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THE BIRDS OF SHOAL LAKE, MANITOBA.*

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Shoal Lake, Manitoba, lies some thirty-five miles a little east of north from the city of Winnipeg and approximately midway between the lower lobes of the two great lakes, Winnipeg and Manitoba. Though brought to the attention of ornithologists at an early date and later repeatedly visited by collectors, very little information has found its way into print regarding the details of its bird life.

Donald Gunn visited the lake in 1867, and his account¹ is extensively quoted by Ernest E. T. Seton (Ernest E. Thompson or Ernest Seton Thompson) in his *Birds of Western Manitoba*.² The same notes with additions appear in *The Birds of Manitoba*³ by the same author and briefly summarized again in the bird part of his *Fauna of Manitoba*⁴ in which the nomenclature is brought up to date.

In 1891, Fred Dippie was in the adjoining locality of Raeburn. In 1893 and the following year Edward Arnold⁵ and Walter Raine visited the lake itself. The latter casually mentions Shoal Lake in his *Birds Nesting in Canada*⁶ but gives no details, and his only published account appears in the *Oologist*.⁷ Frank Chapman and E. T. Seton were on the lake in July, 1901. The former has a popular generalized account of his trip in his *Camps and Cruises of an Ornithologist*,⁸ and I am indebted to Mr. Seton for a copy of his original field notes which I have quoted freely in the following. By him I am informed that Mr. Miller Christy, of

Broomfield, Essex, England, visited the vicinity in May, 1887, and a collection of birds he made there is now in Seton's museum. June 27 to 29, 1912, Mr. Herbert K. Job and his son visited the south and west end of the lake looking for headquarters at which to obtain water bird's eggs for propagating purposes, but found the locality unsuited to their work. Mr. Job has kindly furnished me with a copy of his notes. I have heard of several other observers having collected about the lake at various times, but reports from them are not available at the present writing. From the context most of these trips have been made to the southern extremity of the lake, or in the case of Gunn, 1857, along the west side as far north as the Narrows.

Prompted by these accounts—and desiring a representative collection of Manitoban material, the Biological Division of the Geological Survey, Canada, made an expedition to Shoal Lake the spring of 1917. The party consisted of Mr. C. H. Young and the writer. We arrived at the C.N.R. station at Erinview, some four miles from the east side and about opposite the middle of the lower section of the lake, on May 16. Here we were fortunate in meeting Mr. Frank Ward, who with his father and brother, lives on the lake shore. He transported us and our baggage to his farmstead and allowed us camping privileges in the immediate vicinity. The Ward brothers proved to be unusually well informed sportsmen naturalists and we are indebted to them for many interesting notes and much valuable assistance during the course of our work. I heartily recommend them to all visiting naturalists.

On the map, Shoal Lake is indicated as being about thirty miles long north and south and ten miles in extreme width at the southern end. It is very irregularly shaped, with a constriction called the Narrows somewhat below the middle, forming practically two lakes divided by wide marshes through which winds a narrow creek-like channel. Both Chapman and Gunn describe the shores as composed of broad marshes with tall reeds in which

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¹Notes on an Egging Expedition to Shoal Lake, west of Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba. Twenty-second Annual Report, Smithsonian Institution, for 1867, pp. 427-432, by Donald Gunn.

²*Birds of Western Manitoba*, by Ernest E. T. Seton, Auk III, 1886, pp. 143-156 and 320-329.

³*The Birds of Manitoba*, by Ernest E. Thompson, Proc. U.S. Nat'l. Museum, XIII, 1891, pp. 457-653.

⁴*Fauna of Manitoba*, by Ernest Thompson Seton, as it appeared in British Association Handbook, Winnipeg, 1909 (reprinted?) pp. 3-47, part on birds, pp. 11-47.

⁵A Few Notes from Shoal Lake, Manitoba, *Oologist*, XII, 1895, pp. 22-24, by Edward Arnold.

⁶*Birds Nesting in Northwest Canada*, by Walter Raine, 1892.

⁷A Rough Time Collecting at Shoal Lake, Manitoba, *Oologist*, XII, 1895, pp. 3-6, one plate, by Walter Raine.

