

## GENERAL NOTES

**Recent Specimens from Southern New York and New Jersey Affecting A.O.U. Check-list Status.**—The distributional status of the following species as given in the A.O.U. Check-list (1957) is substantially modified by specimens and data here reported. Unless otherwise stated the specimens mentioned were collected by the writer and are on deposit in the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Measurements are in millimeters.

*Erolia ferruginea*. Curlew Sandpiper. A first-year bird (not sexed) was taken from a flock of Dunlins (*Erolia alpina*) at Jamaica Bay, Nassau County, Long Island, New York, on October 12, 1956. The A.O.U. Check-list reports the Curlew Sandpiper as merely "casual" in North America. Actually, the species is of regular occurrence on Long Island in small numbers, at least in spring (Bull, 1958: 20). From 1947 to 1956 (when dredging destroyed the site) one to three individuals could be seen annually between May 10 and May 30 at the Pennsylvania Avenue mudflats on Jamaica Bay in Brooklyn, New York (see Sedwitz, 1950). Autumn records have been few, perhaps because in fall plumage Curlew Sandpipers are overlooked among the numerous Dunlins; however, in recent years there have been several late summer or autumn reports of one or two individuals from Jamaica Bay, in or near New York City. The bird here recorded (identity confirmed by Dr. K. C. Parkes) is the only recently collected specimen from the area, but among the older examples is one taken on the remarkable date of December 29, 1923 (Cruickshank, 1942: 202).

*Thalasseus sandvicensis acuflavidus*. Sandwich (Cabot's) Tern. The first New York State specimen of this species was collected on June 30, 1957 at Mecox Bay, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York, from a flock of Common and Roseate Terns (*Sterna hirundo* and *S. dougallii*). The A.O.U. Check-list gives the range of this form as breeding north to North Carolina, wandering to Virginia, with one accidental record from Ontario, Canada. Two old specimens from Massachusetts (not mentioned in the A.O.U. Check-list) are recorded by Griscom and Snyder (1954: 136). There were also sight reports from Massachusetts and New Jersey after the September, 1954 hurricanes (see Griscom *et al.*, 1955: 9, 16). The specimen under consideration was secured the day after Hurricane Audrey passed up the Mississippi Valley, with its peripheral winds buffeting Long Island at speeds up to 60 mph. A female in non-breeding plumage with molting primaries, the Long Island bird measured: ovary 18 x 6, wing (flat, outer primaries not fully grown) 255.5, tail 114, tarsus 22.5, culmen 50.5. The bill was black with the terminal 6 mm. silvery-yellow; legs and feet olive-black; irides black. Compared with *T. s. sandvicensis* of Europe, it showed the limited white edgings on the primaries characteristic of the American *acuflavidus*. The measurements also placed it in that form. The identification was confirmed by Dr. R. C. Murphy.

*Pipilo erythrophthalmus arcticus*. Rufous-sided (Spotted) Towhee.—An immature female of the western *maculatus* group of towhees (formerly considered a separate species) was collected for the first time in New York on February 16, 1957, at Jones Beach, Nassau County, Long Island. It had been present since at least December 28, 1956, when it was discovered and identified as a Spotted Towhee by Robert H. Grant. No record from the eastern states of *arcticus*, or of any member of the spotted-backed races, is mentioned by the A.O.U. Check-list, except for one specimen listed as *P. e. montanus*, from Metuchen, Middlesex County, New Jersey, based on a female taken December 24, 1952 (Baird, 1957). For reasons stated below, that

