

period of sub-zero weather the bird was seen no more. Inasmuch as the winter of 1933-34 was of unusual severity this early appearance seems noteworthy.

Pisobia minutilla. LEAST SANDPIPER.—On May 26, 1934, two were observed at close range (four or five feet, almost underfoot) on the mud flats of the Aroostook River, near Presque Isle.

Anthus spinoletta rubescens. AMERICAN PIPIT.—A flock of fifteen was seen on the mud flats mentioned above, near Presque Isle, on May 13, 1934. They allowed rather close approach and identification was unmistakable. This same territory was covered all during the spring migration, this year as in others, but the birds were not seen again.—G. D. CHAMBERLAIN, *High School, Presque Island, Me.*

Notes on the Winter Bird Life of the Delaware Coast.—The following notes were taken during a trip of two days duration to Sussex County, Delaware, in company with Arthur H. Howell and Allan J. Duvall, January 4 and 5, 1935. During the first day, which was clear and cold, with a brisk northwest wind, activities were confined to the beach south of Cape Henlopen, in the vicinity of Lewes, and on the following day to the sand dunes between Rehoboth Beach and Bethany Beach, under conditions reminiscent of early spring rather than of midwinter. Little has apparently been published on the bird life of this stretch of the Atlantic Coast at this season of the year, so although admittedly fragmentary these records may be of interest.

Lanius ludovicianus migrans. MIGRANT SHRIKE.—Two birds, widely separated, were seen near Milford, one on January 4, the other on the following day. There would seem to be few winter records for this subspecies in this region.

Passerculus princeps. IPSWICH SPARROW.—This species was one of the special objectives of the trip, so it was a source of considerable gratification to us to find it actually plentiful on this stretch of coast. At least 20 individuals, possibly more, were seen near Rehoboth Beach in the course of an hour, and brief pauses later in the day between this point and Bethany Beach never failed to reveal the presence of one or more of these birds. They proved less shy than we had anticipated, for on being flushed from the sparse grass they would almost invariably fly to the nearest clump of myrtle bushes and, perching in full view on an uppermost twig, would permit a close approach before dropping back to the ground.

Passerculus sandwichensis savanna. EASTERN SAVANNAH SPARROW.—Apparently scarce during the winter months, for at only one spot, near the ocean south of Rehoboth Beach, was one small flock noted. A specimen taken was clearly referable to this race.

Melospiza melodia melodia. EASTERN SONG SPARROW.—Surprisingly few Song Sparrows were seen, and these were so timid that it was only with difficulty that several were collected. They proved to be the darker race occurring during the breeding season well back from the coast, and not the gray form, *atlantica*, which we had expected to find in such a situation as this. It is possible that *atlantica* winters this far north, but judging from this limited experience, certainly not in any numbers.

Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis. EASTERN SNOW BUNTING.—At first glimpse the beach at Cape Henlopen seemed lifeless, but within a few minutes of our arrival small flocks of Snow Buntings appeared from the south, moving with an apparent objective toward the Cape. There they gathered on the side of a dune until approximately 150 individuals were present, when they flew out over the bay in a compact flock in the general direction of Cape May, New Jersey. One would hardly expect these birds to be migrating north early in January, so an explanation of this sight might be the effect of the relatively mild weather on this boreal species. It would be

of interest to know whether lower temperatures and snow would possibly witness their return to this stretch of coast until conditions modified again.—THOS. D. BURLEIGH, *Bureau of Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

Winter Notes from Coastal North Carolina.—The avifauna of coastal North Carolina is of more than ordinary interest in that it frequently represents the southern limit of northern species and the northern limit of southern forms. A recent trip to the coastal region of that state revealed an increased concentration of a number of species of normal occurrence and it also showed a few uncommon or rare winter visitors.

We ordinarily think of the Loon (*Gavia immer*) as being more or less a solitary bird, both in flight and on the wintering grounds. In coastal North Carolina, however, where these birds probably have always been common as winter visitors or migrants, they occasionally group together in loose scattered flocks. On January 13, near the boundary of Pamlico and Core Sounds, upwards of 1,000 Loons were seen in the air at one time. All were headed northwest. Most of the birds flew past our boat singly or in loose groupings up to 20 individuals. I was much surprised when two large loose and uncoordinated flocks streamed past, one containing 104 birds and the other 130. Such numbers seem to indicate that as a result of protection this species has increased. Over other portions of Pamlico Sound unusual numbers were not seen. I did not ascertain the cause of the concentration at this locality, or why all were flying in about the same direction, or the destination they were seeking.

Tremendous numbers of the Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax a. auritus*) frequent the southern part of the Sound. They are vigorously condemned by fishermen, who claim that they enter their pound-nets and prey upon valuable fish. Because the birds are diurnal in their feeding habits, the fishermen are compelled to be at their nets by the break of day. It is felt that these birds have increased slightly during the past few years.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that concurrently with the dying out of the eel grass, the Brant (*Branta b. hrota*) have been alarmingly reduced in numbers along the east coast and particularly in Pamlico Sound, and it is doubtful whether there were more than 2 per cent of the numbers of Brant in this area in January 1935 that were there in the same month of 1930. Most other species of waterfowl also were comparatively scarce although proportionately more abundant than Brant. Of the Ducks, the White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta deglandi*) perhaps showed the greatest decrease over preceding years.

In a recent number of 'The Auk' (vol. 50, p. 353, 1933), I reported the first two authentic records of the Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) occurring in North Carolina. On January 15, 1935, in company with U. S. Game Management Agent Wm. Birch, I observed 6 of these birds in a flock of about 2,000 Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea* subsp.). During the gunning season other Blue Geese were seen and one was collected on Mattamuskeet Lake. Available data indicate a general increase of this species.

In the 'Birds of North Carolina' by Pearson, Brimley and Brimley, the authors give no winter record of the Willet (*Catoptrophorus s. semipalmatus*). A flock of four birds was observed at unusually close range with 8-power binoculars on the beach at Ocracoke Island.

The occurrence of several hundred Sanderlings (*Crocethia alba*) and Red-backed Sandpipers (*Pelidna a. sakhalina*) in a single flock indicates an increase of these birds over numbers seen on visits to this same area in previous years. In addition to the above species, a small number of Black-bellied Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*), uddy Turnstones (*Arenaria i. morinella*), Oyster-catchers (*Haematopus palliatus*),