

special telescopes for the study of the sun and a 28½-inch reflecting telescope. This instrument is now in regular use in cooperation with the Sproul Observatory of Swarthmore College. It is being

used with a spectroscope in a research program measuring the speeds at which the stars are moving towards or away from the solar system.

*Science News Letter, August 4, 1934*

## ORNITHOLOGY

## First Ptarmigan Hatched In Captivity at Cornell

**"STRONG** and doing well" is the nursery bulletin on the first ptarmigan baby to be hatched in captivity.

Dr. A. A. Allen, head of Cornell's ornithology department, collected freshly laid ptarmigan eggs on an expedition to the Canadian outpost, Churchill on Hudson Bay. Bantam hens were persuaded to act as foster mothers in hatching the eggs which he rushed from Churchill to Ithaca. Out of 18 eggs set, only one hatched.

### Related To Ruffed Grouse

The six weeks trip from which he has just returned was spent at Churchill, a small trading outpost 1,000 miles north of Winnipeg, and vicinity, and was for the purpose of making comparative studies of the ptarmigan, noting the similarities in life history between it and our common ruffed grouse, to whom it is closely related. Dr. Allen, an authority on the habits and breeding of grouse, has succeeded in rearing the birds free from the parasitic disease which is fast making this species of bird almost extinct.

Gathering the eggs of the ptarmigan for hatching was a difficult matter, since they had to be freshly laid in order to survive transportation. Dr. Allen reports that spring had just come to the north country when he left for the return trip. The ice was breaking up in Hudson Bay and great numbers of white whales and seals had put in an appearance. A snowstorm occurred the week before he returned and drifts as much as eight feet deep could be seen.

### To Continue Study

Scientists left by Dr. Allen at Churchill to continue the study of Canadian birds have sent back another set of twenty eggs which are now being hatched. Several eggs have already been broken by the foster hen mother, but it is expected that there will soon be

more hungry mouths in Cornell's ptarmigan nursery.

Photographs and motion pictures of numerous little-known birds were also obtained. Among them were the golden plover and the arctic tern, which have the longest migrations of any birds known to science; the plover winters in southern South America, and the tern in the antarctic.

Pictures were also made of the Hudsonian curlew and the Harris sparrow, which is of especial interest to Cornell since Dr. George M. Sutton of the Cornell faculty was the first scientist to discover its eggs, during a trip to Churchill.

### Accompanied By Students

Dr. Allen was accompanied by three Cornell graduate students who have re-

mained at Churchill to work. They are Fred M. Baumgartner of Indianapolis, Miss Margaret Heydweiller of Rochester, and Miss Theodoro Cope of Dimock, Pa. Prof. Guy Bailey of Geneseo State Normal School, who was also of the party, returned with Dr. Allen.

*Science News Letter, August 4, 1934*

## ZOOLOGY

## Tax Collector Takes Prince's Last Buffalo

**COMPLAINING** taxpayers in America, who groan that the tax collector is going to "take their last buffalo nickel," are better off at that than Prince Pless. Polish tax collectors, alleging unpaid arrears of four million marks, have taken his last buffalo—or more properly his last wisent.

The prince had nine of these exceedingly rare animals, zoological first cousins of the beasts that made Buffalo Bill famous, on his estate in Polish Silesia. Now the Polish authorities have them. They check them off against the prince's alleged unpaid taxes at a valuation of 5,000 zloty (about 2,500 marks) per head.

It is considered probable that the Pless wisent will be purchased by the Polish Agricultural (*Turn to Next Page*)



### FIRST TO HATCH IN CAPTIVITY

*Nestling in a human hand, this little ptarmigan or northern grouse is the first baby of its kind to be hatched in captivity. The event was thus recorded photographed by Dr. A. A. Allen, head of Cornell's ornithology department, who collected a setting of 18 ptarmigan eggs. Only the one baby successfully hatched.*