

and engaged in collecting mud and straw or in attempted copulation, *was a young bird!* Of this I made sure by the most careful scrutiny with a glass at a distance of only 15 or 20 feet. There were a few old birds in the flock, but they remained constantly on the fence.

It seems evident, therefore, that the remarkable behavior of the birds which alighted in the road was simply an expression of premature development, in the young, of the instincts and passions of nest-building and procreation. It is, however, the only instance of this kind that has ever come under my observation. — WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Remarkable Ornithological Occurrences in Nova Scotia. — **LEAST BITTERN** (*Botaurus exilis*). — On March 16, 1896, an adult male in full plumage was shot at Upper Prospect, Halifax County, N. S., and was brought to me for identification. This species has never before been taken in Nova Scotia and its occurrence is remarkable, particularly when we consider the early period of the year in which it was taken. It usually ranges only as far north as Massachusetts in the East, but stragglers have been taken in Maine and New Brunswick. In the latter Province some five individuals were killed between 1877 and 1881 on the Bay of Fundy coast.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Ardea cærulea*). — A male in adult plumage was killed at Lawrencetown, Halifax County, on March 18, 1896 — two days after the Least Bittern was shot. The bird was very thin. Another specimen, also an adult, was taken at Shut Harbour, N. S., on April 10, 1897. Only once previously has the species been collected in this Province. In the summer of 1884 an immature specimen was taken at Cole Harbour, near Halifax.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Ionornis martinica*). — This species is an accidental visitor. In 1896 I saw an adult female which had been captured alive on Devil's Island, Halifax Harbour, about January 16 of that year. It had probably been injured by striking the lighthouse upon that island. After being kept alive for about twenty-five days, it died and was mounted. I am told that another of the same species was found dead at Chezzetcook, Halifax County, in the same week as that in which the before-mentioned specimen was taken. Previous to this, two specimens had been taken in the Province. One of these was shot near Halifax on January 30, 1870 (Jones, *American Naturalist*, IV, 253), and the other was captured alive in April, 1889, and was kept for some time in an aviary by the late Mr. Andrew Downs (*vide Transactions N. S. Inst. Nat. Sc.*, VII, 468). It has been reported as casual in the neighboring Province of New Brunswick.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*). — A partial albino was shot about October 11, 1894, at Canning, King's County.

LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*). — On March 17, 1897, one of these birds was found, dead, on the sandy shore of Ketch Harbour, near

Halifax. I examined the bird before it was skinned. Death had evidently been largely caused by starvation, as the body was very thin. The occurrence of this European bird upon our coast is most remarkable. It is perhaps doubtful if there is another well-authenticated record of the capture of the bird in temperate America, for Mr. Ridgway queries "Long Island" in the list of localities given in his 'Manual.' There cannot be the slightest doubt about the identification of the present specimen.

BLACK VULTURE (*Catharista atrata*).—A Black Vulture was shot at Pugwash, Cumberland County, N. S., on January 12, 1896, and was brought to Halifax where I identified it. Mr. Chamberlain (Nuttall's Ornithology, 1891) states that it has been killed on Grand Manan in the Bay of Fundy. I think it has not been elsewhere met with in the Dominion of Canada. As in the case of the Least Bittern, the Little Blue Heron, the Gallinule, and the Lapwing, it will be observed that the present bird was taken at a very early period of the year.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus americanus*).—An albinistic Crow was killed near Halifax on October 6, 1896. Its general colour was brown, darker on the throat, cheeks and belly; scapulars and feathers of back margined obscurely with whitish; primaries mostly whitish; tertials white; tail-feathers light reddish brown margined with whitish on outer edge; legs, bill and iris, brown.

WINTER WREN (*Troglodytes hiemalis*).—My brother and myself found a nest of this species, containing a number of young, at Spryfield, near Halifax, on June 11, 1894. It was simply a cavity in moss, *in situ* upon the face of a rock close to the shore of a small lake. This moss *was constantly saturated with water* which trickled from a bank above and slowly flowed over the stone on which the moss grew. There is not the least doubt as to identification, for one of the parent birds was seen entering and leaving the exit several times. We were close alongside and could distinctly see the bird. In May, 1891, we found a nest of the same species only a couple of feet from the site of the one just mentioned. It precisely resembled the latter in form, construction and materials, as well as in being saturated with moisture. A full description of the nest of 1891, which contained a number of eggs, will be found in the 'Transactions' of the N. S. Institute of Science, VIII, 203.—HARRY PIERS, *Halifax, N. S.*

Occasional Visitants at San Geronimo (Nicasio Township), Marin Co., California.—**Dryobates nuttallii.** **NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER.**—This bird is a common resident, though never numerous, about thirty miles north of this place, but only one specimen has been seen in this locality. This was a female taken Feb. 14, 1884.

Sphyrapicus varius nuchalis. **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER.**—Two specimens taken in 1894 and one in 1897—all three shot in the family orchard adjoining the house.



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