

JAMES H. BOWLER.

ISAAC H. MERRILL.

OFFICE OF  
**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Feb 8<sup>th</sup> 1883

Mr. William Brewster  
 Cambridge Mass.

Dear Sir: I am again in

pursuit of a little information, and trust  
 you will pardon me for again troubling  
 you -

Is the Glaucous winged Gull found  
 on our Atlantic coast? - I notice that

Baird & Bonaparte give its habitat as N.W. coast of N.A.

- Also that the late Ridgway (1881) Catalogue  
 pronounces the Grey winged Gull (*L. chalcopterus*)<sup>(of N.A.)</sup> as identical  
 with *Larus glaucescens*. - The habitat of *L. chalcopterus*

was given in 1859 as Bering's straits & Greenland

My reason for making this inquiry  
 is that I have lately received a Gull from  
 Grand Menan, which appears to me to be this  
 bird (*L. glaucescens*) - size of *argentatus* - blue  
 of back about same shade. - The outer webs  
 of the first 4 primaries show the ashy gray  
 and are tipped with the round white spots.

I am not familiar with the

perfect adult plumage of the White winged Gull  
but believed that bird to be lighter on  
back - and as not showing the grayish color  
& white spots on wing =

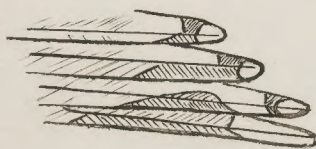
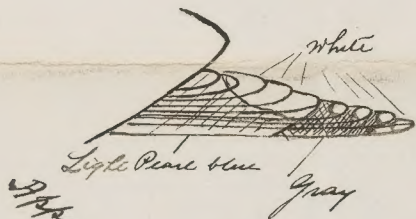
In regard to the Crested Gube(?)  
I wrote you about some time ago - the  
gentleman who informed me about it & who  
had owned it - informs me he had presented  
it to the York Institute of Saco Me -

I am inclined to believe it  
a Red-necked Gube - and request him to have  
it looked up - which he promised to do.

At first he was very positive that  
it was a Crested Gube - but on my second  
interview he was less so - and I incline  
to the belief that it was a case of mistaken  
identity

Sincerely Yours

Harry Merrill



Detail of 4 outer feathers

(Darker shading represents the Gray)

N.B. I am not an artist !!!

Harry Merrill  
Feb 8, 1883

OFFICE OF  
**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 1883

W<sup>m</sup> Brewster Esq

Cambridge Mass

Dear Sir - Thinking that the enclosed measurements of my specimen of *Larus glaucus* (♂) might have some interest to you I enclose them

Length  $23\frac{3}{4}$  - Wing (closed)  $17\frac{1}{2}$

(Bill measurements)

(Culmen) tip to farthest point to which bill can be exposed;  $2\frac{1}{4}$ "

tip to anterior end of nostril  $\frac{46}{50}$

tip to eye  $3\frac{1}{4}$

depth at angle  $\frac{22}{32}$

width " "  $\frac{11}{32}$

Posterior end of nostril to apex of feathers on side of bill  $7\frac{1}{32}$

Tarsus  $2\frac{3}{8}$

3rd  $2\frac{5}{16}$

Sincerely Yours

Harry Merrill

Henry Meville  
Feb. 26, 1883  
Museum of Leam  
Cambridge

OFFICE OF  
**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Apr 23<sup>d</sup> 1883

William Brewster Esq  
 Cambridge Mass

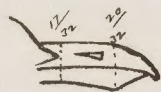
Dear Sir:— Your favor of 16<sup>th</sup> inst  
 duly received. I am very well acquainted  
 with the *Hammatts* — as well in fact as with  
 any one in our city.

I have some more facts  
 of interest relative to *L. glaucescens*. Soon after  
 I obtained my specimens Mr Everett Smith of  
 Portland — was in the city & I showed it to him  
 — he was much interested in the capture as he is  
 publishing a list of Maine Birds in Forest & Stream.

