

13. *Larus argentatus*.—Herring Gull.

A beautiful pair of adults were seen at close range September 24th at the Grand Reservoir, the earliest inland fall date I can find for Ohio.

14. *Totanus melanoieucus*.—Greater Yellow-legs.

A fine male was sent to me, shot on October 16th, at the Loramie Reservoir.

15. *Phalacrocorax auritus*.—Double-crested Cormorant.

A fine young female was shot at the Loramie Reservoir on October 16th, and is now in my collection. It seems best to refer the specimen to this species and not to *floridanus*, although I have but one Comorant of the sub-species *floridanus* in my collection to compare it with.

16. *Nycticorax n. nævius*.—Black-crowned Night Heron.

Besides the specimen mentioned in the June Bulletin as taken at the Loramie Reservoir, another young male was taken at Wapakoneta in April and mounted there and then.

THE BROWN STAIN OCCASIONALLY SEEN ON
THE FEATHERS OF WILD DUCKS.

BY B. R. BALES, M. D.

During a number of years of collecting of natural history specimens, I have on several occasions taken ducks whose breasts and lower parts were stained with a rusty or brownish stain. The feathers so affected have a harsh feeling and do not have the smooth or oily feeling of ducks' feathers not so affected.

Mr. W. F. Henninger, in the Wilson Bulletin, Vo. XXII., No. 2, page 102, writes of three Scaup Ducks (*Aythya marila nearctica*) that were abnormally colored with "a rusty-brownish wash." He also quotes Mr. Leon J. Cole in the Osprey, 1897, p. 69, and Mr. I. F. Arnow in the Auk, Vol. XXIV., No.

2, p. 198, both of whom found similar coloration in the Lesser Scaup Duck (*Aythya affinis*). I have observed it in several specimens of Pintail (*Dafila acuta*), both males and females, one male Mallard (*Anas boschas*) and to a lesser extent in a male Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*). The rusty coloration is very pronounced in the case of the Pintails, both male and female, but, of course, is more noticeable in the males, where in extreme cases the white breast and neck are stained in their entirety.

One specimen in particular that I have before me (No. 197, coll. B. R. B.), has this rusty stain on all the white parts of the breast and neck, as well as (though not so noticeable) on the finely barred feathers on either side of the white portion of the breast. The staining extends well up upon the sides. Mr. Henninger states that he does not agree with the statement made by Mr. Arnow in that the coloration is due to "some compound of iron in the water frequented by the birds," but that "it must be due to other causes."

Owing to the fact that this abnormality of coloring has been found upon so many varieties of ducks, I was led to accept the theory of Mr. Arnow, and determined to make a chemical test for iron. I therefore plucked several feathers from the breast of one of my Pintail skins and soaked them for several hours in water slightly acidulated with chemically pure hydrochloric acid. After several hours soaking, the rusty color entirely disappeared, the solution remaining clear. I then added a few drops of a weak solution of potassium ferro-cyanide, whereupon the solution turned to a blue color, showing the presence of iron. The form of iron in the water at the time it is deposited upon the feathers is likely the hydrate, though it is possible that it may be the sulphate. As soon as the feathers become dry or exposed to the air, the hydrogen is lost, and the form changes from the hydrate to the oxide or iron rust.

The test employed to determine the presence of iron is explained thus: By soaking the suspected feathers in dilute hy-

drochloric acid, the chloride of iron is formed, when, upon the addition of the dilute potassium ferro-cyanide, the blue color is shown, indicating that the ferro-cyanide of iron is present, thus completing the test and proving without doubt that iron is present.

All specimens of ducks that have come under my observation have been taken during the spring migration, and, to my mind, at least, the discoloration is due to iron "in the water frequented by the ducks" in their winter quarters.

CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO, Nov. 1, 1909.

A LAST ATTEMPT TO LOCATE AND SAVE FROM EXTINCTION THE PASSENGER PIGEON.

Through the interest and generosity of Col. Anthony R. Kuser, I am able to offer the following award:

Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) for information of a nesting pair of wild Passenger Pigeons (*Ectopistes migratoria*),
UNDISTURBED.

Before this award will be paid such information must be furnished (exclusively and confidentially) as will enable a committee of expert ornithologists to visit the nest and confirm the finding. If the nest and parent birds are found undisturbed the award will be promptly paid.

(Signed) C. WILLIAM BEEBE.

Until January 1st, 1911, during Dr. Beebe's absence from America, all information concerning the existence of Passenger Pigeons should be sent to C. F. Hodge, Clark University, Worcester, Mass.

In making this offer Col. Kuser withdraws his former offer of One Hundred Dollars (\$100) for a freshly killed Passenger Pigeon. He does this because of the great danger of complete extermination.