

Chestnut-collared Longspur on Long Island.—On April 1, 1944, with Jerry Soll, Walter Ferguson, and Arnold Weinberg, I had the good fortune to see a Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) at Dyker Heights, Brooklyn. The bird, a male in nearly complete breeding plumage, was studied at distances as close as five feet with 8x binoculars for about an hour, and a detailed observation of the plumage was obtained. The chestnut nape, black head markings, black breast and upper abdomen, and the characteristic pattern of the tail when the bird was in flight were all noted. Some vestiges of winter plumage were apparent in a few white, transverse streaks on the black underparts, the white last row of lesser wing-coverts, and the buffy streaks mingling with the black of the posterior portion of the crown.

Our observations were made on a sandy strip bordering the Belt Parkway, in which clumps of alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) were commonly distributed, interspersed with couch-grass (*Agropyron repens*), crab grass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*), several of the fescues, and various other low-growing plants. Present in the area were Eastern Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*), Eastern Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia melodia*), Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus vociferus*), Prairie Horned Larks (*Otocoris alpestris praticola*) and Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna magna*).

The longspur was discovered as we combed through the strip, flushing the various sparrows and larks. As we drew near, it walked and ran from us, crouching low and at intervals attempting concealment, at a little distance, behind a tuft of grass. When left undisturbed, the bird walked leisurely about, apparently feeding on small insects gleaned from the grass blades. I am told by Mr. John Elliott of Seaford, Long Island, who with Mr. Roy Latham of Orient, has been kind enough to diagnose the flora of the area, that the seed crop of none of the plants present had matured sufficiently to be of value, although the seeds shed the previous year are doubtless picked up from the ground at that season by the horned larks and sparrows.

We were able, several times, by surrounding the longspur and approaching it very slowly, to get within five feet of the bird and study it at leisure. At sudden noise or motion, it would flush, however, and usually circle off 75 or 100 yards, uttering a soft, slurred note, *chee-drrt*, eventually returning to the same strip, sometimes almost to the same spot from which it had taken wing. On one such excursion the longspur pursued a Killdeer for a hundred feet over a winding course with the chase terminated as abruptly as it began, by the longspur dropping suddenly into the grass.

An examination of available literature reveals that the Chestnut-collared Longspur has not been recorded from the East in the last half-century. Specimens were taken on Long Island, September 14, 1891, and February 16, 1889, according to Cruickshank ('Birds Around New York City': 475, 1942). Forbush ('Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States': 39, 1929) lists a bird taken at Scarborough, Maine, August 13, 1886, and a male collected at Gloucester, Massachusetts, July 28, 1876. The species is of accidental occurrence, also, in Maryland (A. O. U. Check-List, fourth ed., 1931).

In addition to the foregoing published records, I have learned of an individual seen at Orient, Long Island, by Mr. Roy Latham, who has kindly extended permission to place his observations on record. Mr. Latham writes: "On April 21, 1923, I saw a bird which I identified as a nearly full-plumaged Chestnut-collared Longspur at the edge of a farm lane here in Orient. The bird was very tame and I crawled within a few feet of it as it sneaked along in the short grass. On April 27 of the same year, I saw the bird—or another of the same species—and collected the bird, which was made into a rather poor skin. I have it here somewhere now. There is no

question as to the identity of the species, and my individual is a male in at least two-thirds spring plumage.—ROBERT H. GRANT, 2415 Newkirk Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

Interior records of brant.—In his 'Birds of the Northwest' (U. S. Geol. Surv. Terr., Misc. Publ., 3: 557, 1874) Coues said of *Branta bernicla*: "While ascending the Missouri in October 1872, I observed vast numbers of the Common Brant in flocks on the banks and mud-bars of the River." Then in the 'Report on Bird Migration in the Mississippi Valley' (U. S. Dept. Agr., Div. Econ. Orn., Bull. 2: 78, 1888) Cooke wrote: "During the winter of 1883-'84 this species was represented from Illinois southward by a few rare visitants. In the spring it was rare south of Minnesota, but by the time it reached that State its numbers had been increased by recruits from the southeast and it became almost common."

It is now possible to recognize these as among the 'growing pains' of American ornithology. From the almost pathological aversion of brant to flying over land (following all sinuosities of the coast rather than cross a headland) as reported by old hunters, it would be expected that any birds reaching the Missouri and Mississippi valleys would be mere stragglers that had been accidentally attached to flocks of other species.

Whether under the stimulus of this reflection or not, it has been realized by later ornithologists that all was not well with the early records of brant in the interior. Thus Roberts ('Birds of Minnesota,' 1: 66, 1932) relegates the brant to the hypothetical list among other birds of which there are no Minnesota specimens. DuMONT ('A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa,' Univ. Iowa Studies, n. s. 268: 158, 1934) takes similar action, saying: "There are a number of observations, in each instance unsupported by specimens. Undoubtedly, some of these refer to *Branta c. hutchinsi*." Lynds Jones long before had done the same in Ohio ('Birds of Ohio': 226, 1903). Kumlien and Hollister ('Birds of Wisconsin': 30, 1903) reject all brant records except one based on a specimen taken by Dr. P. R. Hoy. This was one of three birds "from the shore of Lake Michigan." Barrows ('Michigan Bird Life': 120, 1912) found only two records (representing a total of four birds) substantiated by specimens. There is no authentic record for Illinois and none are reported for Missouri (Widmann, 1907), Arkansas (Howell, 1911), and Oklahoma (Nice, 1924). Butler ('Birds of Indiana': 639, 1897) noted one from Indiana and one from Michigan. Oberholser ('Bird Life of Louisiana,' Louis. Dept. Conserv., Bull. 28: 680, 1938) says: "The American Brant is accredited to Louisiana by several authors, but the writer fails to find an occurrence definite enough to entitle it to a place in the Louisiana list. The small races of Canada Geese and the other geese are so commonly called 'brant' in the Mississippi valley that no dependence can be placed on any records other than those of actual specimens taken."

Earlier authors also have suggested that popular misuse of the term 'brant' is responsible for much of the difficulty. As a specialist on bird names, the present writer is sure that is the case. All geese besides the Canada are widely termed brant and even the big honker is not a complete exception. Some as the Snow Goose (young), Blue Goose, and Hutchins's Goose are even called 'black brant.' Certainly the editors and readers of older volumes of sportsmen's periodicals interpreted these names in the light of eastern experience and considered these 'black brant' to be the sea brant of their acquaintance. As we have seen, far better qualified observers and writers also were 'taken in.' In fairly recent years, correspondents have reported 'Black Brant' from Wisconsin, Kentucky, Minnesota, Iowa, and North Dakota, but there is no reason to believe that these are other than misnamed. People are