**A mouse eaten by a Wood Duck.**—A gizzard of a Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by Mrs. Albert F. Haspeslagh, of Galion, Ohio, in the fall of 1943, contained the partly digested remains of a white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus* sp.). The mouse, whose tail protruded from the gizzard, had apparently been swallowed whole. It made up about two-thirds of the gizzard's contents. The remaining third consisted of fragments from normal components of a Wood Duck's diet—pieces of hickory-nut shell (*Carya* sp.) and several grape seeds. The duck had been shot in late October, 1943, in Crawford County, Ohio.—A. L. NELSON, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bowie, Maryland.*

**The sex ratio in Wilson's Snipe.**—The importance of a knowledge of the sex ratios of birds is well shown in the excellent summary recently published by Mayr (*Amer. Nat.*, 73, 1939:156–179), but ornithologists do not often have the opportunity to determine the sex of large numbers of birds, and even when such figures are secured their validity is often impaired by the operation of such factors as differential migration or unconscious selection by the observer. Museums contain large numbers of specimens of known sex, but the report of Pelseneer (*Mem. Acad.Roy.Belg.*, 8, 1926:3–258) showed the danger of depending too indiscriminately on museum series and threw the whole method into disrepute. The specimens in any good-sized museum collection of Henslow's Sparrow and the Clay-colored Sparrow furnish extreme examples of misleading series. They consist largely of males because the persistent singing of the males provides collectors with the only easy way of finding specimens.

On the other hand, it seems to me that the collector's sample might be a fair one in the case of certain species in which the plumage and the reaction to human intrusion are alike in the two sexes, and the number of specimens in museums is large enough to be statistically significant. For instance, David E. Davis (*Auk*, 57, 1940:179–218) found 401 males to 328 females in the museum specimens of the Smooth-billed Ani—a sex ratio which was corroborated by his own field data. The danger of depending on any but very large samples is well illustrated by the report of Imler and McMurry (*Wils. Bull.*, 51, 1939:244) on the sex ratio of ten 100-bird lots of Crows killed by bomb explosions in a winter roost in Oklahoma. The ratio among the 1,000 birds was 52.6 per cent males to 47.4 per cent females, but among the ten 100-bird lots the per cent of males varied from 41 to 65.

The sex ratio in shorebirds is of particular interest because of the remarkable diversity of breeding habits which we are beginning to find among the different species studied. In the case of the Painted Snipe, *Rostratula benghalensis* (Rostratulidae), Stuart Baker (Fauna Brit. India, Birds, 6, 1929:47) reports that males greatly outnumber the females and that the females display and fight for the males.

Little seems to be known about the breeding habits of the once common game bird, Wilson's Snipe (*Capella delicata*). Even the incubation habits are somewhat uncertain. Bent (*U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. No.* 142, 1927:86) states that both sexes incubate but specifically cites only Philipp (*Canad.-Field Nat.*, 39, 1925:76), who says that three incubating birds collected were all males. Jourdain (in Witherby *et al.*, Handbook Brit. Birds, 4, 1940:200) says that in the closely related Common Snipe (*Capella g. gallinago*) of Great Britain only the female incubates.

The present survey summarizes the specimens of Wilson's Snipe in 23 public and private collections: Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia; American Museum of Natural History; California Academy of Sciences; Carnegie Museum; Chicago Academy of Science; Chicago Natural History Museum (including the Conover Collection); Cleveland Museum of Natural History; Colorado Museum

of Natural History; Cornell University; Harvard, Museum of Comparative Zoology; Stanley G. Jewett; Los Angeles Museum; Ohio State Museum; Max M. Peet; Princeton Museum of Zoology; Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology; University of California at Los Angeles; University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology; University of Kansas Museum of Birds and Mammals; University of Michigan Museum of Zoology; University of Minnesota Museum of Natural History; U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U. S. National Museum. I recorded most of the specimens myself, but in a few cases the figures were prepared for me by the curators in charge. I am grateful for their assistance and for permission to use the figures from all of these collections.

These combined collections contained 1,163 specimens of Wilson's Snipe that had data on sex, locality, and date of collecting. The specimens were taken in every month of the year and in all parts of the range, from Alaska and northern Canada to the wintering grounds in Central and South America. With such a large sample made up of specimens taken at all seasons we are presumably justified in believing that we have eliminated any error that might come from differences in migration habits between the sexes. There are no sexual differences in plumage in the Wilson's Snipe nor, so far as we know, in habits or behavior, except at the height of the breeding season.

This series of 1,163 specimens consists of 678 males and 485 females, a ratio of 58.3 per cent males to 41.7 per cent females. It is interesting to note that only two of the 23 separate collections failed to show an excess of males, and these were two of the smallest (8 and 21 skins)—too small to provide a representative sample. When we analyze these 1,163 specimens by months (Table 1)

TABLE 1

SEX OF 1,163 WILSON'S SNIPE SPECIMENS IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

| | ♂ | ♀ | Total | | ♂ | ♀ | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 49 | 36 | 85 | July | 31 | 16 | 47 |
| February | 36 | 20 | 56 | August | 18 | 24 | 42 |
| March | 48 | 30 | 78 | September | 64 | 53 | 117 |
| April | 105 | 90 | 195 | October | 98 | 93 | 191 |
| May | 61 | 47 | 108 | November | 72 | 41 | 113 |
| June | 33 | 11 | 44 | December | 63 | 24 | 87 |

we find that eleven of the twelve months show an excess of males; only August, with the smallest sample of any month, shows an excess of females. The only other evidence I can find of an excess of females in this species at any season is provided by manuscript data which A. William Schorger has generously permitted me to use. He sexed 143 Wilson's Snipe taken in the fall (mainly in October) near Madison, Wisconsin; 65 (45.5 per cent) were males, 78 (54.5 per cent) females. Thinking that this might indicate something unusual about the fall flight in eastern United States, I tabulated the October museum specimens from the northeastern states (east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio rivers and north of the southern border of Pennsylvania), but the result was still an excess of males (48 males to 38 females).—JOSSELYN VAN TYNE, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

**History of a Mourning Dove nest.**—A Western Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura marginella*) built its nest behind the bronze grill over the entrance of Phipps Auditorium, The Colorado Museum of Natural History, in Denver, in the spring of 1941 and raised four broods during the year; the nest was again occupied and four broods raised in 1942; in 1943 three broods were raised; and in 1944 a crippled bird arrived early in May and raised one brood.