⁸*Camps and Cruises of An Ornithologist*, by Frank Chapman, Appleton Co., New York, 1908.

water birds, grebes, ducks, and rails nested in immense numbers, and with stony islets in the lake populated by nesting gulls, tern, pelicans, and cormorants. Today this description and outline are hardly recognizable. The water has fallen from eight to ten feet from its old level, as indicated by the old shore line still visible and the outline and conditions are greatly changed. The Narrows are now high, dry hay fields and the creek channel is a dry ditch winding its way across two miles of open prairie cutting the lake into two separate bodies of water having no communication with one another. The surrounding marshes have disappeared and in their place are broad reaches white with alkali crystals. The islets, deserted by their original tenants, are of considerable extent and with long sand and stone shoals reaching toward each other or toward the shore. Of the luxuriant growth of reeds nothing remains but the root tops in the mud, prevented probably by increasing salinity from following the water in its retreat from the old shore-line. Of the vast numbers of birds that once treaded the mazes of the marsh practically none remain but the few that are restricted to the borders of the rapidly disappearing pools back from the shores.

A tradition from aboriginal sources asserts that the lake rises and falls regularly with a period of about fifteen years. Mr. Seton informs me that "the waters of Shoal Lake, in common with all in Manitoba, have a fashion of rising and falling in periods of about seven years". However regular this rise and fall may be and what the period is, Shoal Lake was high in 1867 when visited by Gunn, also in 1901 when Chapman and Seton were there. The Wards arrived on its shores about 1889 and Ward, Sr., declared that at that time the lake was low. It is evident from the reports of Arnold and Raine that the water was fairly high in 1894 and the Wards say that it reached its maximum about 1899. It rises faster than it falls we are told. Whether the water will ever come back again to its old level remains for the future to show. Should it do so it will offer a remarkable interesting ecological study in investigating the effects of the change from highly alkaline to practically fresh water upon the contained and surrounding life. Before this change takes place it is most desirable that a comprehensive study should be made of the present biological conditions as a basis of contrast with higher stages of water.

The lake has no important inlet and no outlet. The level is probably governed by the variation in annual rainfall extending over a series of years. The geological strata in which the lake lies is obviously porous and fissured with underground channels, as evidenced by changes in the water of near-by wells, but I have heard nothing of corre-

sponding variations in level of the great lakes on either hand, so the local conditions are probably independent of them.

The surrounding country is prairie, liberally sprinkled with small clumps of bush. These clumps, called "bluffs" throughout the prairie provinces, range from mere spots of one or two low growing bushes to several acres of woodland and are occasionally a mile or more in their longest direction. They are usually very dense and sometimes all but impassable owing to underbrush, felled tops, or burnt trunks criss-crossed on the ground like jack straws. The edges, however, are sharply defined and between them runs the clear prairie, winding in and out, narrowing here to grassy lanes and widening there to green glades or broad meadows of varying extent. All the woodland has suffered severely from fire. Grazing is the principal industry and the practice of burning the dead grass to induce a vigorous growth has not only tended to check the natural spread of the bluffs but has devastated many of them and groups of black skeleton trunks offend the eye more often than is desirable.

Most of the timber composing the bluffs is poplar with willow and other smaller shrubbery about the edges. In the largest bit of woodland in the neighbourhood of our camp is a small stand of bur-oak and on Maple Island, some five miles up the lake—an island no longer—is a little maple (*Sp.?*) from which sugar used to be made. At the head of the upper lake, we are informed, considerable spruce or evergreen exists, but there is none in the parts visited by us. Poplar is the principal timber and that upon which the residents rely for general uses and for fuel. Viewed by eyes accustomed to eastern woodlands none of the growth is large—a ten-inch trunk is the maximum now seen, though occasional rotting stumps indicate that larger trees were more common before they fell to the axe of the early settlers. Now most of the growth is little more than pole size and rarely exceeds a height of 40 feet.

Here and there, where the level of the land is lower, there have been marshes and the so-called red-root bogs are common and muskeg occurs locally. Now, however, owing to the lowering of the water-line these are mostly dry except in spring and represented by damp areas with a few reed-like water grasses growing about the occasional watery spots which still persist. On my return in September I found that most of these hydrophytic evidences were obliterated and the usual hay grass was growing where in the spring cat tails and reeds had flourished. Occasional ponds had remained through the summer's drought, but few of these promised to last long.

