

Later in the summer other observers found the species in the same locality.—
RICHARD E. OLSEN, *Museum of Zool., Ann Arbor, Mich.*

Notes from Central Illinois.—The following records refer to species, which are now uncommon or rare in central Illinois. The writer extends his appreciation to Dr. Alvin R. Cahn, assistant professor of zoology at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill., for permission to publish four of the six records here presented.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. WHITE PELICAN.—One adult was found dead on May 17, 1934, on the bank of a dredge ditch southwest of Sidney, Champaign County, by Vernal Mumm of that city. It was prepared for mounting by Guy Day and was examined by Dr. Cahn. The bird was thought to have perished in the violent dust storm which preceded its discovery.

Cygnus columbianus. WHISTLING SWAN.—Eight adult and two immature birds were present on Lake Decatur, at Decatur (Macon County), on about November 7, 1931. Their presence was reported to Dr. Cahn by Mr. D. B. Gorham of that city. He enclosed an excellent newspaper photograph, which showed the birds passing overhead as they left the lake.

Mareca penelope. EUROPEAN WIDGEON.—Four individuals were noted on about fifteen different days during March and April, 1931, on the Smith Duck pond near Mt. Zion, Macon County, by Mr. P. S. Smith, who obtained a fine series of photographs (now in the possession of Dr. Cahn) of three of the birds. One of these birds was seen by Mr. C. M. Powers who reports one from Lake Decatur, and by Mr. D. B. Gorham, to whom Dr. Cahn is indebted for the information here given. Mr. Gorham adds that Mr. Smith stated that some years ago he had killed a bird of this species on his pond.

Falco peregrinus anatum. DUCK HAWK.—Two sight records are as follows: one adult female seen over Brownfield's Woods, three and one-half miles northeast of Urbana, Champaign County, on April 7, 1934, by Mr. A. C. Twomey, an assistant in zoology at the University of Illinois; one immature bird seen by the writer September 23, 1934, near University Woods, not far from the site of the above record.

Tyto alba pratincola. BARN OWL.—One adult was observed for a half hour on June 1, 1929, on the golf course of the Urbana Country Club, north of Urbana, by Dr. Cahn and Mr. J. T. Kemp. It was being "pestered" by Crows at the time of observation.

Nyctea nyctea. SNOWY OWL.—One adult was seen November 17, 1932, in University Woods, northeast of Urbana, by Mr. D. J. Davis.—CHARLES THEODORE BLACK, 407 E. Daniel St., Champaign, Ill.

Unusual Water Birds in the Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin, Area.—On June 12, 1934, Mr. I. J. Perkins of the Milwaukee Public Museum staff and I bogged through the marsh on the south end of Lake Winnebago within the city limits of Fond du Lac, Wis. We were amazed at the large numbers of Ducks of different species that we saw as compared with the numbers seen on or about the same date during former years. Ordinarily, one would expect to find a half dozen pairs of Blue-winged Teal and Mallards and a few Shovelers. Upon the above date we observed about 75 Blue-winged Teal all males with one exception. We saw one female at the head of her little flotilla of young and found the nest and eggs of another. We also saw one female Gadwall, one pair of Pintails, several pairs of Baldpates, one pair of Wood Ducks, one male Shoveler, five Lesser Scaup and numbers of Mallards and Black Ducks. We also saw two Hooded Mergansers and a pair of Red-heads. While inspecting this lot with the glasses, we noticed a fine male European Widgeon, and a

single Hudsonian Godwit was busily feeding out on a mud bar. These last two birds were secured as Museum specimens. The Widgeon was in the molt and the testes showed no evidence of recent sexual activity. Inasmuch as the bird kept to itself and we observed no mate, we decided that it was a non-breeding bird. The Godwit proved to be a fine male with enormously developed testes but long waiting disclosed no mate. Far out on an inaccessible mud flat a flock of over 100 Terns (either the Common or Forster's) rested and gave no opportunity for a shot. Out there were also several large flocks of small shore-birds. I think they were Semipalmated Sandpipers but have no proof. I have never observed either the Common or Forster's Tern on this marsh on this date.

The unusually large congregation of water-fowl at this point may be accounted for by reason of the unprecedented drought which has undoubtedly deprived many species of breeding and feeding grounds and driven them to concentrate at certain favorable spots.—O. J. GROMME, *Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.*

A Practical Method of Degreasing Bird Skins.—During the past year I have employed a method of degreasing bird skins that is apparently not widely used but which is exceedingly practical and efficient. A brief outline of the procedure is as follows:

The bird is skinned as usual and the fat carefully scraped from the skin, after which it is stuffed as a completed skin and allowed to dry in its cotton shroud for about six weeks. The fully prepared and labelled skin (several may be degreased simultaneously) is now placed in a vat or wash-boiler containing several gallons of clear white gasoline such as is obtainable at most filling stations. It is allowed to remain here for several weeks during which period the skin is removed several times, drained, and placed in fresh gasoline. Finally it is removed and drained head downward for about an hour after which it is placed on a flat pile of newspapers which are allowed to soak up the gasoline over night. The newspapers are changed until the specimen is thoroughly dry, whereupon the process is completed. The feathers may require a little stroking to restore them to their former fluffiness but this requires only a few moments in the case of well-made skins.

Gasoline that has been used to degrease skins is strained and poured into the tank of the family automobile thus reducing the cost of degreasing to almost nothing.

It is believed that this method is far superior to that of degreasing freshly skinned birds in gasoline (or other solvents) before making them up into study skins. In the latter case it is a tedious and often difficult task to dry out and restore the feathers to their normal position and fluffiness. In the present method, however, the arrangement of the feathers is never disturbed by the gasoline and no corn meal or other drying material whatever is used. Furthermore gasoline will not penetrate a fresh wet skin nearly as well as it will a dry one, even though alcohol is added to increase miscibility in the former case.

In large greasy birds it is desirable to drill holes into the radius, ulna and tarsometatarsus so that the fat within may be more quickly removed by the gasoline.

I make it a matter of routine to degrease all fat specimens in the manner here described. This has been done successfully with various types of birds including Grebes, Ducks, Geese, Rails, Plovers, Woodpeckers, Sparrows, Thrushes, etc.

In the case of white birds such as Terns, it is necessary to degrease the specimen before the fat on the feathers has had time to oxidize and turn brown; there is no danger of this within a few weeks, however. Brown stains on the feathers of old skins can be removed by mopping with ether.