

## GENERAL NOTES

**Black-throated Gray Warbler on the coast of South Carolina.**—Being fully cognizant of the controversial aspect attaching to sight records of accidental species, the writer feels, nevertheless, that in cases where the identity is so self-evident as to allow of no confusion whatever, it is advisable to place the observation on record. He therefore offers the following.

On December 13th, 1941, while conducting Trip 12 of the Charleston Audubon Tours on Bull's Island, S. C., (part of the Cape Romain Federal Refuge) a warbler was seen in some very small pines, which attracted attention instantly because of its very unusual appearance. It was watched with and without nine-power binoculars at ranges varying from about twelve feet to elevations of about twenty-five feet as it flew into nearby live oak trees. The upper parts of the bird were distinctly bluish gray (this was the arresting character) and the crown was quite black as were the throat and the cheeks, these areas being separated by white stripes. The under parts were white with the sides streaked with black, and the wings showed two white bars.

It was difficult to believe that the writer was standing on a barrier island of the Carolina Low Country, for the last time he had seen such a bird had been on the Pacific coast where it belongs! There was no doubt in his mind the moment it was seen clearly, that the bird was *Dendroica nigrescens*. It was inevitable that he would think of his late friend Arthur T. Wayne, who lived only a few miles away from Bull's Island all his life, and recall that he had taken such species as the Green-tailed Towhee (*Oberholseria chlorura*) and Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spraguei*) in his front yard! Naturally, there was no collecting of this warbler for obvious reasons!

On reaching home the writer went through his ornithological library and all plates of *nigrescens* he could find. Everything only clinched the conviction more firmly than ever. Fuertes's plate of the species in the National Geographic Society's 'Book of Birds,' v. 2: p. 191, might have been done from the Bull's Island individual!

Those accompanying the writer when this epochal find was made were as follows: Mesdames Alfred and Maitland Edey, New York City and Brookville, N. Y., Mrs. W. A. Flagg, Westbury, Long Isl., N. Y., and Mr. Donald Maxwell of Westfield, N. J. The bird was new to all of them but its unusual appearance was apparent at once. It is the first instance of the occurrence of this far western species in South Carolina and probably in the south-east. The A.O.U. 'Check-List' of 1931 lists it as accidental in Massachusetts.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *The Crescent, Charleston, South Carolina.*

**Distribution of Carolina Wren.**—In a recent number of 'The Auk' (57: 95-104, 1940) Mr. George H. Lowery, Jr., gives exhaustive taxonomic treatment of the Carolina Wren, *Thryothorus ludovicianus*. His text-figure 1,—'Provisional map showing distribution of races of *Thryothorus ludovicianus* (Latham)'— shows a considerable hiatus between territories occupied by *T. l. ludovicianus* to the south and *T. l. carolinianus* northward. This hiatus, as shown on the map, extends from southern coastal Virginia, across southern West Virginia, central Kentucky, extreme southern Illinois, southern Missouri, central Arkansas, and into southeastern Oklahoma and central Texas.

With the eastern and western extreme of this region I am not prepared to deal, but there is certainly no such discontinuity in distribution of the Carolina Wren as is shown through central-western Virginia, southern West Virginia, and central

Kentucky. Observations in Bath, Alleghany, Craig, and Giles Counties, Virginia; throughout southern West Virginia, and in central Kentucky,—regions left unoccupied on the map,—have shown the presence of the birds, often in abundance.

I imagine that Mr. Lowery's difficulty has arisen from the scarcity of specimens in any collections from this region. Much of the territory has been (in some cases still is) *terra incognita*, ornithologically speaking. I do not have a sufficient series of specimens from the region to make subspecific determination possible; that must await more extensive collecting. That Carolina Wrens do occur throughout this part of the region, however, there can be no doubt.—MAURICE BROOKS, *Division of Forestry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia.*

**White-tailed Kite in Florida.**—During the Christmas holidays while making a two weeks' tour of Florida with David L. Emerson of Providence, Rhode Island, we spent December 27 birding around the northwest shore of Lake Okechobee. While making the final check of the day along a region where the everglades come nearest to route no. 29, some twenty-five to thirty miles west of Okechobee City, we observed a White-tailed Kite, *Elanus leucurus majusculus*. At the time, it was nearly 4.30 o'clock and the sun was directly at our backs. At first glance the bird looked like a small, pale, male Marsh Hawk as it sat on the branch of a large, dead tree no more than twenty-five yards from the road along which we were driving. Yet when we focussed our telescopes on it, we could clearly see the finer, kite-like bill, a darker region like a line from the bill to the eye, dark shoulder-patches flecked slightly with white, pastel-gray breast with the faintest of streakings, pale-pearly wings, and a slightly lighter, unmarked tail that appeared notched when folded. When the bird finally flew, after a period of more than ten minutes, although it unfortunately went straight away, the nervous, falcon-like flight was noticed by us all.

Shortly afterward, upon consulting Howell's 'Florida Bird Life,' kindly loaned to us by Mr. M. L. Stimson, Secretary of the Florida Audubon Society, we found that the plate therein agreed in all important features with a field sketch of the bird made on the spot. We decided that the bird must be an immature individual, very nearly in adult plumage. Howell regarded the species as on the verge of extinction in Florida, giving the last previous record as 1925.—WILLIAM H. DRURY, JR., and HENRY M. PARKER, *Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

**Long incubation by a Carolina Chickadee.**—During the spring of 1941 an interesting case of a prolongation of the incubation behavior beyond the normal time limits occurred on the Horticultural Farm of the University of Georgia. On April 8 a female Carolina Chickadee (*Penthestes carolinensis*) was observed carrying nesting material into a cavity in a fence post. The male was present and sometimes accompanied her to the nest but he did not carry any material. The first egg was laid on April 12 and the set of six completed on April 17; the eggs were covered during the day and the female slept in the cavity at night. The pair was observed together throughout the egg-laying period. Apparently, normal incubation by the female followed with the male accompanying and feeding her during the inattentive periods, but the eggs failed to hatch. On May 11, twenty-four days after the laying of the last egg and nearly twice the length of the average twelve- to thirteen-day normal incubation period, the female was still incubating faithfully. On May 13 the nest was found to be abandoned. The cavity was partly torn open although the eggs were undisturbed, so that it was not clear whether the female had abandoned of her own accord or had possibly been attacked by a predator.