The spring of 1917 was late and as we passed

over the prairie on our arrival our driver pointed to the grass just appearing through the dead mat of last season's growth and remarked that it should be from 8 to 10 inches high. The poplars were just coming into leaf and the few oaks in the big woods behind the camp were still bare and gaunt. Though the day of our arrival was oppressively hot a change came before we had pitched camp and thereafter we had raw, cold weather during most of our stay, with ice forming in the pails of water at night and towards the middle of June we were glad to have our stove in the working tent even throughout the warmth of the day.

The lake is subject to sudden cyclonic squalls and high winds. The former burst suddenly out of clear skies, whirl a cloud of dust and debris high in the air, and subside as quickly as they rise. On one occasion we saw where a boulder of consider-

lake, but evidently are becoming fewer each year. Waders still visited the shores, and birds were fairly numerous. We had no difficulty in obtaining as many specimens as we were able to prepare. Unfortunately in shipping our collections to the Museum one box, containing the majority of our small birds, was lost in transit. Manitoba is the most eastern of the prairie provinces and one of the most important subjects of geographical distribution in Canada is the location of the meeting points of prairie forms with those of the eastern woodlands. As the determination of these fine subspecific points must be based directly upon specimens the loss of them was serious and it was largely to replace them that Mr. Young returned to Shoal Lake the spring of 1918, spending from April 23 to October 2 on the same grounds we had occupied the previous spring.

He arrived just after the ice had broken up on



The shores of Shoal lake in 1917-18; view near camp.
The shores were of this character everywhere.

able size had been rolled over and over on the mud shores by a particularly vicious twister. The squalls do not last long but they try tent material and pegs. The steadier wind storms are violent and sustained and during our stay several of them tested the texture of our canvas and raised anxiety for our specimens and effects. I would advise all future campers to select sheltered spots for their quarters.

In the fall the writer spent from September 17 to 26 in the same neighbourhood to obtain an idea of the autumnal conditions and to fill some of the gaps of the spring work. It was after the first frosts and while the days were warm and pleasant, the nights verged on freezing.

We were disappointed in not finding any great breeding ground for water birds; a few ducks still remained in spite of the altered conditions of the

lake and the ducks and geese, after being confined to the narrow strip of open water between the shore and the main ice field, had repaired to mid-lake where they could be occasionally seen and even recognized but seldom collected. He found the land slightly if any wetter than it had been the previous fall, and where we had waded thigh-deep in the spring was dry and growing hay. April and May were very dry, the restriction of marshy areas increased apace and heavy rains in July failed to replenish them even temporarily. Consequently, the ducks and water birds that remained in 1917 deserted the vicinity and very few bred in 1918.

Mr. Young worked all the adjoining country in the neighbourhood of the Ward homestead as far as it was possible on foot and made several

auto trips farther afield. The day before he left he reported a heavy frost. In the course of this season's work he obtained personal notes on 183 species, and specimens of 147 of them, which added to the previous year's observations and collections, form a sufficient basis for a fairly complete and representative list of the birds of the locality.

Some few species are herein included upon circumstantial evidence and until confirmatory specimens are secured must be looked upon as hypothetical. However, the evidence upon which they are based is fully given and the reader can form his own judgment as to their value, bearing in mind, however, that no record is absolutely unassailable until specimens are secured and examined by competent authority.

1. WESTERN GREBE, *Aechmophorus occidentalis*.

Though reported by all previous observers as remarkably common we saw none at any visit. The Ward brothers say that they used to breed in such numbers on the marshes that a canoe could scarcely pass between their nests, and Seton reports the species as an abundant breeder and notes that "its shrill metallic cries could be heard from the quill reeds day and night". He further observes "it is the easternmost breeding place of the species. Most birds peter out towards the limit; but here, at the northeastern corner of its limit, this bird has a sort of metropolis". With the lowering of the water this is all past.

2. HOLBOELL'S GREBE, *Colymbus holboelli*.

Reported by Gunn "in fair numbers" and by the Ward brothers as "never very common". Two seen by Young, May 25, 1918, are all we can report.

3. *HORNED GREBE, *Colymbus auritus*.

Both Arnold and Raine report it nesting in 1894. One only was noted in 1917, on June 4. In 1918, Young found it rather common, noting it almost daily through May and from the end of July to Sept. 2.

