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Wm C. Rives Jr. M.D. — John Hare Povel

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Birds of Newport R. I. — Birds he has shot at Newport R. I.

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Proc. Newport (R.I.) Nat. Hist. Soc. 1883-84,
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den in the bush near the point where they had barely escaped with their lives from the Indians. In this quest the two were successful.

Mr. Wilson then described the general appearance of the Yellowstone Park to which he subsequently made his way again. Its boiling springs and geysers and the Mammoth Hot springs were spoken of, and their peculiar configuration. Amongst other incidents, the lecturer described a very extraordinary electric storm in which he and his assistant were caught when engaged in making topographical observations on Electric Peak,—a mountain over 11,000 feet high, situated at the northern edge of the Park. The thunder clouds rolled up from the valleys and cañons below, and enveloped the two observers, while flashes of lightning struck various points around them. Mr. Wilson described the electricity as producing a tingling sensation at the roots of the hair, then making their pencils click with a sharp sound, as they recorded their notes; while from the brass instruments and pointed rocks musical sounds were emitted, which might have been heard fifty yards away. It seemed a strange burst of mountain music gushing from everything around, but evidently produced by the mysterious touch of the dark thunder clouds. Mr. Wilson and his companion had to run at last and find shelter amongst some rocks. The peak they had been on was struck by a thunderbolt within a minute after they had left it. Mr. Wilson's return march was southward from the Yellowstone Park to Rawlins, a small town on the Union Pacific line.

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384153001000 THE BIRDS OF NEWPORT.

By WILLIAM C. RIVES, JR., M. D.*

Before we consider the birds of Newport in particular, a few general observations on the ornithology of our country may perhaps be of some interest.

Until a comparatively recent time, the chief writings of importance on North American birds and their habits were those of Wilson and Nuttall, and the magnificent work of Audubon, who, from his constant familiarity with our birds in their native haunts, and his peculiar skill in representing them in life-like and characteristic attitudes, has produced a set of plates unrivalled, I believe, for their beauty and truth to nature. For many years after the publication of these treatises, few works of importance appeared, but a gradual accumulation of facts was taking place, and many separate papers of more or less value were printed in the transactions of different societies, while much ornithological matter of great interest was, from time to time, contained in the reports of various government exploring parties.

In its contributions to the knowledge of our birds, New England has always taken a prominent position, and the "Birds of New England" by Edward A. Samuels, was perhaps, the first readily accessible volume on their life histories which has been published within the present half of this century. The purely technical descriptions contained in this book are taken from a very important account of the birds of North America, published in the ninth volume of Pacific Railroad Reports in 1858, by Professor Spencer F. Baird, of the Smithsonian Institution, but which is confined merely to descriptions and does not deal with their habits. Another important work, limited to the same subject as Professor Baird's, is the "Key to North American Birds," by Dr. Elliott Coues, which was first issued in 1872.

*Read before the Society, March 6th, 1884.

Since the appearance of Samuel's book in 1867, there has been a great increase in the interest taken in the study of American Ornithology, and books and papers have appeared too numerous to mention, with the exception of a few of the most important. In 1870 was published by the Geological Survey of California a volume by Dr. J. G. Cooper, on the ornithology of the west coast of America, which Professor Baird calls by far the most important contribution to the biography of American birds since the time of Audubon. In 1874 the first three volumes were issued of the great work of Baird, Brewer and Ridgeway, on North American birds—a work which will long remain the standard authority upon the subject. The first two of these authors were friends of Audubon, and new species were named by him in their honor. The two remaining volumes on the water birds are now passing through the press, and will be published as a part of the ornithology in the Geological Survey of California, just mentioned, and will also appear in the *Memoirs of the Museum of Comparative Zoology*. The source of a great part of the information contained in these volumes has been the very copious notes and valuable collections in the possession of the Smithsonian Institution.

According to Professor Baird, “before the appearance of the work of Audubon (who went himself, however, to the Upper Missouri in 1843, and met there with a few new species,) nearly all that was known of the great region of the United States west of the Missouri river, was the result of the journey of Lewis and Clarke up the Missouri and across to the Pacific coast, and that of John K. Townsend and Mr. Nuttall, both of whom made some collections and brought back notices of the country, which however they were unable to explore to any great extent. The entire region of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada and California was unvisited, as was also a great portion of territory north of the United States boundary, including British Columbia and Alaska.”

