

of the intestines and the skin. The fat thick skin is here in general appearance, but not in substance. The skin is now hard, a little harder perhaps than hard white soap and feels a little soapy. It has not changed any since it was found sticking up out of the mud, near a muskrat house, in one of the so-called eddies, on the northwest side of Lake Koshkonong, Jefferson county, Wisconsin, in the spring of 1884.

"If this way of preservation is the result of some chemical combination between the fat of the duck and the lime and other matter in the water, it seems to me that we should find many specimens like this and just in the same lake, where annually hundreds, if not thousands, of ducks are shot, wounded and lost, diving under the small mud islands and perish. Why do not the spring floods, which sometimes entirely change the appearance of those eddies, by sweeping away the mud for acres, once in a while at least, bring to light something like this! Perhaps it is too early yet to expect many specimens, prepared by this under water-mud taxidermist and coming generations may be able to get good collections of them.¹ If chemistry is the conservator in this case, it would be interesting to know how long it has taken to do the job. I think that the duck was shot. I can see the marks.

"Allowing that guns were used on the lake one hundred years ago, which is somewhat doubtful, and that this duck was one of the first shot, lost and mud-bound, it would not be so very old after all for a semi-geological specimen.

"There are in the Museum of the City of Milwaukee two large lumps of a somewhat hard substance, white inside, like chalk, but dirty grayish on the outside. They are somewhat roundish in shape and about 7 to 8 inches in diameter. They are labelled adipocere found at the depth of many feet in a pond near Cedarburg, Wisconsin. The opinion I have heard about those specimens is that they were entrails of animals thrown into the pond by the Indians, some time ago, and by some chemical process got transformed into such solid masses.

"The animals, furnishing materials for this, must have been large, very large, possessing fat in such large lumps, as I cannot suppose that chemistry first picked together the fat and then lumped it into 'adipocere.' To judge from the duck, it is *only* the fat that is so treated.

"The animals must have been Buffaloes² or Elk or Moose, but in either case the fat would be *tallow* while in the case of the duck it was *duck-oil*."—A. W. SCHORGER, 168 N. Prospect Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹ It is now known that under very favorable conditions a fatty body can be converted into adipocere within a year's time.—A.W.S.

² C. D. Wetherill (*Trans. Amer. Philos. Soc.* n. s., 11, 1860:18) found adipocere in a metacarpal bone of *Bison b. americanus* obtained at Big Bone Lick by Dr. Leidy.—A. W. S.

An albino hummingbird.—In view of the scarcity of records of albinistic plumages in the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), the following observation may be of interest. Just before noon on August 22, 1944, a pale cream-colored, almost white, hummingbird suddenly appeared over a large clump of red bergamot (*Monarda didyma*) in a corner of my garden near Niagara Falls, Ontario. I obtained excellent views from all angles as the hummingbird hovered at some length, probing the red florets of the bergamot, before darting up and away across the garden. It was evidently an adult male, for although there was little variation apparent in the all-over cream of the plumage, there was a distinct bib, or dusky, darker area, over that part of the throat which is covered in the normal adult male by ruby-red feathers.—R. W. SHEPPARD, 1805 Moulant Avenue, Niagara Falls, Ontario.