

On Sunday, May 10, Stanley Solar and I were observing a large colony of nesting Boat-tailed Grackles (*Cassidix mexicanus major*). We had already remarked the large number of empty nests, that the Sunday before, had contained small birds. We heard a young Grackle crying in distress, and on going toward the place from where the noise came, saw a Purple Gallinule standing on the edge of the nest holding with one foot a half-grown Grackle while it deliberately tore at its back with its beak. On our nearer approach, the Gallinule took the still living young Grackle in its beak and flew with it about 75 yards to the pond's bank, where we watched it tear it to pieces and eat it. It first tore a hole in the back of its victim, and pulling out the viscera in sections, swallowed the pieces as they came free. It then tore bits of tender flesh from the body, paying no attention to my approach in a boat to within about sixty feet of it.

On Monday, May 11, I was in "Bird City" with Mr. and Mrs. Orr, who were photographing the birds for the Fox Movietone Corporation. My attention was attracted to a Purple Gallinule by the flirting of its white tail. It was standing on a willow stump about forty yards from us, and I called attention to its pulling strongly at something held under its feet. We could see it was the body of a young Heron. After considerable pulling and pecking, a hole was evidently torn through to the viscera, which we saw this Gallinule draw out in sections and eat. I was at the point of going to investigate in a boat, when a second Gallinule flew at the one on the stump and endeavored to rob it of its prey. The feeding bird seized its victim in its mouth and flew with it to an unoccupied section of a nesting platform nearby where it continued its meal.

On Tuesday, May 12, I had my floating blind, from which I photograph the nesting individuals of "Bird City," moved to a position where we could get close-ups of nesting Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*). I had the men with me clip a few twigs that obstructed the view of two nests low down in a cypress, each containing four eggs. The blind was set in position to photograph a nest quite near, in which the young Anhingas were more than half-grown. The moving of the blind and the noise of getting the three cameras set up frightened the Anhingas from the nests, and they flew to the top of several partly dead cypress trees nearby. All of this preparation took perhaps ten minutes. When we were about ready to begin the picture-taking, I looked towards the two Anhinga nests in the cypress from in front of which I had had the screen of twigs cut, and saw a Purple Gallinule standing on one nest eating a young Anhinga it had torn from its egg. Fearing it would destroy the entire set of eggs, I went outside the blind, and by waving my arms, frightened it away.—E. A. McILHENNY, *Avery Island, La.*

A New Illinois Record for the American Avocet.—On the afternoon of October 28, 1935, three men were hunting from a blind on a Mississippi River sand bar two miles South of Quincy. Late in the afternoon, as they were watching the shore-birds playing on the beach, a flock of large white birds with black wings settled among the Killdeer. As they alighted, they held their wings above their heads for a moment, then settled and began feeding in the mud and sand, moving their heads and long up-curved bills back and forth in the water. One of the hunters whistled a Plover-like call. The entire flock of eleven birds took wing immediately and circled over the wooden decoys. One hunter shot into the flock and killed two of the birds which were brought to me for identification.

They proved to be a pair of American Avocets in typical fall plumage. The specimens weighed eleven ounces and were in fine physical condition. Good skins

were made from them and they will be placed in some one of the museums for which I occasionally collect.

Insofar as I can find, there is no recent record of the killing of an American Avocet in this section of Illinois. According to Bent in his 'Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl' there was a sight record of two birds on May 5, 1889, at Chicago. Two were killed in St. Clair County, directly across from St. Louis, Missouri, on October 28, 1878, and one was killed in St. Louis, Missouri, on the same date. Probably all were members of the same flock. It is a coincidence, perhaps, that the three records along the Mississippi were all made on October 28, although there was a variance of fifty-eight years in the occurrence.—T. E. MUSSELMAN, *Quincy, Illinois*.

The Stilt Sandpiper Again on the Lower Savannah River.—A specimen of the Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalma himantopus*), was taken October 20, 1935, and duly recorded (*Auk*, Jan., 1936, 81).

This spring in the same general area, others of this species have been seen at various times. This low land which fills with rain water is a part of the original river bed, but now for many years it has been shut off by jetties, and later by fills. It is about seven miles east of Savannah, and is, technically at least, in South Carolina.

One bird of two was shot March 22, 1936. Another out of a group of four was collected March 29, and a few minutes later I counted eighteen together, under excellent conditions for observation. On April 5, I forgot my binoculars, but think one was present. Then I saw one several times on April 12, once with a Dowitcher, a Pectoral Sandpiper and two Lesser Yellow-legs, it was in the field of my binoculars at a very satisfactory distance. The rain water was nearly dried up on April 19, and the small flock of Lesser Yellow-legs very nervous, one Stilt Sandpiper flew by with them.

Several flocks of Lesser Yellow-legs close to the river entrance were closely observed, and I have watched the fairly numerous Yellow-legs near the dredge, about four miles inland, but have seen no Stilt Sandpipers except in the one rainwater pool.

Considering that this species is a regular spring migrant on the east coast of Florida, and rare elsewhere on the Atlantic coast, one suspects an overland migration route from here to the Mississippi valley, as with the Ring-necked Duck (*Nyroca collaris*).—IVAN R. TOMKINS, *U. S. Dredge "Morgan," Savannah, Ga.*

European Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola rusticola*) in Ohio.—During the autumn of 1935 I became interested in the story of a Cleveland sportsman, Mr. G. F. Dixon, concerning a "large" Woodcock which he had recently shot. Upon questioning him it was learned that this Woodcock, before it was dressed weighed ten ounces, as against five to seven ounces which Mr. Dixon had found to be the range of weight in a considerable number of other Woodcocks taken by him over a period of years. Upon further questioning it developed that Mr. Dixon was still in possession of the body of this large Woodcock which had been dressed and prepared for cooking. The writer was permitted to examine the carcass and was greatly impressed by the large size and the pale color of the flesh when compared with similarly dressed bodies of other Woodcocks. Mr. Dixon gladly consented to save the skeleton of this large Woodcock and to present it to The Cleveland Museum of Natural History. This skeleton was unfortunately incomplete, the head, wings, and feet having been removed and destroyed. However, enough bones were preserved to show a considerable difference in size from a normal American Woodcock skeleton, and my suspicions were strengthened that the specimen represented the European species. Shortly afterwards these suspicions were substantiated by Dr. Harry C. Oberholser who identified the skeleton as that of *Scolopax rusticola*. This species has been taken occasionally