

Some Rare or Unusual Birds in Upper Philadelphia.

BY HENRY W. FOWLER.

FOURTEEN years ago my paper* summarizing the more interesting notes gathered on the bird-life of the tidal region of the Delaware about Holmesburg chiefly, was published in these pages. Since then a number of records and notes have been published in the migration report of the "Club," which have added considerably to the knowledge of the bird life of the region. My paper † on "Some Local Fish-eating Birds" will be found to contain a few notes. Additional data, together with such records as refer to the more usual land birds, are included in the present account. The ever-encroaching conditions of the city are slowly changing this section of the country, so that now the lower valley of the Pennypack has been largely transformed into a public park, with many of the old haunts of the birds quite changed. This has inevitably forced certain species elsewhere, while several species have appeared not noticed in previous years. It therefore appears desirable to place on permanent record the information given below.

Acknowledgment is here offered several gentlemen who kindly supplied information used in this paper. The late Charles Smith of Holmesburg, who was familiar with many of the water-birds, kindly furnished some early notes in 1909, relative to species without definite records in my 1903 paper. Mr. Richard F. Miller kindly placed his numerous notes at my disposal, and such as are included are duly credited. Finally Mr. Earl L. Poole sent a few notes on some birds he observed about city reservoirs in Philadelphia.

* Cassinia, 1903, pp. 43-53.

† Loc. cit., 1913, pp. 6-15.

HORNED GREBE—*Colymbus auritus*. During the fall of 1908 very abundant on the river at Holmesburg, in rather large flocks, sometimes fifty or more seen at one time.

LOON—*Gavia immer*. An adult shot on the river at Tacony in the fall of 1903, and mounted by a local taxidermist. One at Queen Lane Reservoir May 10, 1914 (Poole). The Red-throated Loon I mentioned in 1903 was found in a gill-net above Torresdale.*

HERRING GULL—*Larus argentatus*. Seen on the Diamond Street Reservoir in Fairmount Park in 1910, 1912 and 1913, between November 6 and 12 and until April 15 or May 1 (Poole).

RING-BILLED GULL—*Larus delawarensis*. From my old notes an adult seen February 22, 1895, in the river off the mouth of the Pennypack.

BONAPARTE'S GULL—*Larus philadelphia*. Four seen on the Diamond Street Reservoir April 16, 1914 (Poole). Although this gull has not been observed by me, it doubtless occurs regularly during migrations, and seems to be known to many of the river fishermen.

MERGANSER—*Mergus americanus*. Found on the Diamond Street Reservoir from 1910 until 1914, arrives November 1 to 14 and leaves May 1 to 9 (Poole).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER—*Mergus serrator*. About 1898? I noted a flock on the river off Torresdale, and near this same locality Mr. Miller reported a small flock February 1902.

HOODED MERGANSER—*Lophodytes cucullatus*. None seen killed on the river since 1885, prior to which time abundant (Smith). A pair on the Pennypack near La Grange November 21, 1905 (Miller).

BLACK DUCK—*Anas rubripes*. Several times seen along the Pennypack above Crystal Springs. Two near Vereeville in late June 1915 (Miller).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL—*Nettion carolinense*. One in a ditch at Aramingo, October 1912? (Miller).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL—*Querquedula discors*. Sandy Run (Mil-

* Cassinia, 1903, p. 45.

ler). Two shot at League Island Lake in September 1905 (Poole).

PINTAIL—*Dafila acuta*. Several seen on the Pennypack above the upper Rhawn Street Bridge (Miller).

WOOD DUCK—*Aix sponsa*. Dr. G. F. Enoch reports a pair above Crystal Springs on the Pennypack during the summer of 1899. One seen the same place July 20, 1895, and another July 31. I have seen several mounted birds from this region.

SCAUP DUCK—*Marila marila*. Frequent, sometimes in large flocks during November and early spring. A few remain on the river throughout the summer. On several occasions adult males and females were seen at Torresdale and above from 1908–1910. About twenty-five, both this and the next species, seen on the Diamond Street Reservoir March 28, 1913 (Poole). A Scaup (species not given) on January 21, 1912 on the Pennypack at Walnut Hill, Montgomery County (Poole).

LESSER SCAUP—*Marila affinis*. Two pairs seen on the Pennypack near Sandy Run about 1903 (Miller). Four, probably this species, on the Diamond Street Reservoir March 31, 1913 (Poole).

