

has never been shown to be the case, or even to be likely. The subject has been pretty thoroughly investigated by our best ornithologists, and the above conclusions are those which have been reached.

SEBAGO SALMON.

A SALMON of thirty inches length, nine inches depth, and a weight of fifteen and a half pounds, three days after capture, was taken with rod and line at Sebago Lake May 5, 1883, by Jonas Hamilton, Esq., of this city. It was an active male fish in good condition and gave good sport to its sport captor. This is the largest salmon of record as taken within recent years in Sebago waters by rod and line.

Although the salmon (*Salmo salar*) is popularly regarded as a salt water or "sea" fish, yet its home is in fresh water, and even those of our rivers that annually visit the ocean are in the habit of spending the greater portion of each year in the rivers frequented by them.

The Sebago or lake salmon is of the species (*S. salar*), accustomed to remain in fresh water continuously without visiting the ocean. The name "land-locked," so often used to distinguish individuals of the lake or fresh water variety from the "sea salmon," is absolutely a misnomer, as the fish are in no instance "locked" within the land or in inland waters, but have easy access to the ocean. The habits and food of the salmon of Sebago Lake are almost identical with those of the salmon of the Kennebec and Penobscot rivers in Maine. In the districts of the pure waters of this lake a cool retreat is found, where there is an abundance of smelts, the favorite and most common food of the salmon in Maine. In April, or just as soon as the smelts begin to ascend the streams, the salmon are found following them. In the larger rivers many salmon remain throughout the summer and until obliged to seek suitable spawning places in the autumn, although many of them probably return to the tidal portion of the rivers or to the estuaries for food and cooler water during the summer months. The streams tributary to Sebago Lake are small and shallow, and after the spring "run" of smelts is over and all have returned to the lake, no salmon, except stragglers, are found in the streams, as both the salmon and the smelts return to the lake, their "inland sea," to pass the summer months. In autumn, all the salmon that are found in the pure water and gravelly beds of the upper portion of the streams, there to deposit their eggs. At one of the breeding places of the Sebago salmon a poacher killed a fish weighing twenty-four pounds in the autumn of 1883. This was the largest salmon of record as ever taken in Sebago waters, and the fact of this capture was made public by the detection and conviction of the poacher who killed the fish at its breeding place.

It is impossible to absolutely determine whether a salmon killed at its breeding place in autumn has ever been to the ocean; and I have seen salmon taken in the spring from the mouth of the principal streams tributary to Sebago Lake that were precisely similar to the ordinary kelts taken sometimes in spring in tidal rivers. In spring the lake salmon, or those living constantly in fresh water, can usually be readily distinguished from salmon that have been in salt water.

The salmon of our lakes are scientifically distinguished by a varietal name (*Salmo salar sebago*), but as the term "land-locked" is neither euphonious nor of correct application in its generally accepted meaning, I would suggest to sportsmen and others the brief and expressive terms "lake salmon" and "sea salmon" whereby to distinguish the two varieties. It perhaps hardly seems necessary to add to the above list of facts, generally well known to ichthyologists but less so to sportsmen, a mention of the fact that the varietal name *sebago* was adopted because in Sebago Lake are found the largest fish known to be of the fresh water variety. Similar fish in other waters, in Maine and Canada, do not commonly exceed a weight of five pounds each. EVERETT SMITH.

PORTLAND, Me.

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BIRD LIFE IN THE CENTRAL PARK.

"There is a deal of quiet enjoyment, in this world of ours, if one keeps eyes and ears quiet."

HERE we are quietly seated. The incessant chatter and noisy fussing of the English sparrows is all around us, and to the casual observer it would appear as though there were no other members of the feathered tribe to be seen beside these persistent little fiends, who always thrust themselves into such noisy prominence. But wait. Quietly but rapidly a pair of robins are putting the finishing touches on a neat summer-nest they have built in the willow overhead. Another pair are slowly but surely completing the construction of their new quarters they will, we trust, succeed in rearing a brood of little choristers, to swell the music of nature, despite the thieving efforts of the purple grackles, those black egg-sucking ogres. Even as we speak four or five of the latter swoop down and flutter into and among the bending twigs of the bushes that fringe the opposite bank, and presently we see them stalking sedately along among the bushes at the water's edge, veritable destructive canibals. Now and again their harsh grating cry comes over the water, as if the villains were sharpening their teeth and enjoying in prospect the feasts of nestlings they are sure to have before the season is over.

