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NESTING SITE OF GRINNELL'S WATERTHRUSH

PHOTO BY CARL RICHTER



The PASSENGER PIGEON

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1954 In Review . . .

By C. DENNIS BESADNY

When the end of the 1954 ornithological year rolled around, ornithologists throughout Wisconsin knew it had been a banner year. However, it was not until the last field report was carefully checked that we knew this was a record-breaking year. The final tally showed that a total of 292 different birds had been observed in Wisconsin during the year. Out of this magnificent total came 288 species, two subspecies (prairie horned lark and Gambel's sparrow), and two hybrids (Lawrence's and Brewster's warblers). It took the combined efforts of more than 300 observers to achieve this outstanding list.

The State Picture

Wisconsin wildlife experienced another mild winter. The ground was free of snow except for the extreme northern part of the state where a good snow cover prevailed. Temperatures were somewhat above normal. More than the usual number of birds wintered in the state. Open water areas harbored many ducks and geese and when February rolled around it was difficult distinguishing the migrants from wintering birds. Canada geese arrived at the Necedah Refuge on February 19—this was the earliest arrival on record for this area. Bluebirds were reported as far north as Madison by February 22. It turned out to be the warmest February in climatological history.

March was one of the few months of 1954 which was colder than normal. A few snow and sleet storms covered most of Wisconsin during the middle of the month, much to the disappointment of the "early birders" who had ventured out in February. Nevertheless, a few shorebirds began drifting into the state where many lush mudflats were waiting for their probing beaks. Whistling swans were reported as being quite numerous in several of our northwestern counties where previous spring records have been scarce.

April was wet and windy with several severe storms being recorded during the month. Heavy rains and hail in northwestern Wisconsin on April 14-15 caused large losses to the migrating water birds. Interesting migrants arriving during the month included the American egret, white-fronted goose, and the European widgeon. Shorebird rarities such as the willet, dowitcher, and stilt sandpiper appeared on the spring list bringing with them some of the earliest arrival dates on record. Snowy owl reports continued to come in, the latest being April 16.

The first two weeks in May were quite cold, delaying the migration of passerines, and only a few species appeared locally. Many of the smaller mudflats were completely flooded as a result of the heavy rains in late April and early May, but the larger marshes had good concentrations of shorebirds. New arrivals included the knot, purple, Baird's, and Western sandpipers, dowitcher, marbled and Hudsonian godwits. May 16 marked the beginning of warmer weather and the first of our passerine flights of any significance. It also marked the date of the annual May-



THE BALD EAGLE NESTED NEAR PETENWELL DAM IN 1954, AND BY YEAR'S END 20 EAGLES WERE CONCENTRATED BELOW THE DAM.

PHOTO BY CARL RICHTER

Day count when a record-breaking total of 231 species of birds was observed in the state. Good flights were noted on May 21, 22, 23, 28, 30, and 31. These later flights produced some of the season's best rarities: the brant at Sheboygan, Western kingbird at Cedar Grove, Lawrence's warbler in Waukesha County, and the prairie warbler near Adams.

The majority of migrants had left the state as rapidly as they had come and only a handful of stragglers remained after June 4. Uncommon summer residents included the Canada goose, green-winged teal, redhead, lesser scaup, Bell's vireo, and yellow-headed blackbird.

Fall was ushered in with the return of several pectoral sandpipers in the Milwaukee area July 19. The Horicon Marsh turned out to be a haven for returning shorebirds. Spectacular numbers of dowitchers and stilt sandpipers were observed during August and early September as were several other shorebird rarities. The first fall

warblers were noted in late August, but only in small numbers.

Land bird migration was rather skimpy during the first two weeks in September, but began to pick up considerably after the 13th. Large waves of birds were observed passing through the southeastern part of the state and along the Lake Michigan shoreline September 26-30.

High water in October kept the waterfowl population scattered throughout the marshy areas. A good warbler flight was noted on October 2-3 in southeastern Wisconsin. Rarities reported included Holboell's and Western grebes, yellow-crowned night heron, surf scoter, Northern phalarope, and Carolina wren.

The warm weather during late October delayed the departure of many land birds. Some of the departures were the latest on record.

The months of November and December were extremely fruitful. Temperatures were above normal and many migrants took advantage of the mild weather by spending their winter vacation in Wisconsin. Larger than normal concentrations of ducks were found in the Milwaukee area and such species as kingfishers, Wilson's snipe, great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, and a Virginia rail were observed in open water areas in other parts of the state.

To top off the winter period ornithologists came up with several outstanding contributions to the state list. Included was Wisconsin's first sight record of the mountain bluebird, and the state's second sight record of the European little gull. Huge flocks of finches at Cedar Grove,

widespread influx of white-winged crossbills, two Richardson's owls and a Hudsonian chickadee in southern Wisconsin helped round out the winter picture. The climax to the winter period came when 112 species of birds were recorded on the annual Christmas bird count putting on the final touches to a very successful year.

The Unusual Records

The size of the year's list for the state is largely dependent upon the number of rarities recorded by alert observers. It is indeed a challenge to each and every observer to find one or more of these rarities during the course of a year. Approximately 245 species of birds can be observed regularly in a normal year in Wisconsin and when the state list exceeds this number it means that many of the more unusual visitors have been recorded. 1954 was no exception, for in the record-breaking total we find a large number of new and unusual birds. Only the more outstanding records are included here.

WESTERN GREBE: First observed near Virmond Park, Ozaukee County, Oct. 17 (M. Davidson—Mrs. F. L. Larkin—F. Riegel); two seen from Loon Bluff, Oct. 27 (N. O'Hearn—M. Decker); at Cedar Grove, Nov. 27 (Tom Soulen).

WHITE PELICAN: Three of these unusual migrants were carefully observed in early November at Superior (P. B. Hofslund).

LITTLE BLUE HERON: These rare visitors are usually observed in Wisconsin during August and September. Our first report for 1954 came from Horicon Marsh on Aug. 1 (Mrs. R. A. Walker); it was observed again on Sept. 2 (Donald—O'Hearn—Porter—Priebe—Wilde), and was last reported for Horicon on Sept. 19 (Mrs. R. A. Walker). One was spotted in Brown County, Aug. 30 (Ed Paulson).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: Wisconsin has no specimens of this bird, but several good sight records have placed it on the state list. This year two were carefully observed at Horicon Marsh on July 13, with one still present on July 20 (C. A. Hughlett—R. Labisky). One was seen on the Wolf River in Waupaca County on Aug. 28 and 31 (Mrs. W. E. Rogers et al); seen again at Horicon, Sept. 2 (Donald—O'Hearn—Porter—Priebe—Wilde); one was observed at Horicon on Oct. 2 and four were carefully studied on Oct. 22 (the Glen Fishers).

AMERICAN BRANT: No unquestioned specimen is known for Wisconsin; however, several excellent sight records are available. One was studied under excellent conditions at Sheboygan on May 30 (Myron Reichwaldt). One was also observed in Jefferson County, Oct. 17 (L. E. Compton). Detailed, on-the-spot notes were sent in with these observations.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: This species created a great deal of excitement when it was observed in the Madison area, April 5. Five of these "speckle-bellies" were observed by a group of university ornithology students at Lake Barney (Jack Kaspar et al); they were still present the next day and seen by many people.

EUROPEAN WIDGEON: In the past several years we have been fortunate in having this casual visitor on our state list. It was observed in Winnebago County, April 22 (Jack Kaspar—Stanley Wellso); Brown

County, May 1 (Edwin Cleary—Ed Paulson); Columbia County, May 8 (H. A. Winkler).

SURF SCOTER: Five of these rare birds were carefully observed on Lake Michigan—Ozaukee County—on Oct. 26 (Mary Donald—Karl Priebe); observed the next day (M. Decker—Mrs. F. L. Larkin—F. Riegel). An extremely rare sight was one recorded for Madison on Dec. 4-6 (Mrs. R. A. Walker et al).

PURPLE SANDPIPER: An exceedingly rare straggler, this species was spotted in the Kenosha area, May 29 (Mrs. Howard Higgins). This is our first state record since 1942 when a specimen was obtained from Wind Point in Racine County.

STILT SANDPIPER: This arctic nester put on a magnificent performance in Wisconsin during the year. The first birds to arrive were seen at Goose Lake in Columbia County, April 15 (Tom Soulen et al); they were spotted again on April 25 (H. A. Winkler) and April 28 (Mrs. R. A. Walker)—these are the earliest dates on record. Several more records for Goose Lake were obtained between May 1 and 22 (many observers); seen in Sheboygan County, May 30 (Kuhlman—Orians—Soulen—Reichwaldt). Tremendous concentrations were noted at Horicon Marsh, Aug. 17 to Sept. 7, with a peak of 52 being observed on Aug. 19 (Jones—Soulen—Sontag—Walker—Weber). Also noted at Milwaukee, Aug. 25—Sept. 4 (Donald—Larkin—Robbins—Wilde); Castle Rock Lake, Aug. 23 (Sam Robbins); Oshkosh, Aug. 28 (Stanley Wellso); and three in Manitowoc County, Aug. 29 (Myron Reichwaldt).

MARBLED GODWIT: For a bird which is becoming quite rare, two observations were obtained this spring: Dane County, May 8 (Mrs. R. A. Walker); Goose Lake, Columbia County, May 9-11 (Tom Soulen—R. B. Dryer—H. A. Winkler).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: Even rarer than the marbled godwit, this species was noted at Goose Lake in Columbia County on May 18 (Gordon Orians) and at Cedar Grove on May 30 (Kuhlman—Orians—Soulen).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: This casual visitor was observed in the Kenosha area, April 10 (Mrs. Howard Higgins).

EUROPEAN LITTLE GULL: One of these accidental stragglers was carefully studied in the Racine harbor, Nov. 16-17. It was in the company of about 1000 Bonaparte's gulls (Ed and Hans Prins). This is the first published record of any kind for Wisconsin, but the observers of this bird have a sight record for Nov. 17, 1938. The little gull is a straggler from Europe, and is now being seen with somewhat increasing frequency both along the Atlantic Coast and in the Chicago area.

RICHARDSON'S OWL: This species was observed in northwestern Winnebago County on Nov. 26 (Jack Kaspar—Stanley Wellso). It is a rare visitor to southern Wisconsin in winter.

WESTERN KINGBIRD: Another outstanding record for 1954 was the observation of this western species at Cedar Grove, May 31 (Frank Kuhlman—Gordon Orians—Tom Soulen).

HUDSONIAN CHICKADEE: A rare winter visitor in southern Wisconsin. One was observed in the Madison area, Dec. 4 and on into

the winter (Mrs. R. A. Walker et al); another was spotted in northern Wisconsin, in Oneida County on Dec. 28 (Kenneth Lange—Tom Soulen).

BEWICK'S WREN: This species was first added to the state list in 1921. Since then we have had several scattered records, more so in recent years. In 1954 one was observed in the Madison area, April 2 (N. R. Barger et al); one in song in La Crosse County, April 24 (Alvin Peterson); seen again in Dane County, April 27 (H. A. Winkler) and on May 2 (many observers); several spent the summer in Adams County (Sam Robbins); one in Tomah, May 13 (Sam Robbins). Fall records included one at Mazomanie, Sept. 11 (Alyea—Kuhlman—Sontag—Soulen—Weber); Adams County, Sept. 20-24 (Sam Robbins); and our first winter record, Onalaska, Nov. 19-Dec. 7 (Alvin Peterson).

