

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Biographical Note on Scopoli.—Reading the article by Todd on White-fronted Geese (Condor 52, 1950:63-68), I was slightly startled by the reference to Scopoli as an Italian. Perhaps the underlying reason was that I have usually seen his name as Johann Anton Scopoli and recalled the statement by Gilbert White of Selbourne that Scopoli was physician to the cinnabar miners in Carniola, from which I supposed he was an Austrian. Having looked him up in the more obvious sources (Encyclopedia Britannica, Poggendorf, and Enciclopedia Italiana), the story becomes more complicated and of some interest.

Giovanni Antonio Scopoli (so given by Poggendorf) was born June 3 or 13, 1727, at Cavalese in Venezia Tridentina, about 30 miles northeast of the city of Trento. The province of Trento was a German bishopric from 1027 to 1803. It has only been Italian (politically) from 1810 to 1814 and since 1918. Scopoli took two medical degrees, one at Innsbruck (1743) and the other at Vienna (1753). From 1754-1770 he was (as noted above) a physician at Idria in Carniola. Idria is about 30 miles northeast of Trieste. This region had long been Austrian but was Italian from 1918 to about 1945. Since then it has been Yugoslavian territory. While at Idria (1769) Scopoli described his *Branta albifrons*. Scopoli then went as professor of mineralogy and metallurgy to Schemnitz in Hungary and was imperial and royal coinage and mines councillor. He stayed here from 1770 to 1776. Schemnitz is now Banská Stiaňnica in Czechoslovakia, about 70 miles east of Bratislava. Scopoli made his last move in 1776 and became, apparently for the first time, a geographical Italian. He went to Pavia in Lombardy where he was professor of chemistry and botany and died there May 8, 1788. Pavia was Austrian from 1746 to 1796 and did not become Italian until 1870.

I have seen no complete account of Scopoli's writings. Poggendorf gives the longest list. Aside from botany and zoology, he wrote on mineralogy, chemistry, and "physico-chemical medicine." The last seems to be what we now call industrial medicine. One of his titles in this field is "De morbis fessorum hydrargyri." Linnaeus named for him the solanaceous genus *Scopolia* from which scopolamine is derived.

It will be seen that during most of his active life Scopoli was not only not an Italian politically, but did not even live in places which could be considered geographically Italian. He considered himself Tyrolese. On page 69 of the reference given by Todd, I find that *B. albifrons* was described from a specimen in the museum of Count Francesco Annibale della Torre, but no locality data are given. I have not been able to trace this particular della Torre but it seems clear that he was of the family of the counts of Thurn and Valsassina. The two chief lines of this Bergamese family, Como-Vercelli and Villalta-Spessa, had been associated with the regions of Gorizia (near Idria), Carinthia, and Carniola since 1543 and 1664. On the whole, the evidence points to the type locality of *B. albifrons* as northeast of the head of the Adriatic, in Carniola.—CHARLES H. BLAKE, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 4, 1950.*

Breeding Status of the Ring-necked Duck in Washington.—According to the Check-list of North American Birds (1931, p. 50), Ring-necked Ducks (*Aythya collaris*) breed from central British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and western Ontario south to southern Wisconsin, northern Iowa, northern Nebraska, northern Utah, central Arizona and formerly, at least, to northern Illinois. No mention is made of Washington. Since 1947 I have conducted extensive surveys of waterfowl-breeding areas in eastern Washington. Henry A. Hansen, Waterfowl Biologist for eastern Washington in the State of Washington Department of Game, has worked with me since 1948.

In the last three years we have the following summer records of Ring-necked Ducks in the channeled scablands of the Columbia Plateau: one male, Adams County, July 16, 1947; two males, June 28, 1948, and one male, June 30, 1948, Grant County; four males, Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, Spokane County, July 15, 1948; and one male, Lincoln County, July 26, 1948. No satisfactory records were obtained in this region in 1949.

On July 17, 1947, I observed a brood of seven young approximately one-third grown with an adult which is believed to have been this species (this female had a gray speculum). They were on a pothole which supported a heavy growth of spatterdock (*Nuphar polysepalum*). This pond was less than one acre in size in the yellow pine zone, one-half mile south of Badger Lake, Spokane County.