

Some few guillemots and puffins also lay their eggs among the stones and rocks above high water on the beach. The two eggs in the case of the guillemots are well hidden at the bottom of some passage between the rounded boulders. In scrambling over these rocky portions, we startle the sitting birds from their eggs. They flutter forth and perch upon a nearby boulder, or flop into the waves, watching with outstretched necks and anxious gaze the movements of the intruder.

The peat-like turf of the elevated parts of the island was completely honeycombed with the burrows of the Leach's petrels—the air about being pervaded with the strong musky odor of the birds. The petrels themselves, however, are not to be seen at all during the day, unless you thrust your arm full length into one of the burrows and bring forth the hiding bird, probably the sitting female, whose mate is far out to sea searching its food. But it is at night the petrels make merry. With darkness the foragers return and the sitting ones sally forth. Now the air becomes resonant with their soft twitterings and cluckings, while shadowy forms flit about in every direction. The nest burrow is usually about two feet in length, just large enough to admit the birds and most often following the side of some tree root, or underground boulder. But one egg is laid, that upon the bare turf at the tunnel's end.

The half-wild cats with which the island is infested, play sad havoc with the poor petrels. Lying in wait at the entrance to the burrows at nightfall they seize upon their unhappy victims as they venture forth. Scattered feathers, wings and tails, everywhere through the woods, attest the murderous work of the cats.

Some fifteen or twenty eider ducks were spending the summer about the shore, and suspecting some were breeding, search was made among the brush for the nests. With the aid of an aged Newfoundland retriever, who picked up the trail of a duck, and led us into a tangle of bushes and weeds, we discovered one nest, thickly lined with down and containing six large, olive green eggs. Formerly these ducks nested in great abundance on Seal Island, but of late years only an occasional pair or so.

Of the shore birds, only three species were noted at that season. These were the spotted sandpiper, piping plover and semi-palmated plover; all of which Mr. Crowell has found nesting. A few terns, both the common and arctic, were nesting about the big sand flat, mere remnants of the swarms that used to nest there.