

GENERAL NOTES.

Behavior of the Yellow-billed Tropic-bird.—On June 8, 1935, standing on the northern cliffs of St. Georges Island, Bermuda, where the Yellow-billed Tropic-bird (*Leptophaethon lepturus calesbyi*) breeds, I observed a flight antic of this species which is, so far as I can discover, unrecorded in the literature of any of the Tropic birds. My notes regarding the maneuver, taken on the spot, are as follows:

"I noticed an unusual flight antic of the birds as they flew over the sea. One bird would rapidly overtake another and, getting into position directly over it in full flight, it would bend its tail down so that the long tail feathers seemed to touch the bird below. The latter bird seemed to try to avoid being touched; therefore I saw this antic attempted many more times than I saw it completely carried out."

A. C. Bent in his 'Life Histories of North American Petrels and Pelicans and Their Allies' gives data which establish the date for the second egg-laying of the Yellow-billed Tropic-bird in Bermuda as "late in June." Therefore the date of my observation (June 8) would be such as to allow any of the following explanations of this flight antic:

1. The antic may be an aerial transfer of food from parent to young of the first breeding. That this is unlikely is attested to by the fact that the birds I saw appeared to be in full adult plumage (unmottled, long tails). Bent states that the fully adult plumage is "probably acquired by the end of the first year," but he is not certain of this. Furthermore the young are reputed to be inexperienced flyers for some time after leaving the nest, whereas the antic I am describing embodies the most peerless technique on the part of these consummate flyers. Lastly, my observations, made through binoculars at close range under ideal conditions of light, failed to detect any food transference.

2. The antic may have been a form of courtship display if a new selection of mates is made preparatory to the second breeding. Of this possibility I have been unable to find confirmation.

3. The antic may have been of a directly sexual nature, preparatory to copulation. I am not suggesting that such copulation would take place in mid-air, but rather that sexual excitement might have been aroused by the antic, copulation taking place later in the accustomed medium of Tropic-birds. I can find no reference to the latter question and, unfortunately, did not observe the birds in the act of copulation.

Whatever the correct interpretation of the antic may be, the observation that the long tail feathers are used for personal contact between the birds throws an interesting light on the evolution of these appendages. Whereas one might heretofore have supposed that they were a direct adaptation to the exigencies of graceful and protracted flight, one must now see at least an additional explanation, namely, one based on the process of sexual selection.—C. BROOKE WORTH, 712 Wynnewood Road, Philadelphia, Pa.

The White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) on Lake Mattamuskeet Wild Life Refuge (Hyde County) N. C.—On June 16 the writer's attention was attracted to a large bird soaring above the New Holland Inn in the Lake Mattamuskeet Wild Life Refuge. Focussing 8 x glasses on it the form and colors showed it to be a wandering White Pelican. It stayed above the Refuge for quite a while finally coming down toward the lake and disappearing from view. Pearson, Brimley and Brimley in 'Birds of North Carolina' give only three definite records for the state up to the time that admirable book was published. There are probably others

since then but as the bird is rare in the eastern states and a view of it a welcome and inspiring sight it is thought best to record its occurrence in this Federal Refuge.—EARLE R. GREENE, *U. S. Biological Survey, New Holland, N. C.*

Brewster's Egret at Grand Canyon National Park.—One of the most interesting and important bird records obtained at Grand Canyon National Park in recent months was reported on April 23. On that date an Egret was observed near the Kaibab Suspension Bridge which spans the Colorado River. On May 18 five Egrets were seen in the same locality.

According to the 'Check-List of North American Birds' (fourth edition), these Egrets were undoubtedly *Egretta thula brewsteri*. A careful check of bird records from Arizona reveals that the occurrence of the Brewster's Egret is exceedingly rare. In 'A Distributional List of the Birds of Arizona' by Harry S. Swarth, published in 1914, is found the following statement:

"There are but two instances of the occurrence of this species in Arizona: Coues (1866, p. 263) observed it on the Colorado River between Forts Mohave and Yuma in September, and Scott (1866, p. 385) reports a flock of five seen, one of which was secured, near Tucson, in May." (Listed by Swarth as *Egretta candidissima candidissima*).

Mr. Lyndon L. Hargrave, Curator of Ornithology at the Museum of Northern Arizona, reported that a Brewster's Egret was taken at Turkey Tanks, near the San Francisco Peaks, in April, 1932, and that two were taken at Tempo in April, 1933.

The above references are all that the writer has been able to discover regarding the occurrence of this species in Arizona.—RUSSELL K. GRATER, *Assistant Wildlife Technician, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona.*

Increase of the Roseate Spoonbill on the Coast of Texas.—In 'The Auk,' vol. LII, page 77, Mr. Robert P. Allen, of the National Association of Audubon Societies, gives a census of the Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) observed by him in Florida and on the coast of Texas, in 1934, giving a total of 879 individuals for the latter state. In June 1935, the writer, in his capacity of Supervisor of Southern Sanctuaries for the Audubon Asso., made an inspection trip to Texas and covered the identical ground worked by Mr. Allen the previous year. It is interesting to note the comparison of his figures and those of Mr. Allen and it should be a matter of satisfaction to all ornithologists that the increase is as much as it is in a single year.

The locality and count at each is given below:

Vinge'tun Islands, Galveston Bay, 120; First-Chain-of-Islands, Espiritu Santo Bay, 77; Second-Chain-of-Islands, San Antonio Bay, 1120; Dunham Island, Arkansas Bay, 130; Deadman's Island, northern Laguna Madre, 73; Green Island, southern Laguna Madre, 340; Seluria Bayou, Matagorda Bay, 5. These are adult birds and those young which could fly well, and constitute a total of 1865 individuals. This does not include the young birds in two nesting colonies, viz., Vinge'tun and Second-Chain Islands, which totalled 255. The combined total therefore reaches the figure of 2090 birds. The young in these colonies were, most of them, on the verge of flight, and in another few days would have been on the wing. This is an increase of 1211 birds in 1935 as against 1934.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *R. F. D. No. 1 Charleston, S. C.*

Blue Goose and Glaucous Gull in North Carolina.—On February 23, 1935, an adult female Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) was received at the Museum, in the flesh. The specimen had been picked up dead on the salt marsh about half a mile inside New River Inlet, Onslow County, on the previous day. Apart from the fact