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# *The* PASSENGER PIGEON

VOLUME VIII

*April, 1946*

NUMBER 2



WOODCOCK INCUBATING

EDWARD PRINS

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN BIRD STUDY

*Published Quarterly By*

THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, Inc.

## NEWS . . .

Now that most of our members are back in Wisconsin again **The Passenger Pigeon** will resume its program of gathering information about specific Wisconsin birds. Usually the birds selected are species about which little is currently known, at least as far as our state is concerned, so the results of the studies should be of interest to all members. Incidentally, information so gathered will be useful to Mr. Gromme also in his book, "Birds of Wisconsin." Thus we have consulted him for suitable subjects. The first subject of this series appears on a detachable sheet in this issue. You are asked to give it your immediate attention.

The society has been given a copy of the new book, "A Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology," written by O. S. Pettingill, Jr. It is a complementary copy from the Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis. This book has been reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

Dr. T. S. Roberts, author of "The Birds of Minnesota," died April 19, 1946, at the age of 88. Some details of his career will appear in our next issue.

A gold pin reading "Mother" was found in the auditorium where the convention was held in Appleton. The loser may contact Mrs. W. E. Rogers, Appleton, to recover the pin.

Our supply of check lists of Wisconsin Birds has been exhausted. If there are any books still out on consignment, the holders are hereby requested to report to E. L. Loyster, Middleton, Wisconsin, immediately.

A "Bird Enchantment Garden" exhibited by the Madison District of Wisconsin Garden Clubs, May 24 to 26 at the Spring Flower Show, Wauwatosa, won a blue ribbon. Three WSO members took part in the arrangements: Mrs. R. A. Walker, Madison, served as chairman of the committee that planned and executed the garden. Miss Ruth Stillman, Madison East High School, furnished the mounted birds from her biology department. And Mrs. N. R. Barger, president of the Madison District of Wisconsin Garden Clubs, assisted.

Some years ago **The Passenger Pigeon** tabulated the whereabouts of many preserved passenger pigeons in Wisconsin. Dr. Schorger advises us today that the museum of Viterbo College, La Crosse, has a specimen. This institution also possesses a specimen of the trumpeter swan, but this originated in one of the western states.

The WSO had a very successful convention this year April 6-7. The attendance was splendid and the banquet was excellent. The society is indebted to Mrs. Rogers in particular for this splendid success.

Prof. William Rowan of the University of Alberta was guest speaker, March 18, last, for the Kumlien Bird Club meeting in Madison. Prof. Rowan presented many of his classic experiments dealing with the reasons for bird migration.

We understand from W. E. Scott that a specimen of a male passenger pigeon is to be sold by Mrs. E. W. Harrington, 622 East Main Street, Madison. This mounted specimen was collected near Janesville by her grandfather.

According to the treasurer's report delivered in Appleton as of April 1, 1946, the society spent \$900 (round numbers) for the previous year's operations. At that time there was a cash balance of \$860 (round numbers again) and more than \$325 in bonds.

The American Ornithologists' Union will hold its first annual meeting since 1942 on September 2 to 5 in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. This will be a regular meeting, with presentation of papers, a banquet, social gatherings, and field trips. Headquarters will be in the new Illini Union Building of the University of Illinois, where the business meetings on Monday, September 2, will be held. Here an excellent cafeteria is available, and conference or lounging rooms will be at the disposal of members and visitors.

Reservations for rooms should be made immediately at either the Inman Hotel in Champaign or at the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel in Urbana. Guests who cannot be accommodated by the hotels will be placed in rooms in private homes.

MEMBERSHIP FEE OF \$1 INCLUDES 75 CENTS FOR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE PASSENGER PIGEON, QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC. SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS: SUSTAINING \$5; LIFE \$25; PATRON \$50 OR MORE. SEND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS AND DUES TO THE TREASURER, J. HARWOOD EVANS, 517 JACKSON DRIVE, OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN. SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO THE EDITOR, N. R. BARGER, 4333 HILLCREST DRIVE, MADISON 5, WISCONSIN.

ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER SEPT. 4, 1940, AT THE POST OFFICE OF MADISON, WISCONSIN, UNDER THE ACT OF MAR. 3, 1879.

# OBSERVATIONS OF ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN BIRDS

By HARRY G. ANDERSON

Few ornithologists, in their life-time of studying birds, have an opportunity to observe pelagic birds of either the Atlantic or Pacific oceans. Those students of wildlife, who were of draft age and who participated in World War II in all parts of the world had such opportunity to acquire a knowledge of world avifauna. Men in the navy were better enabled to observe birds of the oceans, while those in the army and marines had more occasion to study land birds of the continents and islands.

However, observations made under wartime conditions had many undesirable but necessary limitations. Bird records are of little value without a certain amount of attended data, such as date, location (latitude and longitude), number of birds, weather conditions, habits, distance from land, direction of flight, and other things. Navy regulations prohibited the keeping of diaries or any records which would reveal the group movements of the fleet. With this rule in effect, it has been necessary for me to simply recollect as closely as possibly during wartime leaves at home and after being discharged from the naval service, the times of bird observations, location and distances from land.

The following series of notations were made from three years of "bird-watching" at sea, over a distance of approximately 155,000 sea miles in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. For a period of many days, no observations were or could be made due to the exigencies of war or weather conditions.

In presenting this article, it was thought best to divide the observations into those of the Gulf Area, Bermuda Area, Central Atlantic, North Atlantic and Mediterranean. For each area an attempt is made to show resident populations, migration movements, abundance and any subsequent interesting facts. Nearly all dates and distances are approximate.

## The Gulf Area

For nine months, from June to March, observations were made in the Gulf area while on patrol and convoy duty. During the month of June, least terns were few and scattered, possibly due to nesting period. They never ventured or were seen for any distance to sea. Man-o-war birds, noddies and sooty terns were very common. The man-o-war birds were usually alone, although occasionally a few pairs or small groups could be seen at any hour of the day, as much as 100 miles from land. The last two were present in large flocks along the Florida coastline, the "Keys," Cuba and the Bahamas. They seldom were seen more than 50 miles from land. Sooty terns were not observed north of latitude of northern Florida and noddies were not seen north of the Florida Keys.

Brown pelicans were present in small flocks near the continental coastline, and there appeared to be a general northward movement. The local fishermen stated, "Pelicans always start moving northward at this time of the year." This fact was substantiated since observations from

the last of June until the latter half of September covered only a very few individuals.

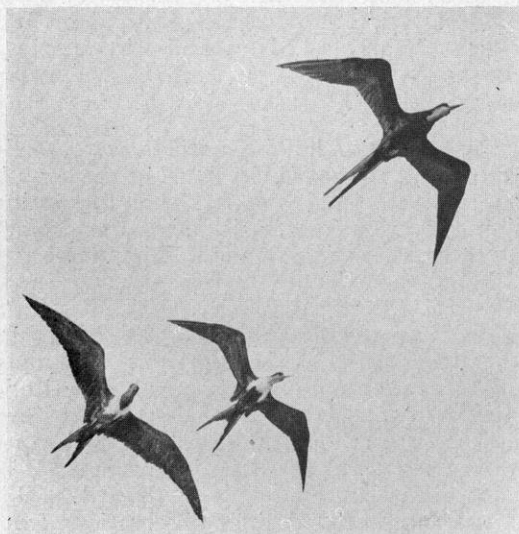
Some shearwaters were seen during June, namely, greater shearwaters. These were more numerous than the other species and were seen at great distances from land; in fact, they seldom were observed within the 10 mile zone. Now and then an Audubon's shearwater would appear near the ship in search of food in the wake or for marine organisms brought to the surface by the ship's movement. Wilson's and Leache's petrels were always present, weaving back and forth over the wake of the ship, or skimming the surface of the waves—dipping into the troughs with the wind currents. One lone yellow-billed tropic bird was seen about 50 miles off St. Pearce, Florida. It was not surprising to find one so near United States soil since they are quite common about the Bahamas.

Even though it seemed very early for birds to be moving southward, nevertheless, it was not uncommon for sandpipers (sp) to be sighted a few miles at sea, southward bound, expertly skimming the wave crests.

Toward the end of June and early July, laughing gulls (adult and immature) began to appear in the Gulf area. Herring gulls and ring-billed gulls were common most of the time in the vicinity of shore.

