

## THE OLD NEW ENGLAND BOB-WHITE.

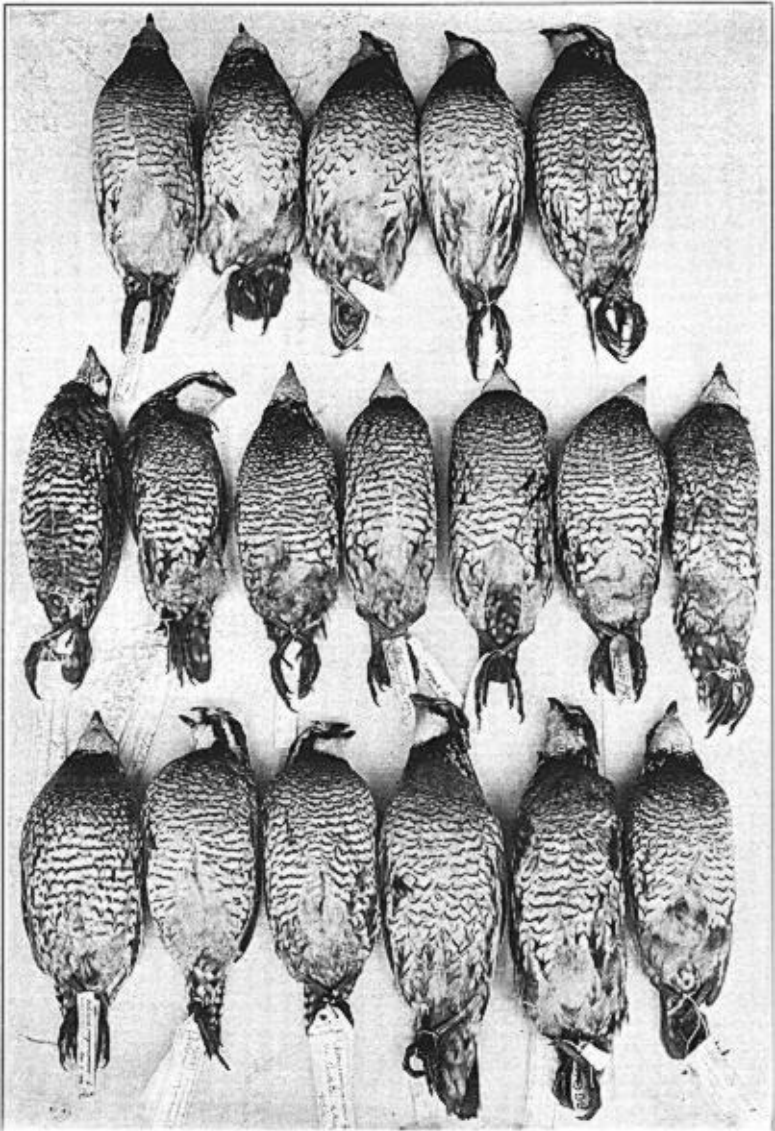
BY JOHN C. PHILLIPS.

*Plate XVI.*

It has long been remarked both by ornithologists and sportsmen that the Bob-whites of New England and the north central states were somewhat larger than those of the Mid-Atlantic states. The name *Colinus virginianus* was given to the bird by Linnæus, based entirely on Catesby's material, so that the type locality may be fairly placed at South Carolina, probably near the Georgia line, for Catesby's bird collecting was done on the Savannah River. Catesby's plate represents a distinctly dark bird.

The question of a northern form is however somewhat complicated by the zealous efforts of sportsmen in transplanting Bob-whites from more favored to less favored regions, a process which has resulted in the entire or partial replacement of the native stock over most of its northeastward extension. It is interesting to note here that the subject of quail transplants was not thoroughly aired in sportsman's journals before the late seventies. By 1880 quail were advertised from various southern localities, Tennessee, Indian Territory, Texas, etc., at the extremely low figure of \$2.00 a dozen. Between 1880 and 1885 there was great activity along this line and large transplants were effected in southern Vermont and in Massachusetts and probably over the whole of southern New England. Many references to this can be found in the files of 'Forest and Stream' between 1876 and 1885.

It appears however that the traffic in live quail existed a good while before this period for I have a record given to me by Mr. G. A. Peabody, of Danvers, for March, 1870, at which time 184 birds were let out in Essex Co., Mass. They were sent from Greensboro, N. C., but whether actually trapped there is of course uncertain. Mr. Peabody himself kept a few quail in a pen in the sixties and liberated a few at Danvers, Mass. He is certain that other sportsmen were doing the same thing about this time and he says that the planting was done with the utmost secrecy, which may account for the late appearance of reports of these transplants in the journals of the time. It is a fact that on Cape Cod quail were planted very early, for Mr. Peabody informs me that Mr.



BOB-WHITE (*Colinus virginianus*).

- Row 1. Old New England Birds.
- Row 2. Birds from Southern States (two on left = *C. v. floridanus*).
- Row 3. Birds from Illinois, Indian Territory, etc.

