

ONTARIO BIRD NOTES.

BY J. H. FLEMING.

SINCE my 'Birds of Toronto' was published in 'The Auk'¹ the manuscript list of Toronto birds written about 1885 by Mr. Ernest Seton has been found in the records of the Biological Survey at Washington, and though the annotations are as brief as possible, it is of considerable value. A greater part of the portion dealing with the water birds is based on information supplied by the late Wm. Loan, a professional shooter whose information is known to have been reliable. The list supplies definite records for two species that were in my hypothetical list.

Since 1906 several species have been found breeding at Toronto that were not known to do so then, and additional records of several rare birds are given in this article, together with other unpublished Ontario records.

Sula bassana. GANNET.—An immature male freshly killed was found floating in Lake Ontario outside Toronto on December 19, 1908; it was in good condition and had recently swallowed a herring seven inches long; the bird is now in my collection.

Another immature bird taken near Ottawa on October 14, 1909, has been recorded by Mr. J. M. Macoun,² and I am informed by Mr. E. G. White that a second specimen was taken at Ottawa about the same time and mounted by Mr. Henry.

Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis. BLACK TERN.—No breeding records for Toronto till 1906 when Mr. W. R. Humphreys took a set of two eggs on May 30 in Asbridge's Marsh. This tern has since become a not uncommon breeder; a pair seen at Toronto Island on July 18, 1911, had downy young, and were not themselves in full plumage, both having a good deal of white on the head and under parts.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. WHITE PELICAN.—The only definite Toronto record is from Seton's manuscript list as follows: "Wm. Loan killed one in 1862, has seen at least a dozen in all."

Marila collaris. RING-NECKED DUCK.—A female taken on September 24, 1906, by Mr. O. B. Spanner at Wassy Lake, Coleman Township, Parry Sound District, is in my collection. Ring-necked Ducks are not

¹ Auk, 1906, pp. 437-453, 1907, pp. 71-89.

² Ottawa Naturalist, 1910, p. 192.

common in southern Ontario and the following records are of interest: in 1906, I examined three females (?) that were taken about October 15, and five full plumaged males that were taken about November 6, the exact locality could not be ascertained except that they were from southern Ontario and probably at no great distance from Toronto. In 1907, I examined two that had been taken probably at Toronto Island on October 12, and saw two more on the 22d, from somewhere in southern Ontario. On April 9, 1909, I saw a single pair in a large flock of mixed ducks that were sheltering in Toronto Bay from a westerly gale. The rarity of this species is interesting when compared with Mr. Loan's statement in Seton's manuscript list as follows: "Marsh Bluebill, uncommon migrant, first week of April to last of September, years ago it was our commonest duck."

Chen hyperboreus hyperboreus. SNOW GOOSE.—In Seton's manuscript list the following Toronto record is given based on Mr. Loan's information. "Very rare fall migrant, four killed in 1875, several seen since."

Olor columbianus. WHISTLING SWAN.—A flock of six were in Toronto Bay, from April 8 to 18, 1909. They were seen by a number of observers and were identified by Mr. J. H. Ames on the 18th. The birds were driven in by a heavy westerly gale.

Mycteria americana. WOOD IBIS.—One taken in November, 1892, near Simcoe, Norfolk County, by a farmer, name unknown. The record is based on a drawing of the dead bird made by a correspondent of Mr. C. W. Nash, to whom I am indebted for permission to publish this first Ontario record.

Rallus elegans. KING RAIL.—A male taken at Toronto on April 24, 1907, is in my collection.

Gallinago delicata. WILSON'S SNIBE.—A nest containing four eggs was found in Ashbridge's Marsh on May 12, 1910, by Mr. R. Buchanan; the eggs were undisturbed and later the young were photographed by Mr. J. A. Munro. This is the first definite Toronto breeding record.

Limosa fedoa. MARBLED GODWIT.—An adult female taken on the Eastern Sandbar, Toronto, on September 20, 1906, is the first Autumn record. An immature bird taken at the same place on August 13, 1909, is the first young bird recorded from Toronto.

Charadrius dominicus dominicus. GOLDEN PLOVER.—The following records show that this Plover is again increasing on Toronto Island: 1906, September 3, one shot by Mr. H. H. Mitchell, September 8, two seen by Mr. Mitchell; 1907, September 30, three taken; October 2, one taken, October 12, several taken; 1909, September 20, one seen; 1910, September 26, a number taken (I examined twelve, one of which was an adult), October 21, one taken, the latest record. All were young birds except the one noted.