The ornithology of those regions is now no longer unknown, and fresh information is constantly added by numerous observers, often army officers and those engaged in the government surveys, but, owing to the vast extent of our country, there still remains much to be done and plenty of interesting and important facts to be ascertained about the local distribution, times of arrival and departure, and other habits of our birds, even in regard to those of the Atlantic

coast. The water birds, in particular, have been much less carefully studied than the land birds.

To show what may be done by close observation, I may mention that Mr. C. J. Maynard discovered an entirely new species, the Ipswich Sparrow, among the Ipswich sand hills in Massachusetts as recently as 1868 ; and birds new to particular localities are constantly discovered—thirty-five, for instance, having been added to the Massachusetts list since 1867.

The American Ornithologists' Union, formed last September, have appointed a committee on the migration of birds, and have issued a series of questions to be answered by any one who is willing to make observations on the birds of his particular locality—a step which will doubtless result in the collection of a mass of information of great interest.

Southern New England, I believe, has been less carefully studied than the more northern parts—than eastern Massachusetts in particular, and the birds of Newport offer still an interesting field for observers. It has been found by numerous observations, and the fact has been thus expressed by Dr. Coues that “any one United States locality of average attractiveness to birds has a bird fauna of over two hundred species and, if it be away from the sea coast and consequently uninhabited by marine birds, about one fourth of the species are comprised in the two families of the *Sylvicolidæ*” (or Warblers, a family of insectivorous birds—small, but often of almost tropical brilliancy of plumage,) “and the *Fringillidæ*,” (the Sparrows and Finches, which for the most part are granivorous). In larger districts—such as a whole state or section of the country—this number is of course much exceeded. The most recent list of the birds of Massachusetts that I know of, gives the number as 316. The number of the birds of New England is 361. I do not know whether any list of the birds of Rhode Island has yet been published.

The total number of North American birds north of Mexico and including Greenland and Alaska, is 888 as given by Dr. Coues in his list of 1882. As to the numbers in which the birds are found, there is of course every gradation, from great abundance to extreme rarity.

In New England, many species have greatly diminished since the colonial times and some have become extinct. The Pinnated

Grouse or Prairie Hen, once very common all over this part of the country, is now no longer found east of the Ohio river, with the exception of a few which, I believe, are still in existence on the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Naushon. That very curious extinct bird, the Great Auk, referred to by early New England writers as the "Pengwin" or "Wobble" is supposed to have been found along the coast from Cape Cod north, and its bones have been discovered among the Indian shell heaps of the Ipswich sand-hills.

The Wild Turkey, which is now no longer known here, was very plentiful in former days—as appears from the following passage in Morton's *New English Canaan* published in 1632: "Turkies there are, which divers times in great flocks have sallied by our doores. Of these there hath bin killed that have weighed forty-eight pound a peece. I had a salvage which hath taken out his boy in a morning and they have brought home their loades about noone. I have asked them what number they found in the woods, who have answered Neent Metawna, which is a thousand that day, the plenty of them is such in these parts. They are easily killed at rooste because the one being killed the other sit fast neverthelesse, and this is no bad commodity."

From these general remarks, I now come to the birds of our own particular locality. Owing to its insular position on the coast, and the comparative absence of trees, Newport is not very attractive to many of the land birds, especially those which frequent deep forests, but nevertheless, a large proportion of the birds which are found in other parts of New England are met with at least occasionally. Beginning with the birds of the winter months, one of the most familiar species which is to be seen frequently in the streets in this immediate neighborhood is the Black-capped Titmouse, or Chickadee, a sprightly, impertinent little bird, very active in its movements, and seeming to enjoy even the severest weather. These birds breed here, and may occasionally be seen at all times of the year, but are much commoner at this season. Often found in company with the Chickadee is another diminutive species, the Golden-crested Wren, a bird of a rather dull plumage, except for a bright yellow patch upon the crown. It is somewhat like the Chickadee in its movements while searching for food upon the branches, and utters a feeble, lisping note. This is one of the smallest of American birds except the

Humming Bird, and it is worthy of remark that its breeding habits have been wrapped in considerable obscurity ; for, notwithstanding that it is very abundant in winter, no discovery of its nest was reported until 1875, when Mr. H. D. Minot, of Boston, found one, containing six young, in the White Mountains, in the month of July. The Meadow Lark, Golden-winged Woodpecker and Crow, all well-known birds at other seasons of the year, remain with us during the winter, although they abandon the more northern parts of New England. Besides the common birds I have mentioned, we find winter visitors which spend the summer very far north, for instance the Snow Buntings and Shore Larks which are not uncommon in the bare pasture fields near the ocean and are often found in each other's company. The Snowy Owl, another beautiful northern bird, is not very rare here, and in the winter of 1876-77 was unusually abundant in New England.

