

Work of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club During 1890.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

Dear Sirs: In the July number of 'The Auk' was published an account of the formation and the objects of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, and as we have now completed a year's study of the birds in the vicinity of Philadelphia it may be of interest to give a brief summary of the results of our work.

We have had six observers regularly in the field during the migrations besides having more or less frequent reports from four others. Our stations of observation being clustered around Philadelphia, the extreme points not more than twelve miles apart, we found a study of the northward progress of the migrating birds, from point to point, out of the question, as the large waves affected all our stations in a single night, and in the case of stragglers the first records came from the stations farthest up the river quite as frequently as from those lower down.

In some cases it would seem as if the advance guard of a wave had halted just beyond our lower stations one night and had not reached the others till the next night.

The records also seem to indicate that the migrating host spreads out farther on the New Jersey side of the river than on the Pennsylvania side, or perhaps the birds sheer off to the east where the river bends northward at Philadelphia; at any rate the arrivals at Haddonfield, N. J., seem to average earlier than at points to the northwest of Philadelphia. Whether future investigations will bear out this theory remains to be seen.

Recognizing the fact that the common species furnish much the best basis for the study of migration, we have endeavored to get as full data concerning them as possible, taking the exact numbers seen day after day, each observer covering nearly the same section of country daily and using the glass much more than the gun in his identifications. The result was that we found the numbers of many species continuing to fluctuate with the waves of migration for some time after the species became common: thus showing that the date of the first arrival, 'bulk arrival,' and last date by no means completely describe the migration of a species.

During the year, 204 species have come under our observation. Of these 86 were recorded through June and July and were proved either by the experience of this year or of former years to be breeders within our district. According to Dr. Allen's lists (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., II, p. 387) twelve of these are characteristic of the Carolinian fauna, and four of the Alleghanian, while seventy are common to both, many being widely distributed during the breeding season.

During January and February fifty-five species came under our observation.

Some of the more interesting records of the year follow:

Uria lomvia.—One shot on the Delaware at Chester, Dec. 29.

Oceanodroma leucorhoa.—One shot at the mouth of Darby Creek, on the Schuylkill River, by Mr. Wm. V. Wiltbank, Dec. 18.

Chen hyperborea.—An immature specimen of this western species was shot at the mouth of Darby Creek, on the Delaware River, Dec. 18, by Mr. Wm. V. Wiltbank.

Hæmatopus palliatus.—One specimen shot on Chester Island in the Delaware, May 14.

Strix pratincola.—Found breeding at Tinicum by J. Harris Reed. The experience of collectors seems to show that it breeds here regularly.

Ceophlœus pileatus.—One shot at Collingdale, Delaware Co., Dec. 12, 1890, by C. A. Voelker.

Corvus corax sinuatus.—One shot in Delaware County near the river, Dec. 30; now in the possession of Mr. C. A. Voelker.

Spiza americana.—One bird, in immature plumage, obtained from a gunner who shot it with Reed Birds on Maurice River, N. J., Sept. 18; now in the collection of Wm. L. Baily.

Thryothorus bewicki.—One shot at Wynnewood, April 12, by Wm. L. Baily.

The club is now engaged in preparing a manuscript reference list of the birds occurring in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania south of the mountains. They will be glad to hear of any captures of scarce birds within this district and to furnish what information they can in return.

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WITMER STONE.

NOTES AND NEWS.

COLONEL N. S. GOSS, one of the original members of the American Ornithologists' Union, died suddenly at Neosho Falls, Kansas, March 10, 1891, at the age of 65 years. Colonel Goss was born in Lancaster, N. H., June 8, 1826, and while still a lad moved with his father to Pewaukee, Wis. His education was such as could be gained at the district school and the local Academy. From childhood he had a deep love for birds, and throughout his life devoted all his leisure to their study, in his later years giving nearly his whole time and energy to ornithological pursuits. In 1857 he moved to Kansas, selecting a home where now stands the city of Neosho Falls, then an unsettled wilderness. He was thus one of the pioneers of the State, and at once took a leading part in the development of its resources. From his enterprise and public spirit he "has been rightly called 'the Father of Neosho Valley.'" In 1860 he was elected and commissioned major, and in 1863 lieutenant-colonel, of the Sixteenth Kansas Militia Cavalry, and saw considerable frontier service, for a time serving as scout for the United States troops stationed at Humboldt, Kans. Later he was register of the land office at Humboldt, resigning to become land attorney for the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railway, and