

Philohela
minor

SBr 97.41.9 (44)
Spine v. 50

Philohela minor.

1889

Ad. ^{17th with} ^{Melrose H. - Torrey} ^{Dorchester, Bick}
 May 17th 4 y. n. p. - 1889. 3rd. 5th. 30th 1890 28th (ad. line) (Ford) 1891.

Feb. 13th Fred Bullen - 1890

April ^{17th only} ^{Same bird in same place Warren Run, Waltham (Faxon)} ^{Red}
 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 26 (29 & May 5 absent) 1890 5th (Ford) = 6th. 7th. 8th. 10th. 12th. 13th. 14th 1891

" a. ^{Concord} 29th (Ford) 1894 4th Geo Hayes 1897 5th Barrett 7th Barrett ^{Concord}, 1899

Dec Carlisle ^{Byron} 24th Robbins - 1893 19th ^{caught by a cat & numbered by A. Fuller} - 1895.

March ^{M.H.} 17th (Torrey) - ^{Wm} 30th - ^{Wm} 31st 1891. ^{Stoughton, Mass.} 24th (R. Hayward) 1893 ^{2. Hights} 25th 1896. ^{Concord} 28th Geo Hayes 1897

May ^{Concord} 12th ^{at wing} ^{Amos's Wood} 1894

June ^{Bald's Hill, Concord} 14th ^{shot by Calvert} ^{at corner building} 1899(?)

P. minor

October

November

July ^{m.v.} 17th 1890. 18th (River bank at evening). Concord 1893.

" ^{Cambridge Cemetery} 11th ^(flushed from edge of ditch, salt marsh) 1894

Aug. ^{1 on at evening} ^{flying over meadows} 7th (Buttrick) - 29th (flying at evening) Concord 1892.

Sept.

Oct. ^{Concord} 19th - 21st - 22nd - 23rd - 24th - 26th - 29th - 31st 1891.

15th (Melvin) 189. 19th 20 (Robbins) 21st 22nd 24th 25th 27th 29th (Robbins) 31st 1892

14th (Robbins) 21st (do) 24th (Melvin) 1893

^{Carlisle} 19th (Robbins) 1895

Nov. ^{Natick} 8 (Denton) 1890 ^{Concord} 5th - 6th - 7th - 8th - 24 (Holden) 1891.

19 (Holden) 1892

1st (shot by Bellant) 1893 ^{Concord} 13th (Lay, Gib) ² ^{Concord} 18th (shot) ^{Ball H. J. Davis} 18 (about Brown) 1894

Philohela minor.

Carlisle, Mass.

Song.

1879. Mr. Robbins having notified us that the Woodcock were in April 8. full song at Carlisle, Jim and I determined to make a trip thither for the purpose of hearing them once more. We accordingly selected this evening which bade fair to be a good one for the purpose. Driving up from Concord we arrived at Mr. Robbins's a little before sunset. A Woodcock, we found, had for several evenings past sung directly behind the house, rising first from a bushy run where I examined a nest in 187-, and afterwards lighting in the open field that adjoined the house. When the sun had fairly set and as the twilight was beginning to descend, Arthur Robbins came in to tell us that the Woodcock had already begun to bleat. We accordingly went out and sure enough at intervals of a half minute or so the Night-Hawk-like cry came up from the depth of the hollow in the run. Before the first flight upward began we took our position on the stone wall that separated the field from the bushy hollow, and we afterwards found that we could not have been better posted for at the close of his song our long-billed friend lit within twenty paces of us and we had an excellent opportunity to observe all his motions as he sat on the close-cropped and withered yellowish turf. He repeated his serenade some six or eight times when it became so dark that he ceased altogether for that night. Once he lit within

Philohela minor.

Carlisle, Mass.

Song.

1879. twelve feet of us and went through all his curious notes and
April 8. motions without apparently regarding my presence in the least.
(No.2).

As I have already published some very full notes on this curious love song it will not be necessary here to give any other than a few additional points which the better opportunities of this event recent experiment enabled me to note. The article referred to appeared in the American Sportsman, vol.1V, p.19.

When the bird rises into the air its wings whistle steadily as it mounts in a broad spiral course into the dusky heavens. The highest point reached is perhaps three or four hundred feet. It then begins to descend by a series of irregular erratic plungings, which produce the effect of dividing the whistling "into syllables". The whistling is at this period especially shrill and loud but is nevertheless unmistakably produced by the wings. When about one third of the descent is effected the wings are apparently (!) set and the birds floats evenly and slowly downward like a dusky ball of thistle down. Then begins the vocal music, a succession of soft and exceedingly liquid notes which are accelerated as the author nears the earth. My original description was perhaps a trifle overdrawn but still the song is a beautiful one and if it had just a little more power it would scarcely be surpassed by

Philohela minor.

Carlisle, Mass.

Song.

1879. that of any of the true singing birds. I was also again re-
April 8. minded of the boys's water whistle and the resemblance is cer-
(No.3). tainly an obvious one.

When within about thirty feet of the earth the song is abruptly cut short, and with the speed and directness of an arrow flight the performer glides down on set wings to near the starting place. Several times when he passed near us the rush of his wings was very audible. When he first alighted he stood for a moment in a stooping posture then made a short, gliding run, stopped and with a preliminary pt-ur uttered his harsh pa-a-p. Then he ran a few steps more and again gave ^{his singular cry.} After three or four runs he seemed to find a spot to his liking and would then remain nearly motionless, bleating, however at intervals of about fifteen seconds, until he again took flight. Just before each cry his tail was jerked up with an automaton-like motion, and as the sound followed his head was suddenly thrown back and his ^{throat} perceptibly swelled. Mr. Robbins told me that he alighted regularly in nearly the same spot each evening. Mr. R. also thinks that this nightly song ceases as soon as the eggs are laid. He has never known it continued after the light has entirely faded from the western sky except on one occasion, a moonlight night, when it was protracted until nearly 9 P.M. With the first faint streaks of dawn it

Philohela minor.

Carlisle, Mass.

Song.

1879. is again resumed and continued until broad daylight.

April 8. We heard another Woodcock rise from the run just before
(No.4). our songster took his first upward flight. It was probably
the female. And later while the male was bleating in the
open field within a few yards of us a Woodcock passed swiftly
within a few feet of my friend's head.

The course described by the bird while in the air would
cover several acres. He seems fairly to exult in his free
upward wanderings and his descent is one joyous tumult of
ecstatic melody. He looks like a small black ball in the
dusky sky.

Philohela minor

1889 Mass.

May 17 Concord. - Passing through a little patch of sparse alder ♀ with young.
border on the upper side by barberry bushes, on the
lower by a bit of springy open ground the entire thicket
and springy ground only a few rods in extent I started
a ♀ Woodcock and four young the latter nearly full Young nearly
grown and strong on the wing. They started all together full grown
like so many Quail and scattered in every direction
more, however, flying out of the cover. Immediately
after alighting the old bird began, ^{uttering} ~~scolding~~ us in a low Scolding cry
but distinct grating ^{call} ~~tone~~, which at times resembled the rasping of parent,
sound of teeth at others was very closely like the ~~scolding~~
scolding of a Yellow-throated or Solitary Tiro. Presently
she appeared advancing towards us by short gliding
Robin-like runs between which she stood rather erect her
bill pointing downward and resting on her breast. She came
within ten yards or so then retreated scolding us incessantly.
When I moved towards her she rose with a heavy flutter
and flying a few rods ~~very~~ slowly her legs hanging Whistling
down like a Rail's alighted on the outer edge of the subject to
cover. I followed her ~~steadily~~ up closely when she rose the bird's
again, this time strongly, and went off like a bullet control.
her wings whistling loudly. As she made absolutely no
whistling the previous rise it is evident that this sound
is, at least to some degree, voluntary or subject to
control on the part of the bird. The young did not whistle.
I looked for them (rather carelessly) without starting
any a second time.

1890
May 9.

Waverley, Mass.

(LETTER OF WALTER FAXON.)-- Many thanks for your kindness in having the Woodcock story copied for me. My observations tally exactly with yours, except that the pt-ul was repeated without any alternating pa-a-p; that is, when I took position within eight yards of where he came down, he peeped until he (evidently) saw or heard me, and then said put-l till he flew away to more removed ground, where he resumed peeping and soon made another ascent. I felt assured that the put'l was a sort of alarm-note, and not a normal part of his serenade. I am positive that he did not put'l at other times, when I was so near to him that I could not have missed the note, if uttered. Every time I saw the performance, the bird in his ascent described a sinistral spiral. The only evenings when I was sure of the direction of the wind and could clearly see the bird as he sprung from the ground (two evenings) he rose against the wind. I told you, each time he uttered the put'l there was a marked movement of the body, apparently, a throwing back of the head and neck.

After the Woodcock attains his maximum height, he appears to fly irregularly about for a time without making circles. The music of the song is much enhanced to my ear by the whistle of the wings which is heard in the short intervals between the vocal outbursts.

You may be interested in some of my time minutes with your own:--

April 17. Began to peep, 6.50, p.m. Ceased at 7.20 (sunset, 6.28). About ten ascensions.

Peeped, 2m , 10s.	Peeped, 40s.
Flight, 50	Flight, 45 s.
.....
Peeped, 1m. 25 s.	Peeped, 40 s.
Flight, 45s.	Flight, 50 s.
	Song last 10s.

I timed him by the second hand of my watch, and the measurement is not so accurate as you would get with a stop-watch. The duration of the "song", to speak more precisely, was the time from the beginning of the vocal notes to the birds reaching the ground.

Philohela minor

1891 Mass.

May 7 Dove. — A nest containing four eggs in which the embryos were late nesting only just beginning to form found by a friend of S. W. Denton and brought to the latter (three of the eggs are now in my collection). The nest was in a shallow depression lined with a few leaves and grass blades on the top of a little mound in moist surrounded by moist ground. The locality was a bushy pasture. The bushes had been cut down during the winter and lay about on the ground. Two men were at work dragging them together to form a brush pile for burning when one of them discovered the bird fluttering under a branch which had literally dragged ~~her~~ rolled her off the nest. Bird pits
very close

Martha's Vineyard. — Mr. Howard Norris of College City tells me that Woodcock are very numerous on the island during the migrations. He also sees a few during the entire summer and infers that they breed there. They are found at all seasons in swampy thickets along brooks. All these statements ~~are~~ confirmed by several other persons who live at W. Fishery. The best Woodcock grounds are said to be on Shaler's land. Martha's Vine
yard

1893

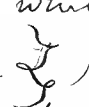
To this Mr. Outram Bangs adds that from good evidence he has become convinced that the choicest Woodcock grounds in New England are those on the vineyard. Mr. Shaler's head man told him that he started one 30 birds one evening this season while looking for some cows in a bushy pasture

1894

May 27 Canton. Set of three eggs $\frac{1}{4}$ incubated taken by J. H. Bowles nesting

Trilohela minor

1891 Mass.

- March 17 Melrose Highlands. Torrey heard one sing several times. Bird Song
silent or gone on following two evenings.
- " 30 Waltham. - Faxon and I heard two in Warren run. They "peeped"
in open, perfectly dry pasture on hillside near birches about 100 yds
apart and sang over the same opening. One went up at
least three times, the other at least once (we failed to take
the right position at first and very probably missed some
of the earlier singing) the first ascent that we noted being at
about 6.20. Watched one bird through his entire flight
keeping him within the field of a powerful glass during
most of it. He rose in a spiral course the first loop
of which was nearly 200 yds. across, starting against the
wind (they always do this). ~~From~~ the time he left the ground
to that when he reached the highest point (about 300 ft.)
his wings whistled continuously and steadily. He then began
flying in a great circle still whistling and beginning a
vocal chip-chip-chip, his wings beating regularly but in a
loose, butterfly fashion. After completing one circle he began
another but at the same time inclined slightly downward.
His whistling now became sharper and more metallic and assumed
the twittering "King-bird" form, the chip-chip-chip notes
alternating with ~~these~~ "twitters". At about this time the real song
began. It became louder and more rapid during the
remainder of the descent which was performed in a series
of loops or cycloid curves (). During each ^{downward} pitch the wings
as nearly as I could make out were held extended
but motionless. When within about 50 feet of the earth
the bird suddenly ceased his notes and ~~descended~~ ^{shot down}
the remainder of the way ^{on a steep slant} in perfect silence and with
great velocity on set wings giving a few abrupt
flops just before alighting. ~~This final descent was~~

Philohela minor

1891 Mass.

March 30 Waltham. - The song, which we heard twice, nearly overhead, Song
(no. 2) (the bird being invisible, on account of the darkness, during
the second, ^{descent} ~~performance~~) was one of the very best that I
have ever listened to. Those who deny that ~~the~~ performance
lacks musical excellence of a high order must indeed
have dull and unappreciative ears. It is rich and liquid
in tone, impassioned not to say ecstatic in delivery, and
more protracted than the songs of many of our most
famous songsters. The resemblance between many of the
notes and those of the water whistles sold by boys in
our cities struck me as forcibly to-night as when I
heard my first Woodcock song in 1874.

Our bird to-night "paped" a great many times in
the intervals between his flights. In fact these intervals
were much longer than usual, probably because the song
season is not as yet fully inaugurated. After the last
song he flew twice without mounting and singing. The
whistling of his wings during each of these flights (which
were doubtless mere flittings from place to place) was
identical with that heard during his ascents to sing
and identical also with the usual sound made by a
cock flushed in the day time. Faxon agreed with
me perfectly in respect to this impression and also
in my impression of the high musical excellence
of the song.

The other bird sang only once and was not distinctly
heard, owing partly to distance, partly to the fact that
a railroad train was passing at the time. When he
was singing our first bird was on the ground
paping.

Philohela minor

1891 Mass.

Song

March 31 Waltham. - Evening cloudy with exceedingly raw E. wind. Sunset gun at 6.09. At 6.19 heard whistle of Woodcock's wings as he flew from the birch cover into the pasture where he sang last night. He peeped once immediately after alighting, remained silent about half a minute, then peeped twice. After this he was silent for four minutes, then peeped once, then silent two minutes after which he peeped at the usual short, regular intervals forty-two times in succession, making 46 peeps ^{in all}, before he took his first song flight. This song flight lasted just 53 seconds from the time I first heard his wings as he started, to his return to the ground. He then peeped fifty-five times at fairly regular intervals and mounted and sang again, being in the air this time just fifty-two seconds. I did not time the first song but the second lasted ten seconds from the beginning of the water-whistle notes to the abrupt termination preceding the drop to the ground. The intervals between the peeps, when these were uttered continuously, varied from three to seven seconds. After the second song the bird peeped 109 times then rose and flew directly past me within 20 yds. keeping on out of sight, not rising, but pursuing a nearly straight course due north. This was at 6.42. It was light enough for me to read my notes easily at the time. There is no good feeding ground for a mile or more in the direction which he took and I suspect he started on a migratory flight. His wings whistled continuously as he passed me. I followed this bird easily with my eyes during both of his song flights this evening. He mounted in the usual broad spiral to a height as it seemed to me of fully ~~six~~ six hundred feet then described a circle about 100 yds. in diameter and all on the same plane, next a circle about half as large descending slightly before it was completed, immediately after which he began the usual series of

Philohela minor

1891 Mass.

March 31

(No 2.)

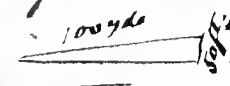

Waltham. - erratic, downward plunges. These were about five or six in number each pitch covering a vertical distance of fifty or sixty feet. His wings moved continuously but with a fluttering motion while he was circling; during the vertical pitches they also moved at least most of the time with a rapid, whirring motion. The only period during which I was sure they were set was that after the termination of the song when the bird was shooting down to the ground. This final swoop began at a height of about 100 feet. Up to the time of beginning the first great circle the bird's wings whistled continuously, precisely as in ordinary flight. While describing this circle the whistling was sharper and more metallic as well as broken or divided into sets of ~~five~~ or eight syllables each. During the second circle it became still sharper and louder or more accentuated and the pauses between the sets of syllables were longer and better marked. There were no vocal sounds (unless this sharp twittering whistle during the circling be vocal, as I suspect it may be) until the bird made its first downward pitch when the water whistle notes began and continued to the end. They were unmixed with whistling or twittering and accompanied each plunge, nearly or quite ceasing for the briefest possible space of time as the bird slackened its speed ~~by~~ turning upward before starting on the next descent. I repeat that to-night, at least, this bird did not begin singing, that is did not utter the first of the liquid, musical notes, until just as he started on his first plunge and also that I heard no whistling or twittering whatever after the beginning of these song notes.

The flight during the circling was very rapid and uniform. It resembles very closely if not precisely that of Wilson's Snipe when circling and bleating but the subsequent plunges are different from those of the snipe being shorter & more nearly vertical.

Song

Philohela minor

1891 (Mass.)

April 7th Lexington. - Fayou found a Woodcock singing on the evening of the 5th and 6th and the morning of the 7th in the top of a high hill near the village. I went there with him this evening, arriving at 6.25, when the bird was already peeping. There were seven song flights and eight peeping spells in the next 35 minutes, the last peeping being unusually protracted and the bird, at its close, rising and flying off low down without singing, at precisely seven o'clock. At this time it was still rather light or, at least, not nearly as dark as the night afterwards became. The weather was cold with strong N.W. wind, the sky overcast. The peeps were uttered consecutively 31, 21, 37, 29, and 28 times, no counts being made during the first and last calling periods. Song proper (timed once only) lasted exactly ten seconds. Song-flight (timed once) from start to finish, the bird being actually seen to leave the ground and to alight on his return, lasted just one minute. Watched the bird through several flights. He always sprang directly into the wind and flew nearly straight for about 100 yds. rising at a very slight angle with the ground . He then turned, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, and flew about 200 yds. with the wind, curving slightly and mounting rapidly on this stretch especially near its end . The next stretch, ~~was~~ a half spiral, carried him to the highest elevation, about 300 ft. He then described one rather large circle on a level plane and after this flew about irregularly in smaller, incomplete circles and broad spirals curves all of which inclined downward. Once he described a double curve nearly like the letter S. Although he was a strong and

Philotula minor.

1891 Mass.

April 7
(No 2)

Bevington - musical singer he did not pitch down on zig-zag lines while singing like all the other birds that I have seen, but merely followed the gently sloping lines just described, his descent, during the song, being scarcely more steep than during the twittering which immediately preceded the song. He looked very bat-like, darting erratically about in the dusky sky. The song proper was interspersed with more or less twittering. At its close the bird shot down in the usual manner on set wings, flapping his wings a number of times to check his speed just before he reached the ground. Sometimes he would alight immediately after this flapping, sometimes skim close over the earth for several rods before finally settling.

By making a quick run while the bird was in the air I succeeded in reaching and squatting behind a small cedar on the edge of the opening where he usually alighted. He settled on the further edge of this within about 50 feet of me, and for a moment or two stood perfectly still. Then he uttered about twenty paaps without changing his position or taking a single step. Each paap was closely preceded by a pit-ut, so closely at times that the two sounds were nearly merged, suggesting that one of them might be mechanical! Sometimes two pit-uts preceded the paap. ~~The bird stood side towards me in a nearly erect posture, his neck stretched up and looking nearly as large as the body, the bill pointing down. The jugular area appeared to be considerably inflated, its plumage~~

Philstula minor

1891
April 7
(No. 3)

Mass.

Lexington

~~crept thus:~~



~~the inflated portion~~

~~was not ^{evenly} smooth and rounded but its outline was~~
~~decidedly angular or pointed, as above represented.~~
~~Mr. Faxon tells me that he noticed this inflation~~
~~on the evening of the 5th but did not feel~~
~~sure that he was not deceived by some chance~~
~~creeping of the feathers. I am very certain that~~
~~the part was really inflated when I saw it.~~
~~The ~~bird~~ light was so poor however, that I~~
~~could not make out whether or not the~~
~~inflation was reduced when the bird preened (I~~
~~saw the swelling between the preens) The delivery~~
~~of each preen was accompanied by an abrupt backward~~
~~followed by a forward and downward jerk of the head and~~
~~a slight opening of the wings. The bird did~~
~~not turn about as described by Mr. Faxon (see~~
~~letter dated April 5, in note pocket) but after~~
~~preening about 20 times he made a crouching run~~
~~of a few feet in a half circle, apparently with~~
~~half spread wings. When he stopped he was~~
~~lost to my sight behind a small bush. ~~Before~~ which~~
~~After preening a few times more he rose, flying~~
~~off up wind, rising at first very gently, in~~
~~fact skimming close to the ground for the~~
~~first twenty yards, but probably rising slightly~~
~~during even this distance. During the~~
~~remainder of the ascent he rose more and~~
~~more steeply the further he proceeded. Faxon~~
~~tells me that on the two preceding evenings, as~~
~~on this, he closed by a long spell of preening &~~
~~then flew off to some or feeding ground.~~

I could not see him very distinctly,
 owing to the fact that the light was dim and east
 from on his further side, he being to the west of my
 position.

Philohela minor

Morning

1891. Mass.

April 8

Vol. 2.

Reached the hill-top at 4.25 this morning; ^{song} sky overcast, wind N.W.; moderate; cold, the ditches and shallow pools covered with ice as thick as window glass. The eastern sky was reddening but there seemed to me to be less daylight than when our bird ceased singing last night. Nevertheless he was already at his post for we heard him rise and sing before we had climbed half-way up the hill-side. During the next 25 minutes he sang nine times & at the close of the ninth song scolded directly over his perching place down the hillside into a piece of birch cover where he doubtless spends the day. Faxon tells me that he ended in the same way ~~last~~ yesterday evening, that is by flying to cover without perching. It was nearly broad daylight during his last ascent and I saw this performance, to great advantage, as well as the two that preceded it, nearly or quite as distinctly as if it had been noonday. The bird rose and descended precisely as he did last evening but once during the descent he made two rather steep pitches (while singing). His ascent was fairly regular but his descent decidedly irregular. He sang last evening & this morning over nearly the same spot. His total flight extended over a space of fully five acres. During his last descent this morning I followed him with my glass and made out distinctly that while singing he alternately flapped his wings (several times in succession) and held them extended and motionless. During one of the periods when

Philobula erinor

1891 Mass.

April 8
(no. 2)

Dorchester. They were not moving the song was at its height and the bird was gliding down on a very gentle slope. Perhaps floating would be a more correct term than gliding, for the motion was comparatively slow. Towards the end of the song the descent was steeper and the bird slid down the sky like a meteor.

The flight of this individual is evidently very erratic and subject to excessive variations.

I ran to the jumping spot during the third ascent but the bird alighted where I could not see him, owing partly to the darkness, partly to intervening obstructions of brush or grass. The next two times he was equally unaccommodating although he chose different spots, both within thirty yards of me, on each return. I then made another run and crouched in the middle of a ground juniper. Fatal mistake! I could not move without making a loud rustle or crunching of dry twigs. It was too late to change again, however, for the next instant the bird came hurtling past my within two feet of my face and alighted directly behind me not ten feet off. I could hear his wings rustle as he closed them. An interval of silence, a pit-ut, and then the harsh vibrating raap smote on my ear with fairly painful effect. At this close range it had a strange, vibrating quality. It seemed to penetrate to my brain as if some one had blown a blast on a fish horn within a foot of my head. Another and another raap,

Philoteta minor

1891

Mass.

April 8
(no 3)

Lexington -- each preceded by the usual pt-ul.
I now attempted to move but a slight sound which
I made caused the bird to cease peeping at once.
Silence for several seconds; then the pt-ul
repeated six or eight times doubtfully; then
the peeping resumed. I did not move again
and the bird finishing its peeping rose and sang,
descending the next time fifty yards away
behind some bushes. The next song flight was
the last.

The pt-ul is, I believe (and Faxon compares
this), usually repeated many times in succession,
without the attenuating paaps, when the bird
is slightly alarmed or suspicious. My old
comparison of the pt-ul to the sound made ^{by its heels}
by a drop of water falling into a cistern is
undeniably good but it also resembles somewhat
the remonstrance made by a brooding Hen
when disturbed. It can be heard about (85)
(yds.) away under the most favorable conditions
but ordinarily not beyond (30) or (40) yds.

The hill where this bird sings is one of the highest (340 ft.)
near Lexington. ^(220 ft.) Its summit is broken by attractive
knolls and hollows and is open pasture land with
a few scattered red cedars and ground junipers
and occasional patches of hard bushes. The
peeping ground is in a hollow on the edge of a
hard thicket, ~~its surface~~ the bird usually alights
in an opening ^{where} ~~or~~ close-cropped turf (now of a
bleached straw color) alternates with patches of
gray Caribou moss or dark green pasture moss.

Phalaropus minor

1891 Mass.

April 8
(No 4)

Lexington. The entire space embraced in the
puping ground would not exceed half an acre.
Mr. Faxon saw the ^{bird} alight several times on the
sight of the 5th, in the same place, but
last evening and this evening it chosen
a different spot each time. The entire
puping ground, as well as the whole
top of the hill, is perfectly hard and
dry. Three sides of the hill are covered with
second growth oak & birch woods, which
appear to be also dry beneath. At the base
of the hill on two sides, however, the land
is wet and swampy.

We searched the "puping ground" carefully
for Hooded Merganser droppings but could find
no trace of any. On April 11 Faxon searched it again
without discovering a single "chalking".

9

Philohela minor.

1891. Mass.

April 13, Lexington. To Davis's Hill with Faxon at 6.30 p.m. Evening clear and warm (ther. 60° at sunset, 62° at noon) with light west wind changing to S.W. just after sunset. The Woodcock began peeping at 6.44 (last night he began at 6.30 and night before last at 6.40, both of these evenings being cloudy.--Faxon.) He continued peeping nine minutes before making his first ascent, and made in all six ascents. (Faxon noted fifteen ascents one evening last week.) Two flights, which I timed from the start to the finish, lasted respectively 57 and 59 seconds, the song I1 and I2 seconds respectively. During the first ascent I ran to the peeping-place and sat down on the ground behind a large rock. The bird alighted on a little knoll covered with reindeer moss just nine paces from me. There was absolutely nothing between us, the rock being in front of me and the Woodcock on my right. For a moment he stood motionless and silent, then began peeping. I turned one quarter around so as to face him, at the same time raising my glass. He evidently saw me, for he stopped peeping and uttered the pt-ul a number of times in succession, but soon after I had settled myself in the new position, he began peeping again and showed no further signs of alarm or suspicion. For some time he stood facing the south, his right side turned squarely towards me, giving me a profile view. The light was still good and thrown directly upon him (he was to the east of my position). Through the glass I could distinctly see his color and markings, the large dark eye, the bill, feet-- in short, every detail of form and plumage. In the intervals between the notes, his position, outline and the relative proportions of the different parts presented nothing peculiar. The body was held a little more erect than usual, the back rounded, the head raised, the bill inclined well downward, the tail depressed and closed, its tip just showing below the ends of the closed wings. There was no inflation of the throat, jugulum or breast, no ruffling of the plumage. In short the bird looked in every way precisely like the conventional stuffed Woodcock that one sees in taxidermists' shops.

At each utterance of the paap the neck was slightly lengthened, the head thrown upward and backward (much in the manner of a Least Flycatcher's while singing), the bill opened wide and raised to a horizontal position, the wings jerked out from the body. All these movements were abrupt

2 (10)

Philohela minor

1891. — Mass.

April 13. Lexington.--- and convulsive, indicating considerable muscular effort on the part of the bird. There was perhaps also a slight twitching of the tail, but this member was not perceptibly raised or expanded. The return of the several parts to their respective normal positions was quite as sudden as the initial movements. The forward "recovery" of the head was well marked. The opening and shutting of the bill strongly suggested that of a pair of tongs. During the emission of the paap the throat swelled and its plumage was ruffed but neither effect was more marked than with any of our small birds while in the act of singing.

The pt-ul note when closely followed by the paap, as was usually the case, was not accompanied by any of the movements just described, but when, as occasionally happened, the bird repeated it several times without peeping, he moved his head and bill just as when peeping, but to a much less degree.

After a minute or two the Woodcock suddenly turned, and without changing his ground, took a position directly facing me. Viewed from in front the motions just described produced a somewhat different impression. The backward toss of the head was no longer apparent, while the lengthening and shortening of the neck became more conspicuous. In fact the head now seemed to be bobbed up and down, much in the manner of an Owl's. The movement of the wings was more strongly marked, and its character and extent could be definitely traced. The wings were not spread or opened, but merely jerked out from the body spasmodically. The shoulders showed distinctly for an instant, but the primaries were at all times covered by the long overlapping feathers of the flanks and sides. These loose feathers moved out and in with the wings, giving the body the appearance of being laterally inflated and then contracted. The mouth opened to such an extent that I could look directly down the bird's throat, which appeared large enough to admit the end of my forefinger. The lateral distention of the mouth was especially striking.

Wilson Flagg says (Birds and Seasons in New England, p.333) that the Woodcock while peeping "may be seen strutting about like a Turkey-cock, with fantastic jerkings of the tail and a frequent turning of the head." Neither Faxon nor I have ever seen anything of the kind. Of the contrary, one of the most marked features of the performance is the fact that the bird, when not in the act of uttering the sound, stands perfectly still, and always in about the same attitude.

Philohela minor.

1891 Mass. *Warren Run*

April 13. Lexington.--- My subject to-night did not once vary his attitude nor turn his head ~~ever~~ so slightly to one or the other side. It is not uncommon, however, for him to change his position after peeping a few times by turning partly around and facing in a different direction, and Faxon has repeatedly seen him move from place to place, over a space of a few square yards by quick, short runs, stopping to peep a number of times in succession on the top of each little mound that lay in his track and facing in different directions. Once to-night he faced all four quarters of the compass in succession, making a quarter turn each time without changing his ground. Each change of position produced a marked change in the sound of his voice. When his back was turned towards me, the paap sounded muffled and much more distant, while I could hardly hear the pt-ul at all, although the bird was within thirty yards. Faxon has seen him descend from the air to exactly the same spot three or four times in succession, but to-night he alighted in a different place after each flight. F. thinks that this was because he had seen me the first time. I had only one good view of him on the ground.

Faxon to-night devoted his entire attention to studying the aerial flight. His conclusions are that during the production of each set of musical (water-whistles) notes, the bird holds his wings extended and Set, whether he be sailing or pitching down sharply at the time; and further that the wings invariably move rapidly and continuously in a whirring manner during the intermittent periods of twittering.

This morning F. found the bird already peeping at 4.15. He watched him through one peeping spell at a distance of 15 feet (measured) from behind a small leafless bush.

April 15. "The Davis Hill Woodcock did not show up to-night. Last night I did not go there. It rained to-night, but I fear that was not the cause of his absence." (W. Faxon, Letter Apr. 15--1891.)

April 17. No bird peeping at Warren Run to-night. I now believe that both this and the Davis Hill Woodcock were migrants. *(Waltham)*

Massachusetts.

Philohela minor. (1)

1861.

- Oct. 20. Carlisle. Next we went together to Wadleigh's run where we left three birds last night. All had left. We beat the ground closely without finding a trace of them. I am surprised that they should have gone during such mild weather.
- Oct. 21. In some birches N. W. of the pond Melvin found a small and exceedingly mild Woodcock at which he shot three times valiantly before we came up, Attius Robbins then had a chance and brought the bird down with his second barrel. To my surprise it proved to be a young bird.
- Oct. 23. Carlisle & Acton. Melvin and I agree that the Woodcocks of the present day behave quite unlike those of 20 year ago. They haunt denser covers, run much more before a dog (flew 50 to 100 yds. before lying) and on rising top the trees much less often, usually, in fact, stealing away as quietly as possible or doubling and twisting low over the ground like a Snipe.
- Oct. 26. Lowell & Carlisle. I noticed that at the last rise it went off with its tail unspread like a fan, an unusual thing for a Woodcock to do if I am not mistaken.
- Oct 31. It was so badly hurt that I had no difficulty in slipping my hand forward and seizing it. As I picked it up it uttered a peculiar low growling sound (gna a a) which I think I have previously heard from a female Woodcock with young. It was a small male bird.

Massachusetts.

Philohela minor. (no. 2.)

1891.

Oct. 31. Concord & Lawrence. Several of the birds which I started earlier in the day were quite as difficult to find and flush as the one just mentioned. They evidently ran for some distance ahead of the dog until they found a good place for concealing themselves. Here they lay so closely that Don actually passed them within a foot or two. Nearly all the Woodcocks this year take remarkably long flights. They also rise in such a way as to cover their flight, whenever possible by a pine or leafy oak I am satisfied they do this deliberately and systematically.

Nov. 5 Concord & Acton. After lunching at the deserted house I went to the "Woodcock hole". Don leaped over the wall and at once pointed but so listlessly that I supposed he had taken the scent of a Hermit Thrush or some other small bird and did not cock my gun. As I was putting one leg over the wall, however, a Woodcock sprang and went off at such speed and so irregularly that I did not even attempt to shoot at it. I followed it at once and the dog flushed it twice without getting its scent. It flew only a few rods each time but although I marked it down after the third flight I failed to find it again until fully two hours later when the dog pointed it in the exact spot near the wall, whence it rose the first time, and I killed it. In the interim I visited this spot and walked all over it examining the ground closely for chalkings. The Woodcock was certainly not there then. It must have returned later either by running or flying. When I finally killed it the sun had set and twilight was falling. I

Massachusetts.

Philobula minor (no. 3)

1897.

have never had such an experience before.

Nov. 6. Lowell. Atter, + Lowell. On the knoll beyond Don found a good deal of ground scent and after "reading" it for some distance at length came to a point under a little pine. I walked up and stopping within 20 ft of the dog scanned the ground carefully. I soon discovered the bird, a Woodcock squatting on the pine needles directly in the shadow cast by the stem of the tree. Its choice of this spot may have been accidental of course but I believe the bird chose it because of the presence of the shadow. Its position was much like that of a bird on the nest, head and tail slightly raised the point of the bill lowered and resting among the leaves.



The large, dark eye was wide open. I watched it closely for fully two minutes but could detect no motion of the bill. There was no apparent throbbing or pulsating movement of the feathers of the back as with a sitting bird. At length I made another step forward and the Woodcock rose with startling suddenness, as it went off it crossed a small opening and I killed it.

Nov. 6. Among these Don flushed the Woodcock. It had previously whistled shrilly but this time it rose in perfect silence and flitted off among the trees curving its wings downward in a peculiar manner. I could have shot it easily enough but I took it at first for a Fox Sparrow and did not recognize it fully until just as it was disappearing.

Massachusetts.

Philohela minor (no. 4.)

1891.

It went only about 50 yards when I quickly found and started it a fourth time when it went off in the usual way whistling loudly.

1892.

Aug. 27 As we were approaching the house this evening some time after sunset (at 7 P.M. it was) a Woodcock shot past within twenty feet flying directly towards the river and very swiftly. It probably came from Mr. Keyes's corn-field and was doubtless intending to spend the night feeding in Mill Brook meadow.

Oct 18 Covered. Started nine Woodcocks, one on Farnham's hill, two in Melvin's run, four near Woodcock hole, one in small birches to the south of the "hole", and one south of Bradley's run. All were in birches or mixed birches and alders vs birches and pines on high ground. About half were females. Most of the Woodcocks seen today "topped" the birches in the old fashioned way and few flew over 100 yds the first rise. Several were on grounds where we found nothing on the 15th. All whistled sharply and flew strongly, and few if any ran before the dogs. In nearly every instance fresh droppings were found in abundance where each bird had lain.

Oct. 19 Two covers where we left Woodcocks yesterday held no birds to-day and two in which there were none yesterday contained one or two this morning. This shows that there was a flight both from & into these covers last night despite the high temperature (48° minimum, file Melvin).

Massachusetts.

Philohela minor. (no 5.)

1892.

Oct 22 Concord. After eating lunch by the roadside we drove north $\frac{1}{2}$ beyond Leaside and beat a large tract of birches which I have never visited before I shot a large Woodcock here. It behaved very curiously standing erect on the top of a mossy mound in an opening where it was so conspicuous an object that it caught my eye the moment I looked that way. It did not squat when my dog ran past within a few yards nor when I approached within ten yards but merely stood there moving its head about & ruffling its feathers as a Plover might have done. At length it gave a series of ducking motions & flew in the usual manner but rather slowly, whistling neither Melvin nor I have ever seen a Woodcock behave in this way before. It seemed to have no fear whatever of either me or the dog. The locality was the crest of a knoll with birches & alders & little moss-grown opening at intervals. The mound on which the bird stood was not ten feet from a thicket of alders.

Oct. 24 There must have been a heavy flight of Woodcock last night for although I hunted alone and made a short day, starting at 9 A.M. and getting home by 4 P.M. I found ten birds, killing nine of them. They were distributed as follows: One in the Parker lot birches. Three on the hill south of Woodley's Run (one among dense young white pines here), one on the peat flat behind Wheeler's Run in the "Woodcock Hole" and three

Massachusetts.

Philobula minor. (no 6)

1892.

on Tharras Hill, Melvin's Run and the swoll near Bateman's Pond proved blanks. These were all the covers I visited. More than half the birds were large females showing that the bulk of the flight has not yet passed. They acted rather lazy as a rule and flew in the old-fashioned way. A few bothered the dog by running.

Philohela minor.

Concord, Mass.

Nest.

1893. A Mr. Dodge who has bought the Dutton farm and who is
July 3. familiar with and much interested in the birds of this region
tells me that a pair of Woodcock nested near his house this
season. He found the nest in some bushes birches on the west
side of the Dutton lane. It contained four eggs which he
thinks were safely hatched.

Philohela minor

1894.

Mass.

Poukeagog. - "Woodcock have been much scarcer than usual this year being most abundant about Sept. 1st" x x x On Sept. 15 I shot six Woodcock" - J. H. Bowler, letter Dec. 20 - 1894). [Reports from various parts of Middlesex Co. convince me that there was no considerable flight this autumn. W. B.]

Nov. 11

Frammingham - a tremendous flight according to F. C. Brown who writes Puerin that on this day (Sunday) a Mr. Badger "found them so thick in a pasture growing up to bushes that they quite scared him. One or two going up every few yards. All gone next day"

1894

Oct. 11 - Nov. 21.

Concord. Woodcock have been exceedingly scarce. There has been no well-marked flight, and the greatest number started in a single day by any one of my acquaintance was four. On Nov. 13 I flushed a very large bird near Balls Hill.

South Carolina

Mt. Pleasant.

Woodcock "have been (and still are) peeping and zinging since the middle of December! and do so every year - starting about December 10th. One has been zinging for nearly two weeks at a certain spot near my house every night. x x x I can find the females any day within two or three feet from the spot where I first flushed them & have been doing so since January 30th. but I cannot find a pair together x x x I do not believe the birds have could yet" Arthur J. Wayne letter. Feb. 1, 1894

Peeping & zinging from Dec 10 to Feb. 1.

Philohela minor.

Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

Peculiar note and
flight.

1894. On the edge of the maple grove we (W.Faxon and I) started
June 27. two Woodcock from the side of the road where the mud was covered with their "borings". When we returned a little later we heard something making a prolonged wheezy sound very like that of young Partridges. Faxon went in among the ferns and flushed a Woodcock, apparently an old bird. A few minutes afterward two Woodcock shot overhead and out into a great, open meadow where they circled at a height of 30 or 40 ft. appearing and disappearing in the mist, one following the other closely. I have never seen Woodcock fly in this way before.

Philohela minor.

Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

Queer behavior and Notes.

1894. After tea Faxon and I walked down the valley again. As
June 28. we approached the sugar maple grove we heard two or more Wood-
cock making the wheezy sound (a lispings tse-e-e-e) noted last
evening. They seemed to be just over the fence under the trees.
As we were standing still listening a Woodcock, evidently an
old bird, rose from the spot whence the sound came and crossed
the road and a bit of open field to the lower grove flying
very slowly and feebly with dangling legs (a very Rail-like
flight) quacking much like a drake Black Duck but less loudly
(quar-quar-quar-quar-quar-quar) six or eight times. Her wings
made no sound during this flight but when we followed and put
her up again she went off like a bullet with legs drawn up w
whistling shrilly - a normal flight in every way.

Immediately after her first flight another Woodcock which
we did not see rose and whistled off. The wheezy sound was
heard for a minute or two after this but it soon ceased. We
did not see any other birds but we assumed that the pair which
flew were adults and that their young were making the wheezing
sound. It was very like the call of a young Partridge. I do
not think that the birds could have been aware of our presence
when we first heard them for we were concealed by a belt of
shrubby and ferns and a rail fence and we approached the
spot quietly.

