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CHRISTMAS CENSUS LARGEST EVER

Cardinal, Fox and White-throated Sparrows
New on List -- Gull, Screech Owl and
Horned Larks Missing from Count

Frances S. Reeves, Christmas Count Chairman

Schenectady, N.Y. (Mohawk River from Lock 8 to Mohawk View, Collins Lake, Woestina Sanctuary and lower Rotterdam Hills, Central Park, Niskayuna, Indian Ladder, Watervliet Reservoir, Fuller and Oxford Road sections of Albany, plus urban and suburban intervening territory; urban and suburban 5%, farm yards 5%, open farm land 40%, light deciduous woods 20%, mixed deciduous and evergreen woods 10%, brush hillsides and ravines 10%, cattail marshes 10%). Dec. 24, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Clear in morning, cloudy in afternoon; temp. 18° to 32°. Ground frozen; light, partial covering of old snow, except Indian Ladder area with 6 to 8 inches of snow; minimum open water; wind W, 0 - 5 m.p.h. Thirty-two observers in nine parties, plus urban and suburban records. Total hours, 44; total miles, 181 (52 on foot, 129 by automobiles). Black duck, 2; American merganser, 1; red-tailed hawk, 2; rough-legged hawk, 2; marsh hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 7; ruffed grouse, 6; pheasant, 13; great horned owl, 2; kingfisher, 2; pileated woodpecker, 2; flicker, 2; hairy woodpecker, 22; downy woodpecker, 50; blue jay, 96; crow, 232; chickadee, 262; white-breasted nuthatch, 56; red-breasted nuthatch, 2; brown creeper, 26; winter wren, 1; robin, 1; hermit thrush, 2; bluebird, 8; golden-crowned kinglet, 18; cedar waxwing, 108; starling, 1394; English sparrow, 710; cowbird, 1; cardinal, 1; purple finch, 4; redpoll, 5; pine siskin, 15; goldfinch, 106; junco, 53; tree sparrow, 473; white-throated sparrow, 2; fox sparrow, 3; song sparrow, 58; snow bunting, 200. Total, 40 species, 3951 individuals. (Cardinal, white-throated sparrow, and fox sparrow - all of them new on local Christmas Count - regularly seen in same small feeding area in Scotia). Alice Abel, Pauline E. Baker, Guy Bartlett, William G. Bartlett, Mrs. Laura Beck, Elizabeth Bigabee, Mary E. Christie, Mary Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Freese, Virginia Freligh, Esly Hallenbeck, Idella Heacox, Alice Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Kelley, Marilyn Kelley, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Korneke, B. D. Miller, P. Schuyler Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Chester N. Moore, Ruth Retzloff, Mrs. M. E. Rexford, Vincent J. Schaefer, Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Scott, Benton R. Seguin, Beatrice Sullivan, Nelle Van Vorst. Frances Reeves, Christmas Count Chairman, S. B. C.

Forty Species Recorded

Party	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of Species	40	18	28	17	22	7	19	5	5	9	5
Number individuals	3951	1597	599	527	248	63	416	122	58	249	72
Black Duck	2	2									
American Merganser	1						1				
Red-tailed Hawk	2				2						
Rough-legged Hawk	2				# 2						
Marsh Hawk	1		1								
Sparrow Hawk	7	3	2	1			1				
Ruffed Grouse	6					6					
Pheasant	13	5		4	4						
Great Horned Owl	2		2								
Kingfisher	2		1		1						
Pileated Woodpecker	2		1				1				
Flicker	2			1	1						
Hairy Woodpecker	22	8	1	7	1	2	2				1
Downy Woodpecker	50	12	8	12	3		1	10	1		3
Blue Jay	96	22	26	6	1	1	15		3		22
Crow	232	14	31	98	38	3	36	6	3	2	1
Blk-cap Chickadee	262	63	94	36	25	11	16		16		1
White-br. Nuthatch	56	11	9	12	7		7	6	2		2
Red-br. Nuthatch	2	1	1								
Brown Creeper	26	7		1	9		9				
Winter Wren	1		1								
Robin	1		1								
Hermit Thrush	2		2								
Bluebird	8		8								
Golden-cr. Kinglet	18	4	6	5	1		2				
Cedar Waxwing	108		108								
Starling	1394	909	108	98	27	14	67	50		113	8
English Sparrow	710	315	54	30	70	26	10	50	32	63	60
Cowbird	1		+ 1								
Cardinal	1				/ 1						
Purple Finch	4		4								
Redpoll	5		5								
Pine Siskin	15		3				12				
Goldfinch	106	13	8	60	2		16		1		6
Junco	53	1	26	2	10		10				4
Tree Sparrow	473	178	85	150	21		4				35
White-thr. Sparrow	2				# 2						
Fox Sparrow	3				3						
Song Sparrow	58	29	2	4	17		6				
Snow Bunting	200						200				

Recorded by EH and PSM

+ Recorded by Elizabeth Bigsbee, Guilderland

/ Recorded by AH, CNM and NVV

The "Perfect Day"

For years participants in Schenectady's annual Christmas Count have patiently waited for the perfect day for birding -- and December 24, 1944, with a clear sky, no wind, moderate temperature, and easy traveling seemed to be it. You may be interested in a few comparisons with previous years:

This time the starling led in numbers while the crow, which had led for several years, dropped to fifth place. The English sparrow moved up to second place, the tree sparrow remained in third place, and chickadees outnumbered crows. From all accounts received from sportsmen, we were not surprised to find but few grouse.

Gull Missing

According to a statement in FEATHERS, December, 1939, it was expected that the herring gull would be dropped eventually from the list of those birds seen on every Christmas Count. From this time there was no gull, probably because of the frozen streams and pools. Even so, though, two kinds of ducks were recorded at what little open water there was.

The pileated woodpecker -- with two seen -- reestablished its appearance on the list after an absence since 1932. The bluebird doubled its record of 1937.

Three new species were added to the total list -- cardinal, white-throated sparrow, and fox sparrow. All were found within one city block in Scotia. There are now 65 species on the total list for 16 years of Christmas Counts.

This winter's count showed five more species than the previous record of 35 in 1937. It is interesting to note that the number of wintering song sparrows is increasing; the 58 of this count were distributed in five of our areas. The flock of 200 snow buntings exceeded any previous count.

There are plenty of comparisons that can be made between the 1944 and previous trips as summarized in FEATHERS of February, 1944.

Those Participating

Those participating in the 1944 Christmas Count, and the areas covered, included:

Party 1 -- Niskayuna; 8 hours, 13 miles on foot, 25 miles by car. Guy Bartlett, William G. Bartlett, Virginia Freligh, Ruth Retzloff, Benton R. Seguin. 18 species, 1597 individuals.

Party 2 -- Indian Ladder; 8 hours, 4 miles on foot, 40 miles by car. Alice Holmes, Chester N. Moore, Nelle Van Vorst. 28 species, 599 individuals.

Party 3 -- Watervliet Reservoir; 7 hours, 7 miles on foot, 25 miles by car. Esly Hallenbeck, P. Schuyler Miller. 17 species, 527 individuals.

Party 4 -- Scotia; 3 hours, 5 miles on foot, 3 miles by car. Mary Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Kelley, Marilyn Kelley, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Korneke, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Scott. 22 species, 248 individuals.

Party 5 -- Central Park; 4 hours, 6 miles on foot. Idella Heacox, Beatrice Sullivan. 7 species, 63 individuals.

Party 6 -- Campbell Avenue and Woestina Sanctuary; 6½ hours, 4 miles on foot, 30 miles by car. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Freese, Vincent J. Schaefer. 19 species, 416 individuals.

Party 7 -- Vale Cemetery; 1½ hours, 2 miles on foot. Alice Abel, Mrs. Chester N. Moore. 5 species, 122 individuals.

Party 8 -- Feeding stations; Mrs. Laura Beck, Elizabeth Bigsbee, Mary E. Christie, Mrs. M. E. Rexford. 5 species, 58 individuals.

Party 9 -- Fuller and Oxford Roads, Albany; 3½ hours, 5 miles on foot, 6 miles by car. Pauline E. Baker, Dr. Minnie B. Scotland. 9 species, 249 individuals.

Party 10 -- Grand Boulevard area east of Myron Street; 3 hours, 6 miles on foot. B. D. Miller. 5 species, 72 individuals.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

DO CREEPERS LIKE SUET? -- Should feeding-station operators expect to number Brown Creepers among their visitors? The question is prompted by a recent note from Mrs. Harold P. French, Loudonville, that she had been seeing a brown creeper, but not at the suet; last year one frequently did feed there.

Experiences of various feeding-station operators indicate that while creepers will often accompany mixed groups of woodpeckers, nuthatches and chickadees, they may pay no attention to suet. Year after year in the case of a Niskayuna feeder it was noticed that creepers would work industriously on trees bearing suet, without feeding on the suet. In the case of other feeders, creepers frequently are reported as regular visitors.

TOO LATE -- Too late for inclusion on the Christmas Count was the Robin seen December 29 by Nelle Van Vorst in Scotia, on a trip when she failed to find the Cardinal. A flock of Purple Finches was also recorded.

FIRST GROSBEEK -- One of Roy Steele's last records was that of a female Evening Grosbeak, in a tree in his yard Sunday, November 26. In the previous winter, incidentally, the arrival date was about a month earlier.

WINTER ROBINS -- Additional to the Christmas Census robin, Schenectady had other wintering redbreasts. On December 1 there was one in the vicinity of St. John's Church and the college campus, and a couple of days later one in Scotia was reported to George Bainbridge. A day too soon for the count was one seen by Virginia Freligh December 23 in Most Holy Redeemer Cemetery, Troy Road.

REDPOLLS -- A flock of about 50 Redpolls was seen December 11 by Mrs. George H. Bainbridge in their yard in Scotia.

GEESE -- During the storm on the evening of December 1, about 6:30 p.m., Bea Sullivan heard a sky-full of geese in high flight over the city.

WHERE ARE THE CROWS? -- A decade and more ago Schenectady had more than its share of wintering crows. There was a large roost in the Carman area and in late afternoon there were always dozens, if not hundreds, of crows to be seen in high flight over the city toward the roost.

In recent winters the crows have been far from abundant, and either the roost no longer exists or else is greatly reduced in size. And the birds in recent winters have not been concentrating along the river banks during feeding hours.

WILLARD R. STEELE

With the passing of Willard R. Steele on Thursday, December 14, 1944, S.B.C. has for the first time suffered the loss of a member by the inevitable hand of death. In the loss of a good husband and father, our heartfelt sympathy is extended to his wife, Flora E. Steele, and to his daughter, Marian Steele Doty.

Interested in the out-of-doors and active in the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club of which he was one time hiking director, Roy, as he was known to most of us, had to forego strenuous outdoor activities about six years ago. Up to that time he had actively participated in bird trips and censuses with the group which constituted the nucleus of S.B.C. Although less strenuously active since then, he had served S.B.C. as a member of the organization committee, Conservation Director and Director of Records besides contributing to FEATHERS, his last article being "Rocking-chair Observations", June, 1944.

Genial, composed, gifted with a timely sense of humor, Roy Steele was a good companion and a real friend.

-- George H. Bainbridge

QUICK IDENTIFICATION

When you read the headline of this article just now did you notice differences in the N's and T's? It is almost certain you did not -- in fact, without looking back right now and going over the words letter by letter, you probably are not sure they were correctly spelled. And yet you knew at a glance what the words were.

What is this all about, you are probably wondering. Your experience with that headline right now sort of answers the tyro's usual question, "How do you know it was a starling?" or "How do you know it was a crow?"

Well, how did you know it was a starling? You didn't examine it, a quietly perched bird, in detail to determine its exact size, the length and color of its bill, and the details of its plumage. In fact, you had hardly more than a quick glance at the bird as it flew overhead. You might have difficulty in explaining to the tyro your points of recognition, and your description might be in terms unlike those used by the next person questioned by the novice. To you the bird may be "bullet-shaped" or "torpedo-shaped" in flight, fast in wing beat, speedy, straight in its course, and apparently with but little tail. The next person might describe it as chunky in build, with short and pointed wings, gliding to some extent in its flight, and with a sort of "semi-transparency" to its wings. Neither of you looked for iridescence or spots in the full plumage or for the dull gray of the young bird, nor did you care about the color of the bill. And yet you knew it was a starling.

Different observers have different techniques for quick identification of species -- or at least it would seem so when they start to describe the characteristics for which they look. Actually, however, most are looking for the same points but describing them differently in their own words. It all boils down to having seen a given species so many times under similar circumstances that recognition is almost automatic.

"Under similar circumstances" was just mentioned. No matter how well you know the starling in flight, the particular points about the flying bird aren't going to help you much with the bird on the ground. But there again you have your own quick way to identify it. Maybe you describe it as a walking or running, dark, chattering, hunched-over, short-tailed, chunky individual; or maybe as a relatively large headed, black, restless, walking bird. Whatever your words, you are looking for those points you have noticed yourself so many times about ground-feeding starlings.

So maybe your analysis of how you knew it was a starling may sound confusing to the beginner. Okay -- but don't introduce him to a Western Sandpiper at Schenectady in the same casual way.

NESTING AND FOOD HABITS OF THE EVENING GROSBEAK

Doris Huestis Speirs, North Bay, Ontario

I have yet to study the nesting habits of the Evening Grosbeak in the field. Only one nest has been found in Ontario as yet, and it was discovered by Mrs. I. V. Earle at Clear Lake, near Whitney, Haliburton County, June 3, 1944. The nest was 50 feet up in a partly dead white cedar or arbor vitae, and close to the trunk of the tree. The female was incubating on June 3. On June 21 Otto E. Devitt and Bill Smith of Toronto visited the spot and photographed the nest. At that time there were large young on the edge of the nest, and they left the nest the next day.

Type of Habitat

Mr. Speirs and I visited Clear Lake on July 5. The nesting tree was situated in virgin bush about 100 feet in from the lake. An idea of the type of habitat chosen by the Evening Grosbeak for nesting is given by the list of the species of trees, plants, mammals and birds identified in the immediate vicinity of the nesting tree:

Trees: Hemlock, balsam, white cedar or arbor vitae, yellow birch, sugar maple, red maple, mountain maple, and striped maple.

Plants: Clintonia borealis, sessile-leaved twisted-stalk, trillium, goldthread, baneberry, wild sarsaparilla, pipsissewa, star-flower, twinflower or deer vine, hobble-bush, usnea, oyster mushroom, bracket fungus, groundpine.

Mammals: Red squirrel, white-tailed deer.

Birds: Common Loon, Broad-winged Hawk, Herring Gull, Great Horned Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Robin, Olive-backed Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Purple Finch.

Always Together

Otto Devitt wrote us after his visit to the nesting locality, giving us some of his observations while in the vicinity of the nest:

"... It was noted that the adults always approached and left the nest-tree together. Invariably the female fed the young first, to be followed in a few seconds by the male. Sometimes only the female did the feeding. After feeding, both birds rested for a brief period, then flew away together. Never have I seen a pair of birds so attached to each other.

FEATHERS

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

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Guy Bartlett, Editor
1053 Parkwood Blvd

During the two-hour period we were at the nest the young were fed on an average of every 15 minutes (extremes 5-20). The usual food offered appeared to be a species of grub or larva which the parents picked off nearby conifers. In the vicinity of the nest the adults uttered a more subdued but similar note to the usual whistled 'cheep'."

In Semi-captivity

While observing the nesting of Evening Grosbeaks in semi-captivity in 1943 at the aviary of H. R. Ivor of Erindale (my Evening Grosbeak "Tina" has raised young there), the devotion of the pair to each other was noted too, and how they flew together to the nest, fed the young in turn, and flew away together to search for more food.

The male Evening Grosbeak woos his mate ardently, and his courtship display is beautiful and moving to see. He lifts tail and beak and lowers the rump, and fans his wings with great rapidity, swaying this way and that, the white on the wings shining and trembling with light. He looks like a tropical butterfly.

Food Habits

In addition to the information about the food habits of the Evening Grosbeak in the recent SBC Bulletin, a further observation might be of interest. The Evening Grosbeak takes its young just out of the nest to the nearest wild cherry trees, and feeds them the kernels of the cherries, breaking the pits with their powerful bills. When the young are still in juvenal plumage they manage to break the stones themselves, and the stones of fruit not yet ripe. Rarely have I seen Evening Grosbeaks eating fruit except for the seeds. However, in the aviary my pair sipped oranges, grapefruit and tomatoes during the warm weather.

Food taken by the pair of Evening Grosbeaks in the aviary included: Buds - elm, alder, spruce, etc. (every kind of bud put in the cage!); Seeds - box elder, sugar maple, ailanthus, grapefruit, orange, raisin, squash, black haw, snowberry, privet, hawthorne, sunflower, hemp, millet, flax, pigweed, wild peppergrass, bitterweet (seeds), highbush cranberry, sumac, Russian olive; Nuts - pinyon nuts, peanuts; Insects - mealworms, goldsmith beetle (soft parts), green caterpillars, flying insects; Twigs - red cedar.

(In FEATHERS of December, 1944, Mrs. Speirs presented other notes about the Evening Grosbeak, pointing out how the bird is incorrectly named. Mrs. Speirs is assembling her records with the view of preparing a life-history study of the species. She kindly granted permission for pre-publication of these notes.)

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IN DEFENSE OF ENGLISH SPARROWS

B. D. Miller

Among the birds I found while taking the Christmas census was a flock of about twenty English Sparrows feeding quietly on the catkins, or aments, of gray birches. When first seen at a distance I felt quite certain they were either goldfinches or redpolls. They balanced themselves skillfully in various positions on the small, swaying outer branches, while breaking apart the collections of seeds. I watched them for several minutes, with and without field glasses.

As no red or yellow could be found on them I even suspected (and hoped) they might be siskins; but, from all the evidence I could gather, including corroboration by the man who owns the trees on which they were feeding, they were all English Sparrows.

Unusual Feeding Habit

According to my very limited knowledge of birds this is a new feeding habit for English Sparrows -- much more refined and dignified than they are usually given credit for; although anyone who will watch them carefully is forced to admit they are resourceful and quickly adjust themselves to new conditions. Possibly here is another example of their practicing the gentle, mannerly, ladylike ways of two of our most highly respected birds - the goldfinches and redpolls.

If any of our readers have observed similar feeding habits among English Sparrows, it will be interesting to learn of them. So much has been said and written of a derogatory nature about this bird, a few compliments seem only fair. If every man is entitled to his day in court -- and many dogs have had theirs -- why not an accused bird? Several species have been acquitted in this way of serious indictments. As examples, read the cases of kingbirds, eagles and buteo hawks versus the people.

Were It Rare

One fair and impartial judge boldly states, if rare, the English Sparrow would be eagerly sought by bird students for their "I got" list, and, if the ancestry of them was not so well known, would probably be called Black-throated Sparrows.

As a rebuttal to Henry Van Dyke's charge of all birds be-

ing divided into two classes, "English Sparrows and others." I quote Mathews as saying "the Cowbird has no song. ... He is a polygamist, a bird of no principles, a low-down character."

Not Black-listed

The U. S. Biological Survey has no doubt published its findings as to the economic status of the English Sparrow. A parallel report on the Starling I have read, and found this introduced species is not black-listed. John Burroughs was afraid of their long beaks and what they might do with them in destroying fruit.

English Sparrows interfere with the nesting habits of our native birds; but so do the crows, hawks, owls and cowbirds. I have seen the sparrows eating various leaf-eating caterpillars, the moths that lay the eggs of the pests, other so-called noxious insects, and can recall credit being given them publicly for assisting in controlling the destructive brown-tailed and gypsy moths.

English Sparrows have several habits or characteristics that I advise our native species to consider adopting, and believe some of them already have "caught on". From my observations I believe Robins and House Wrens are "holding their own" with the sparrows, and have received reports of Bluebirds as learning. In this respect the Phoebe appears to be a little slow.

BULL'S ISLAND, S.C.

Rudd H. Stone

At McClellanville, S.C., is the Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge, which I visited in December. On Sunday, December 3 the manager, William P. Baldwin (who is my boss), took a group over to Bull's Island, a famous spot among ornithologists. The trip over was at least 20 miles, and the greater part was through the Inland Waterway, which extends slightly inland along the whole South Atlantic Coast. McClellanville is not strictly on the coast, but approximately five miles inland. Those five miles include almost nothing but a series of salt marsh-grass islands cut by numerous shallow channels almost as far as the naked eye can see. At McClellanville and along the twenty-mile stretch which is the Refuge, the Waterway runs along the inner border of this marshland.

The familiar birds along the Waterway are the Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers, Horned Grebe, Cormorant, and Willet. At certain points many of the striking Oystercatchers, of stout red bill and bold black-and-white pattern, may be found

with a few Hudsonian Curlews and Marbled Godwits mixed in. Shore-birds are present all year around here, although most of the summering birds are non-breeders. Both Willets are credited with being here at some time during the year. Eastern Willets are seen from March to September, and Western Willets all year except August and September. Their distinction is often problematical, however. This day I saw three or four Dowitchers, which I had seen previously only as a rare bird at Watervliet Reservoir. Just as the boat docked at Bull's Island I saw a Snowy Egret fly up, so close I could see the yellow feet without glasses.

Bull's Island

Bull's Island is the largest of the refuge. It is seven miles long, north to south, and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide. Half of its 5,000 acres are dense semi-tropical forest with many cabbage palmettos and long, dense, beard-like drapings of Spanish moss on the sweet gums and oaks, and even on the pines. The palmetto leaves are large and heavy enough so that you feel it if one comes falling down on your head. And they crackle with disturbing volume when stepped on -- disturbing if you are stalking birds. I did not get out to the ocean beach of the island, but I had ample opportunity to view the thousands of ducks of many species on the fresh-water ponds. Of those seldom seen at Schenectady in numbers, Ruddy Ducks and Gadwalls were familiar. Anyone who hasn't seen a Ruddy has a treat in store. It is one of the cutest, pert little ducks we have; plates and book illustrations don't really do them justice. Buffleheads were also present.

The real experience of the day, however, was with Wild Turkeys, which have become established on the island through successive introductions since 1939. The estimated population is now 90 to 100 birds. The predicament of the Turkey in much of the South is very precarious, so restocking of other areas, particularly other refuges, is carried on with birds trapped from Bull's Island. Baldwin unexpectedly drove us by one of the turkey traps with four birds in it. Under the circumstances there was nothing to do but capture the birds, work day or no work day. The bird I happened to catch was a hen. The other three were gobblers. All the birds were banded and the three gobblers were later shipped, but as the hen ratio on the island was low she was released. Of special interest was the fact the hen had a six-inch beard, and hens are supposed to be bearded only if very old. Baldwin figured the bird could not be more than four years old, young as turkeys go.

Cape Island

December 5 was spent on Cape Island, chiefly to locate and kill a pet pussy gone wild and feeding on rats and birds. It had been left by the Coast Guard when they left their station on the island some months ago. The cat had become very shy, and we didn't find it since there is a great expanse of brushy dunes over the island. We did find its footprints and

remains of several small birds, including sandpipers. We also visited the large fresh-water pond, where several thousand ducks were feeding. They were mostly Blacks, Mallards, Pintails, and Baldpates, but there were plenty of Buffle-heads, Ruddies, Gadwalls, and Shovellers. A very good record was a Whistling Swan, not seen there for several years, and 193 Canada Geese. Along the shore I saw a Knot and a Sanderling.

The pool is fed by rain water only; salt water is excluded by a high earth dike. I did not have much chance to observe small birds, but there were many on the dike. Many Savannah and Song Sparrows were there, and no doubt certain others such as the Ipswich Sparrow and Ground Dove, which I have never seen. I haven't had an opportunity to rout out any Seaside or Sharp-tailed Sparrows from the salt marshes, but they undoubtedly are very plentiful. On returning from Cape Island by a different route I saw great clouds of Green-winged Teal flush ahead of the boat. I never saw so many before; there must have been at least 2500 of the birds in the air at once.

