

LABRADOR BIRD NOTES.

BY WELLS W. COOKE.

MORE than a century ago Cartwright lived at Sandwich Bay on the eastern coast of Labrador and left a journal which contains many notes on the arrival and departure of the birds. Scarcely any migration notes on the birds of this district have been published during all these subsequent years. The coast has been visited by various ornithologists — Coues, Turner, Stearns, Bigelow, Townsend, and Allen — but these men arrived there in the early summer after the close of spring migration and left too early in the fall to note more than the beginning of the return movement. Hence while the birds have been studied during the breeding season, but scant records have been made of their arrival and departure.

In the fall of 1912 Mr. Clarence Birdseye, of New York City, went to Labrador as resident manager for a fox farming company. The winter of 1912-13 was spent at Battle Harbor. The following summer a permanent site for the fox farm was selected near Sandwich Bay, and the two following winters were spent at this place. During each winter long trips were made by dog sledge up and down the coast, and each summer he was absent for a few weeks while making a trip to New York City. Several years of field work for the U. S. Biological Survey had given Mr. Birdseye an excellent training for accurate observation, and during his residence in Labrador he has made copious notes on the bird life. He has turned over all these notes to me with a request that I publish the more interesting records. It must be understood, however, that watching the birds was a mere incident in a life filled full with exacting duties in other lines and that, therefore, the bird notes are not so numerous as his inclinations would have prompted.

The additions to the list of the birds of eastern Labrador are: *Chen hyperboreus hyperboreus*, *Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*, *Mniotilta varia*, and *Dendroica virens*, while the second records on this coast were obtained for *Marila marila*, *Branta bernicla leucogastra*, *Dendroica æstiva æstiva*, and *Regulus calendula calendula*.

Only two previous records had been published for *Fulica americana* and *Colaptes auratus luteus*. The known range of *Cyanocitta cristata cristata* on the south coast has been extended a long distance eastward.

The fox farm is at Dykes Bay, near the entrance to Sandwich Bay, about four miles southwest of Cartwright, about 150 miles north of the eastern end of the Strait of Belle Isle, and about 70 miles southeast of Rigolet, near which place Dr. Coues made many of his Labrador observations. The Sandwich Bay records refer to the fox farm. The settlement called Paradise where Cartwright spent much of his time, and which was often visited by Birdseye, is at the southwestern corner of Sandwich Bay, some fifteen miles from the fox farm. Battle Harbor is on St. Lewis Sound about 40 miles north of the Strait of Belle Isle. Flowers Cove, Newfoundland, and Forteau, Labrador, are at the west end of the Strait of Belle Isle; West Ste. Modiste and Red Bay are in the middle of the Strait; Chateau Bay and Pleasure Harbor are just north of its eastern end; Caribou Island and Lewis Bay are near Battle; Hawke Harbor is 50 miles north of Battle; Seal Islands and Spotted Islands are 50 miles east of Cartwright and Table Bay half that distance; Woody Point and West Bay are on the coast between Cartwright and the mouth of Hamilton Inlet, while Ticoralak is on the north shore of Hamilton Inlet near Rigolet.

1. **Gavia immer.** LOON.— Battle Harbor, May 15, 1913; Ticoralak, October 12, 1912.

2. **Cephus grylle** or **mandti.** GUILLEMOT.— Several at Woody Point, December 30, 1912, and at Lewis Bay, February 15, 1913.

3. **Larus marinus.** GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.— Unusually early arrivals were seen near Romaine, March 26, 1914, and at Rigolet April 9, 1915. The species was still present on the Seal Islands November 2, 1912.

4. **Larus argentatus.** HERRING GULL.— The last at Battle Harbor was noted October 22, 1912.

5. **Puffinus gravis.** GREATER SHEARWATER.— Seen at Hawke Harbor, August 19, 1912.

6. **Mergus serrator.** RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.— Arrived at Cartwright, May 2, 1915, which is probably about an average date.

7. **Anas rubripes.** BLACK DUCK.— First seen at Caribou Island, May 1, 1913, and at Sandwich Bay, May 2, 1915.

8. **Nettion carolinense.** GREEN-WINGED TEAL.— This is a rare species on the Labrador coast, but the wing of one was seen which had been shot near Ticoralak.

9. **Marila marila.** SCAUP DUCK.—Two young males were shot at Ticoralak, October 11, 1912. The only other record for the whole coast of Labrador is that of one shot near Nain in October, 1899.

10. **Harelda hyemalis.** OLD-SQUAW.—The first fall migrant appeared at Pleasure Harbor, September 16, 1912.

11. **Somateria mollissima borealis.** NORTHERN EIDER.—The breeding eider of this part of the coast of eastern Labrador is *dresseri*, but the winter birds are undoubtedly the northern species since Battle Harbor is at the extreme northern limit of the breeding range of *dresseri*. In the fall of 1912 the Eider Duck shooting began near Battle Harbor on September 20, but at that time the birds were scarce and only a few were obtained. Even a month later, October 24, the gunning season had not yet reached its height, and seven men in one day killed only about 80 birds. Later the numbers increased and the birds remained as long as they could find any open water. At West Bay on January 31, 1913, after the simultaneous discharge of six guns, 140 eiders were picked up and many more were lost. A flock of not less than 400 was seen at Rigolet March 14, 1913. The first northward migrants were noted at Battle Harbor, May 1, 1913, and on May 23, they passed by the thousand in companies of a hundred or more.

