

GENERAL NOTES.

Notes on the Genus *Micruria*.—In the 'Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum' (Vol. XXVI, p. 595) W. R. Ogilvie-Grant suggests that *Micruria craveri* may possibly be the breeding plumage of *M. hypoleuca*. That such is *not* the case I have abundant evidence in some fifty or more *hypoleuca* of both sexes which I have taken from the nest, all of which were perfectly characteristic in having pure white under wing-coverts. I have taken *hypoleuca* in every month in the year and have never yet seen an adult with gray or dusky under wing-coverts. On many of the islands off the coast of Lower California *M. hypoleuca* begins nesting in late January, though I have found fresh eggs as late as early April. Late in February they may be seen at sea in family parties consisting of the parents and one or two downy young, which are taken to the water the first night, I think, after they are hatched. The young stay in company with the adults until late in the year, and after June 1 I have never seen an immature bird that could be identified as such at gunshot range. During the second week in June, 1897, I fell in with a number of family parties of *Micruria* off Magdalena Bay, Lower California. An immature bird was shot and upon securing it I found the under wing-coverts smoky gray more or less tipped with white, though I *thought* I was sure that the parents were typical *hypoleuca*. In March, 1899, I was so fortunate as to find several nests of young only just from the egg; two of these are before me, and as regards color, they are exact counterparts of the adults, except that the wings are *sooty below* as well as above. The parents in this case were secured and identified beyond a doubt. Thinking that I had at last a clew to the status of *M. craveri*—a species I had begun to consider somewhat mythical—I sent my Magdalena Bay specimen to Mr. Ridgway for comparison with specimens of *craveri* in the National Museum. His reply is to the effect that the National Museum has but three specimens of *craveri* and the same number of *hypoleuca*; the former "are evidently old birds, being in worn plumage; one of them has nearly completed the moult and still has the dusky wing-coverts!"

Mr. Ridgway suggests that the plumages may possibly represent the two sexes, the sexing of the specimens in the National Museum supporting that supposition, the "*craveri*" being marked males and "*hypoleuca*" as females; or that they may be individual phases of one species. As for the first suggestion, I can say that my series does not bear out the theory, there being, so far as I can see, no tangible difference in the plumage of the sexes. As for the theory of individual variation, if that be the solution, "*craveri*" must be very rare indeed in the northern part of the habitat of the genus. I have taken possibly 75 specimens between the Santa Barbara Islands and Magdalena Bay, and seen a great many more. The only one I have ever taken that suggested in any way the plumage

known as *craveri* is the immature specimen above mentioned. In the light of the present material it would be unsafe to consider *craveri* as a synonym of *hypoleuca*, though it is possible that it may prove to be a plumage of the young carried through one or more moults.—A. W. ANTHONY, *Taylorsville, Cal.*

Some notes on the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*).—The evidence that there is no such bird as *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* continues to accumulate. Doubts of the validity of this subspecies have been expressed before, both orally and in print. (Cf. Knight, Hist. of Birds of Me., p. 19; Maine Sportsman, July, 1898, p. 13; Journal of the Me. Orn. Soc., Oct. 1899, p. 37). These records refer to the occurrence in Maine of specimens referable to *L. argentatus*, and finally question the existence of any subspecific differences between American and European specimens. While in Portland a short time ago I had occasion to visit the shop of a local taxidermist and noticed a large number of these birds which he had skinned for sale to milliners. After carefully examining fully 100 specimens, which had been shot in Portland Harbor and vicinity, I was delighted to find ten specimens which were, as regards the first primaries, typical examples of *L. argentatus*. Three of the birds had the first primary entirely white at the tip without any trace of a black bar or dot, and the others had the black bar only slightly indicated. Other specimens had the black bar more complete, and a perfect series of gradations could be found between adult birds with only white on the apical part of the first primary and birds having a black bar half an inch wide near its extremity. The non-existence of the so-called subspecies *L. a. smithsonianus* seems to be completely demonstrated. At the same time I had the opportunity of examining a large number of Kittiwake Gulls and found a greater variation in their primaries than in those of the Herring Gull. In both cases specimens examined for comparative purposes were adult birds.—ORA W. KNIGHT, *Bangor, Me.*

Ring-billed Gull in New Hampshire.—Thanksgiving Day, 1898, at Campton Village, N. H., I was invited to a country store to see a strange bird that had recently been made a captive. Upon examination it proved to be a Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)—evidently a young bird.

It had first been seen at Waterville, N. H., where it was shot through one wing and then captured.

Thanksgiving Day, 1899, while driving through West Campton, I was surprised to see a Gull chasing a large flock of hens. Upon inquiry I learned that this was the Gull previously seen that had now spent one year in captivity. Its plumage seemed in good condition and the bird apparently enjoyed good health.

So far as I can learn this is the first Ring-billed Gull to enter the New Hampshire bird list.—ELLEN E. WEBSTER, *Franklin Falls, N. H.*



Anthony, A. W. 1900. "Notes on the Genus *Micruria*." *The Auk* 17, 168–169.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/4069162>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54122>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4069162>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/89684>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.