

FEATHERS

Published by the Schenectady Bird Club

Vol. 4, No. 1

January, 1942

FLICKERS AND BLUEBIRDS ARE FEATURED IN CHRISTMAS COUNT

Chester N. Moore, Chairman, Christmas Count Committee

Schenectady, N.Y. (Mohawk River from Lock 8 to Mohawk View, Collins Lake, Woestina Sanctuary and lower Rotterdam Hills, Central Park, Vale and Parkwood Cemeteries, Meadowdale, Indian Ladder, Fuller and Oxford Road sections of Albany, Albany Airport, Consaul Road, Watervliet Reservoir, and intervening territory.) -- Dec. 21; 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Clear; wind moderate, northwest; fields mostly covered with light, crusted snow; minimum of open water; temp. -4° at start, 13° at noon, 11° at return. Twenty-five observers working in eight parties. Total party hours afield, 47; total party miles, 198 (40 afoot, 158 by car, incidental to trips afoot). Black Duck, 1; American Merganser, 6; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 9; Marsh Hawk, 3; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 9; Ring-necked Pheasant, 37; Herring Gull, 4; Great Horned Owl, 2; Flicker, 2 (in distinctly separate localities, one by B. D. Miller, Moore and Stone, the other by Freese, Kelly and Oleson); Hairy Woodpecker, 15; Downy Woodpecker, 47; Blue Jay, 110; Crow, 1133; Black-capped Chickadee, 240; White-breasted Nuthatch, 42; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 3; Bluebird, 2 (first found by call notes, then seen at close range by Havens and P. S. Miller); Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Northern Shrike, 2; Starling, 559; English Sparrow, 547; Meadowlark, 2; Redpoll, 188; Pine Siskin, 6; Goldfinch, 94; Slate-colored Junco, 69; Tree Sparrow, 748; Song Sparrow, 15; Snow Bunting, 30. Total, 33 species; 3935 individuals. -- Mr. and Mrs. George H. Bainbridge, Pauline Baker, Guy Bartlett, Edna Becker, Dorothy Caldwell, Edna Droms, Frank Freese, Eslly Hallenbeck, Barrington S. Havens, Idella M. Heacox, Alice Holmes, John Kelly, B. D. Miller, P. Schuyler Miller, Mrs. C. N. Moore, Harry Oleson, Vincent J. Schaefer, Dr. M. B. Scotland, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Steele, Rudolph Stone, Nelle Van Vorst, John Voght, and Chester N. Moore, Christmas Count Chairman (Schenectady Bird Club).

The composite report for the third annual Christmas Count of the Schenectady Bird Club, in the form required by Audu-

bon Magazine, is in the above summary. Everything considered -- particularly with regard to the unannounced sudden

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Party	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of Species	33	9	25	6	20	23	10	14	9
Number of Individuals	3935	272	426	78	1135	1406	29	268	322
Black Duck	1				1				
American Merganser	6					6			
Red-tailed Hawk	2		1		1				
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		1						
Rough-legged Hawk	9		7		(1)	1	1		
Marsh Hawk	3		3						
Sparrow Hawk	2				1			1	
Ruffed Grouse	9		1		4	4			
Ring-necked Pheasant	37		8		19	8	1	1	
Herring Gull	4					2	1	1	
Great Horned Owl	2	1	1						
Flicker	2		1					1	
Hairy Woodpecker	15	3	2		4	4		2	
Downy Woodpecker	47		4		10	23		8	2
Blue Jay	110	3	2		15	32		30	28
Crow	1133	14	27	2	500	500	8	75	7
Black-capped Chickadee	240	40	25	20	53	68	6	16	12
White-breasted Nuthatch	42	2	4		20	11	1	2	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1				1				
Brown Creeper	3		1			1		1	
Bluebird	2					2			
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4		3			1			
Northern Shrike	2					2			
Starling	559	72	43	1	49	157	2	68	167
English Sparrow	547	11	15	8	108	276	3	36	90
Meadowlark	2		2						
Redpoll	188		12	40	100	36			
Pine Siskin	6					6			
Goldfinch	94		16		12	54			12
Slate-colored Junco	69		14	7	35	11			2
Tree Sparrow	748	126	200		200	191	5	26	
Song Sparrow	15		3		1	10	1		
Snow Bunting	30		30						

low temperature and the bothersome, cold, cutting, north-west wind -- the count was a good one. There were no glaring examples of birds missed, except for the owls, and there were some unexpected finds.

The flicker now appears as No. 61 on the composite list for Schenectady Christmas records of the most recent twelve years. Tree sparrows were unusually common, outnumbering the house sparrow and starling and being surpassed in numbers only by the crow. Among the birds of prey, the rough-legged hawk was in a class by it-

self, particularly in the Meadowdale section. It was more common than the red-shouldered and red-tailed, sparrow and marsh hawks combined.

Those participating in the 1941 Christmas Count included:

Party 1 - Watervliet Reservoir, Carman, Guilderland Center. Eight hours, 9 miles afoot, 34 miles by car. Messrs. Hallenbeck and Voght.

Party 2 - Meadowdale, Indian Ladder, Voorheesville. Eight hours, 5 miles afoot, 35 miles by car. Messrs. B. D. Miller,

Moore, and Stone.

Party 3 - Central Park. 2½ hours, 3½ miles afoot. Misses Becker, Heacox, and Droms.

Party 4 - Vale Cemetery, Rice Road, Vley Road, and in City of Schenectady. 6½ hours, 5 miles afoot, 40 miles by car. Misses Van Vorst, Holmes, Caldwell, and Mrs. Moore.

Party 5 - Niskayuna side of Mohawk River, Lisha Kill, Albany Airport, Consaul Road. 12½ party-hours, 11 miles afoot, 26 miles by car. Messrs. Havens and P. S. Miller; Bart-

lett and Bainbridge.

Party 6 - Collins Lake. Two hours, 3 miles afoot. Mr. and Mrs. Steele, Mrs. Bainbridge.

Party 7 - Woestina Sanctuary, Schermerhorn Road, lower Rotterdam Hills to Lock 8. Four hours, 12 miles afoot, 50 miles by car. Messrs. Freese, Schaefer, Oleson, and Kelly.

Party 8 - Fuller and Oxford Road sections, Albany. Four hours, 1/2 mile afoot, 11 by car. Dr. Scotland and Miss Baker.

-- C. N. M.

ELWOOD TO SPEAK

Walter Elwood of the Sassafras Bird Club, Amsterdam, was the S B C speaker a year ago. At our next meeting, Monday, January 26, he will again appear here. The meeting will be in a new place, in the Girl Scout Headquarters, 4 South Church Street -- between Union and State Streets.

Colored motion pictures made by Mr. Elwood last summer will feature his talk. Carrying on with a program similar to those of other recent summers, Mr. Elwood had his camera with him while he covered several thousand miles of our country. Views he will show include some made during a ten-day hike in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area of Flathead National Forest in northern Montana; through King's Canyon; at Bonneville, including the famous fish ladder there; at Bird City in Louisiana; Capistrano; the territory of California's big trees; and several other famous sections.

At the January meeting the

nominating committee will be named. Four directors are to be elected at the February meeting, to succeed Nelle Van Vorst, secretary; Barrington S. Havens, field activities; W. R. Steele, conservation; and Guy Bartlett, publications.

S B C Calendar

The next field trip of S B C is scheduled for Saturday, January 31, in the Niskayuna section under the leadership of Guy Bartlett. In the case of previous trips this season those making the trips have simply met at Nott Terrace High School. In the case of this trip, however, those expecting to go are to telephone the trip leader, 4-1137, the preceding evening or earlier.

Similar arrangements are to be made in advance by those planning on the Schermerhorn Road trip on Sunday, February 15. Those planning to participate should telephone B. S. Havens, 6-4186, in advance.

CAPE MAY IMPRESSIONS

Pauline E. Baker

On Friday, October 17, I left Albany by train for New York City. The sunset was a brilliant one, and immediately after passing Hudson I could see great blue herons standing motionless in silhouette in the water of shallow places. The Catskills were very blue and beautiful. Soon flocks of ducks in lines stretching across the river or in streamers flew upstream looking for rest and food for the night. There were crowds upon crowds, hundreds of them.

Overnight in New York was followed by early rising and a trip uptown to Audubon House where I met friends of another year. We were off behind the bus to Cape May, New Jersey, some 250 miles south of New York. The trip was broken by several stops in order to see what shorebirds were about. We reached the Hotel Macomber at Cape May about 5:30. At 6 the 86 travelers met for dinner and instructions. Richard Pough and Roger T. Peterson were with us. After dinner the cars took us to the light-house to see if there were migrants passing through the slowly revolving beams of the beacon. Occasionally a bright silver flash would appear as a bird passed. The flicker was brief and infrequent, which indicated slow migration. A south wind was blowing. Later we wandered in the darkness, trying to surprise a barred owl that Mr. Peterson was hearing. No luck.

The sea breeze was delightful, but an early rising (4:15 a. m.) demanded immediate retirement.

After an informal breakfast at 4:45, we boarded vehicles for a trip to the point from which we walked along the shore -- waves lapping up for our feet -- to the choice and high sand dune from which we were to watch for feathered travelers.

Confused Migrants

Again the south wind was blowing, so movement was slow. At that point the birds are confused to see water on both sides of them, and fly back and forth searching for landward routes. A flock of about ten meadowlarks kept flying back and forth above us. It was strange to see them with water breaking off to the right; a tall holly tree, berry-laden, behind us; fruited persimmon trees and junipers nearby on our sandy dune. A flock of white-winged scoters, skimming the water so trimly -- so speedily. A marsh hawk slowly floated over a low marsh. Flickers, a continuous sifting of myrtle warblers, cedar waxwings, a Carolina chickadee or two, tree swallows, golden-crowned kinglets, and a cardinal were among the rewards.

When the sun was well up, and yet no change in the wind, the group broke into twos and threes for a slow walk through the sanctuary. Here one realized there were many kinglets and warblers. A cardinal, a Wilson's snipe, pigeon hawk, sparrow hawk, phoebe, and blue jays were seen. The trees were in berry. Very delicious were the plump, warm persimmons. At this place ve-

getation of the North and the South meet, and the oak trees are especially interesting. In one spot a variety of cactus was found. The blue-berried Virginia creeper was beautiful as it spread its red leaves over the white sand.

Sour-gum Visitors

We left the sanctuary and walked along the highway toward the little lake. There was a sight to behold -- a tall red-lacy sour-gum tree heavily laden with blue berries and guzzling birds! Three kinds of thrushes -- hermit, gray-checked, olive-backed -- not singly but in numbers -- no longer shy, no longer elusive! Brown thrashers, warblers, yellow-bellied sapsucker, waxwings, a downy woodpecker called, and then a nut-hatch. A brown creeper did some curling antics around a fat cone. The Carolina chickadee called a greeting -- much more rapidly than our chickadee, and hung around so we could see him.

Some went off to see the jaegers, but the sour gum was a great fascination for others. At 11 the group met for a hearty breakfast, and then the return North with some stops enroute.

Other birds seen were loon, American egret, little blue and black-crowned night herons, Canada geese (taking form behind the leader -- a thrilling sight), black ducks, baldpate, pintail, blue-winged teal, turkey vultures, bald eagle, semipalmated plover, killdeer, black-bellied plover, yellowlegs, least sandpiper, long-billed dowitcher, sanderlings; herring, ring-billed and laughing gulls;



SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D. 1, Rosendale Road

common terns, prairie horned larks, marsh wrens, robins, bluebirds, cowbirds, grackles, purple finches; the savannah, white-throated and chipping sparrows; and juncos.

A blue-headed vireo and a swamp sparrow were picked up dead under telephone wires not far from shore.

Clam Technique

On the beach we watched a herring gull rise with a clam in his beak. After circling to gain height he opened his mouth. As the clam fell, he flew down beside it and, when the burden hit the ground the impact opened the shell; and the gull was right there to receive the contents. He toyed a little and then, with a wise look in our direction, he swallowed the morsel.

The number of birds seen by the party was above 100 species. Since the wind favored us at no time, the movement was not particularly varied or numerous. It was grand to be there, and I hope I may return again.

NEWS AND NOTES

"News and Notes", usually occupying a few pages, are absent from this issue -- absent because of the amount of material awaiting publication. Our apologies to those contributors whose reports are being held for the February number.

MID-NOVEMBER BIRDS

Ruth Bishop

Nine of us started from Nott Terrace High School on Sunday, November 16, at 8 a. m. for a field trip to Duane Lake and Christman's Sanctuary; two more joined us later at the Sanctuary. The sun shone during the early part of the trip. The mildness of the temperature promised to make our extra coats superfluous, but at Duane Lake a cold south wind made them welcome.

Near the beach at the north end of the lake about five herring gulls, some immature, fed. A kingfisher flew before us, up the lake toward the woods, his blue and white pattern plainly visible. There on the southern part of the lake a flock of ducks floated, with a herring and a Bonaparte gull among them. The herring gull at times flew up, apparently rousing a few of the ducks, then settled down followed by the ducks. Some of them, showing considerable white on the wing and on the water, were without doubt golden-eyes. Others were identified as black ducks. We could not identify any other species at the distance we observed them. We sighted them first from the east shore, then from the west, then again from the south; but the birds always seemed to sense our approach and keep their distance.

Along the road around the south end of the lake we flushed several pairs of pheasants. Most ran, with their stilted steps, back farther from the road along the low bushes with which they blended. But one cock took wing

and flew across the road in front of us; and landed with banking wings among the bushes near the lake. We heard one goldfinch, and saw his undulating flight from cover to cover. Here as most places we saw and heard the starlings.

We reached the Christman Sanctuary just before 10 a. m. Mrs. Christman greeted us and told us of the birds that had been feeding most frequently there.

Now heavy clouds began to form, threatening rain. Still the downy woodpecker in the tree by the door grubbed for insects. Tree sparrows fed by the road, apparently most of the morning, for they were observed now and again later on our return to the house. When last observed, they were frightened off by a passing car. White-breasted nuthatches also fed by the house.

As we passed through the orchard some of the group observed and followed a grouse in the field toward the road. There in the orchard we began to see and hear the black-capped chickadee, so common in the hemlocks beyond. A golden-crowned kinglet flew from tree to tree, remaining low for some time so that his eye stripe could be well observed. Across the stile a silent blue jay was the only new bird we saw.

Now the clouds had dispersed and the sun shone again, but was more moody than earlier. This continued until we had crossed the brook. Then the

sky suddenly clouded over, and rain poured down. A short let-up was followed by another downpour before the rain finally stopped. The air was chilled now by both the rain and the wind.

Across the stream again in the field beyond Mr. Christman's grave, a flock of fox sparrows fed among the weeds.

On the way home a bird in flight caught our eye. We

stopped. The field sloped down from the road toward the fence row, where a marsh hawk soared up, his white markings plainly visible. Continuing on, we scanned the fields for meadowlarks, but saw none. While we were thus on the alert, crows seemed more in evidence. Lack of food supply had apparently forced the robin to leave his favorite haunt on Keyes Avenue. Our observations ended as they had begun, with English sparrows.

SOME RECORDS OF SNOWIES

When all records are in for all of the northeastern United States, it seems very probable that the returns will indicate that there was a very healthy visitation into the section by snowy owls this winter. Before the end of October it was apparent that such a flight was on, according to reports from various sections.

Locally, as in most other sections, the snowy owl is an irregular visitor, usually missing, occasionally in small numbers, and rarely in large numbers. Schenectady's count this winter has apparently not been the largest ever, but has been noteworthy.

Village Visitor

The Union Star of December 4 had a picture of two employees of the village of Scotia with a snowy owl one of them had shot. This owl had perched on a pole near the Scotia end of the old bridge, just west of the village sewage disposal plant. This is within the corporate limits of the village. The bird was shot with a .22 rifle, and flew a short

distance before it dropped to the ground. It appears that the taxidermist, to whom the person who shot the bird took it for mounting, also has for mounting two other snowy owls shot in this vicinity. The bird shot in Scotia weighed 2½ pounds. -- G. H. Bainbridge.

At the Luther Preserve

A few weeks ago a customer in a barber shop told me that, while hunting snowshoe rabbits on the Luther Preserve near Saratoga Lake, he shot a snowy owl which was eating a cottontail rabbit. -- G. H. B.

Rooftop Percher

On November 17, the Gazette reported, a snowy owl perched for three hours on the ridge-pole of the house at 341 Germania Avenue. At 3 p. m. it flew away.

Along the Mohawk

A snowy owl was observed near Rice Road and the Barge Canal terminal in the morning and again at noon of December 4. The bird was seen about 8

a. m. in flight through the fog, and questionably identified. At noon it was again seen sitting on the ground and, with better conditions for observation, the identification was positive. Possibly this individual was the one which perched for several hours on a house on Germania Avenue. -- W. R. Steele

G-E Record

On December 11 a snowy owl, probably the same one recorded just above, was a visitor to the open land adjoining the G-E parking area. It flew to that section when molested by observers while it was along the bank of the river.

December 1

Also probably the same bird was the snowy owl reported up the Mohawk River on December

1, cityward from Lock 8.

At Saratoga

In mid - November a wounded snowy owl was recovered near McGregor. -- Dorothy Caldwell.

In Other Sections

Buffalo, Rochester, New England, and other sections all report flights of snowies. Dean Amadon of New York's American Museum, when here December 16, reported several in that vicinity the previous week.

Still Others?

Do S B C members know of other snowy owl records this winter? If so, they should let B. D. Miller, record committee, know of them now for inclusion in a summary being prepared.

RETURN OF THE ONE-LEGGERS

W. L. Merrill

Late in November I put out my feeding shelf and stocked it with suet and sunflower seeds. On the first day it was visited by the usual inhabitants -- chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers -- and much to my surprise by the one-legged woodpecker, the one-legged nuthatch, and the one-legged chickadee, (FEATHERS, May, 1941, page 35). As a matter of fact, the one-legged nuthatch was carrying the seeds and packing them into the bark of a locust tree in less than ten minutes after the food was put on the feeding tray.

The nuthatch has a well-rounded stump about one-eighth

of an inch below the fleshy part of the leg, which does not seem to trouble him at all flitting up and down the tree, making landings and driving the seeds into bark of trees.

The chickadee has a withered leg which is bent just below the fleshy part, sticks out at right angles to his body, and is useless. It does not seem to trouble him.

The woodpecker has a stump like the nuthatch, only somewhat longer.

The birds have continued to visit the feeding station along with many others of the same varieties.

FEATHERS

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1941 IN REVIEW

B. D. Miller, Records Committee

During 1941 interesting facts were recorded about 50 species of non-perching and 89 species of perching birds. Far from complete, we agree, but a modest start, it is hoped, toward what will grow into a listing not only of important statistical information such as numbers and arrival and departure dates, but anecdotes about their unusual behavior, and interpretations of their human-like activity.

Many of us are not ornithologists, but plain bird-lovers. Just why the public takes a much greater interest in birds as compared to other forms of animal life has long been a mystery to me.

The unbounded curiosity of a crow, a hawk's grace and its majestic flight, a chickadee's sociability and inquisitiveness, that wise but suspicious gaze of an owl -- these are a few things about birds that attract attention.

What a delightful story Ernest Thompson Seton wrote for us about Silverspot, the wise crow! Mr. Merrill's article in last month's FEATHERS about his birds with "peg legs" arouses our sympathies. We are glad to learn they get along

so well with such handicaps.

Also, Miss Baker's observation of the gulls dropping shellfish to break them open is news to us. We have read of the fish crow using this method and, according to our recollections of a little reading in psychology, this is evidence of abstract reasoning on their part.

We could give you the complete text of last year's records, but question the wisdom of doing so. Such compilations make about as interesting reading as time-tables. Readers might entertain the thought of a certain man who carefully read the dictionary and then remarked it lacked "continuity of thought," so we'll give only a few samples taken from the records:

1st. On May 1 a party consisting of Misses Caldwell, Holmes, Reeves and Van Vorst, reported 50 American brant in the north end of Saratoga Lake. This is a large number of birds, listed as rare transients, to be seen nearby.

2nd. A flock of nearly 30 Canada geese reported northward-bound over Niskayuna on April 26th. Again, several

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flocks were seen October 5. These were southbound, we assume. The flight of this fine bird has long been used by rural people and sportsmen as a basis for season predictions.

3rd. Miss Van Vorst's report of seeing three families of wood ducks at Watervliet Reservoir, one with 13 ducklings, is reassuring, and again justifies our conservation laws. This beautiful bird was at one time thought headed for extinction.

4th. Mr. Allen appears to have sprinkled salt on the bald eagle's tail. He reported finding two in January along the upper Hudson. Most people's acquaintance with this royal bird is confined to books and pictures.

5th. The American rough-legged hawk is shown in the local check list as an irregular winter visitor. On December 21, when the annual count was taken, it was found to be unusually common, with nine reported. The Indian Ladder party was rewarded by seeing seven of these birds, with sometimes two in view at the same time, and in both light and dark color phases. With a strong wind blowing and with a crystal-clear atmosphere, they gave to the observers several beautiful exhibitions of their flying ability. To see these graceful fliers, with a wingspread of four feet, poise in mid-air as if perched there, and watch the slight feathering of their wings and tails, is the compensation one may receive for facing an icy blast; but the birds seemed to enjoy it.

6th. A sharp-shinned hawk

was reported by Mr. Steele as spending the winter of '40-41 near the Gateway Bridge.

7th. American egrets were again at the Niskayuna wide waters. Five were reported there on July 4 by Misses Abel and Van Vorst. It is a great surprise to most people to be told of this once rare bird now summering so close to us.

8th. When a great blue heron was reported by Baum and Schaefer along the Binne Kill on December 29 and 31 we were surprised, but again the local check list includes several records of this big bird as a winter visitor. Its presence on this occasion, along with a black duck and a kingfisher, is explained by warm water from the G - E outlet.

9th. The unusual number of snowy owls reported hereabouts during the early winter excited much speculation as to the cause. Was it the weather or food supply?

10th. Among surprises were the Christmas Census listings of such summer birds as meadowlarks, flickers, and bluebirds. When the flicker was reported some of us said "Here is a new record." We were disappointed. Bedell reported it in 1923, and Bedell and Uttal separately in 1937.

One would be somewhat in a quandary to predict the '41-42 winter from our last year's bird records. The presence of snowy owls, flickers and bluebirds complicates the formula. We can at least explain these paradoxes as a venerable Catskill friend of mine often did, by suggesting it might be due to the administration.

NEST OF THE LONG-EARED

Arthur Hubbs, Menands

On a Saturday early last spring, when the snow was still on the ground, Phil Callahan (who has since moved to El Paso, Texas, when his father was recalled to that section by the army) and I were bicycling near Defreestville when we noticed a pine woods on a hill to our right. When we were opposite the woods we saw a road going up near the woods and decided to go up there to eat our lunch. Near the middle of the woods, under a thick white pine tree, we saw several owl pellets. Upon looking up I saw what looked like a piece of white pine bark covered with white pine rust. It looked strangely like an owl's breast so, while I watched from below, Phil climbed a nearby maple tree with the camera. The owl flew off, and I followed it away while Phil came down.

When he came up to me I was

excitedly pointing to a pair of long-eared owls sitting in a tree. Not far away, 40 feet up, there was a large nest.

The next week, when we returned with climbing irons, we found five down-covered owlets in the nest. Two weeks later, we found that the young had been killed by a large band of marauding crows living nearby.

We soon found a new nest with five eggs. The parents all the time tried to lure us from the nest, and because of the height and the wind we were unable to obtain any pictures. When we returned later, the eggs were gone.

Although we searched everywhere, we were unable to find another nest with any eggs in it. We are afraid that one of the pair was shot, because we have been able to find only one of the owls lately.

PITTSFIELD - 1941

G. Bartlett Hendricks, Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield

In 1941 a total of 212 species and subspecies of birds and the hybrid Ridgway's grackle were identified in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, easily the largest number ever reported to me at the Berkshire Museum. Included were four birds new to the county list -- the ring-billed gull, black tern, prairie warbler, and sharp-tailed sparrow, presumably of the James Bay subspecies.

Other rare finds included

the greater snow goose, shoveler, golden plover, American and Arctic three-toed woodpeckers, turkey vulture (as many as seven seen soaring together), worm-eating warbler, cerulean warbler, yellow-headed blackbird, and the red and white-winged crossbills.

Every duck and merganser on the all-time record, except the accidental Barrow's golden-eye, was found. Of interest, if not importance, is the fact that I saw all of these

at Onota Lake in Pittsfield during the autumn, a fine record for an inland lake of moderate size.

We have had two of the strangest records thus far in January. I identified a horned grebe which had been found skidding about, on a Pittsfield street on January 11; and Dr. Wallace identified a common loon which had been picked up in Dalton on January 13. Both birds were released on the river in the south part of the county. Early in January mallards, green-winged teal, pintails, a kingfisher, and song sparrows were present in the Sheffield area.

The Berkshires, conditions permitting, will again be hosts to the Massachusetts Audubon Society for the Berkshire Week-end in June, and it is hoped that members of the Schenectady Bird Club will again join in these activities.

(For an account of last year's Berkshire Week-end, attended by six S B C members, see FEATHERS, August, 1941, page 57.)

FEATHERS

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Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D. 1, Rosendale Road

SWAN SONG

It's been fun. After all, it was someone else who had all the headaches accompanying the initial work -- with this issue, the job of the present editor is done. It was Barry Havens who had the tough job of getting FEATHERS going; the details were in order when the present editor started, so it was easy.

Let's help the new editor as much as possible. It's one thing to have enough "professional" background to be able to swing the job in a carefree way -- and the editors so far have been "professionals." The new editor will possibly have a harder job, unless all help by spontaneously supplying material for publication.

-- G. B.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



NEW OFFICERS

Five directors are to be elected at the February meeting, at 8 o'clock Monday night February 23 at Girl Scout headquarters, 8 North Church Street. They will succeed Guy Bartlett, publications; Barrington S. Havens, field activities; W. R. Steele, conservation; and Nelle VanVorst, secretary, all of whose terms of office have expired; and Dr. R. H. Harrington, junior

activities chairman, who found it necessary to resign for business reasons after a year in office. Directors remaining in office include Mrs. Hans Huthsteiner, treasurer; B. D. Miller, records; and Mrs. C. N. Moore, program committee.

SNOWIES

Additional to last month's list of snowy owls was one shot locally by a hunter in early November. -- B.S. Havens

EAGLES

Featuring the S B C field trip on Sunday, January 18, were two bald eagles. And it was easily established that there were two individuals, for one was in mature and the other in immature plumage.

The trip was the annual winter one made along the upper Hudson for ducks. About 400 of them were seen, of several species.

-- H.V.D. Allen, Trip Leader

WINTER DUCKS

A visit to the open outlet of Saratoga Lake and to the Hudson River on New Year's Day produced the expected list of ducks for us. Unexpectedly, we found them more numerous at the lake than on the Hudson.

-- Nelle Van Vorst

CANVASBACKS

At least two, and possibly three, canvasbacks were on Saratoga Lake on November 21, H. V. D. Allen reports. Also seen were three Holboell's grebes, and possibly a rough-legged hawk in the dark phase of plumage.

PARK REDPOLLS

A Thanksgiving trip through Central Park, on November 17, included a flock of redpolls.

-- Idella M. Heacox

GROSBEAKS

First report of this winter for the evening grosbeak was that of Mrs. E. W. Scott of Scotia, who found them in her yard in early November.

Ealy Hallenbeck found a flock of grosbeaks in box elders near his home on January 8. All of which brings up the point that the records from

year to year indicate Scotia as among the most likely places for finding these birds.

WINTER HERON

The 1941 records were ended with a bang by Ed Bahm and Vincent Schaefer, who on December 29 saw a great blue heron at the GE, along the "kept-warm-and-open-by-the-GE" Binne Kill. A few more days and the bird was also on their 1942 list.

WINTER ROBIN

According to the Union Star, which pictured the victim, it did not require much coaxing to get a robin to enter a house on Curry Road on January 10. The robin was in a canary cage when the photograph was made.

Perhaps the bird was the same one reported to Frank Freese in that general vicinity during the week of December 15.

TOO BAD

It's too bad that neither the great blue heron nor robin was seen on December 21, the day of the Christmas Count.

And it's too bad, too, that the mourning dove reported by Alice Holmes on December 18 also was three days off schedule.

WINTER FISHER

The great blue heron seen along the Binne Kill was still to be found there in mid-January. It was seen January 14, and so were a kingfisher and a black duck. -- Chester N. Moore

BARRED

When Rud Stone and I visited the open sections of the Hud-

FEATHERS

son River above Troy on December 29 we found the ducks as we expected, but not in large numbers. Of particular interest, however, was a barred owl that sat in plain sight on a tree branch and permitted a close approach. Before we left, the bird also perched on a fence post near us.

-- H. V. D. Allen

URBAN BARRED

For some years records of barred owls in this vicinity have been comparatively few, while the numbers of great horned owls have seemed to be on the increase. That the barred owl has not left us for good, however, is indicated by the fact that one was recorded in Vale Cemetery November 13.

The bird had evidently been roosting in an evergreen tree. Something disturbed it, for it left that tree and flew to another, causing a great deal of excitement in the neighboring bird community -- a single downy woodpecker.

How long the owl stayed in the cemetery cannot be stated with any accuracy, except that there were occasional records well into December -- but it could not be found on the day of the Christmas Count.

