

Wilson's Plover in Massachusetts.—On May 25, 1939, in company with Messrs. Seymour H. Stone and Robert W. Puffer, I saw at Third Cliff, Scituate, Massachusetts, a plover that was unmistakably a *Pagolla wilsonia* and presumably, of course, *P. wilsonia wilsonia*. We had just been watching a Piping Plover, when Puffer called attention to a bird not far away which, as soon as we had got our glasses on it, we saw at once to have the long black bill, the medium-dark upper parts, and the white stripe over the eye that characterize Wilson's Plover. From the moment we got a square look at it there was not the slightest doubt of the identification, but this was still further confirmed by the note *whit*, which was uttered several times when, after a considerable chase, the bird took wing. Though none of us was familiar with Wilson's Plover, we do know both the Piping Plover and the Semipalmated Plover very well indeed, both by sight and by ear. This appears to be the fifth reasonably authentic record of the species in Massachusetts. Two are given in Forbush's 'Birds of Massachusetts' (besides what may, perhaps, be a doubtful sight record of a flock of twenty-five). The third is that of a bird taken by Oliver L. Austin, Jr., at Truro, June 26, 1929 (Auk, 46: 538, 1929), and the fourth that of one seen on the Lynn-Nahant beach, May 15, 1932, by Samuel A. Eliot, Jr., Ludlow Griscom, and S. G. Emilio (Auk, 49: 465, 1932).—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Massachusetts*.

The winnowing note of Wilson's Snipe.—Incidental to my observations of waterfowl in the Province of New Brunswick, I found Wilson's Snipe (*Capella delicata*) a common nesting bird in the area from Fredericton to St. John in the St. John River valley between May 21 and 28, 1938. Since I was working in the marshes most of the time, I had excellent opportunity to hear the peculiar winnowing note characteristic of this bird when in flight on the nesting grounds. During this eight-day period of observations I recorded this flight note at the following hours: 1 a. m., 7 a. m., 10 a. m., noon, 2 p. m., 5 p. m., 7 p. m., and 10 p. m.; this indicates that it may be used at practically any hour of the day or night during the nesting season. Snipes were observed to alight on dead snags and on a fence post in the area near Sheffield, Sunbury County, New Brunswick, during the same period.—HAROLD S. PETERS, *U. S. Biological Survey, Charleston, South Carolina*.

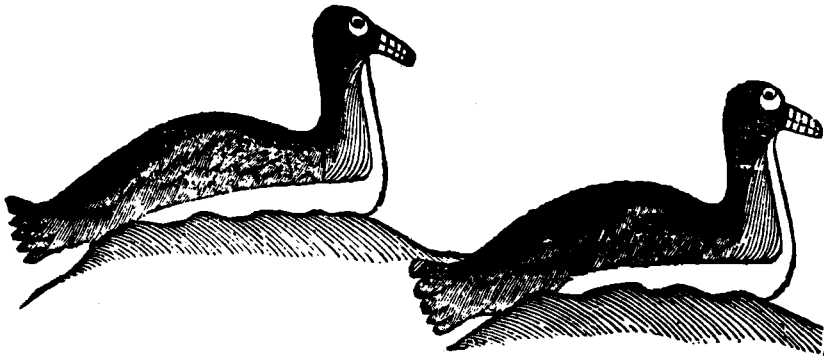
Red Phalarope in Kentucky.—On November 15, 1938, the writer, while hunting ducks on the Ohio River near Carrollton, Carroll County, Kentucky, in company with Mr. Jacob P. Doughty, of Louisville, observed a Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) swimming in the water very close to the Kentucky shore. We paddled on the bird which was shot by Mr. Doughty. I made up the skin which is now in my possession. The bird was sent to Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne, of the University of Michigan Museum at Ann Arbor, who confirmed the identification after comparing it with the specimens in the museum. As far as I can ascertain, this is the first record of this species for the State of Kentucky.—BURT L. MONROE, *207 N. Birchwood Ave., Louisville, Kentucky*.

Courtship note on the Laughing Gull.—Because there appears to exist practically nothing in our literature concerning courtship in the Laughing Gull, *Larus atricilla*, and since there is no reasonable chance of my supplementing the following observation, I wish to record a single ceremony as it was noted by Colvin Farley and the writer on May 12, 1935, an alternately clear and cloudy day, at Old Greenwich, Connecticut. A pair of this species was observed standing alone on the shore of Long Island Sound. The female (as ultimately determined) stood slightly in front of the male and rather suddenly began calling with characteristic cries,

except that each note (or double note?) was given as the bird tossed its head upward and far over its back. Twice the male took a step forward, but each time the female headed him off and continued calling. At about the thirty-fifth (counted) bob by the female, her companion began to toss his head too and call. For the first two or three bobs the male was not in rhythm, but his next three or four calls and bobs were each in unison with those of his mate. She thereupon postured and he at once climbed upon her back. Copulation lasted about ten to fifteen (estimated) seconds, during which the male seemed to maintain his position without the use of the bill. Thereupon the female appeared to throw him off and both birds became more or less motionless and completely silent.

Courtship actions continually impress one with the effectiveness of the symbolic actions which the birds use. This one is particularly interesting because the female initiated the ceremony with no other immediate stimulus (as far as the observers were aware) than the mere presence of her mate. In addition, it is worth noting that these gulls were still on migration, the nearest-known nesting colonies being roughly one hundred miles away.—JOSEPH J. HICKEY, *New York City*.

An early figure of the Great Auk.—In the December 1939 issue of the 'Field Engineers' Bulletin,' of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, there is an article entitled 'The First Thousand Years of Finding New York,' by Thomas M. Price, Jr., which gives an interesting account of early voyages to America and describes the development of nautical charts and navigational methods, from early times to the present. In looking through this article, which is illustrated with a number of reproductions of charts, old and modern, my attention was at once attracted to a picture of two odd-looking birds, riding stiffly on waves which seemed as unreal as the birds themselves. This picture was reproduced from a book called 'The English Pilot,' which was a standard guide for voyages into American waters some two hundred years ago. Several editions of the book were published in London, the first in 1706, and I obtained from the Harvard University Library a copy of the 1742 edition, from which the figure is reproduced herewith (Text-fig. 1). The descriptive matter



TEXT-FIG. 1.—An early figure of the Great Auk (1742).

accompanying the picture of the "Penguins" makes it evident that they were Great Auks (*Plautus impennis*) and that they were mentioned in the book because they were said to serve the mariner as an indication that he had reached the Newfoundland Banks. The compiler of the work comments: "I have read an Author that says, in