

Muskeget Island, Massachusetts, March 11, 1894. Six Sanderlings (*Calidris leucophæa*) have lived in the vicinity the past winter.

Somerville, Massachusetts, March 20, 1840, and Revere, Mass., March 6, 1880. On each of these dates Mr. George A. Tapley of Revere, Mass., shot an American Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus*). Mr. Tapley informed me he had killed one other in the spring.

Revere, Mass., May, 1889. Mr. George A. Tapley saw six Pectoral Sandpipers (*Pisobia maculata*), in one flock, and shot one of them; May, 1890, he saw two and shot both.

Wellfleet, Cape Cod, Mass., August, 1865. Shot two Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*).

West Island, Seconnet Point, Rhode Island, May, 1873. In the early part of this month, three Hudsonian Godwits (*Limosa hæmastica*), all there were. They alighted on the end of a gravel spit which was exposed at low tide on the north side of the island near the boat house. I secured all three at the first shot. They were in the gray plumage.

West Island, Seconnet Point, R. I., April 27, 1875. Shot one Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*), April 16, 1878. A good many flying on migration; wind light northeast. Shot one on April 1, 1881; one on April 13, 1884; three on April 14, 1886; one on April 15 and four on April 20, 1887; one April 21, 1887, and April 16, 1892. A migrating movement eastward; birds flying about sixty yards high; noted one flock of five, one of six, the others scattering, about twenty-six birds in all. April 17, 1892, saw eight flying on migration; wind light west.

April 14, 1886. Quite a flight of Loons (*Gavia immer*), on migration; wind east, a gentle breeze.—GEORGE H. MACKAY, *Nantucket, Mass.*

**Massachusetts Notes.**—On October 24, 1910, I shot a partial albino Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Passerherbulus caudacutus*) on a salt meadow at Nantucket, Mass. I had seen it several days previous but was unable to secure it then. The upper parts are blotched with several patches of pure white feathers. The coverts of the left wing are also pure white while the feathers on the right wing are only margined with white. The tail, crown and primaries are normal in color as are also the underparts and nearly all the rest of the bird.

Early in November, 1909, two White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons gambeli*) were shot at a stand on Sesachacha Pond, Nantucket. I heard of their being killed last spring and was told by the man who had one of them mounted that they were Lesser Snow Geese. However, this bird has recently been presented to the Boston Society of Natural History and has proved to be *Anser albifrons gambeli*. It is a young bird and the white at the base of the bill is only just beginning to appear. Also the tips of the feathers of the underparts show faint traces of black. There are only three other records for New England, and these are all from Massachusetts. A male was shot at Quincy some time about 1848-50

and was presented to the Boston Society of Natural History.<sup>1</sup> At present there is no trace of this bird. Dr. T. M. Brewer, in 'A Defence of his Catalogue of the Birds of New England,'<sup>2</sup> says: "*Anser gambeli*, between 1836-46, was much more common than it apparently is now, but even now there is no lack of evidence of its presence. . . . A fine specimen in immature plumage has been recently taken in Gloucester and is now in the collection of Mr. William Jeffries of Boston." The bird referred to was shot October 20, 1876, at West Gloucester, and at the time was supposed to be *Anser albifrons gambeli*; it turned out, however, to be a Blue Goose. This also is now in the collection of the Boston Society of Natural History and is the only one ever recorded from this State. Possibly after all *A. a. gambeli* was not as common even between 1836 and 1846 as Dr. Brewer supposed. The second authentic record was one shot at Plymouth, November 26, 1897, by Mr. Paul W. Gifford.<sup>3</sup> It is an adult specimen and is to-day in Mr. William Brewster's collection. Of these few records the third is the most interesting, for it is an adult bird that was caught alive in a wounded condition early in August, 1907, at Great Neck, Ipswich, by Mr. A. B. Clark.<sup>4</sup> This bird is still alive and I believe several unsuccessful attempts have been made to cross it with a wild Canada Goose.