RING-NECKED DUCK—*Marila collaris*. Killed several on the river in the late eighties, but then thought unusual, and very few seen since (Smith).

GOLDENEYE—*Clangula clangula americana*. One on Diamond Street Reservoir March 31, 1913 (Poole).

BUFFLEHEAD—*Charitonetta albeola*. Only two killed in 1886, when very few were seen (Smith). Frequently seen in later years, and often large strings brought to Holmesburg by the gunners during the late nineties.

OLD SQUAW—*Harelda hyemalis*. Two adult males killed on the river opposite Riverton in the fall of 1885 (Smith).

RUDDY DUCK—*Erismatura jamaicensis*. Saw several killed on the river in 1903, and others were reported in 1908, and for several years following.

CANADA GOOSE—*Branta canadensis canadensis*. One seen on the Diamond Street Reservoir May 5, 1914 (Poole).

WHISTLING SWAN—*Olor columbianus*. A local taxidermist had the head of a swan he reported shot on the river near Riverton about 1902 (Miller).

GREEN HERON—*Butorides virescens virescens*. Nested near Rowlands in 1911 (Miller).

KING RAIL—*Rallus elegans*. Several killed during the early nineties, though the species never appeared abundant (Smith).

VIRGINIA RAIL—*Rallus virginianus*. A pair nested in the cave near Crystal Springs in the summer of 1897, which I observed with the young. Evidently nesting near the old piggery of the Bureau of Correction—June 4, 1902 (Miller).

YELLOW RAIL—*Coturnicops noveboracensis*. One at Bridesburg in December 1914 (Miller).

COOT—*Fulica americana*. The only example from the Penny-pack was killed above the first dam in the early nineties.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS—*Totanus melanoleucus*. A flock of about thirty seen off Torresdale in the late nineties, from which several were shot, and which I examined when mounted, forms my only additional note.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS—*Totanus flavipes*. I obtained two examples, now in the Club Collection, shot from a flock of forty or more at Willits Pond during 1895. These birds were not shy, readily flushed, and quite noisy. Several also seen at Willits Pond in May 1901 (Miller).

UPLAND PLOVER—*Bartramia longicauda*. Breeding at Sandiford in 1903 (Miller).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER—*Squatarola squatarola*. This species is credited to me* as having been seen at Bristol, August 19, 1909, though this locality is erroneous as the bird was seen on the shores of the Delaware River at Bordentown, N. J. We approached it within a few feet, while in a row-boat, and had an excellent opportunity to watch it a short time before it flew away.

KILLDEER—*Oxyechus vociferus*. Saw two on February 27, 1912 at Holmesburg.

MOURNING DOVE—*Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*. Nested on the ground at Blue Grass, May 10, 1902 (Miller).

TURKEY VULTURE—*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*. About five or six along the river marshes between 1885 and 1896. One

* Cassinia, 1909, p. 56.

seen near Sandy Run in May, 1896, and later eight or nine during the same year.

MARSH HAWK—*Circus hudsonius*. One killed at the mouth of the Pennypack September 14, 1896, contained a song sparrow entire.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK—*Accipiter velox*. On September 7, 1896 several were seen chasing a number of flickers about the tall willows, then growing about the estuary of Sandy Run. The flickers were entirely successful in eluding their pursuers. A Sharp-shin killed October 6, 1894 contained a field mouse (*Microtus*).

GOSHAWK—*Astur atricapillus atricapillus*. Two reported at Torresdale about 1910, fully adult and with finely barred gray bellies. One seen at Frankford in February 1915 (Miller).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK—*Buteo platypterus platypterus*. Regular along the Pennypack, and first secured in September 1894. Breeds. Nested on the Veree Road, Pennypack Creek, April 28, 1915 (Poole).

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK — *Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*. Occasional in winter, and with the Red-tail and Red-shoulder, formerly caught in small numbers by the crow trappers. My records, February 14, 1895 and January 11, 1896.

BALD EAGLE—*Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus*. About 1879 a pair nested in the woods close by the site of the Torresdale fish-hatchery (Smith). An immature example seen below Eden (Torresdale) May 16, 1899 (Miller).

DUCK HAWK—*Falco peregrinus anatum*. One in Fairmount Park February 25, 1912 (Poole).