Curlews

On December 6 I went most of the way to Bull's Island in a patrol boat. It was really easy. In the Inland Waterway it is necessary to slow down to a crawl when passing small boats, so as not to swamp them. At Moore's Landing, where people may embark on Bull's Island trips, are some exceptional flats for shore-birds, especially at low tide (The tide here is from 4 to 5 feet). Here I saw six of my first Hudsonian Curlews in with about 100 brilliant Oystercatchers. All through the channels to Bull's Island we kept the Horned Grebes and Hooded Mergansers skittering along the surface of the water ahead of us. One of the grebes tired of the chase and made a dive.

At Bull's Island the only ducks not previously seen were two Canvasbacks, two Ring-necked Ducks, and fifty Greater Scaup. In all my stay I saw no Blue-winged Teal, although there were plenty of Green-winged. Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Florida Bluejays are familiar sights on the island. Of course there are Fish Crows and both Vultures. Many of our northern migrants, including White-throats, both Kinglets, and Catbirds, were numerous.

On the return trip we passed by an oyster factory along the Waterway, and fortunately had to go very slowly by a heavily laden oyster boat which had just returned. It was fortunate because the oysters were similarly laden with Ruddy Turnstones, the first I had ever seen. And I feasted my wide-open eyes on the splendid creatures. My only regret is that I could not scare one into flight to see his wing pattern.

Santee Delta

December 9 was the high point in my stay as I was privileged to visit the Santee Delta, 12 miles up the Waterway, in the distinguished company of E. B. Chamberlain, Curator of

Vertebrates of the Charleston Museum, and Harold Peters, flyways biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service. The trip was a grand one for me because two eager bird-men were these.

The first good record was an Old Squaw, flying up ahead of the boat in the Waterway. On the average, only one of these birds is seen on the Refuge any winter. At the Santee Delta we got out onto the broad, open marsh and looked for wood-rat nests, of which plenty were found. But only one young rat did I see. Professor Cartwright of Clemson College, who was interested in collecting parasites from wood rats, was with us. He found a few spiders he did not think had been described.

I saw my first cotton-mouth mocassin, which Chamberlain discovered in one of the deserted rat nests. As he was sluggish at this season he was relatively easily caught. Chamberlain did so by stepping on the monster and quickly grasping him directly behind the head. The awesome reptile was then lowered into a waiting burlap bag, the opening of which was promptly closed and tied securely. He was really heavy to carry, but only about average size.

A Concentration Point

The Santee Delta is most considerable. The river has a north and a south branch, and the region between is an almost endless mass of salt marsh grass (Spartina). The delta attains a width of ten miles. Up to a few years ago this area was a major waterfowl concentration point; but now salt water has muscled in so that much of the fresh water aquatic vegetation, upon which the ducks feed, has vanished. Now the place is elegant for shore-birds. We saw great clouds of them wheeling over mud-flat stretches within the marsh grass. Most of them seemed to be Red-backed Sandpipers, but both Yellowlegs and some Dowitchers were present.

In one spot were two blue and one white Little Blue Herons. Some one here has interjected some doubts as to whether white Little Blues are really immature birds or a white phase, hence my restraint. Just before we pulled out of the marsh I had my first sight of a Clapper Rail in plain view. He is dark gray above, with a white rump. I saw him from some distance, and he remained in the clear a surprisingly long time.

Of most interest on the return trip were three Forster's Terns in winter plumage. The mark to note is a black line from the bill through the eye. It is the only tern regularly found in winter this far up the coast. Common Terns have the black eye-line running behind the neck. But they are not so likely to be found here now. We also saw a Louisiana Heron.

On December 11 I saw my first Marbled Godwit -- two at Moore's Landing, on the flats directly across from Bull's Island. But on the whole the day was dismal and rainy. On the following day I returned to Santee Refuge.

WATER CHESTNUT - DOOMED ?

More information about water chestnut has been supplied in "Outdoors with Halpin", the weekly column by John L. Halpin appearing in the Union Star. In the issue of January 8 he wrote:

"Some time ago we began to gather some data on the work of removing that old pest - water chestnut - and one of the sources we looked to was the U. S. Army. A few days ago we received a letter from Lt. Col. P. C. Dorr of the Corps of Engineers. He is chief of the Operations Division of the district engineer's office at Washington. His communication was certainly full of good information.

"Our particular problem is Collins Lake, Scotia, with resulting growths along the Mohawk River and some in the Hudson. The problem with which the engineers had to contend was in a section of the Potomac River extending from Washington downstream about 40 miles to the point where the river became so saline from ocean water that the plant could not establish itself. At the height of the plant growth some 10,000 acres were infested.

"Col. Dorr says that the methods and equipment for eradicating the water chestnut plant were developed after much experimental work which included burning, poisoning and cutting. Development of this method made possible the progress attained in the removal operations. The engineers' studies had disclosed that the plant propagates much more rapidly in a downstream direction. Therefore it was determined that the surest and most practical method of destroying the plants was to commence in the upstream areas prior to maturing of the seeds, and work down the river. Reinfestation of the cleared areas thus would be held to a minimum. The work began at Washington and moved downstream.

"Two types of cutting machines were used, one for operating in areas covered by heavy or dense growth, another for operating in light or scattered growth. The former type is an adaptation of the farmer's mowing machine, developed by modifying a commercial machine manufactured by Hockney of Wisconsin, so as to suit the practical needs of the water chestnut cutting operations. It consists of a small steel pontoon on which is mounted an under-water mowing blade, 12 feet long, which can be raised or lowered to provide a cutting depth of three feet. It is self-propelled by paddles so designed to prevent clogging by the cut plants.

"Each machine cuts up to 10 acres per 16-hour day, and 12 were operated last year.

"The second machine for light growth cuts 20 to 30 acres a day. This consisted of a bandsaw-type blade rigged between

two rowboats which have been rigidly braced about twenty feet apart. A sawing motion was provided to the blade by means of a small gasoline engine and a pump jack placed in one of the rowboats. This unit is propelled by an outboard motor on each boat or is pushed by a motor launch.

"One important point stressed by Col. Dorr was that the cut plants and rosettes be deposited on shore areas to rot, for if left in the water they continue to grow and mature seed.

"The cost? Surprising indeed. The final cost, as figured by the Army engineers, is about \$45 an acre of infested areas."

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

OTHER CENSUSES -- Schenectady had more species than usual on its recent annual Christmas Count. Buffalo, which received so much snow in mid-December, had fewer than usual -- 49 species and 6661 individuals. Included were the Black-crowned Night Heron, 9 species of ducks, 4 of hawks, 3 of owls, 4 of woodpeckers (including the Red-headed). Incidentally, Buffalo had a total of 247 species during 1944.

Rochester totaled 53 species and subspecies and about 4533 individuals in its count. Included were two Common Loons, two Red-throated Loons, one Holboell's Grebe, one Canada Goose, one Florida Gallinule, and nine Cardinals.

Hamilton, Ont., had 53 species and 9965 individuals. Included were 63 Cardinals, four Bald Eagles, one Ruddy Duck, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Buffalo counted 9 Song Sparrows on its census, Rochester 7, and Hamilton 31; Schenectady had 58.

FEEDING STATION HINTS -- In The Prothonotary of the Buffalo Ornithological Society, January, Wheeler M. Rogerson has this suggestion:

"Some of your bird friends who are pestered with English Sparrows may be interested in our experiment on the weather-vane feeder. We nail up two pieces of cloth on the open side, allowing them to blow with the wind. For about ten days the sparrows will not venture any closer than a nearby bush, while the wild birds, after a little hesitation on the first day, hop in and out without any fear. At the end of about ten days one or two sparrows will get up courage to go in, and gradually a dozen or more will follow. When this happens, I change the cloths to another color, and get a week or so more respite from the gluttons. If you have Blue Jays, use colored cloth instead of white, as they seem to be afraid of the white while they scarcely notice the colors. The food I find most attractive to all wild birds is the black walnut. I crack them so they open in halves or quarters. Juncos, Cardinals, Chickadees, and Downies eat them on the spot, and what they leave in the shell the Nuthatches and Blue Jays carry away."

NO GROSBEEKS -- In the recent S B C Bulletin reporting on the 1943-1944 invasion of Evening Grosbeaks, one of the most complete reports was that from Mrs. W. I. Milham of Williams-town, Mass. This season she reports differently; in late January she wrote:

"The winter is well on its way without a single grosbeak to make the winter seem a little more worth while. However, there is no loss without some gain. We have a flock of the most beautiful Purple Finches I have ever seen (about fifty in all), to say nothing of chickadees, woodpeckers, two juncos, and one song sparrow. I do not count my lesser friends, the blue jays and English sparrows. And we might also class in that group Mollie Cotton-tail and a red squirrel."

FARTHER NORTH -- Summer birds to be found at North Bay, Ont., have been listed by Doris Huestis Speirs in her recent articles concerning the Evening Grosbeak. Her comment on winter birds there is also of interest:

"We had just twelve species on our Christmas Census: Iceland Gull, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Blue and Canada Jays, Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Starling, English Sparrow, Evening Grosbeak, Tree Sparrow, and Snow Bunting. The Iceland Gull was the first we have seen here, and the Tree Sparrows were also a surprise as they are usually here on migration only, in spring and fall."

FED BY PLANE -- Schenectady only thinks it had lots of snow this winter (as of late January). Western New York State and northwestern Pennsylvania had far more. On Sunday, January 14, the Erie County (Pa.) Sportsmen's League and the Civil Air Patrol covered about 200 air miles of rural areas in three planes, unloading nearly a ton of food by hedge-hopping. Oats, buckwheat and shelled corn were spread through a chute over areas where it was impossible for men to travel because of huge snow drifts. In accessible places ear corn was spiked above the snow. Plans were also made to continue the feeding in case of added snow.

AMONG THE RECORDS -- Some of the winter's local records, reported from various sources:

After the heavy snow of January 16 a Bluebird and a Robin were seen along Schermerhorn Road. A large flock of pheasants was also observed.

Among records of Nelle Van Vorst in Central Park on January 7 was a Flicker. On the morning of January 17, next day after the heavy snow, she recorded a flock of Snow Buntings flying south over the city.

It seems that the Christmas Census White-throated Sparrows are not the only ones to have been wintering locally. A flock of eight of them was being seen regularly along Sunnyside Road in early January.

The Union Star reported two birds being fed at Charlton during mid-January. They were Bluebirds.

Following the cold snap of January 24 a Sparrow Hawk was recovered on her porch by Mrs. J. R. Wells, Mohawk Avenue, Scotia. After being warmed in her kitchen the liberated bird seemed none the worse for its experience.

WINDOW BIRDING CAN BE GOOD

First Winter Records for White-crowned Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird in Local Area = Field Sparrow Also Seen

Mabel W. French, Loudonville

Probably most of us indulge in "window shopping", especially when the bank account runs a little low. This winter my bank account of health dropped too low to permit much drawing upon it for active out-of-door birding. Hence all the 18 species I listed during January and early February were identified from my windows.

The two highlights of these restricted observations are a White-crowned Sparrow and a Rusty Blackbird. Both species are the first winter records for the Schenectady Bird Club. Also decidedly unusual was a Field Sparrow.

White-crowned

The White-crowned Sparrow first appeared in the late afternoon of January 8. When I sighted it, it was in a plum tree in the back yard. Within a very few minutes it had found the bread I throw out in the driveway twice a day and was eating hungrily. It was an immature bird, light gray beneath from chin to tail, center head stripe buff with border stripes of dark brown, and a bill of that peculiar color-blending one sees in some dahlias, the basic shade pink with an over-flush of yellow. During the past week (mid-February) I have detected a hair line stripe of white in the buff crown, and judge that the bird is already gradually donning adult plumage.

From January 8 to February 11 the White-crown came daily several times a day, with the exception of January 11 and 12. On those days a bitter wind was blowing and none of the birds lingered long at their feeding, so it may have come and gone so quickly I missed it. It came for food repeatedly during the big snow of January 16 and ate as though it could never get enough. The snow covered the food thrown out almost as soon as it touched the ground, so I hastily improvised a feeding shelf by the back step where I could reach it from the door. This consisted of an old high chair with the wooden cover of a bushel basket turned upside down on the seat and tied

to the back. The rim along the edge of the inverted cover kept the bread and scratch feed from flowing away.

The White-crown found the new lunch counter at once, and it soon became popular with the Tree and Song Sparrows also. The White-crown's favorite article of diet seems to be bread crumbs -- white bread preferred. Cracked corn is also liked. By January 20 the bird had found the hanging feeder in a maple tree, and since then has almost daily visited that also for "chickadee pudding". Twice on January 17, when the world was smothered in snow, I saw it pecking at the suet on a pear-tree stub. At first it was present with the first streak of dawn and was the last bird seen before dusk closed in. Now its visits are becoming less frequent and more irregular. Quite often at about 9 A.M. and 2 P.M., when I put out the two daily feedings, the White-crown will be waiting in the plum tree or shrubbery. By the time I have closed the door and stepped back into the entry, it is on its high-chair lunch counter.

I have heard it sing a snatch of song three times. Once the outburst was in celebration of having routed an English Sparrow. It is quite aggressive. I have seen it drive a Downy Woodpecker from the feeder, and the numerous Starlings disturb it not at all.

Rusty

The Rusty Blackbird was a New Year's caller. Its slender body and comparatively long tail, contrasting with the broad shoulders and stubby tails of the accompanying Starlings, attracted my attention.

Through the binoculars the rusty wash on the back and head and the rusty edges of the breast feathers stood out clearly, although the bird was predominantly black. Once I heard it give its short, rather indescribable but diagnostic note. It ate in the driveway about 4:30 every afternoon for three days, and then was seen no more. On the last day a Blue Jay deliberately snatched a piece of bread from the Rusty's beak, and flew away with it. Perhaps such rudeness was discouraging!

Field Sparrow

On January 4 a Field Sparrow was observed in the plum tree near the kitchen window. All the field marks were clearly noted, including the very pink bill. There seem to be previous local winter dates of this sparrow only on January 15 and March 19, 1939, by the late Mr. Steele.

Other Window Records

The other thirteen species observed from our windows up to mid-February, not including Starlings and English Sparrows, are as follows, in the order seen:

Downy Woodpecker: Two to four daily at suet on pear tree or hanging feeder on maple.

Blue Jay: Three daily at suet, feeder, or ground at the back door.

Brown Creeper: One frequently, at suet only twice but often on the tree.

Chickadee: Four to six daily, but only four since the heavy snow of January 16.

Tree Sparrow: Three to six feeding in driveway or at feeder daily; occasional flock up to 20 along edge of field.

Crow: Occasionally passing over.

Song Sparrow: January 3, one bird; January 11, two; January 25, three. All fed at back door.

Hairy Woodpecker: One male and one female frequently but irregularly at suet and feeder.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Two birds irregularly at suet and feeder.

Ring-necked Pheasant: January 9, nine birds in field back of house; first seen in vicinity of house all fall and winter; usually common. These birds all hens, but have seen one cock since. February 2 and 3 a hen was eating food fallen to the ground from the previously mentioned high chair within arm's reach of the back door.

Goldfinch: Two birds January 10, eating weed seed at back of garden.

Slate-colored Junco: January 25 and 26, one immature bird eating with Song, Tree and White-crowned Sparrows in the driveway.

Sparrow Hawk: February 1, one bird.

Brown Creepers

The January issue of FEATHERS (page 4) referred to a note of mine regarding the Brown Creeper at feeding stations. It has been my experience over ten or more winters for a Brown Creeper to find the suet two or three times during the season. Usually the bird wanders all over the tree to which the suet is attached, but does not touch it. When it does find the suet, it is as though the bird stumbled upon it accidentally, and it merely nibbles at it. During January of 1944 a Creeper came to my suet tree with a frequency that almost constituted it a "regular". On January 5 of that year I saw two Creepers feeding at the suet at the same time. Three or four times during that month I saw the bird hopping about on the ground

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

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

Guy Bartlett, Editor
1053 Parkwood Blvd.

like any sparrow, picking up crumbs that had fallen from the suet on the tree.

On January 16 (1944) I was amazed to see the mite of a bird fly savagely at a Blue Jay that was annoying it while feeding, and drive it away. Then it returned to the suet and finished its meal. I had previously thought of the Brown Creeper as a rather phlegmatic little bird that spent its life hitching up a tree trunk and flying down again, but apparently some individuals have some spirit after all.

AVIAN I. Q. ?

George H. Bainbridge

Perhaps it is only fair to tell the reader in advance that the fanciful heading is merely a lead to more about the adaptability of that much despised bird, the English Sparrow. Some features of this species' adjustment to environment, locally at least, were set forth in detail in FEATHERS, June-July, 1942, page 53, under the heading "Worth His Salt?".

More recently (FEATHERS, February, 1945, page 9), under the heading "In Defense of English Sparrows", it is set forth that this species has recently been seen feeding on the catkins of birch trees very much in the well-known manner of the finches. The writer has also seen this same feeding this winter.

Tail Bracing

After recently installing a supplementary bird feeder in the form of a locust log of small diameter but still holding its bark on which peanut butter and other items are plastered, it was observed that the English Sparrows were aping the woodpecker's tail-bracing stunt.

There is a bit of difference, however, in that the tail feathers of the English Sparrow do not seem to be as good struts as the tail feathers of the woodpeckers. But this doesn't phase the English Sparrow. This bird seems to be provided with more tail feathers which are fanned out in a sort of arch formation to give more distributed support.

Incidentally, an SBC member tells of a local political center and parking place where in the past during the insect season the English Sparrows flew to the car radiators to pick out caged insects almost before one was through parking. To capture live insects would, of course, be more helpful, but then maybe the adaptable English Sparrow has also learned the easy way of the average politician.

A WORD ABOUT THE SCHEDULED TRIPS

During 1944 the Schenectady Bird Club scheduled a number of trips, all within a short distance of home. Restrictions on transportation facilities prevented a more ambitious schedule, but even so there were 150 species listed on the trips -- including several rare ones.

Based on last year's experience, a list of proposed trips is here presented for the 1945 season. If further information is to be given, if some trips are to be changed, or if some are to be added, announcements will be made in FEATHERS or the monthly supplements.

The trips have been planned for Sundays, in view of the work schedules of the majority of S B C members. It will be appreciated if those having suggestions for additional trips communicate with the Field Activities Committee. We want to plan trips to meet the wishes of all our members.

Alice Holmes, Chairman
S B C Field Activities

837 De Camp Avenue
Telephone 4-2740

SCHEDULED TRIPS, 1945



SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

S B C -- Schedule of Trips -- 1945

March 25 Scotia

Take the Burnt Hills bus to Sunnyside Road; the bus leaves at 9 A.M. from Erie Blvd. at the State Theater. Meeting Place: Sunnyside and Saratoga Roads. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Scott, and Mrs. H. G. Kelley.

This is a trip for the early migrants.

April 29 Central Park

Meet at the Fire Tower at 6:30 A. M. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. George H. Bainbridge.

Good chance for the first of the warblers -- and plenty of migrants of other species.

May 13 Central Park

Meet at the Fire Tower at 6:30 A. M.; breakfast at the Picnic Grounds at 8:30 A. M. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Chester N. Moore.

The height of the season for the spring migration. Warblers of many kinds should be plentiful.

May 27 Karner's

Take the Albany bus that leaves the waiting room at 8:05 A.M. Meet at Stop 22 (Old Stop 17), Albany Road. Leader: Guy Bartlett.

This is the annual Memorial Day trip -- with the rare Prairie Warbler practically assured.

July 8 Niskayuna

Take the Troy bus that leaves the Waiting Room at 7:20 A. M.; meet at Stop 29, Troy Road. Leader: Nelle Van Vorst.

This trip proves there are plenty of birds to be seen in mid-summer; especially near water.

August 26 Watervliet Reservoir

This trip should produce a wide variety of shore and water birds.

Details of this and subsequent trips will be announced later in FEATHERS or the supplements.

September 16 Boat Trip to Kingston

An annual trip that should be a "must".

Egrets -- cormorants -- eagles -- and a wonderful day. Picnic lunch.

October 7 Suburbs

A "close-to-home" trip right when the warblers are in migration -- and how different they look in the fall!

November 18 Saratoga Lake

Ducks aplenty, and gulls, are to be seen on this annual trip.

December 23 Christmas Count

This will be the 17th consecutive trip of its kind made here. Last year forty different kinds of birds were found -- including a cardinal. It is a trip to be remembered.

**NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF** 

AMONG RECENT RECORDS -- A few observations of the past few weeks, turned in to the Records Committee:

The landscape was white, and so were the concrete posts along the snow-covered, and hence white, road on Friday, January 26, when Al Getz was driving slowly in late afternoon along River Road near Lock 8. Yes, atop one of the posts was a white Snowy Owl.

Schenectady lost one of its wintering Robins. One was found dead, reason unknown, in the vicinity of Steinmetz Apartments on February 14.

Late in January and during most of February it was not difficult to see ducks on the river in the vicinity of the Gateway Bridge, in what little open water there was. American Mergansers and Black Ducks were among those identified. Incidentally, with the Hudson so frozen, it was noticed in early February that ducks were concentrated right in and above New York City, with no more of the Hudson open, except for an occasional patch, until well above Albany.

Another winter record for the Flicker -- recorded by George Bainbridge February 11 in the vicinity of Witch's Hollow.

Two Cardinals for Scotia -- both seen at once by Mrs. Robert H. Zoellner, Sanders Avenue, Scotia, eating raisins at her feeder. Presence of two individuals was suspected for some time, but only one at a time had been the rule.

CREEPERS AT FEEDERS -- A question was raised recently concerning Brown Creepers at feeding stations (FEATHERS, January, page 4). Philip Moore reports that at his feeding station in Delmar a Brown Creeper regularly feeds on the suet. He finds the bird timid, and among the last to leave in late afternoon.

URBAN -- There's no doubt about the invasion of the city by many species that ordinarily are more suburban or rural. Tree Sparrows and Juncos, particularly, are being recorded at many city feeders. And there seems to be but slight if any doubt about the reason -- that this winter's particularly heavy snow is responsible.

Sparrow Hawks, too, have moved in more than usual -- and probably for much the same reason. There have been several reports of these little hawks having been seen with or after English Sparrows. One instance was at the feeder of Mrs. W. H. Norris, Waverly Place, on February 14.

Another result of the heavy snow has been the breaking up of large flocks of field birds. There have been plenty of reports of Snow Buntings all around us, but almost without exception the records are of a half dozen or fewer birds. It's as though, with weeds above the snow in only occasional small patches, the birds have found they must work in small groups in order to feed. "Birds of the trees" have not seemed to have similarly disbanded into small groups.

1945-1946 LECTURES -- At the annual meeting of the Schenectady Bird Club in February it was voted to have a series of five popular lectures on bird and nature topics sponsored by SBC during the coming season. The speakers will all be nationally known authorities on their subjects, and will appear in Schenectady through arrangements made with the National Audubon Society.

FIRST MIGRANT? -- Was the Killdeer the first migrant to arrive this year? There are indications it was -- on February 25 and thereafter one was being observed at the Anthony St. weather station.

ALIGHTING -- Do birds have their wings outstretched when they alight on the ground or on a branch? Similarly, are the wings open as they leave their perch? Motion pictures and photographs show plenty of instances where such is the case, but on the other hand there seem to be plenty of times when wings are folded before landing, or not opened until after rising.

Take the case of Starlings, for instance, landing on top of a ventilator hood on one of the G-E buildings. Already the edge of the ventilator is crowded, with hardly two or three inches between birds. Another Starling arrives and drops into the remaining space, without seeming to brush against his neighbors. It would hardly be possible for him to squeeze in if he landed with wings outstretched. And, on take-off, any of the perched birds can hop into flight without disturbing his neighbors.

AT NORTH BAY -- A wrong impression was given in a note last month in a reference to the summer and winter birds at North Bay, Ont. The list of summer birds to which reference was made was really that of the birds observed by Mrs. Speirs in the immediate vicinity of the nest of the Evening Grosbeak at Clear Lake, 90 aerial miles southeast of North Bay. Summer birds at North Bay totaled 126 species last summer, Mrs. Speirs reports.

