

NOTES ON CERTAIN BIRDS TAKEN OR SEEN
NEAR CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY ARTHUR T. WAYNE.

Gavia imber. LOON.—On June 12, 1905, my friend, Dr. Eugene Edmund Murphy, who was making a trip by water from Charleston to my place, saw an *adult* of this bird. On June 19, 1905, while I was coming home from Dewees Island, S. C., I saw a young Loon and watched it for about 30 minutes. It dove with the greatest ease, and would remain under water for a very long time, and nearly every time it appeared, a fish was seen in its bill. This bird could not have been wounded, thus preventing it from migrating. On June 9, 1902, I observed an immature bird of the above species.

Gavia lumme. RED-THROATED LOON.—I shot an example of this boreal loon on April 8, 1905, near Long Island, S. C. The specimen is a young male and is in first winter plumage, changing into nuptial plumage on the sides of throat. This specimen makes the second taken near Charleston. For a record of the first, see 'The Auk,' Vol. VII, January, 1890, p. 88. The first specimen was taken on October 15, 1889, by the writer and is in first winter plumage.

Sterna caspia. CASPIAN TERN.—As far as I am aware there has never been any specific record of the occurrence of this large tern for the coast of South Carolina, it being generally confounded with the Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*), ever since the time of Audubon and Bachman. The former, in his 'Birds of America,' Vol. VII, p. 78, refers to the Cayenne Tern (= *Sterna maxima*) as breeding in Labrador, which was a mistake, as the tern Audubon found breeding there was the Caspian (*S. caspia*).

On April 24, 1905, a most magnificent adult male, in perfect nuptial plumage, was shot by my nephew, Mr. Ferdinand Gregorie, Jr., at my request. The Caspian Tern is a permanent resident on the South Carolina coast, and it *breeds* in small numbers on 'Bird Bank,' Bulls Bay. On June 19, 1905, I counted upwards of fifty of these terns when I was off Dewees Island, S. C., and

all of them appeared to be moulting on the top of head. This moult usually takes place as early as June 3, that is the first inception.

Mr. Chapman, in his 'Birds of Eastern North America,' states that this tern "apparently does not winter within our limits." I am pleased to say that during the past winter, which was a very severe one, I frequently saw and *heard* this tern during the months of December, January, and February, but after February 18, 1905, they disappeared until March. The notes of this tern are unmistakable, being very guttural, and they bear no resemblance to those of *Sterna maxima*, the latter being pitched in a high key.

***Sterna forsteri*.** FORSTER'S TERN.—In the A. O. U. Check-List for 1895, the range of this tern in winter is given as "southward to Brazil." On January 7, 1905, I shot an example (male) in first winter plumage from a flock of ten or more individuals. The thermometer was far below the freezing point, and a regular blizzard was prevailing. On June 18, 1901, I saw on 'Bird Bank,' Bulls Bay, thousands of these terns, but none of these birds breed on the South Carolina coast, and the mystery is why were they there at the height of the breeding season? All of these terns appeared to be in immature plumage, yet they could not have been barren birds.

***Querquedula cyanoptera*.** CINNAMON TEAL.—April 12, 1904, I shot an adult female of this teal, less than one fourth of a mile from my home. This little duck was in company with a female Blue-winged Teal, in a puddle of water scarcely large enough or deep enough for a duck to float in. Both ducks were taken, but only the Cinnamon Teal was preserved. I well remember a sagacious remark Mr. Brewster made to me, many, many years ago, in reference to the migration of birds, the substance of which was, that during the migration, a person could look for ducks in a basin of water, which is exemplified by the above. The capture of this duck makes the first record for South Carolina, and the second or third for the Atlantic coast.

***Porzana noveboracensis*.** YELLOW RAIL.—On February 3, 1904, while out partridge shooting, I saw my dog pointing in a low, wet piece of open land with a dense growth of short, dead

grass, and being unable to flush anything myself, although I trampled the grass down in every direction, I told her to take it. She at once caught a Yellow Rail, which was the first one I had ever seen alive in South Carolina. I then made her hunt the entire field, and in less than ten minutes she caught two more. These three Yellow Rails were caught near sunset. The next morning, February 4, I again visited the field, in company with my dog, and in less than five minutes she had caught another; while a second specimen was flushed and shot. On February 5 and 8, two more were taken, which make seven in all. On November 19, 1904, my dog again captured another one alive. These rails would not flush, although in every instance I tried my utmost to make them fly, and the only one that did elude the dog by flying, was due to the dog's failure to seize it in a very thick growth. The stomachs of these rails contained the remains of a species of fresh-water snail. One of the specimens taken Feb. 3, ♀ ad., shows melanism in a marked degree.

Porzana jamaicensis. LITTLE BLACK RAIL.—On September 13, 1899, I shot a superb specimen of this rail in a pea field, where the vines were being cut by a reaper. In this same field, which was then planted in oats, I secured on June 10, 1903, a nest and eight eggs, and also captured both parents. The nest was built on high ground, in the oats, and I saw the female *on the nest*. A description of the nest, eggs, and the habits of the birds, has been published by the writer in 'The Warbler,' 2d Series, Vol. I, No. 2, 1905.

Phalaropus lobatus. NORTHERN PHALAROPE.—On the morning of June 3, 1903, my cat brought into the house a specimen of this species, but before I could secure it from her, she had eaten all except a wing, which is all the evidence I had by which to identify the bird. It was evidently an adult female in high plumage, and is the only record I have for the coast of South Carolina, and the capture occurring at so late a date is worthy of being mentioned.

