

## GENERAL NOTES.

**Leach's Petrel on the Coast of Maine.**—After a voyage of about one hundred and eighty miles (measured in an air line), made by us in June and July 1931, when upwards of two hundred islands and ledges were examined for breeding sea birds, we commented on the condition of this species,<sup>1</sup> having in view the general result of our finding, compared with conditions observed a few years previously, and remarked that no reason for the present scarcity was apparent.

In presenting some new data of a local nature, on an old subject, namely "Cats and Petrels,"<sup>2</sup> a recent writer has taken occasion to single out one of us as the author for the statement, and to present as an explanation of the general scarcity, the local conditions cited in her communication.

Incidentally, a statement contained in this recent article, that cats were found to be digging the birds from their burrows, is so unusual and contrary to the experience of those who have written on the subject, that we are constrained to suspect a lapse of memory, or the use of misinformation, and suspect that the digging mentioned should have been attributed to dogs, leaving the cats to follow their usual method of seizing the low flying birds as they hovered over their nesting places, or struggled to rise after emerging from their burrows. At various times since 1905<sup>3</sup> a number of articles have appeared in periodicals, showing the deplorable reduction, and in one or more instances extermination of large colonies of these birds by domestic cats and dogs.

Serious as this form of destruction has been, it fortunately is a local matter. During the last fifty years Leach's Petrel has been known to breed on 26 islands on the coast of Maine between Machias Seal Island and Casco Bay, and nearly all of these places are still resorted to by this bird. Only eight of these islands have been tenanted by man, with his marauding pets.

It seemed to us that some widespread check, temporary or permanent, has been operative during the last few years, and no visible cause was found, for the general decrease. Besides man and his pets, minks and Duck Hawks are known to be important enemies of this petrel, and we have known colonies to be temporarily abandoned by the petrel before the onslaughts of these dreaded foes. We saw no Duck Hawks, and no indica-

<sup>1</sup> 1931, Norton & Allen, *Auk*, XLVIII, 592.

<sup>2</sup> 1932, Perkins, *Auk*, XLIX, 212.

<sup>3</sup> 1905, Dutcher, Norton Ms. *Bird-Lore*, VII, 91. 1906, Norton, *Journ. Maine Orn. Soc.* VIII, 73; relating to Wooden Ball. 1908, Moses, *Journ. Me. Orn. Soc.* X, 91; relating to Machias Seal Island. 1910, Pearson, *Smith Ms. Bird-Lore*, XII, 261; relating to Matinicus Islands. 1911, Smith, *Journ. Me. Orn. Soc.* XII, 60; relating to Wooden Ball. 1911, Pearson, *Bird-Lore*, XIII, 277; 1 fig.; relating to Machias Seal Island. 1911, Brown, *Bird-Lore*, XIII, 243-245; figs.; relating to Machias Seal Island. 1925, Norton, *Maine Natr.* V, 46-56; relating to Matinicus Islands.

tions of their work, in the breeding area of the Petrel last summer, and it is but seldom that minks reach the remote breeding places of the bird. At present, moreover, this valued fur bearer is at low ebb of abundance on the coast of Maine.

It seems possible that these birds, of slow development, may require several years to reach maturity, which may account for some of the temporary periods of scarcity with returns to comparative abundance, which have been observed on several occasions in the past.

With man now domiciled on five of the islands occupied by the bird, it seems to us that the only permanent hope for the future of this unusual and highly interesting bird is the ownership of several sizable breeding places of the species by the Audubon Society, with a special fund for the enforcement of regulations which will insure the places from encroachment and resulting destruction of the birds.

We may mention, as a beginning in this direction, the purchase of Little Duck Island in Hancock County by Mr. Benjamin W. Arnold, who has devoted it to the purpose of a bird sanctuary, over a decade ago; also the purchase of Western Egg Rock, in Lincoln County, for the same purpose, by the Cumberland County Audubon Society of Portland, Maine.—ARTHUR H. NORTON, *Museum of Nat. Hist., Portland, Maine*, and ROBERT P. ALLEN, *National Association of Audubon Societies, 1775 Broadway, New York, N. Y.*

**The Breeding of the Brown Booby in Porto Rican Territory.**—The known breeding colonies for the Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster leucogaster*) in Porto Rican waters have been the islands of Mona and Desecheo in Mona Passage to the west of Porto Rico, with report of another station on two small rocks north of Culebrita Island.<sup>1</sup> The last is based on hearsay evidence only and is somewhat uncertain.

It is of interest, therefore, to place on record information sent to me by Major Chapman Grant who recently has made numerous observations on natural history in this area. Under date of March 20, 1932 Major Grant forwards a snapshot of a Brown Booby with a well grown young taken March 11, 1932, on "El Blanquillo" an islet in the Cordilleras Reefs, a chain of islets and reefs extending along the extreme northeastern point of Porto Rico. The location is said to be between Icacos Cay and Diablo Cay. Eggs and three-fourths grown young were said to be present at this time. This gives definite evidence of the nesting of this booby in a locality where it had not been reported previously.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

**The European Cormorant in New Jersey.**—Referring to the status of *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo* on the New Jersey coast (Auk, Vol. XLIX, p. 77), the writer has, several times, seen winter birds about Barnegat Bay

<sup>1</sup> See Wetmore, *Birds of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands*. *Scient. Surv. Porto Rico and Virgin Islands*, Vol. 9, Pt. 3, 1927, p. 282.