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 Banska Stiavnica 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 fossorum 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.

No specimens were collected. On August 14, 1947, I observed a female Ring-necked Duck with a brood of six downy young on Nile Lake, Pend Oreille County, in the mountainous northeast corner of the state (fig. 1).

In 1949, Henry Hansen and I spent a few days in both Stevens and Pend Oreille counties searching for this species (the area was not visited in 1948). On August 10, we counted 19 individuals on Nile Lake, Pend Oreille County, and 18 on White Mud Lake, Stevens County, the county to the west of Pend Oreille. In both cases most of the individuals were young, two-thirds to nearly full grown, accompanying adult females. At McDowell Lake, Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge, Stevens County, we observed an adult female with young over three-fourths grown and three adult males in breeding plumage. The ring on the bill was not evident with 7 × 35 binoculars. On August 11, 42 individuals (females and young nearly grown) were noted on Twin Lake, Stevens County. We observed, in all, 90 Ring-necked Ducks in the two counties. On August 27, I collected two juvenal female Ring-

Fig. 1. Nile Pond, Pend Oreille County, Washington. Note spadder dock (*Nuphar polysepalum*) in foreground.

necked Ducks at Nile Lake to verify field identifications. These are in the Charles R. Conner Museum at the State College of Washington. In all of the specimens observed at close range in the field with binoculars no light ring could be seen on their bills; the same was true of the two collected later.

In all instances Ring-necked Ducks found breeding in Washington occurred on lakes in coniferous regions from about 1600 to 3500 feet in elevation. In nearly every instance the lake supported considerable beds of spatterdock (*Nuphar*). J. A. Munro (personal communication, 1949) states that it has been his experience in the Cariboo region of northern British Columbia that the species prefers lakes "dominated" by *Nuphar*. David Munro (personal communication, 1949) also had found that Ring-necks were noted nearly always on sloughs which supported a heavy growth of *Nuphar*. The latter sloughs were on the flood plain of the Columbia River and also on the park-like terraces above the river in the East Kootenay Region, southeastern British Columbia. He also has a breeding record: adult with eight young, less than a week old, four miles west of Invermere, B.C., July 8, 1949.

The summer of 1941 was spent in study of birds in Stevens and Pend Oreille counties (see Yocom, Murrelet, 26, 1945:19-23). White Mud Lake was visited frequently and observations were made occasionally on Twin, Nile and other lakes in this mountainous region. Since Ring-necked Ducks were not seen on these lakes it appears reasonable to assume that this species, although known by Stanley Jewett (personal communication) to have bred on the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge

in 1940, has increased considerably since 1941. The East Kootenay region of British Columbia was not known definitely to be a breeding area for this species until David A. Munro found a brood in 1949. Possibly records from both of these regions indicate relatively new breeding areas for this species.

Ring-necked Ducks are difficult to identify in summer. The males when in eclipse plumage lack the characteristic markings that make identification in winter and spring easy. The light ring behind the dark-tipped bill, which is quite obvious in winter and spring, was not evident on the young collected nor on the adults observed. Thus, in the field, it is difficult to distinguish female and young Ring-necked Ducks from Scaups in the summer months. The gray speculum of the Ring-necked Duck and the white speculum on the Scaup, however, are good identification characters at close range, or if the birds can be made to fly. Obviously this is of no value when the wing feathers are molted or when young are less than two-thirds grown. For the most part, Scaup found breeding in Washington were in the scabland lakes of the Columbia Plateau in relatively open country. Thus, the breeding ranges of the two species do not overlap greatly except possibly in the yellow pine zone in Spokane County. —CHARLES F. YOCOM, *State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington, May 10, 1950.*

An Anna Hummingbird Caught in a Spider Web.—On June 7, 1950, Charles E. Shaw of the San Diego Zoo's Department of Reptiles summoned staff members to witness a remarkable spectacle in a landscaped area directly behind the reptile house. An immature male Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) had become entangled in the web of an orb-weaver spider.

The bird was suspended by the left wing from a point that was nearly the center of a horizontal span of web measuring approximately nine feet from end to end and at a height of approximately

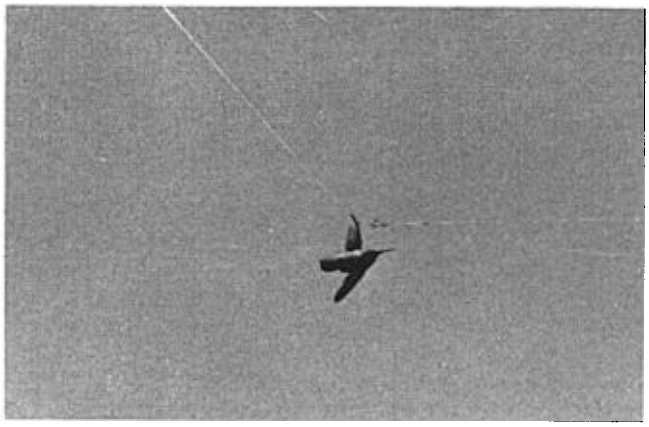

Fig. 1. Anna Hummingbird caught by a spider-web strand. Photograph taken by Jordan S. Roux.

seven and a half feet from the ground. Six diverging strands at one end of the span remained attached to the trunk of a Queen Palm, while the web was attached at the other end to a frond of a Burmese Windmill Palm by only a single strand. Whatever additional points of attachment may previously have existed had been torn loose by the bird's thrashing.

In an attempt to free itself, the bird, using the free right wing, often flew in a swinging circular manner and in so doing further bound the primaries of the enmeshed wing in the web. During its struggle, it called frequently, attracting another Anna Hummingbird which hovered in the vegetation nearby. In one instance the flying hummer, which appeared to be a female, approached to within two feet of the trapped bird.

For more than forty minutes the bird attempted unsuccessfully to free itself. With each successive effort, it became only more firmly entangled and it showed increasing signs of exhaustion. It seemed most unlikely that the bird would be able to free itself; consequently, Shaw cut the web, unwound the portion that had become wrapped about the bird's primaries, and released the hummer.—KEN STOTT, JR., *Zoological Society of San Diego, San Diego, California, June 16, 1950.*