

two ways—drilled in as is wheat, and sown broadcast—and it is the newly-sown seed rice that the ducks come from many miles away to feed on at night. During the day, very few if any ducks are to be found on the paddies and only once did we find a small company of six feeding there in daylight, but at dusk they come in by the hundreds. They will not touch the sprouted rice nor injure the growing crop but, as stated, feed only on the newly-sown seed. For this reason they are exceedingly injurious to the only crop grown in the country, and the farmers try to protect themselves in a measure by organizing shooting parties at night in an endeavor to kill as many as possible and frighten the rest away. Many birds are killed every night during the planting season. They are excellent eating, and one farmer told me he had twelve in his ice box at home from a 'shoot' the night before. The discharge of firearms apparently is the only practical method of preventing serious injury to a rice crop.

The Fulvous Tree-duck is a night-feeder, and during the day is miles away in the almost inaccessible lagoons of the coastal marshes, but with the approach of dusk begins to arrive for the nightly repast in the rice fields. Anyone wanting to shoot tree-ducks in the rice fields of Louisiana must make up his mind for some night-shooting, which is not easy shooting. Accordingly, our search was for fields freshly sown, with no attempt made to hunt the lagoons elsewhere.

Southwest of Crowley, near Thornwell, the birds were particularly abundant owing to much new sowing, and a farmer directed us to a favorable spot. We reached the place before dusk and distributed ourselves along the low dykes or levees that divide the fields into paddies. Not a duck was to be seen or heard, and it was hard to believe what we were told, that in a few minutes the place would be swarming with them. "Just wait a few minutes" was the admonition, and presently we could hear them before we could see them. On they came, in no particular formation as with ordinary ducks—singly, in pairs, in companies of a dozen or more, and in irregular groups, and in twenty minutes they were flying and squealing everywhere, hundreds of them.

Judging from the gunshot reports that could be heard here and there, some of the farmers were also at work, for they go out whenever they can to protect their crops as far as possible by gunfire. Faint booming from far away as well as near-by shooting told of the wide dispersal of the birds in their nightly foray. It is probable that there are thousands of the birds distributed over this vast area during the spring and summer. Phillips in 'Natural History of the Ducks' makes no mention of this condition existing in the Louisiana rice fields; Bent does not refer to it, and Oberholser, in 'Birds of Louisiana,' says nothing about it.

I was too early by a month or more to find the ducks breeding, but every one spoke of them as being common breeders, and the organs of those taken were well advanced in development, although no egg formations were as yet evident. Locally these tree-ducks are known as 'squealer,' 'squealer duck,' and 'Mexican squealer,' and while some writers attempt to describe their peculiar call note as a 'whistle,' from my own observation I would say that 'squeal' describes the note or call perfectly. Once heard and familiarized, I do not think it could ever be forgotten.—
EDWIN M. HASBROUCK, M.D., *Washington, D. C.*

Two abnormal breeding records for South Carolina.—The writer is indebted to Mr. E. J. DeCamps of Beaufort, South Carolina, for the information and the privilege of recording the following notable ornithological data for South Carolina.

HOODED MERGANSER.—On April 6, 1937, a party of workmen was clearing a patch of timber at Gray's Hill, Beaufort County, South Carolina. One of the trees, in falling, struck a dead pine nearby and toppled it to the ground. The dead tree broke apart on impact exactly where an old Pileated Woodpecker hole had weakened the trunk. Looking at the debris, the foreman, Mack Woods, was surprised to see the body of a duck, killed by the fall, amid a welter of broken eggs and nesting material. He did not recognize the species other than by the local name of "sawbill," and carried it to town where it was identified by competent authorities as a Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*). Five of the six eggs were completely smashed but one was only cracked and was given by Mr. Woods to Mr. William Elliott of Beaufort. The egg was heavily incubated and Mr. Elliott rather despaired of preserving it. However, Mr. DeCamps heard of it and asked to be allowed to attempt preservation. He was readily given the chance and made an excellent job of it. The embryo was well-developed and the characteristic bill was plainly evident. Mr. DeCamps succeeded in 'trading' for the specimen with Mr. Elliott and it is now in his (DeCamps's) collection.

This is apparently the first nesting record for South Carolina since the days of Audubon, over one hundred years ago, who recorded its breeding from notes of Dr. John Bachman of Charleston (*Birds of America*, 6: 404).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.—Little more than a month after the above find, Mr. DeCamps was told by a local woodsman that a "blue darter" was nesting on the woodsman's land. He thought, of course, that the man referred to the Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) which occasionally nests in the Carolina Low Country, but the man insisted that it was the "little" blue darter and not the "big"—in other words, that it was the Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*). He told Mr. DeCamps that he would show him the nest if he would promise to kill the birds!

Although it sounded like a case of mistaken identity, he agreed and was taken to the locality. The nest was built in a pine tree amid second growth, and was thirty feet from the ground. On climbing to it, Mr. DeCamps saw at once that the man was correct but the nest held only one egg! He therefore refrained from shooting the birds as he wished a complete set of the eggs. Several days later he returned to find three eggs, but apparently the nest was then deserted as the set was not increased and the birds failed to appear. He collected the eggs which I have seen. They are typical specimens of the eggs of the Sharp-shinned Hawk. The locality was eight miles northwest of Beaufort, South Carolina. This town lies in the extreme southeastern corner of the state and is on salt water, some seventy-five miles south of Charleston. The eggs were collected on May 14, 1937.

This record is, of course, phenomenal. Search of the literature reveals no other instance of the nesting of this bird in South Carolina although this is not surprising. In his 'Birds of South Carolina,' page 72 (1910) the late A. T. Wayne states that he secured a young bird near Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, on August 18, 1896, which he believed to have been "bred not far away" on account of its marked immaturity. This however, is not conclusive. In the Greenwood (S. C.) Index-Journal (newspaper) under date of February 14, 1934, there is a list of birds of Greenwood County prepared by F. W. Hahn, Jr., which states that the Sharp-shinned Hawk is a "rare resident, breeds," but no further amplification is given, nor is any specific instance noted. The above, therefore, appears to be the first authentic nesting record for the state and is likely to remain so for a long while!—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *The Crescent, Charleston, S. C.*