Nuttallornis borealis. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER.—During the second week of September, 1904, I saw, and positively identified, a bird of this species. I had a record of the *day* of the month, but it has been misplaced. When first seen, the bird was

on the top of a dead willow tree which was in an impenetrable ravine. I was within twenty feet of the tree upon which this Fly-catcher was perched, but I would have mutilated the specimen by shooting it from where I was standing, and I could not retreat as I was in a road flanked on both sides by the jungle; therefore as it could not be obtained without being mutilated I determined not to shoot it. There is no question whatever as to the correct determination of this species, as the specimen was positively identified. The bird was seen some days after the occurrence of a very severe storm which raged on the coast of South Carolina, and this record makes the first for the coast region. This species undoubtedly occurs at the proper seasons in the mountainous parts of the State, but it is a *rara avis* on the coast.

Coturniculus henslowii. HENSLOW'S SPARROW.—On January 28, 1905, I took an adult female Henslow's Sparrow, which has *thirteen* rectrices. This makes the second species of the Fringillidæ that I have taken which had thirteen rectrices. The first was Bachman's Finch (*Peucaea aestivalis bachmanii*), female, February 5, 1902. The additional rectrix may prove to be a character peculiar to *females* of the Fringillidæ, and not to the males in certain genera.

Piranga rubra. SUMMER TANAGER.—A very adult male of this species was taken by the writer on May 22, 1903. This specimen has seven normal rectrices, but upon close inspection it was found that the missing tail-feathers were being renewed—not of the color of the adult male, but of the color of the female and young males. That this specimen was retrogressing is plainly shown by the five rectrices which were being moulted. These five feathers are about an inch in length, and the color is yellowish olive-green. It would seem but natural that once this species attained the adult plumage, each moult would be the same. As an illustration of the progressive stage of plumage of the Summer Tanager, I have a specimen (young male) taken May 5, 1903, which is half red and half yellowish green, or in other words mottled. This bird had evidently passed through a post-juvinal moult. There are eleven yellowish olive feathers in the tail, which are very much worn, in fact some are skeletonized, which shows that these were never moulted after the "first plum-

age." The twelfth is the central tail-feather, being freshly moulted, and of a dull red color, as in the adult male.

Helmitheros vermivorus. WORM-EATING WARBLER. — A generic character of the genus *Helmitheros* is the absence of white margins or spots from the rectrices. I have a superb specimen of this Warbler which has two of the outer rectrices on each side very widely margined with pure white; the next rectrix, on each side, is also margined with white, but the area is less. This specimen, No. 4013, closely resembles, in the tail markings, certain species in the genera *Helminthophila* and *Dendroica*, and was shot by the writer on April 16, 1901, and is an adult male.

Helminthophila bachmani. BACHMAN'S WARBLER. — I shot on May 14, 1904, an adult male of this species, and saw the female. It required nearly four hours of constant work in order to secure this restless warbler. On May 13, 1905, I discovered three pairs of these birds and succeeded in taking two young in first plumage, which were being fed by their parent. The young male was being fed by the adult male, and the young female was fed by the adult female! The old birds were not molested. A description, by Mr. Brewster, of the young, which are the first ever taken, will appear in 'The Auk' [see *antea*, pp. 392-394]. Mr. Brewster, visited South Carolina in May, 1883, and also in the spring of 1884 and 1885, especially to search for Bachman's and Swainson's Warblers, and, although we went almost daily, we were unsuccessful in finding the former. For the rediscovery of Bachman's Warbler, by the writer, in South Carolina, see 'The Auk,' Vol. XVIII, July, 1901, pp. 274-275.

Seiurus aurocapillus. OVEN-BIRD. — I secured a fine specimen, ♂ ad., of this bird on January 20, 1904, while out woodcock shooting. This specimen was very fat, which is surprising considering the severe weather which prevailed during December and January. I have frequently seen the Oven-bird in the early part of December, and the capture of this bird in January proves that it winters here sparingly.

Seiurus noveboracensis. WATER-THRUSH. — On January 20, 1887, I shot a female of this bird. On examining the throat I found in it two or three small minnows, which seem to be a very curious diet for an insectivorous bird. This specimen is No.

1614 of my register, and is now in the collection of my friend Mr. William Brewster.

Anthus spragueii. SPRAGUE'S PIPIT.—On the morning of November 1, 1904, I saw and *heard* a Sprague's Pipit *sing* while it was flying high in the heavens. I apparently saw the very spot where it alighted, but although I hunted the ground thoroughly throughout the entire day, I failed to find the bird. For previous records of the capture of this species in South Carolina by the writer, see 'The Auk,' Vol. XI, 1894, p. 80, and Vol. XVIII, 1901, p. 275.

In this connection I wish to place on record a bird of this species which I saw and also heard *sing* while it was flying overhead. This record was made the first week in November, 1892, on the west shore of Lake Tohopekaliga, Osceola County, Florida. I have no doubt that ornithologists who will investigate the fauna of this lake during the winter, will find this species to be a regular winter visitor there.

THE STATUS OF CERTAIN SWAINSONIAN GENERA OF BIRDS.

BY J. A. ALLEN.

IN a recent paper by Mr. Oberholser, entitled 'Notes on the Nomenclature of Certain Genera of Birds' (Smiths. Misc. Coll., Quart. Issue, III, pp. 59-68, May 13, 1905), noticed on a later page of this journal (*postea*, p. 436), several genera proposed by Swainson in 1827 are considered, with the result that Mr. Oberholser concludes that the status hitherto universally conceded to them by ornithologists "must apparently be changed." These genera are *Xiphorhynchus*, *Vermivora*, *Tiaris*, and *Ammodramus*. The first (*Xiphorhynchus*) is transferred to displace *Dendrornis* Eyton, 1852, and the new name *Xiphornis* is proposed for the