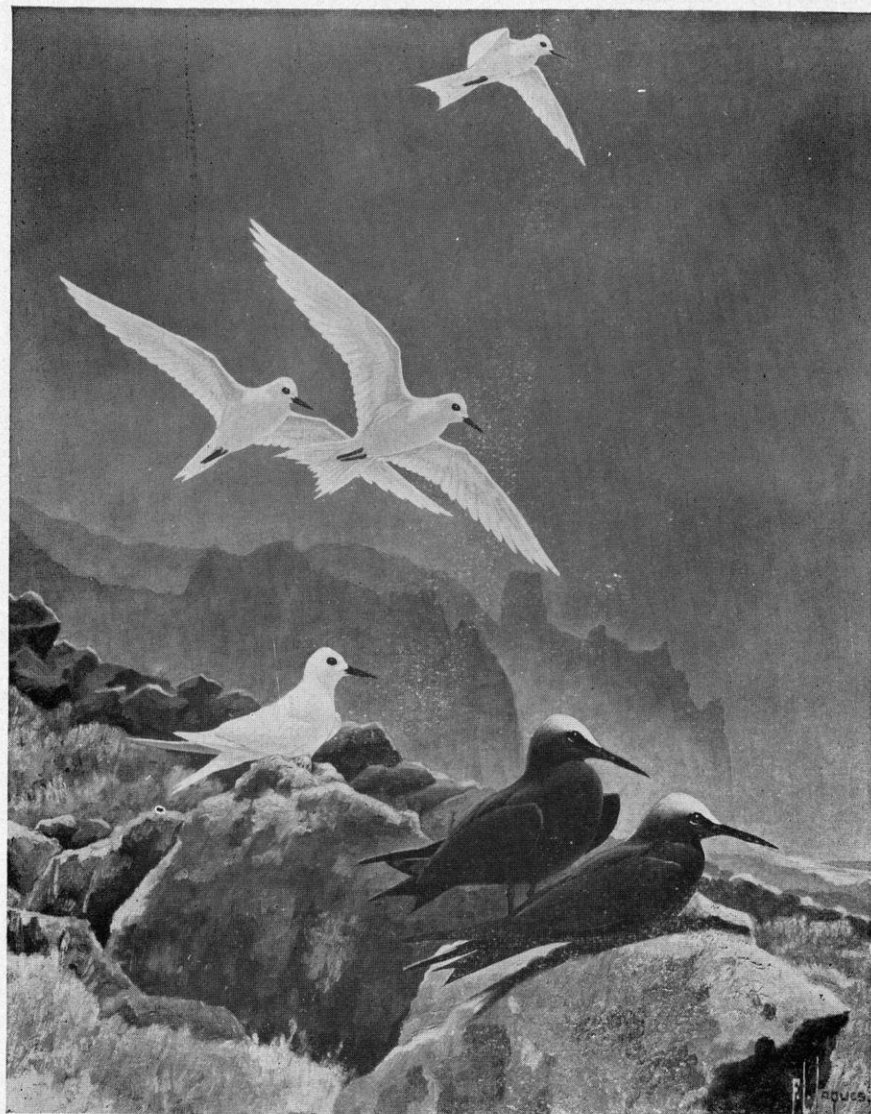
There was little change in species during July and August, but during September new species appeared and the abundance of summer residents markedly increased while at the same time there was an exodus of some birds. Immature black terns first appeared early in the month, followed in a week by the Caspian and royal terns. It would seem that these birds were to fill the niches vacated when the least and sooty terns and noddies disappeared in late September.

During mid-September, I was fortunate in being able to visit for a couple of hours the National Park of Fort Jefferson, on the next-to-the-last island in the Florida key chain. Bushy Key, a nearby sandy island, is the only nesting site for the sooties and noddies in the United States.



MAN-O-WAR BIRDS  
MAJESTICALLY SOAR FOR  
HOURS ON APPARENTLY  
MOTIONLESS WINGS

PHOTO—COURTESY OF  
THE AMERICAN  
MUSEUM OF NATURAL  
HISTORY



#### FAIRY TERNS AND BLACK NODDIES

THE COLONY-NESTING NODDIES BREED IN THE UNITED STATES ONLY ON THE LOWER KEYS

PHOTO—COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

At this time there were still 800 sooties and 100 noddies which is only a very small fraction of the population during the peak of the nesting season. The supervisor estimated a population of 100,000 birds use these sandy pits—along with man-o-war birds and giant sea turtles—to rear their young.

Other birds noted were: Sanderling, semi-palmated plovers, Atlantic blue-faced boobies and white-bellied boobies, man-o-war birds, brown pelicans, kingfisher, barn swallow and one duck hawk. According to the supervisor, the duck hawk is a frequent visitor to Fort Jefferson.

By October, double-crested cormorants appeared in the Gulf area. All other species, such as pelicans, Caspian and royal terns, and boobies had been increasing in abundance.

Lesser scaup ducks, red-throated and northern loons started to arrive in November and increased in numbers until January. Bonaparte's gulls, without the black head, were increasing. Scattered parasitic and pomarine jaegers were first observed about the middle of November and never did increase in abundance. Individuals would often follow in the wake of the ship for food scraps, in company with petrels.

About mid-December, gannets arrived in the area to remain until February when they started to move north again. The general northward movement for most species commenced early in February.

The birds noted above do not include the many species of land birds observed at sea during the northward and southward migration movements. I might add that small birds such as warblers and sparrows were seen in flocks many miles to sea.

### **The Bermuda Area**

One month (May) was spent in the Bermuda area, with only a limited time for bird observations. The following notes are of interest for purposes of comparison. The most interesting bird to be found in this area was the yellow-billed tropic bird. Most sea-going men call it the boatswain bird because of the centrally elongated tail feathers. In Great Sound Bay they were very common and would venture out to sea 75-100 miles in quest of food. Like other pelagic birds, they would follow the ships waiting for whatever tidbits might come within vision of their keen eyes. When sitting on the water, they hold their tails very erect in order not to get their "pride and joy" wet! According to the local gentry, they nest on the cliff ledges under an overhang of vegetation, which affords some protection to the one lone egg laid.

Other pelagic birds observed were greater shearwaters, parasitic jaegers, Audubon's shearwater, Wilson petrels and a few Leache's petrels. These birds were frequent visitors about the turned-up water astern of us. Herring gulls and ring-billed gulls were conspicuous in their absence. A few common and black tern flocks were noted, all steadily moving north-westward over the ocean, presumably intent on reaching the eastern seaboard of the United States.

The land birds were the same as we find in the United States, such as catbirds, brown thrashers, robins, myrtle warbler, magnolia warbler, vireos (sp), et cetera. Bermuda ground doves were very numerous throughout the island and most often were flushed from grassy field borders or gardens.

### **The Central Atlantic Area**

In doing convoy work, I was in and out of Norfolk every two months or so and would often see many changes in the bird life; however, most of my information is for the spring months.

Numerous observations were made in Chesapeake Bay and the 60 miles of swept channel out of Norfolk, Virginia. The bay is rather shal-

low with many mud flats and abounds in oysters and fish. It is a fisherman's and oysterman's paradise and equally attractive for fish-eating birds and water birds. The continental shelf extends seaward from Norfolk almost 60 miles, at which point it deepens rapidly. On this shelf, large schools of many fish are found the year round. Whale and porpoise abound here because of the fish and presence of marine organisms influenced by the nearby Gulf Stream. Many birds are drawn into this area because of the food, but the species are limited.

During the month of April, four species of gulls were very common. The Bonaparte and laughing gulls were in all stages of black heads; however, by the end of the month, full breeding plumage had been



WANDERERS OF THE SEA, LONG-TAILED JAEGER HARASS OTHER FISH-EATING BIRDS FOR BOOTY

PHOTO—COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

attained. Herring and ring-billed gulls by the hundreds trailed small fishing craft, waiting for the entrails and cast-off of cleaned fish.

Gannets were very common and could be seen throughout the bay and continental shelf, diving like a plummet into schools of fish. Fishing for these birds was so plentiful that often being gorged, they were unable to take off from the water and were washed away from the side of the ship by the bow wake.

Early in April, the American, surf and white-winged scoters were common in small flocks, but by late April all had disappeared from the region. Off the coast of South Carolina, several thousand of these species have been seen in late February and March, sometimes as far as 100 miles to sea.

A few golden-eyes, old squaws, lesser scaups and ring-necked ducks lingered on well into April. During the closing days of March, a concentration of old squaws, numbering about 1500, was observed in the upper part of Chesapeake Bay.

Ospreys were a common sight in the bay region. To see one dive, hook his talons in a fish, take off, shake himself and high-wing his way to some snag was always an interesting sight.

Parasitic jaegers and greater shearwaters were never seen in the bay but were numerous along the swept channel. The jaegers were rather pugnacious and on many occasions, I saw them force gulls to dis-

gorge fish. They were not adverse to chasing small land birds that ventured too far at sea. One was observed feeding on a meadowlark, atop a buoy some 40 miles out.

Petrels (Wilson's) were conspicuous in their absence during April; however, early in May, they began to appear in the bay and were often present in Hampton Roads, the inner harbor at Norfolk.

Shore birds were numerous in their northward flight as much as 80 miles to sea in this area. Early one morning about April 20, the sea was quite calm and there were numerous whales feeding in the vicinity. Looking out over the quiet waters, large blackish patches could be seen which upon closer examination turned out to be thousands of red and northern phalaropes. They were attracted to this area by herds of small whales on the shelf, bringing many marine organisms to the surface. A few "Wilson's" were mixed in the group but the "reds" predominated.

There was little change in species during May, except for the appearance of least, common, black terns and double-crested cormorants.

Undoubtedly many species were by-passed in the swept channel due to war-time operations which limited bird sightings until we were well out to sea. There were very few days when crossing the central Atlantic that at least a couple of birds per day could not be seen.

Up to 500 miles from our coastline, Audubons and greater shearwaters were common. During the day only single birds as a rule were seen, but in the early morning and evening hours, one could note numbers of them attracted to the ships.

Wilson's and Leache's petrels stayed with ships up to 600 miles from land, but were not seen in mid-Atlantic or any distance greater than this from the continent or large island groups.

Parasitic jaegers wandered all over the ocean and were often seen in mid-Atlantic with the greater and sooty shearwaters.

Whenever we were within a 400-miles radius of Bermuda, it was possible to see yellow-billed tropic birds. Two observations were sighted 350 miles northeast of Bermuda, both being harried by a lone parasitic jaeger which would pursue one for a few minutes, then the other.

From mid-Atlantic eastward, other species of petrels and shearwaters were observed, such as the Mederian storm petrel, which is very common in the region of the Mederia Islands and Azores; the Cory's shearwater which also became more numerous as you approached the Azores and a few Manx's shearwaters. Greater shearwaters were still numerous.