This year we have been visited by a bird known as the Pine Grosbeak which inhabits the evergreen forests of the extreme northern parts of New England and is not usually found farther south. I cannot recollect ever having seen it before, but this season I have observed birds of this species on several occasions in Red Cross and Rhode Island Avenues. Mr. B. LaFarge tells me that he too, has met with them, and Mr. Jencks, a Providence ornithologist, reports them in numbers from that city and its neighborhood. Very curiously, as has been noticed in other years when this Grosbeak has been plentiful in New England, almost all the birds are females and young, as we judge from their dull plumage. The full plumaged male is a very pretty pink bird, but Mr. Jencks says that he has only known of three being killed this winter, and, among the considerable number of Grosbeaks which I have seen, I caught a glimpse of only one which seemed to be an adult male. This bird is identical with the Pine Grosbeak of Europe, but no positively identified American eggs exist, I believe, in collections—except two found by Mr. Boardman near Calais, Maine, which are supposed to have belonged to this species, although the parents were not seen. During their visits to us, these birds seem very tame and have been caught and kept in cages. The cause of their sudden migrations is supposed to be want of food to the northward. Another species, occasionally seen at this season, though usually arriving somewhat later, is the beautiful little Cedar Bird, with

its crested head and its wing feathers with horny tips like red sealing wax. These birds, as well as the Purple Finch which is also sometimes seen at this time of the year, remain to breed. Among our other winter birds are the little Brown Creeper, which may be often seen in the streets soberly and industriously running up the trees in search of food, an occasional Downy Woodpecker, the smallest of its family to be found here, which sometimes disturbs the stillness of this season with its sharp rapping, the Snow Bird and several Sparrows besides the English Sparrow which also seems able to survive the cold.

About this time in March, we may expect the arrival of the Blue Birds and Red-winged Blackbirds, soon followed by the Robins and several species of Sparrow, though Robins have been seen this year in February and may very likely be found even during the coldest weather in December and January in the thick growth of trees and bushes among the Paradise rocks back of the Second beach. The rest of the migratory birds soon follow, the greater number arriving at different times in April and May—the males of many species arriving before the females.

Among our migrants, the family of *Sylvicolidæ* or Warblers contains many interesting species differing very remarkably from each other in their abundance, extent of migrations and habits; of the genus *Dendræca*, of which we have in New England more species than of any other, there are three which I know visit us, and several others may probably be found. One is the very abundant little Yellow Warbler, which is to be seen in the town wherever there are shade trees, and which has rather a monotonous, piercing, not very pleasant song. It is a small bird, entirely of a deep yellow color, with a few faint brownish streaks upon it,—not to be confounded with the common Yellow Bird or American Goldfinch, a larger bird, with plumage of a lighter shade of yellow, which may be at once distinguished by the black of the wings and tail and which is often seen eating the seed of the thistle, while the Yellow Warbler is insectivorous and frequents the tree tops. The other two Warblers I referred to, are the Golden-crowned and the Black Poll Warbler: the latter is always the last of the spring migrants to arrive.

Among the *Sylvicolidæ*, which breed here, I learn from Mr. LaFarge, are the Maryland Yellow-throat, a pretty Warbler,

which frequents swampy thickets, the Black and White Creeping Warbler, and the Oven Bird, so called from the curious nest, with an arched top, which it builds on the ground, and which is supposed to resemble an old-fashioned oven.

Of the Thrushes, besides several other species sometimes met with, we have that general favorite, the Robin, which is, as we all know, very abundant on the lawns. We are all familiar with its liking for earth worms, but it is probably not known to everyone what an extraordinary number it eats. Professor Treadwell of Cambridge, found that a young Robin he kept in a cage for some time seemed to languish, and did not begin to increase in weight until it was provided with sixty-eight worms daily. On the day when it first eat this number, the bird weighed twenty-four pennyweights before his meal. The weight of the worms was thirty-four pennyweights, so that in twelve hours it eat forty-one per cent. more than its own weight.