12. **Chen hyperboreus hyperboreus.** LESSER SNOW GOOSE.—Snow Geese are only stragglers on the Labrador coast; indeed a single doubtful record at Okkak is the only one for the whole coast. One was shot at Independent Harbor about October 1, 1914, where none of the inhabitants could remember seeing a white goose. Its skin is now in the U. S. Biological Survey collection and, strangely enough, it turns out to be the small form from western North America.

13. **Branta canadensis canadensis.** CANADA GOOSE.—The first were noted at Battle Harbor, May 1, 1913, and at Sandwich Bay, April 30, 1915. These dates agree closely with those given by Cartwright, who records the first as arriving near this same locality on May 4, 1775, April 30, 1776, May 1, 1779, and May 8, 1786.

14. **Branta bernicla glaucogastra.** BRANT.—There is no certain record of a Brant anywhere on the Labrador coast, except the one shot at Nain in October, 1899. One is reported to have been taken at Ticoralak the fall of 1912 and the record is probably correct.

15. **Botaurus lentiginosus.** BITTERN.—This species is known from Cape St. Francis only a few miles to the south of Sandwich Bay, and hence the report that it breeds near this latter place is probably correct.

16. **Fulica americana.** COOT.—One was shot at Table Bay in October, 1913, and is now in the collection of the Biological Survey. The only other records for the whole east coast of Labrador are of one taken near Nain in 1880 and one at Sandwich Bay in August, 1899.

17. **Phalaropus fulicarius.** RED PHALAROPE.—A late record for the coast of Labrador is that of several Red Phalaropes seen at West Ste. Modiste, September 13, 1912.

18. **Gallinago delicata.** WILSON'S SNIBE.—It may be well to record

two Wilson's Snipe seen at Flowers Cove, Newfoundland, September 10, 1912, for this is near the northern limit of the range of the species.

19. **Pisobia maculata.** PECTORAL SANDPIPER.—Those individuals that were still present at Ticoralak October 12, 1912, were remaining later than usual.

20. **Pisobia fuscicollis.** WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER.—This species remained still later than *P. maculata*, for single birds were seen at Battle Harbor to October 29, 1912, while in August they were abundant in flocks of hundreds.

21. **Pisobia minutilla.** LEAST SANDPIPER.—This species migrates so late that the first was not seen at Battle Harbor until June 1, 1913. Migrants returned to Battle Harbor August 7, 1912, and remained for about three weeks.

22. **Totanus melanoleucus.** GREATER YELLOW-LEGS.—The first were seen at Battle Harbor May 14, 1913, and at Sandwich Bay June 4, 1915. These places are near the normal northern range of the species. Several were noted September 15, 1912, at Chateau Bay and the last were seen October 12, 1912, at Ticoralak.

23. **Numenius borealis.** ESKIMO CURLEW.—Though this species may become extinct in the near future, it still existed in 1912, and during that year a few were seen August 17 on Caribou Island; one was recorded at Cartwright in September and four at West Bay during the same month.

24. **Zenaidura macroura carolinensis.** MOURNING DOVE.—The most northern previous record on the Labrador coast for the Mourning Dove is at Red Bay in the Straits of Belle Isle. The known range can now be extended to Battle Harbor where one was seen October 20, 1912, and one found dead on the beach at Spotted Islands during August of the same year. One was shot near Battle Harbor in September, 1912. A close observer of bird life who has lived at Sandwich Bay for fifty years says that during all that time he has seen Mourning Doves only twice, once in 1909 and once the following year.

25. **Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis.** OSPREY.—To the very few records of this species on the eastern coast of Labrador may be added that a pair was seen at Sandwich Bay May 28, 1915, and again the next day. The species breeds on both North River and White Bear River which flow into Sandwich Bay.

26. **Nyctea nyctea.** SNOWY OWL.—“Many of the people at Sandwich Bay set steel traps on isolated stumps for owls. These birds are usually very fat and are good eating. The fat is not at all strong” (Birdseye).

27. **Colaptes auratus luteus.** NORTHERN FLICKER.—This species is probably not so rare as its few records for the eastern coast of Labrador would indicate. One was taken at Sandwich Bay in August, 1908, and one at Okpatok Island, Hudson Strait, October, 1882. These are the only published records for eastern Labrador, but a man who lived at Sandwich Bay and had taken a specimen there the spring of 1909 said that they nested in that neighborhood. In confirmation of this two individuals were heard there June 5, 1915.

28. **Otocoris alpestris alpestris.** HORNE LARK.—The last one noted in 1912 was at Tioralak October 12, and the first returning migrant was seen at Sandwich Bay, April 22, 1913.

29. **Cyanocitta cristata cristata.** BLUE JAY.—The known range of this species was decidedly extended by the capture of a specimen in 1912 at Harrington on the south coast of Labrador near Romaine. It had not been previously recorded east of Mingan.