Philohela minor.

Peterborough, New Hampshire.

1899. One seen at Temple on the evening of August 20th flying
July from a wooded hillside to a brook meadow. Abbott Thayer tells
&
August. me that Woodcock bred abundantly this year in the woods near
his house at Dublin and that early in July his son Gerald saw
one alight twice on the topmost twigs or sprays of some white
pines which were thirty or forty feet high. This happened
during the evening twilight but Gerald saw his bird distinctly
against the sky and is positive that it was a Woodcock.

Concord, Mass.

1899. Looking for the Woodcock in the Barrett run I found him
April 7. within twenty yards of where he lay on the 5th - the same
small male bird evidently. I wonder if he will remain and
breed here. (I afterwards learned that during the past week
a Woodcock was heard singing several nights in succession over
the brook meadow W. of the Barrett house by both Geo. Holden
and Henry Lawrence.)

Philohela minor

1896 Penobscot Bay, Maine.

July 13 Stinson's Neck, Deer Island. At about 8 o'clock this evening I was passing a low, wet, hole where the trees & undergrowth had been cut last winter but which was closely hemmed in on every side by dense young Spruces & Golms when a Woodcock rose and ascended in a spiral course as if about to sing. I did not catch sight of him but it was easy to trace his flight by the thick, incessant whirring of his wings. He rose to at least a height of 200 feet & then passed out of hearing towards the eastern shore. A few minutes later a very large bird came from the east and flying swiftly about on a level with the tree tops passed directly over the clearing & dropped into the Spruces on its further edge. Mr. Berlin tells me that he has seen Woodcocks here but he thinks they are not common.

"Woodcock

Scelopare Fedoa. May 15, 1787."

From a note-book of Manasseh Leutler

Bulletin Essex Institute Vol. 29 (1897) p. 126.

In ye day time they keep about small runs of water
in swamps & obscure places, where they are rarely seen.
When they apprehend danger, they squat ^{very} close between
bays, & in ye grass, so that a person may almost
get their feet upon them, being nearly of ye color of
ye ground, before he sees them. Then take wing, &
fly low to some distance where they conceal
themselves in ye same manner. In ye twilight of ye
evening they come out into open ground, — & sing
with a chipping note — after they have chipped, loud
& distinct at ye close of the note they make a croak
in their throats. These notes are repeated a few
times, when they rise, with a buzzing or whistling
noise made with their wings, much like that of a
Partridge & ascend in to ye air to a considerable
height. After a circuitous flight for a few min-
utes, they return directly over ye place from which
they ascended, & begin their chipping note again
very quick, & with this note descend perpendicularly,
& settle on ye ground with a few feet of ye spot
from whence they rose. After chipping loudly &
distinctly a few times, rise & descend again as
before. These flight are continued thro' ye first of

12.

was

takes

that

having

notes made

man

y.

ye evening, and perhaps ye night,
By observing ye place from whence they rise, &
after they are gone up it [is] ease take a stand
near the spot, & to shoot them after they descend,
especially in ye first of ye twilight, before it is
too dark to distinguish them.

[Copied and sent me by
Mr. R. B. Mackintosh, Reebury, Mass.,
about the middle of April, 1902 +
W. Deane]

02.

was

states

that

having

notes made

erman

g.

GRAY HERBARIUM OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

BOTANIC GARDEN, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

22 April, 1902.

Dear Mr. Deane:

Probably Manasseh Cutler was
in Ipswich or vicinity on 15 May, 1787. Sketches
of his life give no account of his traveling at that
time, but on the 5 July, 1787 he reached New York having
driven there. His manuscript note books have notes made
on May 15, presumably 1787. Perhaps Prof. W. A. Kellerman
could give you more definite information.

Yours truly,

Mary A. Day.

POSTAL CARD ONE CENT.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THIS SIDE IS FOR THE ADDRESS ONLY.



Mr. Walter Deane,
29 Brewster St.,
Cambridge,
Mass.

Indian Head, Newfoundland.

Philohela minor. Woodcock.— A young chick, I think undoubtedly of this species, was closely observed running on a swamp and tree grown wood road near Indian Head on the 12th. It took at once to the underbrush, and from the locality, position of its eye, etc., I felt little doubt of its proper identification. *R. Bellefleur, Jr.*

Auk. xxx. Jan. 1913. p. 115.

Birds of Upper St. John.
Batchelder.

95. *Philohela minor* (Gm.) Gray. Woodcock.—One seen on Little River Flats near Grand Falls. At Fort Fairfield we saw a specimen in the collection of Mr. Frank P. Orcutt, who considered it rare in that neighborhood. "A few breed in the vicinity" of Houlton.

Bull. N. O. O., 7, July, 1882, p. 151

Notes from St. John. N. B.

Several instances have been recorded of Woodcock having been shot in the month of December, but they have invariably proved to be wounded birds, which have been unable to migrate to their southern feeding grounds, and which by the succour of an open Spring have been enabled to eke out an existence till this late season of the year.—*Harold Gilbert*. *O. & O.* VII, Jun. 1882, p. ¹³⁴

I can remember when Wilson's Snipe came here in immense flocks, but about a quarter of a century ago they began to lessen in numbers, and now they are far from common. Woodcock on the other hand, are more plentiful now than they were fifty years ago. When Pictou County was first settled none were found here, and in 1830 the first specimen was placed in the museum of the Academy. From this date they increased rapidly until about fifteen years ago, when their numbers appeared to decrease, from what cause I can only conjecture. Almost every season a few of this species are met with here in March, when the earth's surface is frozen and covered deep with snow, excepting in a few favored spots.

Pictou Co. N. S. *J. Mc Kinlay.*
Auk. 2. Jan. 1885. p. 41.

Mr. Harry Austin's record of Woodcock shooting on Grant Musquodoboit, Nova Scotia;

August 1, 1884, 16 Woodcock.	
" 1, 1885, 14	" 1 Snipe.
" 1, 1886, 21	" 3 "
" 1, 1887, 10	"

August 30, 1886 Col. Clark and Mr. Austin, at the same place, shot 33 Cuck and 11 Partridge.

O. & O. XIII, Nov. 1888 p. 176.
Notes. *Harry Austin.*

He also received from a friend in Kentville, an Albino Woodcock. No use, Canada must be annexed.

O. & O. XIV, Jan. 1889 p. 14

Dwight. Summer Birds of
Prince Edward Island.

Philohela minor. AMERICAN WOODCOCK.—The sportsmen are acquainted with this bird but it is considered rare. I saw a stuffed specimen, and well recollect the one I shot at I don't know how many times when I visited Hunter River in 1876. The country about there is better suited to it than much of the ground visited this time. The partiality of the Woodcock for clean alder swamps still obtains on Prince Edward Island.

Auk X, Jan. 1893: p. 8

General Notes.

Notes on Cape Breton Summer Birds.
Francis H. Allen.

Philohela minor. Indian Brook.

Auk XII, Jan. 1895 p. 90

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 448.

80. *Philohela minor*. AMERICAN WOODCOCK.— Regular migrant, not common; April 2 to 29, returning in July (July 10, 1891) and August (August 17, 1902), and from October 12 to November 5. Earliest record, March 25, 1893; latest, November 11, 1896. Woodcock may possibly breed here.

Philohela minor, - ^{2 copied} Aug. 27 Rye Beach, N. H. 1871.

Philohela minor, - Aug. 7, 12, 25 Rye Beach, N. H. 1872.

1898 *Philohela minor*

Oct. Greenfield, N. H.

16 Good flight

17 Best "

18 Good "

19 Fair "

20 Fair

24 One bird, the last

The above is a sportsman's

account given

to A. H. Allen, Greenfield, N. H.

in a letter dated August 15, 1898.

Partly

from the same source.

Philohela minor.

Peterborough, New Hampshire.

1898. My sportsman (a carpenter, by the name of Shattuck)

July 5 further informs me that the Woodcock breeds here regularly in
to

Aug. 15. limited numbers and that a good many birds are killed every
autumn in flight time. I think I heard one whistle past the
house on the evening of August 9th.

Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

1894.

Philohela minor
Sugar maple near 1500 ft
26⁽³⁾ hatched 27⁽²⁾ about one hatched
at the nest at 1000 ft.

us
from
100
calling young - young
something in the tree
7
The leaves
They
and
at

Breezy Point, Warren, N.H.

1895.

Philohela minor
May 29⁽¹⁾ 30⁽¹⁾ found 31⁽¹⁾ seen as usual
about 4.45 & 8.50
Mid across side
June 4⁽¹⁾ 5⁽¹⁾ seen
4⁽¹⁾ 5⁽¹⁾ seen

1896

Philohela minor nest

May 14 Cambridge, Coos Co., N.H.

Nest 4 fresh eggs two of them cracked when found. Nest, diameter across top 7 inches depth of hollow 1 3/4 inches. In springy run sparsely wooded with willows and young fir & spruces growing in ^{thin} clusters with openings between. Nest in the middle of an opening 5 or 6 yards square on the top of a low mound about 1 ft. above the ~~water~~ pools of water which surrounded it, with dwarf blueberry bushes and last year's bracken growing close around the nest but not arching over it. Indeed it was fully exposed above and from the eggs were in plain sight from a distance of 10 or 15 feet in any direction. They did not even match the nest & its bounding in color but on the contrary, were conspicuous after the bird left them. She rose first about 8 ft. off as I was standing (she rose first about 8 ft. off as I was standing) and flying heavily & slowly with heavy tail & Railliet's - not whistling nor about the cover & disappeared. She voided her excrement on the egg just as she left the nest. This was about 9 a.m. at 10.30 we returned. Bird sitting again. Flashed this time at about 12 ft. acting as before & puping night of 12th on level 60 yards off. Flashed yesterday 30 yds. p. nest, to-day 15-0 yards

Mass. (Belmont) Early arrival? or wintering?

1890

Feb. 13 Fred Fuller (the policeman sportsman) while training a young dog to-day but up two Woodcock in the "Cotton run", where, he says, the grass was green in places. The present winter has been very mild with no continuous frost or snow.

Philohela minor

Mass. (near Cambridge).

1887

April 6th

Philohela minor

Mass. (near Concord). 1887

1887

July 4th (Great Meadows)

Philohela minor.

Mass (Winchendon)

A few bred. I could perhaps start six or eight in a days tramp now (June 26, 1887). In autumn much consumed (Bailey)

Philohela minor

Mass. (near Cambridge).

1887

Oct. 22⁶

1884

Nov. 2 '86 (Indiv. only)

Philohela minor.

Winter Birds of Eastern Massachusetts.
H. K. Job.

Another victim to a northeaster was a Woodcock, one day late in November^x last. This incident was also observed by a friend, who while passing along one of the streets of Boston, while a gale was blowing and the snow falling thickly, saw a Woodcock shoot down the street, borne on the wings of the wind. The unfortunate bird passed within a few feet of him, rendering identification certain. Nothing more was heard from it, so it is probable that it escaped in safety from the city.

^x 1882 (?)

Bull. N. O. C. 3, July. 1883, p. 150.

Fall Migration, Bristol County, Mass.
1885. Charles H. Andros.

Sept. 22: While passing through a piece of woods bordering on a marsh I nearly trod upon a Woodcock, which after running a short distance took to flight.

O. & O. XI. Jan. 1886. p. 2

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros

Philohela minor (Gmel.), American Woodcock. Summer resident, tolerably common. Breeds.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 138

Limicolae in Bristol County.
H. F. Dexter, Dartmouth, Mass.

Woodcock, *Philohela minor*. A common summer visitor and breeds commonly with us, as is attested by the broods of young we flush from under our feet in early May. Have observed this species as late as December 10th and as early as March 5th, thus showing it to be absent but a short time from our county.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 148

Shore Birds of Cape Cod.
John C. Cahoon.

American Woodcock, *Philohela minor* (Gmel.) Summer resident. Breeds. Although this bird is not common in the summer, it is tolerably so in the spring and autumn flights. Its dates of arrival are the same as in other portions of New England. Its habits are pretty well known, and as it cannot properly be called a shore bird, I will not take up the space by an account of them. They have been taken as far down towards the end of the Cape as Orleans, and I have seen borings in corn fields and flushed one from the edge of a swamp at that place. Quite a number are shot in the autumn at Barnstable, and are usually found in pines.

O. & O. XIII. Aug. 1888 p. 127.

Birds Known to Pass Breeding Season
nr. Winchendon, Mass. Wm. Brewster

4. *Philohela minor*.

Auk, V, Oct., 1888. p. 389

General Notes.

Stray Notes from Massachusetts.
George H. Mackay.

Philohela minor.—Oakham, Mass., Oct. 15, 1893. Mr. J. F. Brown of Chelsea, Mass., informs me that in company with Mr. John Stone of Oakham he visited daily the Woodcock grounds in the vicinity of Oakham for fifteen consecutive days, commencing on the above date, but failed to find only a very few birds, although the grounds were extensive. Mr. Stone has shot over this ground for twenty-five years and this is the only year in his experience that no defined flight of Woodcock has been noted by him. From what I have learned I am of the belief that the flight in Massachusetts passed during the last few days in September and first few days in October.

Auk XI. Jan. 1894 p. 84-85

On Sunday morning, May 4, I met H. G. Collins, printer, with an injured Woodcock which he had just picked up on Devonshire street, Boston. It was quite lively but injured in the head. It had evidently flown against one of the many electric wires which cover the city overhead. Jos. M. Wade.

O. & O. XV. May. 1890 p. 77.

Philohela minor ✓

Waltham, Mass.
1890.

(Notes by W. Faxon)

Apr. 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 26.

On the 22, 32, & 6th I only heard the peep, probably because too far off to hear the song.

Did not sing Apr. 29 or May 5.

over

There have been some good bags of woodcock killed lately in the vicinity of Ballardvale, Mass. One was killed there last week that had but one leg. The bird had lost one leg by shooting or by some other accident, but it had healed over nicely, and the bird was in excellent condition. It is reported that some of the market hunters have secured the right to shoot over grounds in this section, which contain many excellent covers, and have had the land posted by the owners.

Shooting
rights
No. 24
Ball. No. 24
Att. 6-1892

Unusual Winter Records.

American Woodcock. One seen on December 1 and 8 on the edge of a pool near Arlington Heights.

Arthur C. Cony, Cambridge, Mass. Auk, XIX, July, 1902, p. 293.

As to the Woodcock that I told you about on Thursday: I saw it on the 2nd of April 1900 for the first time, and on the 6th of the same month. [in Norton's Woods, Cambridge, Mass.]

Very truly yours

Edward M. Davis.

17 Francis Ave.

February 20th 1903

Woodcock Notes.—I have recently received several interesting dates regarding the occurrence of the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) in Massachusetts. Mr. Edward A. Brigham of Grafton, Mass., informs me that he shot a bird several years ago on Christmas Day which was in excellent condition. Also, that on March 7, 1901, he saw a bird of this species—the earliest spring date in his experience. On March 17, 1903, he put up a fine large bird at the same place. Deputy Thomas L. Burney of Lynn, Mass., informs me that he has a specimen of a Woodcock, which was picked up on Estey St., Lynn, Mass., by Mr. Geo. Woodman on Dec. 11, 1902, while still alive, but in an emaciated condition.—

GEORGE H. MACKAY, Boston, Mass.
Auk, XX, Apr., 1903, p. 210.

Philohela minor ✓
Waltham, Mass. (Notes by W. Faxon)
1890.

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Shooting
Hickory
Ball No. 24
At. 6-1892

Unusual Winter Records.

American Woodcock. One seen on December 1 and 8 on the edge of a pool near Arlington Heights.

Arthur C. Comey, Cambridge, Mass. Auk, XIX, July, 1902, p. 293.



CAMBRIDGE STATION



POSTAL CARD.

THE SPACE BELOW IS FOR THE ADDRESS ONLY.

Mr. William Brewster
145 Brattle St.
Cambridge
Mass.

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GEORGE H. MACKAY, Boston, Mass.
Auk, XX, Apr., 1903, p. 210.

Connecticut, June, 1893.

Philohela minor

June 6 fresh tracks 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ chicks. Saybrook

23rd

Andover

According to track a good many
Woodcock still bred about Saybrook
more I should judge than we now
have in 3 rows. One bird seen by us
on the 8th was from a woodcock on
high ground among tall oaks. He went
in within 50 yds. and flew about
30 yds. going off rather slowly & uttering
a heavy whistle like a quail. Given
but uttering in no unusual manner
strutted. He looked the ground on closely
but found nothing. Returning he was
seen again flushed the bird from
within a few yards of the same place.
This time we discovered two young
still in the down & about as large as
sparrows leaving side by side on
oak leaf. They made no attempt to escape
when we reached out our hands & lifted
them up but on being placed raised
up down on their downy feet & ran
a few feet before getting up.
The bird seen at Andover June 23rd was
wild among bushes near the top.

write about birds. What Mr. Trumbull writes about birds

is written while in close contact with his subject, he having traveled thousands of miles to study some of his subjects. Nothing goes forth from his pen but what can be relied on to the fullest extent. Mr. Trumbull is a close student of bird life, and his opportune article on the American woodcock deserves more than a passing notice—it is a diamond of the first water. A. C. COLLINS.
HARTFORD, Conn.

J. M. W. ...

26th, first woodcock seen, Little Mill Pond.
O.C. XVI, March, 1891, p. 37

*Forest + Stream Vol. XXXV. - No 23.
Dec. 25. 1890. p. 454.*

Editor Forest and Stream:

Mr. Gurdon Trumbull's article on the "American Woodcock" that recently appeared in the FOREST AND STREAM is one of the most vivacious, concise and beautiful monographs that ever graced a sportsman's journal. This is saying considerable, but it is a fact nevertheless. Mr. Trumbull is a practical ornithologist—by this I mean one who does not deal in any guesswork or hearsay evidence, but one who studiously finds out all the "whys and where-fors" himself. He knows how to express his views as a naturalist so that one need not be a graduate from some university or college to understand what subject is being treated. Mr. Trumbull being a sportsman and knowing the needs of sportsmen, has done more in an ornithological way for them than all other writers combined. Mr. Trumbull's book, "Names and Portraits of Game Birds," possesses more real merit, intrinsic value and common sense to the square inch than any other work on these birds ever published. With that work you have no use for nine dead languages, keys, charts and other entanglements usually dealt in by those who have attempted to write about birds. What Mr. Trumbull writes about birds

is written while in close contact with his subject, he having traveled thousands of miles to study some of his subjects. Nothing goes forth from his pen but what can be relied on to the fullest extent. Mr. Trumbull is a close student of bird life, and his opportune article on the American woodcock deserves more than a passing notice—it is a diamond of the first water. A. C. COLLINS.

HARTFORD, Conn.

J. M. W. . . . Norwich, Conn.

Feb.

26th, first woodcock seen, Little Mill Pond.

CCCXVI, March, 1891, p. ~~37~~

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

143. *Philohela minor* (Gmelin) Gray. WOODCOCK. — Breeds, but rather rare.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct. 1881, p. 234

FLEW AGAINST THE HOUSE.— No less than four woodcock have met death in the same manner, *i. e.*, flying against the house; and the last fellow tried it while we were all sitting on the piazza one fine summer evening, "twixt daylight and dark"—Zip bang! and poor little longbill was struggling his life away on the gravel walk at our feet. I gathered him in, and I have him mounted; and a fine bird he is. The bill was uninjured, but the top of his head was literally smashed to pieces. The house stands on an elevation, and is painted a buff color, which may account for these frequent casualties. It is also located at Bay Ridge, L. I., on the line of flight of the migration, which would seem to have something to do with it, as three of the victims were found late in autumn.—DICK.

Forest and Stream
March 29, 1883
vol. XX no 9. page 166.

Notes, Shelter Island, N. Y.
W. W. Worthington.

On April 3rd heard
the Woodcocks for the first time, although I had kept a sharp lookout for them for weeks.

O. & O. X, May, 1885, p. 70

Birds Tioga Co, N. Y. Alden Loring.

525. American Woodcock. Common.
Breeds. Gives the hunter great pleasure.

O. & O. XV, June, 1890, p. 86

Cold Weather Notes, Stephentown, N. Y.

Benjamin Hoag

Last Woodcock recorded November 2.
Philohela minor in this locality is doomed to the same fate as the Ruffed Grouse — extermination — unless given better protection, or the number of market hunters reduced.

O. & O. Vol. 18, April, 1893 p. 57

South Carolina (Charleston)

Philobela minor

1889

Abundance & cheapness

January 25

In the Charleston market I found at least ~~one~~ hundred Woodcock hanging in front of the stalls. All were shot near the city. The (retail) price asked was only thirty-five cents per pair.

"Listeni" Woodcock

Desc of song flight

See page 176

Albinism and Melanism in North American Birds. Ruthven Deane.

Philohela

Specimens of *P. minor* have been taken in white plumage. Bull. N.O.C. 1, April, 1876, p. 28

Undescribed First Plumages, Brewster

117. *Philohela minor*.

Downy stage: chick a few days old. General ground-color warm buff, tinged above with ashy. Large areas of rich seal-brown occur upon the crown, back, and sides of the breast, while spots, blotches, and angular stripes of a lighter shade of the same color diversify most of the remaining surface. The throat and central portions of the breast and abdomen are, however, immaculate. From a specimen in my collection taken at Lexington, Mass., May, 1869.

First plumage: male. Ground-color above brownish-ashy; forehead and broad band around the neck behind immaculate. Crown brownish-black, crossed by two narrow transverse bands of fulvous. A few of the scapulars and the feathers of the back generally, with very dark brown centres. Chin brownish-yellow. Throat and sides of neck brownish-ashy, paler than that on the upper parts. Rest of the under surface yellowish-rufous, palest on the breast and body anteriorly, much richer and redder on the lower abdominal and anal regions. From a specimen in my cabinet shot at Cambridge, Mass., July 3, 1872. The plumage above described is the characteristic one of the young bird in summer. It is worn up to about the middle of August, when the moult — which with this species is unusually protracted — takes place. Adults and young moult about the same time, and with both the wing and tail feathers are changed with the rest of the plumage. Autumnal specimens are much more richly colored than spring adults.

Brief Notes

C. F. Emery of Rockville, Conn., recently shot a half Albin Woodcock which he is having stuffed. J. M. Wade.

O. & O. XIV, Nov. 1889 p. 176

ways justified by the event. In fact, it is for the interest of most trusts to keep the price of the product low, in order to avoid inviting competition, to placate popular sentiment, and to extend their trade. The aggregation of capital under one executive management which controls a large plant often gives a trust the opportunity to lower prices, to figures even with, or perhaps below, those that obtained in a period of competition, and every man concerned knows that the cheaper the public can buy the more it will buy. Such is the "platform," to adopt political parlance, on which the trusts stand to justify themselves before the country.

The argument for the trusts is reflected in a communication protesting against Governor Brackett's denunciation, to be found in another column of today's Transcript, which is from the pen of an eminent Boston lawyer. We find in the New York Sun that "Matthew Marshall" has something to say very fairly on the general aspect of the trust question from the mercantile standpoint. "Matthew Marshall," we understand, is the pen name of a well-known financier. His summing up is expressed in the following paragraph:

For all this, both combinations of capital and unions of Workmen are as distinct an advance over the guerilla warfare of competition as it prevailed before they established themselves, as the consolidation of modern civilized society into a few great nations is an advance beyond the multitude of petty tribes of savages which it has supplanted. Only we must not be too sanguine and expect that by any ingenious invention we can extirpate an essential element of human nature. So long as the world is constituted as it is, and men are what they are, they will strive to get the better of one another, and the most we can do is to secure the greatest possible benefit from that strife with the least injury.

By the last words it is evident that from the mercantile or commercial standpoint the popular standpoint is in sight all the time. The popular sentiment is strong against trusts, and what is the popular sentiment becomes in a free country the political sentiment. That this is so is made plain by the eagerness with which prominent leaders in all parties disavow any sympathy with trusts, and by the ease with which legislation against them is enacted. Much of this legislation is nothing more than the firing of blank cartridges, intended to deceive, but intended to deceive only the general public. A good deal of the legislation against the trusts that is honestly intended is found inoperative in the end, and must be inoperative, for it is superseded by the older law of competition, which has its roots in human nature, and which impels men to rush in wherever they see other men making money, or wherever they think men are making money. Thus it follows that trusts are likely to be paralleled just as railroads have been paralleled. The political relations of trusts and combinations to government involves, and must involve, public agitation, for wherever they are against corporation laws of the States as the laws were previous to their organization, the law must either resist or surrender, and the latter is an alternative never contemplated without popular indignation. The further the development of the trust system proceeds, the nearer draws on the question of nationalization of our corporation laws, in which lurks the possibility of the extension of the "national" ideas to national ownership of railroads and mines and transportation interests, from which to manufacturing interests would be but a short step.

THE Board of Aldermen of Cambridge has coupled as a condition to its grant of authority to use the trolley system on Harvard Bridge, that the cars shall run up to the Tremont House or some equally central point. This is something of a poser for the West End, which would have no objection to filling Tremont street with cars, if the people of Boston did not protest against such an occupancy of the street. A Cambridge paper suggests that there should be an agitation in favor of widening Court street, in order that the Bowdoin square cars might run through to Tremont street. They would unquestionably be a great advantage to Cambridge residents and might attract some trade to Boston which would otherwise not cross Charles river. But all the agitation possible in Cambridge could never widen Court street in Boston. The relations of the two cities are such at this time as to give no immediate hope that Court street will be widened, largely for the benefit of citizens of Cambridge.

It was quite natural that the President of Sorosis should object at Chicago to cheap fun and belittling reports of the meeting of the federation of women. Boys who have few ideas beyond their pencils are sometimes sent by sensational journals for the purpose of making "taking" reports of large meetings of women. They have done their work well when they have told the color of the dresses of the women who read the papers, or describe any small peculiarities of speech or manner. It is probable that Mrs. Lozier's indignation was directed not against reporters in general, but against the abuses of the reporters. Most of the women engaged in these conventions are deeply in earnest in regard to the objects of their societies. And to be reported superficially or in a gaudy spirit which takes no note of the underlying earnestness is naturally as trying to women as it would be to men.

THE presidential lightning struck in the longitude of Massachusetts and Virginia for many years; then it struck in the longitude of New York and Tennessee for a while. Ohio drew the nation's electric choice times enough to make her proud of the phrase "an Ohio man." Indiana took her turn. Now Illinois and Iowa are preening their heads in the direction of the bolt. Iowa is west of Illinois; but Illinois remembers that she gave Lincoln and Grant to the nation in an off time, and will not count herself skipped in the line of the presidential lightning if it should strike across the Mississippi river for the first time in the history of the nation.

THE Cambridge water front on Charles River, between West Boston Bridge and Craigie's Bridge, will certainly be much improved in appearance when the stone wall that is being built shall have been completed. It will not have the ornamental appearance of Charles-bank on the Boston side, but it will give the observer an idea that Cambridge is beginning to awake to the necessity of making its bank of Charles River more agreeable to the eye than it has been of late years.

THE LISTENER.

If you come with the Listener to a certain lately-cleared but now bush-grown field not very far from Boston, on the edge of a large wood—a wild spot, stony and yet not innocent of bogs and muddy places here and there—you may hear and see one of the strangest and most delightful of performances. It is the night-flight and love-song of the woodcock—that queer, uncount water-bird who has taken to the land; whose ugly bill head, short legs, long bill and ungraceful ordinary movements are laughable; who is, nevertheless, worshipped by sportsmen; who is divine on the table, and who is capable of the most remarkable union of grace in movement and musical utterance, in his one great rapturous performance that so few people have seen or ever will see.

You may see and hear it, that is, if you come to the place when the bird is disposed to perform, and arrive at the right time, just long enough after sunset so that the dusk shall have barely begun to gather, without making it dark as yet. Then you will very likely hear a sharp, grating bird-sound, which at first you take to be the shriek of a night hawk. But it comes from the level of the ground, and is less musical, if anything, than the night-hawk's song. You hear it repeated at intervals, "Speek, speek-eeek, speek-uk," from the ground

not far away. This is the "bleating" of the woodcock. You listen curiously while the bird reels off this harsh and disagreeable soliloquy; perhaps you have heard that it is preliminary to his much more interesting performance, and you are impatient to see and hear that. The *speek* is intermitted for a moment; and then you hear, seemingly from far away—and yet is it not in your very ears?—a steady, musical, whistling crescendo sound. There he goes! The woodcock's ascent has begun. Now you see him, rising in a slanting straight line, coming straight over your head, his body held stiff and taut, his wings beating swiftly, his course steadily up and away; you fancy he is going to fly away out of sight; but while he is still in plain view, he veers to the right and begins a long curve or circle, still upward; and all the while continues that singular, musical whistling crescendo.

+++

Now he is fairly launched upon his great ascending spiral. He rises more and more swiftly; the note made by his whistle takes a higher and higher pitch, and the throbs are closer together. His spiral has at first covered so wide a space that you have been compelled to twist your body upon the ground where you are crouching to keep your eyes upon him; but now, as he mounts higher, the circles which he is describing become smaller and smaller. At the same time his whistle—one can only call it a whistle for want of a better word, for the sound is indescribable—takes a sort of rhythm; it is like the rhythm which a person falls into who is playing scales upon the upper octaves of a piano so rapidly that he can no longer make them sound regular and even. Higher, higher mounts the bird until he is a mere speck and yet you can still see the swift beating of those wings. Now the circles of his spiral are very small; he is mad with ecstasy. For an instant he seems to flutter at the very apex as if he must die with joy if he went any further, and yet were unwilling to descend; and just at that fluttering instant you begin to hear a new and still more ecstatic sound—a soft murmuring note between a whisper and a cry—*zip-zip*—then the old whistle begins spasmodically again—the bird flutters and falls a little—*zip-zip-zip*—that soft, delicious, intensely musical note is repeated—the bird seems to tip downward sidewise slowly, reluctantly—the whistle and the other wonderful note begin to sound simultaneously; and as the bird sinks and falls faster and faster from his height, he gives himself up in a melancholy rapture to this steadily repeated sound; and now he drops, limp and quite silent, and so swiftly that you fancy he must be hurt, straight to the very spot in the field from which he went up; and in another moment you hear once more the harsh call: *Speek-eeek—speek—speek-uk!*

+++

It is indeed a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous. Here he is grating, squeaking away again on the earth—this bird which but the moment before had been rapt in an aerial ecstasy. He keeps it up for two or three minutes at least—a longer time, probably, than he has spent in his musical flight; for, though you were too much excited while the performance lasted to take any note of time, it is probably not longer than a minute and a half. But he does not "bleat" very long. Once more you hear that vague whistle, far away and yet so near, and you know he is mounting again; once more he shoots straight over your head; and again he is mounting his ecstatic spiral—accelerating, climbing the musical scale as well as the vault of heaven; his whistle getting all the weird effect of a sound coming from high in the air, and yet becoming more clearly to be heard as the creature goes up. Once more the attainment of the apex, once more that delicious reluctance to return to earth, once more that most musical-melancholy whispering, once more the drop straight to earth and the commencement of the harsh quacking refrain there. By and by he goes up again; and you listen and watch, enchanted, until, with the increasing darkness, and the height of his ascent, you lose sight of the bird, and his performance is to the ear only—a voice and nothing more—and yet the more intensely weird because you cannot see whence it comes. Very likely the performance is repeated seven or eight times. You wonder that the little bird can find the strength to make such a series of tremendous flights; and while you are wondering, and incidentally listening to a whippoorwill who is singing a loud complaint from the edge of the woods close by, you become aware that the *speek, speek-eeek* is no longer sounding; and you listen in vain for any farther music from your woodcock.

+++

But unless you are a dull sort of person you carry the singular music home with you and hear it again and again, and wonder at it, as you lie in bed. Never, you think, was utter rapture so completely expressed at once in action and in sound. You wonder, as everybody has done who has heard the sound and seen the sight, how the whistling is produced—whether it is the swift rushing of the bird's wings or a song from his throat. You fancy that it must be done with his wings, because it seems impossible that the creature could fly with such force and sing all the time. But the descending *zip zip*—that is surely done with the throat, for you have heard the whistling, like an accompaniment or obbligato in it, at least apart of the time. Its musical quality is as unquestionable as it is indescribable; and somehow it seems to you as much a miracle as it would seem to hear a swan sing. Rather more, indeed, for the swan on the water is always beautiful at least, and the woodcock is never beautiful.

Philohela minor. WOODCOCK.

Although the aerial manœuvres of the Woodcock at dusk and in the dark are, freely speaking, familiar to us all, in a stricter sense there is still a prevailing ignorance in regard to them.

My journal supplies the following, slightly adapted, under date of April 19, 1884: The birds would start up from amid the shrubbery with a tremulous whirring sound of the wings, rising with spiral course into the air. The spiral varied considerably in pitch, sometimes expanding to sweep far out over a neighboring field, when a single revolution would carry the bird upward almost to the extremity of its flight, which was sometimes directly over the point of departure. The rapid trilling sound with which it started off, as Woodcocks do, continued without interruption during the ascent, but gradually became more rapid, and as the bird neared its greatest height passed into pulsations of quavering sound. Each pulsation was shorter and faster than the last, and took the tremolo to a higher pitch, sounding like a throbbing whirl of fine machinery, or suggesting in movement the accelerating rhythmic sound of a railway-car gradually gaining full speed after a stop. At last, when it seemed as if greater rapidity of utterance was not possible, the vertex of the flight would be reached, and, descending with increasing swiftness, the bird would break forth into an irregular *chipping* — almost a warble — the notes sounding louder and more liquid as it neared the earth. Suddenly there would be silence, and a small dark object would dart past through the dusk down amid the shrubbery. Then, at silent intervals, a single strange and rather startling note — a loud, sharp and somewhat nasal *speat* or *spneat* — which sounded as if delivered with a spiteful directness at some offensive object.

I had no means of estimating the height of the bird's ascent, but in the evening dusk it went up almost out of sight.

This performance I have heard at midnight on the bird's arrival in spring. It is also said to take place in the early morning. Is it ever indulged in the autumn?

Aug. 2, July, 1885. p. 261-262.

For. & Str.
Vol. XXXIII
No. 5-7-89
Aug. 22. 1889

Natural History.

THE WOODCOCK'S WHISTLE.

Editor Forest and Stream:

Will you kindly allow me a little more space in which to answer the arguments that you advance in support of your belief that the whistle of the woodcock is a vocal noise, and not made by the bird's wings?

You discriminate between the sound which the bird makes in rising, "which might perhaps be called a whistle," and which you admit is produced by the wings, and a "well-known ringing note" which you compare to the twitter of the kingbird. I am perfectly well aware that the woodcock's whistle varies considerably in form and perhaps slightly in tone, also at different times, but to my ear it does not vary to anything like the degree that the *scaipe* of the Wilson's snipe varies from the slight whistling which the latter bird sometimes makes with its wings. With the woodcock the variations have seemed to me to be distinctly correlated with different phases of flight. Thus I have observed that when the bird beats its wings vigorously, rapidly and evenly, its whistle is clear, shrill, and practically continuous; when the wing beats are slow and languid, the whistle becomes feebler and less resonant; when they are intermittent it is divided into distinct syllables or set of syllables, which, as you say, sometimes suggest the twitter of the kingbird. I have frequently seen a woodcock, after flying some distance, scale downward on set wings as if about to alight, and then, apparently changing its intention, turn sharply upward, at the same time resuming its flapping. In such cases the whistling has invariably ceased during the interval of sailing, and quite as invariably has been renewed

the wing began to move again. I have never known a woodcock to produce any form of whistling or twittering when its wings were at rest.

Facts impressed me long ago with the belief that a woodcock, throughout all its changes or modulations, was produced by the wings, but I did not feel that I had any authority on this point until after the experiences denoted in my last letter. The sound made by the wings of birds which I held by the bill was precisely the same as that made by other wounded birds which I have seen flap up ahead of a dog and attempt to fly in the air. You have described. It does not seem possible that the sound made by the injured wing may have been mistaken as to the origin of the sound made by the former, while in respect to the whistling of a woodcock during a vain attempt to fly, the wing actually turns quite over and land on its feet with feet kicking in the air. Moreover, if the whistling is vocal, why is the woodcock invariably dumb during its moult? As already stated, I have never seen a bird which lacked the "whistling quills" to produce a whistling or twittering, either during the flight or after being wounded and when trying to fly.

Wilson's snipe, I cannot see why the fact that, like other birds, it utters when wounded a sound which one admits to be vocal, should furnish any authority directly on the case of the woodcock. It would not be quite as logical to claim that because the whistling of a flying mallard or black duck is unquestionably the whistling sound supposed to be produced by the wing, the whistling of a woodcock's wing must be also vocal?

Concluding, however, I would say that, while I am not so firmly convinced that all of the various modifications of whistling and twittering which the woodcock makes are produced by its narrow, stiffened, primary feathers, I do not wish to be understood as denying that some of these sounds may be vocal. It is so mistaken about a comparatively simple thing, that I do not feel at liberty to settle positively a point as elusive as the origin of the woodcock's whistling, that I am willing to admit that the matter may be still an open question in which, it is to be hoped, the readers of Forest and Stream will investigate further at every opportunity.

WILLIAM BREWSTER.

Mass.

Editor Forest and Stream:

Your articles on the woodcock have interested me very much. In your issue of Aug. 1 both yourself and Mr. Wm. Brewster give opinions as to the manner of the woodcock making the whistling noise. I quite agree with Mr. Brewster that the noise is made by the wings, although for many years I was a doubter, until the following occurrence settled it in my mind. One day quite late in the autumn, having very slightly wounded a full-feathered, large fall bird, I retrieved it myself, not letting the dog touch it. As I was holding it by the bill my companion said, "Hear it whistle." I immediately placed the bill lengthwise, between my thumb and forefinger, holding it tightly the whole length; whenever it fluttered, which I let it do several times before killing, it made the twittering whistle so peculiar to the woodcock, that certainly was proof positive. As for the cause, I consider it the same as the whirring sound of the quail and grouse, viz., rapid motion of the wings, caused by fright. Quite often after flushing a woodcock, and when it is some distance away, when shot at and not killed, we hear the same whistle, caused, no doubt, by the additional fright at the sound of the gun or noise of the shot passing near; not a poetical but certainly a practical reason. I hope these articles will cause sportsmen to be more observing, and that new facts as regards this very eccentric bird may be brought to light.

SALEM, MASS.

W.

Mass. (Near Concord)

Philohela minor

1887

Vocal cry of wounded bird - Food.

Oct. 22

A ♂ Woodcock, slightly wing-tipped by my shot, uttered, when caught by my dog, the paap used in spring. J. C. Melvin who was with me assured me that it was the first time in his experience (as it certainly was in mine) when he had ever heard a wounded bird utter any vocal note. This bird when taken from the dog and released again uttered the paap repeatedly as it scuttled off over the leaves.

Examined stomachs of several birds. Found angle worms only partly digested & fragments

of what looked like *Emmelyphus*.



STORIES OF WOODCOCKS. "Woodcock are nearly as well known but not so plentiful as the snipe, to which they bear a strong resemblance," said a well-known sportsman. "One peculiarity of the bird is that during their migration they fly at a great altitude and when directly above the feeding grounds descend almost perpendicularly. The birds fly in companies and prefer hazy, calm weather for their journeys. The color of the bird is brown, mottled on the back with little black spots. The bill of the bird resembles a snipe very much, being about three inches long, of a bony structure and covered with tough skin. When the bird is feeding it spurts along through the marshes and by instinct seems to know where a worm is located, for without any other preparation whatever it runs its long bill in the soft earth and draws out a worm on its long barbed tongue.

"I have heard many stories about how the woodcock finds worms," continued the hunter, as he took a long puff at his cigar, "but about the funniest one I ever heard was that told by an old Charles County farmer. He held that the bird, after boring several holes in the ground, would rush over them with wings drooped so as to scrape the ground. This, he said, produced a sound similar to that of rain, and the worms, thinking that it was raining, would come out of the holes, when the woodcock would grab them. There is one peculiarity of the bird that I have failed to mention, and that is its secretiveness, and there are very few hunters who have ever found the nest of a woodcock. During the breeding season the bird utters a peculiar sound, which resembles something like 'kwauk.'

