

S. W., light and warm. Shot a full plumaged male Wood Duck from a flock of Surf Scoters, only *one* seen.

1890, April 17. A flight, mostly White-wings, going east; wind S. W., light in the morning, and fresh in the afternoon.

1890, April 21. Many Scoters flying high, wind W. early, and S. W. light at 7 A.M. Birds going east.

Some years no large flight takes place in the spring, the birds passing nearly all the time in small numbers, owing probably to peculiarities of the weather; but such years are very unusual.

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## *JUNCO CAROLINENSIS* SHOWN TO BE A SUB-SPECIES.

BY JONATHAN DWIGHT, JR.

WHEN Mr. William Brewster in 1886 described a new *Junco* from the mountains of western North Carolina he considered it a subspecies of *J. hyemalis* and called it *Junco hyemalis carolinensis* (Auk, II, 1886, p. 248).

In the Supplement to the A. O. U. Check-List for 1889, this bird was accorded full specific rank. The reason for this never appeared; presumably it was on the ground that until two forms are proved to intergrade they are to be considered distinct species; and further, because no birds had been taken in the region intervening between the Catskill Mountains and North Carolina.

During the latter part of June, 1890, I visited the mountains of Pennsylvania expressly with a view to determining what sort of Juncos, if any, were found there, and, as I expected, obtained a series that clearly shows *carolinensis* to be only one end of a series that, beginning with typical *J. hyemalis* to the north, and extending southward along the Appalachian Mountain System, reaches its maximum differentiation at the southern end of these mountains.

I have compared my birds with breeding specimens from Nova Scotia and Quebec on the one hand, and from North Carolina and Tennessee on the other. On an average they most re-



semble northern examples, but several are quite typical of the southern form. A certain sootiness about some of them may be attributed to the fact that they were obtained in a region where coke ovens abound. The young and females are practically indistinguishable from the northern birds. The bills of fresh specimens were largely flesh-colored and vary considerably in size. Regarding five males I sent Mr. Brewster for comparison, he writes: "Nos. 2908, 2885 and 2886 are indistinguishable in color from breeding New England specimens (Mass. and N. H.), but they are larger and have larger bills. No. 2936 seems to be about intermediate between New England Juncos and *carolinensis*. No. 2887 is so very close to *carolinensis* that I cannot find any important differences. Taken as a whole your series indisputably furnishes the connecting links between the Junco that breeds in New England and his representative in Western North Carolina. This is precisely what we should expect, is it not?" "Of course," every one will say, and even Mr. Brewster himself in his original description of *carolinensis* writes: "Among a smaller number [of *hyemalis*] taken in early spring at Washington, D. C., however, are several with bills colored precisely as in the North Carolina birds. In other respects, however, these specimens are identical with *hyemalis* proper. It is probable that they represent the form which breeds in the mountains of Virginia and Pennsylvania and which naturally would be in varying degrees intermediate between extreme northern and southern types."

And yet in the face of such probabilities, after *carolinensis* has rested as a subspecies for several years and been written about by several observers who have met with it in Tennessee and Virginia as well as in North Carolina, it is suddenly raised to the rank of a full species. Now it looks as if it must be considered a subspecies again. The trouble seems to originate in the assumption that every newly described bird should stand as a species until proved a variety. Why not just as well expect every variety to stand as such until proved to be a species? The present instance would furnish, I think, an excellent text for a sermon upon the evils of nomenclature. I only wish, however, to call attention to it, for the case of *carolinensis* is but typical of others that have occurred and are still more likely to occur again. Although Mr. Brewster was quite right in the first place, the same cannot be



said of others who in their haste to get ahead of someone else, have burdened our books with endless synonymy, by describing from insufficient material. 'Would science lose much if time were taken by observers to gather suitable material before describing a bird on the chance of its being new? I do not say that this is entirely practicable, but I do say that when a man thinks that specimens proving doubtful relationships may be obtained in any given locality, he should at least endeavor to obtain them. If time or means fail, it is his misfortune, although the adage "Where there's a will there's a way," still has force.

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A LIST OF BIRDS TAKEN AND OBSERVED IN  
CUBA AND THE BAHAMA ISLANDS,  
DURING MARCH AND APRIL, 1891.

BY CHARLES B. CORY.

DURING the past winter the writer visited Cuba and several of the Bahama Islands, and although nothing new was discovered in the way of birds or mammals, yet a list of the species noted is useful in studying the geographical distribution of insular forms, as well as being likely to add to our knowledge of the line of flight and season of migration of many of our North American species.

It is not intended to make this article more than a very condensed account of the route travelled and the different place visited, while giving a list of the species of birds observed and taken during the trip.

In a city like Havana, Cuba, the markets are always attractive from a naturalist's standpoint, as there one finds various kinds of birds, fish, and often mammals exposed for sale. Many birds are trapped and brought in alive, either in cages or tied together by their legs in bunches. Among the birds offered for sale in the Havana market we observed Cuban Quails (*Colinus cubanensis*), Doves (*Zenaida zenaida*), Cuban Meadow-larks (*Sturnella hippocrepis*), Orioles (*Icterus hypomelas*), and Guinea hens. There were also several cages of Blue-headed Quail Doves



Dwight, Jonathan. 1891. "Junco carolinensis Shown to Be a Subspecies." *The Auk* 8, 290–292. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4067857>.

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