

these men were satisfied with the identification.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Massachusetts.*

**Winter food of Snow and Blue Geese in Delaware.**—The commonest winter food of the Snow Goose on the marshes of the Bombay Hook Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, in central Delaware, consists of the roots and culms of *Spartina alterniflora*, commonly known as salt-marsh cordgrass. While studying a flock of 3,700 Snow and 18 Blue Geese (*Chen hyperborea atlantica* and *C. caerulescens*) on the refuge, December 11, 1939, at a distance of 300 feet, I noticed them feeding to a considerable extent on several other grasses in the vicinity. Investigation revealed that both *Spartina patens* (salt-meadow cordgrass, or bent hay) and *Distichlis spicata* (saltgrass) had been used consistently for food; not only were fragments of the roots strewn around on the surface, but holes in the mud leading down to the roots were frequent, and in some cases the holes were ringed with the tell-tale evidence of white feathers from the necks of the Snow Geese.

This particular flock was later observed for several hours at midday at a distance of about 100 yards. Most of the birds were resting and some few were feeding. There were always a few birds in the air, but since it was a cold, windy day, the majority of the birds were relatively immobile.

Dr. Clarence Cottam in a summary of the known observations of the Blue Goose in the Atlantic Coast States (Auk, 52: 436, 1935) gives but one record for the State of Delaware, and that was based on a single bird shot by a gunner. Therefore, these additional data should be of interest.—L. W. SAYLOR, *Patuxent Research Refuge, Bowie, Maryland.*

**Breeding grounds of Ross's Goose at last discovered.**—With the discovery of the Snow and 18 Blue Geese (*Chen hyperborea atlantica* and *C. caerulescens*) on the breeding grounds of Ross's Goose (*Chen rossi*), one of the last of the major mysteries of our more northern birds has been solved. By a process of elimination the country north of the Thelon River and east of Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories of Canada seemed the last remaining probability for the nesting area of this species. The interest of various officers of the Hudson's Bay Company was aroused in the subject and under the authority of Mr. R. H. G. Bonnycastle of the Fur-trade Department of that company, Messrs. Angus Gavin of the Perry River, and E. Donovan of the King William, Posts undertook an investigation of the area. Ascending the Perry River some thirty miles from its mouth July 1 of the past summer (1940) some tundra lakes were reached. On rocky islets in some of these lakes considerable concentrations of Ross's Geese and a few Blue Geese (*Chen caerulescens*) were found breeding. Photographs of incubating birds, nests and eggs, and skins and eggs of the former were secured. These have been received by the National Museum of Canada and fully identified. The Perry River empties into the Arctic Ocean at the bottom of the Queen Maude Gulf about longitude 102° west. The terrain occupied is a low-lying ancient sea bed with little relief and many lakes of various shapes and sizes studded with rocky islets. A full account is under publication in 'The Beaver,' the house organ of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in the 'Canadian Field-naturalist' for December 1940.—P. A. TAVERNER, *National Museum of Canada, Ottawa.*

**Mallard Duck returns to destroyed nest.**—Late on the afternoon of May 19, 1939, we were driving along a country road three miles east of Mooresville, Limestone County, Alabama, and chanced to see a severe grass fire, which had been

started by farmers to burn over a 50-acre broom-sedge field adjoining Wheeler Lake. The following day we returned to the area to see whether wildlife had suffered from the fire.

In addition to a destroyed rabbit's nest, which contained the charred remains of several young, and a number of unidentified nests of ground-nesting birds, we found approximately 100 feet from the edge of the water, a nest containing nine eggs of the Mallard Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Although the eggs had been carefully covered with down before the bird left the nest, either to feed or to avoid the advancing flames, the entire clutch was destroyed. We noted the burned condition of the eggs as well as the deep layer of ash that covered the ground. Of still greater significance, however, were the tracks of the duck leading to the nest. Apparently the bird had returned to the nest despite the fact that all landmarks had been destroyed by the fire, inspected it, and abandoned further incubation of the eggs. Another set of tracks leaving the nest at an angle of about 45 degrees from those leading to it indicated that the bird had walked away some distance before taking wing. It is interesting to note that when leaving the nest she walked away from the water, rather than toward it. The tragic story of her last visit to the nest was clearly recorded in the soft, deep ashes covering the soil.—ROBERT H. SMITH and ALBERT H. TROWBRIDGE, *Wildlife and Fish Service, Washington, D. C.*

**Daily movements of young Black Duck.**—While in residence at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, at Rensselaerville, Albany County, New York, during the summer of 1939, a brood of Black Duck (*Anas rubripes tristis*) was under daily surveillance. The observations were made at Lincoln Pond, a small body of water approximately nine acres in area located at an altitude of 1650 feet in the Helderberg Mountains. The pond was bordered partly by a growth of shrubs (mostly *Alnus incana*). There was a considerable stand of large hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) at the north end. A shallow shelf of ooze bottom extended around three-fourths of the pond and supported a copious growth of emergent grasses and sedges which served as excellent shelter for ducks.

A brood of eleven young led by a female was first seen at dusk on June 27 moving from the north end of the pond to the grassy border on the west side 250 yards away. The ducklings were approximately four to five inches long at this time. Observations on succeeding days revealed that the female and young made this evening journey regularly for a period of six weeks. Throughout the day the young remained among the sheltering grasses at the north end of the pond having moved to this locality during the early morning hours. At night, at least from dusk until 2 a. m., they could always be found in a rather small area extending over fifty feet of shore line. They usually stayed close to shore under the alders. When disturbed they would ordinarily take to shore apparently guided and kept together by the female's call notes. Occasionally they would hurry away through the grass to the open water. They came to this spot as late in the season as August 16 when the young were capable of short flights although now only five ducklings were left. Two young were found dead at the night station but the cause of death was not apparent from a casual examination. Among the predators, rats, pickerel and bullfrogs were especially active at night and may have accounted for some of the other young. Up until August 31, the last day of my stay at the Preserve, this group of five young was often seen changing position in the evening after feeding at the north end of the pond during the