

At 3.30 o'clock I met these two gentlemen at Sagamore, and by 5.30 the bird was safely secured, after such difficulties with quicksands and mud as are not often encountered in New England collecting. It was an immature male. It is on exhibition at the Boston Society of Natural History, and apparently constitutes the first Massachusetts record since 1896.—JOSEPH A. HAGAR, *Ornithologist, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Game.*

**Trans-Atlantic Flight of Gull-billed Tern.**—The record of a banded Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*), recovered on the island of Barbados, British West Indies, adds another bird to the list of those that have crossed the ocean.

Under date of September 13, 1935, the American Consul at Barbados, B.W.I., transmitted through the Department of State a copy of the following item, which appeared in the "Barbados Advocate" of September 6, 1935:

"To the Editor:

Dear Sir,—Please publish in your paper if you think it will be of interest to your readers.

A whitish bird with a wing spread of about fifteen inches was shot at Maynard's Swamp yesterday (September 4) bearing a metal tag inscribed Zool. Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark RK. 2929.

This may catch the eye of some of the enthusiastic bird shooters.

Thanking you,

Yours truly,

N. Kellman, Sand Street, St. Peter."

The Biological Survey immediately wrote to Dr. Å. Vedel Tåning, Director of the Marine Biological Laboratory in Copenhagen, who is responsible for the banding work of the Zoological Museum, and has been advised that the bird in question was a Gull-billed Tern, banded at Tipperne, Ringkjøbing Fjord, Jutland, on June 17, 1935. The chick was at that time about one day old and Dr. Tåning reports that "it left its home about July 20th . . ." He ventures the opinion that the bird made the trans-Atlantic flight in "probably less than a month. No tropical disturbances were recorded at that time in Barbados nor in the week previous to the recovery of the bird."

Dr. Tåning adds that "the record will soon be published," but since it is assumed that this will be in a Danish publication and so may escape the attention of most American ornithologists, it seems desirable to record it also in 'The Auk,' particularly since it may have some significance with reference to the American birds of this species, which, since the Eighteenth Supplement to the A.O.U. 'Check-List' (Auk, 1923), has been given subspecific standing under the name of *Gelochelidon nilotica aranea*.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**Little Gulls again in New York Harbor.**—Every spring, from the middle of April to early May flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) follow the wake of the Staten Island ferryboats, to feed on something churned up by the screws. Ever since 1929 we have watched them with added interest, because of the hope of seeing a Little Gull among them. This year my search was again rewarded on the morning of May 1. Among the Bonaparte's Gulls following a ferry passing us toward the south there appeared to be two Little Gulls (*Larus minutus*). One of them soon switched over to the wake of our boat and was well examined with glasses at about 75 yards. The other seemed to follow its example, but was by this time so far back as to make identification less certain. The black under wing-coverts are always the

best field-mark, provided the observer is not looking down on the bird, as I happened to be in May, 1929.

I believe that these two individuals may well be the same ones we have been seeing for several years. It seems more likely that they reached this region by way of northwestern North America than that they came across the North Atlantic. Their close association with Bonaparte's Gulls suggests that they first accompanied birds of that species on their southward migration, and now winter with them, though they probably do not migrate as far as the breeding ground of Bonaparte's Gull. Indeed two Little Gulls which had already molted from the breeding dress were seen several times between July 27 and August 27, 1933 near Great Kills on the Staten Island shore.<sup>1</sup>

One was seen again that afternoon by Marc C. Rich and at 6 P.M. by me, while on May 3 at 5 P.M. and again on May 4 Mr. Rich observed it. On every occasion it was in the company of Bonaparte's Gulls.—JAMES P. CHAPIN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York*.

**Status of the Black-backed Gull.**—In the January number of 'The Auk' (Vol. 53, p. 81) reference was made to an early migration of the Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) on the Atlantic coast as far south as southern New Jersey by the last of September. This note has brought forth a number of comments on the distribution and migration of the bird that seem worthy of further mention. Harry S. Hathaway, of South Auburn, Cranston, Rhode Island, wrote that he observed an adult of this species on August 5, 1935, and on almost every day thereafter until September 5, when two adults were present resting on the sand flats that border the southern edge of Quonochontang Pond near Charleston, Rhode Island. No Black-backed Gulls were seen again until September 15, when a flock of twelve appeared at this same place. Eight of the birds were in adult plumage while four were young of the year. Mr. Hathaway writes:

"Doubtless this flock was part of a wave that was migrating on the most favorable wind, strong southeast, with light rain and moon full, causing high tides. None seen again until November 2, when one bird was in the same locality."

Mr. Hathaway further records that these are his earliest records for Rhode Island, and he states that the birds normally do not make their appearance until early in October.

Mr. J. T. Nichols, of the American Museum of Natural History, in commenting on the early appearance of Black-backed Gulls on Long Island, New York, wrote:

". . . Of recent years a few individuals, adult and sub-adult, have overwintered there. Prior to this it is my memory that the first stragglers appeared the end of September. One was noted at Long Beach, Sept. 27, 1913.

"On Sept. 2, 1928, I observed a bird in spotty juvenal plumage at Mastic, L. I. (1928, *Bird-Lore*, XXX, p. 399). My Journal entry reads as follows: 'Observed a juvenal plumaged Great Black-backed Gull flying west to east along the beach, interesting on account of the date. Its large size, slow flight, whitish belly and rump and spotted plumage noticeable,—there can have been no mistake in identity.' I have assumed that this individual must have been a migrant, and noticed the correspondence in date with that of the appearance hereabouts of the first Herring Gulls in fresh juvenal plumage."

An all-day aerial survey from a navy hydroplane, flying over coastal Virginia and North Carolina on March 4, 1936, revealed the presence of a fair number of these

<sup>1</sup> Proc. Linnæan Society of New York, Nos. 45, 46, 1935, p. 92.