

at the base of the bill and a median, angle-shaped line of buff on each tail feather that are lacking in the Black Duck, while the rich buff of the head and throat, immaculate on the chin and parts adjacent, and the broad ochraceous streakings of the body are rarely approached by its northern relative. The Texas race *maculosa* seems poorly differentiated from *fulvigula*; the dusky markings about the head are a trifle more extensive and the black at the base of the bill is less conspicuous as a rule. The adults of both have red legs.

It may be well to point out here an error in Ridgway's 'Manual' wherein the Black Duck and the Florida Duck are in the group 'Wing without any white band.' As a matter of fact, in both of these species there is a very distinct band tipping the feathers of the speculum and it is rarely absent even in females.

It is rather beyond the scope of the present paper to take up the two Mexican species (*Anas aberti* and *Anas diazi*) of the Black Duck group, but from descriptions there is certainly room for doubting their specific distinctness from *fulvigula*.

GENERAL NOTES.

Capture of an American Eider at Chicago.—There appear to be very few authentic records of the American Eider (*Somateria dresseri*) having been taken on Lake Michigan, so that its occurrence at Chicago may be of interest to readers of 'The Auk.'

On December 1, 1908, an individual of this species was shot by a fisherman over decoys set off the 55th Street Pier near Jackson Park, and was brought to me for identification. It proved to be an immature male in beautiful plumage. I made the skin and had the specimen positively identified by Dr. Ned Dearborn of the Field Museum of Natural History.—J. L. DEVINE, 5478 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Breeding of the Least Bittern (*Ardetta exilis*) in Chester Co., Pa.—On June 6, 1909, while wading through a cat-tail swamp near Berwyn, Chester Co., Pa., two incomplete Least Bittern's nests were found and one bird seen. On visiting the place again on June 12, one of the nests was found completed, and contained 4 eggs. The nest was situated in a clump of

rushes (*Juncus effusus*) and cat-tails (*Typha latifolia*), 12 inches above water, which in that spot was about two feet deep. The cat-tails were bent over above the nest forming a partially covered arch. The nest itself was loosely, but firmly, constructed of rushes, and measured 9 inches across by 4 inches deep; a slight depression held the eggs. Although this species is a regular breeder in the Delaware River marshes of Delaware County, which borders Chester County on the east, and of Philadelphia County, which borders Delaware County on the north, as far as I have been able to ascertain, this constitutes the first breeding record for Chester County.—LEONARD S. PEARSON, *Wayne, Pa.*

The Black Rail in Maryland.—In 'The Auk' for April, 1909, p. 190, I mentioned that several specimens of the little Black Rail were said to have been taken on the Patuxent River in Maryland. Through the courtesy of Mr. W. F. Roberts, I am now able to give three records. Mr. Roberts, who was an associate member of the A. O. U. from 1888 to 1899, is an enthusiastic sportsman, has had long experience in rail shooting, and is thoroughly familiar with the habits of the various species in this vicinity. In a recent letter he says:

"For more than 25 years the writer has been cognizant of the regular occurrence of *Porzana jamaicensis* on the marshes of the Patuxent River, in the vicinity of Mt. Calvert, Md. It appears more reluctant to take wing than *P. carolina* and more are taken during October than September—the two months of rail shooting. They are never common, but I learn of several individuals every season and have the following record dates: Oct. 19, 1906; Sept. 22, 1907; and Oct. 12, 1908."

The only other record for this rail in Maryland with which I am familiar is that of a specimen presented to the National Museum by John Dowell. This bird (No. 97,717) was taken on Piscataway Creek, Prince George County, on September 25, 1877.—T. S. PALMER, *Washington, D. C.*

First Appearance of the Sanderling in the Vicinity of Detroit.—In August, 1908, the Sanderling (*Calidris arenaria*) was noted for the first time in the vicinity of this city. Specimens were taken by Messrs. W. C. Wood, Spicer, Jones, and the writer. With them came a White-rumped Sandpiper (*Actodromas fuscicollis*) which is the first autumn record for the county. The Sanderling reappeared May 16, 1909.—J. CLAIRE WOOD, *Detroit, Mich.*

Actodromas fuscicollis in Philadelphia County, Pa.—This species, which is rightly regarded by ornithologists as a rare transient in this vicinity, is mentioned in Warren's 'Birds of Pennsylvania,' revised edition, page 85, as a "very rare spring and fall migrant," and in Stone's 'Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey,' we learn (page 32) that it is a "rare or irregular transient," and also, on page 73, that "this species