aa. Throat mostly black; under surface of body strongly ochraceous-buff posteriorly.

b. Coloration pallid; underparts slightly spotted with black
Heleodytes brunneicapillus anthonyi.

bb. Coloration dark; underparts heavily spotted with black.

c. Back broadly striped with white; intermediate rectrices plainly barred with white. . . *Heleodytes brunneicapillus bryanti.*

cc. Back narrowly striped with white, the stripes being broken up into spots; intermediate rectrices nearly all black, or slightly spotted with white . . . *Heleodytes brunneicapillus couesi.*

NOTES CONCERNING CERTAIN BIRDS OF LONG ISLAND.

BY WILLIAM C. BRAISLIN, M. D.

Nettion crecca. A number of years has passed since the publication of any record of the European Teal on Long Island. This species is included in Lawrence's 'List' (1866), but is not mentioned by Giraud in his 'Birds of Long Island' (1844). I am able to record two additional specimens for Long Island. These, together with one American Green-winged Teal, were shot by Mr. Sherman Smith of Merrick, on a small fresh-water pond at that place, about a week before Christmas, 1900. These birds were mounted by Mr. Albert Lott, a taxidermist of Freeport; one of them I found recently in Mr. Willis's shop at the latter place and traced the history of the specimens as related, finding the second specimen at Mr. Lott's house. Both are males in fine plumage. They are now in my collection of Long Island birds.

Ardea egretta. Through the courtesy of Capt. James G. Scott, keeper of the Montauk Point Light, I am enabled to record the second specimen of the American Egret which has come under my observation from Long Island (Auk, XVII, 1900, p. 67). Capt. Scott informs me that he shot the bird on July 23, 1900, on Oyster Pond Beach (Montauk). The mounted skin is now in the possession of Capt. Jesse B. Edwards, keeper of the Amagansett Life Saving Station, to whom I am indebted for measurements and other particulars concerning the bird. The following data are noted: Length, 39¼ inches (dry skin); length of bill, 4¼ inches.

Ardea cœrulea, not **A. candidissima**: A Correction. In 'The Auk,' Vol. XVII, Jan., 1900, p. 69, I recorded *Ardea candidissima* from Long Island. The record was due to an error in identification, and should refer to *A. cœrulea.* The two birds to which reference was made were imma-

ture specimens in captivity; and a subsequent spring moult (in March) to the blue plumage, of which I have been fortunately informed by their possessor, Mr. Daniel De Mott of East Rockaway, renders them unquestionably referable to *Ardea cærulea*.

From the present instance, as well as that of their occurrence in the summer of 1900, on Long Island, later referred to, it appears that these birds are apt to occur with us in summer and early autumn in flocks composed entirely of white, or immature, birds. This fact should prevent a hasty inference that any flock of small white herons must be *Ardea candidissima*. Furthermore, unless the conditions for observation were extremely favorable, the dark blue at the tips of the primaries of *A. cærulea* would not be visible. For example, I may cite the fact that in both instances of the occurrence of this species, as related above, the birds secured were described to me by their respective captors as being altogether white, without other color, except as to their feet and bills. I should therefore be unwilling to trust to the color of the wing tips as a field mark. I mention these details in order that they may possibly be of advantage to other observers.

The occurrence of the Little Blue Heron on Long Island in the summer of 1900 is recorded on account of finding an immature (white) bird of this species in the shop of Mr. Willis of Freeport, which had been shot, together with others, on Hempstead Bay. Mr. Albert Lott of Freeport mounted this bird and confirmed the history of it. Mr. Lott thought the bird was brought to him in August, but of the exact date he was uncertain. The gunner who secured this bird stated that there were no darker birds in the flock; that all were white birds.

Botaurus lentiginosus. A Bittern, shot at Rockaway Beach, Nov. 10, 1900, was found on dissection to have been in life a veritable mouser. The stomach contained the remains of at least two meadow-mice, besides other large pellets of fur, in all respects similar to those one finds in the stomachs of owls. In consideration of the fact that the Bittern receives no protection under the laws of our State, this seems worthy of mention.

