

The nesting date reported may seem early for the latitude concerned, since it was "long before the break-up which comes in May," but it is not improbable. It is possible that the birds were observed in association with a nest of the previous year. Tree-nesting is not in any sense unlikely, especially in an area where ledges are non-existent.—L. L. SNYDER, *Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, Toronto, Canada.*

A bud-eating Ring-necked Pheasant.—The inability of the Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus torquatus*) to adapt itself to a winter diet of buds is thought to be one of the factors controlling its present distribution. Because of this, the following analysis of the crop contents of a male Ring-necked Pheasant may be of interest.

On February 3, 1939, at about 11 a. m., a cock pheasant was seen scratching in the snowplow-cleared strip at the edge of a country road about three miles north of Ithaca, New York. With it were ten to fifteen Crows and a number of Tree Sparrows and Starlings. Except where cleared by man, the snow was about fifteen inches deep and covered by a light crust. One-half hour later a pheasant, presumably the same one, was found dead along the road, having been struck by a car.

The crop contents, with approximate percentages by volume, were as follows: large flower buds of elm (*Ulmus americana*), 50%; leaf buds of elm, 10%; Geum seeds (*Geum arvense*), 7%; ragweed seeds (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), 6%; milkweed seeds (*Asclepias* sp.), 3%; burdock seeds (*Arcticum* sp.), 3%; Prunus pits (*Prunus* sp.), 4%; green leaf fragments, 5%; grass stems (*Gramineae*), 5%; apple fragments (*Malus* sp.), 3%; Bidens seeds (*Bidens* sp.), trace; buckwheat seed (*Fagopyrum esculentum*), trace; 1 small spider (*Arachnida*), trace; gravel, trace; unknown seeds of four species, 2%.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to H. B. Banks of the Department of Botany, Cornell University, for identification of the elm buds.—A. HEATON UNDERHILL, *Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*

Purple Gallinule and King Rail at Lexington, Virginia.—A living Purple Gallinule (*Ionornis martinica*) was brought to me on May 16, 1940, by Mr. Clarence W. Morrison, who had just secured the bird at his home on South Buffalo Creek, ten miles southwest of Lexington, in Rockbridge County, Virginia. He had considerable difficulty in capturing the bird. It flew several times into a small tree near the stream, but made no effort to fly very far and always came back to its feeding in the creek. As far as I have been able to learn from published records this bird has not occurred in Virginia for nearly fifty years, the latest report being for Cobb's Island, May 1891, as recorded in Bent's volume on marsh birds. The present record seems to be the only one for the mountain region of western Virginia. It seemed advisable, therefore, to make the bird into a skin. Unfortunately the friend who prepared it for me neglected to sex it. The bird was in very bright plumage but in exceedingly poor flesh.

Curiously enough the first King Rail (*Rallus elegans elegans*) which I have seen in this county was brought in on the previous day from the same neighborhood and also alive. It was later released.—J. J. MURRAY, *Lexington, Virginia.*

Eskimo Curlew record corrected.—The writer has recently purchased from the Will E. Snyder collection (Beaver Dam, Wisconsin) his mounted specimen carrying tag number 7660 which was reported in various publications as an Eskimo

Curlew (*Phaeopus borealis*). This specimen record was questioned at a recent meeting of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology and a subsequent inspection has determined that the bird is unquestionably a Hudsonian Curlew (*Phaeopus hudsonicus*) according to Cory's diagrams of markings on the outer primary wing-feathers. These primaries are not unmarked as required but carry a definite barring on the inner webs. Only lack of knowledge on this point could explain this error, for the specimen was undoubtedly identified on the basis of measurements, and especially the short culmen which is only 2.50 inches as previously cited by Snyder. The specimen's wing is 9 inches, but the tarsus is more closely 2.40 inches rather than 2.62 inches as he previously reported. This longer tarsus measurement should have caused the specimen to be questioned, as the Eskimo Curlew according to Forbush has a tarsus under 1.95 inches.

Mr. Snyder's official announcement of this specimen, reported as taken at Fox Lake, Wisconsin, on September 10, 1912, was made in 'The Auk' (30: 269-270, 1913). Of interest is the fact that Witmer Stone on the same page called attention to the fact that the Hudsonian Curlew could have a bill as short as 2.25 inches as was the case in one he examined which was taken at Northeast Harbor, Maine, on September 5, 1912.

The record here corrected is also cited by Bent in his 'Life Histories of North American Shore Birds' (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 146, pp. 125, 136). Of interest is the fact that it was reported as one of six fall Eskimo Curlew records for the interior of the United States. Possibly all of these fall interior specimens should be re-checked where that has not been done as it is possible these other birds, all taken before 1890, may have been identified incorrectly on the basis of bill measurement. The fact that some fall Hudsonian Curlews may have such a small bill measurement leads to the conjecture that they may be juvenile birds rather than adults as this Wisconsin specimen was listed by Snyder.

As far as is known today, Wisconsin's last Eskimo Curlew record is now that reported by Oscar P. Allert in 'The Auk' (45: 95, 1928) as collected by Delos Hatch on March 23, 1903, on the Horicon Marsh near Leroy, Wisconsin. The identification was substantiated by Dr. H. C. Oberholser and it is now in the University of Minnesota Museum of Natural History according to Dr. T. S. Roberts.

Some other sources quoting this record corrected here are as follows: Myron H. Swenk, 'The Eskimo Curlew and its Disappearance,' in the Smithsonian Report for 1915 (1916) on pages 333 and 339, and Robert Ridgway's part 8 of 'Birds of North and Middle America' (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 50, p. 415).—W. E. SCOTT, *Wisconsin Conservation Department, Madison, Wisconsin*.

Northern Skua in Massachusetts.—There have been records previously of Skuas taken or seen over New England waters, generally far offshore. On February 4 of this year, however, a Northern Skua (*Catharacta skua*) was found by Miss Lois Randall on the mainland, at Swampscott, Massachusetts. This bird, an immature female, was about fifty yards from the ocean beach, frozen to death, and in an extremely emaciated condition. There had been much cold weather in the preceding weeks.

The interest of the record is enhanced by the fact that the bird bore a British leg-band, no. 401218. Word has been received from Elsie P. Leach, Honourable Secretary of the Bird-ringing Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology, that it was "ringed as a nestling at Hermaness, Shetland Islands, on 3rd July, 1939" and that another banded the same day was found subsequently on the coast of