-- B. S. Ravens

HITCHHIKING OWL

About two years ago in the early evening, a Rugby Road resident near Phoenix Avenue saw something unusual on the front porch. It proved to be an owl, which flew when the family attempted to feed it. The owl was seen and heard in the vicinity all winter, but finally it left for parts unknown. Lately it has returned and has been heard for half an hour at a time.

On November 30, shortly af-

ter midnight, Patrolman Harold C. Ketcham was driving over McClellan Street when a fluffy object plunged through the half-open window of his car. He stopped and discovered an owl, solemnly regarding him from the back seat. After repeated "shooing" the bird departed out of the same window, and flew away.

-- Anna Dickerman

TRULY METROPOLITAN

And, speaking of urban owls, the New York Herald Tribune in early January played up, with pictures 'neverthing a barred owl that was seen for several days perched in a tree at the edge of Central Park, at Fifth Avenue and 78th Street.

Also reported by the paper in the vicinity of the city were ravens in the Bronx and East Hampton; an influx of Acadian chickadees; swarms of black-capped chickadees; a golden eagle near Pelham; a Pacific loon in the Bronx; three shovelers in with 800 black ducks in the 59th Street lake of Central Park; and snowy owls on Long Island.

GATEWAY HAWKS

During November and December of the past two or three years a hawk has been sojourning on Hog Island in the Mohawk River. This year we have seen at least three individuals, one of which was identified as a sharp-shinned hawk. Sparrow hawks are quite often seen in the vicinity also.

-- W. R. Steele

(As Mr. Steele has stated, hawks have been seen there regularly. Many observers, usually driving, have not been able to observe the birds in detail. Some have reported rough-legged, others have reported immature red-tail, and

still others mature red-tail. Actually they have all probably been right. On one occasion in the 1940-41 winter, a rough-legged and a mature red-tail were observed simultaneously; and on this year's Christmas Count both a rough-legged and an immature red-tail were in view simultaneously. And on an earlier occasion this winter the two species were again seen at the same time.)

ANY MISSING?

If you are saving your copies of FEATHERS, it is urged that you check your stock now to see if any of the 1941 issues are lacking. All numbers are still in stock but some of them will not last long. Consult the secretary in case of missing issues.

DUES ARE DUE

S B C is starting its fourth year, and dues are due. It hardly seems necessary to say again that the success of the club depends upon its membership, both financially and in extent of its activities. The larger the membership, the more its activities. If each S B C member interests some person in membership, the continued success of the organization is assured.

ON KEEPING RECORDS

Following the business meeting and election of officers at the meeting on February 23, at Girl Scout headquarters, a discussion of record-keeping will be led by B. D. Miller, record committee chairman of the club. Different members will explain the systems they use, and it is asked that all be ready to contribute to the discussion, both with exhibits and questions.

While it is true that different systems meet individual requirements, it is also true that there are advantages when all club members maintain a certain uniformity of method, particularly when it comes to compiling composite summaries.

AUDUBON BOOK

May I add to the comment on the new edition of Audubon's "Birds of America" the fact that the \$4.95 edition is in every way better than the \$12.50 one, which I was unfortunate enough to get. The plates of the previous book were badly off register, and the colors very poor -- as a matter of fact, after three trials I never did get a book with all plates in register. The new one has better color and I haven't yet seen one with bad printing. It is a buy; the other was not.

-- P.S. Miller

YOUR HELP NEEDED

The National Audubon Society believes that public opinion thoroughly approves of the New York law ending all commercialization of wild-bird plumage in April, 1947.

Determined protests are being made by some members of one group: the fly-fishermen, fly-tyers and manufacturers. It is very probable that they will seek to have the state law amended, seeking exemptions for themselves.

If you wish the New York State law kept as it is, you should let your voice be heard, particularly by your legislators, and by the State Conservation Department.

-- John H. Baker, Executive Director, Nat. Aud. Soc.
(The S B C secretary and conservation director both have details in publications available to you.)

BUFFALO BIRDS

Buffalo made its Christmas Count on December 21, as did Schenectady, but with less wind and a higher temperature. Thirteen parties, with more than 40 participants, accounted for 13,414 individuals of 51 species. Included were 5862 individuals of 13 species of ducks; 5835 individuals of four species of gulls. They had 27 of six kinds of hawks, and eight of four kinds of owls --- but no barred or screech. Two Wilson's snipe were newcomers on the Buffalo census.

Buffalo observers accounted for a total of 254 species on their record for the year 1941.

Among December records there were a towhee and a vesper sparrow.

"It is difficult to explain why song sparrows, robins, meadowlarks, flickers, mourning doves, prairie horned larks, great blue herons, marsh hawks, and juncos (to name a few at random) were so conspicuously lacking in December, when other mild winters have found them present in fair numbers," said The Prothonotary of the Buffalo Ornithological Society for January.

HEADED SOUTH?

Audubon Wildlife Tours will be conducted in the Lake Okeechobee - Kissimmee Prairie Region of Florida from now to April 18. Different Audubon Society speakers at SBC meetings have spoken about the birds there, and Dorothy Caldwell described her trip there at a club meeting and in FEATHERS for May, June, and July, 1940. Details about the trips can be secured direct from Audubon headquarters or from the S B C secretary.

SONG-SPARROW DECOY

Maybe it wouldn't work on other individuals of the same species or, again, maybe it would. At least the story can be told for others to try.

The first song sparrow on the recent Christmas Count was found with ease in Niskayuna. Based on previous observations of the same bird, the observers simply banged together two short pieces of galvanized pipe. A couple of hundred feet away, the answering chip of a song sparrow was heard.

Maybe that technique could be applied advantageously in investigating the song sparrow population of large growths of cat-tails in the winter.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Attwater's Prairie Chicken, Its Life History and Management. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North American Fauna 57. 65 p., 11. pl. From Superintendent of Documents; Publication I49.30:57. 40¢.

Birds of Long Island, Publication No. 4. From the Bird Club of Long Island, Inc., Roslyn, N.Y.; \$1. This number comprises 30 pages of text and four pages of photographs of nesting prairie horned larks, by Gertrude Pettit Selby. Banding records of the thrasher, catbird, grackle, redwing, towhee, junco, and five sparrows are discussed by Marie V. Beals and J. T. Nichols.

DUCK HAWK FOOD

The duck hawk is usually thought of as a bird-eater. K. E. Stager of the Los Angeles Museum reported that he saw a half dozen duck hawks simultaneously at the entrance to Ney Cave, Texas, preying on the thousands of bats pouring in and out of the cave.

FEATHERS

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SOME RECENT INTERESTING RECORDS FOR THE ALBANY REGION

Dayton Stoner, New York State Museum

The field ornithologist, amateur or professional, derives incentive for continuing his observations, and satisfaction from past accomplishments in the sight of a rare or uncommon bird for his territory. And, in the case of migrant species, the opportunity to record a particularly early spring or late autumn date or an "out-of-season record" repays him for the lost sleep and tired body which so often accompany his endeavors.

This brief account has to do with such occurrences which I have noted among birds in the vicinity of Albany during the past few years. These records are of interest principally from a seasonal and distributional standpoint and are presented in annotated form.

Horned Grebe

A single bird; Watervliet Reservoir; May 8, 1940.

Double-crested Cormorant

Two individuals, perched on the dead limb of a submerged tree near the southwest corner of Watervliet Reservoir; May 9, 1941. The birds occupied the same position throughout

the more than one-half hour that I watched them, the while sunning themselves and assiduously preening their plumage. My only record for this territory, 1933-1941.

Common Canada Goose

A belated flock of six individuals; Alcove Reservoir; May 8, 1938. In spring seldom seen here after May 1.

Broad-winged Hawk

A single individual, soaring over small wooded tract, three miles south of Schodack Landing, Columbia County; November 25, 1937.

American Rough-legged Hawk

One bird; Tomhannock Reservoir, Rensselaer County; October 17, 1937. As the hawk circled high above the water it made a sudden dash into a flock of eastern red-wings passing at a lower altitude; the sortie appeared to be unsuccessful. Seldom does this hawk put in its fall appearance here before October 25.

Black-bellied Plover

One bird at small inlet,

FEATHERS

west side of Hudson River at Kingston Point; also heard the notes of another flying over river between Hudson and Kingston Point; August 27, 1940. An early fall record. Also two individuals on mud flats at Watervliet Reservoir, October 25, 1940 and October 15 and 24, 1941. In addition to these records the only other ones I have are three for 1937 and one for 1939.

Greater Yellow-legs

More than usually prevalent on the mud flats at the Watervliet and Tomhannock Reservoirs from early September well through October, 1941. About mid-October, at the Watervliet Reservoir, the species appeared to reach its maximum of abundance when it was commoner than its smaller congener. On November 19, 1941 a single individual was noted on the mud flats near highway No. 20. Although it made no attempt to fly, it could and did run rapidly and uttered its characteristic note. The bird appeared to be in good physical condition. On December 3, 1941 the yellow-legs was still there. As I watched, it flew easily for a distance of about 50 yards and appeared to be in no way physically handicapped. Undoubtedly the lack of snow and the continued warm weather in late autumn were accountable for the belated southerly movement of this bird. Usually the species is not observed locally after the first week in November.

Pectoral Sandpiper

Observed at Watervliet Reservoir September 19 and October 20, 24 and 31, 1941. Four individuals noted on the lat-

ter date, a late seasonal one for this territory.

Sanderling

A single individual; low-lying, isolated mud flat at southwest corner of Watervliet Reservoir, October 25, 1940. A late autumnal occurrence.

Bonaparte's Gull

One bird with ring-billed gulls, at south end Saratoga Lake, November 4, 1938. One bird, east side Hudson River near Stockport railroad station, April 28, 1939. Two individuals, still in breeding plumage, standing on a floating log in Mohawk River at Niskayuna, July 26, 1940. Also a single immature individual over Hudson River near Catskill, recorded on August 27, 1940.

The July 26 record is notable in that while non-breeding individuals sometimes occur in the Lake Erie region in summer, the species usually is not seen in the Albany area until late August.

Black Tern

One adult, partial winter plumage, Watervliet Reservoir, August 9, 1939. My first record here for this uncommon transient in six years. Ernest Geiser, R. D. 4, Troy, reports an example of this species at Albia Pond in the southeast section of the city itself on May 27, 1941.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

One male in a white pine thicket, northwest corner Tomhannock Reservoir, November 12, 1939. The species is seldom seen in this territory after November 1.

Eastern Phoebe

A single individual, edge of wooded area along Route 9J, near village of Schodack Landing, Rensselaer County, November 26, 1939. Usually the last stragglers in this territory have departed for the south a month earlier.

Eastern Yellow Warbler

Saw one male, heard another singing, small wooded area near Hudson River, 10 miles south of Albany, April 27, 1938.

Western Palm Warbler

One individual identified among the members of a loose aggregation of small birds, at south end of Tomhannock Reservoir, October 17, 1937. Usually the last trace of the autumnal movement of this warbler has passed the Albany area by October 10.

Northern Yellow-throat

A male and female gathering nest material, Normandin Woods along Mohawk River near Crescent, May 11, 1940. This activity seldom exhibited so early in the season.

Eastern Cowbird

Eight males and two females, feeding on a tract of freshly scattered fertilizer in an open field near Valatie, Columbia County, March 14, 1941. An early spring date, particularly for females of the species.

Red Crossbill

Seldom did I fail to see from one to 25 or more individuals of this striking bird



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on the numerous trips made in Washington Park, Albany, between April 7 and May 9, 1941. Also a flock of about 12 seen at Watervliet Reservoir April 9 and again on April 16, 1941. The general prevalence, persistency of occurrence, and more than usual abundance locally of this species in the spring of 1941 was noteworthy.

Eastern Fox Sparrow

Several individuals, in some brushy thickets, south end Watervliet Reservoir, November 4, 1941. One of the birds feeding upon wild grapes which were still juicy and untouched by the frost. Also a single individual, same locality, November 14, 1941.

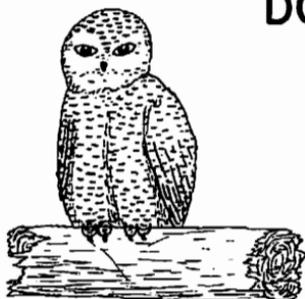
Lincoln's Sparrow

One bird, brushy tangle along Stockport Creek near Stockport railroad station, Columbia County, April 28, 1939.

Eastern Snow Bunting

Twelve individuals, gravelly shores, east bank Watervliet Reservoir, October 20, 1941. My earliest local autumnal record for this territory, 1932-1941. All the birds save one were in intermediate plumage. They were quite unafraid and permitted the observer to approach within 20 feet before taking wing in a compact group.

DOWN FROM THE NORTH CAME THE SNOWIES



Down from the North they came, in numbers far exceeding those of recent years. And down they fell in large numbers before the guns of the sportsmen -- even if they happened to be within corporate limits, where hunting is forbidden, as in Scotia. They were easy targets -- large, conspicuously white, permitting close approach, and flying slowly. Northeastern United States had again played host to more than usual the number of snowy owls.

Locally, the birds seemed to have extended their visit from early November through mid-December. There were numerous sight records, including birds perched atop roofs in the city, near the entrance to the G - E parking field several days, on the parking field itself on one occasion. And there were at least 12 of the birds shot locally, with 10 of them mounted by local taxidermists. All the information available locally on the food of the birds is that one of them was clutching a frog when shot. Specimens varied as usual from very pale to rather dark in markings. The one shot in Scotia weighed 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. One was noted by the taxidermist as being larger than any great horned owl he had ever handled.

Some of the local records have already been mentioned in our two preceding issues; the present summary includes those birds. Without doubt there were definite records of more than 12 birds, representing the quantity shot, but there is also the probability that at least some of the birds seen were shot later. Chester Griffith, local game protector, had records of four at Esperance, Hardin's Crossing, and Scotia. Including the 10 handled by the local taxidermists, the records included Altamont, Ballston, Duanesburg, and Glenville as well as the places previously mentioned.

Dorothy Caldwell reported several records from the vicinity of Mt. McGregor. One was shot at Wilton in early November; another was killed at Gurn Spring, near Wilton; at about the same time; and several others were reported taken in that vicinity. The game warden there, Mr. Lyman, rescued an owl alive but injured near Saratoga Lake in the fall, took it to a battery station in Saratoga, whence the owl went to a taxidermist upon its demise.

Still other reports have been heard from Albany, Troy, and other sections; but details are not at hand. A sectional summary of the records is being prepared, however, by the AOU, to be available later in the year. The record will probably show that the snowy owl flight of 1941-1942 was an outstanding one throughout.

AGAIN A MOCKER VISITS SCHENECTADY

Nelle Van Vorst



Again the mockingbird daily visits a feeding station in the town of Niskayuna. Just how long this welcome visitor has been in the vicinity is not known, but he has been observed by Mrs. B. Starie, hostess of the station, for several months.

The peculiar action of English sparrows, which were daily guests, attracted the attention of Mrs. Starie. Her curiosity was rewarded by the sight of a strange gray bird, cautiously advancing toward the porch for his breakfast. For many days this routine feeding continued. Mrs. Starie determined to learn more about the fascinating stranger and consulted an S B C member. After careful study it was identified as a mockingbird.

Just where the mocker spends his nights and hours when he is not feeding still remains a mystery. At feeding time he arrives promptly and perches in a shrub which is sheltered on the west by two thick cedar trees. As he flies closer, the sparrows give way to him.

This masterful trait of the mocker is described by Forbush as lording it over the lesser birds and not hesitating to attack the larger ones, even the blue jays.

Several S B C members and their friends have had the rare privilege of seeing the mocker, and have succeeded in taking motion pictures.

Edward Howard Forbush in his "Birds of Massachusetts" makes the statement that the mocker migrates very little. Some individuals, usually males, pass the winter in the interior of the state, arriving in November and remaining until April. So it would seem that our visiting mockingbirds are wanderers rather than residents, as no summer record has been made.

* * * * *

NOTE: A previous winter appearance of the mockingbird locally, also in Niskayuna, was described in FEATHERS of June, 1939. That bird visited the feeder of B. D. Miller.

S.B.C. DIRECTORS NAMED

Officers elected at the February meeting include: Miss Nelle VanVorst, reelected secretary; Esly Hallenbeck, field activities; H. V. D. Allen, conservation; and Mrs. Anna Dickerman, publications.

As specified in the by-laws, the vacancy in the position of director of junior activities will be filled by the board of directors. The two-year term has another year to run -- until the election of 1943.



Malcolm Andrews

SCHENECTADY'S FIRST WINTER CARDINAL

Fortunately for us, it was a rather mild 8 a.m. that greeted us Sunday morning, February 15. Our first stop was along Wendell Avenue to try and locate the source of a flicker note which one of us had heard earlier in the morning. No luck, however, so off we went toward Schermerhorn Road, our announced destination.

The G - E open water along Binne Kill harbored some eight American mergansers, while across the road a large flock of tree sparrows were feeding. Overhead numerous crows passed by on the way to their nearby feeding grounds.

Climbing a small hill, we were rewarded by a sparrow hawk which flew by and lit in the top of a tall dead tree. Down the other side of the hill, and along an ice-covered stream, we came upon a somewhat smaller flock of tree sparrows than had been seen earlier. A blue jay was heard giving his warning call somewhere up in the hills, when the characteristic notes of a flock of goldfinches attracted our attention. These soon came in sight, dipping up and down in flight, and settled down to feed on some weeds not far away. We then tried to get a little closer so that one of our group could get a good look at their winter plumage. Suddenly one of us saw a flash of red in a nearby bush -- a male cardinal!

All thoughts of goldfinches suddenly dropped, we immediately started after Mr. Red-bird! He had now flown a short distance away, but by carefully listening for his note and then chasing him from bush to bush, we were finally able to get a magnificent view of him. We then decided not to bother him further, in hopes that he would stay with us long enough for others to enjoy our good luck.

We managed to stop talking about our find long enough to notice two song sparrows calling nearby, and a pheasant giving his squawk from afield.

Back along the road, a starling gave us quite a start with some of his imitations. A large tree was being systematically gone over by a downy woodpecker, a chickadee, and a white-breasted nuthatch.

Starting back for home, we passed the same group of crows that had greeted us upon our arrival.

* * * * *

NOTE: On February 22 the cardinal could not be found, but on March 1 it was again seen. There seem to be records of just one cardinal locally previous to this winter visitor. In 1934 there were independent observations of one, on May 28 by Albert Getz, and May 30 by Paul Schaefer in the St. David's Lane section, without knowledge of the observation by the other.

HAWK MT. IN COLOR MOVIES

Motion pictures in color of Hawk Mountain Reservation, in Pennsylvania, will be featured at the next meeting of SBC, at 8 o'clock Monday night, March 30, in the Old Chapel, Union College. The film was made by Maurice Brown, known to many SBC members for both his Hawk Mountain and his Long Trail activities.

In addition to this reel, two reels of the Audubon Nature Camp in Maine, to which many SBC members have gone, will be shown. The film was made by Mr. and Mrs. Allan D. Cruickshank in 1940 and 1941. Mr. Cruickshank will be remembered as one of our speakers last year.

The March 30 meeting will be open to the public; bring your friends with you.

At the meeting on Friday,

April 17, at 8 o'clock in the Nott Terrace High School Auditorium, John H. Storer will present colored motion pictures and lecture on "Wings West from Florida."

Mr. Storer, Harvard A.B., has developed an avocation into a vocation. His purpose is to spread an interest in the conservation of our wildlife and its environment, our great natural resources of land, water, and forests. His new film is the record of 18,000 miles traveled in 1941 to search out and study the home lives of some of the most rare and beautiful birds of North America.

As in the case of previous lectures by outside speakers at the High School, there will be an admission charge -- 35 cents, including tax; 25 cents for SBC members.

EVENING GROSBEAKS - EVERYWHERE

Evening grosbeaks have been more common than usual locally this winter, according to the volume of reports received. Some of the records were listed in our February issue; still others include:

A flock in the yard of Miss Stephanie Podrazik, Eastern Parkway, on December 23; ir-



Courtesy National Audubon Society

regularly seen since then, and more than 25 in the vicinity in late February. One dead male bird found in snow bank in late February.

At least 25 in a flock in the general vicinity of Rosa Road and Wendell Avenue on numerous dates in mid-February and reported to H.V.D. Allen.

Sunflowers, left in heads on standing stalks through the winter, were an attraction for a flock of seven evening grosbeaks in mid-February on the farm of H. C. Ritchie, Charlton.

There were many February re-

ports of a flock, or flocks, of the grosbeaks in Scotia. Bedford Road, to which the birds have not been strangers in previous years, had a large flock in early March, box-elderling.

Following the heavy snow storm of February 5, Esly Hallenbeck had them in his yard in Scotia. Previously he had been seeing and hearing of them in the vicinity.

E. G. Ham of Troy reports seeing three female and one male evening grosbeaks in a neighbor's yard shortly after

mid-January. They were in a berried tree. One of them was said to have been there two weeks previously.

"Two beautifully marked yellow birds, much larger than sparrows, have been making their home during the day in a tree opposite the home of Mrs. Arthur Bauries of 16 Myrtle Avenue, for three days. They have yellow and black crowns and a heavy beak. ..." So reported the Union-Star on February 4. This time the description was that accurate that few questioned evening grosbeaks.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



STRANDED LOON

Holboell's grebes are frequently stranded locally in winter, forced to land on snow or ice, and unable to resume flight since they must start from water to get into the air. Less frequently loons are found in the same predicament.

Game Protector Chester Griffith rescued a loon, in changing plumage, from ice-covered Duane Lake about February 1. The bird was delivered to the Delmar experimental station for liberation under favorable conditions.

"HAVE NOT'S"

My Mount McGregor records so far (mid-February) are mostly "have not's." John Engle has been fortunate enough twice to see pine grosbeaks up here within the past month, and they have been reported by others. So far I have not seen them. Have seen no cedar

waxwings here or in Saratoga this winter. Have seen no creepers, no red-breasted nuthatches, no crossbills so far. Evening grosbeaks were reported in Glens Falls in December and many in January. Have never had them up here. No siskins or redpolls here so far. We do have a few juncos wintering and, for the first time in five years, a few tree sparrows wintering here. A few golden-crowned kinglets are here. My feeding station continues popular, and the banding work goes on.

-- Dorothy Caldwell

FEW RED-BREASTEDS

A check-up indicates that red-breasted nuthatches were less common than usual in the general vicinity, with them missing from many sections where regularly seen. Incidentally, before February was over, Miss Caldwell was finding a few of the birds at Mount McGregor.

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JOHN H. STORER TO SPEAK ON BIRD DAY, APRIL 17

New Color Films of America's Wildlife Will Feature Program at Nott Terrace High School—Speaker Nationally Known

Friday, April 17, has been designated as Bird Day by Ernest E. Cole, New York State Commissioner of Education.

On that evening the Schenectady Bird Club will present John H. Storer in a lecture, "Wings West from Florida," with colored motion pictures. The meeting will be at 8 p. m. in the Nott Terrace High School auditorium, under the joint auspices of the Mohawk Valley Hiking and Schenectady Bird Clubs.

In obtaining the films that will feature his presentation, Mr. Storer traveled 18,000 miles last year, with long stops at the different places where many of America's most rare and spectacular birds breed. Every spring in the Florida wilderness there are ceremonials that few have ever heard of -- by rare and beautiful birds. These are among the scenes depicted in Mr. Storer's films. He has obtained pictures of the egret, once nearly exterminated for its plumes which command twice

their weight in gold; the rare swallow-tail kite, wizard of the air; the incomparable splendor of the roseate spoon-bill, with the sun shining through its glowing pinkish wings against a background of brilliant blue sky; and the courtship of the shy Florida crane, shown in color for the first time.

Mr. Storer has spoken before many meetings, and has been highly endorsed by all. Last season several S B C members heard him when he appeared in Albany with other motion pictures, and it was upon their recommendation that Mr. Storer has been brought here this year as the Bird Day speaker.

As in the case of previous meetings when outside speakers have been brought to Schenectady, it has been necessary to have an admission charge. For members of the Hiking and Bird Clubs the tickets, including tax, is 25 cents; for non-members the cost is 35 cents. Tickets have been distributed to the members of both clubs.

SOME CHRISTMAS STATISTICS

The story of Schenectady's Christmas count has already been told. Audubon Magazine of January - February has many notes of interest on censuses across the country.

100,000 Plus

Schenectady counted nearly 4,000 birds. At least six places counted more than 100,000 individuals. Chautauqua, Ill., with a wildlife refuge, had a count of 658,668, including 650,000 mallards and 6000 black ducks. The Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, Idaho, had 386,558, with 332,000 mallards, 12,396 pintails, 9,422 green-winged teal, and 978 Canada geese. Three other sections, by reason of duck concentrations, also scored heavily. The sixth high - count section, Raritan, N.J., had 256,587, including a night roost of 250,000 red-wings, starlings, two kinds of grackles, cowbirds, and rusties. It also had a roost of 2,000 crows.

Some Unexpected

At Bennington there were included a catbird and a greater scaup duck (captured alive). At Great Barrington was a green-winged teal. At Holyoke were wood duck, green-winged teal, four saw-whet owls, Acadian chickadee, and white-crowned and white-throated sparrows. Northampton had a great blue heron, mockingbird, hermit thrush, northern yellowthroat (memories of one in Schenectady only a few winters back), and a bronzed grackle.

Counts on chickadees were generally high, and Acadian records unusually frequent.

Comparisons

How Schenectady compared with other places in this state (omitting New York City vicinity and Long Island) and with comparable New England sections is indicated in the following table, Ob being number of observers, Sp number of species observed, and TC the total count:

	Ob	Sp	TC
SCHENECTADY	25	33	3935
Buffalo	38	51	15014
Cortland	8	35	11360
Croton Point	3	41	4363
Fort Plain	1	15	116
Geneva	18	39	5537
Ithaca	1	32	2086
Kerhonkson	1	16	242
Otisville	2	15	213
Rochester	21	56	3677
Watertown	20	22	1178
Bennington, Vt.	3	14	80
Wells River, Vt.	2	14	197
Holyoke, Mass.	17	44	2800
Lenox, Mass.	1	10	118
Northampton, Mass.	38	39	2730
Great Barrington and Sheffield, Mass.	9	24	606

Song Sparrows

At Schenectady no concerted drive was made for records of song sparrows, but it had more than most sections. In fact, general reports are to the effect that song sparrows were less common than usual in the northeast; but such did not seem to be the case locally.

Schenectady's 1941 Census was not particularly high, but did stack up with its average for the past several years. Schenectady's all-time high in number of species was 35, in 1937; and in total counted was 7700, in 1932.

THE SONG OF THE THRASHER

Edna Becker, Schenectady and Hollins College, Va.

(Some of Miss Becker's observations of brown thrashers have already been published in FEATHERS (September and October, 1941). The following is an abstract of another section of her Cornell thesis.)

From its very nature, the song of the brown thrasher would command attention regardless of where it were delivered, since it may be heard for half a mile. Add to this the fact that the thrasher loses his characteristic shyness when he sings and mounts to the highest perch, from where he may be seen and heard by all, and we have an idea as to the reason for his fame as a songster. Besides, he is of great endurance and often sings for long periods at a time. I have heard thrashers sing for as long as 45 minutes with hardly a break.

Altitude Sought

When the urge to sing overtakes a thrasher, it apparently takes effect immediately since often he does not wait to begin singing until he has reached his final perch. Many times I have seen thrashers, who had started to sing while on the ground or in a low bush, move progressively up -- either in one tree (if it were high enough) or in several -- singing all the while. The increase in fervor is apparent then not only in the song itself, which grows more and more determined, but in the actions and behavior of the bird, who becomes ever more absorbed in his singing. It is true quite often that the higher the perch from which a thrasher sings, the longer will the concert last.

Unfortunately, these mad fits of singing are of comparatively short seasonal duration -- ending almost simultaneously with the choosing of a mate and the consequent beginning of nesting duties. Before mating, when singing and feeding are the chief daylight pastimes, the two occur intermittently. The singing periods are then long-continued (15 minutes to half an hour being the average duration); the perches are tall trees or telegraph wires. Although early morning and late afternoon are the favorite times for singing, the male thrasher is so intent upon acquiring a mate that he sings almost continuously throughout the day until he has succeeded in his purpose.

Less Enthusiastic

Once he has a mate, the thrasher no longer needs to proclaim his presence and his singing promptly diminishes. There is a slight recurrence of song -- but not rendered so enthusiastically nor from so high a perch, as a rule -- after nest - building is well started and again when the eggs are about ready to hatch. Quite often, too, the male sings briefly, near the nest, immediately after he has been incubating. He sometimes uses a very low singing, combined with a call note, to urge the female to leave the nest when it is his turn to incubate.

A few days after the young are out of the nest, the male resumes singing to some extent -- sometimes even using a high perch again. After July 1, when nesting is usually

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over, thrasher songs are rare indeed. I have, however, heard thrashers sing their "whisper song" as late as the latter part of September -- just before departing for their winter home. This is a regular thrasher song but sung very softly with closed bill, making a melody which is "inexpressibly sweet but which can be heard only when very near them," as stated by F. W. Roe in "Some Florida Birds," Bird-Lore, 6: 188.

