



Devoted exclusively to Shooting, Fishing and Natural History.

Wilbur F. Parker, -- Editor and Proprietor.

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THE AMERICAN SPORTSMAN.

West Meriden, Conn.

We earnestly request all our contributors to adopt the plan in regard to the use of scientific names which some of them have already adopted, viz: to PRINT all such names legibly to the manuscript, as this will prevent error by giving the compositor plain copy to follow. Above all things we beg, do not venture upon the use of scientific names at all unless certain of their accuracy.

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A MODEL COMBINATION.

An association has been formed among the farmers and landowners of northern New Jersey, of a new and peculiar character. The association, which is known as the Farmers' Mutual Protective Union, arose from a cause which has been frequently brought before our readers, in our own and other sporting papers, and apparently solves that great difficulty, the reconciliation of sportsmen and their interests with those of farmers and landowners.

The constitution, after setting forth in a plain manner the numerous and great injuries inflicted by so called sportsmen upon landowners, deprecates all desire to interfere with legitimate sports in their proper seasons, but recognizes their value and importance, and pledges the members to further them in every way in their power. A permit given by any one of the association entitles the holder to shoot or fish over the lands of all the members, the party issuing the permit being responsible for all damage done by the holder. Any properly introduced person can obtain a permit, and thus a great source of trouble is avoided. The permit is good for one week, and can be renewed "ad infinitum."

A black list is kept in which is inserted the names of persons to whom no permits will be furnished. This includes pot hunters, persons who have done wanton damage, or have refused to pay for accidental damages done by them, persons known to have destroyed game or fishes out of season, and expelled members of the association. Before a name is placed on this black list the matter is fully considered at a meeting of the association, and the accused allowed an opportunity of defending himself. A majority vote is required, and no

personal feelings are allowed to influence the verdict. The form of the permit is as follows:

FARMERS' MUTUAL PROTECTIVE UNION.

Permit Mr. _____ to fish or shoot on the lands of the Union.

Please pin this to the left side of your coat.

Furnished with one of these permits, the sportsman can now range at liberty over nearly fifteen thousand acres of land or water. Without let or hindrance, he is regarded as the guest of the society, and at every farm house is welcomed as a friend, and should he arrive at meal time is frequently invited to take pot luck with the family. Cases in which the privileges of the permit have been abused are rare, though a few have occurred. One came under the notice of the club in January last. A gentleman (?) from a neighboring city came provided with a letter of introduction to an officer of the Union, a permit was furnished him, and he started upon his day's shooting. Passing a farm house at noon he was invited to dinner, an invitation which he readily accepted. During dinner a youngster of the family, childlike, began investigating the contents of his game bag, and to the dismay of the cockney sportsman, extracted from its depths four domestic fowls, which were the result of the morning's sport. For the benefit of such men is the black list kept.

As far as possible a list of members of sportsmen's clubs of the neighboring cities is kept, and these are furnished permits at once upon application.

Should any infraction of the game laws take place, it is reported to the Union, and the offender prosecuted by persons elected for that special purpose.

The members of this Union do not flatter themselves that their by-laws, of which we have mentioned the most prominent points, are as yet perfect, but believe that it is a step in the right direction.

We most cordially and heartily endorse the above society, and recommend the farmers and landowners in other States to follow the liberal and wise example of this combination. We have viewed with much anxiety the growing strife between the landed and the sporting interests of the country, and have striven to reconcile it by pointing out that the representatives of each have their peculiar individual rights, which are equitably entitled to respect and regard. We can fully appreciate the annoyance to which farmers are often subjected, and consider them entirely right in protecting their property by all means the law allows. We do not mean by this that we wish landowners to exclude sportsmen entirely from their lands, (for we have spoken to the point on that matter), but we do mean that there is no reason why property holders should not have some method of deciding by practical test who are, and who are not worthy to be favored with the right of entry, and we are certain that where such liberality is displayed, as in the case before us, an association formed by farmers and landowners for their protection, will receive hearty support from all true sportsmen; for, as we have repeatedly urged, a sportsman is a gentleman, and being such will not disgrace himself by acts of wanton outrage to those who are practically his hosts, and to whose hospitality he is indebted for his pleasure.

