

## GENERAL NOTES

**Herring Gull attack on normal Golden-eye.**—On several days prior to April 11, 1943, an American Golden-eye (*Bucephala clangula americana*) fed by diving in the breaking waves in front of our home on the east shore of Put-in-Bay Harbor, South Bass Island, Ohio. The bird was a young male in changing plumage and therefore readily distinguishable from its fellows. I saw him in flight several times, and he appeared to be normal in every respect.

On the evening of April 11 he again appeared in front of our home, feeding about 50 feet offshore at the point where the huge waves began to curl and break. He usually waited until a wave was about to break over him before he dived. While he was diving, an adult Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) came flying along the shore, swooped down and attempted to grasp the duck with its bill. The duck escaped capture with a quick dive. This was repeated several times until finally the gull succeeded in obtaining a firm hold near the base of the duck's right wing. Both birds began to struggle furiously, the duck attempting to dive, the gull to drag the duck toward shore. Occasionally both birds were almost submerged by the breaking waves. After about two minutes the duck broke free and dived, coming up some 100 feet away, and the gull again attacked. The duck escaped by diving, and swam under water for several yards. On appearing at the surface he flew away. The gull started in pursuit, and coming up with the duck, made repeated though unsuccessful attempts to knock it down into the water. The duck began to out-distance the gull, which then gave up the chase. I have seen Herring Gulls attack wounded or dying birds but never before have I seen one attack an apparently normal individual.—MILTON B. TRAUTMAN, F. T. Stone Laboratory, Ohio State University, Put-in-Bay, Ohio.

**Vermilion Flycatcher at St. Marks, Florida.**—Observations made during the past three years at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, St. Marks, Florida, indicate that the Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus mexicanus*), is less rare—at least in northwestern Florida—than the single record from earlier years would indicate.

On December 26, 1940, while making a Christmas bird census, D. V. Gray and L. S. Givens observed a Vermilion Flycatcher, and collected it the following day. The specimen was identified by H. L. Stoddard of Thomasville, Georgia. According to A. H. Howell's "Florida Bird Life" (1932:327), the only other record of this species for Florida was a bird collected at Tallahassee on March 25, 1901, by R. W. Williams. In mid-December, 1941, and during the first week of January, 1942, a Vermilion Flycatcher was again observed on the St. Marks Refuge, by H. L. Stoddard. On December 10, 1942, Givens observed a female Vermilion Flycatcher there; and on December 24, while making a Christmas bird census, he saw an adult male and collected a female (probably the same bird seen December 10). In the same general location Givens again observed an adult male and female on January 1, 1943. These two birds were seen repeatedly at the Refuge throughout the winter of 1942-43. The last record was of a male seen by Givens, J. J. Lynch, and Clarence Cottam, not far from headquarters, on March 14, 1943.—LAWRENCE S. GIVENS, CLARENCE COTTAM, and DONALD V. GRAY, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**A wren singing the songs of both Bewick's and the House Wren.**—On April 18, 1943, at my home in the northern part of Columbus, I was surprised to hear a wren singing the songs of both the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) and of the Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewicki*). The bird uttered the notes of one species for a few minutes, then changed to the notes of the other. Each song seemed perfectly characteristic of the species indicated. I heard the bird sing

only one of the two principal types of Bewick's song: the one which has been whimsically transcribed as "Eat a piece of che-ee-eeze!"

After singing for several minutes from three perches in the tree tops, the bird dropped to the ground, where I obtained a fairly satisfactory view of it, although the obstructing stems of shrubbery in which it was foraging prevented critical study. In appearance, it seemed a typical Bewick's Wren, with a conspicuous, whitish superciliary line, white tips to the outer tail-feathers, and the characteristic "tail-wobbling" habits, except that the tail seemed a trifle shorter than that of the average Bewick's Wren, and the flirting of the tail was not so free. Unfortunately my attempt to collect the bird was unsuccessful.

Two possible explanations readily present themselves: (1) the bird was a hybrid, and (2) it was a Bewick's Wren with the ability to mimic the House Wren. Without the bird in the hand, the question must remain a matter of speculation.

The ranges of the two species, geographical and ecological, overlap only to a slight extent. At Columbus, the House Wren is abundant, Bewick's infrequent. It is under such conditions, namely, where one of two species in question is rare in a given locality, the other abundant, that hybridism seems to occur most frequently, since an individual of the rare species then has less opportunity of finding a mate of its own kind. The Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) and the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) are a case in point. I have listened critically on many occasions to songs of the Bewick's Wren and have never heard one which varied far from the usual types. They were always characteristic and never showed the faintest suggestion of mimicry.—EDWARD S. THOMAS, *Ohio State Museum, Columbus.*

**Notes on a Captive Redstart.**—From June 13 to 30, 1942, I studied the growth and activities of a juvenile Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) that I captured when it flew from its nest in an isolated 25-foot Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) located about 75 feet from a wooded park in Washington, D. C. The nest was situated 15 feet above the outside traffic lane of a principal street, on a small branch that sloped steeply upward. An old Redstart nest, apparently of the previous year, occupied a similar site a few feet away in the same tree. The recent nest, when first discovered May 28, contained eggs; on June 4, it contained two eggs and one small young; and on June 13, two young, which flew from the nest when nearby leaves were touched. While I was photographing the two young on the ground, a heavy thunder storm began. One fledgling flew to a perch on a protected branch, but the other remained exposed to the weather. The parent Redstarts, which had been fluttering excitedly about attempting to lead the young to cover, went away. I took the wet young bird home and retained it for study until June 30, when I released it because of the failure of my mealworm supply.

**Growth.** At 10 days of age, the rectrices, whose tips were barely visible beyond their coverts, began to break out of their sheaths. The yellow patches on the tail feathers became completely exposed on the twentieth day. The remiges seemed to grow at equal rates. At 13 days of age, the yellow areas of the wings first appeared as narrow wing-bars, showing about one mm. beyond the greater primary coverts. These yellow patches were fully visible at 26 days of age, projecting 8 mm. beyond the coverts; the distal secondary was 45 mm. long at 16 days of age and measured 47 mm. on all succeeding days.

**Post-juvinal Molt.** At 22 days of age the slate gray juvenal plumage of the occipital and dorsal tracts was being replaced in quantity by olive-green first-winter plumage. The underwing coverts, yellow in color, also began to appear at this time; previously the underwing areas had been naked. The post-juvinal molt was thus begun before the juvenal plumage was fully acquired. According to Dwight (*Annals N. Y. Acad. Sci.*, 13, 1900:288), the post-juvinal molt of the Redstart does not include the light feathers.