

only two previous records for the state for this species, and Mr. Harry Harris* says there is only one authentic record for the Kansas City region, and suggests that "Students should be on the lookout for this bird, as we are well within its winter range."

HORACE GUNTHORP.

Topeka, Kans.

BIRD BANDING WORK BEING TAKEN OVER BY THE BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

The Bureau of Biological Survey of Washington, D. C., has taken over the work formerly carried on under the auspices of the Linnaean Society of New York by the American Bird Banding Association. In taking over this work the Bureau feels that it should express the debt that students of ornithology in this country owe to Mr. Howard H. Cleaves for the devotion and success with which he has conducted this investigation up to a point where it has outgrown the possibilities of his personal supervision.

Under plans now being formulated this work will give a great amount of invaluable information concerning the migration and distribution of North American birds which will be of direct service in the administration of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as well as of much general scientific interest.

It is desired to develop this work along two principal lines:—first, the trapping and banding of waterfowl, especially ducks and geese, on both their breeding and winter grounds; and secondly, the systematic trapping of land birds as initiated by Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin the early results of which have been published by him in the Proceedings of the Linnaean Society of New York, No. 31, 1919, pp. 23-55. It is planned to enlist the interest and services of volunteer workers, who will undertake to operate and maintain trapping stations throughout the year, banding new birds and recording the data from those previously banded. The results from a series of stations thus operated will undoubtedly give new insight into migration routes; speed of travel during migration; longevity of species; affinity for the same nesting-site year after year; and, in addition, furnish a wealth of information relative to the behavior of the individual, heretofore impossible because of the difficulty of keeping one particular bird under observation.

The details of operation are now receiving close attention, and as soon as possible the issue of bands will be announced, with full information regarding the methods to be followed and the results expected. In the meantime, the Biological Survey will be glad to

* "Birds of the Kansas City Region." Trans. Acad. Sci. St. Louis, Vol. 23, p. 291. 1919.

receive communications from those sufficiently interested and satisfactorily located to engage in this work during their leisure time, for it is obvious that a considerable part must be done by volunteer operators. It is hoped that a sufficient number will take this up to insure the complete success of the project.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) E. W. NELSON,
Chief of Bureau.

BONAPARTE'S GULLS AND LOUISIANA HERONS CATCHING FISH

During a visit in Florida in early March, 1917, I was much interested in watching from the hotel piazza the Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) feeding in the Halifax River at Ormond Beach. The birds were said to frequent the vicinity of the hotel in order to feed on the garbage which was thrown into the water. But although this may attract them, they are by no means solely dependent on it, for I repeatedly saw a bird pursuing a school of small fish along the edge of the water, and in one or two instances made certain that it secured a living fish in its beak and swallowed it. The bird, flying just above the water, followed the fish and, on overtaking them, reached out and snapped up one, just after alighting, I think. Sometimes the bird swam after the school, and I could see the water move as the fish darted away, but even although the fish saw their pursuer, they were not always able to elude him. When the school swam out into deeper water, and presumably left the surface, the gull rose and flew along the shore until he sighted another school, when, again coming near the surface, he began to strike out at the fish.

The Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*) adopted a similar method of catching fish,—also noted from the piazza of the hotel. The Heron walked slowly toward a school, with body leaning forward and head drawn partly back, and struck quickly, downward and outward. The proportion of successful strikes to failures was, during the short time I watched a bird fishing one afternoon, rather in favor of the fish.

It interested me to learn that these two birds were able to catch a fish which was startled and aware of the approach of its enemy. The skill of these birds must be remarkable,—they must possess the power of striking with great accuracy and with lightning-like speed—otherwise they would avail themselves of the advantage of attacking an unsuspecting prey, by waiting until the fish came within reach.

Lexington, Mass.

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