

While this difference is most marked in the Mallard, the same facts hold good to a large extent in my nests of the following species of ducks:— Red-breasted Merganser (*Merganser serrator*), Green-winged Teal (*Nettion carolinense*), Cinnamon Teal (*Querquedula cyanoptera*), and Pintail (*Dafila acuta*), all of which show the down to be considerably darker than in birds of the same species shot in the winter. In the following species the same variation holds good, although in a somewhat lesser degree:— Canvasback (*Marila valisineria*), Scaup Duck (*Marila marila*), and Lesser Scaup Duck (*Marila affinis*).

There would seem to be a possibility, even though a scant one, that this difference in coloration might be caused by dirt from the parent bird soiling the down. This theory is made practically untenable by the fact that in the following species there is very little difference between the down found in the nests and that on females shot during the winter months:— Merganser (*Mergus americanus*), Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*), and Redhead (*Marila americana*). Lack of material at hand prevents any further comparison, but these few notes may prove of interest to someone as ignorant on the subject as myself.

These notes are not sent in with the wish to publish a well established fact, as possibly the observations of other collectors in different sections of the country may show very different results. However, the nesting season is close at hand, so it would seem to be worth while putting in print the results of my own observations in order that the subject may be brought before other observers as a matter for more extended study.— J. H. BOWLES, *Tacoma, Wash.*

Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*) in Massachusetts.— Upon the authority of many of the older ornithological writers it is evident that this species bred in earlier years at various widely separated stations in the state of Massachusetts. In more recent years however, it has become rare, so much so, as to make its occurrence noteworthy. It is with a sense of pleasure and satisfaction that at this time I can submit evidence of an increase in its numbers and frequency in this northeastern portion of the State at least, an increase due quite probably to the better protective laws now in force. The following notes briefly record its occurrence in a region where it has been absent for a number of years.

West Newbury, Mass., May 24, 1915, 5.30 A. M. While walking along a road in the open country I was attracted by the petulant cry of a Killdeer Plover, and in a moment discovered the bird flying low and coming toward me. He alighted about 60 yards distant in an open pasture, offering me a very good view, and an opportunity to identify him with certainty if his voice had not been sufficiently convincing. After a few moments of erratic running about in the open pasture he took flight in a southerly direction.

West Newbury, Mass., Sept. 6, 1915 — 3 P. M. Three Killdeer Plover noted flying northward at great heights, their unmistakable notes bespeaking their presence and identity.

West Newbury, Mass., Oct. 18, 1915 — 11 P. M. Hear the notes of Killdeer Plover overhead, presumably from several birds migrating.

Newburyport, Mass., May 5, 1916. Two Killdeers walking about on ploughed fields.

June 23, 1916. Probably the same birds seen again in the same field.

Jan. 24, 1916. About a half mile from the above mentioned field heard the notes of a Killdeer and on investigation found four adult birds, running about erratically and uneasily amid the sparse grass of the pasture. They allowed me, however, to approach quite closely and I had an excellent opportunity to observe their coloring. By an odd coincidence, in making my way back to the road, and about 300 yards from where the Killdeer were seen, I flushed three Upland Plover (*Bartramia longicauda*). These last have been sufficiently scarce of late to make their occurrence interesting.

June 28, 1916. In the same locality as above mentioned, saw one Killdeer Plover.— S. W. BAILEY, *Pittsfield, Mass.*

Note on the Passenger Pigeon.— About a year and one half ago, the Cornell University Museum came into the possession of a mounted adult male Passenger Pigeon through the kindness of its collector, Mr. J. L. Howard of Clyde, N. Y., a justice of that city. He is now over 80 years old and had the bird mounted by a local taxidermist, George L. Perkins, who is now dead. According to Mr. Howard's memory the bird was taken in 1909, 11 years after the last certain capture (Sept. 14, 1898) of a Passenger Pigeon in the State. On the bottom of the mount is the legend, "Geo. L. Perkins, July 5, 1898," — a date in close agreement with Mr. Wilbur's record (Sept. 14, 1898) at Canandaigua, N. Y. The mount might be an old mount from some other bird. Mr. Howard's letter follows:

"My account of the shooting of the Passenger Pigeon must be short as there was but little of it. Upon the John Heit farm about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles s. w. of Clyde and near the Clyde River is, and has been longer than I remember, a small pond nearly round and about 3 rods in diameter. A low hill upon the south reaches to the water's edge forming a sloping beach. Years ago this pond was in a large forest. Now this was always, as long as there were any pigeons, a favorite place for them to come and drink. Six years ago (1909) I think, I took my gun and went to this pond in hopes I might get a Blue Heron, which I very much wanted. There were tracks of herons, plover and other birds in the mud around the shores, so I sat down in some bushes and pulled them up around me so as to partly conceal myself, facing the East where I could see a long distance. Presently I saw, far to the East, a bird coming directly towards me. I took it to be a Pigeon Hawk. It flew off to my right and turned in behind me and the next instant I heard its wings beating for a short span and then I heard to my right and very near the loud and distinct crow of a Wild Pigeon. Well that was a surprise. I had not seen a pigeon in fifteen years or more and now I sat within a few feet of one and he kept on crowing. Well I went