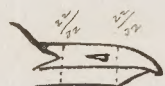
He was of the opinion that he had  
 seen similar Gulls taken near Portland — but had  
 never recognized them as different from *L. argentatus*.

Last week he sent me a young  
 bird for comparison with my specimen — it is  
 in nearly adult plumage. — and I'm of the belief  
 it is a *L. glaucescens* — the gray on the Primaries  
 is a trifle darker than mine — The general  
 measurements of Smith's birds are smaller than mine.

The most marked difference is in the bill - that of Smith's (Portland) bird - being less heavy than mine. In Smith's bird the lower mandible tapers considerably from angle to base - while my specimen does not - as shown in the following measurements



(Smith)



(Merrill's)

My bird's measure is as much in depth of bill at point of feathers as at angle

I suggested that Smith send you his bird for Examination

This capture shows your conclusions in re this birds being found in N. E & strengthens my belief - that my collector had previous acquaintance with the bird under name of Jay Gull

Very Truly

Harry Merrill

Edwards place

Apr. 23, 1853

Harry Merrill

OFFICE OF  
**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. June 1 1889

William Brewster Esq  
 Cambridge Mass

Dear Sir:- Your valued favor of  
 28<sup>th</sup> ult. was duly received - and read with  
 great pleasure - particularly as your reference  
 to the Gull endorsed my position with regard  
 to it, with Mr Smith - etc. (Mr S.) was  
absolutely positive that the bird was not Larus  
glaucescens = that L. glaucescens was not  
 a good species - He has written to different  
 papers comparing the typical L. glaucescens (of Pacific)  
 with L. argentatus - tho' he has told me he never  
 saw but one specimen - that in the Boston Nat Hist Soc  
 - a young one I believe(?) -

As I was opposed to the  
 idea that under the present status of things  
 this bird could be L. argentatus (as he considered it)  
 I was very anxious he should send it to you  
 for examination & am very glad I was successful

in inducing him to do so

I will send you my specimens  
the first of the week - I shall not be  
able to find time to pack it before then  
- Meanwhile - I remain

Sincerely Yours  
Harry Merrill

Harry Merrill  
June 1, 1883



OFFICE OF  
*Bowler & Merrill, Bankers*  
 AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. June 7<sup>th</sup> 1883

Wm Brewster Esq  
 Cambridge Mass

Dear Sir:- I send you  
 my "Gull" tonight by express (prepaid). I  
 have found time to box it before today -  
 trust the delay has not inconvenienced you

I hope you may be able to  
 find material enough to come to a satisfactory  
 conclusion in regard to its correct position

My reference to Mr Smith's article  
 were based on a communication to the Chicago "Felds"  
 (i.e. "American Felds") wherein he draws comparisons  
 between the American Herring Gull found on our coast  
 in summer (i.e. breeding time) & a "more northern race"  
 which occurs as a winter migrant - which he says  
 can be readily distinguished. "Especially by a  
comparison of their bills" - The bill of the

Northern race approaches that of L. leucosternus of the Atlantic coast, he says, "and yet closer to that of the North Pacific gull described as L. glaucescens"

His note in his list of Maine Birds wherein in speaking of L. argentatus he refers to certain specimens showing gray tips & which he believes to be the phase called (by Lawrence) Chalcopterus - was written with reference to my specimen - his own - & after his attention has been called to its being probably L. glaucescens

My particular reference however was to letters he had written me on the subject in which he takes very decided ground (without it seems to me sufficient knowledge on the subject)

In a recent letter to me he says

"I would not wish anything I have written to you in private correspondence quoted to others, at least as regards my opinions as thus expressed in unguarded & perhaps too extreme terms"

Hence - I do not feel at liberty to quote him;

Particularly - as this was written just after sending you his specimen & I believe his remarks were with particular reference to yourself - I will say however that from

my conversations & communication with him on this topic I do not think he has had sufficient acquaintance with the typical <sup>(Pacific)</sup> species to write on it "as one having authority" - And it was with this belief

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Bowler &amp; Merrill, Bankers

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Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine.