Between the Azores and Gibraltar, few birds were observed due to the stormy weather in this area. Petrels (probably Wilson's) became more numerous as we neared the north African coast.

When within 100 miles of the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean shearwater became numerous but later observations were made north of the Mederia Islands and about the Azores.

During mid-summer birds were few and scattered across the Atlantic, but in the spring and fall months numbers were greater. Whenever we were within 500 miles of either continent, bird numbers increased.

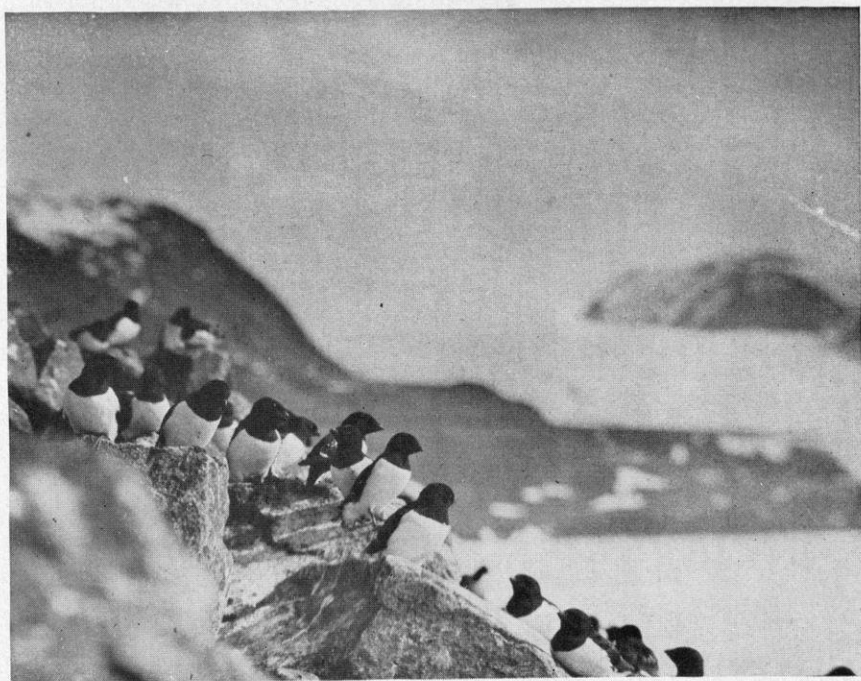
Shearwaters and a few jaegers were predominant mid-Atlantic birds, while gulls, terns, petrels and a few shearwaters and jaegers constituted the off-shore species.

Floating debris will often attract birds. Nearly all of the life-rafts, logs, smashed and half-sunken small wooden boats and drifting buoys encountered, harbored a few birds. This may be for communal purposes as most often sharks or dolphin lingered in the shade the debris offered. Large schools of porpoise were always attended by not a few birds.

### The Mediterranean Area

Mediterranean observations were limited due to war-time operations.

Manx, Cory and Mediterranean shearwaters were quite common. What appeared to be Wilson's petrels were very common. Herring gulls and immature Bonaparte gulls were numerous. The latter species had quite a habit of resting on sea turtles' backs.



THE LITTLE AUK PREFERS THE COLD FOG-BOUND WATERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

PHOTO—COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

A few parasitic jaegers were seen and one other jaeger-like bird which was not identified.

Common terns were frequent visitors in the wake, with the petrels.

Two great black-backed gulls were observed in the month of August on a latitude comparable to Norfolk.

One short trip afield in North Africa was made, with numerous birds being sighted but not identified except as to general classification. Marsh hawks were numerous. There were hundreds of horned larks, swallows, swifts, sparrows, doves, meadowlarks and thrushes along the roadsides and in the fields. English sparrows were quite common.

## The North Atlantic Area

The area from latitude of New York northward is considered North Atlantic. For the most part of the months from July through April observations were limited due to fog, bad weather or floating ice. Only on the coldest days was it clear enough to see beyond a few hundred yards. It was not uncommon to be in a fog for six or seven days while operating off the northern tip of Nova Scotia eastward. Due to these factors, only ghostly glimpses of bird life were obtained.

Through the summer months in the vicinity of Maine, Bay of Fundy and coast of Nova Scotia, there were few species to be seen besides gulls. Herring gulls were by far the most common, with ring-billed gulls second most abundant. These flocked by the hundreds astern of various and sundry fishing craft. Laughing gulls and a few "Bonapartes" were seen but always in like groups. During July a few great black-backed gulls were in this general area, but by the end of August hundreds of them dotted the surface or soared lazily in large flocks above the ships.

Double-crested cormorants were very abundant and were often seen on George Banks, outside of Massachusetts Bay. However, they were most numerous close in to shore.

When beyond the 15-mile zone, a few black guillemots and American eider ducks were flushed from the ruffled surface.

Wilson petrels were not abundant in August and usually no more than six could be observed at any one time in our wake.

Common terns and an occasional parasitic jaeger would by-pass us in quest of food. In the many months spent in this region, only a few greater shearwaters were observed. It would seem they prefer the more southern latitudes.

In August a few long-tailed jaegers were hunting off the coast of Nova Scotia. They were in sight of the ship for only a few moments, then to disappear into the haze.

There was a slight change in bird populations early in September with the influx of additional species. Herring, ring-billed and great black-backed gulls were very common. It was not uncommon to count a mixed group of 700 of these birds following one fishing craft. Bonaparte and laughing gulls had disappeared but in their place were a few kittiwakes.

American and red-breasted mergansers and a few lesser scaups appeared in late September while the double-crested cormorants were winging southward in long strings that often stretched a quarter of a mile.

In November and December, to the east of Nova Scotia, as far as Sable Island, kittiwakes, white-winged scoters, surf scoters, old-squaws and American eiders were quite common. Kittiwakes were the only abundant bird east of Sable Island.

Dovekies and Atlantic murres began to appear as far south as George's Banks in early December, and increased in numbers the farther north we sailed. Parasitic jaegers and a few greater shearwaters were still in the vicinity.

The Grand Banks in mid-winter was apparently a haven for fish-eating birds. It was not uncommon to continually flush dovekies, Atlantic and Brunnick's murres, as we slowly plowed through the fog. On

clear days, thousands could be seen skimming the cold, steaming water. Razor-billed auks were present but in limited numbers. They preferred the company of the murres and at a distance were difficult to distinguish from the common or Atlantic murre.

Kittiwakes, great black-backed and herring gulls were spotty on the banks but increased in numbers close in to shore.

While in the Straits of Belle Isle, south of Cape Farewell, Greenland, the first and only puffins were observed. Other birds seen near the straits were dovekies, Atlantic and Brunnick's murres, a few great black-backed gulls, some glaucous and a couple of Iceland gulls. Usually weather conditions were so bad in these latitudes that birds observations were very limited.

A short trip was made in the hinterland of St. Johns, Newfoundland, early in January, to make observations on land birds. The following species were noted: A number of ravens, a small flock of golden-crowned kinglets, several Hudsonian chickadees and two American three-toed woodpeckers.

The northward movement of birds was well along by late March as lesser scaups, scoters, old-squaws, a small flock of swans, gulls, a few Wilson's petrels and gannets were migrating north in the vicinity of Sable Island.

The list below represents a total of 91 species identified while at sea. From these few sketchy observations, it is hoped that some benefit may be derived for anyone contemplating an ocean trip.

Appended to the observations is a list indicating some interesting distances from land in which land birds were noted.

### **Birds Observed in the Atlantic Ocean**

Man-o-war bird, least tern, sooty tern, noddy, black tern, common tern, Caspian tern, royal tern, brown pelican, greater shearwater, sooty shearwater, Cory's shearwater, Manx's shearwater, Mediterranean shearwater, Audubon's shearwater, Wilson's petrel, Leache's petrel, Mederian storm petrel, yellow-billed tropic bird, herring gull, ring-billed gull, Bonaparte's gull, laughing gull, great black-backed gull, glaucous gull, Iceland gull, parasitic jaeger, Pomarine jaeger, long-tailed jaeger, gannet, golden-eye, northern phalarope, red phalarope, Wilson's phalarope, black guillemot, kittiwake, American merganser, red-breasted merganser, dovekie, Atlantic murre, Brunnick's murre, razor-billed auk, puffin, kingbird, slate-colored junco, black-crowned night heron, great blue heron, white-bellied booby, blue-faced booby, sanderling, Wilson's snipe, semi-palmated plover, upland plover, golden plover, kingfisher, duck hawk, sparrow hawk, marsh hawk, osprey, turkey vulture, black vulture, double-crested cormorant, lesser scaup duck, old-squaw, blue-winged teal, surf scoter, American scoter, white-winged scoter, American eider, northern loon, red-throated loon, catbird, brown thrasher, robin, red-winged black bird, meadowlark, starling, crow, raven, mourning dove, barn swallow, myrtle warbler, orange-crowned warbler, magnolia warbler, nighthawk, whip-poor-will, redstart, sharp-shinned hawk, pigeon hawk, mockingbird, grackle (sp).

### **Land Bird Observations At Sea**

April 27, 1943—Osprey—60 miles out from Chesapeake Bay.

July 28—Redstarts (2)—15 miles off shore from Miami, going southward. Sandpipers (sp)—25 miles out from Florida, going northward.

September 9 and 10—Nighthawks (large flocks)—10-15 miles moving southward. Warblers (sp). Plovers (sp).

September 13—Blue-winged teals (35)—17 miles headed southward, low.

September 14—Sharp-shinned hawk—30 miles going southward, Fort Jefferson.