DIRECTORS NAMED -- At the annual meeting of SBC last month four directors were named for two-year terms. Miss Heacox was renamed treasurer; Mrs. Sachs named for programs; Mr. Voght, records; and Miss Bateman, junior activities. The complete directory, with those elected at the previous annual meeting, now includes:

Secretary -- Miss Nelle Van Vorst, 8 Swan St., 6-5083.

Treasurer -- Miss Idella M. Heacox, 1028 Dean St., 4-5878.

Field Activities -- Miss Alice Holmes, 837 DeCamp Avenue, 4-2740

Programs -- Mrs. Albert M. Sachs, 2111 Plaza, 4-8291.

Records -- John L. Voght, 104 Vley Road, Scotia, 3-2021.

Junior Activities -- Miss Eva I. Bateman, 1455 State St., 3-9875.

Conservation -- Henry V. D. Allen, 1506 Union St., 3-5373.

Publications -- Guy Bartlett, 1053 Parkwood Blvd., 3-0014.

SCOTIA'S HALF MILE

P. Schuyler Miller

When one longish city block adds three new species to the local Christmas Count record, there is not much doubt that it is a place worth watching. Actually the Cardinal (now two), White-throats, and Fox Sparrows which turned up last December 24 were not needed to make the half mile or so of Scotia's river-front which stretches west from the end of the Western Gateway bridge a section which will repay study.

From the bridge to Ten Broeck Street, Riverside Avenue runs close to the edge of the river bank. The flats between Collins Lake and the river, now being filled with debris, taper out toward the foot of Ballston Avenue, forming a brushy fore-shore with ample cover for sparrows and other small birds. A row of large poplars and a few elms have furnished nesting holes for many generations of Starlings and Flickers. This is the part of Scotia's half mile which produced the Cardinal and sparrows at Christmas, and it is the part which ordinarily has the highest bird population.

West of Ballston Avenue the street remains close to a backwater of the river for about half the distance to Ten Broeck Street. However, the bank drops steeply to the water and there is no space for the tangle of high weeds found nearer the bridge. Opposite this section is the last island in this part of the Mohawk to hold any appreciable cover of trees. Twenty years ago, before the Mohawk grew too dirty to be endured, the island boasted a dance pavilion, baseball field, and bathing beach. It is still one of the first places where Red-wings, Grackles, Rusty Blackbirds, and Cowbirds congregate in the spring. It can produce Pheasants at most seasons, and for the last few years it has had Screech Owls year around.

Beyond Ten Broeck Street the backwater curves around, almost making an island of an expanse of cultivated flats which connect with the mainland at the foot of Reynolds Street. This flat is separated from the island by a rather narrow channel which is fast silting up, producing sand bars and mud-banks, with sandpipers at low water. In the 1920's these channels were deep and clean enough for swimming.

The whole stretch of river bank from the Sanders Mansion to the end of the backwater is good bird territory. In the spring the small flycatchers can usually be found, with an occasional Ruby-crowned Kinglet, along the bank just west of

Ballston Avenue, or in one of the nearby yards. I was once able to identify more than 20 kinds of warblers, including one of the Water Thrushes and a Chat, in this block during one Sunday afternoon in early May. In the last few years one Wood Thrush seems to have become established in a back yard near the end of Ten Broeck Street, another at the foot of Ballston Avenue, and a third in the grove behind the Sanders house. For the last two years a pair of Mourning Doves has nested near the foot of Ten Broeck, and Blue Jays are now rather common. Two years ago a pair of Yellow-billed Cuckoos appeared on several occasions, and probably nested on the island. Waxwings visit the wild cherry trees in my own front yard every year. A year ago Scotia's flock of Evening Grosbeaks found our part of town toward the end of winter, and thereafter included it in their regular range, covering about the same beat that the Cardinals do now. It was in this same section that I saw my first grosbeaks and first Purple Finch a number of years ago.

Hawk Owl ?

The islands and flats in the river should probably be added to the river bank if it is ever studied. They were and are a favorite crow-shooting ground, and neighborhood boys who hunted there in the winter reported tracks of the Great Blue Heron regularly long before one showed up in the Christmas Count. It was this same group of boys who more than ten years ago found and shot a medium-sized owl, in a tree along the river bank, which they compared with the New York State plates and identified as a Hawk Owl. If their identification had been checked, this would have given us a first and only record of this northern bird, but they had no idea that it was rare and strung it up as crow-bait. I did not learn of it until spring, when every last feather had disappeared. Snowy Owls were seen on the flats several times that same winter, so the record is quite possibly real. On another occasion the same group reported Hungarian Partridges on the island.

The concentration of feeding stations along this part of Riverside Avenue may be responsible for the definite increase in bird population in recent years. Wood Thrushes, Blue Jays, and Mourning Doves are now summer residents, where they were rarely seen before. Crows have been flocking along the river bank and on the island this winter, arriving in the morning from the northeast. Wrens are much more common in hedges and shrubbery, though the established species like Song Sparrows, Catbirds, and Robins seem no more common than before. Chickadees and Nuthatches have been seen every day this winter. To offset this increase, however, the Night Herons which were commonly heard overhead seem to have disappeared.

I am sorry to say that I have no continuing personal records for this half mile. I do feel sure that it will repay visits by those SEC members who can cover it regularly, especially in the morning. Perhaps one day even such species as the Red-headed Woodpecker, which old timers say was once common along the river, will join other species in a come-back.

WHAT ABOUT FIELD TRIPS ?

Seventeen Scheduled Short Jaunts in 1944 Produced 150 Species, Including Some That Were Rarities

Alice Holmes, Chairman, Field Activities

There were 150 species of birds recorded on the 17 scheduled trips of SBC during 1944. And included were some rarities such as the Little Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, King Rail, Double-crested Cormorant, and Worm-eating Warbler. On the other hand, there were some conspicuous misses, such as the Screech Owl, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Canada Warbler. Of course plenty more than 150 species of birds were recorded locally during the year -- that list indicates only those which were seen on the scheduled hikes.

Transportation difficulties prevented more extensive bird trips last year, but even so it was found that close to home it is possible to obtain a very impressive list, particularly if a variety of territory is included. For instance, it is usually considered that birds are hard to see in mid-summer, and yet the highest count of all was that of a mid-July trip, with 67 species.

The schedule included winter, summer and migration seasons, with some trips within the city limits and others extending out several miles. Many of them are considered as annual affairs -- particularly the Christmas Count, Karner's, and the Boat Trip. The summary of the 17 trips shows statistics as follows:

A - Upper Hudson, Cohoes to Mechanicville	Feb. 6,	16 species
B - Village of Ballston Lake	13,	12 species
C - Rice and Schermerhorn Roads	Mar. 12,	16 species
D - Vale Cemetery and Scotia	26,	27 species
E - Vale Cem., Central Pk., Collins Lake	Apr. 2,	27 species
F - Saratoga and Round Lakes	16,	35 species
G - Vischers Ponds and Guilderland Center	30,	42 species
H - Central Park	May 7,	57 species
I - Central Park	14,	53 species
J - Guilderland Center and Indian Ladder	21,	64 species
K - Karner's	28,	43 species
L - Crescent Lake and Niskayuna	Jul. 16,	67 species
M - Crescent Lake and Niskayuna	Aug. 13,	60 species
N - Albany-Kingston Boat Trip	Sep. 17,	32 species
O - Watervliet Reservoir	Oct. 1,	38 species
P - Saratoga and Round Lakes	Nov. 19,	25 species
Q - Annual Christmas Count	Dec. 24,	40 species

FEATHERS

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

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

Guy Bartlett, Editor
1053 Parkwood Blvd.

April, 1945

In the following tabulation all of the records are included. Of course it does not follow that every S B C member saw each of the birds listed, but in general most species were well observed. The complete record follows:

SPECIES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Common Loon						X											X
Horned Grebe						X											
Pied-billed Grebe												X	X				
Double-crested Cormorant																	X
Great Blue Heron					X					X		X	X	X	X		
American Egret												X	X	X			
Little Blue Heron														X			
Green Heron												X	X	X	X		
Black-crowned Night Heron							X					X					
American Bittern													X	X			
Least Bittern														X			
Canada Goose				X													X
Mallard	X						X					X	X	X			X
Black Duck	X			X	X	X	X					X	X	X			X
Baldpate														X			X
Pintail														X			
Blue-winged Teal							X							X	X		
Wood Duck						X											
Redhead																	X
Ring-necked Duck						X											X
Lesser Scaup Duck	X			X	X	X											X
American Golden-eye	X			X	X												X
White-winged Scoter														X			
Hooded Merganser							X										
American Merganser	X	X	X	X	X												X
Sharp-shinned Hawk						X								X			X
Red-tailed Hawk										X				X			X
Red-shouldered Hawk				X	X		X			X	X				X		
Rough-legged Hawk																	X
Bald Eagle	X													X			
Marsh Hawk										X				X			X
Osprey						X	X							X	X		
Sparrow Hawk	X			X						X	X	X					X
Ruffed Grouse																	X
Ring-necked Pheasant			X				X	X	X			X	X				X
King Rail												X	X				
Virginia Rail													X				
Sora													X				
Florida Gallinule												X	X				
Coot							X										
Killdeer			X	X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X		
Wilson's Snipe										X							
Spotted Sandpiper							X						X	X			
Greater Yellow-legs																	X

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

KEY TO RESIDENTS -- On the next page is one more list of Schenectady's birds, referring to those usually thought of as "residents" and indicating how they vary from season to season. The list roughly groups 51 species into four kinds of residency; there are still others which have been recorded locally each month -- perhaps the list should include the Mockingbird and others.

A suggestion -- It will be found that this page can be trimmed and pasted conveniently on the inside back cover of the recently issued Bulletin 4, summarizing the month-by-month records.

MORE ABOUT THE WHITE-CROWNED -- Last month (page 17) some notes about a wintering White-crowned Sparrow were presented by Mabel W. French. With the end of February her added notes read:

"The White-crowned Sparrow was missing February 12 and 13 for the first time in a month. From the 14th through the 19th it ate at the hanging feeder several times and was seen once in the driveway, but instead of being the poised, unusually fearless bird it had been up to date it appeared hurried and wary, as though it had had a bad fright and was still under the influence of the experience. On the 20th the bird came to the basket cover tray by the back door step and was acting much like its old self again. It was noted feeding in the drive or on the feeder several times up to the 26th, but I have not seen it since.

"I must not omit one interesting fact. About the 10th, as I previously stated, I noticed a fine line of white showing in the buff (immature) crown stripe. Up to the 21st that condition remained unchanged. On the morning of the 22nd the entire crown stripe was white! I saw the bird at close range, less than fifteen feet, both with and without binoculars.

"We have sometimes heard it said of a person that his hair 'turned white in a single night'. This was the morning following the big sleet storm -- a night to turn any bird's hair white!"

GROUND HOG ARRIVAL -- The ground hog has a new rival. We've just about come to the conclusion that we've found a new harbinger of spring. When we start getting reports of bird records from Barry Havens, then we know the long winter is over, for Barry has evidently come out of his hibernation and is looking things over again. For instance:

The Prairie Horned Lark is back in Vale Cemetery again. At least Barry found a pair of them alternately feeding and singing on Sunday, March 4. Really in St. John's Cemetery, however, just back of Brandywine Avenue between Clifton Place and No. 9 fire house.

In February he found the Brown Creeper in Vale Cemetery, as in other recent late-winter months.

Published by the Schenectady Bird Club

HOW DO THE BIRDS KNOW ?

George H. Bainbridge

The record of the SBC field trip to the Central Park territory Sunday, April 29, indicates, on the basis of past records for this section, that regardless of advance short summers such as occurred this spring, certain of the birds such as the warblers, vireos and thrushes are not to be fooled like vegetation by any apparent advancement of the season. Thus, for example, in SBC's "Birds to Look for Month by Month" for late April the Veery, Blue-headed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Western Palm Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush are probabilities. Only the vireo and myrtle were found. The Nashville Warbler, listed for early May, was represented by one individual with a weak song. The Pine Warbler, listed to arrive in mid-April and leave in mid-May, was also represented by one individual, very much in song. As usual at this time of the year, the Towhee and Brown Thrasher were making their presence known in a very positive manner.

Young Larks

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the trip was the family of Prairie Horned Larks with three almost full grown young in their speckled plumage. Just why this species chooses the Parkview Cemetery grounds is a bit puzzling. Presumably the environmental features such as the sandy soil, plant growth, etc. are to the species' liking; but one adult sitting atop tombstones with his horns up presented a sort of Mephistophelean aspect to say the least. In spite of cool, cloudy weather and frequent sprinklings, the 14 early risers of SBC present found 33 species in the Central Park territory.

In the Car-barn Woods section, visited in the later part of the morning, the Winter Wren and the Pine Warbler were found along with several other species previously seen in the park. The list for the trip included:

Pheasant, Mourning Dove, Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Phoebe, Prairie Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (most abundant and most audible of all), Starling, Blue-headed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Pine Warbler, English Sparrow, Red-wing, Grackle, Cowbird, Goldfinch, Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, Junco, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

YANKEE IN ENGLAND

(In previous issues some experiences of one soldier in the South (1944, p.16) and in Europe (1944, p.26) have been told. The same soldier, while convalescing in England more recently, has summarized added observations in the following letter.)

Before I tell of what I have done, I'll go into a little terminology. A "moor" is a barren hilltop, a "tor" is a side-hill, a "fen" is a swamp, and, strangely enough, a bog is just that. To make things complicated, a Moor-hen is very common in the fens, and I have yet to find one on a moor -- but that is just a minor discrepancy. Anyway, I spent a few days on the moors, a few on the coast, and one on the River Exe.

I wish I could do it over, as on the river I saw much more than anywhere else -- Curlews, Oyster-catchers, Red-shanked Stints, and of course the gulls. The most common gull is the Herring Gull, the next the Black-headed Gull. They are really getting their black heads now (mid-March). There are occasional Black-backed Gulls of both species, and a very few Common Gulls.

There are many swans, both on the coast and in the estuaries, but whether they are really wild or just plain everyday Mute Swans I couldn't figure out. However, they would fly and act like any other wild bird -- much wilder than the mallards or widgeons, for example.

To me the most interesting bird was the Dipper. When I finally found one I promptly saw quite a few. They aren't quite as tame as most British birds, but by remaining still I could watch them. One was gathering nesting material and flying under a bridge with it. Several times I saw him submerge and come up gulping some aquatic food -- maybe a nymph, I couldn't really tell.

Thrasher-like Thrush

Next most interesting were the thrushes. The Black-bird and the Song-thrush are the most common. Oddly enough, the Song-thrush reminds me of a thrasher singing as it carefully repeats each phrase three times, and the thrush has that same mocking tone.

The worst part of trying to see birds here are the hedges. Anything less than six feet of hedge is unheard of, and to walk along a lane is like walking alongside a brick wall. I did, however, break convention and wandered through the fields. The English expect almost anything from the crazy Yanks, so nothing was said, but private land is really private in this country.

PACIFIC NOTES

G. Malcolm Andrews

SOMEWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES, April 21 -- It certainly looks as though your Christmas Count was a 100 per cent success from all angles; I was glad to see that so many turned out for the affair. It looks as if that census will be one that's hard to beat. What with some 40 species on the list, and three new ones, it will be a good one to try to equal next year. I sure wish I had been there to participate in such an eventful day. I'll never forget that sub-zero count I did get out on in 1942; it sure was probably the all-time record for bad census weather.

I just received my copy of Mayr's "Birds of the Southwest Pacific" and think it is a very well written book, but am sorry to find that it does not cover the area where I am at present located. Since Dr. Mayr's book covers only the islands as far northwest as the Palaus in the Marianas, it falls about 1000 miles short of this area. Also, as there are more than 1000 islands in the Philippine group, a book of the size of Dr. Mayr's couldn't possibly include this area. A few of the species he describes are far-ranging enough to be found in the Philippines, but the great majority are endemic to the area shown inside the front cover of his book. I would be very much interested in knowing of any book, in English, of the birds of these islands. Because of war conditions, no local libraries are available, at least not at present.

I have seen what I believe is a species of the White and Red Eagle-kite, which is described on page 215 of Mayr's book. I may have described it in an earlier letter (Editor's Note -- This reference, and later ones, to previous letters are to letters not received by Miss Van Vorst). I was waiting upon the arrival of this book, however, before making any concentrated effort to study the local bird population. I'm going to look the book over more thoroughly and see if I can find any other local types described.

I had contemplated writing something on the shore-bird trip I took in Honolulu but find I don't have enough information here to write an intelligent account. All I have is a listing of the species, date and location. The list:

Kalihi Flats, Honolulu, Hawaii, January 7, 1945

Black-crowned Night Heron (6)
 Glaucous-winged Gull (?) (3)
 Hawaiian Stilt (25) (*Himantopus h. knudseni*)
 Pacific Golden Plover (40) (*Pluvialis dominica fulva*)
 Wandering Tattler (3)
 Ruddy Turnstone (20)
 White-eye (1) (*Zosterops palpebrosus japonicus*)

FEATHERS

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The latter is an imported songbird of Japanese origin. The other six are self-explanatory. The gull mentioned above was not positively identified, as I could not get close enough for a good view. Since all three gulls looked the same, and since that species had been identified a year or two previous at the same location and time of year, I let it go at that.

I believe I told you the three common species around Honolulu lawns and gardens and sidewalks were the Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*), Barred Dove (*Geopelia striatas*), and English Sparrow. These three were all imported from other parts of the world, but seem to get along together very well; each seems to tolerate the others at all times. The small Barred Doves are everywhere, in fact sometimes you have to be careful and not step on one. They are continually calling to each other during the daylight hours.

The Mynahs have a very harsh note and often fight among themselves. It is very similar in action to our Starlings, but much more colorful in plumage, and more friendly toward other species. It is mostly black, with a heavy yellow line through the eye and large white wing-patches that produce a striking picture when the bird flies.

UPSTATE CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Of the eight places in upstate New York that had Christmas Counts published in the March-April, 1945, Audubon Field Notes, Schenectady's list was outstanding in several respects. The eight localities included Buffalo, Cortland, Fort Plain, Geneva, Rochester, Syracuse, Watertown, and Schenectady. There were records of 78 species, with a total count of 28,777; Schenectady had 3951 individuals of 40 species.

Only at Schenectady were there any records of the Marsh Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Bluebird, Cowbird, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, White-throated Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow. Schenectady, which had the greatest number of observers out (32) and covered the greatest distance (181 party-miles), also had the highest counts for the Great Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Redpoll, Goldfinch, Junco, Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Snow Bunting.

Looking at the total figures for the eight places, the record of the Cardinal is outstanding -- it was listed on six of the counts, including the one here. Only five species -- Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Chickadee, Starling, and English Sparrow -- were included on all counts. Seven species were missing on only one count; they included the Ameri-

can Merganser, Pheasant, Hairy Woodpecker, Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, and Tree Sparrow. Seen on each of six counts were the Black Duck, Sparrow Hawk, Herring Gull, Cardinal, and Song Sparrow. In the case of 26 species, including nine at Schenectady, there were records at only one location.

The Starling had high count -- 6260. At Schenectady it would not be guessed that second high in count would be the Redhead, 5500 of which were concentrated at Geneva. English Sparrows, with 3447, were third in abundance. Together these three species accounted for 53 per cent of the total count. Four species of ducks -- Redhead, American Golden-eye, Greater Scaup, and Black Duck -- together with the Starling, English Sparrow, and Crow represented three-fourths of the count.

The upstate count included 16 species of geese and ducks, totaling 11,351; they practically equalled the 11,436 count of the Starling, English Sparrow, and Crow. Including the ducks, there were records of 27 water and shore birds. Schenectady, with its minimum of open water, was very poorly represented in this group; it had only two Black Ducks, one American Merganser, and no Gulls.

	Totals	Schn	Bflo	Ctld	FtPl	Gnva	Rooh	Syrc	Wtrt
No. observers	113	32	29	4	1	10	21	1	15
Total party-mi.	540	181	160	54	13	32	50	28	22
Total party-hrs.	234	44	71	13	10	18	56	8	14
Species seen	78	40	48	27	17	37	53	18	16
Total count	28,777	3951	6666	546	167	9043	4533	2943	928
Common Loon	1- 2						2		
Red-thr. Loon	1- 2						2		
Holboell Grebe	1- 1						1		
Horned Grebe	2- 11			1		10			
Blk- cr. Nt. Heron	1- 5		5						
Canada Goose	1- 1						1		
Mallard	3- 544		207			12	325		
Black Duck	6-1345	2	587	22		295	350	89	
Baldpate	1- 1		1						
Pintail	1- 3		3						
Redhead	1-5500					5500			
Canvas-back	2- 36		1			35			
Greater Scaup	5-1413		384	3	1	775	250		
Lesser Scaup	3- 51		1				50		
Amer. Golden-eye	4-1678		1501			92	67	18	
Buffle-head	4- 18		2			13	2	1	
Old-squaw	3- 151		102			2	47		
Ruddy Duck	2- 2			1		1			
Hooded Merg.	1- 1						1		
Amer. Merganser	7- 378	1	238	7	5	35	36	56	
Red-br. Merg.	3- 229		203			3	23		
Cooper's Hawk	4- 6			1		1	2	2	
Red-tailed Hawk	5- 12	2	6	2		1	1		
Red-shldr. Hawk	1- 1						1		

FEATHERS

May, 1945

Species	Totals	Schn	Bflo	Ctld	FtPl	Gnva	Roch	Syrc	Wtrt
Rough-leg. Hawk	3- 9	2	6				1		
Marsh Hawk	1- 1	1							
Sparrow Hawk	6- 34	7	18	2		2	3	2	
Ruffed Grouse	4- 16	6	7	1					2
Europ. Partridge	1- 15								15
Pheasant	7- 705	13	267	9		17	339	42	18
Fla. Gallinule	1- 1						1		
Coot	2- 5					3	2		
Gr. Blk-bk. Gull	3- 17		7			1	9		
Herring Gull	6- 985		128	4		30	600	217	6
Ring-bill. Gull	2- 83		3				80		
Bonaparte Gull	2- 58		6				52		
Rock Dove	3- 294					75		136	83
Mourning Dove	1- 1		1						
Screech Owl	2- 2		1				1		
Gr. Horned Owl	3- 4	2			1		1		
Long-eared Owl	2- 2		1				1		
Short-eared Owl	2- 17		11				6		
Kingfisher	3- 5	2	1	2					
Flicker	3- 5	2	1			2			
Pileated Woodp.	1- 2	2							
Red-head. Woodp.	1- 10		10						
Hairy Woodp.	7- 66	22	7	2	4	11	16		4
Downy Woodp.	8- 193	50	35	8	6	17	64	7	6
Prairie H. Lark	3- 9			2		4	3		
Blue Jay	8- 181	96	34	19	4	13	5	2	8
Crow	7- 1729	232	169	70	2	825	410	21	
Chickadee	8- 889	262	118	106	35	62	229	34	43
Wh-br. Nuthatch	7- 177	56	26	7	9	11	63		5
Red-br. Nuthatch	4- 7	2				2	2		1
Brown Creeper	7- 64	26	13	9	4	3	8		1
Winter Wren	4- 8	1	1	1			5		
Robin	2- 2	1					1		
Hermit Thrush	1- 2	2							
Bluebird	1- 8	8							
Gold-cr. Kinglet	5- 41	18	3	15	1		4		
Cedar Waxwing	3- 226	108					77		41
Northern Shrike	1- 1							1	
Starling	8- 6260	1394	1267	80	35	621	890	1600	373
English Sparrow	8- 3447	710	972	160	25	520	340	700	320
Red-wing	1- 5		5						
Cowbird	1- 1	1							
Cardinal	6- 22	1	6			2	9	2	2
Purple Finch	1- 4	4							
Redpoll	2- 7	5					2		
Pine Siskin	1- 15	15							
Goldfinch	4- 164	106	27		3		28		
Júnco	5- 137	53	30	2		16	36		
Tree Sparrow	7- 852	473	229	8	30	25	74	13	
Wh.-thr. Sparrow	1- 2	2							
Fox Sparrow	1- 3	3							
Swamp Sparrow	1- 3						3		
Song Sparrow	6- 83	58	9	2	1	6	7		
Snow Bunting	3- 207	200	6		1				

SARATOGA LAKE, EARLY APRIL

Beatrice Sullivan

Fair weather, and ducks on Saratoga Lake! That combination was enough to guarantee an interesting trip for five Bird Club members who started out Sunday, April 8.