CAROLINA WREN: During the past few years there have been several good sight records. At least five birds were recorded in southern Ozaukee and Milwaukee Counties during the winter period (many observers). The Carolina wren was also noted from Nov. 5-19 at a feeder in Calumet County (Mrs. Dale Vawter—Mrs. W. E. Rogers) and in the Appleton area from Nov. 20 on into the winter (Mrs. A. C. Berry—Mrs. W. E. Rogers). Other year records included one at Two Rivers, July 22 (Mrs. Winnifred Mayer); one in southwestern Adams County, Sept. 28 (Sam Robbins) and in Ozaukee County, Oct. 15 and 27 (Mary Donald).

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD: Another record-breaker. Here we have another "first Wisconsin record of any kind" for this western species. The first observation was that of a single bird at what is now the new Audubon Camp near Sarona about Oct. 17 (Mr. and Mrs. Carl Peterson). Then came a series of records from Superior in mid-December: one at the home of Mrs. Frank Hayes from Dec. 16-19, two at the home of Mrs. W. J. Bohn for several days about the same time, and four during the same period at the home of Mrs. Henry Flemming. Another indefinite record came to us from Nebagamon in Douglas County with the bird being observed about the same time.

WORM-EATING WARBLER: This southern species which rarely visits Wisconsin was seen for the second consecutive year. It was carefully observed in Dane County, May 16 (H. A. Winkler).

LAWRENCE'S WARBLER: Sight records are very scarce for this hybrid, but one bird was carefully observed in Waukesha County, June 2 (the Ed Peartrees—R. J. Lyman).

BREWSTER'S WARBLER: Two of these hybrids were first observed in Kenosha County, May 13 (Mrs. Howard Higgins—Mrs. Ethel Wallis); one was still present in the area on May 31 (members of the Wild Wings Bird Group); seen in Dane County, May 19 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

PRAIRIE WARBLER: Another rare straggler for which we have few sight records. Seen on the May-Day count in Green Bay, May 16 (Green Bay Bird Club); one singing in Adams County, May 28 (Sam Robbins).

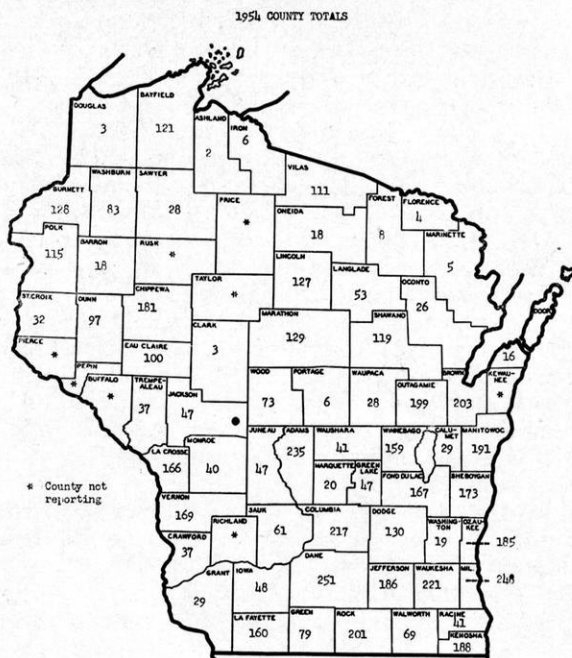
HOODED WARBLER: There have been several good records during the past few years and this year was no exception. Jefferson County, May 14 (Gordon Paeske); Dane County, May 20 (Besadny—Hale—Knudsen—Wagner); and on May 24 and 29 (Bill Foster—Sam Robbins—Mrs.

R. A. Walker); in Brown County, June 5 (Edwin Cleary); seen and heard singing in Adams County, Aug. 23 (Sam Robbins).

GAMBEL'S SPARROW: This subspecies was present at a bird feeder in Waukesha, May 2-14 (the L. E. Comptons).

The Hypothetical List

Each year this section is included for those rare species which are observed in the state, but about which there is still some element of doubt. We continually urge observers to record their unusual findings on-the-spot noting description, behavior, song, etc., in order for the observation to be properly evaluated. This year the more unusual records came in with such detailed descriptions that there was little doubt in your field editor's mind as to the accuracy of the observations. There



are times, however, when an observer may not be able to take detailed notes and make a positive identification. Therefore, in order to maintain all possible scientific accuracy these skeptical observations will be omitted from the regular field note summaries and will be put on the hypothetical list for future reference.

The State Coverage

Each year a few more people become interested in bird-watching. They find, through experience, that this hobby can be most rewarding. Our list of regular contributors to field notes has grown through the years, and we continually urge new observers to send in notes. Though each note sent in may not be published in the quarterly summary, it finds its way to our files and to the county totals at the end of each year.

The accompanying map shows substantial increases in the number of birds observed in many of the counties this year. However, there are still several counties which drew a blank. Let's strive for a 100 per cent county coverage next year.

The following counties reported 100 or more species observed during 1954:

Adams	235	Manitowoc	191
Bayfield	121	Marathon	129
Brown	203	Milwaukee	248
Burnett	128	Ozaukee	185
Chippewa	181	Outagamie	199
Columbia	217	Polk	115
Dane	251	Rock	201
Dodge	130	Shawano	119
Fond du Lac	167	Sheboygan	173
Jefferson	186	Vernon	169
Kenosha	188	Vilas	111
La Crosse	166	Waukesha	221
Lafayette	160	Winnebago	159
Lincoln	127		

It has been a pleasure editing field notes these past two years. The volume of mail has been tremendous and I'm sure our mailman is happy to be relieved of the job of delivering several dozen letters each week. Bill Foster is now carrying on with the duties of associate editor. I sincerely hope each contributor will continue to send in field notes to Bill in the orderly manner that they were sent in to me. Field notes clearly written, with good descriptions of the more unusual species will make the job of editing field notes much simpler.

2644 Milwaukee Street
Madison 4, Wisconsin

NEWS . . .

Plans for the actual purchase of land in the Buena Vista Marsh area for prairie chicken preservation took another step forward at the September meeting of the Board of Directors. President Emlen appointed a committee to handle the purchase, consisting of Jerry Vogelsang as chairman, Carl Frister, J. J. Hickey, and J. Allan Simpson.

Since publication of our last issue, additional gifts to the Prairie Chicken Survival Fund have been received from Richard Gordon, Mrs. Earl Schmidt, and Nils Dahlstrand.

W.S.O. has donated 28 volumes from its library to the new Wisconsin Audubon Camp this year. The books have a current value of \$153.75. Selection of titles was made by members of the Audubon staff.

The articles listed in this issue by the W.S.O. Supply Department and the products of our advertisers will make excellent Christmas gifts for family and friends. When you order from the advertiser, mentioning that you saw the advertisement in **The Passenger Pigeon**, you boost W.S.O.

Also in the offing for field trips in the coming year: an early April trip to Lake Winnebago to see swans; a prairie chicken trip to Plainfield later in April; a camp-out in the northern section of the Kettle Moraine Forest in June; a weekend camp-out to Point Beach State Park in early September; a hawk trip to Cedar Grove in late September.

President Emlen has appointed Prof. Robert McCabe and Mr. James B. Hale to the Research Committee for W.S.O. We hope to announce soon the subject for another range-and-population study to which all members can contribute information.

(more news on page 116)

A GLIMPSE OF THE ARCTIC

By JAMES H. ZIMMERMAN

Some 350 miles of roadless swamp and mountain lie between the city of Fairbanks and Barter, a coastal island near the northeast corner of Alaska. After two days of false starts and delays caused by poor landing conditions on the north coast, we climbed aboard, struggled again into heavy parachutes, and hoped this would be "it." The time was 10 A. M. Would we actually have lunch on that tiny island where a lonely weather station holds forth against pack ice, winter winds, and summer fog? We slowly rose through the gray, drizzling stratus layer of a warm front and suddenly popped into that dazzling world of the air pilot between the billowy main of cloud-tops and the limitless serene dome of blue, where the only guides are sun and compass and radio. The monotony of the landscape occasionally visible between the clouds made it difficult to appreciate the vastness of the wilderness which ticked steadily away, far below, at the rate of over two miles per minute—until we crouched by a window with a camera. Unless the desired view was snapped promptly, it would be found to have slipped too far astern. Often, too, the clouds would close in again while we fumbled with the lens setting.

Across the Yukon

The broad central basin of Alaska was one great oriental rug done mostly in subdued shades of green. Innumerable cloud-reflecting lakes and blackish islands of spruce swamp were set in a matrix of pale green muskeg bearing darker cloud shadows. Here and there, strange pinkish areas may have been caused by red algae, red-tipped sphagnum moss, or perhaps dwarf blueberries and their relatives, for whose brilliant fall color the north country is so famous. Small rivers were never out of sight, interminably meandering ribbons whose miles of neatly-packed loops would put to shame the makers of jig-saw puzzles. The larger rivers—also characteristic of Alaska—were broad strips of grayish-white water foaming under heavy loads of gravel in a crisscrossing of "braided" channels, everchanging under the opposing forces of deposition and erosion. The sogginess of this level expanse, which nourishes the mighty Yukon westward to the Bering Sea, makes it difficult to believe that the annual precipitation is slight. But cool temperatures during most of the year retard evaporation, frozen subsoil prevents the water from soaking downward, and endless acres of spongy moss retard its flow all the way from inland mountains to the sea.

The Brooks Range

Just as the rifts in our flat, white floor began to reveal foothills below, the clouds closed their ranks, piled up ahead, and forced us to climb higher as we approached the center of the Brooks Range. Our pilot was kept busy picking his way between billows too tall to surmount and too full of treacherous updrafts and possible "hard cores" to fly into. But the clouds did grudgingly give us a few brief peeks at this broad, rugged, east-west barrier that divides the central Yukon Basin from the flat belt

of tundra along the Arctic Coast. Wherever the clouds parted, the same gray pyramids challenged us with their grim rock and gravel. No country could be more remote. Unless oil or fissionable ores finance roads some day, this range will remain the last place to be owned by the falcon and redpoll, wolf and marmot and grizzly, and possibly the rare explorer rugged enough to "pack in" over all those weary silent miles on foot. Though the last stunted spruce trees stumble northward barely into its southern foothills, this range is not as barren as it appears from the air. Doubtless all but the higher peaks would be found to be clothed with numerous and exceedingly colorful alpine plants. Though so frequently shrouded in clouds that a rescue mission would hardly merit the effort, these mountains receive so little precipitation that glaciers are rare; the few we saw were shrunken specimens indeed. To the alpine herbs crowding the moister draws or crouching in tiny depressions on windswept rocky ridges, drought must be a far more serious hazard to existence than is cold.

