

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

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GENERAL NOTES.

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A HOODED SEAL IN FLORIDA.

Mr. J. B. Butler, First Assistant Keeper, Cape Canaveral Light Station, has given the United States National Museum the skin and skull of an immature female Hooded Seal killed, during the winter of 1916, on the beach at Canaveral Florida. The back and sides have the plain gray type of coloration that characterizes the young; the skull has the basal suture open. Mr. Butler writes that the length was 6 feet, girth 34 inches, and weight 200 pounds.

As compared with northern skulls of immature *Cystophora cristata* this specimen shows no features that can be regarded as indicating a difference of race or species. The interorbital region is somewhat unusually wide, and the cheekteeth, both maxillary and mandibular, are slightly narrowed; but neither peculiarity seems beyond the range of individual variation. Measurements (those of a slightly younger skull from Baffin Bay in parentheses): condylo-basal length 210 (193); palatal length, 103 (94); zygomatic breadth, 151 (140); mastoid breadth 144 (138); breadth of braincase above zygomatic roots, 106 (106); depth of braincase at middle, 83 (76); fronto-palatal depth at posterior border of palate, 77 (67); nasal, 38.6 (41); greatest combined breadth of nasals, 22 (18.4); least distance from orbit to front of premaxillary, 65 (55); breadth of rostrum over bases of canines, 42 (37); mandible, 136 (124); maxillary toothrow exclusive of incisors (alveoli), 52 (49); mandibular toothrow exclusive of incisors (alveoli), 52 (48); third upper cheektooth, 6.8 x 4.2 (6.6 x 5.0); third lower cheektooth, 7.4 x 4.6 (7.0 x 5.4).

The capture of this animal in Florida has a double interest: nothing of the kind appears to have been recorded from any locality south of the Chesapeake Bay; and it may indicate that the occurrence of the genus *Cystophora* in the West Indies \* is less improbable than has been generally supposed.

—Gerrit S. Miller, Jr.

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\* For a discussion of the probable history of Gray's *Cystophora antillarum* see Allen, Hist. N. Amer. Pinnipeds, pp. 715-720. 1880.

## AUTUMN WATER-BIRD RECORDS AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

The autumn of 1916 at Washington, D. C., was ornithologically most notable for the number of late shore-bird records. Dredging operations along the Anacostia River formed extensive artificial areas of mud-flats and ponds that proved exceedingly attractive to shore birds. For a month or more a flock varying from 50 to 100 birds of several species, the most numerous of which were the pectoral sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*) and red-backed sandpiper (*Pelidna alpina pacifica*), frequented this place. On October 24 the writer saw here the killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*), one black-bellied plover (*Squatarola squatarola cynosurae*) (first record for the District of Columbia), least sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*), pectoral sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*), red-backed sandpiper (*Pelidna alpina pacifica*), semipalmated sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusillus*), white-rumped sandpiper (*Pisobia fuscicollis*) (second record for the District of Columbia, the first having been made by Mr. Francis Harper on October 8, 1916, in the same locality), greater yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*), and lesser yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*). Other species of shore-birds subsequently seen were a stilt sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*), October 26, by Francis Harper (the only other District of Columbia record for which is September 8, 1885); wilson snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), October 26, by Francis Harper; and the solitary sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria solitaria*), October 28, by Mr. L. D. Miner.

The latest autumn occurrences of several species were extended by these observations to the dates below mentioned, the dates in parentheses being the latest previous records:

Lesser yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*), November 2 (October 2); greater yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*), October 26 (September 30); semipalmated sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusillus*), October 28 (October 26); solitary sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria solitaria*), October 28 (September 30); least sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*), November 2 (September 3); pectoral sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*), November 2 (October 22).

The shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*), of which there were only three previous Washington records, was seen on October 25 and 26, and on November 5, 1916.

—Harry C. Oberholser.

## PIRANGA RUBRA RUBRA IN COLORADO.

The Cooper Tanager has for many years stood as a bird of Colorado, on the basis of a specimen taken by Mr. H. W. Henshaw and recorded by him in the Report upon Geographical and Geological Explorations and Surveys west of the 100th Meridian, V, 1875, p. 239. This specimen we have recently examined and found to be a perfectly typical immature male of the eastern Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra rubra*). It was taken at Denver, Colorado, May 12, 1873, and is No. 72,085 of the United States National Museum collection. By reason of this discovery *Piranga rubra cooperi* must be removed from the list of Colorado birds, and *Piranga rubra rubra* added to the catalogue of the birds of this State.

