GENERAL NOTES

Birds in the Upper Arctic.—Although there have been few observers in the northernmost Arctic, it is generally assumed that the region about the Pole is devoid of life, with the exception of that which occurs in the open patches of sea, and an occasional bear or fox. Recently, however, a United States Air Force research party recorded birds on a number of occasions while drifting on a huge ice cake, known as "T-3" or "Fletcher's Ice Island," within 150 miles of the Pole.

It is at the request of the scientific personnel of the U.S.A.F. Cambridge Research Center, who were making geophysical studies on T-3, that I am privileged to place on record these interesting and important observations. I am indebted to Miss Vivian Bushnell, of the Cambridge Research Center, for providing several references to earlier records and for other assistance.

A description of Fletcher's Ice Island, and the course through which it has drifted, may be found in Crary, Cotell, and Sexton (Arctic, **5**: 211–223, 1952) and in Fletcher (Nat'l Geog. Mag. **103**: 489–504, 1953). In brief, the island is 31 miles in circumference and it is composed of fresh water ice which appears to have broken off a glacial shelf at Ellesmere Island many years ago. Scattered irregularly over the rough surface and contributing to the impression that it is a stationary ice-covered island, are rocks, gravel, and dirt. In a limited region near the edge there are deposits of broken bits of plant material such as twigs and roots. There appears to be, however, nothing edible for land birds, although open leads are sources of food for marine birds.

From June 12 to August 15, 1952, the research party sighted single birds on eight occasions between the extremes of 88° 01′ N and 88° 30′ N, and 91° 00′ W and 122° 00′ W. Unfortunately, none of the research party was proficient in identifying birds and all were described as being "sea gulls," with the exception of one on June 12, which Mr. Robert D. Cotell believes, after having examined museum specimens, to have been a jaeger.

From May 6 to September 19, 1953, birds were noted 15 times, between 85° 15′ N and 86° 10′ N, and 75° 00′ W and 96° 00′ W. Ten of the observations were of small birds described as being largely white and flying with pronounced undulations. With additional information concerning their calls and tracing of their footprints, there is little doubt that these were Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). On one occasion there were four in a flock and on another two; the remaining birds were seen singly. Five large birds were also observed singly; four were described as gull-like and the fifth, which was collected by Mr. Albert P. Crary on September 19, at 86° 08′ N, 75° 00′ W, is an immature Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla* subsp.), which is deposited in the Museum of Comparative Zoology. There is no known record of a bird having been collected farther north.

According to Fisher (The Fulmar, 1952) the northernmost locality at which birds have been seen is at 86° 35′ N, 44° 48′ E, the point at which an observer on board the drifting Russian icebreaker *Sedov* noted *Fulmarus glacialis* in September, 1939. An account which was apparently overlooked by Fisher, or not believed to be reliable, is that by Papanin (Life on an Icefloe, 1947), who, starting near the Pole, drifted southward for ten months on an icefloe. He said (p. 133) "Shortly after our arrival at the North Pole we could hardly believe our own ears when we heard the chirping of birds. Then we saw a snow bunting . . . . Later, however, we were visited by seagulls, fulmars, guillemots and many other birds." Papanin also reported (Trudy Dreifuiushehei Stantsii "Severnyi Polius" [= Trans. of the Drifting Station "North Pole"], Izdatel'stvo Glavsevmorputi, **1**: 55, 1940) "we encountered the snow bunting,

guillemot, fulmar and kittiwake from the very first days of our life on the floe." Bunynitsky, who was on board the *Sedov*, and who was the source of Fisher's information, has also remarked (Comptes Rendus, **27**: 122–127, 1940) that "it is curious to note that we fell in several times with the *P. nivalis* beyond the 86th parallel. The appearance of these birds either coincided with or followed a strong gale. The birds were always greatly exhausted. . . ."

Thus, from these shreds of information it seems that the high Arctic is probably not quite so desolate as one might suppose. We have yet to learn, however, the source of the birds, whether they normally frequent such high latitudes, what their feeding habits are, and the answers to many other questions.—RAYMOND A. PAYNTER, JR. *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts.*

Pine and Yellow-throated warblers Feeding on the White Pine Scale Insect.—On December 17, 1950, Mr. William R. Solomon and I found a Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) in a small, dense grove of White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) located within the boundaries of the Split Rock Golf Course, Pelham Bay Park, Bronx County, New York.

After observing and identifying the bird, we noticed that it was rubbing its bill along and among the needles of the White Pine. After collecting some needles, we found small white splotches irregularly scattered along them. Professor Herman T. Spieth of the City College of New York kindly identified these white forms as those made by the wintering stage of the White Pine Scale Insect (*Chionaspis pinifoliae*).

The Pine Warbler was observed during the following two weeks and was found still feeding in the same manner. Although the White Pine Scale Insect occurred on both (*P. strobus* and *P. sylvestris*), the Pine Warbler was never seen feeding in the Scotch Pines.

Mr. Solomon and I revisited the Pine Grove on April 28, 1951, and were fortunate enough to find and observe a Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*). The bird was observed for three and a half hours and was only seen feeding in the Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). It acted and fed in a manner similar to that of the Pine Warbler. While the Yellow-throated Warbler was under observation, I believe it fed continually on this scale insect. Although neither bird was collected and the stomach contents of the warblers were not examined, I would say that this scale insect (*Chionaspis pinifoliae*) must have constituted the major source of food for the birds while they were observed in the pine grove.—MAURICE L. RUSSAK, *1675 Metropolitan Avenue, New York 62, New York.*

A Mixed Clutch of Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasant Eggs Hatch on the Same Day.—On the south side of a poplar-wooded hill at Midland, Michigan, May 5, 1953, a Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) was accidentally flushed from a ground nest containing 19 eggs. There appeared to be two colors and sizes of eggs. By good fortune, it was possible to see the eggs hatching on June 3.

By 12:30 p.m. of that day, four Ring-necked Pheasant chicks (*Phasianus colchicus*) had hatched. The adult Ruffed Grouse then left the nest with these chicks and apparently did not return. Between 1:00 and 6:30 p.m. one more pheasant and three Ruffed Grouse chicks hatched. These chicks and the remaining eggs were collected at 5:30 p.m. and incubated. By back-checking on color photographs of the types of eggs and the young which hatched from them, it was determined that there were six pheasant eggs and thirteen Ruffed Grouse eggs in the nest on May 5. (Dr. Miles Pirnie of Michigan State College kindly identified the chicks, since the authors had no previous experience in separating the very young of these species.)