

Black Tern on Long Island in Spring.—On May 29, 1921, we were studying shore birds on the famous Gilgo flats on Jones Beach, opposite Amityville, Long Island. Several Common and one Least Tern had just flown by, and we were looking at a couple of Knots and some Red-backed Sandpipers among a flock of several commoner species, when an adult Black Tern was discovered sitting on the sand at the water's edge. It turned out to be very tame, allowing us to approach to a distance which was later found to be 37 paces. With so unmistakably marked a bird it seems superfluous to describe its coloration. This is the first spring record for Long Island. Crosby's recently published spring record for Rhinebeck, Dutchess Co., N. Y., which is unquestionably authentic, is the only other from the New York City region. As a spring migrant, therefore, the Black Tern seems to be in the same class as the Connecticut Warbler, but identifying it satisfactorily is, fortunately, a much simpler matter.—LUDLOW GRISCOM AND J. M. JOHNSON, *New York City*.

Some Tern Notes.—In 1907, while engaged in the Mississippi pearl mussel inquiry, we found, on August 1, a colony of Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) breeding on Bird Point, which is the northern bank of the Ohio River at its junction with the Mississippi River. There were probably fifty birds in this colony, all busy carrying food to their youngsters.

On August 12 we discovered another small colony of Least Terns and some Black Terns, (*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*), both carrying food, at the junction of Duck and Tennessee Rivers, Tennessee. The Black Tern colony seems to me rather farther south than any that I am acquainted with, while the Least Tern seems north and inland for that species.—PAUL BARTSCH, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

The Pintado Petrel (*Daption capense*) in Maine.—In 1883 this bird was accorded a place in our fauna in these terms:

"As these sheets are passing the press we learn from Mr. Purdie of this most interesting acquisition to our fauna . . . There appears to be no reasonable question in this case. The bird is said to have been shot at Harpswell, Casco Bay, Maine, and is now preserved in the collection of the Natural History Society of Worcester, Mass., where it is or was labelled "Mank's Shearwater." The identification of the specimen rests upon Mr. Purdie's authority. I have seen a letter¹ to Mr. Purdie from Mr. E. H. Forbush, of Worcester, containing a statement from a Mr. Wooley writing from Sabattis², Me., certifying to the capture of the bird at the place named some eight years ago."³

This record failed to receive attention in those works where it should have been mentioned, though it was cited in the third edition of Coues' 'Key to North American Birds.'

¹ This letter has disappeared.

² A suburb of Lewiston.

³ 1883: *New Eng. Bird Life*, II: 386, 387.

When the writer began to give attention to the literature and records of Maine birds, this case where on the one hand there was said to be "no reasonable question," and on the other hand an almost absolute silence, was met with. The question arose as to whether the A. O. U. Committee on Nomenclature had information on the subject not known to the general reader; and a letter was addressed to Dr. Coues, then chairman of the Committee. This brought the reply that he and presumably others had forgotten it, that he had no doubt of the authenticity of the record. He suggested that the matter be investigated anew, and a supplementary note sent to 'The Auk.'

This investigation was promptly undertaken, and the group of letters at hand from nearly every person connected with the matter show, it is believed, that the original record quoted above is correct. But since the record has fared badly in certain works on Maine birds, and many of the persons from whom the facts have been gathered have passed from life, it seems that these facts should be given to the public, with sufficient fullness to make the matter perfectly clear.

The late Thomas A. Dickinson, from 1872 to 1880 superintendent of the Worcester Museum of Natural History, and later Custodian of the Worcester Society of Antiquity, took great pains to aid in reaching the true facts in the case, and to his knowledge thereof, and his unflinching patience and effort we are much indebted.

On December 23, 1896, Mr. Dickinson wrote that he purchased the bird in question for the Worcester collection in September 1875, as shown by the records of the Society. Miss Dell Teneyck who was custodian of the Worcester collection in 1896 wrote in May of that year that "The specimen is labelled as follows; *Puffinus anglorum* (Temm). Mank's Shearwater; Lewiston Me., (young) June 1873."¹

So far we are on safe ground, amply attested by the invincible records of the Worcester Society of Natural History, and except for a discrepancy in the locality (Lewiston, which is easily explained through the fact that the bird was purchased in that place), in agreement with the 'New England Bird Life' record.

The "Rift within the lute" came in a letter from Levi Wooley to Mr. Dickinson written March 1, 1897, in which he says "I do well remember letting you have the Shearwater bird. . . . It was killed by C. F. Nason, formerly of Lewiston, Me., at the time we were up to the Rangley Lakes. Bird killed on Moose-luck Meguntic Lake in the year Hell Gate was blown up." Mr. O. W. Knight receiving this through another source published the essential part of Mr. Wooley's statement in his 'Birds of Maine.'²

Mr. Edwin Wakefield, however, with whom Mr. Wooley and Mr. Nason visited Rangley Lakes, states that he remembered nothing about the bird and that the only trip they made was in September 1876 which happens to

¹ Miss Ella L. Horr, present Custodian supplies the information that it is a female.

² 1897, Knight; Bull. 3, Univ. of Me., pp. 23-24.

be the exact time of the Hell Gate explosion. It is practically certain that Mr. Wooley's memory became confused after a lapse of twenty years and that he was thinking of some other bird, especially since it was he who gave Mr. Purdie the original data for 'New England Bird Life' stating that the bird was taken at Harpswell, Casco Bay, and this when the record was only a few years old. Unfortunately the label has been replaced by another following in part the Wooley letter of 1897.—ARTHUR H. NORTON.

Cory's Shearwater off Newfoundland, with Remarks on its Identification in Life.—On August 11, 1920, while on the Labrador steamer a few miles north of Bonne Bay, western Newfoundland, and about one mile off-shore, we came across quite a gathering of water-birds, Terns, Gulls of 3 species, some Gannets, and a flock of Leach's Petrels. Suddenly a Shearwater cut across the bow and joined the Petrels, all flying along with the boat and not more than 100 yards distant. Any Shearwater would have been unexpected, but we were very much surprised to immediately recognize Cory's Shearwater, a species not recorded previously in such a northern latitude.

This bird is little known to American field ornithologists, and as the characters given in Chapman's 'Handbook', for instance, make it appear a difficult species to separate from the Greater Shearwater, a note on this subject may be welcome, as we were well acquainted with both species prior to the observation above recorded. There is no difficulty whatever in distinguishing them even at a considerable distance. In the Greater Shearwater the dark fuscous cap extends down to a line just below the eye, where it gives way abruptly to the white of the underparts, this white forming an incomplete collar on the neck. In the field the cap appears black, and the bird has, consequently, a strongly bicolored appearance on the side of the head, while the invasion of the white half-collar in the darkly colored upperparts is equally noticeable. The head and neck of Cory's Shearwater is a lighter ashy fuscous above. This color extends much further below the eye on the side of the head than does the dark cap of the Greater Shearwater, and then fades *very gradually* into the white of the throat and breast. There is no trace of a half-collar. In the field, therefore, Cory's Shearwater appears as a grey-headed bird with a white throat, without any contrast of color. Cory's Shearwater has a longer, stouter, yellow bill, the Greater Shearwater, a shorter, slenderer, blackish bill. The difference in color in the bill is not very satisfactory, but the difference in proportions is about as good between these two Shearwaters, as for instance, between the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, or the Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. We have not found the difference in color of the under tail coverts of any value in the field, and do not believe this character could be used except under most unusual circumstances. Cory's Shearwater is a slightly larger bird throughout, but the degree of difference is small, and we do not regard this as a reliable field character.