

**The Diving Instinct in Shore-birds.**— In looking over an old note-book I find the following information which seems of considerable interest. On August 4, 1912, while looking for early shore-birds at Toro Point, Panama, I knocked down an immature Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). The beach at that point is a wide coral reef, bare at low tide, and with occasional openings or "wells" connected underneath with the sea. Some of these are of considerable size and the water in all is as clear as crystal to all depths — clear as only those who have seen such tropical "coral water" can imagine.

Upon my approach my crippled bird ran to one of these pools and went over the side, resting on the water surface. As I reached slowly down to take him, he surprised me by diving and swimming under water, using his wings only, to the opposite side of the pool. The action was so sudden and so surprising to me that I could not be sure of the manner of diving but it must have been a "tip-up" and a head first plumage almost straight down.

I had however a perfect view of the bird as he "flew" the ten feet across the pool, through the beautifully clear water which showed white pebbles distinctly on a bottom perhaps twenty feet below. The bird crossed at a uniform depth of eighteen inches to two feet, which he held until he brought up against the opposite wall. The head and neck were extended but not at all stretched while the legs and feet trailed behind with flexed toes, like a heron in flight. The wings seemed to be opened to only perhaps half their full extent — the primaries pointing well backward like wings are trimmed as birds cut down from some height to alight. The wing-beats were slow and even but not labored, and progress was uniform and not at all hurried.

Upon coming up against the opposite wall, the bird rose slowly to the surface, and again rested there as before. The entire performance seemed perfectly natural and unstrained. I tried to have him repeat but he would not, allowing me to lift him from the water without further resistance or effort to escape. Wings and legs were both intact, his wound being in the body, and his body feathers were astonishingly dry after his comparatively long under-water flight.

From what period in his ancestry did he inherit this almost obsolete instinct?— L. L. JEWEL, *Wytheville, Va.*

**The Little Black Rail on Long Island, N. Y.**— On May 24, 1914, Messrs. J. M. Johnson, S. V. La Dow and I were on Jones' Beach, opposite Amityville, studying the shore-bird migration. We were walking through a grassy marsh, the others slightly ahead, when I saw a little bird running like a mouse behind a tussock some 10 feet ahead of me. Thinking it might be a rail, I rushed forward immediately and was lucky enough to flush the bird, which flew up in front of me about 3 feet away. It fluttered forward feebly a short distance, then turned and flew directly past me, not more than 10 feet away and about 2 feet above the grass, landing in a