Before reaching Round Lake there were Sparrows -- Vesper, Chipping, Song, and Field, as well as Juncos, the last two mentioned giving almost constant song.

Any expectations of a number of water birds at Round Lake itself were unfulfilled; apparently two ducks and one gull had the lake to themselves. On the shore, however, the Swamp Sparrow was heard for the first time.

Continuing on the road to Saratoga Lake the group saw an Osprey, and had some excellent views of two Pine Warblers. At the first stop, along a little road at the lake, a flock of Rusty Blackbirds added their hoarse, creaking song to the deafening chatter of the countless Red-wings.

"Man with Gun"

It was here that the ever-protective instinct of the Bird Club members asserted itself. One of the group, glancing down the lake, grew very indignant at "the man with a gun leaning against a tree and aiming at some ducks". A little more study, however, through a telescope revealed another SBC group with a telescope in use.

The lake itself, from which the ice had been gone since about March 25, offered plenty that was of interest. There were quantities of Lesser Scaup Ducks, American Golden-eyes, Black Ducks, and American Mergansers, and a few Mallards, Buffle-heads and Hooded Mergansers, as well as Loons and Horned Grebes.

Similar Songs

In addition to the birds that were seen, the day afforded some interesting comparisons of the birds that were heard. There were several opportunities to distinguish the somewhat similar yet wholly different songs of the Pine Warbler, Junco, Chipping Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow.

Speaking of songs, the group was also surprised to hear one or more Hermit Thrushes in song, down along the lake while the observers were standing in a woods where the road passed over a hill.

In all, counting both land and water birds, the day was a fairly satisfactory one -- with 44 species.


 NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

WHITE-CROWNED -- The wintering White-crowned Sparrow, referred to in previous notes, was seen only once during March. It appeared about 11 a.m. the morning of March 6, its white crown very conspicuous among the English Sparrows about the back door. Its visit was very fleeting -- how fleeting may be indicated when I say that I sighted it from an upstairs window and that the bird had vanished before I could get downstairs. I have not seen it since then. I had hoped it would stay around long enough so that I could watch the development of the white eye stripes as I had the crown patch. There was still no sign of those on March 6.

-- Mabel W. French, Loudonville

CANADA -- U. S. Massoth, who has built a leanto in the area west of the Dunneville Road, reports that a "whiskey-jack" or Canada Jay visited the leanto regularly, and was fed there, during the late fall and early winter -- up to the time of the very cold weather in January of this year. At that time Massoth stopped sleeping in the leanto, and consequently was no longer able to check on the bird's visits. He had never seen one in this area before, but has seen them in Canada and elsewhere farther north.

-- P. Schuyler Miller

\$200 MANSION -- This item is quoted from Copperweld Notes of March, 1945:

"Residents of Ocean City, N.J., who use the Roosevelt Boulevard report the Osprey family has returned to its \$200 mansion in the skies built for it by Atlantic City Electric Company.

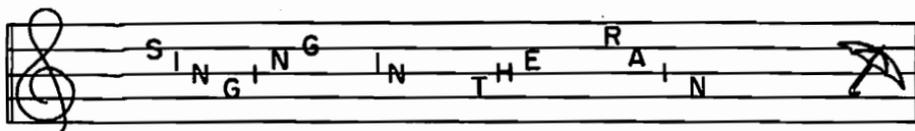
"Mr. and Mrs. Osprey got their elegant home by their nuisance value. That is to say, they built their big nest of wattled sticks in the top story of a high-tension pole.

"All went well in fair weather, but when foul befell, the nest short-circuited the wires. By some phenomenon, the Ospreys always escaped injury, but circuits burned out and linemen were more than angry.

"Time after time they evicted the Ospreys to the last twig, but they always built again. So at last the electric company put up another pole, a bit higher, with good strong cross arm, plural arms and wired heavy branches to it. The Ospreys found it made to order and live happily there every summer."

WHAT IS A MOOR? -- A "moor" is referred to as a barren hilltop in the article on page 32. Perhaps you consider a moor as swampy, boggy, or peat-covered. You are right, but it can also be a hilltop. What a moor is varies in different parts of England -- the larger dictionaries give both meanings for the word.

Published by the Schenectady Bird Club



Of course by now -- early June -- it is almost taken for granted that no longer are there the usual four seasons -- spring, summer, autumn, and winter -- but rather three seasons, including the rainy, little less rainy, and snowy; with what formerly was spring now included in the rainy season. And of course it was to be expected that mid-May snowblanket and end-of-May frost would more than compensate for March's midsummer heat. So the annual Karners trip on Sunday, May 27, was as to be expected -- not hot and dry, but cool and rainy. It was but natural that the turn-out for the trip was good. What if it was raining; that was usual this year. Fourteen SBC members were at Karners, ready for soakings they did expect and did receive.

Prairie. Of Course

The trip was scheduled for a sight of the Prairie Warbler; plenty of them were heard, and seen. It seems that it is now time to stop thinking of this bird as locally rare. The bird is well established throughout the Sand Plain area.

Each year the trip has included one or more unusual records in addition to the Prairies, and this year was no exception. It was a Brewster's Warbler that made the hikers forget it was raining, and that to climb up and down gullies through densely leaved bushes guaranteed drenchings.

Brewster's

At the far ravine, where the Chat has so often been recorded, it was apparent that warblers and other species were numerous. Of course it was raining, but the birds continued to sing and fly among the trees. Songs of several species were recognized: Crested Flycatcher, Blue Jay, Chickadee, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Wood Thrush, Veery, Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-poll Warbler, Northern Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler, Redstart, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Song Sparrow. Not all these species were concentrated in "Chat Ravine" but all could be heard in the vicinity, singing in the rain, while the hikers stood along the road skirting the top of the ravine. Most of the warblers

seemed to be down in the gully; included in the songs from below were some not quickly identified.

Down the slopes went the hikers, and one after another the singing warblers were seen. Finally there were the Golden-winged Warblers, of which there seemed to be three or four in the immediate vicinity and which had already been recognized by their song.

Not Quite Typical

One of the first seen was a very contrasty, full-plumaged male. Close to it was a duller colored individual. The two slowly and flutteringly flew each side of one of the observers, within two feet of his head, and alighted in a bush not more than six feet to the side. There was no mistaking the full-plumaged Golden-winged, with his bright yellow forehead, yellow wing bars, black cheeks, and black throat. But the other bird was different -- its cheeks were dark, but not black, its wing bars were pale, particularly the one nearer the shoulder, and its throat was white, with the breast pale yellow and the belly white. It was the Brewster's Warbler, a hybrid of the Golden-winged which breeds locally and the Blue-winged which breeds slightly to the south.

Two hybrids of the Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers occur. The other, the more rare, is the Lawrence's Warbler, which differs considerably from Brewster's. Both hybrids vary considerably in plumage, with the white throat considered the most determining characteristic of the Brewster's. Ordinarily, however, Brewster's does not have the dark cheek patch of the Karner's specimen, but rather an eye line like the Blue-winged. It's bad business to guess -- but perhaps the Karner individual was the offspring of a Golden-winged and a Brewster's.

After the Brewster's had been recognized, it was not difficult to separate it from the Golden-winged Warblers as they flew back and forth from bush to bush in the gully. The Brewster's showed up in flight as generally lighter in color. Nelle Van Vorst was able to separate the two by their songs -- to her the song of the hybrid was more like that of the Blue-winged, with which she was familiar.

Fifty-five Species

What did the rain and cool weather do to the count for the trip? It certainly didn't seem to spoil it at all; last year the count was 43 species, and this year was 55 kinds. Included were:

Marsh Hawk, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Kingbird, Crested Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Veery, Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, Red-eyed Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Brewster's Warbler, Nashville

Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-poll Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Oven-bird, Northern Water-thrush, Northern Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler, Redstart, English Sparrow, Red-wing, Baltimore Oriole, Bronzed Grackle, Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Goldfinch, Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, Junco, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB
Annual Membership: Active, \$2, Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor
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-- G.B.

STILL BEHIND SCHEDULE

Chester N. Moore

The report of the late April field trip of SBC in Central Park (page 31) indicated that the regular migration of birds which usually passed through this area during the month had been delayed because the birds didn't like this year's spring weather. The cold, rainy weather continued during the following week; and the club members who searched the park area on the morning of May 6 found the bird population still very low.

It is true that a few additional species were present, but in most cases represented by a lone individual not much interested in singing. One notable exception was a Nashville Warbler at the very top of a tall tree where he sang and displayed his blue head and yellow breast until everybody in the party was satisfied of their ability to identify that particular warbler on any future occasion. I wonder how many will be able to recognize it next year!

In addition to the Nashville, the Black and White, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Ovenbird were found, together with the Veery, Wood and Hermit Thrushes. The Brown Thrasher, as on the previous trip, furnished most of the music for the morning.

The early morning trip ended at the picnic grounds in the park where the 18 members present enjoyed the annual spring breakfast. The sun actually shone a while and the cooks were kept busy frying pancakes and bacon until nobody could be persuaded to eat "just one more."

After the breakfast two carloads of members drove to the ponds below Vischer's Ferry on the Mohawk River, where they discovered such swamp and water birds as the American and Least Bitterns, Gallinules, Black-crowned Night Herons, Pied-billed Grebes, and Ospreys.

In all, 50 species of birds were identified during the morning. They were: Pied-billed Grebe, Black-crowned Night

Heron, American and Least Bitterns, Osprey, Sparrow Hawk, Pheasant, Florida Gallinule, Killdeer, Upland Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Kingfisher, Flicker, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Phoebe, Tree and Barn Swallows, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood and Hermit Thrushes, Veery, Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Starling, Blue-headed Vireo; Black and White, Nashville, Yellow, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, and Chestnut-sided Warblers; Oven-bird, English Sparrow, Bobolink, Red-wing, Grackle, Cowbird, Goldfinch, Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, Junco, and Chipping White-throated, and Song Sparrows.

PURPLE MARTINS - DECLINING

M. B. Cater, Millboro, Virginia

A decline of Purple Martins in many sections of the South and East was indicated in an item of mine last year (FEATHERS, June, 1944, page 45). Shortly afterward I was able to personally check this, by making a trip from Arizona to Virginia, traveling by automobile through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and the southwestern portion of Virginia. My observations during this trip substantiate those reports; in fact, the Purple Martin situation is far more serious than I had realized.

The trip extended from May 12 to May 21, traveling only in the daytime. My wife and I carefully looked for martin houses, and made inquiries along the way. The following is a brief report of our observations:

ARIZONA -- Purple Martins observed nesting in the Giant Cactus (Sahuaro) areas, using abandoned woodpecker holes.

NEW MEXICO -- Southwestern portion; none observed.

TEXAS -- First colony of Martins observed approximately 200 miles west of Austin, the colonies becoming more numerous as we traveled eastward. Martins were abundant at Fredericksburg; there were many martin houses placed on the windmill towers, and consequently many colonies. As we traveled eastward from Fredericksburg the martin houses, and likewise the Martins, became less common. From Austin to Lufkin only an occasional colony was observed. Inquiries in this area revealed the Martins had once been "plentiful," but had gradually declined during the past 20 years. East of Lufkin we entered Shelby County, where during my boyhood, 25 years ago, I had maintained a large colony. At that time there were hundreds of Martins, as nearly every farm had a martin box. I spent two days in the vicinity and observed only one pair which I believe were non-nesting birds. There was a relative lack of martin houses. Upon inquiry among the old residents of this section, the answer concerning the lack of Martins was usually

the same "the martin box fell down or decayed, and no one was interested in putting up a new one, so the Martins left."

LOUISIANA -- Only a few colonies observed from Shreveport to the Mississippi River.

MISSISSIPPI -- Very few colonies observed from Vicksburg to Meridian; none seen in the remainder of the state.

ALABAMA -- Except for three non-nesting birds at York, none observed until beyond Birmingham. From Birmingham northward to Chattanooga, Tenn., Martins were abundant, as martin houses in the form of hanging gourds were used extensively.

TENNESSEE -- From Chattanooga to Bristol three colonies were observed. I am informed by my father, living at Sweetwater, Tenn., in the 1880's, that the Martins were very numerous then. Through the whole of the Sweetwater Valley, however, we did not see a single Martin.

VIRGINIA -- Very few martin houses, and only four small colonies, observed between Bristol and Roanoke. None observed between Roanoke and Lexington. We now reside at Millboro, in the western part of Virginia, and the nearest colony of Martins is at Clifton Forge, 22 miles to the west; ten pairs nested there last year. This is the only colony in this vicinity, where 25 years ago they were common. At Staunton, 38 miles to the east, seventy pairs nested in three colonies during 1944. One colony of 32 pairs in a 34-room house is the largest and most consistent I have seen east of Fredericksburg, Texas. I am informed by the older people in this section of Virginia that 25 to 40 years ago nearly every village had its Martin colonies. Today only a few colonies remain.

Houses Needed

We may never know exactly why the Martins have disappeared from so many areas, but it seems due primarily to a decline in erecting new martin houses. No nesting accommodations; no Martins.

The Starling and English Sparrow problem does not seem to be serious in the larger, well-established martin colonies -- that is, those of 12, 15 or more pairs. The policy of keeping the martin house closed or down until about the time of the spring arrival of the Martins seems quite effective in combating the Starlings and English Sparrows.

I have also learned that, when attempting to start a new colony, it is much more effective, in attracting the birds, to use an old, weathered martin house, thoroughly cleaned; an unpainted one is preferred until the colony is well started.

Increasing the size of established colonies of these fine birds will contribute more to bringing them back than will any other one thing.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

NEXT CLUB TRIP -- Highest in count among last year's trips was the mid-summer one along the river at Crescent Lake. See your program for details of this year's, on July 8.

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN -- George Bainbridge recently commented on behavior of English Sparrows, particularly with regard to tail-bracing (page 20). Thereupon Doris Huestie Spears of North Bay, Ont., supplied this quotation:

"Curious Perching Behavior of English Sparrow -- The concrete sections of the Oakland-Alameda Estuary tubes are being constructed in the dry dock at Hunter's Point in San Francisco. These are circular in cross section and are covered with a layer of waterproofing, and then sheathed with planks.

"While walking along beside one of these sections I saw a male English Sparrow alight on the side of the tube, clinging there with his claws and bracing himself with his tail in a manner very similar to a woodpecker. His tail was spread out like a fan beneath him, and he was pecking into a crack between two boards. I could not find out what he was after, though I am sure there was no food there, as the boards had only been in place a few days and were in a position on the horizontal diameter of the tube, where it would be almost impossible for food to lodge."

The quotation, by Ernest D. Clabaugh of Berkeley, Calif., appeared in *The Condor* of January, 1927.

DANCE OF THE GOLDEN-EYE -- The courtship "dance" of the American Golden-eye was referred to by Dorothy Caldwell in *FEATHERS* of May, 1942 (page 37). The dance was observed again this year by those SBC members on the annual upper Hudson River trip on March 4.

The trip had its usual high-light -- a full-plumaged Bald Eagle.

LONE GROSBEAKS -- In the winter of 1943-1944 Evening Grosbeaks were really common locally. This past winter the story was decidedly different. Roy Steele recorded a lone female in his yard November 26. There were no more records until Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Hackett, who had so many the previous winter, saw a lone male in their yard from March 4 to 7. Incidentally, records for the grosbeaks were meager throughout the northeast this past winter.

HOW MUCH? -- What is your guess concerning the weight of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird? The chances are you are guessing high. Its weight is reported as 1/7 ounce. How about the Mourning Dove? That's big enough to be a game bird in the South. Its weight is about 4-1/2 ounces. Some other average weights: English Sparrow, 1 oz.; Song Sparrow, 3/4 oz.; Black-capped Chickadee, 0.4 to 0.45 oz.; and House Wren, about 0.4 ounce.

They really don't weigh much.

RADAR -- Interesting possibilities in ornithological studies are indicated in an item by Maurice Brooks of West Virginia University, published in Science of March 30. A naval officer on Pacific duty reported that albatrosses, man-o'-war birds, and other large birds have frequently been detected by radar equipment at distances of more than three miles. When radar equipment is released for such purposes, West Virginia University intends to work from a mountain top in that state to determine the speed of flight of birds large enough to produce a signal on the equipment, and also to determine the height of flight. Also, it is hoped to detect night migrants, and similarly measure their speed and height. It is even thought that identification of some species, such as geese, may be possible at night. The mountain top in question has a good movement of migrants, particularly of hawks.

"It seems likely that electronics holds the key to much more detailed information regarding bird flight than any which we now have," Mr. Brooks concludes.

SUMMER CARDINAL? -- There have been previous instances of Cardinals summering in Schenectady; perhaps last winter's Cardinals in Scotia will likewise remain through this summer. At least one of the birds was still there on April 14, it was discovered by Nelle Van Vorst.

PARK HAWK -- The Duck Hawk is seldom recorded locally, even in the wild sections. The one seen by the group in Central Park on April 20 was, then, of particular interest.

SUMMER RESIDENTS -- The "Key to Summer Residents," page 46, needs a little explanation. First of all, the species listed as Permanent Residents do not coincide with the recent Key to Permanent Residents (April, page 30). Only those shown in Groups 1 and (1) of the earlier chart -- and not all of them -- are included as Permanent Residents on the Summer chart.

Again, it should not be expected that every species shown as summering locally is to be sought in every section. Some of the "r" group are to be looked for only in small numbers at the higher elevations, or in the broader expanses of wild territory.

Still further, you may have summer records of still other species (additional to late spring and early fall migration dates, particularly among the shore birds and such species). There are several species which have been recorded here as stragglers or accidental visitors during summer months, once or a few times. That list, for instance, includes the Common Loon, Canada Goose, Lesser Scaup Duck, American Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Tern, Black Tern, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Olive-backed Thrush, Cerulean Warbler, and Cardinal, among others. Perhaps there is a question as to whether or not to include the Olive-sided Flycatcher, Olive-backed Thrush, Cardinal, and others on the Summer chart -- a few more records would help in deciding the question.

Common Loon	Turkey Vulture
Red-throated Loon	Goshawk
Holboell's Grebe	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Horned Grebe	Cooper's Hawk
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-tailed Hawk
Double-crested Cormorant	Red-shouldered Hawk
Great Blue Heron	Bronze-winged Hawk
American Egret	Rough-legged Hawk
Little Blue Heron	Bald Eagle
Green Heron	Marsh Hawk
Black-crowned Night Heron	Osprey
American Bittern	Duck Hawk
Least Bittern	Pigeon Hawk
Whistling Swan	Sparrow Hawk
Canada Goose	Ruffed Grouse
American Drant	European Partridge
Greater Snow Goose	Bob-white
Mallard	Ring-necked Pheasant
Red-legged Black Duck	King Rail
Common Black Duck	Virginia Rail
Gadwall	Sora
Baldpate	Florida Gallinule
Pintail	Coot
Green-winged Teal	Semipalmated Plover
Blue-winged Teal	Killdeer
Shoveller	Golden Plover
Wood Duck	Black-bellied Plover
Redhead	Ruddy Turnstone
Ring-necked Duck	Woodcock
Canvas-back	Wilson's Snipe
Greater Scaup Duck	Upland Plover
Lesser Scaup Duck	Spotted Sandpiper
American Golden-eye	Solitary Sandpiper
Barrow's Golden-eye	Greater Yellow-legs
Buffle-head	Lesser Yellow-legs
Oldsquaw	Knot
King Eider	Purple Sandpiper
White-winged Scoter	Pectoral Sandpiper
Surf Scoter	White-rumped Sandpiper
American Scoter	Least Sandpiper
Ruddy Duck	Red-necked Sandpiper
Hooded Merganser	Dowitcher
American Merganser	Stilt Sandpiper
Red-breasted Merganser	Semipalmated Sandpiper

KEY TO SUMMER RESIDENTS

Western Sandpiper	Least Flycatcher	Migrant Shrike	American Redstart
Sanderling	Wood Pewee	Starling	English Sparrow
Herring Gull	Olive-sided Flycatcher	White-eyed Vireo	Bobolink
Ring-billed Gull	Northern Horned Lark	Yellow-throated Vireo	Meadowlark
Laughing Gull	Prairie Horned Lark	Blue-headed Vireo	Red-wing
Bonaparte's Gull	Tree Swallow	Red-eyed Vireo	Orchard Oriole
Common Tern	Bank Swallow	Philadelphia Vireo	Baltimore Oriole
Least Tern	Rough-winged Swallow	Warbling Vireo	Rusty Blackbird
Caspan Tern	Barn Swallow	Black and White Warbler	Bronzed Grackle
Black Tern	Cliff Swallow	Worm-eating Warbler	Cowbird
Brunniah's Murre	Purple Martin	Golden-winged Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Mourning Dove	Canada Jay	Blue-winged Warbler	Cardinal
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Blue Jay	Tennessee Warbler	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-billed Cuckoo	Eastern Crow	Orange-crowned Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Barn Owl	Fish Crow	Nashville Warbler	Eyewing Grosbeak
Screech Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Parula Warbler	Purple Finch
Great Horned Owl	Acadian Chickadee	Yellow Warbler	Pine Grosbeak
Snowy Owl	White-breasted Nuthatch	Magnolia Warbler	Redpoll
Barred Owl	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Cape May Warbler	Pine Siskin
Long-eared Owl	Brown Creeper	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Eastern Goldfinch
Short-eared Owl	House Wren	Myrtle Warbler	Red Crossbill
Saw-whet Owl	Winter Wren	Black-throated Green Warbler	White-winged Crossbill
Whip-poor-will	Long-billed Marsh Wren	Cerulean Warbler	Red-eyed Loon
Nighthawk	Short-billed Marsh Wren	Blackburnian Warbler	Savannah Sparrow
Chimney Swift	Mockingbird	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Grasshopper Sparrow
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Catbird	Bay-breasted Warbler	Henlow's Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Brown Thrasher	Black-poll Warbler	Vesper Sparrow
Flicker	Robin	Pine Warbler	Lark Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	Wood Thrush	Prairie Warbler	Slate-colored Junco
Red-headed Woodpecker	Hermit Thrush	Western Palm Warbler	Tree Sparrow
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Olive-backed Thrush	Yellow Palm Warbler	Chipping Sparrow
Hairy Woodpecker	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Oven-bird	Field Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Bicknell's Thrush	Northern Water-thrush	White-crowned Sparrow
Arctic 3-toed Woodpecker	Veery	Louisiana Water-thrush	White-throated Sparrow
American 3-toed Woodpecker	Bluebird	Connecticut Warbler	Fox Sparrow
Kingbird	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Mourning Warbler	Lincoln's Sparrow
Crested Flycatcher	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Northern Yellow-throat	Swamp Sparrow
Phoebe	American Pipit	Yellow-breasted Chat	Song Sparrow
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Bohemian Waxwing	Hooded Warbler	Lapland Longspur
Acadian Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	Wilson's Warbler	Snow Bunting
Alder Flycatcher	Northern Shrike	Canada Warbler	

NOTES:

- P - Permanent resident
- S - Summer resident
- r - Rare or very local summer resident
- v - Summer visitor, following breeding season

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NIGHT ON GREYLOCK

Dorothy Caldwell

It was a privilege to visit Mount Greylock in early June with a group of bird enthusiasts. It was fascinating to turn the page of the calendar backward as we made the ascent, leaving behind us the valley fields of daisies and clover, and the songs of the Meadowlark, of Wood Thrush and Veery, of Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrow.