What is that shy, dusky fellow flitting his tail and making the little flowers on that bank tremble and quiver in response to his nervous movement as he thills up and down from the grass to the hush above? Oh, you sneer, do you, because I say catbird? He is preparing to take a bath; remain quiet until he has finished and perhaps you may hear something which will surprise you. There he goes, all damp and fuzzy, up, up, among the drooping boughs of that spruce.

Here is a summer yellowbird in the grass, his canary coat, streaked with little brown dashes, is in due order this morning. Look that way through the branches, there is an oriole clinging to that willow; Oh, you sneer, do you, because he balances himself there directly over his nest. His subdued colors proclaim him to be the orchard or garden oriole, as he is called. Why should he chatter so? Now he is off, and his swinging perch is bending under the fairy form of Lord Baltimore himself, who, resplendent in orange and jet, glimmers like a live coal in among the tender green leaves. His arrival is no doubt the cause of the more humble cousin's hurried departure.

Here is a little chap, demurely poking along in the grass, now running down to the water, now back again, as though afraid of wetting his feet. What a pretty contrast his modest gray coat and white vest make with the dark green of his surroundings. He seems thoroughly at home, and is enjoying himself in his own way, as he snoops in the soft

and on the margin for grubs. You hardly recognize in him the "beetle snipe" of our boyhood. I shouldn't wonder if his little red coated spouse were snugly sitting in a nest somewhere near by.

Hark! do you hear that subdued warble now swelling out in a clear ringing note, now modulated and dying in a soft ripple? The notes come swelling out from that dark spruce. Look up there and tell me what you see. Can't find him? Look up toward the top and close in to the trunk. Ah! yest! that fluffly little ball of dusky feathers is our catbird of four days ago. You would admit that he could perform in that way? Well, there are hundreds of others who share your ignorance and cannot believe him capable of anything better than cheel cheel cheel!

Close in shore here come a pair of wood ducks. How proud the drake is of his sweet little wife, and what a pretty picture of domestic content they present as they paddle industriously by.

It may have surprised you to learn that all these sunny pictures of nature are copies from the gallery located right in the heart of this city, and the originals may be seen by anyone who will turn his steps to Central Park and quietly use his powers of observation. There are many secluded nooks where all and more than I have thus briefly mentioned may be enjoyed by anyone not too oblivious of all that is lovely in nature.

[Our correspondent has called attention to a matter of great interest and one which will be new to many of our city readers. No less than one hundred and thirty species of wild native birds have been observed within the limits of the Central Park, and of these many make it their summer home. During the migrations, no doubt, a host of the tiny warblers, which would escape the eye of any but a naturalist, stop there for rest and food, and in the late autumn not a few ducks alight in the reservoir or on the ponds. Several species of herons, one or more of rail, the coot, and a number of gulls have been observed about the water. The presence of the squirrels does much to interfere with the permanent stay of many of the smaller birds, while the prowling cats and the packs of wild dogs which infest the shrubbery at night would probably make it impossible for quail or partridge to successfully rear their young. We have heard quail whistling here in the spring, but have never seen any young birds. The rabbit is extremely abundant in the Park, though it might be supposed that they would be especially exposed to the attacks of night-hunting carnivores. It would certainly be a delightful state of things if the Park could be made a preserve where many of our wild birds and animals could be viewed at home. And we may reasonably look forward to a day when this shall be the case. In the meantime let everyone who goes there keep his eyes open.]

DESCRIPTION OF A MERMAN.

