

within six inches of my hand when collecting eggs. I shall try and get more specimens of the bird I sent you [No. 3237. W. E. D. S. Register; see Auk, VI, p. 317] but they are not very plentiful here and are hard to find."—W. E. D. SCOTT, 58 *William Street, New York City.*

Phalaropus lobatus off Scituate, Mass.—On August 30, 1890, I made my first acquaintance with the Northern Phalarope. As my friend Mr. Marcus Barber and myself were returning from a trip to the Gurnet, Plymouth Harbor, in my sail-boat, when off Fourth Cliff Life Saving Station, we observed what we at first supposed was a large flock of Sandpipers, some two hundred or more, flying to and fro from shore, and were surprised to see them settle on the water. Heading the boat for them, we soon came within gunshot, and secured eight as they rose, they being so scattered as not to offer a good shot. On picking them up, I at once recognized them as one of the Phalaropes. We watched this flock pass from view to southward. Leaving my friend soon after at the Cove, I made sail for Scituate Harbor, about a mile distant; but had not been long underway when the boat was in the centre of a second flock as large as the first, giving me a fine opportunity to watch the bright eyed little birds, as they rode up and down on the light sea that was running. These finally took wing, but had not passed from sight before a third flock nearly as large showed up over the bow; making in all between five and six hundred birds seen within an hour's time. The last were nearly opposite the Harbor, in which I soon dropped anchor. The birds secured proved to be all young of both sexes, except one, an adult female, but no two were alike in plumage. Taking into consideration Mr. W. A. Jeffries' account of 'Phalaropes at Swampscott' (Auk, Jan. 1891, p. 112), and the statement made by my friend Mr. Barber, who in ten years' service along shore "never saw anything like it before," the flight of Phalaropes along our shore last fall must have been a remarkable one. The wind at the time was blowing a fair northwest breeze.—H. D. EASTMAN, *Framingham, Mass.*

The Wild Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) on the Pacific Coast.—I was recently informed by a correspondent, who edits a small weekly journal published in Philadelphia, that Mr. Caleb S. Cope of West Chester, Pa., had seen Wild Pigeons in considerable numbers in "Washington Territory."

This information had been elicited in response to the republication in the above mentioned journal of Mr. Brewster's article in 'The Auk' of October 1889, on the 'Present Status of the Wild Pigeon as a bird of the United States.' A gentleman living in Lycoming Co., Pa., who used to trap Wild Pigeons many years ago, informed my friend that it was commonly understood among those in the business that the Pigeons had gone to the far West and British Columbia on account of their persecution in the eastern and central portions of the United States.

Such testimony being contrary to the published experience of ornithologists, I wrote Mr. Cope to discover by a few leading queries whether his identification of the species was correct. His answers were highly satisfactory, showing that he was not only an admirer of nature but an accurate and intelligent observer. I forwarded his letter to Mr. Brewster, with whom I had previously had some correspondence on the same subject, and he expressed his belief that the evidence presented was unmistakably genuine and worthy of immediate publication. During the spring of 1887, in company with his son, Mr. Cope travelled extensively through the West—"straggling beyond the plains into California, Oregon, Western Washington, and Vancouvers' Island"—where, he says, "I saw and heard more Wild Pigeons (*Ectopistes*) than I remember to have ever met with in any other place." The locality where most of the Pigeons were observed was on an extensive plain in Pierce County, Washington, fifteen miles east of Puget's Sound, between the Sound and the Cascade mountains.

This fertile plain was "dotted over with clumps of pine and fir trees, in many instances bent down by flocks of Wild Pigeons that feasted on the strawberries which in some places were so abundant as to give the sward a scarlet tinge." These flocks numbered several hundreds in each, and during the short time spent there (a few days) plainly showed they were but "transitory visitants" passing northward and unlikely to breed in that vicinity.

It is difficult to account for this (so far as known) unprecedented occurrence of a well-known bird in such numbers in a region where hitherto it had been seen only as a rare straggler.

Taking into account the power of flight and wandering nature of the Passenger Pigeon and coupling this with the persecution it has been subjected to during the nesting season, we might naturally expect a change of habitat, but even the most heterodox would scarcely conceive of a sudden and united movement across a thousand miles of unknown territory and two ranges of lofty mountains for the sole purpose of establishing a new route of operations in more peaceful territory. If this was the actual state of affairs in 1877 and has continued to be, the A. O. U. may well look to its laurels. But this is scarcely possible. The region described has been frequently traversed by naturalists and others who would appreciate and report such an unusual occurrence if repeated year after year. Every bird lover would rejoice to hear that this wonderful bird had finally outwitted its great persecutor and lengthened its lease on life by 'going West' in the true American spirit of liberty; and it is fitting that we use every effort to protect and foster a movement so unprecedented. But a study of the past history of *Ectopistes* should prepare us for these apparently startling disclosures. There is no American bird of strictly gregarious and migratory habits that is found breeding over so great an area—*viz.*, from Mexico to Hudson's Bay and British Columbia, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains.

Mr. Nuttall acutely observes in this relation: 1st, that the congregating propensity of this bird has "no relation with the usual motives to migration among other birds"; 2nd, "Nearly the whole species which at any one time inhabit the continent are found together in the same place"; and 3rd, "They do not fly from climate, as they are capable of enduring its severity and extremes." These characteristics, being rendered the more wonderful and effective by surpassing power of flight, enable the Wild Pigeon to defy the petty limitations which environ and restrict other migratory birds and even to set at nought the one law of nature which beyond any other has proved itself most absolute, tyrannical and mysterious,—the law of geographical distribution of species.

Viewed from this standpoint we may regard the occurrence of *Ectopistes migratorius* on the Pacific Slope as a thing so natural that we wonder why it never happened before. Indeed there should now be many of us who doubt not that it has often happened, and who ask, on behalf of our feathered cosmopolite, an ampler breeding range than the books accord, making it from Ocean to Ocean, and from Mexico to Alaska. Despite our attempts to bridge these gaps in the life-history of North American birds, there yet exists in New World ornithology a *terra incognita* of no small proportions, a fact that should not discourage, but inspire us all to renewed endeavor.—SAMUEL N. RHOADS, *Haddonfield, N. J.*

The Breeding Range of the Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) in Texas.—That this bird is credited with "breeding in suitable localities from Maine to California, and from the Fur Countries south into Mexico" by old and undoubted authorities in ornithology is readily admitted. That it is migratory in northeastern Texas, especially in Cooke County, is proven from my note book showing its departure in April and May and its return in July and August, for a number of consecutive years.

The question then to be considered is, what constitutes a *suitable* nesting locality? I readily admit that I don't know. If a belt of timber (post oak, black oak, elm, black walnut, black hickory, etc.) fifteen miles wide and one hundred miles long is not suitable for the nesting of this bird, then I need not expect its young to be raised in Cooke County.

But Mr. Lloyd records its nesting in Tom Green County, Texas, where the timber is more scrubby than in Cooke County. How is the bird's behavior in this matter to be reconciled with its not breeding in Cooke County? I must again confess ignorance of the reason. The only place I have personal knowledge of the birds' breeding in the State is in Polk County, in the Pine Region of southeastern Texas. In April, 1889, I saw the birds paired and entering holes in the dead pines, in such manner that I felt convinced that they would remain during the season. Mr. J. A. Singley, in Lee County, some seventy-five miles west of Polk County, writes me, "I have never found the Sparrow Hawk breeding in Texas or Mexico." However, he has a report of its nesting in Lee County, in former years. A great many eastern 'species' of birds fail to penetrate the dry plateau region of Texas. Many varieties (subspecies) of eastern forms,