

BIRDS OF THE ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON ISLANDS¹

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THE FRENCH ISLANDS of St. Pierre and Miquelon, lying just off the southern coast of Newfoundland, were visited from July 19 to 22, 1945, in connection with our study of the birds of Newfoundland. Since these islands are seldom visited by biologists we wish to list the birds which we recorded there.

Although these French islands are relatively close to the mainland of North America it is difficult to visit them by regular ships from either Canada or the United States. Most of their traffic is still with French and other Old World ports. We were working along the southern coast of Newfoundland in a motorboat of the Newfoundland Department of Natural Resources, and with the permission of that Department we left Grand Bank, Newfoundland, about noon of July 19 and travelled directly to St. Pierre, the capital and largest city of these islands. Mr. Angus Mullins and E. J. Bragg were in charge of the motorboat and the authors were the only passengers. The Newfoundland Government sent prior notification of our official visit, so we were met at the wharf by Mr. George Bartlett, son of the British Vice-consul. Mr. Bartlett kindly introduced us to His Excellency Monsieur Garrouste, Administrator of the Islands. He was quite interested in our scientific studies and granted permission to travel freely and to collect specimens. He even provided a pilot and a guide for the boat trip of July 20.

Several hours on the evening of July 19 were spent travelling in Bartlett's car across the island of St. Pierre on an excellent paved road. Three stops were made, mostly in scrub spruce and rocky hillside habitats. The next morning we left the harbor of St. Pierre in dense fog, passed Columbiar Island, crossed "The Reach" between the islands of St. Pierre and Little Miquelon, and stopped at the small village of Langleade on the northern coast of the latter island. For several hours we worked up a wooded valley along a small stream and found a variety of small birds. Our next stop was at the southern end of "The Dunes", an elongated but narrow sand-

bar which connects Little Miquelon Island with Great Miquelon Island. A few shore and water birds were braving the strong wind of this exposed beach. We returned to the town of St. Pierre without further stops.

On July 21 we were fog-bound in St. Pierre harbor all day. In the morning we worked outside the town with the aid of Bartlett's car. Our boatmen were anxious to return to Newfoundland so we tried to brave the fog and very rough waters outside the harbor, but were forced to return to shelter. We walked through the town to an area of bogs, meadows, and scrubby hillsides, none of which seemed inhabited by many birds. About 4:30 on the morning of July 22 we left the harbor of St. Pierre still shrouded in fog, but relatively calm waters enabled us to proceed past the faintly seen Little Green and Green Islands. We continued to Grand Bank, Newfoundland, which we reached about 9 a.m.

The following birds were recorded during our sojourn of parts of four days in the St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands:

1. Gannet, *Morus bassanus* (Linnaeus). Ten observed near St. Pierre Island on the 19th and two seen off Little Miquelon Island.
2. European Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo* (Linnaeus). About 15 adults and sub-adults were sitting on high cliffs along the north coast of Little Miquelon Island. Local residents reported them nesting nearby.
3. Semipalmated Plover, *Charadrius hiaticula semipalmatus* Bonaparte. A male was taken on "The Dunes", Little Miquelon Island on the 20th.
4. Wilson's Snipe, *Capella gallinago delicata* (Ord). Three observed on Little Miquelon Island.
5. Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia* (Linnaeus). Two, on St. Pierre Island, gave indications of having young nearby, on the 19th. Five were seen on Little Miquelon Island, and six observed (one collected) on St. Pierre Island the 21st.
6. Sanderling, *Crocethia alba* (Pallas). Three found on the beach of "The Dunes", Little Miquelon Island.
7. Northern Phalarope, *Lobipes lobatus* (Linnaeus). A female was taken from a flock

