

At one time all the holes had frozen over, and the grain was placed on the bare ice, the ducks coming in from the lake and lighting on the ice to feed. This was at a distance of about a quarter of a mile from the open water in the lake. On February 21, being temporarily out of wheat, cracked corn was tried, but the ducks apparently did not relish it, and did not clean it up, as they did the wheat. During a period from February 12 to 16, Mr. DeVille estimated the number of ducks was at least ten thousand. They gradually scattered with the coming of milder weather, but there were several thousand still present on March 18.

The ducks were about seventy-five per cent Bluebills, or Scaups, the remainder being about evenly divided between Canvasbacks and Redheads, with a few Whistlers.

On March 13 when the writer visited the bay he counted in an open place between the outlet of the bay and Sand Point, about five hundred Bluebills, one hundred Redheads, a few Canvasbacks, about a dozen Mallard, three or four Black Ducks and several Holboëll's and Horned Grebes. At this time the ducks were apparently able to take care of themselves, were feeding in the usual manner, and did not come for the grain.

Mr. DeVille stated that the ducks were in such poor condition, that he had seen many with ice frozen to their feathers, the wing feathers being sometimes frozen together. Many also had balls of ice over the bill, often extending to the eyes. Fourteen ducks were found dead, eleven Bluebills, one Canvasback and two Redheads. One Bluebill drake found in full plumage weighed one pound and three ounces.

Great credit must be given to both Mr. DeVille, who is a game protector of a type we need more of, and the New York State Conservation Commission, for their prompt action in this matter, for there is no doubt that if they had not acted in time, thousands of ducks would have died of starvation.—H. E. GORDON, *Rochester, N. Y.*

Early Occurrence of Rails in Massachusetts.—On August 26, 1913, a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) was taken in Longmeadow near Springfield, Mass., and on the 22d. of the same month, a King Rail, *Rallus elegans*, was captured in the same town.

These are the earliest autumnal dates recorded for the appearance of either of these species of birds in this part of the Connecticut Valley, although I believe that both kinds are more often represented here than is generally supposed, and it is possible that they breed here.

In Massachusetts, under a very unwise state statute purporting to be for the protection of certain kinds of so-called marsh birds, the open season for Rallidæ begins as early as August 1, and on that day in Longmeadow, a sportsman caught a young Virginia Rail that was still in the downy state, and probably not more than ten days old.—ROBERT O. MORRIS, *Springfield, Mass.*

Woodcock in Ohio Co., West Virginia.—The first authentic record of the occurrence of the Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) in Ohio County, West

Virginia, came under my notice on July 20, 1913. The writer has been a student of the bird life of this county for the past twenty years, yet this is the first time in his experience that he has been able to positively identify this game bird in this locality.

While sitting on the porch of our residence at Park View in company with his wife the writer was attracted by the peculiar fluttering of a bird which alighted upon the lawn about thirty feet distant. This characteristic and familiar flight recalled instantly to mind this bird which he had formerly often seen in the swampy land about Ithaca, N. Y., but never before here. The bird had hardly alighted before its long bill and large black eyes proclaimed it *Philohela minor*, but an exclamation of surprise from one of us caused it to fly again about ten feet farther away. The writer then followed the stranger behind the shrubbery until it flew into the garden in the rear of the house, where we both under cover of a friendly bush from a distance of only ten feet, calmly watched the owner of those large eyes bore in the damp ground of the potato patch for worms. The protective coloration did not hide it from view at such close range as it was but 8 o'clock in the evening and quite light. After watching the visitor for ten minutes we left him peacefully to pursue his way.—ROBERT B. McLAIN, *Wheeling, W. Va.*

Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) in Massachusetts.—On September 5, 1913, an Eskimo Curlew was taken on the marsh at East Orleans, Mass., by Mr. John Greenough Rogers.

The bird was alone and when taken the weather was thick and raining with an east wind, and since the afternoon of the day before the wind had been northeast to east with rain most of the time.

After the bird was shot, what appeared like hardened whitish grease formed at the nostrils. The centre feathers of the under tail-coverts and the under sides of the ends of the tail feathers were stained a purple color. There was nothing in the stomach but the bird was very fat.

The specimen was preserved and is now in my collection.—CHARLES R. LAMB, *Cambridge, Mass.*

The Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus dominicus*) in Michigan in Spring.—In "Michigan Bird Life," 1912, 210, Prof. Barrows mentions that "although several observers have reported it as seen in spring I have not been able to find a spring specimen in any collection in the state, and it seems likely that these reports may be incorrect." There is a skin in the Museum of Zoölogy, University of Michigan, that was secured on April 20, 1890, by Mr. Norman A. Wood near Pittsfield, one mile north of Saline, Washenau County. There were a flock of some thirty birds feeding in a wet meadow and five were secured from this flock. Two specimens were mounted for some Chicago man, name now forgotten; these were nearly all black on the underparts. The specimen in the Museum collection is in a very advanced plumage.—B. H. SWALES, *Mus. of Zoölogy, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.*