Barter Island

As fast as it appeared, the Brooks Range melted away. Again we caught sight of rivers—the same light gray braided channels—but these were flowing due north, down the gentle Arctic Slope. Soon the clouds thinned to nothing; but now there was no land in sight! Was this the sea which extends across the top of the world? To the north the bluish-whitish whatever-it-was below simply merged with the pale, hazy sky. Disappointingly, there just wasn't any horizon to mark the North Pole nor even to separate up from down. As we descended through a pale rainbow—the air was misty even at high altitudes—we began to discern a wave-like pattern on the surface below. But this proved not to be the sea after all; it was a layer of puffs of fog, rapidly fleeing eastward before the wind. Between the puffs could be seen the vague outlines of a brownish coast, deeply dissected by inlets and fringed with innumerable islands of every shape and size. Land and water were on so nearly the same level as to appear painted on a map. The fog moved off, the water became bluer, and ice floes appeared as tiny white flecks all over its surface as far as the eye could see. We headed dizzily downward toward a small spit which proved to be the long tail of Barter Island. Two more turns over the bright brown tundra and we were rolling to a stop along the wire mesh laid down for a runway. We piled out into warm sunshine and exhilarating freshness of sea air. Between the huddle of quonset buildings and acres of discarded oil drums, curious tank-like "weasels" wheezed along on caterpillar treads in the mud of "Main Street." Beyond this fragment of civilization, several square miles of undisturbed tundra invited our immediate exploration. We hoped there would be a little time here before we took off for our ultimate goal, Point Barrow, where the lemmings we sought were abundant enough to be found quickly. It was near the end of our stay in Alaska in 1953; but, before returning home, three of our party had secured permission to "hitch" a ride on Air Force cargo planes in order to bring back some lemmings needed by our boss, Prof. Morrison, to complete his study of the comparative physiology of arctic mammals at the University of Wisconsin. Now, to our

chagrin, we learned that we might be spending lots of time at this rarely-visited outpost at Barter; after lunch, our pilot was returning directly to Fairbanks! We had mistakenly understood that he had some additional cargo bound for Pt. Barrow, while he, in turn, had failed to notice that we, unlike the other passengers, saw in Barter an interesting detour rather than a destination. The daily rotation of pilots and the constant rerouting of flights necessitated by undependable weather kept things in a delicious state of confusion and surprise that added much to our adventures.

In Search of Lemming

But luck was with us; we reached the mess hall just before it closed! Food is never so good nor stomachs so capacious as in the invigorating Arctic. And then, while Dan Faber and I made a brief tour of the irresistible tundra behind the mess hall, George Riley was busy cajoling headquarters into lending us a weasel. This was not so much for speed—for that is not the weasel's forte—but to carry our cages. The least we three greenhorns in this strange and fabulous land could do was to make the best of things and attempt to find some of these unfamiliar little rodents, even if they were as scarce here as they were reported to be. Our search was somewhat half-hearted, for we kept one ear cocked toward the sky. A plane rumored to be on its way from Pt. Barrow might be going back later in the day, and we had to be ready to urge that weasel toward the air strip to catch the pilot before he left again. However, we had not got out of sight of the buildings before we found evidence of small mammals in the roadless expanse of grass. Along the sides of ridges pushed up by frost were what could have been runways, and occasional small piles of droppings, though not very fresh, confirmed our suspicions. And presently we did flush one of the famous brown lemmings—short-tailed and short-legged brown mice that dash about in grass so short that they literally have no place to hide when viewed from directly above. No raptorial birds could “have it so good” as those that summer on the tundra. We saw no birds of prey; however, our eyes and minds were bent on the elusive lemmings. We decided that they would be easy enough to run down, once one could get close enough to them. Their method of escape was to dart behind a clump of grass up ahead and freeze there while one walked right past, not knowing which clump it was. To solve this problem, Dan elected to ride on top of the weasel, so that he could jump off and follow each animal he spied without losing sight of it. To stay on top while our fiery steed plunged into and reared out of each watery hole was simply the lesser of two evils; to keep an eye on a tiny form darting in the grass fifty feet away while one climbed through one of the small windows had proved to be an impossibility. (The weasel's manufacturer, considering doors a luxury, had provided none.) Thanks to Dan's eagle eye and long legs, and his way with animals, we eventually had in our proud possession several lemmings of various ages and sizes.

The Tundra

I had not expected the tundra to be so beautiful. True, it was monotonously flat—but so flat that a slow rise of a few feet cut off the view

beyond as completely as if it had been a hill. From the air, it was brown, as I had imagined it would be. But strangely, we now sank ankle-deep in lush grass of brilliant green—a very healthy lawn that had escaped its first two mowings in May—which stretched uninterruptedly to the distant streak of rich blue and glistening white that was the sea with its ice pack crowding the shore. I had expected to see many sedges and lichens; and there were a few. But this particular type of tundra was dominated by grasses, not the usual harsh and wiry kinds, but peculiarly thick and tender ones with unfamiliar names: *Arctagrostis*, *Dupontia*, *Arctophila*. The last-named grass grew taller than the others, thus concealing the depressions whose shallow water it preferred. At the other extreme were small hillocks and ridges a foot or two high which, because they were exposed to the sandblasting action of wind-blown ice crystals above the scanty winter snow, supported little grass and only the smallest tufts of herbs and ground-hugging willows. There were even uncolonized areas of frost-heaved mud or eroding, devegetated peat. As a result of this compensating inverse relation of plant height to topography, the unupholstered weasel careened crazily where the eye saw only a level plain of grass-tops. But it was not all green grass. Two-inch flowers of yellow poppies, numerous saxifrages that aped our white cress and yellow buttercups, vivid orchid-lavender heads of betony, barrages of translucent silky balloons of cottongrass, and the delicate dark heads of the grasses everywhere—all these were just in the act of bursting forth. Everything was fresh and tender and growing its fastest. Temperatures were in the sixties; the sky was a soft, pale blue; it was spring. Back in the southeastern Alaska Range, the last snow had melted in July at 5,000 feet; but north of the Brooks Range, a few snowbanks were seen down almost to sea level as we came over, and here on the north coast we had the good fortune to arrive on one of the few warm days of the year. It was August 10th. Interestingly, the arctic birds cannot afford to wait for the beginning of the brief and undependable summer to nest; in fact, the young have to be raised and fed and fledged **before** the plants and insects reach their peak. Now the huge flocks of shore-birds and fringillids rising and wheeling at our approach foretold the nearness of migration time.

As we started to circle a lake whose shimmering surface reflected the sun, the landscape gradually became dim as in a movie fade-out. In a few more seconds, even the faint spot of the sun disappeared, and we were suddenly very much alone in a silent gray world of mist that all but concealed our very feet. Fog can be a terrifying thing in a place like this. Close as it was, the lake might just as well not have existed. What little of the tundra was dimly visible close around us looked the same on all sides. Of course, we were only a mile or two from headquarters, and the whole island was small. Steady progress in any direction would soon have brought us to one of its shores, **providing** our course were straight. We had plenty of clothing and even some food, and a willing vehicle—everything. Everything except a compass.

(To be concluded)

2114 Van Hise Avenue
Madison 5, Wisconsin

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DIRECTIONS

Wisconsin already has one of the largest Christmas bird count programs of any middle-western state. In order that the 1955 count may be more useful than ever—as well as bigger than ever—several suggestions are offered below. All Wisconsin bird observers are invited to participate in this year's count. We hope especially that areas not covered in Christmas bird counts in recent years may receive greater attention this year.

Dates. The counts should be taken between December 24, 1955, and January 2, 1956. Each count should include only one day's observations. Whenever additional species are seen during the count period that were missed on the day of the count, these species should be listed at the end of the report.

Hours. Wherever possible, observers should spend the full day in the field, in order to cover the most territory as thoroughly as possible. The best way to census the owls is to start the count before daybreak and listen for hooting at the most likely spots in the area. The period right after daybreak is the time of greatest bird activity; the most effective counts will be under way by 7:00 a. m.

Area. One of the accepted standards of Christmas bird counting is that the area covered should fit within a circle of a 15-mile diameter. In setting up the area to be censused, a circle should be drawn to include as many favored winter bird spots as can be included. If the most favored areas cannot be covered within the 15-mile diameter, perhaps two separate counts should be taken—of course without duplication of area.

Scouting. Experienced Christmas bird counters know that advance scouting of the count area pays off in a better count. Advance trips to parts of the census area are likely to disclose the presence of some birds that might escape the observers on the day of the count; advance surveys of feeding stations within the chosen circle may reveal the presence of unusual birds that can be added on the day of the count. Pre-count explorations of certain areas may be so unproductive that the time that would have been wasted there will be spent more profitably elsewhere on the day of the count.

Observers. The more observers that can be enlisted on a single count, the more thorough the count will be. Instead of two or three observers taking independent counts on separate days on overlapping areas, these observers should get together on a single day, divide up the territory within the 15-mile circle, and combine results in a composite count. People watching feeding stations should be counted as observers, and asked to keep especially good watch on the day of the count.

Counting. Specific counts of individuals are much to be preferred over rough estimates. A running count of each species should be kept in a notebook or on a checklist; each individual should be noted; the size of each flock should be counted or estimated as carefully as possible. This goes for starlings, English sparrows and herring gulls, as well as all other species.

Reporting. The report on your count should be sent to the Associate Editor of **The Passenger Pigeon** by January 15, 1956. In addition to the list of species seen and the number of individuals listed, the report should include: date; hours afield; weather conditions, such as sky condition, wind, maximum and minimum temperatures, and ground cover; brief description of area covered; number of parties afield; and a list of the participants.

Cooperating with Audubon Field Notes. Christmas bird counters are urged to participate with the continent-wide Christmas bird count program originated by **Bird-Lore** and now carried on by **Audubon Field Notes**. Counters should write immediately to the National Audubon Society, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y., to receive the careful instructions that must be followed and the report form that must be used in submitting the count for **Audubon Field Notes**.

WISCONSIN'S FAVORITE BIRD HAUNTS

CASTLE ROCK LAKE

The entire southwestern portion of Adams County has always had an unusually varied habitat that is attractive to a wide variety of bird life. Much of the soil is too dry and sandy for much agriculture; but there are enough grassy fields to make the vesper sparrow one of the commonest summer residents, and enough jack pine and white oak woodland to make the blue jay positively abundant in any season of the year. Wooded bottomlands along the Wisconsin River and neighboring creeks attract woodpeckers and warblers. The agriculturally poor land—part sandy, part swampy—has resulted in a sparsely populated area, with the bird life relatively undisturbed.

It is not known how great a disturbance to the existing bird population resulted from the construction of Castle Rock Dam and the consequent flooding of thousands of acres of land in 1950; few, if any, ornithological studies were made prior to that time. But the 26 square miles of water that now make up Castle Rock Lake are now attracting huge flocks of waterfowl in spring and fall; and in migration an interesting variety of shorebirds can be found along the eastern shore of the lake and in the drainage ditch that parallels the dike bordering the lake. Thus between 1952 and 1955, in the varied area shown on the accompanying map, the writer has recorded 231 species.

Waterfowl

The largest concentrations of waterfowl—mostly geese and diving ducks—occur in fall, from late October through the first three weeks of November; but with the hunting season on, the birds are far out in the lake, making a powerful telescope almost a necessity. Likewise in mid-April, during the height of the spring flight, most of the birds are far out on the lake. The best times to see ducks close up are in early April when the ice is breaking up, and in late November when the lake is about to freeze over. The best areas for observing ducks at these times

are the confluence of Little Roche a Cri Creek (Area A), the Adams County Park (Area C), and at Castle Rock Dam (Area E).