—Harry C. Oberholser.

## THE BLACK VULTURE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND MARYLAND.

There are so few records of the black vulture (*Coragyps urubu*) in the District of Columbia and Maryland that the following notes will be of interest. On February 21, 1917, a black vulture appeared among the wild resident turkey vultures in the National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C. As commonly the case with birds of the species, it was quite tame; and curiously enough it soon found the large, open cage in which two black vultures from the South are kept. It remained in the Park until March 10, watering with the turkey vultures at a puddle in the elk pasture and spending a large portion of each day near the buildings about the black vulture cage, where food was provided for it. This record has an added interest because Dr. C. W. Richmond tells me that an adult female specimen of the black vulture was shot at Perryman, Harford County, Maryland, about February 8 or 9, and was received fresh at the United States National Museum February 10, 1917, from Mrs. John T. Lear of that place.

—N. Hollister.

THE SALAMANDER GENUS *RANODON* IN NORTH AMERICA.

The discovery just announced by Miss Helen Thompson Gaige (Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool. Univ. Michigan, No. 40, May 30, 1917) of a new species of *Ranodon* occurring in the Olympic Mountains of Washington, almost rivals in interest that of *Ascaphus truei*, the only representative of the Old World bell-toad family, the Discoglossidae, in the same region eighteen years ago.

*Ranodon* belongs to the family Ambystomidae, which is so well represented in North America, but more particularly to the section typified by the genus *Hynobius*, which is almost confined to Eastern temperate Asia. The most startling circumstance, however, connected with this new American salamander which has received the name *Ranodon olympicus* is that the genus *Ranodon* in Asia, so far as known, is confined to the western part of that continent. It is in fact the most western genus of the family, if we except the more northern *Salamandrella* which occurs from the Ural to the Pacific coast, and *Hynobius* which is also represented in Turkestan by a species. I wish to emphasize and elaborate this point because the habitat of *Ranodon sibiricus* is generally, but quite erroneously, stated to be Eastern Siberia and Northeastern China. As far as I know, *Ranodon sibiricus* has not as yet been found east of 85° E. Long. Greenw., and seems to be confined to the western foothills of the Thian-Shan, Ala-tau and Altai mountain ranges, in one locality, at least, reaching an altitude of 6000 feet. Its center of distribution appears to be Semirietchensk, the "land of the seven rivers" between lakes Balkash and Issyk-kul. The type came from Semipalatinsk; Severzof records it from near Viernoje, Ballion from Kopal, and Kulagin from Tashkent, all in Russian Turkestan; Strauch and Nikolski mention specimens in the St. Petersburg Academy from Kulja, in Chinese territory not far

from the Turkestan boundary. Thus, in spite of its name, it seems to belong rather to the Turanian than to the Siberian fauna.

The possibility that this species may be discovered further east is not to be denied, and no far-reaching conclusions should be drawn from its apparent absence in Eastern Asia. The fact that an *Onychodactylus* has recently been discovered on the mainland and an *Hynobius* in Turkestan as well as the finding of *Ranodon olympicus* in our own hemisphere ought to be warning enough.

As this genus has now obtained a place in the North American fauna, it is desirable to place on record its nomenclatorial status as well as that of its two species.

#### **Ranodon** KESSLER.

1866.—*Ranodon* KESSLER, Bull. Soc. Natural. Moscou, vol. 39, p. 130 (monotype, *R. sibiricus*).

1882.—*Ranidens* BOULENGER, Cat. Batr. Grad. Brit. Mus., p. 36 (emendation).

##### 1. **Ranodon sibiricus** KESSLER.

1866.—*Ranodon (Triton) sibiricus* KESSLER, Bull. Soc. Natural. Moscou, vol. 39, pt. 1, p. 130, pl. 7 (type-locality, Semipalatinsk, western Siberia).

1868.—*Ranodon kessleri* BALLION, Bull. Soc. Natural. Moscou, vol. 41, pt. 1, p. 138 (type-locality, Kopal, Turkestan).

##### 2. **Ranodon olympicus** GAIGE.

1917.—*Ranodon olympicus* GAIGE, Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool. Univ. Michigan, No. 40, May 30, 1917, p. 2, pl. 1 (type-locality, Lake Cushman, Olympic Mts., Washington). —Leonhard Stejneger.