

THE LEAST TERN IN COLORADO—A CORRECTION

This note is made necessary by the inclusion of the Colorado record of *Sterna a. antillarum* in Vol. VIII of Dr. Ridgway's monumental work on the "Birds of North and Middle America" (page 524).

In the Auk, Vol. XI, 1894, p. 182, Prof. W. W. Cooke recorded an example of this bird seen by him at Colorado Springs and "reported as having been taken near Fort Collins." But in his subsequent work, "The Birds of Colorado" (Bull. 37, Colo. Exper. Sta., Fort Collins, Colo., Mar. 1897) he personally repudiated the record in the following words: "Further investigation has convinced him (Prof. Cooke) that the specimen was secured outside of Colorado. There is now no certain record for this state."

What was true in 1897, is equally so today and there is no authentic record for the state. In fact the history of this record, as above given, has been accepted by all subsequent writers up to the present time and it seems probable that in compiling the distributional data for his latest work, Dr. Ridgway merely overlooked the correction and included the original note.

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September 22, 1919.

NOTES FROM LAKE COUNTY

ROSEATE TERN.—July 31, 1919, was made noteworthy by finding a single individual of this beautiful little Tern on the beach at the lake. I had made a wide detour in order to come in from the rear on a large flock of Sandpipers assembled on the beach; protecting my approach after getting close by a sand ridge, but, being a little careless, they all took to wing and I was surprised to see a single Tern among them, which, unlike the Sandpipers, only made a short circling flight and then returned to the beach. Its snow-white breast and entirely black bill—I could not detect the change of color at the base—proclaimed it was a Roseate. I finally flushed it and made a further observation in that the wing tips in flight were very light in color, only a trifle darker than the rest of the upper wing surface. The bird alighted again, and this time near a convenient log, which, by crawling on my stomach and elbows I finally reached, and from over the top observed my bird at a distance of twenty feet or less. I have never seen it so stated, and the observation made on this individual may not be constant with Roseate in general, but the bird's attitude when at rest was different, and more graceful, than that of the Common Tern. The last time I flushed the bird it uttered a few cries of a somewhat rasping quality, but entirely different and much softer than the usual call of the Common Tern.

MOCKINGBIRD.—By patiently waiting, September 14, 1919, after having seen a puzzling bird with white wing patches disappear into a swampy thicket, I was rewarded at last by seeing my first Mockingbird in Lake County. The place was alive with Catbirds, assembled mainly for migration, and I was kept busy turning my glass here and there at every new movement. Finally I caught a second glimpse, which started my identification of the bird on the right track by its gray and white color and long tail, and then suddenly, right before my eyes, he sat in a leafless dead thorn bush, contemplating me with a white lidded eye, and I don't know yet how he ever got there so easily and unobserved after all my alert and anxious peering into the depths of the thicket.

SURF SCOTER.—It so happened that the first Scoter I ever observed on Lake Erie is the rarest—the American Scoter; a fine adult male, closely seen November 4, 1917. That same fall I found the White-winged Scoter in numbers, and they were again observed in all plumages during the fall of 1918. The Surf Scoter eluded my search until October 19, 1919, when one winged by and dropped onto the bay formed by a breakwater and a pier. By walking to the end of the pier, while a small boy by chance headed the duck in my direction by running out on the breakwater, I was able to observe the bird at reasonably close range. It was in juvenile plumage. The two white spots on side of head, separated by a dark area, eliminated the juvenile of American Scoter, while of course the absence of white wing patches put the White-winged out of the question. Other details of bill and plumage also noted.

NELSON'S SPARROW.—To make a strictly satisfactory sight record of the Nelson Sparrow in northern Ohio is unusual enough in itself, but to make it on a breakwater one thousand feet or more out in the lake is rather startling at first thought, but when I say I have also found the Swamp Sparrow in the same place, and also such birds as Kinglets, Wrens, *Brown Creeper*, several Warblers, many of the Fringillidæ and other land birds it betters matters somewhat, but still needs explaining. This breakwater extends some six or seven hundred yards out into the lake. The middle third is planked over and was originally intended for a wharf, but now the planking is broken and decayed and in many places whole boards are missing. A filling of broken stones reaches up to within a foot or two of the planks, and the land birds are attracted there to feed upon the small moths and insects that abound there at times. It is hard to conjecture just how a Nelson's Sparrow or a Brown Creeper would *know* of this food supply so utterly out of their usual habitat, but nevertheless there they were. I intend some day to write an article on the "Bird Life of a Stone Breakwater," for

I have a list of nearly a hundred species I have found there, so will not go into further details now.

Sunday, October 26, 1919, as I walked out there a small sparrow flitted up out of a crack in the planking and then down out of sight again. He looked to be a stranger so I got as near as was safe and waited. The bird soon appeared again with a small yellow-brown moth in its bill, then down under again for another, keeping this up for as long as I cared to observe it. As I was only about fifteen feet away—frozen stiff of course—and as the bird would stand on a plank in full view for at least a minute at a time, every now and then, I was enabled to note his every characteristic mark. To begin with I called him (if *him* he was) the very prettiest little sparrow yet. Here is a field description, and any one who chooses may trace the identity as easily as I—providing they know practically all of the other sparrows for a starter: "Crown dark brown, with very distinct white or possibly light gray median stripe. Broad yellow buff stripe above eye. Grayish area about ear region, with buff below. A conspicuous white eye ring. Bill grayish. Nape feathers ashy, finely streaked with darker. Back striped with white and black on brown. Tail sharp. Breast and flanks a bright buff color indistinctly streaked with narrow dusky lines. Throat apparently light gray or white unstreaked. Belly clear white, contrasting oddly with buff of lower breast, flanks and under tail coverts. Feet and legs a peculiar tone—diluted red raspberry expresses it very well." Certainly a beautiful study in buff and brown set off by the contrasting median stripe, eye ring and back stripes. No one could mistake it after once seeing the bird well, for he wears a livery all his own as far as Ohio is concerned.

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