Singing Females

The brown thrasher is not one of those few species in which the female sings equally as well as the male. The female thrasher does sing, however, and on occasion can compete quite successfully with the male in all except endurance and loudness. It was while the eggs of Nest No. 1 were hatching that I first heard Female No. 1 sing. Some time later, about the time the young left the nest, she again sang -- softly but definitely, and the male answered her. A month later, when they had their third set of eggs, Female No. 1 sang louder than the male in answer to his soft singing.

Call Notes

All thrashers -- regardless

of sex or age (excepting nestlings) -- seem to be equally adept at rendering the thrasher call notes. These consist of a whistled wheeu, which may be given in one, two or three syllables, as wheeu, whee-u, or whe-e-u, the last resembling somewhat the pee-a-wee of the wood pewee; the loud kissing note, which is promptly used at the approach of an intruder and which is responsible for the bird being spoken of as the "great American chipper" (Birds and Poets, by Burroughs, 1904; page 114); thirdly there is the hoarse, guttural note, "half a hiss and half a whistle," (The Birds of Eastern North America, by Maynard; 1879; p. 21), which is used mainly at dusk and again at dawn.

The first mentioned of these, the whistled wheeu, in its various modifications, is the principal call note of the birds, being used by the parents in "talking" to the young and to each other. The second, the "kissing" note, is sometimes used as a call note also to announce to the young the approach of food, etc., but is used chiefly as a notice of warning or disapproval to intruders. The guttural sound is, apparently, used almost exclusively to express disapproval -- particularly in the early morning or at dusk.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

INVITATION TO ALBANY

All SBC members and friends are invited to attend the annual Bird Day event sponsored by the Dana Society of Natural History, Albany. Miss Dorothy

Treat will speak on "News on the Wing," Friday, April 17, at 3:30 o'clock in Chancellors Hall, State Education Building. Miss Treat is in charge of Junior Audubon work in the Audubon Society. She is a de-

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lightful speaker. Admittance is free. The Dana Society is the oldest body of organized women in the United States. Monthly meetings have been held regularly for 73 years. Mrs. Dayton Stoner, wife of the State Zoologist, is president.

WATER, SOFTENER

Some people may say it's only instinct, but others know that birds use reason. Grackles returned to the yard of an S B C member on March 7. They observed blue jays and squirrels eating peanuts. One of the grackles helped himself but could not open the shell. He selected several of the smaller nuts and carried them to the water pan where he soused them until the shells had softened, and then he readily removed the contents.

TOWER OF LONDON'S RAVENS

Until Admiral Byrd's Antarctic expeditions made penguins the world's best-known birds, the honor belonged to the five ravens of the Tower of London. These funereal-looking birds measure two feet from beak to tail-tip. They are fed daily in mid-morning by a yeoman-warder, on rations of raw beef and fresh eggs. They sometimes vary their diet by catching mice and pigeons.

Their wings are clipped and they do not mate. A raven which dies is replaced, and there is a long list of ready donors. The birds live, how-

ever, to a great age. There is a record of one which remained at the Tower 44 years.

Ravens are believed to have tenanted the Tower since its completion in the 11th century when, attracted by its high turrets, they flew in from the surrounding forests.

They are prankish birds and sometimes pretend to be dead, then suddenly rise to nip the person who is solicitously bending over them.

Their present fate is unknown, but before the war no sightseeing trip was complete without a glimpse of the Tower ravens.

RESOLUTION

Let us plan, if we possess even a tiny plot of ground and have not done it before, to plant a shrub this spring to provide winter food for birds.

AUDUBON WALLPAPER

Audubon wallpaper is something new. Different groups of birds as done by the great naturalist are scattered about on a neutral ground. They are in full color and look exactly as if the original prints had been cut out and mounted.

TOO GREEDY

A bald eagle flying over an Adirondack lake in March saw his opportunity for a feast of fresh fish and, swooping down, fastened his talons in the gills of a huge fish. He did not reckon with the size and strength of the fish, which put up a terrific struggle and pulled the eagle down until his wings were in the water. Not being able to free himself he was about to drown, when two guides from a nearby park, who chanced to be rowing on

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the lake, saw the commotion and went to the rescue. The men rescued the eagle, removed the fish, took the eagle to their camp, dried his plumage, and watched him soar away, none the worse for his experience.

STILL WITH US

The cardinal discovered in mid-February in the Campbell Road section stayed with us through March. Not all saw it every time they visited there, but the records were fairly numerous.

"THIN AS A RAIL"

The familiar expression "as thin as a rail" does not refer to a fence rail, as many persons have mistakenly supposed. Birds known as rails, or "mud hens," are thin-bodied so they can thread their way readily through the marsh grasses. The sora rail, somewhat smaller than a robin, is one of the thinnest of all birds, hence the comparison.

300 FEEDINGS A DAY

A pair of martins, observed throughout a single day, fed their young 300 times.

YOUNG ROBIN'S DIET

Professor Treadwell, bird authority, made an experiment to determine the amount of food that young robins eat. From a robin family kept in captivity, he learned that the birds ate 68 earthworms daily, or 41 per cent more than each robin's weight. The worms if laid end to end would measure 14 feet. Man by comparison would eat 70 pounds of flesh and drink from five to six gallons of water.

SHRIKES, COMMON

Northern shrikes were relatively common last winter, it is reported by Chester Griffith, local game protector. He frequently saw a half dozen or more in one trip.

RECORDED SONGS

An album of six standard ten-inch double disks, containing the songs of 72 North American birds, has been announced by the Comstock Publishing Company, Ithaca, N. Y. The album costs \$5 postpaid, or individual records are \$1.

The songs were recorded by the Albert R. Brand Bird Song Foundation, Cornell University. The six records include: Birds of the Northwoods; of Northern Gardens and Shade Trees; of Southern Woods and Gardens; of the Fields and Prairies; Game Birds; and Birds of Western North America

STATE BIRD DAY NUMBER

The March issue of the Bulletin to the Schools, of the University of the State of New York, is the annual Arbor Day and Bird Day issue. Ten or more of the articles are devoted to birds.

Dayton Stoner of the State Museum reports on "Purple Martins at Albany and Saratoga." He has had a few records of the birds in the immediate vicinity, but not as breeders. He also reports on the colonies formerly nesting in Saratoga, and on the colony at the Olcott estate.

A comment in general on the issue as a whole -- there are some strange illustrations. There are objections to retouching in Nature photographs and the Bulletin has much of it: Backgrounds have been

blocked out; a chickadee photograph by Roger Tory Peterson very apparently retouched; the semipalmated plover apparently made into a breeding bird of the Susquehanna Valley, by reason of the inclusion of a photograph of an adult and two young as one of the illustrations accompanying the article. Most peculiar of all is a photograph of evening grosbeaks. The birds have been "outlined" and, if the beak of one is correctly shown, the bird probably is a cross between a skimmer and a grosbeak since in no other way can the apparent extreme length of the lower mandible be explained.

The cover is an excellent painting by E. J. Sawyer of a robin on a blossom-loaded apple branch. --G.B.

\$500 FOR FOOD

"To the Fulton County Branch of the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society is bequeathed the sum of \$500 to be used for the purchase and distribution of food for wild birds of Gloversville."

So read part of the will of Frank M. Lord of Gloversville who died in January.

LIFE BEGINS

A feature of the National Sportsmen's Show in New York City in late February were hundreds of quail and pheasants that were incubator-hatched during the show, two or three months in advance of the normal hatching season.

Made possible by game research studies and the use of light irradiation, it is believed that the hatching of bob-white at the show was the first public demonstration of the start of life for New York's smallest game bird.

NEW PUBLICATION

Not of immediate local interest, but of general use is "Common Birds of Southeastern United States in Relation to Agriculture," Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 15. 1941, 43 p. 11., 10 cents.

MORE DUCKS

Ducks Unlimited has calculated that ducks in 1941 had increased only 6.17 per cent over 1940. They estimate that 75,238,000 ducks flew south. Far fewer will fly north, because of the fall hunting and other causes.

The duck population seems to have improved considerably over the 1934 - 1935 all-time low, but the birds are still far from as numerous as they were before then.

ROAD BLOCKED

There are frequent reports of birds nesting in inconvenient places -- of killdeer nests between railroad tracks, of robin nests on railroad cars, of wren nests in mail boxes, of robin nests atop garage doors. Out in Muncie, Ind., a killdeer selected the center of the road as the proper site for its eggs. Police solved the problem by putting a road block and warning lantern over the nest.

WEASEL FOOD

Birds do not form an important part of the food of weasels, according to an investigation by scientists of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Soil Conservation Service.

More than half their food was found to be mice, and two-

fifths to be shrews. Birds, rabbits, squirrels, porcupines, and fish supplied the remainder of the diet.

BOUND VOLUMES

If you intend to have your copies of FEATHERS through 1941 bound into one volume, it is necessary to let Miss Van Vorst know so immediately. The volumes will be sent to the binder within a few days.

WINTER RECORDS

The club report on local winter bird records is being completed. Those with interesting observations should report on them now to the record chairman, B. D. Miller.

NEW CHAIRMAN

At the recent meeting of the S B C board, Miss Nelle Van Vorst, who was reelected secretary of the organization, was named club chairman.

BELLIGERENT CHICKADEES

In line with most other sections in the northeast, Schenectady had more than the usual numbers of black-capped chickadees last winter.

Indicating that at least some of them were "foreigners" was the experience of one Niskayuna feeding station. In previous years that station had been regularly visited by about thirty chickadees, and they got along without friction, both with other species and among themselves.

The past winter told a different story. Sporadically the station was visited by larger numbers of chickadees, and the "extras" were scrappy, not only among themselves but

with the quietly feeding birds already there. In late February, however, the feeding station had fewer visiting chickadees, perhaps indicating that one flock had departed. Those remaining were more peaceful.

STARLINGS IN ROCKIES

The Rocky Mountains, a stumbling block to the spread of birds, are now being penetrated by the starling, an introduced species. Groups of them seem to be well established now in the eastern Rockies.

IN ICELAND

Visitors to Iceland before the war were given a small book, in which was said:

"Please remember that it is not considered sport to shoot birds in Iceland. The birds are dearly loved as messengers of summer and beauty, and their shooting is strongly re-sented by the people."

LOONS AND GREBES

For some time the members of the Schenectady Bird Club have been asking for more complete local records of the birds -- records more in detail than those in the now-out-of-print booklet printed in 1937, and including the records since then.

A start is now to be made on such a list. How accurate and how complete the story will be depends upon the extent members cooperate.

The first article will cover the available records and observations on the loons and grebes. Your records on those birds should be given now to the record chairman, B. D. Miller. Petrels, pelicans, cormorants, etc., will be next.

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WHAT IS LOCAL TERRITORY ?

George H. Bainbridge

"What is local territory?"

Interesting question, this, and just about as answerable as "What is enough?" Well, for both it can truly be said "That depends on circumstances." The principal factor in determining local territory appears to be the ability to get there.

Naturally, back in the days of shanks' mare (walking to you), "local" really was constricted. Probably a safe guess as to the distance a Birder might cover would be a circle of about five miles radius. But even the circle might have some crimps in it because lack of bridges or boats would require too much walking to get to the other side of the stream, even though it were well within the supposed circle.

Horse-and-buggy Days

Even back in the horse-and-buggy days, well within the remembrance of several members of SBC, it really was a journey to get to the Indian Ladder section. From Schenectady and return was an all-day trip by train or trolley to Albany, train to Meadowdale, and walk from there to the old Indian

Ladder road and up to the top. Occasionally parties would hike back through the woods to Altamont for the return train trip. This is a real hike. One story goes that some members of a party who made this hike had to walk (?) down-stairs backwards the following day. So it seems reasonable to assume that Schenectady Birders -- there probably were some even in those days -- did not consider the Indian Ladder section as part of the local territory.

County Lines Mean Nothing

Obviously, artificial boundaries of government, such as county lines and the like, do not mean a thing to bird life except as variations in laws of the different governmental units may affect their slaughter. Of course, while some stream or body of water may be a natural factor in bird life, such as part of a flyway, or good feeding or breeding grounds, it may also form part of a governmental boundary. This latter is only incidental and there is no reason why it should not be considered a part of local territory even though it may be outside of some county or other governmental unit. The main ques-

tion is how accessible it is to the local Birders, since they would seem to be governed entirely by two principal factors of transportation and natural features.

Transportation, the first of these factors, was improved by the bicycle. But even so, local territorial expansion was limited by natural features. Thus, it was relatively easy for the bicycle rider to cover more territory in comparatively flat country, but it was difficult to cover hilly sections. For example, try to imagine pumping and pushing a bicycle up Altamont Hill of the old days, or even today with its improved curves and grades. Also, even in the heyday of the bicycle, now promising a return, there were very few good roads and cycle paths, especially in the sections where birders would naturally have to go to find birds. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the bicycle did not greatly increase local territory, especially in the more or less hilly country around Schenectady.

Welcome to the Automobile

With the advent of the automobile and good roads, the factor of accessibility became a relatively minor one by virtue of quick, flexible, and relatively economical transportation. The Birder could go literally when, as, and if, without consulting timetables or waiting or running for any trains. In short, the Birder became a free individual like the birds he was seeking. Round trips to the Indian Ladder section became a matter of two or three hours instead of a whole day. Both the physi-

cal and mental energy consumed by the old train-trolley walk could be devoted entirely to the pursuit at hand after reaching the desired location.

Not Unmixed Blessing

To the individual inspired by a real love of nature, the automobile has not come in the nature of an unmixed blessing, since it has also opened the great outdoors to the wanton killer, commercial and otherwise, and to the defacer who has yet to learn woods manners. Of course the Birder can now encompass so much more in a day as compared to pre-automobile times that the conception of "local" is now more nearly a matter of a circle of say forty miles radius, and that really covers a lot of good bird territory around Schenectady. Such, for example, as Saratoga and Round Lakes and even Lake George; Mt. McGregor; the upper Hudson River, especially to Stillwater; the Helderbergs and Rensselaerville; Ravena section; Big Nose; and what have you.

Farewell, Gas and Tires

With the present "Thou must not" in rubber and in gas, it behooves us to take what recreation we have available for bird trips with loaded cars so as to carry on through what looks like a long and dizzy session. In fact, "local" may even now be on the retrograde, for surely a return to the bicycle would prevent covering such territorial extent as is now possible with the auto.

And to close with a real pessimistic blackout, maybe that old five - mile circle is on the way back.

RECENT LOCAL RECORDS

B. D. Miller, Records Committee

After a comparatively mild and agreeable winter, with considerably less than our normal snowfall, no extremely low temperatures or severe ice storms, "spring weather" probably arrived a little earlier this year than usual.

As with mankind, food appears to be Item No. 1 in the lives of birds. Man's essentials, according to economists, are food, clothing and shelter. If that is so, then the essentials in a bird's life must be food and weather.

The heavy snowfall of nearly a foot we received April 10 and 11 must have caused considerable hardship among the early arrivals, but so far as I have learned, it did not reduce them to the starvation point. At such times one wonders how the phoebes, swallows and other insect-eating birds survive several successive days of cold, wintry weather.

How dejected and homesick the robin appears during and after these late snowstorms! And so do many other bipeds in spite of warm homes and plenty of food. The song sparrow alone appears to meet such weather reverses bravely and with an outward indication of joy:

He comes in March, when winds
are strong,
And snow returns to hide
the earth;
But still he warms his heart
with mirth
And waits for May. He lingers
long

While flowers fade; and every day
Repeats his small, contented
lay;
As if to say, we need not fear
The season's change, if love
is here
With "Sweet-sweet-sweet-very
merry cheer."

Besides several of the permanent residents, reports have been recorded up to May 4 for 73 species. A few of the "early birds" will now be given in the order reported:

Bronzed grackle - Arrived in Scotia March 5 (Hallenbeck); quite an early date for this bird.

Red-winged blackbird - On March 8, flocks reported (Andrews and Bainbridge).

Killdeer - Schermerhorn Road area, March 8 (Andrews).

Flicker - March 8, Indian Ladder region (Bainbridge); except for some winter dates, this is early.

Mourning dove - March 8, Campbell Road (Andrews).

Bluebird - March 8, in three localities, some singing (Andrews, Bainbridge, Havens).

Robin - March 12, singing on Dean Street (Bainbridge).

Fox sparrow - March 15, along Poentic Kill (Andrews).

Meadowlark - March 22, five birds along Campbell Road (Andrews).

Phoebe - March 29, ten birds in Saratoga Lake region (Caldwell).

Kingbird - April 12, Central Park (Hallenbeck). According to our local records this is the earliest arrival date we have. May 2 is given by Eaton.



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Mrs. Anna Dickerman, Editor
1088 Dean Street, Schenectady, N. Y.

White-throated sparrow - Arrived in Scotia on April 16 (Bainbridge).

Warbling vireo - April 24, Scotia (Bainbridge). Another early arrival date.

Wood thrush - May 2, singing along Myron Street (Miller).

Ruffed grouse - May 3, a nest with 13 eggs, Central Park (Van Vorst).

Rose-breasted grosbeak - May

3, Central Park (Van Vorst).

Bobolink - May 3, large flocks at Vischer's Ferry (Van Vorst).

Crested flycatcher - May 3, Central Park (Van Vorst).

Myrtle warbler - May 3, an unusual migration was reported (Van Vorst).

Of the ducks, nine species have been reported; of the warblers, seven species.

As a result of continued mild weather - almost like summer for nearly three weeks prior to May 5 - a careful comparison might show the migratory birds a little earlier than usual.

PROTECT THE SNOWIES

Gora T. Brockway

I was interested in the article on snowy owls in a recent number of FEATHERS. I have noticed that at no time has there been any unfavorable comment in the magazine against shooting these beautiful and comparatively harmless birds.

The Emergency Conservation Committee, Mrs. C. N. Edge, President, has published a pamphlet, "Framing the Birds of Prey." Of the owls in general, it states:

"It may be stated with confidence that owls are among the most beneficial of all birds, inflicting very little damage on the poulterer and conferring vast benefits on the farmer. The work of owls supplements that of hawks, and materially assists in preventing an undue increase of many obnoxious rodents.

"Mice are the chief food of owls. They also destroy some insects. With the single exception of the great horned owl, they destroy neither game nor poultry to an appreciable extent, and comparatively few birds of any kind.

"Neither is there any reason for destroying the great gray owl and the snowy owl. They both feed mainly on rodents. There should be a law protecting the snowy owl in every state where it is ever known to visit."

(It can be stated that at least the big majority of SEC members and other bird students are opposed to shooting of snowy owls -- particularly when in violation of the law, as in the case of the specimen shot within the corporate limits of Scotia during the past winter.)

HAWKS AND HERONS

Malcolm Andrews

Some fifty or more broad-winged hawks were seen April 25, migrating overhead along the Mohawk River near Vischer's Ferry. They were circling among themselves while slowly progressing in a northerly direction.

On the same day a heronry of black-crowned night herons was found directly opposite Niskayuna, just below Vischer's Ferry and definitely separate from the other, better known one farther down the river. Mr. Allen knows of this location as Heron Pond, and pointed it out to me at an earlier date, before the herons' arrival. There were from 100 to 150 nests on this date, although birds were seen bringing nesting material continually, so that more may have been under construction.

A grouse nest, with nine eggs April 28 and 13 eggs May 3, was discovered in Central Park, not far from the golf club. The female was on the eggs both times. Two birds were seen nearby previously.

(The heronry referred to has been in existence a few years, and is slowly being increased in size, but its location has not been publicized. It is very likely, because of the increased construction in the vicinity of the other heronry lower along the river, that in time this new heronry will become the major one. There are also indications that a heronry may be starting on the Schenectady side of the river. It seems doubtful, though, that it would be successful since it encroaches.)

THE DANCE OF THE GOLDEN-EYE

Dorothy Caldwell

The ice left Saratoga Lake early this year, fortunately for the SEC field trip of the 29th of March, which found the entire lake open, and many ducks present. As Route 9P follows closely most of the east shore of the lake, observations could be made easily from the cars, to the comfort of both ducks and observers.

Probably several hundred ducks were seen but these were of only four species -- American merganser, American golden-eye, lesser scaup duck, and black duck. Many of the birds were close to the shore

and excellent views could be had, even without binoculars.

The curious head and neck dance, part of the courtship posturing of the golden-eye, was seen repeatedly. "The drake extends its head and neck straight forward like a bowsprit, then vertically upwards, then backwards so that the occiput rests on the rump, and lastly forward to the normal position" (G. W. Townsend, "Beach Grass").

In one scrubby field, a chorus of juncos, tree and fox sparrows was heard, plus the

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occasional song of a field sparrow. The group also visited the marshes at Stafford's Bridge, about a mile below the outlet of Saratoga Lake. The special rewards here were a lone tree swallow and a pair of marsh hawks flying low over the marshes.

The trip continued to Bacon

Hill and north along the river road on the west bank of the Hudson. No waterfowl were seen here, but more marsh hawks, sparrow hawks, bluebirds, red-wings, and grackles; and finally a prairie horned lark perched on a fence post for all to see. A flock of goldfinches helped give a total of 31 species.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



ON THE PROGRAM

Included on the SBC calendar are the following:

Week-end - Bus trip to Montezuma Marshes on May 22 to 24 with the Sassafras Bird Club of Amsterdam. Description of that region in FEATHERS, June-July, 1941, page 44; and more details concerning this year's trip in the supplement accompanying this issue.

Picnic - Special plans have been made for this year's picnic meeting, May 25, Monday. Details in supplement.

Local field trips - Details in supplement concerning when, where.

STORER LECTURE

John M. Storer, nationally known speaker, delighted a large audience in the Nott Terrace High School auditorium on the evening of April 17, highlighting the state-wide observance of Bird Day.

Mr. Storer came to Schenectady under the joint auspices of the Mohawk Valley Hiking and Schenectady Bird Clubs.

To obtain material for his lecture and the accompanying presentation of pictures in color, he traveled more than 18,000 miles, making long

stops so that he could successfully film the rarest and most beautiful birds in all America.

Glimpses of animal life on the western plains were also shown, and there were several views of exquisite flowers in the process of opening. Slow motion added a great deal to the charm of the pictures.

INVITATION, AUDUBONIANA

A cordial invitation has been extended SBC members and friends to view a fascinating collection of Auduboniana, loaned by Mr. John S. Williams and on display at Audubon House, 1006 Fifth Avenue, New York, until June 1.

The exhibit may be seen daily, Mondays through Fridays, from 9 to 5 o'clock.

Among interesting items included are Audubon's gun, unpublished letters to his family and many of his choice original drawings, watercolors, an oil, and original hand-colored Havell prints.

FRIENDLY SPARROW

A bus driver on the Albany-Schenectady line lives on Consaul Road. An English sparrow has taken a liking to him

and watches for his homecoming. The sparrow then flies to meet him and perches on his hat or his shoulder, remaining as long as the man is out-of-doors. The sparrow disappeared for a time and it was feared that he would not be seen again, but of late he has returned and is as friendly as ever.

BIRD FATALITIES

Regarding bird fatalities which may come to the attention of members of the Schenectady Bird Club, I am always glad to receive for the Museum specimens, either entire or skulls of birds or other animals, together with appropriate data for the zoological collections of the State Museum. The specimen or part of specimen provides visible evidence of the record and it can be preserved indefinitely to supplement the notation on the accession card so that as much data as possible may be available. Of course the name of the person furnishing the record and material (skin and/or skull, etc.) constitutes a part of the preserved data.

-- Dayton Stoner, State Museum, Albany

McGREGOR FILEATED

Late in April a female pileated woodpecker discovered a dead pine tree near one of the buildings at Mount McGregor. She spent many daylight hours digging for food, oblivious of dozens of eyes and of several cameras focussed upon her from the windows about 60 feet away. Her crest, not nearly as large as that of her spouse of course but covering considerable area on her head, was gleaming like a great flame in the sunlight. It was inter-

esting to watch her give a tap with her powerful beak and to see a slab of bark a foot long or so slide off the trunk of the tree. Unfortunately, she moved on to fresh feeding grounds after two days of extensive excavations on the dead pine. -- D.C.

SINGING CREEPERS

A heavy migration of sapsuckers, winter wrens and brown creepers occurred during the week of April 15-22. The brown creepers were the most common, and several of them sang. Their exquisitely pure and tender song, which resembles the finer song of the winter wren, is seldom heard during migration. -- N.V.V.

SCOTIA'S GROSBEAKS

The evening grosbeaks that came to a feeding station on James Street, Scotia, on February 21 stayed until April 27 at least.

AT THE HERONRY

On April 19 a group of S B C members were somewhat surprised to find the black-crowned night herons well established in the heronry near Crescent. The actual date of their arrival is not definitely known, but it seems to be about the middle of April. April, incidentally, is a good time to visit the heronry as the trees are not in leaf, so the birds and nests can easily be seen. -- N.V.V.

MORE G-E BIRDS

That G-E list of birds will probably never stop growing. Among recent observations of interest within the gates of the plant were a screech owl

on February 23 and, shortly thereafter, a barred owl in Building 60.

UPLAND PLOVER NEST

In the Gifford Road section, in the general neighborhood of one of the sites of the upland plover known for years to SBC members, Game Protector Chester Griffith found a nest with four eggs on May 4.

GARDEN BIRDS

The meeting of the Schenectady Garden Club on April 22 was addressed by Barrington S. Havens, SBC member. Following the talk there was a bird walk through the grounds of Mrs. A. H. Armstrong, Troy Road, where the meeting was held.

EARLY SPARROWS

Among other early birds this season were two sparrows in March - field sparrow at Saratoga Lake, and swamp sparrow at Vischer's Ferry, both on March 29.

RING-NECKS

I have not been in the field much this spring but to date (April 23) my best find among the ducks was a flock of 18 ring - necks, no infiltration of other species; April 18.

-- Dayton Stoner

GUEST WRITER

FEATHERS has a treat in store. Orlee Jacques (Mrs. Jean Jacques), a noted California author and bird student, has promised to write an article on Bird Life in the Desert for one of the summer numbers. Her observations were made from an oasis on the edge of the Mojave desert.

The climate of the desert is the third driest in the world, exceeded only by a portion of the Sahara and smaller portions of the deserts of Arabia. The oasis is a mile-long stretch of springs and pools, supporting a luxuriant growth of mesquite, cottonwood and palms. Abundant food, water and shelter attract many migrants, as well as native birds.

BUFFALO RECORDS

March was warmer than usual at Buffalo, and many of the early migrants were ahead of schedule. Through March the composite list for the Buffalo Ornithological Society included 102 species, with 29 new that month.

WAR VICTIMS

"New England Bird Life" reports that some 5000 oiled ducks were found February 22 on Monomoy Point's beaches, victims of a tanker's foundering nearby. About 90 per cent of the birds were eiders; nine species were in the total.

Among winter rarities in New England were Pacific loon, black gyrfalcon, ivory gull, Richardson's owl, American three-toed woodpecker, Acadian chickadee (five reports), evening grosbeak (many flocks), and mockingbird.

WATER CHESTNUT

That pest of the Mohawk, water chestnut, which was the topic in some issues of FEATHERS last year, is the subject of an article in Water Works and Sewerage for March. How the plant has been controlled in the Potomac is described by an army officer of Fort Belvoir, Va.

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SOME EXPERIENCES WITH BANDED PURPLE FINCHES

Colored Bands Used To Assist In Identifying Birds
Not Yet In Full Adult Plumage ---
Year-around Cafeteria Visitors

Dorothy Caldwell, Mount McGregor

My feeding station, like most others, was originally maintained during the winter months only. After I had combined a banding station with this in the winter of 1937-38, I found that some of the banded birds were nesting nearby in 1938, so the cafeteria was kept open the year around. With the exception of an occasional chipping sparrow and robin, most of the patrons the first three summers were banded birds nesting in the neighborhood.

Purple finches are abundant summer residents at Mount McGregor but they did not discover the free hand-out of sunflower seeds until the spring of 1941, when they made themselves very much at home and were constantly at the feeding station from late April until mid-October.

As the purple finches do not attain their superb rosy-red coats until their first post-

nuptial molt, and as some males do not acquire full adult plumage until even later in life, a definite system of color banding the birds was adopted, that each individual finch might be recognized at sight and that changes in plumage might be recorded easily. The usual numbered aluminum band was given to all rosy males on the left leg and to all brown birds on the right leg; each bird was also color-banded and both color and position of this band recorded. For instance, a finch in brown plumage might be banded on the right over a black celluloid band, on the right under a black band, or on the right leg with a black band on the left leg, giving various possible combinations for the limited color series available.

From April 25 through August 23, 1941, fourteen purple finches were taken; six rosy males were banded on the left leg, eight brown birds banded

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on the right. Two of the latter molted to rosy plumage late in August.

Few Winter Finches

Purple finches seldom winter at Mount McGregor, and the winter of 1941-1942 was no exception. Even the tremendous purple finch invasion of the winter of 1939 missed us completely. On April 4, 1942, to my joy, a banded purple finch with a colored band returned to the window and was identified as one of the males which had come into rosy plumage in August, 1941. On April 6 he was joined by an unbanded male. On April 14 a second banded male returned and began at once to sing. From April 27 through May 1, many purple finches came, including the first brown birds of the season. There were often eight birds in sight at once at the feeder or in the trees nearby, which looked like the Rex Brasher cover of the University of the State of New York Bird Day Bulletin for 1938.

