

Old Specimen of the Blue-faced Booby from Texas.—In the Museum of Natural History, University of Iowa, there is a specimen of the Atlantic Blue-faced Booby (*Sula dactylatra dactylatra*). This bird, an immature female, was formerly No. 13138 in the D. H. Talbot collection and was collected at Matagorda Bay, Texas, June 8, 1885, by Edmond, and the specimen skinned by Carr, two of Mr. Talbot's collectors. It is now No. 6308 in the M. N. H. collection. Additional data on the field label are: "Length, 30; extent, 65; wing, $15\frac{1}{4}$; tail, 7. Color of bill and face, slate; color of feet and tarsi, dark slate; color of eyes, yellow." Measurements in inches of this specimen, recently taken, are as follows: Exposed culmen, 4.18; depth at base of bill, 1.49; wings, 16.80 and 16.50; tarsus, 2.09; middle toe (without claw), 2.89. While the entire head, neck, wings and tail are grayish-brown, the underparts are white; the back and rump are narrowly streaked brown and white.

Since the Talbot collection of birds came to the University Museum in 1891 no critical study has been made of the material other than for the purpose of cataloguing. This specimen was placed with the gannets at that time but recorded as *Sula sula*.

The A. O. U. 'Check-List,' 4th Edition, lists this species for three localities: Florida; Avery Island, Louisiana, and Rockport, Texas. Alden Risser records (Auk, XLIX, p. 106) the capture of a specimen, July 31, 1931, near Matamosos, Mexico, about four miles south of the mouth of the Rio Grande. If this occurrence is accepted as a North American record then the Talbot bird will constitute the fifth record for the U. S. and the third for Texas.—PHILIP A. DuMONT, *Museum Nat. Hist. University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa*.

Flying with a Flock of Swans.—On the afternoon of November 5, 1932, I left the airport east of York, Pa., and climbed my ship to an altitude of 1400 ft. into a westerly wind. When over the northern part of the City I was suddenly attracted by a long curving line of large white birds flying at about the same altitude several miles to the north and headed for the Susquehanna, in view, about ten miles away. I was up with them in an instant and for the next fifteen minutes was actually flying with the flock, being always careful not to fly too close as a collision might be most damaging both to swan and ship. I recognized them as Whistling Swans (*Cygnus columbianus*), and estimated the flock to contain about one hundred birds. Most of the time I was flying about the birds on the outside, herding the flock at will. In these maneuvers I was soon aware that I was traveling much faster than the swans, and on several straightaway flights which followed, I made a careful estimate of the birds' speed. My ship was cruising at 80 miles per hour, and from experience in overtaking other ships in the air I estimated the speed of the flight of the Whistling Swan at from 50 to 55 mph., certainly not over the latter figure. During these maneuvers the birds broke ranks and bunched together, but always deployed in a long curving line on the straightaway. In any event, I am quite positive that at all times the birds were flying at maximum speed.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Bent (Life Histories. Bulletin No. 130, p. 287) quotes Audubon as saying that the estimated speed of these birds is 100 mph. or more; but favored with being in a unique and interesting position for observation of the birds in flight, I can not confirm this observation.—CHARLES S. WEISER, 105 West Springettsbury Ave., York, Penna.

Summering Eiders off the Massachusetts Coast.—It will doubtless be of interest to record that on July 30, 1930, I found a pair of American Eiders (*Somateria m. dresseri*) in full breeding plumage at a point near Stone Horse Shoals on the Monomoy Peninsula. I first found them asleep on the beach and was able to approach to within fifty feet before they took alarm. They were apparently associating with a large flock of mixed scoters.—LESTER L. WALSH, 532 Spring Ave., Ridgewood, N. J.

A Pennsylvania Black-crowned Night Heron Colony.—Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*), for many years have maintained a heronry on McCormick's Island in the Susquehanna River opposite the upper end of Harrisburg, Pa. The island is one mile long and densely wooded except for a farm in the center. It is said to have been there for three generations at least.

Five years ago we saw the herons nesting in the tops of tall red birches but for the past four years they have occupied a small clump^a of white pines. This year we found 150 nests in the white pine trees, 13 in scrub pines, 3 in wild cherries and 15 in red birch trees. In 134 white pine trees there were single nests but eight others had two nests each. The nests in the birches were forty feet above ground, in the pines about fifteen feet.

The white pine trees had from nine to twelve whorls of branches, most having ten or eleven. The ages of white pines are computed as from three to five years more than the number of layers of branches. In 53 trees examined the nests were on the top layer of radiating branches of sixteen trees, on the second layer in 27, on the third layer in 24 and fourth layer in 6. The first 16 were certainly built this year, and most if not all the nests on the second layer of branches. The lower thirty nests may have been built last year. All the trees were numbered for future study as to the reoccupation of nests. Doubtless many nests are destroyed by the weather but we found 36 old nests which seemed to have withstood the storms.

The census showed 145 occupied nests, of which 135 were in 122 white pine trees. The shells of 231 heron eggs were found on the ground beneath 122 trees, from one to four per tree. Occupation was determined by the appearance of the trees. Eighty-one were greatly whitened by the excreta of the herons, and 61 showed no discoloration. Ten of the 81 showed no egg shells on the ground. One showed excreta and no egg shells but the nest contained a fledgling. Among those trees showing no excreta upon the branches or ground, four held nests with young birds. The presence or absence of egg shells, or excreta, are evidently not absolute indications of the occupancy of a heron's nest.