

taken in winter, are full of eggs, and ready to propagate, and instinct drives them up into fresh water for that purpose. On the St. Lawrence, they ascend the tributary rivers on the North Shore with this end in view, but in some of them, at least, they cannot penetrate very far. They can go only a few miles up the St. Charles at Quebec, and in the St. Maurice there are falls about fifteen miles up which would bar their progress. Some of the other rivers between Three Rivers and Quebec may be more accessible to them. The conditions under which the spawn is deposited are, however, unknown.

Mr. Saulte says that the Tommy Cod has been an article of food in Canada ever since the French colonists arrived, and no doubt it was relished by the Indians long before that time. No diminution in the supply has been noticed. To-day the quantities used, principally by the French-Canadian population, are very great, and as Jack Frost comes to help, and preserves the fish in the best manner possible, none of this valuable food supply is wasted.

H. K. C.

BIRDS OF WESTERN ONTARIO.

SIR,—Since the appearance of your January number I have been requested to explain two points in the list of Birds of Western Ontario, and have pleasure in doing so: 1st.—As regards the common Tern, it appears in the Hamilton list as *Sterna Wilsoni*, and in the London list as *Sterna fluviatilis*, both names were taken from the Smithsonian catalogue, but were taken at different dates, and the name had been changed in the interval. To be strictly correct in following the Smithsonian nomenclature, we should drop the *Wilsoni* and adopt the *fluviatilis* as being the most recent, and let us hope that there will soon be an end of these frequent changes in specific names which are so perplexing to the student. 2nd.—As regards the large Rails, the specimen referred to in the Hamilton list was brought me by a local sportsman who said it was the only one of the kind he had ever seen here, but he had often shot them at Baptiste Creek; that they bred there; this was to all appearance the Clapper Rail, as the measurement as also the bleached-worn appearance of the plumage agreed with the descriptions given of that species, and the entry was made for the list in accordance with these facts. Whether I was strictly correct or not in the identification will probably not be known, as the specimen referred to was lost, and neither of the

large rails has been found here since that time; the one which breeds at Baptiste Creek and the St. Clair marshes is the king rail, *Rallus elegans*.

I have to record the capture within the past ten days of a second specimen of the Barn Owl, *Strix flammea*; this was a female shot at a farm-house near Dundas, about four miles from where the other was obtained. It is quite possible that this pair may have left their home in the south in company, bent on a voyage of discovery; if so, they have met the fate which frequently befalls adventurers in new countries, viz.: been skinned by the natives.

Pine grosbeaks have been very abundant round the city since the middle of January; they are nearly all in the grey plumage, being either females or immature males. The appearance of these birds in such numbers may be taken as an indication of the severity of the winter in the north as I have not heard of their being here at all for many years past.

Your truly,

T. McLEWRAITH.

Cairnbrae, Hamilton, O., 14th Feb., 1883.

CROW BLACKBIRDS.

Your correspondent in the January No. of the "C. S. & N.," Mr. Ernest D. Wintle, probably refers to but one species of grackle in his remarks under the above caption. The Boat-tailed Grackle is a Southern species, not yet recorded as found in Canada, I believe. The Purple Grackles are abundant in Canada, and the "boat-like" spreading of the tail may be commonly observed during the love season of these birds, when the males thus display themselves, both on the wing and strutting upon the ground. I have often watched these grackles in the city of Three Rivers, P. Q., where they breed abundantly, and being unmolested there, are very tame, feeding upon the streets and in gardens. The males are larger and of handsomer plumage than the females, and the contrast is quite noticeable.

The Rusty Grackle, a smaller species is also found in Canada, but Mr. Wintle's remarks will not apply to this bird.

The Boat-tailed Grackle exceeds in size the Purple Grackle, especially in length, and would never be confounded with any of our smaller North American Grackles. In my catalogue of the "Birds of Maine" I have recorded a single occurrence of the Boat-tailed Grackle in this State, and I do not know of any other record of the species occurring so far north.

Portland, Maine.

EVERETT SMITH.