SOME days ago in reading a collection of quaint documents written by the first visitors to Newfoundland, I came upon one entitled "Captaine Richard Whitbovnes discovere an discovery of Newfoundland, unprinted at London, 1623," which interested me so much that I procured an extract which I believed would prove interesting to the readers of FOREST AND STREAM. The Captain has related many wonderful things of what he saw upon the new-found land, and among other marvels relates:

"Now also I will not omit to relate something of a strange creature which I first saw there in the yeere 1610, in a woman's entry, which she said that she saw in the harbor of St. Johns, which very swiftly came swimming towards me, looking cheerfully on my face, as it had been a woman; by the face, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, ears, ucker & forehead it seemed to be so beautiful, and in those parts so well proportioned, having round about the head many blue streakes resembling haire, yet I beheld it long, and another of my company also yet behaving, that was not then far from me, and he said I comming so swiftly towards mee; at which I stepped backe; for it was come within the length of a long pipe, supposing it would have sprung ahand to mee, because I had often seene huge whales to spring a great height above the water, as divers other great fishes doe; and so might this strange creature doe to mee if I had stood still where I was, as I verily believe it did such a party, which I saw as it were in the water, it did therewith dive a little under the water and swam towards the place where I little before I hauded, & it did often looke backe towards mee; whereby I beheld the shoulders & backe down to the middle to be so square, white & smooth as the backe of a man; and from the middle to the hinder part it was poynting in proportion something like a broad hooked arrow; howe it was in this part from the neck & shoulders, which I did see it dissembling, he came shortly after to a boat in the same harbor (wherein one William Hawkbridge then my servaunt man) was that hath been since a captaine in a ship to the East Indies, & is lately there so employed again; & the same creature did put both his hands upon the side of the boat: whereat they were afraid, and one of themstrucke it a full blow on the head, whereby it fell off in the harbor, when they lay by the shore the men in them for feare fled to land and beheld it. This (I suppose) was a mermaid or mareninn. Now because divers have writ much of mermaids, I have presumed to relate what is most certaine of such a strange creature that was thus then seen at New-found-land, whether it were a mermaid or no I leave it for others to judge; and so referre you to the persons that saw it, and the several letters following which have been lately sent from the New-found-land, which I doubt not but that they will also give you some satisfaction of what I have written of that country whereby to bring you the more in love to the imbracing of a plantation in that country which may be well styled a sister land: which God grant to blesse and prosper."

What this strange creature could have been I cannot venture to say. But in my opinion that it was a seal, as I have frequently shot seal in the harbor of St. Johns, but that these animals are shy, and will scarcely permit a boat to get within forty yards of them. J. E. COLLINS.

TORONTO, Canada.

A FALSE ALARM.—The daily papers of last week announced, with something of a flourish of trumpets, that a young sea cow had been captured in the surf off the beach at Spring Lake, N. J., and had been sent to the Zoological Gardens at Philadelphia. The animal turns out to have been neither more nor less than a small specimen of the common seal (*Phoca vitulina*). It is quite remarkable to find this species so far south at this season of the year, though in winter they are not specially uncommon along the coast.

MORE ABOUT THE "STICKFISH."

Editor Forest and Stream:

I notice in yours of the 3d of May an interesting letter on the "stickfish" (*Halipterus haka*). Signed by Mr. J. C. Hughes. I can add a few facts in regard to it, which may be of interest to him and to your other readers. This animal belongs to that group of polyps generally called "sea pens," on account of the endostome which supports the soft polyptidum, or external fleshy mass to which numbers of the individual polyps are attached or form a part. Most of the kinds are much smaller, and reach six to ten inches in length, though there is one of the largest in the world, the North Atlantic, which has the polyps grouped in a rosette at the tip (instead of being set like the vanes of a feather, as in the *Halipterus*), which reaches nearly as large a size. They are both deep-water animals, and the west coast species certainly normally lives erect in the mud, above that part and the bulb are buried in the mud, the latter acting as an anchor. The smaller species occasionally swim in the water by simultaneous rhythmic contractions and expansions of the bulb and polyps. I have seen one in the very act in the Santa Barbara Channel, Cal. It is quite possible that if accidentally detached from its anchorage, the *Halipterus* may be able to progress slowly in the water, but probably not as well as itself again. The smaller and more fleshy species must be more normally adapted to active exertion than one of such elongated and slender form.

The "stickfish" is found as far west and north as the cod-fishing grounds in the Shumagin Islands, Alaska, where, in 1880, I obtained a bundle of the rods from a generous fisherman, who told me there were certain banks where they were so thickly set on the bottom, that no fishing could be done there. They probably are in the mud, the latter being the more favorable, from Puget Sound to the extreme end of the Aleutian Islands, throughout the extent of the Oregonian fauna. But as this region is little known and the deep waters are almost wholly unexplored, they have not come to light elsewhere than in Burard Inlet and the Shumagins.

