

Note on Rostratulinae.—It would appear that Vieillot instituted the genus *Rostratula* in 1816, before Cuvier proposed *Rhynchæa* for the same Painted-snipe, though the former name has never become current. These Snipes are peculiar in several respects, and especially in those secondary sexual characters for which the female is conspicuous, among which are the tracheal convolutions. In any system which recognizes several families of charadriomorphic birds, such characters would seem to be of more than generic value.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

The Wild Turkey in Massachusetts.—When a pupil of the Public Latin School in Boston in 1837-38, I spent a portion of my summer vacations in Northampton. I distinctly remember conversing with some of the town's people at those times in regard to the existence of a flock of Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) which had frequently been seen in the neighborhood of Mount Holyoke. I was much interested in the circumstance, which even then was deemed very unusual.

These birds had the range of a large tract of wild mountainous country, in some parts almost inaccessible and impassable, lying at the base of and comprising Mount Holyoke, and to the southwest also including Mount Tom and its surroundings. An incident occurring at this period serves to show the character of this district. A stranger ascended Mount Holyoke to enjoy the view from its summit. In descending he missed the path, and becoming bewildered, wandered away into the forests at the base. Here he passed two or three days before he succeeded in extricating himself in a famished condition, and having upon his person only a small portion of the holiday attire in which he ascended the mountain.

I am unable to state the exact period at which this flock became exterminated, but should say that it must have been in 1840, or thereabouts.

My friend, Mr. J. A. Allen, has kindly given me the following references on this subject, which I have looked up.

Hitchcock in his 'Geological Report of Massachusetts,' 1883, says, "Wild Turkeys are frequently met with on Mount Holyoke." In the same volume, Dr. Ebenezer Emmons, in his list of the birds, says, "The Wild Turkeys have now become scarce and nearly extinct."

In a communication to the 'Bulletin' of the Nuttall Ornithological Club (Vol. I, 1876), Mr. J. A. Allen says, "According to John Josselyn the Wild Turkeys began early to decline." This author, writing in 1672 ('New England's Rarities') says, "I have also seen three score broods of young Turkies on the side of a marsh sunning of themselves in a morning betimes, but this was thirty years since, the English and the Indians have now destroyed the breed so that it is very rare to meet with a wild Turkey in the Woods, but some of the English bring up great stores of the wild kind which remain about their Houses as tame as ours in New England."

Thompson, in his 'History of Vermont,' says, under date of 1842, "A few of the Wild Turkeys continue still to visit and breed upon the mountains in the southern part of the state."

In a communication to the 'Proceedings' of the Essex Institute, under

date of May 2, 1864, Mr. Allen says, "The Wild Turkey is now probably extinct in this State. Within a few years it has been said to occur wild on Mts. Tom and Holyoke, but I can find no authentic instances of its recent capture in this State. It is well known that the domestic turkey will sometimes take to the woods, assuming the habits of the wild bird. Hence these reports may well be received with considerable caution."

In Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway's 'Land Birds,' Vol. III, 1874, we find the following: "It has probably become an extinct species in New England, though within a few years, individuals have been shot in Montague, Mass., and in other towns in Franklin County."

We must consider, then, that the fate of this noble bird, not only in Massachusetts but in New England, has been decided for many years, and the same fate awaits it in all the other States, where it still lingers, unless means are early adopted to prevent its complete annihilation. — D. D. SLADE, *Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass.*

The European Kestrel in Massachusetts—A Correction.—In 'The Auk' for January last (Vol. V, p. 110), the locality of capture for the specimen of this species there recorded should read Strawberry Hill, Nantasket Beach, Mass., instead of "Nantucket," Mass.—CHARLES B. CORY, *Boston, Mass.*

First Occurrence of the Western Red-tail in Ontario.—I have obtained from M. J. Dodds, St. Thomas, Ont., a fine adult of the Western Red-tail (*Buteo borealis calurus*), which was killed near there in the fall of 1885, by John Oxford. This appears to be the first recorded occurrence of this species in Ontario. At the same time I procured from him an Ontario specimen of the Sandhill Crane, killed at Roudeau in 1869 by the same man, which is interesting from the probability that Ontarians have seen their last living examples of this species in the Province, and there are but very few native specimens in existence.—W. E. SAUNDERS, *London, Ont.*

Dichromatism in the Genus Nyctidromus. — During my examination of this group, Mr. J. A. Allen called my attention to a number of particularly red or rich cinnamon colored birds, among the twenty-seven specimens from Matto Grosso, Brazil, which belong to the American Museum of Natural History, and were collected by Mr. Herbert H. Smith.

Having before me a number of specimens from other localities belonging to the National Museum, the American Museum of Natural History (the Lawrence collection in particular), I also find this dichromatism, though to a less extent. Judging from the material at my command, it seems to be prevalent only about and south of the equator, although it may be looked for in a lesser degree in Mexico and Texas. These two phases—the red and gray—are analogous to those so well known to exist in our common Screech Owls of the genus *Megascops*. I find that in Matto Grosso, Brazil, one out of every three are in the red phase; in