"I have seen the bird when in the act of emitting this sound and I was struck with the peculiar position he got himself into. He seemed to exert himself to produce this note to his utmost capacity; his head was inclined toward the ground and he made a strong forward movement of his body simultaneously with the emission of the sound; then he listened and repeated the sound again. The birds are of a fine flavor and much prized by epicures throughout the world. The way I hunt them is with a cocker spaniel. You know these species of dogs can go through any amount of tangled underbrush. A man should provide himself with a pair of waterproof boots. The birds will be found generally in marshy woodland, and when they get up, make a peculiar singing sound. A sportsman must be a good shot to bag them, for they are up and gone before you have time to think. The season does not last long, for on the first approach of hard weather the birds migrate, although I have seen woodcock throughout a mild winter." [Washington Star. 1890]

No. 23
1890. pp. 453-454

AND STREAM.

453

tural History.

WOODCOCK'S WHISTLE.

I have read for a long time has inter-uch as Mr. Trumbull's account of his. It certainly deserves the encomium in it editorially, for it is a fascinating important piece of evidence. Never-ank you justified in saying that it ally dispose of the vexed question as k whistles," or in assuming that those he ground that the sound is made by proved to be wholly in the wrong. true, appears to entertain the same s positive, and his article affords in-er that his conclusions are not wholly ervations on which they rest or that press these conclusions with entire on.

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to claim.

In a letter that appeared in the issue of FOREST AND STREAM for Aug. 22, 1889, I called attention to the marked variation of the woodcock's whistle, and, in concluding, said: "That while I believe most firmly that all the various modifications of whistling and twittering which the woodcock makes while flying are produced by the narrow, stiffened primary quills, I do not wish to be understood as denying that at least some of these sounds may be vocal." I confess that these words were added at the close of my letter more with some vague idea of guarding against possible error than from any real expectation that they might come true; but during the two shooting seasons that have passed since they were written I have been struck repeatedly by the apparent vocal quality of some of the sounds accompanying a woodcock's flight, and more than once have felt strong suspicions that my original position in the matter might be partly wrong. Mr. Trumbull has now shown conclusively that it was partly wrong, for I no longer doubt that some at least of the sounds which I believe to be made by the wings are really vocal. But has he proved that all are vocal? What becomes of the testimony of those of us who have held slightly wounded birds by the bill and heard the ringing sounds of the flushed cock coming directly and unmistakably (as we have thought) from the beating pinions; at first, as the wings moved rapidly and vigorously, in a continuous silvery trill, then, as the bird became tired and relaxed its efforts, more faintly and disconnectedly, each note exactly accompanying a downward stroke of the wing. Were our birds also "talking with their mouths" and deluding us the while by idle pantomime? What, moreover, can be the function of the attenuated primaries (I suppose we may no longer call them whistling quills)? How does Mr. Trumbull explain the fact (attested by several good observers) that moulting woodcock who lack these quills never whistle, and the still more significant fact (which I have noted repeatedly, especially during the last two seasons) that birds which have nearly finished the moult and have the stiffened primaries nearly but not quite fully grown whistle more faintly than do birds in perfect plumage? Is the woodcock dumb when moulting and does he afterward graduate his vocal twitter in nice accord with the different stages of growth of his curious primary quills?

These and similar questions have occurred to me in thinking over Mr. Trumbull's testimony. I do not see how they can be answered if we must conclude that Mr. Trumbull is wholly right and we of the other side wholly wrong. It is as if some high authority on dogs were to assert that pointers and setters depend wholly on their sense of hearing in searching for game, and in proof of such assertion were to narrate a series of the most convincing experiments. A dog was first hunted with his eyes and nose bandaged in such a way that it was impossible for him to see or smell anything. He made a number of staunch points and was observed to pause and listen attentively while drawing on his birds. When pointing there was a slight but significant raising and lowering of the ears. Then his nose and eyes were freed and his ears stuffed tightly. While in this condition he ran over bird after bird and evinced unmistakable surprise and disgust at flushing them. None of the motions of the nose or lips which have been mentioned by writers as accompanying the act of drawing on game were detected, although they were carefully looked for. It was ascertained, however, that the nose was of some use in finding a piece of meat. These experiments were made in the presence of a number of well-known sportsmen, all of whom expressed astonishment at the result, but acknowledged it no longer possible to deny that a dog discovers the presence of game solely by his sense of hearing.

Such a comparison may seem absurd on first thought, but is it really so after serious consideration? In the two cases there is of course this difference; the dog has been so long and closely associated with man that the precise nature of the functions performed by his eyes, nose and

ears may be assumed to be very perfectly understood; whereas, the woodcock, despite the fact that it is so generally hunted, is certainly known intimately but to few, if indeed to any one. Nevertheless I confess I am almost as ready to believe that my pointer's nose is a mere ornamental appendage and that I have to thank his keenness of hearing for the many birds that he has enabled me to bag, as I am to credit the assumption that the woodcock's attenuated primaries are used merely to produce sounds similar to those "made by many kinds of birds," and that a flushed cock talks only "with his mouth." I admit that dogs are occasionally guided in the direction of a bird by some noise that it makes and that at times they point game which they see but do not smell; but I have abundant proofs that scent is the faculty on which they chiefly depend.

So with the woodcock I have had experiences which have convinced me that the sound ordinarily made by the rising bird is produced by the wings. Mr. Trumbull, on the other hand, has heard this sound or something very like it given by a captive woodcock which, at the time, was standing on the ground with its wings tightly closed and which accompanied the notes by a slight but evident movement of its throat or breast. Sure of the correctness of his own impressions he not unnaturally concludes that the senses of other observers must have deceived them, and accordingly passes over their testimony in silence in drawing his final conclusions. If it must be admitted that the sounds which he has shown to be vocal are identical with those which some of us believe we have traced to the wings, the question is indeed settled, for, however good our proofs, Mr. Trumbull's are obviously better, and it is idle to claim that the same sounds are produced in radically different ways. But may there not be two sounds seemingly much alike but really of different character and origin?

It becomes evident on close reading of Mr. Trumbull's article that he is not quite sure of his identification of these vocal notes; in other words he hesitates to assert that they were positively the same as those of the flushed bird. They "were seldom so loud or energetic * * * nor were most of them like those heard in the cover." But were sufficiently similar "to be regarded as very nearly the sound we were listening for," while others "seemed absolute reproductions of those of the flushed bird as we remember them; it is, of course, impossible to recall them literally enough for nice comparison, no matter how often they have thrilled us." In any ordinary case the very frankness of these admissions would prevent the critic from using them against a writer who shows such evident determination to be entirely fair and accurate at possible expense to his argument, and it would be manifestly unwarrantable to claim that the mere opinions of an ornithologist and sportsman of Mr. Trumbull's standing and experience are not entitled to much weight.

But the case is not an ordinary one, and the entire confidence which otherwise might be reposed in Mr. Trumbull's convictions must be more or less affected by the fact that other sportsmen have recorded directly opposite convictions based on evidence which cannot be lightly disregarded. In this connection it also seems fair to insist that if the importance of a direct comparison of sounds be conceded, the advantage lies with the supporters—perhaps I should now say the defenders—of the wing theory, for their experiments have been made in the covers and immediately after listening to the sound of the flushed bird. As far as my personal experiences of this kind are concerned, I will say that I have no doubts whatever that the sound made by the wounded bird as I held it in my hand was identical with that which it had given on rising only a minute or two before. It may be objected that I was deceived as to the origin of this sound, even although I held the bird within a few inches of my face. I admit that this is possible, but it is not to my mind more probable than that Mr. Trumbull was also deceived, and that his captive really made its various twitters, squeaks and murmurs by an undetected rubbing together or "stridulation" of its stiffened primary quills—a theory which I am not, of course, disposed to maintain.

What I do maintain is simply this, that some of Mr. Trumbull's conclusions relating to the flight sounds of the woodcock are not satisfactorily proven by his own observations, while they are directly negated by the experience of certain other sportsmen, whose testimony should not be arbitrarily dismissed. If, however, it can be shown that some of these conclusions have been a trifle too broadly drawn and that Mr. Trumbull, in common with others who have written on the subject, has fallen into error in supposing that all the characteristic flights of the woodcock are produced in the same way, most of the difficulties of the case will at once disappear. In other words, why may it not be that the "twitter" ascertained by Mr. Trumbull to be vocal has in some of its variations so strong a resemblance to a twitter-like whistle made by the wings that the two have been generally, if not universally, confused by ornithologists and sportsmen?

At first thought this suggestion may not seem to differ materially from that advanced in the closing paragraph of Mr. Trumbull's article; but Mr. Trumbull apparently indorses the idea expressed in his quotation from Frank Forrester that the "twitter" and "whistle" are habitually given simultaneously by birds of perfect plumage, and in this and other connections he distinctly implies that the "whistle" is at best a slight and in no way characteristic sound, and that it is usually drowned by the vocal note, the latter being the sound ordinarily heard from a rising woodcock.

Now what I have found to be the characteristic sound of a full-feathered woodcock on rising and afterward during vigorous, protracted flight is a clear, continuous, pulsating whistle closely similar to that made by the wings of certain ducks, but louder (perhaps because the woodcock is usually nearer than ducks are apt to be) and rather more silvery and musical in tone. It is not subject, so far as I have observed, to marked modifications of tone, but the pulsations vary in distinctness with the speed at which the bird is moving. In very rapid flight they are often so run together as to be inappreciable. This whistle I believe to be made by the wings, or rather by the well known specialized outer primaries. I have never heard it from a bird which lacked these quills, nor on the other hand have I known a bird in which they proved to be fully developed rise in the ordinary manner without whistling, although a crafty old cock will not infrequently steal off close to the ground, moving its wings in a peculiar quiv-

Drake was struck by lightning together with two horse amount of hay. Two h were saved. Loss esti ning struck the barn of cy Point, damaging a pigs. Several people stunned by the bolts. At Waltham a bolt st house owned by Cha Adams and Ash stre badly cracked.

ANOTHER ELECTR

A. Maine Woman
Tremont

There was another last night. It happen The police say that Freeport, Me., while mont street, near Ma and carried some fee north, the number of She was picked up by and hastily conveyed t eral Hospital in a her her injuries were fou scalp wound on left tiple bruises.

The condition of th ured by the electric- avenue Monday aftern day. John Baxter is doctors think that Joh

SENT TO THE

Sentences Impose
Superior Cr

In the Superior Cr Judge Thompson sent seven years in State p killing Michael Hale June 26.

Edwin Richardson, f the tailor shop of I place, April 22, was se State prison. Richard years' sentence, havin bridge a short time a committed in Somerv Dr. Edward de la Gr saulting police Lieut cane at Station 5 on M

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Dec. 25. 1890. pp. 453-454

FOREST AND STREAM.

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Natural History.

THE WOODCOCK'S WHISTLE.

NOTHING that I have read for a long time has interested me so much as Mr. Trumbull's account of his captive woodcock. It certainly deserves the encomium which you bestow on it editorially, for it is a fascinating story as well as an important piece of evidence. Nevertheless, I cannot think you justified in saying that it "would seem to finally dispose of the vexed question as to how the woodcock whistles," or in assuming that those "who have taken the ground that the sound is made by the wings" are now proved to be wholly in the wrong. Mr. Trumbull, it is true, appears to entertain the same opinion, but he is less positive, and his article affords internal evidence either that his conclusions are not wholly sustained by the observations on which they rest or that he has failed to express these conclusions with entire clearness and precision.

For example, he says in one place that the vocal notes of his bird were so like the whistling of ducks' wings as actually to deceive his companion, Mr. Marchant, into the belief that wild ducks were passing over at the time; yet in the closing paragraph of his article he affirms that "when a woodcock 'twitters' he squeaks, pipes, squeaks, rather than whistles," and adds, "The sound made in swift flight by the wings of this and other species—many of our ducks, for example—is perhaps more appropriately termed a whistle." Again, while asserting quite positively in two different connections that he, as well as several friends who were fortunate enough to participate in the observations, were convinced that some of the vocal notes were identical with those made by free birds during ordinary flight, he admits that they "were seldom so loud or energetic as those of the flushed bird, nor were most of them like those heard in the cover. Yet at almost every trial there was at least one squeaky enough to be regarded as very nearly the sound we were listening for, certainly enough like it to convince any doubter who happened to be present that a flushed cock 'talks with his mouth.'"

I do not call attention to these passages in any spirit of idle controversy, nor with the least intention of discrediting the observations to which they relate, but simply because they appear to me to furnish some grounds for suspecting that Mr. Trumbull's observations have not proved quite all that he, as well as you, Mr. Editor, seem disposed to claim.

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Wilson Flegg's "The Birds and
Seasons of New England." Bos-
ton: Geo. B. Osgood & Co., 1875.

P. 333. [The Woodcock] makes his ^{first} appearance
here early in April, and at this time
we may observe that soaring hab-
it which renders him out of the
picturesque objects of nature. This
soaring takes place soon after
sunset, continues during twi-
light, and is repeated at a cor-
responding hour in the morn-
ing. If you listen at these times
near the place of his roost,
he will soon reveal himself
by a lively peep, frequently ut-
tered from the ground. While
repeating this note he may
be seen strutting about like
a Turkey-cock, with fantas-
tic jerkinings of the tail and a
frequent turning of the head;

Good description of song etc.

G. Wilson Flegg's Birds & Seasons
of N. E. (pp. 333, 334, 336)

Colaptes auratus

and his mate is, I believe, at this time not far off. Suddenly he springs upward, and with a wide circular sweep, uttering at the same time a rapid whistling note, he rises in a spiral course to a great height in the air. At the summit of his ascent, he hovers about with irregular motions, chirping a melody of broken notes, like imperfect warbling. This continues about ten or fifteen seconds, when it ceases and he descends rapidly to the ground. We seldom hear him in his descent, but receive the first intimation of it by the repetition of his peep, like the sound produced by those minute wooden trumpets sold at the German toy-shops.

x x x x x x x x x

There are other sounds connected with the flight of the Woodcock that

increase his importance as an actor in the great melodrama of Nature. When we stroll away at dusk from the ruin of the town, to a spot where the stillness permits us to hear distinctly all those faint sounds which are turned by the silence of night into music, we may hear at frequent intervals the hum produced by the irregular flight of the Woodcock as he passes over short distances near the wood. It is like the sound of the wings of doves, or like that produced by the rapid whistling of a slender rod through the air. There is a plaintive feeling of mystery attached to these unusual flights that yields a savor of romance to the quiet voluptuousness of a summer evening.

Good description of song etc.

G. Wilson Filley's Birds & Seasons
of N. E. (pp. 333, 334, 336)

Philohela minor

V

Lexington,
3 April '91

My dear Brewster:

I read yr account of the
Woodcock with much interest.
Last year I noted that the
peeping spells varied in length
from 40 s. to 2 m. 10 s. and that
the song-flight lasted from
45 to 50 s., the song proper be-
ing 10 s. in its accomplishment.
While the peeping is entirely
irregular in its duration, you
will observe the close agree-
ment between our record of
the time consumed by the
ascension and by the proper
song. Wilson Flagg says
that the song lasts from

Good description of song etc.

G. Wilson Flagg's Birds & Seasons
of N. E. (pp. 333, 334, 336)

Phalacrocorax minor

10 to 15 s. Have you ever timed
the intervals between the flaps?
Tory (Birds in the Bush) avers
that this interval is from 15 to
20 s. but this is surely too much.
T. gives the length of the flight
as "a few seconds more than
a minute".

I decided last year that the
bird under observation sprang
up against the wind & de-
scribed a left-handed spiral.
I wonder whether this holds good
of all individuals. The normal
right-handedness of man has
been correlated by some anatomists
with the disposition of the aor-
tic arch. As in birds the oppo-
site arch to that in man is
the one that persists, the bird

ought to be left-winged to
suit the theory of these phys-
iologists. Have you ever ob-
served whether hawks etc.
circle to the right or to the
left or either way indifferently?
A Pulio laticatus which I
wounded yesterday sailed
invariably to the left ↶.
Do "Bolles's Brown Creepers"
make right- or left-handed (or
rather legged) spirals? Per-
haps, however, the asymmetri-
cal aorta won't affect the legs!
Did I tell you that I found
the Yellow-rumps again in
the same place on Mar. 18
(6 birds)? Saw one Fox Sparrow
yesterday, one Towhee (singing)
Mar. 31. A Purple Finch singing
Mar. 28. March record for

Good description of song etc.

G. Nelson Flaggs Birds & Seasons
of N. E. (pp. 333, 334, 336)

Chelidon minor

7

Cedar-bird, 8th (one flock), 31st
& flock of 20+.)

No Woodcock yet in Deep-
ington.

Yours sincerely

W. F. Fugate

Good description of song etc.

G. Wilson Filley's Birds & Seasons
of N. C. (pp. 333, 334, 336)

Phalacrocorax minor

Weymouth, 5 Apr. '91

My dear Brewster:

After supper to-night I went up Davis Hill - 7 minutes walk from the house - where I found a Woodcock in full blast when I arrived - at about 6.30. During his first ascent after my arrival I rushed up and sat down near the spot where he had been peeping. He alit just seven paces from me, it being so light that I could clearly see him with the naked eye (he was so close that I did not dare to ruin my opera-glasses or my eyes for

my mind more probable than that Mr. Trumbull was also deceived, and that his capture really made its various twitters, squeaks and murmurs by an undetected rubbing together or "stridulation" of its stiffened primary quills - a theory which I am not, of course, disposed to maintain. What I do maintain is simply this, that some of Mr. Trumbull's conclusions relating to the flight sounds of the woodcock are not satisfactorily proven by his own observations, while they are directly negatived by the experience of certain other sportsmen, whose testimony should not be arbitrarily dismissed. If, however, it can be shown that some of these conclusions have been a trifle too broadly drawn and that Mr. Trumbull, in common with others who have written on the subject, has fallen into error in supposing that all the characteristic flights of the woodcock are produced in the same way, most of the difficulties of the case will at once disappear. In other words, why may it not be that the "twitter" as-
certained by Mr. Trumbull to be vocal has in some of its variations so strong a resemblance to a twitter-like whistle made by the wings that the two have been generally, if not universally, confused by ornithologists and sportsmen?
At first thought this suggestion may not seem to differ materially from that advanced in the closing paragraph of Mr. Trumbull's article; but Mr. Trumbull apparently indorses the idea expressed in his quotation from Frank Forrester that the "twitter" and "whistle" are habitually

3 yards. He always sprang up against the wind at a very slight angle with the ground:

Generally he described a left-handed spiral, but twice or thrice he turned to the right.

The ascensions lasted from 50 to 60 seconds, the song proper about 10 seconds. He was singing when I arrived (about 6.30) and he was still at ^{it} when (Chillie thro') I came away at 7.10.

The situation is peculiarly favorable for observation - an open pasture near the top of a hill where his whole flight is seen against the western sky. During his first few flights tonight I could see him as plainly as in broad noon. I

2
fear of frightening him). He at once proceeded with his peeping. Each peep was closely preceded by a put'l sound - as you put it, like a drop of water falling into a cistern. As the peep is uttered he opens his bill, jerks his head, and slightly opens his wings. After peeping a few times he begins to strut about (still peeping) over a small area, facing now this way, now that. I remained in the same spot thro' two more peeping spells with my glasses at my eyes before his descent, so that twice I saw the terrestrial manoeuvres thro the glasses at from 7 to 10

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am sorry to say that I did
not count the no. of flights,
but it was much in excess
of any thing I ever saw
at Helmut Hill. Moreover,
the bird was remarkably
tame. He must have seen
me, unless as blind as a
mole, for I was merely
sitting down beside a little
Swarf Pitch Pine. Would
you had been there!

To-morrow night, instead of
going to the N. O. C. I shall go to
Davis Hill again, & if he is
still there I hope you will
be able to come over on Wednes-
day. I will see you Wed. A. M.
I shall also make an early
morning visit, it being so near the
house. God many Fox Sparrows
today
Yrs sincerely
W. Ferguson

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deceived, and that his captive really made its various
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to-day
for the evening
17th June 1891

So warm night, intention of
going to the N.O.C. I shall go to
again this evening, & if I do
not think I take you with
me the steam when on the
bay. Write me your best. A.M.
Of course also write an early
morning note, if being so near the
house. Good morning to all yours
to-day

Philohela minor - n. t. 1
Davis Hill, Georgetown
April 11, 1891 - P.M.

Bird left cover with twitter at 5.40 & immedi-
ately began to pump. Wind southerly, cloudy sky.
Sunset, 5.20. I knelt behind a rock during
the bird's first ascension. He alit 7 feet
from me on the sandier mass in a per-
fectly open space. I could see every feather
and shade of color distinctly. Description
of bird:



put once, twice, rarely thrice before each
pump. With each pump the head is thrown
backward a little, the wing slightly ex-
tended, the jugulum a trifle inflated
but not remarkably so. No erection or
spread of tail discernible. Frequently
shifts his position over an area

of a few square feet, facing in different directions. Sometimes mounts the diminutive knolls. Hit in the same spot on his 2d descent. 3d descent some distance further away & I could not see him on the ground. 4th and 5th in the original spot. 6th further down the hill & I could not see him on the ground. During the next flight I took a position further away as it was over growing, so much that I could not see him from a distance (6.55 o'clock). Made but one ascent of the number of peeps - 8th series, 17. Ninth series consisted chiefly of just-bills with not few peeps. (I am sure I did not distinguish him - I was now too far away - a dog was barking.) He finally sprang up for his next flight immediately on the knolls. Made in all, 15 ascents, the last at 7.12. After his last ascent he peeped till 7.23. Waiting about 5 minutes after all was still & ap-

proached his station & flushed him, he taking a short flight. On being immediately flushed a second time he flew over to the northwest as on previous occasions after the performance was finished. The corner from which he issued at the first was the same one to which he has gone in the morning immediately after his last excursion (to the S.E. of his stamping-ground). In his ascents he always runs up wind. I would to left or (sometimes) to right. The spiral at first covers several acres diminishing as the bird reaches his maximum height. Then, on one occasion I distinctly saw him reverse his course, making a sigmoid curve instead of a ~~straight~~ circle: -



The "check-marks" betray the stamping-ground.

you had seen them!
So many night, make of
young in N.O.C. I shall go to
again this again, & if the is
and then I hope you will
be able to see them on the
day. Write on you 17th. 8. 9. m.
Of course also make an entry
in my diary, it being so near the
house. And many things
to-day
17th

You had seen them!
 To-morrow night, instead of
 going to the N.O.C. I shall go to
 swim this again, & if he is
 still there I hope you will
 be able to swim with me on Friday-
 day. Write me your best R. M.
 Of course this note can only
 remain with it, it being so near the
 hour. And many respects
 to you
 M. G. Trumbull

Forest & Stream, Vol. XXXV. - No. 23.
 Dec. 25, 1890. p. 454.

Editor Forest and Stream:
 In your editorial comments on Mr. Gurdon Trumbull's article on the woodcock, in your edition of the 11th inst., you say that no one had remarked on the curving of the upper mandible of the bill. I have had but little opportunity for studying the woodcock, never having lived in a section where the bird is more than a casual visitor, but I have had the good luck to see the bird curve the mandible while I held him, entirely uninjured, in my hand. Back in the early 80s (I cannot say which), while stationed at the Boston Navy Yard, some men of my department saw a woodcock light on the ground and run into a pile of lumber; they secured him without starting a feather, and brought him to me. I put him in a wire house in which my children had had some rabbits and kept him four days. I did not have the time to give to a close study of his habits, but one thing I did have my attention called to and that was the curving of the bill. I had the bird in my hand before putting him in the inclosure and while examining the head and eyes I took hold of the tip of the bill and immediately on my letting go he curved the bill exactly as shown in Mr. Trumbull's sketch. I was uneasy at first, thinking I had injured the bill, but in a short time the bill was in its proper shape. I repeated the thing three or four times and always with the same result. I did not see the bird feed, although I have no doubt that he did so, for after four days' confinement he was as plump as any bird I ever saw, there were plenty of worms in the earth in the inclosure and I kept a place very wet, but did not examine for borings. At first the bird was quite wild, and when I would go into the inclosure would start to fly, but would bring up against the screen and fall back. I thought at first he would kill himself, but the hard knocks did not seem to hurt him in the least. In all of his quick short flights I did not hear the peculiar noise the woodcock makes in flight; I did hear the noise noted by Mr. Trumbull when I approached the bird. He got very tame, and on the fourth day when I took him out of the cage to set him at liberty I had no trouble in catching him, he allowed me to pick him up without trying to get away from me, and when I reached the open fields and let him out of the basket he walked around, with my wife and me just standing within 10ft. of him, for at least a minute before he took flight. The bird was very interesting, and I was sorry I did not have the time to observe him more thoroughly. As to the sound made by the woodcock when in flight, I do not believe in the "wing theory" any more than I believe that the *skeep* of the snipe is made by the wings. U. S. G. WHITE.

Natural History.

THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK.

Editor Forest and Stream:

I have read with peculiar interest, and sometimes with great surprise, the articles that have appeared in your paper concerning the "ways of the woodcock," about which such diversity of opinion exists. The details of the many theories advanced, the various "facts and fancies" need not be entered into here. Your readers must have become already very familiar with the literature of the subject—not to say weary of it. I have earnestly wished for an opportunity, such as I have lately had, of more thoroughly investigating the bird's manner of feeding, its notes, etc.

On Wednesday, Nov. 19, a live woodcock was brought me by a friend. It had, I was told, been already "three or four days" in confinement. It was apparently unhurt, and a perfectly strong, healthy bird, and remained so until the following Monday, when, with my full consent and best wishes, it flew rapidly away. I kept it in a long pine box with a wire netting in front, at a greenhouse near by, where in a bright light I could easily watch its movements. A piece of carpet, however, was thrown over one end of the coop to afford the little fellow a shady retreat. He came into my possession about 11 o'clock in the morning, and from that hour until 11 A. M. Monday, the day of his release, I devoted myself almost exclusively to studying his ways. He ate, by actual measurement, about a half-pint of earth worms during each day (twenty-four hours); the worms being measured without any dirt, of course: each one picked up by itself, shaken clean, and dropped into the measure. A few "white grubs" of different sizes were also supplied: he ate the little ones but refused the larger. None of the angle worms, however, seemed too large for him.

The worms were kept at the brightly lighted end of the coop in a box of earth which afforded a feeding surface of a little over 12x6 in., the earth having been flattened down with the hand and sprinkled with water. He fed at very irregular hours, and ate fully as much by daylight as in the dark, and food was accessible to him at all times. I say "him," believing that this bird was a male, but I could not bring myself to determine the matter by dissection—he was such a winning little creature.

The intervals between his meals were perhaps from half an hour to three hours, this very rough estimate being founded upon the day and evening feeding. I did not watch him so constantly during the evening as I did in the daytime. I visited him, however, every evening once or twice, sometimes making him a long call by the light of a lantern. All that I know about the remainder of the night and the early morning was gained by re-measuring the worms and finding how many were gone.

After eating all he wanted—from four to seven worms, let us say—he would sometimes retire to his shady corner, at other times stand or squat exactly where the last worm was swallowed, remaining motionless until moved again by hunger. He took no exercise unless forced to, and was often found with his big head turned backward and his long bill beneath his wing. A dish of water was always by his side, but I never saw him touch it.

I will add to my estimate of the number of worms eaten at a single meal, that there were certain occasions in which he quite regularly ate less than three; for example, when friends of mine called, as many did, to see the bird. I could start him to "boring" by driving him about the coop very gently. He would then get upon the dirt, and with very little of the preliminary teetering, which I describe further along, make a few rather short, hasty, nervous thrusts, and finally extract and swallow a worm—at the most two worms—not hungrily at all, but rather as if he were trying to make sure of a little more of his property before we stole it. He never (to my knowledge) picked up a worm that lay upon the surface, or any worm that was not entirely covered with soil. I have several times seen him walk directly over those that were exposed without paying them the least attention. Once a worm that he had extracted slipped from his bill and lay squirming about in plain sight, but he made no effort to recover it.

His manner of feeding was very nearly like that of Mr. Eldon's woodcock, mentioned in your issue of Nov. 27, 1890, but as corroboration is always a good thing—and my bird did not act precisely like his—I will include my own observations, I am writing in the past tense, but my narrative is a summary of copious notes made daily while the bird was with me; in no instance am I trusting to memory.

When hungry my bird would walk out of his dark corner and step up, or hop up on the wet earth, stand there usually for a short time motionless, then slowly and methodically teeter or swing himself up and down as if trying to throw his fullest weight upon his feet (but I will speak of this further on), then, generally without any preliminary pecking, thrust his bill into the mud, sometimes two-thirds its length at the first trial, but oftener pushing it in by degrees a third of its length perhaps at a time, pulling it a little outward again to give the next thrust greater force, and when probing deeply there was a rooting shake or energetic tremor to the head. If he found a worm—and he almost always did, they were planted so thickly—the bill was entirely withdrawn with the worm held more or less crosswise between the partly opened mandibles; it was quickly worked around, however, until one end—it made no difference which—was started straight and then swallowed. I never saw him pull out a worm by its end, its position always had to be changed, a little at least, before it was worked upward and the swallowing really began. While watching, my eyes were usually within three or four feet of him, and often—after he had become more tame—within eighteen inches of his bill. Sometimes after a momentary and thoughtful pause, he would suddenly pull his beak from a hole that he had made, and hurriedly start another very near it, as though he had located the fellow while in the first hole, but could not quite reach him.

Though no one will claim that all the birds of any species conduct themselves precisely alike upon all occasions, yet it now seems entirely reasonable to infer that no woodcock ever sucks a worm into its throat before withdrawing its bill from the ground; that the term "bog-sucker" is a misnomer, and that Audubon would not have "concluded" as he did, had he not watched his woodcock in a "partially darkened" room.

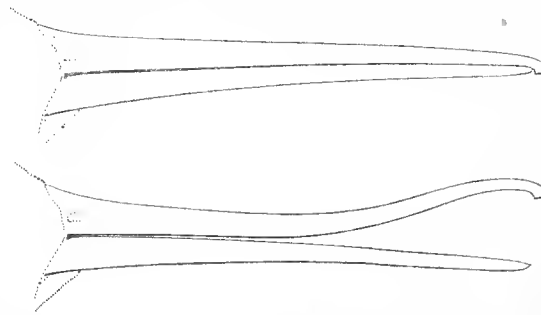
After a worm had been swallowed there was commonly a decided pause during which the bird remained motionless—from forty-five seconds to three minutes let us say—then the preliminary teetering began again. I never saw him "cock his head on one side" in the act of listening, and though he once made a quick little backward jump while feeding, I saw no "dancing" or "stamping." While the teetering was going on both feet remained upon the ground, and his wings were at all times closely folded while standing or squatting, and though while moving quickly or excited his tail was lifted, I never saw it spread while the bird was on his feet.

Whether this preliminary teetering or swinging lift and fall of the body was to cause the worm below to move and thus reveal its whereabouts, or whether the bird was simply pulling himself together for the muscular effort that was to follow—as a boy swings his arms and body before jumping—remains an open question; but the movement was more vigorous when it followed one of his long periods of statue-like repose. A very mild form of the teetering often preceded an evacuation.

When, as sometimes happened, a worm which he had extracted squirmed into a position that seemed to baffle the powers of the bill alone he would lift his foot—as others have described—in an impatient manner, brush it quickly along the side of the bill and knock the worm into place. He also used his toes to wipe the mud from his beak; but I regret to say that my little woodcock was sometimes very careless about his personal appearance, and that he once sat for nearly an hour with a large lump of mud resting on the upper mandible and the pretty feathers of his forehead.

He had no particular position for his feet while feeding; at one time they would be side by side, at another time one or the other would be advanced. His thrusts were made at all sorts of angles: now directly downward or perpendicularly, another time to the front at an angle of forty-five degrees perhaps, or inwardly beneath his breast, almost as far back as his toes. Once while probing in the last-named fashion he lost his balance and was very near turning a forward somersault.

I had heard from Dr. S., who secured this woodcock for me, that he and his friend Mr. B. had seen the bird turn up the end of its upper mandible in a very peculiar and inexplicable manner. I was urged to watch carefully for a repetition of the occurrence. At the time I paid but little attention to the statement, I was watching for so many other events, but while carrying my bird out into the country that last day of its confinement, my friend's remark was most vividly recalled. I was holding the bird in my hand with a handkerchief around him, covering all but the bill, when suddenly, as he was making one of his frequent struggles to get away, I saw that the upper mandible was thrown upward as I have represented it in the lower outline of the accompanying woodcut. For an



instant I thought that the bird must have met with an accident in some way, but as I touched the lifted mandible it was lowered to the usual position. Twice more during my walk he threw up the mandible in the same fashion, and each time I held him directly in front of my eyes and studied most carefully the exact curvature. There was no "dilation," nor any change of form other than that which I describe. He once held the bill in this strange position for nearly, if not quite, half a minute.

After liberating my captive and reaching home, I immediately procured a woodcock that had been recently killed, and found that I could easily curve its mandible into the precise position into which my live bird could curve his own at will. Though my outline was made from the dead woodcock, it was drawn while the aspect of the live bird was thoroughly fresh in my mind (within two hours after I had witnessed the occurrence). For the purpose of comparison I have also drawn the bill as it is commonly seen.

During the first day with me my bird made no sound of any kind, and was somewhat frightened or depressed, though not as much so as most birds would have been under the circumstances—the woodcock is one of the most gentle and trustful of birds, as every one knows, and so many have testified—but on the following morning he seemed quite reconciled to his surroundings, and but little disturbed by my reappearance. He was so much at home, indeed, that when I reached my hand for the worm box he did not move away as he had done before, but stood his ground manfully, uttering two very positive notes of remonstrance. At this point of the proceedings the owner of the greenhouse (Robert Marchant), who was standing about ten feet from the cage, jumped for the outside door with the exclamation, "Wild ducks going over—don't you hear 'em!" I quickly motioned him to be silent and to come nearer; and when it uttered a few more notes, more squeaky than the first, Robert, who little knew what important evidence he was bearing, said: "That's the noise they make when they jump up in the woods. It sounded before like ducks a long way off."

From that morning (Nov. 20) until I gave the bird its freedom (Nov. 24) I could call forth these or similar notes, day or evening, whenever I chose to do so, and more and more easily as the bird grew tamer, by simply putting my hand into the coop and moving it very slowly and hesitatingly toward him. The notes, though having decidedly similar qualities, varied from an almost dovelike murmur to a positive and almost ratlike squeak. They were sometimes uttered singly and sometimes two or three in succession.

The bird created quite a sensation locally, and a number of sportsmen came to see and hear him, and all these gentlemen agree with me that the notes heard, or rather some of those notes, were undeniably the sounds which have caused so much discussion—the sounds, that is to say, which are made by the flushed cock, and to which

the words squeal, whistle, piping alarm note, twitter, jingle, etc., have been applied.

While my bird was "talking," there was not the least movement of the wings nor of the bill, the mandibles remaining tightly closed. The only movement anywhere, with the exception of a very slight drawing backward as my hand advanced, was in the throat or breast; it is impossible to say which, as the bird rarely showed any of his neck while in the coop. He sat, stood, walked and hopped with head drawn in to the shoulders, his breast touching or nearly touching the base of the bill.

The notes were seldom so loud or energetic as those of the flushed bird, nor were most of them like those heard in the cover. Yet at almost every trial there was at least one squeaky enough to be regarded as very nearly the sound we were listening for, certainly enough like it to convince any doubter who happened to be present, that a flushed cock "talks with its mouth."

Some of the notes seemed absolute reproductions of those of the flushed bird as we remember them; it is, of course, impossible to recall them literally enough for nice comparison, no matter how often they have thrilled us. Once as I held the bird pinioned in my hand he made a violent and almost successful struggle to free himself, uttering at the same time two notes so thrillingly like those of his wilder brother that for an instant I was really unconscious of my surroundings, and the words "mark cock" were very near my lips. I have listened many times while my bird was flapping his wings, as I held him (sometimes by the bill and sometimes by the legs) suspended in the air, for those sounds which certain writers have mentioned as being heard at such times. Once—and once only—in over twenty trials I heard two very faint peeps. Upon all other occasions there was no sound but that of rapid fanning, and when the motion was at its highest the cutting *whit, whit, whit* of the wings that would be made by many kinds of birds under similar conditions. The two peeps (I do not know how better to describe them) were the only doubtful sounds that the bird was heard to make. They were so very faint that my friend Mr. N., who was with me at the time, heard only one of them, and our heads were as near the bird's wings as we could get them without being hit. Was that little sound, we asked each other, vocal, or was it an intensified, whistling *whit* of the wing?

Two of the sportsmen who witnessed my bird's performances had been lifelong believers in the wing-twitter theory, and they were very watchful critics; but after the bird had been induced to utter a number of its notes, and had been held up for the wing-beating or flapping performance, and each wing had been carefully examined to see if the attenuated primaries and pollex feathers were in place, these gentlemen acknowledged that the sounds about which so much has been said are vocal beyond question, and that the *whit, whit, whit* of the pinions—no matter how loudly and shrilly made in rapid flight—is not liable ever to be confused with the vocal notes by any one with an experience like ours.

When a woodcock "twitters" he squeals, pipes, squeaks, rather than whistles. The sound made in swift flight by the wings of this and other species—many of our ducks for example—is perhaps more appropriately termed a whistle. Frank Forester makes the same distinction. He speaks of the woodcock's flight after the leaves are off the underbrush—of its darting away "on a vigorous and whistling pinion, with sharp-piping alarm note, swift as a rifle bullet."

GURDON TRUMBULL.

HARTFORD, Conn.

THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK.

THE article on the woodcock, contributed to this week's FOREST AND STREAM by Mr. Gurdon Trumbull, is perhaps the most important essay on this bird that has ever been published. To the sportsman, and more especially to the sportsman who is a naturalist as well, it is as entertaining as a novel, and holds the attention from its beginning to its end. While many of the observations recorded in this article are merely confirmatory of those which have been made by others it contains several points which are entirely new and would seem to finally dispose of the vexed question as to how the woodcock whistles. Every one who has followed the literature of this subject will remember what diverse views have been held on this point, and how earnestly it has been debated *pro* and *con*, such an eminent naturalist as Mr. Brewster, with a vast number of sportsmen, taking the ground that the sound is made by the wings, while an almost equal number of writers, some of them well-known, have held that the woodcock literally, as Mr. Trumbull puts it, "talks with his mouth."

We do not recollect that any man has ever before stated that he has seen the woodcock curve up the tip of his upper mandible as recorded by Mr. Trumbull, although the bird's ability to do this was inferred from an examination of its boring holes, in a note published in FOREST AND STREAM of Nov. 6 last.

Mr. Trumbull's observations were conducted with the extreme care, and the results will delight all who are interested in shooting, or in natural history. The value of such a study of our game birds can hardly be over-estimated.

It must be remembered that Mr. Trumbull is a trained ornithologist, a careful and accurate observer, and thus that his observations are entitled to much more weight than those of a man who—however honest he might be—could not weigh evidence and draw just conclusions with the certainty of a scientific man. Mr. Trumbull's important and fascinating book entitled "Names and Portraits of Birds Interesting to Gunners" has a place in every ornithological library in the country, and we doubt not in most sportsmen's libraries. It is a piece of good work, well done, and is to our mind the most entertaining book on game birds ever written.

dark. It cracked and lit up the surrounding timber and brush with a lurid light. It had a comfortable look,

THE LISTENER.

If you come with the Listener to a certain lately-cleared but now bush-grown field not very far from Boston, on the edge of a large wood—a wild spot, stony and, yet not innocent of bogs and muddy places here and there—you may hear and see one of the strangest and most delightful of performances. It is the night-flight and love-song of the woodcock—that queer, uncouth water-bird who has taken to the land; whose ugly bull head, short legs, long bill and ungraceful ordinary movements are laughable; who is, nevertheless, worshipped by sportsmen; who is divine on the table, and who is capable of the most remarkable union of grace in movement and musical utterance, in his one great rapturous performance that so few people have seen or ever will see.

