

Abundance of the Passenger Pigeon in Pennsylvania in 1850.— My attention has been called to a letter published in a work¹ compiled by Mary Thomas Seaman, which shows only another instance of the countless numbers of Passenger Pigeons which once inhabited Pennsylvania as well as other States.

Letter from Peter Yarnall to Rebecca Yarnall, Columbia, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania:—

Jersey, March 17th, 1850

My Dear Sister,

"The pigeons have visited us again this spring in such numbers, that through the last week we could get all, or more than we could make use of, with little trouble, we do not shoot them, but a few traps in the corn field, supply us with all we can take care of, our traps are made of sticks, like partridge traps, and we take them alive. It would surprise thee to hear what numbers we catch, in that way, James made a trap just 4 feet square and set it, in about two hours he went to it, and found twenty-one pigeons in it, yesterday we caught one hundred and three altogether; I do not approve of shooting them for so many get wounded, that suffer and die, it seems cruel. Thee may wonder what we do with so many at once, we have a coop 12 feet long and 8 ft. wide with poles placed for them to roost on, here we turn them loose, and feed them. When they are first caught, they will not eat before us, but I was surprised to find how soon they grow tame, in a day or two they will come forward and eat like chickens. We now have one hundred and fifty-three in our coop. It will accommodate perhaps two hundred if they continue so plenty in a day or two more we will have to leave our traps down, only catching what Lemuel's family, and ours can make use of. A description of the habits of this bird may be interesting to thee; as they only visit your County transiently, you know but little about them, here they come in such vast numbers, as at times to almost darken the horizon. I have known a flock passing over our heads that has continued I think a full half hour before we could see the end of it. When they visit us in the spring, they form what is called by some a pigeon encampment. After selecting a piece of woods that will suit them, they commence building their nests on every tree, some have twenty or more on according to the size of the tree, thus they continue on for miles; a few years ago there was an encampment about six miles south of us, on a tract of unimproved land, this was said to be four miles long. After their eggs are laid, the male bird sets on them half the day, and the female the other half, and take their regular turn in the same way while taking care of their young; this we found out by catching them in our traps, in the forenoon I think it was, we caught all he ones, in the afternoon all she ones; this was invariably the case, I do not recollect an instance at that time, of catching the two kinds together. There is another peculiarity, other small birds

¹ Thomas Richardson of South Shields, Durham County, England and his descendants in the United States of America compiled by Mary Thomas Seaman, 1929.

carry the food to the young in their beaks, but the pigeon carries it altogether in its crop; and has it in its power to eject it at pleasure, was it otherwise it would be very inconvenient, for they often go fifteen, twenty, and perhaps thirty miles for their food, and altho they fly verry fast, they would become verry tired carrying it in their mouths. When the young pigeons become fledged, they are so fat, that they are much heavier than the old ones, and can not do much at flying, the surrounding inhabitants (at least many of them) far and near, come to the encampment to supply themselves with squabs, they strike the trees with their axes, and frighten them out of their nests, and catch them, thousands are taken in this way, and hundreds destroyed by birds of prey. When the encampment was six miles from us, two of my neighbors came by with their waggon, and wished me to go with them, not having time, I let my two little boys go with them, in the evening they returned with 33 squabs to their share, they had much more fat on than was required to cook them and I thought it the most delicious meat I ever tasted, of the wild kind.

I have filled up my letter so much with pigeons that I have but little more room, but if it is not interesting, excuse me, and I will try to do better in future."

believe me thy ever affectionate

Brother P. Yarnall. Write soon.

—RUTHVEN DEANE, 112 W. Adams St., *Chicago*.

Doves using an old Robin's Nest.—A pair of Mourning Doves (*Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*) used a last year's Robin's nest which had been placed on a projection under the eaves of a house. Early in the year the pair began to make visits of inspection to the nest. It was repaired and the first brood hatched April 3. They left the nest April 25 and immediately the pair put a new lining in the nest. This was repeated for each nesting, during the season. The fifth brood left the nest September 1, 1930.—MYRA KATIE ROADS, *Hillsboro, Ohio*.

The Mourning Dove in Alaska.¹—On October 9, 1916, Dr. Thomas E. Winecoff collected a Mourning Dove at Fort Yukon, Alaska. This specimen subsequently came to the United States National Museum, where it now is. The skin is in poor shape, but is definitely identifiable as the western subspecies *Zenaidura macroura marginella*, as it has the rather pale ventral coloration characteristic of that race. Its dimensions are as follows:—wing 144; tail 112; exposed culmen 14 millimeters. The bird, which is a male, constitutes the first record for Alaska, and the northernmost for the species. It seems that the Mourning Dove is only a casual straggler so far to the northwest, but its known range must be extended to include the present record.—HERBERT FRIEDMANN, *U. S. National Museum*.

Intestinal Parasites in Sharp-shinned Hawks.—Twenty-three Sharp-shinned Hawks were shot on September 29, 1930, in Schuykill

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