

to round up the zero point, and the ice on the river was quite thick and safe for crossing, though the water flows swiftly through the cañon. The only snow to be found lay in heavy banks on the north slopes. Personally I was unable to visit the cañon again during the winter, but my friend, the conductor, Mr. J. J. Duffey, kindly kept me posted up to February 7, 1888. On this date, he informed me a few days afterward, the birds were as abundant as when I saw them, two months before. Mr Duffey is thoroughly reliable, and I greatly regret his transfer to another division, as his departure on February 7 left the cañon without an observer. The severe weather being nearly over at this time, I am satisfied the birds remained in the cañon until spring. Does any member of the A. O. U. know of the bird's wintering in favored localities like the North Platte Cañon, or in this latitude ( $42^{\circ}20'$  N.) anywhere? *Myiadestes townsendii* is hardly tolerably common during the migrating seasons, at Cheyenne.—FRANK BOND, *Cheyenne, Wyoming.*

**Another Western Bird in South Carolina.**—October 5, 1888, I procured, near the town of Chester, a Thrush which I believed to be *Turdus fuscescens salicicolus*. To place the identification beyond question, I submitted the specimen to Mr. Robert Ridgway, the original describer of the subspecies, soliciting his determination. I was promptly favored with a reply which corroborated the opinion formed by myself as stated above.—LEVERETT M. LOOMIS, *Chester, S. C.*

**Bicknell's Thrush Breeding in Vermont.**—Now that *Turdus alicia bicknelli* has been reported as a summer resident on Mount Graylock, Massachusetts, as well as in the Catskills and the White Mountains, it may not be amiss for me to enter a somewhat tardy record of its presence in the Green Mountains. In July, 1885, I passed four days (14th to 17th) on Mount Mansfield, and found Bicknell's Thrushes abundant in the evergreens about the hotel. From the piazza, one evening, I heard six singing at once, and during the day their calls were so persistent as to become almost a nuisance. After my return to Boston the clerk of the hotel sent me a young bird in the flesh, and the specimen is now in Mr. Brewster's collection.—BRADFORD TORREY, *Melrose Highlands, Massachusetts.*

**Some Rare Rhode Island Birds.**—The following species, considered rare for that portion of the country, have been observed by me in the vicinity of Newport, Rhode Island: Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowi*), abundant in September and October, 1888; Florida Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*), a number seen in October, 1888; Black-throated Bunting (*Spiza americana*), one specimen, September, 1888; Red Phalarope (*Crymophilus fulicarius*), one specimen, Oct. 11, 1888.—WIRT ROBINSON, *2d. Lieut., 4th Artillery, Fort Adams, R. I.*

**Some Rare Virginia Birds.**—On November 12, 1881, whilst hunting in Chesterfield Co., Virginia (the south side of James River), I observed

among a large straggling flock of Horned Larks, what I thought was an albino, and after a tedious pursuit over ploughed fields, I succeeded in securing the bird which proved to be a Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). This was the only one in the flock and the only one that I have ever seen in Virginia. The day was extremely disagreeable, with drizzling rain and sleet, and very cold.

The following are some birds which I have observed, and which by some authorities are not ascribed to that section of the country, or else are considered as stragglers :

*Chen hyperboreus*. SNOW GOOSE.—One specimen, winter of 1877.

*Nyctea nyctea*. SNOWY OWL.—One specimen, winter of 1877, Buckingham Co.

*Ægialitis wilsonia*. WILSON'S PLOVER.—One shot on a sand bar in James River, Nelson Co.; it was in company with Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers and Killdeer, August, 1887.

*Protonotaria citrea*. PROTHONOTARY WARBLER.—One seen in King William Co., April 29, 1879.

*Dendroica dominica*. YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER.—Numbers seen in May and June in different portions of the State.

*Lanius ludovicianus*. LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE.—Numbers seen; resident; more seen in December than in any other month. — WIRT ROBINSON, *ad Lieut.. 4th Artillery, Fort Adams, R. I.*

**Costal Variations in Birds.**—Dr. Shufeldt's valuable paper 'On the Affinities of *Aphriza virgata*' contains the following passage. "Then again it is pretty well agreed that when we come to define the line between cervical and dorsal divisions of the column, we look chiefly to the ribs for assistance; yet these are by no means always to be relied upon; as sometimes in the same species, an additional pair may remain free at the further end of the cervical region, or an additional pair (always at the anterior part of the dorsal division) may connect with the sternum by a pair of hæmapophyses."

In 'The Auk' for July, 1888, allusion was made to the fact that it was by no means unusual for the Great Auk to possess an extra (ninth) pair of ribs, these being attached to the second 'sacral' vertebra, and subsequent examination shows this additional pair of ribs to have been present in no less than twenty-three, out of one hundred and forty-four sacra, pretty nearly one out of every six.

It is extremely difficult to say whether or no extra, free ribs were, or were not, occasionally present in the cervical region, from the fact that series of consecutive vertebræ cannot be obtained, but there is little doubt but that this was the case, although no twelfth vertebra bearing a costal facet has yet been noticed.

The question of the attachment of extra ribs to the sternum can be decided by that bone only, and unfortunately sterna of the Great Auk are much scarcer than almost any other bone. Still thirty sterna are available, and of this number twenty-three have seven pairs of costal facets, while