+ + +

You may see and hear it, that is, if you come to the place when the bird is disposed to perform, and arrive at the right time, just long enough after sunset so that the dusk shall have barely begun to gather, without making it dark as yet. Then you will very likely hear a sharp, grating bird-sound, which at first you take to be the shriek of a night hawk. But it comes from the level of the ground, and is less musical, if anything, than the night-hawk's song. You hear it repeated at intervals, "Speak, spee-eeek, spee-uk," from the ground

not far away. This is the "bleating" of the woodcock. You listen curiously while the bird reels off this harsh and disagreeable soliloquy; perhaps you have heard that it is preliminary to his much more interesting performance, and you are impatient to see and hear that. The *speek* is intermitted for a moment; and then you hear, seemingly from far away—and yet is it not in your very ears?—a steady, musical, whistling crescendo sound. There he goes! The woodcock's ascent has begun. Now you see him, rising in a slanting straight line, coming straight over your head, his body held stiff and taut, his wings beating swiftly, his course steadily up and away; you fancy he is going to fly away out of sight; but while he is still in plain view, he veers to the right and begins a long curve or circle, still upward; and all the while continues that singular, musical whistling crescendo.

+ + +

Now he is fairly launched upon his great ascending spiral. He rises more and more swiftly; the note made by his whistle takes a higher and higher pitch, and the throbs are closer together. His spiral has at first covered so wide a space that you have been compelled to twist your body upon the ground where you are crouching to keep your eyes upon him; but now, as he mounts higher, the circles which he is describing become smaller and smaller. At the same time his whistle—one can only call it a whistle for want of a better word, for the sound is indescribable—takes a sort of rhythm; it is like the rhythm which a person falls into who is playing scales upon the upper octaves of a piano so rapidly that he can no longer make them sound regular and even. Higher, higher mounts the bird until he is a mere speck and yet you can still see the swift beating of those wings. Now the circles of his spiral are very small; he is mad with ecstasy. For an instant he seems to flutter at the very apex as if he must die with joy if he went any further, and yet were unwilling to descend; and just at that fluttering instant you begin to hear a new and still more ecstatic sound—a soft murmuring note between a whis-

per and a cry—*zip-zup*—then the old whistle begins spasmodically again—the bird flutters and falls a little—*zip-zup-zup*—that soft, delicious, intensely musical note is repeated—the bird seems to tip downward sidewise slowly, reluctantly—the whistle and the other wonderful note begin to sound simultaneously; and as the bird sinks and falls faster and faster from his height, he gives himself up in a melancholy rapture to this steadily repeated sound; and now he drops, limp and quite silent, and so swiftly that you fancy he must be hurt, straight to the very spot in the field from which he went up; and in another moment you hear once more the harsh call: *Speek—spee-eeek—spee-uk!*

It is indeed a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous. Here he is grating, squeaking away again on the earth—this bird which but the moment before had been rapt in an aerial ecstasy. He keeps it up for two or three minutes at least—a longer time, probably, than he has spent in his musical flight; for, though you were too much excited while the performance lasted to take any note of time, it is probably not longer than a minute and a half. But he does not "bleat" very long. Once more you hear that vague whistle, far away and yet so near, and you know he is mounting again; once more he shoots straight over your head; and again he is mounting his ecstatic spiral—accelerating, climbing the musical scale as well as the vault of heaven; his whistle getting all the weird effect of a sound coming from high in the air, and yet becoming more clearly to be heard as the creature goes up. Once more the attainment of the apex, once more that delicious reluctance to return to earth, once more that most musical-melancholy whispering, once more the drop straight to earth and the recommencement of the harsh quacking refrain there. By and by he goes up again; and you listen and watch, enthralled, until, with the increasing darkness, and the height of his ascent, you lose sight of the bird, and his performance is to the ear only—a voice and nothing more—and yet the more intensely weird because you cannot see whence it comes. Very likely the performance is repeated seven or eight times. You wonder that the little bird can find the strength to make such a series of tremendous flights; and while you are wondering, and incidentally listening to a whip-poor-will who is singing a sad complaint from the edge of the woods close by, you become aware that the *speek, spee-eeek* is no longer sounding; and you listen in vain for any farther music from your woodcock.

+ + +

But unless you are a dull sort of person you carry the singular music home with you and hear it again and again, and wonder at it, as you lie in bed. Never, you think, was utter rapture so completely expressed at once in action and in sound. You wonder, as everybody has done who has heard the sound and seen the sight, how the whistling is produced—whether it is the swift rushing of the bird's wings or a song from his throat. You fancy that it must be done with his wings, because it seems impossible that the creature could fly with such force and sing all the time. But the descending *zip-zup*—that is surely done with the throat, for you have heard the whistling, like an accompaniment or obbligato in it, at least apart of the time. Its musical quality is as unquestionable as it is indescribable; and somehow seems to you as much a miracle as it would seem to hear a swan sing. Rather more, indeed, for the swan on the water is always beautiful at least, and the woodcock is never beautiful.

NOTES AND SONG-FLIGHT OF THE WOODCOCK
(*PHILOHELA MINOR*).

BY WILLIAM BREWSTER.

IN 1891, Mr. Walter Faxon and I spent two evenings and one morning studying the notes and song-flight of the Woodcock, and the present article consists merely of a transcript of the memoranda made on these occasions,—viz., the evenings of April 7 and 13, and the morning of April 8, the locality being Lexington, Massachusetts.

Lexington, Mass., April 7, 1891.—Mr. Faxon found a Woodcock singing on the evenings of the 5th and 6th and the morning of the 7th on the top of a high hill near the village. I went there with him this evening, arriving at 6.25, when the bird was already peeping. There were seven song-flights and eight peeping spells in the next thirty-five minutes, the last peeping being unusually protracted and the bird, at its close, rising and flying off low down without singing, at precisely seven o'clock. At this time it was still rather light or, at least, not nearly so dark as the night afterwards became. The weather was cold with a strong northwest wind, the sky overcast. The *paaps* were uttered consecutively 31, 21, 37, 29, and 28 times, no counts being made during the first and last calling periods. The song proper (timed once only) lasted exactly ten seconds.

backward, followed by a forward and downward, jerk of the head and a slight opening of the wings. The bird did not turn about

<i>Ortyx V.</i>	1879,	<i>Habits of the Woodcock.</i>				
<i>W. L.</i>	1879	"	"	"	"	"
<i>Constant Reader,</i>	1879	"	"	"	"	"

FROM
Forest and Stream, N. Y. Vol. XII, No. 11,
April 17, 1879.

FROM

Forest and Stream, N. Y. Vol. XII, No. 11.
April 17, 1879.

HABITS OF THE WOODCOCK.

MONROETON, Pa., Jan. 27, 1879.

EDITOR FOREST AND STREAM:

Seeing in your issue of Jan. 23 a question as to the habits of woodcock, I am prompted by a desire to repay, in a small part, the many pleasant hours I have spent in the perusal of the entertaining and instructive articles always to be found in FOREST AND STREAM, to give you a little of the result of my own observations on the habits of that king of all game birds. Residing in the northern part of Pennsylvania, and in a locality in which, until recently, the woodcock and ruffed grouse were the only game birds we had, has led me to watch closely their habits. I have stood for hours in the spring of the year, from early twilight until late in the night, listening to the hollow, ringing "Zisb, zisb," of the woodcock, which he repeats at intervals of about twenty seconds for four or five minutes; then for a moment all will be still. Next is heard the sharp whirr of his wings as he takes flight, swinging around and upward in a spiral, rising, as they tell us the English lark does, high in the air, until the sound of his wings is almost lost. When the bird begins to descend, the sound of the wings is wholly changed, seeming almost like the twittering song of the canary bird, until the bird reaches to within about one hundred feet of the place from which he started, when he sets his wings like a parachute, and drops silently and swiftly to the ground, to repeat the performance again and again. I have lain on the ground in moonlight nights, and watched him come out of his cover, strutting about much as an old gobbler does at times, and uttering his peculiar cry, which would be answered by other birds in hearing. Whether both sexes participate in the dance I am unable to say, never having shot one of them during the performance. I have shot woodcock at all times of the day, from earliest daylight until it was too dark to see the barrels of a gun, and have found fresh worms between their bills, which they had not had time to swallow; and I have seen them boring and feeding at all hours of the night. I think the bird sleeps and feeds alternately, at short intervals, during the entire twenty-four hours, except, perhaps, during the moulting season, when they feed during the night. Our best month for woodcock shooting is July, for then the old birds and full-grown young ones are in the cover along the streams and bottom lands. In August you can hardly find one there, although you will find fresh boring every morning. They are then away on the steep side hills and mountains, moulting, and feed less than usual, coming down to the feeding-grounds only in the night, and returning before daylight to their mountain fastnesses. In September they begin to work in the cornfields wherever there is a damp, soft soil, and remain in the cover of the corn during the day. Then it is grand sport to get into the corn, with a stool tall enough to raise you above the corn tops and a merry little cocker flying about to finish the birds, and bang away at them. What if your gun does kick you off the stool occasionally; there is soft ground to fall on—"up and at them again." As soon as hard frost comes the birds start for a more genial climate; and I have noticed that, with us, they follow the streams toward the coast, stopping occasionally to feed, which they do in the soft ground close to the water's edge, rarely going more than a few feet from the stream; and upon looking along in these places one will be surprised at the great amount of boring, compared with the number of birds, which he will find. An incident came under my observation which illustrates the rapidity of their flight: I was standing on a slight elevation overlooking a cornfield on the bottom land, and was watching the manœuvres of a chicken hawk which was sailing about in small circles. Suddenly he poised himself for an instant, then darted almost perpendicularly into the corn. About the time he reached the tops of the corn, I heard the whirr of a woodcock, and saw him emerge from the corn with the hawk in close pursuit. Away he darted, at the same time seeming to look back to see if his adversary was coming. I soon saw he was in no danger, for he could handicap that hawk one rod in ten, and then beat him. After flying fifty or sixty rods he darted into a dense cover, and the hawk gave up the chase in disgust, several rods behind. I hope to learn still further of the habits and customs of *Philohela minor*.

ORTYX V.

FROM

Forest and Stream, N. Y. Vol. XII, No. 11,
April 17, 1879.

EDITOR FOREST AND STREAM:

NEW YORK, Jan. 29, 1879.

I read with great interest the letter of "Portsa" in a recent number, and having once had a very similar experience with woodcock, I can add my testimony to his as regards both their "singing" and appearance at night. Two years ago I spent a week in camp upon Greenwood Lake, N. Y., and one evening, as we were sitting around our fire after the day's shoot, my attention was called to a bird which flitted past the fire, and alighted at a short distance, immediately commencing its peculiar cry, which, having heard it in the spring of the year, I recognized as that of a woodcock. It was a bright moonlight night, and my companion and myself, going out into an adjacent field covered with small undergrowth, were enabled to shoot three of our nocturnal visitors. Having never heard of such a thing being done before, when the letter from "Portsa" met my eye I immediately recognized an experience similar to my own, and write this, hoping that somebody may take interest enough in the subject to give a little information concerning the nocturnal habits of *Scolopax minor*.

W. D.

FROM

Forest and Stream, N. Y. VOL. XII, No. 11.

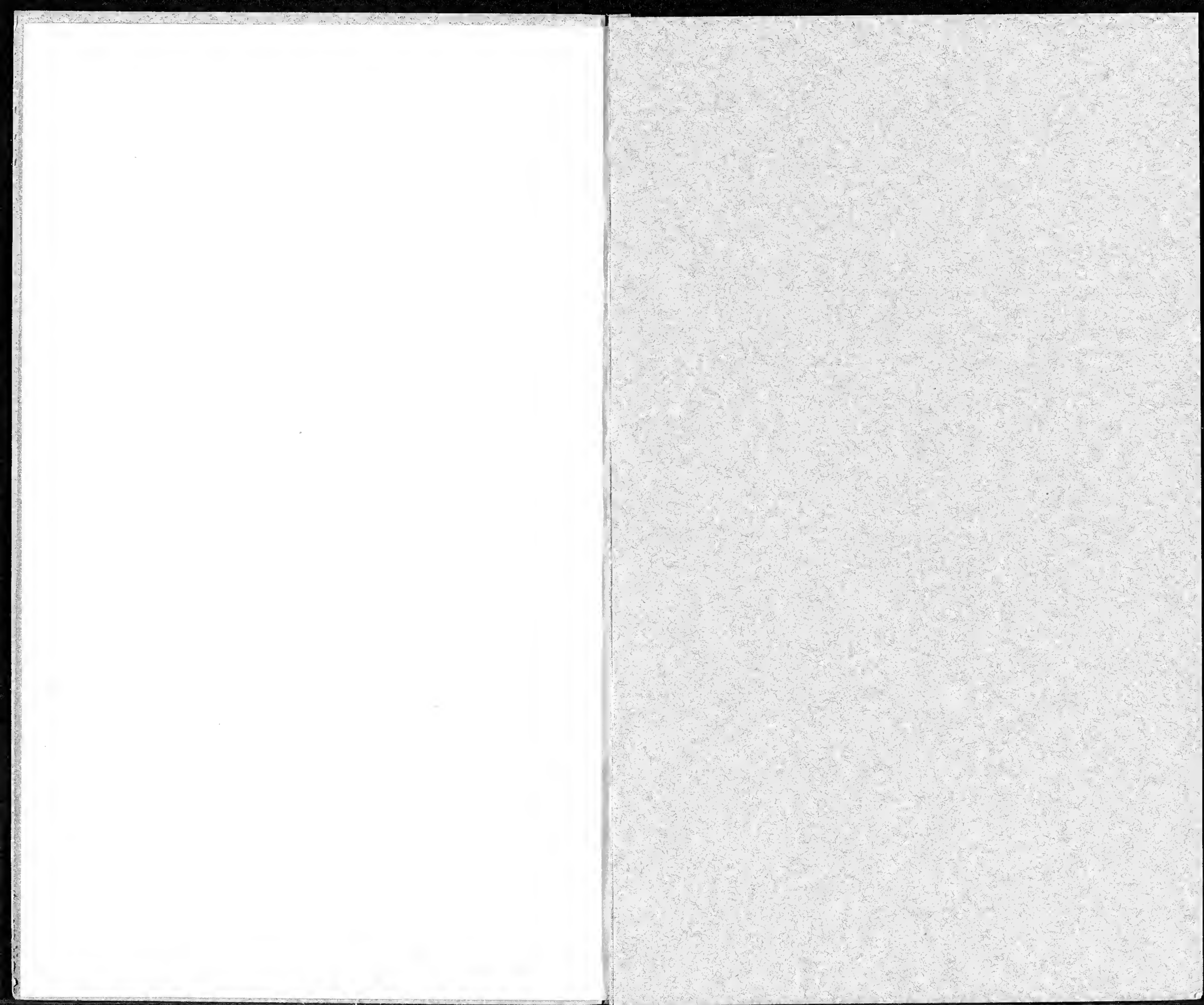
April 17, 1879.

GERMANTOWN, Pa., Jan. 25, 1879.

EDITOR FOREST AND STREAM :

In the article headed "Are Woodcock Nocturnal?" there is certainly a mistake as regards time. About mating season, which takes place in early spring, the woodcock is in the habit of soaring, and often ascends to the height of two or three hundred feet, and comes down nearly in the same spot. His habit is to feed at dusk and early in the morning, before day, and also through the day, although not as industriously in the day time. If these woodcock did soar in the middle of summer, they must have made a mistake as to the time of the year; if he did not soar in the summer, your correspondent has made a mistake in the time. The mistake lies between the woodcock and the man, but as far as my experience goes, the woodcock has the inside track.

CONSTANT READER.





J. A. Clark
Old Saybrook Conn.

OLOGIST

[Vol. 7—No. 18

~~WOODCOCK AND BLACK DUCK~~—Passing through an old pasture Thursday, May 4, I started up a Woodcock from a small thicket, which was immediately followed by four more, an old bird and four young; the latter so large as scarcely to be distinguished from the mother bird, except that she flapped her wings as if flying with difficulty and made a sort of whining cry. I don't think I ever saw young of that species so early before and very mature—eggs must have been laid exceedingly early, perhaps before April, though I do not know how long time is required for their incubation. I also found a Woodcock's nest containing one egg, just as we were going to leave. I left it in order to get the full set, and went down again on Wednesday, the 24th, and got the set of three. Incubation was just begun. This is very late for Woodcock's eggs and must have been a second set.

Mrs. B. Sniffing. Shelter Island, N. Y. May 6, 1863.

O. & O. VIII, Dec. 1883. p. 96

Early Nesting of the Woodcock.

On March 30, 1889, a friend of mine found a nest of the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*), containing four eggs. The nest, which was a mere depression on the top of a small moss-covered mound, measuring about five inches in breadth by one in depth, was situated in a thicket of briars and bushes on the south side of a piece of woods near a small stream of water. He discovered the nest while engaged in cutting bushes, and had cut them all from off the mound on which the nest was made, his scythe passing directly over the sitting bird's head two or three times in the operation. It was not until the bushes fell across her back that she moved at all, and then it was only to go a foot or two from the nest. The eggs were of the usual color, but were a little larger than the average. They measured as follows in hundredths of an inch: 1.57 x 1.22, 1.55 x 1.23, 1.57 x 1.19, and 1.53 x 1.18.

Bethel, Conn.

G. L. H.

O. & O. XIV. June. 1889 p. 88

EARLY WOODCOCK.—Mr. R. G. Hazard, 2d, found a Woodcock's nest, April 16th, that the young had just left, and he collected the shells.

Random Notes Vol. 1 No. 1 May 1, 1884. Editorial

A Series of Eggs of the American Woodcock.

The eggs of the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) are almost always four in number, and are laid on a few leaves on the ground. They are rounded ovate or short ovate in form, although occasionally a set is found that are ovate. The ground color is subject to considerable variation as well as the markings.

Set I. June 3, 1875. Ledyard, New London County, Connecticut. Collected by "J. M. W." (C. L. Rawson). Eggs on old leaves, among white birches, on ground sloping toward swamp. Female feigned lameness, almost touched. Pointed by dog. Male near. Four eggs, incubation begun. Ecru drab, spotted with fawn color and lavender-gray: 1.49 x 1.21; 1.44 x 1.19; 1.50 x 1.21; 1.49 x 1.19.

Set II. March 29, 1889. Wake County, North Carolina. Collected by H. H. & C. S. Brimley. Nest, a mere depression in dead leaves in mixed woods, on hillside sloping to creek, just above flood mark. Bird on nest. Four eggs, incubation far advanced. Buffy, spotted with russet and fawn color: 1.60 x 1.09; 1.58 x 1.09; 1.51 x 1.07; 1.50 x 1.09.

Set III. April 15, 1883. Preston, New London County, Connecticut. Collected by "J. M. W." (C. L. Rawson). Eggs on ground, among white birches. Nest pointed by dog, although he may have been pointing the male bird, which was within a few feet of the nest when first seen. Four eggs, incubation begun. Ecru drab, spotted with cinnamon and lilac-gray: 1.53 x 1.14; 1.47 x 1.19; 1.50 x 1.16; 1.49 x 1.17.

Set IV. April, 1885. Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Collected for H. H. Gawthrop. Eggs on ground. Three eggs; fawn color, spotted with russet and lilac-gray: 1.57 x 1.17; 1.52 x 1.14; 1.51 x 1.14.

Set V. April 21, 1875. Ledyard, New London County, Connecticut. Collected by "J. M. W." (C. L. Rawson). Eggs on leaves on ground, on slope wooded with white birches, sloping toward water. Pointed by dog. Four eggs. Fawn color, spotted with russet and drab: 1.53 x 1.23; 1.49 x 1.22; 1.60 x 1.21; 1.53 x 1.22.

Set VI. April 26, 1886. Rockland, Maine. Four eggs, fresh. Fawn color, spotted with russet and lilac-gray: 1.50 x 1.24; 1.48 x 1.19; 1.52 x 1.22; 1.46 x 1.17.

J. P. N.

O. & O. XIV. Aug. 1889 p. 119

ward him for his kindness.

The nest was a mere depression on a hillside leading from the pine woods to creek lowlands, and close by a lane leading up the hill from the creek meadows. The eggs were about three-quarters incubated, but we saved them with some trouble.

The Woodcock is a rare resident about here, although sometimes abundant in their migrations. I suppose about a dozen pairs may nest in this neighborhood.

C. S. Brimley.
Raleigh, N. C.

O. & O. XIV. Nov. 1889 p. 169

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O. & O. VIII, Dec. 1883. p. 95

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Set III. April 15, 1883. Preston, New Lon-

are never to be forgotten. The other name
 gan, they are easily learned, and one heard
 like the notes of any other bird of the
 are mysterious, and seem almost meanly.
 other. The sounds coming from the marsh
 final syllable *den* being less distinct than the
 six or seven times. The accent is on *pu*, the
 repeated from four to eight times, generally
 has received this name. These syllables are
 resemble the words *pudden* that the bird
 standing in the marsh. The sounds so nearly re-

Nesting of the American Woodcock in North Carolina.

On March 29, 1889, a young friend of mine was returning home from fishing and had just started up a sloping hillside covered with bushes, that led down to the creek bottom, when his bird dog came to a dead stand. On investigating the matter he flushed a female woodcock (*Philohela minor*) from her complement of four eggs. Overjoyed at his find he brought the eggs home to us, two in each hand, and we were equally glad to receive them, and to reward him for his kindness.

The nest was a mere depression on a hillside leading from the pine woods to creek lowlands, and close by a lane leading up the hill from the creek meadows. The eggs were about three-quarters incubated, but we saved them with some trouble.

The Woodcock is a rare resident about here, although sometimes abundant in their migrations. I suppose about a dozen pairs may nest in this neighborhood.

Raleigh, N. C.

C. S. Brimley.

O. & O. XIV. Nov. 1889 p. 169

American Woodcock.

The American Woodcock is very seldom found in the vicinity of Detroit now, but there are still a few swamps where they can be found. In one of these swamps about three miles from the city I first made my acquaintance with their nest. The swamp was a dense mass of brush and tall weeds on the northern side of Voight's woods. On May 24, 1891, I started out here, hoping to collect a few sets of eggs, with my chum, Harry Allis. We had fair luck and were returning homeward when I started a female Woodcock from nearly under my feet, and there was a nest containing two nearly full-fledged young. The nest was only a slight hollow, lined with fine grass. I hid a short distance off, and soon I heard the old bird chuckle and call to the young, much like the common domestic hen does. The young crept out of the nest, and crept slowly away, hiding under the plants as they went. The next day, May 25, I went out alone to the swamp, and found two other nests containing young; the first had three young who could fly a little, and the second two half-fledged young. I was feeling rather discouraged over the result, although I knew it was very late for them. Going on farther to a denser part of the swamp, I had seated myself on a hillock when I espied a nest containing four eggs in a clump of bushes under a small tree. The nest was composed of dried grass and leaves, and was quite a large structure. The eggs were very handsome, being a creamy buff, dotted with reddish brown, and were a trifle incubated. I felt so elated over my find that I just stood and looked at them for several minutes until my senses came back, and then I packed them carefully in my collecting box. On June 8th I went out again with J. Claire Wood, and we flushed several and Mr. Wood shot two. Since then the swamp has been burnt down and ploughed up. This was my first and only set of eggs. On June 1, 1889, H. Allis and I went collecting in a

dense swamp east of Highland Park. We had a good success, getting a set of four Myrtle Warblers, two Black-billed Cuckoos, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, etc. I started a Woodcock from a clump of bushes, and she circled around and around the place, and seemed very disinclined to leave. I searched carefully for the nest, but without success, although I am certain one was there. The Woodcock is a very wary bird, and you can seldom surprise them. In fact they usually surprise you by their sudden uprising and the peculiar noise made by their wings. The Woodcock is a summer resident here, arriving the latter part of March and staying till October. They are nocturnal and remain in dense underbrush unless flushed.

B. H. Swales.

Detroit, Michigan. *O. & O.* Vol. 18, May, 1893 p. 79

**A Few Nests Collected at Cornwall, Vt.
Spring-1889. C. H. Parkhill.**

Woodcock (*Philohela minor*). Collected May 4th. The nest was situated in a small piece of hard woods, ten rods from a stream. It was a slight affair made by hollowing out a place in the leaves, and contained four eggs nearly ready to hatch. The old bird allowed me to nearly tread upon her before she flew.

O. & O. XIV, Oct. 1889 p 150

Cambridge, Mass.

Philohela minor

1832-1835

Dr. Samuel Cabot tells me that while in College he used to get fine Woodcock shooting in and about Cambridge. A cover sure to hold eight or ten birds was a tract of springy ground covered with alders on the shore of Fresh Pond at the foot of the hill below the Fresh Pond Hotel. He has also killed Woodcock on what is now the College Delta.

Philohela minor

In captivity.

I saw a live Woodcock to-day at Maynard's. He had it from a boy who flushed it from a garden where it flew against the side of a house and fell stunned sufficiently for him to pick it up. It was in a large box prepared for its reception by covering the bottom with several inches of loam and sinking a basin of water in the center and planting tall living weeds around. When I first looked in the Woodcock was squatting among the weeds. No could any motion on my part produce any perceptible effect, save a slight shuddering on the bird's. M. brought up a live owl (*Scops asio*) and held it against the wires. The cock at once rose and advanced hesitatingly to the front of the cage to meet its vis a vis. Singularly enough the owl seemed the more frightened; indeed the Woodcock showed no perceptible fear. After the removal of the owl the Woodcock ran about freely exploring all the nooks and corners of its domain. Upon one retiring to a little distance it threw off all restraint probing vigorously in the earth apparently without success tho' it left no spot untried. The long bill was thrust downward with

Newtown, Mass.

July 14, 1878.

Cambridge, Mass.

Philohela minor

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wonderful rapidity and on every side in quick succession, the motion reminding me strikingly of that of a man spearing for eels. When it took a stalk or two and tried again. Sometimes it would stop and apparently listen with its neck slightly on one side and forward. Again it would ~~stop~~ ^{spring} quickly with its feet several times in succession then hold its head very near the ground and with one ear evidently listening for the movement of the reptile soon beneath, then broke the spots all over rapidly and slowly, I have often seen Robins listen in the same way for the worms beneath the turf.

In its motions this bird reminded me of a Rail. It rarely stood erect. It moved with a shuffling gait, the head being drawn in between the shoulders and slightly raised and bowed with each step, producing a bobbing motion. When frightened it held its tail nearly erect and opened to its utmost, the downy lower parts drooping beneath the feathers in a vertical fan - shaped fringe. When undisturbed and always when feeding, the tail was depressed and closed. It eats hay, a pint of cattle, various kinds of hay, &c.

It is a bird of the year in summer plumage.

Novae Scotia

Phalaropus minor. An engineer of the I. S. S. Co. St. New Brunswick tells me that Woodcock stay later in Nova Scotia than in Massachusetts. On Dec. 5, 1883, he shot mine at Yarmouth, and on Dec. 11, two. In November he, with Mr. John Taylor, killed eighty-two in two consecutive days shooting. He believes that all the Woodcock bred in Nova Scotia migrate directly south-west leaving the land at or near Yarmouth where they sometimes congregated in astonishing numbers. A friend of his asserts that he has seen them come ashore on Cape Cod in the early morning and alight in the beach-grass. Hence he believes that they strike directly across the sea to the coast of Southern N. E. (Notes taken Sept 27, 1886)

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Phalaropus minor

1886

Aug. M. A. Franks returned Sept 1 from a trip to Halifax where he had some good Woodcock shooting. With a companion he killed fifty birds in five days. Most of them were immature & in bad plumage. He showed me twenty skins, however, which average very much larger than any equal number of birds I have ever seen killed here. All his birds were killed in sprout lands growing up to young alders, bushes & maples.

Maine (Portland)

Philohela minor

Perching in a tree

Autumn

Mr. Ira Crocker tells me that while shooting Woodcock in autumn near Portland a few years since he killed one as it flew from the horizontal branch of a large birch. He had flushed and shot at the bird before and was beating for it when his eye caught sight of it standing on a large limb some thirty feet above the ground. A companion also saw it at the same moment. Mr. C. thinks it may have been wounded slightly by the first shot.

Mass. (Boston)

APR 12 1888

Philohela minor

1888

Picked up dead in street.

April 12

Mr. A. P. Chadbourne picked up a dead Woodcock to-day on Commonwealth Avenue. It was near a telegraph post & evidently had struck against the wire. The shoulder and side were bruised and there was a contusion on the crown. The late date at which this bird ~~occurred~~ was migrating is interesting.

Mass. (Middlesex Co.)

Philohela minor

1888

Heavy & late spring flights

April 19 For the past two weeks an enormous flight of Woodcock has been reported from various points near Boston. One man (Cuth) tells me that his pear orchard was alive with them about April 10 for several days. C. J. Goodale says his customers report unprecedented numbers. The reason is obvious viz. the interior of the state is still buried in snow drifts. On Wed. 10 one three feet of snow fell in Worcester Co. & it has melted very slowly.

Philohela minor

In a strange place.

Phillips Beach
 Swampscott, Mass.
 Nov. 3, 1882

While beating for Sparrows to-day on the sand-hills behind Phillips Beach I flushed a Woodcock from the grass bordering a cabbage field and shot it. It rose with a sharp whistle and was apparently perfectly vigorous & healthy. There is not a thicket and scarcely a bush with half a mile and the breakers were thundering on the beach within thirty yards of the spot. The attraction, probably, was the loamy field

- 1 That it has the power of song
 - 2 " " picks up its young in its feet
 - 3 " " has a strongly developed bump of curiosity
 - 4 " " is only semi-nocturnal
 - 5 " its evening flights are more playful exhibition of speed
 - 6 " it does not secure its worms by burrowing
 - 7 (Editorially) That worms do not whistle
- Of all those who have seen a Woodcock feeding less many have seen it with a worm in its bill

With regard to the Forest and Stream editor's notion that the Woodcock is feeling with its bill when it thrusts it into the mud, it does not seem to me that it is at all certain, when one considers the well-known fact that sounds are much more readily transmitted through the medium of the cranial bones than directly through the air, as can readily be perceived if one holds a sonorous body between the teeth. --- Walter Faxon, letter of August 8, 1889.

Woodcocks Carrying their Young, their Feeding Grounds and a Woodcock Hunt.

The Chicago Field, July 21, 1889.
Vol. XIII - No. 2 - p. 24

WOOSTER, O.
EDITOR CHICAGO FIELD:—In one of the late issues of the CHICAGO FIELD, I notice you give a representation of the woodcock carrying its young. This is a subject which I would like to see more fully discussed and brought before your readers, by those whose experience with this bird have made them familiar with its habits. The mode of carrying I am satisfied is correct, and am also satisfied from what I have seen that the entire brood is carried from place to place by the mother bird. As I spend nearly all my time in the field with my dogs, and have hunted and killed a great many woodcocks, I have made it a point to note their peculiar habits, from their first appearance here in the Spring until their disappearance in the Fall; their feeding grounds; time of moving from place to place; kinds of food and where obtained; how to tell where likely to be found, and last but not least, why more birds can be found in the dark than by the light of the moon. *No moonshine about this.* As hundreds of birds nest in this vicinity, I have had a great many opportunities of observing the carrying process, and have frequently seen birds rise and fly away that looked as though their entire entrails were hanging out, and from appearance seemed as large as the crown of a cap. I have followed them closely, and have been near to them when flying, and also when alighting with their young. Have seen them carry from three to five at once, but have never been able to detect whether the young held on by their bills or with their claws, being so closely packed to the old bird. The first instance that came under my observation was several years ago. A friend of mine, who was in very delicate health, came to me one day, in May, and proposed a hunt for squirrels. I accepted his invitation and we drove to the woods together. After hitching the horse we separated, each one taking his own course. I had gone but a short distance when my attention was drawn to my friend, who yelled to me, "Look out." I turned around and beheld a woodcock passing within ten or fifteen feet of me. My friend's gun was to his shoulder and in an instant the bird fell to the ground. When struck, it looked as though it was blown into half a dozen pieces. Approaching the bird I was surprised to find five young ones apparently about four days old. The old bird had the right wing broken about the first joint, and two of the young ones were killed. I have often ran to the spot where birds that looked so large had dropped, and found three or four young ones. One peculiar circumstance I have noticed, that I never saw a bird drop any more than one that had pin feathers on it. I believe after the young become a certain size they are carried as described in the issue mentioned. My idea is, that when the parent bird is startled or danger threatens, she gathers her young together and moves off with them, and under no circumstances, other than this, will she take to wing in the day time.

Woodcocks change their feeding grounds at night, and I doubt if ever a woodcock took wing during the day, unless put up by some unnatural cause. This is why I mention the moon business. That they do move on a light night there is no doubt. But I believe very seldom, unless disturbed.

If my best bags were made in the dark of the moon,

Information of woodcocks feeding. During last season three or four birds remained close to my house, near a spring. Around this spring were several large oak trees. A friend and myself were seated under these trees one evening; it was nearly dark when I saw one of the birds alight near one of the trees. It sat for a few moments very unconcerned, when it walked up to the root of the tree and began jumping against it. We watched it for a while, when I had a curiosity to see what it was doing. I soon found that about fifteen or eighteen inches from the ground there was quite a number of the last mentioned worms. I also noticed that a cob-web on the tree at this point stopped the worms on their upward course, and that the bird made the jumps to catch them.

to a certainty by hunting over the ks, and making large bags at times singly or in wisps, as the snipes? I tter way the most plausible, and will ceasions that will uphold my theory. er a corn-field and took out of it fifty-killed every bird in the field. The ough again, and took out thirty-six James Verner, of Plittsburg, Pa., and ground in the Killbuck bottoms, and t morning Mr. Theo. Gray, of Alle- t over the same ground precisely, and y-eight birds. Last July I beat over roughly, but did not raise a feather. rdner, of Mt. Vernon, N. Y., and my- I sent my red dog, Mack, into the minutes, and about one hundred yards bouted five birds rise out of the corn got over into the corn, and in less than think, thirty-seven birds. Two days if Pittsburg, and myself, on the same e number again. Should this notice he parties I have mentioned, if they s as to dates, they will see that the as it, was in the right sign, was right, dark.

he woodcock is in locating its feeding- etoo hard, others too soft, some too wet or e that is objectionable. In corn-fields it time the grounds are plowed up, and yil. If the ground is wet when plowed, rd, and they cannot bore, or rather the If moist and loose when plowed it the corn is large enough to shade the moist all Summer. Here the birds can er the corn is in tassel. The best fields e found are composed of a black or gray l. Gravely or clay soil never holds the wash in the field where the sediment r a short time. An experienced hunter r a field whether it holds birds or not. come to locating birds that I can tell are birds in a field by climbing onto a d over the corn. I am now speaking of elds; by observing the growth and color ly observe where the moist and good will find the object of your search, er his grub. I have seen it quoted by cock feeds only at night. In this respect t have killed hundreds with worms in ee different kinds—the common angle- m with black head and feet, and a small or grayish color, similar to the yellow yellow worm is to be found er the bark of logs. The smaller one abing around cob-webs. I will relate

be of some benefit to persons desiring r; \$2 for six months; \$1 for year \$9.

Woodcocks requires a thorough knowl- d this can only be acquired by long peaking, ninety-nine sportsmen out bout this kind of hunting, and go , depending entirely on good luck me, and nine times out of ten come as, if a little judgment was used and surroundings, plenty of birds place and parallel with the P. F. own as the Big Ditch. This ditch ank is used as a road, and is on her side are large corn-fields and nd for two miles is, to all appear- and timber for woodcocks as there here is magnificent, but to find of the question. I have never d on this side of the ditch, while y yards of the ditch, and for its nd, and bags from ten to forty l the first freezing weather, after all disappear in a single night. In H. Mack, of Chicago, and myself, ew birds. We struck a corn-field, and so remarked to him. We such a getting out of woodcock I eing late when we began shooting, on, it was necessary to hold close y we made the best of, and we plump birds. How many we left ber did not seem diminished when 's first woodcock hunt, it was g them. A bird would get up fact all around. His gun would one, and at last he would fail to birds," he remarked, "I don't An hour's drive brought us home. d loading shells for the morrow, ndred birds would be brought to tart was suggested and agreed ght, thinking of the good time During the night I heard a s of Mr. Mack's bed-room. I d it came from Mack himself. e of my birds." He evidently had in the afternoon and of an ed thief being no other than my t up all the birds he could and o killed them. Morning came, after Mr. Mack's one hundred gum-boots you don't get a bird hat red thief Mack comes around l cripple him." Mr. Mack had during the night it had frozen e find the entire day, all having KILLBUCK.

With regard to the Forest and Stream editor's notion that the woodcock is feeling with its bill when it thrusts it into the mud, it does not seem to me that it is at all certain, when one considers the well-known fact that sounds are much more readily transmitted through the medium of the cranial bones than directly through the air, as can readily be perceived if one holds a sonorous body between the teeth. --- Walter Faxon, letter of August 8, 1889.

Harry and I exchanged glances. Her's countenances.

"Is there a train going toward Philadelphia?"

"Not until six o'clock a. m." replied Harry.

"Well, we will take that," I replied.

We lit our cigars, and, with feeling about daylight and the morning travelers would have been hard to find.

I thought struck me that this was no ordinary circumstance would permit, should circumstances would permit, should

engaged him in conversation; he did not ducking yarns, characteristic of

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We concluded to take his advice. I played in getting ready after breakfast

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bank, and we were about turning back near the shore.

"Harry," I remarked, "paddle me out, then I am ready for home."

Now, Harry, be it known, was an expert on the Delaware. Slowly we

threw thirty-five yards I let them head; they both keeled over. "Now

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ducks were getting up in every direction; we shook hands, and for a

minute. Quietly we paddled our ducks

silently and in whispers we laid down. If these ducks act as they do

we must drive them away, then we turn, and I will show you some

of how the land lays, for there is that they are feeding in."

The tide was low and it had almost considerable exertions we forced out

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of ducks, the noise of which every one heard, numerous little ponds.

"Let them go," says Harry, "do it before night." Every now and

then a splendid chance but we restrained. We succeeded at last in driving the

ducks no easy task as they were very numerous. We disturbed much. Selecting two

of ducks, the noise of which every one heard, numerous little ponds. We regained our boat, and discovered

and that otherwise I have failed to make a respectable count.

This I have demonstrated to a certainty by hunting over the same grounds daily for weeks, and making large bags at times

described. There is one point that I should like to see discussed: Do woodcocks move singly or in wisps, as the snipes? I

am inclined to think the latter way the most plausible, and will relate of three different occasions that will uphold my theory.

Several years ago I beat over a corn-field and took out of it fifty-two birds—am satisfied I killed every bird in the field. The

next morning I passed through again, and took out thirty-six more. In July, 1878, Mr. James Verner, of Pittsburg, Pa., and

myself beat over a piece of ground in the Killbuck bottoms, and never saw a bird. The next morning Mr. Theo. Gray, of Alle-

gheny, Pa., and myself beat over the same ground precisely, and before dinner haggled thirty-eight birds. Last July I beat over

a corn-field, and beat it thoroughly, but did not raise a feather. The next day Mr. A. L. Gardner, of Mt. Vernon, N. Y., and my-

self went to this same field. I sent my red dog, Mack, into the field, and in less than five minutes, and about one hundred yards

from where we stood, we counted five birds rise out of the corn that the dog put up. We got over into the corn, and in less than

two hours we counted, I think, thirty-seven birds. Two days later Mr. Howard Eaton, of Pittsburg, and myself, on the same

ground, picked up the same number again. Should this notice come before any of the parties I have mentioned, if they

will refresh their memories as to dates, they will see that the moon, as the Dutchman has it, was in the right sign, was right,

and as I have represented, dark.

Another peculiarity of the woodcock is in locating its feeding-grounds. Some grounds are too hard, others too soft, some too wet or

too sour, or something else that is objectionable. In corn-fields it depends altogether on the time the grounds are plowed up, and

also a great deal on the soil. If the ground is wet when plowed, it becomes cloddy and hard, and they cannot hore, or rather the

worms leave the surface. If moist and loose when plowed it holds its moisture until the corn is large enough to shade the

ground, and then keeps moist all Summer. Here the birds can be found at any time after the corn is in tassel. The best fields

or feeding grounds I have found are composed of a black or gray vegetable or sandy loam. Gravely or clay soil never holds the

birds unless there is a wash in the field where the sediment lodges, and then only for a short time. An experienced hunter

can tell at a glance over a field whether it holds birds or not. So accustomed have I become to locating birds that I can tell

almost instantly if there are birds in a field by climbing onto a fence and looking around over the corn. I am now speaking of

first and second bottom fields; by observing the growth and color of the corn you can readily observe where the moist and good

spots are. Here you will find the object of your search, leisurely boring away after his grub. I have seen it quoted by

authorities that the woodcock feeds only at night. In this respect I would beg to differ. I have killed hundreds with worms in

their hills, and of three different kinds—the common angle-worm, a long yellow worm with black head and feet, and a small

striped worm of a brown or grayish color, similar to the yellow one mentioned. The yellow worm is to be found

in rotten logs and under the bark of logs. The smaller one is frequently seen climbing around cob-webs. I will relate

a circumstance that may be of some benefit to persons desiring information of woodcocks feeding. During last season three or

four birds remained close to my house, near a spring. Around this spring were several large oak trees. A friend and myself

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Now, Harry, be it known, was an old man on the Delaware. Slowly we paddled thirty-five yards I let them both keeled over. "Now," I said, but saying, when, "thunder and lightning look there." I did look. Black mallards were getting up in every direction. We shook hands, and for a moment. Quietly we paddled our ducks, but silently and in whispers we laid down. If these ducks act as they do, I think we must drive them away, then we will turn, and I will show you some of the best I see how the land lays, for there are ducks that they are feeding in."

