

eggs we walk along to Flamborough Head. On our way we startle several Wheatears from rabbit burrows, and find three nests made of feathers and rabbits' fur, built from one to two feet inside the burrow, and containing five or six eggs each, of a pale blue color, like those of the Bluebird. We also startle a Meadow Pipit or Titlark from its nest of four eggs (dusky-brown, freckled with dark brown), built on the ground.

After visiting the Light House at Flamborough Head, and the wonderful caverns, we return home much pleased with our visit to the home of the "Sea Birds."

THE COMMON OR SORA RAIL.

Porzana carolina.

BY C. C. MAXFIELD, WILLARD, N. Y.

This Rail is very little known on account of its skulking habits ; it being very difficult to get one to rise from the ground. Another reason, that may be cited, is that they choose as a home and nesting place, a low, swampy swale ; which, in nearly all cases, is partially or entirely covered with water, and thick undergrowth is so interlaced as to make it very difficult to move about in search of them.

The bird itself is small : length, about 8 1-8 inches ; wing, 4 2-32 inches ; tail, about 2 inches ; bill, from 1-2 to 2-3 inches and the tarsus slightly over 1 inch. The upper parts are greenish-brown, with numerous black and white streaks and specks ; belly, whitish ; throat, light slate color ; bill, light yellow, and legs and feet light green.

My first specimen was taken very late in the Autumn of 1883, while hunting ducks on Ox Creek, Oswego Co. Owing to the lateness of the season, I was much surprised to take this one ; but after securing the specimen, the absence of the left wing fully explained matters. The feathers of the left side lay smoothly, and at a short distance the loss of the wing could not be noticed. About a half-inch of the humerus still remained covered by skin, but no feathers. On dissection, the bone appeared cracked and broken at the end.

Another specimen, and a set of ten eggs were taken on Memorial Day, 1884, in Onondaga Co., in a swale a few rods from the Oswego River, about seven miles from where the first specimen was taken.

A pair of the birds were followed for about two hours, by two companions and myself, in water nearly waist deep. After being thoroughly wet through and very cold, one of the pair was secured—the female. On dissection, a fully matured egg was found in the oviduct.

Later in the day, the set of ten eggs were taken at the edge of the same swale. The nest was built in the top of a bunch of swale-grass, of dead and dry grasses found in and near the swale, and was very shallow; about 5 1-2 inches in diameter, and rather rudely constructed. Incubation of eggs varied much, being from fresh to badly addled.

The five eggs of the set, which I have in my collection, measure respectively: 1.32x.84; 1.26x.90; 1.29x.87; 1.35x.84; 1.38x.90. In color they are a light creamy-brown, dotted by blotches of two shades of darker brown: the lighter shade of the blotches being hardly distinguishable from the ground color.

Mr. E. G. Taber, at Meridian, N. Y., reports in the *Ornithologist and Oologist* of Boston, Mass. the taking of a set of seventeen eggs of this species. I have never taken but the one set of ten, mentioned above, but no doubt the set number varies and no positive information can be given.