specimen should also be assigned to *arcticus*. According to the Check-list, *arcticus* breeds in the northwestern Great Plains and northeastern Rockies from Alberta and Saskatchewan to central northern Nebraska, and winters from Colorado and Kansas to Texas, casually east to Iowa and Illinois, while *montanus* breeds in the western and southern Rocky Mountains from central eastern Nevada and California to Arizona and northwestern Mexico, and winters from southern Utah to central Texas, casually to Nebraska and Kansas. Swarth, the original describer of *montanus*, and of the Great Basin race *curtatus*, states (1913: 173-4) that females of *montanus* and *curtatus* have the head and upper parts "very dark (a dull slate color) with little or no indication of brown. In the female of *arcticus* these same areas are so overlaid with a brownish suffusion as to give a decidedly different and lighter tone of color to the whole bird" (see also, Swarth 1905: 173-4). Through the courtesy of Dr. John Aldrich of the United States National Museum, the 1952 New Jersey specimen was compared with the Long Island bird and with a series of *arcticus*, *montanus* and *curtatus* in the American Museum (other races could be eliminated immediately). Both eastern specimens are very similar and, in their lighter grayish head, distinctly suffused with brownish, agree with *arcticus*, and differ considerably from the much darker and more slaty-headed *montanus* and *curtatus*. Dr. Charles G. Sibley, of Cornell University, to whom the Long Island and New Jersey specimens were sent, confirmed the identification of both as *arcticus*. The Long Island bird (now in the Museum of the State of New York at Albany, N. Y.) had the skull not completely ossified and measured: wing (flat) 80.5, tail 88, tarsus 28.5, hind toe and claw 19.5, culmen 13, and length of white spot on outermost rectrix 29.5. On December 23, 1958 the writer collected a second New York specimen of the *maculatus* group in Bronx Park, New York City. This bird had been first found and identified by T. Peszell on November 30, 1958. Like the Long Island specimen, it was a first-year female with the skull not completely ossified, and the following measurements: wing (flat) 80.5, tail 90, tarsus 27, hind toe and claw 17.5, exposed culmen 12.7, and white spot on outermost rectrix 31.5. This individual differed somewhat from the Long Island specimen in having the head and back rather more tinged with brownish, though still of a distinctly grayish tone. The wing-coverts, scapulars, and interscapulars were spotted or streaked with white or whitish, the pale streaks of the interscapulars being suffused with fulvous. Dr. Charles Sibley and Mr. David West, to whom the specimen was sent, confirmed that this was a member of the *maculatus* group, but were unwilling to make a subspecific identification on the comparative material available at Cornell University. On the basis of the series in the American Museum, and the literature, I believe this bird also to be *arcticus* and Mr. Eugene Eisenmann concurs in this identification. The collection of three examples of western towhees in localities in or near the City of New York within the past few years suggests that these birds may be reaching the coast more regularly than formerly, or that they have been overlooked. The likelihood of oversight is indicated by the fact that all three were first seen either on a Christmas Count or on a pre-Count survey.

*Junco oreganus montanus*. Oregon Junco. A male, now in the American Museum, the first recorded specimen of this species from New Jersey, was taken on February 23, 1958 at East Orange, Essex County. It was first identified on January 24, 1958 and was seen almost daily (usually several times a day) at the feeding station of Mrs. Anne W. Wachenfeld, with whose kind permission it was taken. It measured: wing (flat) 77.5, tail 64, tarsus 22, culmen 10.5. Mr. Eisen-

mann allocated the specimen to the northern population of the subspecies *montanus*, as defined by A. H. Miller (1941: 251-264) and the 1957 A.O.U. Check-list, a race which breeds chiefly in the northern and western Rockies. Confirmation was received from Dr. Miller, who (*in litt.*) considered it somewhat atypical, although clearly within the *montanus* group, and probably "one of the more northerly and western representatives of the race *montanus*, which are not as gray-backed as the southern division of that race." The Check-list characterizes the Oregon Junco as "casual" on the Atlantic slope and records only one specimen east of the Alleghenies between Massachusetts and Maryland—Poundridge Township, Westchester County, southeastern New York, a dark-headed male (wing [flat] 80, tail 69) in the American Museum, taken by F. C. Scott on December 6, 1946, found by Dr. Miller (*in litt.*) to be "quite typical" of *montanus*. In recent years, there have been sight reports of Oregon Juncos almost annually from the suburbs of New York City, occasionally near coastal beaches, but most frequently at inland feeding stations, particularly in northern New Jersey. In this respect these juncos differ from most other western wanderers, which are usually found along the coast.