As we climbed the mountain, foliage and flowers were not so far advanced as in the valley, and we heard the songs of the Hermit Thrush, of the Black-throated Green, the Black-throated Blue and the Blackburnian Warblers. Near the 3500-foot summit, crowned with its 100-foot memorial beacon tower, we found the red-berried elder and the hobble-bush still in bloom and the last of the flowers of the spring beauty and the wake-robin, and we heard the welcome songs of the White-throated Sparrow and the Blackpoll, Magnolia and Mourning Warblers. Toward dusk we enjoyed the songs of the Olive-backed and the Bicknell's Thrushes, also residents of the mountain top.

The next day we spent along the ridge at a lower level, watching hawks and once a Turkey Vulture soaring up and down the valley, with Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Winter Wrens, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Warblers galore making gay the forest-clad slopes and mingling their songs with the music of the mountain brooks.

Bell-like Saw-whet

Evening showers interrupted the thrush vespers that evening but later, when the rain seemed to be over, we all wound down the mountain road to a point about a hundred feet below the summit, to try our luck with the owls. To be sure, the weather was threatening, but we had cars in which we could find shelter if it stormed again and, this being the wet season of 1945, we were all equipped with raincoats and the like. The downpour, plus thunder and lightning, was soon upon us and we fled to the cars until the storm passed. Then out on the road again.

One of our number who is good at imitating owls began to call. At first only the dogs far below in the valley made reply. Then we heard the bell-like note of the little Saw-whet



FEATHERS

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Owl near the summit, and a bit later a Barred Owl made the night resound for us. After some moments of this we began to notice little ghostly forms, like the disembodied spirits of some of the old pictures, floating past, definitely avian but definitely not owls. Our view of the summit was completely cut off by the dense undergrowth on the slope above us, shrubs and small trees, so we were not conscious of the light from the memorial beacon pouring out far over our heads, but a belated wave of migrants, possibly held back by the storm, was streaming through its rays.

Fluffs of Radiant Light

Owls forgotten, we hastened back to the summit to study the newcomers more closely, but we had had no field experience in identifying birds that looked like fluffs of radiant light. We could see that some birds were smaller than others, but all gleamed shining white in the glow of the beacon. Some were in close little flocks, suggestive of knots of the smaller shore birds. Others we thought were small land birds, possibly vireos, warblers, or the smaller flycatchers.

Fortunately they seemed to be attracted rather than dazzled by the brightness and to be playing in the light rays as they wove back and forth through them. All the while we stood watching spellbound we saw only one bird approach the tower too closely, and early next morning a lone Red-eyed Vireo seemed to be the only victim of the exquisite spectacle we had witnessed.

SOARING EAGLE

Nelle Van Vorst

The regularly scheduled SBC trip of July along the wide waters of the Mohawk at Niskayuna always produces a surprise. On this year's trip, on July 8, it was an immature Bald Eagle that soared over the river and then disappeared among the trees near the new heronry on the Saratoga side.

Only one American Egret was seen, but it really was early to expect this bird in numbers. It was apparent that the rapid growth of the water-chestnut is spoiling many of the good areas; the duck population is certainly decreasing. A total of 53 species was listed for the trip.

Consalus Vlaie

Things change in a matter of a half dozen years. That was apparent when Consalus Vlaie was visited June 24 by a small SBC group. Since the last visit in 1939 (FEATHERS, Oc-

tober, 1939) the dense undergrowth seems to have become less jungle-like and the open swampy meadow is giving way to the small larch and spruce trees. Orchids have apparently greatly decreased.

The chorus of White-throated Sparrows and Hermit Thrushes made the swamp echo, and gave the folk a feeling of much more northern, wild territory. The nesting birds were about the same as recorded in 1939.

Shore Birds

Next in the list of regularly scheduled trips is the one of Sunday, August 26, particularly for the shore birds at Watervliet Reservoir. Further details are in the supplement accompanying this issue.

ANOTHER BREWSTER

Mabel W. French

The report of the Brewster's Warbler on the recent Karner's trip (June, page 39) was of particular interest to me because I recorded a Brewster's on May 17, 1943, by a muddy little pool in the Loudonville woods on the west side of Schuyler Road.

A comparison of the description of the Karner specimen with mine leads me to believe that mine was the more typical of the two. My notes read:

"When its head popped out of the top of a willow shrub my first thought, on sighting the black line through the eye, was that the bird was a Blue-winged. Then I noticed how clearly the yellow on top of the head stood out like a cap, after the manner of the Golden-winged, and how much grayer the back was than the Blue-winged's. Also the wings did not stand out in clear gray contrast like the Blue-winged's, but were about the shade of the back, gray with a slightly olive cast, and with wing bars which, instead of being clear white, were a creamy shade that merged more or less with the wing. The throat was white, the breast was clear yellow of a somewhat lighter shade than that of a Blue-winged, and shaded to white in the underparts."

I also saw Golden-winged Warblers that day in the same piece of woods as the Brewster's, but they were not with it at the time.

I reported this bird to the late Dr. Dayton Stoner in Albany, who wrote a very interesting reply. He stated he had never personally seen the Brewster's Warbler in life.

AT KARNERS AGAIN

Nine SEC members revisited Karners on Sunday, June 10, chiefly to learn if the Brewster's Warbler of two weeks earlier (June, page 39) was still there. Most of the time was spent in "Chat Ravine", and at first it seemed as though both the Golden-winged and Brewster's must have been transients.

Other birds were in song (in spite of the so-usual rain), but not until 10:30 a.m. EWT was a Golden-winged heard. Every few minutes he would sing once -- and it was hard to locate the singer under such circumstances. Within another half hour he was singing repeatedly, and was then seen. A female could be heard, and so could another male; but no Brewster's was seen.

Canada Warblers were among the most common pairs in the ravine section. High light of the trip were two Gray-cheeked Thrushes, along the road at the ravine.

On May 27 there were records of 55 species, including ten not seen on the second trip: Downy Woodpecker, Barn Swallow, Hermit Thrush, Brewster's Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Water-thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Slate-colored Junco.

The June 10 trip, with 51 species, in turn had a half dozen not seen on the first trip: Cuckoo, Hummingbird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Meadowlark, and Purple Finch -- not to mention one deer. -- G.B.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

MUST DISCRIMINATE -- Governor Thomas E. Dewey recently vetoed a measure that would have permitted poisoning, trapping and snaring of Starlings by unlicensed persons when the birds become a nuisance. The Conservation Department had warned that beneficial and harmless birds and animals would have suffered from any indiscriminate practices.

WORM-EATING -- The Worm-eating Warbler was found again this May in the Indian Ladder ravine. It was first recorded in that area in 1932, and has been listed there regularly each summer since then. -- N.V.V.

FOOLING WOODPECKERS -- Said Electrical World in its issue of July 7:

Woodpecker damage has been a major cause of pole replacement on the Mississippi Power & Light Co. system. At least it was until Division Superintendent V. K. Smith hit upon a

deception that has virtually stopped the troubles. Previous efforts at prevention had consisted of filling the woodpecker holes with concrete, painting white rings around the poles, nailing imitation snakes on the poles. These and sundry other efforts all proved futile.

The effective remedy is a matter of saving the holed section of the old pole and bolting it as the top of the new pole. The woodpeckers seem to confine their activities to the old, damaged timber.

GOONEY -- Along with a group of pictures showing how thick the air and ground can be with the birds, Air Force in its June issue said:

After an airfield had been carved out of Ascension Island, thousands of "Gooney birds" assembled on it and created an unusual problem. For five months each year it was extremely hazardous for planes to land or take-off after 1600 hours (4 p.m.). All attempts to shoot the birds, smoke them out, or scare them away by dynamiting the ground failed. Then Major C. S. Chiles hit on the idea of firing Very pistol flares. That proved to be the answer. Now it is SOP for two men to stand near the end of a runway and shoot the flares. The birds are chased away long enough to keep the air traffic moving.

VALE -- Many records have been made of the birds in Vale Cemetery, and now two SBC members will add this one: On a cloudy, warm May morning as they walked through to business they counted 43 species, including 11 kinds of warblers and three of thrushes. -- N.V.V.

CONCENTRATED -- Among the many interesting observations of Chester Griffith, local game protector, and speaker at a recent SBC meeting, were those relating to the Woodcock. Ordinarily hunters, and bird students, find the birds thinly spread over large areas. Mr. Griffith in the autumn about ten years ago had the experience of flushing hundreds of them at one time from swampy land bordering a local pond. On another occasion he observed some in trees. Still another time he watched Woodcock in spring migration, seeing them through binoculars as the birds at intervals flew across in front of the moon.

RADAR -- Years back there were tests to determine whether or not the homing abilities of pigeons were affected by radio waves -- waves long by today's standards. The tests did not indicate any effects. Now it seems as though the shorter waves of radar may have some effect, and it is reported that the Signal Corps is investigating. The ability of pigeons to find their way home is yet to be explained.

POISON -- Particularly if you do not recognize poison ivy and poison sumac (and both plants are encountered on SBC trips) you may want a copy of a new booklet on them. It is by Dr. William M. Harlow and titled "Poisonivy and Poisonsumac" and is supplied without charge by the New York State College of

Forestry, Syracuse University. The booklet identifies the plants, tells how to avoid infections, and how to treat them.

MARTINS -- Following publication of his interesting notes on Purple Martins in the south (June, page 42), Mr. Cater wrote that the figures for Staunton, Va., should have been 60 instead of 70 pairs.

STARTING EARLY -- It really is not a new stunt with the species, but Flickers "anting" the cracks of the concrete walks of Parkwood Boulevard last month were of interest because of the meticulous way in which they operated.

They could be seen early in the mornings, before there was any amount of traffic, working down the block methodically, going over every inch of a crack and then walking on to the next one. And they seemed to be finding plenty of food. The birds were wary, however, and flew into the trees quickly whenever a pedestrian or automobile approached.

Not so wary, however, were a couple of the birds late one afternoon. They permitted close approach and flew clumsily; they hadn't been out of the nest many days.

POSSESSIVE ROBIN -- There's a Robin that has been keeping the edge of the roof of General Electric's Building 23 as its own. Let another bird -- usually an English Sparrow -- land there and the Robin is usually after it, sometimes running along the edge and at other times flying in.

Last winter the ventilators atop that building were regular roosting places for Starlings. Frequently this summer one of them has served as a perch for a Flicker. With memories of what a Flicker can do when it finds metal (1944, page 59), this one was watched, but on none of its visits did it show any indication of knowing what a racket it could set up with a drumming on its perch.

VERY URBAN -- There aren't many breeding Duck Hawks in New York State, and Schenectadians usually think of the birds as demanding high, unreachable cliffs and ledges in wild, inaccessible locations as their nesting sites. Recently, however, the New York Herald Tribune showed a picture of a young Duck Hawk removed from its nest at West End Avenue and 72nd Street, right in the center of things urbanly. Two young were captured.

"Strewn about the nest on the roof of the 20-story vacant building were the carcasses of more than 200 pigeons which the striking parents had plucked from the air and brought back to the roost for food," said the news item.

CAMOUFLAGE -- AAF men are reported to have discovered that camouflage suits are effective not only as concerns Japs but also ducks. It is reported that, so far as hunters are concerned, such suits are as effective as blinds. Ducks are said to pay no attention to hunters sitting right on a river bank a few feet away. Ducks are not the only game deceived; animals are reported to be just as easily fooled by such clothing.

THRICE RECORDED -- Not much doubt about the presence of a Whip-poor-will in the city May 17. Among those to record the bird independently that night were Mrs. W. H. Norris, Malcolm Rix, and Frank Haughton, all in the vicinity of their Waverly Place yards.

SUPERSONIC -- A modern pied piper in reverse is Lee Klos, electronics engineer, says a recent news item. Instead of tuning to attract rats, he has invented a supersonic whistle to drive away pigeons.

The whistle, to be installed on the county courthouse at Spokane, Wash., will chase out some 1,500 pigeons, he says, but when it is turned on, the citizens of Spokane won't hear it at all.

The sound frequency is about four times too high to be detected by human ears, but is extremely irritating to the pigeons.

Maybe the same idea could be applied in the case of various obnoxious Starling roosts -- and Schenectady does have them, particularly during the winter.

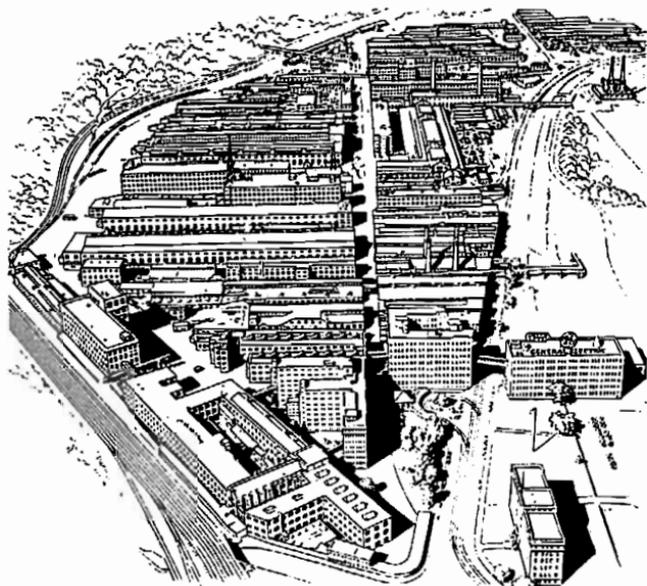
WATER-CHESTNUT -- Schenectadians have become well aware of the fact that water-chestnut is to be found in local waters. Both local newspapers in the past few weeks have been devoting considerable space to a discussion of the pest and discussions of possible ways of eliminating the weed, particularly from Collins Lake, Scotia. As we go to press, the report is that a tractor is starting work, yanking out the plants.

GENERAL ELECTRIC BIRDS

A bird's-eye view of the General Electric plant at Schenectady hardly identifies it as a place to attract birds, but still there have been records of at least 61 species within, or over, the grounds of the company. A few years ago (1940, page 57) there was presented a summary of birds which had been found there. Since then there have been many notes about additional species.

Repeatedly the question is raised about G-E records, so in the following tabulation the available listings have been summarized -- and there is no doubt about the fact the list will continue to grow.

The records have been roughly grouped in two parts, those which have been found in, on or close to the buildings, and those which have been seen only in the undeveloped areas and along the ponds and streams. Included in the latter are those which have been recorded only in flight over the plant. Some of the records in the first group are of birds captured within the buildings, including the Bittern, Screech Owl, Brown



Creepers, Nashville Warbler, Northern Yellow-throat, Starling, English Sparrow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. At least some of those shown as permanent or summer residents are known to have bred. The list includes:

Recorded in Built-up Areas (44 Species)

Permanent residents (3 species) -- Screech Owl, Starling, English Sparrow.

Summer Residents (9 species) -- Sparrow Hawk, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Flicker, House Wren, Robin, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

Transients or Stragglers (32 species) -- American Bittern, Pigeon Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Herring Gull, Snowy Owl, Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Catbird, Wood Thrush, Black and White Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Parula Warbler, Northern Yellow-throat, Meadowlark, Red-wing, Bronzed Grackle, Cowbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow.

Recorded Only in Undeveloped Areas (17 species)

Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Black Duck, American Golden-eye, American Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagle, Osorey, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Prairie Horned Lark, Vesper Sparrow.

MAYBE THAT WASN'T A BIRD YOU HEARD

Barrington S. Havens

Much has been written (and this writer has contributed his share) about the value of bird notes as a means of identification. It is not the purpose of this article to underrate the importance of this form of recognition but rather to suggest, in case you had not already thought of it, that birds don't make all the notes you hear. As a matter of fact, some birds have some rather clever imitators -- or it sounds like it sometimes.

Among those whose notes are most likely to be confused with those of birds are the amphibians. There are not, however, so many species of these that they cannot be learned with comparatively little difficulty. So, hang on your hats; here goes for a brief summary of amphibian notes, with a few signs hung out along the way at points where there might be some confusion between notes avian and amphibian.

American Toad

The American toad sounds off with a sort of medium-pitch trill, and no two individuals necessarily sing on the same pitch. When the breeding season is on, the note of the toad is a very common one. A chorus of such "songs" may be heard day or night from any given pond, with two or three toads hanging onto the notes for some time, and then suddenly all quitting except one, whose song carries on at a different pitch.

The Hylas

There are two species of hyla commonly found in this territory, of which the more common is, of course, the spring peeper. This little fellow, so tiny he can sit on the end of a lead pencil, can produce an astonishing volume of sound. His characteristic note is a "peep" or "per-leep" or else a "pr-r-r-r-eeep" somewhat like the notes of a Spotted Sandpiper. But there is little likelihood of confusion with the bird in question, because the spring peeper almost always sings in chorus with a lot of his friends. It is pretty well established that both the pitch and frequency of utterance of his notes vary with the temperature. He sings more commonly at night and in the morning and evening.

The other local hyla is the tree frog, whose note bears such a striking resemblance to that of the Red-headed Woodpecker that many bird students find it almost impossible to tell them apart. This note seems to be heard more often at dusk. It is rather difficult to locate. One evening one was heard at Jenny Lake which seemed so near that it was decided to track it down and find the singer. It seemed just a few hundred feet away, but after a chase of about a half mile the search was given up, for the song still seemed just ahead and about as far away as when the chase started. One was almost tempted to think that a series of tree frogs were working in relays to fool the hunter.

True Frogs

Five species of true frog are more or less common in this territory, as follows:

Leopard Frog: This is a medium-size species characterized by black and green markings on its back. It could easily be confused in appearance with the pickerel frog. Its note is a low-pitched, short, wooden rattle.

Pickerel Frog: Very like the leopard frog in appearance but with a different note. This is much softer in volume and lower in pitch, sounding, according to Howard Cleaves, like a lazy snore.

Wood Frog: A comparatively small species, this is the earliest frog to sound off in the spring, and it seems to vocalize only at that time. It breeds so early in the season that snow may still be on the ground and ice around the pools in which it is found at that time. The notes are uttered in chorus, usually by a large number of individuals, and are variously described as cacks, clicks, or the sound made by striking two nickels together. They can be heard from a great distance and, in the writer's opinion, they resemble the sound made by a treefull of Redwings.

Green Frog: A rather large frog, more or less dull green in color, which can be heard all summer. Its note sounds very much like that made by plucking a taut rubber band. Groups around a lake or pond seem to speak one at a time and in more or less regular sequence. As the pitches differ (perhaps with size?), the chorus has been compared by some observers with the plucking of different 'cello or bass fiddle strings.

Bullfrog: Our largest frog. Its note should be familiar to everybody, having been well described in various ways. The familiar "jug-a-rum" is probably as simple and fitting a description as any. It could be confused with the "pumping" of the American Bittern.

There are other "songs" the bird student should know -- the red squirrel, the woodchuck -- and even the notes of a kid in a flock of goats out of sight back of a knoll.

Another Mystery Solved
 Guy Bartlett, Editor
 1053 Parkwood Blvd.

Life, to some of us bird students at least, seems to be a series of mysteries cleared up, of problems solved. Certainly that has been the experience of this observer. One of the first problems, one which arose in our earliest days of bird study, was where to find a Screech Owl. This one was solved by finding a nest across the street from our home. Then there were the peculiar notes which eventually turned out to be made by the Blue Jay; the puzzling rattle which was discovered to be uttered by Crows; and the mysterious, haunting song which, after many years, was found to be that of the Carolina Wren.

The latest puzzle was a series of taps in odd rhythm, heard in the Adirondack region or that of the Adirondack foothills, too uneven and inconsequential to be those of a woodpecker, too loud to be the manifestation of an insect. This summer, at Jenny Lake, the mystery was solved; the performer was found to be the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, who chooses this method of serenading his lady love.

Evidently the Sapsucker finds himself a suitable tree or other sounding board and just taps out his feelings in short and irregular code. Once heard, this tattoo should never be forgotten, for we remember no other woodpecker taps which bear the slightest resemblance to it. A typical sequence might be as follows, rhythm being shown by the grouping and spacing of the syllables: Tat-tat tat-a-tat-tat tat-tat tat tat. Usually the sound starts out with more volume or amplitude than it has when it finishes. It is rather arresting and should attract the attention of any bird student.

We had convincing proof that the Sapsucker was responsible, for the bird in question lit on a telephone pole, went through the performance described, looked around as if to see whether he had any audience, and did it again. On a later occasion, when we saw and heard the same thing all over again, we found that the sound was transmitted -- or broadcast, rather -- in a quite metallic fashion by the telephone wires. An attempt was made to persuade the bird to respond to a series of man-made taps, but without success.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

HOW FAST? -- During recent convalescence, while seated in an easy chair and looking out on our front lawn, I have been amused at the actions of some of the birds, and particularly interested in trying to estimate the rate at which Robins hop. Perhaps some may care to do some estimating themselves, but as near as I could guess, they make about five hops a second when in no hurry, and more when in haste. --C.L.Perry

HOMES OF HERMITS -- At Jenny Lake in early July it was possible to see how well birds can conceal their nests. A Hermit Thrush, with food-laden bill, flew to a low branch, became concerned about the presence of three persons on a closeby camp porch, and flew to another tree across an opening in the woods where the ground was densely covered with tall ferns.

After several minutes, during which it hopped from one branch to another several times, occasionally sounding a low note, it dropped to the ground almost below its perch. That the nest was elsewhere was quickly apparent, however, since the movements of the bird could be followed with difficulty, sometimes by glimpses of the bird itself but usually by the motion of the ferns. The bird covered roughly a circular path about twelve feet in diameter, stopping frequently for several seconds, and then flew back to its perch from a place no more than three feet from where it had alighted. Now its bill was empty. A cursory examination of the ground failed to reveal the nest.

That was on July 4. On July 9 the bird was again watched as it arrived with food. This time it remained longer in the tree, and was joined by its mate, also carrying food. One passed its food to the other, which then almost immediately dropped to the ground. This time it landed within five feet of the nest and went almost directly to it. The bird remained a few seconds and then flew back to its perch, leaving the ground from within a foot of the nest. Now the nest was found without difficulty, in a depression right at the base of one of the large ferns. It was completely filled by the three well-feathered young. Two days later, on July 11, the nest was empty.

That all Hermits do not nest simultaneously was apparent from the fact that on July 11 another Hermit Thrush nest was observed, with three eggs under incubation. That one was just off the side of a dirt road through very light woods. It was built into a steeply sloping cut of a bank above the road.

NO MORE RED-LEGGED -- Decided revisions are being made in the official American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American birds. Publication of the new check-list has not been practicable during the war but in July of last year and again this July, The Auk has carried lists of changes. Many of these have to do with spellings and with additional subspecies.

One change of particular local interest is the dropping of the Red-legged Black Duck as a subspecies. From now on they are all Black Ducks.

JAPS -- Japanese beetles have become established locally in various areas, and have attained newspaper headlines. It will be of interest to observe what birds will feed on them here.

NEXT TRIP -- Next on the list of Scheduled SBC Trips is on August 26, to Watervliet Reservoir. Details in supplement.

MORE THAN CENTURY -- Many bird observers are in the habit of making mid-May "Century Runs" when they expect to -- and do -- find more than 100 species in one day. Working in 25 groups, members of the Buffalo Ornithological Society this year recorded 178 species and 20,181 individuals, on their annual Spring Census, on May 13. On May 21 of last year the record was 180 species and 18,760 individuals.

Through May Buffalo observers had seen 232 species so far this year, The Prothonotary reports.

LIVE DECOYS -- If our information is up-to-date, Congress is to consider again this fall a bill which would permit the use of live decoys, sponsored by Illinois Senator Lucas and Illinois Representative Simpson. Use of live decoys would further deplete duck population, which has suffered a decrease of 20,000,000, it has been pointed out by the Fish and Wildlife Service, which opposes the measure.

AIRPORT BIRDS -- Writes Whitney Eastman of Minneapolis, who landed at the Schenectady airport early this summer:

"I noticed that you had Prairie Horned Larks all over the airport. I noted also some Upland Plovers.

