

residents are given so late for 1907 is owing to the fact that Mr. Stansell only arrived at Stony Plain about April 1st of that year. And if some birds marked as common have only been seen late in the year for the first time, that is no doubt due to the little leisure time that Mr. Stansell has from his work. That section is no doubt an interesting one from an ornithological point of view, as witness the breeding there of the Bohemian Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak, etc., and it is to be hoped that Mr. Stansell will hereafter regularly send in bird news to the NATURALIST and thus further elucidate the conditions of bird-life there. A number of the species enumerated in this list will eventually, no doubt, prove to be the western subspecies of the ones named, and perhaps Bonaparte's Gull will turn out to be Franklin's Gull.

G. E.

### THE SO-CALLED WHITE WILD OATS AND WHAT THEY ARE.

BY NORMAN CRIDDLE, TREESBANK, MAN.

There has been considerable apprehension among farmers within recent years, through the discovery of white oats which resemble in their nature, or seed form, the wild species *Avena fatua*. These oats were first brought into prominence some two or three years ago by the different agricultural institutions of the country whose experts found it advisable, pending investigation, to class them as "wild oats" when judging grain for seed purposes, and to condemn the sample in which they were found. As this type of oats has become better known, and carefully looked for, examples have been found in nearly every variety of cultivated oats, and, as a matter of fact, there are probably very few that are entirely free from them, either black or white.

As the problem of what these oats were and how they were going to affect the interests of grain growers became a prominent one economically, and as it also became an interesting subject botanically, I devoted some time to it during the last three years with the result that I am now in a position to throw some light upon the question.

One of the first things that attracts attention to these so-called "white wild oats" is their close resemblance, in the seed form, to the variety from which they were selected. There is, however, one striking difference, namely, in every case the supposed wild oat, or as I shall term it in future, the sport, is always awned with a strong twisted black and white awn, and

\*This does not refer to albino wild oats which can always be recognized by their close resemblance to the black ones.