

**The King Eider** (*Somateria spectabilis*) at Brunswick, Ga.—I have been so fortunate as to secure two fine specimens of the King Eider, both of which I shot at the mouth of the Altamaha River. The first, a male, was taken April 25, 1890, and was alone. The other, also a male, was shot from a flock of seven, four males and three females, on May 5. All were rather tame and unsuspicious until shot at once, but I was unable to get near them again. The flesh of the two captured was found to be tender and delicious, with no fishy taste. The stomachs contained a few small shell-fish and some vegetable matter.—W. W. WORTHINGTON, *Shelter Island, N. Y.*

**The Snow Goose** (*Chen hyperborea nivalis*) on the Coast of Maine.—About the middle of last April I received a Snow Goose in the flesh that had been shot April 7 on Heron Island, at the mouth of the Kennebec River, by Mr. E. A. Morse, of Phippsburg, Maine. The bird was a female in good condition but not fat. Mr. Morse writes me that it had been seen about there for three days before it was shot. It never went outside on the open ocean, but stayed on the marsh or in some pond. It alighted one day with a flock of Wild Geese, but they appeared afraid of it, and it did not stay with them. Except in this instance it was always alone. It was very shy and wild, but would not leave the neighborhood.

There are some half-dozen published records of the capture of Snow Geese in New England, but unfortunately they are by no means explicit as to whether the specimens were of this form or of the smaller Western race, *C. hyperborea* proper. A point of interest is that they were all taken in the autumn or early winter.—C. F. BATCHELDER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

**Former Abundance of the Wild Pigeon in Central and Eastern New York**—During the early years of my boyhood Wild Pigeons abounded in great numbers in central New York. One case in particular I well remember in the spring of, I think, 1835. The southeastern part of the township of New Hartford, Oneida Co., N. Y., became for several days their feeding grounds. This region abounded in beech forests, upon the nuts of which trees they delighted to feed. For several days, beginning with the early dawn and extending to near the middle of the forenoon, the flight of these birds was almost incessant, and in the afternoon and evening their return was equally as phenomenal; their roost was reported as being in the town of Norwich, Chenango Co., a distance of about fifty miles. The flocks were so large and numerous that they appeared almost more like clouds, and during the most active part of the time many flocks would be in sight from any one point of observation. Their flight was also very low, probably owing to the close proximity of their feeding grounds, and caused the noise from their passage over our heads to be very perceptible, resembling the rushing sound of a heavy wind. Many of the smaller flocks would fly so low, that it induced the workmen from a neighboring machine-shop to try to kill them by striking among them with long poles; this failed, however, for some time, as the flocks simply parted and al-



lowed the pole to pass through without hitting any of the birds. After a time my father suggested that they strike in the direction of the flight, when, the birds being unable to see the pole, many of them were destroyed in this manner. I well remember my brother and myself standing in the garden, watching them as they passed over our heads, and throwing our caps at them, which would pass through the parting ranks without hitting a bird, the gap being closed again almost instantly, and not seeming to check their rapid passage in the least.

Many of the people in the vicinity employed nets to catch them. Going into the woods where they alighted in the quest of food, a spot of ground was prepared, the net set so as to be thrown over the spot by the rebound of a young sapling placed so as to be strongly bent under tension which when relieved would instantly carry the net over the prepared area. A living Pigeon, having been caught and a cord fastened to it, was allowed to fly into the air on the approach of a flock, when, on being drawn back to the ground, its cry would attract them, and they would follow and settle on the prepared ground where food had been scattered. Then the net was thrown across, and large numbers entrapped. A farmer, Mr. Oxford, whose farm was within their feeding ground and whose newly sown fields they were injuring, obtained my father's net in the morning, and by night, with the aid of his two sons, had a pile of dead pigeons which would have made more than one wagon load. The Indians from a distance came and camped in the vicinity, procured vast numbers of them, salted and packed them in barrels, and carried them away in quantities.

At a still later period, in the early sixties, on the mornings of two or three consecutive days, large numbers of Wild Pigeons passed up the Hudson Valley crossing over the City of Albany. One of these mornings the flocks were uncommonly large. Three in particular which passed northward in quick succession, so that all were in sight at the same time, were so large and dense that the shadow cast on the ground as they passed was like the shadow of a passing cloud, being easily perceptible. The Hudson Valley at this point from the level of the plateau on the west to Cantonment Hill on the east, must be two and a half miles or more in width. Standing on the crest of the hill to the south of the city, the east and west extremities of each of these three flocks were invisible, although they were at a great height; the ends dwindled away in the distance, appearing only as a faint shadow. I noticed a few days after in the newspapers a statement that there was an unusually large 'pigeon roost' near Fort Edward, N. Y.—R. P. WHITFIELD, *New York City*.

**Harlan's Hawk.**—I am pleased to notice that Mr. Ridgway has concluded (*Auk*, Vol. VII, p. 205) that *Buteo harlani* is only a variety of *B. borealis*. Thus far so good, but I think that in the near future the species '*harlani*' will be entirely disposed of and no attention whatever be paid to the singular coloration spoken of, which, at least in the specimens I have secured here, particularly in the fall, have shown its strong melanistic character. I have not the opportunity now to refer to specimens or notes but write from memory only.—D. H. TALBOT, *Sioux City, Iowa*.



Whitfield, R. P. 1890. "Former Abundance of the Wild Pigeon in Central and Eastern New York." *The Auk* 7, 284–285. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068007>.

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