

were regularly present on the front beach. Two weeks later there were indications of courtship, and by July 3 two pairs were definitely mated. On July 8 the Austin party noticed that both pairs repeatedly entered the edge of the tern colony at about the same point, and a short search soon led to the actual finding of the nest and egg by James L. Peters. The full clutch of three eggs was completed July 11 or 12, and on July 18-19 Dr. Austin trapped and banded one of the parent birds and took moving pictures of a nest-relief. Two eggs hatched just before or during a severe northeast storm on August 1-2; the chicks were dead, apparently from exposure and chilling, on the morning of August 3. The remaining egg hatched that morning, and at the date of writing (10th) the chick is alive and well. In the meantime, the second and two additional pairs of adults have progressed through the stages of courtship to the point of scooping out nest-hollows in the immediate vicinity of the occupied nest, but have not laid eggs.

The steps by which the Skimmer has reoccupied its old Massachusetts range are interesting enough for brief review. The species is supposed to have nested on Cape Cod in colonial times, and it almost certainly persisted at Muskeget Island until about 1830 (Forbush, 'Birds of Massachusetts,' etc., 1: 133, 1925). By 1870, when consecutive ornithological records for New England may be said to begin, it was reduced to the status of an accidental straggler from the south, and so continued through the second decade of the present century. Its appearances were at long intervals, and almost invariably after the northward passage of a West Indian hurricane in late summer. Specimens were taken all along the coast after such a storm in 1879, and again in 1924. With the recent increase of the species on the middle Atlantic coast these post-hurricane visitations have become larger and more frequent; during September and October of 1944 there were gatherings of one to four hundred Skimmers at several points along the Massachusetts shore. No matter how many birds were involved, however, it does not seem to me that these accidental incursions had any direct connection with the reoccupation of former nesting territory.

The type of occurrence which foretold renesting was a gradual increase of single Skimmers during June and early July, chiefly in the vicinity of Vineyard and Nantucket sounds. These records were made at dates which corresponded roughly to the close of spring migration farther south, and indeed may best be thought of as overrunnings of the established range at a season when the bulk of the species was actively nesting. They occurred very rarely during the period when Skimmers were most reduced (sight record, Weepecket Islands, July 16, 1903), but increased progressively from the middle 1930's when the bird was already re-established in New Jersey and was about to breed on Long Island. Thus I have sight records for Nauset in 1936, lower Buzzard's Bay in 1937, Hyannisport on June 22, 1939, and for every succeeding summer. At first the extension was in the form of a greater number of occurrences of single birds, but later more birds were seen together. The transition to the type of gathering already described for Plymouth in 1945 and 1946 is obvious.

In view of the progressive steps by which the Skimmer has returned to Massachusetts, I think it is reasonable to expect that its numbers will increase somewhat further as long as environmental conditions remain substantially unchanged.—
JOSEPH A. HAGAR, *Massachusetts Department of Conservation, Boston, Massachusetts.*

California Gull on the coast of Texas.—On October 21, 1945, I discovered a gull near the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, standing on the beach with a flock of Ring-billed Gulls. It was observed with 8-power binoculars at about fifty feet and its unusual features noted. The legs and half of the bill were bright ochre; the outer half of the bill was black. The mantle was turning pearl gray, flecked with

brown; the primaries were black, with the ends of the feathers faintly edged with ash. The head was white, with dark streaks especially conspicuous on the hind neck. The tail was white, merging into a broad brown band.

I had never seen a gull with these characteristics before, and wrote to Mr. Ludlow Griscom about it. He replied that it was doubtless a California Gull (*Larus californicus*) in intermediate plumage, but under the circumstances I agreed with him that the sight record was not publishable.

On March 17, 1946, however, I saw this bird again and was able to check its characters carefully. The bill and legs appeared to be slightly paler than in October and there was less streaking on the hind neck; otherwise, it appeared to be as it had been before. Probably it had been wintering on the flats near the Naval Technical Training Center, Ward Island, a mile from the Naval Air Station. Opportunity for collecting in this locality are limited, so the sight record is published now. The only other record of the California Gull on the Texas coast is of a specimen taken over seventy years ago near Galveston.—FRED MALLERY PACKARD, *Lieutenant Commander, Corpus Christi, Texas.*

The American Pintail breeding in New York.—On July 9, 1945, the junior author encountered a female American Pintail (*Anas acuta taitzihoa*) with a brood of nine young about a week old on the Perch River flat seven miles north-northwest of Watertown in Jefferson County, New York. One of the ducklings became entangled in vegetation and was taken by hand. It was prepared as a study skin and deposited in the bird collection of Cornell University. This apparently constitutes the first known record of the Pintail breeding in New York.

Perch River flat consists of dense to open swamp as well as extensive marsh land and low-lying pasture. The river itself, with a stream bed hardly more than ten yards wide at any point, is confined to its channel in dry years, and in normal summers much of the emergent aquatic vegetation of the flat is found growing in habitat containing too little water to prove attractive to ducks. In the summer of 1945, because of continued heavy rains, the water level on the flat was maintained at a point much higher than normal. As a consequence, conditions for brood production by the principal nesting species, Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*) and Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*), as well as for the Pintail, were unusually favorable.

Substantial numbers of Pintails appear upon the Perch River flat each spring. In 1945, this movement occurred in two waves; the first and somewhat lesser one reached a peak during the last week in March; the second attained maximum proportions in mid-April when approximately one thousand birds were estimated to be present. By the end of the first week in May the migrants had moved on.

Even after the migratory wave had passed, Pintails continued to be seen. For example, on May 21 two pairs plus two extra drakes were noted, and on June 15 one pair and an extra drake were observed. This led to the suspicion that nesting birds were present. As a consequence, discovery of the female and brood on July 9 was not unanticipated. Also on this same day the junior author discovered a second female, several hundred yards down stream from the point where the breeding record was established, feigning injury and manifesting deep concern over his presence. Her behavior clearly suggested a second brood, but diligent search failed to reveal its presence.—H. L. KURTZ, *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Project 20-R, New York State Conservation Department, Chaumont,* and DAVID G. ALLEN, *208 Kline Road, Ithaca, New York.*