

bird is handicapped. It is frequently remarkable how well abnormal birds (or humans for that matter) get along despite this or that handicap, but they are primarily handicaps none the less.

Mr. A. L. Rand tells me native cattle herders in Madagascar frequently stand on one leg (sometimes with a staff, however) for considerable periods; the other foot resting on the knee. Their reason for doing this might have a bearing on our problem.—J. T. NICHOLS, *New York, N. Y.*

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*) Breeding in New York.—Black Skimmers have been observed daily this summer in the vicinity of South Oyster Bay, Long Island, and their actions led the writer to believe that they were breeding. A prolonged search, with the assistance of John Harris of Amityville, who kindly made his boat available, failed to disclose breeding evidence. On August 18, while working in Gilgo State Park, I heard a Skimmer barking not far from a place where, Harris had reported, the bird resented his intrusion. With my glasses I watched the Skimmer fly to the Bay, return with a fish, and drop to the sand near three downy young; their primaries were just beginning to emerge from their sheaths. This is, I believe, the first breeding record for New York State.—WILLIAM VOGT, *Jones Beach State Bird Sanctuary, Wantagh, N. Y.*

Recent Owl Records from Southwestern New England.—*Tyto alba pratincola*. BARN OWL.—The pair that breeds in the Court-house tower at Springfield, Mass. (apparently the species' northeasternmost breeding-station) had eggs in the mild winter of 1932-33 as early as Feb. 8, but a cold spell shortly after seems to have spoiled them. Several young, very tame and silly, appeared in July 1933 and were caught in attics, photographers' studios, and even the middle of streets. One died in captivity; another, banded and released, was killed by an automobile; a third, also banded, has not yet been heard from. Another brood must have been raised in the fall, for on January 4, 1934, an Owl that was still downy spent the day in a tree at the Colony Club. Undaunted, it seems, by the terrible winter of 1933-34, the Court-house pair held their ground: I banded four unfledged young July 14, 1934. On February 14, 1934, and for several days thereafter, a Barn Owl was observed at South Windsor, Conn., hunting in broad daylight.

Surnia ulula caparoch. HAWK OWL.—On Feb. 11, 1933, one was collected at the eastern end of the Holyoke range, in Granby, Mass., by B. Schurr, who has mounted it for the library museum at Holyoke. On Jan. 26, 1934, one in Podunk swamp, South Windsor, Conn., was studied in good light through a 33 x telescope at a distance of about 1000 feet by Mr. Geo. T. Griswold, an observer of long experience, who took ample notes on the unexpected stranger he was seeing. Only two Connecticut records, 1869 and 1879, are mentioned in the 'Birds of Connecticut' of 1913.

Scotiaptex n. nebulosa. GREAT GRAY OWL.—On Feb. 4, 1934, shortly southeast of New Haven, Conn., an Owl of this species was flushed into a

bare tree less than 50 feet from the observer (who had a bright sun at his back) and minutely studied by Frederick W. Loetscher, Jr., a Yale student with exceptional knowledge and caution. He particularly noted the yellow eyes, yellowish bill, and huge facial disks, and next day found his notes tallied perfectly with a mounted specimen.

Asio f. flammeus. SHORT-EARED OWL.—Once a common transient along the Connecticut river through Massachusetts, this Owl is now a rarity there. On October 31, 1933, I found in Hadley the body of one that had very recently been shot, and on April 14, 1934, two young friends of mine observed in Northampton what can only have been this species. On Feb. 3, 1934, with the sun high and a foot of dazzling snow on the ground, one was watched by Mr. Loetscher, near the Sound southwest of New Haven, hunting by ear. It flapped and hovered close over the snow, cocked its head, and plunged, coming down with wings outspread on the snow and ducking its head deep under. Having caught its prey in its bill, it remained where it was, as if helpless, until too closely approached, when it rose, transferred the mouse from bill to foot, and lit on a post, where it seemed to pluck little pieces from the mouse and then swallow it whole, head first.

The first nine days of February, 1934, were almost solidly sub-zero in western Massachusetts. A Screech Owl perching on an iron bridge was seen to fall from it, numb and helpless. The frozen body of a Great Horned Owl was found on golf-links in Holyoke, uninjured. Quite a number of Saw-whet Owls were picked up, dead or dying, in the late winter or early spring.—SAMUEL A. ELIOT, JR., *Smith College, Northampton, Mass.*

A New Stygian Owl.—The stygian Owl, *Asio stygius stygius* (Wagler), has been considered quite uniform throughout its range. Comparison, however, shows certain differences between specimens from southern Brazil and from Mexico and Central America. I therefore describe the latter as a new race.

***Asio stygius robustus*, subsp. nov.**

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Asio s. stygius* (Wagler)¹ but lighter areas above and below whitish or light buff instead of deep buff or ochre; lighter spots on inner webs of primaries light ochraceous to buffy-white or obsolete instead of deep buff or ochre; bars of upper tail coverts buffy white instead of deep buff; ground color of flanks and under tail-coverts whitish washed with buff instead of wholly deep buff; streaks of longer under tail coverts giving out three pairs of lateral bars instead of one or none; size larger, wing of female more than 335 mm.; toes sparsely feathered to middle of terminal joint.

Type.—Adult female, U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 27, 113, Mirador, near Vera Cruz, Mexico, collected by C. Sartorius, original No. 6.

¹ *N[ycalops] stygius* Wagler, *Isis* (von Oken), 1832, col. 1221. ("Brazil" = Minas Geraes.)