Shorebirds

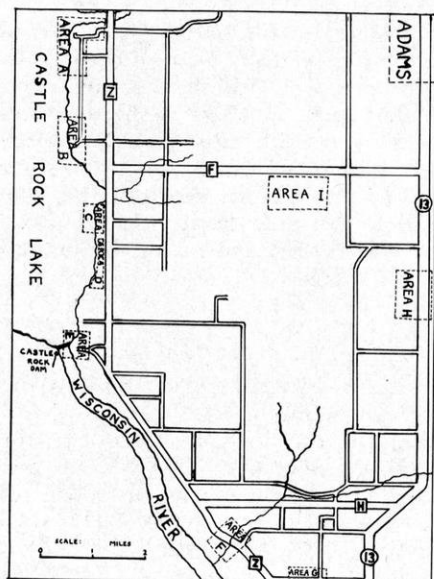
Except when the water level is unusually high, there is a little sandy beach and sand bar at the south end of Adams County Park (Area C). Only a few shorebirds have been seen here in spring, but those that occurred include the sanderling, red-backed sandpiper, piping plover and ruddy turnstone. This spot is even more interesting in fall, with sanderlings and Baird's sandpipers appearing regularly, joined occasionally by a golden or black-bellied plover, Bonaparte's gull, or Caspian tern. It was here that one of the state's few sight records of a laughing gull was made in 1953.

There is more sandy beach at Area B, where sanderlings, Baird's sandpipers, golden and black-bellied plovers, and an occasional Franklin's gull have been seen.

The main concentration of shorebirds in fall, however, is found in the upper one mile of the ditch (Area D) that accompanies the dike at the eastern edge of the lake all the way from the Adams County Park to Castle Rock Dam. Up to 200 shorebirds may be seen here from late July through August. The larger shorebirds rarities—godwits, curlew willet—do not seem to be attracted to this ditch; but most of the smaller rarities—white-rumped, Baird's, Western, dowitcher, stilt—have been noted. A knot spent a week here in late August 1955.

Warblers

Just south of the confluence of Little Roche a Cri Creek (Area A) there stretches a half-mile of wooded area—some jack pine and scrubby



growth, some tall white pine on high banks overlooking the lake—that is particularly attractive to warblers and other small passerines in spring and fall migration. Even when there appear no waves elsewhere, one usually finds at least a few scattered migrants here. Pine warblers also nest in the tall pines.

Somewhere along the lower stretches of White Creek (Area F) the prothonotary warbler has spent each summer, during the past few years. The Louisiana water-thrush is sometimes found here in spring and summer, and the yellow-bellied sapsucker has been known to spend the summer.

The blue-winged warbler has been found in spring and fall in

the shrubs and oak trees of Area G; quite possibly it breeds somewhere nearby. For several summers there have been cerulean warblers in the high maples along highway 13 five miles south of Adams (Area H), accompanied by redstarts, red-eyed and yellow-throated vireos, veeries, ovenbirds, blue-gray gnatcatchers, and occasionally a chestnut-sided warbler.

Other Species

The sedge meadow on the south side of C.T.H. "F" (Area I) provides a small booming ground for a few prairie chicken, but the presence of these birds is rarely detected except in early morning hours from late March to early May. Short-billed marsh wrens and Henslow's sparrows summer here; sandhill cranes have been seen rarely in April and September; LeConte's sparrows occur in late September and early October; turkey vultures have been observed in April.

Pileated and red-bellied woodpeckers frequent the creek and river bottom woodlands; they are frequently heard from Area F, Area G, and any other spot from there south to highway 82. Brewer's blackbirds are numerous in spring and summer; they may be seen almost anywhere in the entire territory, but are most frequent along the ditch (Area D). Bewick's wrens are regular summer residents within the city of Adams.

Directions

Much of the best area lies close to C.T.H. "Z" which follows the Wisconsin River through much of Adams County. By following C.T.H. "J" west from Friendship six miles to the junction of "Z," turn south on "Z" for one mile until one finds water on both sides of the road. This is where Little Roche a Cri Creek widens to join the Wisconsin River, and is the beginning of Area A. The first road to the right is little more than a track through the woods, but either that or another road one-half mile to the south (at the Dellwood pavilion) leads to the edge of Castle Rock Lake and the rest of Area A. Area B is just to the south, at the corner where the gravel road turns east to rejoin "Z." Following "Z" south, one crosses another water area where small creeks join, and immediately thereafter signs indicate the entrance to the Adams County Park (Area C). There are picnic facilities at this park.

At the south end of the park a white gate marks the beginning of the dike and ditch leading to Castle Rock Dam. Stop anywhere along "Z" for the next one-half mile to look at the ditch (Area D); at the Frank Essex farm the ditch bends away from the road, but a further half-mile walk along the ditch is often fruitful.

Where "Z" bends from a southerly to a southeasterly direction, signs point the way to Castle Rock Dam (Area E). Parking is permitted in certain areas below the dam; one can then walk up an embankment to glimpse the south end of the lake.

Area F is where "Z" crosses White Creek, one mile southeast of the junction of "Z" and "H." Proceeding southeast on "Z" for another mile, a left turn will lead through Area G, and thence east to highway 13.

Area H is a tamarack swamp with adjoining maple woodland, through which highway 13 runs. The area is about three miles north

of the junction with C.T.H. "A," and one-half mile south of C.T.H. "E." Proceeding north to "F" and following west for two miles, one comes to Area I, the sedge meadow on the south side of the road.

Sam Robbins

The 1955 May-Day Count

By **BILL FOSTER**

In 1953 the practice was established of fixing a single day in May as a target date for as many Wisconsin bird observers as possible to get into the field for a state-wide count of species present. This was done again in 1954, and the date originally set for May-Day counts in 1955 was the 22nd of the month.

Soon after the first of May it appeared almost certain that, for most parts of the state, at least, the date would be entirely too late. A great many birds were pulling out, and unless the count day was moved forward in time, a poor result could generally be expected. This, anyway, was the view taken by a number of persons who contacted both Sam Robbins and the writer.

So Sam and I took the bit in our teeth, and decided to move the date to May 15, and tried to notify as many people as we could that the change had been made. Needless to say, not everyone got the notice; and some who did had made firm plans for the 22nd, and were not free on the 15th. So the editor and the present field-note editor take this occasion for an apology to the many of you whom this change doubtless inconvenienced.

But almost certainly the nearly uniformly poorer results on May 15 this year than were obtained on May 16 in 1954 cannot be wholly charged to the last-minute change of dates. Enough people did get out on the 22nd to establish that results then would have been as bad, or worse, had the count been taken then.

The record number of 231 species noted on May 16, 1954 was not seriously challenged by the 212 species found May 15, 1955 in the state. Yet the number of observers again exceeded 100, and the total number of counts made was about the same.

Some good birds were seen, however. Carol and Gordon Bly reported a marbled godwit from Bayfield County, the only record of this species for the entire spring period. Elsewhere there were reports of European widgeon, willets, Brewster's warbler, orchard orioles, LeConte's sparrow, and Harris's sparrow. But for the most part feelings were generally summed up by the comment of one observer who wrote "... a terrible day. Everything had moved out, and nothing moved in!"

Summaries of various counts follow:

DANE COUNTY: 156 species. Members of the Kumlien Club, Madison Audubon Society, and students in U. W. ornithology classes scoured the county May 15, a sunny and reasonably warm day. Good records: common loon, least bittern, white-rumped sandpiper, Bewick's

wren, and American pipit. Total warblers: 23 species, including prothonotary and cerulean. Reported by Mrs. R. A. Walker.

MILWAUKEE AREA: 144 species. Members of the Milwaukee bird clubs confined their efforts to the immediate area on May 15 (compare this with the total of 183 species compiled May 16, 1954, when these same groups included 4 counties in their count; see 1954 *Passenger Pigeon* 105, 106). Good records: American rough-leg (quite late), king rail, barn and short-eared owls, hermit thrush (late), clay-colored, Harris's and Lincoln's sparrows. Total warblers: 20 species. Reported by Mary Donald.

BROWN COUNTY: 140 species. Members of the Green Bay Bird Club spent the day compiling this good list which nonetheless dropped far below the record-breaking 161 species on May 16, 1954. Good records: least bittern, Northern phalarope, Forster's tern, common tern. Caspian tern, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets, and fox sparrow. Total warblers: 17 species, including Cape May. Reported by Edwin Cleary.

ADAMS COUNTY: 138 species. One observer was afield from 3:00 to 9:00 a. m. and from 1:00 to 2:30 p. m. That this total fell only eight short of last year's total of 146, in spite of the limited amount of birding past the mid-morning hours, was due in large part to one of those rare strokes of luck when, within a 15-minute period, the observer discovered an American egret, least bittern, European widegon, king rail and yellow-headed blackbird. Other good records: sandhill crane, Bewick's wren and lark sparrow. Total warblers: 18 species, including blue-winged, Brewster's, Louisiana water-thrush and Connecticut. Reported by Sam Robbins.

ROCK COUNTY: 102 species. Members of Beloit's Ned Hollister Bird Club spent all of May 15 building this list which fell short of the 110 species found by the same group on May 16 the year before. Good records: Baird's sandpiper, blue-gray gnatcatcher, and dickcissel. Total warblers: 12 species, including prothonotary. Reported by Harold Liebherr.

WAUKESHA COUNTY: 102 species. Members of the B. F. Goss Bird Club devoted all the daylight hours of May 15 to produce a list disappointingly short of the 127 species found by that group May 16, 1954. But the day was made noteworthy by the discovery of a LeConte's sparrow, probably the outstanding find reported from the state on this date. Other good birds: blue-gray gnatcatcher, and clay-colored sparrow. Total warblers: 11 species, including Louisiana water-thrush. Reported by Mrs. Olive Compton.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY: 100 species. Three observers worked from 3:00 a. m. to 8:30 p. m. on May 22 for a list that fell well below the 114 species reported by this group May 16, 1954. Good records: red-bellied woodpecker, American pipit, yellow-headed blackbird, orchard oriole, and Henslow's sparrow. Reported by Dr. C. A. Kemper, and Mr. and Mrs. N. R. Barger.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY: 99 species. Two observers produced this list, covering four miles on foot, eighty by car, on May 15. Good birds: Wilson's phalarope, dickcissel, and lark sparrow. Total warblers: 6

species, including Louisiana water-thrush. Reported by Lola Welch and Ethel Olson.

LA CROSSE COUNTY: 93 species. Five observers in three parties produced this list May 15, which fell four short of the 97 species reported from the county on May 16, 1954. Good records: Bewick's wren and Bell's vireo. Total warblers: 9 species. Reported by Mr. William Frisch, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Peterson, and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Schick.

APPLETON AREA: 86 species. Members of the Appleton Audubon Society worked from noon May 15 to noon of the 16th to produce this list, 21 species below the 107 reported May 16, 1955. Total warblers: 16 species, including Cape May. Reported by Mrs. Walter Rogers.

Many others took counts at this time, and their reports have furnished valuable aids to completing the migration picture. Those who sent helpful lists from May 15 were: Carol and Gordon Bly from Bayfield County; Charles Youmans and G. L. Paeske from Jefferson County; Robert Schlising from Lincoln County; John Kraupa from Manitowoc County; Mrs. May Hook and Mrs. C. M. Schwendener of Milwaukee County; Mrs. Lester Pedersen, Mrs. Orin Jerdee, and Mrs. J. A. Riegel of Polk County; Harold Koopmann from Sheboygan County; Ed Peartree from Waukesha County; and Diane Feeney from Washburn County.

