

A very interesting record is that of an adult female Northern Pahlarope in almost perfect summer dress, taken June 5, 1922, by Mr. Owen Gromme of the Museum, on the shores of Lake Winnebago, at Fond du Lac Wis. It was in the company of a single Wilsons' Phalarope when shot.

Recurvirostra americana. AVOCET.—Kumlein and Hollister¹ list a number of records of the capture of this peculiar wader in the state, the latest in 1879, when they bred in Green Bay. As far as known none have been recorded since so that the following should be of interest. There is a male, No. 9061 of the Museum's collection, taken September 7, 1908, on Horicon Marsh, Dodge County, and presented by L. F. Crosby.

Another specimen, a beautiful male, was killed on Partridge Lake, Waupaca County, October 21, 1921, and presented to the Museum by Mr. H. J. Nunnemacher of Milwaukee. This specimen is now mounted.

The bird, which was mistaken for a Greater Yellow-legs, was seen to circle the lake a number of times, finally dropping in among some Canvas-back decoys, where it was swimming when shot.

Micropalama himantopus. STILT SANDPIPER.—A male was collected at the mouth of Bar Creek, near Cedar Grove, Sheboygan County, August 13, 1921. This bird was in the company of a Yellow-legs, which it followed here and there, always keeping slightly behind, where its actions and manner of feeding were noticeably different from those of its companion. This is the only Stilt Sandpiper so far observed by the writer on the Lake Michigan beaches.

Limosa haemastica. HUDSONIAN GODWIT.—There is a female specimen of this Godwit, No. 10032 of the Museum's collection, that was collected and presented by Mr. A. J. Schoenebeck. This bird was taken at Little Tail, Brown County, Wis., June 1, 1910. This is one of the many large waders that have almost disappeared from this region.

Numenius hudsonicus. HUDSONIAN CURLEW.—A fine female of this rare Wisconsin species was collected on the Lake Michigan shore a short distance south of Cedar Grove, Sheboygan County, September 23, 1922, by Mr. Owen Gromme and the writer. The bird was alone. There is a mounted specimen of this Curlew, No. 7034 of the Museum's collection, also an immature female, that was taken at Milwaukee on September 9, 1903, and presented to the Museum by Mr. John Kugler. H. L. STODDARD, *Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.*

Dr. Blagden on the Heath Hen.—The letters written from North America by Dr. Charles Blagden, a medical officer in the British Army then engaged in the task of bringing back the rebellious 13 colonies to their allegiance to the mother country, to Joseph Banks, his brother fellow of the Royal Society, are notable in many ways. There is much comment on the politics of the day; and it is evident that Blagden has little hope

¹ 'Birds of Wisconsin' by L. Kumlein and N. Hollister, *Bull. Wis. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, 1903, p42.

that the British Arms will triumph in the strife with "Mr." Washington and the "rebels." But the chief interest attaching to these letters, at least from the standpoint of a naturalist, is the frequent mention of natural history subjects. Dr. Blagden worked chiefly along lines of physical research. Many of his physical papers may be found in the 'Philosophical Transactions' and he also published papers on medical subjects. But all branches of natural science interested him. Hence the frequent communications on natural history subjects (plants, birds, fishes, etc.) to his friend Banks to whom he also sent natural history material of all sorts.

Sir Charles Blagden was a good deal of a figure in his day—1748–1820. He was in the British Army as medical officer for a number of years and remained in the service until 1814 when he was in Paris with the allied forces at the time of the abdication of the Emperor Napoleon. He became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1772 and in 1784 he was elected its secretary which office he held for a number of years. Dr. Johnson, as quoted by Boswell, speaking in true "Johnsonese" of Blagden's copiousness and precision of communication, avers that "Blagden, sir, is a delightful fellow;" while Hannah More said that he was so modest, so sensible and so knowing that he fitted perfectly Pope's line: "Willing to teach and yet not proud to know."

Blagden enjoyed for 50 years the friendship of Sir Joseph Banks who was knighted in 1781. The most interesting of his American letters to Banks is undoubtedly that dated at New York, Dec. 24, 1778, from the fact that he describes therein the Heath Hen and its habits. This is almost the first *scientific* communication in regard to this nearly extinct fowl which a century ago enjoyed a broad distribution along the Atlantic seaboard, very unlike its present restricted habitat on the island of Martha's Vineyard. It is of interest to know that the letter was dated less than a month after the election of Banks to the presidency of the Royal Society which office this "munificent patron of science" held until his death in 1820, the year also of Blagden's demise.

The letter follows:—

New York, Dec. 24, 1778.

My dear Friend

The October Packet is at length arrived, and I must confess it was no small disappointment to me not to receive by it a letter from you, as it is now above half a year since I had that Honour. Though I have already written you one letter by this Fleet, yet, as some new matter has occurred, I cannot refrain from addressing you again. I had lately an opportunity of seeing a bird much celebrated among the Aldermen of this town, and learning some particulars of its natural history. It is the Tetra Cupido of Linnaeus called here the Grouse. The distinguishing character of this species, its projecting feathers on each side of the upper part of the neck resembling small wings, are said to be peculiar to the male, and to give

him a very singular appearance in his flight. The Grouse are hatched in July, and attain their full growth about 20th of September, though the private regulations of the Province used to restrain the shooting them till the beginning of October. They are found among shrub oaks, and in considerable plenty on Long Island about 40 miles from this town, on a part of the dry flat barren country there, called the brushy Plains, on account of the great number of these low scrubbed oaks which grow there. You must already know the singular circumstances of Long Island compared with the rest of this country, that the middle of it is formed into a pretty uniform Plain of great extent, on which no trees appear ever to have grown, called Hampstead Plains. This champaign country terminates eastward in woods, but gradually, and the gradation is made by these brushy oaks, among which the Grouse reside. They are hunted by Pointers, the best of which for this purpose are of a very large size, so as to be able to make good their way among and over the infinitude of shrubs with which the country is covered. These birds are said to be much more delicate after the winter is set in; it is however, scarcely possible to catch them then but by chance, in a snow-storm, when they sometimes come near the Farmers' houses settled there for shelter, and are shot with the guns which these people always keep loaded for that purpose. I have inclosed you a specimen of the feather, to shew in what manner it is doubled, or lined, for the greater warmth of the bird. Toward the basis of the rachis of the great feather, the supradecomposition not beginning very near the raches, the plumage of the feather is hollow, and would be cold, if a smaller internal feather, arising from the same quill, and remarkably downy, did not fill up this defective place.

Winter is fairly begun, and with unusual severity. This morning near half an hour after sunrise, the Thermometer was rather below zero, whereas I never found it before lower than -4° . Though this may be a good remedy after the accursed sultry summers, it is certainly a very rough one, and I think our health might be as well restored by a more moderate prescription.

Your most affectionate Friend

C. Blagden.

—J. A. FARLEY, 52 Cedar St., Malden, Mass.

Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus virginianus*) Increasing in Ohio.

—The Ohio Christmas bird census of 1915 as published in 1916 Jan.-Feb 'Bird-Lore' was the first Ohio census following the enforcement of the State law which gave permanent protection to *Colinus virginianus virginianus* from gun and dog.

This census consists of reports of fourteen Ohio observers from widely separated and generally representative parts of the State, and it develops the fact that the report of but *one* observer, Lutea E. Roades, Hillsboro, O. includes the Bob-White—fourteen birds. This equaled an average of one Bob-White to each observer.