

In summary, we consider that field notes giving accounts of rarities (either in time of year or in locality) should only be accepted for publication in this journal if they contain a detailed description of the bird written in the field which confirms the identity beyond reasonable doubt. Readers interested in more detailed information are referred to articles by the late Clark S. Beardslee (The verifying account in ornithology, *Kingbird* 7:109, 1958) and the late Josselyn Van Tyne (What constitute scientific data for the study of bird distribution?, *Audubon Field Notes* 19:390, 1965) in addition to the article by Axtell mentioned above. For those who believe that the specimen is the only reliable record the account of the Hastings rarities (Nicholson and Ferguson-Lees, *British Birds* 55:299, 1962) is a 'must'.

FIELD NOTES

Least Tern at Montezuma NWR, Seneca Co.: On July 3, 1965 while watching for marsh birds from the dike of the May's Point Pool at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, the writer along with Mrs. Ruth Williams, Mr. Walter E. Benning, and Mr. Jon R. Bart observed an adult Least Tern (*Sterna albifrons*). The bird initially was flying over about 20-30' above the open strip of water adjacent to the dike, and made several short, steep plunges into the water, passed directly in front of the observers at a distance of 30-40' and worked gradually up the waterway, and in five minutes passed out of sight westward over the marsh area. Observers were using 7X to 10X binoculars and one observer (JRB) was able to follow the bird closely with a B&L Zoom Scope mounted on a gunstock. Time 1800 EDST; light excellent. Details of the observation taken at the time are as follows:

Small white tern, markedly smaller than the local Black Terns, with very fast, fairly deep wingstroke, rapidity of wingstroke increased when hovering just prior to plunging into the water; body totally white as was moderately forked, rather short tail; upper back and wing surface very pale pearl gray with dark gray along outer primaries from wrist to tip; crown and line from eye to bill black but forehead white, in a pattern like a boomerang with thickest portion near bill-base; a few white feathers in anterior portion of black crown; thin, sharply pointed bill yellow with black tip; leg color not seen (bird never alighted); single "zeet" notes heard several times, but whether from Least Tern or adjacent food-begging young Black Terns not determinable.

The day of the observation a strong SW wind was blowing and had been so for the day prior. In view of this direction of origin of the wind and the inland location, the bird was probably from the Mississippi Valley population, but definition of this point demands collecting. Both the writer and Mrs. Williams are familiar with the species from observations on the Maryland-Virginia coast.

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Winter Wren Nest in Delaware County, 1964: Nests of the Winter Wren are notoriously difficult to find and there are few records of them in New York State outside the Adirondacks and higher elevations of the Catskills. Therefore, the

following observations made in Delaware County, April through June 1964, may be of interest.

The nest was discovered on April 18. It was located in a clearing in the midst of a grove of birches, giant hemlocks and rhododendron bushes in a large wooded swamp near where I live. In this clearing a yellow birch had been partly blown over and was fixed at an angle of about 70 degrees, caught and held in the branches of a nearby tree. The roots were partly pulled up, forming a small cave-like recess beneath them. There were several fairly large openings between the roots through which one could see into the semi-darkness of the interior. The nest was constructed on a shelf-like place on the inner wall of this little cave, about 2½ feet above the ground over a bare space of oozy muck beneath the tree.

On April 18 I was birding in the swamp and heard a bird song that I had heard on a previous occasion without being able to identify it. I traced the song to its source—a tiny wren about 4 inches long with a very short tail which it tilted sharply upward over the back, barrings on the sides and belly, and a buffy stripe over the eye. I identified it as a Winter Wren. While identifying the bird I noticed that it was carrying pieces of sphagnum moss in its bill and disappearing between the roots of the partly upturned tree, into the dark interior. It would emerge without the moss, and repeated the process several times. My curiosity aroused, I peered into the little cave. It required only a brief examination to disclose the nest. It was in the shape of a ball with a circular opening in the side and was constructed of tiny hemlock twigs, clods of earth, mud, and moss, all woven together. It contained neither eggs nor young, as construction was still in progress, but it had the same general shape and appearance as at a much later date. On the basis of a careful description of the song it has been suggested that this was the female singing and carrying nesting materials.

For several weeks I watched the nest without noting further developments, although the birds were still singing in the swamp. On May 22, while showing the nest to a friend, I discovered the female sitting on the nest and there were four eggs! The eggs were pure white without markings. The literature indicates that Winter Wren eggs may sometimes be almost clear white. A fifth egg was laid later.

Two eggs had hatched on June 3, but there were eggs in the nest for the next few days, although all five eventually hatched. The young were flesh-colored and naked at first, appearing completely helpless. On June 18 I went to check the nest and as I bent down to look in, the young popped out—all five of them—and scurried away through the grasses and cinnamon ferns, each in a different direction. The young were fully feathered, resembling the adults in every respect, except for a somewhat blotched appearance and shorter tails.

The eggs hatching over a period of several days suggests that incubation began before the clutch was complete. This would explain what would otherwise be a 12 day incubation period, rather short for this species. The young left the nest 15 days after the first ones hatched, although they may have been forced out early by my visit.

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A Roof-nesting Upland Plover: The Upland Plover (*Bartramia longicauda*) is generally regarded as nesting in concealed grass or among grass tufts in the open areas that it frequents. In the Schenectady area its nesting is of extremely local occurrence. In recent years the plovers at Craig School on Balltown Road in Niskayuna near Schenectady have drawn considerable interest. On June 21, 1965 I went to Craig School hoping to band young plovers which I had been told were seen on the school lawn.

Craig School is in open, semi-rural country atop a grassy knoll. The building is