The tide was low and it had already made considerable exertions we forced our way through the shallows, the noise of which every mallard, black ducks, teal, and numerous little ponds.

"Let them go," says Harry, "do not let them before night." Every now and then a splendid chance but we restrained ourselves. We succeeded at last in driving the ducks no easy task as they were very numerous and disturbed much. Selecting two we regained our boat, and discovered

"Yes, of course, and if it was not for me he is just the thing you want."

I bought him, and in a few days he was as restless for the morning to dawdle over required treasure. I was too impatient. My mule had been led up to the front of the house. I was just about starting, when a large flock of mallards had just lighted in the garden, not two hundred yards from the house.

With gun in hand, and my boy leading the dog. A fence running parallel to the garden was an excellent blind for me to creep up to the edge before firing. Notwithstanding I did not have time to notice the dog; he seemed to have had hoped to see him inspired by the dog's howling along as unconcernedly as a dog.

In a minute or two more I found the flock of ducks, and not more than seven or eight of them. To make doubly sure, I rested my gun on the ground and fired; the result was, my dog dropped at the report, or when I looked for him he was lying on his back.

Was it from fear? said I to myself; thus I flattered myself with the idea of dead ducks, and urged him to get up. I knew but few dog words at that time, and I understood the dog looking me in the face.

"What do you say?" I began to wonder what he saw before; was this the first time he had seen me go for them? So I took up a piece of stick and held it close by them. At once he seized the stick and brought it to me. I was hoiling over; such a belief lived! I kept my temper, he was with a lump of dirt. I thought of nothing else, the dog would certainly bring the duck; as soon as the dog jumped the dog, and absolutely blind, but not noticing them at a distance search, he came back to me. I caught a wallowing I gave the beast, to the creek he plunged, swam to the bank and looked at me. Whether or not, I did, and thus rid myself of the brute.

On another occasion my sight was a little mistaken. I bought a nuncheon necessary, but I had no other thing to have all the most agreeable sporting fraternity. These decoys were set in the evening, but the exact spot was not known, so riding along the banks the decoys were set to be a flock of ducks, and in short range, I fired; not a bird moved.

I fired again, with same success, and firing two more barrels, to my great riddling my inoffensive decoys I often laugh when I think of my brother of the manager of the

and as he was a constant hunter for miles around. He had several times with them was to be certain of the place he placed me on a stand, which was a small picket of swampy ground I had not been felled, and where he had the pea-field were in the habit of cutting the fence where I was placed. I would run to get out in the forest, and there the tracks were plainly to be seen. I locked the top rails off in their fire

To make a good bag of woodcocks requires a thorough knowledge of the feeding spots, and this can only be acquired by long experience. Comparatively speaking, ninety-nine sportsmen out of a hundred know nothing about this kind of hunting, and go stumbling through the timber, depending entirely on good luck and their dogs to find their game, and nine times out of ten come home with empty bags, whereas, if a little judgment was used and a glance taken at the soil and surroundings, plenty of birds might be found. South of this place and parallel with the P. F. W. & C. R. R., runs what is known as the Big Ditch. This ditch is about four miles long; the bank is used as a road, and is on the right or west side. On either side are large corn-fields and timber lots; on the west side and for two miles is, to all appearance, as fine a piece of ground and timber for woodcocks as there is in the world. The hunting here is magnificent, but to find what you hunt for is out of the question. I have never known but one bird to be killed on this side of the ditch, while on the east side, and within fifty yards of the ditch, and for its entire length, birds can be found, and bags from ten to forty made any day from July 4 until the first freezing weather, after which not a bird can be found; all disappear in a single night. In the Fall of '78, my friend, Joe H. Mack, of Chicago, and myself, started one afternoon to get a few birds. We struck a corn-field, which I was satisfied held birds, and so remarked to him. We put the dogs into the corn and such a getting out of woodcock I never saw before or since. It being late when we began shooting, and having very little ammunition, it was necessary to hold close and shoot fast. The opportunity we made the best of, and we brought to bag forty-three fine plump birds. How many we left I am not able to say, but the number did not seem diminished when we quit. This being Mr. Mack's first woodcock hunt, it was rather amusing to see him among them. A bird would get up behind him, one in front, and in fact all around. His gun would go up at this one, then at that one, and at last he would fall to shoot at any. "Confound the birds," he remarked, "I don't know which one to shoot at." An hour's drive brought us home. After supper, Mr. M. commenced loading shells for the morrow, making the remark that one hundred birds would be brought to bag during the day. An early start was suggested and agreed upon, and we retired for the night, thinking of the good time we would have on the morrow. During the night I heard a great rumpus in the directions of Mr. Mack's bed-room. I listened for a moment, and found it came from Mack himself. "Stop that red thief, he stole one of my birds." He evidently was dreaming about the hunt we had in the afternoon and of an incident that took place. The red thief being no other than my red setter Mack, who would pick up all the birds he could and bring them to me, no matter who killed them. Morning came, and we were soon on our way after Mr. Mack's one hundred birds. "Will you get me a pair of gum-boots you don't get a bird to-day?" "Well, I will, and if that red thief Mack comes around me to-day and steals my birds, I'll cripple him." Mr. Mack had misconstrued my meaning, for during the night it had frozen very hard and not a bird did we find the entire day, all having left for a more congenial climate. KILLBUCK.

THE CHICAGO FIELD \$4 a year; \$2 for six months; \$1 for three months. Three copies one year \$9.

Woodcock and Turtle.

While on a collecting trip at Gardner's Lake, New London County, Conn., last Spring, we made some enquiries of an old gentleman about Birds of Prey, Ducks, etc., about the lake. After giving us the desired information the old gentleman stated that he was a few years ago driving slowly down the road when he heard something "flopping" its wings over the wall. Thinking it might be a wounded bird he got over the wall and found a Woodcock struggling in the mud, flapping its wings laboriously. Taking it for granted the bird was wounded, he seized it and in pulling it out found that its foot was fast, and he only secured it by leaving its foot behind. This state of things surprised the old man not a little, and while he stood there he noticed the mud moving where he had drawn the bird out. He secured a hoe which was in his wagon and began to dig in the mud; finding there was something alive there, he worked until he brought to *terra firma* a good sized Snapping Turtle. It would appear that the Woodcock in search of food had walked over the soft mud, and the turtle, also in search of a dinner, had seized the Woodcock by the foot, and would have taken it under only the hole was not deep enough for the mud turtle to get the bird below the surface; hence the struggle for life.

Q. & O. VIII. Aug. 1833. p. 63

AN incident of the blizzard of last March was related to me one morning recently. It will be remembered that storm was the most severe that has visited this section in a half century. All business was at a stand-still, railroads were paralyzed, and for two days the sole occupation was shoveling snow. The storm occurred about the middle of the month, just at the time when the woodcocks are moving northward, and no doubt the birds suffered severely and many must have been killed. On the corners of Montague and Court streets, in Brooklyn, a colored man was cleaning the sidewalk of the piles of snow, using one of the broad wooden snow shovels for the purpose, and in one of the shovelfuls, as he threw it toward the gutter, was a partially chilled woodcock. As the bird was freed from the snow it fluttered away for a few rods and fell again in the soft snow, burying itself as it fell. It was followed and captured but, being held between the captor's hands long enough to become warmed, finally escaped. It was seen by quite a number, for it was shown to the passers-by by the colored man who had it.

New York. Vol. XXX No. 14, h.

1888
JACOB PENTZ.

THE WOODCOCK AND THE WORM.

Editor *Forest and Stream*:

The following, coming from Audubon, ought to bear a good deal of weight on the question raised in your last issue as to how the woodcock get their food from the mud by boring. He says on page 20, Vol. VI. (of the edition of Roe, Lockwood & Son, New York, 1861): "The food of the woodcock consists principally of large earthworms, of which it swallows as many in the course of a night as would equal its own weight. It obtains its food by perforating the damp earth or mire, and also by turning the dead leaves in the woods and picking up the worms that lie beneath them. On watching a number of individuals probing mud in which a number of earthworms had been introduced, in a tub placed in room partially darkened, I observed the birds plunged their bills up to the nostrils, but never deeper; and from the motion of the parts at the base of the mandibles I concluded that the bird has the power of working the extremities so as to produce a kind of vacuum, which it enables it to seize the worm at one end and suck it into its throat before it withdraws its bill, as do curlews and godwits."

Some summers ago, while shooting woodcock, I observed some birds in an old field ditch under some willows; these birds were in the open ditch and were feeding or boring in the mud; it was early in the morning, but the sun was well up, so that I had full chance to see them; they were not twenty to twenty-five feet away. These birds acted as Audubon relates that his tame birds did, that is, they ran the bill deep into the mud, held it there, and appeared to suck in with their throats, but on the withdrawal of the bill I never saw the worm. Now with snipe, I have often seen the worm after the bill is withdrawn, and more often have taken the worms from their mouths after they were shot.

There is one point I don't understand in regard to the construction of the woodcock's bill, nor can I reconcile it with the sucking theory, and that is that, unlike the snipe's, the woodcock's upper bill overhangs the lower, or more properly speaking, the lower bill is shorter and fits into the upper; and if I am right, it is stiff at the ends and not soft and capable of being opened like the snipe's. Now if this is so, how can he open his bill while in the mud to suck, and not open the whole length of it? A snipe can; he opens just the very end and makes a tube of his bill. I have not a woodcock head with me, and an old one would be too dry to surely test this point, but I am quite sure a woodcock's bill is as I describe it.

BOSTON, Mass.

E. B.

Editor *Forest and Stream*:

"A Study of Woodcock," by "Paul Pastnor," in *FOREST AND STREAM* for July 18, is certainly a remarkable contribution to the literature of the subject of which it treats. Indeed, one hesitates to take the writer seriously or to feel quite sure that his "little old wood witch hobbling about with a very long black cane," did not begot his senses by some potent spell, under the influence of which he dreamed, instead of saw, the curious things which he describes so pleasantly. But, as he truly observes, "many mirth-provoking theories, in the course of modern investigation, have become science," and it would be not less unsafe than ungenerous to positively ridicule or discredit any of his observations or theories, however fanciful they may seem. Moreover, most of them, as I shall presently show, are by no means as new as their author apparently thinks. For convenience of discussion, the leading points in his article may be briefly restated and considered as follows:

(1) That the woodcock possibly has a song. There is no doubt about this, for the fact has been recorded and more or less freely commented on by several observers. (See *American Sportsman*, IV., 1874, p. 19; the same, pp. 41, Torrey's "Birds in the Bush," pp. 222-223; Nuttall's Manual, "Water Birds," pp. 196-197). The bird sings in the air during the mating season, in the evening twilight, rising in a spiral course to the height of three or four hundred feet, thence descending in zigzag lines, at the same time uttering warbling notes, which, to my ears, at least, are very sweet and musical, recalling the sound produced by a water whistle such as boys sell in the streets of our cities. I have witnessed this performance many times at various places, and on several occasions have traced the bird's flight from the ground to the highest point which it reached and back to earth again.

(2) That both the European and American woodcock pick up and carry off their young is also a fact attested by many observers, although writers differ in their impressions as to the way the thing is done, some asserting that the chick is carried in the parent's bill; others, on her back; others, in her claws, and still others, that it is held pressed close to her body between her thighs. The last view seems to be supported by the best evidence, although it is not improbable that the method varies at different times. An article on the subject in the *Zoologist* (third series, Vol. III., pp. 433-440) is accompanied by an illustration, depicting the European woodcock carrying its young very much as "Paul Pastnor" describes.

(3) I have never seen anything to indicate that the woodcock has a strongly developed bump of curiosity; but there seems to be no reason for challenging your correspondent's observations on this point, which are certainly very interesting and apparently quite conclusive.

(4) The assumption that the woodcock is only semi-nocturnal, although doubtless, contrary to the general impression of sportsmen, is perhaps correct. I have never detected a wild bird in the act of boring in the day time, but in the stomachs of several specimens, killed at about mid-day I have found fragments of earth worms. This would seem to be strong presumptive proof of diurnal feeding, for earth worms must be very rapidly digested in the stomach of a healthy woodcock.

(5) It is certainly possible that the evening flights of woodcock may be occasionally undertaken, as your correspondent believes, simply to enjoy "a mad, merry whirl in the air;" but nothing that I have seen warrants such a conclusion. On the contrary, after observing these flights on many occasions and at various places and seasons, I am convinced that the birds rise at evening from the thickets in which they have spent the day merely to seek richer but more exposed feeding grounds, where they dare not trust themselves by daylight. The fact that "Paul Pastnor's" birds flew into open meadow is significant in this connection.

(6) The assumption that the woodcock does not secure its food by boring, but that the holes which it makes in the mud are intended to serve as passages through which

earthworms may be lured to their fate by the simulated sound of rain, produced by the subsequent dancing and fluttering of the bird on the surface above, is apparently an original, and certainly a rather startling theory. From the nature of the case such a theory cannot be disproved, but it may be discredited, partly on the ground that observations made in the field at night, even in the clearest moonlight and with the aid of a good glass, cannot be wholly reliable, partly by evidence that the bird sometimes gets its food in simpler ways.

Audubon, "watching several individuals probing mud in which a number of earth worms had been introduced, in a tub placed in a room partially darkened," concluded "from the motion of the parts at the base of the mandibles * * * that the bird has the power of working their extremities so as to produce a kind of vacuum, which enables it to seize the worm at one end and suck it into its throat before it withdraws its bill, as do curlews and godwits ("Birds of America," Vol. VI., pp. 20-21). I am not aware that this supposition has been since verified, although it does not seem improbable that the woodcock, without withdrawing its bill, may sometimes suck up very small earth worms or other minute animals found in soft mud. However this may be, it certainly frequently, if not habitually, employs a different method, at least with earth worms of fair size.

In July, 1878, I saw a live woodcock in the possession of Mr. C. J. Maynard. He had it from a boy who flushed it in a gardeu, whence it flew against the side of a house, falling sufficiently stunned to be easily captured. It recovered in a short time and was placed in a large box, prepared for its reception by covering the bottom several inches deep with loam, sinking a basin of water in the center, and planting tall living weeds about the back and sides. When I first looked in the bird was squatting among the weeds, nor did any motion on my part avail to cause it to shift its position, save by shrinking a little closer to the ground, but when a live screech owl was brought and held against the wires that covered the front of the cage, the woodcock at once rose and advanced to meet its *vis-à-vis*. Singularly enough the owl seemed to be the more frightened of the two. Indeed, the woodcock showed no perceptible fear. After the removal of the owl the woodcock ran about freely, exploring all the corners of its limited domain, and probing the earth vigorously, but apparently without success, although it left no spot untried. Its long

Philohela minor (No. 2).

bill was thrust downward with wonderful rapidity and on every side in quick succession, the motion strongly resembling that of a man spearing eels. Then the bird would take a step or two and try again. Sometimes it would stop and apparently listen with its head held slightly on one side, the ear directed downward. Again it would stamp with its feet quickly and forcibly, several times in succession, then hold its head very near the ground, evidently listening for the movements of suspected worms beneath, for, immediately afterward, it twice probed rapidly and closely over the spot to which its ear had been applied. It rarely stood erect, and moved with a skulking gait, the head drawn in between the shoulders and slightly raised and lowered, with a nodding motion, between each step. When frightened, it held its tail nearly erect and spread to the utmost the down lower coverts, drooping beneath the tail feathers in a vertical, fan-shaped fringe. When undisturbed, and always when feeding, the tail was depressed and closed. Mr. Maynard told me that the bird ate half a pint of earth worms twice each day.

It will be observed that during the observations just recorded, I did not actually see the woodcock secure an earth worm; in fact, it is quite certain that of the many thrusts which it made while I was watching it, none was successful, for I stood within a few feet of the cage into which a strong light penetrated freely. If I remember rightly, Mr. Maynard said that no earth worms had been put into the cage for several hours previous to my visit, and that the bird had probably nearly or quite exhausted its last supply. Hence its ill success in boring had no special significance. The attitude of listening was most suggestive, however, and the subsequent rapid and exciting boring about the spot to which the bird's ear had been applied convinced me that its stamping was simply for the purpose of startling the worms and inducing them to betray their whereabouts by the sound, however slight, of their movements beneath the surface. Robins listen in a similar way before locating and dragging forth an earth worm. They also sometimes stamp just before listening, although this action is not as vigorous and strongly marked on their part as it was with the woodcock. If the latter stamped for the purpose of simulating the sound of rain, and thereby inducing the worms to come to the surface, why did it not, after executing its "war dance," remove a step or two, or, at least, assume a position of watching instead of listening and immediately boring again?

Fortunately it is needless to multiply arguments in support of this view, for Mr. Maynard actually saw his bird, after stamping and listening, "turn either to the right or left or take a step or two forward, plunge his bill into the earth and draw out a worm which he would swallow, then repeat this performance until all the worms were eaten." ("Birds of Eastern North America," pp. 374, 375). Then this statement proves that the woodcock is perfectly able to "withdraw a worm from the ground with its bill," despite "Paul Pastnor's" incredulity on that point; while taken in connection with the other facts and arguments above detailed, it also proves that the "war dance" serves—at least sometimes—the purpose which I have explained.

Since writing the above I have come upon the following in an early number (Vol. I., No. 16, p. 251) of *FOREST AND STREAM*:

"Did our readers ever see a woodcock 'boring?' We have, and this is how he did it: Once on a time we surprised one of these gentry at his matutinal occupation, and so intent was he that he never noticed our presence. We had always supposed that he thrust his long bill into the moist earth and drew out his grub, snipe-fashion, and swallowed it; but no, he pegged away vigorously at the ground, something as woodpeckers hammer, digging deeper and deeper, until he actually stood on his head to reach the greatest depth. Then when he had one hole bored he began another, and so continued until he had made nine, as we ascertained by counting afterward. But never a worm or grub did he draw forth from subterranean sources. He had been merely preparing his little stratagem, setting his traps, so to speak, and when

all was ready he laid down on his stomach, with his bill flat to the ground, and commenced beating the perforated earth violently with his wings. Presently a little worm or a grub or other insect came to the surface, and peering above the edge of one of the holes was incontinently sucked into the long protruding bill. Directly afterward a red well-scoured angle worm was victimized—we could see it distinctly as it passed into the bill—and possibly others would have followed had not our stupid dunderhead of a setter worked up on the scent and flushed the bird."

This note, which was apparently written by Mr. Chas. Hallock, the then managing editor of *FOREST AND STREAM*, curiously confirms as well as anticipates "Paul Pastnor's" observations. Although it does not mention the "rain" theory, it undeniably gives the latter much added probability. Indeed, if Mr. Hallock (?) was deceived in his impressions, the behavior of his bird may be fairly regarded as proving that the woodcock sometimes gets its food in the way that "Paul Pastnor" maintains.

Before concluding I should like to add a word about the whistling sound which the woodcock makes when flying. In your editorial remarks in the issue of July 18 you say that you "believe that it is not made by the wings, and could give reasons which to us appear conclusive." Will you kindly give these reasons? I must confess that nothing in connection with the habits of this interesting bird seems to me surer than that its shrill silvery whistle, which so thrills the heart of every sportsman, is produced by the wings. My grounds for this conviction are: (1) That I have over and over again had the same experience as that given by your correspondent, "H. D. N." (*FOREST AND STREAM*, Vol. XXXII., No. 25, July 11, 1889, p. 510), of shooting birds that did not whistle and finding that they were without the small, stiff, attenuated primary quills, while in no instance have I ever known a bird which lacked these quills to make the least whistling sound; although I do not deny—indeed, I have seen repeated instances of the fact—that a full-plumaged woodcock possessing these quills sometimes rises without whistling. (2) That twice upon picking up wounded woodcock by their bills I have had them beat their wings vigorously as if flying, producing at the same time the usual shrill whistle. One of these birds flapped so slowly that the whistle was not continuous, but on the contrary, made up of closely connected, but still separate, notes, each of which could be distinctly associated with a stroke of the wing. In both instances I held the bird's mandibles tightly together.

Surely nothing could be more conclusive than this. Assuming that it settles the origin of the sound, we are led naturally to consider what advantage a bird derives from its ability to whistle with its wings, for it is an universally-admitted law of nature that no highly specialized or peculiar function is developed in any animal except to serve some definite purpose, either of use or ornament. Now the attenuated primaries, as I prefer to call them, whistling quills, are present and equally developed in young as well as old birds of both sexes, and at all seasons excepting during the moult. It is evident, then, that they are not secondary sexual characters. The woodcock is also the only member of its family with which I am familiar which does not habitually and frequently utter some vocal whistle or call when flying. As far as is known the love-song already described, a harsh, night-hawk-like *paip*, made only when the bird is on the ground, and chiefly, if not wholly, by the male during the mating season, and a low *put'l*, given in connection with the *paip*, are the only vocal notes which the woodcock utters. Why then may not its wing-whistling serve the same purpose as the vocal calls of other waders, viz., to inform its companions of its movements and approximate position? This, at least, has seemed to me a logical inference from the facts just stated.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

WILLIAM BREWSTER

Editorial
p. 24 WAYS OF THE WOODCOCK.

IN his interesting paper on the woodcock, published in our Natural History columns, Mr. Brewster requests our views on certain habits of the bird. The two points of especial interest are the boring and the whistle, or twitter, so well known to shooters, and about which such diverse opinions are held.

We have only once seen the woodcock bore in the wild state. The bird, started by a companion, alighted within 6 or 8 ft. of where we were standing, ran a step or two, stopped, turned its head on one side, stood so for an instant as if listening, and then plunged its bill into the mud. It at once withdrew it, and raising the point of the bill, appeared to be swallowing, but as its back was toward us we could not see just what it did.

We have, however, seen the woodcock bore in captivity. The operation, which was performed with great deliberation, was repeated many times, and was witnessed on several different days, being always done in the same manner. The bird introduced the point of his bill into the damp earth at an angle of about 80 degrees, and by a series of slow pushes buried it to the base. While doing this, his left foot was slightly advanced and his body inclined downward. When the bill was fairly buried, the bird stood perfectly still. He looked as if he were listening, and we thought it quite probable that he was doing so. It seemed likely also that he was feeling, employing both senses to detect any movement in the earth beneath him. The apparent sensitiveness of the bill in the woodcock, as in some other waders, appeared to us to justify the impression that the sense of touch as well as of hearing came into play. If the bird found no worm, he withdrew his bill, and again plunged it into the earth at a little distance further on. If a worm was felt, or some sound or motion indicated that one was near, he partly withdrew his bill, and, altering its direction, plunged it in again and drew out the worm. The operation of deglutition seemed to begin as soon as the point of the bill touched the worm. A movement of the bases of the upper and lower mandibles indicated that he had a worm, and as the bill was withdrawn the two came together again and again very rapidly, and almost as soon as the bill was fairly clear of the earth the end of the worm disappeared down the bird's throat. It appeared, when the bird made his first thrusts into the ground, as if they were tentative, a deliberate thrust followed by a moment of waiting, another thrust and then another wait, in all perhaps three or four motions before the bill was buried to its base. This slow action we took to be an exploration by the tip of the bill for motion in the earth, at first near the surface and then deeper and deeper. When the bird had learned that there was a worm in the soil there was no hesitation. The bill was buried by a sharp quick thrust, about which there was no uncertainty. After devouring all the worms that it could, this bird commonly cleansed its bill by means of its feet, and then washed it in water by gently shaking its head. This bird, which weighed six ounces, devoured eight ounces of worms in twenty-four hours.

The cause of the whistle of the woodcock has long been a mooted point. There is no doubt that in rising the bird makes a noise with its wings, which might perhaps be called a whistle, but the sound to which we refer is the well known ringing note, as often heard in the woodcock cover, and which sometimes closely resembles the twitter of the kingbird. A crow, a robin, an English sparrow and a pigeon all make a noise with their wings, and so does the woodcock, but this sound, we believe, is not to be confounded with the other and better known note of the springing bird. We said last week that we believed that this sound was vocal, and that we could give reasons for this belief, which appeared to us conclusive. We came to this conclusion in October, years ago, when we one day shot a woodcock and broke its wing close to the body. Having a puppy at home we captured the bird alive in order to work the young dog on it. While attempting to catch it in our hands it ran ahead of us, now and then springing into the air as a wounded bird will, trying to support itself on its uninjured wing, and at each attempt to rise from the ground whistling. To us it appeared impossible that this one wing, which from the circumstances could not have been moved rapidly or it would have turned the bird quite over, should have made this sound.

At another time we captured a wing-broken bird which we held in the hand in the house; by a sudden spring it slipped from our grasp and fell to a chair, a distance of a foot or two. As it struggled to release itself and fell, it uttered the well-known whistling note. Subsequently, when this same bird was released on the ground before the young dog, it sprang into the air, using its uninjured wing as before, and whistling. This we have seen a number of times, and with many different wing-broken birds. Again, some of these wing-tipped birds, in the thick grass and weeds of a yard, have made this whistling when it appeared to us an impossibility for them to have used their wings.

The vocal whistle of the woodcock and the whistle of its wings appear to us as different as the well known "scaip" of the Wilson's snipe is from the whistle of its wings. Most snipe shooters have seen a wounded snipe run on the ground, constantly springing into the air and uttering its cry. We have never heard it questioned that this call of alarm was vocal, and we believe that the twitter or whistle of the woodcock is in the same way vocal.

Aug 1-1889.

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Forest and Stream.

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THE WOODCOCK.

Am. Field. XXX, No. 7, Feb. 18, 1888. CHRISTIANSBURG, OHIO.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD!—In the AMERICAN FIELD of January 28, Mr. John Bolus asks a question and I think to all lovers of woodcock shooting, an important one. I fully agree with Mr. Bolus in saying that he would rather give up the entire month of July than one week of October. I presume the gentleman who made the proposed amendment to our game laws was looking after the interests of our quails during the month of October, for hundreds of them are killed during that month by presumed woodcock shooters.

I also read, in the same paper, Mr. Bolus' very interesting article on the habits of the woodcock. Brother Killbuck must be a student of nature as well as a woodcock shooter to produce an article so true to life; and if sportsmen would remember some of the ideas advanced in Mr. Bolus' article they would have better luck woodcock shooting. It is an evident fact that the mother bird of the woodcock family will carry her young from one feeding ground to another, but will she ever carry them away from danger? Twice in my life have I seen the mother bird fly away from a point with a young bird between her feet. The first time I ever saw a woodcock fly away with her young was on July 10, 1883. I was shooting woodcocks over an Irish setter puppy and birds were plenty. I was beating an open, grassy place when the puppy came to a stanch point some fifteen yards from me. After admiring the point for a few minutes, I walked up and flushed the bird. As it arose out of the grass not over five yards from me, I noticed something was wrong with it, and, instead of shooting at it, stopped to look and could plainly see the little downy fellow between her feet.

I met with the same kind of a circumstance last season only it was before the open season. My explanation of the reason that those two birds carried their young away from danger is that they only had the one, for a thorough search of the ground failed to reveal another young one. In both cases had there been more than one in the brood, the mother bird would have done everything in her power to entice us away from her treasure.

Now, brother woodcock shooters, have any of you met with similar circumstances. If so, let us hear from you.

A. GUTHRIE.

Am. Field. XXV, No. 24, NOTES. June 11, 1887. p. 575.

ON last Friday I had the pleasure of seeing a woodcock carrying its young to a place of safety. It was not the first time, but I had a clearer view than I ever had before. I have a pointer puppy nine months old, a great-grandson of Waddell's Old Phil, and on that evening my wife and I went where I knew a woodcock had nested, to determine whether the youngster would point a game bird. Shortly after entering a piece of low ground bordering on the Tippecanoe River the puppy came to a stanch point. I called my wife's attention to the point, and while we were talking about his pretty position, a woodcock flushed with a young one between her thighs. We were not more than ten feet from her and had an unobstructed view. The little one was held tightly between the thighs of its mother, while she was almost doubled up, and kept the little one in position with her bill and tail. Her flight was slow and labored. She flew about thirty yards behind some brush, placed her baby in a safe place, and returned and picked up another one and carried it in an opposite direction. The legs and feet of the little one were plainly visible. During this time three or four more woodcocks flushed about the same place. When we turned to look at the puppy he was still standing, and I doubt not if we had game upon which to educate him, he would be an honor to Old Phil. HAY.

Warsaw, Ind.

Woodcock in New York City.—On March 10, Mr. Louis H. Schorter brought into the office of the National Association of Audubon Societies a Woodcock, *Philohela minor*, which he had picked up in Maiden Lane, New York City, that morning (March 25, 1911). The bird appeared in good condition, save that it was probably weak from hunger. It was sent to the New York Zoological Park. Mr. Crandall informs me that the bird refused all food and was kept alive for about a week by stuffing it with worms and maggots, when it died. This has been the previous experience at the Park with these birds and is in line with one experience I had. Although Mr. Crandall even secured earth worms for this purpose, and buried them in soft earth, the bird refused to eat voluntarily.—*BOWDISH, Demarest, N. J. Am. Field.* XXXVIII, July 1911, p. 368.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FALL FLIGHT OF
WOODCOCK.—1889.

The best type of sportsman is invariably something of a naturalist. He cannot help asking himself certain questions regarding the flocks of migratory birds in spring and fall. Whence come they, and whither are they going? What makes them choose such and such a date each year? And many queries of a like nature. Some species seem to have a date, fixed and unalterable; others seem guided largely by the seasons. If the wild goose does not show up on March 17 (the holy day of the blessed St. Patrick), the native of the fertile Province of Prince Edward's Island feels himself an injured man. It is only about once a generation that *Anser Canadense*, can be accused of tarrying on the way up. He is sometimes ahead of schedule, but very, very seldom behind. Then, again, the grand rush south of the lesser migratory birds (finches, buntings, etc.) has been proved, by investigations at the lighthouses, to take place during the first week in September each year. In spring they seem bound to cross the northern boundary of the United States about the beginning of April, even if they be decimated by a late frost, as often happens. All the feathered tribes, however, have not this peculiarity; some seem to be guided by caprice, and foremost in this respect stands undoubtedly the woodcock.

It has long been an ardent desire of mine to get at the true inwardness of the woodcock's migration, but, alas, I regret to say that I seem as far from having this wish gratified as ever. It came to my knowledge that there was a flight of woodcock along the New England coast on the 8th of last October. In order to discover what had induced this sudden migration, I wrote to the chief signal officer at Washington, D.C., for pressure, wind, temperature, etc., on the night of the 7th, hoping thereby to be able to discover why that date was chosen for the great migration of the year, fully ten days to a fortnight earlier than the usual period. I confess freely, that I expected the following conditions to have existed: Bright, moonlight, cloudless night; wind, north or northwest; low temperature and high barometer. So much for theory; what do we find in practice? Chief Signal Officer A. W. Greeley, in his prompt reply to my requisition for information, gives the following details for Eastport and Portland, near which centres some of the heaviest bags were got:

Eastport, Me., Oct. 7.—8 P.M., Bar. 29.651, Temp. 56°, Wind S.W., Cloudy.

Portland, Me., Oct. 7.—8 P.M., Bar. 29.679, Temp. 51°, Wind S.W., Light Rain.

In other words, every condition was about diametrically opposed to those I imagined as probably existing and enticing the cock to a flight south. True, the moon was near her full, but this was nullified by the heavens being overcast. It is quite evident that neither frost nor a favorable wind tempted the birds along the Maine coast on the night of Oct. 7, 1889. Yet on the 8th every cover swarmed with them, and good scores were made from Calais to Rockland, and I believe in Massachusetts also. Had there been a heavy frost in the Provinces, I could well believe that many woodcock would have been driven to the seashore, but this was apparently not the case.

without fear of flattery, that he knows probably as much about this subject, as any one man is allowed to. The result of his observations has led him to propound the following theory: When a flight of woodcock are met with by the gunner, these birds are not travellers from a distance, but, on the contrary, are merely the locally-bred birds who are gathering together before migrating. I must own that this was entirely a new idea to me. Hitherto, if I have struck a flight, I have always asked, "Where did they come from?" It appears I should have questioned rather, "Where are they going?" All other birds bunch before sailing; why not woodcock? Against this no valid argument can be advanced that I know of. Of course, in Europe, the cock (a different bird) is often found in large quantities in the seashore covers of eastern England and other countries, worn to a skeleton and nearly exhausted, evidently having travelled far, but in New England is this ever the case? I, at least, have never seen it; all those I have shot have been fat and vigorous, almost proving Mr. Smith's theory.

I once kept a woodcock in confinement (as I reported in the sporting press at the time), and proved that a few hours' abstinence reduced the bird to a skeleton; and, as no bird can fly and eat, the fact that woodcock are usually in good condition proves, to me at least, that they have been stationary.

Another subject we discussed at some length was, the route taken by the Province birds going south. Those bred in New Brunswick probably pass along the Maine coast, but hardly those hatched in Nova Scotia. The beautiful vale of Annapolis, N.S., is as famous for its woodcock shooting as for its apple crop, and the birds are there shot far later in the season than in New Brunswick. They migrate from Nov. 1 to 10, as a rule. The fact that the best shooting is over in Maine by Oct. 25, seems to prove that the Nova Scotia birds lay a straight course from Yarmouth for Cape Cod, and do not visit Maine in the fall.

If any other gunner with naturalistic leanings wishes to add to my notes on this subject, the platform is at his service, and there are lots of his brother sportsmen, (although sitting in the back row), who would rejoice to see such a one make a "hit." C. A. B.

All over the interior of New Brunswick woodcock nest and rear their young. In fact, during July (if the law was off), very heavy bags could be made, but, after moulting, they disappear, and are never seen in large numbers inland again that year. Generally a few remain nearly up to November, in fact until frozen out, but the man who should pick up half a dozen to his own gun, inland, after Oct. 25, will have done wonders.

A few days since, I enjoyed the pleasure of a long chat on this (to me) most interesting subject, with Mr. Everett Smith of Portland, Me. This gentleman is a naturalist, whose reputation or accurate observations of bird life and habits is spread considerably beyond his native city, and he is probably well known to many readers of *SHOOTING AND FISHING*. Like myself, Mr. Smith has been trying to unravel the mysterious habits of *P. Minor*, and I think I may say,

HABITS OF THE WOODCOCK.

Forest & Stream
March 26, 1875.

DANSVILLE, N. Y., March 1, 1875.

EDITOR FOREST AND STREAM:—

The woodcock that have been in the Southern States since the latter part of November will be with us again by the full moon of this month. They travel as far north as Canada, and through every State in our Union, around the great lakes, and as far northwest as Fort Union, on the Missouri River. In the month of September the shooting is splendid in the northern part of Dakota, and along the Mississippi River north of Dubuque. At Red Lake they are also in abundance. They commence traveling south about the first of October, and by full moon they are in this vicinity. At all the lakes they can be found, and the shooting is perfection, especially in Minnesota, ducks, geese, swan and crane being very plentiful. A few sportsmen travel in steamboats up and down the Mississippi River, making it a business shooting woodcock, ruffed and pinnated grouse; geese and ducks for the St. Louis and Chicago markets. About the first of April they build their nest in this section which is roughly formed under some fallen tree or dead bushes, or by the side of a decayed stump, and lay from three to five eggs nearly as large as a pigeon's. They are of an olive color, with light, pale brown spots. They generally hatch two broods, and if not disturbed will sit in the same nest the second time. The first brood is taken care of by the cock bird, and after the second is fully grown they take hot broods to the best feeding grounds. They should be left alone until September. July shooting should be abolished in every Northern State, because the bird cannot fly as a game bird should fly until he has moulted and received his Autumnal colors. In 1870 I bagged sixty-five woodcock in two days' shooting in the month of October; the birds were fat, many of them weighing eight ounces. It is impossible to do this in Summer. Northward of Dakota their stay is short, but the snipe passes far beyond, being lighter and stronger on the wing. As soon as they commence migrating they make short nocturnal flights from covert to covert, resting in the day time. This valley has caution signs for miles along the roads, and the law will be enforced if any one is detected shooting woodcock during the Summer months. Woodcock, when migrating, feed at dusk, and are ready for their journey at daylight. I have flushed them in November in the woods, and have seen them tower far above the forest trees, flying in a circle for ten or fifteen minutes, and then alight near the spot where they had been flushed. I have seen my dog rise from his charge when told to lie on, and after walking a few steps point the second time on the first bird. At daylight, in the Spring, their flights are more rapid and longer. They generally travel in pairs, and when on the move can be found in any swampy ground inclined to be sandy, especially in second growth sprouts, or in low lying thickets near open ground, but never in the forest. Black alder, birch and willows are their favorite resorts, and food abounds more plentifully where there is a low, rich, black soil and bogs, but not grassy. During the heat of the day the birds lie in the thickets and close woods. At twilight I have seen them on the wing near open swamps, or along the open banks of rivers, and when seen at that season on moonlight nights they feed all night long, and at daybreak take a long flight to some shady haunt. They only act in this manner when non-migrating. They will return to the covert in which they were hatched, if not driven out before the moulting season; but as the law stands to-day I think very few return. Nearly all of the young are but three-fourths grown by July, and the old ones are taken away from the second brood that are but half fledged. If left alone for two weeks longer they could take care of themselves. Woodcock, at times, are sluggish and hard to rise, and when flushed they will only fly ten or fifteen feet and drop again suddenly, and that, too, in front of the dog. I generally found that when this was the case the bird was either very fat, or fatigued by a long journey, and if so, was very thin and pin feathered. The woodcock, on alighting, runs oftentimes as the quail, before squatting. I have seen them in October run round and round the dog, then hide under a leaf. Their tails are erect and spread when running in this manner. About the full moon in August they disappear. A single bird is only found here and there until the first of September, when they again take up their former grounds. They very soon get in fine order and give sport which is excellent, but after a few heavy frosts and the ground becomes slightly frozen, they cannot here, the insects disappear, and they leave for the South, and do

Long Island, N. Y.

Late Flight of Woodcock on Long Island, N. Y. — On December 5, 1908, while hunting near Flanders, Suffolk Co., I flushed a Woodcock (*Philohela minor*). On December 8, after a storm and heavy rain, eleven were shot in a small swamp at Lawrence, Nassau Co., close to the New York City line. The same day one was seen in a little strip of woods about one mile from this swamp.

In 30 years on Long Island, I have never seen other than stragglers after about November 20th and do not recall ever before seeing one in December. — HAROLD HERRICK, *New York City*.

FOREST AND STREAM.

not appear among us until they get ready to build and sit; then they visit our lakes and swamps again. The largest and fattest birds that I have ever bagged have been in this locality, and I have hunted them for forty years. I bagged my first brace in Pennsylvania, in 1835. In the Autumn of '74 I weighed twelve birds, and they turned the scale at six and a half pounds. I shot several this season that weighed nine ounces fully, and my nephew shot one that weighed ten ounces. The feeding grounds here are small, but are superior for woodcock and snipe. My nephew also shot a grouse that weighed forty-eight ounces, which is of course a very rare specimen, their usual weight being from twenty to thirty-five ounces. Woodcock generally weigh from five and one-half to seven ounces, and the English bird from nine to sixteen ounces. I had one sent to me from England that weighed one pound one ounce. I had it set up, and have it in my collection. The plumage of the two birds is very different. Ours is more delicate in flavor and juiciness. The rich and loamy soil in this locality causes the Autumn birds to be so fine and fat. They are not confined to snotion, for under the leaves and turf and in the thickets and open hogs they find many worms and insects.