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(2)

that I wrote you as I did in my last letter

He was in Bangor shortly after I obtained my bird & there had never seen or apparently heard of *L. glaucus* - & I believe his knowledge on the subject is as limited as my own.

In regard to *L. leucosternus* I would state that in my somewhat limited experience I have not found them common - In fact I have never obtained an adult specimen - but have secured three or four young birds that I considered referable to this species - These from Grand Menan in every case

Trusting you will pardon this extremely long epistle I am

Sincerely yours

Harry Merrill

Harry Merrill  
June 7, 1883  
Harris Janesens

OFFICE OF

Bowler &amp; Merrill, Bankers

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Feb 19 1886

Wm Brewster Esq  
Cambridge Mass

Dear Sir: Will you kindly inform me as to the correct color of eyes of the Sandhill Crane - I notice that most of our authorities give them as Red in adult (- Maynard says also Yellow in young) - Have lately received an adult specimen and the collector says "eyes Yellow".

I have a very badly torn up specimen of what I have supposed to be a Connecticut Warbler - Same was given a note in the Bulletin a few years ago as the 2<sup>d</sup> capture for this state - My opinion was verified by Dr. Brewer - and also by G. A. Allen to whom it was sent by Dr. B. - Our friend Correll Smith doubts its identity - and A. C. Brown was I believe inclined to question its correctness but

Harry Merrill  
Feb. 19. 1886

finally agreed with Dr B<sup>r</sup> others that it  
was the *O. agilis*

Mr J. explained the  
statement of Dr B<sup>r</sup> & Mr Allen - by saying  
that the specimen I sent them was probably  
the bird in question, <sup>(i.e. a *Com. bird*)</sup> - but by some error  
they had returned another skin to me

— This is very <sup>inaccurate</sup> - but absolutely  
incorrect --- The specimen, <sup>I am sure</sup> is the same that

I shot at Ebene Lake - and the question of  
identity stands or falls on this skin now  
in my possession —

Would you be so kind  
as to examine the remains and give me  
your views in relation thereto? If so I  
will mail it to you.

The skin is torn completely  
in two the result of an accident in  
the mails - but still it is all there

In much haste I am

Sincerely Yours

Harry Merrill

OFFICE OF

Bowler &amp; Merrill, Bankers

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Feb 30. 1886

William Brewster Esq

Cambridge Mass. Dear Sir: your

valued letter of Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 86. is at hand and contents noted - I am under great obligations for your kindness in settling the identity of the Warbler sent you. I will write to

the "Auk" retracting & correcting the claim to the ♂ specimen of *A. agilis* for this state. That I should have been wrong does not surprise me, but I am decidedly surprised that both Dr Brewer & Mr Allen should have been misled.

The following is quoted direct from Dr Brewster's letter "Oct 26 (79) - "As well as I can make out one of your birds is the Connecticut Warbler, the other is an immature or female Black Poll - I will keep them and get some one more au fait in plumage than I to confirm or reverse my opinion" - Oct 30<sup>th</sup> he returned the skins and wrote "I have shown the inclosures to Mr Allen

and have his confirmation of my own impressions.  
The agilis is rather an interesting specimen.

Under these circumstances I did not  
question the correctness of the identification  
and consider it settled beyond doubt. I  
had not at that time any other specimens  
of O. agilis - since then I have not  
questioned its status and so make no com-  
parison.

Again thanking you for your  
your kindness I am, Sincerely, Yours

Harry Merrill

Harry Merrill  
Feb. 30. 1886



OFFICE OF  
Bowler & Merrill Bankers

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE  
Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

The owner  
tax, doesn't who  
receives the  
Bowler & Merrill  
reports in Bangor  
in state to  
about the  
he needs this bird  
a  
Bowler & Merrill  
it was shot  
to be  
there  
he  
I  
can  
to  
love  
be  
mistaken  
in  
other  
instances

