

On July 6, 1920, I saw a Willet flying over the salt marshes at Pubinco, two more on the same day at Wood's Harbor—these records were made from the railway train—and on July 9, one at Barrington Passage, all in southern Nova Scotia. On July 18, on the sand flats of Barrington Bay, near Coffineroft, I found a flock of ten Willets, and on July 25, at the same place, Dr. Spencer Trotter and I counted twenty-six of these birds.

Dr. S. K. Palten, of Boston, formerly of Yarmouth, tells me that Willets were shot in considerable numbers in the marshes at Comeau Hill, about twelve miles southeast of Yarmouth, every year. He heard of twenty-two being shot there in 1917. In 1919 some were shot and the offender prosecuted and fined at Yarmouth under the Migratory Bird Convention Law.

Mr. Harrison F. Lewis, as will be seen by his note in this number, has given the final proof of the Willets' still breeding in Nova Scotia by the discovery of two nests with eggs.—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, M.D., 98 Pinckney St., Boston, Mass.

Breeding of the Semipalmated Plover (*Aegialitis semipalmata*) in Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia.—On June 14, 1920, at Cook's Beach, at the mouth of the Chebogue River, Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia, I found a nest and four eggs of the Semipalmated Plover (*Aegialitis semipalmata* (Bonap.)). The nest was a short distance above ordinary high-tide mark, at a point where the beach consisted of smooth gray stones of moderate size, among which had lodged enough soil to support a very scanty growth of fine, short grass. The four eggs, which corresponded in appearance with the description of the eggs of this species contained in Chapman's "Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America," 1912 edition, lay, points inward, on a few bits of seaweed, in a slight, circular depression, apparently made by the bird. They were wholly without shelter, yet so well did they blend in appearance with their surroundings that I had previously searched the beach carefully for three hours without finding them. I finally discovered them by seeing the parent Plover run to them and incubate them while I sat motionless beside some lobster-traps which were piled on the beach a few rods away. After incubating for about ten minutes, the Plover became uneasy, left the eggs, and, with short runs and frequent pauses, repeatedly approached within eight feet of me on the open beach, giving me the best of opportunities to see in detail the characteristic markings of the species. I have been familiar for many years with the appearance and notes of both the Semipalmated Plover and the Piping Plover, and, under the circumstances, could make no error in this identification. There were at least five pairs of Semipalmated Plovers at Cook's Beach on the day of my visit, all apparently breeding there, but I found one nest only belonging to that species. The nest and eggs were left untouched.

The 1910 edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' says that this Plover "breeds from Melville Island, Wellington Channel, and Cumberland

Sound to the valley of the Upper Yukon, southern Mackenzie, southern Keewatin, and Gulf of St. Lawrence.' The Gulf of St. Lawrence does not extend south of latitude 45° 35' N., while Cook's Beach is in latitude 43° 44' N., so that it is evident that the breeding-range of this bird extends farther south than was supposed.—HARRISON F. LEWIS, *Quebec, P. Q.*

The Cowbird's Whistle.—During a visit of five days at Jamestown, R. I., July 3-7, 1915, I frequently heard a male Cowbird (*Molothrus ater ater*) whistle in the following manner. He gave two long whistles, inflected upward, followed by three short, quick whistles on a lower pitch. His only variation was to omit one of the long whistles. This bird interested me not a little, for in Lexington, Mass., where the Cowbird is common—especially in the spring and early summer—I have noted a remarkable uniformity in its note. The Lexington birds give one long whistle followed by two short ones—never more and never less.

I should not have ventured to call attention to this Jamestown bird, if the matter had not been brought to my memory by another Cowbird (presumably another one) at exactly the same spot in Jamestown. On May 2, 1919, as I was passing the corner of the road where I had heard the bird four years before, a Cowbird uttered a long whistle, then two short ones, and concluded the series with another long whistle. This performance was not exactly the same, to be sure, as that heard in 1915, yet it was similar to it, and, at the same time, very different from our Lexington birds. During the spring of 1919 I noticed repeatedly a similar extension in the whistling of another Cowbird, two or three miles away in Saunderstown, R. I., although other Cowbirds near at hand whistled as the Lexington birds do.

A small matter, all this, perhaps, yet in the light of Mr. Saunders' illuminating demonstration in his article on Geographical Variation in Song ('The Auk,' 1919, pp. 525-528) the thought suggests itself that there may be many minor variations in bird-songs, slight in direct proportion to the distance separating varying birds. Possibly these Rhode Island Cowbirds presented a variation of a longer song of which I am ignorant, but which may be heard in the southern states.—WINSOR M. TYLER, M.D., *Lexington, Mass.*

Dance of Purple Finch.—The following description of the ecstatic movements of a Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus purpureus*) is interesting in the light of recent discussion. At six-fifteen (Eastern Time) on the afternoon of May 16, 1920, my wife called my attention to a male Purple Finch fluttering among the branches of our cherry tree. A female Purple Finch was soon discovered sitting quietly in the same tree. The male remained about five feet from the female, taking short, nervous flights, raising his crest and softly uttering the call note. In a few moments the female flew down to the ground. At once the male followed and became violently excited, drawing his quivering wings out in an arc