

On Nov. 17, 1885, the bulk passed south, and on Dec. 10 the mercury fell to 15° below freezing. This was the coldest weather until Jan. 7, 1886. On Jan. 6, 1886, a flock of fifteen were seen, and were repeatedly seen up to Jan. 20. Where those birds came from and why they came at such an unseasonable time of the year is the question. It will be seen that they passed south in November, 1885. It will be further noted that there was only four days difference in the time of arrival in January, 1885, and that of 1886. For three weeks prior to their arrival in 1885 it was very cold for this climate. For three weeks prior to their arrival in 1886 the temperature was moderate. During January, 1886, they endured weather 4° below zero.

If winds are to be considered as affecting the flight of birds, these Finches must have come from the N. W., as it had blown from that quarter for five successive days, and one day it blew with great violence all day. They were just ahead of the 'blizzard' of Jan. 7, which was also from N. W. But why should they come in advance of the cold in 1886, and through it in 1885? Mr. Nehrling (Bull. N. O. C., Vol. VII, p. 12) says: "Grass Finch. Only found during migrations. None remain, so far as I know, to winter or to breed." His observations were made near Houston, Tex. Mr. Geo. B. Sennett's 'Notes on the Ornithology of the Lower Rio Grande of Texas,' page 17, says: "*Poæcetes gramineus confinis* (Gm.) Bd. Western Grass Finch. ♂ Apr. 9th, Brownsville. ♀ Apr. 29th, Hidalgo." Dr. J. C. Merrill's 'Notes on the Ornithology of Southern Texas' (Ft. Brown), page 126, says: "*Poæcetes gramineus* var. *confinis* Baird. Spring and Autumn."

It is probable from the longitude of the localities in which the above observations were made that a large per cent. of the Grass Finches are of the intermediate form.

It is worthy of note that Grass Finches were wintering south of the Rio Grande in 1876, and on the northern border of Texas in 1886.—GEORGE H. RAGSDALE, *Gainsville, Cook Co., Tex.*

A Song Sparrow wintering in Eastern Maine.—During the winter of 1885-86 I received a Song Sparrow (*Melospiza fasciata*) from a friend, who secured it on January 23, 1886. The bird found abundant food during its winter sojourn in the chaff and other refuse from a large barn, in the immediate vicinity of which was a protected covert that afforded it ample shelter. On dissection it proved to be a male in good condition. Considering the date and locality, it may fairly be said to have been wintering.—LEWIS M. TODD, *Calais, Me.*

The Song Sparrow in New Brunswick in Winter.—I have seen the Song Sparrow occasionally in New Brunswick during the winter months, and Mr. Francis Bain says a few regularly remain on Prince Edward's Island all winter.—MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN, *St. John, N. B.*

Unusual Nesting-Site of the Song Sparrow.—Mr. Wilbur F. Lamb, of Holyoke, Mass., writes me under date of May 30, 1887, as follows: "I

send you in same mail with this a bird which was captured on her nest in a hole in a willow tree. The hole was made by the decay of a limb, was about five and a half feet from the ground, and large enough to admit the hand of an adult easily. It was about ten inches in horizontal depth. There was almost no nest—simply a depression scratched in the decayed wood, with half a dozen short strips of grape-vine bark arranged circularly in it. The whole cavity was wet and soggy. . . . The bird was sitting on five eggs when captured.” On examination the bird proved to be a female Song Sparrow (*Melospiza fasciata*), showing marks of incubation.—J. A. ALLEN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City*.

The Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) in a **Fresh-Water Marsh**.—I am informed by my friend, Mr. Lewis M. Todd, of Calais, Me., that during the autumn of 1886 he captured one of these Sharp-tails on a marsh some distance above the falls on the St. Croix River. The water at that point must be free from saline flavor, as the falls prevent the sea water from reaching it.—MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN, *St. John, N. B.*

Nesting of the Hudsonian Chickadee (*Parus hudsonicus*).—I find that this species, when excavating for its nest, sometimes enters from the side of a tree, and not invariably from the top of a stump, as I have stated elsewhere. My co-laborer in this district, Mr. James W. Banks, during the seasons of 1885 and 1886, discovered three nests of which the entrance was at the side of a decayed stub. One of these, now before me, is a rather interesting example. It lays in the section of the tree (a poplar) just where it was placed by the birds. The tree measures four inches in diameter, and the nest fills all the space excepting the little that is taken up by the outer bark, and on one side by a slight margin of the decayed wood. The nest is about two inches deep, and is set on a cushion of dried moss. Beside the felted fur used in the construction of the nest, there is considerable dry moss mixed through, a material I have never before seen in the nests of this species.

The entrance was about six inches from the top of the nest. After piercing the outside shell of bark the excavation turned downward, and was carried obliquely some four inches, where it was abruptly widened from two to four inches. This width was continued to the bottom.—MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN, *St. John, N. B.*

Another Addition to the Avi-fauna of South Carolina.—May 6, 1887, I shot a specimen of *Turdus aliciae bicknelli* in the thick undergrowth of a large body of timber near the town of Chester. In the same locality I have found *aliciae*, in varying numbers, in former years. Some of the examples of this form have approached closely to the maximum dimensions of the lesser race, still none could be properly assigned to it. The following are the measurement of the bird above noted: ♂ Length, 176.53 mm.; extent, 274.32 mm.; wing, 86-36 mm.; tail, 72.39 mm.; culmen, 12.7; tarsus, 24.2 mm.; middle toe, 16 mm.—LEVERETT M. LOOMIS, *Chester, S. C.*



Allen, J. A. 1887. "Unusual Nesting-Site of the Song Sparrow." *The Auk* 4, 260–261. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4066932>.

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