Tringa maritima. A specimen was shot on Great South Bay by Andrew Chichester, a gunner of Amityville, on Nov. 23, 1899, and sent to me. It was alone, on a bank of sea-weed drift. It is rare on this part of the coast, where the shore is altogether sandy, with an entire absence of the rocks among which it ordinarily seeks its food.

Strix pratincola. I am enabled, through the courtesy of Capt. J. G. Scott, to record an additional specimen of the Barn Owl from Long Island, taken at a point near the locality at which the one I previously noted was secured (Auk, XVII, 1900, p. 70). The present record is that of a specimen shot by Capt. Scott at Oyster Pond, Montauk, Sept. 25, 1900. I have not examined the bird; but his graphic description of the 'Monkey-faced Owl' in question leaves no doubt as to its identity.

Contopus borealis. An additional record for the Olive-sided Flycatcher, rather later than any of the four specimens which I have previously re-

corded (Auk, XIV, p. 99, and Auk, XVI, p. 192), is one taken at Jamaica South, Sept. 26, 1900. This specimen is now in the collection of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.

Quiscalus quiscula æneus. The Bronzed Grackle is rare on Long Island. Its spring and autumnal migrations are ordinarily completed without crossing the island. Extraordinary conditions, high northwesterly winds, for example, may drive it from its regular course. It is not improbable that grackles, sometimes seen here in November, are this form. On Nov. 17, 1900, a flock of six or eight grackles was seen at Jamaica South, feeding in company with many robins, in recently cultivated fields. They were shy, and but one specimen was secured. It proved to be a typical ♀ *quiscula æneus*. I know of but one other specimen of this variety from Long Island. Mr. W. W. Worthington of Shelter Island killed a grackle on June 16, 1886, which was of the same variety. These birds were identified by Mr. Chapman. Almost all varieties of intermediates occur on Long Island, all the breeding birds being intermediates. See paper by Mr. Chapman entitled 'Preliminary Study of the Grackles,' Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., Vol. IV, 1892, pp. 1–20.

Loxia leucoptera. During the extensive migratory excursions of crossbills down to, and south of, this latitude in January, 1900, White-winged Crossbills were observed at several stations on Long Island. They were seen by the writer in Prospect Park between and including the dates Jan. 11 and Jan. 18. They chiefly frequented the hemlocks. Both dull and brightly colored birds of this species, and also mixed with them some individuals of *Loxia curvirostra minor*, were seen.

Piranga rubra. The Summer Tanager has been taken on Long Island, as recorded in 'The Auk', during the past seventeen years as follows:— At Sag Harbor, Apr. 7; at Bridgehampton, May 1; at Merrick, May 14; (Dutcher, Auk, III, 1886, p. 442); at Manor in April; at Promised Land in April (Dutcher, Auk, V, 1888, p. 18), and at Long Island City, May 15, (Hendrickson, Auk, I, 1884, p. 290). I here record an additional specimen, which was picked up on the beach at Ditch Plain, April 8, 1901. Capt. Scott of the Montauk Point Light secured it from the finder and sent it to me. The stomach was empty except for a little discolored sand. It is remarkable that of the seven specimens, five were from stations at the eastern end of the Island, where migration is normally a week later for land-bird migrants than the western end. The eastern extremity, however, stretches well to sea and is more advantageously situated as a haven for birds driven out over the ocean by storms and seeking land.

The occurrence of this bird on Long Island, instead of a normal extension of the vernal migratory movement, seems to be more the result of weather conditions. They are isolated survivors of coast storms.

On sending the specimen above recorded, Capt. Scott writes me: "It was found on the shore at Ditch Plain on the 8th inst., chilled with cold, after this last south storm."

The early dates on which the birds have been recorded lead one more

readily to conceive that a cause other than a normal migratory movement is responsible for their presence. Of the seven instances, four were recorded in April; two as early as the 7th and 8th respectively. In Chapman's 'Birds of Eastern North America' (1895), p. 317, we find that the Summer Tanager arrives in Florida early in April, and that at Washington, D. C., the first recorded date of arrival is April 28. In 'The Auk', Vol. XVII, 1900, p. 297 (Allison) it is stated that the first recorded date at which this bird has been seen by the writer in spring at New Orleans, La., is April 2. The specimens of the Summer Tanager which have reached Long Island early in April are birds which must have been driven off the coast at points far to the south of the point of arrival; not impossibly while crossing the Gulf, between the West Indian Islands and the Mainland.

