

year (Auk, XLVIII, page 615) Eider Ducks were found feeding in company with Black Ducks on a flooded space where the swollen river overflowed its banks, in West Charlestown, N. H. There were four males and at least as many females. Their presence again this spring is interesting in that it may prove the species a more common migrant on this waterway than has been suspected.—LEWIS O. SHELLEY, *East Westmoreland, N. H.*

**The American Eider in Colorado.**—During the forenoon of February 25, 1932, Mrs. R. J. Kerruish and Miss Susan Goddard of Littleton, Colorado, and Miss Prue Bostwick of Denver in company with the undersigned, visited Marston Lake, near Littleton, Colo., on which there were, at the time, several hundreds of ducks, and some geese.

These birds were studied for a couple of hours with a high power telescope ( $\times 40$ ) which brought them so close, as it were, that every detail of bill, color, and color-pattern was distinct, and unmistakable. Miss Bostwick, in examining the flocks, drew attention to a duck which exhibited a striking forehead marking; further and prolonged examination showed the bird to be a male American Eider (*Somateria mollissima dresseri*). We had with us Vol. I of Forbush's 'Birds of Massachusetts,' the Eider plate of which enabled every one to verify the diagnosis.

While extremely skeptical of the value of sight identifications of birds rare or unknown in the area of observation, the circumstances of the identification of this eider were so extraordinarily favorable and easy that its correctness is beyond question. There are two previous records (Cooke, Birds of Colorado, Append. p. 157) of this eider in Colorado. One is utterly worthless: "a mounted bird of this species in the rooms of the Society of Natural History in Denver" with no data. The second record is only a shade better: "taken by W. G. Smith at Loveland sometime previous to 1892" said to be in Mr. Smith's collection but specimen not seen by Cooke and no other data published.—W. H. BERGROLD, *Denver, Colo.*

**"Duck Ponds" in Holland.**—The establishment in the United States of what are referred to by the uninforming name of "duck ponds" of the Holland pattern has been urged as a conservation measure. We are informed that these devices are still in operation with the same "wonderful results" that they have yielded for generations in the past.

The "duck ponds" prove to be only what are known in England as "duck decoys," that is, ponds to which wildfowl are attracted and which are equipped with devices for trapping the birds. These ponds are usually well-screened by trees and surrounded by dikes or walls so that when the birds are inside they cannot see what is going on outside. The Dutch Government prohibits all interference with the ducks for about a mile in all directions, and no shooting or other disturbance is permitted on the entire preserve.

Some of the birds are wing-clipped and especially trained to feed in, and thus lose fear of, the leads to the traps. These usually are females which, retained in the ponds until their quills are renewed and they are again able

to fly, serve as guides to bring other birds into the ponds. These wild birds if not trapped leave the pond at dusk, but return for food the next day, bringing others with them, so that in the height of migration great numbers come into the ponds. For nine months of the year no one but the trainer is allowed in the enclosure and training is kept up daily. Some of the Mallards breed, long vase-like nests woven of straw being provided for them, but the other species do not breed when wing-clipped and kept in the ponds. Regardless of the minor feature of Mallard breeding, the duck ponds can scarcely be termed propagating places for wild ducks; rather they are essentially duck traps.

Holland being in the main path of migration for the waterfowl of western Europe is admirably located for the operation of duck decoys. Thousands of the birds come into the ponds during migration and catches of from four to five hundred birds per day are not uncommon. At one of them it is said that more than 4400 Widgeon were taken in a week. Authentic statistics recently published (*Ardea*, 20, 1931, pp. 152-169) show that nearly half a million birds have been captured in a single season by the 145 duck decoys known to be in operation in Holland. Enthusiastic advocates of decoys allege that 3,000,000 wild ducks are trapped in them annually. Whether a half million or more it needs no saying that Holland is reaping a much larger duck crop than she is entitled to, that is to say one out of all proportion to the number of ducks that are actually hatched and raised in the country. Not only are wildfowl produced in other countries thus caught wholesale, but the breeding stock of those countries also is reduced by the numbers of birds that are retained in these ponds and thus rendered non-productive during the breeding season. These duck ponds, while a source of revenue to their proprietors and to Holland, are almost wholly destructive from the standpoint of wildfowl conservation and are certainly not devices to be invited in countries now fortunate enough to be free from them. Any moves to establish them in the United States should be stamped out forthwith.—W. L. McATEE, *U. S. Biol. Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**A New Genus for *Rallus poeciloptera*.**—In working on the rails for the second volume of my 'Check-list' I have come across a number of cases wherein I cannot agree with the arrangement used by Sharpe in the 'British Museum Catalogue' and later adopted by him in his 'Hand List.' Most of these cases are questions of difference of opinion as to the validity and limits of certain genera, but in only one case has it not been possible to accomplish a rearrangement either by "lumping" genera or transferring species.

The genus *Eulabeornis* Gould as constituted by Sharpe consists of

- E. castaneoventer* Gould (type of the genus)
- E. woodfordi* (Ogilvie Grant)
- E. poeciloptera* (Hartlaub)

A simultaneous examination of the three species clearly shows that the