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NOTES AND NEWS.

ECTOPISTES MIGRATORIUS, once one of the most notable species in the North American avifauna became extinct on September 1, by the death of the last surviving specimen, a female, which had lived for twenty-nine years in the aviary of the Cincinnati Zoölogical Garden. It is rarely possible to state the exact date of the extinction of a species as the process is usually a gradual one, but in view of the fruitless efforts extending over the past ten years to find evidence of the existence of wild Passenger Pigeons we may safely consider the passing of this last captive specimen as the extinction of the species.

The reduction of this once abundant bird to absolute extermination by man's greed should be a lesson to us all and should stifle all opposition to the efforts now being made by national and state governments in behalf of the conservation of other birds threatened with a like fate. What is a little loss of sport to us compared with the extinction of a wild bird species — something that the hand of man can never replace?

As we glance over the pages of 'The Nuttall Bulletin' and 'The Auk' we fail to find a satisfactory chronological record of the extermination of this splendid bird. That it had decreased materially was recognized and also that the great flights that darkened the sky were a thing of the past in most parts of the country. Writers were busy explaining why the birds had left their immediate vicinity and speculating as to where they had gone,

little dreaming that the disappearance was general and that the supposed 'migration' was really extermination. In many a local list the Passenger Pigeon is mentioned and dates given which constituted the last record of the bird for that state or county, although the writers little thought when they penned the lines of their import in years to come.

The pigeon trappers year after year plied their nefarious trade, and with the assistance of game dealers warded off legislation that might have checked the slaughter, although there was really little effort made in behalf of the birds as the public failed to appreciate what was going on, and the sentiment for the conservation of wild life was not yet aroused.

Prof. H. B. Roney and others associated with him stand out as the few who did realize the approaching catastrophe but his account of the butchery of the last great nesting at Petosky, Michigan, in 1878, came too late.

The bird was not exterminated at this time and Mr. William Brewster who went to Michigan in 1888 in the hope of seeing another nesting wrote: "that the Pigeon is not, as has been asserted so often recently, on the verge of extinction, is shown by the flight which passed through Michigan in the spring of 1888. . . . and the birds must have formed a nesting of considerable extent in some region so remote that no news of its presence reached the ears of the vigilant netters." (Auk, 1889, p. 290.)

Nevertheless it seems as if the slaughter of 1878 and years immediately following had done its work; apparently the birds had been so reduced that another great nesting was impossible. The pigeon like the buffalo was a species whose existence seems to have depended upon association in large numbers and once separated and scattered into small flocks and pairs its doom was sealed.

Later mention in 'The Auk' consists of early records hitherto unpublished, because their significance was not appreciated until the imminence of extermination was forced upon our attention. Finally we have the numerous recent records of "birds seen" mainly by people who never saw live Passenger Pigeons in the time of their abundance and then the rewards for the detection of live birds under the direction of Prof. Hodge lasting over three years which were productive of negative evidence only.

The Cincinnati bird was sent to the United States National Museum to be mounted and placed on exhibition and we learn from Dr. Charles W. Richmond, acting curator of birds, that it was photographed and then entrusted to Mr. William Palmer and Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, the former of whom was to skin it while the latter was to make a study of its anatomy and preserve such of the soft parts as possible. We hope to publish the results of Dr. Shufeldt's investigations in the January number of 'The Auk.'

In an interesting article in the July-August number of 'Bird-Lore' Mr. Leo E. Miller, a member of the Roosevelt Brazilian expedition, presents some facts regarding the exportation of feathers from Argentina to the United States.

In one place he saw piles of burlap-covered bales filled with Rhea feathers aggregating sixty tons in weight, all the feathers having been taken from wild killed birds.

These are the feathers used so extensively for feather dusters and lately for millinery purposes also. Further inquiry elicited the fact that thirty-four tons of these same feathers had been exported during the first six months of the last fiscal year.

The provision of the new tariff prohibiting the importation of wild bird plumage will fortunately deal a death blow to this traffic.