

**Red Phalarope** (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) **off Boston Harbor in Summer.**—On July 11, 1913, when Miss Cleveland, local secretary of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and I were returning by boat to Boston, from Plymouth, a small duck-like, brightly colored bird caught my eye just as the boat passed the Harding's Ledge buoys just outside Boston Harbor. We examined the bird carefully with our glasses, and it proved to be a Red Phalarope in full plumage, the first of the kind we had ever seen, but we had good views and were able to positively identify it.—LIDIAN E. BRIDGE, *West Medford, Mass.*

**Another Massachusetts Record for the Turkey Vulture** (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*).—On July 24 of this year, I was watching a Red-tailed Hawk over Higgins' Pond in Truro, Cape Cod, Mass., when a large black bird appeared from the southeast and flew with slow wing-beats across the pond, rather low and at no great distance from me, and then mounted soaring into the air. Though I had become familiar with the Turkey Vulture on a visit to Virginia some years ago, I did not at once recognize it in Massachusetts, where this species does not ordinarily come into our reckoning, but soon the size, color, long outstretched wings with the tips of the primaries well separated, and comparatively long, rounded tail identified the bird positively as *Cathartes aura* and presumably of the subspecies *septentrionalis*. Presently it dropped to a lower level and sailed straight on motionless wings in the direction of Slough Pond, half a mile away to the north. On reaching Slough Pond, I failed to find the Vulture but startled an immature Bald Eagle from its perch on the farther shore, and while watching it move off in circles towards the west, I saw two other soaring birds in the distance, probably the Red-tailed Hawk and the Turkey Vulture. Meeting with these three fine birds in such close succession, each one larger than the last, was an interesting experience, and the Turkey Vulture is uncommon enough in Massachusetts to make it seem worth while to record the occurrence.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

**Richardson's Owl** (*Cryptoglaux funerea richardsoni*) **in N. E. Illinois.**—Richardson's Owl rarely strays as far south as the United States, and after more than forty years collecting I had never seen a specimen in the flesh, until one was brought into the shop of Mr. R. A. Turtle, the taxidermist, who very kindly presented it to me. It was picked up dead in the street — Data from label: "Mus. H. K. C., No. 17479 — ♀ Chicago, Illinois, March 5, 1914 — Length 10.25 in., Extent 24.25, Wing 7.25, Tail 4.38, Tarsus .80, Bill .75. Stomach empty —" The only other Illinois records are Rockford, October, 1884, Cicero, December, 1902, and Kenilworth, December, 1902, all near Chicago.—HENRY K. COALE, *Highland Park, Ill.*

**Unusual Behavior of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird** (*Archilochus colubris*).—On August 22, 1914, my wife and I were coming through the extensive piece of swamp-land just east of Chain Bridge in the District of



Columbia. It was nearly sundown, and the place was gathering on the evening shadows, when, within a few feet of where we stood resting for some moments, there suddenly appeared a male hummingbird (*A. colubris*) in hot pursuit of a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus l. ludovicianus*), the latter leading it a pretty chase through the trees and dense vegetation. Both were giving vent to their peculiar notes indicating their excitement, while the hummer seemed bent on doing the wren any bodily harm it could effect with its bill. Once or twice it lit close to us, and the scolding notes of the wren brought two other birds of the same species to the scene. These were likewise immediately charged by the valiant little hummer with great vehemence, which uttered as it did so its little, shrill, squeaky pipings. All three of the wrens kept dodging these attacks, and it was remarkable to see the skill with which the hummer shot about after each in turn through the vines and small branches of the trees and shrubs.

In a few moments, several warblers put in an appearance, among them a Maryland Yellow-throat (*Geothlypis t. trichas*), a couple of Parulas (*Compsothlypis a. americana*), a Magnolia (*Dendroica magnolia*), and others which I could not with certainty identify, on account of the increasing darkness. Their arrival seemed to still further excite the hummingbird, which shot first after one, then after another according to their accessibility. In no instance, however, did I actually see it come in contact with the bird attacked, and always on account of the skill of the latter dodging a direct charge; for beyond such linear flights, the hummer could only buzz for a few seconds about the bird he was particularly after in any attack. Neither the wrens nor the warblers made any counter charges, while the entire affair did not last over a minute or two, when both assailant and the assailed flew off in different directions.

Never before in my life have I witnessed such a scene; and I can not conceive what could have occasioned a hummingbird to behave in such a manner.—R. W. SHUFELDT, *Washington, D. C.*

**Breeding of the Red-winged Blackbird** (*Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus*) **in Nova Scotia.**—On June 21, 1914, after repeated searching, I found the nest of the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus*) in a swamp near Antigonish, Nova Scotia. It was attached to cattail stems and rank grass, and was placed six or eight inches above the surface of water in which I stood knee-deep. It contained four eggs, corresponding exactly in appearance with the description of the eggs of this species given in F. M. Chapman's 'Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America,' 1912 edition. Unfortunately, I did not actually see the female at the nest, but she and a male fluttered over my head, or perched in the nearby bushes while I was examining the nest. They uttered many cries of distress and anger, and I consider that their actions, together with the situation and appearance of the nest and its contents, indubitably determine its identity. I did not collect it, as I did not wish to disturb the birds in any way. A second pair of the same species was present in this swamp and presumably



Shufeldt, Robert Wilson. 1914. "Unusual Behavior of a Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*).*" The Auk* 31, 536–537.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4072015>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54326>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.2307/4072015>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/86793>

#### **Holding Institution**

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

#### **Sponsored by**

Smithsonian

#### **Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.