Storey Fay brought many quail from his place near Savannah, Ga., and liberated them on the Cape (Falmouth?) in the late fifties. It is well known that at least some of the quail of Cape Cod are small and dark colored, and three male specimens taken at Wareham, Mass. (Bangs Coll. Nos. 4196, 1059, and 3347) between 1882 and 1901 are very heavily barred on the flanks and breast, like birds from Georgia and So. Carolina. On the other hand two specimens from the same collection and locality, nos. 1060 and 11492 are typical northern birds and these bear the dates 1882 and 1904. On measuring these skins I find that the three dark males from Wareham have a wing average of only 110 mm., while the two normal females from the same place average 114.5 mm. In other words there is evidence that the native and imported birds may have existed side by side and kept their identity, for a time at least.

In Mr. Brewster's collection there are some fine specimens taken near Boston between 1871 and 1891. These show no trace of imported blood. The largest specimen has a wing of 120 mm., being far larger than any of the specimens in the collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, either from New England, the Atlantic States, or the Dakota-Missouri region. In measuring these skins I divided them into three regions: 1st, Old New England, 2nd, Virginia to So. Carolina, 3rd, the western area, including Indian Territory, So. Dakota, Kansas and Missouri, 4th, a series from the Thayer museum at Lancaster representing Maryland, Virginia, and localities near Washington, and lastly another lot from the same collection taken at Sing Sing, New York.

	♂					♀				
	Cul.	Tar-sus	Wing	Tail	No. spec.	Cul.	Tar-sus	Wing	Tail	No. spec.
Old New England	15.8	31	113.7	57	9	14.6	30.6	113	55.6	6
Sing Sing, N. Y.	15.6	31.6	109	55.4	5					
Md. & Va.	16	31.3	111	57	9					
So. Atlantic	15.3	30.1	109.8	53.3	6	15	29	109	52.7	4
Western	15.7	30.7	110.4	57.3	12	15.4	30	109	55.3	10
Mt. Pleasant, S.C.	15.5	31	107.5	53	2	15.5	30	111	56.5	2

Two ♂♂ and two ♀♀ from Mt. Pleasant, S. C., near the type locality are added.

The old New England series is limited to birds collected near Boston in the seventies, mostly in Mr. Brewster's collection, and I am assured that the localities Belmont, Concord, and Brookline, where this series was taken, were not affected by southern quail. The wing measurement is large in both male and female, but the other measurements do not show much size difference. Probably in the flesh the birds were larger and heavier. One of these specimens has a wing of 120 mm., which is maximum for all the quail examined for the combined localities.

The South Atlantic series measures slightly less in both sexes than any other group, but the difference is surprisingly small. The Maryland and Virginia series are pretty well up to the New England standard and taken altogether the regions show far less difference than I had been led to expect.

Now the matter of coloring is not so easily settled as the size question. The spring plumage of Bob-whites is much grayer than the fall plumage, especially on the lower back and rump. The typical and extreme Massachusetts birds have a very light buffy appearance, the top of the head has very little black and the mantle is apt to be plain colored. There is a marked tendency to a more delicate barring on the under parts, and to an absence of barring on the lower breast and abdomen. In females the barring is much less heavy. In typical specimens of New England birds the barring is by no means transverse as in Georgia and South Carolina specimens, but very distinctly V-shaped, the pattern drawing out more and more to a sharp point on the lower flanks. It must be noticed, however, that our series shows no constant color difference between North and South Atlantic birds till one reaches at least the vicinity of Charleston, where specimens show a distinctly heavier and more transverse barring over breast and abdomen. Also the backs, scapulars, and tertials are darker in southern birds as well as the whole top of the head. There is no way that I can see of telling western from New England birds, while the Sing Sing, N. Y., series is identical with the Maryland series. Variation is very considerable, especially in the width of the barring on the lower parts, and in the extent of the barring on the abdomen. There is one

very darkly barred bird from Indian Territory and another from Vermilion, S. D.

In the plate I have arranged male birds in the following order: top row, old New England birds, typical ones on left, darkest individual on right. Second row; from right to left, Va., N. C., S. C. and Ga., with two typical Florida birds, *Colinus v. floridanus* at the left end. The lower row shows a series of western birds, with Illinois birds on the right and a darker Indian Territory bird on the left. The Georgia, Florida and Indian Territory specimens can always be told from those of New England, and the typical old New England bird can with fair certainty be separated from the southwestern bird, but not from that of Virginia.

To sum up: if I were asked to characterize the probable appearance of the New England quail of fifty years ago, I should say — Size large, especially the wing; mantle with a tendency to a plainer appearance and not so heavily speckled. Lower parts less heavily barred, and barring more V-shaped; whole top of head and post-ocular streak more reddish and less black: entire bird more tawny and generally somewhat lighter in tone, especially on the lower back, rump and sides.

---

#### EARLY RECORDS OF THE WILD TURKEY. IV.

BY ALBERT HAZEN WRIGHT.

(Continued from p. 81.)

##### *The Carolinas and Georgia.*

In the seventeenth century, we have seven or eight notes of interest. In 1663, a "Report of Commissioners sent from Barbodes to Explore the River Cape Fear" has it that <sup>1</sup> "The woods (are) stored everywhere with great numbers of deer and turkeys — we never going on shore but we saw of each sort." Several excerpts from "A Relation of A Discovery lately made on the Coast of

---

<sup>1</sup> Hawks, Francis L. *History of North Carolina, 1663-1729*, Vol. II, p. 31.