

bon, was William MacGillivray, spelled with a capital G as here printed. Since the name was given in this form in the Twenty-third Supplement to the A. O. U. Checklist in the Auk for July, 1948, page 442, several friends have written me asking about this change in spelling so that it has seemed desirable to publish this note. Those who wish to look further into the matter may consult the interesting 'Life of William MacGillivray' by his namesake William MacGillivray, published in London in 1910. A plate facing page 68 in this work reproduces a hand-written letter from "W. MacGillivray" to Audubon introducing Mr. Bell, under date of 19th June 1834. This signature, in the writer's own hand, is clear, so that there is no uncertainty as to the method of spelling of the name.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington 25, D. C.*

An English Sparrow Roost.—While in a hospital at Marshalltown, Iowa, October 7 to 27, 1948, I had opportunity to make observations on a roost of English Sparrows, *Passer domesticus*, in Boston ivy on the walls. No matter how bright the day, the birds began to assemble in the vines at about 4:00 p. m. and by 4:10 every day their varied chatter attracted attention. The first thought that struck me was that the struggle for existence, at least as regards the search for food, could not be very severe or the birds would not give up an hour or more of potential feeding time for the sake of the social, and presumably not so vital, attractions of the roost.

While roosts of crows, swallows, starlings, and blackbirds are formed by birds already in flocks, this assemblage was of a different type. By twos or threes, but more often as singles, the sparrows came and joined in the apparently conversational chorus, meanwhile shifting about for desirable situations. The hubbub continued until dusk, at about 5:30 on clear, or earlier on cloudy, days. In the morning the chattering came quite regularly at 6:10 a. m., and all of the birds dispersed in about half an hour. A point of interest was that, through these three weeks, absolute time, not relative degree of daylight, seemed to rule, as the beginning of both assembling and dispersing was within a 10-minute range, regardless of whether the weather was cloudy or clear. The intensity of light at the "roost-breaking" was only a fraction of that prevailing during the "roost-formation"; hence it could not have been the decisive factor in stimulating both of these activities.

There was no mass movement either to or from the roost, so this gathering did not seem to be a flock phenomenon but rather a result of coincidence in the movements of numerous individuals seeking to satisfy similar wants.—W. L. McATEE, *Chicago, Illinois.*

Three Unusual Records from Louisiana and Mississippi.—On December 28, 1948, while driving on a country road about three miles east of Slaughter, East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, I stopped my car and used the familiar "squeak" to bring up any birds in the vicinity. About three minutes after stopping, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *Pheucticus ludovicianus*, alighted on a blackberry briar about 15 feet away. I collected it; it proved to be a female. I am unable to find any reference to a previous winter record of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, except a sight record reported by George H. Lowery, Jr. (Aud. Field Notes, 48th Christmas Bird Count, 1948: 100). This would, therefore, appear to be the first confirmed winter record of this species in the United States.

Howell in 'Birds of Alabama' (Alabama Dept. Game and Fisheries, 1928: 218) with reference to the Boat-tailed Grackle, *Cassidix mexicanus major*, says: "The boat-tailed grackle is a fairly common resident on the coast, but so far as known does not range into the interior." Oberholser, as well, in 'Bird Life of Louisiana' (Louisiana

Dept. Cons. Bull. 28: 599, 1938) states: "The Boat-tailed Grackle is an abundant permanent resident of the Gulf Coast region of southern Louisiana . . .", and he reports no record of it except in close proximity to salt water. On January 7, 1949, about two miles north of Anchor, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, while in company with Robert J. Newman, the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, I shot a male Boat-tailed Grackle. The point at which this bird was taken is approximately 70 miles from the coastal marshes and it is the first time, as far as available records indicate, that this species has been reported at such a distance from that area.

While I was a resident of Vicksburg, Mississippi, from November, 1940, until April, 1948, I was never able to encounter the Ground Dove. Since I was afield on the average of once each week during that period, I came to the conclusion the bird was exceedingly rare in that area. On January 9, 1949, a male Eastern Ground Dove, *Columbigallina p. passerina*, was brought to me from my Vicksburg friend, Thomas Murphy, who had shot the bird that day on State Highway No. 3, at a point 22 miles northeast of Vicksburg, Warren County, Mississippi. Burleigh in 'The Bird Life of the Gulf Coast of Mississippi' (Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool., La. State Univ., No. 20: 386, 1944) states: "The presence of the Ground Dove as a transient in southern Mississippi was totally unexpected. So far as I am aware there are no actual breeding records for the State. Therefore the birds that appeared each fall in southern Mississippi must have come from the east, rather than from the north. Howell (1924) gives the status of this species in Alabama as 'a local and rather uncommon resident in the southern third of the State.' From personal experience I am of the opinion that this statement applies also to Georgia. Therefore, it is difficult to understand why a species considered resident within its range should appear with such regularity each fall on the Mississippi coast, and why there should be this tendency to migrate west rather than south into Florida. The fact remains, however, that each year the Ground Dove appears in October, and is seen at frequent intervals on the mainland and on the islands until the latter part of December. It apparently does not remain throughout the winter for I have no records for either January or February." In view of the foregoing, the Vicksburg record is interesting.

In each of the above three instances skins were made and the specimens turned over to the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, at Baton Rouge.—MERRIAM L. MILES, 2350 Daytona Beach, Florida.

Date of John Abbot's Bird Plates in the De Renne Collection.—In 'The Auk' (35: 271-286, Pl. IV, 1918), Samuel N. Rhoads reported on a collection of Abbot's bird paintings in the De Renne Georgia Library near Savannah. From characteristics of the paper on which the pictures were drawn, Rhoads thought that they were "made several years prior to those described by Dr. Faxon" (Auk, 13: 204-215, 1896). The latter illustrations were labelled "largely in accord with the nomenclature of Wilson's 'Ornithology'" and one bore Abbot's signature and the date "1810". The volume in the De Renne collection containing Abbot bird paintings bore on the spine the legend, "Birds of Georgia, 1797." That this date is incorrect is clear from the artist's labelling which consists very largely of the vernacular and technical names of Wilson, which were not available until the period of publication of American Ornithology, 1808-1814. Such examples as the "Great Heron. *Ardea herodias*" and the "Wood Ibis. *Tantalus loculator*" agree with names in Volume VIII, 1814, of Wilson's work. The prevalence of Wilsonian nomenclature throughout the series indicates that the pictures were labelled, and thus probably made, after the several volumes of the American Ornithology were completed.—W. L. McATEE, Chicago, Illinois.