

SUTTON, G. M.

1936. Notes from Ellis and Cimarron Counties, Oklahoma. Auk, 53: 431.

1938. Some findings of the Semple Oklahoma Expedition. Auk, 55: 501-508.
—A. M. BAUMGARTNER AND F. M. BAUMGARTNER, *Oklahoma A. & M. College, Stillwater, Oklahoma.*

Hudsonian Curlew in District of Columbia.—On May 18, 1941, at about 2 p. m. E.S.T., we were looking for birds, as part of an all-day 'Century Run' (eventual total within the District of Columbia, 91), along the Potomac River and its western shore line from the road running around the new airport under construction at Gravelly Point, D. C. When we were at the most northeasterly portion of this road, i. e., that part farthest out in the river and nearest the City of Washington, we observed a mixed flock of three Black-bellied Plovers and four Hudsonian Curlews (*Phaeopus hudsonicus*) flying at an altitude of about 500 feet (*cf.* Washington Monument) from the east toward us and the airport; when half-way across the Potomac they turned (perhaps they were then able to ascertain that the airport was not a mudflat) at right angles toward the city and flew north over the buildings of the Department of Agriculture and disappeared in the haze over the city. The white forehead and black belly on the plover and the all-dark body and longer, slightly down-curved bill of the curlew were clearly visible. Although the Black-belly has been recorded with some regularity in the District of Columbia this apparently represents one of the very few records here of the Hudsonian Curlew.—HENRY H. COLLINS, JR., 3116 Rodman St., N. W., AND JOHN S. WEBB, U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.

Ruff in Massachusetts.—On July 30, 1940, in a marsh-pool close to the highway that skirts Newburyport harbor, the tide had begun to ebb and many shorebirds had congregated—among them a large one that I noticed with swiftly mounting excitement was none of those I knew. It was running about, among many Lesser Yellow-legs, where the water was still two or three inches deep. It stood as tall as they, on legs of a green-gray color, very pale, and it was decidedly heavier, more robust, than they, and bellicose when they came near it. Its bill was about the same length as theirs, dark, and slightly decurved, like a Pectoral Sandpiper's. Its feathers looked ruffled, very dark-mottled in front and on the whole head but shining white on the rear under parts and—as, presently, it bathed and preened—on the wing-linings. Then it took several short, circling flights, displaying more white in the upper surface of the wing and—most satisfactorily—two oval patches of white on either side of the narrowly dark central tail-coverts. This, I knew, clinched the identification, but I drove later in the day to Salem and saw the Peabody Museum's specimens of *Philomachus pugnax*, ascertaining that as my bird had no whitish throat nor breast-spots, it must be a ruff-less male Ruff.

My mind then flashed back to May 14, 1934, when at a marsh-pool in Hadley, Massachusetts, I had studied a similar bird but missed the oval croup-patches; the tail had looked, in flight away from me, like those of the accompanying Yellow-legs, a Greater and two Lesser. That bird had yellowish-green legs and a less robust body, but its fore-parts had been similarly dark—in fact, darker and decidedly ruddier, without any light color save a tiny spot at the mouth which was exactly matched by the Newburyport bird. My wise friend and counselor, Ludlow Griscom, had commented on my description of this puzzler: "Either a male Ruff in the erythristic phase, or a Curlew Sandpiper." The latter was impossible, because of its shorter legs and markedly down-curved bill, but the Ruff had only *seemed*

impossible because I supposed it would be rather the size of the Greater than the Lesser Yellow-legs, with a thick-based, dagger-shaped, probably yellow bill and (on May 14) ruffs. So I wrote pages 240-241 in 'Birds of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts' on the supposition that I must have seen an erythristic Stilt Sand-piper! I am now perfectly certain that it was a Ruff. We live and learn.—SAMUEL A. ELIOT, JR., *Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.*

Glaucous Gull in Florida.—On April 2, 1941, while examining a large group of gulls at North Miami Beach, Florida, the writers noticed among the others, a large white gull, which proved to be a Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) in second-year plumage. The bird was a particularly white individual, being nearly snow white all over. The legs were pink, and the bill was basally light, the terminal one-third dark. The eye was completely dark. The darkness of the eye and of the tip of the bill would seem to eliminate the possibility of confusion with an albino of another species. An unexcelled size comparison was afforded by six immature and one adult Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) which were standing with the Glaucous Gull in the mixed flock of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*). The Glaucous Gull was markedly larger than the Herring Gulls, and had a decidedly larger bill than a Herring Gull which conveniently walked over and stood immediately next to the Glaucous Gull.

The flock was sufficiently tame to permit us to approach to within about one hundred feet to determine these points. Both writers are familiar with the Glaucous Gull as a regular winter visitor to the Northeast.

We are aware of two previous records of the occurrence of this species in Florida: Howell's 'Florida Bird Life' records a second-year bird seen by Eaton and Savage at Coronado Beach, February 23, 1930; Weston (*Auk*, 53: 445, 1936) records a second-year bird at Pensacola Bay, March 14 to May 10, 1936.—HUSTACE H. POOR, *112 Park Ave., Yonkers, New York*, AND OLIVER K. SCOTT, *767 Central St., Framingham, Massachusetts.*

Gulls eat fruit of the cabbage palmetto.—In the early forenoon of February 5, 1941, while 'birding' along the Indian River, Vero Beach, Florida, I saw several Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) hovering above the crown of a cabbage palmetto. One by one, with supreme grace, the birds fluttered down to the pendant fruit stalk, snatched a berry, then sailed off. This was repeated several times, while in a nearby palm an immature Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) was clumsily perched on a fruit stalk and eating the berries. Two days later I observed forty or fifty gulls of both species devouring the fruit.

Two boatmen (natives) to whom I remarked about this behavior, said that the gulls had been observed feeding on the palmetto drupes for four or five days previously, and that never before had the gulls been seen to do this.

Raw northerly winds and chill temperatures prevailed in Florida during early February, and the gulls evidently had a difficult time securing their normal food. The drupes of this tree are exceedingly hard, and as palatable, from the human standpoint, as cherry-stones.—MAURICE BROWN, *Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Route 1, Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania.*

Common Terns nesting on muskrat houses.—The following notes concern an unusual marsh colony of Common Terns, *Sterna hirundo*, of which all the nests were located on the tops of muskrat houses.

The marsh where the observations were made had been formed in 1929 when