

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

gulf states. Two previous winter occurrences of *Wilsonia pusilla* in the eastern United States have been published as follows: Lowery (Additions to the List of Birds of Louisiana, Univ. of Kans. Publ., 1: 177-192, 1947) has recorded a female *Wilsonia p. pusilla* collected on December 20, 1944, at Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Stevenson (Auk, 64: 468-469, 1947) has described a sight observation of this species near Tallahassee, Florida, on January 1, 1947.—CHANDLER S. ROBBINS, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland.*

The Guianan meadowlark in Surinam, Dutch Guiana.—The range of the Guianan meadowlark (*Sturnella magna praticola*) is given by Hellmayr (Cat. Birds Americas, 10: 218, 1937) as northeastern and southern Venezuela, British Guiana and northeastern Brazil. It was therefore of much interest when I observed on October 29, 1947, in the dry savanna between Paramacreek and the airfield "Zanderij," some 45 kilometers south of Paramaribo, an individual which I was able to collect and which is now in my collection. It proved to be a female weighing 73 grams.

By this record the range of this species seems to be extended considerably to the southeast. I must draw attention to the fact, however, that in the large egg collection assembled by the Penard brothers about the beginning of the present century (now in the Leyden Museum) there is an egg attributed to this species from Surinam, though Hellebrekers in his revision of this collection (Zoologische Mededeelingen, 24: 267, 1942), apparently not aware of the existence of any South American forms of this species, calls it *Sturnella m. magna*!—FR. HAVERSCHMIDT, *14 Waterkant, Paramaribo, Surinam, Dutch Guiana.*

Grackle competition for dogwood fruit.—An abundant crop of fruit was noted on flowering dogwood trees, *Cornus florida*, near Leesburg, Virginia. Some 20 trees along the Potomac River were much frequented by birds, in particular, the northern flicker, *Colaptes auratus*, the eastern cardinal, *Richmondia cardinalis*, and the tufted titmouse, *Parus bicolor*. About 10:00 a. m. on the morning of October 27 a heavy downpour of rain began. Within 15 minutes large numbers of purple grackles, *Quiscalus quiscula*, accompanied by a few starlings, *Sturnus vulgaris*, began to descend into the dogwoods. These two species had not hithertofore been seen in the dogwood trees.

Both grackles and starlings began to devour ravenously the ripe fruit. Apparently the bill of the purple grackle is not suited for the operation of both plucking fruit and swallowing it. They are able to tear off the fruit with ease but are able to swallow only a small portion of it. The rest is dropped to the ground; many of the grackles were soon at work there. Both the seed and the fleshy part were consumed.

After half an hour the birds suddenly departed. There appeared to have been 800 to 900 grackles and seven or eight starlings in the flock. It was still raining when they left. Later when I inspected the trees, I discovered that they had been completely stripped of fruit. Some uneaten fruit still remained on the ground, particularly near the house, where the birds apparently had been too wary to descend. Without competition, such as I have described, the dogwood trees would have furnished food for many species of birds throughout the fall.—JOHN V. DENNIS, *Moose Hill Bird Sanctuary, Sharon, Massachusetts.*

A new goldfinch from Persia.—During the study of my collections from Iran a new race of the gray-headed form of the goldfinch was discovered.