The sub-genus *Ferrillia* of Stearns is not thought by naturalists to differ essentially from *Halipterus*, beside which I believe the name *Ferrillia* has been used before for a coral or other anthozoan.

Wm. H. Dall.

United States National Museum.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 3, 1893.

WHAT WAS IT.—Le Roy, Minn.—Editor Forest and Stream: Having taken much interest in those articles on the rattlesnake bite and antidote, I will relate a circumstance that occurred under the notice of a friend of mine, who some years ago there came into the neighborhood two young men that professed to be snake-charmers, having with them several snakes, which they would handle with as much ease as they would a kitten. My friend having an idea that the poison fangs were extracted, thought to try them with a boua file Minnesota rather than had been to a dentist, and shortly the opportunity came to do so. I slipped around the neck of the snake was taken from the house and thrown upon the ground. One of the men took up the snake, and in doing so was bitten on the hand. He dropped the snake and started for his satchel, which contained a grayish white powder, which he applied around but not on the bite, and also touched his tongue to the same. He then continued to handle the snake. The bile seemed to have no more effect on him than a mosquito fly bite. He claimed that he obtained the above powder from an Indian chief in Missouri, and called it *teubeah*. The boys tried to obtain some of the magic powder, but could not get any. Can some one of your many readers tell what the antidote was?—SHARPEY. [Among the Pawnees in old times in Nebraska we have several times seen horses cured that were bitten by rattlesnakes. The Indians said that of the remedy was a plant that could be consumed on the prairie, but we never succeeded in inducing them to point it out to me, and I have never been able to learn what it was.]

"DO RAIL CARRY THEIR EGGS?"—Last Monday evening, I found the nest and eggs of a sore rail. After seeing the bird walk away from, and pass within ten feet of me, not being prepared to take the eggs, I left them and went for them the next evening, but was disappointed in finding nothing but the nest, which was partly submerged in water. It having rained for twelve hours during the day, I went to the ground over and finding no tracks, I came to the conclusion that the bird had removed the eggs. On Saturday evening I tried the swamp—which is about three by eight rods in extent—again, prepared to make a thorough search. I found the bird on the opposite side, and shot it, and after half an hour's search, found another nest about two rods from the first one, and about eight inches above the water, containing the same four eggs. Never having seen any rail eggs before, I examined them very closely the first time and noticed a peculiar x-shaped marking on one of them—which I had no difficulty in recognizing when I found them the second time. If any of your readers have had a similar experience, I wish they would make it known in your columns.—J. L. L. (Lockport, N. Y., June 4, 1893).

NIGHT SONG OF THE CUCKOO.—A cuckoo that has envied our shrubbery and fruit trees with its peculiar song for the last week, awakened the echoes of a startling note on the 5th inst., at 11:50 o'clock P. M. His voice appeared to me a little subdued and softened, not quite so full and strong as in the daytime. It is common for the American cuckoo to sing at night.—E. S. HOLMES (Grand Rapids, Mich., June 6).

MAY ARRIVALS AT THE PHILADELPHIA ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN.—Purchased.—Two beavers (*Castor fiber canad.*), two gray squirens (*Hesperetes griseus*), two blue jays (*Cyanus cyaneus*), two bluebirds (*Cyanus cristatus*), two black-necked stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*), two hooded mergansers (*Mareca americana*), two common noddies (*Micropus cynopterus*), one black-headed stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), one brown espino (*Cebus felleus*), five elephant seals (*Microrhinus angustirostris*), one turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), two blue jays (*Cyanus cristatus*), one green fish (*Carduelis elegans*), two blue jays (*Cyanus cristatus*), and two unadorned grass parakeets (*Troglodytes aedon*). Presented.—Five woodchucks (*Arctomys monax*), one white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons gambelii*), one snow goose (*Anser hyperborea*), two diamond rattlesnakes (*Crotalus adamanteus*), two water moccasins (*Aligatoron piscivorus*), one hog-nosed snake (*Di. plathiphis nigrifasciatus*), one black-headed stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), three black-necked stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*), one diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*), and three alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*). Born.—Five prairie voles (*Citellus talpoides*), six prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), and two mallard ducks (*Anas boschas*).