September 20-23—Warbler flight (heavy)—20-30 miles over Gulf (night); many alighted on ship.

September 23—Osprey—30 miles going southward.

October 17—Common tern (1), catbird (1), mourning dove (1), great blue herons (3), snipe, warblers (sp)—350 miles off Charleston, South Carolina going southward. Warblers, catbird and mourning dove exhausted, on ship.

October 27—Catbird—20 miles, alighted on forecastle.

March 3, 1944—200 double-crested cormorants, 5 red throated loons, 2 northern loons, crows, starlings (numerous), 10 mocking birds, 20 grackles (sp)—Off Charleston, South Carolina, moving northward.

July 18—Plovers (15) sp.—800 miles at sea going north.

September 15—1 pigeon hawk, 5 miles at sea off Portland, Maine. Numerous small birds migrating at sea.

September 17—1 kingbird, 5 miles at sea—Portland, Maine.

September 22, 1944—1 kingfisher, 40 miles out from Norfolk.

October 5—Small flock of arctic terns, 500 miles west of Gibraltar.

November 6—Starlings and meadowlarks, 40 miles at sea and being pushed further by strong winds. Also robins and red-winged blackbirds.

March 27, 1945—1 crow flying eastward 230 miles east of Nova Scotia.

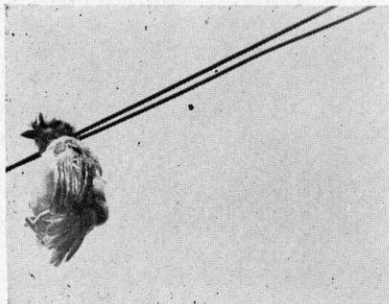
April 15—Slate-colored junco resting on the ship, 475 miles east of Nova Scotia and 300 miles south of Newfoundland.

April 19—2 meadowlarks, 1 sparrow hawk and 2 long-tailed jaegers 160 miles east of Nova Scotia moving southward.

409 Sidney Street  
Madison, Wisconsin  
April, 1946

## HOW BIRDS HANG THEMSELVES

ENGLISH SPARROW



PHOTOS BY I. O. BUSS

ROBIN



# Sac Prairie Spring

By AUGUST DERLETH

**8 March:** Walking into the village this morning along the Lower Mill Road, I heard above the voices of sparrows, cardinals, juncos, horned larks, and crows, the welcome *conquerree* or *okalee* of redwings—quite a little flock of them congregated in the vicinity of the neighbor's barn and sheds and in the adjoining meadow, singing and calling, the year's first arrivals. I stood listening to their welcome songs; two of them flew over, calling out as usual, and quite low; but the choir was in no way diminished by their taking leave of the flock. I was delighted to take note of their return in numbers, somewhat earlier than the average date.

In the marshes this afternoon the hawks whickered and screamed, and presently I saw them over the Lower Meadow—a trio of marsh harriers, consisting of one female and two male birds. The female was perched on top of the now empty hay-standard south of the barn in the Lower Meadow, and the two males were tumbling above her; but, as I approached, one flew south into a tree at the far rim of the meadow, and the other wheeled to eastward, and then returned to perch slightly lower on the standard, removed from the female by about two feet, so that the contrast in size was clearly evident. The other remained where he was, screaming and whickering, until my approach from the Triangle Lane crossing, when he flew farther into the meadow to another tree there, and sat watching the duo on the poles. But it was a day for hawks, with the wind in the south.

In the bottoms this afternoon redwings called and sang distantly; I heard their voices only faintly, but later, as I walked up the Mazomanie road, I saw two of them among some sparrows in a plum tree behind Lenson's. Juncos and sparrows—tree sparrows—foraged together among the willows, picking something—possibly seeds; I could not get close enough to observe—out of the thawing ice; and all the air at that place was filled with that wonderful whisper of junco song, rising from every bush and tree.

**12 March:** I observed in the marshes along the sloughs tonight that a cardinal, high in a tree, singing persistently in little bursts, was each time immediately followed by a buzzing or stridulant sound, clearly made by some bird; I thought at first that it was the cardinal which gave forth this sound, but not so, it came from somewhere among the alders near him, and it seemed to be deliberate in its occurrence—that is, coming directly after the cardinal's song, regardless of the intervals between the notes.

**14 March:** This evening at six by the sun's time, after a short, brisk shower riding the south wind into Sac Prairie, I went into the marshes by way of the Yellowbanks road, and from Hiney's Crossing went up along the railroad tracks. The air was wondrously fragrant; the first rain of spring, the warmth, all earth giving off a thousand and one perfumes to delight the senses, and the wind now diminished almost to a breeze, though grey-blue clouds still boiled up out of the southwest and threatened rain which did not fall. At this hour there was a great todo of red-

wings among the willows east of the Triangle Lane crossing, a constant eruption of **conquerees** and the various cries, particularly the whistling of redwings. I heard killdeers, robins, song sparrows—all scattered and singing on the rim of earth, as it were—of that intimate small place of earth of which at the moment I occupied the center, bounded on the east by the Mazomanie road, on the south by the Yellowbanks, on the north by the Spring Slough, and on the west by the Wisconsin—less actually than a square mile, but holding in it much pleasure and nature magic. Larks called, too, out of the Lower Meadow, and a pheasant cock or two; and beyond them, a few barred owls set up occasional flurries of sound.

But more than these, more striking to the ear, was the sudden twittering and fluttering of a woodcock out of that little oak grove just below the Triangle Lane west of the railroad tracks—and how welcome to the ear that fluttering and twittering and crying from the ground before and after! Here in the fragrant, misty twilight, the voices and mating flights of the woodcocks took place with singular wonder. I stood for some time watching the birds, while the other birdsong diminished—the redwings to a few scattered **okalees** rising from time to time in the depths of the willows, where they swayed still on thin branches, and ruffled their beautiful red shoulder-patches like jewels in the gathering dusk, the killdeers to a plaintiff crying at the perimeter of the meadows, the robins to a thin fluttering or a broken portion of a carol—marveling as always at their erratic flight-patterns, and taking such pleasure in their calls and flights that they might indeed have been exotic beyond all imagining, instead of prosaic with that intimate familiarity allied to the core of existence. It was this very familiarity, and the woodcocks' association with the vernal months which made them the source of such pleasure, that and nothing more, save perhaps the changelessness of their pattern from decade to decade, as it were, taking the face off time in its passage.

**16 March:** Watching and listening to woodcocks tonight at the Spring Slough trestle, I celebrated them with the first draft of a poem, **Spring Evening: Woodcock:**

Oh, you wild!—  
you headlong hurtler,  
you hunter of the vernal evening  
—winged arrow circling high,  
past eyes' reach, embracing  
Venus and Sirius late  
and Arcturus rising great  
on the eastern rim—  
you wingswift lover!  
Wild cry, wild fluttering and plaint,  
familiar of black alder and pussywillow,  
of osier red and witches' ash—  
mounter of heaven,  
you wild!  
Oh, you inspired singer,  
you soarer, you volant swain,  
in your spiral flight

what kinship bears your ecstasy to me,  
that it maddens pulse and heart,  
earth-bound, imprisoned in the spreading night?

I had not long finished jotting this down, when I heard a car come to a stop along the Mazomanie road across the Upper Meadow, and, looking over, saw three girls and a man get out to hunt for pussywillows, at which I was much amused, for they kept getting their feet wet among the hummocks, and when finally they had enough pussywillows and were on their way back to the car, they frightened up a pheasant, at which one of the girls cried out, "Oh, look! a duck!" None disagreed.

**1 April:** At the east end of the Spring Slough trestle tonight at five by the sun's time, I took note of sounds heard at the hour—crows cawing intermittently in the distance; a jacksnipe booming over the Upper Meadow; a flicker crying and drumming; a solitary *hyla versicolor*; many robins, bluebirds, cardinals, mourning doves, meadowlarks, redwings, song sparrows, vesper sparrows, phoebes, redheaded woodpeckers, singing and calling; a quail bob-whiteing in the meadow; barred owls in a sudden flurry of cries north of the Spring Slough; pond frogs chuckling from the surface of the water; a kingfisher rattling by, and a trio of foraging nuthatches. A brown creeper, the year's first seen, examined the trunks of the old trees beyond the trestle.

**3 April:** The first hermit thrush of the season foraged among the sprouting lilies-of-the-valley and under the lilacs around the house today.

**24 April:** While gathering morels today, walking along a fence-line, I started up a bluebird, which flew out of an old, long abandoned woodpecker opening in an old post, suspended only by the wires between posts on either side, its own base having long since rotted away. I paused to look into the post and discovered the nest within, with four blue eggs in it. I did not linger, lest the bird become alarmed.

**27 April:** I took time from morelling today to watch an oven bird feed—a persistent and evidently untiring bird in foraging, not much disturbed at my presence and my scrutiny.

In the marshes tonight, I caught sight of two Virginia rails (*Rallus limicola limicola*), and for the first time was able to be certain of their calls—for one called to the other, and the other replied: a series of sharp, chicken-like cries—though with a difference, being more shrill and rapid, a kind of quick *wiek-wiek-wiek*.

**29 April:** Woke this morning to a flicker's crying and strutting along the balcony rail off my studio, plainly visible and most audible from my bed; and for a few moments I lay watching him, his feathers ruffled, his wings held stiffly out from his body, his head bobbing. Back and forth he went, looking first this way, now that. I was not able to determine whether he saw himself in the glass of the french doors or not, but it did not seem to be so, for when at last I got up, he was aware of that movement, paused, cocked his head, and presently flew silently away.