Nine Returns

Nine of the fourteen birds banded in 1941 had returned in April, 1942; three of the rosy males banded on the left, the two males which molted into rosy plumage in August 1941, two more males which were brown when last seen in August but which were rosy-red when they arrived in 1942, and two birds, apparently females, whose brown plumage persisted. Of these nine, eight were birds banded between April and early June, 1941. During the first week in June 1942, six of these eight were still in residence; four banded males and the two banded brown birds coming daily to the window.

The ninth "return" was one of the finches banded late in August 1941. He did not stay more than a day or two in the spring of 1942 -- apparently a migrant both seasons.

From Another Station

There were numerous unbanded finches at the feeder the last of April 1942. Two of these were taken but it was not possible to run the banding traps during the height of the migration. By May 4 most of the newcomers had moved on, including one "foreign" purple finch, a brown bird banded on the left and my first visitor from another banding station. Unfortunately this bird was seen for one day only and was not trapped and identified. Perhaps it will come this way again in the autumn, or perhaps sometime one of the thousands of purple finches banded at other stations in the 1939 invasion will visit the window sill.

All Summer Residents

The birds banded in the spring and early summer of 1941 were all summer residents apparently, and most of them returned for the 1942 season. Of the birds banded in August 1941, only one returned in 1942 and then only during migration. Although Mount McGregor is a bit outside the main migration lanes we do have some migrant purple finches in the spring and fall in addition to those which nest here.

- - -

YEAR-AROUND FEEDERS --

A feeding station in a locality free of English sparrows and starlings can be of interest the year around. To

be sure, most of the birds that come daily all winter gradually wander away in the spring as they scatter for nesting. The summer colony from 1938 through 1940 consisted of a single pair of chickadees and a pair or two each of white-breasted nuthatches, hairy and downy woodpeckers. Since 1941, when the purple finches became summer boarders, the chickadees have been conspicuous for their absence during the nesting season.

Teaching the Young

From mid-June on the feeder becomes especially fascinating as the nuthatches and woodpeckers begin to introduce their offspring to the free lunch at the window sill. The young downy and hairy woodpeckers are almost dazzling in their crisp black and white juvenal plumage; and the parent birds are so bedraggled with their dingy feathers, gray where they were white before they took on family cares. The first day or two the young birds stay in the trees nearby while the parents bring them choice tidbits of suet or doughnut crumbs from the feeder. How hard they do clamour for more and still more food, and how the parents have to hustle to satisfy the growing appetites! At first the young birds are still clumsy, and it is amusing to watch them imitate the older birds as they follow after them on the limbs in their attempts to search the bark of the tree for still more food.

Father and Son

In other seasons there has seemed to be a tendency for the downy and hairy woodpecker families to run to two off-

spring, equally divided between the sexes. Usually the male has brought the son to the feeder the first week or so and the female has brought the daughter. This season each parent has come sometimes with the son but just as often with the daughter. One pair of downies has achieved a family of three for 1942, one son and two daughters. One young woodpecker can keep one parent extremely busy even after it seems old enough to look out for itself. When one of the parents of the triplets tries to take care of the food for two at once, there is much excitement outside the window. It has been interesting also to note how the whole crown of the head of the young downy or hairy male is often red almost to the forehead at first and how gradually the red feathers are replaced by black until only the usual small red patch remains at the back of the head.

Learning How

One year an especially fluffy young nuthatch made its first visit to the window; it watched the parent bird pick up a sunflower seed, wedge it into a crevice, and start to hammer it open. The youngster promptly seized for itself an empty shell and proceeded to go through exactly the same procedure. Before many days, however, it was adept at choosing at a glance the fattest sunflower seed on the shelf.



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1088 Dean Street, Schenectady, N. Y.

AT THE MONTEZUMA MARSHES AND SANDY POINT

New Birds for the Life List of Dozen Members On Second Annual Trip

Helen Cole, Edna Dromms, Ruth Halleck, and Dorothy Rowley

Want to add some new birds to your life list? Want to meet some fine people and visit some excellent and beautiful bird country? Better plan right now to go with the Schenectady Bird Club if they have a trip to Seneca Falls with the Sassafras Bird Club of Amsterdam next year. Twelve of the S. B. Clubbers (and we do include Dorothy Caldwell, even though the Sassafras Club also claims her!) and ten from Amsterdam took off by chartered bus from Amsterdam on Friday night, May 22nd, after a week of rain, rain and more rain with intermittent showers on the day of departure and a drenching rain after we had been traveling about two hours. To save time, we had brought our lunches in various containers and started eating them about 6 o'clock, thus launching a round of continuous food which almost threatened to eclipse our major interest in birds, and ended only when we packed up to leave the bus at Amsterdam on our way home.

Syracuse's Martins

We passed our first "bird landmark," the martin house, in Syracuse. The bus was comfortable but not water-tight, as we discovered after a while when a trickle of water ran across the floor in several places and we decided to in-

vestigate how the luggage, piled against the side door, was getting along. The bag on the bottom was the only one to ship water, and Ruth Halleck was the only unfortunate to have to sleep in wet pajamas.

Nothing else happened to disturb us, and we sped thru the wet countryside, arriving at the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Oliver, a short distance outside of Seneca Falls, about 10 o'clock. They served us with refreshing tea and cookies and Mr. Marble, of the Seneca Falls Bird Club and our leader on the trip the next day, gave us a short talk about our itinerary and what we could hope to see. After deciding to have breakfast at 5:30 we adjourned to our comfortable, heated cabins about a quarter of a mile distant.

Baldwinsville Swamp

Just as dawn was breaking on Saturday morning a passerby would have seen plenty of activity around the camp, for breakfast was to be served at 5:30. We dressed hurriedly and walked to breakfast at the Olivers, hearing early-morning bird songs on the way and rejoicing that the rain seemed to be over as the morning was clear and windy. Breakfast was promptly at 5:30 -- first breakfast, that is -- and ourselves and lunch loaded in the

bus by six o'clock to start on our eighty-mile drive to Sandy Point, on Lake Ontario, where we planned to spend the greater part of the day. On the way we stopped at the Baldwinville Swamp where the black tern, green heron, swamp sparrow, long-billed marsh wren, great blue heron, and many ducks were the most outstanding birds seen, amidst many others. Back into the bus and on our way again!

Hunger set in shortly and we began to consume the apparently limitless supply of good things which Mrs. Oliver and her helpers had put up for us. Still going strong when we arrived at our destination where we added some liquid refreshments, impossible to manage on the speeding bus.

"On to the Beach!"

The parking place was at a deserted estate, and we saw and heard many warblers, but couldn't wait to track them all down as the cry was "On to the beach!" and we must keep up with the gang. The day was ideal. A brisk wind made hiking pleasant and drove away annoying flies. Mr. Marble hoped to show us the bald eagle which frequents the shore but he wasn't at home and we contented ourselves with the other delights which were so abundant. The walk along the shore with wind and waves pounding at our feet and the sky a beautiful clear blue with powdery clouds was almost treat enough, but in addition there were birds in great profusion -- ruddy turnstones near enough to study them well, many herring gulls and common terns flying constantly above us, circling and screaming and trying to keep us away

from their nests, even though it looked as if they would have to start their nesting activities all over again as the heavy rains of the previous week caused the lake to flood the point so that most of the nests we saw were ruined and the eggs cold. We spent happy hours watching countless sandpipers and plovers, the piping plover being an especial favorite as he seemed so unafraid and in fact curious about us. We watched red-backed, semipalmated and spotted sandpipers long enough so that we felt we could recognize them when we meet them again; but the experts assured us that the next time we see them they will probably look entirely different. Nothing's sure in bird-watching. The height of the shore trip came when a Caspian tern was discovered. He behaved beautifully and gave everyone a grand opportunity to get a good look at him.

As we rounded the point to go down the other side of the sandy peninsula the transition was like night and day. Here the trail led through the woods, beautiful hemlocks and pines, and the songbirds seen here were too numerous to list. However, we saw for the first time the mourning warbler, and would travel just as many miles to see it again! In fact, the mourning warbler wasn't all we saw for the first time. One member had a list of 21 life birds.

An Obliging Owl

The camps were deserted, not having been opened yet from the winter season, but standing like a sentinel in back of one of the camps was a screech owl with his back up against

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the trunk of a small hemlock. He sat there and stared at us, never blinking an eye until one member of the party ventured nearer to take his picture. As he got closer, the owl turned and watched him, facing the camera in a most obliging way. A little farther along the path we roused a startled bittern with his raucous cry. We saw so many things and were having such a good time doing it that the walk took longer than the four hours planned on, but no one minded that.

We reached the bus to find that an advance guard had already started cooking, so on the warm sands around Lake Ontario we enjoyed another good meal, likewise prepared by Mrs. Oliver. We had a little time to explore the old orchard, but the warblers seemed to have gone on, all except a parula which was singing constantly but which we were unable to see. In trying to get a glimpse of him, however, we did see a white-crowned sparrow, which was some recompense.

Howland's Island

About 4:30 we started our homeward trek. Part way there it was decided to save the hamburgs, etc., scheduled for a fireside supper at the Olivers and have them Sunday noon, eating out that night and thus enabling us to take time to visit Howland's Island. We arrived at the island, a federal game refuge, where they hope to breed many wild ducks, about 7:30 p.m. We had hoped to see the black-crowned night heron but our wishes weren't granted. The special attraction was the way the great blue herons decora-

ted the stump landscape in the distance, so that you felt it must be a mirage when you first glimpsed them thru your glasses -- 12 stumps and 12 blue herons in varying attitudes. We arrived back home about 8:30 that evening, and a few brave souls had energy enough left to clean up and go out for another meal. The others, looking forward to the next day's trip, soothed tender spots with sunburn lotion and climbed into bed at an early hour to be ready for another day of birding on the morrow.

Montezuma

Four forty-five Sunday morning! The alarm rang into the hushed stillness of breaking dawn, and 22 bird-lovers again jumped out of bed and made ready for an early breakfast at the Olivers. It seemed as though Mrs. Oliver had to stay up all night to prepare the meals that she served us, but she claimed she didn't. We visited the Montezuma Marsh region, one of the newer refuges of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It contains 5932 acres and is an important sanctuary for migrant birds which stay near Cayuga Lake. Here we saw and heard flycatchers, warblers, both the yellow- and black-billed cuckoos, and the golden-winged warbler. This was indeed a birder's paradise, but we had a lot of ground to cover and only half a day to do it in, so we had to tear ourselves away from that delightful spot and move on to the next place, an old towpath where we heard many songs but didn't see much for it was so overgrown and thickly foliated. From there we went to Cayuga State Park, where we got an excellent view

of a red-headed woodpecker and several members were able to add another life bird to their lists. After a short stop at the park we drove along the shore of the lake. Here more shore birds were seen. There were a couple of loons, a pied-billed grebe, and a flock of herring gulls, all of which flew away when we got too near. A cedar waxwing was added to our list here, bringing the total to 120 varieties for the two days.

The scene shifts again from lakeside drives to towpaths, for we drove toward home and stopped at Demont's Landing to scour the woods for warblers. The yellow warbler was very much in evidence while the song of the northern water-thrush filled the air.

The hands of the clock were spinning around and it had come to an end, so we reluctantly climbed back into the bus and headed toward the cabins once more. Fifteen minutes was the time allotted in which to pack, dress, and be back at the Olivers for the delayed hamburgs, which were most welcome and satisfying. After each guest signed the guest book and the group posed for a picture, farewells were said and the happy, enthusiastic group started the long trek back east.

The drive back home was by way of Cherry Valley. Amsterdam was reached at 7 o'clock, and we parted company, all agreeing it had been a most satisfactory and happy excursion, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Oliver, Mr. and Mrs. Marble, and the Amsterdam committee headed by Lillian Perkins.

Music in the Marshes

It was Sunday in Montezuma
Marshes
Where men very seldom trod,
Yet the peaceful, soothing
stillness
Made it sacred, as the Church
of God.

The tall, stately trees of the
woodland
Seemed to beckon and to say,
"Come, enter this holy temple--
Rest--find peace--and pray."

From out of that shrine of
beauty
A choir of birdsong was
ringing,
Flycatcher, redstart and
golden-winged
All blended in the singing.

'Midst the heart of the far,
dense thicket
With notes so mellow and
cheery
Came the beautiful, liquid
notes
Of the wood thrush and the
veery!

They all harmonized so
sweetly --
Never faltered or once lost
key --
That compared to human voices
We seem in our infancy.

As I listened the music grew
richer,
Each bird with its own
distinct song
Helped weave a choral pattern
That I shall remember long!

It was Sunday out in the
marshes
Not a church was anywhere in
sight,
But I had been to a service
Planned only by God in His
might!

BIRD MAGIC IN MEXICO

Dr. George Miksch Sutton, Curator of Birds, Cornell University

(Dr. Sutton was the speaker at the June 23 meeting of S B C. following his appearance as the WGY Science Forum speaker on the same subject. At the Club meeting Dr. Sutton exhibited many of the life-size water-color paintings he made in Mexico from life or from freshly killed specimens.

The following is adapted from the talk given by Dr. Sutton.)

A little over a year ago the Cornell University - Carleton College Expedition returned from Mexico with a wealth of scientific data and a fascinating story to tell. The Expedition established itself in an unoccupied wilderness rancho in the secluded Sabinas Valley, some 375 miles south of Laredo, Texas. The purpose was the study of bird life in a region rich with possibilities -- and, needless to say, we made the most of the two months of our stay. Dr. Olin S. Pettingill, Jr., professor of zoology at Carleton College in Minnesota, had the responsibility for the photographic program; I centered on paintings in water-color, a representative collection of bird skins, and certain ecological studies.

We stopped off at Monterrey for a few days to get the members of our party familiar with Mexican birds, coming to grips first with the birds at our tourist court. From the moment we arrived, we'd been hearing loud cries from the palmettoes outside. Some of them were pipings, tuneful enough to be bird-like. Others were harsh chacks. Others were comparable only to the noises cattle make in trampling dry brush or cornstalks.

Birds were making those trampling noises, and all the

other noises too. What is more, the same birds were making all three noises. The great-tailed grackle, a most versatile fellow, can pipe, chack, and make a sound like crackling of cornstalks. He looks something like a long-tailed crow. When he goes to work, he sticks his bill straight up, puffs out his body feathers, spreads his wings and tail, shakes as if palsied, and delivers himself of a series of ridiculous squeals. When the squealing subsides into a mere fizzing, he rests a moment, and starts all over again, this time producing in some corner of his amazing voice-box the sound of breaking stubble. We had a great deal of fun out of those grackles. Of course we saw many other species of birds during our stay, but after two days we got underway again and moved down to Linares.

Brown Jays

We were even busier at Linares than we were at Monterrey, because we were trying to make a complete list of the birds. That meant being out at night as well as in the day time, so we had our hands full, especially with the brown jays. They took good care that we were well announced wherever we went, and they weren't content to sound just one alarm -- they fol-

lowed us wherever we went, screaming almost incessantly, saving their vilest language and loudest voice for the time we most wanted quiet. They're about as big as crows, dark gray brown on their upper parts, lighter beneath, and rather long-tailed. They have one unique anatomical feature. On the brown jay's chest there is a curious little bag that fills with air when the bird screams. It pops up from the feathers, sometimes showing quite distinctly, and collapses when the scream ends. In some individuals the collapsing part of the process is so audible that the bird seems to hiccough.

Guacomayas

The birds of the Sabinas Valley were even more interesting. We were just settling down at the rancho when we heard a couple ear-splitting squawks outside.

"Guacomayas!" exclaimed our host. "Remember them?"

I certainly did remember them -- it would have been impossible to forget. We ran to the door and saw them; two guacomayas headed down the river, flying deliberately, not very high in the air. The sunlight gave their pointed wings and long tails a turquoise shimmer, but they were really green, with golden wing linings. They were military macaws.

During our stay at the rancho there were immense flocks of red-crowned parrots milling about the tall ojita trees near the river, screeching incessantly. Their flight was rapid, rather like that of a wild duck. Often they flew

about in pairs. Some of their courting they did in mid-air, fluttering about in a daze, screeching and clawing as if climbing some invisible vine, facing each other. One morning we saw them, they were eating the ojita buds and flowers, devouring about a tenth of what they pulled off. The sound of discarded petals, buds, and stems was like rain.

Plenty of Other Species

There were plenty of other birds. Gorgeous black and white and flame-orange Alta Mira orioles trooped through the tree-tops. Red-brown wood hewers hitched up the trunks and along the big boughs, jabbing their beaks into the clumps of epiphytes. A coppery-tailed trogon, bronzy green above, poppy red below, with snow-white chest band and yellow bill, called "cory, cory, cory, cory" in a husky, plaintive voice that reminded us of a hen turkey. Hummingbirds darted about. Wrens sang jubilantly. Off in the distance a Guatemalan ivory-billed woodpecker, regal in black and white and red, rapped an incisive challenge on a cypress stub.

Too Much Rain

We had trouble with the weather. It rained a good part of the time we were there, and was cloudy most of the rest. But we did the best we could under the circumstances, and we were richly rewarded. Take our second morning at the rancho. It had rained all night, and the paths were muddy; but Pettingill and I started out together to observe birds.

We separated toward noon. Each of us was beginning to

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feel, as a good ornithologist may under such circumstances, that bird identification problems are worked out better by individuals than by parties.

Faisano

All at once, out in the gray-green tangle somewhere between me and the river, sounded the solemn oomp, oomp, of courting male Mexican curassow, a bird the Mexicans call the Faisano Real. So I started off, through the underbrush. My nice new pants were torn in a dozen places before I had taken many steps. And for each snag in the pants there was a corresponding snag in me.

The Faisano Real is almost a ventriloquist; he may seem far away and still be close by. Suddenly, to my great surprise, there was a crackling of branches almost overhead, and a loud whuff, whuff of wings, as the heavy black and white bird left the high branch on which he had been perched. Then I automatically raised my gun and fired, and the winging Faisano crashed into the thicket.

At that very instant the Faisano's face had all the colors of life. In five minutes or ten that great golden yellow knob at the base of the bill would be a bit duller, the eyes less bright, the flesh colors of the mouth and tongue less intense. What oddly beautiful, stiffly recurved feathers were those of that barbaric top-knot! How strange the pattern of black and yellow and grayish ivory on the bill! Lifting my prize, I decided that it must weigh as much as eight or ten pounds, perhaps more.

In painting my Faisano I made a quick pencil outline of the whole bird, thereby determining the design of the picture as a whole, then worked out the plumage of the head, color patterns of the face and bill, and scalation of the feet in great detail. It does take a great deal of time, infinite patience, and exhaustive attention to detail. But it's worth it. Of course you aren't through even when you have made the drawing; you have to make the birdskin.

Singing Quail

The bird that gave me the most trouble was the singing quail -- a bird known among the more stuffy ornithologists as the long-clawed quail. Not that the species was so difficult to draw, though its feather patterns were intricate, but the bird itself was so difficult to see and obtain.

We heard the bird singing on the mountain the first day we got to the rancho, but we did not recognize it right away. But before long getting one of the mountain-inhabiting quail had become a sort of mania with me, and at last I saw one -- two birds, in fact. They got away from us that time, but we did find out for sure that they were nearby, and that was something. Unfortunately for me, though, Pettingill got the first specimens -- a male and female. Handling them, I was torn between vague hatred of any mere photographer who could blunder into two almost fabulously rare quail and actually get them; deep admiration for this old friend who knew how desperate our need for these specimens was; and sheer enjoyment of the birds themselves.

We made good use of them. I painted and skinned them, and we all ate them. So you can say we exploited them to the fullest. But there was one catch. Pettingill had to shoot them at very close range and consequently they were pretty badly battered. So it was just as well I ran across a mother bird and two newly hatched young ones. When I first stumbled across them, of course, I didn't realize that there were any young. I was right on top of the female before I noticed her, and since I didn't want to duplicate Pettingill's hard luck in shooting at too close range, I was faced with the choice of backing up ten or twelve paces or taking the slim chance of getting it at the proper range on the fly. I decided to back up, got away with it without flushing the bird, and picked it off at the proper distance. It was a perfect specimen. I found the two baby birds when I stooped to pick up the specimen -- partly to my sorrow, and partly to my great elation. They were possibly the first baby singing quail ever to be collected, and almost certainly the first ever to be seen by a bird artist. I made a painting of the singing quail family together -- the father, mother and two babies.

Exclusively Tropical

During the course of our work we recorded on or near the rancho, representative species of four distinctly and exclusively tropical bird families that probably are not to be found anywhere else in the world north of the rancho's latitude. These families were the Nyctibidae, or potoos; the Cyclarhidae, or pepper shrikes; the Cochleariidae, or boat-billed herons; and the Formicariidae, or ant shrikes. No representative of any of these families has ever been recorded anywhere in the United States, and so far as I have been able to learn, not one of them has ever been taken as far north as the Tropic of Cancer -- less than fifty miles to the north of the rancho.

And, of course, the photographs, the paintings, and the specimens speak for themselves: forty life-size water-color paintings direct from life or from freshly killed specimens; the first full-length color motion picture ever made of Mexican birds; a full report on birds found in southern Tamaulipas from March to June, the transient forms included -- these were among the results attained.

HORSE HAIRS AND BIRD NESTS

B. D. Miller

Have some of our birds been forced to make substitutions for the horse hairs so popular with them in nest building? Long, strong hairs from the tails and manes of this noble animal are in demand with several of our native sparrows, vireos, warblers and orioles.

In some rural districts horse hair is so generally used by chipping sparrows in constructing their nests, they are known as "hair birds." It also is favorite material for the Baltimore orioles in weaving their strong pouch-like nests.

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Are the orioles' nests as long as they used to be prior to 1900? Where I lived as a boy the Baltimore orioles were known as "hanging birds" -- a name suggested by the long, pendulous nests they built, largely of horse hairs, from the swaying branches of elms and maples. They then appeared to me as 18 or more inches long, but considerably shorter nowadays.

As a substitute for hairs these birds are now using considerable string. Burroughs mentions this in some of his later writings. He tells us of supplying orioles with silk threads and watching them weave with it a nest of many colors. One of his threads became caught so that the bird was unable to carry it away. This appeared to provoke her -- she couldn't forget it all that summer, and would occasionally return to give it a few more vicious yanks, as if to say "There's that darned string again."

This year in Scotia a resident discovered both the orioles and robins were appropriating string he had put up to protect his lawn. When a piece of string was attached to stakes at both ends, they would use it as a trapeze, performing various acrobatic stunts in their attempts to gain possession of the desperately needed material for nest building.

A considerate lady, seeing the birds' difficulty and hoping to supply their needs, put out some short lengths of yarn and string. Each time she put out a mixture of cotton and wool, as reported to me, the oriole would take only the cotton threads. Now, why did they prefer cotton to wool? It appears to me like an example of bad judgment. I wonder if they would be able to distinguish silk from rayon or nylon. Can any readers throw light on this subject? If not, it will be worth observing next year.

TREADING BIG NOSE

Virginia C. Freligh

Again this year S B C collaborated with the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club and spent Sunday, May 12, at Big Nose in the foothills of the Adirondacks, several miles west of Fonda, just off Route 5, where the Mohawk River, coursing through the valley, has terminated the junction of the Appalachian and Adirondack mountain chains. The day was blustery but the sun shone invitingly, and before we even reached our destination a flicker was observed alighting on a lawn near the river. The orchard near the road was our first

and last source of interest. Here nesting places were ideal and many of the birds were after the all-too-numerous supply of insects found in any orchard. An old, hollowed-out fencepost yielded a bluebird family nestled cosily ten inches down. The parent birds were fortunately not too alarmed at the satisfying of our curiosity, and when they accommodately left the nest five light blue eggs were revealed.

Farther up the road a hawk sailed majestically above. As

he neared us his gray underparts came into view, but as he banked to complete his ever-winding orbits, his back and tail feathers came into prominence. We concluded it to be a red-tailed hawk. Other members of the hawk family were observed soaring very close to the Heavenly Blue. Many different kinds of warblers, sparrows, swallows, vireos, woodpeckers, and thrushes were in evidence.

The scarlet tanagers and orioles sang superbly, and the rose-breasted grosbeak put on an ostentatious performance for our benefit. It was interesting to note how the barn and rough-winged swallows skimmed over the plowed fields for insects, just as the tree swallows skim over the water. A group of bank swallows was discovered up the creek, where they were just commencing a colony.

The abundance of the magenta-colored fringed polygala found in the lighter soil of the woods was of special interest. White trillium carpeted many a sunny spot of hillside. Dogwood bloomed profusely on the steep sides of the ravine, and at the summit of one of the mountains a hawthorn blossomed. A yellow moccasin flower was discovered and seven kinds of violets counted. In all, approximately forty varieties of flowers poked nodding heads from beneath trees and shrubs, and fifty kinds of birds cavorted from precarious perches, circled smoothly overhead, beat rhythmic tattoos on hollow trees, preened exquisitely beautiful feathers in the sunlight, sang lovely songs from near and distant boughs of the deep woods, or swooped down for insect pests in the gathering twilight. And thus "the end of a perfect day."

WORTH HIS SALT?

George H. Bainbridge

With the coming of the automobile and the passing of the horse and certain concomitants from the city streets at least, the ever-present English sparrow has risen from a lowly gutter-snipe and rowdy bully to a position of some respectability. How much depends on one's point of view. The purpose of this article is not to present any brief for the drab plumage, unmusical and somewhat annoying chirp, and the messy nest-building of this so-called foreigner, who had no voice in his importation but has had plenty ever since. My observation over the last four years gives evidence of adaptability to a

high degree and real economic value.

Thus, about four springs back, the silver maples on Washington Road in Scotia were heavily infested with a small caterpillar. This pest so quickly riddled the leaves that the trees presented a half-naked appearance with the ground beneath literally covered with leaf fragments and what-not. In fact, the trees, lawns, sidewalks and streets looked like -- well, you know what Sherman said about war.

Came to the rescue the Baltimore oriole, but in too small numbers for the magni-

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tude of the infestation. It was a joy to watch him work -- no lost motion digging the caterpillar from its rolled leafy bed, usually from the very tip of a twig -- nothing but the beauty of stream-lined action and the precision of bull's eye perfection.

Clumsy Emulator

Then one day near dusk while we were eating dinner, some clumsy bird which, through the window glass, looked like an English sparrow was seen trying to emulate the oriole. But his motions were so clumsy while trying to hang on to the twig tips and at the same time get the caterpillar, one could but think of an elephant trying to dance with a mosquito.

And could it be an English sparrow? Well, dinner was temporarily forgotten and binoculars quickly trained on the clumsily performing bird. Yes, it was an English sparrow. Well, if there is anything in the old copybook maxim "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," the English sparrow has demonstrated it. True, he has never acquired the dexterity, grace and efficiency which the Baltimore oriole displays, but what there lacks in these qualities is more than compensated by numbers. At any rate, this, the fourth spring counting the first occurrence of the pest in question, finds the English sparrow still on the job, and more and more proficient. The robin also has contributed by gathering the caterpillars which fall with their island leaf-fragment which they chew loose.

Each year the pest has lessened, and this year its de-

predations are of little consequence except on one or two isolated trees. In passing, it may be well to mention that no spraying or other preventive measures have been taken to reduce this leaf-eating pest.

Perhaps you are familiar with that pesky annual known locally at least as crab or summer grass. Mow and pull all you can, still some will go to seed in late summer. Here again the English sparrow proves his economic worth for he has a great hankering for the seeds of this grass. Too bad he can't be sold on vitamins, so that he would also eat the grass. But even English sparrows have limitations

Seed Cracker

This past relatively mild winter gave further proof of the English sparrow's adaptability and perseverance. For days he longingly watched the chickadees and nuthatches eat sunflower seeds grown in 1940. Age apparently makes the seed shells more flinty and harder to crack. Even the chickadees and nuthatches discover this. Finally the English sparrow must have decided that what was good for other birds was also good for him. But he seemed to realize that the methods of attacking sunflower seeds used by the chickadees and nuthatches were beyond him, so he developed a technique of his own. This consists of rolling a seed over in his bill -- one bird took a minute and a half by watch, until a mechanically weak spot is located, or some softening effect of mouth liquids, if birds have such, helps the process of opening the shell and revealing the food.

The English sparrow also showed himself a bit of a beachcomber in that he investigated the opened shells left by the chickadees and nut-hatches for remaining tidbits, thereby saving himself to some extent the cracking process.

But in spite of the English sparrow's proof of economic value and intelligence, I still feel like throwing something at him. Perhaps it is just a surge of youthful memories of the one-time gutter-snipe bully.

A CAPE ANN IDYL

Caroline Hamilton, Greenfield, Mass.

One of the happy features of this present day is the increase and wide distribution of unknown, unofficial, small bird sanctuaries, maintained not by taxes or public contributions, but by garden club members for their own joy, a joy, however, they gladly share with any real lover of birds for birds' sake. The collector is not wanted in these paradises.

Usually the owners were uninterested in birds at first, owned no binoculars, went on no bird hikes at early dawn. Instead they planted trees and shrubs, built arbors for vines, developed pools and brooks, and the birds moved in. Naturally it followed that the owners became bird-conscious, added feeding stations, began to look up on kinds of food for shelves and on fruit-bearing bushes for the yard.

"Strange Bird"

Such a Bird Eden was visited by a member of the S B C and I on May 14 to run down the report of a "very strange bird." No one, birding on Massachusetts' North Shore at any season should fail to call there. It belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Elihu Clark, the latter president of the Pigeon Cove Garden

Club, and is an easy place to reach.

