

**White-fronted Goose specimen from Alabama.**—On 28 December 1966, W. G. Peebles, Mooresville, Alabama, shot a White-fronted Goose on land adjoining the Beaverdam Peninsula portion of the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Limestone County, Alabama. The specimen has been examined by a number of qualified observers familiar with the species and is unquestionably *Anser albifrons*. It is preserved in Mr. Peebles' home, Mooresville, Alabama. Although Mr. Peebles' bird is the first and only known preserved specimen from this state, Thomas A. Imhoff, author of Alabama birds, tells me (in litt.) there have been 11 sight records of the species from 1942 through 1967 involving single individuals and small flocks. All records were either from the vicinity of Mobile Bay, Mobile County, or from Morgan and Limestone Counties in the Tennessee River Valley. Imhoff suggests that small numbers of the species may occur regularly in the state during cool weather months, but, mixed with flocks of Canada, Blue, and Snow Geese, escape detection.—THOMAS Z. ATKESON, JR., P. O. Box 1643, Decatur, Alabama 35601.

**Prey in two Screech Owl nests.**—When checking Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) nesting boxes on the floodplain of the Scioto River, Ross County, Ohio, early on 7 May 1956, I found a nesting box containing three young Screech Owls (*Otus asio*) 1 or 2 days old. In addition to the owlets the nest contained the following eight dead birds and one mammal, presumably brought by the parent owls as food: 1 Catbird, *Dumetella carolinensis*; 1 Nashville Warbler, *Vermivora ruficapilla*; 2 Cardinals, *Richmondia cardinalis*; 1 Indigo Bunting, *Passerina cyanea*; 2 American Goldfinches, *Spinus tristis*; 1 Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia*; 1 prairie vole, *Microtus ochrogaster*. As the nine animals were all whole and fresh, they were probably the result of the previous night's hunting by the parent pair. When examined again in the early morning of 10 May, the nest contained no prey bodies.

In 1967 I examined a Screech Owl's nest in Granville County, North Carolina, each morning from 6 days before until 8 days after the two eggs hatched. Only one item was found on any one morning, as follows: 30 April, Brown Thrasher, *Toxostoma rufum*; 1 May, hog-nosed snake, *Heterodon platyrhinos*; 2 May, tree frog, *Hyla versicolor*; 5 May, spotted newt, *Diemictylus viridescens*. The first pair of Screech Owls caught more in excess of their immediate needs than the second and made birds a larger part of their diet.—PAUL A. STEWART, Entomology Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Oxford, North Carolina 27565.

**A Great White Heron in Great Blue nesting colony.**—On 12 February and 3 March 1968, Hal H. Harrison and I visited a heron and cormorant colony on Hemp Key in Pine Island Sound opposite Fort Myers, Florida, where we found a Great White Heron (*Ardea "occidentalis"*) apparently mated with a Ward's Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias wardi*). This location is 120 miles north of any previously known breeding grounds of the Great White. The pair was caring for one young just beginning to feather out. It had the plumage of a young Great Blue, which seems to lend further evidence to the theory that differences between the Great White and Ward's Great Blue herons are dichromatic rather than specific (cf. Meyerriecks, Publ. Nuttall Orn. Club, no. 2, 1960).

On our first visit some 30 pairs of Great Blue Herons were present, some with empty nests, some with eggs, and a few with young. We flushed the Great White from a thicket of black mangroves (*Avicernia nitioa*) and cacti where several Great Blues were nesting. We were unable to determine the nest from which it came or, indeed, if it had come from a nest at all. We concealed ourselves and watched for an

hour. The Great White perched atop a mangrove about 100 yards away with several alarmed Great Blues where it moved about but did not return to any nest before darkness forced us to leave.

On the second visit we saw the Great White Heron even before we landed, perched against the skyline in the same general area. Again we concealed ourselves at different vantage points. This time observation was complicated by a dozen pairs of nesting Common Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*).

In a half hour the Great Blues began coming back to their nests, and a few minutes later the Great White came in and lit within 2 feet and slightly above a Great Blue that was either on a nest or standing on its edge. The birds maintained their positions without change for 30 minutes. When another Great Blue started to settle nearby, the Great White responded with a powerful thrust of its bill and drove it away.

Shortly thereafter something, perhaps a movement from one of us, disturbed the birds and they flew off. We then went to examine the nest. It was 8 feet from the ground in a black mangrove growing out of a cactus clump. This location was lower than most of the other Great Blue nests. In it was one downy young which we judged to be about 10 days old and showing the starting feathering of a juvenile Great Blue. Most of the other Great Blue nests contained two to four eggs or young.

We concealed ourselves again where we could watch this nest. In 20 minutes both birds came back almost together. The Great Blue took a position just over the nest and the Great White some 3 feet away. Except for an occasional movement by the Great Blue neither bird changed position for the next hour at which time darkness again forced us to leave.

In early April Andrew J. Meyerriecks and I flew over the island. We saw an adult Great White Heron perched on the rim of a large nest, which it was most reluctant to leave, even though the pilot made several low passes over the island.

It is worth noting that for several years on Christmas bird counts and at other times, a single Great White Heron has been seen across the Sound on Captiva Island, which may or may not be the same bird that has now joined the Great Blue nesting colony.—GRIFFING BANCROFT, *Captiva, Florida* 33924.

**Starvation of Alaskan Ruffed and Sharp-tailed Grouse caused by icing.**—Late in January 1968 residents of Minto Village in central Alaska (64° 54' N, 149° 10' W) informed the Alaska Department of Fish and Game that they were finding dead grouse along trails near the village. At least 10 dead grouse were discovered from late January to 7 February, 3 of which (1 female Sharp-tailed Grouse, *Pedioecetes phasianellus*, and 1 male and 1 female Ruffed Grouse, *Bonasa umbellus*) were sent to the department for examination. These birds were very thin, and the possibility that they had died of starvation led us to investigate the situation in some detail. Our conclusion was that grouse in the vicinity of Minto suffered fairly heavy mortality in January 1968 when thick accumulations of ice cut off food supplies and roosting sites. This die-off is reconstructed below as far as our evidence allows.

Although central Alaska is normally cold and dry in winter, storms from the south and west occasionally bring warm, moist air to the interior valleys. Nearly every winter one or more of these storms causes icing on the snow and vegetation. According to the U. S. Weather Bureau's Local Climatological Data, glazing occurred on 4 days in December 1967 at Nenana (25 miles south of Minto, and the closest weather station), with liquid precipitation totalling 0.63 inches, and on 3 days in January 1968, with liquid precipitation amounting to 0.10 inches. Heaviest icing occurred on 29 December when 0.60 inches of rain fell at Nenana. At this time all