A society of this kind, uniting as it will sportsmen and land owners by a bond of sympathy and gratitude, does indeed present an acceptable solution of the troublesome question which has already roused too much ill-feeling and threatened to precipitate an open rupture between those who should be friends. It is the wisest and most manly act that could be devised, alike honorable and worthy of imitation.

DURING our visit to the convention at Oswego, we were the recipients of many favors which we desire to acknowledge. Our thanks are due to the members of the Leatherstocking Club and prominent citizens of Oswego, including the "Union Club," for complimentary cards. Also to the officers and members of the Association for their cordial aid and assistance in obtaining full and correct reports of the proceedings, and to the Palladium and Times for the use of their editorial rooms, offered to all members of the press during the convention. Our stay at the Doolittle House was made very pleasant through the courtesies of the proprietor. The house itself is a splendid and well kept establishment, with elegant rooms and everything which can conduce to the welfare and comfort of its guests. The

rooms of the Board of Trade, where the business meetings of the Convention were held, are in this building, and are well adapted for their purpose.

A GRAND shooting festival and opening of a new shooting park, will take place at Newark, N. J., on July 8th, 6th, 7th and 8th. Two thousand dollars in prizes and premiums will be awarded and a general invitation is extended to riflemen. The shooting will be at a ring target, man target, stick target and bulls eye targets. Tickets for three shots will be sold on the three first targets at \$3 each. On the bulls-eye targets the charge will be \$1 for ten shots. Good rules to govern the shooting have been selected and every care has been taken to ensure the success of the meeting.

By an issue in our last weeks report of the Convention at Oswego, wrong delegates were credited to the Mohawk Game Club of West Troy. Corrected, the list would read Dr. Rowe, Henry G. Kelsey, E. R. Barker and H. P. Schuyler.

LARGE ELK ANTLERS.

There is an unusually large pair of elk horns here in St. Paul. They were collected by the Chippeway Indians, and were exchanged by them to a trader who sold them to Mr. M. T. Kennedy and Brother, of this city. Their dimensions are as follows: Circumference at base, 12.25 inches; length, 55 inches. Originally there were twenty-two prongs on the antlers, but two of them have been broken off. The horns are very massive and heavy, and are the finest pair I have observed.

Mr. Kennedy also has other antlers, such as those of Caribou, deer, &c., and can furnish guns, rifles, etc., of his own make, which are beautifully gotten up, and stand hard use, besides shooting well, as many of the Minnesota sportsmen can testify.

H. J. BATTY.

Discovery of a Burrowing Owl in Florida.

BY ROBERT RIDGWAY.

One of the most important results of the ornithological researches of Mr. N. B. Moore, of Manatee, Florida, a very diligent and trustworthy observer and an esteemed correspondent of the Smithsonian Institution, is the discovery in Florida, of a burrowing owl. In this not only is an entirely new element added to the bird-fauna of the Eastern Region of North America, but the geographical range of the genus is extended to a country far distant from any of which it has been considered specially characteristic; while besides the bird under consideration proves to be new to science.

The genus *Spytylin*, of which the burrowing owls of America are the sole representatives, embraces but a single species as far so known, which extends from Chili, Buenos Ayres and Paraguay northward across the pampas and llanos of South America and over the plateaus of Mexico to the dry plains of the western countries of North America. In the United States its eastward range is limited by the Great Plains west of the Mississippi river, from Texas to Nebraska. It also occurs in the island of Guadeloupe in the Lesser Antilles. The name of this species is *S. cucularia*, (Molina); but it being found that the Andean, North American, Antillean and Floridan forms are appreciably different, the term is properly restricted to the race found upon the pampas of Buenos Ayres and the adjacent countries. The four well-marked "geographical races" are therefore designated as follows: The pampas birds are var. *cucularia*, Molina; the Andean are var. *grallaria*, Spix, the North American var. *hypogaeae*, Bonaparte, the Antillean var. *guadeloupenensis*, Ridgway, (see History of North American Birds, by Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, Vol. III., page 60). The Floridan form being entirely new to science, is therefore yet to be named. Accordingly, it may be called var. *floridana*, Ridgway, and diagnosed as follows:

SPOTTY CUCULARIA VAR. FLORIDANA.—FLORIDA BURROWING OWL.

