

CORRESPONDENCE.

Editor of 'The Auk':

In the last (October) 'Auk,' pp. 508-527, appears an annotated list of the Birds of Gaspé County, Quebec, that contains so many obvious errors that I feel forced to call public attention to it as a guard against future distributionists taking it seriously and adding still further to the uncertainties of our literature. I cannot here pick out all the statements that fail to carry conviction but merely call attention to some of the grosser and more obvious inaccuracies.

In the introductory paragraph it is stated that the Canada Geological Survey established certain grounds as bird sanctuaries. It would be impossible for such a governmental department to establish such a sanctuary. In fact the sanctuary was proclaimed by the Provincial Government of Quebec, followed by similar action of a Federal Order in Council.

In the species list we find,—

Brünnich's Murre. I know of no summer record for this species on the Gulf of St. Lawrence except in the immediate neighborhood of the Bird Rocks in the neighborhood of the Magdalen islands. It occurs in winter in Gaspesian waters but I know of no summer specimens from there and would question sight records.

Black Tern. The Black Tern may occur occasionally but is certainly not a "regular traveller in the region." I know of no record for the Gulf of St. Lawrence except a single fall occurrence on Prince Edwards Island.

Double-crested Cormorant. Official orders were never issued to destroy Cormorants on the Gaspé coast. Because such a request has been made and was under consideration the investigation was conducted.

Red-breasted Merganser. Mergansers nesting, as inferred, in colonies of several hundreds on rocky islands is a new event in the known life history of this species.

Mallard. Under heading of Black Duck, Mallards are said to breed plentifully on the southeastern coast of Labrador. A wilder statement could scarcely have been made. It is very rare as far east as Quebec City and we have no record of occurrence beyond Pointe des Monts.

Barrow's Goldeneye. We have no substantiated record of Barrow's Goldeneye breeding on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It occurs in some numbers there in winter and some may possibly be found in summer along the North Shore but where these birds nest is still a matter of surmise. All the breeding Golden-eyes of the Gaspé Peninsula that have been so far identified have been American. Nesting on rocky islands with Scoters and rising from the ground in flocks when disturbed does not agree with usual Golden-eye practice.

Scoter. Though under heading of Barrow's Goldeneye the writer mentions large numbers breeding on rocky islands, no mention of nesting is

given under any of the three Scoter headings. Large flocks of Scoters, mostly Surf and White-winged, are to be found through the summer along the North Shore and perhaps stragglers may be seen on the south side of the Gulf in the same season but so far their breeding locality is unknown.

Piping Plover. A very unlikely bird to be met with in this northern locality yet it is dismissed with mere mention.

Flycatchers. These Flycatcher notes fail to carry conviction for instance,—May 6 and October 5 are extraordinary dates for the Alder Flycatcher at this latitude.

Lincoln's Sparrow. One small flock and a single pair make a very small number of this species to note during the better part of a season's work here. It should be one of the commonest and most generally distributed species.

White-eyed Vireo. A breeding pair mentioned without comment. It is scarcely profitable to even speculate what these birds could have been. We cannot accept the identification as given without more evidence. If corroborated this would be a most extraordinary record for the locality.

Thrushes. The writer's account of the status and relative abundance of the various species of Thrushes is hardly recognizable to others familiar with the birds of the region. That the Wood Thrush should be recorded without hesitation so far from its normal range on ear identification alone indicates little knowledge of avian probability or realization of ornithological responsibility.

With this amount of obvious error it is evident how little reliance can be placed in the list as a whole.

P. A. TAVERNER.

*Victoria Memorial Museum,
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