

The Passenger Pigeon.

Not discovered last year—Renewal of search—A reward of \$1,000

The search for the Passenger Pigeon will be carried on for another year. No person was successful last year in finding this finest and noblest of all wild pigeons. Whereas forty or fifty years ago great flocks comprising hundreds of thousands, or even millions were frequently observed, much doubt exists as to whether there are any left today. Its range extended over the portion of the American continent east of the Rocky Mountains and as far north as Hudson Bay.

Last year many reports were received to the effect that the long-lost pigeon had been found, but on further enquiry, and on demanding a deposit of \$5.00 as an evidence of good faith and care in its identification before we incurred any expense in confirming the discovery, it turned out that some other bird had been mistaken for it, and nothing more was heard of it.

All finds are to be reported to Dr. C. F. Hodge, Clark University, Worcester, Mass., or to the undersigned. The awards are offered solely and only for information of *location of undisturbed nestings*. We do not desire to obtain possession of any birds dead or alive, but we are working solely to save the free wild pigeon.

To insure intelligence and good faith, informants of nestings are advised to enclose, or agree to forfeit, at least \$5.00 in case they have failed to identify the birds correctly. This is only fair, since the amount may cover only a small part of the costs occasioned by a false report. The money will be immediately returned if the birds are found to be the true wild passenger pigeons.

In sending reports give exact date, hour, number in flock, direction of flight, and descriptions of the nest, the eggs, and the birds themselves.

Last year the Mourning Dove, the Band-tailed Pigeon of the Pacific Slope, and Cuckoos, were mistaken for Passenger Pigeons.

Passenger Pigeons nest during April or May, making rude scanty platforms of twigs through which the eggs can be seen. The nests are usually from ten to thirty feet above the ground and are apt to be found in any woodland. There is usually one (sometimes two) elliptical white eggs, one and one-half inches by one inch, in each nest. The Passenger Pigeon is sixteen inches long from bill to end of tail, of slender build, and has a long

graduated tail, that is, the central tail feathers are about twice the length of the outer ones. The male is blue-gray above and on the head, and ruddy underneath; the female is duller colored, inclining to brownish.

The Mourning Dove is shorter by four inches, and both sexes have black spots on the ears and brownish backs. The forehead of the adult is vinaceous brown, and the nest is usually less than ten feet from the ground.

Observers should be absolutely sure of the identity of the bird before making a report. If the nest contains eggs, haste in reporting is unnecessary, as the young birds will remain in the nest for three weeks or more before leaving.

It should be remembered, too, that the rewards are offered for *undisturbed nests*. The birds must not be molested in any way. Watch them closely from a concealed position with a field glass and ascertain for a certainty that they are passenger pigeons before reporting.

Macdonald College, P. Q.,
March 1st, 1911.

W. LOCHHEAD.

A year ago the REVIEW published an article on the Wild or Passenger Pigeon, showing how that bird, so numerous in these provinces forty or fifty years ago, had been almost completely exterminated by sportsmen (?) and pot-hunters. A reward of a thousand dollars was offered for its re-discovery with a nest in our northern forests. To stimulate young naturalists it was urged that the knowledge obtained by comparing the descriptions of birds, and health-giving walks in the forests would be an ample reward. But the money prize has never been awarded although a vigorous search has been made.

In *Bird-Lore* for December it is stated that probably the only live Passenger Pigeon in existence is a female, eighteen years old, that was hatched in the cages of the Cincinnati Zoological Company and still preserved there. A writer in the same periodical says:

"Eighty tons of Passenger Pigeons were sent from one county in New York to the market in New York City in 1849, and at least three hundred tons were dispatched from Petoskey, Michigan, in 1878. Sullivan Cooke states that there were caught and shipped in forty days from Hartford, Michigan, 11,880,000 pigeons. Also that in the two succeeding years one-third more than that number were shipped from Shelby, or 15,840,000 birds. When it is considered that this traffic went on wherever the pigeons appeared, and that they were slaughtered at all seasons, particularly while nesting, there is no mystery in the extinction of the Wild Pigeon."