30. **Euphagus carolinus.** RUSTY BLACKBIRD.—The last one seen in 1912 at Flowers Cove, Newfoundland, was seen on September 10. It is there a common breeder.

31. **Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis.** SNOW BUNTING.—This species is an abundant migrant at Battle Harbor, but does not breed there and is rare through the winter. During the spring migration great numbers are killed for food, as many as twenty being taken at a single shot. After November 6, 1912, the only ones seen were one on December 29, 1912, and one on February 15, 1913. The first song was heard May 1, 1913, when the species was abundant, but most left the latter part of that month, the last seen being three on May 31, and one the next day.

32. **Calcarius lapponicus lapponicus.** LAPLAND LONGSPUR.—Neither breeding nor wintering at Battle Harbor, the first spring arrival of the Lapland Longspur was noted there May 13, 1913.

33. **Passerherbulus sandwichensis savanna.** SAVANNAH SPARROW.—The last record made of a Savannah Sparrow at Battle Harbor was on September 12, 1912, when the species was still common. The first arrived the next spring on May 15.

34. **Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys.** WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW.—An abundant breeder on the Labrador coast. The last was seen at Forteau September 11, 1912, and the first at Battle Harbor May 22, 1913, and at Sandwich Bay May 28, 1915.

35. **Zonotrichia albicollis.** WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.—There seems to be no published record of the occurrence of the White-throated Sparrow on the Labrador coast north of Battle Harbor. It is rare there, and the first arrived May 19, 1913, and several were heard May 22. The last was heard in 1912 at Forteau on September 11.

36. **Spizella monticola monticola.** TREE SPARROW.—This species was abundant in migration at Forteau, September 11, 1912. It seldom nests on the coast, but is a common breeder in the wooded country inland, nesting for the most part on the ground and occasionally in the trees. The first arrived at Battle Harbor in 1913 on May 15.

37. **Junco hyemalis hyemalis.** SLATE-COLORED JUNCO.—Labrador is much too cold for the Junco or "snowbird" to winter and in the Sandwich Bay district it is not common at any time. One was seen at Lewis Bay August 13, 1912, and one at Rigolet September 30, 1912. The following spring a single bird appeared at Battle Harbor on the unusual date of April 16, and a few were seen for ten days; then they disappeared and were not noted again until their usual time of arrival the middle of May. In 1915 the first appeared at Sandwich Bay on May 12.

38. **Melospiza lincolni.** LINCOLN'S SPARROW.— The last one seen at Forteau in 1912 was on September 11.

39. **Passerella iliaca iliaca.** FOX SPARROW.— The last were seen at the head of Chateau Bay September 15, 1912, and on the coast of Newfoundland, near Flowers Cove, September 10, 1913. The first was heard on Sandwich Bay, May 5, 1915.

40. **Mniotilta varia.** BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.— The first record for Labrador is that of one seen at Sandwich Bay June 2-4, 1915. It was undoubtedly a straggler for the species had not previously been known northeast of Anticosti Island.

41. **Dendroica æstiva æstiva.** YELLOW WARBLER.— The only previous record of a Yellow Warbler on the eastern coast of Labrador seems to be that of the one taken on Hamilton Inlet, September 1, 1905. To this record can now be added that of a pair seen at Sandwich Bay June 6, 1915.

42. **Dendroica coronata.** MYRTLE WARBLER.— The earliest warblers to appear at Sandwich Bay the spring of 1915 were about a dozen Myrtle Warblers that arrived May 24.

43. **Dendroica striata.** BLACK-POLL WARBLER.— The first were noted at Battle Harbor, June 6, 1913, and at Sandwich Bay May 27, 1915. This is a good example of the fact that a late migrant advances on the average more miles per day than an early migrant. The Black-poll Warbler arrived at Sandwich Bay in 1915 only three days later than the Myrtle Warbler, though it arrives at Washington, D. C., on the average more than thirty days behind the latter. It is also interesting to note in this connection that, assuming May 5 as the average date of arrival at Washington, the Black-poll Warbler occupies about twenty-five days in passing over the fifteen hundred miles thence to the Labrador coast, an average of about sixty miles a day, while the Black-poll Warblers that are to nest in Alaska are averaging more than a hundred and fifty miles a day during this same part of May and by the end of the month reach Kotzebue Sound a thousand miles farther north than Sandwich.

44. **Dendroica virens.** BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER.— The list of the known birds of the east coast of Labrador has been increased by the addition of the Black-throated Green Warbler, a specimen of which was seen at Battle Harbor June 6, 1913. The most eastern previous record was that of one at Eskimo Point.

45. **Anthus rubescens.** PIPIT.— The last was seen at Ticoralak in 1912 on October 11, and the first arrival the following spring at Battle Harbor on May 16.

46. **Regulus calendula calendula.** RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.— One was seen at Sandwich Bay May 26, 1915. There seems to be only one previous record of the species on the coast of eastern Labrador and that was at Rigolet on August 6, 1860.

47. **Planesticus migratorius migratorius.** ROBIN.— The last was seen at Forteau September 11, 1912, and the first at Sandwich Bay May 1, 1915.



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