In 'The Auk,' Vol. XXVII, No. 3, page 339, Mr. R. Heber Howe, Jr., mentions a King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) being shot at West Barnstable on Dec. 30, 1909, as the ninth record for the State. I have five more unrecorded specimens making a total of fourteen. The first one was shot on the Neponset meadows, near Canton, on September 9, 1893, and is in the collection of the Boston Society of Natural History. The other four were all shot in 1909, at Chatham, and as far as I can find they are the only ones known to the local gunners ever to have been taken there. Of these four the first was taken January 9, 1909, by Mr. Russell Bearse in a brackish marsh while he was duck shooting by moonlight. This is now owned by Mr. W. E. Freeman of Arlington. The second was shot by Mr. W. A. Carey of Boston on October 2, and is now in his collection. He was shooting quail along the edge of a cranberry bog when the dog flushed this bird. The third was caught alive on October 25 by a setter dog in a bit of salt marsh, and is now in the collection of the Boston Society of Natural History. The fourth was killed by Mr. Frank Eldredge on October 20. This one was shot on Monomoy Island, in a salt meadow where Mr. Eldredge was after shore birds. It seems very remarkable that these last three should have all been taken within the space of about three weeks time and all within an area of a few square miles. Undoubtedly the King Rail is more abundant than is generally supposed, and although it is thought that it may breed within the limits of the State, no authentic case has yet been recorded. However, this recent abundance may lead

<sup>1</sup> Cabot, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist., Vol. III, 1851, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Bull. Nutt. Ornith. Club, Vol. II, April, 1877, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Auk, Vol. XVIII, pp. 135, 136.

<sup>4</sup> Auk, Vol. XXV, 1908, p. 80.

in the near future to some such discovery.—S. PRESCOTT FAY, *Boston, Mass.*

**Number of Species and Subspecies in the New A. O. U. Check-List: A Correction.**—In 'The Auk' for October, 1910 (XXVII, pp. 468, 469), the number of species in the third edition of the A. O. U. Check-List is given as 802, and the number of subspecies as 394, making a total of 1196 forms. Prof. W. W. Cooke later informed me that he made the numbers to be, respectively, 804, 396, 1200. A recount shows Professor Cooke's numbers to be correct, namely, 804 species, 396 subspecies, and 1200 forms.—J. A. A.

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Carriker on the Birds of Costa Rica.**<sup>1</sup>—In this work of some 600 pages, our knowledge of Costa Rican birds is brought thoroughly up to date. The author's style is pleasing and his method of treatment is both modern and comprehensive. A total of 753 species and subspecies is recorded, with full citations of Costa Rican references and many hitherto unpublished records, based chiefly on the collections of Ridgway and Zeledon, Carriker, Underwood and Lankester.

The local distribution is well worked out and treated in more detail than in any previous work. Under almost every species are interesting notes on the life history, from the author's own experiences, in many cases with descriptions of nest and eggs. These form an important addition to our knowledge of Neotropical bird-life. Under the Tanagers and Finches Mr. W. E. C. Todd has incorporated in the text many valuable critical notes. Keys are given to the species of most of the lower groups as far as the Cotingidae, with the evident intention of supplementing those in the first four volumes of Ridgway's 'Birds of North and Middle America.'

The 60 pages of introductory matter treat, among other subjects, of "Geography and Physiography," "The Life Zones" and "History of the Ornithology of Costa Rica." A Bibliography is of course included, and a comprehensive descriptive list of localities at which birds have been collected. Some general notes on the habits of both the winter visitant and the resident species are also to be found here. At the end of the volume is a large folding map of Costa Rica.

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<sup>1</sup> An Annotated List of the Birds of Costa Rica including Cocos Island. By M. A. Carriker, Jr. Reprinted from *Annals of the Carnegie Museum*, Vol. VI, pp. 314-915, with map. "Issued August 29, 1910."