

feeding on some floating rubbish. Among the usual ring-billed gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), herring gulls (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*), laughing gulls (*Larus atricilla*) and Bonaparte's gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) was a fine specimen of a European black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus ridibundus*). Even though this is probably the first report of this Old World species for the state of Florida, I submit the observation with confidence; I have seen thousands of these birds in other parts of the world and had an excellent opportunity to observe all the necessary field marks on this Florida vagrant.—ALLAN D. CRUICKSHANK, *Rye, New York*.

Sooty tern and northern horned lark in South Carolina.—There was brought to me on September 25, 1947, an immature sooty tern, *Sterna fuscata fuscata*. It was taken alive by a young man at the Great Pee Dee River, 10 miles east of Florence, Florence County, South Carolina. Evidently this bird was blown in from the south by the tropical storm that struck the coast of South Carolina two days previously. Two weeks later this bird had become quite tame and ate fish and raw shrimp from our hands.

On January 26, 1946, I collected two female northern horned larks, *Eremophila alpestris alpestris*, from a flock of American pipits, *Anthus spinoletta rubescens*, feeding in an oat field on the Revel plantation about two miles west of Florence, Florence County. A male northern horned lark was taken on January 29, 1946.

Identification of the tern and horned larks was made by Alexander Sprunt, Jr. of the National Audubon Society and E. B. Chamberlain of the Charleston Museum.—H. L. HARLLEE, *1301 West Palmetto St., Florence, South Carolina*.

Winter record of ivory gulls, St. Jean Port Joli, Quebec.—The College Museum received, in the flesh, three adult ivory gulls, *Pagophila eburnea*; the birds were captured on March 3 and 4, 1947, at St. Jean Port Joli, Quebec. Two of the birds are now in the Museum's collection.—REV. RENÉ TANGUAY, *Director, Museum Ste. Anne de la Pocatière, Province of Quebec, Canada*.

Status of roseate tern as a breeding species in southern United States.—As is well known, the distribution of breeding colonies of *Sterna d. dougallii* on the Atlantic seaboard shows remarkable gaps and is very highly localized. Particularly is this true in the southern states. If one reads the ranges given in "state" bird books of this region, he would get a completely erroneous idea. For instance, in the "Birds of North Carolina" (Pearson & Brimleys, 1942: 176) this statement appears, . . . "breeds from Nova Scotia to Virginia." Naturally, the assumption of the reader would be that it does not breed south of Virginia. In "Florida Bird-life" (Howell, 1932: 264) the range is given as "breeding . . . on the Atlantic coast of America from Sable Island, Nova Scotia south to Virginia." It is true that Howell, in the body of his text on the species, mentions the colony at Dry Tortugas, but *not* in his discussion of range. In "Birds of Georgia" (Odum, Stoddard, Tomkins *et al.* 1945: 43) there is listed but one occurrence in the state, this a late fall specimen. In "Birds of Alabama" (Howell, 1924) the species is not included in any way. In "The Bird Life of the Gulf Coast Region of Mississippi" (Burleigh, 1944) the species is likewise omitted entirely; there are no records. In "Bird Life of Louisiana" (Oberholser, 1938: 295) there is a record of a single bird, the only one for the state. Peterson's revised "Field Guide" (1947) gives the best indication of range, as he states that the species breeds "in widely separated localities from Nova Scotia to Texas." None of these authorities mention the Dry Tortugas in their "range" when, as a matter of fact, it is the *only* locality between Virginia and Texas where

this tern does breed! Indeed, one could say that it is the only locality where one can be anything like sure of *seeing* the bird, except as a very brief migrant, anywhere southward from Virginia. There are three records for North Carolina, one actual specimen from South Carolina, one from Georgia, none from the east coast of Florida, none from Alabama, none from Mississippi, and one from Louisiana.

Audubon, in his day, found nesting roseates on "small detached rocky islands" in the Florida Keys. No specific key is mentioned. Neither H. K. Job, who photographed at Tortugas in 1903, nor J. B. Watson, whose magnificent work with the sooties and noddies is a classic, appears to have paid any attention to the roseate colony, if it was then current. Paul Bartsch did, recording about 100 pairs nesting in 1917. Nothing else appeared in any detail regarding these birds until the Florida Audubon Society began making population studies of the sooty and noddy colonies in 1936. Roseates were noted by observers of that group, and a record was kept. The activities of that group may be summed up by listing the annual counts.

1936, 400 birds present, the assumption being 200 nesting pairs.

1937, none.

1938, 314 birds.

1939, 80 birds.

1940, 20 birds.

1941, none.

No observations were made during the war years of 1942-43-44. In 1945, the writer began his systematic population studies at Tortugas, and the record is better. It is listed below.

1945, 85 nests; bird population, 170.

1946, not a single bird present!

1947, 142 nests; birds 284.

1948, 225 nests; birds 450.

No explanation presents itself for the fluctuation from zero to more than 200 nesting pairs in different years. Conditions amid which these terns breed at Tortugas vary not at all; they use keys without vegetation, and heavy storms seldom occur there during the nesting season. Natural predation cannot be a factor, for even the hermit crabs and sand crabs, so abundant on the nesting grounds of the sooty tern, are few on the barren islets used by the roseates. Predation by frigate birds is probably nil; and human interference is certainly non-existent.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *The Crescent*, Charleston 50, South Carolina.

Wilson's warbler in Maryland in late December.—On December 22, 1947, while participating in a Christmas Bird Count on the eastern shore of Maryland, I observed a Wilson's warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) feeding along a sunny margin of a woods near the Pocomoke River, three miles north of Snow Hill. It was with a flock of myrtle warblers (*Dendroica coronata*), white-throated sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), Carolina chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*), and several other species. My attention was first attracted to the Wilson's warbler by the distinctive call note which it repeated about once a minute. The bird was actively feeding among the dead leaves on a group of young oak trees. The bird was collected and proved to be a female. The skin was preserved for the collection of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The stomach was full, and the contents were identified by Robert T. Mitchell as: fragments of *Araneida*, 80 per cent; *Coleoptera*, 10 per cent; *Hymenoptera*, 10 per cent.

Subspecific identification as the eastern race *pusilla* was made by Dr. John W. Aldrich. This appears to be the first winter record for Wilson's warbler north of the