CH.—Above dark amber-brown, with numerous spots of pure white; on the top of the head and on the nape these spots are narrow and longitudinal, and along the shafts of the feathers; on the back they are broadly-cuneate, and medial, but on the wings they are rounded, and on both webs—each feather having about two pairs of spots. Quills lighter brown, the outer webs with semi-oval spots of dull white; rump, upper tail-coverts and tail, rather paler brown, the former less distinctly spotted, tail crossed by about four rows of transversely-oblong spots of dingy white (forming as many

incomplete bands) and indistinctly tipped with the same; eye-brows, throat, indistinct spot in the middle of the breast, and ground-color of the lower parts, white; a collar across the fore-neck heavily spotted with dark umber; rest of the lower parts, except the lining of the wing, femorals, tibia, anal-region and crissum, marked with broad transverse bars or spots of dark umber, the tint growing lighter and more reddish posteriorly; lining of the wing, and flanks, much tinged with ochraceous. Tarsi naked, with scattered bristles on upper portion in front; bill, pale greenish yellow; feet, dusky grayish.

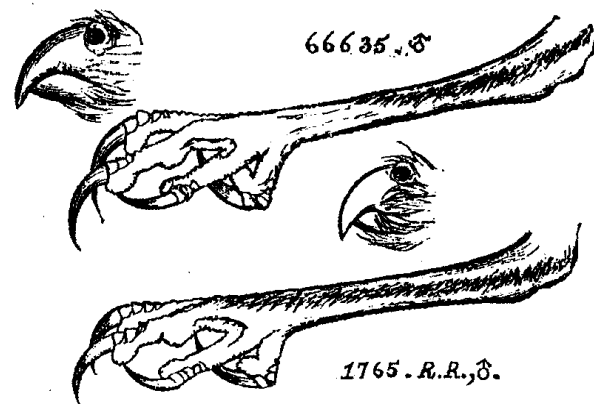
MALE.—(No. 66635, 16 miles east of Sarasota Bay, Manatee county, Florida, April 17th, 1874; N. B. Moore). Wing, 6.40; tail, 3.80; culmen, 65; depth of bill, 50; tarsus, 1.85; middle toe, 75.

FEMALE.—(No. 66636, same locality, date and collector). Wing, 6.50; tail, 3.40; culmen, 65; tarsus, 195; middle toe, 75.

A comparison of these specimens with others from the western United States, reveals differences of a very decided character, though not of specific importance. The size is decidedly smaller than that of the average of western specimens, the colors are darker, the bill much larger and more compressed, and the tarsi longer and very much less distinctly clothed. In colors and in the nakedness of the tarsi this form approaches quite closely to the Antillean var. *guadeloupensis*, standing about half way between it and var. *hypugaeus*. It is most like the latter in colors, but closer to the former in size and relative proportions. The three races compare in measurements as follows:

	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus	Middle toe	Specimen measured
Var. <i>hypugaeus</i>	6.40-7.00	3.00-3.30	10-60	1.50-1.70	80	25
Var. <i>floridana</i>	6.40-6.60	3.30-3.40	65	1.85-1.95	75	25
Var. <i>guadeloupensis</i>	6.40	3.40	100	1.82	72	1

The accompanying cuts show the comparative dimensions and proportions of the western and Floridan birds as exhibited in the bill and feet.



I quote below the portion of Mr. Moore's letter in relation to these specimens:

"Since the box was mailed up I have obtained three specimens of the burrowing owls mentioned (in a former letter) as probably occurring in this State. I shot them about sixteen miles east of Sarasota Bay, on the 17th inst.

They were seen in the driest prairies, where the grasses and palmettos are very stunted, being scarcely a foot high, with numerous small patches of naked sand or earth interspersed, and without any other vegetation, such as trees or shrubs, the latter appearing only on the borders of the shallow (now dry) ponds. In these ponds there occurs what is here called "saw grass," growing to the height of four or five feet; the shrubby around the border of the ponds attains the height of two to five feet.