The house, practically hidden amid trees and shrubs, stands on the corner where bird lovers leave the circular bus line out of Gloucester to go down to Halibut Point, that projection into the great Atlantic runway where one can sit in the Fall to watch the flocks of ducks, cormorants, and geese fly by on the annual southward trek. All car conductors know this stop. And a big sign makes it easy for the stranger who motors that way.

An Exotic Visitor

On May 14 Dorothy Caldwell and I received from the excited householders a royal welcome. Inside we were seated in easy chairs to watch the window feeding shelf. Barely were we seated when the exotic visitor flew in and began to eat. It was clearly a cardinal of sorts, but what sort? The crest and part of the head a warm blood red, the rest of the plumage soft shades of gray! Unfamiliar and beautiful. Strange to see perched, after feeding, among the pink buds of the apple tree!

We could not linger long watching this fascinating novelty, for urgent calls from

another member of the Clark family made us hurry down to the kitchen, beneath whose windows scratched sparrows -- white-throats, kingly white-crowns, Lincoln's, with songs and chippies.

Thrushes wandered on the lawn outside the living room windows. Hunting insects in shrubs, magnolia and Canadian warblers almost touched the lower panes of the dining room window. A scarlet tanager flashed through the yellow flowers and the young, yellow leaves of a spreading oak, while more than a dozen male bobolinks, each trying to out-sing the others, dropped together into a bush on the edge of the pasture across the road. Everywhere birds!

During the night the major migration wave of May had poured onto Cape Ann. Yet the cardinal was not a part of this mass movement. For a week previously he had been feeding in Mrs. Clark's yard. What kind of a cardinal? According to Mr. Clark, who claimed to have owned a similar bird years ago, it was a Brazilian cardinal. We left it there among the apple blossoms, perhaps a good-will messenger between the Americas, perhaps a lost pet escaped from a gilded cage.

Massachusetts Notes

The evening grosbeaks lingered on in Greenfield into May, being last seen on May 13th. The male rose-breasted appeared on May 1, the female May 3; and both varieties fed on the same shelf, though not too peacefully. The evening grosbeaks drove the male rose-breasted away, but the female rose-breasted fought and won

the right to feed when she chose.

May 14 and 15 were the days this year of the great wave of warblers, thrushes and sparrows through the eastern section of Massachusetts. Only a few Blackburnian, Nashville and myrtle warblers were noted. Quantities of parulas, black-throated greens and blues, magnolias, Canadians, redstarts, ovenbirds, northern yellowthroats, the black and whites, yellow warblers, water thrushes. All the thrushes except the hermit -- and unusual numbers of white-crowned and Lincoln's sparrows.

It is the custom of a group of Essex County men to make a two-day bird census of Essex County birds, both upland and shore, in mid-May each year. The group is led by S. G. Emilio, curator of the Peabody Museum in Salem. The census this year was on May 16 and 17. This year's list was unusually small, contained no rarities, and no migrants. Just one day can such a difference.

- - -

W. H. Hudson, who spent many years in Argentine, in "Adventures among Birds," wrote:

"-- a bird of the finch family of southern South America, about the size of a starling, but more gracefully shaped, with a longer tail; the whole upper plumage clear blue-grey, the underparts pure white; the face, throat, and a high pointed crest an intense brilliant scarlet.

"The cardinals are taken as fledglings from the nests in forests on the upper waters of the Plata River, and reared by hand by the natives, then sent down to the bird dealers..."

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THE 1942 STATUS OF THE NORMANDIN WOODS HERONRY

Recent Years Have Seen Rookery Successively
Smaller — Possible Explanation Seen
in Marauding Activities of Crows

Dayton Stoner, New York State Museum

For at least the past eight years the number of breeding individuals making up the colony of black-crowned night herons in the Normandin woods on the west side of the Mohawk river three miles south of Crescent has been slowly though gradually diminishing. According to Guy Bartlett (N. Y. State Ed. Dept. Bull. to the Schools, 20, no. 13, 151-52, 1934), this colony was established "years ago." In the summer of 1933, the period covered specifically by his report, he indicates that there were "nests by the hundreds." At another point in his discussion Mr. Bartlett refers to the "few hundred" nests which had served the occupants of the colony in the breeding season of 1933.

Fewer Each Year

At the time of my own first visit to the colony on May 17, 1935, a combined count and estimate placed the number of

nests there at 300 to 400. On May 5, 1939 I placed the number of nests at 175 to 200; some nests were then still under construction. On May 11, 1940 the number of nests was about 125 with some construction still going on. On May 7, 1941, between 70 and 80 nests were completed or under construction. When I visited the heronry again on June 25 of that year, perhaps 80 to 90 nests were occupied. On May 9, 1942, between 60 and 70 nests were in various stages of construction and occupation.

A note by "N.V.V." in the May, 1942 number of FEATHERS (page 39) indicated that this heronry was "well established" as early as April 19, 1942.

Crows, Marauders

At the time of each of my visits to the heronry, the presence of considerable numbers of eastern crows in the

immediate vicinity was noted. Occasionally one would swoop down toward an incubating night heron or to a nest carrying eggs or young. The raucous voices of the crows and their persistent sorties into the heronry appeared to cause considerable disturbance and confusion therein. It was evident, too, that these sudden visits of the crows resulted in considerable destruction of both heron eggs and young. For, in their hurried and harassed leave-taking the night herons often broke the eggs or pushed the nestlings from their precarious perches in or near the frail nests. On June 25, 1941, I found the partly decayed bodies of several young night herons on the ground with the brain-case of the skull picked open and the contents removed -- work of the black marauders.

My most recent visit to this heronry occurred on June 24, 1942 when it presented an unusual appearance. As I approached the place I missed the hoarse, croaking notes of the herons; not a bird circled about; somewhere near by the "caw caw" of a crow reached my ear.

Inspection of the rookery, well-populated six weeks before, now revealed a complete absence of night herons. However, many nests remained in the tall trees; some had partly disintegrated there while others lay upon the ground; those nests in the trees appeared not to have been occupied recently. The rather profusely growing ground vegetation as well as the foliage of the nest-trees themselves further indicated that the rookery had been unoccupied for some time. Usually the

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Mrs. Anna Dickerman, Editor

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limy, semi-fluid excrement from the inhabitants of the colony has so burned and seared the underlying green foliage by mid-June that the trunks and branches of the nest trees are stark and bare and the ground beneath them exhibits little that is green. Numerous fragments of eggshells littered the ground. From an ornithologist's viewpoint the unwonted quietude and lifelessness about the area was startling and depressing.

Whether or not the crows were entirely to blame for the departure of the night herons from their usual nesting haunts is difficult to determine but all the evidence points to the marauding activities of those aggressive birds as an important factor in the evacuation of the herons from the territory. It will be interesting to observe whether, in future seasons, the night herons attempt to renew their nesting activities here and the degree of success that may attend these efforts. Further interest also will be associated with the forthcoming status of the heronry in this territory which is directly opposite Niskayuna and was reported upon briefly by Malcolm Andrews in this journal. (Volume 4, no. 5, 37, 1942). It is possible that an infiltration from the Norman-din woods heronry may considerably augment the size of that colony.

BIRDS OF VALE CEMETERY

One-year Intensive Study Reveals Large Number of Species in City-Encircled Area

Barrington S. Havens

During the years 1940-1941 a comparatively intensive study was made of the birds of the Vale Cemetery and its immedi-

ate vicinity. Trips were made through the territory almost daily in an attempt to get some idea of the various spe-

SPECIES	R	S	W	T	SPECIES	R	S	W	T	SPECIES	R	S	W	T
Green heron.....				2	House wren.....				1	Pink warbler....				b
Canada goose....				a	Winter wren....				b	Ovenbird.....				b
Black duck.....				1	L-b.marsh wren..		1			No.waterthrush..				b
Red-should.hawk.				1	Catbird.....		b		b	Mourning warbler				1
Sparrow hawk....				3	Brown thrasher..				1	No.yellow-throat				b
Killdeer.....				b	Robin.....		f		b	Wilson's warbler				1
Spot.sandpipar..				b	Wood thrush....		b		b	Canada warbler..				b
Herring gull....				1	Hermit thrush...				1	Redstart.....				b
Mourning dove...				b	Olive-back thr..				b	English sparrow..		b		
Screech owl....		b			Gray-oh.thrush..				f	Bobolink.....				b
Barred owl.....				1	Veery.....				b	Meadowlark.....				1
Nighthawk.....		b			Bluebird.....				b	Red-wing.....			b	g
Chimney swift...		b			Gold-or.kinglet.				e	Baltimore oriole			b	b
Hummingbird.....				1	Ruby-or.kinglet.				f	Rusty blackbird.				b
Kingfisher.....				2	Cedar waxwing...				b	Bronzed grackle.				e
Flicker.....		b			Starling.....		g		g	Cowbird.....				b
Sapsucker.....				d	Yel-thr.vireo...		b		b	Scarlet tanager.				b
Hairy woodpecker		b			Blue-h. vireo...				b	Rose-br.grosbeak			f	b
Downy woodpecker		b			Red-eyed vireo...		b		b	Indigo bunting..				1
Kingbird.....				1	Warbling vireo..		1		1	Purple finch....			b	b
Gr. flycatcher..				2	Blk.& wh.warbler				f	Redpoll.....				h
Phoebe.....				2	Golden-w.warbler				1	Pine siskin....				b
Yel-bel.flyc....				b	Tennessee warb..				b	Goldfinch.....				e
Least flycatcher				b	Nashville warb..				b	Red crossbill...				h
Wood pewee.....		b			Parula warbler..				b	Towhee.....				b
Horned lark.....				2	Yellow warbler..				1	Vesper sparrow..				b
Barn swallow....				3	Magnolia warbler				b	Junco.....				g
Bluejay.....		b			Blk-thr.bl.warb.				b	Tree sparrow....				b
Crow.....		b		g	Myrtle warbler..				b	Chipping sparrow			b	e
Chickadee.....				b	Blk-thr.grn.wblr				b	Field sparrow...				b
Wh-br.nuthatch..		b			Blackburn.warb..				b	Wh-cr.sparrow...				1
Red-br.nuthatch.				b	Chestnut-s.warb.				b	Wh-thr.sparrow..				g
Brown creeper...				2	Blackpoll warb..				b	Song sparrow....			b	b
										Snow bunting....				h

KEY: R - resident; S - summer resident; W - winter visitor; T - transient visitor. a - flew over; b - less than 10 birds; c - from 10 to 20; d - 20 or more; e - fairly common; f - common; g - abundant; h - flock(s). Figures indicate total seen.

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cies of birds which might be found there as residents, summer residents, transients, and visitors of different kinds. This article summarizes the results of that study.

As a rule the trips were not exhaustive. Usually they were made on the way to and from work, in the morning and evening (more often in the morning). Usually time was not sufficient to chase down unidentified species, or locate nests or to otherwise check up points worthy of more careful study. But the results, meager though they may be, seem worthy of recording.

In all, trips were made on 283 different days during the period from October 3, 1940 to November 14, 1941. On some days, especially during the pleasant months, more than one trip was made on a given day. Additional trips were also made by others, principally Nelle Van Vorst, who, occasionally with some other bird students, provided material for these records.

A summary of the findings is provided in the accompanying table of bird species, which shows that a total of 100 different kinds were recorded in the period specified. Eighty-three birds are shown as transient visitors -- the largest percentage of the total -- while, on the other hand, but seven species were recorded as residents. Of summer residents there were 23; there were seven winter visitors. These subtotals do not, of course, make a grand total of 100 for the simple reason that in many cases a single species was observed in more than one category. The song sparrow, for example, is listed as a

summer resident, a winter visitor, and a transient visitor. Greatest number of species recorded on one trip was 42 on May 7, 1941. Least number was none on both December 6, 1940 and January 3, 1941. Temperatures ranged from zero on January 14, 1941 to 75 on June 27 and July 21, 1941.

General Comments

Before entering into a specific discussion of noteworthy findings on individual species, a few general comments should be set down for the record:

1. Species found in the cemetery vary more or less erratically from year to year, as a result of which this summary should not be considered as a true representation of what might be found in the territory over a long term. For instance, the red-headed woodpecker has been found in the Vale Cemetery in other years, but was not recorded during the intensive study.

2. As already mentioned, most of the birds found in the region were transients. This interesting fact indicates that, while birds have not settled in this section to any great extent either as permanent or summer residents, they do use it as a feeding ground in their migrations or wanderings. While this was interesting as applied to the winter period, it was not any more interesting than would be the case in any typical territory studied. On the other hand, the remarkable lack of definite evidence of breeding of species which might normally be expected to spend the summer was very curious. The wood warblers are a noteworthy

example of this conspicuousness by absence.

3. Many records were based on the observation of their song alone. But in no case was the species recorded unless the song was sufficiently well known to warrant the omission of a sight check.

4. Six species shown on the tabulation were observed in flight only: Canada goose, killdeer, herring gull, barn swallow, bobolink, and snow bunting. The records were made of the bird or birds flying over the territory in these cases, but where the birds were feeding in flight over the territory, they were considered as belonging to that territory; e.g., night-hawk and chimney swift.

Specific Comments

Black duck: One was observed circling in flight over the cemetery ponds on October 9, 1941. It was quite obvious, from the actions of the bird, that it had been flushed from one of the ponds by people walking through the cemetery to work, and it seemed that the bird was trying to make up its mind to alight again in the water but was frightened into the air each time by more people going through. A number of years ago two of this species were seen swimming in one of the ponds.

Sparrow hawk: In September, 1941 one of these birds was seen chasing a flicker.

Screech owl: At least two pairs of this species are permanent residents. On June 13, 1941 four were seen perched on a single limb, including two immatures.

Barred owl: This bird, recorded only on November 3, 1941, was seen in the daytime and may have stayed in the territory, judging by later actions of crows. At the time it was seen, but one bird noticed its presence and objected: a hairy woodpecker.

Nighthawk: Regularly found in summer feeding in the air over the territory near Brandywine Avenue.

Chimney swift: Regularly observed feeding in flight over the general territory.

Flicker: One was killed by crows in the spring of 1941, as observed by Nelle Van Vorst and companions; another was chased by a sparrow hawk.

Horned lark: No attempt was made to make a subspecific distinction. On March 25 it became evident that a pair was breeding in the Brandywine Avenue lots. The nest (a second brood?) was discovered on June 16, with young. (See FEATHERS, August, 1941, p. 16: "Nesting with Difficulty")

Crow: Large flocks flew on their way to and from their roosting places during the winter season. On June 30 a family was observed acting peculiarly in a tree and on the ground, and investigation disclosed the fact that they had been preying on some young rabbits; one young rabbit, dropped by one of the immature crows, had been decapitated. Other crows killed a flicker.

Black-capped chickadee: Interestingly, not a single one was observed during the winter of 1940-1941, although a few seemed to be wintering for 1941-1942.

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Brown creeper: At least two birds spent the 1940-1941 winter, and daybreak and early morning records were usually made at the same place each time, indicating that the birds spent the night in the same spot regularly. Weak song was first recorded on February 13 and was heard regularly, increasing in strength from then until the spring departure.

Long-billed marsh wren: A single bird was regularly found singing in the cattails during the summer, but no evidence could be found that it had a mate.

Gray-checked thrush: This bird is entered for the record only, because there is no positive evidence that it was actually there. The record was based on a guess of what the song may be (see FEATHERS, September, 1941, p. 76: "Was it a Gray-checked?")

Veery: Although one would expect naturally that this species would breed in the territory, no evidence was found that this was the case. It was not recorded in the cemetery at all from spring to fall, 1941.

Starling: Large flocks flew over, evidently to and from roosting places, in the fall of 1941.

Warbling vireo: Although listed as a summer resident, it apparently did not breed in the territory proper but in the outskirts.

Warblers: With one possible exception, there was no evidence to indicate that any species bred in the territory during the 1941 season. The

exception was the black and white warbler, and this record of breeding is questionable.

English sparrow: Although regularly found in the territory in varying numbers, there was no evidence that it bred in the territory proper. One possible breeding place was in the vicinity of the caretaker's house on the high ground.

Meadowlark: Two interesting records of single birds alighting in the territory on Oct. 17, 1940 and April 4, '41

Red-wing: Large flocks flew over, evidently on the way to and from roosting places, each fall. In the fall of 1941 a small flock of the species regularly spent the day in the cattails. In the morning these birds, vocally active, evidently acted as decoys to the larger flocks, for great numbers occasionally lit in the trees near the ponds for short periods, only to fly off a short while later. The species was always in song, in early spring or late fall.

Bronzed grackle: Continued in song until fall departure.

Cowbird: Males were observed before females in the spring of 1941. First males arrived March 24, while no females were recorded until April 15. At that time the first "rattle" notes were heard.

White-throated sparrow: On May 5, 1941, the cemetery seemed veritably alive to an overwhelming visitation of this species. Best guesstimate of the number, 250 birds.

Song sparrow: At least two wintered in the cattails during the 1940-1941 winter.

DESERT BIRD HOMES

How Materials for Nests are Found, and Where They Are Built

Orlee Jacques, La Canada, Calif.

To the bird lover newly arrived on the desert one question recurs again and again. How do birds find material for nests, and places to put them?

Of course, time reveals that the desert -- particularly around Twentynine Palms in the southern part of the Mojave desert of California where these observations were made -- is not so barren as it seems on first appearance. The floor of the desert bears scattered yuccas, greasewood, cactus and the small gray-green bushes, dome shaped and about a foot in height, which are typical of most American desert landscapes. Even the grim blackened rocks of the age-old mountains which surround the Twentynine Palms valley bear upon their lower slopes some growth of cactus or stunted shrub.

Many birds rear their young out on the open desert. Locating their nests is a real adventure. Equipped with stout boots, a wide hat and good bird glasses, a few early morning walks (a 5 o'clock start makes cooler going) in April or May are most enlightening to the seeker.

Though the desert sparrow nests anywhere about the desert, she may often be found along the rocky borders of a wash, cut out by the very infrequent rains which are sometimes real cloudbursts.

One nest, found by the writer when the brooding bird flew out from almost under foot, was placed in a small, round, gray-green bush. Thru the center of the bush a cholla (choy - yah) cactus had thrust its way to a height of about 18 inches. The nest was most cunningly placed in the top of the bush, just under the protecting spread of the cholla's crown. The word "protecting" becomes significant when you picture a many-branched cactus with spines closely set and over an inch long. The three, waxy-white eggs fitted well their neat, little grass-lined cup.

Scott's oriole selects the tree yucca for building site and material as well. These yuccas bear a crown of stiff, narrow leaves atop a trunk that varies from a foot to 8 or 10 feet in height, depending on age and available moisture. The orioles seek out the tallest of these. The nest is hung (oriole fashion) under the dead, down-drooping leaves and is constructed from the fibers stripped from the edges of the yucca leaves. It is not too easy to locate, so closely is it hung among the dead leaves and so perfectly does the material blend in color with the background.

Where there is underground moisture, on the floor of a wash or near a spring, smoke trees and mesquite flourish.

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These house a large population of verdins. The verdin, his gray dress relieved by a dusting of yellow over the face and bright chestnut shoulder patches, is forever busy.

The verdin's nest is a compact ball of gray twigs with a tiny opening near the bottom. It serves two purposes, the usual one of family rearing and that of a shelter for the adult bird in winter. If a summer nest is not available when fall winds begin to sharpen, the verdin cheerfully builds a new one. Such a nest, started September 22, 1940, in a mesquite in the writer's back yard, took about two weeks to build and was as perfect in finish as any summer nest observed.

The cactus wren, as her name implies, builds almost exclusively in the larger branching cactus forms, some of which reach a height of four or five feet. The completed nest resembles a long-necked gourd lying on its side, with the opening in the end of the neck of the gourd. Both birds work at its construction, using as material some twigs and the fine blades of desert grass, which springs up for a few

weeks during the scant, pre-summer rains. To watch them at this task is to wonder how they escape the long, vicious spines, for the nest is completely surrounded by a protecting network of cactus.

Say's phoebe seeks out man's company and the use of his buildings for a home. The miner's shack is often not too inviting, but nothing daunted, phoebe will place her nest under the three- or four-inch overhang of its corrugated iron roof. With the withering heat of the desert sun beating down on the top of the roof all day long there is no explaining how the nestlings survive, but the number of phoebes seen attests to the fact that they do.

Many other birds nest in this section of the Mojave, among them Gambel's quail, the road runner, the white-rumped shrike, the mourning dove, and Le Conte's thrasher. All have very cleverly adapted themselves to the blazing sun, scanty shade or none at all, and water holes miles apart. Their nests are as secure and as trimly constructed as those of their kind in more favored localities.

EAGLES, PROTECTED

We quote a recent item from the New York State Conservation Department:

Prompted by reports of the recent shooting of two eagles, the Conservation Department issued a new warning today that these birds are protected under the Conservation Law and future killing of either the bald eagle or the golden eagle will bring stiff penalties

from law enforcement officers.

A spokesman for the Department voiced the opinion that the recent destruction of these two birds could hardly be classed as a case of mistaken identity. The bald eagle, as compared with the turkey vulture or hawk, is much larger, weighing about 12 pounds. They also are much easier to spot in the air because of the

white head and tail which distinguishes the bald eagle after several years' growth.

Known principally as a scavenger, the birds' food consists chiefly of coarse fish. Observations of conservationists have established the fact that the eagle has become slightly more abundant in the Adirondacks, on Long Island and along the Great Lakes.

. . .

So much for the press release of the Conservation Department. But nothing is said as to what was done to penal-

ize those who shot the two eagles. How many eagles have been shot since they became protected birds years back? How many fines have been imposed, and how stiff have the penalties been? Shooting a pheasant -- which is hardly more than a barnyard fowl running wild -- carries a stiff penalty. Pheasants are easily replaced (although it is a question as to whether or not they shouldn't be eliminated); why is the sportsman who takes a hen or out-of-season cock pheasant in trouble, while the sportsman who bags a wood duck or eagle, or other rare species, usually merely warned?

-- G.B.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



BETTER WAY TO DO IT

It was quite a relief to see a different kind of a bird story in the Union-Star for a change. Too many of them tell how children have taken home young screech owls, robins, or other birds; have the youngsters posed with the birds in a canary cage; and make it look as though the children have done well by the birds.

No need to go on here as to the advisability of not handling any young birds, since so seldom have they really been abandoned by their parents. And no need to mention that keeping the captives is illegal.

However, the Union-Star of June 20 had a picture of a boy and bird that was refreshingly different. Headlined "Keeps Foundling Bird from Harm," the item said:

"You're looking at a picture of a small boy and a small

bird, but there's more of a story to the picture than you think. Three days ago the bird, an oriole, was shoved out of its nest by the mother to force it to fly, and it landed in a rose bush in front of a home on Broadway. There it was found by some children of the neighborhood, but Joey Reynolds of 470 Vedder Street, (the boy in the picture) took a particular interest in it. For three days he guarded the small bird from cats and other dangers, arriving early in the morning and staying until dark, leaving long enough only for meals. During his watch, the mother oriole would appear and feed her youngster and would try to get him to fly. The picture was made yesterday afternoon. Last night the mother bird got tough and pushed her offspring off the rose bush trestle and it flew to a porch. She brought it a worm, and it then flew up to a

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window sill. It was then pushed off by the persistent motter, and it disappeared into the yard, and today probably has its wings."

G-E ONCE MORE

To that probably-never-will-end list of G-E birds has been added the rose-breasted grosbeak. On July 8 an immature bird flew through an open window of the fifth floor or the main office building. It of course followed that the occupant of that office got in touch with George Bainbridge on the same floor. After a few minutes in the office, mostly up on pipes near the ceiling, the bird flew away.

CENTRAL PARK TRIP

On Saturday, April 25, the writer took charge of a trip through Central Park, starting from the archery grounds at 7 a. m. Six were present. We hoped to see warblers but not one appeared, although we covered the area north of Stump Pond where I expected to find the myrtle warbler. Unfortunately, we did not cover the pine tree district to the south, where we might have found the pine warbler.

The list of birds seen included: Starling, downy woodpecker, ruby-crowned kinglet, chickadee, cedar waxwing, cowbird, crow, junco (two dozen), chipping sparrow, blue jay, song sparrow, meadowlark, redwing, yellow-bellied sapsucker, field sparrow. There were perhaps a dozen of the kinglets, and we were lucky in one case to see the ruby crown. We enjoyed a good view of the field sparrow singing in an open field, north of the woods.

-- H.V.D.Allen

BENT, No. 14

The fourteenth in the series of bulletins by Arthur Cleveland Bent has been announced. "Life Histories of North American Flycatchers, Larks, Swallows and Their Allies, Order Passeriformes" is the title. It has 555 pages plus plates, and is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, at \$1 per copy. It is National Museum Bulletin No. 179.

NEST OF THE OVEN-BIRD

Apparently not all SBC members are familiar with the nest of the oven-bird for on a recent field trip someone asked "Why is a bird that says 'Teacher, teacher, teacher' called an oven-bird?"

On a wooded trail early one gray evening in June, a little brown shadow slipped suddenly through the undergrowth and then fluttering pitifully on the ground gave an obvious indication of a nest nearby. Sure enough there was the beautiful little domed nest of the oven-bird, for all the world like a little old-fashioned Dutch oven. Under the arched roof exquisitely fashioned of the materials of the forest floor, a clutch of five eggs was just visible.

-- D.C.

EARLY ORIOLE

An early date for the Baltimore oriole was established this year at Troy -- May 1.

-- Everett G. Ham, Troy

STORM BIRDS

Recall the rather brief but unusually heavy rain of Saturday afternoon, May 23? Not more than five minutes before

the downpour started, a turkey vulture went over Niskayuna. Its tail was narrowed and it was aiming due north, with no time spent in idle sailing.

During the first few minutes of the storm starlings were seen in straight-line flight back to their roosts. The rain pretty well quieted down all the songs, but a few robin calls were heard. And, before the storm was over, a mallard drake was seen to fly from its nesting to its feeding area.

The slight sprinkle that continued after the real rain had stopped was not enough to keep the robins from returning to their search on the lawns.

-- G.B.

PARK FLICKERS

Police Officer E. Klein has reported his observations on the nest building and raising of the young of a pair of flickers in Central Park.

While making his rounds he was attracted by a brown bird with a red spot on the back of the head. The bird was hewing out its home in a maple tree about four feet from the ground, just off Fehr Avenue. With its stout bill it tore into the tree and broke off large pieces until it had a round hole in which the eggs could be laid and the young hatched. Officer Klein both watched and photographed them.

-- Alice Holmes

CLIFF SWALLOW COLONY

A gathering of swallows near an old barn on the road at the foot of the Helderbergs between Altamont and Voorheesville has attracted the attention of several people. Sunday, June 7, we stopped to study the group since one cliff swallow was identified

when we drove near the farm.

Following the swallows, we soon found several pairs of cliffs were nesting under the eaves of the barn and also on the other buildings.

-- Frances S. Reeves

AOU EDITOR

The American Ornithologists' Union has elected John T. Zimmer, executive curator of birds of the American Museum of Natural History, to the post of editor of *The Auk*, the official organ of the society. He succeeds Dr. Glover M. Allen, who died in February.

BIRDS A HAZARD

Birds are a hazard to transport planes, Allen L. Morse of the C A A said at a recent aeronautical meeting. There have been, since 1939, 61 airplane accidents in which birds were involved. Two-thirds of them were at night; a third shattered or penetrated windshields.

In one case a plane collided with a flock of five night-flying swans, with considerable damage to the plane, not to mention death to the birds.

AT BUFFALO

Buffalo bird observers had a series of early migration records this year, particularly in late April and early May. Their total through April was 160 species.

The annual duck census, on April 12, showed a decided increase in Canada geese but decreases in the cases of most of the ducks.

A sage thrasher, purely accidental as a bird of that vicinity, was collected as a specimen on the trip; that was the outstanding find.

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LATE ROUGH-LEGGED

On May 17 a small group made the annual trip to Indian Ladder to find the worm-eating warbler. Several were heard on the wooded hillside and one was seen in some low underbrush. The usual thrushes and warblers were abundant, and two hawks were soaring above the treetops. Watching them for some time, we identified them as rough-legged hawks.

Again on June 7 we went to Indian Ladder. As we started up the old road we were greeted by some very unusual and amusing calls. No other bird but the yellow-breasted chat could tease us as the bird was doing, and sure enough it was the chat. A golden-winged warbler called as we neared the edge of the wooded section. At this late date it would seem as if they were nesting there. We have found them in this section for at least three consecutive years. Several worm-eating warblers were singing from their usual high perches. On our return trip through the ravine a barred owl sounded off several times; it was being tormented by some crows and blue jays, as usual.

Near the farm buildings where on May 17 we first saw the rough-legged hawk, the bird again appeared. This time we very definitely could identify him. It is very unusual for a rough-legged to be in this area in the summer, as he is an irregular winter visitor.

To make our trip complete, a pileated woodpecker called as we approached the Anderson's yard, and before we left he was seen nearby on a tree beside the little bridge where we had parked our car.

-- Nelle Van Vorst

LATE GEESE

Not only were they exceptionally late, but they were also headed in an unusual direction -- in mid-afternoon on May 21 a flock of about 50 Canada geese went down the Mohawk over Niskayuna, headed east toward the Hudson. Their flight formation was the usual V, and they were high. Their honking was the first indication of their presence.

