

that *M. penelope* comes mostly down the coast from the northeast, perhaps from Greenland, while our *M. americana* arrives from the West? This would explain the apparent increase of the European bird by continuous increments from some far northeastern breeding ground.

It is also remarkable that we have never noted a full plumaged male Widgeon, either *americana* or *penelope*, at Wenham Lake, whereas at the "Vineyard" full plumaged males are much in evidence as early as mid-October. Probably those individuals occurring east of Boston, at Wenham, are young birds of the year which are much more likely to straggle beyond their regular migration route; the normal range of *americana* reaching only to Martha's Vineyard.

It may be worth while to note here that the American Widgeon, which is generally considered an irregular and scarce migrant all over Massachusetts, is really a very common duck on the south shore of Martha's Vineyard Island, frequenting Squibnocket and Black Point ponds as well as Poucha Pond on Chappaquiddick Isle.

The first *M. americana* arrived this year (1919) at Squibnocket on August 31 (six or eight birds). By September 15 there were thirty in the pond and on the 21st about seventy-five. During October the numbers increased to 1500 or 1800 and at times in November to possibly 2000. They never spend the night in Squibnocket but fly to other and better feeding grounds at dark. This body of Widgeon usually remains, so I am told, until driven out by ice.—J. C. PHILLIPS, *Wenham, Mass.*

Whistling Swan (*Olor columbianus*) in Massachusetts.—On November 6, 1919, I saw a flock of seven swans at Squibnocket Pond on Martha's Vineyard Isle, in the town of Chilmark, Mass. They were still in the pond on the following day and residents told me they had already been there several days when I first saw them. They left on November 10 or 11.

This is the largest flock of Whistling Swans that I recall for Massachusetts, most of the records having been for single birds. Mr. John E. Thayer received two swans from this same pond in 1906, shot on November 28 and 29. Three swans were observed at Squibnocket within the past few years, but I have not the exact date. This pond has a good supply of Widgeon grass and musk grasses, with some wild celery, and could probably furnish good feeding ground for swans.

So far as I know these seven swans were not persecuted and left for the south in as good condition as when they arrived. The recent marked increase of the Whistling Swan in Currituck Sound, N. C., where it is said to be doing considerable damage to ducking property, may account for its more frequent occurrence in Massachusetts.—J. C. PHILLIPS, *Wenham, Mass.*

Habits of the Two Black Ducks, *Anas rubripes rubripes* and *Anas rubripes tristis*—This past autumn of 1919, while shooting at

Squibnocket Pond, Chilmark, Mass., a very interesting fact was brought to light, namely, that no Red-legged Black Ducks resort to this region, and this experience was so different from that to which we are accustomed in any of the eastern Massachusetts ponds, where Black Ducks are shot through the entire season, that it seemed worth while to record it. It is of especial interest because it brings out the different habits of the two forms.

The south shore of Martha's Vineyard Isle consists in the main of a chain of fresh, brackish, and salt ponds, separated from the sea by a beach. There are no salt marshes proper, and no tidal flats off the shore. In many of these ponds there is excellent feeding ground for diving ducks, but not much shallow ground for surface feeders. Nevertheless a goodly number of Black Ducks resort to Squibnockett, using it as a day-time refuge, and fighting to small sloughs scattered through the pastures and uplands at night. Squibnocket is entirely fresh. The ducks have been systematically baited there for many years and a number of pairs breed. On August 20 last there were some 250 to 300 Black Ducks and on September 15 this number had not increased greatly. On September 20 some 600 were counted and by early October they had about doubled. After the 10th of October it did not appear that there was any increase; and the same number persisted until driven away by the big freeze of December 12, 13, and 14, 1919.

Black Ducks were shot on the following dates: September 23, 24; October 14, 22; November 6, 7, 14, 21, 25; December 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10. In all, 224 were taken during the season, and all of these, except 28, I examined personally. There was no marked change in the appearance of these ducks as the season advanced. In some of the males the color of the legs increased slightly in richness, but never approached the coral red of *rubripes*. No other *rubripes* characters were noted. The average weight of the males in mid-October was 2.86 pounds and the females averaged 2.43 pounds. By December 10 these weights had increased to 3.24 in the males and 2.66 in the females, a very high average, induced no doubt by artificial feeding.

This body of birds became almost sedentary in its habits as the season advanced, and when not disturbed they spent almost the entire day asleep on the beaches at the west end of the pond. Even when greatly disturbed they seemed loth to go to sea, although it meant a flight of only a couple of hundred yards. They seldom remained long in the ocean. At night many of these ducks resorted to small bog holes scattered through the pastures, up to the time when ice made this impossible.

It is fair to presume that nearly all these ducks would have passed south early in the season if they had not been attracted and held by grain. The absence of the tidal flats and marshes of course explains the non-appearance of *rubripes*, but that there should be such a sharp line of demarkation between the two forms at any one place seemed hardly possible.

The habits that characterize the two forms as they appear in autumn in New England may be thus summed up: *Anas rubripes tristis*: Breeding locally and often migrating as early as, or before, mid-September, or at least "shifting ground" from inland nesting grounds to better feeding grounds near coast. Feeding in both ponds and salt meadows, but if in salt meadows resorting to fresh water once or twice a day. Much less nocturnal in feeding habits than *rubripes*, because less shy, and much less inclined to spend day on open ocean. Prefers good fresh water and brackish water food, but spends the winters on the coast of New England in small numbers, along with *rubripes*. Reaches great size at times. Largest male 3 pounds 10 ounces; largest female 2 pounds 15 ounces (Squibnocket, 1919). More difference in size between sexes than in *rubripes*! Comes readily to live decoys, no matter how extreme the voice may be (too high or too low); and is more loquacious than the red-legged form.

A. rubripes rubripes: Late migrant, never becomes localized except near sea, and where marine food in the form of small mollusca is abundant. Very seldom resorts to small ponds or bogs, but likes large open sheets of fresh water near ocean, to which it often makes daily trips to drink and rest, but not to feed. Is better able to sit off-shore in rough seas; and in general appears a more rugged bird with heavier feathering and superior resistance to extreme cold. In winter, it does not depend on ponds for fresh water, but obtains a sufficient supply in small springs about salt meadows at low tide.

This is a much more wary bird, is more silent itself, and comes less easily to live decoys, towards which it manifests an instinctive fear, especially if they be loud or shrill callers. In the salt meadows the best gunners prefer sea-weed bunches or canvas sacs, and find the live decoys useless, especially late in the season.

When a flock of *rubripes* alights on a pond near a shooting stand, they nearly always keep at a safe distance until perfectly satisfied of their surroundings. Then, more often than not, they will swim away from the stand and its live decoys. If they approach the stand, which they do with the utmost caution, and with necks erect, they are not apt to keep closely together as *tristis* does.

Extreme weights not much above that of *tristis*. Heaviest male noted by myself, 3 pounds 12 ounces. Average is a good deal heavier than *tristis*, females perhaps more nearly size of males than in *tristis*, but no figures at hand to bear out this point.—J. C. PHILLIPS, *Wenham, Mass.*

Flight of Water-fowl at Washington, D. C.—On February 24, 1920, an unusual flight of water-fowl, bound in a southerly direction and flying at an altitude of probably one thousand feet, passed over Washington. During the following three days we experienced the coldest weather of the winter, the thermometer hovering about the 13 degree mark.