

## GENERAL NOTES.

**Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) Breeding in Essex County, Massachusetts.**—While banding juvenile Herring Gulls with Mr. W. G. Means, on July 7, 1931, at North Gooseberry Island, Salem, Massachusetts, our attention was attracted by the cries of a Black Backed Gull circling overhead. Presently, our inevitable suspicions were confirmed by the discovery of a single juvenile Black-back almost fully fledged. Traces of natal down still persisted on its head, neck, and rump. The dorsal feathers were conspicuously margined with "vinaceous buff" in marked contrast with the more uniformly darker brown back of the young Herring Gulls. Its tail was sufficiently well developed to show the characteristic white banding at the tip and base.

Not wishing to collect the bird without more information about its breeding range, we banded and released it. After consulting Messrs. Griscom and Peters at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, it seemed possible that we had established the first breeding record for the species in the United States. Accordingly, Mr. Means returned to the island on July 9 and collected the young Gull (a male about five weeks old) without difficulty. It has been mounted and given to the Peabody Museum, Salem.

According to A. C. Bent (1921)<sup>1</sup> the southern limit of the breeding range of the species has been considered to be in King's County, Nova Scotia. I can find no published record in recent volumes of 'The Auk' which modifies this opinion. Audubon (1835)<sup>2</sup> considered that "none breed further south than the eastern extremity of Maine," presumably on the islands in the vicinity of Grand Manan where Boardman (1862)<sup>3</sup> and Herrick (1873)<sup>4</sup> reported scattered pairs breeding among Herring Gulls. Stearns and Coues (1883)<sup>5</sup> stated that "some individuals breed in Maine." Apparently Mr. Bent considered these unauthenticated reports of Maine stations too vague to accept and made no reference to them. However, the marked southward extension of breeding Herring Gulls during the past ten years suggests that a Massachusetts occurrence for the Black Back is no mere accident and that recent unpublished accounts of stations along the Maine coast may be uncovered. Mr. Arthur H. Norton of Portland writes that such indeed is the fact, and that data on the breeding of this bird in Maine may soon be expected in publication. Furthermore, it is reported on good authority that Mr. Samuel A. Eliot, Jr., of Northampton, Massachusetts, discovered one or

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Bent, N. A. Gulls and Terns, U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 113, p. 79, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> Audubon, Orn. Biog., 306, 1835.

<sup>3</sup> Boardman, Proc. Bos. Soc. Nat. Hist. IX: 131, 1862.

<sup>4</sup> Herrick, Bull. Essex Inst. V, 28-41, 1873.

<sup>5</sup> Stearns and Coues, N. E. Bird Life, II: 347, 1883.

two mated (?) pairs and one well-grown juvenile bird at Little Duck Island, Mt. Desert, Maine, on July 15, 1931.

From the foregoing, it is highly probable that the Black-backed Gull within a very few years, if not in 1931, has made the first definite southward extension of its breeding range since Audubon's time. In all likelihood, this may be attributed to a marked increase in the Gull population in northeastern United States.—RICHARD J. EATON, 53 State St., Boston, Mass.

**Breeding of the Great Black-backed Gull and Double-crested Cormorant in Maine.**—During an inspection of the bird colonies on the coast of Maine, made under the auspices of the National Association of Audubon Societies, from June 23 to July 14, 1931, we found the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) breeding at ten different stations along the coast. With but one exception these breeding places were islands upon which there were also nesting colonies of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*). The exception was Egg Rock, in West Penobscot Bay, where one pair of *Larus marinus* and two young of that species were found. On this same rock, a tiny island less than 100 yards in length, we counted 9 nests of the Eider (*Somateria mollissima dresseri*). The usual number of these Gulls breeding at each of the ten stations was one pair, two breeding pairs being found on only three islands: the Brothers, Cone Island, Little Duck Island. In all 13 pairs of breeding birds were observed. The nests always occupied elevated positions, commanding a view of the surrounding land and sea. The young were more advanced than the majority of young Herring Gulls, and in every instance were in early juvenal plumage. All of them could run with considerable speed, in spite of a certain awkwardness, and many took to the water upon being disturbed, swimming short distances off-shore with great facility. In one instance, at Hardhead, one which had swum well off-shore was seen to rise against the light breeze and fly to windward to join its parents, which persistently kept still farther up-wind, evidently encouraging the young one to overcome the leeward drift until it could reach shore and land once more.

According to our observations, the station farthest west upon which *Larus marinus* was found breeding was Northern White Island, belonging to the town of Boothbay, in Lincoln County. One young Gull of this species was discovered hiding among the rocks close to shore. When released he took to the water, and as he swam off-shore the two adults followed, flying in circles and zig-zags over him, sounding their characteristic low, hoarse notes, and an occasional high, screaming *ki, ki*.

Following is a list of the islands where *Larus marinus* was breeding: Double-headed Shot; the Brothers; Cone Island; Little Duck Island; Green Island (off Swan's Island); Hardhead Island; Spoon Ledge; Egg Rock (West Penobscot Bay); Yellow Ledge; Northern White Island. These islands are scattered from the region of Machias Bay to the western proximity of Pemaquid Point, roughly a distance of about 140 miles. It is very likely that *Larus marinus* is breeding on Elm Island, in Casco