"I was much interested in knowing that you saw the Brewster's Warbler in Schenectady this spring. I was lucky enough to see the other hybrid, the Lawrence Warbler, here in Minneapolis, right in front of my home on West Lake of the Isles, on May 22. I saw the Brewster here on May 13, 1942. These are the only two single specimens of these two hybrids I have ever seen."

ANOTHER G-E -- Last month (page 53) there was published a summary of G-E birds, with the comment there would be additions from time to time. Right away there is another record, that of the Yellow Warbler by George Bainbridge May 12.

NESTING CHATS -- On June 9 a Yellow-breasted Chat's nest was located. The incubating bird was "seen" to leave the nest, but was not actually seen. In the nest were three eggs, one of them measured as .95 by .7 inch; the nest, in the main, low fork of a bush, had a cup 2-5/8 inches wide and 2-1/4 inches deep. On June 14 the bird was still incubating, and remained on the nest even though an observer was within four feet. By June 28 the young had left.

In the jungle-growth of bushes and small trees still another animal permitted close approach -- a doe that slowly walked away when the observer was within fifty feet of it. Incidentally, another nest of Chats was less fortunate.

That nest, discovered by another group, contained three eggs on June 4. But, whereas in the case of the nest previously mentioned, the nest remained well concealed, this particular nest had a path beaten down to it. And the nest itself suffered -- to the extent that one of the eggs fell out. Thereupon the nest was abandoned, and on June 9 contained two cold eggs. In another few days that nest was even more wrecked -- at an angle in its bush, and the eggs gone. Another few days, and even the nest was gone.

IN THE AUK -- The Auk of July, 1945, contains several items of more than passing interest locally:

"An Example of Bumblefoot in the Great Horned Owl," by Dayton Stoner and Lillian C. Stoner, reports and illustrates an owl received from a Gloversville taxidermist in March, 1944, and reported taken in Schoharie County. The emaciated bird, weighing only 2.44 pounds, had both feet enlarged.

S. Charles Kendeigh of the University of Illinois has written on "Community Selection by Birds on the Helderberg Plateau of New York." The work was centered at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve at Rensselaerville, known to most SBC members, and analyzes the restriction of breeding birds, especially warblers, to various biotic communities.

"The Food of the Red-shouldered Hawk in New York State" was written by Stanton G. Ernst, then at the State College of Forestry, Syracuse. Based on observations made at 16 nests in the vicinity of Syracuse, he reported the food to include: Mice and rats, 58%; frogs and amphibians, 19%; insects (including grasshoppers, beetles, spiders and caterpillars), 10%; reptiles (mostly garter and water snakes), 3%; small birds (often taken during spring migration; includes Song Sparrow, Horned Lark, Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker), 8%; and miscellaneous (includes crawfish, carrion, minnows, etc.), 3%.

In four years he observed only one authentic case of a hawk feeding on poultry; in June, 1940, an adult female brought a freshly killed domestic duckling to the nest. "There can be no doubt that this species is a decided asset to the farmers of this region, and should be encouraged in every woodlot where it has set up residence," he concludes.

The Red-shouldered Hawk, incidentally, is protected by law in this state.

NOT NECESSARILY NOISY

There are times, although it may seem otherwise to some, when a Jay is quiet. Ordinarily it seems as though the bird is a loudly screaming individual but, at least at certain times, it can be very noiseless.

During the past winter there were several Blue Jays at feeding stations in the Boulevard section off Union Street. And through spring they were much in evidence, mostly vocally. Then, as the songs of the Robins, Orioles, Thrushes, Wrens and other species became noticeable, the cries of the Jays became less frequent, less penetrating, and even nil. The birds, however, were still to be seen, albeit with difficulty because of the dense foliage of the trees.

A Quiet Battle

In mid-May there could be heard the beating of wings, and scratching on a tree trunk, along with a few, very quiet,

notes of a bird. Jays were after a gray squirrel, but after him quietly.

That the usual screams of the Jay in its scraps with squirrels are not necessary was readily apparent -- the squirrel was driven down the maple quietly but efficiently. The squirrel, incidentally, was a tame one that fed readily from your hand and who was at home in every dog- and cat-less yard in the neighborhood. The tree was one in which he had spent much time the previous year, unmolested. A search revealed no nest, either finished or under construction.

Twig-pluckers

A few days later -- on May 18 -- it became apparent why the Jays objected to the presence of the squirrel in that particular maple. The nest, then under construction, was discovered independently by two observers, in different ways.

The first watched with interest the way in which Jays were plucking twigs from another maple. One of the birds would look over the branches carefully, select a long twig, and jerk and twist on it. Occasionally the birds tackled twigs too large to be broken but in general they obtained the pieces they sought. At times the Jay might drop its twig, sometimes apparently intentionally and other times accidentally. If a twig dropped, there was no attempt to retrieve it from the ground. All the twigs noticed going into the construction of the nest were freshly plucked ones.

That observer located the nest by watching the Jays carry their twigs by a somewhat circuitous route from the one maple to the other. When discovered, the nest was hardly more than a platform of a couple dozen twigs, twenty feet up and far cut on a branch that reached to within ten feet of the house.

Lawn Decorations

The other observer found the nest in a different way. What, he wondered, were the neighborhood youngsters up to with this big bunch of twigs more or less piled on his lawn. He removed them.

What, he again wondered, was going on when again the next evening he found a similar pile when he went out to mow the lawn. And then came the answer, as another long twig dropped to the pile in front of him. Directly overhead he could see the Jays at work.

The nest was not molested, and it was so concealed by overhead branches that it was not possible to look into it from upper-floor windows. However, an idea of the progress of the nest could be gained by watching the birds from the ground. The long tail of the incubating bird could be seen protruding beyond the rim of the nest; and later it was easily apparent that the nest contained hungry young. Finally there was evi-

dence of protruding bob-tails or heads over the edge of the nest as the young became too big to have room to spare.

First Out

June 28 was a warm evening, and front doors were open. A somewhat different bird note could be heard nearby. Sure enough, out on the walk was a young Blue Jay, distinctly short tailed. And he was not with his parents, but was following a Flicker "anting" the cracks of a concrete walk. The Jay did not itself try to capture any of the insects, but kept calling to be fed. The Flicker seemed to pay no attention to the youngster. The parent Jays seemed more concerned with the nest than with the grounded fledgling.

Admitting that it is better to leave young birds alone, still it was toward night, cats and dogs were "on the prowl", and the young Jay, which offered no protest when picked up from the walk, refused to perch on a low branch. So indoors it was taken, photographed, and put to bed on small branches in the corner of a darkened closet.

All Out

Early the next morning the baby bird was retrieved; it had remained quietly in the dark corner all night. The parent birds at once located it when it was taken outside. On the lawn, in an ornamental spruce, and on the porch steps were three more young Jays. Two were fully as developed as the one found the previous evening, but the fourth was much smaller. Later in the morning the birds were discovered, but not molested, by children of the neighborhood.

Within a couple of hours a cat suddenly appeared and killed one of the birds that had hopped out to the lawn in the parkway. By evening the three remaining young were more or less able to care for themselves, although still demanding to be fed by their parents. They could now make short flights and climb readily along the branches of the trees.

Again Vociferous

Two weeks away for the observer, and hence the progress of the young not witnessed. But on July 14 five Jays were seen in a low, fruited plum tree in an adjoining yard. Two of the birds, screaming typically, quickly flew into a high poplar several yards away, but the other three birds remained, even when approached to within ten feet. They stayed alert, however, and soon proved they were perfectly able to fly.

After two more days, during which the five remained in the neighborhood, the group either broke up or wandered into new territory.

And again Jays became noisy in the neighborhood -- there was no longer a nest to be guarded in silence. -- G.B.

A NORTHERN CAPISTRANO

P. Schuyler Miller

The Jesuit mission of St. Regis stands on a windswept point where the quiet, bog-browned waters of the St. Regis River empty into the clear, fast-flowing St. Lawrence. Tradition has it that the St. Regis Mission was established in 1752, when a Scottish priest from Caughnawaga, near Montreal, brought a group of Catholic Mohawk families with him to found a new town seventy miles from the temptations of the big city.

These were the same "praying Mohawks" who had left the Mohawk Valley late in the 17th Century to found a new village where they could worship without the persecution of their pagan brothers, under the guidance of the Jesuit missionaries who had converted them.

Caughnawaga Mohawks led by Chief Kryn were in the French expedition which burned Schenectady in 1690, and Caughnawaga and St. Regis Indians were in many of the war parties which ravaged their old homelands during the Revolution.

Today the Mohawk tongue is generally spoken on both sides of the border on the St. Regis Reservation, and the Fathers at St. Regis have permission from Rome to carry on their services in the Indian language.

The present simple church of grey native limestone, whose silvered spire rises above one of the widest stretches of the St. Lawrence, is the fourth of a series of log and stone churches in which the Jesuits of St. Regis have ministered to their Mohawk friends during nearly two hundred years. There are many traditions connected with it, and there might well be a legend such as that of Capistrano, for the shining steeple seems to attract swallows in scores and hundreds, to wheel dizzily about it, crowd in twittering rows on the cross which rises above its top, or swing low over the deep, swift waters of the river. It might be more accurate to suggest that the spire (aluminum-painted in imitation of the sheet-tin covering of a previous steeple) attracts the insects which spawn in myriads along the banks of the great river and its tributaries, and that the swallows congregate where the food is most plentiful.

When we visited St. Regis early in August, in search of information on the Mohawks and their life since they left our

valley, the swallows were everywhere. Barn Swallows and Bank Swallows seemed, at first sight, to predominate, but there were a good many square-tailed Cliff Swallows in the crowds around the steeple, and it was often possible to identify a Rough-winged Swallow by its lack of a breast band as it swung past over the water.

Sites for Homes

The Indians at St. Regis live in tiny log cabins or frame houses only fifteen or twenty feet square, with equally small out-buildings, but the more prosperous farmers among them on both sides of the border have well-kept barns and other farm buildings, often (in good York State tradition) in better repair than their houses.

These probably provide shelter for both the Barn and Cliff Swallows. St. Regis Island, perhaps half a mile away in the St. Lawrence, shows high cut banks which would provide nesting holes for both the Bank and Rough-winged Swallows, and there are undoubtedly many such high banks along the river. Chimney Swifts popped in and out of every unused chimney, and were as common as the Barn and Bank Swallows in the wheeling, dipping, twittering throng about the steeple.

One Martin

On the evening of our arrival, just before sunset, I was watching the swallows feed over the river when a larger, dark ashy-gray bird appeared among the rest. It swung back and forth between the steeple and the river for some time before it disappeared, and as far as I can tell, it can only have been a female Purple Martin. Whether there are colonies anywhere in the vicinity, or across the river in Canada, I did not learn. If other Martins, either males or females, were in the flock I did not see them.

Sight of the Martin had thoroughly aroused my interest in the swallows of this northland Capistrano, and the following noon, while we were eating lunch on the river bank behind the parish house, I watched them more carefully. A hatch of shad-flies (or fish flies, as the Mohawks called them) was swarming around the church, and swallows and swifts were everywhere. This time, as they darted past my feet over the river, I could see that a good many of the clear-breasted birds which I had thought all Bank Swallows were actually Tree Swallows.

Without Legend

The Jesuits at St. Regis have no legend of the swallows like that of Capistrano. They are far too busy ministering to their Mohawk parishioners to have time to bother about such pretty fancies. They have noticed, however, that the swallows seem to come and go in waves or flights, although they have no

idea whether any one species predominates in these flights. None did in the crowd I saw, unless it was the Barn Swallows which lined telegraph wires all through the lowlands between the Adirondacks and the St. Lawrence during the three days we were there. It may be, too, that these flights of swallows coincide with hatches of insects, attracted to the church by its prominent location and shining steeple, as they might be drawn to a beacon-light.

Be that as it may, for the first time at St. Regis I saw at close quarters all our northeastern swallows feeding together, with the "chimney swallows" or swifts to make the roll complete.

The famous bell of St. Regis may be gone, and the relics of the saintly Indian girl, Kateri Tekakwitha, who was baptised here in our own Mohawk Valley, for fire has struck the mission again and again and the present church was raised on the burnt walls of the last one as recently as 1886, but the swallows will always come back to the Mission of St. Regis as they return to Capistrano, to wheel about its shining spire and dart under its gray walls for as many more centuries as those walls shall stand beside the broad, clear waters of the St. Lawrence.

WHAT ABOUT NATURAL DEATHS ?

B. D. Miller

What proportion of our birds die a natural death? By that I mean where death is caused by old age or one of the many diseases to which feathered animals are heir. Certainly quite a large percentage are annually killed by hawks, owls, cats, foxes, and other predatory animals; pike and pickerel are said to prey heavily on waterfowl; and during severe storms large numbers of all species perish.

Some observers argue that most of them meet a tragic death. House cats, in areas where they are allowed to roam at will, may account for a fifty per cent loss, according to my memory of Burrough's estimate.

We also see many birds killed by flying against buildings, trees, wires, etc.; the high-speed automobile takes quite a heavy toll, besides firearms and other instruments of mankind.

There was little doubt in our minds, after picking up several dead robins following the heavy snowfall last May, about it being unseasonal weather that emptied some early nests this year. Waterfowl are occasionally frozen into the ice during sudden drops in temperature, and migrating birds such as geese have been forced to land and face destruction because of ice accumulating on their feathers and weighting them down so much they could fly no farther.

I once found a dead hummingbird that apparently had become hopelessly entangled in burdock seed burs; also a screech owl that got down into our fireplace chimney and starved; and have read or been told of quite a number of similar unusual accidents among birds.

But frequently you will find a bird without any external evidence on it of violence or disease. Such cases often raise the question as to what actually caused its death. An autopsy I once helped perform with some boys showed us that a fine, healthy grouse died of an internal hemorrhage caused by one stray shot.

I was again reminded of this question during the past summer when some children told me they had found a dead crow, which turned out to be a grackle, and later a robin. Both of these birds gave no outward clue of what caused death, as they appeared in prime condition. So many of these cases have come to my attention, I wonder if something like heart failure or apoplexy might not be an occasional cause.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

RESPONSE -- Early in May I played the record of "Birds of the Northwoods" (Brand, Cornell, American Bird Songs) for my zoology class at New York State College for Teachers. While I was turning over the record we heard what sounded like a Hermit Thrush. We played the other side of the record, and the bird was still responding. -- Minnie B. Scotland

(In connection with this report it might be of interest to refer back to page 88 of Feathers, October, 1942. Similar reactions of thrushes to recorded songs were described)

PARK RED-HEADED -- Not much chance for doubt about it, so many have independently reported the presence of at least one Red-headed Woodpecker through the summer in Second Ward Park.

BIRDS OF MIDWAY -- The Atlantic Monthly of July, 1945, contains an interesting article entitled "Birds of Midway" by Captain McKean Downs. Tiny Midway Island, where one can walk scarcely a mile in any direction, is remarkable as the nesting place of incredible numbers of seabirds. There is also a small but interesting group of land birds and at certain times there are large numbers of migrants from Siberia and Alaska.

Midway has for years been maintained and guarded as a bird sanctuary, and even under the conditions of the past few years it continues to be a refuge. This permanent closed season is enforced as much by public opinion as by orders and police. All hands go out of their way to avoid doing injury to the birds.

Captain Downs describes the nesting habits of the "bosun

bird" with its two long central tail quills colored a bright vermilion; the two albatrosses called "goonies" because they are so awkward on the ground; the sooty terns which never allow their plumage to get wet, because if their feathers are saturated they cannot take off; and the fairy tern which deposits one egg on a horizontal branch one inch in diameter.

Among the land birds are the Laysan rail that looks like a rather sluggish mouse on the ground with only tiny tabs for wings, large-beaked finches, ring-necked pheasants, and the canaries. The canaries were freed on the island a number of years ago and have multiplied until there are large flocks. They form a very colorful addition to the garden and woods, and their song seems much freer and happier than the song we are accustomed to hear from caged birds.

-- Viola Mabb

G-E THRASHER -- The Brown Thrasher is a very definite addition to the recent list of birds recorded on General Electric property. On August 27 there was a dead bird on the parking field.

-- C. N. Moore

CLOUDS OF THEM -- It is almost a safe bet that at least one night close to Labor Day will have its record of hundreds of nighthawks in flight over the city. Such a night was August 28. The birds were many, quiet, and mostly low. Incidentally it was the same evening when the Gazette reported large clouds of flying ants over the city.

"LIFE IN THE BIRD BATHS" -- Quoted from "News and Views" of General Motors for July, 1945:

Somewhere around 100 different species of birds put in their appearance in Central Park, New York, an average year, although as many as 250 have been recorded. Very few of these birds are permanent residents, not over 10 or 12 species at the most. The others, the travelers, come and go by pretty definite schedules of arrival and departure. May is the month that sees the largest and gayest arrival of bird visitors to the Park.

The regular migrators travel at night, nothing apparently barring their arrival right on the dot. Although there is hardly a yard of country over which migratory birds do not fly, there are certain definite routes and flyways that are generally used for travel.

Central Park is one of the greatest stop-overs in the whole country. It is the Times Square of the bird world, and sooner or later most well-traveled feathers turn up there at the bird baths now and then. The fact that the park is an oasis of green in the midst of such an endless shambles of steel, concrete and canyon must be an important factor in its selection as a stopping point for the birds.

-- V. M.

VALE -- The above item concerning the birds in New York's Central Park is particularly of interest locally at the moment in view of the summary of the birds of Schenectady's Vale Cemetery, by Barry Havens on pages 68 and 69 of this issue, immediately following.

BIRDS OF VALE CEMETERY

Barrington S. Havens

In the August, 1942 issue of FEATHERS the writer published the results of a one-year intensive study of the Vale Cemetery and its immediate vicinity. The birds observed were listed in a table, followed by more detailed comments on certain species.

It has been suggested that the old table be brought up to date to include observations made since that time and in other years, and the accompanying data are the result. The material from which the new - and the old - table was prepared was contributed by many observers in addition to the writer, principally Nelle Van Vorst.

A few specific comments may be made about the species listed on the next page. It will be noted that, whereas the old table listed a total of 100 species, the new one includes 108. It should be explained also that the notes apply to a given species for a hypothetical "typical" year - admittedly a loose and misleading terminology, but the most appropriate one which could be applied under the circumstances. To make the table fully explicit would have involved expanding it to an extent impractical for this publication and uninteresting to its readers. In some cases this "typical" year category is an obvious misfit; e.g., the Green Heron and the Long-billed Marsh Wren, with a specific quantity of birds listed as observed. In such cases, the quantity in question was observed on a single instance or over a single short period.

Some other species will be found to be followed by a question mark. In the case of the Spotted Sandpiper, while a few species were observed as transients, there is some reason to believe at least a pair stays occasionally to breed, but there has been no direct proof. The Gray-cheeked Thrush is listed as a questionable transient; the observation was made under difficult circumstances and was not conclusive. In the case of the Purple Finch, the questionable "summer" entry is again the result of a belief that the species stays and breeds without any positive proof, however.

Of course succeeding years will bring changes in the list, particularly with regard to additional unusual species. The cemetery is, however, pretty well established as so much open land and shrubs, so much woods and stream, so it is not expected that territorial changes will play a major part.

Following is the key to the table on the next page:

R - resident	a - flew over	e - fairly common
S - summer resident	b - less than 10	f - common
W - winter visitor	c - less than 20	g - abundant
T - transient visitor	d - 20 or more	h - flock(s)

SPECIES	R	S	W	T	SPECIES	R	S	W	T
Green Heron			2		Starling	g			
Black-cr. Night Heron			b		Yellow-thr. Vireo		b		
Canada Goose			a		Blue-headed Vireo				b
Black Duck			1		Red-eyed Vireo		b		
Red-shouldered Hawk			b		Warbling Vireo		b		
Sparrow Hawk			b		Black & White Warbler		b		
Pheasant			b		Golden-winged Warbler				b
Killdeer			b		Tennessee Warbler				b
Woodcock			b		Nashville Warbler				b
Spotted Sandpiper	?		b		Parula Warbler				b
Herring Gull			b		Yellow Warbler				b
Mourning Dove			b		Magnolia Warbler				b
Black-billed Cuckoo			b		Black-thr. Blue Warbler				b
Screech Owl			b		Myrtle Warbler				b
Barred Owl			b		Blk-thr. Green Warbler				b
Nighthawk			b		Blackburnian Warbler				b
Chimney Swift			b		Chestnut-sided Warbler		b		
Hummingbird			b		Blackpoll Warbler				b
Kingfisher			b		Pine Warbler				b
Flicker			b	c	Yellow Palm Warbler				1
Red-headed Woodpkr.			b		Ovenbird				b
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker				d	Northern Waterthrush				b
Hairy Woodpecker	b				Mourning Warbler				1
Downy Woodpecker	b				Northern Yellow-throat		b		b
Kingbird			b		Wilson's Warbler				b
Crested Flycatcher			b		Canada Warbler				b
Phoebe			b		Redstart		b		b
Yellow-bel. Flycatcher			b		English Sparrow		b		
Least Flycatcher			b		Bobolink				b
Wood Pewee			b		Meadowlark				b
Horned Lark (Sp?)		b	b		Red-wing		b		g
Barn Swallow				b	Baltimore Oriole		b		b
Blue Jay			b		Rusty Blackbird				b
Crow			b	g	Bronzed Grackle		b		e
Chickadee			b		Cowbird		b		c
White-br. Nuthatch			b		Scarlet Tanager		b		
Red-breasted Nuthatch			b		Rose-br. Grosbeak		b		
Brown Creeper			b	b	Indigo Bunting				b
Carolina Wren			1		Purple Finch		?	b	b
House Wren			b		Redpoll				h
Winter Wren				b	Pine Siskin				b
Long-b. Marsh Wren			1		Goldfinch		c	e	h
Catbird			b		Red Crossbill				h
Brown Thrasher				b	Towhee				b
Robin			f		Vesper Sparrow				b
Wood Thrush			b		Junco				g
Hermit Thrush			b		Tree Sparrow				b
Olive-backed Thrush			b		Chipping Sparrow		b		e
Gray-cheeked Thrush			?		Field Sparrow				b
Veery			b		White-crowned Sparrow				b
Bluebird			b		White-throated Sparrow				g
Golden-cr. Kinglet				e	Fox Sparrow				b
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				f	Song Sparrow		b	b	
Cedar Waxwing				b	Snow Bunting				h

S B C LECTURE SERIES

The Schenectady Bird Club is sponsoring a series of five lectures in 1945-1946 by exceptionally well-known bird and nature authorities. For the Club to sponsor such talks is not novel; each year we have had one or two such programs. To have extended this phase of SBC activities so decidedly is, however, a real undertaking. There was a demand for such an extended program, however, both on the part of the Club's members and the general public which has responded so consistently in supporting previous lectures.

It is planned to hold all of the programs in the Central Park School auditorium, Elm and Becker Streets. Gasoline rationing is a thing of the past; the school is easily reached, and parking facilities are most convenient; and the more spacious auditorium means better seating arrangement for the motion pictures which feature the programs. The subjects cover a wide selection of interests, and the speakers will be recognized at once by most of our members.

Space does not permit going into detail about the different programs. Howard Cleaves will show "Midnight Movies in Animalland" October 2. "Birth of the Land" will be presented by John H. Storer November 6. Laurel Reynolds will show her new "Southern Exposures" December 3; Dr. Olin S. Pettengill will have "Bird Magic in Mexico" February 11; and Edna Maslowski "Our Heritage in the Rockies" April 3.

It is planned to sell season tickets only, and the tickets are now available from the committee. There is, of course, no "quota" for sales of tickets by Club members, but it is expected that all will assist in distributing them. Tickets will not be sold in excess of the good seats in the auditorium -- seats along the sides, where the screen can be seen only with difficulty, will not be included.

The season tickets have been priced as low as possible (and 33 cents of each ticket goes for tax). The program is not expected to yield a profit, but is expected to pay its own way. If there is a profit from the series it will be reflected in later programs -- it will be recalled that in the past there have been some outstanding programs when there were no charges for members. They were made possible by the attendance at previous meetings.

