

1927). I was born on St. Croix, a very small island, and have been an ardent observer of its bird fauna all my life, but I never saw a Masked Duck until very recently.

On March 14, 1957, on the Upper Love Pond (dam), St. Croix, close to the heavy aquatic vegetation, I saw a tiny brown female duck with a small white dot on its wing (speculum) and two distinct brown stripes across the side of the buffy head. On March 15, I was unable to find the duck on the pond until I searched the massed aquatics. The duck then flew up from almost under my feet and dropped back in the pond about 30 feet away, where she was quickly collected. These are the statistics of No. 79 of my collection: weight, 317 grams; length, 357 mm.; wing, 132 mm.; tail, 98 mm.; tarsus, 30 mm.; bill, 35 mm.; iris brown. Ovaries slightly enlarged; stomach empty; gizzard with small amount of gravel.—G. A. SEAMAN, Box 474, Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

Fat Deposition on a Migrant Stilt Sandpiper.—On August 4, 1957 the writer mist-netted a migrant Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) along the Humber River, near Toronto, Ontario. It was collected and donated to the Royal Ontario Museum. While skinning it, E. H. Taylor, Chief Technician at the museum, noticed that there was a layer of fat over most of the body. On careful examination it was found that there were two or more separate layers. This was especially noticeable in the abdominal region. The thickness of the combined layers varied from 0.5 to 2.5 mm. The fat, when removed and weighed on a triple-beam balance (sensitive to one-tenth of a gram), weighed 19.2 grams. The total weight of the bird, a male, was 75.0 grams. Fat deposition therefore made up about 25% of the total weight. In contrast, the total weights of 4 adult males, taken between 2–9 July 1948 on the breeding grounds at Cape Henrietta Maria, James Bay, Northern Ontario, ranged from 47.0 to 57.0 grams. These were taken by a Royal Ontario Museum collecting party. J. WOODFORD, 233 Roehampton Avenue, Toronto 12, Ontario.

Great Auk Remains from a Florida Shell Midden.—In a recent collection of bird bones from Castle Windy Indian site (Vo 112) the author identified two humeri of the Great Auk, *Pinguinus impennis* (Linnaeus). This site was excavated by Ripley L. Bullen of the Florida State Museum and Frederick W. Sleight of the Central Florida Museum under the auspices of the William L. Bryant foundation of Springfield, Vermont. A right and a left humerus were recovered from levels 0'-1' and 0'-2', respectively, of the shell midden at the site, fifteen miles southeast of New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., Florida. Both bones appear to be those of adults, but their presence in contiguous levels makes it difficult to determine whether more than one individual is represented. The humeri are in a good state of preservation and reveal no evidences of being moved or transported. The bones were associated with St. Johns Check Stamped potsherds, a marker type for the St. Johns II period, usually dated ca. 1150–1650 A.D. (Goggin, 1952, Yale Univ. Publ. Anthropol., 47: 53–58). Since the whole of this deep midden was occupied at this time and since the auk bones are from the top levels, they presumably date late within the time range of this period. Pending receipt of a radiocarbon date, Mr. Bullen has tentatively dated the site as late 17th century.

This represents the second find of Great Auk bones from a Florida Indian site. The first occurrence was reported in 1902 by O. P. Hay (Auk, 19: 255–258), who identified two left humeri excavated by W. S. Blatchely and C. H. Hitchcock from a shell midden at Ormond Beach (Vo 83). These humeri were previously thought

to be definitely associated with only the Orange Period, which terminates around 200 B.C. A resampling of the Ormond midden by Griffin and Smith in 1947 (Florida State Univ. Studies, 16) revealed that although the bulk of the occupation dates from near the end of the Orange Period there is a short interval of reoccupation during the St. Johns II Period. This makes the association of these humeri with the Orange Period questionable, and they may even be coeval with the auk humeri of Vo 112.

The archeological evidence from Vo 112 gives us a definite period for the presence of the Great Auk in Florida and substantiates its extension of winter range as indicated by the Vo 83 record. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Pierce Brodkorb of the University of Florida for use of his data on Great Auk skeletal measurements and for confirmation of the identification.—PENELOPE HERMES WEIGEL, 245 North Street, Buffalo 1, New York.

First Ancient Murrelet Collected in Colorado.—While driving on November 28, 1957 on U. S. 287 just south of Lafayette, Boulder County, Colorado, we noticed a dead bird beside the highway and stopped to examine it. The bird proved to be an Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*)—the first of its kind recorded in Colorado. Though it had apparently been killed by a car, except for a broken wing the specimen was in good condition. We showed the bird to Dr. A. M. Bailey, Denver Museum of Natural History, and Dr. Gordon Alexander, University of Colorado, who verified our identification. The specimen was then given to the University of Colorado Museum (Mus. No. 6282 in the bird series). Upon dissection it was impossible to determine the sex with certainty from the gonads; however the bird (an adult in winter plumage) was probably a male, the testes presumably being very small. The bird measured: wing 140 mm., culmen 14 mm., tarsus 26 mm.

Just previous to November 28 we had a period of very strong westerly winds across the northwestern states. Air velocities reached 170 miles per hour at high altitudes. Perhaps the murrelet traveled from his normal range on these air currents. Analysis of wind conditions indicates that the flight could have been made in about twenty-four hours. Though the Ancient Murrelet breeds only on boreal islands in the Pacific and winters somewhat farther south in the north Pacific, according to the A.O.U. Check-list (1957) there are a number of accidental records from the interior of the United States and Canada, one as far east as Montreal.—JOHN R. AND MARGARET M. DOUGLASS, *Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.*

A Releaser Mechanism in the Feeding of Nestling Chimney Swifts.—Much has been written in recent years about the phenomena known as "releaser mechanisms," and their controlling roles in animal behavior. These releasers are now known to be fixed, specific events which generally must occur before an animal is enabled to perform some series of habitual acts. Many of the most outstanding examples of such behavior chains have been observed among the birds, where some are so widely operative as to have been observed among members of different genera. Other chains are highly specialized and are known to appertain only to a single form.

In 1953, three unfledged Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) were acquired by Mr. Dennis Puleston of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York, as a result of storm destruction. He made efforts to rear these through manual feeding, but the nestlings remained totally uncooperative. The familiar artifice of tapping the nesting box to imitate the parent's arrival failed to elicit the slightest response, and Mr. Puleston fearfully resorted to forcible means. Then, quite by accident, a sudden draft of air chanced to blow across the birds. Immediately the whole feeding syndrome ap-