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Migrant Ducks in the Dominican Republic

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in Florida, was from 1902 to 1908. As they began to increase in numbers, they gradually reclaimed their original breeding territories. All three reached New Jersey as breeding species within about a decade, showing that the rate of increase under protection was closely parallel. The American Egret was found nesting in Salem County, New Jersey, in 1928, at a time when Snowy Egrets were still extreme rarities—even as visitors—in the State. The Little Blue Heron was found nesting in Camden County, New Jersey, in 1935. The Snowy Egret was found nesting in Cape May County, New Jersey, in 1939. Since the original nests of American Egret and Little Blue Heron were found, both of these species have established themselves in other colonies scattered through southern New Jersey, the number of pairs breeding annually in the State showing a satisfying increase year by year. Sight records of the Snowy Egret have simultaneously become more frequent. It is therefore to be expected that the Snowy Egret will likewise continue to invade this ancient territory, so that in a few years numerous breeding colonies may be familiar to many ornithologists.—C. BROOKE WORTH, *Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Princeton, New Jersey.*

American Bittern eats garter snake.—On August 22, 1940, 11.45 a. m., an American Bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus*, was observed in the shore water of Lincoln Pond on the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville, Albany County, New York. The bittern was standing in two inches of water among a shore zone of *Glyceria borealis* with an approximately 12-inch-long garter snake, *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*, in its bill. The writer approached to within ten feet of the bird without frightening it, and was later joined by three other observers; the addition of these caused the bird (still secreting itself in the *Glyceria*), to move fifteen feet away.

When the bittern was first seen it was holding the garter snake by the center of the body. The bird made four efforts to take the snake's head into its mouth, succeeding on the fourth attempt. The snake's head was then directed down the esophagus, with the body following, by a series of gulping movements. As the head disappeared down the bird's throat the gulping movements were transferred to the esophageal region of the neck, and later to the gizzard region after the tail had entered the bittern's bill. The swallowing process consumed about three minutes. The bittern then raised its bill in the air and held it in this position for a few seconds; lowering its bill, the bird thrust it between the right wing-feathers several times and retired to the shelter of the alders bordering the shore.

At this time of year the garter snakes come down to the shore to feed on newly transformed green frogs, *Rana clamitans*, and bullfrogs, *Rana catesbiana*. The garter snake in search of such food along the shore of Lincoln Pond apparently becomes easy prey for the voracious bittern.—WILLIAM MARCUS INGRAM, *Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville, New York and Zoology Laboratory, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*

Migrant ducks in the Dominican Republic.—Mr. Hugh A. Johnston, resident for years near Monte Cristi in the northwestern part of the Dominican Republic, has written me recently that migratory ducks have come to his region in great abundance during the last two winters. He reports flocks of many thousands flying over the Rio Yaque del Norte, ten miles above Monte Cristi, attracted apparently by the rice fields located on a government irrigation project.

Among them he found the American Pintail (*Dafila acuta tzitzihoo*) common, a species that has not been reported before with certainty from the island. Mr. Johnston has had individuals in captivity from specimens trapped by natives so

that there is no doubt about their identity, particularly since he has kept regularly the Bahama Pintail, the only species with which it might be confused. He also reports shooting the American Widgeon (*Mareca americana*) at the mouth of the Rio Yaque del Norte, another first record for Hispaniola.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Turkey Buzzards killing young pigs.—It is commonly assumed that the Turkey Buzzard (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*), through inability to kill its prey, is a scavenger by necessity. Pearson (*Bird-lore*, 21: 319-322, 1919) speaks of this bird killing young pigs, but gives no specific instance.

During March 1939, at Half Way Lodge, fifteen miles east of Fort Myers, Florida, Mr. Dwight Dyess witnessed buzzards successfully attacking and killing young pigs. Several new-born litters were destroyed by these birds. On one occasion, the birds boldly approached the young shortly after the sow had farrowed them, and tore at the umbilical cord and belly, disembowelling the little pigs. Although the sow was but a few feet off, she offered no resistance other than a few passive grunts. Mr. Dyess assured me that this was not an uncommon occurrence, and that many young pigs were lost each year through the depredations of buzzards.—W. J. HAMILTON, JR., *Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*

Gyr Falcon in Wisconsin.—An immature female gray-phase Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) was killed on the London Marsh at the western edge of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, just east of the town of London, on December 10, 1939, by Mr. R. R. Roehl of the nearby town of Lake Mills. The bird was examined by the writer shortly after it was mounted by a local taxidermist. The carcass was procured and the sex determined. The stomach was empty. Since the Gyr Falcon is protected by law in Wisconsin, and since it was deemed desirable to preserve this rare specimen, the bird was confiscated by the Wisconsin Department of Conservation, and is now on display in their museum at the State Game and Fur Farm at Poynette, Wisconsin.

In the event that future taxonomic workers in this group may be unable to examine the specimen, the following description is given: upper parts light gray-brown, general tone of head and nape much lighter in color than back, wings, or tail; head evenly and narrowly streaked with light gray-brown and white, 'moustache' mark scarcely discernible; feathers of back light gray-brown, narrowly bordered with white; tail light gray-brown, irregularly and narrowly bordered with white; under parts white, prominently, but not heavily streaked with gray-brown; under tail-coverts white, each feather very lightly marked centrally with a light gray-brown streak; tarsal feathering white to pale buff, unmarked; cere, eyelids, and feet light blue-gray.

Gyr Falcons have been taken in Wisconsin at least four times previously: near Lake Winnebago at an early date, near Beaver Dam on November 27, 1904, in Sauk County on October 22, 1916, and in Milwaukee on December 26, 1939, as reported respectively by Kumlien and Hollister (*Bull. Wisconsin Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 2: [= 3] 1-143, 1903), Snyder (*Auk*, 22: 413, 1905), Stoddard (*Auk*, 40: 325, 1923), and Gromme (*Auk*, 55: 273, 1938).—C. T. BLACK, *Game Division, Department of Conservation, Lansing, Michigan.*

Marsh Hawk feeding on Scaup Duck.—On November 25, 1939, at Melbourne, Florida, I saw a female Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) on the shore of Indian River, feeding on the partly immersed and still fresh body of a Scaup. When first