

27. *Regulus satrapa aztecus* *Lawr.* ?—Can only be reported as doubtful, since the specimen was not preserved. Others were seen.

28. *Sialia mexicana* *Sw.* MEXICAN BLUEBIRD.—One specimen, a young bird, was taken at the snow line, 14,000 feet. Several others were seen.

In addition to the above species a flock of Parrots was seen and their notes distinctly heard, above the deep pine forest about midway between upper and lower timber lines on the Peak.

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### AN HISTORIC LETTER.

BY JOHN H. SAGE.

MR. GEORGE W. CONCKLIN, of Portland, Conn., recently presented me with a letter which I think of historic interest enough to be published. It was written by Mr. John L. Gardiner of Gardiner's Island, N. Y., to Alexander Wilson, and dated April 30, 1810. The date as given is erased in pencil and June 5 (also in pencil) written over it. The letter is superscribed: "Mr. Alexander Willson, Author of the American Ornithology, Philadelphia," but there is nothing to show that it was ever sent, being kept probably as a copy. In Wilson's account of the Fish Hawk he speaks of his "worthy friend Mr. Gardiner," and quotes practically from this letter in many instances. When writing of the Bald Eagle, Wilson refers to "Mr. John L. Gardiner, who resides on an island of three thousand acres, about three miles from the eastern point of Long Island, from which it is separated by Gardiner's Bay," words almost identical with those written in the letter before me. The gentleman who gave me the letter is well along in years and a relative of the Gardiner family. He tells me that the precious document had been in the possession of his father for many years previous to his death.

"Gardiner's Island April 30th 1810.

"Mr. Alexander Willson.

"I have received so much instruction & amusement from reading your first and second volume of Ornithology and as a real American am so well pleased with the execution of the work

particularly the 2d Vol. — as to the plates — that I cannot omit giving you the trouble of hearing how much pleasure you have given a plain farmer — in publishing your works, — which as to its execution of every kind has not been exceeded in America — A work of so much celebrity cannot fail of handing your name down to posterity with eclat. Before I had even seen the first volume I had become a subscriber and am particularly agreeably disappointed as to the manner of your description of the birds — their manners & customs. If it will not be deemed impertinent I will suggest to you how pleasing it will be to me & others that you add specimens of the eggs of the birds as far as you can & your manner of stringing them in plate 13th of 2d Volume is agreeable to the eye of your readers. Where you omit the eggs a plate or two in the 6th or 10th volumes of them arranged judiciously and fancifully will suit the taste of many. Explanations of them may easily be made by figures to refer to. Instead of small parts of dry limbs of trees sometimes perhaps you could place the birds on living trees or shrubs or bushes, which would have a tendency of making the birds themselves look more lively & natural — or at least my fancy suggests this on comparing your plates already executed with one another. Where the male & female can be placed near each other it seems more pleasing at least to the courting or married pair. The manners of some birds may prevent their being placed on trees, but where they can be so placed they look more natural & by fixing the artificial birds on real limbs or shrubs, they can at length be placed so as to have the most pleasing effect to ones view.

“ I live on an Island of 3000 acres of land at the eastern extremity of Long Island from which I am separated by Gardiner’s Bay one league wide where I usually pass it. The common birds are not here interrupted by school boys & are plenty. Geese & Ducks of all kinds abound in my ponds and if you would take an excursion this way, shall be very happy to accommodate you in my house here & it is not impossible but you may find here or on the shores of Long Island some kind of waterfowl that are nondescripts. I am not sufficiently acquainted with birds to mention any that have not been described. My friend Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchell of Queens County on Long Island

is one of the greatest naturalists we have & I presume would be happy to give you any information he has. He informs me he has the pleasure of being acquainted with you.

“If ten volumes will not well contain our American Birds I hope you will add volumes enough to contain the whole. It is a work in which our national character is interested & I am anxious it should be a work of as much celebrity as any European publication.

“If you should acknowledge the receipt of this you will direct to me on this Island — Suffolk County, State of N. York.

“With much respect & esteem I am your friend

“JOHN L. GARDINER.

“FACTS AS TO THE FISH HAWK ON GARDINER'S ISLAND.

“1. They are regular in arriving on the 21 March & in leaving the place on 21 Sepr. heavy equinoctial storms only prevent a day or so.

“2. They repair their nests a few days before they leave them & being on high dry topped trees, they frequently have their nests blown away entirely during winter.

“3. They lay generally three eggs — hatch about 1 July.

“4. Are very fierce & bold while they have eggs or young & have been known to fix their claws in a negro's head, that was attempting to get to the nest — but was obliged to desist from the attempt on account of the flow of blood from the wound. Black-birds build their nests in the side of the nests of the Fish Hawks.

“5. As soon as they arrive they wage war on the Eagle & by numbers & perseverance drive him off. The Eagle in darting on the Hawk obliges him to quit his fish — which before it reaches the ground the Eagle seizes.

“6. Sometimes on fixing their claws in too large a fish — are taken under water before they can clear themselves.

“7. When the Fish Hawks are seen high in the air sailing around in circles it is a sign of a change in the weather very soon — generally of a thunder storm in two or three hours.

“8. Are never known to eat anything but fish — commonly eat the head first. Are frequently seen cutting strange gambols in

the air — with part of a fish in their claws with loud vociferations darting down perhaps 100 yards. They seem proud of their prey.

“9. Seldom take one from the ground when dropped.

“10. Are so voracious that I presume when they have young they devour in 300 nests — two or three fish a day of 2 or 3 lbs. each fish — 7 or 800 fish a day in July & August.

“11. They seem fond of the striped bass which they cross Gardiner’s Bay & Long Island to the Atlantic for. Are not known to refuse any other fish than the one commonly called Toad fish of the ponds.

“12. Are seen frequently crossing Gardiner’s Bay with a stick in their claws, but it is not known whether from an unsuccessful fishing voyage or for the want of such particular stick for their nests.

“Facts communicated by John L. Gardiner.”

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## NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE WACISSA AND AUCILLA RIVER REGIONS OF FLORIDA.

BY ARTHUR T. WAYNE.

FEBRUARY 9, 1894, I commenced to make observations on the avifauna of the Wacissa River and adjacent country. I selected the village of Waukeenah, in Jefferson County, as a base to work from, which is ten miles south of Monticello, the County seat, and about six miles from the head waters of the Wacissa River.

The country around Waukeenah is high and rolling, and the line of demarcation is so closely drawn, that upon leaving the hill country you pass immediately into the flat woods of the Wacissa. Within a mile of the flat woods the hills are so high that you can see over the forests of the Wacissa, as well as see the smoke from the famous Florida ‘volcano,’ which must be in Jefferson County, near the line of Wakulla County.

The country around Waukeenah is one vast clearing, which is all under cultivation. The Wacissa River presents a different