**5 May:** I listened for a time this evening to what appeared to be a three-way woodbecker conversation by means of tappings. Certainly one seemed quite definitely to answer another, and the tappings came without ceasing, and did not seem to conflict. The birds were at some distance from one another. But my attention was distracted by the *unk-a-*

dunk pumping of a bittern, not commonly heard now for five years or more, in contrast to the numbers of bitterns calling a decade ago. A persistent grouse southwest of the Lower Meadow drummed as many as three times a minute, and another on occasion replied from the Heights farther away. This continued without cessation for all the time I spent in the marshes tonight.

Sauk City, Wisconsin.

## Thure Kumlien

By A. W. SCHORGER

(Continued from page 10)

The interest of Brewer in oology was of long standing. As early as 1846, he had a "great collection" of birds' eggs.<sup>15</sup> He did not do much field work, since his business interests did not permit the time, but by study, correspondence, and purchase of specimens he became the leading oologist of his period. Skins he did not collect so that when identification was involved he usually referred the specimen to Baird or Cassin. In this way he was of great assistance to Kumlien. Regarding a shipment of skins, he wrote on October 26, 1854: "Baird and I studied them all out . . . No. 5 and 6 are not *vireo solitarius* [blue-headed vireo] but *vireo gilvus* [warbling vireo] . . . No. 7 and 8 and 9 are not *Muscicapa querula* [Acadian flycatcher] but *Muscicapa flaviventris* [yellow-bellied flycatcher], that is the first two, and 9, the darker one is *Muscicapa minima* [least flycatcher] . . . No. 11 and 12 are young *Regulus calendula* [ruby-crowned kinglet]. No. 14 is a female *Sylvia canadensis* [Canada warbler]. No. 15 is a Cape May warbler, a rare skin . . . No. 16 is Canada [olive-sided] Flycatcher, *Myiodioctes Canadensis*. No. 17 is Cooper's Hawk and not the Goshawk. . . . The *tringa* was the *pectoralis* [pectoral sandpiper]. No. 52 is Lincoln's finch, a rare skin, get as many as you can . . . 54 is *Falco columbarius* [pigeon hawk]. Do pray get its eggs next summer. No. 56 is *Larus zonorynchus* [ring-billed gull] . . . 57 is *Charadrius semipalmatus* [semipalmated plover]."

Kumlien seems to have taken the errors very much to heart for on November 20 Brewer wrote graciously, "I do not think you made many mistakes all things considered—not so many as I would have made with more light than you."

It is difficult for the modern ornithologist, with the wealth of colored plates, detailed descriptions, and specimens at his command, to realize the difficulties under which his fellow scientists labored a century ago, especially when isolated on a Wisconsin farm. Kumlien had to feel his way in oology as in other fields. In the spring of 1853 he wrote to Brewer: "I have the eggs of a bird the boy that gave them to me called the 'Pheebecbird,' a *muscicapa* no doubt but I don't know what kind." It is one thing to find a nest of eggs in a marsh and quite another to see the owner upon them. Brewer wrote on January 30, 1854: "The egg you think that of the gallinule is without doubt that bird unless it be the coots. It is just like some given me for Coots eggs but I have always thought it a mistake, and your eggs make me think so more than ever." Kumlien was troubled for several years over eggs that he thought belonged to "*rufitorques*." Apparently he never succeeded in the positive identification of the eggs for as late as April 27, 1872, Brewer inquired, "Can't he [Ludwig Kumlien] find the nest of the ring-necked duck?"

Brewer's appetite for information was insatiable but he was constantly sending descriptions of the nests and eggs of various birds, such as the wrens and thrushes. On December 7, 1871, he wrote that, "The Prothonotary warbler breeds in **hollow trees**. Another year Ludwig will know where to look for it." This discovery had been made by Capt. Goss<sup>16</sup> and the knowledge of it recently acquired by Brewer. The following letter, dated April 16, 1871, is typical of the give and take: "I returned from Washington on Friday and on the following day I opened the box. . . . The *empidonax* I should judge to be *E. flaviventris*, and the nest and eggs render this probable. It is too small for the *Traillii* or *Arcadica*. I should say I will however send it to Baird for determination. I would like to have all the light you can given me as to position of the nest, habits of parents, etc., if you will be so kind.

"The wren is probably the *T. aedon*, but I will send that also. In regard to the eggs you desire information about, No. 1 is undoubtedly your Common Prairie Hen,

only unusually spotted. No. 2 is *Bonasa umbellus* [ruffed grouse], not a hawk's and No. 3 is *ampelis cedrorum* [cedar waxwing] . . .

"In the box of 13 eggs taken from nests of *pipilio erythrophthalmus* [red-eyed towhee] are two of *molothrus pecoris* [cowbird], two that resemble eggs of bobolinks and one like the egg of *chondestes grammacus* [lark sparrow]. Has there not been a mistake here? Both these birds build on the ground as well as the *pipilio*.

"Those white eggs in the nest of *cistothorus palustris* [long-billed marsh wren]. I should like to have some explanation of them or some clearing up in the future if possible."

The status of the house wren was entirely different at that time than at present, if the identifications were correct. On May 4, 1871, Brewer wrote that the wren "is *aedon* & nothing else." He asked on July 10, 1873, "Did I ever tell you that one of those wrens you sent me proved to be Parkman's?" It would be very difficult to find any house wren other than *Troglodytes aedon parkmani* in the Koshkonong region today.

References to the passenger pigeon by Kumlien are few. His *Journal* entry for March 12, 1849, records a flock seen and this is the only case where a flock is mentioned. He wrote to Brewer on March 25, 1852, that the pigeons arrived on the 12th. On April 21, 1859, Brewer wrote: "You say you can get eggs of *Columbia migratoria*. If so please get a lot for the Smithsonian & myself. I need it more for exchanges than any other common egg. About here it does not breed." When Bryant requested their eggs, Kumlien replied in December of this year that "Eggs of *Col. migrat.* are scarce hereabouts. Some seasons I have got as many as 4—they seldom lay more than one egg here." At this time he wrote to Lowenhielm that he had a few good skins of the passenger pigeon and added that they were difficult to prepare "as their skin on the lower back is like wet gray paper."

Kumlien, like many experienced ornithologists of his time, failed to recognize that the prairie horned lark was distinct from the northern. The notes written to Brewer, apparently in 1852, contain this statement: "*Alauda alpestris* . . . Some of them perhaps move north with the *Em. Lapp.* [Lapland longspur] but a good many stay here and they are by no means rare on the prairies in summer time—running along the roads before you." After receiving a shipment of eggs from Kumlien, Brewer wrote him that all were acceptable, especially those of the shore-lark. The eggs were submitted to Baird who thought that they were not of the shore-lark but of "the *Alauda* (*rufa*), one of the last species discovered by Mr. Audubon in his last excursions to the Yellow Stone." Brewer mentioned on April 10, 1852, that the two species differed in size but had not been recognized as separable until recently. On October 26, 1854, he stated categorically: "The Shore Larks were not *rufa* but the common kind, *alpestris*. And by the way if you will take pains next spring to get a lot of good skins in the breeding plumage they will sell well. It is rare to get them in that dress." Through a slip of memory, Kumlien informed H. Schlegel in 1862 that he could furnish skins of *Otocoris rufa*.

Light was slow in coming. Brewer<sup>17</sup> in 1875 stated that the eggs from Labrador were much larger than those from Wisconsin. In spite of the smaller size of the bird and its eggs, it was not until 1884 that Henshaw<sup>18</sup> established the subspecies *Otocoris alpestris praticola* as the breeding bird of the Upper Mississippi Valley. This lark is thought to have steadily extended its range eastward from Illinois since 1870. Pickwell<sup>19</sup> in his monograph on the prairie horned lark gives the dates, throughout its original range, when it was mentioned as a breeding bird. Kumlien's collection of the eggs preceded these dates by many years.

The yellow-headed blackbird was added to the fauna of the United States by Thomas Say while attached to Major Long's expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the years 1819 and 1820. At the time (1843) that Kumlien came to Lake Koshkonong the species was unknown as a breeding bird east of the Mississippi River. He included it in his list of birds of 1850 but it is highly probable that he collected it much earlier. In 1851 Kumlien sent skins of this species to Brewer and wrote that he had had a tedious, fruitless search for the nest.<sup>20</sup> He was equally unsuccessful the following two years, but on August 25, 1854, he asked Brewer, "Do you wish me to send you more than one nest of the yellow-headed bl. bird? I have 3 nests, in two there were one egg a piece & one nest had 4 eggs—so I have 6 in all." Brewer on August 2 had rejoiced that the problem was to be solved since he suspected strongly that the eggs given him for this species were those of the towhee. He added that, "The yellow-headed [skins] I sold for 50 cts. apiece." A few years earlier there was a good demand for these skins at higher prices. Kumlien on August 25 made the following revealing

reply: "I am glad to get 50 cents a piece for the Yell. h. bl. skins and I wish I could sell many for that price. It is easier for me to kill and skin it than to go out and work hard for 50 cents a day for a farmer." The drop in price was due to the number of skins that John Bell brought from California (Brewer to Kumlien, January 30, 1854).

Kumlien found or came into possession of many ornithological rarities. He saw a flock of paroquets near Lake Koshkonong in 1844 or 1845, and added to his collection a specimen stated to have been taken in Waukesha County in 1844. This county was not established until 1846; however, a correction may have been applied subsequently. The skin was eventually obtained by Dr. E. Copeland who donated it to the Milwaukee Public Museum. It is the only known Wisconsin specimen.

