

## GENERAL NOTES.

**The Fishing Plunge of the Brown Pelican.**—While engaged in an investigation of the muskrat in the coastal region of Louisiana during the years 1925–1927, I had many opportunities of observing the fishing plunge of the Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*). Many writers have mentioned these plunges but very few analytical descriptions have been published.

Nichols (1918) described the observations of Dr. Russell J. Coles who noted the plunges of the Brown Pelican in Florida as follows: "When these birds are feeding, the distance of their flight above the surface of the water is carefully regulated by the depth at which the fish are swimming . . . . I have often seen a Brown Pelican suddenly dart forward and upward ten to fifteen feet higher and circle back over his prey before making his plunge, indicating that the fish was swimming at a greater depth than expected." From this one may get the impression that the circle before the plunge occurs only when the Pelican has underestimated the depth of its prey. Quoting further, "The plunge is interesting in that it is always made headed down wind" (italics mine). From this point on until the bird strikes the water, the plunge is very accurately described. Nichols continues, "It is necessary for such a heavy bird to rise against the wind, therefore, it is only a case of instinctive preparedness that the Brown Pelican always rises to the surface headed up-wind, in order to be ready for instant flight."

Bent (1922) who quotes these notes of Nichols, comments on this description as follows: "Thus, by entering the water down-wind and emerging from it up-wind, the Pelican makes a complete turnover or turnabout under water; many writers have referred to this, and almost every observer has noticed it."

My observations are somewhat at variance with the preceding notes, for I have never seen the Brown Pelican plunge into the water headed down-wind or make a turnover or turnabout under water. The ordinary flight of the Pelican is into the wind whenever any breeze is blowing. When about to plunge, the bird makes a complete circle of 180 degrees so that it strikes the water headed up-wind. Upon coming to the surface of the water with its prey, the Pelican is still headed up-wind. Thus, it is in position to receive the wind on the under surfaces of its wings and so rise from the water to continue its flight. This, with the characteristic circling, is the normal plunge of the Brown Pelican as I have observed it in Louisiana.—ARTHUR SVIHLA, *State College, Pullman, Wash.*

**Occurrence of the Barrow's Golden-eye and (Greater?) Snow Geese in Berkshire County, Massachusetts.**—Late in the afternoon of April 15, 1931, I was driving on the dirt road bordering the Housatonic River, in Lenox, accompanied by John F. Treadway, of Williamstown. We skirted the rather spacious stretch of water back of the Lenox depot,