Of the family of the Vireôs, among the very best of our singers, birds which are found in the tree tops and build very beautiful nests, we have the well-known Red-eyed Vireo, the White-eyed Vireo and the Warbling Vireo, and other species may perhaps occur. Both kinds of Cuckoo, common to eastern North America, are found here in summer and breed—though not abundantly. There is one bird which is common here that always lays its eggs in the nests of its neighbors. This is the Cow-blackbird or Cow-bunting.

Among the best known of our summer birds are the Swallows. We have the Barn Swallow, the White-bellied Swallow, the Bank Swallow, the Cliff Swallow and the Purple Martin. All of these varieties, including the so-called Chimney Swallow, may be seen at almost any time in summer—hovering over the marsh back of the beach, where there is an ample supply of their insect food, the White-bellied being perhaps the most abundant and the Purple Martin floating high in the air above them all.

The very remarkable family of the Humming Birds is peculiar to America, the West Indies and neighboring islands, and comprises nearly four hundred species, though of that number hardly more than a dozen are at present known to occur north of Mexico. Several of them are very limited in their range, some being confined to particular islands and others to the tops of certain

mountain peaks. The Chimborazo Hill Star Humming Bird, for example, is found only upon that volcano, at an elevation of from 12,000 to 16,000 feet, up to the edge of the snow line, and upon the neighboring volcano of Pichincha only thirty miles distant, is found a distinct species which is peculiar to that mountain alone.

The flight of the Humming Bird differs from that of all other birds, and resembles, as we all know, that of the insects, the wings moving so rapidly that it is impossible to see the separate vibrations. Almost all of them are endowed with the most wonderful brilliancy of plumage, which glitters in parts with a metallic lustre and varies in color according as the feathers are viewed in front or obliquely, so that these birds are able by their movements to change their hues. The Rufous-backed Humming Bird of the Pacific coast, for instance, is said to change the color of its throat from a fire tint to a light green. The only species found in eastern North America is our little Ruby-throat which breeds from Texas to high latitudes. I should mention, however, that a specimen of Linnæus's Emerald, a South American species, was captured in 1864 at Cambridge, Mass., the cause of whose presence there has ever since been a mystery to naturalists. Any one who has a trumpet creeper or plant with tubular flowers is sure to see a Ruby-throat about it during the summer, and I understand that its nest has been found on the Island.

Frequenting the beaches and the marsh back of the beach, quite a number of interesting birds can be found. At almost any time in late spring and summer, walking by the edge of the pond, you may hear coming from among the thick reeds a peculiar trilling song, difficult to describe, but which, after it is once heard, cannot be mistaken. This proceeds from the Long-billed Marsh Wren, a little bird which is quite common, and which builds one of the most curious of American nests. It attaches to the reeds a coarsely woven structure more or less spherical in shape, like a large ball with a hole in it on one side for the bird to enter. Mr. LaFarge has found the nest of a closely related, but much rarer species, the Short-billed Marsh Wren.

Besides these Wrens, I will mention in particular two other birds found among the reeds and frequently shot by sportsmen, which are much commoner than is usually supposed. These are the Common Rail, called in Virginia the Sora, and the

Virginia Rail. These birds will always run in preference to flying, and keep themselves carefully hid in the reeds, so that they are not often seen unless specially sought for. Both kinds breed here, but they are more abundant about the first of September when their numbers are increased by the return of those which have passed the breeding season farther north. They are sensitive to cold, and usually, on the occurrence of any severe weather, all disappear. This disappearance is so very sudden,—sometimes not a single Rail being found after a severe frost in places which the day before were swarming with them,—that some startling theories have been advanced to account for it, one of which is that the Rail buries itself in the mud and remains torpid until the following spring, the other, that they turn into frogs. It is hardly necessary to refute these statements, and it is known that these birds regularly migrate and have been met with by ships at a distance of several hundred miles from land. By the end of October the greater part of them have left Newport, though I have seen one as late as the second of November.

