

the wind for the shore about a mile and a quarter distant, but it made but a short flight when it again fell into the sea, where it probably perished.—ARTHUR H. NORTON, *Museum of Natural History, Portland, Maine.*

Northern Bald Eagle: an Addition to the New Hampshire List.—It has been suspected for several years that Eagles wintering on the coast of New Hampshire were of a different form from the birds present inland at other seasons. While a series of measurements to substantiate this cannot easily be obtained, and since Mr. Luman R. Nelson who has handled both forms, assures me the wintering birds are larger as well as darker, I wish to submit the following notes:

On January 26, 1934, from a group of ten immature and adult Eagles at Great Bay, Portsmouth, N. H., Mr. Nelson collected two immature birds of the form *Haliaeetus leucocephalus alascanus*. Both were preserved by him and repose in his bird museum at Winchester. The larger of the two birds measured eight feet four inches from tip to tip wing-spread and weighed twelve pounds; bill, two and three-fourths inches; folded wing, twenty-seven inches. The second bird averaged a little smaller. One stomach was empty; the other contained parts of a Black Duck.

On January 15, 1935, Mr. Nelson collected, also at Great Bay where these birds winter each year, a third Northern Bald Eagle; a beautiful, very dark male. In structure it proved to be larger than any of the few adult females of the common form in his collection; it weighed ten and one-half pounds, and the stomach was empty. The bill measured a little over two and one-half inches; folded wing, twenty-four inches.—LEWIS O. SHELLEY, *East Westmoreland, N. H.*

Notes on the Black Pigeon Hawk.—Two recently published notes concerning the Black Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius suckleyi*) by Dr. G. M. Sutton (*Auk*, Vol. LII, Jan. 1935, page 79) and H. S. Swarth, (*Condor*, Vol. XXXVI, Jan.-Feb. 1934, page 40) would seem to indicate that my own notes and observations regarding this little known race may be worth recording. First, in regard to the validity of the race: "I know of no proof," says Mr. Swarth, "that the name (*F. c. suckleyi*) represents a valid, geographic race, confined within boundaries to the exclusion of other forms of *columbarius*. Most assuredly it is not of the humid coastal strip, as has been supposed. I have collected specimens of "*suckleyi*" at Hazelton and at Atlin, south-bound migrants all; it must breed somewhere in this general region, where, however typical *columbarius* also occurs."

In regard to the taking of an adult male in breeding condition at Blue River, B. C., Dr. Sutton concludes: "Our capture of this breeding bird so far inland forces us to believe that *suckleyi* is not restricted to the coastal region in summer, as has heretofore been supposed; and strengthens our conviction that the adult male taken by Taverner at Oliver, in the southern Okanagan Valley, on June 10, 1922, was not far from its nesting grounds, even though we are plainly told that this was 'not a breeding bird' (see Brooks and Swarth, l. c.)."

In the last fifteen years I have observed or taken Pigeon Hawks in the west coast region from Portland, Oregon, to the Chitina River, Alaska, and eastward in British Columbia to the Similkameen and Okanagan valleys. A breeding pair with a family from which young specimens were taken, on the Chitina headwaters—close to the Yukon-Alaska line—proved to be the eastern form, *Falco columbarius columbarius*. Birds observed at Portland, Oregon, in winter—one at very close quarters—were almost certainly juveniles of the dark form, *F. c. suckleyi*, or at least not the eastern form. Mr. Stanley G. Jewett, of Portland, Oregon informs me that of seven Black Pigeon Hawks in his collection, only one is from east of the Cascades,—this an

immature male taken July 31, 1929, at Heppner, Oregon, by H. W. Dohyns. Two are from coastal Oregon or Washington, two from Comox, Vancouver Island. In the Similkameen and Okanagan valleys of British Columbia I have taken during autumn migration both *columbarius* and *suckleyi* juveniles. In regard to the Taverner specimen of the adult male, mentioned above by Sutton, I stood on the other side of the tree when the bird was shot and a few years later, August 31, 1928, on the same mountain (Anarchist) some few miles distant near its southern end, took a juvenile of the same race.

In the last thirteen years on Vancouver Island mainly in the Comox region I have collected twenty-three Pigeon Hawks, the dates of taking being scattered over most of the year. Of these, two males and two females have been adult, the balance juveniles, and of this number only one is of a paler, doubtful form not typical of either race here under discussion. The others have been of the black race, supposedly *F. c. suckleyi*. In addition to the above there must be another dozen Vancouver Island specimens of this bird in other British Columbian collections taken mainly at Comox.

