

It may interest the readers of 'The Auk' to hear of the occurrence of the Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*), female, at Ann Arbor, in the latter part of December, and again in the early part of March, a foot of snow being on the ground at the latter date.

A small flock of Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*) was seen on May 24, and a number of individuals secured. It is considered a rare bird in that locality.

Last spring also, I had brought to me for examination an egg of a common fowl about four inches in its long diameter, and the short diameter nearly equal to four inches. The shell was of average thickness, shell membranes normal. This egg not only contained white and yolk, but also a second egg of the usual size, with shell, membranes, and contents perfect. The shell of the inclosed egg was extremely thick. An interpretation of this phenomenon is easy enough; the smaller, normal-sized egg was evidently detained in the oviduct when just about to be laid, and then, having worked back to the region of the oviduct where the shell membrane is formed, met the descending yolk and white of the larger egg. A membrane was then deposited, not only around this second egg, but also around the the first formed perfect egg; then both descended the oviduct, a shell was formed about them both, and the resulting 'double egg' expelled. The failure to lay the first egg may have been due to some temporary weakness of the muscles employed.—F. L. WASHBURN, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Polioptila plumbea at Palm Springs, California.—During the latter part of April I spent a week collecting at Palm Springs in company with Mr. W. W. Price, and together we secured eight specimens of *Polioptila plumbea*, the first taken west of the Colorado River, I believe. Palm Springs is situated in the extreme western end of the Colorado Desert, about midway between the coast and the Colorado River, seven miles south of Seven Palms, a station on the Southern Pacific Railroad, and about seventy miles from San Bernardino. *P. plumbea* were found in a dry sandy wash near the settlement, in the tangled thickets of the creosote brush (*Larrea mexicana*). They undoubtedly breed there, as two young scarcely able to fly were secured, and others seen. Three males had the black cap fully developed.

Harporhynchus lecontei and *Callipepla gambeli* were found with young, but very shy.—FRED. O. JOHNSON, *Riverside, California.*

Winter Notes from Portland, Maine. — The exceptionally mild winter of 1888-89 was not without its effect on the birds about Portland. During the fall migration a great many of the Sparrows and Warblers prolonged their stay a week or ten days, or even longer, beyond their usual date. A noteworthy case was that *Dendroica coronata* which remained until December 6. There appears to be no previous December record of this

species in Maine, though it has once been detected at Pine Point in January.*

Robins wintered in unusual numbers in and about the city.

A single flock of Cedarbirds (about twenty in number) appeared on February 6.

But the most interesting result of the mild season was the wintering of *Colaptes auratus*. As a rule this species withdraws very early in November, although my brother saw a straggler on November 13, 1881.† Yet while most of the birds disappeared in the autumn of 1888 about the usual time, I saw a single individual (perhaps the same one) almost every day up to December 18. After that date I met with no more until January 1, 1889, when I found a bird feeding on the berries of a mountain-ash tree within the City limits. A friend reported one on Cape Elizabeth on January 3, and Mr. Luther Redlon, of Portland, an accurate observer of birds, saw one in the Portland 'Oaks' on February 10. I met with one again on February 16, and also on the 25th of the same month. From the latter date up to March 1, not a day passed without my meeting with one. It may be worth while to note that all the birds seen after the first of November were males. So far as I am aware the Flicker has not before been known to winter in Maine, though Mr. Everett Smith has recorded ‡ the capture of a single bird at Fort Popham, in January, 1885.—
JOHN CLIFFORD BROWN, *Portland, Maine.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Suggestion to the A. O. U. Committee on the Revision of the Check-List of North American Birds.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:

Dear Sirs:—Perhaps no more important and beneficial advance has ever been made in North American ornithology than the publication by the American Ornithologists' Union of a 'Check-List' which at once became an authoritative standard and assures us of a uniformity and probable fixity of nomenclature before impossible. With intense satisfaction, therefore, should we view a continuance of this work in the labors of the committee whose duty it has become to annually revise the productions of the preceding year and give to the Union the results of their deliberations.

But with how much more pleasure should we regard this committee's

* See Goodale, *Auk*, Vol. II, p. 16.

† See *Proc. Port. Soc. Nat. Hist.*, Dec., 1882.

‡ *Forest and Stream*, February 5, 1885.