I must pass over many interesting birds, merely mentioning the names of the King Bird, Night-hawk and Baltimore Oriole, all of which breed here, and now come to the shore birds of which there are very many varieties. We have two kinds of “Peep” which are very abundant, the Least or Wilson’s Sandpiper and the Semipalmated Sandpiper; their general appearance is much the same, but the latter is distinguished by having the toes semi-palmated or half webbed. Then, there is the Pectoral Sandpiper, always known as the Creaker, from its peculiar cries, a bird which is found on the salt marshes, and rarely if ever on the beaches. The Sanderling Sandpiper, on the other hand, frequents the beaches rather than the marsh, and may be often met with on the Second beach. It differs from the other Sandpipers in having no hind toe, in which respect it is like the Plovers. The largest of our Sandpipers is the Red-breasted Sandpiper or Robin Snipe which is a somewhat rare species and is identical with the European bird called the Knot. Belonging to a sub-family by themselves are the Willet, a comparatively rare species here, the well-known Yellow-leg, and the Great Yellow-leg. Of the Plovers, we have the Golden Plover or Greenhead and the Black-bellied Plover usually, I believe, called Black-breast or Beetle-head. The little

birds called Ring-necks, which are nearly as common as the Peeps, also belong to the Plover family. We have two of them, the Ring Plover and the Piping Plover, and also an allied species the well-known Kildeer. The first of them is rather the commoner and may be seen almost anywhere along the shore, while the Piping Plover is often found on the Second beach. The much sought after Grass Plover,—now no longer common here—is usually classed with the Sandpipers. Of the Curlews we have the Long-billed Curlew or Sickle-bill, a large bird with a bill a foot long, the Hudsonian or Jack Curlew, and, if I am not mistaken, the Esquimaux Curlew or Dough Bird has also been shot here.

The two varieties of Godwit or Marlin are met with rarely. Then we have the Turnstone which frequents the rocky shores and rejoices in the various names of Rock Plover, Brant Bird, Horsefoot Snipe and Calico-back. A good many of these birds make a very brief visit to us in spring on their way to their northern breeding places, but are more abundant and stay much longer on their return when they are with us during the months of August and September and are much sought after by sportsmen. The best place for shooting most of them is the marsh at Easton's pond, as the larger species are not often found upon the beaches. The usual way of obtaining them, as is well known to many of those present, is for the sportsman to take a basket of wooden or tin decoys painted to imitate the different species, and before day-break to go down to the marsh and choose one of the pond holes, often however to find it previously occupied—as even at that early hour there is great competition. If, notwithstanding, he succeeds in obtaining a place, he puts out his decoys in the water, fastened upon sticks and, making a blind to screen himself, sits down behind it with his back to the wind—regardless of the mud and the mosquitos. His patience is often greatly tried as sometimes for hours there is nothing to be heard except perhaps the peculiar squeaking cry of a Rail or the dip of a Swallow as it touches with its wing the surface of the water, but, at other times, particularly at the moment when the sun begins to color the eastern sky, a distant whistle is heard. The sportsman seizes his gun which has been lying idly by his side, crouches down and begins to whistle in return, and gradually the sounds come nearer and a flock of some variety of shore birds is seen

approaching. All the sportsmen on the marsh vie with each other in attempting to entice the unlucky birds, but as they almost invariably come over the hill from the direction of the Second beach, those who have taken their stand at the eastern end of the marsh usually get the first shot. The birds in the meantime have been answering the whistles and, when they see the decoys, will usually come flying towards them and when near set their wings, drop their long legs and sail down uttering their shrill cries. The sportsman then takes advantage of the opportunity and often brings down a good many at a single shot. By far the most abundant of the species which may be decoyed in this way, is the common Yellow-leg. These birds are frequently so tame that they may be whistled up a second time and, after losing several of their number at one stand, will often go to another. They are never seen here in the great numbers described by Audubon who speaks of one hundred and six being killed at a shot, on Long Island.

The Golden Plovers or Greenheads are usually decoyed in the bare pastures and not on the marsh, but, although numerous some years ago, they are now I believe not common.

The Red-breasted Snipe known as the Brown-back or Dowitcher, which I omitted to mention, is another species much sought after by sportsmen and is very easily decoyed. It resembles in shape, though not in plumage, our Common Snipe. I have heard an explanation of the singular name of Dowitcher applied to this bird which seems very plausible; the Common Snipe which is very closely related to its European brother, though not identical with it, is always called the English Snipe, and some one out of compliment to our German population is supposed to have distinguished the species in question by the name of the "Deutscher" or German Snipe. Our so-called English Snipe is not uncommon here; like the Grass Plover it cannot be decoyed and is never met with in flocks. It is a difficult bird to shoot on account of its peculiarly irregular and rapid flight.