4. *PIED-BILLED GREBE, *Podilymbus podiceps*.

Seton reports it common and evidently breeding. In 1917, we noted but three in September on a small pond, but in 1918 Young observed individuals, mostly singles, April 25 to May 18, and the latter half of August to the middle of September.

5. *COMMON LOON, *Gavia immer*.

The Ward brothers say that it used to breed though they never found its nest. On both visits we saw single individuals almost daily. They were usually observed flying over and seldom showed any inclination to stop on the lake.

6. IVORY GULL, *Pagophila alba*.

In Mr. Darby's taxidermy establishment in Winnipeg, I examined on May 15, 1917, a mounted specimen of this species which I was informed was taken at Woodlands, Man., on Dec. 27, 1915, a station on the Canadian Northern Railway just south

of Shoal Lake, and hence within the scope of this paper. It is a medium-sized, pure white gull, with face and forehead flecked unevenly with light smoky gray, with remains of terminal tail band, dark spots on tips of primaries, and a few dark flecks on tertiaries, bend of wing, and lesser coverts.

7. HERRING GULL, *Larus argentatus*.

Chapman reports finding a few Herring or California Gulls nesting on Pelican Island and states that they were very troublesome to other birds, destroying numbers of Tern's eggs and even those of the Pelican. Large gulls of the Herring Gull type were seen by us on every visit but were very shy and all we managed to take were Ring-bills. Young tells of a Herring Gull carrying off a Horned Grebe he had shot and was wading out to retrieve, lifting it bodily by the nape of the neck and taking it out to mid-lake where, joined by another, the two proceeded to tear it to pieces. The Ward brothers say the species bred on one of the rocky islands as late as 1916, but as no boats were available were unable to say whether they continue to do so or not.

The specific status of the larger gulls of the province has not been well determined. Specimens of both migrants and breeders are necessary from various localities. The Herring Gull and the California Gull, *Larus californicus*, are so similar as to be differentiated with difficulty. When juvenile, probably careful size comparison between similar ages and sexes is the only guide. When adult, probably the best criteria is the colour of the legs and feet; in *argentatus* these are flesh coloured whilst in *californicus* they are said to be light greenish.

8. *RING-BILLED GULL, *Larus delawarensis*.

Raine reported the species breeding on the islands in 1894. We saw a few in the spring of 1917, but were not always able to separate them with certainty from the Herring Gull as the ringed bills are only safe criteria when perfectly adult and most of the large gulls seen on the lake showed various traces of juvenility. Young recognized the species with certainty only during the latter part of July, August, and September. Four birds were taken and all are juveniles. They probably do not now nest on the lake.

9. *FRANKLIN'S GULL, *Larus franklini*.

In 1917, common on our first arrival May 17, but became scarcer towards the latter part of our stay, to June 14. According to Young, it was present on his arrival on the lake on April 24, reached a maximum on May 7, and then gradually became reduced in numbers to June 7. It returned on July 1 and remained until Aug. 27, after which no more were seen. Very large flocks were noted Aug. 8 to 10. Chapman notes it as breeding, but there is no indication that it nests on the lake now that the marshes are gone.

10. *BONAPARTE'S GULL, *Larus philadelphia*

Not identified by us in 1917 though a flock of birds noted at a distance, Sept. 22, were probably of this species, as Franklin's Gull seems to leave before this date. In 1918, Young saw eleven on May 25, taking specimens in verification. They appeared again in some numbers on Aug. 16 and remained without much diminution up to the date of his leaving, Oct. 2. Though Seton (*Auk*, 1886, p. 147) cites Gunn as the authority for its breeding on Shoal Lake and repeats the statement in subsequent lists, including his Fauna of Manitoba, British Association Handbook, 1909, I cannot but regard it as a mistake, and think that Franklin's Gull has been the basis of these records. The nearest well authenticated records of the breeding of this bird is on the lower Mackenzie. The more or less common occurrence of non-breeding Bonaparte's Gull in summer dates, as far east as the Atlantic coast, has probably been to blame for many confusions of breeding records between these similar birds.