Wm Brewster Esq

Cambridge Mass: Dear Sir: Believing that

unusual ornithological appearances are of interest to you. I would state that during the past month six (6) Great Gray Owls have been shot within a radius of 40 miles of this city and have been brought here to be mounted - and it is not unreasonable to think that many more may have shot and not preserved. These birds are very rare in this vicinity and since my interests in birds I have not known (personally) of but one or two being taken in this state - and this flight seems rather remarkable on many accounts. Our winter has as a whole been very mild in this vicinity, although we have had some extremely cold days, which were however exceptional - Being cold weather birds and considering this very "open" winter, they can hardly have been driven south by the weather. As to food supply - that of course is problematical - It was noticed

Harry Merrill

however that Pine Grosbeaks arrived here in flocks  
of considerable numbers - rather early in the fall <sup>or winter</sup>  
of 1889. and it is possible that the Owls followed  
the flight of small birds - who may have been  
driven south by lack of food.

I would be much interested in  
your theory of their appearance, if you have any

Arctic Owls were received here  
from the surrounding country (particularly from  
the coast) in extremely generous numbers early  
in the winter - (about the middle of November in particular)

At this time more were received than the total of  
several preceding years - but lately none  
have come in. the supply apparently ceasing as  
quickly as it came on.

The heavy snows that are  
reported from the north west, may have extended  
across the continent into Labrador and by rendering  
their living precarious have driven them to us in  
this congenial (!) climate. This heavy snow idea  
if true. might account for the appearance of both species  
and also for the appearance, (as reported to me by  
a professional taxidermist) of large numbers of Pickardsons Owl.

Respectfully Yours

Harry Merrill

OFFICE OF

Bowler &amp; Merrill, Bankers

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Jan 31<sup>st</sup> 1889.

William Brewster Esq

Boston Mass. Dear Sir: Your valued

favor of 29<sup>th</sup> inst at hand and contents noted

I should be pleased to have you make such use of the information regarding Great Gray Owls as you see fit. as it was not my intention to publish anything regarding it.

I presume that any theory regarding their abundance, this matter, would be simply speculation and inference and of course my suggestion regarding snow etc was nothing but guess work without any basis of actual knowledge - I only mentioned it as a possible explanation - and not as a theory which could stand on actual information

If any more specimens are brought in I will endeavor to ascertain the fact and inform you

Respectfully yours

Isaac Merrill

Harry Merrill.

Jan. 31. 1880.

OFFICE OF  
**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**  
 AND PROPRIETORS OF THE  
 Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine, Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 1890

William Brewster Esq  
 Cambridge Mass

Dear Sir - your favor of 5<sup>th</sup> inst  
 at hand and noted: Your previous letter which  
 you refer to - most certainly contained nothing  
 which I could by any possible means consider  
 "discountous", "intolerant" or expressed "too strongly"

It is my regret that I expressed myself so  
poorly in my reply - that you could have supposed  
 I was in any way put out or hurt by your letter  
 - Most certainly I was not - and could not <sup>be</sup> with reason

In closing I would inform you that  
 since writing you, another Great Gray Owl has been  
 brought in - making a total of 7 (seven) so far  
 - will report any further captures that I know of

I believe that you or Mrs Brewster  
 are acquainted with the family of Mrs P. D. Bartlett

Harry Merrill

Feb. 7. 1890.

of this city - so I would <sup>(son of Mrs. D.)</sup> mention that on Monday  
last the wife of Chas. H. Bartlett - (and a sister of  
my wife) died under most sad circumstances  
- she had been suffering for about a week with  
the prevailing "La Grippe" - and Friday night gave  
birth to a boy baby - Sunday night Pneumonia  
set in, and she died Monday. She was one  
of the most lovely & charming young ladies I ever knew  
and her death, under such singularly sad circumstances  
was a most terrible and unexpected blow to the  
relatives and friends.

You will pardon this allusion  
to a matter in a measure personal - and will  
understand that I do so in the belief of your  
family's acquaintance with Mrs. Bartlett's family - and  
that it might have interest to you on that account

Most sincerely yours

Harry Merrill