

therefore easily destroyed. In his excellent article "Migrations of the American Brant" (Auk, 54: 73-95, 1937), Harrison F. Lewis mentions early flights of dark birds locally called "les noirs" at the Bay of Seven Islands, Quebec. These dark birds have different flyways and probably nest in a particular region yet to be discovered, as breeding specimens collected by Sutton on Southampton Island are typical pale-bellied *hrota*.

We propose to recognize the following subspecies of *Branta bernicla*:

*B. b. bernicla* (Linné) Syst. Nat., ed. 10, 1: 129, 1758, Sweden.

*B. b. hrota* (O. F. Müller) Zool. Dan. Prodr., 1776: 14, Iceland.

*B. b. nigricans* (Lawrence) Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. N. Y., 4: 171, 1846, Egg Harbor, N. J.

*B. b. orientalis* Tougarinov, Faune de l'URSS, Aves, 1 (4): 180, 1941, Eastern Siberia.

The taxonomy of the brant geese has long been a subject of controversy. These circumpolar birds, breeding in the far north, remain completely uniform in size, proportions, and life habits throughout their entire range, but they vary in color. They vary principally in the color of the underparts below the black breast, in the width of the borders of the feathers on the sides and flanks, and in the extension of the white-spotted collar on the foreneck. The evidence is that of a continuous cline from pale to medium gray-bellied and dark-bellied ones from central arctic America, through Greenland, Iceland, arctic Europe, and Asia to eastern Siberia, with intergrading populations and intermediate individuals. But cases of mixing and blending between the dark-bellied populations of western arctic America and the pale-bellied ones to the east are few, when they meet, as reported by some observers, particularly in the Perry River area and on Prince Patrick Island (A. Gavin, Wilson Bull., 59: 195-203, 1947; H. C. Hanson, P. Scott, and P. Queneau, 'Waterfowl Populations and Breed. Cond., Summer 1949,' Spec. Sci. Rep. Wildlife, Wash., 2: 225-228, 1949; and C. O. Handley, Jr., Wilson Bull., 62: 128-132, 1950). It does not seem, however, that two distinct species are involved. We are rather facing here one of the several instances in which two subspecies of the same species, recently coming again into contact owing to changes in life conditions, are wont to mingle. Furthermore, the colonial habits and close family ties of the geese tend to insure inbreeding and to delay the mixing of populations. It is possible that the plumage differences in the present case are due to alterations in a single gene.

The nominal form, *B. b. bernicla*, with a medium gray belly, narrow white fringes to the flank feathers, and a spotted-white collar interrupted in front, breeds in arctic eastern Russia, western Siberia, and the islands to the north, from the south of Nova Zembla to the mouth of the Khatanga River. The pale-bellied form, *B. b. hrota*, breeds in the north of Nova Zembla, Franz Joseph Land, Spitzbergen, Greenland, and arctic Canada, west to the Perry River and St. Patrick Island, where it meets *orientalis*, the dark-bellied form of western North America and eastern Siberia.—JEAN DELACOUR AND JOHN T. ZIMMER, *American Museum of Natural History, New York*.

**Records of the Black Pigeon Hawk, *Falco columbarius suckleyi*, in Utah.**—The winter range of this race as given by Friedmann (U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 50 (11): 713, 1950), includes the states of Washington, Oregon, California as far south as Los Angeles County, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. To the present time this falcon has not been reported from the following western states: Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana.

Two records from Utah in the past two years suggest that, during the winter months, this falcon ranges more widely in the western states than heretofore thought. Further collecting may substantiate this supposition. One female with a broken

wing was found by Robert J. Erwin at Plymouth, Boxelder County, Utah, in February, 1948. The second specimen, a male, killed itself by flying against a window pane in the business district of Ogden, Weber County, Utah, in March, 1950. Both of these specimens were identified as *Falco columbarius suckleyi* Ridgway by Dr. H. Friedmann and are in the Weber College Museum of Zoology, Ogden, Utah.—RICHARD D. PORTER AND HOWARD KNIGHT, *Weber College, Ogden, Utah*.

**Sparrow Hawk, *Falco sparverius*, Eats Bread.**—For the first five days of April, 1950, I was able to observe a female Sparrow Hawk in the grounds of a hospital in Toronto, Ontario. Since cold weather inhibited the movements of insects etc. most of the time, and small birds seemed to avoid the vicinity of the hawk, I was puzzled by an apparent lack of food for it.

Feral Pigeons, *Columba livia*, fed in numbers on bread thrown to them by patients. On the morning of April 1, the hawk dropped from her perch and approached two such pigeons in a swift horizontal glide. The pigeons took flight but the falcon flew directly to the bread, on which she alighted. Holding it with her feet, she tore small pieces of bread off the crust, raising her head after each bite and usually throwing the bread to one side. Within a few minutes she had reduced the bread to crumbs, apparently without swallowing any, and then flew to another perch.

In the next 24 hours the hawk repeated this performance several times, never attacking the pigeons but never approaching bread unless it was already being eaten by pigeons. Like the pigeons, she wasted much of the food as crumbs, by shaking large pieces violently and flinging them to one side.

On the afternoon of the second day, the Sparrow Hawk began carrying bread to her perch, in her beak or feet. She still lost much of it as crumbs, but definitely ate some. Late in the afternoon, she seized a piece as soon as it was thrown from a window. From that time, she lost her apparent dependence on pigeons to draw her attention to bread.

On the third day, the hawk no longer pounced on the bread, as on a grasshopper, but spent much time running about on the ground like a Robin, carrying bread in her beak to a perch. The fourth day was warm and rainy, and she used exactly the same technique to capture rained-out earthworms. April 5, the last day of my observations, was cold again, and the hawk returned to a diet of bread.—FREDERICK E. WARBURTON, *Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada*.

**Communal Roosting of American Rough-legged Hawks, *Buteo lagopus sancti-johannis*.**—South of Palatine, in northwestern Cook County, Illinois, is a stand of five old apple trees left unmolested in the midst of otherwise cultivated fields. During January and February, 1950, I drove by this stand of trees every evening around five o'clock. At this season it was about the time of dusk when motorists begin turning on their car lights. I observed the Rough-legged Hawks on the evening of January 24. One hawk was in the tree and one was approaching. As I watched, three more hawks alighted and a sixth drifted by. After a while three left and flew off across the darkening fields. Finally they came back one by one and settled in the trees. The sixth had not returned by the time I left.

My journal for January 30 records four hawks on the roost when I arrived. Two flew off and one returned, leaving three at the time I left. On January 31, a clear day, I found hawks on the roost early. By the time I left eight were there. February 2 was clear and I stopped by earlier to look for hawk pellets. Crows were congregating in a plowed field, and I saw three of the hawks perched here and there on fence posts at some distance from the trees, waiting, I suppose, until the Crows left.