11. CASPIAN TERN, *Sterna caspia*.

On the gravelly islands where the Common Tern used to nest in immense numbers the Ward brothers tell us that there were occasional sets of eggs that were so much larger than the rest as to attract immediate attention. The parents of these seemed to them to be exactly similar to the other tern flying about but considerably larger. Though they regarded them at the time as only monstrosities there can be but little question but that these were Caspian Tern. The numerical ratio these eggs bore to those of the Common Tern was about five to a thousand.

12. *FORSTER'S TERN, *Sterna forsteri*.

Seton says that while he did not note the species, Miller Christy found it common on May 1, 1887. Arnold and Raine report colonies of hundreds of nests, but it is suggestive that they make no mention of the Common Tern. In 1917, we found Forster's Tern in company with the Common Tern but generally scarce. In 1918, Young observed it from the 8th to the end of May, but much more common during the last week. He has one hypothetical record for two individuals, namely Aug. 21. The Wards say that it was once much more common than now and that it used to nest singly on the musk-rat houses in the marsh and not on the gravelly islets with the Common Tern.

13. *COMMON TERN, *Sterna hirundo*.

The Ward brothers tell us that when the water was high the Common Tern nested in immense numbers on the gravelly islets. On one such islet of about three acres, they once estimated one thousand nests. In some places the foot could not be put down without treading on eggs. This statement is largely confirmed by Seton. Such descriptions, however, do not represent the species at Shoal Lake

now and there is no indication of any nesting there. The species was occasionally common during our spring visit in 1917. In 1918, Young found them more or less common during the latter half of May and noted a few individuals occasionally through June, July and August and as late as Sept. 16, when a flock of thirty was seen. The Common Tern can be separated from Forster's in life by the grayness of the white below. In Forster's Tern the under parts look a dazzling, pure white in the sun, a character that is obvious when both species are in view together and, after a little experience, of value when they are seen separately.

14. *BLACK TERN, *Hydrocheledon nigra*.

A common breeding species nesting in the few wet spots remaining back from the lake. None were seen in September of 1917. Young reports heavy migrations Aug. 1 to 21, and the last seen, Sept. 3.

15. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, *Phalacrocorax auritus*.

Said by Gunn, Seton, and the Ward brothers to have been a common breeder on the islands, but now, except for occasional stragglers and during migrations, they have deserted the lake. None were seen by us in 1917, but Young reports flocks of five to sixty in late April and early May with straggling singles on May 23 and Aug. 29. All seen were flying over, mostly from east to west, towards Lake Manitoba. Probably the growing alkalinity of the lake has destroyed the fish and forced them to seek other feeding grounds.

16. WHITE PELICAN, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchus*.

Said by the Ward brothers to have been a very common breeder on the islands during high water, and Raine speaks of an "Island white with them" in 1894. Seton tells of seeing a flock of thirty-five and finding a score of deserted nests, "the eggs strewn about, in some cases evidently sucked, I suppose by Herring Gulls". We are told that their eggs used to be regularly gathered by Indians and others. In one case a boat-load were boiled and fed to the hens. At present only a few small flocks appear in the spring, and occasional summer visitors. Young reports thirty on May 6, which were all we saw.

17. *RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, *Mergus serrator*.

Young found one dead on the beach near the Narrows in the spring of 1918. This is our only definite record of the species. Though the Ward brothers do not distinguish between the two big saw-bills, they report them common in spring but do not think they breed locally.

18. *HOODED MERGANSER, *Lophodytes cucullatus*.

Young reports this species in early May, the middle of June, late July and the last of August. The Wards state that it breeds in the neighbourhood and that young in flapper stage are often

seen in small pools and standing in ditch water along the railroad tracks, and that it is one of the earliest of ducks to mature.

19. *MALLARD, *Anas platyrhynchos*.

One of the commonest ducks though being rapidly reduced as a breeder by the progressive restriction of suitable marshes.

20. *BLACK DUCK, *Anas rubripes*.

The Ward brothers seem to know this species and describe it as a rare fall migrant. We are in receipt of a specimen labelled Winnipeg, Man. (W. R. Hine) which we are informed by its donor, Mr. Seton, was taken at Shoal Lake. The date is not recorded.

21. *GADWELL, *Chaulelasmus streperus*.

