

Copy for Mr. DuMont.

September 8, 1943.

Mr. Fred T. Schwab, Director,
State Conservation Commission,
10th and Mulberry,
Des Moines, Iowa.

Dear Fred:

I am extremely pleased with your new book on "Waterfowl in Iowa". It is a real contribution towards the better acquaintance of perhaps the most popular group of birds, and certainly it will be welcomed by all wildlife managers, bird students, and hunters.

The colored plates are exceptionally good and provide information on plumages seldom found in other bird books. Mr. Reese is to be congratulated on his resourcefulness in securing material to portray other than breeding plumages. The pen and ink sketches are excellent. Frankly, I don't see how you can publish a book of this caliber for a dollar.

Mr. Musgrove has presented his material well. It is readable, and shows good judgement in the selection of species for treatment. Since a chapter was devoted to lead poisoning it seems to me some mention should have been made of botulism which is undoubtedly a more serious agent in the loss of birds at the present time. Fortunately for Iowa botulism outbreaks generally occur from Nebraska and the Dakotas westward, although outbreaks have occurred on the Atlantic Coast.

There is some material that Mr. Musgrove omitted from this volume that might have been added easily if the manuscript had been reviewed by an ornithologist familiar with current literature. I would like to enumerate these omissions so that you may have on record the references if they are requested by others.

Dr. Logan J. Bennett found a nest of the Black Duck on Turnbull Lake, Clay County, during June 1933. This record was included in my paper on "The Breeding Birds of Iowa" published in OCOLOGIST, May 1934, pp. 50 to 65.

The validity of two races of Black Duck seems to have been very well disproved in the paper by Mr. Terence M. Shortt in the WILSON BULLETIN, March 1943, pp. 1 to 7. His excellent colored plate of feet and bills shows that the bright red foot and leg was found only on the adult male in winter plumage; the less brightly colored feet

being found on females or birds in other than adult plumages. If these findings are accepted by the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Nomenclature, and I can't see how they can do otherwise, future reference will be to "Black Duck" without the use of either "Common" or "Red-legged".

A fully plumaged male European Widgeon was killed during October 1933 by George Van Wyngarden while hunting ducks at North Twin Lakes, Calhoun County. Mr. Wyngarden stated that this bird was shot from a flock of four which flew over and all appeared identical. The specimen was mounted and is displayed in Van Wyngarden's collection at Manson. A note on this was published by me in the WILSON BULLETIN, September 1935, p. 236.

Needless to say, I approve of Mr. Musgrove's treatment of the Scaup Ducks. I learned of two additional specimens taken since the publication of "The Revised List of the Birds of Iowa" in 1934. One of these is in the Lloyd Wellendorf Collection at Algona. It is a male with the bill 1.00 inch in width and a wing of 8.20 inches. The other was secured by Wm. Schenke at Clear Lake on March 29, 1934. It evidently had flown into a telephone wire. Its bill was 1.06 inches in width and the wing measured 8.50 inches. Both had the characteristically large bill-nail. Another specimen of the Greater Scaup examined by Mr. Bruce Stiles was recorded in the June 1942 IOWA BIRD LIFE, p. 28. The bird, ~~male~~, was shot by E. H. Brown at Lake Manawa on October 20, 1941. Its wing measured 8.63 inches and the width of the bill was 1.09 inches.

At the time my Iowa list was published I had been unsuccessful in finding a specimen of the American Scoter. However, on April 6, 1934, Professor W. E. Praeger of Kalamazoo, Michigan, wrote that the specimen of American Scoter which was "probable shot on the Des Moines Rapids" on October 31, 1894, was still in his possession. This record was published in the WILSON BULLETIN for September 1935, p. 206.

In the Accidental List, Mr. Musgrove lists the Woodbury County elder duck specimen. This is a good example of the difficulty of identifying birds in the low plumage.

R. M. Anderson in his "Birds of Iowa" published Dr. Rich's report of shooting an American Eider on November 1, 1901, in Woodbury County. It is doubtful whether Dr. Anderson ever had the opportunity to examine the specimen. On my first visit to the Sioux City Academy of Science Collection, which is housed in the Public Library, I made a rough sketch of the exposed bill processes. Examination of specimens in the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History suggested the possibility of this specimen being Somateria v-nigra instead of Somateria mollissima dresseri. Upon the occasion of my next trip to Sioux City I was able to secure satisfactory measurements. The corrected identification was published by me in the WILSON BULLETIN for September 1934, p. 203. I had not been aware that the identification was questioned. The specimen no doubt is still in the Sioux City Library and while the females of the two species are nearly identical, the shape of bill processes are different and diagnostic. Plates 24 and 25, and Fig. 51, in Mr. Kortright's new book show these differences to advantage.

The Cackling Goose is, of course, confined to the West Coast. The shifting of names for these birds has been responsible for confusion in the records. All Iowa

records attributed to the Cackling Goose should be placed under Hutchins's Goose (also known as Richardson's Goose) which it approximates in all measurements except size and shape of bill, but differs some in color. The Cackling Goose breeds in Western Alaska and moves southward to California. The three varieties of Canada Geese listed by Dr. Anderson and the present accepted Iowa equivalents are as follows:

Branta canadensis canadensis	---	B. C. canadensis
" " " hutchinsii	---	B. C. leucopareia
" " " minima	---	B. C. hutchinsi

It has now been demonstrated satisfactorily that the difference in size of snow geese as found by Dr. Anderson in the University of Iowa Talbot collection represented variations as found in the Lesser Snow Goose, and not typical specimens of Chen hyperborea atlantica. The latter occupies a limited breeding range in northern Greenland and migrates over a very restricted route along the Atlantic Coast as far south as Pea Island Refuge, North Carolina.

I think the check-list and similar material in the back of the book is most important and the index is perhaps the best part to enable identification by means of the numerous local names.

You have my permission to use any of the material contained in this letter in your Iowa Conservationist.

Very truly yours,

Philip A. DuMont,
Senior Administrative Assistant,
Division of Public Relations.