

GENERAL NOTES

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*) Nesting in Ocean County, N. J.—

The Black Skimmer is coming back. For a good many years the farthest north breeding colony known has been Atlantic County, N. J. This colony was visited in July, 1926, by Alden H. Hadley of the National Association of Audubon Societies and the number of adults estimated as 250, which according to my July 1925 count indicates an increase. On June 28, 1926, while looking for breeding colonies of Gulls and Terns on the islands in the coastal bays of Ocean Co., N. J., I found on a small island occupied by several hundred nesting Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), a pair of Black Skimmers and a young bird still in the down, evidently the nucleus of a new colony. I visited the island again on July 25 with Mr. Lester Walsh, and was surprised to find twelve adults, at least one well grown young and two nests containing eggs. The new colony had evidently received further recruits from the other group—probably birds that had been unsuccessful with their first sets of eggs.

The island on which the new colony is established seems to be free from rats. It is small, contains both grass cover and high mounds of sand and is an ideal nesting site. Such islands could easily be created in the shallow costal bays with the help of a sand dredge and show the possibilities in the future of creating without excessive cost, suitable nesting sites for many of our ocean and bay birds when our outer beaches are entirely appropriated for summer homes.—CHARLES A. URNER, *Elizabeth, N. J.*

An Unusual Set of Eggs of the Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*).

—Those who have had the opportunity of a visit to colonies of the Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*), will have perhaps, noticed that, at times, very palely marked eggs will be seen in nests of this species, although the other eggs of the set are normally marked.

It was my good fortune, to find on July 6, 1926, a set of these eggs which differs from any which I have seen. I was investigating a colony of Black Skimmers upon a sand bar about 14 miles to the southwest of Charleston, S. C. In an area of, perhaps, two acres, two hundred and thirty-one nests with eggs were counted, and, among these was the set in point.

When first noted, all of the eggs appeared to be pure white. There were three in the set, laid in the usual slight depression in the sand, without any lining whatever. The ground color of all the eggs is pure white. One egg is totally unmarked, not the slightest suggestion of a spot marring its rather glossy surface. Another is almost identical, having two minute blackish spots about the size of a pin's head, near the larger end. The last egg shows three or four splashes of pale brown. It would be interesting to know the order in which the eggs were laid. Probably the more spotted one was the first, and the unmarked one last.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *Charleston, South Carolina.*