Raine found nests in 1894 and Seton noted them on Pelican Island on July 6, 1901. Wards say it is, or was, an uncommon but regular breeder. Specimens were taken on May 15 and 19, 1917, and Young reports a few individuals during May, 1918.

22. BALDPATE, *Mareca americana*.

Raine found nests in 1894 and Chapman in 1901, and the Ward brothers say it is one of the scarcest of the ducks and growing more so. Young reports seeing individuals at the end of April and in the beginning of May, 1918.

23. *GREEN-WINGED TEAL, *Nettion corolinense*.

A common breeder and still lingering in some numbers, seeming to require less extensive marshes than many other species of duck.

24. *BLUE-WINGED TEAL, *Querquedula discors*.

A common breeder similar to the green-winged but seen considerably later in the fall.

25. CINNAMON TEAL, *Querquedula cyanoptera*.

Seton (*Auk*, 1886, p. 328) quotes R. H. Hunter as having taken a specimen at Oak Point, on the adjacent Lake Manitoba shore. This is near enough to the locality under discussion for mention though the lack of recent records for the species and apparent absence of specimens render it a little unsatisfactory.

26. SHOVELLER, *Spatula clypeata*.

A common breeder in 1917. Said by the Wards to be the only duck that is showing an increase, and they describe, during the past three years, vast flocks of a thousand or more in eclipse, remaining until the fall plumage is assumed when they depart for the south. However this may have been just previous to 1917, we have seen nothing like it in the last two years. They are present throughout the spring, but Sept. 17-26 may have been too late for such aggregations in 1917. Young was present all the summer of 1918 and only noted occasional birds through April and May, so it is probable that the above increase was only momentary and was

checked by the continued ecological changes in the locality.

27. *PINTAIL, *Dafila acuta*.

Was a common breeder. Said by the Ward brothers to mature earlier than any other species of duck except the Hooded Merganser. More Pintails were seen during the spring of 1917 than any other kind of duck. In 1918, Young found them very common in early May, gradually reducing in numbers after the middle of the month, scarce in midsummer, which here gives no cover for eclipse conditions. The last noted were fifty on Sept. 16.

28. WOOD DUCK, *Aix sponsa*.

The Ward brothers give circumstantial accounts of the occurrence of two Wood Ducks at different times. One male taken in 1899 or 1900 was identified as such by a Mr. Robt. Holland, who was familiar with them in Ontario, and the other from memory of that specimen. Whilst these records are not unimpeachable, taking into consideration the striking characters of the birds and the qualifications of our informants, I accept them with but slight reservations.

29. REDHEAD, *Marila americana*.

Arnold found nests in 1894 and the Wards say that it used to breed. We saw only occasional specimens during spring and fall.

30. *CANVAS-BACK, *Marila vallisneria*.

Said by the Wards to have been a common breeder in the past. A female was taken on June 6, 1917, but it proved to be a non-breeder. We have only seen occasional individuals in spring and early summer.

31. *LESSER SCAUP, *Marila affinis*.

A considerable number of Scaups were noted during both spring and fall. All taken proved to be the Lesser Scaup, though undoubtedly the Greater Scaup also occurs. The Wards know of but one nest being taken, that one being amongst the gulls on an island.

32. *RING-NECKED DUCK, *Marila collaris*.

Nothing like as common as the Scaups. A few were observed in the spring of 1917 and specimens taken in the following fall. It was not observed by Young in 1918. The Wards know it under the name of "Buck-eye", and say that it occasionally occurs in small flocks but do not know of its breeding.

33. AMERICAN GOLDENEYE, *Clangula clangula*.

A flock of six were seen between May 17 and 23, and a pair hung about until the first week of June in 1917. Young noted one on July 11, 1918. All adult males observed were of this species. We have no record of its breeding.

34. BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, *Clangula islandica*.

Seton (*Auk*, 1886, p. 328), cites R. H. Hunter as authority for the capture of a drake on Shoal

Lake in the spring of 1880. It is a long way from normal range of the species and should be authenticated by specimens for unreserved acceptance. The Wards are unacquainted with the species.

35. BUFFLEHEAD, *Charitonetta albeola*.

Said by the Wards to have been a common migrant, but not known to breed. Seen on May 19, 1917, and a few in late April and early May in 1918.