*Spizella pallida*. Clay-colored Sparrow. An immature (sex?) was taken from a flock of Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) near Jacob Riis Park, Queens County, Long Island, New York, on October 12, 1956. This appears to be the first specimen reported for the Atlantic coast of New York. According to the A.O.U. Check-list, the Clay-colored Sparrow occurs in the east only as "casual in . . . Ohio (Ottawa County), New York (Ithaca), Massachusetts (Lenox, North Andover)." During the past ten years, this midwestern species has come to be of regular occurrence in small numbers in autumn on the south shore of Long Island, New York, and on the coast of New Jersey (Bull, 1958). Most observations on Long Island are in late September and early October, but dates range from September 2 to November 11. In recent years at least one has been reported each fall by experienced observers and some seasons have produced twelve or more reports. As many as three individuals have been noted in one day at Riis Park. The species is most frequently reported from Jones Beach State Park, Gilgo State Park (Alperin and Eisenmann, 1950) and Riis Park, all on the barrier beaches of the south shore of Long Island, where it favors short grasses near open patches of sand. It has been reported at least twice as far east as Montauk Point. There are a number of fall reports from the barrier beaches of central and southern New Jersey. The first New Jersey specimen was taken on September 12, 1953 (Fables, 1955: 71). In addition Joseph R. Jehl, Jr. has collected the following recent specimens: September 14, 1957, Stone Harbor, Cape May County; September 28, 1957, Tuckerton, Ocean County; and September 14, 1958, Island Beach, Ocean County. Other individuals have been banded, photographed, and released. The Long Island and the two 1957 New Jersey specimens are in the American Museum of Natural History and the 1958 New Jersey bird is in the Newark Museum. Their identifications were confirmed by Dr. Parkes and Mr. Eisenmann.

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**Albinism in *Podiceps grisegena* and other grebes.**—During field work in the Delta Marsh in southern Manitoba, two juvenile albino Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena holbölli*) were seen with a normal colored adult during July, 1954. One of the juveniles was collected by M. C. Milonski and the writer on July 15 and was found to be an incomplete albino. Its irises were brown and the bill and feet were yellow, though the plumage lacked any coloration. The bird was nearly full grown, with the body plumage complete and primaries breaking from their sheaths. The specimen is now in the museum of the Delta Waterfowl Research Station.

Albinism in grebes has been considered rare, but this rarity may reflect the inconspicuous behavior of grebes on relatively isolated areas, not merely the low incidence of such aberrations. Observations of albinism have accumulated in recent years and at least six species and three genera are now represented. Both partial and incomplete albinism have been reported, but there is only one uncertain case of complete albinism and apparently no record of imperfect albinism. Terminology is modified from Mueller and Hutt (J. Hered., 32: 71-80, 1941). "Complete" is used here in place of "total" for a bird lacking melanin in the eyes and skin, as well as in the plumage. This term is consistent with "incomplete" (lack of melanin in plumage, eyes or skin, but not all three), and with the original terminology proposed by Pearson, Nettleship, and Usher (Draper's Co. Research Memoirs, Nos. 6, 8, and 9, 1911-1913). "Total" may be used for animals lacking all pigments.

In Europe, partial albinism was reported in the Horned Grebe (*P. auritus*) by Petit (Bull. Soc. Zoo. France, 34: 32-35, 1909), in the Eared Grebe (*P. caspicus*) by Chernel de Chernelhoza (Ornis, 14: 524-527, 1907), in the Great-crested Grebe (*P. cristatus*) by Gloger (J.f. Orn., 14: 285-286, 1866) and Chernel de Chernelhoza (*op. cit.*), and in the Red-necked Grebe (*P. g. grisegena*) by Sage (Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 76: 109, 1956). In North America, the U. S. National Museum contains a partial albino Eared Grebe and there is a partial albino Horned Grebe in the collection of the Denver Museum of Natural History. Incomplete albinism was reported in the Red-necked Grebe (*P. g. grisegena*) by Chernel de Chernelhoza (*op. cit.*) and in the Great-crested Grebe by Grochmalicki (Kosmos, Lemberg, No. 50: 892-894, 1925). A Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) in the Manitoba Museum of Natural History appears to be the only specimen of a complete albino. This bird was killed by a hunter and was reported to have had pink eyes and cream-yellow bill and feet.