

such types are extremely rare, and offer in themselves a large field of research in studying the laws of variation and heredity.

Another deterrent factor in the noting of colors is that many collectors distrust their ability in this regard. They assume that a trained eye, a knowledge of the various tints, and the names of all the pigments are necessary. This is not the case; all that is needed is the ability to distinguish the ordinary colors. These can be qualified by the simplest of prefixes,—“dark”, “light”, “dull”, “bright”, or “intense”,—or modified by a terminal such as “bluish” to indicate something akin to blue. The description should be as concise and brief as possible; too elaborate details are apt to tangle one up. Also it is hardly necessary to define the color of the eyes of all such small birds that have the ordinary brown iris, nor to record the black bill and feet of most of the Corvidae, for example. It is the *divergence* from the ordinary type that is noteworthy.

Some few collectors make elaborate records of the colors of soft parts in their note books, leaving the label of the particular specimen they make the record from, blank in this respect; this is a method greatly to be condemned; one might almost as well record the sex in this manner, as one never knows the ultimate destination of the specimen in future years—or centuries.

Make all records on the label itself; probably the most convenient way is to record the colors of soft parts on the reverse side of the label to that which carries the name, sex, locality, and date. Without these data the specimen is incomplete, a monument during the whole period of its existence to the lack of thoroughness of its collector, no matter how perfect it may otherwise be.

Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, March 4, 1914.

NESTING OF THE KITTLITZ MURRELET

By JOHN E. THAYER

RECENTLY I had the good fortune to obtain from Captain F. E. Kleinschmidt, eggs of the Kittlitz Murrelet (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*), together with some interesting information regarding the breeding habits of the bird. I think, although I am not sure, that these are the first authentic eggs of this species. I have heard only of the white eggs, the same as the one already in my collection, which evidently are not of the Kittlitz Murrelet.

The egg found on the ground, on the side of Pavloff Mountain, June 10, 1913, has a ground color of olive-lake, dotted all over with different sized markings of dark and light brown. It measures, in inches, 2.29x1.40. The other egg, taken from the oviduct of a bird May 29, 1913, is perfectly formed, and was evidently about to be laid. Its ground color is yellow glaucous, with dark brown spots over the whole egg. The measurements are, 2.46x1.45. The second egg taken from a bird's oviduct was so broken that it could not be measured, but color and markings are the same as in the one last described. I have both the females from which these eggs were taken.

Pavloff Bay and Pavloff Volcano, Alaska, where Captain Kleinschmidt's notes and specimens were taken, is near the west end, and on the south side, of the Alaska Peninsula, a little northwest of the Shumagin Islands.

This is what Captain Kleinschmidt says:

During my recent expedition, I spent the time between the first and middle of May cruising in Chatham Strait, Icy Strait and Glacier Bay. Among other specimens, we collected quite a few Marbled Murrelets and also several Kittlitz Murrelets. It was the height of the breeding season of these two species, for we found in every specimen fully or partly formed eggs, most of which, however, were broken in the collecting. However, I preserved, of the Kittlitz Murrelet, one fully formed and colored egg, besides several broken ones.

I had no previous data or reference with me other than "*North American Birds' Eggs*", by Chester A. Reed, and this gives on page 16 the data of Capt. Tilson: "Kittlitz Murrelet—a pure white egg found in a hollow under a bunch of rank matted grass on Sanak Island, June 25, 1899."

I am sending you the broken egg, the whole egg, and both parent birds from whose oviducts they were taken, so you may properly describe and measure them for yourself. I have long doubted the authenticity of the Tilson data, and it seems strange to me that the Kittlitz Murrelet, which so closely resembles the Marbled, should lay such widely different eggs.

On June 5, while lying at anchor off Pavloff Bay, Alaska Peninsula, a trapper and miner came aboard, who saw me preparing skins of the Kittlitz and Marbled murrelets. He recognized the Kittlitz immediately, and said it was strange that a water bird should lay its egg far inland, high on the mountain sides, in the snow. Upon closer questioning he said he meant that the egg was laid, not on the snow, but far above timber line on the mountain, in bare spots, amid the snow. In the sixteen years he had been there he had found but two eggs, but he remembered well the eggs and bird. I had him describe the egg carefully before I showed him the one I possessed, and it tallied with his description.

On June 6, I was hunting brown bear for the Carnegie Museum, in company with this man, and while crossing a high divide, a Kittlitz Murrelet flew past us. "There is your bird", called the trapper immediately; "it has a nest here somewhere". On June 10, I saw with my glasses a she-bear and two cubs far up in the snow of Mount Pavloff. To reach them, I had to climb several miles inside the snow line, with only here and there a few bare spots to give me a much desired walking ground, when close to my feet rose a Kittlitz Murrelet. There on the bare lava, without even the pretension of a hollow, lay a single egg.

Eight years ago, when I shot my first Kittlitz Murrelet in the ice pack of Bering Sea, an Eskimo looking at the bird said, "Him lay egg way up in snow on mountain". I ridiculed the idea then, of this bird laying its egg in the snow far from the sea on the mountain-side, but, keeping a constant lookout, expected to find its breeding place on the rocky islands of Alaska or Siberia, perhaps in company with the auks and murre. Now, however, I found the Eskimo's words corroborated, and the Murrelet's solitary egg laid in just such a strange place as he described. I enclose a photograph marking the spot where I found it, and this egg also.

Lancaster, Massachusetts, February 9, 1914.