

discovered the hawk was eating the head of the carcass. Later, after vigorous effort, it succeeded in dragging its find from the water. The manifest difficulty of the task made it seem unlikely that it could have captured and killed even a sick or injured duck. Similarly, the length of time, after the breast was plucked, required to open the body cavity indicated something less than the power of beak usually attributed to birds of prey of the size of this species. It is known, of course, that the Marsh Hawk's food consists chiefly of small, soft-bodied animals. As much would be deduced from the observation here recorded and the conclusion is reached that the finding of remains of wildfowl or poultry among the stomach contents of hawks is doubtful proof of their danger to these forms.—EDWARD R. FORD, *Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois.*

**Sage Hen eats grasshoppers.**—During the past summer (1940) I noticed Sage Hens, *Centrocercus urophasianus*, feeding along the roadway in central Montana, sometimes at a distance from their usual feeding environment of sagebrush. I have often wondered if they were feeding on grasshoppers, but not having a collecting permit I was unable to obtain any birds for a food-habit determination.

On August 6, while at Yellow Water Reservoir south of Winnett, Montana, in the company of Philip Van Cleave and Allen Erickson, I found the remains of a Sage Hen. The body, including all of the bones, had been eaten or carried away. The feathers, however, provided adequate identification and luckily, the modified gizzard was intact. A pile of 19 grasshoppers from the gullet indicated what the bird had been eating. The gizzard was analyzed to determine to what extent this bird had been feeding on 'hoppers. It was found that the entire contents consisted of grasshoppers. Some, of course, were in a very much broken and mashed condition; however, the jumping legs served to indicate the number of 'hoppers consumed. There were 150 jumping legs, indicating the consumption of at least 75 'hoppers. These, plus the 19 that were found in the gullet, made a total of 94 grasshoppers destroyed by the Sage Hen just previous to its death. This is but a small part of the number of grasshoppers the bird might consume during the entire day, and indicated that the Sage Hen does, under some conditions, feed exclusively upon grasshoppers.—Louis M. Moos, *Biologist, Soil Conservation Service, Billings, Montana.*

**Golden Plover in central Indiana.**—Following heavy rainfall in April 1940, many fields in the adjacent flat countryside became temporarily flooded, and numerous shallow lakes were formed. It had stopped raining April 21 and become bright and clear. That afternoon we were driving along an unfrequented country road beside a last year's cornfield which was partly inundated, when we saw a flash of wings about a hundred yards distant from us on the opposite side of the water.

We stopped our car, and training our binoculars in the direction where we had seen the birds flying, were surprised to see a considerable number of Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) feeding along the edge of the water, and in the field near the water. The whistled call note was unmistakable, as were the golden-brown back, white streak above the eye and along the sides of the breast, and black throat and breast. The male birds were more strikingly marked than the females, and a number of the males performed energetically. Whistling, with wings slightly lifted, and head lowered, a male would run toward a female, stop when almost touching her, then run off again and come back and repeat the performance. Several times males had brief fights. Two of them became so embroiled that they carried their quarrel from land to water. They were going at one another

so vigorously that nothing but deep water, which finally made both fly, separated them.

We did not leave our car, and several times birds came within fifteen or twenty feet of us. Twice cars passed, and we moved our own also, but the birds were not in the least disturbed. We found that the birds were on both sides of the lake, which was over a hundred feet wide and three hundred feet long. Several times, all the birds flew, and after the flock circled about over the water for a moment, alighted again, some near to us and others on the opposite side of the water. They all immediately began to run about, usually quite independently of each other and started to feed again.

There were at least a hundred plover in the flock. We also noted several Lesser Yellow-legs, and one Greater Yellow-legs, which mingled freely with the plovers, even joining them in their circling flight over the water.

After we had been watching the birds for about an hour, they finally all flew some distance to the extreme far side of the field.—DELOS E. JOHNSON, 42 Public Square, Shelbyville, Indiana.

**An oddly colored Wilson's Snipe.**—A peculiarly colored specimen of Wilson's Snipe (*Capella delicata*), was collected November 25, 1937, about one mile north of the Savannah River, in Beaufort County, South Carolina. This bird, a female, did not differ greatly from the ordinary in size, or in the color of the soft parts, but the plumage seemed to lack one of the color elements of the normal bird. This gave it the appearance of a buffy bird, rather than a blackish one. The buffy tone was carried out completely over the plumage wherever blackish is found in normal specimens. It appears that the normal blackish tones must be composed of more than one element, and that in this case some of the color elements were missing.

The present case might be called a 'color phase' for it represents somewhat the same sort of departure that is found between the two phases of the Screech Owl. The term, however, is not entirely satisfactory for several reasons, but in the absence of a better one, it may serve for the present.—IVAN R. TOMKINS, U. S. Dredge DeWitt Clinton, Savannah, Georgia.

**Eskimo Curlew food note corrected.**—The correcting of the identification of specimen number 7660 collected by Will E. Snyder at Fox Lake, Wisconsin, on September 10, 1912, from Eskimo to Hudsonian Curlew (Scott, Auk, 57 (4): 566-567, 1940), so alters the picture of the food of the Eskimo Curlew that we are offering the following amended summary of the stomach contents to be substituted in an account contained in an earlier paper (Cottam and Knappen, 'Food of Some Uncommon Birds', Auk, 56 (2): 154, 1939).

One of the three Eskimo Curlews, *Phaeopus borealis*, upon which this note is based was collected in 1887, in New York (Long Island City), and the two others were taken in 1888 in Massachusetts (Monomoy Island). All three were taken during September. They contained 100% animal foods as follows: spiders, 2.67%; grasshoppers (Acrididae), 40%; field crickets (including *Gryllus* and *Nemobius*), 52%; beetles, including ground beetles and scarab beetles (Carabidae, Scarabaeidae), 3.33%; moths (Lepidoptera), 1.67%; ants (Formicidae), 0.33%. The plant food consisted of but a trace of vegetable debris including one seed of a crab-grass (*Digitaria* sp.). These stomachs were respectively one-half, two-thirds, and completely full.—CLARENCE COTTAM and PHOEBE KNAPPEN, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.