

in the Auk, Vol. XXII, 1905, p. 87, in which he refers to a Hudsonian Chickadee seen at Ipswich, Mass., on November 12, 1904, as follows: "[he] was very finely seen while he gave a sweet warbling song." Of another bird, seen on November 25, he says: "The Belmont bird was also well seen and gave a few notes of the warbling song."

STRAY NOTES FROM ALASKA.

BY A. W. ANTHONY.

AS EVEN fragmentary notes on the avifauna of northwestern Alaska are by no means common I have ventured to offer the few disjointed records which I noted during the winter of 1904-1905 on the Seward Peninsula. These records are from a region somewhat closely adjoining those so well covered by Messrs. Nelson and Grinnell, and I would hesitate were it not for the fact that the country explored by myself is almost entirely open tundra, differing from the St. Michaels region or that of Mr. Grinnell's camp on Kotzebue Sound. The Seward Peninsula is more or less timbered along the streams and mountains of its eastern part but the spruce growth ceases abruptly between Long. 163° and 164°, west of which nothing larger than arctic willows are to be found, save for one or two small groves of stunted cottonwoods, which will be mentioned more in detail further on.

After the fall migration the Redpolls lingered along the willow thickets until I had hopes that they would winter with us, for I could not see any possibility of any other winter residents except the Ptarmigan. A march of over a hundred miles in early October failed to bring to light any other species but by October 15 the last Redpoll had departed for the timbered regions along the Yukon, leaving the tundras and wind-swept hills to the Rock and Willow Ptarmigan, large flocks of which had appeared by October 1, in more or less advanced winter dress.

On October 26 I saw the first Snowy Owl; though the species is said to nest all over the peninsula, I did not meet with any until then, when I found them common near the base of the Kigulik Mountains, about 20 miles from the coast. Very little snow had fallen up to this time and the wind-swept hummocks offered ideal watch towers where at nearly any hour of the day two or three owls could be seen, certain favored elevations being scarcely ever without a tenant on the watch for a luckless mouse or lemming. As the snow became deeper mice were harder to catch, and owls correspondingly scarce, so that by December 1 they were nearly or quite all gone.

On November 20 I heard a Chickadee on the upper Cripple River, and a month later another lisped his cheery notes to me from a stunted bunch of willows on Penny River as I journeyed toward Nome. This was, with the exception of a few Willow Ptarmigan, the last bird I saw for two months.

Early in February I arranged with an Eskimo to accompany me on a sledge journey to Cape Prince of Wales, thence north into the Arctic as far as caprice might carry us, returning to Nome only when travel with dogs was no longer practicable—late in May as it subsequently proved.

Off Grantley Harbor, at the edge of the shore ice, a large gull was seen February 20. It was following an open lead along the edge of the ice pack, so far away that its identity could not be ascertained.

As the natives at Cape Prince of Wales reported no game to be found to the north along the coast it was considered advisable to follow up some of the rivers tributary to Grantly Harbor or Port Clarence further east.

On March 1, at Port Clarence, a flock of a dozen Snowflakes marked an epoch in the trip. They were on the wind-swept sand-spit, the only spot of bare earth I had so far seen on the trip, and, to keep from being carried away by the gale then blowing, were lying almost flat on the sand and behind frozen hummocks of snow.

On March 3 a Richardson's Owl was caught on the Agapuk River. It had taken up its quarters in an abandoned igloo, and when driven into the glare of the outer world was confused, and after a short flight returned to the igloo and submitted without protest to capture. From an inspection of several deserted igloos

in the interior of the peninsula I concluded this species was a regular winter resident and made general use of these shelters. During the month of March two or three Richardson's Owls were seen, all in the thick willow growth along the Kruzitrin River.

A few *Parus* were found at long intervals in the willows; their presence being usually announced by their call, and it was not often that one could be seen near enough for identification. I think that all I saw were *P. cinctus alascanis*.

Extending up from Grantly Harbor, toward the northeast, is an extensive basin but very slightly elevated above the sea. The tides are noticeable 75 miles by the river from the head of Grantly Harbor, and with a south wind the waters are distinctly salt even thus far from the coast. Running back from the several rivers which drain into this basin are numberless sloughs and bayous, forming a network of water ways, a veritable swamp in summer, well nigh impassable, but furnishing ideal nesting grounds for water birds, while the thickets of willow and alder growing over a large part of the dryer ground furnished better cover for land birds than I met with in any part of the peninsula. Flanking this region on the south is the Kigulik Mountains, their ragged peaks rising abruptly to elevations ranging from 3000 to 4700 feet and extending about 60 miles east and west. At the base of the range, on the north side, are found several hot springs within an area of a few acres, and surrounding them a growth of cottonwoods of perhaps a mile in extent. In this region I camped several times and found more bird life than in any part of the region covered. As the Eskimos assured me that about the warm springs the water fowl are first seen in the spring migration, I returned to this point to watch the arrivals as late as I safely could and return across the mountains before the ice broke up in May. Most of my time was spent along the northern base of the Kigulik Mountains, and the valleys of the Krugamapa and Kruzitrin Rivers.

