

the time when it was quite scarce, the increase having taken place during the last twelve years or so. It is quite possible that the Eastern Bluebird will be a regular summer visitor in the near future. This particular family frequented the ranch buildings during the fall and were seen last on October 12.

It is gratifying to be able to record a slight increase in numbers of the Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) which not so long ago seemed to be just about extinct. In 1914, when this railway was first built, the grouse disappeared, and I saw no more till 1920, though an odd bird or two was reported from time to time. During the winter of 1921-22 a band of eight or nine appeared in our pasture, and last December I saw twenty-three together. On this last occasion they were all bunched close together on a corner of my summer fallow, and all one could see at a distance of 200 yards was a number of black patches; these patches were the breast feathers of the Sage Grouse, the rest of their plumage matching exactly with the soil on which they were crouching.

Gower Ranch, Eastend, Saskatchewan, March 5, 1923.

THE MIGRATION OF THE KING EIDER AT SYNUK, ALASKA

(WITH TWO PHOTOS)

By GRACE A. HILL

I N April 10, 1915, the King Eider Ducks (*Somateria spectabilis*) began to pass Synuk, an Eskimo village some thirty miles up the coast from Nome, Alaska. Their flight was the most spectacular event in the migration of the birds that I witnessed. It was impressive not only because of the vast numbers (one flock, consisting of several long 'ropes,' following another so closely as to make an almost constant procession, for hours at a time, during the first week or ten days of their flight), but also because at that time there had been no real break in the winter, and it seemed the birds must starve in the snow-covered, ice-locked land into which they were so eagerly pressing. By the first of May the migration had practically ceased. On May 5, however, a native came in with a killing, which was the last I saw of the King Eider, that season.

These birds followed the same course as closely as though the first flock had left a beaten trail in the air. This 'highway' was over the ice, parallel with the shore, and so low as to be within easy gunshot. The natives killed them in large numbers for food, both for themselves and their dogs.

I regret that I did not make a careful observation of the King Eiders in their migration the preceding fall. At least there was no spectacular procession. Small flocks drifted by, flying low, but so far out to sea that there would have been no way of knowing them but for the native hunters. The Eskimos returned from their summer fishing camps during the last days of

September. From then until about the middle of October these ducks figured prominently in the village larder.

Other flocks of the ducks and of geese of the fall migration, that I observed at Synuk, including the Mallard and the Canada Goose, approached the



Fig. 32. SLEDGE ISLAND AND BERING SEA FROM THE BEACH AT SYNUK VILLAGE, ALASKA, JUNE 3, 1915. THE PROCESSIONAL SPRING MIGRATION OF THE KING EIDER WAS OVER A ZONE BETWEEN THE ISLAND AND THE SHORE. THE ISLAND IS ALMOST DUE SOUTH FROM THE VILLAGE.

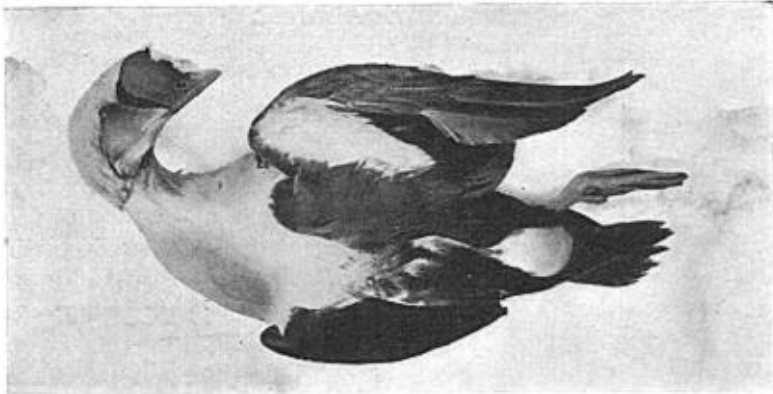


Fig. 33. KING EIDER SHOT IN THE MIGRATORY FLIGHT PAST SYNUK VILLAGE, ALASKA, MAY 5, 1915.

village from the north, coming over the land, as though they had cut across the western portion of the Seward Peninsula. They passed over the village, flying high, and went out across Sledge Island, over the sea to the south. The course the King Eiders took in passing the village was southeast.

Berkeley, California, November 10, 1922.