And on May 22, Mr. Raymond Stefanski of Forest County took a count which contained the only black-throated blue warbler reported from the state on that date.

MORE NEWS . . .

A field trip to the Milwaukee lake shore is planned for February 26. Details will be announced in the next issue of **The Passenger Pigeon**; but members should start planning now to attend, and the Milwaukee birders should start soon to turn up more harlequin ducks, Iceland gulls, and other treats such as they supplied last year.

Several members have suggested that our summer camp-outs be week-long affairs. A week-long camp-out would provide camping and birding for many who would like to spend a week in an area with people of like interests, and at the same time provide experiences similar to

those we have already had for those who can attend only on a weekend. More distant localities might also be chosen for study. Jerry Vogelsang, field note chairman, would like to hear your ideas about this. The Brooks Bird Club of West Virginia holds an annual "foray" of this type that is very successful.

It is not too early to be making plans to attend the W.S.O. annual convention next spring. It will be held on May 4-6, 1956, on the Beloit College campus, with vice-president Harold Liebherr and the Ned Hollister Bird Club in charge of arrangements. Have you considered preparing a paper that might be read at the convention?

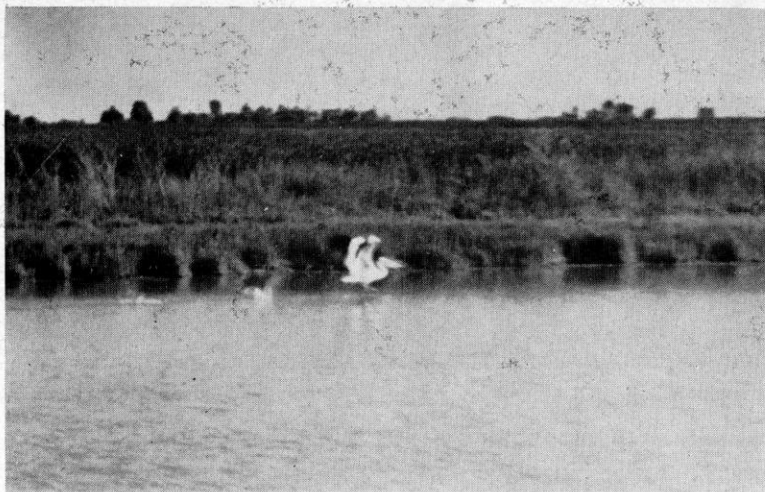
(more news on page 120)

HORICON MARSH FIELD TRIP

By MARTHA and ROY LOUND

August 28 dawned bright and clear as 74 enthusiastic birders converged on Horicon Marsh. By 7:30 A. M., the hill at state headquarters presented a varied scene—birders with Balscopes and binoculars trained on the surrounding marsh, birders eating breakfast, and birders meeting and greeting old and new friends.

The official outing started with Richard Hunt and Harold Mathiak giving a brief review of the past, present, and future of the marsh. Maps of the area were distributed, and the day's route was outlined. Then we piled into cars, and the caravan started for the Federal Dike Road. The writers, Helen Northup, and Allan Simpson rushed ahead to locate the white pelican which had been at the marsh for several weeks. By the time the other birders arrived, two thirty-power Bascopes were trained on the bird. This was the first time that many of the persons there had ever seen a wild white pelican, and others had never seen one before in Wisconsin. In our enthusiasm to find the pelican, we missed a king rail which some of the others in the group saw near the eastern end of the road. Harold Mathiak and Richard Hunt led the group clear across the marsh, and it was a treat to see this area since the western part of the Federal Dike Road is normally closed to the public.



WHITE PELICAN TAKING OFF

PHOTO BY SAMUEL D. ROBBINS, SR.

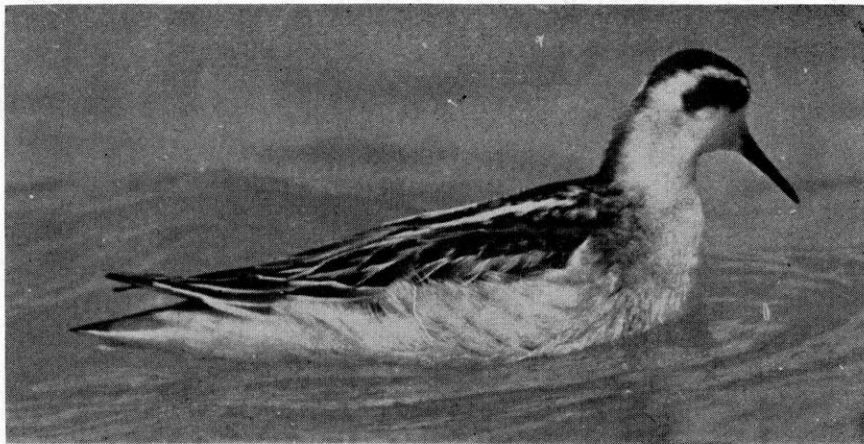
The next stop was on Highway 49 at what is one of the best known shore bird areas in the marsh. Black-bellied plover, dowitchers, stilt sandpipers, and Baird's sandpipers were among the species present. The number of species and individuals present was considerably smaller than a week earlier. Then we had seen 7 little blue herons, 22 American egrets, a buff-breasted sandpiper, and many other shore birds in that same area.

Lunch on a limestone ridge at the northeast edge of the marsh was a popular stop. The cows, which normally have the ridge much to themselves, were not too disturbed at the invasion of their domain by so large a group of strangers.

The Management Program Explained

The Old Marsh Road was the next area visited. This road crosses the marsh about one and one-half miles south of Highway 49 and is especially good for observing coots, Florida gallinules, rails, wood ducks, and

ruddy ducks at close range. Strook's Ditch, about a mile south of the Old Marsh Road, is where the trip ended. Here a representative of the Fish & Wildlife Service explained the management program for the federal portion of the marsh. We had fallen a bit behind the group, so we missed that talk. But we were amply repaid for moving along at a slower pace, because a Northern phalarope flew in shortly after we arrived, all the bird life in the area either hustled for cover or took to the air as a duck hawk made a pass over the marsh, and a little blue heron presented itself for a fine view. These three rather rare visitors brought the group total to 81 species observed during the day.



NORTHERN PHALAROPE

PHOTO BY PRINS BROTHERS

The ever increasing popularity of the W.S.O. field trips is attested to by the large number of persons attending and the varying localities from which they came. Illinois and Minnesota were both represented. Following is a list of those who signed the register:

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cox, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Morse, Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mahlum, Frances Glenn, and Bernice Andrews of Beloit; Mr. and Mrs. Hal Roberts of Black River Falls; Richard A. Hunt, Harold A. Mathiak, and L. R. Jahn of Horicon; Dorothy Hammel of Janesville; Mr. and Mrs. Nils P. Dahlstrand of Jefferson; Myron Reichwaldt of Kiel; Dagny Borge, Catherine Crocker, Helen Northup, Kerry Lippincott, Mrs. Eileen Williams, Robert Williams, William K von Kaas, Mrs. R. A. Walker, Alan S. Keitt, and Mr. and Mrs. Roy H. Lound of Madison; Mr. and Mrs. Carl P. Frister, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Kaiman, Mr. and Mrs. John Campbell and Bruce, Jerry Vogelsang, F. Gerald Daley, Mrs. Glen Lockery, Rufin Jankowski, Elmer L. Basten, and Lorna Liebl of Milwaukee; Mr. and Mrs. Ed Peartree and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hoffmann of Oconomowoc; J. Allan Simpson, Esther King, Ann Carlson, Jay and Dorothy Joslyn and Mr. and Mrs. Chas. A. Conrad of Racine; Mr. and Mrs. Glen B. Locking, Mrs. Myron Paulson, and Donna Lee Jorgenson of Rosholt; Gordon Paeske and A. J. Gamroth of Watertown; Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Hopwood and Jeanne Hopwood of Wauwatosa; Mr. and Mrs. Les Compton and son, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nelson, Spencer Nelson, S. Paul Jones, and T. G. Wilder of Waukesha; David and Ruth Mezger of Rockton, Illinois; and John Trisch, Jr., of Caledonia, Minnesota.

110 Corry Street
Madison, Wisconsin

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MORE NEWS...

The editor is always in the market for worthy manuscript that can be published in **The Passenger Pigeon**. Articles may deal with a wide variety of subjects that may be interesting and informative to Wisconsin ornithologists: bird behavior studies, nesting studies, changes in distribution of certain species over a period of time, population studies of limited areas,

interesting experiences on trips, etc. Articles may be long or short. Manuscripts should be sent to the editor, preferably typed double-space on 8½ x 11" paper. Send illustrations whenever possible.

Meeting in September, the Board of Directors voted to offer one scholarship for the Wisconsin Audubon Camp next summer. A committee will be appointed to handle the selection of the scholarship recipient; interested candidates should be on the watch for future announcement.

By The Wayside . . .

Edited by **BILL FOSTER**

Wintering Black-crowned Night Heron. We were fortunate in having an immature black-crowned night heron spend the winter with us this year. On Saturday noon, Feb. 12, 1955, Les came home and came to the door, saying: "Say, what's that big bird out in the tree here?" It was in a small red oak about 50 feet from our back door. We looked at it and saw that it was an immature black-crown. It was so well camouflaged against the brown leaves that it gave the appearance of a bunch of the leaves balled up with a little snow. Chances are it had been around during the early part of the winter, since we had seen one roosting here the middle of November. It stayed here until April 30. During the winter it was always in the red oaks. It would be here when we got up in the morning, and would leave for the river not far from here about dark. On March 9 I noted it took off in the evening at 6:30, and it was gradually later as the days grew longer. On April 1 it was 7:00 p. m. On April 9 I noted that the bird was here at ten minutes of five in the morning, and not being an early riser, I refused to arise any earlier to check when it came in.—Mrs. Olive E. Compton, Waukesha.

Harlequin Duck at Port Washington. On Feb. 5, Harold Bauers and I accompanied Ken Lang to Port Washington to check on some Iceland gulls that he had seen there. In casually scanning a group of mixed ducks immediately in front of us, I spotted this one duck that was different. My guess was a harlequin duck. But we hauled out two different field guides, along with a high-powered scope, and made a detailed study of the bird, noting its markings, and size, and how it rode in the water, comparing it with the scaup, golden-eye, buffle-head, red-breasted merganser and a female hooded merganser. It was later seen on the W.S.O. Milwaukee field trip, Feb. 27, and I last saw it at Port Washington on that date. I understand, however, that it was found by others as late as March 14.—Carl Frister, Milwaukee.

Saw-whet Owl at Madison. At the time of the 1954 Christmas Count Prof. Joe Hickey had found pellets in a grove of white cedars on the Arboretum that made him suspect the presence of the saw-whet owl, but diligent search failed to reveal the bird. More than a month later, on Feb. 3, my wife and I enlisted the support of Peggy Hickey and Mrs.

