

birds this faculty may attain higher development, becoming a talent for geography. The restlessness sometimes displayed in seasons of migration by wild birds reared in captivity is perhaps indicative of an incentive to travel. But here heredity seems to end and *education* to begin, for there appears to be guidance by old birds and guidance by physical phenomena. . . . Intelligence and habit remain to account for the constancy of migratory birds to time and place. . . . In short, it is believed that the causes of migration are simple facts and not impenetrable mysteries lying beyond the domain of scientific enquiry. . . . To sum up the whole matter in a single sentence: It is held that bird migration is a habit evolved by education and inheritance which owe their origin and perpetuation to winter with its failure of food."

Doubtless few careful students of migration will disagree with Mr. Loomis in respect to the propositions above quoted, and very few of the points raised have the interest of novelty, they having been in the main stated before by Mr. Loomis, and independently by others. But he gives us very little satisfaction, and nothing new, on the subject of what prompts the return migration. What he has to say on this point (mainly in a footnote on p. 315) is a rather weak attempt at destructive criticism of the views held by others.

The annotated list (pp. 317-322) of birds observed off Monterey during the two months of observations forming the occasion of the present paper numbers 42, several of which, however, were seen but once or twice; the bulk of the birds met with were a few species of Gulls, Shearwaters, Ducks and Phalaropes. Among the Shearwaters, Buller's Shearwater (*Puffinus bulleri*) is recorded for the first time as a North American bird, on the basis of a specimen captured by Mr. Loomis off Point Pinos, Nov. 6, 1896. It is also the fourth specimen known to science, the others, including the type, having been taken in New Zealand waters. "It may be confidently expected," says Mr. Loomis, "that persistent observation off Monterey will add to the list of pelagic wanderers from austral regions."—J. A. A.

Stone on 'The Summer Molting Plumage of Certain Ducks.'¹—The collection of Arctic birds recently made at Point Barrow, Alaska, by Mr. E. A. McIlhenny, includes large series of various species of Eiders which have formed the basis of Mr. Stone's observations here detailed. Mr. Stone finds that there is a supplemental summer plumage, or post-nuptial dress, in not only the King Eider, the Pacific Eider, the Spectacled Eider, and Steller's Eider, but also in the Red-breasted Merganser. It has also been recorded as occurring in the Pintail and in various other species of Ducks in which the males and females are markedly different in coloration, and the inference is that this double summer moult is general among

¹ The Summer Molting Plumage of Certain Ducks. By Witmer Stone. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sciences Phil., 1899, pp. 467-472. Separates issued Dec. 1, 1899.

the Ducks in which there is a marked sexual difference in plumage. This post-nuptial plumage "is mainly restricted to the head, neck, breast and scapulars," and is acquired just prior to the loss of the flight feathers at the regular annual post-breeding moult; it is of dull tints, and rather loose structure, and is worn for only a few weeks, or during the period when the birds are unable to fly, through the loss of the flight-feathers by moult. "At such a time," says Mr. Stone, "a dull blended plumage would naturally be important in rendering the bird inconspicuous and thereby protecting it, and such I think is the explanation of this curious molt." Mr. Stone has here for the first time clearly described this temporary post-nuptial plumage and suggested its rôle in the economy of the species. As will be noticed later (see p. 186) Mr. Chapman has, independently and almost simultaneously, described this plumage in the King Eider and the Greenland Eider.—J. A. A.

Stone on a New Race of Short-eared Owl.—Mr. Stone finds¹ that a series of Short-eared Owls from Point Barrow, Alaska, in Mr. McIlhenny's collection are much paler than birds from Pennsylvania, and on this basis he has named the Point Barrow birds *Asio accipitrinus mcilhennyi*.—J. A. A.

Bangs on Colombian Birds.—Mr. Bangs has recently published two additional papers on the birds of the Santa Marta district of Colombia, based on collections made by Mr. W. W. Brown. The first² relates to a small collection made at San Sebastian, in June and July, 1899, at altitudes ranging from 6600 to 9000 feet, on the opposite side of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta from the points where his previous collections were made. The list numbers 29 species, six of which had not been previously taken by Mr. Brown, one of the latter, *Acestrura astreans*, being described as new.

The second paper³ relates to the two species of *Henicorhina* found to inhabit the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region of Colombia, namely, the wide-ranging *H. leucophrys* and *H. anchoreta*, the latter here described as new, and as living in the higher parts of the mountains, at 11,000 to 12,000 feet, and above the range of *H. leucophrys*.—J. A. A.

Chapman on New Birds from Venezuela, etc.—A small collection of

¹ A New Race of Short-eared Owls. By Witmer Stone. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sciences Phila., 1889, p. 478. Separates issued Dec. 29, 1899.

² On a Small Collection of Birds from San Sebastian, Colombia. By Outram Bangs. Proc. New Engl. Zool. Club, I, pp. 75-80, Dec. 27, 1899.

³ The Gray-breasted Wood Wrens of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. By Outram Bangs. *Ibid.*, pp., 83, 84, Dec. 27, 1899.



Stone, Witmer. 1900. "Stone on 'The Summer Molting Plumage of Certain Ducks'" *The Auk* 17, 183–184. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4069185>.

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