-- G.B.

BANDED GEESE

It is reported that, of the 26,500 Canada geese banded by Jack Miner in 27 years at his Kingsville, Ont., sanctuary, only six of the 6,000 reports have been of birds killed west of the Mississippi.

IN NEW ENGLAND

New England records in March included three reports of the American egret; and many exceptionally early reports were turned in for various species during April.

OIL SLICKS TRAP BIRDS

Oil from tankers and other craft sunk in naval warfare in the Atlantic is taking its toll of North American bird life, according to the east coast migratory bird officer of the Canadian Department of Mines and Resources.

Observers along the coast report that increasing numbers of waterfowl and sea birds are being washed ashore, dead or nearly dead. The oil from sunken vessels or submarines comes to the surface and then floats for days in calm patches or slicks, often extending over wide areas. The birds alight on the oil-calmed water and, once their plumage

is saturated with oil, they are unable to fly, and must drift helplessly until death by cold or starvation ends their misery.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Diseases of Upland Game Birds; Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 21; 32 p. il., 15 cents.

Homes for Birds; Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 14; 24 p. il., 10 cents.

Local Bird Refuges; Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 17; 17 p. il., 10 cents.

Improving the Farm Environment for Wildlife; Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 12; 56 p. il., 10 cents.

Wildlife Management through Soil Conservation on Farms in the Northeast; revised 1942; Agriculture Department, Farmers' Bulletin 1868; 52 p. il. map, 10 cents.

Available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington; or through the SBC secretary.

CEMETERY BIRDS

Apropos of the article by Barrington S. Havens concerning the birds of Vale Cemetery (page 59, this issue), it is of interest to note what is going on in Buffalo. We quote a clipping:

Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo features birds in its newspaper advertisements. Copy which runs regularly in Buffalo Evening News describes the different birds seen in the cemetery and carries illustrations of each one.

The advertisements were prepared in collaboration with the Buffalo Ornithological So-

ciety. Increased traffic to the cemetery has been noticed since the advertisements appeared and there has been considerable bird study there.

The cemetery believes the bird angle has solved the problem of finding a suitable subject for cemetery advertising.

FEWER

Without vouching for the correctness of the figures, we quote a recent newspaper item to the effect that bird life in this country has decreased 75 per cent in 60 years.

ABOUT SWALLOWS

Reference has already been made (page 66) to the new volume of life histories by Bent. Among those quoted in the book is Dayton Stoner, one of this month's authors (p. 57).

Dr. Stoner has done much original work in his study of the swallows; and the new volume contains numerous references to his work.

AGAIN, WATER CHESTNUT

Another possibility for ridding local waters of water chestnut -- about which so much has been said and so little done -- may be offered by an organic chemical, sodium pentachlorophenate. This chemical, called Santobrite commercially, has been used with success in ridding southern waters of water hyacinth.

Eighty parts per million is a sufficiently strong solution to kill that plant; five parts per million will retard the growth.

A chemical, with at least a different trade name, was given a trial in Collins Lake in 1939.

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MORE COWBIRDS?

At least some local bird observers have been wondering if cowbirds were unusually common this summer. Small flocks of them were to be found in many sections where they had not been seen in other recent summers; and many of them were to be seen, particularly in early June, day after day on the same city or suburban lawns.

TRANSOCEANIC

A kittiwake captured at Bonavista Harbour, Newfoundland, during the autumn of 1939, proved to be a long-distance traveler. It had been banded, and investigation revealed the gull had been banded during the summer of 1938 on the Island of Kharlov by a worker of the Central Bureau for Bird Ringing, Moscow. The Island of Kharlov lies in the Barents Sea, off the coast of Murmansk, about 200 miles within the Arctic Circle.

WINGS OVER STAMFORD

We quote from "Illuminator," employes' magazine of the Connecticut Power Company of Hartford, Conn.:

"With the war of survival on in full swing, and with dive bombing becoming more popular every day as an international pastime in Europe, one sometimes wonders if some of the ideas we so-called humans have flashed across our mind from time to time aren't the outgrowth of observations made of the habits of birds; then, on the other hand, one also wonders if some of the birds aren't slowly falling into sort of a decadency, gradually descending from their former lofty heights of grandeur to copy some of our modern, anti-

civilized tactics of self-preservation -- or destruction as the case may be.

"Not being fully certain from the human angle, I can only say, I trust I am wrong from the bird's-eye view of the situation, but again there is some doubt, for it isn't all the bird's fault, because, for purely logical reasons, most gas utilities construct their gas holders and fuel tanks near the water, which is also in close proximity to the shore, and where there is a shore, there is 'shore' to be sea gulls.

"Now sea gulls love clams, but the pesky clams have a hard shell surrounding their tasty morsels, for their protection, I guess, or maybe it's to keep them warm in winter; anyway, sea gulls don't go for the idea at all. But if and when Mr. Gull does succeed in snatching his hard-shelled friend from the mud, he places Mr. or Mrs. Clam, as the case may be, gently but very firmly in his beak, and takes off in a very graceful glide until he gets high up over the oil fuel tank. When he sights the light painted top of the tank, he cuts his motors and at the same time releases Mr. or Mrs. Clam from his beak, dropping him or her nine times out of ten, smack on the target, where the shell breaks and Mr. Gull descends rapidly to enjoy the agonizing remains, thus saving wear and tear on his beak. If Mr. Gull were a good bird, he would also dispose of the shell and salt water and mud which rests on the top of the tank, but one can't expect one to eat the plate too, so up on the tank about three times a week goes our Steeple Jack, and sweeps off about a bushel of shells, then repaints portions

of the tank which have become corroded from the salt water.

"To relieve this nuisance, why not fool these birds. They're not half as smart as the war birds on the other side, and those birds are fooled every day in the week by camouflage. So why not use camouflage on the tops of tanks and holders with various colored paint? It'll fool these local gulls and may serve some day to fool some other gulls -- not so local and who wouldn't drop clams."

CALCIUM CHLORIDE

You've seen various birds feeding in and along newly snow-scraped roads during the winter -- maybe you are one of those who have mentioned seeing pine grosbeaks in the road up in the Adirondacks in recent winters.

Now we learn from The Auk, in a report from Rochester, that calcium chloride, often used to melt the snow from roads, is a poisonous lure for many birds. White-winged and red crossbills, pine grosbeaks and pine siskins were killed by the hundreds in March, 1941 when they ate such salt on the Saranac-Tupper road. The effect of the salt is apparently to make the birds so sick that they do not rise from the road to escape from automobiles.

AGED SPARROW

In The Auk of July, Dayton Stoner reports on a captive English sparrow that lived, caged, for 12 years. It died in Albany last year.

GOOD SAMARITAN

A woman waiting in a parked car while her companion did an errand, noticed a robin and a

grackle close together on the ground. The robin found worms which the grackle took and proceeded to eat. The woman was annoyed until she saw the robin actually offer a worm to the grackle. Then she observed that the grackle was a young bird and had only one leg, and that the friendly robin was feeding it.

HENSLOW'S, INCREASING

Henslow's sparrow very definitely is an increasing species locally. Ten or so years ago it was customary to drive maybe several miles to a few favored spots where the "flee-sick" notes could be heard and the singing birds seen atop the tall weeds.

Each succeeding year has revealed more summer places for this inconspicuous sparrow. Among new sections are two along the Rosendale Road, one a field on the left just before reaching the old schoolhouse, and the other a field on the left just beyond the Y-intersection with the river road. There are a few places along the Schenectady - Troy road also. One is on the left out of Schenectady, in the field atop the hill just beyond the Cemetery-Pearse Road intersection near Stop 14.

EVER NOTICE IT?

You have seen such flight plenty of times, but can you offhandedly describe the undulating flight of the goldfinch or downy woodpecker?

Does it, for instance, dip on set wings and rise with beating wings, or does it beat its wings on the downward part of the flight and then glide up? And does it sound off its call while gliding or beating, while rising or descending?

ANOTHER SEASON

Maybe it seems as though it is still summer, but already it is autumn for many of the birds.

The shorebirds are already working to the south. Warblers, in plumages far different from those of May, are to be found flocked. Swallows are bunched. Roosting colonies of the various blackbirds are of increasing size. Some of our summer residents have already disappeared; and those to be heard are far fewer.

And it won't be long now before there will be plenty of ducks on the rivers and lakes, and migration in full sway.

POINTED

It was a paved road that had light traffic. On this day in early June a dog stood in the center of it, facing the oncoming car, and apparently not intending to move. The road was a narrow one, and there was hardly room enough to pass the dog on either side. The car was moved slowly up and the dog -- a young pointer -- never budged.

Then the cause became apparent. A few feet in front of the dog was a young English sparrow. Not until the driver stepped into the road did either bird or dog budge, and then it was the bird that made the first move. It flew a hundred feet or so, low over a fence and down into a field. Quickly the dog raced after the bird.

Some might say that the dog, realizing that the bird was threatened, was protecting it by standing there. However, the way the dog chased the bird made it apparent that the sparrow had been hunted out by the pointer.

HOSPITAL NIGHTHAWKS

Schenectady has several places where nighthawks are seen regularly. One is the vicinity of Ellis Hospital, and it is atop some of the flat roofs or the hospital buildings that the birds nest year after year.

To the rear of the hospital is a large, cindered area for parking automobiles. Just before dark on July 4 an adult and two young nighthawks were to be seen on these cinders, with close approach permitted. The first hospital visitor to find the birds that night saw them in one of the main driveways, closely bunched together and threatened with death by any passing car. It was not difficult to pick out the parent bird -- when an observer bent too close, the old bird was the one to spread her wings, open wide her mouth, and become noisy.

It was not difficult to put all three birds into flight, but it was another matter to keep them from alighting only a few feet away, still in the driveway. Finally, when two visitors teamed up on the birds, it was possible to flush the young to a low, stone window sill, where the parent bird soon joined them.

In the next few evenings it was easy to follow the birds in flight over the hospital. There was a decided difference in the quality of the notes of the old and young. A week later, however, either the young had attained practically mature voices or else they had moved on to other hunting grounds, for the voices of the birds were all much alike.

Incidentally, the hospital nighthawks have always been conspicuous for the amount of "zooming" they do.

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EAGLES AND EGRETS

Geneva L. Eddy

One can hardly put in words what a delight the Hudson River trip is, though early Saturday morning, August 15, as three of us neared Albany, blankets of fog made a boat trip to see birds seem a bit foolish. However, being bird enthusiasts as well as optimists regarding weather, we took the 9:20 boat, anticipating a clearance of weather and plenty of birds -- and neither of these failed us.

The trip itself is restful. We said "We will just sit back and relax," always keeping an eye out for anything with wings, to be sure.

The mate on the Robert Fulton was very kind and, noting our interest in birds, told us to look for the American egrets between Coxsackie and Hudson, and that between Markers 67 and 65 on the west shore bald eagles could be seen. We were nappily thrilled at the prospect. But even without birds I could recommend the trip. There were long stretches of shoreline in varying shades of green, often entirely bordered and with glimpses of fields beyond of the lovely purple loosestrife, and here and there a dotting of small poplars gold-leaved for fall, so as we glided along we watched a continuing flower garden.

Then we saw a black-crowned night heron, then another, then great blue herons -- they seemed numberless on the trip. We were too excited to relax -- the word was without meaning to us. We began to watch for eagles. No sooner spoken than a fine adult flew by. The white head and spreading white tail as he alighted made a striking contrast to his dark body and wings. On a stretch of sandy beach near Marker 70 we saw two immature bald eagles and a third bird with much tawny plumage in wings and tail. We consulted the ever-ready "Peterson," for an immature golden eagle would have looked well on our list and this particular bird seemed to fit the description nicely. Sadly we put him down finally as an immature bald eagle. Sadly? No, there wasn't a sad moment on the trip. We just put him down.

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The egrets came into view, one, then three, and then so many we counted up to 35, and just had to estimate after that. The boat was moving, we were excited, and so we lost count. I think a safe estimate would be 50, perhaps more. Some stood in the river, some were in flight with graceful movements of their large white wings. On our return trip all the egrets were roosting in trees. There were too many again to count accurately. They looked like huge white bouquets scattered among the green boughs. It was a picture to remember.

We ate our picnic lunch at Kingston Point where a park and a nice picnic place ramble over a hill beside a brook filled with water plants and the blue pickerel weed in blossom. It is no doubt an excellent spot to find warblers and I am sure -- though I cannot prove it -- that there were bitterns there.

Other water birds for the day included the double-crested cormorant, blue-winged teal, baldpate, black duck, herring and Bonaparte gulls, and, last of all, on the trip back, high on a bare tree-top sat an osprey.

(For other descriptions of this section, see Wilson Bulletin, March 1941, p. 41, Dayton Stoner; and also FEATHERS, September 1941, p. 77, Nelle VanVorst.)

TIME FLIES AT AUDUBON NATURE CAMP

Minnie B. Scotland

Did you ever make a sundial, a war-time sundial? No? Well, I hadn't either until I went to the Audubon Nature Camp on Hog Island off the coast of Maine. It happened this way. At the first meeting of the Nature Activities group I learned that every camper had to decide upon some project and to develop it within his two weeks' stay at camp. After pondering awhile I chose to do something about which I knew nothing, namely, to make a sundial on war-time. A helpful instructor, Miss Dorothy A. Treat, and a shelf of nature books aided me greatly in carrying out my project.

Fortunately it rained for four days the first week of camp, for that gave me plenty of time to do all the computations and to make my diagram, and, incidentally, to locate a large, flat stone on the beach. On the first clear day I managed to get two young men to move the stone to the lawn in front of the office and to transfer my plan to the face of it. With part of a wire coat-hanger for a gnomon, imbedded in a cup of plaster-of-Paris at just the right angle (43.58° for Medomak, Me.) with the base line, I waited for the sun to reappear from under a lingering cloud.

Well, it checked, but it needed double-checking through several days to convince me that my sundial worked. I have heard, since leaving camp, that it is really functioning. One thing that I found out about a complete sundial was that it

always had to have a motto. And so, the last strokes of the brush, after the Roman numerals had been painted, wrote, "Time Flies at Audubon Nature Camp."

Instead of this meteorological project I could have arranged an exhibit of different kinds of soil, as the girl from Florida did. Or there was the interesting compilation of food plants, grouped by the social worker from Boston into a booklet the shape of a pot and entitled "Pot-pourri." The Nature Trail game planned by the twins from Aberdeen, Md., excited interest; and the very neatly labelled display of many kinds of mosses, arranged by the man from Baltimore, was admired. A fine exhibit of rocks collected, labelled, and well grouped was the work of a mother from Chicago who was at camp with her daughter. A survey of nesting birds was well done by a Massachusetts girl who aspires to become an officer in W.A.A.C. A terrarium showing the succession of plants from shore to climax forest was executed by the youngest member, a lively fourteen-year-old from Long Island. These were a few of the projects that we all enjoyed during our last days of Nature Activities.

What prompted me to write the not-too-original motto on my sundial? Well, it was the very truth of it. Never have minutes cast their shadows so quickly -- so it seemed. And yet, I feel that the inspiration from these two weeks at Audubon Camp is like an accumulation of lengthening shadows that will ever be with me. In Edna Becker's account of "A Day at Audubon Camp" (FRATHERS, August 1941, p. 60) the spirit of the camp was truly reported. This spirit is due largely to the excellent staff, who are real educators. A statement gleaned in one of the talks on conservation will apply here. It was from Angelo Patri: "Education is lighting a lamp, not filling a bucket." Audubon campers are eager to learn, and they feel confidence in their instructors who do impart "their own infectious enthusiasm."

Perhaps the telling of a few high spots on our last trip on the Osprey, one of two boats owned by the Audubon Society, will reveal best the advantages of Audubon Nature Camp. Earlier we had visited Old Rump Lodge, down Muscongus Bay, and had seen the nesting cormorants. Not only had we observed the adults on and off the nests, but we had watched the struggling young peck open the shell and gradually emerge from the eggs. We were told that in 1900 there was not a cormorant on the island, but that in 1931 eight breeding birds were counted and that last year, just 10 years later, the number totalled 367 pairs of nesting birds. The cormorants have far outnumbered herring gulls on Old Rump.

We had stopped at the still untrampled Wreck Island to see the heronry with its great blues and black-crowned night herons winging and squawking overhead. From the boat we had become acquainted with the common loon, the black-backed and laughing gulls, the white-winged, surf, and American scoters, the common and Arctic terns, not to mention a surprise flock of American eiders that crossed the bow rather close to the

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water. We had learned to recognize the frequently seen osprey and had had one good view of a bald eagle.

But the most unusual experience came when we were on our last trip, the one to Eastern Egg Rock. Here the nests of herring gulls abounded, and campers had to watch carefully to avoid stepping on eggs or young. Though the family life of herring gulls was interesting, the real thrill came when Allan Cruickshank reached arm's length into a burrow and brought out a Leach's petrel. It seemed like magic until I realized that we were fortunate enough to be on hand at the beginning of the petrel's nesting period, and that the bird incubated its single egg at the end of a burrow about 18 inches deep. When we had seen the tube-nosed, drab-colored bird and had caught the characteristic petrel odor, Mr. Cruickshank placed it on the turf some distance from the opening of its burrow. To our surprise it hurried directly toward the opening and disappeared all too quickly into the dark passage.

Another act of apparent magic was the producing of eggs and fluffy black young of gulllemots by crawling far under large tumbled-together rocks and reaching into the sheltered crevices where the birds had placed their nests.

Few bird enthusiasts have had such rare privileges as these. Conservation of bird life in Muscongus Bay, stimulated by the purchase and occupation of the islands by the National Audubon Society, has made these experiences possible.

What of the land birds, you ask. More than eighty kinds were recorded during the two weeks. To me one of the most fascinating was the northern parula warbler as it laced together strands of the lichen, *Usnea*, for its beautifully camouflaged nest. A new bird on the camp list was reported by Carl W. Buchheister, the director. It was none other than the mockingbird.

I wish that I might tell you of the marine class and the wonders revealed on collecting trips. Joseph Cadbury, the instructor, delighted in handing us specimens with the challenging remark, "Now, you're stuck," -- and most of the time we were. It was very stimulating to the inquiring mind. I can't resist telling of an experience on the freshwater trip over on the mainland. Have you ever found yourself knee-deep in a fast-flowing stream, with fish all around you swimming upstream to spawn? Well, we did, and all we had to do to get enough fish for lunch the next day was to bend over and catch those alewives in our hands, believe it or not!

Then there were those visits to the botany class under the direction of Dr. Josiah Lowe. It was an opportunity to sit in on a study of lichens and mosses where material was abundant and simple keys were provided to help in identifying the different kinds.

My sundial motto was right; time did fly at Audubon Camp.

ELK LAKE, 1942

George H. Bainbridge

Abandonment, in view of the gasoline and rubber muddle, of a proposed vacation in the West, raised the question "What to do that would be easy on tires and the gasoline ration?" A long-felt desire to see some sunrises and sunsets at Elk Lake, and maybe photograph a bit, together with a recollection of the enjoyable time some SEC members had there last year in Mr. Rogers' Nature Group (FEATHERS, September 1941, p. 74) answered this question.

Arrangements were accordingly made with Mr. Rogers and Mr. Davis, manager of Elk Lake Camps, to join the second period, July 19 - August 2, of Mr. Rogers' group. So, as the eventful day arrived, into the Dodge went nature books, field glasses, cameras, Folbot, Staway, and everything but the kitchen sink. Even so, there was enough room in the front seat for what is left of the Bainbridge family at 32 Washington Road, and departure was made for Elk Lake Sunday morning, July 19. Yea, verily, it was one of the hottest days ever. Shortly after noon Elk Lake hove into view, with a cordial welcome from our genial but perturbed host, Mr. Davis, and later from Mr. Rogers, when he returned from meeting others at the train.

Yes, it was hot even at Elk Lake, but nothing like Scheenectady. After noon meal we took over a room in the Darling Cottage, where most of the Nature Group, including Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, were staying. At this time there was also at Elk Lake Camps a hiking group of about a dozen members, led by E. A. Dench, whom some will remember as the author of the hiking column which appeared in Nature Magazine a few years ago. The rest of the day was spent in swimming, eating, setting up the Folbot, an apparently novel and interesting operation to the many bystanders, and later an evening paddle on the lake.

Although Elk Lake is a man-made body of water by virtue of a timber crib dam at its south end, it is nevertheless an island-studded wilderness-jewel, encircled on the east, north and west by the high Adirondack peaks, McComb (elevation 4425 ft.); Dix (4842 ft.); Nippletop (4620 ft.); Colvin Range (max. 4074 ft.); and Boreas (3815 ft.). The lake is stream fed only by East Inlet, flowing south out of Hunters Pass, between Dix and Nippletop, and by West Inlet, flowing south out of Elk Pass between Nippletop and Colvin. However, due to past lumbering operations on the sides of these mountains draining into Elk Lake and the resultant erosion, the run-off is too rapid to maintain uniformity of flow. Moreover, the dam leaks considerably and the lake level is apparently low. The U. S. Geological Survey map gives the elevation of the lake as 1986 feet above sea level. The wilderness charm of the lake and particularly its appeal to wild life as well as to nature lo-



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barring some natural upheaval or human interference, the lake will be like Consalus Vlaie (FEATHERS, October 1939, p. 21).

Beginning Monday morning and each morning thereafter, those of the Nature Group at Darling Cottage were whistled out of bed between 6:30 and 7 a.m. by Mr. Rogers. After breakfast, for which appetites were well whetted by the exhilarating mountain air, came a birding hike over some of the numerous mountain trails; a walk to Clear Pond two miles south of Elk Lake and well named; a canoe trip on Elk Lake, closely following the shore line and into the inlets; or a mountain climb. These outings were generally led by Mr. Rogers, although the group sometimes divided so that those particularly interested in plant life could go with Mrs. Rogers. One day the group climbed Boreas, and on another occasion most of the group went on a hike to Hunters Pass. Except for these two hikes, everybody was on deck for the noon meal with an appetite capable of doing full justice to the excellent food served. Afterwards, everyone was on his own. Some rested, others did not, and nearly every day a few enjoyed the swimming in water which was surprisingly warm for a mountain stream-fed lake. In the late afternoon the group gathered at the Darling Cottage for a talk on birds by Mr. Rogers. These talks covered the different families and species, with particular emphasis on the birds likely to be found at Elk Lake and vicinity. Mr. Rogers used bird skins for illustration. Since the members of the group were free to handle these skins afterwards, one could readily become better acquainted with some of the fine points not readily visible in field glass ranges. The last talk given by Mr. Rogers was devoted to mammals, of which there were seen at the lake and vicinity, white-tailed deer, beaver, red fox, muskrat, porcupine, red squirrel, and white-footed mouse. And thereby hangs a tale.

One SBC member of the mouse-fearing sex decided at evening meal after returning from the strenuous hike into Hunters Pass (during most of the time it rained and RAINED) that if sleep were to be enjoyed that night, the nocturnal prowler in her room, one white-footed mouse, should take his daily dozen elsewhere than around her bed. So came a bright idea -- one piece of processed cheese, not too surreptitiously lifted from the cheese supply on the table, was very carefully placed in a strategic position on the porch outside her room. This kept "mouse" busy, and the very much fatigued SBC member slept soundly and soundless, without any qualms as to the movements of the room's pet.

The white-footed mouse was not the only nocturnal prowler

to disturb light sleepers at the Darling Cottage. The floor of a nearby dilapidated outhouse made a grand sounding board on which a porcupine freely sharpened his teeth. The accompanying noise was anything but soporific.

After evening meal some took to the canoes for a trip on the lake, usually to one of the beaver houses to see the evening performance. This consisted largely of the water-spanking job, which the beaver does only too well at surprising moments. Morning trips on the lake almost invariably resulted in finding deer standing in the water and feeding, with bucks decidedly in the minority.

The second-period Nature Group was not fortunate enough to see the three evening grosbeaks which were reported as seen the second week of the first group. These birds were reported as one male, one female, and one questionable, possibly a young bird. They were seen at the lodge and also at Clear Pond. Where they bred is a question. Chapman, in his "Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America," second revised edition, page 509, lists the evening grosbeak as breeding once at Woodstock, Vt. (Auk, 1926; 549). It is therefore within the realm of possibility that the two adult evening grosbeaks bred not very far from Elk Lake.

During the second period (July 19 - August 2), the songs of the birds were diminishing in length and intensity, although some like the hermit thrush were still singing beautifully. One hermit just started her nest about the time the group arrived. When we left, she had three handsome blue eggs under her. On the whole, though, the nesting season was about over. A pair of myrtle warblers had brought forth one brood near the dam, and were busily engaged in feeding a second, much younger brood. Cedar waxwings were everywhere. One pair nested near the lodge and emptied their nest during the first week of the second period. One morning a nest of the least flycatcher was found with young, but during the day something wrecked this nest and did away with the young. There were several broods of American mergansers on Elk Lake and one brood on Clear Pond. Elk Lake also had several loons. Apparently only one pair bred. Originally this pair had two young, but one disappeared. The survivor was as much fish as bird if the length of time he or she could stay under water is any criterion. Observations of loons for several years, and especially in the Canadian lake country, fails to make any point for the old saying, "Crazy as a loon."

The wing and tail feathers of a broad-winged hawk were found in a circle of small diameter in a boggy but wooded section well up East Inlet. The feather-pulling job looked as if a red fox made the kill, but how a hawk could fall prey to a fox unless the hawk was disabled, sickly, or unable to get away quickly through the tangle of young trees is a mystery.

Fifty-three species of birds were recorded by the writer. Most outstanding of the records -- no crow, no starling.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



NEXT MEETING -- An interesting collection of motion pictures is scheduled for the next SBC meeting, scheduled for Monday night, September 28, in the Old Chapel of Union College. For details about the films, see the supplement with this issue. The meeting is an open one -- bring your friends.

FORT EDWARD MARTINS -- Friends had shown us a purple martin colony in Glens Falls, near Grandall Park; we had discovered for ourselves the colony at Innisara in Saratoga Springs; and we had been told of a colony at Fort Edward, but opportunity had not presented to follow the clue. In July several of us were driving east on Route 197 and as we entered Route 4 and the town of Fort Edward our genial SBC chairman and secretary said, "I hear purple martins" -- and there we were, right at the purple martin colony. It is located on the main street of the town near the junction of Routes 197 and 4, with two apartment houses on poles providing adequate accommodations for a sizeable colony. ...Dorothy Caldwell.

MOUNTAIN ASH, GONE -- Late in August I noticed robins were feeding on the berries of four mountain ash trees in our neighborhood. There was a good crop of bright red berries on each tree -- they did look appetizing, but I assumed were not eaten by birds except during the late winter months when hard-pressed for food. A scarcity of food could hardly have explained their eating at this time, after the wet growing season of 1942, when there was an abundance of fruit of all kinds. Although the trees are only about three inches in diameter, each must have yielded at least five quarts of berries. The birds displayed a little system in harvesting, by concentrating their efforts on one tree at a time, and beginning at one end of the row.

Nearly all the birds I noticed in the trees were young robins -- often four to six in a tree. By September 1 practically every berry had disappeared from all of the four trees. ... B. D. Miller.

URBAN MARSH WREN -- In late August W. R. Steele found an unexpected visitor in his yard in Scotia. First he heard, and then he saw, a long-billed marsh wren. The amount of marsh in the vicinity is zero, and the wren was gone the next day.

MIGRATING FAWKS -- Schenectady does not seem to have the pronounced migrations of hawks that some sections experience, but even so there are occasions when such movements are evident. Malcolm Andrews reported on a flight this spring (FEATHERS, May 1942, p. 37). Now we have reports of some fall flights. On August 29 and 30 buteos and accipiters in numbers were seen irregularly through the day headed south across the Mohawk at Niskayuna; and on September 13 the Fal-lenbecks and Bainbridges found a movement at Indian Ladder.

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HENRY BOYD, BIRD MIMIC, WILL FEATURE OCTOBER MEETING

Bird Man of Columbia Broadcasting System at
Nott Terrace High School on 21st — —
Tickets Available for Public

Did you ever hear a bird that had a very striking song, a song that you vividly remembered -- but a bird you never identified because you couldn't see the bird and because you did not know the song? Maybe that song will be recalled to your memory at the October meeting, on Wednesday, the 21st, in the Nott Terrace High School Auditorium at 8 o'clock.

Henry Boyd, rated among the foremost bird imitators of our times, will present his featured talk, "Tales from Birdland." This is an hour lecture illustrated with colored stereoptican slides made especially for him. The program includes interesting facts about bird music, general information about bird life, and unusual true experiences he has had with birds. Mr. Boyd, of New York City and to be heard regularly on the Columbia Broadcasting System, imitates scores of birds and has been known as the "classic whistler" because of the type of music he warbles. He has lectured on bird study ever since boyhood. "Mr. Boyd is a super-specialist. He is a bird commentator who narrates the events of birdland," the New Yorker magazine has said in referring to him.

Tickets on Sale

The response of S B C members to previous featured meetings has been so good that it has been found possible to supply tickets without charge for the use of members. Tickets for the public are being made available through the members, and they will also be available that night at the auditorium.

