

84. *Merula migratoria*. ROBIN.—Locally common. Several large flocks appeared at Port Manvers on September 6, apparently from the North.

85. *Saxicola œnanthe*. WHEATEAR.—Nests near Nachvak, for the Hudson Bay Company factor there had nests which he had taken. I did not observe the bird.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROTECTION OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.

DURING the past year bird protective work in America has been more effectively systematized than ever before and the results have been correspondingly definite and far-reaching. The vigorous and efficient enforcement of the Lacey Act, by the Division of the Biological Survey of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, under the personal direction of Dr. T. S. Palmer, has gone far toward suppressing the trade in sea birds for millinery purposes and has spread consternation among illicit game dealers throughout the country. The firm backing thus furnished by the Federal government has spurred on the State Game Protective Societies to renewed efforts and stimulated game protection all along the line. In this connection we cannot too highly praise the several 'Bulletins' prepared by Dr. Palmer and Mr. H. W. Olds, and issued by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, giving concise abstracts of the game and bird laws of the several States.

The operations under the Thayer Fund for the protection of Gulls and Terns have been, as heretofore, under the able direction of Mr. William Dutcher. The protection afforded the sea birds of our Atlantic Coast last year has been continued and extended with gratifying results.

In addition Mr. Dutcher and Dr. Palmer have personally appeared before the legislatures of most of the States from Maine to Florida in the interests of better State bird laws, and in every instance their efforts were crowned with success.

The work of the Audubon Societies has continued on the same lines as heretofore and has been reported upon from time to time

in 'Bird-Lore,' the official organ of the Societies. Several new societies have been organized during the year, and at the last session of the A. O. U. at Cambridge, the first step was taken towards an affiliation of the State societies. Delegates from nine State organizations took part in the conference, and it was decided to establish the Conference as a regular feature of the A. O. U. Congress.

The work of the Audubon Societies I find is not fully appreciated by the public at large and many persons noting the continuance of the feather fashion hastily conclude that they have failed in their object. This however is not so. Like most other reforms the suppression of the feather fashion cannot be accomplished all at once; it is a gradual work, and the portion already accomplished must not be lost sight of. It is the widespread popular interest in birds which has rendered possible the passage of the many improved bird laws and the establishment and maintenance of the Thayer Fund, and for this popular interest the Audubon Societies are directly responsible.

We should therefore use every effort to encourage those who are active in conducting the work of these societies and give them every possible assistance, for only by keeping alive and spreading the present interest can we permanently stamp out the feather trade.

In this connection your chairman would suggest to the Audubon Societies the importance of discouraging the use of any feathers except those of the ostrich and domestic rooster, which can be easily identified.

All secretaries have doubtless been assailed by numerous inquiries whether this or that feather is admissible, and too many members are content with the assurance of the milliners that various quills, sprays and tufts of feathers now so largely replacing entire birds are manufactured from the plumage of domestic fowls.

Your chairman recently examined a large series of sample feathers from one of the leading milliners in Philadelphia and found that fully nine tenths of the material was *not* the plumage of domestic fowls. Part of the dyed, trimmed and bespangled feathers defied more accurate determination, but the plumage of the Indian Vulture, Nicobar Pigeon, Great Bustard, Baikal Teal, Indian

Pheasant, Impeyan Pheasant, and Gull, were positively identified. Though not American birds, to be sure, all of them are wild birds.

Turning to the immediate work of your Committee for the past year, it should, in the first place, be stated that for the purpose of making our body still more representative and effective, ten additional members have been appointed, namely, Mr. A. H. Thayer, New York; J. Merton Swain, Maine; James H. Hill, Connecticut; F. C. Kirkwood, Maryland; M. J. Elrod, Montana; George E. Beyer, Louisiana; R. W. Williams, Jr., Florida; Frank Bond, Wyoming; W. L. Baily, Pennsylvania; W. O. Emerson, California.

As already explained, the most important work of the year has been accomplished by the Lacey Act, the Thayer Fund, and the Audubon Societies, but since all of these are in whole or in part the outgrowth of this Committee and as our members are all active in one or other of these lines, their work naturally forms part of your Committee's report.

As most of the details of this work will be reported on by Mr. Dutcher and Dr. Palmer, it remains for your chairman to briefly summarize such other matter as is contained in the reports submitted by the members of the Committee.

The universal feeling seems to be that there is a great increase of sentiment throughout the country in favor of bird protection on the part of all classes. In every State where bird laws failed of passage, at the last legislature, redoubled efforts will be made at the next session. Newspapers are not only willing to print reports and circulars on bird protection but in many cases apply to members of the Committee for such matter. Farmers and landowners show an increasing desire to assist in the work by posting notices and enforcing the law.

From Illinois Mr. Deane reports the failure of an effort to place Meadowlarks on the game list, and the practical suppression of the trade in American cage birds in Chicago.

From California Mr. Emerson reports the failure of the Cooper Ornithological Club's bird law after getting it through both branches of the legislature, but hopes for better success at the next session. He states that so far as he knows, no birds are now collected in California for the millinery trade, but the Italian fishermen still net small birds for the San Francisco market. As many

as 1000 are sometimes caught in one setting of the net, largely Song Sparrows and Yellow-throats.

In Arkansas Mrs. Stephenson and Mrs. Sara T. Thomas have been very active in distributing bird protection posters to the sheriffs, school superintendents, mill owners, etc., a work that cannot fail of good results. Mrs. Florence Merriam Bailey urges the same plan of action among the ranches of the southwest. She found at Carlsbad, New Mexico, great flocks of wading birds of all sorts in the irrigated fields, and to anyone in search of either plumes or game, wholesale slaughter would be an easy matter. "The indifference and ignorance," she says, "of the ranchmen in regard to birds makes them largely careless of their destruction and the question suggests itself: Should more effort be made to reach the ranchmen and farmers with bird protective literature? This might perhaps be done in the East through the granges and in the West through agricultural journals."

On the whole, the present status of our work is most encouraging, and in closing I can only urge those who are aiding us to continue their support, feeling sure that the results amply justify our efforts.

WITMER STONE,
*Chairman A. O. U. Committee on the Protection
of North American Birds.*

RESULTS OF SPECIAL PROTECTION TO GULLS AND TERNs OBTAINED THROUGH THE THAYER FUND.

Plate I.

"I will not kill or hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive and comfort all gentle life and guard and perfect all natural beauty on earth."—From JOHN RUSKIN'S '*Declaration.*'

THE SECOND year of the special work of the Committee entrusted with the administration of the Thayer Fund has passed,