He preserved the fragments of a roseate spoonbill taken by the Indians on Rock River in August, 1845.<sup>14</sup> On June 25, 1859, he mentioned to Brewer that he saw "a black [glossy] ibis." The *Journal* entry for December 8, 1849, reads: "Skinned a *Grus Americanus* [whooping crane]." Brewer wrote to Kumlien on November 28, 1951, that the eggs of the "whooping crane" were very acceptable and that he would like to have more of them. This may have been an error as there is no further mention of the breeding of this species.

The long-billed curlew was a summer resident on the prairies in the early '50s but Kumlien does not appear to have been successful in securing the eggs. He wrote Brewer on January 19, 1852, that, "The Trumpeter Swan is here some winters. One was brought to me last winter for stuffing." A mounted specimen was sold to the Smithsonian Institution for \$20.00 in 1880 (Baird to Kumlien, Aug. 30 and Dec. 10, 1880). In the winter of 1852-53, a Mr. Wing captured a gyrfalcon but Kumlien was unable to obtain it for Brewer. He wrote Brewer on August 11, 1861, that he had found the orchard oriole breeding for the first time, and that he had a nest with two eggs. Eggs of this species were sent to E. A. Samuels on August 30, 1864. Kumlien and Hollister<sup>14</sup> expressed in 1903 the opinion that this species is "certainly more common in southern Wisconsin than formerly."

The status of the two species of three-toed woodpeckers is not determinable from Kumlien's correspondence. Neither species occurs in the list of 1850. The first reference, apparently, is contained in his letter of February 13, 1862, to Schlegel. That winter he collected one specimen of the American three-toed woodpecker. Nothing further appears until December 7, 1871, when Brewer wrote "Your notes about *Picus arcticus* and *hirsutus*, and also the others are interesting and I shall incorporate the facts in my notes." Brewer<sup>17</sup> subsequently said of *P. hirsutus* that, "Mr. Kumlien has several times, in successive winters, obtained single individuals." The notes on the Arctic three-toed woodpecker were not used. This species, according to Kumlien and Hollister<sup>14</sup>, was formerly abundant in winter in the tamarack swamps as far south as Fort Atkinson.

The nest of the solitary sandpiper proved to be a will-o-the-wisp to the Kumlien family. Samuels was anxious to get the eggs and wrote to Thure on March 20, 1866: "Dr. Brewer says that you collect the eggs of the Solitary Tattler. It is very rarely found breeding here, and I have never seen the egg." On the back of the letter Thure wrote that, "The Solitary Tattler breeds here, but is extremely rare to find breeding some how." Kumlien and Hollister<sup>14</sup> mention that it is a fairly common breeding bird in the state. Young just hatched were found, but the most persistent search failed to lead to discovery of the eggs. All United States breeding records are open to doubt at the present time. The fact that this shore bird lays its eggs in old nests in trees was not published until 1904<sup>21</sup>. In view of this custom, it is desirable to quote from Ludwig's letter of November 18, 1886: "This coming May I intend to procure the eggs of the Solitary Tattler if it takes a week. I was a little late this year but I have found the nest I am positive, in some scrubby willows about four feet up in a very miry springy place. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

In the fall of 1870 Kumlien secured a female masked duck (*Nomonyx dominicus*), killed by a hunter. He wrote to Brewer: "In November last I got possession of a duck killed in Rock River about 6 miles from here, a duck that I can not make out what it is unless possibly *Erismatura dominica*." The specimen was sent to Brewer who stated on May 4, 1871, that it had been forwarded to Baird for identification. Kumlien had identified the duck correctly although he had no guide other than the meager notes in the Pacific Railway Report. Brewer<sup>23</sup> published a note on the discovery and mentioned that it was "the second ever obtained north of Mexico." The specimen was donated to the Boston Society of Natural History.

The small flycatchers continued to be puzzling to both Kumlien and Brewer. In 1872 appeared the following note: "Dr. Brewer said that among the birds from Wis-

consin, purchased from Mr. Kumlien, is a species of *Empidonax*, parent birds with nest and eggs, identified as *E. pusillus* by Prof. Baird. This species had not before been seen east of the Rocky mountains, over one thousand miles west of the locality where it is now found breeding."<sup>24</sup> Actually the bird was our common alder flycatcher.

The bay-breasted warbler was abundant in Wisconsin and Massachusetts in May, 1872. Brewer published a note on the unusual migration and quoted Kumlien as follows: "The *D. castanea*, which used to be a rare bird with us, except in the latter part of August and in September, when they return with their families, has this week been very abundant; almost any number could have been had."<sup>25</sup> W. Brewster advanced the opinion that this species in spring makes long flights and usually passes over the northern states. On a scrap of paper Kumlien made a note that the night of September 22, 1887, was fine and warm. He picked up a young female *D. castanea*, with many other more or less mutilated warblers, on the roof of the Exposition Building, the former home of the Milwaukee Public Museum. The birds had been attracted by the electric lights.

Kumlien came exceedingly close to discovering a new species, the Philadelphia vireo. On February 11, 1851, John Cassin<sup>26</sup> described this vireo from a single specimen taken by him in September, 1842, and the only one then known to science. In 1854 Kumlien sent to Brewer specimens of a vireo that did not fit any of the descriptions available to him. Skins were referred to Cassin who through a curious error considered them to be the warbling vireo "in an unusually fresh plumage." Kumlien was not satisfied with the identification and in a masterly letter, subsequently published by Brewer<sup>27</sup>, showed convincingly that his bird was distinct. Cassin later admitted that it was his Philadelphia vireo. Kumlien had the satisfaction, at least, of proving that this vireo was a perfectly good species.

On March 20, 1866, Kumlien wrote to Samuels that he should inform him if he wanted any eggs, and if he was not at home his son Ludwig, though only thirteen years of age, was entirely capable of identifying those to be found in the vicinity. In the fall of 1871, Ludwig secured a goose that Thure identified as the *Anser arvensis* of Brehm, the bean goose of Europe. Brewer was very anxious to secure the bird and hoped, December 7, 1871, that "your Wisconsin University will not appreciate its rarity." The fragmentary correspondence indicates that Brewer thought that it might be the *Anser frontalis* described by Baird<sup>28</sup> in 1858 and subsequently determined to be a young white-fronted goose. On February 9, 1872, Brewer wrote to Kumlien: "I am sorry to have to say that the *Anser frontalis* turned out to be a not good species. He [Baird] gives it up as the young of *Gambelli* and [it] has no very particular value. I have sent it on to him to see if I shall report his views as to its being his supposed *frontalis*. I hope for both our sakes it may be something more choice. It is a good skin & I will give Ludwig something for it to encourage the youth. . . ."

The kindness of Brewer is exemplified by the inspiration given to Ludwig. He wrote on April 27, 1872: "Tell your Ludwig for me that I hope he will find some very rare novelty for us this spring, another *erismatura*, or perhaps *Buteo Bairdii*, that was first taken in Wisconsin." This *Buteo*, described by Hoy<sup>29</sup>, was Swainson's hawk in unusual plumage.

It was not long before Ludwig made an enviable record. On July 5, 1873, he shot a white-winged black tern (*Chlidonias leucoptera*) on Lake Koshkonong. The information was sent to Brewer on the 7th. His reaction was odd in that he thought that there were quite enough North American species, but that there would be pleasure in recording this novelty. He thought that there must be others of the same species and urged Ludwig to search for them. Prior to this time he showed a youthful eagerness for new species, but the labor of preparing the text for North American Birds seems to have dulled his appetite.

Brewer's note on the above discovery reads as follows: "On the 5th. of July last Ludovic Kumlien, a son of Thure Kumlien, the well known ornithologist of Wisconsin, shot . . . among a flock of *Hydrochelidon fissipes* [black tern], a bird which he at once recognized as something entirely new to our fauna. It was a mature female and was found to contain well developed ova, though not fully grown. Mr. Kumlien, Sr., who is familiar with European forms, at once recognized it as *Hydrochelidon leucoptera* and this determination has since been confirmed by Prof. Baird."<sup>30</sup> The bird was given to the U. S. National Museum. Sight records have been reported from Canada but the only other specimen for the western hemisphere was taken at Barbados, West Indies, October 24, 1888.<sup>31</sup>

Collecting never proved sufficiently remunerative to permit Kumlien to devote most of his time to it. The greatest demand was for the rarer eggs, the search for which was a time consuming, fortuitous pursuit. He seldom set a price for his eggs and skins, but left the value to the judgment of the purchaser. Kumlien wrote to Brewer on March 30, 1851: "I have had some of these [eggs] and I know where most likely I can find some of the rarest and though it certainly will be a tiresome and rather uncertain hunting, especially among the grass in Lake Koshkonong, I will endeavor to get as many as I possibly can." The number and kinds of eggs comprising the first shipment to Brewer, made in 1851, are unknown. Brewer sent him \$5.00 since this was the cost to him of a similar shipment from a taxidermist in Halifax. The desire of Brewer for the eggs of hawks was insatiable. In the spring of 1853, Kumlien wrote: "You desire to have hawk eggs! Well they are in the first place scarce and they build in such high trees that I could not undertake to go up."

Generosity was not one of Henry Bryant's attributes. He wrote Kumlien on May 28, 1859, that he was mistaken as to the prices paid by dealers: "For my own purpose it is entirely different. I would give a dollar for the skin of a Cape May warbler for instance or \$5.00 for the egg of the Golden Eagle but I would not give a cent for the skin of a common bird or the eggs of most of our common birds." On November 29, 1859, Bryant sent Kumlien \$7.30 in payment for 21 skins and added the following cheerful news: "Since the Smithsonian commenced collecting, common eggs are worth nothing. Baird has received 500 of some species from a single collector—he measures them by quantity not number—in his last letter to me he says he just received 2 quarts of mocking bird eggs—2 of Orchard Orioles, etc."

