

First specimen of Arctic Loon from Missouri.—The Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) is known from few localities in the interior of North America; Palmer (Handbook of North American birds, vol. 1, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale Univ. Press, 1962, p. 45) lists but four records, none for Missouri. Only one sight record exists for Missouri, at Lake of the Ozarks, Gravois Mills, Morgan County (Easterla, Condor, 67: 544, 1965). On 19 October 1969 Floyd and Pearl Lawhon discovered an adult Arctic Loon in summer plumage at Browning Lake, Buchanan County, Missouri. After two unsuccessful attempts the senior author collected the bird on 23 October 1969. It was a male (testes 10×3.5 mm, moderately fat) that could fly (seen once flying the 1-mile length of Browning Lake) and appeared healthy in all respects. That the bird was still in summer plumage seems unusual, but Palmer (op. cit., 41) gives the definitive alternate plumage as lasting until October. Only the head and neck showed any suggestion of beginning molt. The bird weighed 4.93 pounds and its stomach contained unidentified fish and pebbles. The throat patch had both a purple and green sheen and the measurements (flattened wing 313.5 mm, tarsus 77.5 mm, bill from feathers 52.5 mm) were inconclusive for determination of the subspecies; *pacifica* would be the expected race (Palmer, op. cit.). As already suggested by Easterla (op. cit.), the Arctic Loon, breeding over most of extreme northern North America, may migrate more commonly through the interior than records indicate, especially in the autumn when immatures and winter-plumage adults could be easily overlooked and mistaken for the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*). The specimen was preserved as a study skin (CLJ 149) and is at Northwest Missouri State College.—DAVID A. EASTERLA, *Department of Biology, Northwest Missouri State College, Maryville, Missouri 64468*, and FLOYD LAWHON, *3327 Burnside Avenue, St. Joseph, Missouri 64505*. Accepted 10 Feb. 70.

Use of blister beetle in bill-sweeping by White-breasted Nuthatch.—I described in a previous communication (Auk, 85: 477, 1968) how White-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta carolinensis*) sweep the bark in the vicinity of their nestholes while holding insects in their bills. Possible reasons for this behavior were not apparent until I had watched the nuthatches for a number of years. My final hypothesis was that tree squirrels are the chief competitors for the natural cavities these nuthatches use for nesting, and that the bill-sweeping may serve to deter or deflect squirrels by spreading repellent or other substances present in the bodies of the crushed insects. It was difficult to determine with field glasses and at a distance what species of insects were actually used. Twice I noted that when a female nuthatch came to her nest carrying a metal-blue beetle with a prominent abdomen and about 2 cm or more in length, she seemed impelled to sweep intensively both inside and outside her nest cavity until little of the beetle remained. She showed no interest in feeding the beetle to her nestlings. I was unable to find any similar beetle in the woods at the time. In May 1968 my wife, who had read my description, announced that she had found considerable numbers of the beetles in a dry field where they had gathered, apparently to copulate. The beetles appeared to be exactly like those I had seen through field glasses the year before.

I offered several of the beetles to a pair of nuthatches breeding in my aviary at the time. The female took a while to find one, but seizing it in her bill, she immediately started sweeping inside and outside of her nest cavity in the same manner I had noted in the field the year before. She was incubating eggs at the time and hence had no nestlings to feed. I had tried giving her a number of miscellaneous insects, including mealworm beetles (*Tenebrionidae*) on previous occasions, without precipitating bouts