

GENERAL NOTES

Further observations of Whooper Swans in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska.—

In the period 19 January to 4 April 1962, which I spent on Amchitka Island, a possible total of 122 Whooper Swans (*Olor cygnus*) was observed. Between 29 March and 3 April, Mr. David L. Spencer, Refuge Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, participated in obtaining observations. As in past seasons (Kenyon, *Auk*, 78: 310–311, 1961), the swans showed a preference for Silver Salmon Lake (51°21' N, 179°14' E) but were also seen occasionally on three smaller lakes. All 1962 observations are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
WHOOPER SWANS AT AMCHITKA ISLAND, 1962

Date	Records		Number of young per pair*	
	Adult	Juvenile	Pairs of adults	Number of young
13 February	2	—	5	0
4 March	4	5	9	1
16 "	12	7	11	2
19 "	4	4	7	3
22–23 March	4	4	1	4
26–28 March	6	6		
28 March	2	2		
29–30 March	4	4		
1 April	8	7		
2 "	12	11		
3 "	8	6		
Total	66	56	33	56

* Without reference to dates seen.

I have identified no other species of swan on Amchitka. Whooper Swans usually remained there for only a day or two, as I learned from searching for them on the day following each observation. Family groups were associated in loose flocks while feeding, but the families remained distinct to a considerable degree. Because of this I thought I could be reasonably certain when new flocks appeared. For example, the two families seen on 19 March consisted of parents and two young each, while the two families seen on 22 and 23 March consisted of parents and three and one young, respectively. That families may have left one flock and associated themselves with another is possible, but no indication of this was observed.

The birds were wary. Even when our pickup truck was a mile away they exhibited mild alarm and began moving downwind to prepare for flight into the wind. While feeding they usually remained in the shelter of a lee shore. In flight, the family groups drew together, but paired adults and their young usually remained close together as distinguishable units within the flight formation (Figure 1).

There are records from other islands. Aleutian National Wildlife Refuge Manager Robert D. Jones (letter, 1962), who has watched Whooper Swans with me



Figure 1. Parents and three subadult Whooper Swans, Amchitka Island, Alaska, 19 March 1962.

on Amchitka, said that he saw 17 Whooper Swans in Crescent Bay, near the west end of Atka Island ($52^{\circ}2' N$, $175^{\circ}15' W$), on 11 February 1962.

Mr. Innokenty Golodoff, who worked with me on Amchitka in 1959 and 1962, lived on Attu Island from 1932 to 1942. He told me that he saw "quite a few swans every year on Attu." Although these were not identified as Whooper Swans, it appears reasonable to conclude, in the light of recent observations, that many of them were. He and John Nevzoroff, who both now reside at Atka Village, told me that they see unidentified swans almost every winter on Atka Island. On 6 April 1962, while conducting an aerial survey of sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*) at Atka Island, I saw 10 unidentified swans near the north extremity of the island.

Murie (*N. Amer. Fauna*, no. 61, 1959) presumed that swan remains found on Amchitka and Semisopchnoi, and swans reported by native hunters from several other Aleutian islands, were Whistling Swans (*Olor columbianus*). Swan bones from a midden on Little Kiska were assigned to this species by Friedmann (*J. Washington Acad. Sci.*, 27: 436, 1937). At my request, the Little Kiska bones were re-examined by Dr. John W. Aldrich, Mrs. Roxie Laybourne, and Dr. Alexander Wetmore, who unanimously concluded: ". . . the larger ulna and radius undoubtedly belong to the Whooper Swan The smaller ulna and radius are about the same length as those of the male Whistling Swan; so until sufficient Whooper material is obtained for comparison, we will abide by the identification of *columbianus* We have been unable to locate any specimens of swan bones that Murie collected on Amchitka" (Dr. Richard H. Manville, letter, 1962).

In the summer of 1955, Jones found long bones from the wing of a swan on a beach at Kanaga Island. These (U.S.N.M. no. 431863) were identified as *Olor columbianus* by Aldrich and Laybourne.

These bones, and those from the Little Kiska Island midden, are the only specimens from the outer Aleutian Islands identified and recorded as *columbianus*. No Whistling Swan in the flesh has yet been positively identified west of Unimak Island, near the tip of the Alaska Peninsula.

Observations and specimens now available indicate that reports of swans from outer Aleutian areas which were presumed to represent Whistling Swans undoubtedly involved many Whooper Swans.

The observations of 1962, along with mine from past years, include a total of 168 birds (3 specimens, 2 from St. Paul Island and 1 from Amchitka Island, are in the U. S. National Museum). Available data indicate that the Whooper Swan may occur regularly in fall, late winter, and early spring in the outer Aleutian Islands. Some of the birds, however, may visit the Aleutians when forced by severe weather from their more usual Asian range, since we saw more Whooper Swans in the unusually stormy season of 1962 than in two previous observation periods on Amchitka. Mild weather dominated the period 16 March to 1 April 1963. During this time biologist Jerry E. Burdick (field notes) observed a total of 32 swans on Silver Salmon and nearby lakes.

The occurrence of the Whooper Swan in the outer Aleutians may have gone unrecorded for many years because few trained observers have visited the Aleutians in the seasons when swans occur there, and, since the Whooper Swan was not expected, even trained ornithologists may have assumed that swans reported by natives or seen at a distance were Whistling Swans. Finally, few specimens of Whooper Swans are available for identification of skeletal remains.—KARL W. KENYON, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Sand Point Naval Air Station, Bldg. 192, Seattle 15, Washington.*

The name of a fossil rail and its date of publication.—Alphonse Milne-Edwards (*Oiseaux fossiles de la France*, 2, 1869, p. 144, pl. 103, fig. 17) figured and described a fossil rail from the Montmartre in Paris, under the name *Rallus intermedius*. Kalmán Lambrecht (*Handbuch der Palaeornithologie*, 1933, p. 461) provisionally referred this species to his new genus *Quercyrallus*. The holotype in the Paris Museum is a fairly complete skeleton from the gypse de Montmartre, a formation that represents the Ludian stage of the Upper Eocene.

Milne-Edward's classic work was distributed by groups of "livraisons" at intervals between 1867 and 1871, and Lambrecht accepted 1871 as the date of publication of *R. intermedius*. Plate 103, where the species is first named and figured, however, was published possibly in 1868, and certainly by April, 1869, as shown by contemporary reviews of Alfred Newton (*Ibis*, n.s., 5: 220, 1869; *Zoological Record* for 1868, *Aves*, p. 104). At times the letterpress did not keep pace with the plates, and quarto sheet 18 of volume 2, with the description of this species on page 144, was not published until later in 1869 (*Zoological Record* for 1869, *Aves*, p. 94).

During preparation of the second installment of the *Catalogue of fossil birds*, I find that the name proposed for this species by Milne-Edwards is preoccupied by *Rallus intermedius* Johann Hermann (*Observationes zoologicae*, 1804, p. 198), for a bird that is now known as *Porzana pusilla intermedia* (Hermann). Therefore I propose the new name ***Quercyrallus ludianus*** as a substitute for the preoccupied *Rallus intermedius* of Milne-Edwards.

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