

**The White Gyrfalcon in New England.**—Not long since Mr. George A. Boardman wrote me that he had heard of the capture, in eastern Maine, of a very light-colored Gyrfalcon. Upon my expressing a lively interest in the matter he very kindly put me in correspondence with Mr. John Clayton of Lincoln, Maine, who mounted the specimen and from whom I have just purchased it. Although too dark colored to be typical of that form it is, nevertheless, an unmistakable example of *Falco islandus* Brünn. It is a young bird and, judging by the measurements, a male, although the sex was not determined by dissection. It was shot in South Winn (just south of Lincoln) about October 8 (Mr. Clayton received it on the 9th and in such fresh condition that he does not think it could have been dead more than twenty-four hours), 1893, by a young man named Wyman who found it perched on a telegraph pole.

This capture is of considerable importance, for the White Gyrfalcon does not appear to have been before taken in New England if, indeed, it has occurred anywhere within the United States. It has been reported more than once, but in every case, apparently, either on insufficient evidence or mistaken identification. The repeated changes or interchanges of names in the Gyrfalcon group have also led to much confusion. A recent instance of this is the mention by Mr. Chapman (Birds of Vicinity of New York City, 1894, p. 41) under "*F. islandus* Brünn." of the Long Island, (New York) specimen originally recorded by Mr. Lawrence (Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York, VIII, 1866, p. 280) and since referred to by Mr. Ridgway (Hist. N. Am. Birds, III, 1874, p. 114) and by Mr. Dutcher (Auk, X, 1893, p. 274) as *F. islandicus*.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chapman now writes me that he has never seen this specimen and "had not the slightest intention of changing its original identification," but that he was misled "into giving *F. islandus* as the equivalent of *F. islandicus*." It may be well, therefore, to improve this and every convenient opportunity to reiterate the fact that, under the arrangement first proposed by Dr. Stejneger (Auk, II, 1885, pp. 187, 188) and afterwards adopted in the A. O. U. Check-List, the bird which, prior to 1885, was so generally called *F. candicans* now stands as *F. islandus*, while that formerly known (among American writers at least) as *F. islandicus* has become *F. rusticolus*.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.

**The American Barn Owl Breeding at Washington, D. C., in Winter.**—One or more pairs of American Barn Owls (*Strix pratincola*) have been known to breed for a number of years in one of the towers of the Smithsonian Institution, and eggs of this species taken here in June, 1861, and June 1, 1865, are now in the United States National Museum collection.

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<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above I have examined this Long Island bird, which is now in the collection of the Brooklyn Historical Society. It proves to be a perfectly typical example of *Falco rusticolus gryfalcon* in nearly mature plumage.



Brewster, William. 1895. "The White Gyrfalcon in New England." *The Auk* 12, 180–180. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068852>.

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