R. A. Walker to make a thorough search of the cedars for the owl. It was intended to search each tree first for signs of whitewash draped down the branches close to the trunk, and then to examine thoroughly any tree which had those tell-tale signs. Peggy Hickey located the first tree with whitewash splashings, and she and my wife began searching that tree, with my wife finding the bird an instant before Peggy spotted it. Thereafter, until Tom Soulen and Dick Wills found a pair present on April 7, and the bird was last seen, it is certain that well over 100 persons saw one or both of the wintering pair of saw-whets. Countless photographs were taken, and to the best of the writer's knowledge not a single shot taken turned out well enough to justify printing in **The Passenger Pigeon**. But he hopes he is wrong, and if there is a publishable shot of the Madison saw-whets, and the owner of the print would like it printed in the magazine, will he be good enough to contact either the writer of Sam Robbins?—Bill Foster, Madison.

Sight Records of *Oreganus*-type Juncos. In recent years observations have become much more numerous in Wisconsin of birds variously referred to as "Oregon," "Montana," or "pink-sided" juncos. There was a time when these names stood for three entirely separate species of juncos, but today they are generally regarded as races of a single species bearing the scientific name of ***Junco oreganus***.

Experts in classification of juncos admit much more information is needed to settle many basic questions as to separation and distribution of valid species and races of juncos. But despite the many unsolved problems, a few generalizations can be made which will permit sight records in the state to contribute valuable data.

First, most juncos occurring in Wisconsin can be identified with reasonable certainty as slate-colored. Adults have black or gray hoods which merge gradually into the gray flanks and the gray back, and these may be characterized with relative safety as slate-colored juncos.

Second, occasional birds may be characterized with equal safety as belonging to the ***oreganus*** type. This is probably as far as field identification ought to go until much more is known, and no attempt ought to be made to identify it as to subspecies. Nonetheless, birds which combine all the following characteristics belong to the ***oreganus*** type: (a) a hood which may range in color from pale gray to flat black but is uniform in color and has no trace of brown streaking; (b) a sharp line separating the gray or black of the hood from the pink or pinkish brown of the flanks; and (c) a sharp line separating the gray or black of the hood from the reddish or warm brown of the back.

Third, quite a number of birds simply must be dismissed as "juncos" without attempting to separate them as to species. This is true of many immatures, and it is doubtless the only wise thing to do with birds that have most, but not all, the characteristics of the ***oreganus***-type described above.

Because juncos are common, and because they may often be studied carefully at close range around feeding stations, much helpful information may come from determining the ratios of birds belonging to the three categories just described. Some observers have suggested that birds of the ***oreganus***-type may occur as frequently as one in every 50 juncos,

but much more study is needed to fix this as to (a) transients; (b) winter residents; and (c) geographic distribution in the state.

Yet another helpful source of reporting consists of careful description of birds that clearly fall into the **oreganus** group. Do most have pale gray—or flat black—hoods; reddish—or warm brown—backs; pinkish—or brownish—sides?

If you can keep some records of the total number of juncos you see, and the percentages of each that belong to the three categories just described, and can occasionally pass along your data to the field note editor, we'll do our best to tabulate the results, and publish them from time to time.—Bill Foster, Madison.



EDITOR'S NOTE: FIELD NOTES FOR NOVEMBER, AS WELL AS AUGUST-OCTOBER, SHOULD BE SENT TO THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR IMMEDIATELY.

By **BILL FOSTER**

THE EARLY SPRING SEASON

FEBRUARY-APRIL 1955

The early spring season did not match up to the spectacular winter season that preceded it. And indeed it was probably the dwindling momentum of the winter period that produced the one extraordinary record for the spring period: the harlequin duck found by Carl Frister at Port Washington on February 5.

Kumlien and Hollister's **Birds of Wisconsin** treated the harlequin as a "rare winter straggler to Lake Michigan," but their evidence supporting this conclusion is hardly satisfactory; and Dr. A. W. Schorger's 1951 revision of their work merely adds the cryptic observation that "no Wisconsin specimen was located." Apparently the harlequin at Port Washington in 1955 did not become a museum specimen; at least it had not as late as March 14 when last reported there. And in the five weeks it was known to have been present in the Port Washington harbor, half a hundred (perhaps more) bird watchers had ample opportunities to study the young male bird.

The unusual duck and gull records, too, were more nearly products of winter than spring. White-winged scoters were reported from Lake Michigan in the Milwaukee area during late February and early March; and a flock of eight American scoters from the lake in Ozaukee County on March 12. The Iceland gull found at Jones Island, Milwaukee, Jan. 30 (see **1955 Passenger Pigeon 82, 89**) remained at that place until March 13 and was seen by countless observers. Mrs. Howard Higgins found a great black-backed gull on a breakwater at Kenosha Feb. 20, producing

another Wisconsin record for a species that appears to be extending its range westward into the Great Lakes as well as southward along the Atlantic coast.

Three passerines of note were also winter holdovers. The Hudsonian chickadee which wintered at Madison was present there at least until March 26. Two mountain bluebirds (see **1955 Passenger Pigeon 59**) reappeared in the yard of Mrs. Henry F. Flemming of Superior, Wisconsin, on the morning of March 8, providing an additional sight record of this western species for the state. And Bohemian waxwings appeared during February in Bayfield, Chippewa, Dunn, Marathon and Waukesha counties, with reports from Bayfield County continuing through April 6.

But the impressive movement of winter finches noted between October and January did not have a spring counterpart. Evening grosbeaks, which have not been conspicuous in southern Wisconsin during the past several years, were reported from a number of places in that area during February and March. Pine grosbeaks were probably recorded from more places than usual—certainly this was true in southern Wisconsin—but nowhere were large numbers reported. The redpoll flight was poor. Red crossbills were reported only twice: from Wausau in central Wisconsin, and from Vilas County in the north. Those who hoped the hordes of white-winged crossbills that swept through in fall and early winter would reappear in spring were disappointed. White-wingeds were reported Feb. 15 in Waukesha County, and a lone bird was seen at Madison March 19, the only reports received during the period.

A moderate heavy, wet snow fell across southern Wisconsin on Feb. 26 but it was followed in the next two weeks by a steady warming that brought many portents of an early migration. During the first several days of March the Canada geese returned to southern Wisconsin in force. The weather continued to moderate; ponds opened and fields flooded; and by March 13 a real push northward was under way. Then the mercury dropped abruptly and remained well below normal for more than two weeks. As ponds re-froze, those that remained open became more crowded with birds. Mrs. L. E. Compton reported record concentrations of green-winged and blue-winged teal in the Scuppernong Marshes of Waukesha County on March 23, while observers farther north found few if any birds where birds had been ten days earlier.

This upside down weather pattern was closely paralleled by bird movements characteristic first of an accelerated migration during the first half of March, then of a migration almost totally stalled until the closing days of the month. Thus, an American egret appeared in Waukesha County March 11, disappeared soon afterwards, and the species was not again recorded in that place until April 2. Snow and blue geese arrived in Waukesha County March 11, but were seen few other places till the end of month. On the week-end of March 12-13, a substantial movement of birds into southern Wisconsin took place: pigeon hawks at two places; many snowy owls (more records those two days than the total of records before and after that for the February-April period); northern shrikes, present all winter in fair numbers, were much more numerous in the southern counties at this time; an exceptionally early report of a migrant shrike on Mar. 13 came from Mesdames Olive Compton and

Dixie Larkin in Waukesha County; fox sparrows, quite early, appeared in several places.

First dates for the four common blackbirds—red-wing, rusty, grackle and cowbird—formed an interesting pattern. All four species were reported from various parts of southern Wisconsin prior to March 13, most observers reporting only one or two of the four species. But the same observers tended not to report the species they had missed until the closing days of March, two weeks or more later. In other words, the intense cold which settled over the state about the middle of the month at least stemmed further northward movement, and probably sent some birds back to the edges of open water.

By the time the warming weather recurred late in March, a number of species were late in arriving, and the cold snap appeared to leave enduring marks on what remained of the waterbird migration. Once things opened up, birds pushed through quickly, with fewer concentrations built up by lingering. The only comments made as to numbers and distribution of waterbirds in April were to the general effect that they were present in fewer places and in smaller numbers than in more recent years. But the last half of April did produce a few good waterbird records. On April 17 a Holboell's grebe was reported from Barron County, and on the same date, a Western grebe from Ozaukee County. And on April 30, a white-fronted goose was found at Horicon and the European widgeon first appeared on Goose Pond in Columbia County.

Shorebirds produced few good records. The first golden plovers were found in Columbia County April 19, and thereafter were more common than usual in parts of Dane and Columbia Counties. A stilt sandpiper was found in Dane County April 20, quite early, and a Hudsonian godwit appeared there April 27 and was seen by many observers in the day or so thereafter.

But otherwise there were few surprises between mid-March and the end of April. After the first of April, passerines tended to drift in more or less on schedule, and nothing extraordinary appeared with them. By April 30, eight species of warblers had been reported (most having just then arrived), but this number is neither particularly large nor small.

All told, the early spring season was good compared to most seasons, and suffered only by comparison with the quite unusual winter period which preceded it.

Here are highlights of the period:

COMMON LOON: Mrs. Walter Rogers in Winnebago County, and Tom Soulen in Dane County, reported the first arrivals April 1. Reports of many others showed the bird overspreading the state in the week that followed.

RED-THROATED LOON: A conspicuous winter resident along Lake Michigan at a few favored places in Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties. The Carl Fristers reported the species still present April 17 in Ozaukee County.

HOLBOELL'S GREBE: A single bird in breeding plumage was studied by John Butler on Kagamo Lake, Barron County, April 17.

HORNED GREBE: A single bird on Lake Michigan in Ozaukee County on March 12 (Mrs. R. A. Walker and others) was perhaps a win-

tering individual. The next dates were March 25 in Jefferson County (Mrs. Elizabeth Degner) and April 1 on Lake Winnebago (Mrs. Walter Rogers).

WESTERN GREBE: This handsome species loitered well into the winter period off Virmond Park in Ozaukee County, but was not found there again until April 17 when reported by the Carl Fristers.

PIED-BILLED GREBE: Ed Peartree reported what may have been a wintering bird from Waukesha County Feb. 19. Bob Bates saw a single bird in Jefferson County March 12, and numerous observations were reported by March 20.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: April 8 in Brown County (Ed Paulson) was the first report, with many other reports by April 20.

GREAT BLUE HERON: One or more birds apparently wintered in Adams County (Sam Robbins), but Mrs. Elizabeth Degner's report from Jefferson County March 25 probably marked the first returning bird. By April 1 the species had reappeared over most of the state.

AMERICAN EGRET: A single bird was reported in Waukesha County March 11 by S. Paul Jones, and the L. E. Comptons saw two birds in the same place April 2. Thereafter reliable reports of one or more birds seen came from each of these counties: Columbia (Howard Winkler and others); Dane (Sam Robbins); Dodge (the Carl Fristers); Iowa (Mrs. R. A. Walker); Jefferson (Mrs. Elizabeth Degner); Rock (Mrs. Melva Maxson); and Sheboygan (Tom Soulen and others).

GREEN HERON: Ed Peartree's date of April 17 from Waukesha County was eight days earlier than the next report, but there were a number of records from southern Wisconsin by April 28 and it was seen as far north as Wausau April 30 (Sam Robbins and others).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: The L. E. Comptons reported a wintering bird in Waukesha County (see "By the Wayside"). The April 3 record from the Carl Fristers in Milwaukee appeared to be the first migrant reported.