I saw the first one perched on a "gall bush" near the margin of one of these ponds; seven in all, were seen during two visits made to the locality. The others were flushed from the ground, two being seen to fly from immediately within the entrance of their burrows. On being "put up" they flew sometimes twenty-five and again seventy-five yards, and alighted either in the grass, on the ground, or upon some low bush, usually a saw-palmetto. One I discovered, for the first time, at the mouth of a burrow as I rode along, and as I came within fifteen steps he flew away and alighted in the grass. This was the male whose wing I send.

On being shot at and missed they become very cau-

tious, rising farther from me, and flying to a greater distance.

Once only did I detect a vocal utterance; the sounds were, as nearly as can be expressed by writing, *chit, chit*, repeated five or six times, while the bird was flying.

"Their flight is slow, steady and level; just before porching, however, they mount rather abruptly, at times, as if to view the ground before alighting.

"The burrows occupied by the owls, I think are the deserted habitations of skunks. No odor of these animals, however, was detected at or near them; but on the other portions of the prairie it was very perceptible. The burrows of the "gopher," (a species of land tortoise—*Testudo polyphemus*), which are so numerous in other parts of Florida, are not found here, I am told; and opossums, mecons, and foxes though abundant here, are quite unwilling to reside in these dry and scantily clad localities. Another species of tortoise (*Chelonia*?) does occur here now and then (I saw none), but judging from the sizes of the burrows inhabited by the owls they are larger than would be necessary for this tortoise should it be its habit to excavate such a residence. The burrows I found to be five inches in diameter at a foot beyond their mouths; they enter the earth at an inclination to its surface of less than 45°. There is nothing like a mound at the entrance, the earth, (sand), removed, presenting a level and oblong surface, not compact, but loose as if disturbed constantly for a slight depth, and occupying an area of nearly two square feet, in which no grass or other vegetation gains foot-hold, except around the edge. Scattered around upon this bed of earth were found the elytra of various coleopterous and neuropterous insects, parts of crawfishes and hard-worms (*Julia*); no remains of quadrupeds or birds were detected.

"But seven or eight burrows were seen, no one being nearer another than thirty or forty feet, and then seemed to be in three communities, each as much, I should say, as three-fourths of a mile to a mile from the other. I cannot suppose that they are very numerous, for a Mr. Rawles, who is native of Florida, and has always resided here (*bi-racinated*, as persons do heretofore), first noticed them five years ago on his week in this (Manatee) county, in the neighborhood of those seen by Mr. Knight, of which I have informed you.

I conclude with no other aid to assist me but the work of Mr. Audubon and the ninth volume of (*"Birds of North America"*), that they are the *Athene hypugaeus*, supposing that the nakedness of the tarsi of these and the lack of anything like a "yellowish" tinge upon the upper parts, would scarcely be sufficient to entitle them to specific distinctness; the dimensions too, agree with *Athene hypugaeus*. Accordingly, I refer them to the third stage of plumage described in the "Ninth Volume," (page 52.) "The skins sent are, without doubt, of a pair of mated

birds, the wing being that of a male, whose dimensions were as follows: total length, 8.5-8; length to end of claws, 10.5-8; expanse of wings, 23. The measurement of the others are as follows:—male: total length, 9.5-16; length to end of claws, 11.5-8; expanse of wings, 23.5-8; female: total length, 9.7-8; length to end of claws, 11.3-4; expanse of wings, 23.7-8."

The occurrence of this Western owl in Florida prompts some remarks upon the subject of the geographical distribution of North American birds, in which connection this peninsula constitutes a field of extreme interest. Here we have an instance of the isolated occurrence in a restricted portion of Florida of an owl which elsewhere in North America is found only on the plateau of Mexico and the arid plains adjacent to and west of the Rocky Mountains. This fact calls to mind a parallel case in the distribution of a genus of jays (*Cyanocitta*). In the same portions of Florida where this burrowing owl is found is also (*Cyanocitta floridana*) peculiar to that locality; its nearest relative is a species (*C. californica*), including its geographical races) which is distributed over almost precisely the same area with the burrowing owl, in the West. The vicinity of the Rocky Mountains is likewise the eastern limit, so far as known, of this species, which so closely resembles the Floridan one that it cannot be considered as more than a geographical race. These two are the only non-migratory birds which are peculiar to Florida; but the fact that some thousand miles away to the westward they are almost exactly repeated by scarcely different