As this black form of the species has been observed or taken on Vancouver Island in every month of the year; as it undoubtedly breeds here; as the early migrant autumn birds are mainly juveniles and the wintering birds more apt to be adult; as the young of the year are out in the open in the last week of July; and as the eastern form *F. c. columbarius* is found on Vancouver Island only as a rarity of migration, turning up as a score of other eastern birds do, surely there is enough evidence at hand to warrant that this black form of Pigeon Hawk is a valid geographic race with a range of its own and that range, if not centering about Vancouver Island, is at least in the coastal strip. As in four summers' field work—six months each year afield—in southern British Columbia between Vancouver City and the Rockies, including ten weeks observation in Jasper Park, Alta, and five weeks in the Lake Louise area in the Rockies, I neither took nor saw any Pigeon Hawks, it would seem that the Okanagan specimens, of which there are several, and the Blue River bird mark approximately the eastern limits, and the Atlin specimens are close to the northern extremity of the range—Blue River being almost due north of the southern Okanagan and Atlin at no great distance from the Chitina headwaters. The fact that a Black Pigeon Hawk turns up occasionally in the interior of British Columbia or even in eastern Canada in the undoubted range of *F. c. columbarius* surely can mean little more than the fact of *columbarius* coming to Vancouver Island.

A bird with gonads in breeding condition by no means proves the case of actual nesting; but conceding the Blue River male breeding and even for the sake of the argument, the Taverner male also, too much must not be taken for granted from such outpost records. It is vastly more difficult to secure Pigeon Hawks at breeding time out of the heavy timber of the coastal belt than to get them in the interior country where the timber is not only lower but the woods more open. Coastal birds are often sighted on perches quite out of gunshot and I have had to kill a number with a small-bore rifle. That some birds of a coastal race extend its range into the interior beyond the Coast Range is not surprising; but the wilderness interior of Vancouver Island and the whole coastal area of British Columbia from Vancouver City northward is a region practically unworked by ornithologists. A glance at the map will show its intricate system of inlets, channels and islands. It is all heavily forested, the most difficult sort of country for field work. This undoubtedly is the home range of the elusive little Black Merlin.

That it can be found actually breeding here by anyone who cares to spend the effort on the problem, I have no doubt. On May 10, 1926, in the suburbs of the city

of Vancouver I noted a Black Pigeon Hawk carrying something in its feet that I judged to be nesting material. Twice at least in June and July, on Vancouver Island, I have heard the shrill cry of the little male—in one case I saw him also—and judged the bird close to its nest site. In both cases these birds were in heavy timber inland, the most difficult country in which to locate a nest. This plainly accounts for its scarcity in mid-summer and relative abundance in late July and August when the young come out of hiding. At nesting time (June and July) when it is relatively seldom seen, it evidently retires to its original natural habitat—the dense forest, and emerges in July and August when the burns and slashings and cultivated fields provide abundant small bird prey.

The life story of the Black Merlin would seem to offer in small edition a wondrously exact parallel to that of the Black Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus pealei*)—a similarity that holds good not only in plumage but in habits of life, range, manner of taking prey, migration, wintering and nesting. From the above I think it can be seen that the Black Merlin would seem to be a good enough race and that its home range is the “humid coastal strip” from which not even a few outpost records will remove it.—HAMILTON M. LAING, *Comox, British Columbia.*

Albinism Among New Hampshire Ring-necked Pheasants.—On October 3, 1934, Mr. Luman R. Nelson collected in Winchester, N. H., a full-sized albino male Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus torquatus*) from a flock of seven albino birds. All seven birds were young-of-the-year from normal colored parents; the brood was hatched near, and lived about the Country Club grounds, where they lingered at least part of the winter, with the adults often accompanying them.

While their color was white throughout, the legs and feet, and bill were colored a light shade of buff; the eyes were the normal brown color, I was given to understand, and such eyes were used in the mounted specimen. The wattles and bare places of the head were an intense red.—LEWIS O. SHELLEY, *East Westmoreland, N. H.*

Does the Female Woodcock Ever Sky Dance?—Some years ago I recorded (Auk, Vol. XLVII, No. 2, p. 248) observations on the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) in West Virginia. Since that time we have had rather exceptional opportunities for studying the habits of this bird, and have been very much puzzled by one observation.

Several times observers near French Creek, Upshur County, W. Va., have noted that more Woodcocks seemed to be in the air than were giving the usual “peents” from the ground. It appeared that two distinct series of whistling notes could be heard during the sky dances, where, apparently, only one male was calling on the ground.

On the evening of April 19, 1935, Mrs. Brooks and the writer were looking for Woodcocks near French Creek just at dusk. In a nearby ravine we had already heard a number of “peents.” Suddenly quite close at hand we heard the whistle of wings at the take-off for a sky dance, and we both saw very distinctly *two* birds rising together, starting their circles, and then we caught glimpses of them again, still together, as they circled over our heads during the flight. When the musical notes which precede descent were given we could not tell that more than one bird was giving them, but the descent was too far away for us to be sure that both birds came down in unison. Of course it is quite possible that these were two males which happened to fly at the same time, but there were no evidences on the ground to this effect. It naturally occurred to us that we had perhaps seen a female going through the sky dance procedure.