

starvation an absolute certainty. How great the mortality became as the season advanced, and when it ceased, I had no means of ascertaining, since the hotel closed the week that I left. During September of the present season of 1908, friends who were with me last year again visited Pacific Beach, and again found dead birds on the beach. Conditions seemed much the same, altho the mortality did not appear to be so great.

It is of interest to note that certain species of birds seemed to be immune to this plague; for the gulls and cormorants, both of which were very numerous, appeared to go completely unscathed. It is to be presumed, of course, that the root of the evil is to be found in some food that the birds get. What this could be I was unable to discover as, very naturally, the stomachs were all completely empty. Here arises the puzzling question, what do the other birds eat that the gulls and cormorants are unable to get?—J. H. BOWLES, *Tacoma, Washington*.

Albino Eggs of the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*).—Unspotted eggs of this species are, as is well known, not uncommon; but I believe that deficiency of pigment in the ground color is comparatively rare. Nevertheless it has been my good fortune to find this season (1908) two sets which, compared with normal specimens, might fairly be called "white", tho when placed beside the eggs of a woodpecker, for example, a very faint bluish tinge is perceptible.

The first set (No. 3258, Coll. T. W. R.) was taken, perfectly fresh, at Coronado Beach, Cal., April 17. The nest was found before completion, and as I passed it daily for some time both birds were frequently observed on or about it; identity is therefore beyond doubt. The four eggs are of normal size and shape and against anything but a dead white background appear absolutely colorless. Nest, 5 feet from the ground, in a small tree.

My second set was found near Bangle, Los Angeles County, Cal., April 24; female flushed and both parents remained in vicinity. I had made it a point to examine all nests of this species since taking my first one, but this one was difficult to reach in a slender sapling and three of the eggs fell out. However, I saw them clearly in the nest and examined the fragments after the catastrophe, and am positive they were all precisely like the fourth specimen which I still possess as a sad memento of my carelessness. This set was unspotted like the first, but the bluish tinge is a little more apparent.—DR. T. W. RICHARDS, *U. S. Navy*.

Oological.—Mr. Herbert Massey's article on "Arrangement of an Oological Collection" contains some novel ideas on this subject, several of which are well worthy of adoption by American collectors.

The round trays seem to me to produce a much more pleasing effect than square or oblong ones, and without going into the mathematics of the question, I should judge that there would be very little difference in economy of space.

The point however which appeals most strongly to me, is the use of *dust-proof* glass tops to the trays, an idea which is entirely new to me, and the greatest improvement imaginable over the use of open trays. The expense of the round glass tops and the work of sealing them onto the trays might be considered an objection; but the perfect protection afforded from careless fingers and falling articles, and the absence of dust and insect pests more than offset the extra labor and expense, and as a matter of fact, the last two items should be negligible quantities in the preparation of any scientific collection.

The custom of placing the data for the set on the *bottom* of the tray, so that the tray has to be removed from the cabinet and turned either partially or altogether up-side-down, when the data is referred to, seems to me an exceedingly dangerous practice, especially in a public museum where people of all classes and ages handle the trays; for no matter how securely the eggs were packed in the tray, a fall from the hand to the floor would undoubtedly be accompanied by dire results, especially in case the glass cover broke.

However Mr. Massey's article is exceedingly instructive and interesting and I am indebted to him for several ideas which I shall put into practice.—ROBERT B. ROCKWELL, *Denver, Colorado*.

A Flight of Shearwaters.—On the 25th of August, for the only time during my stay at Pacific Beach, Washington, the fog lifted sufficiently about an hour before dark to enable one to see for a long distance off shore. To my surprise and extreme gratification an immense flight of Shearwaters was in full progress; for as far as the eye could reach from north to south there was an unbroken ribbon of birds. This ribbon had a width of about ten birds, all flying north and flapping leisurely just above the surface of the water. They were about eight hundred yards off shore, and a strong field glass showed them to be all similar in color to the dead Slender-billed Shearwaters (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) picked up on the beach. I watched the flight from time to time until it was obscured by darkness, but there was no diminution of the numbers, and it was impossible to tell when it stopped or how long it had been going on before I was able to see it. Foggy weather during the remainder of my stay made further observations on this subject impossible.—J. H. BOWLES, *Tacoma, Washington*.