36. HARLEQUIN DUCK, *Histrionicus histrionicus*.

Frank Ward tells us that in the spring of 1898 he shot three brilliantly coloured little ducks that he was unfamiliar with. At the time he thought they might be Wood Ducks, but upon seeing that species later realized the mistake. He identified them as similar to coloured pictures of the Harlequin Duck in Reed's Bird Guide. Taking everything into consideration I am inclined to accept this record with but few mental reservations.

EIDER, Sp?

The Wards tell of a large duck of unknown species, with greatly swollen bill, having been taken by Mr. Samuel Martin, of Winnipeg, about 1900. Plumage descriptions seem to suggest a female, either Eider or Scoter. If Eiders, ever occur they must be accidental stragglers and except for the above uncertain record they are unknown on the lake.

37. WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, *Oidemia deglandi*.

Seton found nest and eggs on Pelican Island on July 6, 1901. This is the only Scoter known to the Ward brothers, who say that when the lake was fished many were taken in the nets. We saw small flocks almost daily in the spring of 1917, and Young reports occasional individuals throughout the season until Aug. 10.

38. RUDDY DUCK, *Erismatura jamaicensis*.

Reported by Seton, 1886, on the authority of Hine to breed at Shoal Lake. Said by the Wards to have bred very commonly but not often taken. It has practically disappeared from the marsh since the drying of the marshes. Young noted one individual on May 29, 1918.

39. SNOW GOOSE, *Chen hyperboreus*.

Single individuals seen on May 25 and 28, in 1917, a large flock on April 30, a smaller one on May 25, and two individuals on Oct. 2, in 1918. The residents are enthusiastic over the "Wavie" shooting. I take it for granted that all are Lesser Snow Geese, *C. h. hyperboreus*. It is locally called Greater, but apparently in contrast with Ross' Goose, which seems to be as well known as the "Lesser Wavie".

40. BLUE GOOSE, *Chen caerulescens*.

One was seen on May 29, 1917, in company with a Snow Goose and watched for some time in good field-glass range. The slaty black and white head and neck made identification positive. Young

noted a flock of one hundred on April 30, 1917, and a few more individuals on Oct. 1 and 2. The Ward brothers say that in most flocks of Snow Geese a few of this coloration occur, but not many are taken.

41. ROSS' GOOSE, *Chen rossi*.

The Wards differentiated between the Greater and Lesser Snow Geese, but upon questioning it appeared that the latter were little larger than Mallards. There can be little doubt but that this is the species referred to. They are only occasionally seen on the lake, but numbers have been brought into Winnipeg market.

42. WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, *Anser albifrons*.

May 26, 1917, one pitched on an isolated rock off the shore within sight of camp, from whence we watched it with glasses for a considerable time. The general brown colouration, white frontal patch and pink bill and feet were plainly visible and there can be no doubt as to the identification. The Ward brothers say it is scarce within their experience and know of but six individuals being taken on the lake.

43. *CANADA GOOSE, *Branta canadensis*.

Besides seeing the species during spring and fall in 1917, Young noted individuals as late as June 4 and as early as Aug. 10 in the following season. Arnold reports finding a nest on an island in 1894 and doubtless the present breeding ground is not far away. Two captive birds seen were evidently *B. c. hutchinsi*. One specimen obtained on April 30, 1918, is *B. c. canadensis*. The Wards and others say that the two large forms of Canada Goose can easily be told apart in life, having different voices and the flocks keeping more or less separate. The living birds of the small form do not make good decoys for the larger. They also upon their own initiative tell of occasional very small Canadas, scarcely larger than Mallards, and with voices like a hard cack-cack-cack. They are very scarce and there can be little doubt but that they are stragglers of the Cackling Goose, *B. c. minima*.

44. BRANT, *Branta berniola*.

Reported by Seton (*Auk*, 1886, p. 329), on authority of R. H. Hunter, to have been killed at Shoal Lake. As Geo. Atkinson records in his *Rare Birds of Manitoba* (Trans. No. 65, Hist. and Sci. Soc. Man, 1904), a specimen in his possession from Oak Lake, killed the spring of 1889, the record is not an isolated one for the province.

45. WHISTLING SWAN, *Olor columbianus*.

The Ward brothers tell us that Swans are still common migrants, especially in the fall and do not seem to be decreasing to any marked degree. We saw none in 1917, but in 1918 Young noted thirty on April 30, and six on May 6.

