

On this coast, as far as I know, the adults of the Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) arrive first. I merely mention it, as this bird is very closely allied to the Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) (see Gätke, page 460). This is also the case with the Hudsonian Curlew.

Judging from the twenty-five years' shooting experience of one of my friends at one of the larger fresh water ponds in Massachusetts, where the shooting of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) has been made a specialty, it appears that they migrate in broods. It makes little difference how many birds may be travelling in company, for on alighting in the pond (unless in very stormy weather) they separate, each gander and goose with their young keeping together, the gander leading.

My observations in relation to rate of speed and length of flight lead me to believe that under very favorable conditions, such as flying before a very strong wind, such birds as the American Golden Plover and Eskimo Curlew for instance, will attain a speed of one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles an hour. It is consequently not inconceivable to me that under such favorable conditions they are able to reach the Argentine Republic or Patagonia in one flight, or with a possible rest on the ocean. Hence I cannot regard a flight, under favorable circumstances across the Atlantic ocean, as any great hardship to many of our birds.—
GEORGE H. MACKAY, *Nantucket, Mass.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Soaring of Birds and Currents of Air.

TO THE EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs,—Allow me to call the attention of ornithologists to the following question in which ornithology and meteorology join hands.

In recent years, wind vanes have been devised to indicate the vertical component of the wind's motion, and it has been shown that there is a significant variation in the strength of this component in various kinds of weather. It has long been known that the diurnal variation of wind velocity on land was due to local convectional ascending and descending currents, these varying greatly at different times and places, according to the nature of the land surface, the strength of sunshine, etc.

In recent years, attention has frequently been called to the importance of vertical currents in air movement as an aid in the flight of birds, Professor Langley's studies being perhaps the most important in this direction.

Now the question that I should like to have jointly considered by ornithologists and meteorologists, is whether there is a correlated variation in the flight of soaring birds and in the activity of local convectional movements, or other vertical movements. Do soaring birds float for a longer time without flapping wings in weather when convectional ascending currents are indicated, or in localities where disorderly ascensional currents, prompted by irregularity in the land surface, may be expected? A pair of observers, one attending to the behavior of birds, the other following out the processes of the winds, might perhaps discover some interesting correlations in this field of study. The work might be commended to semi-invalids, who are sent South in search of mild weather and gentle occupation. Could anything be more genially lazy than lying on one's back in the sun, and counting the turns of a Turkey Buzzard?

Very truly yours,

W. M. DAVIS,
Cambridge, Mass.

November 3, 1895.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY, an Honorary Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died June 29, 1895, at his home in Eastbourne, England, in the 71st year of his age, having been born at Ealing, Middlesex, England, May 4, 1825. His early education was obtained partly at home and in part "at the semi-public school at Ealing, of which his father was one of the masters." In 1842, he entered the medical school of Charing Cross Hospital, and in 1845 passed the first M. B. examination at the University of London. The following year he joined the medical service of the Royal Navy, and was soon after assigned to the post of assistant surgeon to H. M. S. 'Rattlesnake,' which sailed from England late in the year 1846 for a surveying cruise in the Southern Seas, and thence around the world, returning to England in 1850. In recognition of his scientific work during this voyage, he was elected in June, 1851, a fellow of the Royal Society. He left the naval service in 1853, and in 1854 was appointed naturalist to the Geological Survey, and also made professor of natural history in the Government School of Mines, which latter position he occupied till 1885. From 1863 to 1869 he was Hunterian professor at the Royal College of Surgeons. He was president of the Geological Society of London in 1869 and 1870, president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1870, and of the Royal



Davis, W. M. 1896. "The Soaring of Birds and Currents of Air." *The Auk* 13, 92–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068779>.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068779>

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