Members having tickets for sale are asked to report on them by October 18 to any member of the ticket committee, or to Mrs. Chester N. Moore, program committee, from whom additional tickets can be secured.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



REWARDED -- A different kind of rescued-bird story was related in FEATHERS for August (page 65). The story has a sequel. Quoting the Union-Star of July 22:

"A kind deed to a young bird several weeks ago brought its reward to Joseph Reynolds, son of Mrs. Dorothy I. Reynolds of 470 Veeder Street today when he was presented a book, 'Travelling With Birds,' by the Schenectady Bird Club.

"The lad found a young bird which apparently had fallen from its nest before its wings were fully developed. He put it in a bush near his home and watched and guarded it, until it was able to fly away."

SOUTHBOUND -- Plenty of migrating hawks can be seen in both spring and fall over Schenectady, but they pass over in relatively small numbers at a time, and over a relatively long period of time. On Sunday, September 20, it was apparent over Niskayuna that the hawk movement was still in progress, even though late August had also had its flight. That Sunday's records included mostly the three more common *buteos* - red-shouldered, red-tailed, and broad-winged - and also three kinds of *accipiters* - Cooper's, sharp-shinned, and one *goshawk*. Falcons were absent, except for one high-flying duck hawk. And no marsh hawks were seen.

It was very evident that night that many other species were migrating. Call notes of many kinds could be heard, starting almost as soon as it was dark. It was not a particularly dark night, however. Even though the sky was partly cloudy, the nearly full moon gave considerable light. Many of the birds could be followed as coming in from the north, their call notes becoming louder and vanishing to the south. There were migrants with loud whistles, others with nasal chirps, some with almost whispered notes.

The next night was colder, the sky clear, and the moon bright. Again the migrants could be heard. There were the unmistakable cry of the killdeer and the quacking of ducks which may or may not have been migrating.

Incidentally, try the stunt some time of watching the face of the bright moon through telescope or binoculars, and see how many migrating birds you can count in a given time, in flight across your view. Maybe you'll even be able to identify some of them.

... G.B.

DUM VIVIMUS VIVAMUS -- Allan Cruickshank chose to quote *Catullus* when he autographed a copy of his recent book for me. "Dum vivimus vivamus" (While we live, let us live) serves as an excellent thought for a conservationist to write in his book on "Birds around New York City, Where and When to Find Them."

Inasmuch as one object of the Schenectady Bird Club is "conservation of bird life" and another is to collect data on bird life in an area not too distant from the region cov-

ered by Mr. Cruickshank, this up-to-date book on the migration and distribution of birds will be most welcome. The introduction of 47 pages contains helpful material in chart form of ecological groups and seasonal variation. This is

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followed by 429 pages of text, the content of which is the result of 20 years of keen observation and study in the field. This annotated list is accompanied by 36 of the best photographs ever taken of birds. Thirteen pages of a carefully prepared index complete the volume.

The American Museum of Natural History asked Mr. Cruickshank to write this book; and it has been published as Handbook Series No. 13, beautifully printed and bound, and unusually low in price, \$1.75. ... Minnie B. Scotland.

YES? -- It's a question as to how much to believe when you read it in the newspapers. For instance, here's an item out of a New England weekly:

"Hummingbirds have to eat about every ten minutes during the daytime because the energy from their food is consumed by the rapid beating of their wings as fast as it is produced. In New York recently, six hummers were taken on a 50-minute taxi drive, without food, from a pier to the Bronx zoo, with the result that one died and the other five passed into a coma from starvation."

This hardly jibes with the fact, though, that hummers regularly migrate, non-stop, across a few hundred miles of the Gulf of Mexico. Not much chance to feed every few minutes during that trip.

NEW PUBLICATIONS -- From the Superintendent of Documents, at Washington, D.C., or through the SBC secretary:

Miniature portraits, wildlife of our national parks (poster-stamps). Consists of 26 detachable poster-stamps. Published by National Park Service (I29.2: W 64), 10 cents.

White-necked raven in relation to agriculture. 56 p. 11. Fish and Wildlife Service, Research Report 5, 10 cents. (I49.26:5) Gives life history notes, damage caused by ravens, food habits, economic status, and crop protection. A western desert species.

Propagation of aquatic game birds. 40 p. 11. Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 29; 10 cents. (I 1.72: 29) Gives information relating to the propagation of the mallard duck, and other ducks, also Canada geese and other geese.

NIGHTHAWK MIGRATION -- August 22 was one of the dates this year when plenty of nighthawks were to be seen in low, silent flight. Dozens of them were seen going over the Troy Road in late afternoon, in a general southerly direction. They were a little earlier than usual, the flight generally being observed in early September.

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PILEATEDS -- Decidedly unusual were the circumstances under which two Schenectadians saw pileated woodpeckers on Sunday, August 30. While they were driving along the main road between Duanesburg and Quaker Street, in a high and open part of the territory, a pileated woodpecker flew from woods in the background and alighted on a lone tree beside the road. In another few seconds it was joined by a second pileated.

A O U MEETING -- The sixtieth stated meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held at Philadelphia October 12 to 16, with all programs at the Academy of Natural Sciences, excepting the business meeting at the Warwick. Included in the program will be a field trip, by train, to the Witmer Stone Wildlife Sanctuary at Cape May, N. J. There will also be nearby field trips on Saturday, October 17. The new Audubon Hall of Birds, of the Academy, will be open in time for the meeting.

MORE VULTURES -- There seems to be no doubt about the turkey vulture extending its range to the north. As yet it is not really a bird of this vicinity -- although there are occasional records of it -- but it's not necessary to go very far south without finding them. Bear Mountain had several during the summer.

MORE GROUSE -- Hunting season on ruffed grouse opened October 1 to the north of the main New York Central tracks and will last through November 12. Simultaneously the woodcock season opened for 15 days. South of the tracks, the season on both opens October 15, woodcock for 15 days and grouse thru November 26. Quoting the State Conservation Department:

"There seemed to be no reason for limiting the grouse season to the 15-day woodcock season. In fact, two independent surveys were made -- one by the Bureau of Game, which received reports from its own field forces and from game protectors, and the other by Commissioner Osborne himself who circularized more than 700 fish and game clubs.

"The results of these surveys were almost identical. They revealed the fact that in most sections of the state, grouse appeared to be more plentiful this year than last year and perhaps than in any recent year. Therefore, there appears to be reason for extending the season rather than limiting it."

DUCK HUNTING -- Duck hunters are entitled to be afield this year over an extended season and with longer shooting hours. The season for wild ducks, geese including brant, and coot, rails and gallinules is 70 days from October 15 to December 22. Last year the season lasted 60 days. Shooting hours are from sunrise to sunset; last year they were from sunrise to 4 p.m.

There are numerous special provisions that must be kept in mind by the hunters, but it hardly seems necessary to go into them here.

The point is, though, that bird hikes along the river will not amount to much from mid-October until Christmas.

PIED Tanager -- A few seasons ago some of the patients at Mount McGregor were much interested in watching a male scarlet tanager in the curious pied coat he wears as he changes from his brilliant nuptial plumage into his quieter traveling clothes. My efforts to see the bird were in vain.

This year on August 20 I was fortunate in obtaining my first glimpse of a scarlet tanager in postnuptial molt. He was bizarre indeed with his greenish head, dark wings, and breast flecked with patches of scarlet; no longer glorious to behold but most interesting to see for one's self.

... Dorothy Caldwell

WAR-MINDED -- Heard Sunday afternoon, August 9, on Washington Road, Scotia, a war-minded Baltimore oriole singing the so-called victory opening of Beethoven's 5th albeit in a higher pitch but the timing was excellent -- This bird repeated this four-note phrase three times at intervals of about one-quarter of a minute. ... George H. Bainbridge.

CHESTNUT -- Not that enough has not already been said in our columns about water-chestnut, here's another item. Says Southern Power and Industry in its September issue: "A road building contractor had a contract which involved the removal of hyacinths from a Florida canal. Hyacinths have defied the engineers for the last 25 years. This contractor made a special bucket with the aid of his welding and machine shop equipment and dipped the hyacinths out and dumped them on the bank. The special rig was a complete success."

Maybe there's a germ of an idea in that item as to a way of fighting the water chestnut in the Mohawk. A flat-bottomed scow might be equipped with a similar special bucket, and a few million tons of the obnoxious weed removed from Collins Lake and the Mohawk.

HUDSON CHESTNUT -- Last year it was indicated in FEATHERS (p. 94) that water chestnut might be becoming established in the Hudson River as a result of the terrible condition of the uncared-for Mohawk. There were reports then of growths above the Waterford bridge and in the Stockport marshes.

This year Miss I. M. Smith of Earlton, N. Y., forwarded a fruit of water chestnut to Albany, with the explanation she found it on the beach at Coxsackie. This may reveal still another station for the plant.

If the water chestnut becomes established in the Hudson -- as it certainly will if the Conservation Department or some other interested government agency doesn't do something about it -- it's not going to be many years before there will be an army of hot-headed, real sore, justifiably indignant duck hunters bitterly complaining about botulism killing off the Hudson ducks and chestnut making duck waters impossible to penetrate. And, too, there will be a similar large army of fishermen unable to push their boats through the growth, and unable to find fish if they do succeed.

There's one thing certain -- There's going to be a mess if action isn't taken. A State Biological Survey in 1934 gave warning as to what to expect.

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PROTECTED -- Maybe the State Conservation is kidding, maybe it doesn't know the difference -- at any rate, it regularly announces that there will be no open season on Ross's goose.

"There will be no open season in New York State on snow geese, Ross's goose, swans and Wilson's snipe or Jacksnipe," says the Conservation Department's press release.

A question -- Did you ever hear of a Ross's goose being seen or taken anywhere in New York State or, for that matter, anywhere in the eastern part of the country.

100,000-MEMBER CLUB -- The largest bird club in the world has 100,000 members, according to George Sherwood Fly, writing in the American Legion Magazine recently. Connie Watts, a disabled veteran living on Apple Pie Ridge in the red-clay hills of Habersham, Ga., beloved by Sidney Lanier, heard his neighbors complain that bluebirds were building nests in mailboxes. He reasoned that the birds were not to be blamed, since the CCC boys had cleaned out the old dead hollow trees in the forests, and the picturesque oldtime rail fences had been supplanted by modern wire ones. The purple martins were likewise homeless.

Mr. Watts decided that the nation's housing shortage must not apply to birds, so he whittled holes in gourds for the benefit of the martins, and built a few houses for the bluebirds. All were occupied so quickly that he made more. He then organized the "Dixie Martin-Bluebird Cooperative Club" so as to enlarge the scope of the work.

Radio station WSB, Atlanta, told about the club and its founder on one of the broadcasts, and Mr. Watts was deluged with letters. Hundreds more came when editorial mention appeared in southern newspapers. Mr. Watts sends each correspondent a membership card and, if requested, twenty-five gourd seeds. Last year he mailed 56,000 seeds and expects to double the number in 1942.

The club is unique in that there are no funds and no dues, nor will there be any.

The martins, after being away all winter, return to the gourd they occupied previously. The bluebirds remain in Georgia all the year.

One grateful bluebird spotted a nest of outworms in the garden and cleaned them all out in less than two minutes. They make short work of Japanese beetles. Mr. Watts comments on the amazingly swift flight of the martins, which only touch ground when gathering nesting material. They take their food on the wing, eating only flying insects, and do not pause to drink but scoop water in their bills as they skim the surface.

BY THE HUNDREDS -- Starlings in loudly squawking hundreds are being seen abundantly this autumn in sections previously not bothered by them. One such general section is Niskayuna out to the Troy Road county line. Maybe it's just a case of the usual flocks in unusual sections, however.

The redwings did not wait for October this year before being gathered into their large wandering flocks.

HAWK MIGRATION -- Last month (page 80) reference was made to hawks seen at Indian Ladder this fall. George H. Bainbridge reports in greater detail:

A party of SBC members while in Thatcher Park Sunday afternoon, September 13, saw an appreciable hawk migration. The weather was clear with gusty to steady strong west northwest winds. About fifteen hawks were seen. For the most part, they were flying south too high and too fast for positive identification. However, there were apparently several broad-winged hawks, some sharp-shinned hawks, and a red-tailed hawk. A goshawk flew around along the edge of the escarpment.

UNOFFICIAL REPORT -- (Being unofficial notes from an observation post. Not reported to H. Q. R. 5:30 - 7:30 PM watch):

Tuesday, July 14. Sunny and warm. Good visibility. Little companies of chimney swifts darting about overhead, chattering as they wheel. Broad-winged hawk appears in the east with a little band of barn swallows in pursuit. Sizeable company of swallows skimming about in the sky, the deeply forked tails of the barn swallows, the gleaming white breasts of the tree swallows, and the gritty notes of the bank swallows easily distinguishable. Note suggestive of the crested flycatcher punctuating the robin chorus. Soon the crested flycatcher himself flies to a dead branch of a nearby oak and calls vociferously. Occasional notes of the wood thrush heard. Purple finches fly about. Chipping sparrow disregards sign "No admittance. For air-raid observers only" and pays his his nightly call to the observation post. Least flycatcher out for his supper. Infrequent call of wood pewee. Call of flicker who presently appears on the scene. Red-eyed vireos sing incessantly toward sunset.

Thursday, July 16. Sunny and warm. Occasional chimney swifts overhead. Two crows skirt the treetops on business bent. Occasional song of wood thrush and intermittent robin chorus. Two cedar waxwings perch temporarily on bare branch near tip of large oak. Phoebe flits about. White-breasted nuthatch calls "What, what, what, what, what" very rapidly, his nearest approach to song. Goldfinches go over singing as they loop around. Lone barn swallow heads south. Scarlet tanager flies past, his beautiful red coat gleaming in the sunlight. Chipping sparrow sings from lawn but fails to inspect observation post as usual.

(Passing planes duly observed and reported). ...Post ABC

NEW FEEDER VISITOR -- On returning from vacation, we were surprised to find a hummingbird feeding in the petunias and other low flowers. The feeders were quickly brought forth and filled with maple syrup and water and set low near the flowers. The next day, the feeders were empty much to our surprise because no hummers had appeared. Moreover there was no evidence of ants. So the feeders were filled again. The following day the 'hummer' was discovered -- a new species -- our 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old granddaughter, who was visiting us, was bending low and tipping the feeders to empty their contents into her mouth. The Bainbridges.

ATTRACTING THRUSHES

Mary B. Kilcawley

Three years ago I became very much interested in the late Mr. Brand's work with bird songs. I borrowed bird pictures from the State Education Department, and used Mr. Brand's records for the bird songs.

I tried to interest children in birds by using this method in my home city of Troy. I found boys quite interested, but girls as a rule were not. Miss Howe and I worked out a program for a group of women in Hoesick Falls. The plan worked very successfully, but I was too interested in what I was doing to try to find out what effect if any it had on the women. Miss Howe manipulated the portable phonograph, and I the lantern slides. We put the bird and its song together. This was the only time that I considered the plan worked successfully from my point of view, thinking of the mechanics of the presentation and not of the effect on the audience.

A Wood Thrush Answers

I took the phonograph out on Berlin Mountain about 6 o'clock one morning in May, and decided to try to find thrushes. It was an interesting experiment. The wood thrushes came up the mountain; I could hear them calling as they came nearer. I hid behind the rock on which the phonograph was placed and tried to keep the record on the wood thrush song. One bird came within a few feet of the phonograph and answered the call, but then the bird gave a low, throaty alarm call, and they disappeared and were very quiet. I have heard hermits there, but they were not interested if they were there that morning.

Excited Hermits

That fall I heard a flock of birds in the cemetery that adjoins our backyard. I was sure they were thrushes. I brought out the phonograph. This time the hermits were curious. Six of them came into the yard with a rush at the sound of the first notes that were played. There were two in the oak tree almost directly over my head. Two more alighted on the fence a few feet away, and two more were on the ground. They were excited. Again I tried to hold the hermit song. Of course I could not prevent the scraping sound of the needle. I played it twice and then the birds lost interest. Two flew away, and the others went to feeding. I tried at intervals to attract their attention again, but I was not successful.

(In connection with this report by Mrs. Kilcawley on working with thrushes, it is interesting to note that Dr. A. A. Allen of Cornell University, while recording bird songs in the south, photographed a mockingbird that was attracted to a loudspeaker when the song of the mocker was played.)

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LOST OR INJURED ORPHANS

Caroline Clark Barney

"No." I said emphatically, when a young robin was brought to me. "Take him back to his mother."

This is what I have said many times to several children and some older people during the past two years.

I remembered the arduous work, the sadness at the parting after I had enjoyed the different robins that I had brought up. There was a boy to whom I paid a cent a dozen for worms. There was a neighbor who helped me. But there were dry summers when worms were scarce, as they bored deeper into the ground for moisture. Then we had to depend on the butcher for beefcut to imitate a worm, or on hamburger steak rolled to look like worms. To be sure, the first weeks were more simple because a boiled egg or bread and milk sufficed. But there was the time when the robin demanded worms and berries, and needed them. We bought blueberries especially for him; we stuffed him with beef worms; we gave him water from a medicine dropper

The injured leg or wing healed quickly, but it often seemed as if the bird would never learn to fly. There was no one to teach him; that was one thing that I could not do.

Pam and Mike

Epaminondas (Pam), and Michael (Mike), Nicholas (Nick), Peter, and then Reddy came and went. I loved each one, but they were grown and in good condition, and the late days in September came. When we had to leave our summer home I knew that I must send the robin on. Some robins I took to the Moose Hill Sanctuary in Sharon, Mass. One I sent to Franklin Park in Boston. Two returned to the wild.

They were so tame that they spent much time on the ground and often flew to the heads and shoulders of strangers. They had to be protected until they became wild birds. I grieved to let each one go, for I had become attached to him and had enjoyed much of the care that I had to give him.

I enjoyed the gaiety of the robin, especially in the

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morning when he played with me about the room and, after a while, out-of-doors. He liked to play tag and hide-and-go-seek, hopping from chair to chair, hiding under desk and table, and calling softly to me to follow him.

Towards noon, after he had learned to fly, he hurried to the kitchen sink when water was left dripping a little from the faucet. Then he had his bath in glee, chuckling and cooing until he was soaked. After the bath, he would fly to the top of the door and preen his feathers until he settled down for his nap, with his head tucked under his wing. About 2 o'clock he was ready for another frolic and for much food. I have given him as many as 63 small earthworms in a day.

At night he flew to the screen door, flapping his wings against it until we admitted him. When the door was opened, he would fly immediately to the lamp, preen his feathers, and coo happily until he was sleepy. After a while my pleasure came, for he settled down on the table with his little body pressed against my arm and, cooing quietly, even lovingly, went to sleep. I usually put him in a cage at night. How he did rejoice to see me in the morning! I shall never forget his calls and his joyous greeting.

Ready to Share

I shall remember always his affection for me, his desire to share his berries and grapes with me, though I had several dresses stained by the fruit when he flew eagerly to me with his gift. I shall treasure the memory of his first song -- a sweet, tender, little song, usually given to me as he perched on my chair or on a stone on a stand beside me.

Reddy was the latest bird, brought to me last June. The people who had adopted him had been his kind parents during his early days; but as they were going away for the summer, they turned to me. At first I demurred; but finally consented to take him. I vowed that I would not become attached to him; and I did not, for the reason that he was not really affectionate or grateful. He was not playful. Perhaps he was ready for wild life and objected to human attention. After a few days I freed him; but he stayed nearby, enjoying the bird baths and the pool, and finding ants for his food. He called me often, whenever he wanted a worm.

An Angry Robin

One day we had to be away from the house for five hours, and I had to shut him in his cage. When I returned, he scolded; and when I opened the door of the cage, he bit my hand. No robin had ever treated me so ungraciously. When I opened the outer door he flew, chattering angrily, to the roof of the

house where he had not been before. After that he would not come into the house. He did come to my chair every two hours for some worms. He feared that he would be imprisoned again, away from the sunshine and his freedom. He had learned to fly and he came less often to me. After four weeks, he came no more. A family of robins had lured him away. Once in a while we saw him with another robin; and we knew him because I had banded him.

Will He Return?

Another spring he may return, as did Michael and Peter; but he will not come to me. There may be a nest in the tall white pine tree, and a lady bird sitting, and there may be jubilant songs punctuating the dawn, and I shall be content.

From now on, though, I shall hesitate to care for an injured or a lost orphan robin -- the parting hurts too much.

THRASHERS AS INDIVIDUALS

Edna Becker

(Some of Miss Becker's observations of brown thrashers have already been published in FEATHERS (September and October, 1941, and April, 1942). The following is an abstract of another section of her Cornell thesis.)

Brown thrashers living in the same area show definite individuality. The most noticeable point of difference of the thrashers I had under observation on the campus of Hollins College, Virginia, was in their reaction to me -- the degree of wariness shown toward intruders.

This varied from the decidedly pugnacious and offensive attitude of Pair 1, both of whom tended pretty much to the business of caring for the young while I was there and who made no bones about fighting me -- striking me any number of times on the hand, back and head -- to the mere defensive, scolding attitude of Pair 3, both of whom would leave the nest when I was still a considerable distance from it and refuse to go back until sometime after I had gone. This pair stayed away from the newly hatched young for an hour and a half because I had weighed them.

Carefully Guarded

In the case of Nest 1, I had to watch for a chance to take the young out of the nest since they were so carefully guarded. While there was yet only one egg in the nest, Male 1 went back on to incubate five minutes after I had chased him off in order to mark the egg. Pair 2 reacted differently from

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both of these others. While they stayed near the young and were always ready to protect them, this police duty seemed to absorb their whole energy. At least, the young received very little food when I was around; the parents were too busy scolding me. Pair 4 showed a difference from the "normal" in that the male did much of the incubating of the eggs. It was the exception to find any of the other males on the nest, but after finding Male 4 in the process of incubating the eggs every time I approached the nest for several days in a row, I had about concluded that the female had either deserted or been killed, and that the male had undertaken to do double duty. This was a false alarm, however, since the female soon reappeared.

Sexual Differences

The differences between male and female thrashers are definite, and apparently quite consistently uniform. All five males were easily trapped -- food and the young both being effective bait. None of the females entered the trap to feed the young; two of them went in it to feed -- Female 2 being caught along with the male (who had already been banded); Female 4 the day after the male was caught. The other three never would enter the trap, and two of them remained unbanded, Female 1 being caught in a nest trap.

That interest in these later phases of the reproductive cycle reach their peak earlier in the female than in the male was quite evident. The female ordinarily shows more interest than the male during the time of incubation and until the young are nearly ready to leave the nest. This interest seems to lag then; and by the time the young leave the nest, and soon after, it is the male who assumes the main responsibility. It is the male, also, who shows the first interest in territory and nest building.

THE RETURN OF THE PHOEBES

Guy Bartlett

The story of the bad luck accompanying one pair of phoebes has already been told (FEATHERS, February, 1941, p. 12, and June-July, 1941, p. 52). It was then stated that "Perhaps the time will come when phoebes will again nest on ledges of the garage or house, but they will not be the same birds."

During both 1940 and 1941 phoebes were missing from the immediate vicinity of this particular Niskayuna farm house, following a succession of a half dozen years in which nests had been attempted but no young successfully raised.

In 1942 the story was different -- phoebes successfully

reared their brood, using the garage-shed door ledge as the site for their nest. The phoebes of the vicinity had never been banded so it was, of course, impossible to say that the male who had disappeared during nest-building in 1939 was not the same one who appeared in 1942. All indications were, however, that the 1942 birds were a new pair -- in all their actions they differed considerably from those who were there previously.

A Late Start

In former years the resident phoebes had arrived early in the spring, and started nesting activities promptly. The 1942 birds were not seen around the house until early May. At first an attempt was made to build on the narrow ledge over the usual second-story window on the north -- the same ledge where unsuccessful nests had previously been built. By May 15 the nest was practically completed; on May 17 it was a bulky mass of long grass, chicken feathers, and junk. As in previous years, English sparrows had taken over.

A couple of squeezes on the trigger of a .22 accounted for the sparrows; and the surplus material was removed from the structure the phoebes had built. The phoebes returned, but did not attempt to take over. Instead, they started construction of a new nest, on the wider ledge over the door of the garage-shed. In this respect they behaved as did the phoebes of previous years -- first the house window, and then the easterly facing door.

On Memorial Day there were four eggs in the nest -- and for some reason there was not the usual cowbird egg, even though those birds were more common than usual that season. Perhaps the answer was that the phoebes were nesting late, and the many other nests of small birds in the vicinity had already been depositories for the cowbird eggs.

Success at Last

Before the end of June four healthy young phoebes left the nest. For a few days they remained in the immediate vicinity, and then went on to new regions. In the autumn it appeared as though the parents and two of the young returned to the vicinity of the house. Will there be a phoebe nest on the house or garage in 1943? Probably, and possibly even two.

Why is it felt that the birds of 1942 were not the phoebes of 1934 through 1939?

Of course there is no doubt in the case of the one -- the female found dead in 1939. But there might be a question about the male who disappeared just before the death of his mate.

The 1942 birds had different favorite perching places; and their territory extended more to the creek and woods,

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rather than into the garden and to the east of the house. The birds perched more in an elm; the previous birds preferred the power wires between house and garage.

Previous nests were of mud and clay obtained from one particular section of the bank of the creek -- the same section where most of the robins, swallows, and wasps obtained their ingredients. The 1942 birds obtained their mud from a section of the creek a couple hundred feet above stream, in the woods and around a bend.

Despite an early spring, which brought most birds in far sooner than usual, the 1942 phoebes were weeks behind the earlier pair.

Easily Captured

The garage and shed doors were always open most of the time; and the windows naturally were happy hunting grounds for insect-eating birds, working within the buildings. Both phoebes and chickadees regularly fed within the buildings. The birds of previous years had learned how to find their way out on those occasions when a wind-slammed door would trap them. In fact, if the doors were closed, they knew how to get in and out without difficulty.

The phoebes of 1942 were different. Repeatedly they were trapped, particularly in the shed. Then they would beat and flutter against the windows, and continue in a frenzy even after the door was opened. On at least a dozen occasions one of the phoebes was picked up at a window and released outside; and on one occasion both birds were so removed.

New Night Perch

In at least one more respect the male phoebe of 1942 also differed. The male of previous years had regularly perched at night on the power wires close to the eaves of the garage. It was always possible to flash a light up there and see the bird asleep. Not so with the 1942 male, however. Never was he to be seen there, and his night perch was never found.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

MORE "MOUNTAIN ASH, GONE" -- Instead of explaining why Mr. B. D. Miller's robins gobbled all the mountain-ash berries in sight, as described in FEATHERS for September (p. 80), my observations add to the mystery by confirming his. This year the crop of berries on my 40-foot mountain ash was unusually good. That on my large wild cherry tree was at least normal. As in former years the robins, assisted by a few waxwings, who soon disappeared, stripped the cherry tree at random. Then, contrary to former practice, they began eat-

ing berries at the very top of the mountain ash. They worked down so systematically that there was always a definite line above which all berries were gone and below which few if any were taken. Now, October 3, there are berries on the lowest branches only.

Formerly the robins, after sampling a few berries, have generously left almost the entire crop as winter food for the waxwings and other winter birds. Their appetite this season carries my memory back more years than most club members can muster. As a small boy, I once observed for several days a flock of robins denuding a mountain ash tree of its berries. They ate so fast that every now and then one of their number would fly heavily to the ground and sit there for some time with outspread wings -- too full for utterance or motion.

... Malcolm W. Rix.

NOT "MOUNTAIN ASH, GONE" -- That a different fate awaits different mountain ash trees locally is apparent from an inspection of still others of the trees. Along Mohawk Road, off the Troy Road, is a mountain ash heavily laden with berries. It remained apparently untouched through October, despite plenty of robins and waxwings in the neighborhood, and a large flock of starlings roosting nightly in a nearby giant oak. In the vicinity are many wild grape vines, also heavy with fruit; and these too hardly seemed to tempt the birds.

Along Rosendale Road two other mountain ashes have also been watched. They, also, through October did not seem to interest the birds. Perhaps most heavily laden of all in early November was a mountain ash atop the crest of the Troy Road at Stop 14.

... G.B.

DO BIRDS EAT WALKING-STICK EGGS? -- I am interested in photographing bird food; thus the question as to whether birds eat the eggs of walking sticks. The eggs are certainly attractive, being glossy black on top, with white stripes on the sides, and about an eighth of an inch long. They might be mistaken for a small beetle.

I caught a male and female the first week of September on a hollyhock leaf. The female was kept in captivity for about three weeks on a diet of hollyhock leaves before she died. During this period she laid 93 eggs. Every day new eggs appeared, eight being the limit for a day.

Can I expect some member of S B C to give me the answer?

... J. M. Hollister

HEADED SOUTH -- There were about 200 geese in the honking flock seen by Jack Voght in flight south over Scotia at 7 o'clock in the evening on Sunday, October 18.

ABOUT SWALLOWS -- Dayton Stoner, New York State Museum, Albany, is the author of several articles in current publications:

THE AUK, October, contains an article by Dr. G. M. Meade of Rochester and him, reporting on "Aspergillois in a Snowy Owl," with two photographs. The owl had been captured alive near South Cambridge, N. Y., November 15, 1941.

"European Starling Nesting in a Bank Swallow" is the subject of an item by him in THE WILSON BULLETIN, September. The nest described was at a gravel pit about nine miles northwest of Albany.

In BIRD BANDING, July, Mr. Stoner reported on "Behavior of Young Bank Swallows after First Leaving the Nest."