In one of his letters to Brewer, Kumlien tells him that he is his best friend this side of the Atlantic. When he thought that this friend required solicitude, he promptly expressed it. After receiving the prospectus of Coues, *Key to North American Birds* (1872), he wrote to Brewer: "Now I cannot say I saw this prospectus with mixed feelings; not entirely to my satisfaction. The work will likely be a very good one perhaps as a textbook and I am sure that I could learn much from it if I had it but if I am not too much mistaken we will find big doings, some tremendous (if I may say despotical) changes and sharp blows without mercy right and left. Now I may judge him wrong but I have, from what little I have seen of his writings, got the impression that he thinks himself very great, indeed the only A No. 1 in ornithology and that his say is the *ipse dixit* and no mistake. . . . Now I can not help to think that the publication of this work especially now will materially damage the sale of your work."

The American short-eared owl was given the name *Brachyotus cassini* in 1856 by Brewer<sup>32</sup> since he thought it distinct from the European form. Coues, in his *Key* (1872), used *Brachyotus palustris* Gould, and stated subsequently that he was unable to find any tangible difference between them.<sup>33</sup> This opinion prevails today. Kumlien asked Brewer, "Is your *Otus Cass.* a good species no longer? Is it so by the common consent of the leading Naturalists or is it only one of the many papal Decrees of the mighty Coues?" Kumlien thought that the two forms were distinct in size and coloration, and especially in breeding habits. Here it nested on the prairies at about latitude 40° and in Europe in the "willow region in perpetually snow covered mountains." On February 21, 1875, Brewer expressed his appreciation of Kumlien's "hearty growl over the weak spots in friend Coues book," and his belief that *B. Cassini* will yet stand.

Kumlien taught at Albion Academy from 1867 to 1870 and made it a pioneer institution in the study of ornithology<sup>34</sup>. Then he made extensive collections of birds for the University of Wisconsin and several of the State Normal Schools. In 1881 he became taxidermist and conservator for the Wisconsin Natural History Society. This position was held until May, 1883, when the Society's collections were taken over by the Milwaukee Public Museum. Here he remained in the same capacity until his death. His first task with the Museum was to classify and correct the nomenclature of the mounted birds and mammals. In 1885 it could be said, "The collection of birds has improved materially in appearance and value under the loving hands of our able ornithologist, Mr. Thure Kumlien."<sup>35</sup>

The labors of Kumlien were those of a keen scientific collector. A great tribute to his zeal and singleness of purpose under trying circumstances is contained in the following: "As an instance of the injustice that may be done a man for a long term of years, by an unthinking public, the case of Thure Kumlien has hardly a parallel. For a decade or more he was regarded by the residents in the vicinity as a half crazy individual, which notions arose from the professor's occasionally roaming field and forest at night with his lantern engaged in the strange occupation of catching flies

and beetles."<sup>36</sup> People became more discerning for one visitor to the Kumlien homestead wrote: "... we visited Prof. Kumlien, a distinguished Naturalist, and were fully repaid for our pains. . . . The Professor kindly endeavored to exhibit his whole stock of treasures. . . . Any student of Natural History will do well to visit Prof. Kumlien at his home near Albion."<sup>37</sup>

Due to Kumlien's indefatigable efforts, Prof. Cornwall<sup>38</sup> could write with pride in 1878 that Lake Koshkonong was better known abroad than at home, and that more European than American universities had specimens from this lake. A man must have great love for his profession when he is willing to devote even his small leisure to collecting in order to enrich an institution; yet, in 1886, he presented to the Milwaukee Public Museum "over six hundred specimens of plants and invertebrates, besides several birds, mostly collected during his vacation."<sup>39</sup>

The reluctance of Kumlien to prepare for publication articles under his name is difficult to understand. The only paper that appeared in this way was the one on wild flowers mentioned previously<sup>8</sup>. He wrote a short paper on conditions at Lake Koshkonong at the time of settlement and credited it to "An Old Settler."<sup>40</sup> Nearly all of his ornithological observations were published by Brewer and others. Kumlien and Hollister<sup>41</sup>, in the introduction to their work, express their indebtedness to Thure Kumlien for his "extended, accurate and perfectly authentic notes." It has been impossible to find any trace of these notes or any other evidence that they existed.

At one time he contemplated preparing a list of the plants of Wisconsin. On February 12, 1862, Brewer expressed the opinion that the Boston Society of Natural History would be glad to publish the work whenever it could be prepared. Brewer, on May 10, 1855, urged him to compile a list of the birds of Wisconsin as it would be interesting and valuable. Perhaps the answer to the problem is contained in the following letter written by Dr. E. A. Birge on November 25, 1882: "You will give us a paper at the meeting of the Wisconsin Academy next winter, will you not? Make your boys help you write it out, since you say that is the hard part to you. There is no use in sending a boy to college, if he doesn't help at such things! Seriously you know that I am anxious that your observations on our birds and animals should be recorded and I hope that you will set seriously to work at the task."

Diffidence was a handicap hard to overcome. When he did not acknowledge election to membership in the Boston Society of Natural History, Brewer took the matter in hand, wrote the letter, and signed Kumlien's name.

Wheeler said in his fine, appreciative memorial: "Mr. Kumlien's arrival in our country at a time when many of our native species were still very imperfectly understood opened a wide field for work. Too modest to think his own often very valuable observations sufficiently important to publish, he devoted many years of his life to helping other naturalists by sending them large and carefully prepared collections. Mr. Kumlien was a singularly acute observer, though his powers of observation were stimulated by an intense and childlike love of natural objects rather than by an interest in their importance from a speculative standpoint. Hence his conversation teemed with interesting facts, but seldom rose to wide generalizations. He was satisfied to observe, to collect and prepare plants and birds because they were full of marvelous beauty and offered endless material for comparative study."<sup>42</sup>

A biographer cannot fail to be disturbed by the thought that this gentle, conscientious naturalist may never have been completely happy in the land of his adoption. On one occasion he expressed a pathetic nostalgia to be back in beautiful Upsala. Again, apparently in 1854, he wrote: "At last spring has come, the bluebirds, Robins & Meadow Larks sing near my home & the Pr[airie] h[ens] tooting in the lowland below it with an occasional screaming of a Sandhi[l] Cr[ane], long strings of geese cackling and the constant whistling of ducks wings over my head is to me delightful, makes me feel better. O! I was tired of this long, dreary & severe winter—with me spring has something inexpressibly pleasing."

Kumlien was elected a corresponding member of the Boston Society of Natural History in 1854. He was also a member of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, the Wisconsin Natural History Society, and an associate member of the American Ornithologists' Union. His death occurred in Milwaukee on August 5, 1888, due presumably to poison received from the specimens that he had been handling. He was buried, August 7, in a country churchyard in Dane County, three and one-half miles from his home and one and one-half miles from Albion.

Thure Kumlien was a collector of exceptional ability. The specimens in vast number that he sent to various institutions were of very great value to science. The

rivalry between the field and the laboratory naturalists may be dismissed with the phrase, "useless each without the other." His records have given us a better picture of the bird life of early Wisconsin than those of any of the other pioneer naturalists. Had he had more time for his favorite pursuit, and the will to publish, our knowledge of the ornithology of his period would have been enriched far more.

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168 North Prospect Avenue  
Madison, Wisconsin  
April, 1946

## BY THE WAYSIDE . . .

**A Summer Tanager in Madison.** I saw a female summer tanager in the grove at the university president's residence, May 22, 1945. The brown plumage of the female rendered it readily identifiable.—Dr. A. W. Schorger, 168 North Prospect Avenue, Madison.

**Old-squaw Comes Inland Again.** A female old-squaw was taken by my father, Dr. H. N. Huff, while hunting on Prairie Lake, south of Cameron, Wisconsin, October, 1943.—H. R. Huff, Barron.

**Habits of the Starling.** While stopping at a farm several miles east of Elmwood recently, I noticed some peculiar apertures in a red brick chimney alongside one of the buildings. Bricks appeared to be missing at irregular intervals, and others were chipped and gouged out to varying depths. Inquiry from the farmer revealed that starlings were responsible for the damage! Has anyone else noticed that their mimicry has extended even to an imitation of the woodpecker? The farmer added that the bricks in that particular chimney were softer than those in other undamaged chimneys on his farm.—Rev. C. Toppe, Elmwood.

**Barrow's Golden-eye at Two Creeks.** March 29, 1946 started out as a beautiful day but a cold northeast wind had lowered the temperature nearly ten degrees by mid-afternoon. There was a large flock of golden-eyes, very probably all of the common species, bobbing around among the waves that dashed against our shore.

We have a pond on our property which is close to the lake but sheltered by steep banks. At 2:30 in the afternoon of the above date I observed that a wild duck had landed on the pond. It was a Barrow's golden-eye. Although puddle ducks have been frequent visitors we have never had a diving duck visit the pond before. I could see the Barrow's very plainly with my field glasses and later crept down the sloping bank until I was within thirty feet of him. I could see the purple sheen of his head, the irregular spot in front of his eye, as well as the mud dripping from his black bill after a dive to the bottom. Our pond is rich in crawfish and the duck seemed to be enjoying a fine feast.

