

BIRDS OBSERVED IN THE FLORIDA KEYS.

BY HENRY W. FOWLER.

WHILE searching for land snails in the Florida Keys for Mr. Clarence B. Moore, between Cape Sable and the Marquesas Keys, I incidentally observed a number of birds. As some of them may prove of interest I give an annotated list made during June, 1904.

1. **Larus atricilla.** GULLIE; GULL; BLACK-HEADED GULL.—Seen on the bouys approaching Key West, and also about Cudjoe's and Snipe Keys. The bouys mentioned were whited with bird excreta and were used either for resting or roosting by sea-birds.

2. **Sterna hirundo.** TERN; BLACK-HEADED TERN; REDSHANK.—One seen off the Marquesas and many others about West Cudjoe's and Snipe Keys. June 22 they were found in numbers breeding on Hailer's Rock. One egg contained a young bird about to hatch.

3. **Sterna antillarum.** KILLING-PETER.—Breeding in some numbers together with the former on Hailer's Rock. From an ornithologist's point of view this is one of the most interesting places visited. It is a low, small, flat island of sand, with a rocky foundation, off Bahia Honda Key. The vegetation consists of a low growth of bushes, with here and there more or less sand. The southern end is of broken or excavated rock leaving numerous tide-pools with an abundant supply of food in the form of anchovies, etc., for most water birds. Three eggs were found to be the exception in the nest of this species, seldom more than two occurring, and sometimes only one. The nest is a mere shallow depression in the sand, and those found were all situated more or less to the lee of the island. They were scattered here and there, and rather close at times. Some were along the beach but always above tide-line. At our approach the birds all flew from the ground in a body, and continued to utter their sharp, grating cries while flying about overhead. The eggs of this and the preceding are robbed by the turtle-hunters, and others, and used as food. I also saw this bird about Snipe Key.

4. **Pelecanus fuscus.** BROWN PELICAN.—Key West, Boca Grande, Boca Chica, Riding and Snipe Keys. They were numerous about the Marquesas Keys catching mullets (*Mugil*) and other fish. When flying the strokes of the wing may be heard at times for quite a distance. When flying about the shallows they frequently drop into the water with a loud clumsy splash, though not always successful in capturing a fish. One was found which had apparently accidentally committed suicide by transfixing its beak in a forked branch of a mangrove. A flock of these birds frequented the rocks about Hailer's Rock where they can easily obtain plenty of finny food.

5. **Fregata aquila.** MAN-O'-WAR HAWK.—Seen about Key West either high in the sky or frequently darting down into the shallow water, among the vessels at anchor in the harbor, to pick up some scrap of food. Mr. S. Brown observed one swallow a gar (*Tylosurus*) fully a foot in length. Most of the birds seen had white throats, and the nearly uniform black ones were only occasional. When seen at sea they sail very high, mostly in a straight line, though sometimes flapping their wings a little. I saw them at Riding Key and large flocks about the Marquesas. Although reported to breed on some of the islands I did not meet with any nests. A common impression prevalent among a number of fishermen and others, and which I believe has already been noted before, is that these birds will chase and pounce on gulls which immediately vomit. This is then caught in the beak of the marauder, before it reaches the water, and swallowed. The robber if not satisfied will still chase his victim again and sometimes catch him about the neck to repeat the operation. It was also reported that the gulls will cast their excreta and that the Man-o'-War treats it in the same manner. However, I did not observe any of these attributes and merely submit them based on what seemed to me largely reliable information.

Upon inquiry concerning the Flamingo (*Phaenicopterus ruber*) or "Fala-mingo" as it was called, it appeared to be either very rare or probably exterminated. None seemed to have been noted during the last ten years.

6. **Ajaia ajaja.** PINK CURLEW.—One reported from Riding Key though I did not meet with the bird myself. They were also reported to occur on the Marquesas.

7. **Guara alba.** WHITE IBIS; CURLEW; BROWN IBIS.—Flock of a dozen or more adults, and a single brown bird, seen about the bird-rock off Vaca Key.

