

The Kingbird in a New Rôle.—The following note is from the pen of my friend, the Rev. Frank W. Ritchie, who has courteously permitted me to publish it.

“On the afternoon of June 15, 1884, I was walking near the bank of the Massawipi River when my attention was drawn to a pair of Crow Blackbirds by their cries of evident distress, and, upon looking to see the cause of the outcry, observed, in a tree near by, a Crow with an almost fully fledged Blackbird dangling from its beak. In a few moments afterwards the Crow started across the river, the parents of its victim in hot pursuit, and when about midway the stream was charged upon by a Kingbird with such vigor that the young Blackbird was released, and half fell, half fluttered in a slanting direction toward the shore, the Kingbird following, and by flying under and against the youngster was evidently endeavoring to assist it in reaching the shore. Some bushes intervened between me and the birds, as they approached the water, and though I rushed down quickly, to observe the end of this interesting scene, by the time I reached the edge of the bank the birds had disappeared. As I could see nothing of the young bird's body floating on the water, I concluded that the Kingbird had succeeded in its generous endeavor.”—MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN, *St. John, N. B.*

Late Occurrence of the Phœbe (*Sayornis fuscus*) at Brewer, Maine.—On Nov. 23 (1884), when the snow here was six inches deep, and the Penobscot River frozen over above the dam, a Phœbe came into my garden and remained a long time. As it was Sunday I did not shoot him, but there is no doubt as to his identity, for my daughter and I stood within a few feet of him and watched him catch insects over a smoking manure heap.—MANLY HARDY, *Brewer, Maine.*

Hawk Owls in New England.—Although the months of October and November, 1884, do not seem to have been characterized by any special meteorological phenomena, they will be long remembered by ornithologists and collectors throughout Northern New England from the fact that they brought to this region a flight of Hawk Owls altogether unparalleled in any previous year of which we have definite records. This inroad seems to have begun late in October and to have lasted nearly through November. It apparently extended over most of Northern Maine and New Hampshire, but I have no evidence that it reached Massachusetts. Some idea of the abundance of the birds may be had from the fact (for which I am indebted to Mr. Manly Hardy) that a single taxidermist in Bangor, Maine (Mr. Bowler), received no less than twenty-eight freshly-killed specimens in the course of a few weeks. Most of our Boston taxidermists also had from three to six each (all from Northern Maine or New Hampshire), and at Lake Umbagog, Oxford County, Maine, I secured four, shot respectively Oct. 25, Oct. 31, Nov. 15, Nov. 16.

These figures doubtless represent but a small proportion of the total number killed, for in the region over which the birds spread few persons

are aware that an Owl has any commercial value, although every one shoots the despised bird at sight. Thus for every one preserved a dozen were probably thrown away. As instancing this, I quote the following from a short note in 'Forest and Stream',* signed Ned Norton, and dated at Colebrooke, N. H., Dec. 1:—"Hawk Owls came three weeks ago in greater numbers than ever seen before. Farmers' sons have been killing them all over the country."

The account of this species in 'New England Bird Life' (Part II, p. 96) would lead one to infer that while "a rare and irregular winter visitor to Massachusetts," it is of regular and rather common occurrence throughout Northern New England. This is certainly a mistake, as every collector who has any practical knowledge of our fauna knows. Indeed the bird is ordinarily one of the very rarest of our Owls—so rare, in fact, that during an experience of some twenty years previous to 1884 I had never seen either a living or freshly-killed specimen.

In respect to the remarkable migration just described, it may be well to add that all the specimens which I have examined belong to the American form, *Surnia funerea* (L.) Rich. & Sw.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.

The Turkey Buzzard in Central New York.—I have lately examined all that remains of a *Cathartes aura* which was killed in Oneida County, N. Y., in May, 1879. When first seen he was in company with three others in a small grove in Westmoreland Township, and was shot by Mr. Lavello J. Groves, of that town, who had him mounted and preserved. This is certainly the first record for the County and, I think, for this part of the State.—EGBERT BAGG, JR., Utica, N. Y.

Recent Occurrence of the Black Vulture in Ohio.—A Black Vulture (*Catharista atrata*), in company with some Crows, flew into the Zoölogical Garden on the afternoon of Dec. 4, 1884. Spying one of the same species in one of the outer aviaries, it deserted its companions and alighted on the wire netting covering the aviary. From thence it flew on to the lower limb of a large tree just opposite, and becoming frightened at the attempts of the keepers to capture it, circled to a great height and slowly sailed off in an easterly direction.—FRANK J. THOMPSON, Zoölogical Garden, Cincinnati, O.

A New Bird for Illinois.—In a letter from Mr. Ridgway, dated Oct. 25, 1884, he says: "Among the lot of birds you sent us last week was a specimen of *Buteo borealis krideri* (orig. No. 575), a very typical specimen, from Halfday, Illinois, July 25, 1876. This specimen is particularly acceptable since the race was previously unrepresented in our collection. It also adds one bird to the fauna of Illinois!" Referring to my Record I find that No. 575 was one of two large Hawks (the other a *Buteo borealis*) brought into camp by one of our party while on a collecting trip along

* Vol. XXIII, No. 19, Dec. 4, 1884, p. 368.