

of this species in Massachusetts in winter will be found in Bull. Nuttall Orn. Club, VIII, 149.

The winter of 1889-90 was on the whole a very mild one, with but little snow, yet marked by great and sudden changes of temperature. The mercury stood at 5° F. or thereabouts on several nights, and on the 22d of February it fell to -7°. It is worthy of note that the Yellowthroat, Nashville Warbler and Blue Heron above-mentioned were all birds born during the preceding summer. It seems reasonable to suppose that many young birds annually get left behind when the autumnal migration occurs. In such an event they might survive the following winter if it should prove to be a mild one, while the stoutest heart among them would probably succumb to the rigors of a genuine 'old-fashioned' New England winter.—WALTER FAXON, *Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass.*

**Two Notes from South Carolina.**—I shot a male *Dendroica cærulescens* on December 6, 1889, at Pinopolis, a few miles from Charleston. The weather was very cold at the time, and was the coldest of the winter of 1889-90, up to March. This species ordinarily passes through here as late as the middle of October.

On May 9, 1890, Mr. W. F. Colcock brought me an adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak. It was shot in Saltkehatchie Swamp which is only a few miles from tide-water. A few days later another male was seen. This is the first record for lower South Carolina. It is only found in the mountainous portions of the State.—ARTHUR T. WAYNE, *Temassee, S. C.*

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### A Query in regard to the Least Tern.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

*Dear Sirs:*—I wish to inquire about a peculiarity in the nesting habits of the Least Terns or, as they are commonly known here, the 'Little Sea Gulls.' They generally arrive here about May 6 (this year, May 13) to breed on the sand bars of the Mississippi River. If the water is off the bars they begin laying about the middle of June, and they continue to lay until August, for I have found their eggs as late as the middle of the latter month. I have generally found three or four, and often five, eggs in a nest. The nest is only a little hollow scooped out in the sand. In July, when most of them are laying and have eggs, if you walk over the bars they fly close to you and almost strike you with their wings, making a loud noise as if they were terribly annoyed by your presence and wished to drive you away.

Upon examining the eggs you will find perhaps half of them have a spot of water on them. How did it get there? Is it put there by the parent bird, and if so, for what purpose? I have questioned persons who were,