

GENERAL NOTES

Great Blue Heron Spearing Fish.—On March 14, 1939, our party which included Maurice Brooks and Robert Patterson, had stopped to observe a group of water-fowl feeding in a small pond along the Huron River in Wayne County, Michigan. On the opposite shore we saw a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias herodias*) strike into the water to catch a 9 to 10 inch fish. The heron carried the wriggling fish, which appeared to be a bullhead, between its mandibles while walking to the bank. Here the bird laid the fish down on the ground, poised motionless for a few seconds and then, using his closed beak as a spear, drove it through the fish. The bird shook the fish off and again poised erectly above it. A second swift thrust and the fish was speared again.

In all the bird speared the fish four times and at the end of the fourth time adeptly transferred the fish between its mandibles and swallowed it. The bird seemed to have difficulty swallowing so large a fish. He immersed his bill in the water and seemed to regurgitate something only to swallow it again. For the next five minutes the bird took little sips of water about every 15 seconds, and meanwhile visible contractions of the throat indicated he was trying to swallow. At the end of this time the bird assumed the familiar erect feeding position. He did not however do any more feeding but flew away out of sight.—JOHN L. GEORGE, *Department of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

Prairie Falcon at Oberlin, Ohio.—On September 20, 1940, Lloyd Hugo Heidgard, an Oberlin College student, captured a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) that had become entangled in a wire chicken fence in Oberlin. He kept it on leash for some days, and succeeded in teaching it to be unafraid of him, but was not able to get it to eat enough to keep it in good condition, so he sent it to Bear Mountain (New York) Trailside Museum. It escaped from there and has not been heard from since, although Director Kenneth H. Carr offered a reward for its return.—LYNDS JONES, *352 West College Street, Oberlin, Ohio.*

Note on the Courtship of the Black-necked Stilt.—The nonmusical, monotone cry of the Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) has an insistent quality which compels attention when the call is often repeated. Late one afternoon in early April the reiterated *kwa, kwa, kwa* of more than one Stilt led me along the Gulf beach of Sanibel Island, through a tangle of saw grass to a hidden pool of brackish water some two hundred feet inland. Although my approach was not especially careful, the two pairs of Stilts which had appropriated this pond seemed unaware of my presence as I sat upon a tussock of grass at the edge of the pool. The four birds were close together and the members of each pair were attentive to one another as they stood face to face in the shallow water about two feet apart, bowing, fluttering wings and frequently half leaping—half flying a few feet upward into the air. After a few moments of this charming play, one bird—probably the male, though sex is indistinguishable at a distance—executed a flying leap over the back of his partner and with incredible swiftness kicked up a shower of spray, using the feet alternately. The shower bath seemed to give pleasure to the courted bird and immediately the two faced about and commenced a repetition of the bowing, wing-fluttering, leaping, and sprinkling.

Presently, quite suddenly and synchronously, all four birds flew steeply upward to a considerable height where they remained for some time flying together in wide circles, giving utterance to their loud, sharp call. Gradually their arc of flight narrowed and quite abruptly the four birds spiralled downward to alight in the shallow water and begin anew the same ritual of bow, flutter, leap, spray.

This sequence was repeated again and again during the hour and a half I sat upon the grassy tussock. The Stilts took no note of my presence nor departure and until late in the night their continued cries told that the courtship was prolonged by the light of the moon.—LOUISE M. PERRY, *Sanibel, Florida*.

Where is the Marbled Murrelet in Early Summer?—During field work in 1940 at Sitka, Alaska, which involved almost daily trips on salt water, several observations were made on the little-known Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*).

This species was seen occasionally from February 28 on throughout the spring. By April 26 they were invariably seen in pairs; by May 2 they were common in the upper parts of Sitka Sound; from then on a few birds were seen daily until May 22. From May 22 until June 21 no Marbled Murrelets were seen. After June 21 they were noted commonly until September 10, when I left town. On July 19, 24, and 25 adults were seen carrying fish, presumably for their young, over salt water towards the mainland of Baranof Island.

During July, while working as a nightwatchman, I saw and heard murrelets flying inland just after sundown and out to sea about dawn each morning. The first juvenile noted was collected, on Sitka Bay, August 24.—J. DAN WEBSTER, 2381 Thornton Avenue, Newark, California.

Winter Association of Pairs of Ground Doves in Florida.—During a series of quail trapping and banding studies conducted on the University of Florida Conservation Reserve at Welaka, Florida, a number of trapping records were obtained of the Eastern Ground Dove (*Columbigallina passerina passerina*). Among these records are several that seem to indicate that Ground Doves may remain mated through the winter. In addition I observed during the winter many instances of the apparent attachment of one member of a pair to the other. This, as well as the very common winter field observation of two of these doves together, supports the evidence obtained by trapping.

The captures of the two pairs of birds that best illustrate this association of apparently mated doves are discussed below. Unless otherwise stated, all of the birds were caught in the Stoddard "standard" quail trap, and no other doves were taken with these pairs in any of the instances cited.

On August 21, 1939, a pair of Ground Doves were captured after they had entered a large wire enclosure. On January 20, 1940, these birds were again taken together, this time in a trap 350 yards from the scene of their first capture. The most conclusive records are those of a pair that were trapped together three times: October 25, 1939; December 8, 1939; and January 11, 1940. Between the October and December trappings the pair had moved a mile—the greatest movement that was shown in the numerous recaptures of banded Ground Doves throughout the winter.

The breeding season of the Ground Dove extends from February to October (A. H. Howell, "Florida Bird Life," 1932:282), although Oscar E. Baynard (*Oologist*, 26, 1909:5) reports finding eggs in every month of the year.—O. EARLE FRYE, JR., *Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida*.

Utah Bird Records.—A number of bird specimens which provide new state records, verifications, or changes in previously published records have accumulated at Dixie Junior College. With the exception of the Ring-necked Duck, all specimens discussed in this note were identified by Dr. Clarence Cottam and Dr. H. C. Oberholser of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.