8. **Ardea occidentalis.** BIG WHITE HERON; WHITE HERON.—Marquesas, Boca Grande, Ballast, Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, No Name, Vaca, Grassy, West Cudjoe's and Snipe Keys. First observed on Woman Key and Key C far out from shore. In such places they have a good chance to look out for both food and danger. They are very shy and will not permit even a fair rifle-shot, suddenly flying off into the cover of the thick woodland. They may be seen wading in the water sometimes up to their bellies. They usually frequent shallower water, often standing perfectly motionless or walking about like great white sentinels, their snowy plumage enabling one to distinguish them at a very great distance. For the same reason they may also be located if in the trees, the contrast being very pronounced in the green foliage. Their flesh is used as food and is reported to be of good quality. It is only the younger birds which are preferred for this purpose, as the old ones are said to be tough. At the Marquesas I noticed as many as a dozen individuals stationed about in the shallows at one time. In the mangroves I saw traces of roosting of either these or the other herons.

A large example was killed on Sugar Loaf Key which had swallowed

a large sheepshead (*Archosargus*) of about ten inches in length. As a result of this extraordinary feat the fish had completely filled the abdominal cavity, greatly crowding the viscera and to the apparent great discomfort of the bird. In fact it was so thoroughly gorged that it had little disposition to fly, and made but little resistance when captured. No sex organs were developed.

9. ***Ardea herodias wardi***. BIG BLUE HERON; BLUE HERON.— Large nests, probably of this species, were seen in the mangroves on the Marquesas. I also saw several birds there and others on Mangrove and Snipe Keys.

10. ***Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis***. LOUISIANA HERON.— Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf and Knight Keys. Common on the bird-rock off Vaca Key, associated with the White Ibis, Green Heron, dark and white plumaged Little Blue Herons, Kingbird, Grackles and Red-wings, all of which appeared to roost there in numbers. When disturbed the Grackles and Red-wings rose up in great flocks from the undergrowth, all keeping up an incessant clucking. The water birds possibly used this roost to some extent to avoid the numerous mosquitos of the mainland. At our approach the herons whirled about overhead in flocks, but usually alighted again in or near the same places, such as the tree-tops.

11. ***Florida cærulea***. LITTLE BLUE HERON.— Seen at Mangrove Key and the Marquesas Keys.

12. ***Butorides virescens***. BITTERLING.— Found in some numbers on the roost north of Vaca Key. Mostly seen down among the lower bushes or flying near the water, and not at all shy. Their familiar cry was frequently heard.

13. ***Nycticorax violaceus***. GAULDIN.— Marquesas, Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, West Cudjoe's and Riding Keys. Used as food.

14. ***Symphemia semipalmata***. WILLET.— The shrill and plaintive whistling cry of this bird was heard at Cudjoe's Key where about half a dozen individuals were seen.

15. ***Rallus crepitans scottii***. MUD HEN.— One example killed on West Cudjoe's Key, and another with young was reported from Riding Key June 26. This is regarded as a game-bird.

16. ***Ochthodromus wilsonius***. RING-NECKED SNIPE.— A flock of about ten were seen on Ballast Key along the rocky shore. They were quite tame, keeping but a short distance ahead and continually uttering their piping notes. A pair also frequented Hailer's Rock where they were probably breeding as two small eggs, smaller than any of the terns, were found.

17. ***Columba leucocephala***. PIGEON.— Boca Grande, Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, No Name, Vaca, Bahia Honda and Summerland Keys. A flock of about twenty-five was seen at one time on the Marquesas, and while frequently observed at various other places in this group they were always shy. Usually but two or three were seen at one time and then as they were flying about from one island to another. They seemed to prefer the concealment afforded by the luxuriant vegetation.

18. **Columbigallina passerina terrestris.** DOVE; MOURNING DOVE; TOBACCO DOVE.—On the island of Key West I found them in the low grass in the more open land, and either solitary or in pairs. Their flight is short and steady, and their cry similar in dolefulness to that of *Zenaidura macroura*. At Boca Grande Key they were feeding along the beach and were very tame. Abundant on the Marquesas, and also seen on Big Pine, Vaca and Summerland Keys.

19. **Cathartes aura.** TURKEY BUZZARD.—Boca Chica and Big Pine Keys. Abundant in the sky about Key West most of our stay, frequently very high.