Details of the series have been published separately in a folder accompanying this issue of Feathers. More copies of that folder, for use in disposing of tickets, are available from the committee.

Let us all obtain our own tickets immediately, and also tickets for those who we feel will be interested in the series. A successful series this season will mean a continuation of this worthwhile project in future years.

SOME COMMON FORMS OF ROBIN NOTES

Barrington S. Havens

The analysis of bird notes and music leads the student through a sort of cycle of reactions. The beginner usually is bewildered by what seems to be the utter complexity and infinite variety of the bird notes and songs which he hears all about him in the field and forest. No two songs seem alike, whether coming from one or a number of species.

Gradually, as he learns to distinguish one species from another, this bewilderment subsides, giving way to a growing keenness of perception and increasing ability to differentiate one species from another, until the day when he distinguishes with ease among robins, rose-breasted grosbeaks, scarlet tanagers, and red-eyed vireos -- all species that seemed to sing the same to him at one time.

Individual Differences

There is bound to come a time when the student finds that the simple subdivisions can be continually broken down into finer and finer distinctions. What seemed to be an entirely fundamental and unchangeable meadowlark song, for example, is found to be capable of greater and greater variations. A study of the recordings of A. A. Saunders quickly demonstrates the great variety of songs uttered by different individuals of one species.

A given species also may have a considerable variety of utterance, each used to fit its own occasion. Ernest Thompson Seton has recorded in very entertaining fashion some common forms of crow notes, and doubtless much valuable work has been done with other species. The following represents the writer's attempt to set down some of the more common utterances of the robin. It is not very exactly done and it is by no means complete, but it is a start and may be found useful to those interested in further research.

1. The characteristic song of the robin is the first form to be disposed of. This is well known to everyone. The syllables "cheerily cheer up" which were given in some standard bird book would be difficult to improve on in describing the song.

2. Probably associated with the song is the utterance, frequently heard in the spring mating season, which might be

represented as follows: "sleeep...sleeep...sleeep" etc. This is a very fine, high-pitched, liquid note, given as single notes or as a chain of them, and is very pleasing to listen to. It is among the notes which may be uttered while the bird is in flight.

3. The syllables "tup-tup-tup-tup" etc. are a fundamental component of various utterances. They may be heard singly or in chains, and are often combined with other notes, as will be seen by reference to some of the following combinations.

4. "Peek!" and "peek-peek-peek-peek" etc. form another fundamental note, heard singly or in chains. It, too, like No. 3, is often found in combination with others. It is often a battle note.

Familiar Battle Cry

5. A typical combination utterance is "peek-tup-tup-tup" etc. This is the familiar battle cry and can be more or less counted on to indicate that something is annoying the robins, whether cat, owl, blue jay, or similar predator. When the robins get really frantic or the climax of trouble is reached, they often resort to No. 4, relapsing as the trouble subsides to No. 5 again, and then through No. 3 to a state of comparative calm.

6. A common warning or alarm note is "pirp...pirp...pirp...pirp" etc. This seems to be used when danger is first sighted, but the danger may not come closer and the note is thereupon dropped. If, however, it develops into definite alarm, the birds probably pass on to No. 5 and go through the sequence described under that number.

Peaceful Notes

7. One of the earliest notes to be heard in the spring, even before the first arrivals start singing, is "great-deal", in which the "deal" is uttered as a two-syllable word. It is a cheerful utterance, although that atmosphere could easily be the product of one's imagination, fostered by the general feeling of well being which the arrival of the first migrants engenders.

8. Another peaceful note is "pur-leep-tup-tup", in which the inflection rises to "leep" and drops to the "tup-tup". It may be uttered as a solitary phrase or repeated.

9. "Ta-lee-lee-lee-lee-tup" is somewhat similar in nature and also seems to be more or less peaceful. The inflection rises on the "lees", dropping with the "tup".

10. Another phrase or group more or less in the same category is "pur-pur-lee-chee-chee-chee" etc. This, too, seems to have a peaceful atmosphere. The inflection rises regularly from the beginning to the chain of "chees", where it remains steady.

11. The chain "chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee" etc. seems either to be derived from the last part of No. 10 or to be a fundamental component of it. It is uttered rapidly and is a common dusk note.

12. Somewhat similar in sound to No. 11 but rather distinct from it on careful analysis is "lee-lee-lee-lee-lee-lee" etc. This seems to be frequently heard in early spring, but may be used throughout the year.

13. "Swee-e-ek!" This note has a guttural quality. It is one of the most characteristic notes uttered by the young and immature birds, and should be immediately associated with that part of the summer when the fledglings, out of the nest, are roosted in tree branches or hidden among the garden shrubbery.

14. "Swee-e-ek t- t- tup!" or "Swee-e-ek swee-e-ek t-t-tup!" or other permutations and combinations. Possibly this is a transition utterance, used by the current year's crop of birds before they have gone south and after they have learned to fend for themselves. At any rate, it seems to be a common fall note.

SOME SPRING AND SUMMER RECORDS

Rudolph H. Stone

Among notes made locally during the past spring and summer have been the following which are of more than usual general interest:

Late Departure Dates

Common Tern, three, May 18, Niskayuna.

Olive-backed Thrush, June 6, in city.

Parula Warbler, June 6, in city.

Bay-breasted Warbler, June 4, Schermerhorn Road.

Black-poll Warbler, June 17, Schermerhorn Road.

River Records

May 18, Niskayuna -- Three Common Terns, two Black Terns and one Double-crested Cormorant.

June 30, Niskayuna -- Two Great Blue Herons and one American Egret.

August 14, Niskayuna -- Two Semipalmated Flowers and one Least Sandpiper.

August 15, River Road at General Electric -- Osprey.

Sparrows and Finches

Lincoln's Sparrow -- May 13, near Troy Road and Oregon Avenue. Chased Nashville Warbler from small bush in open. Bounded in non-tail-flirting flight into open dry thicket, where excellently observed. Short tail, less nervous and darker brown than Song Sparrow.

White-crowned Sparrow -- About eighty, strung out along Rice Road fence of General Electric and singing profusely, on May 13.

Purple Finch -- July 10, adult male feeding young bird (possibly Cowbird) outside Bedford Road window.

Warblers

May 13 -- First real wave of migrants (following heavy snowstorm of May 10 and 11).

Myrtle Warbler -- May 2, Central Park; Myrtle singing strikingly like Nashville. Quality lacked sharpness of Nashville, however, and the interval between higher first and lower second trills less than in Nashville.

Golden-winged Warbler -- May 13, at the Municipal Golf buildings, with song variation new to me:

zee z z
 zrr

May 22 -- Over a wide area of Gordon Road section.
June 15 to 30 -- Male, singing different song:

 zee a number of times, then
reverting to "typical" song. This song has gradually replaced earlier song.

June 15 -- Heard second bird sing second song few times but leave out "bees" at end. Strongly suspect this is female singing, as I am convinced of their nesting. In this event it is highly unlikely another adult male is nearby. Second bird was close to an answering first bird also singing second song.

June 28 -- Male in ecstasy song: "Si-zi-zi-zi--zip, zip--si zi zi zi -- b-e-e-e".

June 21 -- Observed male Golden-winged feeding a larger young Cowbird; proof of nesting. At end of period did not hear "typical" song at all; second song exclusively.

June 30 -- Saw and leard Lisha Kill Golden-winged use second song in ecstasy.

Mourning Warbler -- May 26, Schermerhorn Road; bird with no black spot singing; full-plumaged male not singing.

Yellow-breasted Chat -- May 22, two along Schermerhorn

Road near the pumping stations.

May 26 -- Chat, probably female, observed obviously close to nest with a whole bronzed oak leaf in its bill; observed at 10 to 12 feet. Dropped leaf with a low "chuck" of surprise when she saw me.

May 28 -- One pair of Chats definitely nesting near where observed first with oak leaf.

May 30 -- Found Chat nest previously sought, almost exactly where female was seen with oak leaf in her bill. Three feet up in red osier thicket. Had many whole bronzed oak leaves woven into outside. Two eggs, one in nest and one on ground, broken.

May 31 -- Two eggs in Chat nest.

June 1 -- Three eggs in nest; incubating.

Other Species

Yellow-billed Cuckoo -- May 22, two along Burdeck Road.

Mourning Dove -- August 11, incubating two eggs in nest used by Cedar Waxwings which reared three young from five eggs in June-early July. Nest scarcely if at all altered. August 15, two downy young with black faces and bills being brooded.

Alder Flycatcher -- May 26, several along Schermerhorn Road, uttering "way-be-o" and "fitz-bew" songs; one or the other is exclusive to the individual.

DUCKLESS RESERVOIR

Stephanie Podrazik

The SBC trip of Sunday, August 26, to Watervliet Reservoir was quite disappointing so far as the water birds were concerned. The water was too high, leaving no shore line -- presumably the all-day rain the day before could have been held accountable for that. However, we decided to go on to the surrounding woods and fields, to search for land birds.

The morning was pleasant -- a bit cool -- making walking quite comfortable. Thirty-two was the total of species we saw. A lone Spotted Sandpiper and a Great Blue Heron were found at the creek, not far from the reservoir, and a Black Duck flew over our heads at the same spot.

Very much in evidence were the Cedar Waxwings, darting about over and near the creek. The Mourning Dove was also prominent that morning.

A family of Wood Pewees fascinated and held the group's interest for a long time. The birds, not very timid, permitted us to observe them at close range. Two or three of the birds were in song. A welcome song it was, as is that of any

bird this time of the year, though not as melodious as those of the Goldfinch and the Song Sparrow. We all climbed out of our cars to hear the Goldfinch give out, atop not too tall a tree. It was particularly thrilling, hearing its song.

Our group included two young boys, pupils of Rudd Stone, who provided much spontaneous enthusiasm for everything we saw and heard. Among the things we saw were old bird nests, probably robins'. One of the boys had a keen eye for finding nests, and would come up with one frequently. Unoccupied they were, of course. But two or three were occupied, by mice -- field mice, we were told. The nests had been taken over and rebuilt after the birds were through with them. We were astonished at the ingenious way the mice had worked.

On our way home we managed to see a family of Ring-necked Pheasants. Small it was, but there they were, scurrying away as we came along. They were shortly out of our sight. That, too, provided us some thrill.

GENUS TOTANUS, DISTINGUISHABLE

Henry V. D. Allen

Two common American shore-birds belong to the genus Totanus, the Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, similar in certain respects and yet quite different when you come to study them.

Nantucket Island is off the southeastern Massachusetts coast, too far at sea for most of the fall migration. For nine summers I watched the shore-birds come in late July, August and September. There are a number of brackish pools on the south shore, and the ground is firm enough so that you can drive a car within a few feet of the water.

The birds congregate in small flocks. Nantucket does not get the large flocks that are seen on Cape Cod. Perhaps there are a dozen Lesser Yellow-legs and two or three Greater at one time. I could sit in my car at a distance of thirty to fifty feet from the birds and with twelve-power glasses bring them quite close.

Not Just Larger or Smaller

I confess it took some time to settle in my mind all the differences between these two birds, but after a while it became evident to me that the birds are not just larger and smaller varieties but that they have differences in shape, markings and habits, as different perhaps as Gulls and Terns.

First, the call as I wrote it down was something like "Peep peep peep peep peep" etc. for the Greater and "Twit a wit" for the Lesser.

The general markings on back and wings are relatively large and irregular on the Greater, giving somewhat the impression of the surface of English tweed. Not having seen the birds in spring plumage, I have sometimes wondered whether the effect was characteristic only of the fall plumage. The spots on the Lesser are very regular and much smaller, giving perhaps the impression of satin.

The bill of the Greater is approximately one and one-half times the length of the head; in the Lesser it is, say, 7/8ths. The crown of the Lesser is a smooth, even curve from the bill to the nape. In the case of the Greater there is a fairly pronounced angle at the front and at the back, and the Greater has what I have sometimes called an "Adam's apple". There is no sign of this in the Lesser.

The length of the Lesser is generally given as 10-3/4 inches, but the Greater varies considerably, say from 12 to 15 inches. The legs of the Lesser are slim and without much of a knee joint. The legs of the Greater, whether 12 or 15 inches, seem about twice the diameter, with very definite knee joints.

As to habits, the Lesser seems to feed a great part of the time. I have generally observed the birds between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The smaller bird is constantly running this way and that, picking up food from the bottom in water one to two inches deep. My observation of the Greater is that he stands still or wades sedately through the water. I have seen one of these birds stand for half an hour on a tuft of grass in the middle of one of the ponds.

The best distinguishing feature of the birds at a distance, when you cannot compare the size with any other known bird, is the rapidity of the leg movement when walking. The

	<u>GREATER YELLOW-LEGS</u>	<u>LESSER YELLOW-LEGS</u>
<u>Length</u>	12 to 15 inches	10-3/4 inches
<u>Call note</u>	Peep peep peep peep peep	Twit a wit
<u>Markings</u>	Large, irregular (tweedy)	Small, regular (satiny)
<u>Bill</u>	1-1/2 length of head	7/8 length of head
<u>Crown</u>	Pronounced angle, front and rear	Smooth, evenly curved
<u>Throat</u>	Has "Adam's apple"	Smoothly curved
<u>Legs</u>	Heavy, definite knee	Slim; not much knee
<u>Feeding</u>	Wades sedately; stands still more of time	Running much of time, in water two inches deep
<u>Walking</u>	<u>One step</u> per second	<u>2 or 3 steps</u> per second

Lesser takes perhaps two to three single steps per second, the Greater about one step per second -- and I think this applies as well to 12-inch as to 15-inch birds. In a mixed flock in flight you can of course pick out the larger birds, and the calls are different. They may be more or less so in the breeding season; I have no data on that. The point I want to make is that because a bird appears larger at a distance, when you have no comparison of size, is not conclusive of the presence of a Greater Yellow-legs. You should look for the distinguishing characteristics mentioned above, particularly the speed of the walk, which cannot be altered by distance.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

EAGLES GALORE -- The annual SBC boat trip to Kingston has already been held, and will be reported in the next issue. This item was sent to the printer in advance of that trip, however, and it will be interesting to compare mid-August and mid-September Hudson River records.

Mabel W. French, Loudonville, made the trip to Kingston Point on Monday, August 20. She reported:

Ducks -- Almost minus; apparently too early. Possibly twenty Blacks in all. One, probably female American Merganser, seen on both up and down trips about an hour from Albany, close to the eastern shore line.

Osprey -- None seen, though watched for closely.

Yellow-legs, probably Greater -- Six flying between the shore and boat.

Double-crested Cormorant -- Six in all, mainly as isolated singles on buoys.

Great Blue Heron -- Only 16 on down trip; fewer on the return trip.

American Egret -- Seen at only two points. Going down, a concentration of 40 by count, possibly more, in a few half-dead trees on wooded point very slightly south of Hudson. On the return trip, part of them were feeding in a swamp. Two others were seen on the return trip, in a swamp considerably north of Hudson.

Bald Eagle -- On down trip two, on return trip eight, but two of these on return trip may have been repeats of the two seen on down trip. They ranged from slightly south of Catskill to considerably north of Hudson. The only full-plumaged adult was the one farthest down the river. It was perched in picture-book pose on a stake in the river. The others, in varying degrees of immaturity, were flying over, perched on dead trees, or standing on the shore.

THREE MORE G-E -- That G-E list we have mentioned so many times continues to grow. Three more now, and no doubt more later. Included newly are the White-crowned Sparrow and Osprey, referred to by Rudd Stone on page 74 of this issue; and the Indigo Bunting, seen by Nelle Van Vorst near the lower parking-field gate on August 11.

EAGLES ALONG THE HUDSON

Dorothy E. Snyder, Pittsfield, Mass.

To visitors from Berkshire County the September Hudson River bird trip was a revelation for the fine studies of birds it afforded. The traditional Schenectady Bird Club good luck as to weather held on September 18, when five members of the Hoffman Bird Club of Pittsfield joined the large group of 55 from the Schenectady club for the trip.

Thirteen Eagles

In New England we would find it hard to match the excellent views of Bald Eagles; indeed, in a decade in Massachusetts I have not seen as many of these great hawks as the thirteen recorded that Sunday. A mature bird, with snowy head and tail, perched on a tree at the river's edge, or soaring in great circles is a real treat for us, as is the chance to study the pattern of the immature. The upward sweep of the primary tips, and the heavy wing beat, as seen again and again during the morning, will not be forgotten, and these birds will be more surely identified in the future.

The hawk family supplied most of the excitement of the morning trip; there was hardly a moment when one or more was not in sight. The top deck of the boat gives such a wide view, as birds follow the line of the river, that they can be studied for many minutes.

Besides the Eagles a number of Ospreys were seen, perched on trees, soaring, circling, hovering in the characteristic Osprey fashion, and even diving into the Hudson for fish. Two Red-shouldered, a Broad-winged, two Marsh, and two Sharp-shinned Hawks offered good comparisons with their larger relatives.

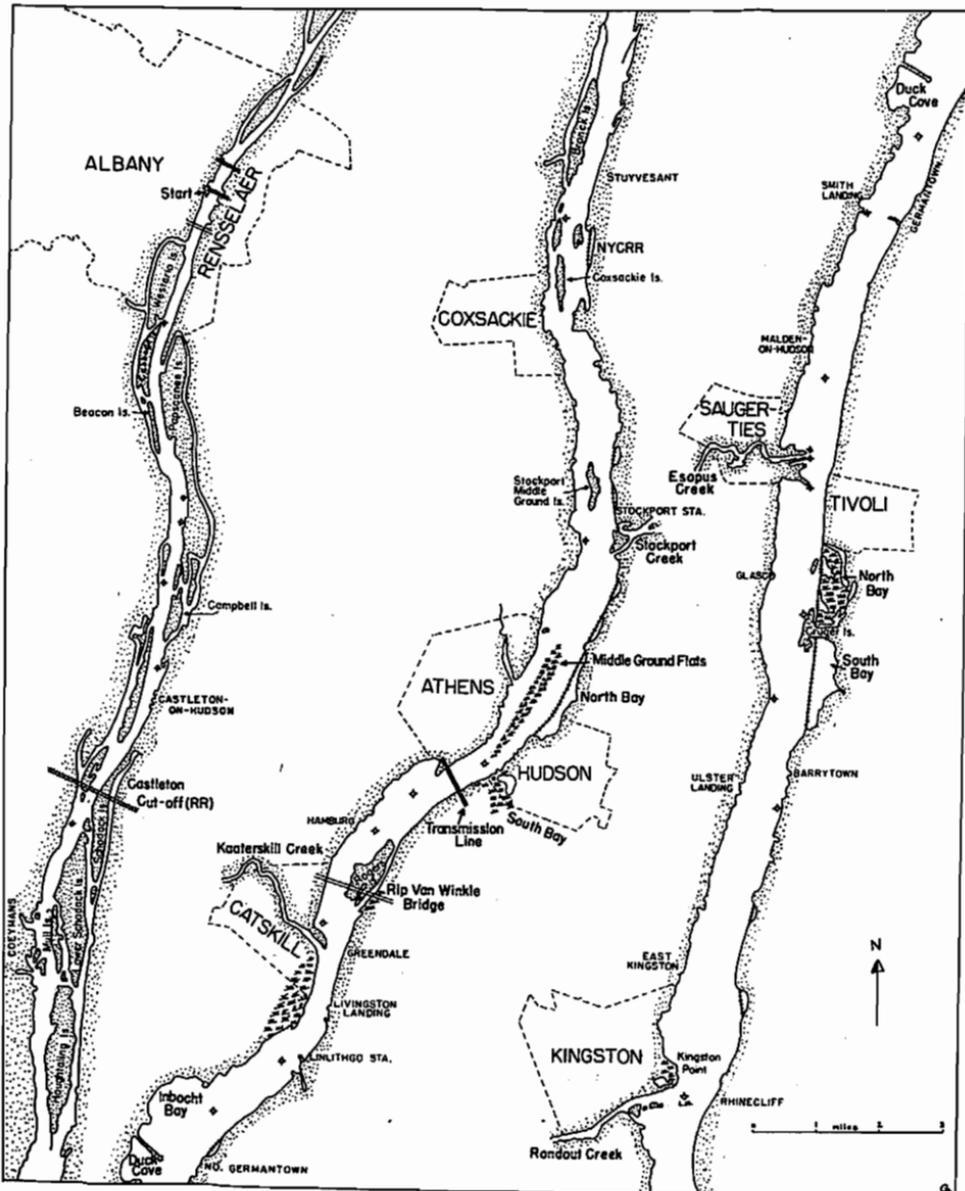
A strong northwest wind limited the number and variety of land birds at Kingston Point, but the Eagle seen here just as the boat docked, and Cormorants flying up and down the river were good substitutes, especially for those of us who live where these species are seldom seen.

Hérons Plentiful

Low tide on the return trip made conditions favorable for observing the heron family; and as hawks had been the feature of the morning, so these birds were in the afternoon. What a

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 Guy Bartlett, Editor
 1053 Parkwood Blvd.

sight it was to see 69 American Egrets, glis-
 tening white in the rays of the setting sun,
 as they fed on bars or in marsh grass, or
 flew gracefully beside the boat! We, and all
 those who enjoy this sight, should be grateful to the National
 Audubon Society for its success in saving this bird from the
 fate of the Passenger Pigeon. At favored feeding grounds the
 numbers were such that it was difficult to count the Egrets
 accurately, and we wished the boat could be stopped for a few



ALBANY - KINGSTON BOAT TRIP, September 16, 1945

In party - 60 (SBC and local guests, 55; Hoffman Bird Club, 5)
Time - 9:20 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Temperature, 48 degrees
Wind - Northwest, strong. Weather - Clear. Species seen, 47

Common Loon, 1	Chimney Swift, 1
Double-crested Cormorant, 9	Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 5
Great Blue Heron, 98	Belted Kingfisher, few
American Egret, 69	Flicker, 2
Green Heron, 7	Barn Swallow, 6
Black-crowned Night Heron, 5	Blue Jay, 1
Canada Goose, 5	Crow, abundant
Mallard, fairly common	Black-capped Chickadee, 2
Black Duck, abundant	Catbird, 1
Baldpate, 3	Brown Thrasher, 1
Pintail, 6	Robin, several
Green-winged Teal, 3	Bluebird, 1
Blue-winged Teal, fairly common	Cedar Waxwing, several
Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2	Starling, common
Red-shouldered Hawk, 2	Red-eyed Vireo, 1
Broad-winged Hawk, 1	Pine Warbler, 1
Bald Eagle, 13	English Sparrow, several
Marsh Hawk, 2	Bobolink, one flock
Osprey, 4	Red-wing, abundant
Killdeer, several	Bronzed Grackle, flock of 6
Spotted Sandpiper, 1	Cowbird, few
Herring Gull, common	Goldfinch, two flocks
Ring-billed Gull, 3	Song Sparrow, 1
Mourning Dove, few	

minutes to permit more extended study. Great Blues were hardly out of sight during the return trip; not concentrated as were their more southern relatives, but standing tall and sedate in twos and threes and half-dozens, until the count reached the impressive total of ninety-eight. Five Black-crowned Night Herons sitting solemnly on trees in one cove, and six or seven little Green Herons completed the score on this family.

Ducks in Numbers

And all day long the ducks, in flocks large and small, added to our delight; protection for these much-hunted birds has been effective in some degree at least, for the total seen must have been nearly a thousand. Besides one small flock of Canada Geese, so high that their honking could not be heard, Blacks, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal and a few Baldpate, Green-winged Teal, and Pintail made patterns against the sky which we never tired of watching. The wind was strong, and holding binoculars steady was difficult; the ducks often took off at a distance, so that identification was not easy and we may have missed other species. But the pleasure of studying their flight or of watching them peacefully feeding was not thereby

impaired; Shoveller and Gadwall could look no handsomer nor fly more gracefully than the Blacks and Mallards.

