

disarranged curtain that excluded the sun from the precious eggs, fixed some permanent ranges, and quietly departed to await the completion of the set. A week later, on the 13th of June, I again visited the nest and found therein the full complement of nine eggs.

This nest was situated about forty rods back from the shore of the river, on the moist meadow, often overflowed by the spring tides. The particular spot had not been mowed for several years, and the new grass, springing up through the old, dry, accumulated growths of previous years, was thick, short, and not over eight or ten inches in height—a fine place for Rails to glide unseen among its intricacies. The nest after the complement of eggs were deposited in it resembled that of the common Meadow Lark, it consisting of fine meadow grasses loosely put together, with a covering of the standing grasses woven over it and a passage and entrance at one side. The eggs also have a general resemblance to the Lark's, but differ in several points, being smaller and of a duller white, without the gloss usual on the Lark's. The spots are also smaller than the ordinary markings on the Lark's eggs. In size I find them as follows: No. 1, 1.04 × .81 inches; No. 2, 1.04 × .81; No. 3, 1.04 × .79; Nos. 4 and 5, 1.00 × .80; No. 6, 1.00 × .81; No. 7, 1.02 × .80; No. 8, .98 × .81; No. 9, .97 × .80.

Compared with other Rail's eggs, they most resemble in general color those of the Virginia Rail, but the markings are much smaller as well as much more numerous; two of the specimens have, however, large spots, like Virginia Rail's, at the large end; but in the majority the spots are small and abundant. The difference between the two ends, if any, is very slight, the eggs being much less elongated than those of any other Rail I have seen.

I found a Lark's nest the same day within two rods of this Rail's nest, and not very far from it a Virginia Rail's nest. Taking one of the nine eggs therein for comparison, I find it measures 1.30 × .98 inches; rather larger than the average of the species.

I must add an account of my efforts to secure the Little Black Rail with the set. I devoted the whole day to this special end, and visited the nest about every half hour through the day, approaching it with every possible caution, and having a little tuft of cotton directly over the nest to indicate the exact spot; but although I tried it from every quarter with the utmost diligence and watchfulness, I was never able to obtain the slightest glimpse of the bird—never perceived the slightest quiver of the surrounding grass to mark her movements as she glided away, and yet I found the eggs warm every time, indicating that she had but just left them.—JOHN N. CLARK, *Saybrook, Ct.*

**The Widgeon in Maine in February.**—On the 20th of February last Mr. T. B. Davis, the gunsmith of this city, showed me a recently killed male specimen of the Widgeon (*Mareca americana*), which had been forwarded to him for preservation by a sportsman of Freeport, Maine. The bird had been dead several days. February, 1884, will be remembered as

a month of mild and rainy weather. It appears probable, therefore, that this bird should be regarded as an early migrant rather than as a winter resident.

I have looked through the records in vain for specific notice of the Widgeon's occurrence in New England during winter. Dr. Coues, however, both in his 'List of New England Birds' and in 'New England Bird Life,' states, in general terms, that it is to be found at that season.—NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN. *Portland, Me.*

**Pelicans on the Move.**—Mr. Wm. Smith, who resides at Burlington Beach, at the west end of Lake Ontario, and who is making observations for the Migration Committee of the A. O. U., reports his station being visited by five White Pelicans on March 13. The wind was blowing strong from the southeast, and the birds came up the lake before it, flying heavily, and passing his house alighted on the ice on the bay. They seemed very tired, and at once squatted flat, with the head and neck drawn in and resting between the shoulders, in which position they might readily have been mistaken for chunks of ice. Mr. Smith examined them closely with his glass at a distance of 300 to 400 yards and then tried to reach them with the rifle. When the ball landed among them they jumped straight up and moved 100 yards farther off. They were very unwilling to move, and gave opportunity for two more long but unsuccessful shots, and finally went off east down the lake again, flying low and hugging the shore for shelter from the wind. The last time this species visited the Bay was in the month of May, and they stayed fishing around the inlet for a day or two, and two of their number were shot by a fisherman; the other two then made off.—T. MCLWRAITH. *Hamilton, Ontario.*

**Capture of *Megalestris skua* off the Coast of Cape Cod, Mass.**—I shot a specimen of the Skua Gull, on Jaeger, September 10, 1884, about eight miles east of Polluck Rip, as I was on a return trip from the fishing grounds. I had been tolling the Shearwaters for some time with livers taken from our freshly caught codfish, in hopes to attract the attention of other birds, and at the time had at least forty of the Greater and Sooty Shearwaters following; but the day was too hot and still for the birds to be actively flying about, and this was the only new or different kind called in; but I felt more than paid for the trouble, and proud of the capture, which I have carefully mounted with a view to add it to my collection in the State House, Topeka, Kansas. I did not observe the bird until it was well astern, and for fear of loosing it did not wait to note its flight and actions but dropped it on sight.

The specimen was a female, and presents the following characters: Length, 22.00 in.; stretch of wing, 54.00; wing, 14.75; tail, 6.00; tarsus 2.40; middle toe and claw, 1.80; bill, 1.95; depth at base, .75; plate or cere, 1.03. Weight, 2 lbs. 11 oz. Color dark sooty plumbeous or slate, with pale chestnut markings on neck and back, which gives that portion a dull rusty look. Tail and remiges white at base, the white extend-