

eventually by strong westerly and northwesterly winds as polar air masses passed across Canada and the Great Lakes into eastern United States. These Mew Gulls may have been influenced by this sequence of pronounced meteorological events in their passage to Ontario. However, since similar weather patterns with systems of varying intensity occur over Canada and northern United States more or less frequently in autumn, it is conceivable that, if affected by them, these gulls wandered toward Ontario in shorter stages over more lengthy periods of time. We thank J. L. Baillie, Jr., R. C. Banks, J. C. Barlow, W. E. Godfrey, A. H. Morgan and R. A. Paynter, Jr. for their information and assistance.—ROBERT F. ANDRLE AND HAROLD H. AXTELL, *Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, New York, 22 March 1968.*

**Color aberrations in some alcids on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.**—While engaged in a study of the comparative breeding biology of plankton-feeding alcids on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, in 1966 and 1967, I had opportunity to make observations on albinism and melanism in several alcid species.

Gross (Bird-Banding, 36:67-71, 1965) compiled a list including 54 bird families in which albinism has been reported; the family Alcidae is represented by seven species and 27 individuals. A. O. Gross (pers. comm., 1968) listed the alcids in which albinism has been recorded (number of individuals in parentheses): *Alca torda* (1), *Uria aalge* (2), *U. lomvia* (4), *Plautus alle* (2), *Cephus grylle* (7), *C. columba* (1), and *Fratercula arctica* (10). Storer (Univ. California Publ. Zool., 52:121-222, 1952) and Tuck (The murre, 1961) mentioned additional records of *Uria* spp.; Storer also mentioned one albinistic *Plautus*. The present note records albinism in four individuals of three additional alcid species. The degree of albinism is categorized following Gross (op. cit.) and the terminology for color follows Palmer and Reilly (A concise color standard, 1956).

On 17 August 1967 an imperfect albino Parakeet Auklet (*Cyclorhynchus psittacula*) was collected near its nest-site on Sevuokuk Mountain. The specimen (U.B.C. Mus. Zool. no. 13361), an adult female, weighed 289.5 g, was moderately fat and showed extensive abrasion of the remiges and retrices. Postnuptial molt had not commenced. The plumage on the dorsal surface, wings, tail, and chin showed albinistic characteristics; this plumage was a "washed-out" buffy brown rather than the normal black. This bird's mate was normally pigmented and their single chick, estimated to be about 24 days old on the basis of its 38.2 mm outer primary (Sealy, A comparative study of breeding ecology and timing in plankton-feeding alcids (*Cyclorhynchus* and *Aethia* spp.) on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, unpubl. M.Sc. Thesis, Univ. of British Columbia, 1968), was normally pigmented. The chick fledged at 35 days of age.

On 27 June 1967 a partial albino, adult Crested Auklet (*Aethia cristatella*) was observed flying and walking on boulders on Sevuokuk Mountain. Its wings and breast were white; the remainder of its plumage was apparently normally pigmented.

A Least Auklet (*A. pusilla*) with white rectrices was collected on Sevuokuk Mountain on 30 June 1967. This specimen (U.B.C. Mus. Zool. No. 13389), a subadult male, weighed 81.7 g and was moderately fat.

On 20 August 1967 a young, total albino, Least Auklet was found in a nest on Sevuokuk Mountain. It retained the normal plumage pattern, but the dark color of the upperparts was replaced by buffy tan (Fig. 1); a similar condition has been described for *U. lomvia* and *P. alle* (Storer, op. cit.). The auklet (U.B.C. Mus. Zool. No. 13359) had pink irises, legs and feet, and was about 24 days old on the basis of the 41.2 mm outer primary (Sealy, op. cit.). Its parents were not observed.



FIG. 1. Total albino Least Auklet chick, 20 August 1967, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Sage (Brit. Birds, 55:201, 1962; Brit. Birds, 56:409, 1963) discussed melanism and its occurrence in British birds but did not record it in the Alcidae. Storer (op. cit.) mentioned three examples of melanism in *U. aalge* and Winge (Grønlands Fugle, 1898) and Tuck (op. cit.) reported several melanistic individuals of *U. lomvia*.

On 11 June 1967 I saw one apparently total melanistic *U. lomvia* flying in a flock of about 20 at sea near the Northwest Cape of the island.

This work was supported by a National Research Council of Canada grant to M. D. F. Udvardy.—SPENCER G. SEALY, *Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver 8, British Columbia. (Present address: Department of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104). 3 March 1968.*

**Flicker incubates pink plastic balls, on a lawn, for five weeks.**—The following incident, brought to my attention by Mrs. Howard Vivyan of the Kirkland Bird Club in Clinton, New York, is an interesting addition to our knowledge of the sometimes unusual breeding behavior of the Yellow-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*). The bizarre courtship antics of the species are well-known to all observers. In the literature one may find examples of the odd places this species has been known to nest—haystacks, rotten stumps, old barrels and very occasionally on the ground. And the flicker is known to be an indeterminate layer and will continue to lay eggs if they are removed as soon as laid (Welty, *The life of birds*, W. B. Saunders Co., 1962, p. 295).

On 11 June 1967, Mrs. F. C. Lloyd, who lives three miles northeast of Clinton, near a wooded pond and open fields, found an egg on her front lawn lying next to a pale pink plastic ball, of the type that has a small protruding knob to snap into another ball, with a circumference of about four inches. On the 12th, another egg was laid and on the 13th a female flicker was discovered sitting on the eggs and pink ball. In all four eggs were laid; two were broken and then the remaining two were removed to the house (where an unsuccessful attempt was made in the next two weeks to hatch them in an improvised incubator). A second plastic ball was placed by the Lloyds on the lawn beside the first. At intervals, on the 16th–18th, the flicker was seen on the balls, so on