The greater number of the shore birds I have mentioned rear their young in the far North, but there is one little bird that breeds here in abundance, the Spotted Sandpiper sometimes called Peet-weet from its ordinary cry or Tip-up from its

peculiarity of rocking itself backwards and forwards, a habit often indulged in by the Yellow-leg. These Spotted Sandpipers keep by preference to the rocky and pebbly shores and are very common along the Ocean drive. They are never found in flocks and have a characteristic flight which enables one to identify them at a long distance. They lay four eggs, which, like the eggs of the Sandpipers in general, are very large in proportion to the size of the bird.

There are several species of Heron which visit Newport in summer, first the American Bittern which I have met with on the marsh at Easton's pond, then the Night Heron which a few years ago might be seen in early summer standing in meditative attitudes on the edges of the Dumpling rocks, while ever on the alert to capture a passing fish, but which seems to have disappeared from them the last year or two. Then there is the common Green Heron and a very curious little species, the Least Bittern, which, though resembling in many of its habits others of its family, hides itself among the reeds like the Common Rail. It is very rare in other parts of New England, but is not uncommonly met with here. Mr. LaFarge, who has found several of their nests, tells me that on one occasion he was able to approach so closely to one of these birds which was sitting near its nest as to stroke it with his hand, and at Lake Koshkonong in Wisconsin where these birds are very common, I have known of one lighting for an instant on a dog's back.

Those very curious birds, the Phalaropes, have also been shot here; they are members of a family of birds which resemble miniature ducks, as they light upon the water and swim with perfect ease, though they walk about also on marshy ground or floating vegetable matter. A specimen of the Northern Phalarope was shot by Mr. F. W. Rhineland, Jr., August 30th, 1876, and a Wilson's Phalarope was shot by Mr. F. T. Jencks, August 2d, 1880. The Phalaropes usually keep off the coast while migrating, and seldom are met with in New England unless they have been driven in by a storm.

In September the Ducks and many other web-footed birds begin to appear and remain until May, a few being sometimes seen even in summer. Of the fresh water Ducks, some of which are found however in the bay, we have the common Black Duck,

an excellent bird for the table. It is wonderfully shy and to decoy it successfully one must be very carefully and entirely concealed.

The Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal both visit Easton's pond,—the former being much the commoner. The beautiful Wood Duck, a bird found all over the continent on the fresh water, is sometimes seen here. Several other varieties are more or less common. Of our sea Ducks, among the commonest and best known is the Long-tailed Duck, always called here the Old Squaw. It is a handsome black and white bird remarkably swift flying. These Ducks are shot at the Dumplings from row boats at sun rise when they fly up the bay often in immense flocks, and also at sunset when they return. They are very tough, often escaping when wounded as they can dive like a fish. Samuels, in his "Birds of New England," mentions knocking seven out of a flock without getting one.

Then we have several species, commonly called Coots, though they are not Coots at all, the true American Coot being a lobe-footed bird, which is to be seen on Easton's pond in small flocks in autumn, and, I believe, is never found on salt water. Of these so-called Coots however, we have the Surf Duck known as the Patch-poll Coot, the American Scoter Duck or Butter-bill Coot, and the Velvet Duck—a large, handsome species, called, from the white patch on its wings, the White-winged Coot. Some of these Coots sometimes collect in large masses in the shoal water at Brenton's Reef, or off Easton's Point. Rare species are occasionally found here. The celebrated Eider Duck has been shot, as well as the Canvass-back and Red-head, and the rare King Eider has been obtained this winter up the bay.

Wild Geese are often seen passing over, uttering their loud "honking" cries—always flying in the shape of the letter V, with one or two old ganders leading them. Their migrations extend to the furthest northern regions, and flocks have been seen within the Arctic circle, still pursuing their way towards the pole. They hardly ever stop here, but are known to have done so on a few occasions. They are frequently domesticated, and I have seen a large flock of them which had become very tame. The Brant Goose is here of extremely rare occurrence.

Plenty of marine birds, besides the Ducks, are found upon our waters. An abundant species is the Great Northern Diver or Loon, a bird about as big as a goose, remarkable for its extraordinary powers of diving and swimming under water. It dives instantly at the flash of a gun and comes up again several hundred yards off, after being under water a minute or more. Besides being common on the sea coast, this bird is almost always to be seen, in small numbers, on the lakes of northern New England and New York, where it is known to breed.