In SCIENCE for September 18 he and Mrs. Stoner reported on "A Seven-year-old Bank Swallow," banded in 1936 when at least a year old, near Oneida Lake, and most recently captured in May, 1942. Science Service syndicated an abstract of the item.

FLYCATCHERS -- Did you ever notice how it is possible to see a half dozen species of summer-resident flycatchers in one small section? In that semi-wooded, swampy section where the Lisha flows into the Mohawk, for instance, the six species can be recorded throughout the summer, in an area not over three acres in extent.

Crested flycatchers are atop the higher trees in the small wood plot. Kingbirds are in the adjoining open field, and nesting in a scrub apple tree there. Phoebees are along the edge of the woods at the stream. Least flycatchers are in the woods, as are the wood pewees. And the alder flycatchers are in the swampy growth below the woods.

It is not difficult to record all the species in a short time from one spot, simply by listening for their very specific and easily identified notes.

TWO BOOKS -- "Birds Across the Sky" by Florence Page Jaques, illustrated by Francis Lee Jaques; Harper & Brothers, \$2.50. "Trail of the Money Bird" by Dillon Ripley; Harper & Brothers, \$3.50.

FEEDERS -- Plenty of feeding stations are already in operation, with plenty of customers. It may not be long now before plenty of birds will be ready to visit plenty of feeders. Remember that it is the well-provisioned feeder that attracts the most birds. Food stations that are permitted to go for days without replenishment of feed quickly lose their customers.

Maybe you will find that it is no longer an easy matter to get plenty of suet, even of the tough and stringy kind that most butchers do not want and which have some advantages so far as feeding stations are concerned. And maybe you previously banked on using plenty of sunflower seed. And maybe, too, peanut butter seems now to be pretty expensive to be plastered wholesale on the bark of trees.

The list of foods that will attract birds is so large, however, that there is still plenty of opportunity to keep the tray filled.

If you have not maintained a feeding station previously, why not start one now? They're not difficult to make -- even a bracket shelf nailed against a tree in the yard or against the window sill will do the trick. Even a nail through a piece of suet against a tree will attract plenty of species.

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INLAND WADERS

. . . Dorothy Caldwell

When we inland bird watchers have the rare treat of a visit to the coast during shore-bird migrations, it is a delight to watch the myriads of little waders as they scurry up and down the sands, daintily hunting for morsels of food or scampering back before the incoming tide, and to see them rise up from the sand or the salt marshes, wheel in the air now this way, now that, and then return to their feeding. But when it comes to identifying any but the most common species and those that are easiest to sort out from the multitude, we folk who seldom have opportunity for this kind of bird study are in difficulty and confusion at once. Study of the occasional stragglers that visit our inland waters (Autumn Shore Birds in the Albany Region, Dayton Stoner, N. Y. Bulletin to the Schools, March, 1940, p. 248; FEATHERS, May, 1940, p. 14) is fascinating but increases our little store of experience very slowly.

Without Distraction

Our SBC chairman and I were especially grateful on Sunday, October 4, along the Crescent Lake section on the south shore of the Mohawk, when a single group of 30 or 40 waders was constantly in our field of vision for an hour or more and we had the opportunity to study them thoroughly and without the distraction of others of the tribe moving in and out.

When we first saw them, they were feeding busily on the beachy point at our feet; they occasionally flew to the patch of water-chestnut to the right of us or to the patch to our left, but always returned to the bit of shore in our immediate foreground, unmindful of the fact that we were standing in the underbrush a few feet away.

Seven Species

A lone spotted sandpiper was the first to be identified, then a killdeer or two became obvious, then several lesser yellow-legs bobbing in the water and giving their two-syllabled cry when on the wing. The remainder of the group required closer scrutiny, but a lone semipalmated sandpiper and several sanderlings were next identified. Most of the birds,



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some fifteen or twenty of them, were larger than the sanderlings and smaller than the lesser yellow-legs, and these we finally concluded to be none other than pectoral sandpipers. One bird in the group still troubled us; it was grayer than the rest of the pectorals, and apparently

taller and slimmer. The next time the group swirled over to the water-chestnut we noted that this bird had an obviously different flight pattern, suggestive of a diminutive yellow-legs. We reproached ourselves for having left the faithful "Peterson" behind, but temporary lack of a field guide stimulated minute and accurate scrutiny of the group at our feet.

When we finally could consult our handbook and had satisfied ourselves that our seventh wader was a stilt sandpiper, a rare species in this locality and rather a late date for it at that, not to mention its being a life bird for one of us, great was our delight and satisfaction at the results of our hour of study of a single small diversified group of shore-birds. Next time we see a stilt sandpiper, if he happens to be in fall plumage, we shall feel that we are meeting an old friend.

CANVASBACKS

. . . Nelle Van Vorst

The dull gray Sunday, November 29 gave us one of the most interesting mornings along Saratoga Lake we have experienced this year. We met Dorothy Caldwell at Collamer's Corners and then started toward the south end of the lake, where we saw our first large flock of American golden-eyes of the season. The lake, dark but very calm, was almost free of hunters and fishermen, and traffic was very light. This was all in our favor for close study of the concentrated flock feeding near the shore.

Wheeling Gulls

The gulls wheeling and diving for food are always interesting at this time of the year since their various stages of plumage make it difficult to distinguish the ring-bills. However, when we found a group resting along the shore the ring-bills could be identified by their smaller size.

As we watched the large rafts of ducks in the middle of the lake we would scan the water for a late-leaving loon, but all of them that had been there a few weeks earlier seemed to have left.

North of Snake Hill we observed a flock of perhaps 50

scaup, drifting in to feed in the shallow water. On careful study Dorothy Caldwell spied a male red-head, then another, and still another. We had parked our car back of some small trees so we could watch the ducks from the car. The light was very bad, but as the ducks continued to feed nearer the shore we could even identify the female red-head. A few ring-necks and some golden-eyes joined the group. Almost constantly small flocks or a lone duck flew close.

A pair of small, interesting ducks alone in a cove near a rocky shore proved to be Mr. and Mrs. Hooded Merganser.

Chiseled Profile

The climax of the morning came soon. A flock of fifteen ducks not very far out attracted our attention. At once we knew they were strangers to some of us. Their chiseled profile and striking white backs against the dull gray water were most outstanding. Eight male canvasbacks with some immatures and females were our unusual find. We were careful not to disturb them as a few hunters were in their queer-looking blinds a few rods back, evidently not aware of the fine species they were missing.

Miss Caldwell, who has kept very careful records of the Saratoga Lake area for several years added a new record on this trip which terminated her field work for a time at least in this section. Residing at Mt. McGregor for 16 years, she has done a great deal of fine work there and in the nearby country. Her migration records and records of residents for the Mountain are most complete. Now she is leaving to take a position on the staff at Harvard Medical School, Boston. From her findings many interesting facts have been established, and a story of the nesting warblers on Mt. McGregor, among other reports, has been promised us.

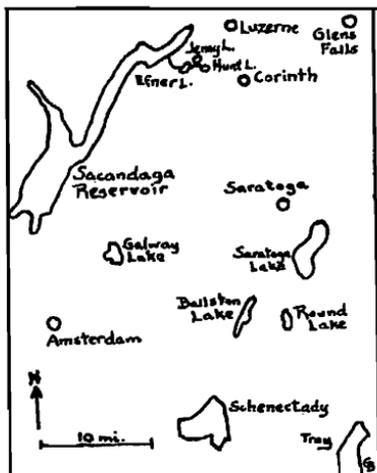
JENNY LAKE BIRDS

. . . Alice Moore

One Sunday morning in July I was washing breakfast dishes about 9:30. It was raining -- a warm, slow drizzle. My attention was attracted to the lower branches of the white pines. These branches are all dead, becoming smothered as the trees grow close together. Very quietly, with no calls whatsoever, four tiny birds were gathering breakfast for their young in the nests. There were a female redstart, a chickadee, a female black-throated green warbler, and a chipping sparrow. The way the chickadee made the dead bark fly and filled its stubby beak with fuzzy aphids!

All the birds seemed very tame, coming close to the screen where I was standing. Another rainy Sunday I was calling the chickadees, which were feeding very low about my head. Sud-

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denly I realized there were kinglets near the other birds, just as curious and tame as the chickadees. Why do birds feed so fearlessly in the lower parts of trees in the rain? I'm sure they save the more accessible places for use in emergencies. On clear, sunshiny days they are often in the tallest of the trees, where it is very difficult to see them.

It is fun to study birds at Jenny Lake because they come to breed and are so preoccupied with their own business one can approach closely and trail them. Identification is not as difficult as during migration. When the parents are feeding the fledglings

it is easy to study them. They return again and again to the squawking youngster. As long as you keep him in sight, you have a good opportunity to identify his parents. Both black-throated blue and black-throated green warblers come in large numbers. I get a great thrill watching them, their plumage is so beautiful.

Thrush Concerts

The olive-backed thrush gives us many a concert from across the lake. His notes take on a ventriloquistic quality or echoing around sunset. For a month to six weeks the singing is delightful, and then the insects take over.

Boss Robin

We had a robin take up his abode, early in the season, near our cabin. Last year we often enjoyed watching thrushes have their breakfast at the same time we had ours. But not this year. The robin did not bother the little birds but he wouldn't allow the thrushes near his bailiwick.

At a certain time in the season the borers, with which the pines are generously infested, leave their tunnels to drop to the ground and pupate. Two hermit thrushes were gathering a feast by our wood pile when the robin, scolding and bullying, finally drove them away.

Morning Dip

About seven one morning we were taking stock of the weather. There had been a heavy rain during the night. Now the sun had climbed the mountain and was picking out every droplet caught on the heads of the red-top grass, which was in flower. The grass was holding much moisture, and how it did sparkle! Two white-throats were taking their early morning dip. They would rush through the grass until they were soaking wet, then

perch on a flat rock of the outdoor fireplace to shake themselves a second, and then return to the wet grass. Over and over the performance was repeated, as if to say "Aint we got fun?"

Hide-and-seek

We played hide-and-seek with a grebe one lovely summer day. He won the game easily. We paddled near him before he was aware of us, and then he dove. It's impossible to tell which direction the bird will take under water from his position on the surface. Each succeeding dive took him farther away from us and we stopped chasing him, for fear he would burst a lung.

The nest of a ruffed grouse, full of eggs, was found not ten feet from where Barry Havens was working on his cottage. The following week the little ones were hatched and gone.

It is no wonder to me that John Burroughs and many other nature writers have paid so much attention to the purple finch. His song is so ecstatic, poured forth with such vehemence and so tirelessly. He is so beautiful, perched on the topmost branch of a dead tree, or swaying in the breeze on the tip of a white birch. The sun catches the raspberry feathers and turns them into flame. His notes are not monotonous, because the warble is varied.

This summer I watched one suitor, so enthusiastic he sang in flight -- not the dignified, sustained song and flight of the meadowlark but a topsy-turvy series of somersaults.

Barry Havens and Chester Moore have lists of over sixty varieties of birds summering at Jenny Lake this past season.

MT. TOM

. . . Beulah W. Huthsteiner

Early on the morning of October's first Sunday, four enthusiastic SEC members -- three experienced and one amateur -- started to climb Mount Tom, near Northampton, Mass. It was chilly, with a drippy mist obscuring all but the nearest landscape.

We stopped frequently and looked and listened in vain for our feathered friends. Suddenly, about fifty feet ahead of us, a fox dashed across the road with his breakfast in his mouth.

As we continued the climb the fog thinned and there was a distinct feeling of spring in the air. We discovered a bush in bloom. It was witchhazel, our latest blooming shrub. Soon the climb began in earnest and when we reached a resting place

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we all gladly shed a few layers of clothing. Here we began to hear the birds, and I heard for the first time the bluebird's call.

We wandered toward a patch of sunshine filtering through the autumn foliage and came out on a ledge of rock overlooking the wide, thickly wooded Connecticut Valley. We were looking down on the tops of the trees, and the colors were breathtaking. In the distance was all there was left of the fog -- a wide, soft blanket that obscured the river.

Two Schools of Thought

It seems there are two schools of thought in looking for birds. One may go out and hunt them, or one may sit quietly and let the birds come. I promptly joined the latter school and picked a comfortable seat. Soon we saw the birds busily feeding among the leaves and topmost branches of the trees below, and were able to distinguish goldfinches, myrtle warblers and ruby-crowned kinglets, to name a few.

Although the great hawk migration had occurred two or more weeks previously, when 700 hawks were seen, there were five stragglers about, to show us how they ride the air currents.

A wild scurrying in the leaves just back of where we sat proved to be a merry game of tag among three chipmunks. One stopped to look at "Peterson" which was on the rocks beside us.

Suddenly there was a flutter of wings, and a bird lit on the ledge not two feet in front of me. For just an instant a startled hermit thrush looked eye-to-eye with an equally astonished Bird Clubber (Are you sure the hummingbird is the only one that can fly backward?)

Thoughts of the lunch basket began to intrude as we talked, and presently we all started down the trail. At the picnic area we enjoyed a delightful lunch together and compared notes. Reluctantly we packed our baskets and started for home.

CHRISTMAS CENSUS

Do you know of any mockingbirds at local feeding stations this winter? Or the whereabouts of any wintering robins? Or of flocks of cedar waxwings? Or the wintering quarters of any owls? Or have you heard of any flocks of evening grosbeaks in our territory?

These questions are all in connection with the coming annual Christmas Count, plans for which are being completed by

the committee of which Miss Alice Holmes is chairman. Any SBC member who, particularly during December, has been seeing any unusual birds should notify Miss Holmes (Phone 4-2740) so that plans can be made for inclusion of those birds in the Christmas count.

Details about the census were arranged at the SBC meeting on December 14. That does not mean, however, that it is too late to plan on participating. Any club members who were not at the meeting and who want to join the trip should telephone to Miss Holmes, who has the information not only as to the date and general arrangements, but also the details as to how Schenectady's "15-mile circle" will be covered this year.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



FIRST SNOWY -- The first record of this season for the snowy owl was that of a darkly marked individual on display in front of the Hub store in mid-November. It was reported to have been shot on November 15 at Jonesville by Dr. McElroy.

MORE RECORDS -- Since our August report (see supplement to October FEATHERS) several new and interesting records have been turned in by Malcolm Andrews, bringing the total transients up to 142. Besides several earlier dates, there were the following of interest:

New records - Winter wren, April 22, one in Central Park; bay-breasted warbler, May 13, several in Central Park; ring-necked duck, October 11, several below Niskayuna; Virginia rail, October 17, one below Niskayuna; green-winged teal, October 18, Watervliet Reservoir; coot, October 11, one below Niskayuna.

Interesting data - Broad-winged hawk, April 25, about 50 birds migrating over Visschers Ferry; common black duck, October 11, estimated 2,000 along the Mohawk; blue-winged teal, October 18, estimated 100 on Watervliet Reservoir; wood duck, October 18, twenty birds on Watervliet Reservoir.
 . . . B. D. Miller.

TWO FOR G-E -- November 27 was one with unexpected birds at the G-E. The morning was clear, though windy. Over the works, flying low enough so that its plumage could be seen easily, went a mature bald eagle, headed toward the Mohawk. In the afternoon, flying even lower but in the same direction, was a great blue heron. Last winter a great blue heron wintered along that part of the Mohawk, but unfortunately was not found on the Christmas census. Perhaps there will be one this year.
 . . . G. B.

INTERESTING PEOPLE -- In the "Interesting People" section of the December issue of the American Magazine is a sketch on Allan D. Cruickshank, recent SBC speaker.

EXTINCT BIRDS

. . . Dean Amadon

(The following is an abstract of an interview presented by The Science Forum of Station WGY, Schenectady, on December 1. Mr. Amadon is a member of the staff of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City.)

Extinct birds have always been of especial interest to the naturalist. They also arouse the curiosity of many who are not otherwise interested in birds. This is particularly true of extinct species which were once widespread and common, but which became extinct under somewhat tragic and dramatic circumstances. Such a bird was the beautiful passenger pigeon.

Audubon and other early travellers witnessed migration flights of this pigeon which contained millions of birds and literally darkened the sky. Yet within a brief period of years the passenger pigeon decreased tremendously. By the beginning of the twentieth century, only a few stragglers remained. Dr. C. V. Whitman had established a flock in captivity, and for a time it was hoped that they might perpetuate the species. Perhaps as a result of inbreeding, they stopped nesting, and the last individual of this species died in the Cleveland Zoo in 1914. Thus a bird which less than 100 years before had been possibly the most numerous species in North America was totally exterminated. Little wonder that philosophers sometimes find in the fate of the passenger pigeon a melancholy commentary on man's brief sojourn in this vale of tears.

Opinions have been expressed that the passenger pigeon had migrated to Mexico, Bolivia, or some other country; but there is almost no chance at all of this being true. Birds just haven't the intelligence to move out of their former home area when conditions become unfavorable, the way human beings sometimes do. The average ornithologist would be more surprised to learn of the existence of a live passenger pigeon anywhere today, than he would to hear that an undiscovered island the size of Cuba had been found between the United States and England.

Sixty Recent Extinctions

About sixty species of birds have become extinct in the world as a whole. This number, of course, does not include fossil species which disappeared before man had come onto the scene. I have also excluded species which became extinct before any specimens had been preserved. For many such species, only legends, crude drawings, or bones and other remains found around the campfires of primitive man, exist. The war-like Maoris of New Zealand, for example, exterminated for food the

huge flightless moas, which occurred on that island. Moas were related to the ostrich, but were much larger. They were all gone before Europeans arrived in New Zealand. Another species which disappeared before any complete specimens were secured was the famous dodo, which has given rise to the expression, "Dead as a dodo." The dodo was a huge flightless pigeon native to the French island of Mauritius, near Madagascar. It survived long enough so that we have some written accounts of it. Apparently it was exterminated by pigs introduced on the island which ate its eggs and young.

Vanished American Birds

Unfortunately, there are several other American birds besides the passenger pigeon which have become extinct. One of the most interesting was the great auk, which nested on islands on both sides of the North Atlantic south as far as Newfoundland. The auks are the northern counterparts of the penguins of the Antarctic, but the great auk was the only one of its family which had lost its ability to fly. This proved to be a fatal mistake. When fishing and sealing vessels began to visit the northern islands where it nested, they found that the great auks could easily be killed with clubs. The eggs were eaten, and if provisions were short, the birds too were eaten. They could also be used for oil. The unfortunate auk could not cope with such persecution, and the last one was killed in 1844. About eighty specimens are preserved - most of them in various museums. Of most species which have been extinct for 100 years, there are fewer specimens than that in existence, but the great auk was such a curious bird that it early attracted the attention of collectors in Europe.

The Labrador duck is another North Atlantic species which became extinct. It was found only on the American side of the ocean, and the reasons for its disappearance are a matter of debate as it was able to fly and apparently was subject to no greater hazards than many other species of ducks which survive in large numbers to this day. Even from the first it had a much smaller range than most other ducks, and we must assume that it was on the verge of extinction for some natural but unknown cause and that man at most merely hastened its disappearance.

1931, Gone

The most recent of our birds to become extinct was the heath hen. The last individual died on Martha's Vineyard Island off the coast of Massachusetts in 1931. This bird was formerly found in the pine and oak barrens of the North Atlantic states. On the mainland it was exterminated at an early date by hunters, but it found sanctuary on Martha's Vineyard. Unfortunately a brush fire and diseases which it acquired from introduced pheasants depleted its numbers so seriously that it never recovered.

This bird was an eastern variety, or subspecies as they

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are called, of the prairie chicken which is still found in the central states, and it requires an expert to tell specimens of the two apart. For that reason its extinction, to my mind at least, was not quite such a depressing event as that of such unique species as the passenger pigeon and the great auk.

Probably Gone

Two other American birds now probably extinct are the Eskimo curlew and Carolina parakeet. The latter was the only parrot native to the United States. In colonial times flocks of this beautiful little parakeet occasionally wandered north as far as Albany, but for almost a century they have been confined to the most impenetrable swamps of the southeast. A few may still survive there, but it is very doubtful.

Valuable Specimens

Specimens of the great auk and other extinct birds have sold for well over \$1000, but that was at a time when private collectors were much more numerous and competitive than at the present time. Such competition has been discouraged because it might lead to a further reduction or even to the extinction of a rare species.

To the scientist, however, specimens of extinct birds are unique and irreplaceable, quite apart from any monetary considerations, just as are great works of art. For that reason we have moved our collection of extinct birds at the American Museum of Natural History to a safe place away from the city where it will be kept under lock and key until after the war. It is probably the largest collection of extinct birds in the world, with the possible exception of that of the British Museum.

A few years ago we obtained the large ornithological collection of the late Lord Rothschild of Tring, England. He had long been especially interested in extinct birds and is the author of the standard reference work upon them. His collection contains several of which less than a dozen specimens exist.

Lawrence, an early New York ornithologist, writes of seeing six fine drakes of the now extinct Labrador duck hanging in the Fulton Street meat market, in New York City, until they spoiled and were thrown out ... although the price asked was only a few cents each. This duck became extinct so rapidly that at the time few realized what was occurring. Less than fifty specimens now exist and, needless to say, they are worth considerable.

Isolation, A Handicap

In these days when we are waging a world-wide war of survival and when some nations have become extinct -- at least temporarily -- before our very eyes, this question of survival and extinction seems very real; and there is a similarity in

the conditions which make a given species of bird or a given nation especially subject to decline or extinction.

More than half of the extinct species of birds inhabited small islands or isolated mountains. In this atmosphere of isolation they did not find it necessary to cope with the numerous enemies which beset birds on the larger continents. As a result, the island species often lost their power of flight, and otherwise became unfit for the active competition and struggle for survival which characterizes nature. When enemies do invade their stronghold such species are usually doomed to quick extinction.

Survival of the Fittest

The course of evolution both in birds and other groups of animals seems to have been one in which a few species acquire advantages that enable them to crowd out or otherwise exterminate neighboring species. The species which become extinct are those too isolated, too specialized, or too small in numbers to put up an effective resistance.

So long as "survival of the fittest" continues to play such an unfortunately large role in the relationship of nations, countries which are over-specialized, which have isolated themselves from the activities and progress of their neighbors, or which are so unfortunate as to be both small and weak, will have to beware the fate of the dodo.

From this standpoint extinction of some species may be considered as inevitable so long as evolution by the existing process of natural selection continues, and so it is. But extinction by natural processes is usually a slow process. Most of the birds which have become extinct in the last century or two have met their fate as a result of the activities of that most destructive of all animals -- man himself. Such extermination is deplorable for almost every species of bird is of some economic value in addition to the scientific and aesthetic interest of such a species as the passenger pigeon.

Man's Methods

Most of the methods by which man has brought about the extinction of some birds and greatly reduced the numbers of many others have already been mentioned. Hunting for sport or for food, commercialized destruction for the millinery trade, destruction of forests by axe or fire, draining of swamps ... these are some of the activities which must be regulated if rare birds are to be saved. On many islands such as Jamaica, in the Atlantic, or Fiji and New Zealand of the far south Pacific, foreign mammals such as the weasels and mongooses, not to mention cats, dogs and swine which are allowed to run wild, have been introduced and are a scourge to native birds.

One peculiar extinct bird known as the Steven's Island wren had a unique history. Steven's Island is a small island

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near New Zealand, and its only inhabitant was a lighthouse keeper. The known specimens of this wren, about fifteen in number, were all brought in by the keeper's cat. Apparently this cat discovered the wren and exterminated it as well, for no one has been able to find one of them there since.

War, Exterminator

As a final method in which man may decimate the ranks of rare species of bird, it is but necessary to consider the effects of the present war. For instance, the Philippines and many islands in the East Indies are inhabited by splendid, rare native birds. Some of these are very likely to become minor victims of the conflict. Hawaii is already noted for the number of its birds which have become extinct, and we must hope that more will not be added to the list.

Threatened Species

A number of our birds in the United States are now being threatened with extinction. Legislation directed towards the preservation of rare species has been in effect for some years but in many cases this is not enough.

The National Audubon Society of New York has recently had the wisdom to sponsor special studies of vanishing American birds, to find out the exact cause of their decrease and to attempt to take corrective measures while there is yet time. The results of two of these studies have recently been published -- one on the roseate spoonbill, and one on the ivory-billed woodpecker. The spoonbill is threatened with extermination in Florida but it still exists in considerable numbers in Texas and to the south of the United States. The ivory-billed woodpecker, however, is on the very brink of extermination, and almost a miracle will be required to save it. This magnificent bird, which is larger than a crow, is black and white with a flaming red crest. Its large white bill was used by the Indians to wear as a luck charm. James Tanner, who studied the species for the Audubon Society, investigated all likely localities in the southern states, but found ivory-bills only in one tract of virgin forest in Louisiana. Even there the number of birds is less than ten. Tanner estimates the maximum existing population of ivory-bills as 22 individuals scattered over five localities in three states. Whether they can be saved is a moot question, as they require large areas of wilderness.

Rifle Victim

Another bird that is dangerously reduced in numbers is the California condor. Most of us think of the condor as South American, but the California species is about the same size and has by far the largest wing-spread of any bird native to the United States. Perhaps 40 or 50 individuals still exist. They nest in a remote mountain range in southern California, but as this bird ranges over an immense area in search

of food condors occasionally appear in more settled regions. This subjects it to its greatest danger, that of being shot by riflemen out of sheer curiosity. The California condor lays but one egg a year and thus will increase very slowly, even with the strictest protection.

Two More

Among other species threatened with extinction are two of the largest of American birds. The whooping crane nests in the prairies of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and winters along the gulf coast of Texas, partly within the confines of the famous King Ranch. It is an immense white bird and by shooting and by drainage of marshes where it once nested it has been reduced to a total population that may number less than fifty.

The trumpeter swan, the largest of the two American swans, now survives only in Yellowstone Park, and in one area of British Columbia in small numbers. Unlike the whistling swan, which nests in the Arctic where it is relatively free from disturbance, the trumpeter swan has steadily decreased in numbers though now it is responding to protection.

It is to be hoped that the efforts to save the ivory-billed woodpecker and other vanishing American birds from extinction will be successful. The extermination of a species of bird by man's activities is always a melancholy event.

EMPIDONAX

. . . Guy Bartlett

"How can I tell the smaller flycatchers apart?" is a frequent question. The answer is -- by voice, easily; by appearance, difficultly if at all. Of the four species of the genus Empidonax -- the yellow-bellied, Acadian, alder, and least -- it is too frequently impossible to differentiate; it might be better to indicate the individual simply as an Empidonax and let it go at that.

In the following table have been listed the characteristics of the nine flycatchers regularly found in this vicinity. No claim is made for originality in the tabulation; nor are the indicated local dates absolute -- there is always the possibility of finding the birds earlier or later than indicated in the table.

The type of territory, the arrival or departure date, and in the case of highly plumaged individuals the color, are all of help in establishing probable identification; but it is the voice that is the determining factor, so far as field recognition is concerned. And in the autumn sight identification might as well be considered as impossible.

THE FLYCATCHERS

Species	Size	Eye	Wing	Tail	Belly	Throat & Breast	Head	Posture	Local Dates	Territory	Song & call notes
Kingbird	6½-9	No ring	Bars	Rounded, white tip basal	White, some gray	White	Incomplete crest	Breeds; early May to early September	Orchards, fence hedges	Orchards, fence hedges	Various high rasping notes; also sings in flight
Crested	8-9	Ring	Bars	Rounded, reddish	Yellow	Gray	Slight crest	Upright; alow to trees	Breeds; early March to early October	Woods & Forests	"Fee-bee", either dropping or rising on second note; not whistled
Phoebe	6½-7	No ring	No bars	Forked	Light gray	Whitish	Black bill	Upright; wings tail	Breeds; late March to early October	Bridges, farms, suburbs	"Fee-bee", either dropping or rising on second note; not whistled
(Empidonax)	5-6¾	Ring	Bars	Forked	Gray		Lower mandible lighter		Early May to mid-September	See next four entries	See next four entries
Yellow-bellied	5-5½	Ring	Bars	Forked	Gray, mandible lighter	Yellowish	"	Tips of wings later Aug.-early Sept. (S.F.)	Coniferous woods		Rising, whistled "ah-wee" somewhat like last two notes of the pewee
Acadian	5½-6¾	Ring	Bars	Forked	Gray, (yellowish)		"	Trans; mid-May to early June; late August (S.F.)	Deciduous woods		Rising "ka-reep"; call "peet"
Alder	5¼-6	Ring	Bars	Forked	Gray, (brownish)	Light throat	"	Breeds; late May through August	Stream thickets		"Fee-bee-oh" with accent on higher; louder second note; call, short "gip"
Least	5-5¾	Ring	Bars	Forked	Greener above, lighter below		"	Breeds; early May to mid-September	Orchards, Open woods		"Che-bee", second syllable higher, louder; call, short "whit"
Pewee	6-6½	No ring	Bars	Forked	Whitish		"	Does not breed; late May to late September	Open woods, forests, parks		"Fee-aw-wee", "fee-ah" or "ah-wee" whistle, with "ah" lower and softer; call "chip"
Olive-sided	7¼-8	Ring	No bars	Forked	Dark chest; olive above; lighter below	Light	Large head, large bill	Upright; alow to trees	Trans; late May to early June, August. (S.F.)	Woods & brush	Low, whistled "whit-when-dee-ah", second note higher

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