Two or three Redpolls were seen and heard singing March 7 in the willows along the Kruzitrin, and on the same day two Hawk Owls were recorded. These arrivals marked the first of the spring movement, but it was several weeks before any real migration could be said to have commenced. Redpolls became gradually more common, coming in flocks by April 15. It was not until April 12

that the first Snowflakes made their appearance at the base of the Kiguliks, and then but a pair were seen, twittering a suggestion of their spring song; they became abundant but little later than the Redpolls. On March 27 a *Dryobates*, of the size of *pubescens*, was seen among some dwarf willows at the base of the Kiguliks and was the only representative of the order that I met with at any time. The same day I saw a Golden Eagle, and from inquiry of the Eskimos learned that the species is resident but not common.

On several occasions between March 15 and May 1 Gyrfalcons were seen along the bayous and sloughs, where they were doubtless hunting Willow Ptarmigan. They were by no means wild but maintained a discreet distance. The natives state that along the Tuxsuk River, connecting Salt Lake with Grantly Harbor, "white" Gyrfalcons nest quite commonly, feeding on the water fowl that nest about Salt Lake.

On May 3 a Rough-legged Hawk was noted at the hot springs, and on the 23d, while en route to Nome, I found a nest that had been despoiled of its three fresh eggs by a prospector the day before. The nest was a bulky structure of sticks on a ledge, but quite accessible. In the cottonwoods about the hot springs were many hawk nests but up to the date of my leaving the only species seen other than the above was a single Marsh Hawk on May 8.

The Eskimos assured me that the first water fowl to arrive would be the geese which, regardless of weather, would be seen within a day or two of May 1. It was therefore with considerable interest that I watched the open water below the hot springs. May was ushered in with a thermometer 25° below zero, and as much snow and ice as at any time during the winter. Some bare tundra could be seen where an April thaw had promised an early spring, but otherwise winter reigned supreme. It was clear that since the only open water was at my station, early water fowl must sooner or later report in my region. The bad weather continued, however, until the 6th when the north wind abated somewhat and in the A. M. three geese, of the size of Hutchins's came in from the west and alighted after circling the pond. Another was reported the same day as passing on to the north. No others were seen until warmer weather set in, on the 10th, when migrants fairly swarmed. At 11 A. M. two Whistling Swans arrived from the west, and after

some minutes spent in circling the pond disappeared in the north. A little later large flocks of Little Brown Cranes began to arrive from the east and passed on toward Cape Prince of Wales. All the rest of that day they were passing by and the air was filled with their bugle-like notes. With them came flocks of geese, numbering each from four to twenty-five. Many of the geese came from the west, suggesting the possibility of their having come from Siberia.

Most of the flight seemed to be *Branta canadensis minima*, but a few *Anser albifrons gambeli* were noted as well. Each flock of geese, on arriving, made direct for the open water but after being disturbed they retired to the open spots on the tundra or lit on some of the many frozen lakes. This date also brought us the first gulls; several, the size of the California Gull, lit on the ice or hovered over the open water but were so wild that they could not be identified with certainty. Wilson's Snipe also was noted for the first time on the 10th and rapidly became common.

On May 11 a Robin was heard singing. At the pond I found a flock of ducks, consisting of Pintails, Green-winged Teal, and Scaups. Three Least Sandpipers were probing the mud for their breakfast. Later in the day flocks of *Tringa* and *Larus* arrived from the east. In a small cottonwood near the hot spring a nest of the Northern Shrike was found with seven fresh eggs. The nest was large and bulky, composed of sticks and twigs outwardly, somewhat loosely put together; inside of fine dry grass, lined with a large quantity of the pure white feathers of the ptarmigan, which gave to the structure a most artistic effect.

On the 12th Robins were plenty, and Tree Sparrows had also arrived in numbers. The flight of water birds had somewhat abated though but few ducks had arrived. The geese had paired and were looking into the merits of the nesting sites offered in the open spots on the tundra. After I reached the coast I learned that this region was visited by heavy and prolonged rains that so swelled the streams that a large part of the nesting water birds were driven from their nests; the geese gathered in flocks and were said to have made little or no attempt to raise a brood.

On the southern slopes of the Kigulik Mountains I met with the first Fox Sparrows and Golden Plovers on May 16, and the following day noted the first Titlarks and Red-backed Sandpipers. The

18th brought the first Lapland Longspurs and Golden-crowned Sparrows, and the 21st the first Parasitic Jaeger. On the 22d a number of Golden Plovers arrived in pairs, their mellow calls sounding from every side as they sought the bare spots on the tundra or chased each other over the snow drifts. One Wandering Tattler also arrived on this date.

One Bristle-thighed Curlew was seen on the head of the Nome River on the 23d. Here also I met with quite a flight of Hawk Owls migrating northward. At no time during the day were they absent from the landscape, and often five or six were seen at one time.

On May 24 I took a nest and set of four eggs of the Hoary Redpoll, from a leafless arctic willow that reached but two feet above the snow. The eggs were so far advanced in incubation that they could not be saved. No attempt has been made to tabulate the migration further than to note the arrivals in a general way. As a rule I think the land birds became abundant a day or two after the first arrival was noted. There was, however, a straggling band that brought up the end of the procession long after the movement had to all appearances ceased, as was attested by my finding a number of Lapland Longspurs on each of several days spent with the Eskimos hunting walrus in the ice pack fifty miles or more south of the peninsula.



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