

belongs to the Passerine subfamily of the *Ploceidae* in the sense of this arrangement.

*Cyanocompsa* is surely distinct from *Guiraca*, and is a near relative of the Red Cardinal (and still more so, of *Pheucticus*).

*Tiaris* is most intimately related to the famous Galapagoes finches, *Geospiza*, presenting one instance more of the affinities between the fauna of the Galapagoes and Antilles [It is to be noted that *Certhidea* is a modified form of the same, Geospizine assemblage, and not Mniotiltine.]

Of *Passerina* I am not yet sure; certainly, however, it stands in no near relation to *Guiraca*.

*Calamospiza* is quite certainly Emberizine, and not very remote from *Junco*.

*Spiza* is a very remarkable type. It presents no marked affinities with any of the American—at least, North American—*Emberizidae* and represents a connecting link between *Emberizidae* and *Icteridae*. Its placing in one or the other of these families is rather a matter of convenience. It is certainly an ancient, rather isolated genus. I agree with the suggestion made by Mr. O. Bangs during our discussions concerning the affinities of *Spiza*, that its very archaic, intermediate character may explain the evident retreat of this genus in recent times, manifested by the restriction in the range of *S. americana*, and by the total extinction of another species, *S. townsendi*.

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#### GENERAL NOTES.

**Notes on the Black Skimmer, in Maine.**—That there was an irruption of Black Skimmers (*Rynchops nigra*) reaching the shores of the Gulf of Maine the last few days of August and early September, 1924, is a fact that has been chronicled. The following definite instances of the recent occurrence of the species in the State have been handed to the writer for permanent preservation.

Mr. E. B. Sawyer of Jonesport writes that after a "southern hurricane passed us off shore" three Black Skimmers appeared the last few days of August at Sandy River Beach about three miles from Jonesport. They remained in the vicinity for several days and were never seen to feed or to

attempt to. When first seen they were on the upper limit of the beach in the lee of the beach grass. One of these birds was taken and sent to the State Museum at Augusta where it is preserved. Shortly after the disappearance of the birds from this place two were seen in Machias Bay, a dozen miles to the eastward.

Hon. Clarence H. Clark of Lubec, who is ever alert to preserve the rarities of his district for the benefit of students of Natural History, writes that he has added the three following specimens to his collection. An adult male taken at Lubec, Maine, September 1, a female from Jonesport, September 2, and an immature bird from Stonnington, Hancock County, about the same time.

Capt. Herbert L. Spinney of Bath informs us that three were seen by Mr. Hubert McCarty of that city at the Horse-shoe, a shallow lagoon at the western end of Popham Beach on August 30. On September 1, eight were seen together at the same place and on September 5 three were seen there by Mr. McCarty. They were actively feeding in the shallow water, and were observed at close range, enabling him to render a satisfactory description of the birds.

It seems that this species has not been detected in Maine since 1881, when one was shot near Matinicus and sent to Bangor where it was identified by Mr. Harry Merrill.<sup>1</sup>

During the irruption which reached the Gulf of Maine in 1879, it has been shown that at least seven were shot about Grand Manan and Campobello New Brunswick, and that the birds were seen as far up Passamaquoddy Bay at St. Andrew's, N. B.<sup>2</sup>

It seems likely that it was to these New Brunswick examples that the late Mr. Everett Smith had reference in his statement, "a number were shot off our coast."<sup>1</sup> He adds this definite Maine record: "Mr. Ira Shalis of Wells shot one of two seen at a creek of Wells Bay, [= Wells Beach] August 28, 1879."

The status of a specimen rather questionably cited as probably seen off Saco Bay, August 31, 1879<sup>2</sup> will not be discussed at this time.—ARTHUR H. NORTON, *Museum of Natural History, Portland, Me.*

**Wilson's Petrel in Maryland.**—On June 21, 1924 I secured a male of *Oceanites oceanicus* one mile south of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland. The bird which, when first seen, rested on the shore, fluttered out across the water so feebly that I had no difficulty in seizing it in my hand. Its weakness was due apparently to lack of food as it had none of the fatty tissue beneath the skin usual in Petrels, though otherwise in good flesh.

The species though common at sea near the Virginia Capes has been found so seldom on Chesapeake Bay and the lower Potomac that the present bird seems to constitute the fourth inland record for the region in question. One was secured near Washington after a violent storm in

<sup>1</sup>1883: Smith, *Forest & Stream*, xx, 205.

<sup>2</sup>1879: Deane, *Bull. Nutt. Orn. Cl.* iv, 243.