Land Birds in Contrast

Land birds along the way made for variety; two Hummingbirds flying just over the boat, a Chimney Swift hawking above us, half a dozen Barn Swallows perched on wires along the river side, were a contrast to the larger species.

And as a background for these fine bird studies, and for the unforgettable pictures of birds in flight, there was the ancient and mighty river, which has played such a part in our history. The Catskills, too, drew the eye again and again; crystal clear on such a day, their outlines gave the final touch to pictures which we hope many will enjoy -- not only this year and the next, but under enlightened wild-life conservation, for all the generations to come.

(Miss Snyder is Supervisor of Nature Education in Berkshire County for: Massachusetts Audubon Society; The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield; and the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary, Lenox.)

S B C VISITS ARCADIA

Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, Albany

Members of S B C are very fortunate in having several bird sanctuaries within driving distances of Schenectady. Among these is Arcadia, which is only three and a half miles from Northampton, Mass. It consists of 200 acres of marsh, woodland, and open country through which trails with many markers have conveniently been made. Names such as the Warbler Trail, the Killdeer Trail, the Marsh Trail and the Fern Trail, the Cedar Trail and the Big Pine Trail speak for themselves. Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary was given to the Massachusetts Audubon Society as a memorial to Robert Searle Chafee, and is operated by the Society to further conservation.

View from Mt. Tom

A bird's eye view of the preserve may be had from the tower on Goat's Peak at the top of Mount Tom. There, to the northwest of the beautiful ox-bow lake, made by the Connecticut River, one can see the white house and barn which serve as headquarters and museum. Snugly hugging these on one side are green masses of trees and on the other a more open stretch through which runs a stream. It is the latter that makes the marsh as it empties into the ox-bow lake. To this spot come the birds and also the bird-lovers.

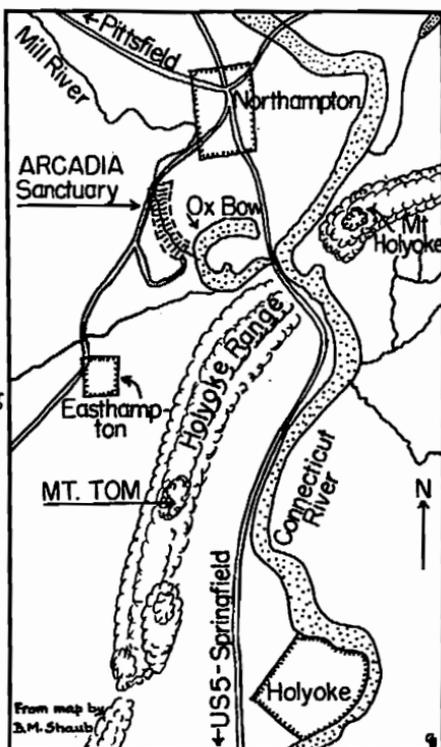
It was a genuine welcome that Edwin Mason, the superintendent of Arcadia, gave four S B C folks Sunday morning, September 23. Who were they? Well, Nelle Van Vorst was the driver of the car, and in it rode Frances Reeves, Alice Holmes, and the reporter. They had gone to Northampton the night before in order to be up and away early the next day.

One experience of the drive was seeing the cavorting of the big golden moon. Its sudden appearance was thrilling but nothing compared with its bouncing from peak to peak of the Berkshire Mountains on the right and then stopping boldly in the center of the road in front of the car. No sooner had the hypnotized ornithologists decided to run into the giddy moon than it crept slyly off behind a hill on the left side of the road. From that time on it behaved a little more sensibly, as moons should.

Late Pewee

At the Sanctuary the S B C visitors met Massachusetts Audubon Society members who had come for a scheduled fall trip. Mr. and Mrs. Russell Mason were in the group. Inasmuch as the S B C people did not have enough time to go on the entire trip, they went only a short way on the Cedar Trail with the others and then broke away, returning via Fern and Big Pine Trails. Twenty-seven species were spotted in the two hours spent in the Sanctuary. However, word has come from Mr. Mason that they "logged 61 species" on the longer trip. Outstanding on the S B C list were the many Black-poll Warblers in their autumn plumage, one of the last Wood Pewees of the season, and a Pied-billed Grebe that fixed itself on the surface of the water not far from the road.

Before leaving Arcadia a glimpse was taken of the work done in the museum. Certainly here is where education in the ways of Nature and in Conservation is being given. Living animals were well taken care of. Grasses of different kinds had been segregated carefully. The quiz-of-the-day was a challenge to grown-ups. The emphasis on neatness and order was shown, even to the row of individual caches made from egg crates. Camp lore must be a product of the training in this



museum. Conversion of tin cans into protected candle holders and stoves was new to the visitors. If only they could join the Saturday morning classes there!

After Hawks

Since the journey to Northampton was two-fold, it became necessary to hurry on to Mt. Tom, where hawks might be passing by. There had been more than a thousand observed on the Tuesday before, including eleven species. As the group of hawk-seekers neared the tower, a voice from the top said "My, how you S B C people do get around". It was none other's than Dorothy Snyder's; she who had been on the Kingston Point trip with S B C the previous Sunday. From the tower platform could be viewed the Connecticut River, with the Green Mountains in the distance. There was little wind and few, very few hawks. In fact, only two hawks -- Cooper's -- flew by during the hour and a half given to this part of the program. The scarcity of hawks was disappointing but, on the other hand, S B C can send another scouting party next year.

Thar's hawks in them thar hills in late September, so they say.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

NIGHTHAWKS -- Reference was made (page 67) to many night-hawks over the city just before Labor Day. On succeeding evenings at least through September 8 they continued to be seen in numbers, in silent flight.

HUNTING -- Hunting season is open, so it is appropriate to quote the following from the 1945 state syllabus:

"Unprotected birds include the English sparrow, starling, crow, purple grackle, kingfisher, cormorant, great horned owl, snow owl, great gray owl and any of the hawks EXCEPT the following: bald eagle, golden eagle, osprey, red-shouldered hawk, redtailed hawk, broad-winged hawk, rough-legged hawk, duck hawk and sparrow hawk. NOTE: Taking or possessing protected wild birds, dead or alive, prohibited."

Of particular interest is the fact that the Red-tailed Hawk is now given protection. That should mean a lot, because it should mean that a soaring hawk is safe from marksmen. The Marsh Hawk, Goshawk, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned and Pigeon Hawks remain unprotected.

Three owls are listed as unprotected. That means protection for our Barn, Barred, Screech, Long-eared, Short-eared and Saw-whet Owls.

In fact, most hunters will really have a job in deciding if the bird they are about to shoot is legal prey. As time progresses, more and more species are deservedly on the protected list. Herons and jays, for instance, not long ago were legal prey.

NOT A SWIMMER -- Supplementing my recent notes about the two species of Yellow-legs (page 76) is an unusual experience I had once when I saw a Lesser land in water where it could not touch bottom. Evidently Yellow-legs cannot swim; at least there was a tremendous splashing before he got his feet on the bottom. -- H. V. D. Allen

AT THE G-E -- Frank Freese retired from the General Electric Company on September 29. His last day there was marked with a record of a Meadowlark in Building 49 that morning.

GEESE -- A story of "Honker, Leader of the Flock" is told in the October issue of Nature Magazine by Walter J. Schoonmaker of the State Museum at Albany, S B C speaker some few months back. Drawings by the author accompany the article.

FERNS IN PRINT -- At the S B C meeting of September 25, 1944, Member J. M. Hollister spoke on ferns, and illustrated his talk with a quantity of colored slides showing how he was identifying the species according to the types of vascular bundles, seen in cross sections of the stems.

The Chicago Naturalist of August, 1945, contains an article by Mr. Hollister on this subject, with a diagram showing the arrangements as dots, curves, and loops, and with photographs of the three patterns.

FEEDERS -- Are you going to operate a feeding station this winter? If so, it is time to start putting food out regularly and sufficiently.

DDT -- There are two sides to the question when it comes to the new insecticide DDT. There is no doubt about its ability to kill insects, but there is serious doubt about the advisability of general, widespread use. Nature Magazine of March, 1945, had a notable article by Edwin Way Teale on the subject. We now quote a brief editorial from the October issue of the same magazine:

"Recently a young Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, chemist made some of the insecticide, DDT, bottled it, and it was offered for sale by a local druggist. The WPB stepped in and confiscated what was left because DDT was still restricted for war purposes. In the newspapers and over the air there was some indignation about this on the part of thoughtless editors and radio commentators. They failed to realize that exhaustive experiments are being conducted to discover how lethal DDT is to beneficial insects, birds, mammals, fishes, amphibians and other forms of life important to human existence. The insecticide is known to kill fishes and amphibians; it also kills bees and other insects essential in the fertilization of various food plants and flowers. Much more needs to be known as to strength, dosages and methods of application before Swarthmore housewives -- or any other housewives -- can safely use this killer indiscriminately, yet some has now been released for public use. DDT packs such a punch that its gloves should be properly padded before it is allowed in the ring."

EARLY EVENING GROSBEAKS

Evening Grosbeaks made an early visit in Scotia, on September 10. Six immature or female birds spent the afternoon in yards along Saunders Avenue, John Mislin reported. Later in the week two were seen, and several times during the rest of the month one or two at a time were seen occasionally by various observers.

During the winter of 1943-1944, when the Schenectady region had so many Evening Grosbeaks, the earliest arrival date locally was the end of October -- and that was much earlier than usual.

The SBC Bulletin No. 4, on the Evening Grosbeak, includes a reference to three -- male, female, and probable juvenile -- at Elk Lake and nearby Clear Pond, in the Adirondacks, from July 5 to 18, 1942.

A Schenectady Gazette clipping of February 6, 1940, now reveals Evening Grosbeaks recorded in Saratoga County by S. R. Ingersoll of Ballston Spa once in September during the period of 1916 to 1920.

Many birds are known to spread out their breeding or summering range, just as other species are receding. Perhaps the Evening Grosbeak, once rare or unknown in the east and now not uncommon some years, is extending its range in this direction. Maybe this winter it will again be common locally.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS
PRESENTED BY THE SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB
AND THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Central Park Junior High School
8:15 P. M.

NOV. 6—JOHN H. STORER

"BIRTH OF THE LAND"

Mr. Storer's dramatic color film shows the death and rebirth of the American soil. Erosion and devastation by forest fires are balanced by scenes of the building of new land deep in the great Okefenokee Swamp of Georgia, home of a host of strange animals and birds.

FEATHERS

Published by the Schenectady Bird Club

READY FOR CHRISTMAS COUNT

Schenectady Bird Club's seventh annual Christmas Count of local birds is to be made on Sunday, December 23, under the leadership of Mrs. Laura Beck. If the weather is such that the 23rd is simply out of question (but do you remember that Count in 1942 when the thermometer read 20 below?), then the census will be made on the following day.

Plans for the day's activities will be arranged at the SBC meeting of Friday, December 14, at the G-E Women's Club, Washington Avenue. That meeting, incidentally, will also feature the annual Christmas Party of the Club.

As in the case of all preceding counts, the area to be covered will be included in the "Fifteen-mile Circle" that has been described in detail with each annual report. Within that circle there will be many groups at work, independently but co-operatively. Some will be out from before sunrise until after sunset. Others will be out for much shorter times. There will be those who will hike for miles; those who will climb up the Indian Ladder escarpment, or the Rotterdam hills; or up and down the gullies of the Lisha Kill and other streams; or maybe breaking through the ice unintentionally as they investigate the islands in the river. And there will be others

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS PRESENTED BY THE SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB AND THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Central Park Junior High School
8:15 P. M.

DEC. 3—LAUREL REYNOLDS, "SOUTHERN EXPOSURES"

Mrs. Reynolds, the California housewife who adopted the hobby of bird photography in self defense, is a favorite in Schenectady. Her new pictures were taken as she followed her surgeon husband from California to Virginia, with side glances at the Grand Canyon and the Gulf Coast of Texas.



who will cover more urban territories -- Central Park, Vale Cemetery, Collins Lake, various feeding-station areas. In fact, there is plenty of chance for all to participate. Incidentally, 32 participated last Christmas, and they found 40 species. The trip is second only to the annual Kingston Point late summer boat trip in popularity, according to attendance records.

Special check-lists will be distributed at the meeting of the 14th. Those planning to participate but who will not be able to attend the meeting are asked to communicate with Mrs. Beck, 19 Miles Standish Road (telephone 6-7568) so they can be supplied with the check-lists and the schedules.

And don't forget to keep watching for those Robins, Bluebirds, Evening Grosbeaks, and other winter rarities in advance so that their whereabouts on the 23rd may be more easily discovered.

MARSH MUSIC

Dorothy Caldwell

Some twenty miles or more from Boston there lies a beautiful tract of marshland many acres in extent and across which a generation or so ago the owners built two broad dikes. The dikes are traversible, though heavily overgrown, and provide a sort of footpath into a haven of special charm. From early Spring when the water is high and ducks and geese tarry there, and the places ring with the delightfully wild calls of the Pied-billed Grebe; through the Summer with its sheets of blue blossoms of pickerel-weed and its masses of American lotus, with its unique beauty of bud, blossom and seed capsule; into the Fall when the ducks begin to gather again there; each month has its own measure of interest and appeal. And while it is not easy to walk across the dike, it is good to have a path across the marsh at all, and especially a footpath so concealing that one may mingle delightfully with the wild life of the marshland.

A Day in May

One day this past May, the usual serenity of the marsh was broken by hundreds, possibly thousands, of Swallows, predominantly Cliff, with many Barn and Tree, a thin sprinkling of Bank Swallows and now and then a Rough-winged -- the air tumultuous with them as far as the eye could see. The water was still so high that the shy, elusive rails had been forced out of their usual retreats and were encountered in the dike again and again -- including both Sora and Virginia Rails, scurrying up and down and hunting busily along the edges. Blue-winged Teal in nuptial plumage at one end of the dike and Wood Duck at the other, three beautiful drakes perched on one log. The cackle of the Gallinule and the resounding notes of the Pied-billed Grebe. Swamp Sparrows chattering, and now and

then the calls of the Rails, especially the fairy chimes of descending notes of the Sora. Occasionally the leisurely flight of the Great Blue Heron across the reedy expanse. On a grassy island, a Bittern displayed his creamy epaulets as he "pumped" in full view.

Mid-summer Visitors

Once in August when the lotus was at its loveliest and the Least Bitterns had been especially obliging about letting themselves be seen, and the many Marsh Wrens were singing happily, a crowning touch of joy and beauty was given when several Little Blue Herons in their gleaming white plumage came up out of the marsh and flew across to another chosen spot. And again and again that afternoon that exquisite spectacle was repeated.

Autumn Days

By mid-September the glory of pickerel-weed and lotus and most of the other flowering things was gone; the throngs of Red-wings and Bobolinks had long been drained out and the marsh was almost devoid of bird song, the goldenrod and asters still bloomed on the dike and there were still other compensations. In addition to the usual Marsh Hawks leisurely quartering their territory, occasional Red-shouldered, Red-tailed or Broad-winged Hawks, and sometimes several at once, were almost constantly wheeling high overhead. Black Duck, Mallard and Wood Duck flew across, and once a Pintail; and now and then a Great Blue Heron or a Bittern. Swamp Sparrows were underfoot, and once a Sora scurried across an open place.

Then in a little lagoon a gray bird flashed across the water with wings edged with white. In response to human "squeaking", presently a Coot swam across the little bay in full view this time. Later in another lagoon, a flash of wings and a splashing of water as a bird spattered along the surface; more "squeaking" and soon an inquisitive little Pied-billed Grebe came up, periscope first, to see what it was all about.

Even that day had to come to an end, but it still had joys to offer after the marsh had been reluctantly left behind. A flock of Blackpolls in the woodland nearby, Mourning Doves along the wood road, a belated Hummingbird at the honey cups in a friend's garden, and finally in a little wayside pool now drained nearly dry, a lone Solitary Sandpiper; and on the mud behind him a dark brown, curiously mottled bird with a long bill -- could it be? -- yes, it most certainly was a Woodcock, not only in broad daylight, but with full sunlight enhancing all the richness of his beautiful plumage, unconcernedly probing the mud for his dinner and apparently completely oblivious of a spectator.

THREE DATES TO REMEMBER -- December 3, SBC lecture, Mrs. Reynolds; December 14, SBC Christmas Party and meeting, GE Women's Club; December 23 - Annual Christmas Census.

**NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF**

FEWER LEMMINGS -- In a later item (page 92) Chester Griffith reports the first Snowy Owl of this season; probably there will be more. At least we have a report indicating that in northern Quebec the lemming-mouse population "crashed" last spring, and it is usually when there is a drastic reduction in numbers of lemming that a flight of Snowy Owls into the northeastern states may be expected.

YOUR RECORDS ARE IMPORTANT -- Over the years local bird lists become increasingly important -- not so much because of the occasional unusual or accidental records and the exceptionally early or late transient dates, but because of the information they supply on normal arrival and departure dates from one year to another, notes on summer residents, relative numbers of any species from one year to another, and such data.

The Schenectady Bird Club, like all local clubs, is endeavoring to build up the information in its own file. And it needs the records from all its members. In too many instances real local information is missing because not enough of our members are turning in their own observations.

Jack Voght, 104 Vley Road, Scotia, is chairman of the SBC Records Committee. In another few weeks he will be summarizing all the information he has received on 1945 observations. Does, or will, he have yours?

UNRECOGNIZED FOOD -- Hummingbirds seem to recognize flowers as a source of food only after they have become good fliers, it is reported. Young hummers seem to peck at leaves and twigs, and make no attempt to visit flowers even though adult birds do so only a few feet away from them.

FIVE-HUNDREDTH -- If your life-list of birds had reached the imposing total of 499 -- and the chances are yours is not that high -- what would you expect as the 500th? Dorothy Caldwell, SBC member of Brookline, Mass., had reached such a figure, including, of course, not only local but also Florida, West Coast and other records. And then she obtained her 500th -- right here. It was the Worm-eating Warbler, out in the Indian Ladder ravine, where so many SBC members have been introduced to the species.

AGAIN, FEEDERS -- The story has been told before, but it will bear repeating: Feeding stations are fine things, if they are maintained. Once started, they should be kept up, particularly during the worst weather.

Feeders can be as simple as merely a shoveled-out space in the yard where crumbs and table scraps are left; or simply a chunk of suet nailed against a tree trunk. Or they can be as pretentious as the glass-enclosed, weather-vaned, pole-mounted structure containing automatic feed hoppers.

But, once started, it should be kept supplied with food, and plenty of it.

IN THE AUK -- The Western Meadowlark, Lark Bunting, and the Tufted Titmouse have been recorded in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Dorothy E. Snyder of Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, reports in the October issue of The Auk.

The Western Meadowlark was seen, in song, from July 8 to 19, 1944; the Lark Bunting on October 24, 1944; and the Tufted Titmouse most of January, 1945, at a Pittsfield feeding station.

A White Pelican was seen in Monroe County near Lake Ontario on April 21, 1945, and found shot the following day, Dr. Gordon M. Meade and Clayton B. Seagears of Rochester reported. The bird was turned over to the New York State Museum collection.

The issue contains two notes of the late Dr. Dayton Stoner of the State Museum at Albany. One reports on "Additional Unrecorded Passenger Pigeons from New York State" and the other on "Further New York State Records for the Great Gray and Richardson Owls".

Also of particular interest locally is a note from A. C. Bent concerning future Bulletins on the Life Histories of North American Birds. The material for four volumes, including all birds on the A.O.U. Check-list from the Jays to the Vireos, is awaiting publication, he reports. Two volumes on the Wood Warblers are nearly completed, and work is in progress on the volume to include the birds from the Weaver Finches to the Tanagers.

A feature article by Allan Brooks on "The Under-water Actions of Diving Ducks" was also of local interest in view of the motion pictures of ducks under water that were shown by Howard Cleaves at the S B C meeting in October.

BY EAR ALONE -- Some people have the idea that the use of bird notes is limited in value, that such a method is valuable only in the springtime when the birds are in full song. At other seasons, say these Doubting Thomases, the birds are quiet and we have to fall back upon our good old, tried-and-true, visual method.

This is all very well. It may even be true in the case of many species. But just to show that the "ear" method of identification has its points, no matter what the season, the writer kept a record of the species he was able to identify during the month of September when the birds are on their way south or settling down for the winter. Two dozen species were thus recorded -- and recorded without going out of one's way to find them. The birds were heard while walking to work mornings through Vale Cemetery, with the exception of a few heard while at work around camp at Jenny Lake. Here is the list:

Broad-winged Hawk, Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Wood Pewee, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-poll Warbler, Oven-bird, Canada Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Bronzed Grackle, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and White-throated Sparrow.

-- Barrington S. Havens

NOT THE FIRST, BUT -- Of interest is the bird referred to in the attached item from the General Electric General Office News of October 19:

"Proving that General Electric is not so far from the birds 'n the bees, a pheasant made a three-point landing on the roof of Building 4 last week. He didn't seem to feel at all out of place so near all the big machines, radar, and electrical civilization of General Electric, but he did prove camera-shy because the minute the cameraman sneaked to take a picture of him, he made a fast getaway, and such was the abrupt end of his stay at General Electric."

Back in 1940 a cock pheasant was seen on one of the flat factory roofs -- just after hunting season opened.

BRUHN TO KENTUCKY -- Mathias M. Bruhn, S B C charter member, now lives at Louisville, Ky. After 22 years with the General Electric Company, he retired recently from the industrial control engineering division and started for the South to enjoy some hiking, gardening, and other outdoor activities.

LATE THRUSH -- A late departure date for the Wood Thrush was that of October 25, when one was seen along with Hermit Thrushes in Scotia by Mrs. Kent C. Reynolds.

FIRST SNOWY -- First of the season was the Snowy Owl reported by Game Protector Chester Griffith, shot October 29 near West Albany.

During late October Chet also reported sighting occasional Evening Grosbeaks in this area.

GUILDERLAND GROSBEEKS -- A full-plumaged male Evening Grosbeak was in our yard at Guilderland Center Sunday morning, October 28. -- Nelle Van Vorst

GROSBEEKS GALORE -- It was only a matter of a few days after the reports of Chester Griffith and Nelle Van Vorst when records of Evening Grosbeaks began to be common.

A flock of eight appeared at the feeder of Misses Mabel Magee and Agnes Eddy in Scotia November 5. About 25 showed up the same day to visit Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Hackett at Ballston Lake, where they were so common in a recent winter. And on November 8 Stephanie Podrazik found a flock of 15 in the same box elders along Eastern Parkway where she has seen them in previous years. And then, in succeeding days, there were added reports of the birds in still other parts of the city and vicinity. It looks like another Grosbeak Winter.

AND IN CONCLUSION -- Is there a wintering Robin in your vicinity? Or Bluebird, or Flicker, or Cardinal? Or do you know where a Screech Owl is poking his head out from a tree-hole at sunset? When it comes to the annual SBC Christmas Count on December 23, it is going to help a lot if those possibilities are known about in advance. Let Mrs. Beck (telephone 6-7568) know about them, so that the plans for the Census can include these unusuals. And don't forget to sign up to participate in the Count.

- JANUARY** Christmas Census Largest Ever, Frances Reeves, 1; Willard R. Steele (Obituary) 5; Quick Identification, 6; Nesting and Food Habits of the Evening Grosbeak, Doris Speirs, 7.
- FEBRUARY** In Defense of English Sparrows, B.D. Miller, 9; Bull's Island, Rudolph H. Stone, 10; Water Chestnut -- Doomed? 14.
- MARCH** Window Birding Can Be Good, Mabel W. French, 17; Avian I. Q.?, George H. Bainbridge, 20.
- APRIL** Scotia's Half Mile, P. Schuyler Miller, 23; What about Field Trips? (1944 Summary) Alice Holmes, 25; Key to Permanent Residents (Chart), 30.
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- JUNE** Singing in the Rain (Brewster's Warbler) 39; Still Behind Schedule, C.N. Moore, 41; Purple Martins, Declining, M.B. Gater, 42; Key to Summer Residents (Chart) 46.
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