

## GENERAL NOTES.

**The Red-throated Loon in Montana—A Correction.**—In both the third and fourth editions of the A.O.U. 'Check-List,' *Gavia stellata* is listed as "casual" in Montana. The record upon which the species has been admitted to a place in the list of the birds of that state is given in detail by Mr. Aretas A. Saunders in his 'Distributional List of the Birds of Montana' (Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 14, 1921) as follows: "One taken at Mud Lake, Flathead County, July 15, 1901 (Silloway, 1901a, p. 38). The specimen is in the collection of the University of Montana. Occurs on the Yellowstone, near Billings, in migrations and winter (Thomas, MS)."

Credit for detecting the error in identification of the Silloway specimen must be accorded Mr. Vernon L. Marsh, of Great Falls, Mont., who wrote the Biological Survey that he had examined the bird and that it was unquestionably an example of Holboell's Grebe (*Colymbus griseogen holboelli*). Mr. Marsh further stated that there was no specimen of *Gavia stellata* in the University collection, but that the Grebe carried a label marked "Red-throated Loon, *Urinator lumme*," this label being "very securely tied to the specimen and looks as though it had never been removed."

Further correspondence with Mr. Marsh resulted in the specimen being sent to the Biological Survey for examination. As stated by Mr. Marsh it is a perfectly typical example of *C. g. holboelli*. It is a female and is obviously the specimen collected and recorded by P. M. Silloway as *Urinator lumme* (Gunn.) in his paper on "Summer Birds of Flathead Lake," published in 1901<sup>1</sup> and again in his revised list published in 1903.<sup>2</sup>

In this second list, Mr. Silloway made the additional comment that "Specimens [had been] taken at . . . Rost Lake, 1901." No further details of this alleged occurrence are given.

The Thomas mentioned by Mr. Saunders as having noted the Red-throated Loon on the Yellowstone near Billings apparently is Gerald B. Thomas, of Billings, later of Long Beach, California. Mr. Thomas sent migration records to the Biological Survey during the period 1917-1920, but he did not furnish any of his older records. At least there is no record for this species for Montana in the files of the Survey save the oft-repeated misidentified Holboell's Grebe.

In the absence of specimen evidence the Red-throated Loon should be withdrawn from the list of Montana birds.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**Shearwaters and Ships.**—In the interesting paper "On the Habits and Distribution of Birds on the North Atlantic," by V. C. Wynne-Edwards (Proc. Boston Society of Natural History, 1935), I find the following statement in regard to the Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*): "As a rule they will not follow a liner. Very frequently one or two are to be seen among the Fulmars in the wake, but whereas the Fulmars make a business of it, these Hagdowns do not." From my own experience and that of others with whom I have talked I am led to believe that this does not tell the whole story. The Greater Shearwaters, as I have seen them, do not, to be sure, follow the ship to anything like the extent that the small Petrels and the Fulmars do, but they do accompany it for long periods of time, keeping more or less in front of it, though usually not very near, and crossing and recrossing the bows. Again, of the Manx Shearwater (*P. puffinus puffinus*) Mr. Wynne-Edwards says, "It takes no

<sup>1</sup> Bull. No. 3, Biological Series No. 1, University of Montana.

<sup>2</sup> Bull. No. 18, Biological Series No. 6, University of Montana.

notice of ships, either liners or fishing craft, except to fly away if they approach too close." And again my experience is very different from his, for those I saw in St. George's Channel in July, 1930, acted precisely like their larger relatives; they certainly appeared to take notice of our ship, for they kept along with it and crossed and recrossed our bows. In a short paper printed in the 'Bulletin of the Essex County Ornithological Club' for 1930 I noted this habit of the Shearwaters, as well as the corresponding, though different, behavior of the Storm Petrels and the Fulmar, and indulged in a little speculation on the origin of a habit that would seem to be of no particular practical use to the bird.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

**Some Observations of the European Teal.**—In 1923 when Mr. Ludlow Griscom's 'Birds of the New York City Region' was published the European Teal (*Nettion crecca*) was listed as an accidental visitant from the Old World. J. G. Bell had reported several specimens from Long Island in 1858 and earlier; and two others had been shot out of a flock of Green-winged Teal (*Nettion carolinense*) at Merrick in mid-December, 1900.

Within the last decade *Nettion crecca* has either shown a decided local increase or else field observers have suddenly become conscious of the possibility of this species and the ease with which the drake can be identified even at a long distance. At any rate, to-day the European Teal can be regarded as a rather regular bird around New York City and we can quite constantly depend on seeing one, two or even three drakes of this species in a few chosen localities on Long Island any day from mid-November to early April.

On March 7, 1936, I observed two drake European Teal in a flock of Green-wings on the Hempstead Reservoir of Long Island. There was a third bird resting on a mud flat which I at first took to be a European Teal because of the conspicuous white scapular stripe. When this individual took to the water, however, it was at once suggestive that he was a hybrid for not alone did he possess the distinct scapular stripe and other marks of *crecca* but also the white bar on either side of the breast characteristic of *carolinense*. This bird was still present on the following morning when Messrs. R. P. Allen, R. T. Peterson and the writer visited the reservoir and we decided that in all probability it was a hybrid of *Nettion carolinense* × *Nettion crecca*.

Such a cross should be fairly regular in a place where both species occur for it is not a very rare sight in early spring on Hempstead Reservoir to see drakes of both the European and Green-winged Teals performing before the same duck. So far as I can ascertain the courtship demonstration of both species is practically identical and the drake Green-winged Teals show the same tolerance to competition from a drake European Teal as they do to competition from a drake of their own species. The entire courtship performance is rather dignified and impressive: the competing drakes hold their bodies high, partly erect their head feathers and circle the demure duck every now and then opening their bills wide and uttering a mellow *peep peep* with each forward thrust of the head. The pursued duck seems well pleased with the attentions as long as each suitor keeps his distance, only jabbing in disapproval when a bold fellow tries to get too familiar.

Since most of the wintering and migrant waterfowl on the Atlantic seaboard come from a general northwesterly direction it is likely that the European Teal occurring on Long Island represent birds from the Aleutian Islands where Mr. A. C. Bent found this species to be breeding commonly way back in 1911. And yet there is a possibility that a small number of European Teal nest somewhere in the interior of our continent and that the species is more widely distributed in the States during the non-breeding seasons than the meager records would indicate. Observers