46. TRUMPETER SWAN, *Olor buccinator*.

The Ward brothers have observed Swans of two different sizes. One shot in 1904 weighed thirty-two pounds and was so large that Frank Ward, a large man, could not close his hand about the neck behind the head. Mr. Ward, Sr., says that swans nested on the lake in 1893-94 and that he watched the old one with cygnets one day for hours. This can only refer to the Trumpeter Swan and is strong circumstantial evidence of its occurrence. Our informants also tell us that the big swans are not as wary as the small ones, do not keep as consistently in the centre of the open lake, and are more easily taken. The voice is also quite different from

that of the smaller species, being either a single "Whoop-Whoop" or a louder, clearer, and less shrill "Coo-coo—" that can be plainly heard for miles. Frank Ward tells of a wounded one uttering a long drawn note of such extreme mournfulness that it moved him deeply, thus substantiating, in a measure, the fabled song of the dying swan. These trumpeters do not come with the large flocks of Whistlers, but usually as individuals accompanied by one or two dark cygnets. Two have been seen as late as the early spring of 1917.

(To be continued.)

The asterisk (*) denotes that specimens were taken.

THE ORCHIDS OF HATLEY, STANSTEAD COUNTY, QUEBEC.

BY H. MOUSLEY.

In that interesting book, "How to Know the Ferns", Mrs. Theodora Parsons recounts how a friendly rivalry used to exist amongst fern students as to who could claim the greatest number of species for a given area. Possibly if such a rivalry exists amongst students of the orchid family, I might take a prominent place, for I can lay claim to having found seventeen species and one variety of orchids (or just one-quarter of all those known to occur in Eastern North America) within a radius of one mile of my residence, and I am beginning to wonder whether Hatley is not an "El Dorado" for these lovely flowers, the same as Dorset and Pittsford (both in the State of Vermont) are for ferns. On a two hours' walk in the former place thirty-three species and four varieties of ferns have been found, but then it must be remembered that the party finding them had made the study of ferns a speciality, whereas I do not lay any claims to being considered a specialist in orchids or even a botanist. Still from childhood I have always had an innate love of the beautiful, and it has been whilst pursuing my favourite study of ornithology, that I have made a side line, so to speak, of botany, having collected and named some two hundred or more local species of wild flowers, at odd moments when from some cause or another birds were scarce. Possibly I owe my success with the orchids almost entirely to the warblers, for in making a special study of this family of birds, I generally seem to have been most fortunate in securing my rarest finds, the following up of a Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*) for instance giving me my first sight of that exquisite little orchid, *Calypso bulbosa*.

Hatley is a pretty little village lying at an elevation of 1,000 feet above the sea level, the country

all round being of an undulating character with plenty of small streams, many of which eventually find their way into Lake Massawippi, a fine sheet of water about nine miles long, lying on the western side of the village. Between this lake and the village there stretches a long belt of low-lying woods composed largely of spruce, fir and cedar, with hemlock, maple, birch, beech, ash and other deciduous trees intermixed. It is in these woods principally to the north-west of the village that most of my records have been made, although there is a famous bog to the north-east, where several species are to be found growing in profusion including *Arethusa bulbosa*.

During most of my eight years' residence here (1911-1918) I have resided about one and a half miles to the south of the village, but in May, 1917, I made a temporary change and occupied a house about a mile or rather more to the north of the village until October, 1918. Previous to making this change I had only observed six species of orchids to the south of the village, so that my change of residence is responsible for an additional twelve, the ground being of a more swampy nature and better suited to the requirements of orchids, although I do not wish it to be understood that a systematic worker could not find any of these twelve additional ones to the south or east of the village, for indeed I myself have already done so during the present year (1918); nevertheless I think the localities indicated will be found to be the most productive, as the following annotated list (taken in the order given in Gray's Manual of Botany, Seventh Edition) clearly shows:

SMALLER YELLOW LADY'S SLIPPER, *Cypripedium parviflorum* Salisbury. My first acquaintance with this fragrant flower was on June 22, 1917, when I



Taverner, P. A. 1919. "The Birds of Shoal Lake, Manitoba." *The Ottawa naturalist* 32(8), 137–144.

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