OSPREY—*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*. Nested at the Torresdale fish-hatchery May 28, 1898 (Miller). I obtained a female at Somerton October 5, 1896.

BARN OWL—*Aluco pratincola*. One secured in October 1895 was very tame and docile. Several others seen in 1900, Bridesburg in January 1914 (Miller).

SHORT-EARED OWL—*Asio flammeus*. Several taken at Holmesburg and Liddonfield.

SAW-WHET OWL—*Cryptoglaux acadia*. A wing found in the woods near the upper Rhawn Street Bridge March 12, 1911.

Other feathers scattered about, also cast-up pellets, suggest the owl might have been preyed on by some rapacious bird or mammal.

SNOWY OWL—*Nyctea nyctea*. Several have been killed along the river-marshes prior to 1896, where it was an irregular straggler in winter (Smith).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO—*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. Found nesting about Holmesburgh in 1902 (Miller).

HAIRY WOODPECKER—*Dryobates villosus villosus*. Only one example taken, August 4, 1895, above Crystal Springs. Nested in the Axe Factory Woods.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER—*Sphyrapicus varius varius*. One taken Holmesburg January 22, 1894.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER—*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*. My records October 3, 1894, September 7, 1896, October 8, 9, and 12, 1897, and July 1907. Nested at Eden in 1897 and 1898, and one seen at Sandiford in winter 1904 (Miller).

WHIP-POOR-WILL—*Antrostomus vociferus vociferus*. August 1892, August 10, 1894, August 1895, and October 11, 1894.

NIGHTHAWK—*Chordeiles virginianus virginianus*. My records, April 9, 1895, September 13, 1895, several in September 1896, many September 11, 1911, four, on 23 and one on 25.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER—*Nuttallornis borealis*. One obtained September 5, 1894 by Mr. F. F. Carthage*.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER—*Empidonax flaviventris*. My examples obtained August 20 and 21, 1895, September 26, 1896, and May 6, 1909.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER—*Empidonax virescens*. Found occasionally about La Grange.

ALDER FLYCATCHER—*Empidonax trailli*. One taken above Crystal Springs May 18, 1895.

HORNED LARK—*Otocoris alpestris alpestris*. Flock in February 1895 and another in February 1905.

FISH CROW—*Corvus ossifragus*. Nested at Torresdale April 10, 1902 and Crystal Springs May 1912? (Miller). No examples were obtained between May and December.

* Cassinia, 1903, p. 73.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD—*Euphagus carolinus*. One taken at Richmond in January 1914 (Miller).

PINE SISKIN—*Spinus pinus*. A small flock found feeding in low bushes near Liddonfield in November about 1906.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW—*Ammodramus savannarum australis*. Frequent summer resident about Crystal Springs, though I did not meet with it until 1911.

FOX SPARROW—*Passerella iliaca iliaca*. One secured near the mouth of Sandy Run January 1, 1896.

TOWHEE—*Pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus*. Two on December 18, 1910 near Sandy Run.

WORM-EATING WARBLER—*Helmitheros vermivorus*. My records August 20 and 23, and September 4, 1895, and May 11, 1907.

GOLDEN - WINGED WARBLER—*Vermivora chrysoptera*. My specimens August 21, 1895 and September 4, 1895.

TENNESSEE WARBLER—*Vermivora peregrina*. One near Crystal Springs September 12, 1895.

MYRTLE WARBLER—*Dendroica coronata*. My records November 3 and 26, and December 31, 1894, and February 8, 14, 22, and 28, 1895. A dead example found November 8, 1910.

LOUISIANA WATER THRUSH—*Seiurus motacilla*. Seen at the first dam on the Pennypack May 12, 1900 and May 12, 1902.

KENTUCKY WARBLER—*Oporornis formosus*. A summer resident of recent years. I first met it in May 1912. Nested from 1907 or 1908 to the present time about the upper Rhawn Street Bridge (Miller).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER—*Oporornis agilis*. Found at Vereeville May 16, 1902 (Miller).

HOODED WARBLER—*Wilsonia citrina*. My records August 22, 1895, and May 11, 1907.

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN—*Telmatodytes palustris*. Nested at Crystal Springs June 4, 1902 and in June 1915 (Miller).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH—*Sitta canadensis*. Only found in September and October of 1896.