

Ruff in Iowa in spring.—On May 10, 1940, Mr. W. C. Thietje, a member of our museum staff, collected a specimen of female Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax*. It was in a mixed flock of Lesser Yellow-legs and Pectoral Sandpipers at the marsh in Louisa County, Iowa. The specimen is now in the Natural History Museum at Iowa City, Iowa.—HOMER R. DILL, *Director, Museum of Natural History, Iowa City, Iowa.*

Herring Gull in Guatemala.—On November 25 and 26, 1940, I saw a dark-colored immature Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) repeatedly in the harbor at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. The bird was in company with Laughing Gulls and came close about the ship on which I was traveling so that I had no uncertainty in its identification. The species is supposed not to range ordinarily south of Yucatán, and has not been listed previously from Guatemala.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Common Tern nesting at Oneida Lake, New York.—On June 20, 1937, we again visited the islands in Oneida Lake where the year before we found a flourishing colony of Common Terns, *Sterna hirundo* (Auk, 53: 446, 1936). On Wantry, the small island, we found exactly 100 nests with one to three eggs each, an increase of 69 nests over 1936. However, there were no young birds where we banded 31 young in 1936. The water in the lake was high and parts of Long Island were covered, dividing the eastern end into several small islands. The island was nearly covered to the water's edge with a triangular sedge (probably *Scirpus Torreyi*) and growing in the water was much water willow (*Dianthera americana*) and the gravelly places were much smaller than they were the year before. Nests were thick in the gravelly places and many in the thick sedges. From the number of birds in the air we estimated that there were at least 200 nests on the island, or more than double the number found there the year before. But as on Wantry there were no young birds. Two broods of young Black Ducks were seen, one of four and one of nine. There were several pairs of Spotted Sandpipers and we found one nest with four eggs. On Little Island we found 26 nests of Common Tern and one of Spotted Sandpiper but no young birds.

On July 11, Charles Spiker and I made a second trip to these islands. As we approached Wantry, more than 100 Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were resting on the bare pebbles and sand at the east end. There were just 70 nests of Common Tern (one to three eggs) and a single newly hatched young one. On Long Island the sedges were so thick and tall that it was impossible to make a count of the nests. There were several hundred Common Terns and ten or twelve Black Terns hovering over and around the island. We found more than 100 nests of Common Tern with eggs, and hiding in the sedges at the water's edge we found 18 young terns, many of them nearly ready to fly. These we banded.

We estimated that on these three small islands during the 1937 season there were at least 900 eggs laid by the Common Terns. We found only 20 young birds. What became of the others that should have hatched from the 900 eggs? Did they fall prey to the gulls?

On July 10, 1938, the water in Oneida Lake was nearly a foot lower and more of the beach was exposed than last year. The Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were there but in less numbers, the Common Tern population about the same. On Wantry we found 30 nests with eggs (one with four eggs) and about 60 young. Of these 37 were large enough to band. On Long Island every gravelly place was full of terns' nests and there were more nests scattered thickly, even out in the sedges. There were young terns of all ages, the newly hatched mottled buffy,

brown and black with solid brown cap and black chin, legs and feet orange or yellow or light or deep flesh-color, bill flesh-color with blackish tip. This downy plumage changes rapidly, the black chin disappears, the top of the head becomes mottled like the back, and under parts including the throat become white. At this time the early broods were partly or fully feathered, the upper parts pale gray with forehead brownish gray blending into the black on back of head, and under parts white. There were many of these early-brood birds hiding in the edge of the sedges or flattened among the stones on the narrow beach. Some would swim out into the lake as we approached and come back after we passed on. One that seemed fully fledged I tossed into the air and it took wing and flew around with the old birds where I soon lost track of it. One hundred and twenty young Terns were banded which used all of our bands and there were many more left without bands.

Four families of young Black Ducks and a family of young Blue-winged Teal were driven out of the tall sedges, took to the water and swam out to the grass and sedges growing in the water offshore.

In 1939, we found the Islands with more and thicker vegetation and the terns had increased in numbers, it seemed almost to the saturation point. It was impossible to count the nests owing to the dense vegetation but there were at least 150 nests and many young in the down. Most of the young were well feathered and nearly old enough to fly and kept to the shores hiding in the sedges or flattened among the stones on the beach. We banded 267 using all of our bands and left fifty to seventy-five unbanded. Only about 20 Ring-billed Gulls were there which may account for the large number of young terns found.

I could not get to Oneida Lake this year (1940). The water was probably high as it was in the other central New York lakes and conditions could not have been as good for the nesting terns.—VERDI BURTON, *Branchport, New York*.

Historical data on a specimen of Sooty Tern from Oswego, New York.—On page 149, Part 1, of E. H. Eaton's 'Birds of New York' (N. Y. State Museum Memoir 12, 1910), six records of the Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata fuscata*) are given for New York State. The localities cited are: Oswego, Lake Champlain, Owasco Lake, Lake Ronkonkoma, Highland Falls and Montauk.

The only information given by Eaton regarding the Oswego specimen is that it was taken "about 1875" by D. D. Stone. Perhaps now the whereabouts and earlier history of this first recorded New York State specimen of Sooty Tern will be of interest, at least to eastern ornithologists. On August 22, 1940, the same Dwight D. Stone, now of Coolidge, Arizona, and 82 years old but alert and active for one of his age, visited me at the State Museum in Albany. At that time he not only furnished me with further data concerning the Oswego specimen but offered to donate it to the Museum. The generous offer was gladly accepted and the tern was received from him on August 29, 1940.

Concerning this specimen Mr. Stone furnished the following historical background. As a youngster he lived in Oswego, New York, where, on account of his collecting proclivities and his penchant for mounting birds and other animals, he was known as the local 'boy taxidermist.' Mr. Stone cannot be more specific than "about 1875" regarding the date of discovery of the tern in question. However, he reports that following a severe storm the bird was picked up dead on the roof of the 'Doolittle House' by the janitor of that hostelry. This building was located on the bank of the Oswego River and occupied the site of the present 'Pontiac Hotel.' It was apparent that the tern had met death not long before it was