Vireo gilvus. Since recording the Warbling Vireo on Long Island, Sept. 16, 1895 (Auk, Vol. XIII, 1896, p, 87), I have observed it every spring and summer near the same locality, namely, just south of Prospect Park near the Ocean Parkway. It probably nested here continuously, and in 1900 I observed the nest, which was in plain sight from the driveway. Not only the nest but the bird upon it could be seen from the ground, and I repeatedly heard the bird and saw the articulating movements of the head and bill as it sang from the nest *while brooding*. The nesting terminated successfully as far as I could determine, though later in the season I failed to visit the locality for a considerable interval. During the summer of 1901, no birds of this species occupied the locality referred to.

Dendroica palmarum. The Palm Warbler was common in the vicinity of Brooklyn in the autumn of 1895. They were noted Sept. 25 to Oct. 7, and several specimens were secured on and between these dates. In habits, these warblers impressed me as being birds more strictly of the open than *D. palmarum hypochrysea*. For example, I did not see them in the woods at any time, while *hypochrysea* is found in such localities at times. I found the Palm Warblers in open pasture fields, in hedges, in isolated trees and on fence posts. Mr. William Dutcher mentions in 'The Auk', Vol. VI, p. 182, a specimen received from Fire Island Light. Sept. 23, 1887. I do not find any other records of this western species on Long Island.

Parus bicolor. The Tufted Titmouse is observed so infrequently on Long Island that it is considered proper to place the following note of its occurrence on record. I heard and saw an individual of this species at Sheepshead Bay on March 14 and 15, 1898. A thick grove of cedars, almost impenetrable in many places by reason of thick underbrush and cat-briar, stands, or then stood, on the edge of the salt-meadows at that place. Here, on the date first mentioned I saw Crows, Goldfinches, White-throated and Song Sparrows, Robins, Purple Grackles, one Red-winged Blackbird, Myrtle Warblers and one Golden-winged Woodpecker. My attention was attracted by the clear, whistled note of what I at once

recognized as the Tufted Titmouse. I heard intermittently for about a quarter of an hour the series of notes, which sound like *pêtel-you, pêtel-you, pêtel-you*, but did not succeed in getting sight of the singer. Wishing to confirm what I considered a rare find for Long Island, I returned the next day. The bird was still there and singing, and without much trouble, by imitating the song, I coaxed him out of the thicket into plain sight. No doubt existed in my mind as to the identification, as I am familiar with the songs of the bird and its appearance in life. Giraud in his 'Birds of Long Island' (1844), wrote as though *Parus bicolor* were common at that time. It is also included in Lawrence's 'List.' But one specimen, bearing no date, is extant in the Long Island Historical Society's collection (Dutcher, Auk, X, 1893, p. 277). I consider it a very rare straggler on Long Island.

INDIVIDUAL, SEASONAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS OF THE AMERICAN GOLDFINCH *(ASTRAGALINUS TRISTIS).*

BY JONATHAN DWIGHT, JR., M. D.

LINES of least resistance are those most naturally followed, and there is perhaps no line of ornithological investigation easier than discovering differences of color and size that can always be seen in series of skins laid out before our eyes. But, heretofore, the tendency has been to look for geographical variations, and consequently almost every North American species has been gradually split up into geographical races as fast as enough specimens from one part of the country have been gathered for comparison with those from another. Major differences have already been recognized and we now seem to be fast approaching a point where individual variation is likely to prove greater than the minor differences, that pass as subspecific characters. When these consist only of slight variations in depth of color and millimeter differences in dimension, it is indeed a wise describer that knows his own race when the labels of locality are removed. My contention is that unless these geographical variations are appreciably greater than those common to the species there is small reason for 'splitting,' however much this may redound to the describer. I believe, too,