

Stone ('Bird Studies at Old Cape May,' 2: 523, 1937) states that there are no records of the Long-tailed Jaeger for New Jersey proper although Dr. Frank M. Chapman saw one 80 miles off Barnegat light, May 6, 1894. Therefore, it would seem that this constitutes the first recorded occurrence for the State. Had it not been for the passage offshore a few days previously of a tropical disturbance of hurricane proportions, it is unlikely that this bird would have been seen so near to shore. Indeed, it was so rough at sea on the day this bird was seen that it was not wise to venture very far offshore in search for pelagic birds and it is probable that most of them were near shore at any rate.

Among those who observed the bird were M. Albert Linton, Edward S. Frey, George W. Pyle, W. Roger Whitworth, Herbert S. Cutler, and the writer. The Long-tailed and the Parasitic Jaegers were observed independently from the shore on the same day by Joseph M. Cadbury.—ALBERT E. CONWAY, *West Chester, Pennsylvania*.

**Least Tern watering eggs: Gideon Mabbett's query.**—Dr. T. S. Palmer's obituary of Gideon Mabbett (Auk, 58: 613, 1941) mentions Mabbett's query (Auk, 410-411, 1890), about drops of water on the eggs of the Least Tern (*Sterna a. antillarum*). Some years prior to reading this query, about 1934, I too had been puzzled by the same thing. On several occasions drops of water had been found on tern eggs in the middle of a very hot day. It seemed the water must have been put on the eggs shortly before I arrived.

Mr. G. Robert Lunz, Jr., gave a clue to the solution of the problem a year or so later, by telling of watching a Least Tern come in to the nest, stand over the eggs, and shake water from her plumage, some of which naturally fell on the eggs. Since then, it has been noticed in the tern colonies on hot days, that there is a steady movement of terns out to the river where they dip the feet and lower belly in the water a time or so, then fly back toward the colony. During the very hot hours, the terns do not cover the eggs closely, but merely shade them from the hot sun. Probably this allows some little cooling from the breeze.

The origin of the practice may be merely the wish of the bird to cool herself. The function, as regards the eggs, may be to cool them, and perhaps to restore through absorption, some of the moisture lost by evaporation. The Black Skimmers, American Oystercatchers, Florida Nighthawks and Wilson's Plovers, using a similar nesting ground, all have eggs with much thicker shells, and may consequently have less evaporation. Abandoned eggs often dry up rather than decompose.—IVAN R. TOMPKINS, 513 *East Duffy St., Savannah, Georgia*.

**Notes on the Devil Owl.**—There are three American species of the genus *Asio*, the Short-eared Owl, the Long-eared Owl and the Devil Owl (*Asio stygius signatus*). The last-mentioned is rare and little known, although it ranges from Mexico and the Greater Antilles south to northern Argentina. In Barbour's 'Birds of Cuba' (Mem. Nuttall Ornith. Club, no. 6, 1923) this owl is said to resemble in the field "an earless . . . Short-eared Owl," but those I have seen looked like a Long-eared Owl, the prominent ear-tufts rising straight from near the middle of the head. The bird presents quite a different appearance from illustrations in recently published works, which were drawn from skins by artists unfamiliar with the bird in life. I have taken the species on Gonave Island, Haiti (*A. s. noctipetens*) and on the Isle of Pines, and have seen living specimens of both adult and young in captivity.

The following is a description of a bird in juvenal plumage, taken alive in Cuba during the first week in January, 1941:—Top of head dusky, the feathers edged with whitish; facial disc sooty, freckled with white above and with a distinct crescent-shaped mark behind eye; ear-tufts small but apparent directly above the eyes; rest of upper parts dusky brown, regularly barred with whitish or buffy white, the wings blackish with ochraceous and buffy white spots and bars; under parts buffy white, regularly barred with light dusky; tail barred dusky and buffy white; iris yellow; bill horn-blue, the tip whitish; feet ash-gray.

Credit for the discovery of the first nest of the Devil Owl must go to my friend Gastón Villalba, of Havana, who after repeated inquiries was shown a nest on or about December 1, 1940, near Laguna la Deseada south of San Cristobal, Pinar del Rio. The two eggs were laid on the ground in the middle of a small clump of 'palmas canas.' The 'nest' was composed merely of a few shreds of palmleaf. Unfortunately the eggs were subsequently destroyed, probably by pigs from a nearby farm. I had previously been informed by some 'guajiros' both in Cuba and in the Isle of Pines that these owls nest on the ground, but did not believe them, and at the time suspected that the 'Carabo' (*Asio flammeus*) nested in Cuba.

Nests are now known of all but four Cuban species (*Chondrohierax wilsonii*, *Cyanolimnas cerverai*, *Ferminia cerverai* and *Dendroica pityophila*), although numerous others have not as yet been found breeding within the confines of the Republic.—JAMES BOND, *Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

**Saw-whet Owl in Centre County, Pennsylvania.**—On December 11, 1941, an adult female Saw-whet Owl, *Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*, was found wounded, by Mr. T. R. Legler near Snowshoe, Centre County, Pennsylvania. According to 'The Birds of Western Pennsylvania' by W. E. Clyde Todd, this is the first record for Centre County, although the species has been taken in adjacent counties. This specimen was in excellent physical condition and has been placed in the ornithology collection of The Pennsylvania State College.—MERRILL WOOD, *The Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania.*

**Autumnal display of northern Downy Woodpecker.**—While traversing the Spellacy Valley in Holmes County, Ohio, on October 20, 1940, my attentions were diverted to the activities of a male and female Northern Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens medianus*). Stationed on a limb, head to head, they appeared to be engaged in courtship activities. The male was displaying before the female and in doing so he kept his head raised at a considerable angle to the long axis of his body. All the while he would flip his wings sharply, while he kept his tail fanned out. At times there was a slight weaving motion of the head, but it was not a conspicuous part of the display. The female, in the meantime, received the affections of the male in a somewhat passive manner, although she occasionally flipped her wings. No sound was made by either bird, and they would remain on the same branch for perhaps a minute, then they would fly to another tree, and there repeat the performance. The female always made the first move to another perch.

On referring to Bent's 'Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers' (1939), I find that he alludes to similar activities of two Downy Woodpeckers, but in this case both birds were females. What can be the significance of such behavior?—EDWARD MACARTHUR, *Cleveland, Ohio.*