

GENERAL NOTES

Pacific Loon in Indiana.—On or about April 14, 1949, a farmer living near Newcastle, Henry Co., Indiana found a small loon alive, and apparently uninjured, in one of his cornfields. He gave the bird to Marjorie Tapscott, a senior at the Newcastle High School. Miss Tapscott, uncertain as to the bird's identity, showed it to Max Forsyth, her biology teacher. Mr. Forsyth kept the bird in captivity for some days, but fish for it were expensive, so on April 19 he liberated it on a pond in one of the municipal parks. A day or so later he described the bird to me and I was led to believe that it might be a Pacific Loon.

On April 24 the loon was found dead near the nest-site of a pair of Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) which bred regularly in the park. On skinning the specimen I found that it was a female with very small ovary. The neck was broken. The exposed culmen measured 51 mm., the wing (primaries not pressed flat) 266; the tarsus 67. The plumage appeared to be that of a fully adult bird in winter except that the wing coverts, which were dark medially, had rather noticeable ashy gray edgings. The upper parts in general were dark gray, darkest and most glossy on the lower hind neck, back, scapulars and rump. The scapulars were sparsely marked with small roundish, not squarish, spots. The under parts were white except for a faint interrupted dusky line across the lower throat, a few not very noticeable dusky streaks on the sides of the chest, the dusky median portion of the longer under tail coverts, and a dusky band (wide at each side but very thin in the middle) across the vent. Nowhere in the plumage—despite the lateness of the date—was there evidence of molt into the handsome breeding dress.

So far as I know this is the first specimen of *Gavia arctica* ever to be taken in Indiana, though Butler in his "Birds of Indiana" included the species hypothetically. For verification of my identification I sent the specimen to the U. S. National Museum, where Allen J. Duvall pronounced it an example of the small New World race, *G. a. pacifica*. It is now No. 18862 in the collection of the Joseph Moore Museum at Earlham College.—JAMES B. COPE, *Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana*.

White Pelican on Ohio Shore of Lake Erie.—During the summer of 1950 the White Pelican, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*, was observed on two occasions along the south shore of the Marblehead Peninsula, near the west end of Lake Erie, in Ottawa County, Ohio. On July 19, Charles A. Triplehorn and his wife, Wanda, observed a solitary bird in flight over East Harbor State Park. On August 19, Fred Crates, R. S. Phillips, and James Bruce observed a single bird standing in the midst of a large mixed flock of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*), Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), Black Terns (*Chlidonias nigra*), and Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*) on a sandbar about a hundred yards offshore at Bayview Park. The three observers approached the pelican twice, once to within about fifty yards. They obtained excellent views of the bird.

According to Borror (1950. "A Check List of the Birds of Ohio," *Ohio Jour. Sci.* 50: 2) the White Pelican is 'rare' in Ohio. Along the Ohio shore of Lake Erie it has been recorded at least twice—on May 5, 1925, a group of five in the Maumee River, east of Walbridge Park, Toledo (Campbell, 1940. *Toledo Mus. Sci. Bull.* 1: 32), and a single bird May 28, 1944, near Toledo (Mayfield, 1944. *Aud. Mag.*, 46, Sec. 2, p. 6).—CHARLES A. TRIPLEHORN, *Ohio State Museum, Columbus* and R. S. PHILLIPS, *Biology Department, Findlay College, Findlay, Ohio*.

Marsh Hawk feeding on Black-billed Magpie.—On February 4, 1950, I flushed a male Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus*) from a small patch of willows two miles south of Roosevelt, Duchesne County, Utah. It held in its claws a partly eaten, freshly killed Black-billed Magpie

(*Pica pica*) which it dropped after flying about a hundred feet. Most of the viscera and pectoral muscles had been eaten.

When I returned to the site three hours later the uneaten portion of the magpie still lay in the snow where the hawk had dropped it.

Bent (1946. *U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 191: 151-152) indicates that magpies are seldom used for food by other birds. Starvation may have caused this Marsh Hawk to eat the magpie. Below-freezing weather continued from the middle of December, throughout January, and into February. At the time of my observation, an average of 16 inches of snow covered most of the ground.—MERLIN L. KILLPACK, *Biology Dept., Union High School, Roosevelt, Utah.*

Ruffed Grouse nest predation by blacksnakes.¹—During the nesting seasons of 1949 and 1950 I observed two instances of Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) nest predation by the Pilot Blacksnake (*Elaphe obsoleta*) on the Beaver Creek Wildlife Management Area in McCreary and Pulaski Counties, Kentucky. The instances were:



Blacksnake eating egg of Ruffed Grouse. Photographed on the Beaver Creek Wildlife Management Area in McCreary County, Kentucky, May 17, 1949, by Harold E. Alexander.

1. On May 17, 1949, as H. E. Wallace, H. E. Alexander, J. O. Moynahan and I were checking grouse nests under observation, we found a blacksnake in a nest about five miles northeast of Greenwood in McCreary County. In the nest were four eggs, one of which was also in the mouth of the snake (see photograph). When we had last visited that nest, three days before (May 14), we had flushed the hen from four eggs. Presumably the clutch had been complete at that time, since no more eggs had been added by May 17. Observations recorded in my field note-book on May 17 were as follows:

- 3:56 p.m. We approached nest on foot from the nearby jeep road. A blacksnake in the nest apparently is attempting to swallow an egg.
- 3:59 Snake has firm grasp on butt end of the egg with edges of mouth.

¹ This paper is a contribution from Federal Aid Project 18-R, Kentucky Division of Game and Fish.