

## GENERAL NOTES.

**A New Duck for Massachusetts, *Nomonyx dominicus*.**—A fine adult male specimen of *Nomonyx dominicus* (Linn.) was shot in a small pond near Malden, Mass., on August 27, 1889. It was brought to Messrs. Goodale and Frazer (93 Sudbury St., Boston) to be stuffed, and it was by the kindness of Mr. Goodale that I had the pleasure of examining it in the flesh. The color of the upper mandible was light blue with a narrow middle stripe of black. The feet were gray. This is, I believe, the first record for this species in Massachusetts, and the third for North America. (See Baird, Cassin, and Lawrence, B. N. A., p. 925 (1860); Cabot, Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., VI, p. 375, XIV, p. 154; and American Nat., V, p. 441.)—CHAS. B. CORY, *Boston, Mass.*

**Phalaropus lobatus and Phalaropus tricolor.**—I saw four *Phalaropus lobatus* here June 18. Two killed were females with ova the size of No. 12 shot. I believed them to be last year's birds.

I came upon three *Phalaropus tricolor* at play the afternoon of May 16 just as the sun shone for the first time after a two days' cold storm of rain and snow. They were in shallow still water, about a foot apart, forming a triangle, and each kept in nearly the same place while they spun about rapidly like tops. They would often pause for a little while with bills pointing inward and then at the same moment resume their spin, each apparently doing its best to go the fastest. I watched them for ten minutes at less than twenty-five yards' distance, and their light graceful bodies riding like corks the little waves of their own making was a pretty sight. I reluctantly killed them and found them to be an old female and male and a last year's male.—P. M. THORNE, *Capt. 22d Inf., Fort Keogh, Montana.*

**Nesting Habits of the Parrakeet (*Conurus carolinensis*).**—While in Florida during February and March, 1889, I questioned everybody whom I met regarding the nesting of the Parrakeet. Only three persons professed any knowledge on this subject. The first two were both uneducated men—professional hunters of alligators and plume birds. Each of them claimed to have seen Parrakeets' nests, which they described as flimsy structures built of twigs and placed on the branches of cypress trees. One of them said he found a nest only the previous summer (1888), while fishing. By means of his pole he tipped the nest over and secured two young birds which it contained.

This account was so widely at variance with what has been previously recorded regarding the manner of nesting of this species that I considered it, at the time, as a mere fabrication, but afterwards it was unexpectedly and most strongly corroborated by Judge R. L. Long of Tallahassee. The latter gentleman, who, by the way, has a very good general knowledge of the birds of our Northern States, assured me that he had examined

many nests of the Parakeet built precisely as above described. Formerly, when the birds were abundant in the surrounding region, he used to find them breeding in large colonies in the cypress swamps. Several of these colonies contained at least a thousand birds each. They nested invariably in small cypress trees, the favorite position being on a fork near the end of a slender horizontal branch. Every such fork would be occupied, and, he has seen as many as forty or fifty nests in one small tree. Their nests closely resembled those of the Carolina Dove, being similarly composed of cypress twigs put together so loosely that the eggs were often visible from the ground beneath. The twigs of the cypress seemed to be preferred to those of any other kind of tree. The height at which the nests were placed varied from five or six feet to twenty or thirty feet. Mr. Long described the eggs as being of a greenish white color, unspotted. He did not remember the maximum number which he had found in one set, but thought it was at least four or five. He had often taken young birds from the nests to rear or to give to his friends. He knew of a small colony of Parakeets breeding in Waukulla Swamp, about twenty miles from Tallahassee, in the summer of 1885, and believes that they still occur there in moderate numbers.

It seems difficult to reconcile such testimony with the statements of Audubon, Wilson, and others that the Carolina Parakeet lays its eggs in hollow trees. It may be, however, that, like the Crow Blackbird and some of the Owls, this Parrot nests both in holes and on branches, according to circumstances; at all events the above account has seemed to me to rest on evidence sufficiently good to warrant its publication.

I may add in this connection that the wide-spread impression that the Parakeet is on the verge of extinction, is not literally correct. A few are still found as far north in Florida as the Weekiva River bottom, while south of Kissimee they are still actually abundant over a region of considerable extent. Everywhere, however, they are decreasing fast, and unless steps are taken to protect them from the ravages of the specimen and plume hunters, who invariably shoot all that come in their way, the total extermination of the species can be a matter of only a few more years.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

**Melanerpes carolinus Eating Oranges.**—As corroborating Dr. Warren's account in his late report on the birds of Pennsylvania, it may be worth while to state that when at Enterprise, Florida, in February, 1889, I observed a Red-bellied Woodpecker eating the pulp of a sweet orange. He flew down to the ground and, hopping along rather clumsily, approached an orange, and for several minutes pecked at it in a slow deliberate way. When I showed myself he at once took flight, and sought shelter in the dense foliage of the trees above. Upon examining the orange, I found that it was decayed through the whole of one side. In the sound portion were three holes, each nearly as large as a silver dollar, with narrow strips of peel between them. The pulp had been eaten out quite to the middle of the fruit. Small pieces of rind were thickly strewn about the spot. Upon searching closely I discovered several other oranges that had been