When horing, they make a dull, heavy sound, until they grasp their prize. Raising their bill into the air they seem to suck the worm steadily, when, with a quick motion of the head, it disappears, and the work is commenced for another morsel. They bore five or ten boles very rapidly and then rest for a few minutes. Their bill being filled with many nerves makes it very sensitive, so that no worm can escape, if within two inches of the surface. They are greedy, unsocial and solitary. From the time the first egg is laid until the brood is hatched, is generally four weeks. I have seen the male bird at this time rise almost in a line, probably three hundred feet, then commence circling, making a very singular note, something like the snipe, but much louder and deeper, then rapidly descending to the place whence he started he commences giving an entirely different note, sounding like quack, quack, and is answered by the female instantly.

The ordinary number of the young brood is four birds. I have seen five, but seldom. When the moulting season commences the woodcock separate, and do not come together again until they get ready to migrate. I have seen the male bird with the first brood tumble and flutter along the ground and over the dead leaves for a short distance, and then take wing, fly in a circle, and return to the hen, and in a few moments utter a few clucks, and the young would come out of their hiding places and be under his protection again. He would squat and allow me to pass within a few feet of him. Wherever there is good boring a side hill is his choice for home. If the weather has been dry, you will always find them in briar patches, or deep thickets, where the ground never loses moisture; and on the contrary you will find them on the hills or elevated grounds, especially if there is a certain degree of moisture. And when the weather gets cool you will find them among the chestnuts and birch clearings, receiving the warmth of the November sun. And as the season approaches its end you will find them in the more sheltered swamps, where the worms and insects are protected. The cedar swamps they delight in, and I have shot many of them in November and in the early part of December. But they are very uncertain in their movements, being governed by the soil and weather. In the southern part of Delaware they collect in large numbers, for the marshes and cripples is their home. Last season birds were very scarce in the Eastern and Middle States. Summer shooting kills off all the old birds and spoils the Autumn sport.

This game bird is harrassed more than any other; after being hunted all Summer and Autumn, when he returns south they are not content with hunting during the day, but at night take the negro and torch, and whilst he is feeding "shoot him on the spot," and call that sport. The severe, many snows, but light; but if the too wet, there will be plenty of game next

JOHN DEBANES.

A Fern-eating Woodcock.—One of the most singular departures of birds from their ordinary food-habits that I have ever observed is the following: In examining the digestive organs of more than one hundred Woodcocks, I think I have never found in them anything but the common earth-worm, either entire or in various stages of digestion, excepting in one or two instances, a leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*).

The Woodcock in question was brought to me to be mounted by Mr. W. C. Alvord, of Washington, D. C., who shot it while Woodcock shooting at Martha's Vineyard. This bird was one of several killed on the 17th of October, 1885. When skinning it my attention was called to its very

singularly distended crop. Upon making a cut into the membrane with a pair of scissors, out rolled, or rather jumped, the contents, which being released from confinement increased to three times its former size. At the same moment I was astonished to observe the character of the contents, which proved to be leaves of the common fern (*Pteris aquilina*), rolled up in so curious a manner, and in such quantity, as to plainly indicate that it was the result of a deliberate meal, and not an accident.

The crop was so full as to be incapable of holding any additional material. No other substance was mixed with the leaves, the entire wad or ball being free from dirt of any character. Every leaflet of the fronds was intact, and after being soaked in warm water and spread out side by side they covered a space twelve inches square. The stomach and intestines appeared to contain parts of partly digested leaves, but nothing else, though this was not carefully determined.

A 'Fern-eating Woodcock' is a novelty in my experience. Drs. Merriam and Fisher have desired me to send this record for publication to 'The Auk.' This is one of the most singular instances noted, not excepting even the record of the presence of an entire Song Sparrow in the crop of a Chuck-wills-widow.

It may be mentioned that the locality where this Woodcock was shot was an open marsh, with bushes here and there, while springs and small streams afforded in abundance the usual food of this very fastidious bird. The specimen was in fine condition—a plump and fat old female.—

FREDERIC S. WEBSTER, *Washington, D. C.*

Auk, 4, Jan., 1887, p. 73-74.

Light on the woodcock and worm question: According to the last Smithsonian report the Hupa Indians, in Humboldt county, California, relish angleworms as a delicacy. In the autumn, when the ground has been well soaked by the rains, the Yuki housekeeper takes her "woman stick," a pole 6ft. long and 1½ in. thick, sharpened and fire-hardened at the end; and thrusting this into the ground about a foot in depth, twists it around in every direction, so agitating the earth that the worms come to the surface in large numbers for a radius of two or three feet, and are scooped up for soup. "Frequently," says the report, "the worms are brought to the surface by the Indians dancing over the ground to make the game uncomfortable below." The Indians of Round Valley punch a pole as far as possible into the damp earth, work it back and forward, and by pressure drive out the worms, which they eat raw or make into soup. Now, may it not be true that when the woodcock bores for worms it procures them in three ways, by seizing any which it may come upon directly in boring, by agitating the earth by successive borings, thus driving the prey to the surface, and further by the dancing, stamping or beating with the wings described by observers? *Editorial for Auk*

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No. 2

THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF BOB-WHITE.

BY JOHN N. CLARK.¹

To THE man who keeps his eyes and ears open, there are new sources of entertainment and instruction bursting upon his vision at every turn. They often come as surprises — for Nature, ever prolific in resource, offers a new program at every interview. Such were the thoughts that suggested themselves as I took the pen to recount a little episode that afforded much entertainment for me the past summer.

I frequently observed during later June and early July a stately Bob-white stationed on a post near at hand where at early morn and fading day he called out with great energy his weather prognostications with little favor to the haymakers, as if he were a trusted employee of the Weather Bureau.

By the roadside in that immediate vicinity grow numerous patches of what I call scrub. There are hazel scrub, wild rose scrub, and blueberry and dwarf willow scrubs — annually mowed. Mowing does not destroy or discourage them, but puts them in the form so popular in Japan when practiced upon trees kept in plant form by trimming and training. These scrubs, cut to stubs from six to ten inches, renew their annual leaf and vigor and afford nice

¹[This article has a sad interest, owing to the death of the author since the manuscript was received for publication. See 'Notes and News' in the present number of 'The Auk'.—EDD.]

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Gallinago
delicata

G. M. = Great Meadows, Concord
 B. H. = Opposite Ball's Hill, "
 * = drumming
 K. = *kup-kup-kup* call

Gallinago delicata.

1889
 April 4³ (shot) Pullen - 12⁴ shot Pullen - 26² shot 1889. 13⁶ (shot) - 15⁵ * - 23⁶ * 1890 18² hd - 17⁵ * 7⁴ * 1891. 16¹⁰ * 1892.
 " 14¹ - 15¹ - 20⁶ * Concord 1892 2¹ (H. Holden) 6³ (J. Burgen) 8³ (Coc. coc) 11³ hd 23² (G. Meadows) 1893
 " 2¹ (Morse farm) 6¹ (H. Holden) 6³ (J. Burgen) 8³ (Coc. coc) 11³ hd 23² (G. Meadows) 1893
 " 6¹ * (Drumming) 19¹ * (Drumming) 1895 14⁶ (Ball's Hill) 15³ (W. Bartlett) 16² (D. M. M.) 18¹ (H. Holden) 20⁴ 22¹ * 23² * 24⁴ * 1896
 " 2¹ (two quinnis first) 27¹ (about 10¹⁰ to 12¹² M.) 28¹ (two quinnis first) Concord 1896
 May 18¹ (about 30 shots, West M.) 4¹ (B. (Coc. M.) 11¹ (Ball's Hill) 17¹ * - 1891. 3¹ * 1894 1¹ * 3¹ * 1898 3¹ * 1899

August 14¹ Concord 1892

Sept. 3⁴ (seen 1 shot) (fide quinnis) 7¹ * (at daybreak) 15¹ (Jones) 21³ 24² 27¹ Concord 1892.
 2¹ (Gummers beating meadows with pinclets) Concord 1893. 30¹ (Port Pond) 1895 16¹ (Glaswick P. Carr) 23¹ 30¹ 1898
 22¹⁰ O. A. Lathrop 1899

Oct. 16³ (evening) Concord 1899. 14² (O. A. Lathrop) 1899.

Oct. 8¹ (ball mark) 30¹ 1891. 1¹ (at W.) 12¹ (shot) - 13¹ (Jones) 17⁴ Concord 1892

11⁷ shot 12²¹ shot 21⁷ shot 22² (at W.) 23¹ (mud) 24¹ (do) 26¹ (second) 27⁴ (birds) 28¹ (Swamp) 30⁴ (shots) Concord 1896

21¹ (pair) 22² (hand) 24⁵ (shots) 25³ (shots) 28¹⁰ (shots) 29² (shot) 30¹ (hand) Concord, 1897

14⁴ (shots) 15⁴ (shots) 16¹ (shot) 17² (shots) 18¹ (shots) 19¹ (shots) 20¹ (shots) 21¹ (shots) 22¹ (shots) 23¹ (shots) 24¹ (shots) 25¹ (shots) 26¹ (shots) 27¹ (shots) 28¹ (shots) 29¹ (shots) 30¹ (shots) Concord, 1898

Nov. 18¹ (A. S. Robbins) 1893 3³ 4³ shot. 1895 3¹⁵ (shots) 6¹² (shots) 10³ (shots) Concord, 1897

March 31¹ (7¹ shot) 1894 20¹ (Fenton) 1898

April 22¹ * 23¹ * 24⁶ * 25¹ * 26³ * 27² * 28¹ * 29³ * 30³ * Concord, 1897 30³ (over) 1899

January 27¹ (H. B. Bowles) 1896

G. delicata

Gallinago wilsoni

1889

April

On the Fresh Pond marshes north of the Glacialis between the Fitchburg and Mass. Cen. R.R. tracks and north of the Central also, Snipe have been apparently numerous this month. Pullen, the politician, is said to have started them there on the 4th, six on the 12th, and fifteen on the 22nd. I visited the meadow on the 26th and found it in perfect condition - a broad expanse of slimy ooze, shimmering with water through which the green grass had already sprung up to a height of two to six inches. Several sportsmen were ahead of me and I heard ten or twelve shots - several of them doubles - as I was approaching. Accordingly I chose a portion of the meadow which I suspected had not been beaten and on the edge of some low bushy willows flushed and shot two birds. Both were very fat and heavy. The ground over nearly half an acre about where they had been lying was thickly bound and chalk marked. One of them rose wild on the open meadow and after flying a few rods dropped in the densest part of the willows.

Snipe shooting in Massachusetts at this season is delightful sport. The air is soft and warm with perhaps just a refreshing breeze of East wind. The meadows are green with the young grass. On the isolated maples scattered about over the broad level and on some of the taller willows that mark the courses of the sluggish brooks Red-wing Blackbirds are perched three near at hand showing their scarlet epaulets as they half expand their wings to utter the familiar quawk-a-ree, the more distant ones showing merely as black specks against the sky. From every side comes the melody of trilling toads or morning leopard frogs.

Numbers
killed on
F. Pond marshes

Spring
Snipe shooting

Gallinago wilsoni

1890

Mass.


April 15

Cambridge. On the evening of the 13th Faxon heard Surfer "Drumming"

"drumming" over the Fresh Pond marshes. I went there to-night with Chadbourne getting on the ground a little before sunset. A little after sunset while it was still quite light heard one in distance towards Little Pond. Hurried over there & found the bird or birds over the meadow just west of Beach Island. ^{We could not be any of them as they were to the east of us.} The drumming was practically continuous at short intervals (1/2 minute or less) during the half hour we stayed.

There must have been several birds engaged for one "drum" would frequently precede another too quickly for the bird to have had time to reascend in the interim. Twice we actually heard two birds drum at once. Most of the time they were apparently several hundred feet high but every now & then one would come down to close that the sound would startle us and we involuntarily dodged or at least felt like it. ~~That~~ birds apparently changed position at each performance and "drummed" ~~at~~ different points over a space of 8 or 10 acres. Not once did we hear any of those engaged in drumming utter any other sound but twice we heard a bird that had evidently just started from the meadow utter the usual succession of "kaipes" as it flew off. One of these birds I think rose into the air & joined the "drummers."

Nothing could be more inappropriate than the term "drumming." The noise is rather a humming or hooting. It consists of from 8 or 10 to 12 or 15 notes resembling the syllable who repeated in quick succession the pitch rising and the time quickening to nearly the end when the final two or three notes drop & are given more slowly.

It is probable that the notes quicken as the bird's speed increases & that the final slowing is caused by the upward turn of flight thus 

The Crescendo effect is perhaps due partly to fact that the bird approaches the listener as it descends. The time occupied by the series of notes varied to-night from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 seconds, averaging 2 seconds.

The evening was cold (ther. 34° at 9 P.M.) and rather windy. Hylas piping, leopard frogs croaking, toads trilling, night herons quacking. First Surfer heard about 6.40 P.M.

This humming resembles most closely the hutting sound of a Scarp Duck's wings when the bird is flying at maximum speed. The termination recalls that of the Pileated Woodpecker call. The whole also reminded me at a distance of the beating of a goat. It is a crescendo, ending in diminuendo.

Fallinago wilsoni

1890 Mass.

April 23 Cambridge. - A soft, warm evening with light S. wind after Drumming
a very warm day. Sky obscured by filmy clouds through
which the sun could be seen before it set and after sunset
there was a strong glow in the western sky.

The first Snipe began "drumming" at 6.45 P.M. We did not
see him rise from the meadow but I discovered him just
after his second "drum," flying ~~at~~ the height of 250 or 300 ft
in a huge circle fully 300 yds. in diameter. His flight was
peculiar, rather slow and very steady for a snipe, his wings vibrating
rapidly but with a loose fluttering motion. Every three or four seconds
he would incline slightly downwards and glide for perhaps
30 yds. dropping in this distance only a few feet and unmistakably
moving his wings continuously but ^{perhaps} more slowly and tremulously
than when proceeding on an ~~level~~ plane. At each of these downward
glides we heard the humming sound but it was shorter than
usual and all on the same key. At the end of each glide he
resumed his former level by an easy upward sweep and his
course was always in the path of his huge circles. In
completing the circle once he made about five glides. After
completing the circle ~~for the first~~ he turned and retraced it in
the opposite direction gliding two or three times until half way
around when he left his regular path and shot away to
the westward on a long but very decided decline his speed
increasing towards the end and his course nearly straight but
more and more downward until he finally shot down like an
arrow to within 50 feet of the earth then inclined sharply
upward again & disappeared against a cloud. Towards the
end of this sweep the humming began and reached its maximum
intensity just before he turned upward. His course was about
like this during the long descent just described.

A few minutes later we ~~again~~ saw him make

(Continued)

Gallinago wilsoni

1890 Mass.

April 23

Cambridge

Another long swoop. This time he descended fully 200 ft. in a glide of 200 yds. His speed towards the end of this glide was very great. During both of these long swoops Faxon and Bolles agreed with me in thinking that his wings were set and apparently motionless but the light was dim & we may have been mistaken. The humming during these long, sharp descents was long of maximum length and increased in volume & rapidity and rising slightly in pitch towards the end. These long swoops closely similar to ^{those of} a booming *Chordeiles*.

Drumming

After it became dark one bird descended to the meadow his wings making a rushing sound as he passed us. A few seconds later he "drummed" very low down ending apparently only a few yards above the ground. Then he was silent for 15 or 20 minutes when he began again and was joined by another the two drumming continuously up to our departure at 8 P.M. when it was very dark with a cloudy sky.

Recapitulation: "Drumming" of two kinds a short who-who-who who-who-who-who all of the same pitch and intensity and a longer more varied who-who-who-who who who who who ho- he- he- he increasing in volume & intensity and rising slightly in pitch but dropping in both volume and pitch at the end, a crescendo ending in diminuendo. Bird seem to produce the first by flying in an immense circle dipping down slightly with tremulous wing beats at each repetition and to produce the second by a long yet decided decline ending in an arrowy swoop at an angle of fully 45°.

The ~~second~~ first sound resembles ^{in the distant cry of a booby,} the hooting of an Owl. The second the humming sound of a duck's wings. When the bird descended near us there was a distinct swish of wings at the end.

He did not once to-night hear the scap or any vocal note. The circling bird looked large and his flight was somewhat bat-like. He moved his wings continuously.

The humming has a wild wren-like quality yet is a singularly pleasing spring-like sound when heard over the meadows & a still warmer spirit evoking.

Gallinago delicata

1890 Mass.

May 18 Cambridge.-- This evening as twilight was falling I heard a Wilson's Snipe Late stay in
rise from the marsh north of Point Pond uttering the usual hoarse May
scarp. He passed around me in a half-circle flying low in the
direction of Black Island and showing plainly against the light
in the west.

1891

Apr. 18 Cambridge.-- Spent the evening in the swamps near Hills' Crossing
hoping to hear Snipe drum. Two different birds rose near me
and flew about over the meadows "scarping" but neither of them
ascended. It is strange that none were heard drumming for
the evening was unusually favorable, very warm (ther. 70° at noon
to-day) with a moist S. wind and the moon showing through
fleecy clouds. On the evening of the 11th I spent the twilight
in the same place without hearing a Snipe at all.

I have since learned that Faxon spent the evening of the 17th
in these swamps with similar results; i.e. he heard Snipe scarping
but only over the humming board.

May 11 Belmont.-- T. Bolles heard at least one and he thought two Snipe Probably breeding
drumming this evening after dark on Rock Meadow. in Belmont

" 17 To Rock Meadow this evening to listen for the Snipes. One began drumming
at 7.45 P.M. it being nearly dark at the time. He kept at it very
steadily until 8 o'clock when we were forced to leave. He was over the
eastern end of the meadow & seemed to be flying in a great circle.
For further particulars see journal entry under this date.

" 28 No one has visited Rock Meadow at evening since the 17th I
went there this forenoon taking my pointer and beat the
entire eastern end of the meadow on both sides but could
find neither the birds nor any of their callings or boings.
I also searched Fifty Acre Meadow, Carlisle, with equally poor
success. Further details in journal under this date.

1890

Oct. 24

Mass.

Belmont

Gallinago delicata

" At 5.20 a Wilson's Snipe got up from the marshy ground near the roost, emitting its "scape", rose to a great height, darting about as in the Spring flights, and bleated once. The bleat was of shorter duration than in the Spring, but otherwise the same. The rest of the while it uttered only the "scape". Disappeared in a little while in the direction of Rock Meadow. Thoreau says (Excursions", p.50): "The late walker or sailor, in October evenings, may hear the murmurings of the snipe circling over the meadows, the most spirit-like sound in nature". After reading this I went to the Fresh Pond marshes Oct. 12 on purpose to hear the Snipe, if possible. At about 5.20 a Snipe rose from near Alewife Brook, "uttering its "scape" as it rose, and joined two others high up in the air, but I heard no bleating. But from the way they flew about it seemed as if they ought to bleat. You may well believe that I was pleased to confirm Thoreau last night when a Snipe was the last thing in my mind. I am going to F. Pond again to-night to see what I can hear (as an Irishman would say), Can't you hear the Snipe bleat at Umbagog? Or is it too far North & cold? And can't you induce a Woodcock or two to sing? I can't help believing that they do-more or less, just as the Partridge drums and other birds sing in the autumn." (W. Fayon in letter Oct 22, 1890)

1892. Mass.

Gallinago delicata.

Aug. 14. Concord.- While sailing a little below Davis's Hill I was positively electrified by hearing, suddenly, the scaipe of a Wilson's Snipe thrice repeated. The next instant I saw the bird flying across the river about fifteen feet above the water. It alighted on the west bank among tall grass. I could see nothing moving on the meadow to the eastward whence it came but possibly it had been frightened by my sails or it may have been merely changing its feeding grounds. The time was about half-an-hour before sunset. If this bird was a migrant it furnishes the earliest date of autumn arrival which I have ever obtained.

Wilson's
Snipe.

Sept. 3 Concord.- Two parties of sportsmen with their dogs were beating the meadows in the afternoon and fired a dozen or more shots. On my way up river at evening I passed near one of these parties and on questioning them was informed that they had started four Wilson's Snipe and had shot one of these birds and a Marsh Hawk.

Wilson's
Snipe
on the
meadows.

Sept. 7 Concord.- The first sound that I heard was the whistling of Duck's wings. Then suddenly, from directly overhead and with startling clearness, came the weird humming of a Snipe, and after an interval of a few seconds, during which I had an opportunity to convince myself that I was really awake, the bird drummed again very near me and then flew about low down on the meadow marking its course by a succession of scaipes. The "drumming" was precisely like that produced by this bird in spring. I have

Snipe
drumming

Gallinago delicata.

1892. Mass. .

Sept.7 Concord.- never heard it in autumn before and know of only one Snipe
instance (communicated to me by Faxon who heard a Snipe drum in drums.
the early evening last September on Rock Meadow) when it has
been noted by others.

Gallinago delicata

1893 Mass.

Jan.-Feb.

Martha's Vineyard and - Although the winter has
Barnstable been exceptionally cold Scaup
have been seen in the usual
numbers in the swamps on the Cape. Putnam Bangs
found several the very last of December in a
swamp at Barnstable and Feb. 1st 4th started one
in a swamp near West Liberty, on the Vineyard

Wintering

1894

Dec. 25

Poukeagoy - "It may interest you to know that while walking
beside a boggy pond to day I flushed a Wilson's
Scaup". (J. H. Bowles, letter Dec. 25, 1894) Mr. Bowles afterwards
told me that this bird passed the entire winter in Concord.

1896

Jan. 27

Concord - Mr. J. H. Bowles started four Scaup from the
banks of a trout brook that is fed by numerous springs which
never freeze. He was told of the presence of the birds by a
boy who visits the place in search of water cress and who
says that there were Scaup are wintering on another similar
brook not far off. He has seen all seven birds at frequent
intervals since December. Mr. Bowles shot one of the four birds
& found it to be an adult ♀ "as fat as butter". He further
tells me that on the brook first mentioned he saw a
single Scaup at frequent intervals through the winter of 1894-95.

Wintering

Sept. Oct.

Concord. On reaching Concord Oct. 10th I was told by various sportsmen
that for two or three weeks previous to this date Scaup had been more
numerous on Great Meadows than during any past season for 20 years or more.
Harriet Holden said that she started one 50 birds one foggy morning.
On Oct. 11th one of the local gunners killed 7 birds & next day the
same man shot 21 in two or three hours. The weather since Sept 1
has been stormy more than half the time. This, I think, accounts for
the appearance of so many Scaup. Like the Golden Plover on our coasts
they have learned the danger of alighting on moss, peeling grounds & only
do so in winter when driven to it by stress of weather.

Gallinago delicata (W.L.)

Concord, Mass.
April, 7. 1893.

In the afternoon there was much shooting on the meadows over which the Snipe were drumming last evening and I fear that some of the poor birds fell victims. It is a shame that our laws should allow this spring shooting of a bird which is so rapidly decreasing.

Snipe

Concord, Mass.
April, 8. 1893.

After tea I went out to find across Red Bridge to the meadow where my young field heard the Snipe drumming the third evening of the S.S. The birds were there to night for I heard at least two and I think three in and fly about but none of them drummed, although the night was very warm with a light S.W. breeze. The night conditions were, however, I heard a single Snipe. Once the bird was within 20 yds. or less within in the ground or drumming close to it. Its call note the sound consisted of a series of caas, very like the call note of the Red wing but more hoarse, repeated ^{on the first evening} once or twice on the second evening. It reminded me also of the pig call of the Virginia Rail but the notes were derived more hoarsely and were all on the same key. The Snipe cry of the Snipe may be very closely imitated by drawing a fine file quickly across the end of a small iron wire.

Wilson's
Snipe

Concord, Mass.
April, 6. 1893.

A young man much interested in birds & a pupil of Mr. Hoffmann's came to see me in the evening. He had been up the river to Fairhaven starting very early in the morning. Shortly after day break when it was still snowing hard he saw flying

Wilson's
Snipe

Gallinago delicata. (M.S.)

about over the town, high in air, a flock of eight birds which from his description I judge to have been Hudson's Snipe. As he crossed the Casaway this evening he heard several birds making a "peculiar tremulous sound" and apparently flying in circles high overhead. I imitated the humming of the Snipe and he at once said that that was what he had just heard.

Concord, Mass.

April 11-1878

As I was crossing the bridge I heard a Snipe rise scaping from Hudson's meadow and then another and another. Their cries indicated plainly enough that they rose to a considerable height and made off over the hills to the N. E. As the evening was perfectly still and very warm I was surprised that none of them drummed but on thinking the matter over I came to the conclusion that they left the place altogether and started on an extended southward flight. I afterwards went out on the meadow but neither saw nor heard any more Snipe. It was almost dark at the time.

Hudson's Snipe

Gallinago delicata

1896 Mass.

April 22 Concord. A bird drumming at Hove, regular intervals from 8.30 to 9 a.m. & probably later (-I had to leave the train there at 9). Raining heavily at the time - the sky filled with low-driving clouds or sand. Drumming by day in stormy weather

Evening clear & cool with light N. wind. A moon past the second quarter casting a good light. Snipe began drumming at about 7 P.M. Keeping it up steadily until 8 when I left. There were certainly two drumming at once. I heard other snipe. I also twice heard the kuc-kuc kuc-kuc-kuc-kuc-kuc-kuc-kuc cry (8 to 10 kucs about 2 per second).

" 23 Snipe began drumming at 6.08 P.M. (about half-an-hour before sunset) and kept at it steadily until 6.40 (about sunset). During this period the sky was practically cloudless and the sun shining brightly. It was almost perfectly calm & the air was very clear & bottom cool. Following up the sound I found the birds flying over the meadows at a point fully half-a-mile from the spot where I first heard them (I am satisfied that the drumming can be heard rather further than half-a-mile under favourable conditions). There were two of them. I watched them for about 20 minutes in broad daylight at a distance of from 100 to 300 yards. They kept together the whole time (or at least within from two to twenty yards), sometimes nearly abreast but as a rule one slightly behind the other, flying swiftly but steadily in ~~an~~ irregular circle varying from 100 to 200 yards in diameter always over the same part of the meadows. At intervals varying from 5 to 10 or 15 seconds but usually of about 6 or 8 seconds they would drum, sometimes nearly together but usually one beginning

Gallinago delicata

1896

Mass.

April 23

(No 2)

Concord. just after his companion had ceased. The duration of the drumming sound varied from 1 to 5 seconds but was usually 2 or 3 seconds. Its emission was invariably accompanied by a ~~slight~~ downward deflection in the course of the bird's flight but this was often so slight as to be scarcely noticeable and the total descent was never greater than 20 or 30 feet while it was often apparently ~~less than~~ no more than 5 or 6 feet. The length of the decline corresponded with the duration of the sound and varied from about 10 to about 50 yards. At its termination the bird swept up to its former level without apparent effort. This level was very uniformly maintained at a height of about 200 feet above the ground. ~~Save for a marked acceleration of~~ ~~speed~~ During the downward sweeps the speed of flight was very appreciably increased and there was something peculiar (but not markedly so) about the motion of the wings which seemed to be raised higher and to cut deeper at each stroke as if the bird were exerting its maximum power to the utmost. Nevertheless the wings appeared to be moved loosely in a butterfly sort of way. Not once during the whole time that I watched these birds - either during their drumming swoops or while flying on a level plane - did either of them cease flapping or let his wings for a single instant. On the contrary the flapping was incessant & very nearly regular although (I think) slightly slower during the drumming than on other times. These facts surprised me for although I have not before seen birds drum in broad daylight for upwards of 25 years my recollection of their early observations is that the birds swooped down

Gallinago delicata

1896

Mass.

April 23
(No 3)

Covead. - very steep declines (nearly vertically sometimes) on set wings much after the manner of Chordeiles. It is certain however, that the birds observed this afternoon did nothing of the kind. I watched them with a powerful glass (although it was not needed) and in the strongest & clearest possible afternoon light.

The drumming sound carries wonderfully. When the air is still a bird drumming over the middle of Great Meadows can be heard in every part of it although it is fully a mile in length. The sound has another peculiarity; it seems loudest when the bird is 200 to 250 yards distant. When he is overhead the musical quality ^{or volume} is lost & you hear but little more than the rushing sound of wings.

Thrice to-night I heard a sound which I attributed to Snipe but which was quite new to me. It was very like the cuc-cuc-cuc cry but the notes were shorter and harder and given much more rapidly - so rapidly in fact that I found it impossible to count or time them although I had a stop watch. There were at least four or five to a second and they were kept up without the slightest cessation a pair for from four to ten minutes. On two occasions the bird was apparently on the ground and stationary. On the third occasion it seemed to move from place to place but without flapping its cry. My sole reason for believing that these sounds were produced by Snipe was their resemblance to the cuc-cuc-cuc note & the fact that the meadow at the time contained a large number of Snipe.

Gallinago delicata.

Ball's Hill, Concord, Mass.

1897. During the first ten days of April the Great Meadows were, April. as usual, flooded but, after the 10th, continued warm, dry weather caused the water to fall steadily until by the 21st the river was in most places well within its banks. No doubt there had been Snipe on the brook meadows of Concord long before this but the first bird that I noted was one that drummed a few times near Ball's Hill on the evening of the 22nd. During the remainder of the month I heard them every evening as well as in the early morning whenever I happened to awake at the right time. In the evening they began drumming about 15 or 20 minutes after sunset, keeping it up until the light had faded out in the west (I did not once hear one after it had become fairly dark); in the morning I heard them from 4.15 to 4.30 o'clock. They were most numerous on the evenings of the 27th and 28th when the meadows seemed to be fairly alive with them, three or four being usually engaged in drumming at one time while others were cackling or "scaiping". As a rule the cackle was seldom heard until nearly the close of the drumming period when, for ten or fifteen minutes, it would come from every part of the meadows. In quality it was very like the cut-cutta note of Rallus virginianus and anyone hearing it for the first time would be nearly sure to conclude that it was the voice of some species of Rail. It varies somewhat in tone

Gallinago delicata.

Ball's Hill, Concord, Mass.

1897. and form and greatly ~~and~~^{its} duration and rapidity of utterance.
 April. Ordinarily the syllable kep is repeated about 15 or 20 times at the rate of about three keps to the second but sometimes they are continued without the slightest pause for several minutes. Again they are sometimes given much more slowly at the rate of about three to each two seconds. So far as I have observed, however, the rate never varies during any one cackling period. The tone is usually rather dry and harsh but occasionally it is soft and almost liquid-^akup rather than a kep sound. The cackle is very penetrating in quality for it may be easily heard half-a-mile away when there is no wind.

The drumming carries even further under favorable conditions-to quite three quarters of a mile when the air is still. It varies considerably in tone and fulness with different birds and to some extent with the same bird.

On the 27th I heard a Snipe drum several times at about 9 A.M. the sky being overcast but not densely cloudy at the time. On the morning of the 29th, a bird drummed almost continuously over the meadow opposite Birch Island from 6 to 8 o'clock although the weather was clear and the sun, after 7 o'clock, very warm. At first there was no wind but a fresh breeze from the N. sprang up about 7.45. Although we (Mr. Fax-on was with me) stood for a long time on the shore at Birch

Gallinago delicata.

Ball's Hill, Concord, Mass.

1897. Island using our glasses freely we did not once get our eyes
April. on the bird and unfortunately we had no means of crossing the
river. At times, however, the Snipe must have come within
200 yards or less judging by the sound of his wings while
drumming. He cackled every now and then. We heard him first
from just behind Ball's Hill a distance of fully half a mile.
He stopped drumming at 3 A.M. About half-an-hour before sun-
set he was at it again keeping it up until dark.

Apr.23. Shortly after sunset a Snipe began drumming on the mead-
ows opposite Benson's landing keeping it up at intervals for
half-an-hour or more. Twice this same and another bird gave
the kep-kep-kep-kep-kep call or cackle very distinctly and
apparently not over 100 yards from where I was standing but
on the other side of the river.

Apr.28. After tea we (W.Faxon and I) took the Jod wooden boat
and rowed up to the Beaver Dam Rapid. The meadows were sim-
ply alive with Snipe and their drumming and cackling for an
hour or more was almost incessant.

Gallinago delicata.

Concord, Mass.

1898. The grass on the meadows along the river has been cut
Oct.10. cut over a space of about an acre near the head of Beaver Dam
Rapid and in this little opening the sportsmen find all their
Snipe. A man who was beating the place this morning told me
that he and two companions bagged seventeen Snipe there on
September 17th. He said there were many more that escaped.
They would rise high and fly all over the meadows but they
always returned sooner or later and alighted again in the
opening.

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
de Monts, Can, Comeau & Merriam

87. *Gallinago wilsoni*. SNIPE.—A rather rare migrant.—Earliest
killed May 9, 1882.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, Oct., 1882, p. 238

Records from Toronto. H. E. T. Seton.

AMERICAN SNIPE. *Gallinago wilsoni*.—A *white* specimen
of this well-known bird was shot in Toronto marsh on the 3d of
May, 1884, by Mr. H. Townson, in whose possession the bird
now is. It was killed in company with two normal individuals
of the same species. It is pure white, with the ordinary mark-
ings indicated in pale, creamy buff, the only dark shades being a
few dusky touches on the scapulars, flanks, and subterminal tail-
band. The legs and bill are yellowish flesh-color.

Auk, 2, Oct., 1885, p. 336

Last Dates Migratory Birds observed by
E. D. Wintle, Fall 1885, Montreal, Can.

Oct. 18. Wilson's Snipe.

O. & O. XI, Mar. 1886, p. 44

Summer Birds of Bras D'Or Region
Cape Breton Id., N.S. J. Dwight, Jr.

5. *Gallinago delicata*.

Auk, 4, Jan., 1887, p. 16

Birds of Magdalen Islands.
Dr. L. B. Bishop.

19. *Gallinago delicata*. WILSON'S SNIPE.—Abundant. Breeds plenti-
fully on all the islands. The young were able to fly by the latter part of
June.

Auk, VI, April, 1889, p. 146

Dwight, Summer Birds of
Prince Edward Island.

Gallinago delicata. WILSON'S SNIPE.—This species breeds, sparingly
I fancy, at suitable places on the island. I saw a young bird in first
plumage among Prof. Earle's birds and talked with several men who had
found nests. The tussocks in boggy places along brooks seem to be the
usual site—in one case a nest was found in a bunch of iris.

Auk X, Jan, 1893, p. 5

Auk, XIII, Oct., 1896, p. 341.

Wilson's Snipe in Nova Scotia in Winter.—During the months of
January and February, 1896, I frequently flushed a pair of Wilson's Snipe
(*Gallinago delicata*) from a small fresh-water swamp near this town,
known as Willow Hollow. This swamp is watered by many springs,
situated in a well sheltered place, and remains open all winter.

Is not this pretty far north for these birds to winter? The winter was
severe with much snow.—HAROLD F. TUFTS, *Wolfville, Nova Scotia*.

Auk, XV, April, 1898, p.195.

Remarkable Ornithological Occurrences
in Nova Scotia

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*).— A partial albino was shot about October 11, 1894, at Canning, King's County.

Harry Piers, Halifax, N.S.

Newfoundland Notes. A Trip up the
Humber River, Aug. 10-Sept. 24, 1899.

13. *Gallinago delicata*. WILSON'S SNIPE.— One seen August 20.

Louis H. Porter, New York City.

Auk, XVII, Jan., 1900, p.71.

Birds of N.E. coast of Labrador
by Henry B. Bigelow.

41. *Gallinago delicata*. WILSON'S SNIPE.— Three or four near Cape St. Francis.

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p.28.

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p.448.

81. *Gallinago delicata*. WILSON'S SNIPE.— Regular migrant; fairly common in May, returning September 11 to October 27; earliest record, March 28, 1897; latest, November 24, 1894.

Wilson's Snipe Wintering in Nova Scotia.— Mr. R. W. Tufts of Wolfville, Kings County, Nova Scotia sent me a Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) which he shot at Wolfville, February 17, 1915. He said this bird (which proved to be a male) was discovered in a sheltered spring swamp or bog, which never wholly freezes and where the grass shows green even in the severest winter weather. The bird was in fine condition, being well protected with fat.— JOHN E. THAYER, Lancaster, Mass.

Auk xxxii. July 1915. p. 368

Early Flight of Wilson's Snipe in Massachusetts.— On the afternoon of August 27, 1916, I saw at least 25 Wilson's Snipe, *Gallinago delicata*, along the Ipswich River in Topsfield, Mass. Mr. F. W. Killam reported about "three dozen" there the next day. These snipe were very wild and restless, continually fighting about the meadows in small flocks. A flight of snipe was reported at other points in Mass. the same week. So far as I can find out this is the earliest autumn record for any considerable number of this species in Mass.— J. C. PHILLIPS, Wenham, Mass.

Auk xxxiii. Oct. 1916. p. 434.

Rye Beach, N. H. 1867.

Gallinago wilsoni. - Aug. 22

1 shot 8 P. 2 shot

Gallinago wilsoni. - Aug. 17, 29 Rye Beach, N. H. 1868.

1 shot 8 P.

Gallinago wilsoni. - Aug. 20 Rye Beach, N. H. 1869.

Rye Beach, N. H. 1870.

Steganopus wilsoni (?) - Aug. 24. Saw one on the Gel Pond. Got very near it

1 shot 8 P. 1 shot 8 P. 1 shot 8 P.

Gallinago wilsoni. - July 22, Aug. 6, 9 Rye Beach, N. H. 1872.

1 shot

Steganopus wilsoni. - Aug. 18 Rye Beach, N. H. 1872.

Mass (Witchendon)

A very few seen during migration. They do not breed. (Bailey)

Gallinago wilsoni

Mass. (Witchendon)

Gallinago wilsoni

1888

Rarity

"I shot a Wilson's Snipe here this autumn the first I have ever seen in this region." C. E. Bailey letter of Nov. 10. 1888.

Notes on New England Birds .. S. H. Mackay

3. *Gallinago wilsoni*. WILSON'S SNIPE. — Obtained August 29, at Nantucket. (Comm. by Brewer)

Bull. N.O.C. 4, Jan, 1879, p 63.

Mass. (near Cambridge).

1888

APR 18th

Gallinago wilsoni

Limicolae in Bristol County.
H. F. Dexter, Dartmouth, Mass.

Wilson's Snipe, *Gallinago media wilsoni*.
Noticed only in migrations, April and in autumn. One flushed from a salt marsh Nov. 30th, 1883 is the latest date I have heard of their being seen.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 148

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Gallinago delicata (Ord.), Wilson's Snipe.
Migrant, not common.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 138

On March 8th, while duck shooting at Squantum (7 miles from Boston) I had the good fortune to secure a Wilson's Snipe. On severing it I found it to be a ♀, very lean, and nothing in the crop except a very little greenish substance resembling eel grass. It flew within five yards of me and lit in a snow bank, where I easily procured it with dust shot.

S. K. Patten.

O. & O. XV. Mar. 1890 p 48

Notes from Belchertown, Mass.
J. W. Jackson

Dec. 20, Wilson Snipe shot near mill-
pond.

O. & O. Vol. 18, Mar. 1893 p. 45

Gallinago delicata.

Nantucket Notes.— *Auk*, *XII*, July, 1895, p. 310.
Nantucket, Mass., August 26, 1894. I shot to-day
a Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), which was feeding among a
flock of Peeps on the shore of Hummock Pond.

George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.

Shore Birds of Cape Cod.
John C. Cahoon.

Wilson's Snipe, *Gallinago delicata* (Ord.)
A common spring and autumn migrant. It
arrives in the spring early in April, and all do
not pass before the middle of May. In autumn
it reaches the Cape about the second week in
August, but is not in full force until the middle
or last week of September. On the Cape it is
found on fresh marshes and springy bottoms at
the edges of salt marshes. The best locality
that I know of is a soft, muddy marsh near
Harwich called the "Grassy Pond." It is very
springy and miry, and is overflowed with water
in the winter and spring, which dries away
during the summer, leaving large pools of
water in some places. It is crossed by several
wide ditches and is covered by patches of grass,
rushes, and lily pads. It is exceedingly hard,
tiresome work traveling about on the marsh,
and although in some parts there is a firm bot-
tom, in most parts it is very miry, and one will
sink to his hips at every step. On several oc-
casions I have gone down into the mud up to
my arms. I have had some fine sport with
duck, teal, rail birds and snipe, and have
started as many as forty of the latter in a few
hours tramp over this marsh on a September
morn. Of late years they have not been as
plentiful in this and other localities on Cape
Cod. Most of them leave by the last of Octo-
ber, but a few remain until the soil freezes.

