

Snow Goose in the Cayuga Lake Basin.—On January 30, 1923, the coldest day of the winter, while watching a flock of about 30 American Crossbills feeding on *Tsuga* seeds along Six Mile Creek, Ithaca, N. Y., a flock of six wild fowl was spied flying up the stream. As the birds drew closer it was seen that they were Snow Geese, *Chen hyperboreus* (*nivalis*?) The Geese, traveling about twice as high as the trees, were in a broken V-formation in marked contrast to an irregular mob of Herring Gulls that had passed by shortly before. The sun shone full on the birds as they went overhead and made the white plumage contrast greatly with the primaries, which appeared to be coal black. The wing beats were slower than those of an American Merganser, but somewhat faster than those of a Canada Goose. In comparison with a Duck the necks seemed long and thick, and the tail long. The writer had a very satisfactory view of these Geese. Mr. E. H. Forbush recorded a flock of Snow Geese on the New England coast during the same cold spell.

The only other published record that I find for the Cayuga Lake Basin is that of two young birds that were killed near Ithaca, during the last of March, 1876, (see *Forest and Stream*, Vol. 7, p. 283; also Reed and Wright on *The Vertebrates of the Cayuga Lake Basin* in the *Proc. Am. Phil. Soc.*, XLVIII, 1909, p. 416.)

Eaton, in his 'Birds of New York,' gives but six records for the mainland of New York, and eleven for Long Island, the latest being 1903. I have not found any later records than this one of 1903.—THOMAS SMYTH, *McGraw Hall, Ithaca, N. Y.*

Baird's Sandpiper in Dutchess County, N. Y. with Remarks on its Identification in Life.—On September 9, 1922, Messrs. M. S. Crosby, Allen Frost, and I went to Morgan Lake, just outside of Poughkeepsie, to try and find some Shore-birds, as the lake had been allowed to run dry, leaving several acres of mud flat and we were not disappointed. As we approached from the north a large flock of mixed species flew away, leaving one solitary individual behind. A careful study of this bird at fifty yards through high powered binoculars convinced me that if indeed it were possible to identify a Baird's Sandpiper in life with absolute certainty, the bird before me was that species. Fortunately the means of proof were at hand. The specimen was promptly collected, and proved to be an adult female Baird's Sandpiper. This is apparently the first record for the Hudson River Valley. The skin is in the American Museum of Natural History.

Few groups of birds are more difficult to determine accurately in life than our smaller Shore-birds. With the species under discussion I had awaited for years the opportunity of proving that this could be done. To some it may seem unfortunate that collecting the specimen is the only possible proof, but I know of no other that is absolute with birds of such obscure patterns. If one pronounces a certain bird before one to be a certain species in a certain plumage, and the bird is collected, and proves

to be that species in the plumage stated, he who claims that it cannot be identified in life has an exceedingly weak case. On two previous occasions I have been convinced that I was looking at a Baird's Sandpiper, but neither time could I prove that identification was possible.

In my opinion a satisfactory identification of Baird's Sandpiper is possible for a student who knows the Pectoral and White-rumped Sandpipers well, who can describe the *exact pattern of coloration* both above and below of all three from memory, and who has practised looking at skins of all three side by side from *various distances approximating* those reasonably to be expected with living birds. Needless to say those who most glibly state that this or that bird is impossible to identify in life never dreamed of taking this trouble. Above, Baird's and the White-rumped are almost identical, but the former is more uniformly colored, of a grayer cast, especially on the head, which is practically unmarked with darker. The latter is of a browner cast, with a distinctly streaked head, the feathers of the back and scapulars distinctly edged with whitish. One has white upper tail-coverts, the other fuscous. The Pectoral is blacker and browner than either, with heavy black streaking, especially noticeable on the crown, and blackish tail-coverts. Below all three have an immaculate white chin. The throat and breast of the Pectoral have a brownish cast, with distinct fine blackish streaking, abruptly succeeded by the white belly.

In the White-rumped these parts are white with less distinct and less extensive dark grey streaking and spotting, the spots tending to run down the sides of the breast and flanks. In Baird's these parts are buffy with (adult) or without (immature) indistinct darker streaking. In practise, of course, the White-rumped can sooner or later be eliminated by its white upper tail-coverts. Were it not for this character, separating out a Baird's Sandpiper would be almost impossible, as the color pattern of these two species is much more alike, than Baird's and the Pectoral. In life distance serves to accentuate the darkness of throat and breast contrasted with the white belly, and an adult Baird's seems dark enough below to be a Pectoral. Here experience is essential. The observer must have seen enough Pectorals to know that that species is really even darker below. The much darker crown of the Pectoral is also an excellent check. The immature Baird's, with no visible streaking below, is a much easier proposition, as the breast never has the same dark effect. Returning to our flock of Shore-birds on Morgan Lake, one immature Baird's Sandpiper was subsequently studied at leisure with Pectoral, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers.—LUDLOW GRISCOM, *American Museum of Natural History*.

The Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) in North Carolina.

In recently going over some old family papers and letters I have found the following references to the Passenger Pigeon, which have interested me, and which may interest others.

In a brief sketch of his life written by my father, Francis Raymond Holland, not long before his death, which occurred on May 21, 1894, I find the following.