

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

An Abnormally Colored Woodcock (*Philohela minor*). — Mr. R. W. Tufts of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, has sent me in the flesh a woodcock, *Philohela minor* (Gmelin), which he characterized as a "Golden Woodcock." He writes me that in his long field experience in the Maritime Provinces of Canada he has handled thousands of woodcocks and recalls that about 1909 at Black River, Kings County, Nova Scotia, he shot one of these especially brightly colored birds and then dubbed it a "Golden Woodcock." Twenty-six years later, on October 9, 1935, he was hunting at South Berwick, Nova Scotia, and shot another brilliant, coppery-looking bird. In the first week of November, 1949, Mr. James Donly of Mill Village, Queens County, Nova Scotia, told Mr. Tufts that he had shot a peculiar looking woodcock, so different from the usual run of birds that he had placed it in his deep freeze until Mr. Tufts could see it. Tufts found it to be another "Golden Woodcock." Thanks to the interest and cooperation of Mr. Tufts I now have this bird before me.

Pettingill (1936, *The American Woodcock*, Mem. Boston Nat. Hist. Soc., 9, p. 197) in his monograph of this species under "Abnormal Plumage Coloration" listed only a number of cases of partial albinism. The present specimen falls in a somewhat different class, and while perhaps not as different from the normal bird as the term "Golden Woodcock" might imply, still falls completely outside the range of variation of the 64 specimens of woodcock in the Chicago Natural History Museum in the considerably more bright reddish and less blackish and greyish color of the upperparts and merits a brief description.

The specimen, taken in the autumn of 1949 presumably in Queens County, Nova Scotia, is in fresh autumn plumage, and was fat. It proved impossible to sex it; its size is: wing 139, exposed culmen about 72 mm. Compared with other autumn birds, the under parts are richly colored but fall within the range of variation of normal birds. On the upper side the primaries are much paler, silvery grey rather than blackish; the inner secondaries and wing coverts have the blackish markings paler, more silvery grey, and the rufous markings coarser, brighter rufous,

and hence this plumage is more conspicuously reddish. On the back the black blotches are still black, but seem reduced in size, and the finer dark markings are paler, more silvery grey; the brown markings are coarser and brighter red; and in some of the grey areas there is more of a rufous tinge. The result is to give the upper parts a considerably more reddish brown, sparsely blotched with black appearance, rather than a black, grey and brownish-barred appearance.

The lack of pronounced individual variation in the Chicago Natural History Museum series is rather striking. That unusually reddish birds do occur is demonstrated by the present specimen. The scarcity of such variants is indicated by Mr. Tufts' observation that he has seen but three of these birds in over forty years of active bird study and woodcock shooting. — A. L. RAND, Chicago Natural History Museum.

June Record of a European Widgeon in Manitoba.—The annual Waterfowl Breeding Ground Survey in Manitoba brought to light an interesting record of a European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) from the southwest part of the province. The bird, an adult male, was observed June 3, 1949, 6 miles southeast of Hartney, a region of numerous willow-rimmed potholes. While making a routine survey of the area I noted a rather grayish widgeon feeding on this typical slough. Visibility was excellent and the vegetation gave sufficient cover for me to observe the undisturbed bird for 10 minutes with a pair of 7 x 50 Bausch & Lomb glasses. The bird slowly fed its way towards me and soon approached a male American Baldpate (*Mareca americana*) which had been sleeping on a muskrat house some 10 yards away. When the two birds were both in my field of vision it was apparent that the grayish widgeon had a reddish head, a buffy crown, lacked a green eye patch and checked with all field marks for the species as given in Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds*. The bird appeared to be healthy and when attacked by the territorial Baldpate flew off quite readily. There was no evidence that this was a breeding bird.

The vegetation in the slough was typical of the region and consisted of a mixture of sago pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*),



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