O. & O. XIII, Aug. 1888 p. 121.

Unusual record near Boston, Mass.—

Gallinago delicata. A pair spent the past severe winter along a small
brook in the Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Francis G. and Maurice E. Blake, Burlington Mass.
1904, p. 392.

Wilson's Snipe Wintering near Boston, Mass.— Mr. C. A. Clark of
Lynn informs me that at least seven Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*)
are wintering not far from that city in a meadow on the northeast side of
Hall's Brook, which runs into Flax Pond. There have been open places
in the brook all winter and the birds come out of the meadow and are seen
"boring" into the mud with their long bills. When everything has been
locked in frost and snow they have been seen thrusting their long bills
down through the snow. The flock was first noticed by Mr. Clark on
November 12, 1909, and he has watched them up to date, January 22, 1910.
I have notes of the occurrences of single snipe occasionally about brooks
and springs in January, but have never before heard of such a number of
them here in winter. The weather of the month has been very severe.—
E. H. FORBUSH, Boston, Mass. *Auk* 27, Apr. 1910 p. 206.

SNIPES WINTERING IN THE NORTH.

Am. Field. XXIX., No. 5. Feb. 4, 1888. p. 104.
WELLSVILLE, N. Y.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—Tuesday, January 24, Rev. E. H. Edson of our village called at my office and told me of a strange bird with long legs and a long bill that his children had seen frequently of late at the mouth of a spring near his residence. I became interested at once and suspected a snipe of some kind had been left over from the Fall flight. Immediately I called my old pointer, Shot, which was in my office, and went to the residence of Mr. Edson. Sure enough, just below where the spring of water made out from the bank we found the bird standing in the water. I sent the dog down there and he made a point that would delight the heart of any sportsman. The bird was flushed, and flew away, perhaps forty-five yards, when it alighted again in the stream of shallow water coming from the spring. The old dog moved on and made another point which he held for a long time until I again flushed the bird. This time when the bird went up he gave his "scaipe" note, so common with *Scolopax wilsoni*, and there could be no question but that we had found a Wilson's snipe. I never heard of a Wilson snipe being with us this time of year. For more than six weeks the ground has been frozen a foot in depth, and the ice upon the river is upward of fourteen inches in thickness. The ground was covered with snow several inches deep and had been for weeks. However, at this place there is an open stream of water fifteen or twenty rods in length coming from the spring which never freezes, and cresses and green grass are now growing therein.

This place is in the corporate limits of our village and within forty rods of our Main street. The spring is used for domestic purposes and water is taken from it half a dozen times or more every day. Upon inquiry I ascertained that the little children of Mr. Edson had frequently seen the bird of late when playing near the spring. This snipe was in full plumage, apparently fat, and a large one, and I could discover no injury about it. I shall keep watch of this bird and am anxious to ascertain if it will stay with us until Spring.

Have any of the readers of the AMERICAN FIELD seen a live snipe in the Winter where such severe cold weather is found? Our altitude is 1,500 feet above sea level, and upon this day the mercury stood at zero and lower all day.

CLARENCE A. FARNUM.

NOTES.

Am. Field. XXVII., No. 19. May 7, 1887. P. 457.
IN reading the valued AMERICAN FIELD I notice that evidence is required to support the theory that English snipes (*Scolopax wilsoni*) light on trees. Now, I am sure they do, and also woodcocks. Last Fall, as Jim Riley—the oarsman, who is a capital hunter and trapper—was poleing his duck punt through the Old Ditch, a sort of slough on the shore of Saratoga Lake, near the mouth of the Kayaderosarus Creek, and separated from the main lake by a strip of bog meadow, its shores being grown with cat-tails, wild rice, etc., and quite a favorable spot for ducks and snipes, he saw, one evening, coming through this place, a queer looking bird standing or perched on the branch of an old dead tree. Standing on the bank of this Old Ditch, some thirty odd feet from the ground, he raised his gun and killed the bird while so perched. On picking it up he found it to be a veritable English snipe, and when he related the circumstances to me, to make sure, I asked to see the bird and sure enough it was a genuine *Scolopax wilsoni*. So much for English snipes perching on trees. Again, one Autumn while out for woodcocks near the mouth of this Kayaderasaros Creek, where grow some large trunk willows, I flushed a woodcock and it alighted on the leaning trunk of one of these big willow trees, and seemed perfectly at home in this situation. The above are actual facts and not hearsay.

WASHINGTON A. COSTER.

Flatbush, L. I.

Birds of the Adirondack Region.
C. H. Merriam.

144. *Gallinago media wilsoni* (Temminck) Ridgway. WILSON'S
SNIPE.—On the 7th of October Mr. Gregoire de Willamov (Secretary of
the Russian Embassy) shot and killed a bird of this species on the big
marsh at the head of Big Moose Lake, Hamilton County.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 234

Birds Tioga Co, N. Y. Alden Loring

526. Wilson's Snipe. Found during the
spring migration around the wet and swampy
places. Arrives here in small detached flocks.

O. & O. XV, June, 1890, p. 88

Ithaca, N. Y.

Gallinago delicata. WILSON'S SNIPE.—The first individual was seen
July 11. It was not again seen until Oct. 1, after which two or three speci-
mens were seen each week until Oct. 20. It was not as common as usual.

Ann 27. July - 1910 p. 344.

Albinism and Melanism in North
American Birds. Ruthven Deane;

Gallinago

Specimens of *G. Wilsoni* have been shot in white plumage,

Bull. N. O. C. 1, April, 1876, p. 23

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago wilsoni*) NESTING IN MASSACHUSETTS.—
As I was hunting for Least Bitterns' nests in one of our swamps in
Brookline, where they breed in considerable numbers,—that is, I found
three nests this year there, one with three eggs, the other two with five
young ones apiece,—I thought I would leave the sedges where they build
and look among the high grass, which grows at the side of the marsh
for a Carolina Rail's nest. Just on the border of the grass I started up a
Snipe, that seemed to me to sit closer than usual and in a very curious
manner. She came very near to me, chiding me as if in great trouble.
I looked in the grass very carefully and finally found her nest, with four
half-grown young birds, which, when I approached, scampered off
among the high grass which surrounded the nest. They seemed to be
able to run about and take care of themselves perfectly well. The date
was the 18th or 19th of June, I cannot be sure which, as I have mislaid my
book in which it was entered. I think the eggs must have been laid
about the second or third week in May, which seems to me quite early.—
NATHANIEL A. FRANCIS, Boston, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 8, Oct. 1888, p. 243

668. *Late Snipe*. By S. R. Ingersoll. *Ibid.*, No. 26, p. 515.—Taken at
Cleveland, O., Dec. 23, 1883.

For. & Stream, Vol. XXI

1926. *Woodcock and Snipe in the Middle West*. By Prof. R. A. Jewell.
For. & Stream, Vol. 34, June 12, pp. 407-408.

File under Snipe.

554. *Wilson's Snipe*. By J. H. L. (Buffalo, N. Y.). *Ibid.*, XIX, No.
6, pp. 112, 113. Feb. 10, 1883.—On the habits of *Gallinago wilsoni*.

American Field,

pp. 593, 594.—J. A. A.

Auk, 4, Oct. 1887, p. 337-342.

Publications Received.—Berlensch. Hans von Systematisches Ver-
1703. *Col. Pickett's English Snipe*. *Ibid.*—*Gallinago delicata*
wintering in Wyoming. See also *antea*, No. 1680. *For. & Stream*, Vol. 30

1265. *The Habits of Snipes*. By A. Guthrie. *Ibid.*, No. 10, March
5, p. 224.—Snipe seen alighting in trees and on fences. *American Field*, XXVII

1889. [*Haunts of Gallinago delicata*.] Editorial. *Ibid.*, March 27,
p. 185. *For. & Stream*, Vol. 30

1680. *The Hardy Snipe*. By W. D. Pickett. *Ibid.*, Feb. 2, p. 24.—
Gallinago delicata wintering in Wyoming. *For. & Stream*, Vol. 30

1740. *Jacksnipe in January*. By G. C. P. *Ibid.*, Jan. 17, p. 515.—
Gallinago delicata (?) at Granville, Ohio. *For. & Stream*, Vol. 31

April 26,
p. 269

Amer. Field XXIX, No. 5, Feb. 25, p. 175. (1888)
SNIPES WINTERING IN THE NORTH.—Taylor, Arizona.

Editor American Field:—Having noticed in your issue of February 4 the communication from Mr. C. A. Farnum of Wellsville, N. Y., I take pleasure in replying that I have seen the "Wilson snipe" in the Winter time, in as severe cold weather as he speaks of, and to me it was a matter of very great surprise. Though the latitude of my place is much less than where Mr. Farnum resides, the altitude is nearly 6,000 feet, which gives us very cold weather during the Winter, the mercury often dropping below zero for many days. Our water supply comes from a spring which runs off in a small ditch and the water being warm, it never freezes. Now, two Wilson snipes have had possession of that ditch all Winter, and being curious to see how long they would remain I have not molested them. I first noticed them early in January during a severe spell of weather, when the ground was covered with nearly a foot of snow, but the little fellows would feed up and down the ditch seemingly happy and contented. I have noticed others this Winter while shooting ducks on "Silver Creek," which is a small stream fed by a few warm springs. This is the first time I have ever seen the Wilson snipes Wintering in such a cold climate, and I am observing them with much interest.

"BLUEBILL."

The Jack Snipe
as a Rustler.
The Habits
of
Snipes

THE JACKSNIFE (*Gallinago Wilsonii*) AS A RUSTLER.

Am. Field.

March 5, 1887.

pp. 223, 224. MEE-TEE-SE, WYO. TER.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—My attention was recently arrested, in a late issue, by an account of a very late appearance in the Fall of the jacksnipes at some point in Wisconsin, I believe. This reminded me of an intention already formed of giving you the particulars of a still more erratic performance of this justly celebrated game bird. It will be premised that my locality is among the foothills of the Rockies, at an elevation of about 6,500 feet, near the intersection of the 109½° meridian west longitude and the 44th parallel of latitude. Winter set in rather early as, on the 20th of October, there was a minimum of 3° F.; between the 15th and 25th of November a long cold snap, with minimum during several days of 12°, 20°, 21°; on December 11, 3°; December 21, 8°; December 26, 26°; December 31, 6°; January 6 to 10, 1887, with minimum of 12° and 27°, and January 17, 11½°.

During the Summer at several times were seen a pair or so of these birds in my upper meadow, but they were thought to be transient passers. On December 25, after the several cold snaps above given, I was astonished, in passing an open spring in my upper meadow, to see a pair of jacksnipes fly up, giving tongue to their old familiar "scaipe." It should have been stated that since the middle of November the whole country has been wrapped in a mantle of ice and snow; no open water except a few springs that had been sufficiently cleaned out to prevent freezing. There is a spring in my upper and another in my lower meadow yet open, from which are drain ditches of twelve to twenty-four inches in depth that, from the drifting of the snow, have been covered over and are really covered drains, the water passing through without freezing. The water from the springs runs ten to fifteen yards before entering these covered drains, which is the only open water known for ten miles. After first noticing the presence of these birds, I have been on the lookout for them and have placed bread and slices of beef where they would be likely to find it. It was devoured by some birds, but whether by jacksnipes or that prince of thieves, the magpie, or the dear, cheerful, sociable little chick-a-dee, it is unknown. These snipes have been several times seen at one or the other of these springs since December 25, the last time until to-day (January 31) on the 17th of January. Since then, within a few days past, a fearful blizzard has passed over this district, the barometer having been at the lowest point ever reached. It lasted sixty hours, with wind at its maximum velocity, but its temperature at no time reaching lower than 3° F. To living things exposed to it that was, however, equivalent to a temperature of 30° or 40° below zero with the air calm. Every particle of water except these two springs was covered with snow for that time. I had given up hope for the jacksnipes, until to-day, January 31, 1887, when I was rejoiced to hear their familiar "scaipe" as they flew up from near the spring, flying as vigorously and "scaipeing" as cheerily, as I have so often heard in the marshes in Missouri and Illinois.

Where do these birds roost and on what do they subsist? In getting up from the spring, they sometimes fly fifty yards into a willow thicket through which a branch runs, which has a few open places, into which they alight and they are there a little more protected from the wind than at the springs. They could easily get into those covered ditches, which are well ventilated and warm, and where they could feed on water plants, or worms were there any to be had. Each spring branch has tender water plants on which they probably subsist. I shall watch their movements and report further as to their welfare. I had thought, at one time, of invoking the prayers of all good sportsmen for the welfare of these birds, but on second thought, it seemed doubtful that they would be of much avail and, secondly, these jacksnipes had proven themselves such "rustlers," that it appeared they were in nowise in need of Divine interposition.

This recalls that about the middle of October, 1880, I saw a pair of these birds on the head waters of the North Fork of Stinking River, Wyoming; the river there occupies a gorge in the mountains four to five thousand feet below the overlooking mountains, with occasionally a sage brush flat sloping down to the water. In passing along the trail through one of these flats, a pair of these birds flew up and lit just ahead. My shotgun being convenient, I killed them and found them fat. They were found to be delicious eating, even after fat elk. Though the stream was not frozen, the ground was frozen at that time.

Though these details are somewhat extended, I am sure they will be of interest to a large class of your readers.

P. S., February 3. Since the above was written an unusually cold snap has followed the blizzard. On the night of February 1 the temperature receded to 36° below zero (Fahrenheit), and all day February 2, 20° below was the highest, usually 25° to 30°. Being anxious about Jack's welfare, he was hunted up, and approaching cautiously, close enough to see his eyes, he was observed sitting in the water of one of the springs, his legs covered with water, his head buried as far as possible in his feathers, and making himself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. The water of one of the springs tested to-day showed a temperature of 41° F. This snipe, it will be admitted, is a

good rustler. P.
The association will include all its original founders intended, and for this purpose the association is sending out the fol-

RABBITS FROM AUSTRALIA.

Commissioner Colman of the Department of Agriculture has made public the following, regarding the rumor of intended importation of rabbits from Australia into the United States:

For some time past the press of the country has contained paragraphs relating to the expected introduction into the United States of the "Australian rabbit," and the gravest fears have been expressed concerning the probable effect of such importation upon our agricultural industries, hence a few facts concerning this rabbit may prove of interest. In the first place it should be stated that in reality there is no "Australian" rabbit, no species being native to that country. The rabbit that has done so much harm in Australia and New Zealand is an introduced species—namely, the common rabbit of Europe (*Lepus cuniculus*). Not only did this rabbit become a pest to the gardeners and fruit-growers, but it soon multiplied to such an extent as seriously to interfere with sheep-raising, by destroying the pasturage. In New Zealand the legislature took the matter in hand in 1876 and began the enactment of a series of stringent laws for the suppression of the rabbit scourge. In 1881 more than 500,000 acres of sheep runs had been abandoned on account of the rabbits, the loss to the exports of the colony was calculated to be \$2,500,000 per annum, and it was estimated that upward of 18,000,000 of rabbits were killed in New Zealand in a little over three years. In the United States we certainly have enough rabbits of our own, and the injury they now inflict upon our agricultural industries is by no means insignificant, if any reliance is to be placed upon the complaints of fruit-growers in the Mississippi Valley and in California. Many cases might be cited, prominent among which is that of the English sparrow, to show that the transplanting of a naturally prolific species to a country where the conditions for existence are favorable gives it a peculiar impetus and enables it to crowd out and supersede the indigenous related species. While there is no positive evidence to show that the European rabbit would be the curse in this country that it is in Australia and New Zealand, yet there is no proof to the contrary, and its introduction here would be, to say the least, an unnecessary and hazardous experiment.

As to the power of an officer of the government to prevent the introduction of this pest in the United States, I know of no law conferring any such authority. Congress might enact a law conferring upon the commissioner of agriculture the power to prevent the landing of any animal, bird, or other pest in any port of the United States that in his opinion would be injurious to agriculture on the same principle that it prevents the introduction of cattle affected with contagious diseases.

Unless there is premeditated importation by dealers, however, there would seem to be no occasion for alarm.

THE HABITS OF SNIPES.

Am. Field.

March 5, 1887, p. 224.
CHRISTIANSBURG, OHIO.

EDITOR AMERICAN FIELD:—I know that there are a great many sportsmen who will differ with me and say that snipes do not alight on trees, fences, etc. I find that Captain A. H. Bogardus, in his "Field Cover and Trap Shooting," page 146, says, "I have never met a man who had seen or pretended to have seen a snipe alight on a tree or fence at this or any other time." Snipes must therefore differ in their habits in different localities. I always had my doubts about the matter (many good authorities to the contrary notwithstanding) until the 13th of April, 1886, when a friend and myself, on the morning of the date mentioned, drove to a big marsh some ten miles from here, where we have shot snipes for many years. The morning bid fair for the day—just such a day as one would wish for snipe shooting—but by the time we reached the marsh the wind had raised considerable, the atmosphere became hazy, and hundreds of snipes were hovering in the air. Of course we got no shooting, but I had the best opportunity of my life to observe their habits while hovering (or drumming as it is sometimes called). We spent the whole day on the marsh and killed but five snipes, notwithstanding there were hundreds of them in sight all the time.

I was beating a strip of marsh-land alongside of a few dead trees and, the snipes hovering all around me, I set down on a log to watch them. While sitting there one of the hovering birds commenced circling around and coming down, and before I had time to think what he was going to do he lit upon one of those trees, less than fifty yards from me. So that there might not be any mistake I thought I would shoot the bird as he sat on the tree, but before I could do so he dropped to the ground and I walked him up and killed him. He was one of the finest specimens of the snipe family I ever saw.

This being the first bird we had killed I called my friend to admire him and while we were looking at him another came down and lit upon a fence, about seventy-five yards from us. I started for him, but before I got within shooting distance he took wing, coming toward me, and I killed him as he passed me without ever taking my eyes off of him, so I know that I killed the bird that sat upon the fence. All the doubts I had in the matter were now forever set at rest. I know that snipes in Ohio will sometimes alight on trees, fences, etc. I would like to hear from other snipe shooters in different parts of the country in regard to the above subject.

A. GUTHRIE.

FOREST AND STREAM

For Forest and Stream.

SNIFE AND SNIFE SHOOTING—No. 3.

Oct. 22, 1874.

THE arrival of the Wilson's snipe with us in the Spring is very uncertain, and depends entirely upon the state of the season. If, after a cold and blustering Winter, March suddenly opens warm and genial, which is seldom the case, and the frost is drawn from the ground by the sun's rays, we may expect the bird soon to be on our meadows; but not often does he reach us before the middle of the month, and then in small numbers, uneasy in its habits, and scarcely lying to the dog. By the last of March, or the 1st of April, the great flight of birds arrives from the Southern States, and, like the woodcock, the prevalence of a warm rain appears to be chosen for the migration. The average appearance of the snipe from Delaware eastward may, in favorable seasons, be set down as about April 1st, but frequently, when the Spring is late, and Winter has lingered into April, we find it passing hurriedly northward, scarcely visiting our meadows, and directing its flight to its breeding grounds. We have always thought the snipe, after tarrying with us until May, are mated, and leave us in pairs ready to begin nesting. In fact, we have on several occasions killed and found in them fully formed eggs as early as the 20th of April, and for this reason oppose the shooting of snipe during their Spring passage northward.

On their return from the North with their young, they pay us a visit before moving South, reaching us in September and October, the first cool weather having prompted them to seek winter quarters, making their autumnal migrations southward in stages in advance of hard freezing, stopping and resting on the route.

On our meadows of the Eastern and Middle States, where snipe are comparatively rare, a good dog, thoroughly understanding his business in this particular, is invaluable; but in some portions of the Southern and Western country the bird is so numerous that a setter or pointer is of very little use, unless he be kept at heel and used as a retriever. But we confess our own shooting is to us more enjoyable when fewer are bagged, and the working of a well bred and trained setter is added to the pleasure.

The snipe lies best to the dog on warm, sunny days, when gentle winds are blowing, and if feeding in high tussock meadows will not take flight until almost trodden upon. But during blustery weather, especially if the wind is from the northeast, they are very loath to allow even the most steady dog to come within thirty or forty yards of them. This is more noticeable in the Spring, when the birds have first arrived, and are in wisps or bunches, than in Autumn, when they appear to have made up their minds to stay for awhile previous to moving southward.

The snipe is noticeably the most difficult game we have to kill, although we have seen only medium quail shots that were really brilliant in their shooting on the meadows; but we also noticed that such persons resided adjacent to good snipe grounds, and devoted much more time to it than to any other sport.

Beating for snipe with the wind in one's back has been always advised by experts, as the bird invariably rises against wind, and flies at an angle towards you, either to the right or left, thus presenting a more easy shot than when going straightaway in a zig zag course. Sometimes, however, on account of the many ditch drains that interrupt us in our tramps over the meadows, we cannot find it as convenient by far to take the wind at our backs, and are compelled to breast it; but we should bear in mind that far better chances are given to kill if the advice is carried out, and always endeavor to follow it.

Snipe not unfrequently take to swampy thickets of black alder, and what are known as "willow gardens," with springy bottoms, in the Spring for shelter and food, when, after their arrival from the South, the country is visited with a snow squall and a touch of the past Winter. We have on two occasions found them in such localities lying like stones, and making capital shooting, and fully as expert in twisting their way through the sprouts and alders as their larger cousin, the woodcock.

The snipe remains with us frequently as late as the latter part of November, and on occasion, while quail shooting in the State of Delaware, we shot them on the 13th of December, but the weather during that month and the one previous had been remarkably open and mild, and we doubt not the bird could have been met with on the same ground a week after. We made two memoranda that season, and they appear on reference—"Shot five Wilson snipe on 13th December." "Shot one well conditioned woodcock on the 31st of December."

We noticed in the report of the proceedings of the National Sportsmen's Convention, held at Niagara on the 9th of September, that it was urged that the Spring shooting of woodcock, snipe, and "bay birds," during their sojourn in the Middle and Eastern States, previous to their moving farther North, for the purpose of breeding, should be abolished. Nothing could more benefit the sportsman.

Recollect, every pair of birds thus killed in the Spring makes just three or four less in the Autumn.

In spite of being considered as given to chronic growling, we shall continue to urge, as we have always done, the cessation of the murderous and unsportsmanlike killing of our game birds of passage on their journeys toward their nesting ground, albeit they may not be at the time paired, knowing well the time has arrived when the fast disappearance of all game demands it, and we call on all sportsmen to put aside that little selfishness we all are endowed with, and have such laws passed as will benefit the sporting fraternity of every State.

Within our own recollection, snipe ten years ago were far more numerous at Pine Brook, N. J., and other meadows of that neighborhood, and certainly in far greater quantities on the feeding grounds bordering the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers near Philadelphia. Then we could be tolerably certain about making a bag; now we more frequently see none than to get shots at any. The steady destruction of the source of supply in the Spring has brought this about; nothing else. The meadows have not changed, and food is just as abundant.

A fellow sportsman, who had always been able to find game enough in the neighborhood of his city home until within a few years, made the remark to me that he found it did not pay to keep a setter or pointer, for birds were too scarce even to train upon, and that he intended devoting his attention to the little "Basset" for slow chasing of the rabbit, feeling this was all that remained. HOMO.

Sportsman Review 1/22/02
An English Snipe in Captivity.

As the retaining in captivity of any of the birds of the Scolopax family has been thought almost an impossibility, it may prove of interest to many of your readers to learn of an English or Wilson snipe—the (the Scolopax Major) having been a captive and fed by man, and the bird kept alive for some four months. To learn the habits of this bird, with its manners of getting its food, etc., will at once be understood to be a task, but with the belief that this was never before accomplished, the undersigned was, perhaps, more attentive than otherwise, and watching the bird's habits was exceedingly interesting.

It was while shooting in the spring of the year I took from my dog's mouth this identical bird, and thinking it was dead, was about putting it in my pocket, when a strong fluttering made me aware of my mistake, and as the bird, upon examination seemed unhurt, further than having been stunned by a shot that had just grazed its head, I carefully secured it with a napkin, allowing freedom for the movements of its head, and so conveyed it to my home, then at Chatham, N. J.

This incident occurred in the early 60s, and while then only a boy, I believed as much, if not more enthusiasm, was shown than that would be at the present time, for well I remember of the preparations that were made for this bird. The coachman was dispatched with a wagon for bogs, the gardener set digging for worms, while the pies or pastry or anything else that happened to be in the wire safe had to be removed, as this receptacle, when furnished as to my ideas, would contain all the requirements that were to be found on the meadows, and, in fact, about everything was here supplied, but still when this bird died its death was apparently from starvation, and though it consumed over twice its own weight of worms (about the only diet) every day, when the bird was in good order. Although I tried, it seemed, everything that a snipe could find, while fresh water was supplied several times a day, with new bogs, etc., yet while the bird ate heartily, the daily loss of flesh was very noticeable.

Just previous to the bird's demise I found it took quite readily to bread and milk, but whether or not this food would have sustained life is a question that I am unprepared to answer beyond as is above stated, and it might have been the cause of the bird's death. (I mention this, as the only food swallowed, with the exception of the worms, and which, by the by, were, whether large or small, invariably swallowed after being doubled.) The worms were quite often, but not always washed, and the earth they contained was ejected from them by the snipe's squeezing process, and it was as interesting as instructive to watch the bird bore, etc. I had always supposed that each hole (so to speak) was made by the bird probing and withdrawing its bill each and every time, in accordance with the number of holes, but instead of this if on the first "put down" of the bill no worm is found, the bill is only partly drawn from the earth, and then pushed down again in a different direction, but the moment a worm would be touched the bird's eye would twinkle, and become full of animation. The snipe would quickly make fast to its prey, and being familiar and knowing just how to handle worms, they never would break, as they would if I undertook to pull one out.

The bird's apartments, before referred to, contained two pans, in one was kept water and in the other black earth and worms; and from the first confining of this bird it never was particularly frightened, and ate heartily the first day I caught it, while many were looking at it close by. I should say further I after awhile cut one of its wings and the bird was allowed the freedom of the lawn, etc., and I afterward took it to the meadows, recapturing it with ease. Though this bird was never hooded—as were the "hawks" of old, when being broken or used for hunting purposes, and then returning to the hand that liberated them, with apparent joy—the snipe seemed always delighted to get back in its cage, and could be well called domesticated. While I have made several attempts since with wing-tipped birds, etc., in no other instance have I been in any way successful in keeping these birds alive, and though several accounts were written of this bird, when in captivity by the reporters of different papers, I never heard, before or since, of any of these birds being kept in captivity, and think many of your readers may read of this with interest. Possibly we may hear of some one that keeps them on hand and fattens them for the market.

Milford Square, Pa.

PERCY C. OHL.

Gallinago Wilsoni

Amend. Thad

October 16, 1880

While hunting Woodcock today I very unexpectedly flushed a Snipe from a thicket of alders on the edge of the woods.

The place is situated by a brook. In addition there are numerous springs which have sustained deer the whole winter of the present season.

Mr. Nelson also started another Snipe from the bed of a brook in a perfectly open meadow. It flew only a few rods & dropped into the brook again upon shooting it.

be found it greatly emaciated. I recall a
similar specimen at Cambridge in the
Autumn of 1871 or 2.

Three *Impe* were killed on the Sudbury
Meadows today but in the vicinity of
around the *Impe* meadows are all dead
I may have been seen this Autumn.

Macrorhamphus
griseus

Macrorhamphus griseus

Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Aug. I, 1890. Upwards of 100 were seen along the beach at the head of the harbor. The flight was swift, direct, the bill held slightly inclined downward, the neck drawn in, and the white on the hinder part of the back conspicuous showing as a broad snowy-white stripe. The note was phèu-pheu or phèu-pheu-phe, in mellow falsetto tones. They feed ^{along the} ~~on~~ wet sand, often wading in ~~the~~ shallow water and walking slowly ~~along~~ with the head down, at each step thrusting the bill about an inch into the sand or mud, with the mandibles slightly open. Occasionally one would stop and plunge the bill down to the base several times in quick succession.

I saw them extract and swallow long red worms (Memertian family) resembling angle worms.

Owing to the shortness of their legs they look smaller, sitting than the Yellow legs. They feed and fly in close bunches. At night-fall all the Snipe along the shore began flying up and down the beach restlessly but they did not assemble to roost in any one place. A small flock passed the night on the shore near my camp; I went to the place and started them at 10 ~~A.M.~~ ^{P.M.} These birds resemble Wilson's Snipe not a little in their movements and manner of feeding but their flight is very different and wholly without the corkscrew curves of Gallinagos. Most of those seen seem to be adults in worn summer plumage.

Macrorhamphus griseus

1896

Penobscot Bay, Maine.

July 12

Kumpet Island. - Two birds on the beach, very tame permitting me to walk to within 10 yards or less - Feeding perfectly undisturbed & difficult to distinguish among the crops of black seaweed. Both were shot by two gunners a little later. On examining them I found they were typical M. griseus - old birds in rather worn but still bright breeding plumage.

Birds within Ten Miles of Point
deMonts, Can. Comeau & Merriam

88. *Macrorhamphus griseus*. RED-BREASTED SNIPE. — Occurs during the fall migration.

Bull. N. O. C. 7, Oct, 1882, p. 238

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 449.

82. *Macrorhamphus griseus*. DOWITCHER. — Regular migrant, not common, May 16 to 31; one taken August 1, 1894, is in full plumage; one taken August 24, 1891, and one September 15, 1889, are young birds.

Late date - in gray plumage E. Mass.

A ♀ Salem, Oct. 16, 1876 in gray plumage in the Essex Co. Coll. of the Peabody Museum at Salem.

Also another specimen in gray plumage but without data in the same collection.

Macrorhamphus griseus

Macrorhamphus-griseus
at scelopacens

Swampscott & Salem, Mass.
October, 1876

♀ Oct. 14, 1876 Swampscott (M. scelopacens) to Oct. 16, 1876 Salem, (griseus) both in gray pl.
(In Mus. Peabody Acad. Science, Salem)

Salem, Mass.

Macrorhamphus griseus

1876

Oct. 16

A ♀ with above data is in the Essex Co. Collection of the Peabody Academy at Salem. It is in pure gray winter pl. having no trace of red either above or beneath. There is, next it, another in similar dress but bearing no label.

Macrorhamphus griseus.

1884

Great Marshes, Mass.

June 13 - Started a single bird from
the edge of a pool on the
salt marsh. Saw it distinctly.

Mass. (Ipswich)

Macrorhamphus griseus

1886

July 17 Eighteen seen at above date & place by
R. B. Newcomb.

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.
F. W. Andros.

Macrorhamphus griseus (Gmel.), Dowitcher.
Migrant, tolerably common.

O. & O. XII, Sept. 1887 p. 138

Limicolae in Bristol County.
H. F. Dexter, Dartmouth, Mass.

Red-breasted Snipe, *Macrorhamphus griseus*.
Quite common in autumn along the beaches,
where it resorts in small flocks. Have secured
specimens as late as the last week in October.

O. & O. XII, Sept. 1887 p. 148

Shore Birds of Cape Cod.
John C. Cahoon.

Red-breasted Snipe, *Macrorhamphus griseus* (Gmel.) Brown-back on Cape Cod. A common spring, summer, and autumn migrant. The first arrivals in the spring reach the Cape as early as May 1, and become common about May 20. Only a few stragglers are seen after June 1. In the summer migration the first ones arrive at Cape Cod about July 5. Several old Cape gunners say that they always go for them at Monomoy Island the 12th of July. They are the most common from July 15 to July 25. A few continue to arrive until the middle of August, and by the last of that month none are seen about the Cape. One thing that I have noticed, is that there are very few young birds of this species seen. Unlike the other shore birds in the fall migration, a very great majority of these birds seen on the Cape are adults.

These birds go on to the flats to feed as soon as the tide ebbs off sufficient to allow them to wade about. They follow the tide out in the manner of sandpipers, wading belly deep in the water, sticking their long, probe shaped bill into the grass and mud for the numerous marine bugs, worms, and soft shell fish that they feed upon. Often several are seen in company with a flock of small sandpipers ruaning about on the sand flats, and are easily distinguished from their smaller companions by their slower motion, larger size and length of bill. As soon as the tide flows, they fly to the salt marshes or meadows and stop until the next ebb tide. They seldom go on to the high beaches with the eurlaw, plover and sandpiper that go there to roost at high tide.

They have decreased very fast during the last five years, and where we saw a flock of several dozen then, we now see them singly, or in bunches not exceeding ten or twelve. They are the least shy of any of the shore birds, and it is due to this fact that they have decreased so fast. They are easily decoyed, and although they fly swiftly, their motion is steady and they keep closely together. They alight in a compact bunch, and the gunner usually shoots into them before they scatter out. Many are killed by a single discharge, and those that remain spring up with a sharp whistle and fly a short distance away, when hearing what they think to be the call of a deserted comrade, they wheel about and come skimming bravely back to the murderous spot where they were first shot at. Again they are shot at, and again the remaining half dozen are loath to leave their dead and dying companions, and return to share their fate. One or two may escape, and as they drop silently down on some lonely sand spit, sad relics of their departed companions, what sorrowful thoughts must be theirs as they wait for their comrades that will never come. When scattered on the meadows they lie very close, and when flushed their actions are similar to the Wilson's Snipe. They can swim very fast, and I have several times got a good wetting by following a wounded one into deep water.

Macrorhamphus griseus

South Carolina

Sullivan's Island, S.C.
May 17, 1883.

is very heavy flight. Saw at least
five hundred. They in large compact
flocks & came well to whistle. Call a
mellow rolling, whistle quee-quee-quee.
Flight swift & direct. Shot on in grey
plumage. Many flocks alighted on
a moist sand-flat.

The Dowitcher at Ottawa.—On May 9, 1890, I shot a female *Macrorhamphus griseus* feeding in a moist meadow within a mile of this city. It is now in my collection.—GEO. R. WHITE, *Ottawa, Ontario*.
AUG. VII, Oct., 1890, p. 400

25. *Additions to the List of District Birds.* By W. F. Roberts. *Ibid.*, p. 172.—Adds *Macrorhamphus griseus*, and states the whole number of species known from the District of Columbia to be 242. **Field & For., Vol. 3**

983. *Red-breasted Snipe in Northeast Lincolnshire.* By John Cordeaux. *Ibid.*, Oct. 1882, p. 392.—Record of a specimen of *Macrorhamphus griseus* shot on the seacoast between Cleethorpes and Tetney Haven, Aug. 15, 1882. **Zoologist, VI**

1816. *Waders in Sandusky Bay.* By Dr. E. Sterling. — *Linnæa*. *Fedoa*, *Macrorhamphus griseus*, *Microfalana hirsutopus*.
For. & Stream, Vol. 33, Oct 24, p. 265
File under *Macrorhamphus griseus*.

An Additional Note on the Genus *Macrorhamphus*.—It is well to remember in connection with the breeding range of *M. griseus* given in my recent paper on this genus (Auk, XVIII, pp. 157-162), that in 'Fauna Boreali-Americana,' Swainson and Richardson state that the species breeds from the shores of Lake Superior northward, a fact which at that time was probably true. I am also lately in receipt of, and here permitted to record, two young specimens of *M. g. scolopaceus* (Nos. 167026, 167027 U. S. Nat. Mus.) through the kindness of Mr. Edward A. Preble. They were taken by him at Button Bay, near Fort Churchill, Hudson Bay, on July 31, 1900. The Dowitchers were, he writes me, "abundant in the pools on grassy tundra," and were moving southward. The fact of their presence in such numbers would go to show that this subspecies, after breeding, ranges over the country eastward to the shore of Hudson Bay before migrating, or even perhaps breeds as far east as this point. It is, I think, not improbable that the extreme eastern limit of their breeding range will prove to be Hudson Bay rather than the 110th meridian, and that *M. griseus* in the breeding season is confined to the east and north of the Bay. In any case the occurrence of this form near Button Bay explains why they not uncommonly reach the Atlantic coast on migrations.—REGINALD

HEBER HOWE, JR., Longwood, Mass.

Auk, XVIII, July., 1901, p. 272.

A STUDY OF THE GENUS *MACRORHAMPHUS*.

BY REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR.

EVER since Thomas Bell and George N. Lawrence in 1852, in the 'Annals' of the New York Lyceum of Natural History (Vol. V, pp. 1-5), recognized that long- and short-billed forms of this genus existed, ornithologists have either been loath (Coues, Birds of the Northwest, p. 477) to accept the two forms, or have been puzzled to identify many specimens in the collections.

A month or two ago while examining some fifteen specimens of this genus in search of a male Long-billed Dowitcher, the fact of

maculata) (see Auk, Vol. XVI, p. 179, and Vol. XVIII, p. 107), the males exceed the females in size, while in the present genus the reverse is true. The Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*), the genera *Limosa* and *Numenius*, all show this latter type of sexual variation to a greater or less degree.

Macrorhamphus griseus Gmelin.

Geographical Breeding Range.—The breeding range of this species is given as "within the Arctic Circle" in Chapman's 'Hand-book' (p. 155), based on what data, other than hypothetical, I am ignorant. We know, however, from various sources¹ that it breeds in Ungava. Its breeding range I think can be safely said to be to the north and northeast of Hudson Bay, from the 55th parallel northward to Greenland,² probably also a little

¹Turner, Birds of Labrador, 1885, p. 246; Stearns, Bird Life in Labrador, 1886, p. 53.

²Arctic Manual and Instructions, 1875.

scolopaceus

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 449.

83. *Macrorhamphus scolopaceus*. LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER.— Rare migrant; there is a specimen in Mr. Ernest Seton's collection, taken September 3, 1888; one without date in my collection, and a full plumaged bird from Hamilton (39 miles west), August 12, 1891.

Notes on New England Birds - J. M. Brewer.

6. *Macrorhamphus scolopaceus*, Lawr. — A female was shot at Eastham by Mr. Frank L. Tileston, November 2, 1878. Without presuming to decide whether this is entitled to rank even as a variety, the fact remains that this bird was in a very different form from the common *M. griseus* and was shot at a period much later than the latter bird has been known to appear.

Bull. N. O. C. 4, Jan, 1879, p 64.

Shore Birds of Cape Cod.
John C. Cahoon.

Long-billed Dowitcher, *Macrorhamphus scolopaceus* (Say.) A rare migrant. In New England *Bird Life*, Vol. II, I find the following note: "A female was shot at Eastham by Mr. L. Tileston, November 2, 1878. I have not been able to distinguish it from *M. griseus*."

O. & O. XIII, Aug. 1888 p. 122.

late date. in gray plumage. E. Mass

"♀ Swampscott, Oct. 14, 1876" in gray plumage
in the Essex Co. Coll. of the Peabody Museum at
Salem.

Macrorhamphus scolopaceus

Swampscott, Mass.

Macrorhamphus scolopaceus.

1876

Oct. 14. A specimen (labeled ♀ with above data)
in the collection of the Peabody Academy
at Salem is in pure winter plumage
bearing no trace of the brown and
red summer dress.

Auct. XIII, Jan., 1896, p. 88

Nantucket and Muskeget Island Notes.

Macrorhamphus scolopaceus? — Aug. 29, 1895. A male bird (by dissection) was taken at the Hummock Pond. This being a young bird of the year, it is next to impossible to certainly identify it. *M. griseus* is not uncommon here, but this is the first instance in which I have taken what I suppose to be *M. scolopaceus*.

George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.

Bird Notes from Long Id. Wm. Dutcher

4. *Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus* (Say) Coues. RED-BELLIED SNIPE.—July 23, 1884, while shooting at Shinnecock Bay, three individuals of this species came to my stools at the same time, two of which were secured. I sent them to Dr. A. K. Fisher of Sing Sing, N. Y., with particulars of their capture. He wrote me as follows: "I should consider No. 55 a fair example of *M. griseus scolopaceus*. No. 56 is one of those, doubtful; just on the line; but if the note was different it might be considered the mate of No. 55, as they were male and female." The bill of the larger specimen measured 2.83 inches and of the smaller 2.38 inches.

Auk, 2, Jan., 1885. p. 37.

Long Island Bird Notes N. T. Lawrence

11. *Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus*. GREATER LONG-BEAK.—Secured a specimen in Fulton Market, New York, October 15, 1884, killed on the south side of Long Island.

