

**Breeding of the Dickcissel in New Jersey.**—On July 3, 1904, while passing along a country road near Plainfield, New Jersey, I heard an unfamiliar and very unmusical song coming across the field. It soon ceased but before I had started on again it suddenly came down from almost over my head with such distinctness that I guessed the singer's name and, looking up, saw a Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) perched on a telegraph wire above. After singing for a while, during which I had an excellent view of him through my glass, he flew back over the field. As he was evidently at home I decided to make the most of my opportunity, so spent the greater part of the day there. To my great satisfaction I soon found that the Dickcissel had a mate. She was shy and most of the time kept well hidden in the grass. The male sang persistently from three widely separated perches on as many sides of the field, — the lower branches of a large black walnut, the top of an apple tree and the telegraph wires over the road. The field in which the birds were located was a grass field of mixed timothy and red-top with considerable red clover in parts and with a sprinkling of fleabane and black-eyed susans.

On the following day I visited the place with three ornithological friends. We saw both the old birds and in addition were delighted to find two young birds, one of which I secured. This specimen is a female in juvenal plumage with the first feathers of the winter plumage beginning to appear. The wings are not full grown and the tail is less than two-thirds of the full length. There cannot, of course, be the slightest doubt that these young birds were bred in this locality. Neither of the parents were taken, and it is hoped that they will return next year. As I had passed this field many times in the last few years it is unlikely that any Dickcissels nested in it before this season.

Mr. S. N. Rhoads allows me to state that he believes a specimen or two of this species was taken near Philadelphia this spring. As these are the first records for New Jersey or eastern Pennsylvania since 1890, they evidently indicate a tendency of the Dickcissels to return to their old haunts. The breeding record is the first for New Jersey or eastern Pennsylvania since 1879, although a few pairs doubtless bred as late as 1881. It is also apparently the first record for the entire Atlantic coast plain since 1884, when the species is recorded as breeding at Chester, South Carolina. There is little doubt, however, that the bird observed by Dr. J. Dwight, Jr., at Kingston, New York, on June 5, 1896, was breeding.

Mr. Rhoads wishes me to state that he has made a careful comparison of eastern and western Dickcissels without finding the slightest difference between them.—W. DE W. MILLER, *Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., New York City.*

**Another Nest of Kirtland's Warbler.**—On June 15, 1904, I found *Dendroica kirtlandi* in full song and breeding in Oscoda County, Northern Michigan. I took both parents, the nest, and four fresh eggs. The nest

was sunk in the ground at the foot of a small oak tree in vicinity of some small jack pines (*Pinus banksiana*). The vegetation was very heavy, and the nest was well concealed by deer-vine grass and other weeds. It was composed of dry grass, weed stems and pine needles. The male visited the nest while I was watching. The eggs have very thin shells, with very little gloss, and are spotted and blotched, mostly at top, with pink and chocolate spots. Average size, .73 X .55 of an inch.

The song of the male as follows: *Trp, trp, terp, terp, terp, ser-wit, er, wer*, all but the first two notes uttered rapidly. Besides this song, the prevalent one, the male has two other shorter song-notes. The female has a chirp like that of a sparrow. The male is a beautiful bird and a fine, incessant singer during the breeding season. The female sits very close on her eggs and can be caught on the nest with the hands. The birds are not wild and will allow close observation. They inhabit the high jack pine ridges, and seem to feed principally on an insect that infests the jack pine, occasionally flying to the ground for other food. The bird is called the Jack Pine Bird in northern Michigan.

As the nests are well concealed, and the female is a close sitter, it is a very difficult matter to find them, as the male will sing a long distance from the nest. This set is, I believe, the first perfect set of this bird's eggs known to science.—EDWARD ARNOLD, *Battle Creek, Mich.*

**An Interesting Variation in *Seiurus*.**—A diagnostic character of this genus is the absence of white (or other colored) spots from the tail feathers. In all descriptions of *Seiurus*, and in all keys including it, this feature is set forth in practically the same language as in the following extract from Ridgway (1902, p. 429): "Inner webs of the lateral rectrices without white terminal spot." Thus it may be concluded that this character is essential to a definition of the genus, or in other words, is a generic character. It is this fact that lends a greater interest to the following record.

A specimen of *Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis* in the collection of the University of Indiana (No. 128) has distinctly marked, white, terminal spots on the outermost and next to the outermost rectrices of the right side, and indications of similar markings on their fellows of the left side, in the form of correspondingly placed narrow edgings of white. The facts that these markings are paired, and that they are in precisely the position of the blotches on the rectrices of most of our warblers with normally parti-colored tail-feathers, remove them entirely from the category of those irregularly shaped, white patches, which are often found on the primaries or on the tail-feathers, or in fact on any of the feathers of many species of birds.

This change from a character of its own genus to that of another must be considered as having a deeper, a phylogenetic significance. The color arrangement of *Seiurus* tends to the primitive or streaked type. The