

IMPORTANT ORNITHOLOGICAL MATTER

FROM BURLINGHAM SCHURR, NATURALIST

IF YOUR MUSEUM HAS AMONG ITS EXHIBITS SPECIMENS OF EXTINCT AND NEAR EXTINCT BIRDS, - YOU ARE URGED TO LIST SUCH SPECIMENS IN THE CENSUS OF EXTINCT BIRDS.

"TOP O' MOUNTAIN"

GRANBY, MASSACHUSETTS

October 12, 1933

Director,
Dalhousie University,
Science Collection,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
Canada.

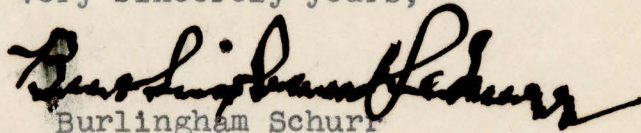
Dear Friend:

In February 1932, the taking of the Census of Extinct Birds in Museums and collections was inaugurated, and it has been steadily carried on in an endeavor to make this undertaking as thorough and complete as possible. Newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals, have been very generous in calling wide attention to the census, and this fact, together with printed forms and personal letters sent through the mails, has brought a response that bespeaks of a pronounced interest in this undertaking. Directors and curators of public and college museums, librarians, collectors, and individuals, have given detailed lists, descriptions, and all information possible at their command bearing upon the extinct and near-extinct species in their respective collections. It is most gratifying that a large majority of museums have rendered lists of extinct and near-extinct birds in their possession, but it is very much desired to tabulate in this census the extinct and near-extinct birds that are in museums and collections that have not as yet sent in reports.

This is a final appeal to all museums and collectors possessing mounted specimens, skins and eggs, of the Great Auk, Labrador Duck, Eskimo Curlew, Heath Hen, Passenger Pigeon, California Vulture, Carolina Paroquet, and Ivory-billed Woodpecker, to write to the undersigned and give information as to the number of each species in their respective collections, together with such information where possible, as to when and where the specimen was originally collected.

That the close of this census will reveal that all museums, collectors, and dealers, have contributed in making the results of this work wholly complete, is my very earnest wish.

Very sincerely yours,


Burlingham Schurr

P.S. - In an effort to reach every possible source where birds as mentioned in this letter may be located, it is suggested that information regarding this Census be given to newspapers and journals.

Final Notice and Appeal in

THE TAKING OF THE CENSUS OF EXTINCT BIRDS

Never before in ornithological research has the endeavor been made to get a full report as to the number of extinct birds that have been preserved by institutions and individuals, and likewise no attempt has heretofore been made to learn to what extent Museums and Collectors have in their possession the near-extinct species.

To know the exact number of extinct birds, and the near-extinct species that have been preserved, and their whereabouts in Museums and Collections will be in itself interesting information. But even more interesting and valuable will be the data and notes on various species as submitted by the directors and curators of museums, and by collectors and interested persons.

THE OUTCOME OF THIS WORK WILL BE OF MUCH IMPORTANCE IN A NUMBER OF RESPECTS, FOREMOST OF WHICH WILL BE THE STRESSING OF MORE PRONOUNCED PROTECTION OF VANISHING WILD LIFE, AND THE PART MUSEUMS AND COLLECTORS MAY TAKE IN THE CAUSE.

In the interest of scientific research - and in behalf of sincere effort to advance a means for more extended PROTECTION of the NOW LIVING BIRDS, it is ESSENTIAL TO KNOW THE NUMBER OF EXTINCT and NEAR-EXTINCT BIRDS THAT ARE IN MUSEUMS and COLLECTIONS.

Address all correspondence in this matter to

Naturalist Schurr is Director of the Museum of Natural History and Art, Holyoke; a Curator at the Museum of Zoology, Amherst College, and the Founder of "The Naturalists' Memorial Nature Preserve", Granby.

BURLINGHAM SCHURR,
"TOP O' MOUNTAIN"
GRANBY, MASSACHUSETTS

November 8, 1933.

Burlingham Schurr, Esq.,
"Top O'Mountain",
Wranby, Massachusetts, U. S. A.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your circular letter of
October 12:

It may be of interest to you to know that Dalhousie University possesses a pair of Labrador Ducks. These ducks were originally the property of Reverend Dr. Thomas McCulloch, first President of this University, 1938-43, and his son, and were presented to us by members of the McCulloch family. These are the very birds which Audubon used in making his folio plates.

Yours very truly,

/LH.

Secretary to the President.

ADDRESS REPLY TO
CHIEF FEDERAL MIGRATORY
BIRD OFFICER



CANADA

DEPARTMENT
OF
MINES AND RESOURCES
LANDS, PARKS AND FORESTS BRANCH

Wolfville, N. S.
Dec. 2, 1943.

PLEASE QUOTE
FILE 43-1

Museum Curator,
Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Sir:

Many years ago your museum was presented with a pair of Labrador ducks now long extinct. Can you tell me the date of the presentation and any other particulars concerning the incident. I believe they came from the McCulloch collection of Pictou.

I hope in due course to publish a book entitled BIRDS OF NOVA SCOTIA and require the above information in connection with this work. I saw the birds in question in the museum about 1904. They were then on exhibition on the floor of the museum. About twenty years later I called to see them having heard that the female bird was spurious. By this time both birds were in the vault and I recall having made careful measurements and identified it as a female American Scoter, though I recall that the then curator showed some evidence of indignation at what he called presumption on my part, maintaining as he did that both birds were genuine.

Are these birds still in your possession, and if so do you still consider them both Labradors?

Yours faithfully,

E. W. Tufts
E. W. TUFTS.

RWT/KP

Chief Federal Migratory Bird
Officer Maritime Provinces

December 17, 1943.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of December 2, addressed to Museum Curator, Dalhousie University, has been given to me for attention.

I should have answered your letter sooner, but I have been trying hopefully to find some references to the history of the Labrador Ducks in our files, but I have not been very successful.

The two birds are still in our possession. So far as I can learn we still consider both of them genuine specimens. They came to us in 1884, when the McCulloch Collection was presented to the University.

In a letter, written by the late President A. S. Mackenzie to Dr. Leonard C. Sanford, New Haven, Conn., May 30, 1916, is the following paragraph, which, I think, gives as much history about these birds as I can find anywhere:

"I may add that these specimens of the Labrador Duck have a special interest on account of the fact that the original owner was the first President of the University, and his son, who donated them to us, was a member of the Board of Governors, and that the daughters of the latter are alive and interested in the University and in seeing these specimens, which belonged to their grandfather, retained in their vicinity and hands of the University with which they were all connected. I do not know also whether or not you are aware of the fact that these are the very birds Audubon used in making his folio plates."

I am sorry that I cannot be more helpful.

Yours very truly,

R. W. Tufts, Esq.,
Wolfville,
Nova Scotia.

Secretary to the President.