

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.

Forbush (Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States: Vol. 1, p. 388) records an observation on the flight of a presumed female during the sky dance of the male, but states that no whistling of wings could be heard as she flew. It is common observation, however, that the female is capable of making these whistling sounds during flight, and we are certain that both the birds we observed were making these notes.

We have noted many times that Woodcocks give a vocal warning just before they start their sky dance flights. This consists of a much shortened "peent," given at a close interval after the last regular note on the ground, and followed almost immediately by the flight. Attempts were made to measure the width of the circles made during sky dance flights, observers being on opposite ridges to note the birds in the air. Where only a single bird was sky dancing it was fairly easy to mark these circles, and we concluded that they were sometimes at least four hundred yards in diameter.

Another characteristic noted is that the point of departure from the ground is not usually in the center of the flight circle, but is rather apt to be located near the outer circumference. The song notes that come before the descent are not given over the point of alighting, but to one side of it. Several times we have noticed that birds were regularly alighting near light-colored rocks; this suggesting that a land-mark might be used in again locating the point from which flight was made.

Ordinarily sky dancing is done only at dusk and early morning, but during times of bright moonlight it continues as long as the moon is unobscured. Mr. A. B. Brooks and the writer noted during the spring of 1934 that when heavy clouds crossed the face of the moon sky dancing stopped, to be resumed immediately after the clouds had passed.

On April 27, 1930, "peent" notes were heard, and a single sky dance noted when the temperature was standing at 30° F. My father and I had an unusual experience on March 26, 1930. As we were walking along a trail near French Creek, we noticed the tracks of a bird in a rather heavy snow which had fallen the night before. Following back on these tracks, we came to the nest of a Woodcock completely surrounded with snow. The old bird was on the nest sheltering four eggs. This was the only time I have ever tracked a bird to its nest through the snow.—MAURICE BROOKS, *Dept. of Biology, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va.*

Second Recorded Nesting of the Laughing Gull on the South Carolina Coast.—On May 15, 1935, the writer, in company with a small party visited the Cape Romain Federal Migratory Bird Refuge with its Superintendent, Mr. H. F. West. While investigating a small reef known as the White Bank, on which were numbers of nesting Oyster-catchers, Willets and a large colony of Louisiana and Snowy Herons, three pairs of Laughing Gulls were seen. Recalling that this spot was the site of the first breeding record of this species in the state (Auk, vol. I, 360) we looked carefully for nests and were successful in finding three, one for each of the pairs seen. One nest held two eggs, the other two one each. One was built out in the open on oyster shells, the other two were slightly sheltered by wips of salt-water myrtle (*Baccharis* sp.). No other material other than sedge stems was used.

The nest which constituted the first record in 1933, was broken up by Crows, and it is doubtful whether the exposed nest found recently will survive. That the Laughing Gull is beginning to nest regularly now in South Carolina seems certain. During all of Mr. A. T. Wayne's nearly fifty years in the field in this state, he never saw a nest, and White Bank is in Bull's Bay, a region often visited by him. Another peculiarity in the White Bank area is that the Louisiana and Snowy Herons are