AMERICAN BITTERN: Mrs. Melva Maxson reported a lone individual in Rock County on Feb. 14, doubtless a wintering bird. The Harold Liebherers in Rock County and N. R. Stone in Burnett County reported the first returning birds April 11, and many others reported the species in the week that followed.

WHISTLING SWAN: The first date was March 13 from Brown County (Ed Cleary); and the last date was April 16 on Lake Winnebago (Mrs. Walter Rogers). Numbers were down substantially in the usual places where the birds are expected in Jefferson, Dane and Columbia counties.

CANADA GOOSE: Mrs. Emma Hoffmann's date of March 1 from Waukesha County was the earliest record of transient birds. There were many reports from southern Wisconsin by March 4, and broken lines of geese, totaling a thousand or more birds, were still pushing north from Adams County on April 23 (Sam Robbins and Bill Foster). Sam Robbins reported two distinctly smaller individuals in a flock of Canadas on April 1 in Adams County.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: A single bird was first noted April 30 by Dick Hunt in the rearing pens at the State Conservation Head-

quarters on Horicon Marsh where it had joined the penned Canadas. It was last seen there May 16.

SNOW AND BLUE GEESE: Both species were first reported March 11 in Waukesha County by S. Paul Jones. The flight of both this spring was small and few observers reported substantial numbers.

EUROPEAN WIDGEON: A male (and perhaps a female, too, judging from coloration and continued association with the male) was observed among the baldpates on Goose Pond, Columbia County, April 30 by Bill Foster. It was thereafter seen by numerous observers and was last reported there May 8.

HARLEQUIN DUCK: A young male, first reported by Carl Frister on Feb. 5 (see "By the Wayside") at Port Washington, Ozaukee County, was seen thereafter by numerous observers and last reported there March 14 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER: A few birds were reported along Lake Michigan in the period Feb. 27 through March 11, with the Milwaukee County records coming from Bob Bates and Mary Donald, and the Ozaukee County record from Tom Soulen.

AMERICAN SCOTER: A flock of eight birds was observed on Lake Michigan off Virmond Park in Ozaukee County March 12 (Bill Foster and others).

TURKEY VULTURE: First reported March 26 from Waukesha County by Tom Soulen. There were the following sporadic records during the next month: Adams County (Sam Robbins); Crawford (George Knudsen); Sawyer (Karl Kahmann); Vernon (Margarette Morse); and Winnebago (Frank King).

GOSHAWK: These reports were received Adams County, March 28 (Sam Robbins); Bayfield County, April 9 (David Bratley); Brown County, March 20 (Ed Cleary); Milwaukee County, Feb. 6 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom and the Carl Fristers); and also on March 5 (Tom Soulen).

OSPREY: David Bratley's report from Bayfield County on April 10 was followed a week later by Dr. Charles Kemper's report from Chippewa County. By April 23 there were numerous and widespread reports.

DUCK HAWK: Margarette Morse's report of March 19 from Vernon County was rather early. The only other report came April 30 from Ed Paulson in Brown County.

PIGEON HAWK: Reports from Jefferson County on March 12 (Bill Foster) and Waukesha County on March 13 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin) were exceptionally early and doubtless were connected with the substantial northward movement taking place during the warm spell that ended soon afterwards. Other reports came from the following counties: Outagamie, March 20 (Alfred Bradford); Bayfield, April 6 (David Bratley); Brown, April 9 (Ed Cleary); Dunn, April 10 (H. E. Clark); and Barron, April 17 (John Butler).

SANDHILL CRANE: First reported April 6 in Adams County by Sam Robbins. Thereafter, in the earliest daylight hours, its strident calls could be heard rolling across the Leola Marsh in n.e. Adams County during the rest of April.

VIRGINIA RAIL: The only date was April 23, from Sam Robbins and Bill Foster in Adams County.

SORA: April 29 in Adams County (S. P. Jones and Sam Robbins) was the only report.

KILLDEER: First date came from Lola Welch and Ethel Olson in Lafayette County March 1. By the middle of the month it had pretty well overspread the state.

GOLDEN PLOVER: Sam Robbins reported a few birds present at Goose Pond in Columbia County on April 19. Observers in the Columbia-Dane area found it present in larger than usual numbers thereafter through the first week of May.

WOODCOCK: The earliest dates reported came from Mrs. Emma Hoffmann in Waukesha County on March 12 and Norman Stone on March 17 in Burnett County. Sporadic reports of arrival came in from the rest of the state through the first week of April.

WILSON'S SNIPE: A few hardier birds survived the winter, or most of it, along the margins of open water. Reports beginning March 31 from Ed Cleary in Brown County appeared to mark the returning movement of southern birds.

UPLAND PLOVER: Mrs. Howard Higgins' date of April 10 from Kenosha County was six days earlier than the next report, which came from Ed Cleary in Brown County. Numerous reports from other observers soon followed.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: Lola Welch and Ethel Olson reported it from Lafayette County on April 16, a quite early date. Sam Robbins and Bill Foster found it April 23 in Adams County, and there were few other April reports.

GREATER AND LESSER YELLOW-LEGS: Four of the larger, and ten of the smaller, species were observed around a thawing farm pond in Dane County on April 3 by Bill Foster. Mrs. Howard Higgins found the lesser at Kenosha the same day, and both species appeared widely distributed over the state by mid-April.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER: Sam Robbins found it in Adams County March 30, and there were sporadic reports until mid-April, after which time it was generally common over the state.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: Mrs. R. A. Walker and Dick Wills found a single individual in a flooded field in Dane County on April 27, and numerous observers saw it there through April 29.

STILT SANDPIPER: Tom Soulen reported a lone bird in a mixed flock of yellow-legs in a flooded field in Dane County, April 20. No other April record.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: First reported April 20 at a pond in the northern part of Dane County by Tom Soulen, and the species was thereafter present at that place and at Goose Pond in Columbia County through the end of April.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: Mrs. Howard Higgins reported a single bird on a breakwater at Kenosha on Feb. 20.

ICELAND GULL: The bird first reported Jan. 30 by Carl Frister (see 1955 Passenger Pigeon 82, 89) at Jones Island in Milwaukee was seen by many observers after that time and was last reported there on March 13 (Carl Frister).

BONAPARTE'S GULL: The Carl Fristers reported the species' return to the Milwaukee harbor by April 3, and Bill Foster found one bird on Crystal Lake, Dane County, April 9. Few other April records.

FORSTER'S TERN: Three birds on Lake Wingra, Madison, on April 23 (Bill Foster) were the earliest reported.

COMMON TERN: First reported on April 13 from Ed Cleary in Brown County, with the next report coming ten days later from Mary Donald in Milwaukee.

CASPIAN TERN: A vanguard of this species occasionally shows up in mid-April, three weeks or more ahead of its arrival in numbers. Such a record came this year on April 17 when Ed Paulson reported it from Brown County, for the only April record received.

BLACK TERN: The only April reports were from Lola Welch and Ethel Olson in Lafayette County on the 25th, and from the Carl Fristers at Horicon on the 29th.

MOURNING DOVE: A few birds wintered. A flurry of dates immediately followed Sam Robbins' report from Adams County, March 9, and apparently marked returning birds. But the real return to the state in force did not begin until the closing days of March.

BARN OWL: A dead bird, freshly killed by a car, was picked up along a roadside south of Madison on March 20 by Mrs. R. A. Walker.

SNOWY OWL: A bird in downtown Waukesha on Feb. 25 was seen by many observers (Mrs. L. E. Compton). A number of reports came in from Columbia, Dane, Milwaukee, Rock and Waukesha Counties shortly before the middle of March. The one observed April 6 in Chippewa County by Dr. Charles Kemper "looked like a pile of wet wash" and was the last date reported from the state.

SAW-WHET OWL: A pair wintered in the Arboretum at Madison (see "By the Wayside") and was last seen there April 7 by Dick Wills and Tom Soulen. John Butler also reported a single bird from Barron County.

WHIP-POOR-WILL: Robert Bethe's report from Brown County on April 29 was the first report received.

CHIMNEY SWIFT: Lola Welch and Ethel Olson reported it from Lafayette County April 24, and the species was common as far north as Wausau by April 30 (many observers at W.S.O. convention).

FLICKER: A few birds winter, and perhaps the March 10 report from Sam Robbins in Adams County was one of these. The abundance of records commencing the first of April in the southern counties and spreading north to Barron County (John Butler) on April 7 apparently marked the return of the species in force.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER: A lone bird wintered successfully at Madison (Mrs. R. A. Walker), but the dates beginning with the April 3 report from Nils Dahlstrand in Jefferson County apparently marked its return as a transient and it was generally present over the state within the next ten days.

PHOEBE: Sam Robbins reported the first returning bird to Adams County on March 30, and John Butler found it the following day as far north as Barron County. The abundance of records in the next three days showed its return in force during that period.

TREE SWALLOW: Mrs. Howard Higgins reported it first from Kenosha County on March 31. Within the next week there were enough scattered records to indicate a few birds, at least, had put in an appearance over most of the state.

BANK SWALLOW: Mrs. Elizabeth Degner reported it from Jefferson County on April 22, and Sam Robbins found it in Adams County April 25. There were few other April records.

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW: First reported by the Carl Fristers from Milwaukee on April 17, and it was generally present over the southern portion of the state within the next week.

BARN SWALLOW: A single bird over Crystal Lake, Dane County, on April 9 (Bill Foster) was the earliest reported. Ed Cleary observed it in Brown County on the 10th, but the bulk of reports indicated that it was after April 20 before the bird was conspicuously present over the state.

CLIFF SWALLOW: Sam Robbins' report from Adams County on April 25 was somewhat early, and no other April report was received.

PURPLE MARTIN: The April 2 date from Tom Soulen in Dane County was the earliest by almost a week, and records prior to April 20 indicated it was not widely present before that time.

CANADA JAY: Reports of this species from Wisconsin depend primarily on whether observers visit the limited areas in which it is regularly found. Tom Soulen did this on April 11 in Oneida County.

HUDSONIAN CHICKADEE: The individual first found at Madison December 6 remained steadily in the same area until at least March 26 (Dick Wills). Tom Soulen also reported the species from Oneida County April 4.

HOUSE WREN: The report in Lafayette County April 13 from Lola Welch and Ethel Olson is strikingly early and most observers did not report its presence until the closing days of the month.

BEWICK'S WREN: Sam Robbins found it singing in Adams on April 2, and found it thereafter in a total of five locations in Adams and Friendship. The Norval Bangers had a singing bird around their home at Madison for several days shortly after Robbins' first report, and Alvin Peterson reported it from La Crosse on April 24.

CAROLINA WREN: One or more birds were steadily present at Virmond Park, Ozaukee County, throughout the period and were seen and heard there by many observers.

SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN: S. Paul Jones and Sam Robbins found it in Adams County April 29, the only report for the period.

CATBIRD: Reported April 30 from Lafayette County (Lola Welch and Ethel Olson), Dane County (Bill Foster) and Sheboygan County (Harold Koopmann).

