

**Early Record for the Piping Plover (*Ægialitis meloda*) in Rhode Island.**— I have just obtained a Piping Plover which was taken on March 24 last by Mr. C. B. Clarke, a local taxidermist. The bird, which is a male in spring plumage, was shot on the Middletown marshes about three miles east of Newport. I believe this is the earliest spring record for the State.— LEROY KING, *Newport, R. I.*

**Richardson's Owl (*Nyctala tengmalmi richardsoni*) in Illinois.**— The only previous capture of this owl in the State was recorded in the 'Ornithologist and Oölogist,'<sup>1</sup> one having been taken October 15, 1884, at Rockford. I am indebted to Mr. Robert H. Van Schaack for the following information: "The Richardson's Owl was shot by my son, Louis F. Van Schaack, December 26, 1902, in Kenilworth, Ill. He found the bird along a small ditch that drains from the Skokie Swamp; he shot the owl with a toy air gun." I examined the specimen while in the possession of the taxidermist who mounted it, who informed me that he had mounted another specimen of this species about the same time, which was said to have been shot not far from Chicago, but I have been unable to get any definite locality or date.— RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.*

**Nesting of the Red-bellied Woodpecker in Harford County, Maryland.**— Until within the last few years, I have found the Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) to be quite a rare bird within a radius of twenty miles of Baltimore, and, until very lately, most of my records were made during the winter months.

For the past twenty years it has been common in the vicinity of Princess Anne, Somerset County, Maryland, but all my dates were made in the months of November, December, and January, the only time I was there. Still, from all I can find out, I am sure it is a resident there the year round, and my friends on the farm tell me they find it very destructive to the cherries.

On April 21, 1891, I made what I called my first spring note on the species, a bird being seen in a piece of heavy timber at Grace's Quarter Ducking Shore on the Gunpowder River, Baltimore County. This made me think perhaps they might nest here, but I saw no more birds within the breeding season until April, 1899, although, on July 28, 1898, in this same piece of woods Mr. F. C. Kirkwood and I saw an immature bird busily dodging the fierce attacks of a Red-headed Woodpecker.

Again, August 13, 1899, about one half mile from where the former young bird was seen, I saw two young, so small that the down was still clinging to their heads. These were apparently hunting for grubs and when one would fly it was immediately followed by the other, they seldom keeping more than ten feet apart.

Finally, after a little over twelve years' search for the nest I was

---

<sup>1</sup> Ornithologist and Oölogist, Vol. X, March, 1885.

rewarded by finding it May 11, 1902. The nest was in a dead stub growing up from the side of a red oak, and was twenty-four feet from the ground. The opening measured  $2 \times 2\frac{1}{4}$  inches and it was 5 inches from the outer edge of the hole to the back wall. It went straight down for  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and the four eggs were resting on some fine chips.

About twelve inches below the entrance to the nest was a smaller hole. This had been commenced by the birds, but was abandoned, as they had run into a hard knot after digging in about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. The eggs were deposited just back of the lower hole, and there was only about one fourth of an inch of wood between them and the abandoned opening. The eggs, which are now in the collection of Mr. F. C. Kirkwood, were about ready to hatch.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker can now be called a resident species for Maryland, as I have data for every month in the year.

The only authentic record I have of their breeding in the State other than mine is a note of Mr. L. D. Willis, who saw old birds feeding young near Church Creek, Dorchester County, May 5, 1897. He says the nest was about 60 feet up, in the dead top of a red oak.—WILLIAM H. FISHER, *Baltimore, Md.*

**A Much Mated House Sparrow.**—In the spring of 1895 I placed a small box with a movable top in a tree near a window of my room in order to try a few experiments with the prolific English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and made the following observations in 1897. During the coldest days and nights of the winter the box was not inhabited, but during warm spells it was occupied by three sparrows, a male and two females. On February 26 I first saw them carry straw to the box to repair the old nest. The male had driven away one of the females and had considerable trouble to keep her away.

I have noticed that where House Sparrows live in a box they take much time in constructing their nest, which is often not completed until some time after the eggs are laid, while those that build in trees build the whole nest in a day or two.

On March 15 the birds were still building. On March 19 I saw them copulate; also on March 23, and again on March 25. Then I shot the female while the male was only two feet away from her; he not hearing any noise, could not make out what ailed her, but it did not take him long to collect his thoughts, for he darted down and was on the ground before the female touched it. As she struck the ground she bounded in the air about a foot, which frightened him. He approached to within a foot of her and fluttered around her. She never even moved her wings after I shot her. My dog picked up the dead bird but I made him drop it by calling to him, but the male did not go back to her. Ten minutes after the male was courting another female; he seemed to know his mate was dead and wanted another immediately. On dissecting the dead bird I found the ovaries all small and the bird was apparently an old one.