

For a "land-lubber" to see all the Phalaropes in New Jersey is quite a rare privilege. To see all three within a week during the spring migration is a consummation too unlikely to seem possible.—CHARLES A. URNER, *Elizabeth, N. J.*

**Wilson's Phalarope in New Jersey.**—On August 28, 1932, at Brigantine Island, N. J., in a large flight of shore birds I found a single Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) running about on a mud flat busy feeding. It presented a comical sight with tail held up at an angle and neck stretched out in front while it held the body in more or less of a crouching position. The species is very unusual on the New Jersey coast.—JULIAN K. POTTER, *Collingswood, N. J.*

**Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) on the New Hampshire and Maine Coasts in July.**<sup>1</sup>—In his 'Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States,' Forbush says (p. 82) that this gull is "rarely seen in Massachusetts waters before September or early October when young birds appear among flocks of Herring Gulls."

While waiting on the pier in Portsmouth harbor on July 18, 1932, for our boat en route to Duck Island, several Ring-billed Gulls were noted at close range, and watched with binoculars, as they flew about and alighted on the water with *L. argentatus*, in dark plumage, hunting stray scraps of food.

At Hampton Beach on July 17 Mr. J. P. Melzer and I watched a Ring-billed Gull which was in perfect adult plumage, except for a broad deep black subterminal band equal to a quarter the length of the tail itself; probably a bird in its second year.

When, on the 18th, three such birds but with narrower tail bands, rose together with the thousands of *L. argentatus* and the few pairs of *L. marinus* as we neared Duck Island, it seemed convincing that the birds seen earlier were not merely accidentals.

Dean C. F. Jackson, of the Marine Zoological Laboratory on the nearby, Appledore Island, informed me he has seen such birds at Duck Island in other seasons and the bird may yet be found breeding.

Duck Island is the northernmost island in the Isles of Shoals group, and is, incidentally, wholly in Maine, the boundary cutting through the upper half of this group of islands.—LEWIS O. SHELLEY, *East Westmoreland, N. H.*

**Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia imperator*) in Camden County N. J.**—On August 20, 1932, John A. Gillespie and the writer were looking over a flock of shore birds on a bar in the Delaware river at Fish House, Camden County, N. J., when a large light-colored bird flew in and settled on the exposed mud. Mr. Gillespie who had his glasses on it recognized it as a Caspian Tern and the unusual size, heavy red bill and comparatively short tail, not reaching the folded wing tips, quickly dispelled any doubt as to the bird's identity. Presently it was joined by another of the same

<sup>1</sup> Published through the Jonathan Dwight Memorial Fund.

species, and after circling about they flew off up the river. Both birds were adults. To the best of the writer's knowledge, this is the only record of the bird in Camden County. Mr. John T. Emlen, Jr., however, recorded it on April 21, 1929, in Burlington County, N. J. (*Auk*, Vol. XLVI, Page 534).—JULIAN K. POTTER, *Collingswood, N. J.*

**Fishing Ability of the Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra nigra*).**—I have watched Black Skimmers many times "ploughing the main" (fishing?) without ever seeing them catch anything but on August 28, 1932, Henry H. Collins, 3rd, and I were watching one cutting the water in a shallow pool at Tuckerton, N. J., when suddenly it had a fish struggling between its mandibles at a point about one half way between the tip and base of bill. The bird wheeled over a dead sod bank on the edge of the pool and as it did so, the fish freed itself and dropped to the ground. Immediately the Skimmer lit and tried to secure the fish with a straight thrust. The sod did not yield and the bird seemed unable to grasp the fish, though in soft sand or mud the result would probably have been different. It then tried to get the struggling fish by turning its bill sidewise but this also failed and without further delay it flew out over the pool and started again to cut the water in its characteristic manner. Almost at once another fish was caught. This time the victim was forced far up near the base of the bill and the skimmer flew off holding it crosswise.

Mr. Stanley C. Arthur states that he has never seen the skimmer catch a fish while cutting the water with its bill. (*Auk*, XXXVII, p. 566) He also says that during the performance the bill is not held open. From my observations I believe the skimmer's bill is always partly open for the greater part of its length when actually fishing,—an open elongated notch wide at the tip of the bill narrowing to a point at the base. Naturally as the skimmer forces the bill through the water any object such as a fish that is hit by the protruding tip of the lower mandible is forced up into the notch-like opening and caught. This method of fishing appears to be the normal way for the bird to capture its prey and has been previously noticed by Dr. Witmer Stone (*Auk*, XXXVII, p. 595). That it is not witnessed more often is due largely to the fact, no doubt, that a single bird cannot be kept under observation for any great length of time. That it uses other methods of capturing fish is plainly pointed out by Mr. Arthur in the above mentioned article.

As to another possible use of the bird's peculiar bill—I have on several occasions seen skimmers on approaching shallow water to alight, apparently test the depth by the skimming and when the lower mandible struck bottom, they would come to rest. I have never seen an adult Skimmer swimming or floating on the water, but always standing in a position where its feet touch bottom.—JULIAN K. POTTER, *Collingswood, N. J.*

**Least Tern on the New Hampshire Coast in July.**—On July 3, 1932, while walking along Hampton Beach, N. H., I was surprised to note several Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) plunging into the water with the other