BROWN THRASHER: A single bird, protected by an evergreen hedgerow and supplied with adequate food from a nearby feeder, wintered successfully at Madison (Mrs. R. A. Walker and others). The first returning bird was reported April 13 from Lafayette County (Ethel Olson and Lola Welch), and a few observers found it elsewhere in the ten days thereafter, but it was not until April 23 that the bird was widely present in the state.

ROBIN: Return dates were somewhat confusing. A few birds wintered, and doubtless some of the February records apply to them; but it is nearly impossible to ascertain from the many March reports just when the species returned to the state in substantial force.

WOOD THRUSH: Ed Paulson's record from Brown County on April 29 was the only report in the period.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH: Ed Cleary and Ed Paulson both reported the bird from Brown County, April 23, uncommonly early, and the only April record.

BLUEBIRD: Perhaps the bird noted Feb. 7 by Lola Welch and Ethel Olson in Lafayette County spent the winter there, because subsequent records from other observers were not until March, and these return dates, like those of the robin, present a confused picture of the species' return.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD: Mrs. Frank Hayes, who reported the first records of this western species for Wisconsin in December, 1954 (see 1955 *Passenger Pigeon* 59), wrote that "two more of these beautiful birds came to the yard of Mrs. Henry F. Fleming, of Superior, Wisconsin, on the morning of March 8, 1955; still interested in the hopa-crab tree, as previously reported."

BLUE GRAY-GNATCATCHER: The single bird on the University of Wisconsin campus at Madison, April 28 (Bill Foster), was the only April record noted.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: Carl Frister noted it on April 6 in Milwaukee, and within four or five days thereafter many observers in the southern counties had found it.

AMERICAN PIPIT: Tom Soulen found it at Goose Pond, Columbia County April 29.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: A number of good records. Ed Peartree saw a single bird in Waukesha County February 6, and David Bratley saw one the same day in Bayfield County. Bratley thereafter reported it from Bayfield County in numbers up to fifty birds on three occasions in March and his last date for the period was April 6, when seven birds were observed. H. E. Clark observed a flock of 40 in Dunn County February 7; Mrs. Spencer Doty saw a flock of 14 in Marathon County, Feb. 12; and Dr. Charles Kemper saw 31 in Chippewa County on February 26.

CEDAR WAXWING: Roving flocks apparently wintered over much of the state, judging from the scattering of dates throughout the period of February through April.

NORTHERN SHRIKE: A good shrike winter (see 1955 *Passenger Pigeon* 91). The bird appeared more numerous around the middle of March, judging from reports, and this probably coincided with the return of the species northward, since the last record came April 2 from Ed Cleary in Brown County.

MIGRANT SHRIKE: The March 13 report from Mesdames L. E. Compton and F. L. Larkin in Waukesha County is quite early for this species, but the record is consistent with the early movement occasioned by the unusually warm spell which terminated shortly thereafter.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER: Dr. Charles Kemper reported it April 27 from Chippewa County, and John Butler saw it in Barron County on April 29.

TENNESSEE WARBLER: H. E. Clark's date of April 29 in Dunn County was the only one for the period.

NASHVILLE WARBLER: The only record was April 30 in Dane County (Bill Foster).

YELLOW WARBLER: Only record: Milwaukee, April 29 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

MYRTLE WARBLER: The first report came from Mrs. Balsom in Milwaukee on April 5, and a number of records within the next weeks showed the bird's spread had reached as far north as Barron County (John Butler) by April 12.

PINE WARBLER: The first date came from Adams County, April 19 (Sam Robbins).

PALM WARBLER: First date: Adams County, April 23 (Sam Robbins).

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH: First date: Adams County, April 19 (Sam Robbins).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Mrs. A. P. Balsom reported it from Dodge County, April 17; Tom Soulen from Columbia County, April 20; and Ed Cleary from Brown County, April 23.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: Lola Welch and Ethel Olson reported it from Lafayette County, April 30.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: The only records for the period came from Lafayette County on April 27 (Lola Welch and Ethel Olson) and Dunn County on April 30 (H. E. Clark).

EVENING GROSBEAK: Observed in almost every county from which reports were received. Nowhere were really large numbers seen, but the reports were more or less evenly spaced throughout the period from early February through early April. Thereafter the reports were fewer and came primarily from the more northern counties, with the last report coming from Wausau on April 29 (Doris Vesely).

PINE GROSBEAK: John Butler regarded them as "fairly common" during the winter in Barron County; otherwise, the following were the only reports received: Bayfield County, regularly in small numbers between February 12 and March 23 (David Bratley); Dane County, February 19 (Bill Foster); Eau Claire County, February 13 (C. A. Kemper); and Sawyer County, February 21 (Karl Kahmann).

REDPOLL: Generally a poor showing, with a handful of scattered dates from northern and central counties. Ed Paulson's last report from Brown County on April 20 was somewhat later than usual.

PINE SISKIN: A pair noted at Madison on March 19 (Bill Foster) were perhaps birds wintering in the area. Ed Peartree noted seven birds in Waukesha County on April 17, and soon afterwards it was noted by observers in widely scattered areas of the state.

RED CROSSBILL: The only reports for the period came from Doris Vesely, who reported "many" from Vilas County on March 26, and found a single bird at Wausau on April 15.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: Mrs. A. P. Balsom noted it in Waukesha County February 15, and a single bird was seen by Mrs. R. A. Walker and others in Dane County on March 19.

TOWHEE: Mrs. Paul Hoffman found it in Waukesha County on April 2, with the next date coming on April 10 from Adams (Sam Robbins), Brown (Ed Cleary), and Fond du Lac (Rev. George Henseler) Counties. There were many records from others soon after this time.

SAVANNAH SPARROW: The first reports were on April 10, from Jefferson County (Mrs. Elizabeth Degner), and Winnebago County (Mrs. Glen Fisher).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: Adams County, April 23 (Sam Robbins and Bill Foster).

HENSLOW'S SPARROW: April 23 in Adams County (Sam Robbins and Bill Foster) and Brown County (Ed Cleary and Ed Paulson).

VESPER SPARROW: March 31 in Adams County (Sam Robbins) and the species appeared widely distributed by April 10.

LARK SPARROW: First on April 22 in Lafayette County (Lola Welch and Ethel Olson) and April 25 in Adams County (Sam Robbins).

OREGON-TYPE JUNCO: Wintered in the following counties, generally around feeding stations: Brown (Ed Cleary), Dane (Mrs. R. A. Walker), and Waukesha (Mrs. L. E. Compton). It was also observed on several occasions in Milwaukee County by Mrs. A. P. Balsom, and in Adams and Dane Counties by Sam Robbins. See "By the Wayside."

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: Adams County, April 29 (S. Paul Jones and Sam Robbins); Milwaukee, April 30 (Mary Donald).

FIELD SPARROW: Reported March 19 from Dane County (Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lound), but most reports did not appear until the end of March or the early days of April.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: No wintering birds were reported. A lone bird observed at Madison in a flock of juncos, March 20, had almost certainly not wintered in the place found (Bill Foster), but despite scattered reports thereafter, the species did not become common in the state until the middle of April.

FOX SPARROW: Migration pattern spotty. The first report came from Ozaukee County, March 12 (Mrs. R. A. Walker and others) and in the next two days there were several other records from the southern counties. A gap in reports followed, and it was not until the last days of the month that others were reported elsewhere, with most dates occurring soon after April 1.

SWAMP SPARROW: A few birds wintered around open water, as at the Fish Hatchery south of Madison (N. R. Barger). The March 19 date from Dane County (Bill Foster and others) was perhaps of a bird that wintered in the area but not at the place found. A few dates appeared around the first of April and scattered reports thereafter indicate that it was not until the third week of April that it could be regarded as having returned in any numbers to its customary locations.

SONG SPARROW: A handful of birds winter, and may be expected in likely habitat anywhere in southern Wisconsin. Reported dates make difficult an assessment of the species' return movement into the state, but it was clear that singing birds were present in the southern counties soon after the first of March, and were not reported from the northern counties until the end of the month or early April.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR: No particular pattern of movement was discernable from the dates reported. 500 or more were found in Dane County on March 5 (Bill Foster and others), and dates thereafter range irregularly through March and April from observers in scattered localities over the state. In Dane County, where they generally occur in multitudes during late April and early May, the impression was created that fewer birds had been observed during that period (Bill Foster).

SNOW BUNTING: Probably close to a "normal" season for this irregular wanderer. A number of observers reported them in varying numbers up to 100 or more birds during February and early March; the last date came from Ed Paulson in Brown County on March 28.

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 1, 1955 (Madison)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Fran William Hall speaking on "Hawaii, U. S. A.," at West High School at 8:00 p. m.

December 1-7, 1955 (State-wide)—Field notes for August-November should be sent to the Associate Editor.

December 6, 1955 (Beloit)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Alfred G. Etter speaking on "A Missouri Story," at Eaton Chapel at 8:15 p. m.

December 24-January 2, 1955-56 (State-wide)—Christmas bird count dates.

January 12, 1956 (Milwaukee)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Emerson Scott speaking on "Rocky Mountain Rambles," at the Shorewood Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.

January 13, 1956 (Madison)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Emerson Scott speaking on "Rocky Mountain Rambles," at West High School at 8:00 p. m.

January 15, 1956 (State-wide)—Christmas Bird Counts should be sent to the Associate Editor and to Audubon Field Notes; cooperative fall migration data should be sent to the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

February 26, 1956 (Milwaukee)—W.S.O. field trip to Lake Michigan shore.

March 1-7, 1956 (State-wide)—Field notes for December, January and February should be sent to the Associate Editor.

March 16, 1956 (Madison)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Robert P. Allen speaking on "The Long Flight Back," at West High School at 8:00 p. m.

March 17, 1956 (Milwaukee)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Robert P. Allen speaking on "The Long Flight Back," at the Shorewood Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.

April 2, 1956 (Milwaukee)—Audubon Screen Tour, with George Regensburg speaking on "Little Known New Jersey," at the Shorewood Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.

April 8, 1956 (Lake Winnebago)—W.S.O. field trip to see swans.

April 23, 1956 (Madison)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Olin Sewall Pettengill speaking on "Penguin Summer," at West High School at 8:00 p. m.

April 24, 1956 (Beloit)—Audubon Screen Tour, with Olin Sewall Pettengill speaking on "Penguin Summer," at Eaton Chapel at 8:15 p. m.

May 4-6, 1956 (Beloit)—W.S.O. annual convention.

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COOPERATIVE FALL MIGRATION STUDY

The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service is again enlisting all available help in studying the fall migration patterns of certain key species. Active field observers, banders and feeding station operators are invited to contribute arrival, peak and departure dates for the following species: Canada goose, mallard, broad-winged hawk, Wilson's snipe, mourning dove, nighthawk, chimney swift, crested flycatcher, catbird, hermit thrush, golden-crowned kinglet, myrtle warbler, red-wing, Baltimore oriole, bronzed grackle, rose-breasted grosbeak, evening grosbeak, slate-colored junco, tree sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, white-throated sparrow and fox sparrow.

It is not necessary to be able to furnish complete information on all these species in order to contribute; even if you have only limited information on a few of these species, the data will be useful. Some of the data will be used by research workers who are studying the movements of a particular species; other data will be used to correlate bird migration with weather conditions.

The editor has a supply of forms that can be used for sending in data, and will be happy to furnish them on request. The forms should be sent to Mr. Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland, by January 15, 1956.



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