Ægialitis meloda. PIPING PLOVER.—Though breeding at Point Pelee and other places on Lake Erie and possibly in Prince Edward County

on Lake Ontario, the Piping Plover has never been more than a migrant at Toronto till 1907, when Mr. W. R. Humphreys found two young and two eggs on the Eastern Sandbar on June 23. In 1908, a number of pairs bred along the whole lake front of Toronto Island, — a set of three eggs was found on July 1, and a downy young was taken by a boy on the same date, and another downy young was seen on June 10. I saw three pairs of old birds on July 6.

Cathartes aura septentrionalis. TURKEY VULTURE.— A young male taken at Scarboro near Toronto, November 17, 1908, was mounted by Mr. O. Spanner. Another unpublished Ontario record is copied from the journals of the late J. Hughes Samuel, December 2, 1895, Peterboro: Ontario: "Called on Elcombe the local taxidermist, he has a fine specimen of Turkey Buzzard taken on the banks of Indian river at Warsaw, 14 miles from Peterboro during the summer by a man named Spencer, the hotel keeper Morgan of Warsaw tells me that Spencer winged this bird and kept it alive for several weeks."

Astur atricapillus atricapillus. GOSHAWK.— A large flight occurred in 1906, from October 13 to November 26. I examined over a dozen from Toronto and heard of as many more that had been taken, all full plumaged birds. The flight extended east to Ottawa and a few remained about Toronto during the winter. I received one from Oakville, 19 miles west of Toronto, on January 4, 1907.

Buteo borealis krideri. KRIDER'S HAWK.— An immature bird taken at Pickering, 23 miles east of Toronto, on August 19, 1901, by Mr. W. B. Rubidge, is in my collection; this is the first Ontario record.

Buteo swainsoni. SWAINSON'S HAWK.— One taken at Toronto on October 16, 1909, an immature bird in the dark phase with yellowish markings, mounted by Mr. O. Spanner.

Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa. GREAT GRAY OWL.— A flight appears to have passed eastward along Lake Ontario in 1907. On January 3, I received one from Port Credit, 13 miles west of Toronto, on January 4, one from Mimico, 7 miles west, and on February 1, one from Toronto and on March 8, one from Trenton, 100 miles east of the city. Besides these I heard of a number of others that were taken. I examined two taken at Toronto, February 11 and 15, 1911.

Cryptoglaux funerea richardsoni. RICHARDSON'S OWL.— A male picked up dead but quite fresh at Toronto on June 11, 1907; the bones of both legs were crushed and gangrenous, and death was due to starvation. The bird had probably been trapped and released as it showed no traces of captivity. A female taken at Toronto January 13, 1910, is in my collection, as is the June bird.

Bubo virginianus subarcticus. ARCTIC HORNED OWL.— I examined a female of this form of Horned Owl taken together with two small downy young about April 24, 1911, at Heaslip, 123 miles north of North Bay. This breeding record explains the presence in winter of this Owl in southern Ontario.

Nyctea nyctea. SNOWY OWL. The majority of Snowy Owls that migrate into southern Ontario in winter are birds of the year, but in 1906, a flight of adults, males as far as I examined them, appeared on October 13. A very white one was taken at Toronto, on November 1, three more males were taken, two of them almost spotless, the other very white. I examined between November 19 and 26, several more exceptionally white birds from the city and three from Bradford, 40 miles north of Toronto, these were also very white birds.

Otocoris alpestris hoyti. HOYT'S HORNED LARK.— One male taken at Port Sydney, Muskoka, May 17, 1909, by Mr. Alfred Kay in whose collection the bird now is. This is probably a non-breeding bird, and was shot, together with one Horned Lark and one Prairie Horned Lark, from a small flock that had been for some time about Mr. Kay's yard.

Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina. EVENING GROSBEAK.— Small flocks visited Toronto in March, 1907, and February, 1909, and from November 23, 1910 to January 29, 1911, flocks were in and about the city. I counted twenty, many of them old males, in one mountain ash.

Calcarius pictus. SMITH'S LONGSPUR.— An immature female taken by Mr. Geo. E. Atkinson, at Port Arthur, Ontario, in September, 1892, is in my collection and is the first Ontario record. It is due to Mr. Allan Brooks' keenness that the bird was recognized in my collection, and I have since checked the identity with the aid of Dr. J. Dwight, Jr., and Dr. Louis B. Bishop, as the stage of plumage is a little known one.

Progne subis subis. PURPLE MARTIN.— There has been a noticeable increase in the number of Martins about Toronto since 1906. In 1909 one pair returned to the old nesting box in my garden that had been abandoned for several years, and bred, and in 1912, seven pairs brought off broods in the same box.