

## GENERAL NOTES.

**Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa leucorhoa*) Breeding in Massachusetts.**—For four years beginning with 1930 those who have visited Penikese Island at the mouth of Buzzard's Bay, Massachusetts, for the purpose of banding terns have heard strange nocturnal noises which until this year remained unidentified. The banders—Dr. Winsor M. Tyler, Mr. Laurence B. Fletcher, Mr. Charles B. Floyd, and others—made some effort to discover the source of the mysterious sounds, but their self-imposed duties prohibited a systematic investigation. F. H. Allen visited the island July 28–30, 1932, with Mr. Elliott B. Church. The banding had then been completed for that year, and their visit was for purposes of general observation. Shortly before starting Allen had for the first time learned of the noises, and Dr. Tyler's description had suggested Leach's Petrel to him, but when he heard them himself, they proved to be not so loud as he had expected from his imperfect recollection of Petrel notes heard some years before under adverse conditions on Matinicus Rock, Maine. This, together with the facts (1) that the noises appeared to come only from the ground, (2) that cottontail rabbits, raised there by the State Division of Fisheries and Game, swarmed all over the island and were seen at night in numbers about the shed used as a dormitory, (3) that the noises were heard to issue from a hole in the rocks at the foot of a retaining wall into which rabbits were seen to disappear on several occasions in the daytime, (4) that no burrows such as Petrels ordinarily nest in were found, and (5) that the known breeding-range of Leach's Petrel extended no farther south than Matinicus Rock, 175 miles to the north-northeast, made it seem more probable that the rabbits were the authors of these not very birdlike sounds—and this in spite of the fact that no vocal utterances could be found recorded for the cottontail rabbit except screams of pain and fear. In this hypothesis Dr. Tyler was inclined to agree, and after visiting Penikese again for the banding in July, 1933, he came back strengthened in the belief that the sounds were probably made by rabbits. We have gone at some length into these earlier, and, as it proved, erroneous conclusions in order to show how it was possible that so interesting a discovery as that of the breeding of Leach's Petrel in Massachusetts was so long delayed.

Townsend, when he heard the description of the notes given by Tyler and Allen in the autumn of 1932, became at once convinced that they were made by Leach's Petrel (see his note on the song, 'Auk,' XLI, 1924, pp. 148, 149), and we planned a visit to Penikese in 1933 for the express purpose of endeavoring to solve the problem. Accompanied by Allen's son, Robert H. Allen, of Cincinnati, we made the trip July 18–20, spending two nights on the island. The notes were heard from 2.00 till 3:45 A. M. (Eastern daylight-saving time) on the 19th and from 2:30 to nearly 4:00

A. M. on the 20th. Townsend recognized them as those of Leach's Petrel. Unfortunately the waning moon was too small to give any appreciable light, but on the first night both Francis and Robert Allen, on separate occasions, saw a single bird in the air. Though they saw no more than a flutter of wings, it was definitely determined that the notes came from the air, though from near the ground. On the second night Allen saw again a fluttering bird and heard a bird fly to the base of the retaining wall before mentioned, and then heard notes issue from a hole there while he stood in front with an electric torch directed into the orifice. These notes were of an entirely different character from the flight song and included a trill such as Townsend described in his note of 1924 (*loc. cit.*). Allen and his son sat down against the wall on either side of the hole, and presently a bird fluttered out between them and gave its song as it flew away.

Later, by daylight, we examined this hole and found the white of bird excrement on the stones inside. Though the arm could be thrust in for its full length, it was impossible to reach the nest, and as the retaining wall of large cut stone could not well be torn down, we were forced to wait till a suitable means of netting or trapping the bird could be found before getting a specimen or photograph to confirm the record. We feel, however, that our evidence of the breeding of Leach's Petrel at Penikese is conclusive as it stands.

An interesting fact in connection with these Penikese Leach's Petrels is that, so far as is yet known, they nest, not in burrows in the turf, as is customary with the species, but in crevices among the stones of a retaining wall. Bent in his 'Life Histories of North American Petrels, etc.' gives no account of any such nesting-site, the nearest approach to it being among tree roots on the edge of spruce woods on Seal Island, Nova Scotia.—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, *Ipswich, Mass.*, and FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *Boston, Mass.*

**Anhinga Nesting in Liberty Co., Ga.**—On June 3, while visiting a pond in Liberty Co., Ga., Mr. Audley F. King showed us an Anhinga's nest containing six eggs. The nest was large and not more than five feet above the surface of the pond. One of the parent birds resumed incubation on our departure.—MRS. V. H. BASSETT, *1010 E. Pack Ave., Savannah, Ga.*

**Spring Migration of the Great Blue Heron.**—Mr. A. C. Bent in his 'Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds' (Bul. 135, p. 112) writes of the Great Blue Heron: "Its fall migration is particularly well marked. Many individuals migrate singly, as solitary birds are often seen, but flocks of a dozen or 20 birds are not uncommon. I have several times seen such flocks in the fall, but none in the spring." He apparently had no spring migration records from other observers and from a brief perusal of ornithological literature, it appears that flocks in the spring are very rare if not unknown.

On April 9 between 10 a. m. and noon, while studying food habits of