We have also numerous varieties of Gulls and Terns, the latter being usually called Mackerel Gulls. In summer there are the Common Mackerel Gull or Wilson's Tern which breeds plentifully, and several other species, while the larger Gulls are seen more particularly in the colder months. Stormy Petrels or Mother Carey's chickens are found as well, the particular variety being probably Leach's Petrel.

The Cormorant, a shy bird, very expert at catching fish, is common in winter. The Shearwaters, a family of birds resembling the Petrels, are met with off the coast. Specimens of the Little Auk and the Puffin, if I am not mistaken, have been found here, and several of the birds called Brünnich's Guillemot have been shot this winter up the bay. From the sketch I have given, although I have not nearly exhausted the list of Newport birds, it is very evident that there is much here to occupy the student of ornithology, certainly one of the most interesting branches of natural history—the pursuit of which quickens our powers of observation, affords an object for pleasant and healthful out-door excursions, besides making us familiar with a most attractive part of the animal creation.

LIST OF BIRDS SHOT NEAR NEWPORT.

By COL. JOHN HARE POWEL.

At the meeting of the Newport Natural History Society, March 6, 1884, Colonel John Hare Powel read the following list of birds he has killed on the island of Newport :

Bald Eagle (one only in 1853 or 4), Osprey, Sparrow Hawk, Harrier (or Marsh) Hawk, Great Snow Owl, Horned Owl, Screech Owl, Grey Marsh Owl, White Swallow (an Albino), Snow Bird, Scarlet Tanager (Fire Bird), Shrike (Butcher Bird), Long-tailed Dove, Wild Pigeon, Gallinule, Purple Gallinule, Coot (Marsh Hen), Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, Red-breasted Rail, Black-bellied Plover, Golden Plover, Ringed Plover, Wilson's (?) Plover, Piping Plover, Beetle-head Plover (Frost Bird), Killdeer, Turnstone, Red-breasted Sandpiper, Bartram's Sandpiper (Grass Plover), Red-backed Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper (I think), Pectoral Sandpiper, Purple Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Great Curlew, (or Sickle bill), Jack Curlew, Esquimaux Curlew (Fute or Dough Bird), Willet, Great Yellow-leg, Little Yellow-leg, Common Marlin, Ring-tailed Marlin, English Snipe (Wilson's), Dowitcher (or German Snipe), Robin Snipe, Woodcock, Great Blue Heron, Night Heron, Bittern, Least Bittern, Canada Goose, Brent Goose, Snow (or Mexican) Goose, Mallard Duck, Black (Dusky) Duck, Widgeon (or Baldpate), Pintail Duck, Gray Duck, Summer (or Wood Duck), Gadwall, Green-wing Teal, Blue-wing Teal, Shoveller Duck, Canvass-back Duck, Red-head Duck, Broad-bill, Ruddy Duck, Velvet Duck, Surf Duck, Scoter Duck, Eider Duck, Great May White Wing (this is the bird that comes from the east and flies to the west in its spring migration in May, from the 10th to the 20th, and is seen at no other time of year), Golden Eye (or Whist-

ler), Buffle-head Duck, Long-tailed Duck, Hooded Sheldrake, Cormorant, Gannet, Common Tern, Marsh Tern, Gray Gull, White Gull, Mackerel Gull, Fork-tailed Gull, Burgomaster Gull, Auk, Least Auk, Foolish Guillemot, Great Loon, Red-necked Loon, Tinker Loon, Pied-bill Grebe, Red-necked Grebe (young only), Phalarope, Mother Carey's Chicken, and, on the mainland of the State, Quail and Partridge (Ruffed Grouse). Total, 101.

ON SOME OF THE LOWER FORMS OF ANIMAL LIFE.

By RICHARD BLISS.*

*Title of paper read before the Society on April 3d, 1884.

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Judson, Captain J. A.	Squire, Dr. A. F.
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King, George Gordon	Van Zandt, Hon. Charles C.
King, William Dehon	Waring, Jr., Col. George E.
Little, Lt. Wm. McCarty, U. S. N.	Werden, Admiral Reed, U. S. N.
Magill, Rev. George J.	White, Prof. J. F.
Marquand, Henry G.	Whitehouse, William F.

Total, 82.

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