

where, in company with a pair of the old birds, they constitute one of the most attractive of the many 'natural groups' which adorn Mr. Sharpe's department.

Lieut. A. W. Greely, U. S. A., Commander of the late Expedition to Lady Franklin Sound, succeeded in obtaining the long-sought-for egg of this species; and has had the extreme kindness to ask me to publish the first account of it.

Lieut. Greely writes me: "The specimen of bird and egg were obtained in the vicinity of Fort Conger, latitude 81° 44' N. The egg was 1.10 inch [28 mm.] in the longer axis, and 1 inch [25.40 mm.] in the shorter. Color, light pea green, closely spotted with brown in small specks about the size of a pin-head."—C. HART MERRIAM, *Locust Grove, N. Y.*

Southern Range of *Rissa tridactyla kotzbuwei*.—In the last number of 'The Auk' (Vol. II, p. 222), Mr. N. S. Goss mentions the capture of *Rissa tridactyla kotzbuwei* in Washington Territory, and thinks it to be its most southern record. We have, however, received it from Mr. Charles A. Allen, taken at Nicasio, Cal.—SOUTHWICK & JENCKS, *Providence, R. I.*

The Relationship of *Podiceps occidentalis* and *P. clarkii*.—About four years ago Mr. Henshaw* discussed the relationship of *Podiceps occidentalis* and *P. clarkii*, as shown by a series of eleven skins collected by me in San Francisco Bay, Cal. Owing to lack of specimens from different localities, and from the breeding grounds of these forms, I am unable to give a definite opinion respecting the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Henshaw, but will leave the now generally accepted belief of the specific identity of the two forms until they can be studied from fresh specimens on the breeding grounds. From my own investigations I decidedly incline to the opinion that the differences which, prior to Mr. Henshaw's investigations, were supposed to characterize different species or varieties, are in reality only sexual.

Of the twenty skins of this bird which I have prepared fifteen are females, and can easily be distinguished from the males, the female differing from the male in size and in the general appearance of the bill. In fact, I find no difficulty in distinguishing the sexes in the fresh bird before skinning. The color and curvature of the bill as seen in skins are of little aid, as the bill so warps in drying that a bill slightly recurved in life may become very much recurved in the dried skin. The color of the bill, also, soon changes after death, especially if the bird be suspended by the legs for a time before skinning. Through the courtesy of the authorities of the National Museum I was kindly afforded an opportunity to examine twenty-five specimens of these Grebes in the collection of the Museum, and with one exception I correctly determined the sex at sight by the

* On *Podiceps occidentalis* and *P. clarkii*. By H. W. Henshaw. Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, VI, pp. 214-216.

appearance of the bill alone. I have found that birds of 24.50 inches in length or less are females, and those 25.50 inches or more in length are males. No. 199, a female, which in Mr. Henshaw's article is given as 26.25 inches in length, is an apparent exception. The longest bill I have measured was 3.20 (chord of culmen), and the shortest 2.13, the average being 2.50. The lores vary in tint from white to the color of the head, in both sexes; and I have seen January specimens with white lores, and June birds with dark lores, and the reverse.—WALTER E. BRYANT, *Oakland, Cal.*

The Western Grebe in Manitoba.—In Coues's 'Key' I find the Western Grebe (*Podiceps occidentalis*) described as a bird of the Pacific Slope. It will then be not a little surprising to readers of 'The Auk' when announcement is made that this bird is common in Northern Manitoba. After I had made the discovery for myself I was a little disappointed to read the following in Professor Macoun's 'Report': "This bird [the Western Grebe] seems to be altogether unknown in the interior, and yet it has bred in thousands at Water Hen River. From time immemorial up to the present it has only been known from the Pacific Coast."

I examined specimens taken at Long Lake, Winnipeg, where it is common, and others from Shoal Lake, further north, where it is abundant. Thus it will be seen that its numbers increase as we go north towards the Saskatchewan Valley, for Water Hen River is much farther north still.

The following completes my list of Manitoba Grebes:—

Podiceps griseigena holbœlli. RED-NECKED GREBE.—Scarce.

Podiceps cornutus. HORNED GREBE.—Very common.

Podilymbus podiceps. DAB-CHICK.—COMMON.—ERNEST E. T. SETON, *Toronto, Canada.*

Capture of Escaped Cage-birds.—Mr. Forrest Ball, of San Bernardino, Cal., writes that on Jan. 12, 1884, he took at that place "a Cockatoo Paroquet (*Nymphicus novæ-hollandiæ*). It was resting on a tall cottonwood tree, basking in the sunshine, and was apparently perfectly at home in its strange surroundings. As it is an Australian species, it was no doubt an escaped cage-bird, but from its perfect condition it had, I surmise, been out of captivity a considerable time. The specimen is now in my collection."

Mr. Joseph L. Goodale also writes me that on Nov. 2, 1884, he shot, in the Belmont (Mass.) orchards, a Java Sparrow, "which was lively and in good condition." The capture of exotic, even tropical, species of birds, more or less common as cage-birds, in various parts of the United States, has been from time to time recorded, while other instances that have never been published have come to my knowledge. Generally the birds thus taken, even when captured in the colder parts of the year, are reported as found in good condition, and as showing rarely any trace of previous confinement. The fact that their natural habitat is generally very remote—not unfrequently south of the equator—and that they are species often met with in confinement, seems sufficient evidence that they are in reality 'escapes,' and therefore not to be counted as stragglers to our fauna. Yet it is of interest to know that such species are so well