Auk, 2, July, 1886. p. 273

Bird Notes from Long Id. Wm. Dutcher

6. *Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus* (Say) Coues. RED-BELLIED SNIPE.—A female of this species was shot September 19, 1882, by a sportsman stopping at "Lane's" on Shinnecock Bay, who kindly presented it to me. September 26, 1883, I secured another in the same locality. The gunners about Shinnecock Bay claim that they can distinguish the note of this bird from that of its congener, *Macrorhamphus griseus*. The measurements of these two specimens are as follows:

Length.	Extent.	Wing.	Gape.
11.87	19.00	6.00	2.75
11.00	18.50	5.75	2.50

Auk, 1, Jan., 1884. p. 32.

Long Island Bird Notes. Wm. Dutcher

8. *Macrorhamphus scolopaceus*. LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER.—I think that on Long Island this wader may be called a regular, but not common, late fall migrant. September 26, 1884, Mr. F. M. Chapman informed me that he procured three while at Shinnecock Bay. Capt. Lane, of the same place, wrote me that his sons shot three October 6, 1885, and on the next day two more. Mr. E. A. Jackson wrote me that he saw, at Atlanticville, a Dowitcher on the 5th of October, and another on the 9th. They were undoubtedly *scolopaceus*, as the common form is never found in this locality so late in the season. October 9, 1885, Mr. W. F. Hendrickson shot one at Long Island City.

Auk, 3, Oct., 1886. p. 436.

Auk, XII, July, 1895, p. 313.

Rare Birds near Buffalo, New York.

Macrorhamphus scolopaceus. LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER.—I am indebted to Mr. Grieb for a specimen shot from a flock of *M. griseus* on Strawberry Island, Niagara River, in October, 1892.

James Savage, Buffalo, N.Y.

normal individual variation."* He then gives the measurements of nine specimens shot out of the same flock, the minimum length being 10.25, grading to a maximum of 12.50, and in the bill from 2.20 to 3.25. From this we see the variation in length and length of bill is about one inch, which, he says, "is not much more than is frequently found in examples of *Ereunetes pusillus* and *Numenius longirostris*." This may be so, but with the last two birds the parallel stops here, for the notes, plumage, and habits of *E. pusillus* and *N. longirostris* are the same, notwithstanding how they may differ in other particulars, while with the *M. scolopaceus* and *M. griseus* there is not only a variation in size and length of bill between the two birds, but the notes, plumage, and habits are different, at least so far as I have observed, and still, with due respect for what Dr. Coues says on the subject, in all my Bay Snipe shooting I have yet to see the flock of Red-breasted Snipe from which any nine individuals could be shot showing the great variation in measurement he gives, at least on Long Island, although in the West it may be so. From this I surmise that perhaps the Red-breasted Snipe in the West is *M. scolopaceus*, and that the *M. griseus* is merely a straggler, while on the Atlantic Coast it is just the contrary, the *M. scolopaceus* being the straggler; particularly as Mr. George N. Lawrence states that all specimens supposed to be *M. griseus* which he has examined from Mexico have turned out to be *M. scolopaceus*. The bill of this bird varies from 2.50 to 3.25, while that of *M. griseus* seldom if ever reaches 2.50 in length.

The *M. scolopaceus* not only exceeds the other in length of bill, etc., but the whole general appearance of the bird is very noticeably different, and it can be easily distinguished from *M. griseus* some distance off.

Mr. George N. Lawrence says: "In all three of my specimens which are in full summer plumage, the breast and entire abdomen is of a uniform rather pale rufous without spots or bars, but having the sides of the breast transversely barred with black. In an example from Texas, the breast is barred in the same manner as the ones from Cuba."†

In all of the seventeen specimens of *M. scolopaceus* I have examined, this character of the plumage is strongly marked, with still

* Birds of the Northwest, p. 477.

† Notes on Cuban Birds, with Descriptions of New Species. Annals of Lyceum of Nat. History of N. Y., Vol. VII, p. 272.

THE GREATER LONG-BEAK, *MACRORHAMPHUS SCOLOPACEUS* (SAY).

BY NEWBOLD T. LAWRENCE.

As this bird seems to be held by certain eminent ornithologists to be rather a doubtful species or even variety, I should like to give my experience with it on the south side of Long Island, where I have had the pleasure of securing four specimens and noting two others, and also give the result of the examination of some forty specimens of both birds. Dr. Elliott Coues says: "The supposed species (*M. scolopaceus*), based on larger size and larger bill, is not even entitled to rank as a variety. Almost any flock contains a per cent of such individuals. The difference in these respects is merely the

another feature, and that is in having the feathers of the breast and abdomen edged with a lighter rufous or white, this being particularly strongly marked on a specimen in the collection of Mr. George N. Lawrence taken in Florida during the spring of 1879. In summer specimens of *M. griseus*, the rufous of the breast blends into white on the abdomen, and the whole is more or less spotted.

In the notes, which are so characteristic of all the *Limicolæ*, and in the time of its arrival and departure during the spring and fall migrations, it differs essentially from *M. griseus*. The note of *M. scolopaceus* is much louder and clearer, and easily distinguished from the rather plaintive note of *M. griseus*, bearing about the same relation to it as the notes of the Big and Little Yellow-leg bear to each other.

Mr. George Lawrence Nicholas, in speaking of the capture of a specimen of this bird last summer, on Shinnecock Bay, says: "The note was entirely different from that of a Dowitcher, being made up of several quick sharp whistles. I am quite sure it is not a Dowitcher, as it is quite different in color, the under parts being like those of *Tringa canutus*, and only the throat and sides being spotted. Mr. Lane, with whom I was staying, says that for the past three years he has seen these birds in company with the Dowitchers, and they seem to be increasing in numbers. He and the other gunners of the house also say they have never heard this bird give a note anything like that of the Dowitcher."*

In regard to the spring arrival of this bird, Mr. George N. Lawrence gives March 20 as the earliest date, he having secured several specimens in Fulton Market, N. Y., at that time, from Long Island, which is about six weeks earlier than any recorded capture of *M. griseus*. The gunners in the vicinity of Rockaway, L. I., make a distinction between the two birds, calling *M. scolopaceus* the White-tail Dowitcher, and say it is the first to come in the spring, and that during the southern migrations it remains until late in the fall, after the Dowitchers have disappeared. Five of my specimens agree with the prevailing opinion of being late migrants; the sixth is in summer plumage, taken in August, and is my earliest record from Long Island.

The latest record I can find of this bird is a note by Dr. Thomas M. Brewer,† in which he speaks of the capture of a specimen of

* "Bird Notes from Long Island," Forest and Stream, Vol. XIV, No. 3.

† Bulletin of Nuttall Orth. Club, Vol. IV, No. I, p. 64.

M. scolopaceus at Eastham, Mass., by Mr. Frank L. Tileston, Nov. 2, 1878.

I have never seen more than one at a time, although an old gunner informs me he has had a flock of five come in to his decoys.

The following are my records of the bird in question:—

Sept. 27, 1873. Shot a young female out of a small flock of *Totanus flavipes*; when first seen it was supposed to be a Dowitcher, but at the same time I was struck with the large size and length of bill noticeable at quite a distance. (This was the first time I had seen the bird alive.)

Sept. 28, 1873. One observed flying with a flock of *Totanus flavipes*.

Sept. 15, 1874. Had a fine specimen alight within a few feet of my blind while Snipe-shooting; it was very gentle, and I watched it for some time, but, on starting it up, failed to secure it.

Sept. 25, 1875. Shot an immature bird in a salt pond on the marshes; peculiarity of note noticed.

Aug. 7, 1878. Secured an adult specimen in summer plumage; came in to the decoys alone; abdomen uniform pale rufous.

Oct. 13, 1878. While lying for Ducks at a pond on the marshes early one morning, I heard the note of this bird from high overhead, but could not see it; the next moment it darted down and settled alongside of a Duck decoy, notwithstanding the water was almost up to its breast, where I secured it.

Bull. N.O.C. 5, July, 1880, p. 154-157.

ON *MACRORHAMPHUS GRISEUS* (GMEL.) AND *M. SCOLOPACEUS* (SAY).

BY ROBERT RIDGWAY.

NOT being fully satisfied in my own mind as to the exact status of the bird called *Macrorhamphus scolopaceus*, and there being much variance of opinion among ornithologists concerning the bird in question, I was induced, some months since, to submit to a very close examination all the material at my command, and to carefully analyze all the published data bearing on the subject. The collection of birds of this genus in the National Museum, while very extensive (embracing no less than 75 specimens), was unfortunately deficient in examples from Eastern localities; therefore the conclusion arrived at from the study of this material alone proved erroneous, from the fact that nearly all were of the *scolopaceus* type, the

true *griseus* being scarcely represented. Subsequent correspondence with Messrs. George N. and Newbold T. Lawrence, of New York City, both of whom were much interested in the subject, led to the exchange of specimens for examination, and I thus for the first time became autoptically acquainted with the Eastern bird. With this additional material to aid me, I have reviewed the matter, and the result is a perfect correspondence of my views with those of the gentlemen above named, as embodied in the preceding article, except that I cannot regard the two forms as specifically distinct, since intermediate specimens do unquestionably occur, although they are exceedingly rare.

The results of my later investigations may be briefly summarized as follows:—

(1.) That in Western North America specimens never occur which, in summer plumage, have the abdomen either whitish or speckled, or the sides speckled.

(2.) That specimens marked as above are peculiar to the Atlantic coast (I have seen none from west of the Alleghanies), where they abound during the migrating season, in the proportion of about 1,000 to 1 of *scolopaceus* (according to Mr. Lawrence, *in epist.*).

(3.) That size and proportionate length of bill, legs, etc. is much more variable in both forms than is the coloration, *scolopaceus* averaging decidedly larger, however, than *griseus*.

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(3.) That size and proportionate length of bill, legs, etc. is much more variable in both forms than is the coloration, *scolopaceus* averaging decidedly larger, however, than *griseus*.

(4.) That young birds and those in winter plumage cannot with certainty be referred to either form, excepting that the very large individuals (those exceeding the maximum of *griseus*, as given below) are undoubtedly *scolopaceus*.

These conclusions, I believe, agree in the main with Mr. Lawrence's views concerning the two forms in question. Following, I give a brief synonymy and diagnosis of the species in its two races.

Macrorhamphus griseus.

a. var. griseus.

THE GRAY SNIPE.

Scolopax grisea, GMEL., S. N. I., 1788, 658 (based on the *Brown Snipe* of Pennant and Latham).

Macrorhamphus griseus, LEACH, Cat. Brit. Mus., 1816, 31.—CASSIN, in Baird's B. N. Am., 1858, 712.—BAIRD, Cat. N. Am. B., 1859, No. 524.—COUES, Key, 1872, 253; Check List, 1873, No. 415; Birds N. W., 1874, 476.

Scolopax noveboracensis, GMEL., S. N., I, 1788, 658 (based on the *Red-breasted Snipe* of Pennant and Latham).—WILS., Am. Orn., VII, 1813, 45, pl. 58, f. 1.—SW. & RICH., F. B. A., II, 1831, 398.—AUD., Orn. Biog., IV, 1838, 288, pl. 399; Synop., 1839, 249; B. Am., VI, 1843, 10, pl. 351.

Scolopax (Macrorhamphus) grisea, BONAP., Synop., 1828, 330, No. 267.—NUTT., Man., II, 1834, 181.

Scolopax puykullii, NILSSON, Orn. Suec., II, 106.

Totanus ferrugineicollis, Vieill., Enc., Méth., III, 1823, 1099 (based on the *Red-breasted Snipe* of Pennant and Latham).

Hab.—Atlantic Coast of the United States, breeding farther northward. No specimens seen from west of the Alleghanies.

b. var. scolopaceus.

THE RED-BELLIED SNIPE.

Limosa scolopaceu, SAY, Long's Exped., II, 1823, 170.

Macrorhamphus scolopaceus, LAWR. Ann. Lyc. N. Y., V, 1852, 4, pl. 1 (Long Island).—CASS. in Baird's B. N. Am., 1858, 712.—BAIRD, Cat. N. Am. B., 1859, No. 525.

Macrorhamphus griseus, var. *scolopaceus*, COUES, Check List, 1873, No. 415 a.

Scolopax longirostris, BELL, Ann. Lyc. N. Y., V, 1852, 3.

"*Macrorhamphus griseus*" (part), COUES, Key, 1872, 253; B. N. W., 1874, 476.

Hab.—North America in general, but chiefly the western portions of the continent; east to the Mississippi Valley, north to Alaska, and south to South America and the West Indies. Casual along the Atlantic coast of the United States.

SP. CH. — About the size of *Gallinago wilsoni*, or larger. Bill long, compressed, flattened and expanded towards the end, where (in dried specimens) punctulated and corrugated. Shaft of first primary strong, pure white. Axillars, tail-coverts, and lower part of rump, white, barred, or transversely spotted, with slate-color; upper part of rump white, usually immaculate. Tail slaty or dusky, barred with white (or, in summer, adult, with pale cinnamon on the middle feathers). *Adult in summer*: Head, neck, and lower parts light cinnamon (the abdomen sometimes whitish), the foreneck and sides of breast speckled, the sides and crissum barred or speckled with dusky. Upper parts mixed black, light cinnamon, and white, the former prevailing. *Adult in winter*: Belly and anal region white, usually unspotted; rest of the plumage nearly uniform ash-gray, somewhat intermixed with white on the breast and sides; wing-coverts bordered with whitish; a whitish superciliary stripe. *Young, first plumage*: Back, scapulars and tertials variegated black and light clay-color, the latter chiefly on the edges of the feathers; lower parts dirty white, soiled with dull buff or pale clay-color, especially across the breast; jugulum and sides usually indistinctly speckled with dusky.

Total length, about 10 to 12½ inches, extent 17½ to 20¼; wing, 5.30-6.00 (5.73); culmen, 2.00-3.00; tarsus, 1.25-1.75 (1.53); middle toe, .90-1.10 (1.00).

Var. griseus.

Wing, 5.25-5.90 (5.65); culmen, 2.00-2.55 (2.30); tarsus, 1.20-1.55 (1.35); middle toe, 0.90-1.05 (0.95).* *Adult in summer*: Abdomen whitish; breast and sides speckled with dusky.

Var. scolopaceus.

Wing, 5.40-6.00 (5.74); culmen, 2.10-3.00 (2.72); tarsus, 1.35-1.75 (1.58); middle toe, 0.95-1.15 (1.01).† *Adult in summer*: Abdomen uniform cinnamon, without markings; breast speckled (usually scantily), and sides barred with dusky. *Bull. N.O.C.* 5, July, 1880, p. 157-160

ON A NEW ALASKAN SANDPIPER.

BY ROBERT RIDGWAY.

THE various collectors of the National Museum in Alaska have sent from that country numerous specimens of a Sandpiper which in its winter plumage greatly resembles *Arquatella maritima* (Brünn.), but is very differently colored in its summer dress. After much search among the older authors I have been unable to find a name for it, and therefore, since it appears to be new to science, take pleasure in dedicating it to the well-known author of an excellent "Monograph of the North American Tringæ," ‡ also the original describer of a kindred Alaskan species, the *A. ptilonemis* of the Prybilov Islands. Following is a description of the new species:—

Arquatella couesi, Ridgw. — THE ALEUTIAN SANDPIPER.

SP. CH.— Similar to *A. maritima* (Brünn.), but averaging slightly smaller, and the plumage appreciably different at all ages and seasons. *Adult, breeding dress*: Above fuliginous-slate, the feathers of the pilcum broadly edged, those of the dorsal region (including the scapulars) widely bordered with rusty ochraceous, or bright cinnamon, (a few of the scapulars and interscapulars tipped with white in some specimens,) the central area of each feather nearly black, or much darker than the wings and rump; lesser wing-coverts slightly, and middle coverts broadly, bordered terminally

* Extremes and average of 18 fully adult specimens.

† Extremes and average of 40 fully adult specimens.

‡ Proc. Philad. Acad., 1861, pp. 170-205.

*Microbalama
himantopus*

Microfalama himantopus

1890 Mass.

Aug N. Truro - Mr Faxon found seven in a dry, sandy cranberry bog. They tilted the body more than the Yellow-legs holding the legs quite stiff as they bent forward whereas ~~the~~ species of Totanus bend the legs and crouch a little as they feed.

1893

Sept. 16 Ipswich. Two shot from a flock of six by a gunner were examined in the flesh by Mr Faxon. The gunner said that all six birds were alike. a late autumn date.

1890 Boston Harbor

Aug. 9 (Breed's Island). Two shot by a friend of Foster W. Brackett

" 30 " " One " " " " " " "

1892

July 18 } Ipswich Three " " " " " " "
to Aug 26 }

1893

July 15 } " Three " " " " " " "

Sept. 1 } " " " " " " " " "

" 2 " Six " " " " " " "

}

All these specimens were taken by one man. This man is a gentleman sportsman who has a good mounted coll. of N. E. shore birds. Brackett did not give me his name.

♂ ad. Ipswich [Mass] } In mounted colln Peabody Academy
♂ " " } at Salem.
♂ juv. Salem, [Mass.] }

Micropalama himantopus ~~Stilted~~ Sandpiper

1890.
Mar 7-15

Florida,
Canaveral, Panama Creek.

After the wind had blown from the north for two or three days in succession, the water in the creeks and bays became low, exposing broad mud flats in every direction. Then large numbers of ~~Stilted~~ Sandpipers would appear, coming from I know not where, but probably from Mosquito Lagoon to the northward, where the water always rises when it begins to lower in Indian river and its tributaries. These Sandpipers sometimes associated with Yellow Legs or Red-breasted Snipe, but oftener appeared in flocks of from 25 or 30 to 50 or 75, composed wholly of birds of their own species. They flew in compact clusters or bunches, like the ~~Least~~ Sand-piper, and very swiftly, doubling and turning at frequent intervals and usually sweeping over and around a spot several times before alighting, uttering, at frequent intervals while flying, a short whistle, usually monosyllabic, but sometimes doubled, resembling that of the Yellow Leg, but softer and more musical. Their motions when feeding are very unlike those of the members of the genus Totanus, and much more like those of the Sandling or some of the smaller Sandpipers, the bill held down at an angle of 45°, the tip ~~touching~~ ^{usually} or slightly ~~entering~~ ^{touching} the mud. ~~Usually~~ ^{usually} the entire flock, spread about over a considerable area, would move in one direction, all with the head and bill down at the same time, presenting a curious appearance. They were very ~~un~~suspicious, and could be easily approached to within 20 yards. ~~but~~ the report of a gun seemed to alarm them exceedingly, and, after being shot at once, the flock would usually rise high in air and fly quite out of sight. When feeding they moved at a slow walk, the body carried in a crouching attitude. Wing-broken birds stalked directly off over the flats, making for the shores on the further side, upon reaching which, however, they merely stood ^{on} ~~in~~ the grass, ~~without~~ attempting to conceal themselves by crouching.

Birds of Southern New Brunswick.
M. Chamberlain.

13. *Micropalama himantopus*.—STILT SANDPIPER.—The only known occurrence of this bird in this vicinity is of three seen by Mr. F. W. Daniel on the sand flats back of St. John on September 8, 1881. He secured one of them, which is now in the museum of the Natural History Society.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, April, 1882, p. 105

Some new records for Nova Scotia.

Micropalama himantopus. STILT SANDPIPER.—An adult female, secured August 18, 1902, seems to establish a first record for Nova Scotia.

Jonathan Dwight, Jr. M. D.
New York City.
Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 440.

Birds of Toronto, Ontario.

By James H. Fleming.

Pt. I, Water Birds.

Auk, XXIII, Oct., 1906, p. 449.

84. *Micropalama himantopus*. STILT SANDPIPER.—Regular fall migrant, not common; adults in full plumage, July 18 to 28, and young August 9 to September 26; there are records of birds from June 25 to 30 but I have not seen these specimens.

Grindstone Island, Magdalen Islands.

Micropalama himantopus. STILT SANDPIPER.—On September 24, 1908, a single Stilt Sandpiper lit within a few feet of the blind I was occupying while shooting shorebirds on Grindstone Island. I had an excellent opportunity to observe the bird but unfortunately failed to secure it. I am positive that this bird was *Micropalama himantopus*, for I was close enough to observe its most striking characteristics. This is the latest date for the latitude that I am able to find.—WINTHROP S. BROOKS, Milton, Mass.

Auk 29, Jan. 1912, p. 112.

THE STILT SANDPIPER (*Micropalama himantopus*) AT PORTLAND, MAINE.
— Mr. H. A. Purdie, in his review of a recent "Catalogue of the Birds of New England," stated (this Bulletin, Vol. I, p. 73) that *Micropalama himantopus* is migratory along the whole New England coast. This elicited the rather sweeping assertion from the author of the Catalogue that the bird had "not been found in any part of that coast from St. Andrews to Kittery" (Bull., Vol. II, p. 48). I desire to contribute my evidence in support of Mr. Purdie's statement. *M. himantopus* has been repeatedly taken on the marshes and sandbars in the vicinity of Portland, Me., during the early part of autumn. — NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN, *Portland, Me.* Bull. N.O.C., 3, April, 1878, p. 102.

The Stilt Sandpiper in Knox County, Maine. — On August 13, 1902, I took a specimen of the Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) on Matenic Island, Knox County, Maine. If I am not mistaken, this is the first record of this species for that county. I was shooting Turnstones on some half-tide ledges between Matenic and Matenic Green Island, when I noticed a bird flying in from seaward which I took to be a Summer Yellowleg. When it came within shooting distance I dropped it on the rocks, and on picking it up, was surprised to find that I had a Stilt Sandpiper, which later I found to be a female.

August 23, I found Wilson's Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) in numbers, four miles south of Seguin Island. They were feeding on the wash of the bait from a fisherman's hook, and were noticed a number of times to plunge beneath the surface of the water for the food they were after. Although I have watched many thousands of Leach's Petrels while they were feeding, I have yet to see one plunge beneath the surface. — HERBERT L. SPINNEY, *Seguin, Me.*

Auk, XX, Jan., 1903, p. 65

The Stilt Sandpiper, — a Correction. — On August 13, 1902, I took what I then thought to be a Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) on Matenic Island, Knox Co., Maine. The record as such was published in 'The Auk,' January, 1903, p. 65. Upon a more recent examination I find I am in error, and respectfully ask that the same may be corrected. — HUBERT L. SPINNEY, *Seguin Light Station, Popham Beach, Me.*

Auk, 24, Apr., 1907, p. 213

Near Pine Point, Scarborough, Maine.

The only Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) that I have heard of in this vicinity this fall was taken near Pine Point, Scarborough, a day or two previous to September 26. It passed into the collection of Bowdoin College.

Auk 25, Jan., 1908, p. 81-82

^{1 ad shot}
^{G.P.}
Microfalama himantopus. - Aug. 20 Rye Beach, N. H. 1868.

^{1 shot}
^{G.P.}
Microfalama himantopus. - Aug. 24 Rye Beach, N. H. 1869.

^{1 ad G.P.} ^{2 shot 1 shot 1 shot}
Microfalama himantopus. - July 31; Aug. 9, 11, 24, 25 Rye Beach, N. H. 1871.

1883 *Microfalama himantopus* Rye Beach
N. H.

Aug. 18. a ♂ shot by C. R. &
George Lamb. It was in
a flock of about 20
some yellow legs.

Sept. 1
"George [Lamb] tells me they
[still *Sandpipers*] have been very
common at Rye Beach lately.
One boy shot three in one
morning and George had quite
a number. He told about six
in the woods when he came
home, much to my disgust"
(with Capt. C. R. Lamb.)

Notes on New England Birds. G. H. Mackay.

2. *Micropalama himantopus*. STILT SANDPIPER. — A single specimen, in company with one *Gambetta flavipes*, was shot July 25, 1878, at Nantucket. The capture is interesting on account of locality and its early date. [See this Bulletin, Vol. III, p. 148.] (Comm. by Brewer)

Bull. N.O.C. 4, Jan, 1879, p 63.

RARE BIRDS TAKEN AT CAPE COD.—An adult female Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*), in partly Fall plumage, was shot at Monomoy Island, in company with some Sanderlings, Aug. 5th, 1885. It was shot by a gunner who gave it to me, and although it was pretty well shot up, it made a fair skin. J.C. Cahoon. O. & O. X. Oct. 1885. p. 160

Shore Birds of Cape Cod.
John C. Cahoon.

Stilt Sandpiper, *Micropalama himantopus* (Bonap.) A tolerably common summer and autumn migrant. It is seen on the Cape between the last week in July and the first in September. Most of them seen at Monomoy Island are during the first or second week in August. It is usually seen on the flats and beaches in company with sanderlings and *Ereunetes pusillus*, and with the exception of being more shy its habits are the same.

O. & O. XIII. Aug. 1888 p. 123.

Mass. (Ipswich)

Micropalama himantopus

1886

Early return

July 17 One seen by R. C. Newcomb.

Auk, XII, July, 1895, p. 310.
Nantucket Notes.

A short time after I shot a Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) from this same flock of Peeps. I saw in addition another specimen which had been taken in the same locality two days before.

George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.

Auk, XIII, Jan., 1896, p. 88

Nantucket and Muskeget Island Notes

Micropalama himantopus.—On Aug. 29, 1895, a female was taken at Hummock Pond. On Aug. 31, I shot another at the same place. This pond is a very large one. On Aug. 29, with some friends, aided by a horse and scoop, I dug a trench to the ocean, thereby draining it, hoping that the margins thus exposed would offer an inducement for some of the migrants to tarry. George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.

micropalama himantopus in Mass.

I have shot and known of being shot
[in Mass.] a great many Stilt Sandpipers -
I think it safe to say at least 50.

Chas. R. Lamb in litt. to Wm Brewster
Cambridge, Oct. 2, 1902.

The Stilt Sandpiper in Massachusetts.— On August 9, 1906, while gunning in Chatham, Mass., I shot a Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*). It was the only one we saw, and the local gunners said it was the first one that had been seen there for several years.— CHAUNCEY C. NASH, Boston, Mass. **Auk, 24, July, 1907, p. 339**

The Stilt Sandpiper in Massachusetts.— While looking over the 'General Notes,' in the July issue of 'The Auk' I noticed a reference to the Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) in Massachusetts. I think the rarity of this species in this State has been greatly exaggerated in this note.

On September 20, 1903, while gunning at Chatham with a friend, a flock of about a dozen Stilt Sandpipers flew over us, and we each secured a pair. Since then both my brother and myself have seen numbers of these birds in the big market in Boston, which were shot along the south shore in the vicinity of Chatham and Monomoy.

Thus it seems to me that the Stilt Sandpiper is not so rare in Massachusetts as Mr. Nash believes and states it to be. I would like to hear from other Massachusetts men in regard to the prevalence of the Stilt Sandpiper in this State.— WINTHROP S. BROOKS, Milton, Mass. **Auk, XXIV, Oct. 1907, p. 437.**

Rare Birds in Rhode Island. F. T. Jencks.

I took a male Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) in
spring plumage at Newport, Aug. 2, 1880.

Bull. N. O. C. 5, Oct., 1880, p. 237.

Occurrence of the Ruff (*Parusella pugnax*) and
other birds in Rhode Island.

Micropalama himantopus. STILT SANDPIPER.—This species occurred
in greater numbers than usual near Newport in August and early
September, 1903. It seems to be a very irregular migrant, varying in
numbers from year to year.

Le Roy King, Newport, R. I.

Ann. X I Jan., 1904, p. 85.

*Notes from New Haven, Conn. .
by E. L. Moulton.*

on September 16, 1886, there was a Stilt Sand-
piper, young, taken; both at "Quinnipiac"
marshes.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 156

Distribution of New England Birds.-
A Reply to Dr. Brewer. H. A. Purdie.

A word about the Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalma himantopus*), and I am done. In the "American Naturalist" (Vol. III, p. 639) is recorded the first supposed instance of its occurrence in New England. In the same periodical (Vol. VII, p. 727) is given the first supposed * instance for Massachusetts. Again (in Vol. VI, p. 307) Mr. Brewster says: "The Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalma himantopus*), which I see was recorded in a recent number of the 'Naturalist' as new to our Fauna, I consider by no means rare in its migrations. Indeed, I have seen as many as six or seven sent into Boston market at one time, from Cape Cod, and, in the course of a few weeks' shooting in August, at Rye Beach, N. H. (just north of our State limits), secured no less than ten specimens." Not only has he since shot it, but he, as well as myself and others, find it frequently in the Boston markets.

* Mr. F. C. Browne, of Framingham, has a specimen taken at Plymouth in 1852.

Bull. N.O.C. 2, Jan., 1877, p. 17.

Notes on an Unusual Flight of Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*).— While walking through the Boston Markets on August 12, 1912, I was surprised to find large numbers of Stilt Sandpipers offered for sale. This species is rather uncommon and although a few generally occur each fall I had never before seen more than twenty or twenty-five in the market at one time. On this date nearly every stall had bunches of them and at one place I saw a large hamper filled with shore-birds nearly all of which were this species. There were a few Yellow-legs and Ruddy Turnstones in the lot but I estimated that there were not less than two hundred Stilt Sandpipers in this one stall. The proprietor, whom I personally know, informed me that all came from Ipswich, Massachusetts, or the immediate vicinity. I could not learn from the other dealers where their birds had been shipped from but there is little doubt that practically all came from points along the Massachusetts coast.

The presence of so many birds in the market would seem to indicate an unusual flight along the coast and the following observations made on Long Island, N. Y., on the same date by my friend, Mr. John Treadwell Nichols, of the American Museum of Natural History, may throw some light on the extent of this flight. With his kind permission I quote the following from his letter.

"On August 12, 1912, I observed an unusual flight of Stilt Sandpipers at Mastic, Long Island. In about three hours time, in the early morning, approximately 200 birds passed by a single set of stool (decoys). They were in flocks of varying size, and mixed with them were a very few Lesser Yellow-legs and Dowitchers. The Stilt Sandpipers taken and observed (and I imagine all the rest) were in barred plumage." — F. SEYMOUR HERSEY, Taunton, Mass. *Arch. x x x 1. Am. 1914. 7. 246.*

THE STILT SANDPIPER (*Micropalama himantopus*). — In a late paper read before the Linnean Society of New York, Mr. N. T. Lawrence speaks of this species as being common on the south side of Long Island (N. Y.). He has quite often, while Bay-Snipe shooting, had parties of from three to five, and very frequently a single bird or a pair, come to his decoys. And, of the four specimens in his collection, two, in adult breeding plumage, were taken in July, the others, in fall plumage, in September. This note is interesting as presenting different conditions from any recorded in New England. But one occurrence of this species is known in July, and that in the last part of the month and fifteen miles from the sea. Mr. Geo. N. Lawrence writes me, in reference to this same species, that he lived at Rockaway for five summers, and on one occasion, when he was there, there was a flight of this species and *Gambetta flavipes*, the latter the most abundant, and of the two species there were killed over one hundred and twenty individuals. He remembers killing six of *M. himantopus* at one shot. He never saw so many together as on that day, but all through the season scattering ones were shot. — T. M. BREWER, *Boston, Mass.*

Bull. N. O. C., 3, July, 1878, p. 148.

Long Island Bird Notes N. T. Lawrence

12. *Micropalama himantopus*. STILT SANDPIPER.—I have always found this bird unusually common in the vicinity of Far Rockaway, and should like to give my experience with it on two occasions during the past two years. On September 10, 1883, I was shooting on the meadows; wind east; rained from six A. M. until twelve M. On that day I had three flocks come to my decoys, composed of Little Yellow Legs and Stilt Sandpipers, and numbering from fifty to one hundred birds in each. I killed nineteen, twenty-one, and ten, respectively; among them were twenty Stilts.

On July 28, 1884, there occurred one of the largest flights of Bay Birds at Far Rockaway that I have seen in a number of years. The day was bright and clear, with a light southerly wind; it had stormed hard from the East all the preceding day. The flight was composed almost entirely of Little Yellow Legs and Stilt Sandpipers, every flock containing more or fewer of each. Saw several flocks composed entirely of Stilts. One numbering twelve came to my decoys and I killed them all. I secured that day twenty Stilt Sandpipers, all old birds. On both the dates mentioned a great many flocks of traveling birds were seen flying very high; some of them must have numbered over two hundred individuals.

Auk, 2, July, 1886, p. 273

Auk, XII, July, 1895, p. 313.

Rare Birds near Buffalo, New York.

Micropalama himantopus. STILT SANDPIPER.—Two of these Sandpipers were shot by me on September 16, 1893. They were feeding in company with some Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*) in the bottom of the artificial lake in South Park, which was then being excavated.

James Savage, Buffalo, N. Y.

BLAKE BROTHERS & COMPANY,
BOSTON.
P.O. Box 2148.

Feb 6, 1895

Mr Wm Brewster
Cambridge Mass.

Dear Sir:

After leaving your place the other day it occurred to me that I had been talking to you in regard to the Curlew Sandpiper. I do not know what put that particular bird into my mind or why I did not discover my mistake at the time but the fact is I intended to say the Stilt Sandpiper, and was laboring under the delusion that I was talking about that bird and not the Curlew Sandpiper.

Hist., Oct. 3, 1877). Its presence at a single point on the western portion of the coast of Maine, so long as all the rest of the coast is destitute, does not prove either that it is regular in its migrations, or that these extend along the whole New England coast. — T. M. BREWER, Boston, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 3, July, 1878, p. 148.

1816.. Waders in Sandusky Bay. By Dr. E. Sterling. — *Limosa fedoa*,
Macroramphus- griseus, *Microfalama himantopus*.
For. & Stream, Vol. 38, Oct. 24, p. 265.
File under Macropalama himantopus.

Yesterday afternoon I looked at the collection of the friend, who I mentioned to you and find that he has a good collection of mounted birds (mostly shore birds) collected by him during the past 30 years, and all correctly labelled.

He has never shot a Curlew Sandpiper and knows of but one shot about here, the same as reported in the Auk from East Boston flats.

He has however shot or been with parties who have shot a number of the Stilt Sandpipers and although I suppose you have many records of this bird in Mass, the following may be of interest, and I do not think have ever been recorded.

Microfalama himantopus

APOLOGETIC. — I sincerely regret that my hasty and inaccurate reference to Mr. N. C. Brown's brief mention of the occurrence, near Portland, of the Sharp-tailed Finch should have given to that gentleman even a moment's annoyance. Nothing could have been farther from my intention than to "misquote" him. Indeed, had I *quoted* him the mistake could not have been made. My point of interest was the *locality*, the number seen was to me of no moment. Remembering that he had spoken of the "bird" in the singular number, I had a mistaken impression that he had seen but one. Certainly the readers of the Bulletin have no occasion to regret my careless mistake, since it has been the means of eliciting an interesting and more full account of the occurrence of this species in a before unknown and unusual locality.

My statement that not a specimen of the *Microfalama* was then known to have been taken along the entire coast of Maine may have been "sweeping." It was so intended to be. At the time it was made it was literally and exactly true. Of the occasional and irregular occurrence of this bird in the vicinity of Portland I am well aware (see Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., Oct. 3, 1877). Its presence at a single point on the western portion of the coast of Maine, so long as all the rest of the coast is destitute, does not prove either that it is regular in its migrations, or that these extend along the whole New England coast. — T. M. BREWER, Boston, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 3, July, 1878, p. 148.

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He has never seen a Wren
 Sandpiper and knows of but one shot
 about here, the same as reported in the Cook
 from East Boston Falls.
 He has however shot or
 been with parties who have shot a
 number of the Stilt Sandpiper and of

BLAKE BROTHERS & COMPANY,

BOSTON.

P.O. Box 2148.

Breeds Island, Boston Harbor

Aug 9. 1890 2 Stilt Sandpipers
 30. 1890 1 Stilt Sandpiper

Ipswich, Mass.

July 18 to Aug 26. 1892 3 Stilt Sandpipers
 1 Wilsons Phalarope

July 15 to Sept 1. 1893 3 Stilt Sandpipers.

Sept 2. 1893 or thereabouts 6 Stilt Sandpipers

These birds were all shot & recovered.

I did not make a thorough examination of
 his records but the positive taking of 12
 birds in two seasons would seem to indicate
 that the bird is at least regularly with
 us and perhaps not so rare as some have
 supposed.

Yours resp.
 Foster H. Braekett.

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 been with parties who have shot a
 He has however shot or
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Microfalana himantopus

APOLOGETIC. — I sincerely regret that my hasty and inaccurate reference to Mr. N. C. Brown's brief mention of the occurrence, near Portland, of the Sharp-tailed Finch should have given to that gentleman even a moment's annoyance. Nothing could have been farther from my intention than to "misquote" him. Indeed, had I quoted him the mistake could not have been made. My point of interest was the locality, the number seen was to me of no moment. Remembering that he had spoken of the "bird" in the singular number, I had a mistaken impression that he had seen but one. Certainly the readers of the Bulletin have no occasion to regret my careless mistake, since it has been the means of eliciting an interesting and more full account of the occurrence of this species in a before unknown and unusual locality.

My statement that not a specimen of the *Microfalana* was then known to have been taken along the entire coast of Maine may have been "sweeping." It was so intended to be. At the time it was made it was literally and exactly true. Of the occasional and irregular occurrence of this bird in the vicinity of Portland I am well aware (see Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., Oct. 3, 1877). Its presence at a single point on the western portion of the coast of Maine, so long as all the rest of the coast is destitute, does not prove either that it is regular in its migrations, or that these extend along the whole New England coast. — T. M. BREWER, Boston, Mass.

Bull. N.O.C. 3, July, 1878, p. 148.

1816.. *Waders in Sandusky Bay*. By Dr. E. Sterling. — *Limosa fedoa*,
Macroramphus griseus, *Microfalana himantopus*.
 For. & Stream, Vol. 38, Oct. 24, p. 265.
 File under *Microfalana himantopus*.

Stilt Sandpipers (*Micropalama himantopus*) at Ithaca, N. Y.— Following the cold rainy days of the first of August (1912) and coincident with the first flocks of migrating warblers, there occurred through central New York State a considerable migration of Shore Birds. Although a few had been noted about two weeks previously, this was the first large migration of the fall. In mixed flocks along the head of Cayuga Lake, the following species were abundant: Semipalmated, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers, Sanderling, Lesser Yellow-legs and Killdeer Plover. In addition, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, feeding singly, were scattered all along the shore and likewise one Ring-necked Plover. Three days later, I found the same species in greater numbers, and associated with them, a flock of six Knots and one of seven Stilt Sandpipers. The number of Knots did not change, but the flock of Stilt Sandpipers shortly increased to eleven, although all were seldom seen at once. Two White-rumped Sandpipers, two Black-bellied Plovers, a Turnstone, a Greater Yellow-legs, and a Dowitcher soon added themselves to the assemblage. The majority of these birds were adults and still in nuptial plumage. They remained the greater part of a week, when most of them moved on, leaving only a small number of those species which had earlier been the most numerous.

The presence of such a variety of Shore Birds, including the Stilt Sandpipers, induced me to make somewhat extended observations. Accordingly a blind was constructed along the lake shore and many hours were spent in watching their movements. Inasmuch as the Stilt Sandpipers are so generally overlooked on the migration or confused with the Yellow-legs, a few comparative observations on their habits may be of interest.

Although they might have been actually more numerous, the largest number seen together at one time was eleven. Usually they were in groups of from two to six and mingled with the Yellow-legs. The adults of the two species were easily distinguished as many of the Stilt Sandpipers still retained more or less of the breeding plumage with buffy and rufous markings about the head, and heavy bars on the sides and flanks. The immature and molting birds of the two species, however, were much more easily confused for the Yellow-legs lacked the checker-board markings of the adult and approached very closely, in the back pattern, the mottling of the Stilt Sandpipers. The bars on the sides of the young Stilt Sandpipers being very faint, the two birds were therefore outwardly much alike. The color of the legs distinguished them, when these were visible, but when they waded in water an inch or more in depth, even this proved an uncertain criterion as the upper shanks of many of the Yellow-legs were dark. Again in flight, the birds were very similar, although the white rumps and tails of the Stilt Sandpipers seemed less conspicuous than those of the Yellow-legs. The difference in size when the two birds stood side by side was very appreciable but, at other times, was merely confusing.

In their habits, however, the two species were quite different. The Yellow-legs were always rangy birds and covered a great deal of ground while feeding. Even when resting they were conspicuous by the nervous jerking of the head and neck. In flight they usually formed fairly compact flocks but scattered upon alighting. The Stilt Sandpipers on the other hand, were quiet birds and went about their search for food very systematically, gleaning everything in their way. They frequently fed in a