20. **Buteo lineatus alleni.** FOWL HAWK.—First observed in a cocconut grove on Boca Chica Key. Possibly they may nest there. Also found on Big Pine and Grassy Keys.

21. **Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis.** FISH HAWK.—Several seen about the Marquesas where one was chased into a tree by a Kingbird. A nest was seen on Snipe Key, which was reported to have been there about fifteen years. Cudjoe's Key.

22. **Crotophaga ani.** ANI.—About the lagoon on Key West Mr. S. Brown and myself saw a bird which we believed to be this species. It resembled the grackle somewhat though the tail was longer. The color and flight were apparently similar. Its cry was most peculiar and may perhaps best be described as a whining whistle. I also saw another of these birds which answered the cry of the one we were observing, and the next day both were found about the bushes in the same locality.

23. **Coccyzus minor.** RAIN CROW.—Key West, Boca Grande, Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, Big Pine, Grassy and Snipe Keys. Their cry is a clucking similar to that of *C. americanus*. They occur usually solitary or in pairs in the mangroves and are tame.

24. **Centurus carolinus.** WOODPECKER.—Boca Chica, Big Pine, Knight and Grassy Keys.

25. **Chordeiles virginianus.** BULL BAT.—One seen on Knight Key.

26. **Corvus brachyrhynchos pascuus.** CROW.—Two seen on Big Pine Key about a pool well inland. Their cry resembles that of *C. brachyrhynchos*.

27. **Tyrannus dominicensis.** BEE BIRD; FIGHTER.—Marquesas, Boca Grande, Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, Big Pine, Grassy and Snipe Keys.

28. **Agelaius phœniceus bryanti.** BLACK BIRD.—Boca Grande, Ballast, Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, Big Pine, No Name, Vaca, Summerland, Cudjoe's and Marquesas Keys. The note of this bird is noticeably different from that of *A. phœniceus*, or mostly more metallic. They are shy and prefer the concealment of bushes.

29. **Quiscalus quiscula aglæus.** BLACK BIRD.—Small flocks were seen at different points on the island of Key West. Their note is apparently a little different from that of *Q. quiscula*. Mr. S. Brown saw a small flock on Big Pine Key, also several nests in the slender buttonwoods. They were made of sticks and placed about ten feet from the ground.

I saw similar nests about a pool on Summerland Key. These birds were very abundant on the island off the north shore of Vaca Key. They were tame and many young were heard continually. Others were observed on No Name, Vaca, Grassy, Bahia Honda, Little and Big Pine and Sugar Loaf Keys.

30. **Quiscalus major.** BLACK BIRD.—Several brown birds, apparently this species, were seen on Summerland Key.

31. **Cardinalis cardinalis floridanus.** RED BIRD; RED ORIOLE. Marquesas, Boca Chica, Big Pine, No Name, Knight, Vaca, Grassy, Little Pine, Summerland, Cudjoe's and Snipe Keys. The familiar whistle of this bird was heard in most every place we visited though only occasionally could one catch a glimpse of the bird.

32. **Vireo noveboracensis maynardi.** SPARROW.—Boca Chica, Sugar Loaf, Big Pine, No Name, Knight, Grassy, Summerland and Cudjoe's Keys. Abundant and frequently in the mangroves.

33. **Mimus polyglottos.** MOCKER; MOCKING BIRD.—Key West, Boca Chica, Summerland and Cudjoe's Keys.

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A-BIRDING IN AN AUTO.

BY MILTON S. RAY.

THAT faithful friend, the horse, was forsaken this year (1905) for that modern, rapid but rather uncertain conveyance, the automobile. To be technical, our machine was a sixteen-horse-power double opposed cylinder Wayne touring car. The tonneau was replaced by a large locker which held sufficient supplies to sustain us almost indefinitely, should we leave the land of the storekeeper. The original plan was to enter the San Joaquin Valley from the west, via Dublin Pass and Livermore, but the early May rains willed it otherwise; so we embarked on a river boat, at a city pier, which took us as far as Stockton. The latter town lies at the mouth of this great level valley, which presents a very even type of country throughout its length. The central portion, for the most part, consists of either marshy waste or alkali-desert land, often as wide as thirty miles or more, and which is practically