

## GENERAL NOTES.

**The Nostrils in Young Cormorants.**—Through the kindness of Mr. R. C. McGregor and Mr. Curtis Clay Young I have come into the possession of a considerable series of crania of Cormorants, from a very early stage of incubation up to the twenty-eighth day after hatching. In the oldest of these skulls the external nostrils are still open, and the bones of the palate have not coalesced, and the probabilities are, as already stated, that the external nostrils close about the time the young Cormorants take to the water and begin to feed themselves.—F. A. LUCAS, *Washington, D. C.*

**Labrador Duck.**—In the Museum at Amiens in France, which is located in a temporary and very unworthy building by the river, I was surprised to come across a fine adult male Labrador Duck, *Camptolaimus labradorius*, in good preservation. It was unknown to Mr. William Dutcher when revising the list of extant specimens (*Auk*, 1891, p. 201), but I conclude that it is probably one of the specimens which he mentions to have been sent to Europe by Mr. John Akhurst prior to 1850 (*op. cit.*, 1893, p. 270).—J. H. GURNEY, *Keswick Hall, Norwich, England.*

**Nesting of the Larger White-cheeked Goose (*Branta canadensis occidentalis*) in Okanogan Co., Wash.**—In May, 1896, a nest of this species was located in the gorge of the Columbia River due east of Chelan. A visit paid to it on May 13 led me through a wild stretch where the cliffs press in upon the swirling river. I began to walk softly over a rocky point which projected over the stream at about fifty feet above high-water mark. I had seen a Goose push out from the shore below and hoped his mate might be on the nest. I was not to be disappointed, for as I rose over the crest of the rocky point the mother Goose flew off with a loud squawk, and I had in addition a vision of something green flying through the air. In a shelf of rock commanding the river below three green goslings, newly hatched, were resting on a bed of down. Pale green egg shells were lying about the nest as a reminder of what might have been. The green thing "flying through the air" proved to be a fourth gosling which Mother Goose had knocked off the nest in her haste, but I rescued him from a cleft in the rock twenty feet below, where he had been fortunately caught before striking the fierce current of the river, and returned him apparently none the worse for his tumble. The nestlings were in general of a bright grass-green color mottled with a shade of olive. The nest was entirely composed of soft down from the Goose's breast.

The Larger White-cheeked Geese are the first birds to arrive in the Chelan valley in February, and they leave the wheat fields, reluctantly enough, in December. Their breeding in the county seems to be alto-

gether by detached pairs, although in some places where unusually abundant they gather daily for a sociable feed. — WILLIAM L. DAWSON, *Oberlin, Ohio.*

**A New Bird for the Virginias.**— I have lately received from Mr. Thaddeus Surber, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, a young male specimen of the Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) which was taken on November 2, 1896, near Caldwell, P. O., on the Greenbrier River, six miles from the above mentioned Springs. This species has not hitherto been reported from either Virginia or West Virginia, although a bird from the Patuxent River, Md., has been recorded by Mr. Hugh M. Smith (Auk, Vol. III, p. 139). — WILLIAM C. RIVES, M. D., *New York City.*

**Asarcia spinosa.**— In Vol. XXIV of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds, Limicolæ, p. 86, 1896, Dr. Sharpe names a genus *Asarcia*, type *Parra variabilis* Linn., 1766, as distinguished from *Jacana* proper by the reduction of the facial appendages to a comparatively small frontal leaf, which is trifid, somewhat like a fleur-de-lis; the same cutaneous excrescence in the type of *Jacana* being bifid or heart-shaped, and supplemented by a pair of wattles. Assuming the generic sufficiency of this distinction, I may remark that Dr. Sharpe's use of the specific term *variabilis* in this connection is at variance with A. O. U. canons of nomenclature. As shown by Elliot, Auk, July, 1888, p. 298, and as admitted by Sharpe, *l. c.*, *Parra variabilis* Linn., S. N. 1766, p. 260, was based on Edwards's Nat. Hist. I. 1743, p. and pl. 48, as a mere renaming of *Fulica spinosa* Linn. S. N. 1758, p. 152, which had the identical basis of Edwards's pl. 48. Consequently *variabilis* is untenable by our rules, and the species should continue to stand as *Jacana spinosa*, unless we recognize the new generic name; in which probable contingency *Asarcia spinosa* becomes the onym of the bird. — ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

**The Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) in Lewis County, N. Y.**— In the Boonville (N. Y.) 'Herald' of May 27, 1896, appeared an item to the effect that Mr. Henry Felshaw had recently seen "a large flock of Wild Pigeons, perhaps 300 in number, flying westward." On writing to Mr. Felshaw he replied that there was no possibility of his having been mistaken, as he had shot, trapped and netted thousands of these birds, in former years, and the flock in question was seen when not more than fifteen rods distant. The flock, as said, numbered about 300, and was seen at about 5.30 A. M. on May 22, the locality being Constableville, Lewis County, N. Y. He further states, "I mounted, last spring (in April, I think) a cock Pigeon that was shot somewhere near North Western." — W. S. JOHNSON, *Boonville, N. Y.*

**Melopelia leucoptera in Osceola County, Florida.**— The National Museum has recently received a wing and foot of this species from Prof. W.