forms, suggests the inquiry—why are they thus isolated? Many of your readers are doubtless familiar with the address of Professor Gray before the American Association for the advancement of science, at Dubuque, Iowa, in August, 1873; those who are not, are referred to this extremely interesting treatise, entitled "Sequoia and its history," reprinted at the "Salem Press," Salem, Mass. In his discussion of the present geographical distribution of the Sequoias, the allies and geographical associates of these remarkable Californian trees are also mentioned. While establishing clearly the near relationship between Eastern North America and Eastern Asia (1) in the vegetation of the two regions, the very singular fact of a like parallelism between Florida and California in the distribution of certain trees is also alluded to. It is well-known that no two portions of the earth's surface of the same parallels of latitudes differ more completely in their fauna than do Eastern North America and Eastern Asia; consequently we have nothing to do with the latter region in this connection; but the points of relationship between California and Florida, as proved by the repeating in the one locality of species, or nearly allied species, of the other is so important in its bearing upon our subject that special attention is called to Prof. Gray's remarks, from which we quote: the *Torreya floridana* "is a noble yew-like tree, and very local, being known only for a few miles along the shores of a single river." In North America, there is only one more species of *Torreya*, and that is the companion of the redwoods in California. Moreover, the *Torreya* of Florida has growing with it a yew tree; and the trees of that grove are the only yew trees of Eastern North America. The only other yew trees of America grow with the redwoods and the other *Torreya* in California." Here, then, are two instances among trees, as well as birds, where Californian forms are repeated in Florida, (or vice versa as the case may be), without their being known to occur anywhere in an intervening three thousand miles of country. Therefore, to return to the question regarding the Florida forms of the burrowing owl and *Cyanocitta*. "Why are they thus isolated?" Are they in reality so isolated as would be supposed from that facts that they are only known to occur in Florida, and there in a restricted locality. A careful analysis of other facts bearing on the case decides the probability of a negative answer: these facts are the following:—Besides the two birds above mentioned, are two other species found in Florida, but also in adjacent portions of the South Atlantic and Gulf States, which likewise have their nearest representatives in the Western Region. These species are the brown-headed nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) and logger-head shrike (*Ochtho ludoviciana*). The western representatives of these two species (*S. pygmaea* and *O. accubitorides*) are so very closely related that they are undoubtedly but slightly modified derivatives from the same stock. Yet there is a wide gap considered to exist—at least in the case of the former species—between the habitats of the eastern and western races.

All the facts bearing upon the subject when duly considered and carefully analyzed, points to the conclusion that there is not in reality any such gap, and that these Florida forms are not (except perhaps in the case of the phalarope), thus isolated from their western relatives. The shrike is known to extend from Florida uninterruptedly westward, and while the birds of this species, from the Rocky Mountains, and those from Florida are as decidedly different from each other as are the brown-headed nuthatches or the *Cyanocitta* of the same regions, they yet grade insensibly together in the intervening region. The *Sitta pusilla* has been found west nearly to the Mississippi river; who can say positively that it does not continue westward across that river and become, step by step, modified into its relative of the Rocky Mountains. Of no other portion of the United States are we so ignorant in regard to the distribution of the birds as we are of the Gulf States; no one since Audubon has gone through them with an eye to ornithology, and then the science was, comparatively speaking, in its infancy. The "pine-wood-finch" (*Peucaea aestivalis*) was, prior to 1871, universally considered to be confined to lower Georgia and South Carolina and contiguous portions of Florida; no ornithologist ever heard of it from anywhere else, and it was classed along with our most local birds. In the west, however, it was found in Arizona by one of the government expeditions. It can, therefore, be imagined what surprise the writer felt when he found it in southern Illinois, more than a thousand miles to the northward of the old locality for the species, and not occurring there accidentally, but plentifully, and breeding! The finding of the Florida jay in the scrub of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, and the burrowing owl on the dry prairie, of the same States is, therefore, in the opinion of the writer, but a mere matter of time, and the sure result of the proper research.

Not only with these stationary birds is there a near relation between the Western Region and Florida, but there is also a connection between them by the migratory ones, no less than five western species, not found elsewhere in the Atlantic States having been recorded from that peninsula.