

Another Black Robin.—While looking at the birds in an aviary in Somerville, Mass., a few days since, I noticed an American Robin as dark as a European Blackbird, for which I took it until the owner informed me that it was our Robin taken from the nest, in this neighborhood, by himself. He told me that Robins thus raised in confinement were often thus colored. Is not the melanism to be connected with the peculiar conditions to which the bird is exposed? The aviary is built like a greenhouse, with one side (glass) sloping to the south. It has no artificial heat therein, yet keeps southern birds (as Cardinal Grosbeaks) in good condition. The Robins get no worms except those they may pick up in the aviary.—WALTER FAXON, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Some Additions to the Avi-fauna of Colorado.—Mr. Frank M. Drew, in his admirable paper 'On the Vertical Range of Birds in Colorado' (Auk, Jan., 1885), makes no mention of the following species, and, so far as I know, they are new to Colorado. The notes were obtained by the joint efforts of Mr. A. W. Anthony and the writer.

Spizella socialis. CHIPPING SPARROW.—On May 14, 1882, I first made the acquaintance of this species. Small numbers were seen for a week or ten days during the migration. I did not see any more until May 19, 1884, when they were abundant on the Platte River and congregated in large flocks.

On the night of April 22, of the past spring (1885), we had the heaviest fall of snow of the season at Denver, and it continued to fall for most of the forenoon of the 23d. All the morning I had noticed a number of small birds flying about and on closer examination they proved to be of this species. A few were seen off and on until May 12.

Scolecophagus carolinus. RUSTY BLACKBIRD.—In the collection of Mr. Anthony is a pair of Rusty Grackles which he shot December 17, 1883. They were in a piece of swampy ground, near Denver, and were the only ones seen.

Colaptes auratus 'hybridus.' 'HYBRID FLICKER.'—Specimens of this bird are not uncommon here. Generally seen during the migrations.

Syrnium occidentalis. SPOTTED OWL.—In the collection of Mr. A. W. Anthony is a specimen of this Owl, which he shot either in January or February, 1882. It was in a wet marshy place grown up to coarse grass. The bird seemed to make its home in this locality for some time, as he says he flushed it from the grass on several different occasions during the winter, before he succeeded in shooting it. On corresponding with Mr. C. E. Aiken, of Colorado Springs, we learn that he has taken several specimens which he refers to this species.

Glaucidium gnoma. CALIFORNIA PIGMY OWL.—The earliest specimen of this species is in the possession of a taxidermist of this city, who informs us that it was found dead and frozen under a bank on Clear Creek, in the vicinity of Denver, February 3, 1881. In July, 1884, the writer was camped on Bear Creek, a brawling mountain stream, which winds its way through the cañon of the same name. On the afternoon of the 21st, I crossed the

creek and commenced climbing the rugged side of the mountain, every now and then stopping to rest and listen for some bird-note to guide me. I had been climbing for perhaps half an hour when, on turning to look back, I saw a small, thick-set bird, having the appearance of an Owl, flying along the side of the mountain some distance below me. As the sun was shining brightly I expected he would alight near by, but this he did not seem at all inclined to do, but kept on until lost to sight around a projecting spur of the mountain. Following in his line of flight, I was soon attracted by the chattering of some Mountain Chickadees, and on approaching nearer I found his Owlship in the top of a small spruce with a number of small birds about him. On shooting it, it proved to be of this species. I was unable to tell the sex from dissection, but owing to its large size and coloration I believe it to be a female. The nearest settlement which can be called by the name of town, was Evergreen, three or four miles distant.

Nycticorax nycticorax nævius. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.—In the collection of the Denver High School is a specimen of this Heron which is labelled Fort Collins, Colorado, May, 1882. Sex ♂.

Two more specimens—an adult and young bird—are in the possession of a taxidermist of this city, who informs me that they were shot by a ranchman a few miles from the city. They bear no label, but he believes they were taken either in the year 1882 or 1883.

The fourth specimen was brought to me May 12, 1885, and was a full plumaged male in good condition. It was also shot by a ranchman, about twenty miles from Denver.

Charadrius squatarola. BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER.—In the collection of Mr. Anthony is a specimen of this bird, which he secured in the market October 22, 1885. The game-dealer said it was brought in but a few minutes before he purchased it. It was a young male, very fat, and was shot on a small lake near this city.

Philohela minor. AMERICAN WOODCOCK.—In a gun store in Denver, Mr. Anthony found a mounted specimen of the Woodcock, which he learned was shot on August 12, 1885.

He also learned that a second specimen had been shot in the last week of October of the same year. They were taken almost within the city limits, and our informer stated that many others were seen, but as *Galinago delicata* is also common in the locality, we prefer to think he confounded the two species.

Phalacrocorax dilophus. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT.—About the 1st of November, 1885, one of our daily papers mentioned a bird called a 'Surf Coot,' which was on exhibition at a certain restaurant in the city. Mentioning the fact to Mr. Anthony, he started in quest of information, only to learn that the bird had been sold to some unknown person. A few days later, however, he stumbled upon the supposed 'Surf Coot,' in the possession of an amateur collector, and on examination it resolved itself into the Double-crested Cormorant. We understand it was shot about twenty miles from Denver.

Larus argentatus smithsonianus. AMERICAN HERRING GULL.—A

young bird of this species was shot November 17, 1883, and is now in the collection of Mr. Anthony. The person who shot the bird said that many other Gulls were seen, but whether they were of this species is questionable. It was shot on a small lake a few miles from the city.—HORACE G. SMITH, JR., *Denver, Col.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

[Correspondents are requested to write briefly and to the point. No attention will be paid to anonymous communications.]

Revival of the Sexual Passion in Birds in Autumn.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

Sirs: In 'The Auk' for January (p. 141), Mr. Bradford Torrey speaks of the revival of the sexual passion of birds in autumn. A similar occurrence has been observed here for two or three years past. The early winter (November and December), this year was exceptionally mild in this locality. During this weather the English Sparrows were seen building their nests and the male birds were seen hopping about the females with lowered wings and acting exactly as they do in spring. The birds were very noisy and a great deal of fighting occurred. As soon as cold weather came on all this stopped and the Sparrows found it necessary to spend all their time in securing food.

Respectfully,

CHAS. KEELER.

Milwaukee, Wis., January 29, 1886.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Fish Commission Steamer 'Albatross' sailed from the Washington Navyyard February 15, for a cruise among the Bahamas and other islands in the West Indies. Among the islands which will be visited is Cat Island, or San Salvador, the first land discovered by Columbus. The 'Albatross' is well provided with trained naturalists and collectors, of whom Mr. James E. Benedict, Mr. Thomas Lee, Mr. W. Nye, and Mr. Chas. W. Townsend will pay special attention to the birds, of which they are prepared to make a judiciously limited and selected collection, while in no case will they jeopardize the continued existence of any local species,