

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*),

and Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*) were observed on one or more of the islands bordering Pamlico Sound. The last-named species, however, are not common winter visitors, although they occur regularly in small numbers.

During each of the past four winters a progressive increase of Gulls has been noted. Until the past few years the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) has occurred only as a casual visitor south of Delaware Bay. During five days spent in the Pamlico Sound area more than 50 of these birds were observed. More than 30 were seen in one afternoon between Cape Hatteras and Rodanthe on Hatteras Island. Thirteen of these were in one flock.

Two Terns were observed at Swanquarter and 2 near Portsmouth, yet they did not come within gunshot and I could not collect a specimen. While they were regarded as the Common Terns (*Sterna h. hirundo*), they may have been Forster's (*S. forsteri*).

Five records of the Razor-billed Auk (*Alca torda*) are known for North Carolina. On January 16, 1935, at Pea Island, one individual of this species, covered with oil, was picked up on the beach. An effort was made to clean the feathers and bring the bird to the National Zoological Park, but it died in transit.

While Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) are known to winter sparingly along the coast of the state, it was somewhat surprising to see 30 of these birds in the air at one time on January 18. They were observed at a number of places, but were most common in the Swanquarter Migratory Bird Refuge. In this same area 2 Maryland Yellow-throats (*Geothlypis trichas* subsp.) were seen.—CLARENCE COTTAM, *Bureau of Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

Interesting Winter Notes at Lake Mattamuskeet Wild Life Refuge (Hyde County, N. C.).—*Casmerodius albus egretta*. AMERICAN EGRET.—Although several birds were observed in October and November about the lake it appears likely that only one remained during the winter, an individual being seen on January 3 and on January 7, 1935.

Branta bernicla hrota. AMERICAN BRANT.—As this species has become rather scarce except in certain localities along the Atlantic seaboard, I take this occasion to record one bird here on January 9, and three birds on January 22, 1935.

Chen hyperborea atlantica. GREATER SNOW GOOSE.—Another form which has become rather scarce except in certain sections. Three birds flew up from the lake with a flock of Canada Geese on November 27, 1934; two birds seen on December 4, 1934; one bird seen flying with and on the waters of the lake with Canada Geese on January 21, 1935; one bird seen by W. G. Cahoon and J. B. Hodges flying over New Holland Inn on March 17, 1935.

Chen caerulescens. BLUE GOOSE.—Records for this form are always of interest along the Atlantic coast and I give the following:—October 30, 1934 one bird flying with a flock of Whistling Swans; November 9, 1934 six birds seen by Mr. James Silver and Mr. Joe Mann; November 20, 1934 seven birds in one flock, apparently all in adult plumage; January 9, 1935 one bird flying with Whistling Swans for some distance; March 13, 1935 two birds on the lake recorded by Mrs. Wm. F. Atkinson.

Falco columbarius columbarius. PIGEON HAWK.—As this Falcon is supposed to winter further south it is well to record one here on December 25, 1934.

Gallinula chloropus cachinnans. FLORIDA GALLINULE.—On January 7, 1935 a bird was seen by the Goose pen which it struck against in efforts to get away. This date may establish this form as a permanent resident to some extent in this coastal strip.

Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis. SNOW BUNTING.—All records of this bird in the south are of interest so I give the following:—One bird on December 3, 1934, allowing