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- of three individuals in the water off Green Island on the 22nd.
8. Pomarine Jaeger, *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Temminck). One was observed several times, flying near "The Dunes", off Little Miquelon Island.
9. Great Black-backed Gull, *Larus marinus* Linnaeus. Seven observed off St. Pierre Island the 19th; about 20 off the coast of Little Miquelon Island; and several near St. Pierre harbor the 21st.
10. Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* Coues. Observed commonly around the islands on each day.
11. Atlantic Kittiwake, *Rissa tridactyla tridactyla* (Linnaeus). About 40 seen off-shore and around rocks along the northern coast of Little Miquelon Island. Local reports indicate some may nest on the southern coast of this island.
12. Arctic Tern, *Sterna paradisaea* Pontopidan. A number flying around Little Green Island on the 22nd indicated a nesting colony of about 150 pairs, but we were unable to land to investigate.
13. Dovekie, *Plautus alle alle* (Linnaeus). A non-breeding male was taken off Little Green Island on the 22nd.
14. Black Guillemot, *Cephus grylle atlantis* Salomonsen. At least 50 were observed along the rocky northern coast of Little Miquelon Island.
15. Atlantic Puffin, *Fratercula arctica arctica* (Linnaeus). We took three near Columbiar Island on the 20th, where many were nesting. Others were seen daily around St. Pierre and other islands.
16. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, *Empidonax flaviventris* (Baird and Baird). About five were heard, and one was taken, on Little Miquelon Island on the 20th.
17. Northern Horned Lark, *Eremophila alpestris alpestris* (Linnaeus). One was found along the grassy shore at the edge of "The Dunes", Little Miquelon Island.
18. Newfoundland Black-capped Chickadee, *Parus atricapillus bartletti* (Aldrich and Nutt.). About eight were observed on Little Miquelon Island on the 20th, and one specimen proved to be this race.
19. Newfoundland Brown-capped Chickadee, *Parus hudsonicus rabbittsi* Burleigh and Peters. Fairly common on Little Miquelon Island.
20. Red-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta canadensis* Linnaeus. An immature was taken on Little Miquelon Island on the 20th.
21. Newfoundland Winter Wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes aquilonaris* Burleigh and Peters. Fairly well distributed on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands.
22. Newfoundland Robin, *Turdus migratorius nigrideus* Aldrich and Nutt. Common on St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands each day. An immature was taken on St. Pierre Island on the 21st.
23. Northern Gray-cheeked Thrush, *Hylocichla minima minima* (Lafresnaye). Common on St. Pierre Island and very common on Little Miquelon Island where one was taken the 20th.
24. Eastern Ruby-crowned Kinglet, *Regulus calendula calendula* (Linnaeus). Four were seen on Little Miquelon Island.
25. Newfoundland Yellow Warbler, *Dendroica petechia amnicola* Batchelder. Common and well distributed in suitable habitats on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands. Two males were taken on St. Pierre Island, on the 19th and 20th.
26. Eastern Black-poll Warbler, *Dendroica striata striata* (Forster). Fairly common on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands each day. A male was taken on the former island on the 19th.
27. Newfoundland Water-thrush, *Seiurus noveboracensis uliginosus* Burleigh and Peters. Fairly common on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands. A male from St. Pierre the 19th proved to be this race.
28. Mourning Warbler, *Oporornis philadelphia* (Wilson). Common and well distributed on Little Miquelon Island.
29. House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus domesticus* (Linnaeus). A few were seen in the town of St. Pierre each day.
30. Newfoundland Pine Grosbeak, *Pinicola enucleator eschatosus* Oberholser. Two observed on Little Miquelon Island on the 20th, when we collected a male of this race.
31. Common Redpoll, *Acanthis flammea flammea* (Linnaeus). An immature was observed on Little Miquelon Island.
32. Labrador Savannah Sparrow, *Passerculus sandwichensis labradorius* Howe. Fairly common on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands each day.

33. White-throated Sparrow, *Zonotrichia albicollis* (Gmelin). Found commonly on Little Miquelon Island.

34. Eastern Fox Sparrow, *Passerella iliaca iliaca* (Merrem). Common to abundant on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands each day. Cooke (Bird-Banding, 13: 180, 1942) reported one taken at St. Pierre, April 10,

1937, which had been banded C160076 at Pomfret, Connecticut, November 11, 1932, by Mrs. K. B. Wetherbee.

35. Northern Swamp Sparrow, *Melospiza georgiana ericrypta* Oberholser. Common each day on both St. Pierre and Little Miquelon Islands. Two specimens taken on St. Pierre Island on the 21st were typical of this race.

A NEW NORTHWESTERN OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH¹

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IN the ornithological literature of the latest decade considerable confusion is apparent with reference to the status of *Hylocichla ustulata almae* Oberholser (1898), the type locality of which is in the East Humboldt Mountains, Nevada. This name has recently been applied by authors to populations as far west as California, as far east as Newfoundland Labrador, and as far north as Yukon Territory! This race was admitted to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (19th Supplement) in 1944, at which time the Committee cited Oberholser (1938), Dickey and van Rossem (1938), and Wetmore (1940), as literature establishing its validity. A careful perusal of this literature, however, reveals little more definite information than that these authors were of the opinion that *almae* is valid. What material was examined as the basis for these opinions is not stated. Perhaps the key to the situation is contained in an earlier publication by van Rossem (1925), in which he expressed a belief that *almae* is valid. He made it clear, however, that this opinion was based on a comparison of California breeding specimens with material thought to be *swainsoni* from the eastern United States. Recently the writer (Godfrey and Wilk, 1948, pp. 18-20) pointed out, however, that birds inhabiting extreme southeastern Canada and northeastern United States differ from *swainsoni* in being of decidedly more rufescent coloration. These have since been described and named *H. u. clarescens* Burleigh and Peters (1948), type locality Glenwood, Newfoundland. Naturally, then, California birds are greyer than birds from the southeastern parts of the range of the species, the latter

being racially separable from *swainsoni*. Had van Rossem compared his specimens with *swainsoni* from Saskatchewan, for example, it seems certain that he would never have recognized *almae*. Moreover, in as much as New Jersey was considered to be the type locality of *swainsoni* at the time Oberholser (1898) described *almae*, it seems probable and unfortunate that he compared specimens of the population he named *almae* with specimens from northeastern United States.

The writer has examined the type specimen of *almae* together with June-July specimens from the following localities presumed to be within the range of *almae*:

Montana (Crazy Mountains, 1; Emigrant Gulch, 1; Flathead Lake, 1; Johnson Lake, 1);

Colorado (Avalo, 2);

Idaho (Inkom, 1; Silver, 1; Bonneville Co., 2; Teton Co., 1; Bear Lake Co., 2; Valley Co., 1; Boise Co., 1);

as well as specimens from southern and central British Columbia. I regret that these are not separable from *swainsoni* (Saskatchewan to Quebec) and that *almae* must, in my opinion, be relegated to the synonymy of *swainsoni*². As a matter of interest, the fact that these populations are not separable from each other undoubtedly accounts for the application of the name *almae* to eastern Canada populations by Braund and McCullagh (1940, p. 116), Peterson (1947, p. 267), and Burleigh and Peters (1948, p. 118). However, these authors should have used the older name *swainsoni* for these birds.

² Dr. Harry C. Oberholser informs me (in litt.) that as a result of his recent investigations he, too, has concluded independently that *almae* is a synonym of *swainsoni*.



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