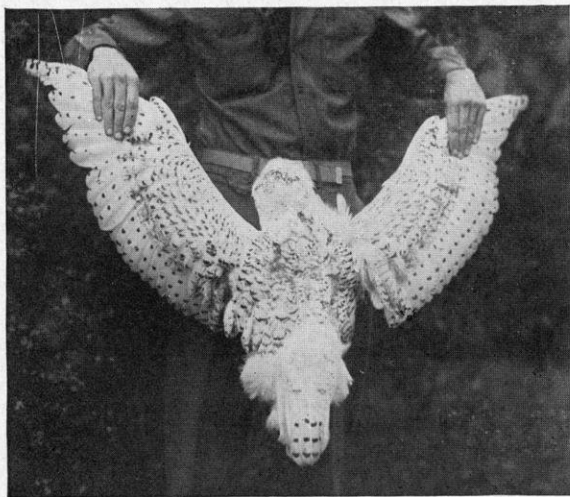
The lake continued to play host to numerous flocks of golden-eyes that remained some distance from shore, and the lone Barrow's golden-eye was still on the pond the next morning. Later he disappeared, but flew in again at 9:40 a. m. and remained all day in the company of a green-winged teal which had arrived that morning. On March 31, the

teal was our only pond visitor and I thought I had seen the last of the Barrow's.

When I looked out of the window at 6:30 the morning of April 1 the Barrow's again was on the pond, this time accompanied by a female! I again crept down the slope and observed them closely for some time. Later the male left and at the present time only the female remains, feeding industriously from the muddy pond bottom. Will the male return? Did he fly to some distant spot during his absence on March 31 and return with a mate? Finding the answers to queries like these certainly makes bird study a continually interesting hobby.—Mrs. Winnefred Smith, Route 1, Two Rivers.

**Two Interesting Bird Records from Madison.** The snowy owl (*Nyctea nyctea*) invaded Wisconsin in large numbers during the winter of 1945-46. One specimen was found dead in the yards of the Weber-Kelly Coal Company, 1341 East Mifflin Street, in the city of Madison on November 4, 1945. The bird, a handsome male, apparently died after striking telephone wires adjacent to the yards. It was in good flesh and weighed 1348 grams (3 lbs.). The stomach, however, was empty. Its other measurements (according to "Measurement of Birds" by Baldwin et al., 1931) are as follows: Total length, 56.7 cm; tail, 21.0 cm; wing folded, 38.4 cm; wing spread, 139.2 cm. The intestinal tract was examined by Dr. B. B. Morgan of the Veterinary Science Dept. of the University, and he reported no parasites. The bird was heavily infested with bird lice (*mallophaga*).

Whistling swans (*Cygnus columbianus*) have been known to pass over Madison and often rest on Lake Mendota. Swans have also been seen over Lake Wingra (22 in the spring of 1944), but until March 23, 1946, they had not stopped on the lake in 25 years. On this day 4 birds, 2 adults and 2 immatures, were seen feeding in the shallows at the mouth of Wingra Springs. They were first seen by Arnold Jackson, Jr., of Madi-



PHOTO—R. A. MCCABE

MANY OF THE SNOWY OWLS WHICH INVADE THE STATES NEVER RETURN HOME

son, and later I photographed the group off the Arboretum shore at a distance of 40 yards. They did not flush, but swam slowly out toward the middle of the lake. The time was 12:00 noon, and they had been on the lake at least 4 hours.—Robert A. McCabe, 217 North Orchard Street, Madison.

## THE WINTER SEASON . . .

(Field notes should be sent to the editor at the end of the four seasons. They should be turned in promptly and the A. O. U. order may be followed. All members are invited to participate.)

The winter season was characterized by conspicuous flights of evening grosbeaks, snowy owls, goshawks and perhaps pine grosbeaks. Several excellent records were made of rare species and several very early migrants were noted in late winter. Most arrival dates of importance appear in the following list, but species which commonly winter in our area were not considered early migrants. Thus the Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, sparrow hawk, mourning dove, kingfisher, robin, meadow-lark, red-wing, and others which spend the winter in the southern part of the state more or less regularly have been regarded as residents in that area.

**Red-throated Loon:** Milwaukee, Mar. 16 (Helmuth Mueller) found dead.

**Great Blue Heron:** Madison, Mar. 11 (McCabe and Thompson); possibly wintered within our borders.

**Whistling Swan:** Earliest record, Green Bay, Mar. 12 (Mrs. Weber). A flock of 30 or 40 were observed on this date. Two swans settled on Lake Wingra, Madison, Mar. 23 (Miss Hoffmann and others) which is unusual for inland waters. The birds usually pass by overhead.

**Canada Goose:** Madison, Mar. 6 (McCabe and Thompson). Since flights were seen regularly thereafter, this probably was the beginning of the real migration this year.

**Black Duck:** This species, golden-eyes, and American mergansers began moving inland (Oconto), Mar. 16, says Richter, which probably represents the opening up of small pot holes sufficiently to start the migration.

**Pintail:** Madison, Feb. 15 (Arnold Jackson); Milwaukee, wintering (Sharp-Mueller); flock of nine over Oshkosh, Mar. 16 (Kasper). The latter probably represent real migrants.

**Shoveller:** Milwaukee, wintering (Sharp-Mueller).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Milwaukee, wintering (Gordon Orians).

**Canvas-back:** Oshkosh, Mar. 16 (Evans).

**Lesser Scaup:** Oshkosh, Mar. 16 (Evans).

**Old-squaw:** More abundant than usual this season, Racine (Dr. von Jarchow).

**Turkey Vulture:** Racine, Mar. 18 (Dr. von Jarchow). Rare.

**Goshawk:** Madison, Feb. 8 (Dr. Mossman); Edgerton, Feb. 24 (Harry Anderson); two near Sauk City, Mar. 3 (Strelitzer).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** On nest, Sauk County, Mar. 10 (Kruse). Flushed from nest, Mar. 17, Dane County (Schorger).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Oconto, Mar. 11 (Richter).

**Golden Eagle:** Wood County, Feb. 17 (Searles). Jackson County, Mar. 9 (Searles and Becker). One near Elkhorn during January, checked by personnel of the Milwaukee Museum.

**Marsh Hawk:** Wood County, Mar. 1 (Searles).

**Sparrow Hawk:** Portage County, Dec. 30 (Becker).

**Prairie Chicken:** Booming, Mar. 14, in Wood County (Becker).

**Killdeer:** Earliest, Feb. 20, Racine (Dr. von Jarchow). The average date of arrival for southern Wisconsin from Sauk County to Appleton and Oconto was Mar. 3 this year.

**Woodcock:** Earliest, Mar. 12, Milwaukee (Sharp-Mueller). Peenting Mar. 13, Sauk City area (Derleth). This species arrived in southern Wisconsin generally on Mar. 15.

**Wilson's Snipe:** Columbia County, Jan. 23 (Deerwester). In aerial dance, Mar. 19, Sauk City area (Derleth).

**Glaucous Gull:** Oconto, Feb. 20-23, feeding on fish remains of commercial fishing activities (Richter). Very rare.

**Mourning Dove:** Dunn County, 13 at feeding station, Jan. 25 (Buss). Milwaukee, 7 at feeding station, Dec. 25 (Mrs. Malisch). Flock of 21 near Baraboo, Feb. 26 (Schwengel). In song Mar. 19, Madison (Mrs. Barger). In song Mar. 16, Oshkosh (Kasper). Arrived in Oconto, Mar. 14 (Richter), the probable date of the season's first migrants.

**Great Horned Owl:** At nest Feb. 10 near Oconto, but no eggs were laid by Mar. 2 (Richter).

**Snowy Owl:** Madison, Feb. 24 (Loyster); Oshkosh, Jan. 1 (Evans); details of other known records were not sent in.

**Saw-whet Owl:** Milwaukee, Mar. 13 (Gordon Orians).

**Flicker:** Milwaukee, Mar. 6 (Gordon Orians). Madison, Mar. 20 (McCabe-Thompson). The latter is probably the beginning of the migration.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Fed suet successfully by Mrs. Thornes near Princeton during winter (Kasper).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Attracted all winter by Mrs. Peterson in Waupaca. Seen also in Pierce County all winter (Buss).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Portage County, Dec. 30 (Becker). Dunn County, Feb. 9 (Buss).

**Sapsucker:** Cedarburg, Feb. 16 (Steven-Diedrich). Rare in winter.

**Phoebe:** Milwaukee, Mar. 17 (H. Mueller). Sauk County, Mar. 20 (Kruse).

**Prairie Horned Lark:** Earliest date, Feb. 5, Sauk County (Kruse). Noted around Madison, Feb. 9 (McCabe-Thompson).

**Tree Swallow:** Oshkosh, Mar. 21 (Kasper). Early.

**Purple Martin:** Madison, Mar. 13 (Strelitzer). Early.

**Raven:** Jackson County, Mar. 3 (Duchart-Searles).

**Crow:** Oconto, Mar. 2 (Richter). Probable beginning of migration.

**Robin:** Madison, Jan. 20 (Barger). Wood and Waushara Counties, Mar. 7 (Searles). Oconto, Mar. 6 (Richter). In numbers at Oconto, Mar. 14. Females noted in Madison, Mar. 21 (McCabe-Thompson). Territorial fights, Mar. 25 (Mrs. Barger).

**Varied Thrush:** At feeding station in Janesville, February, (Mrs. Allen). Described in detail elsewhere in this issue.

**Bluebird:** Average date of arrival in southern Wisconsin from Sauk County to Wood County, Appleton, and Oconto this year was Mar. 4. No truly winter records were turned in for this species.

**Bohemian Waxwing:** Pierce County, Feb. 19 (Buss).

**English Sparrow:** Nesting, Oconto, Mar. 15 (Richter).

**Western Meadowlark:** Earliest date, Mar. 6, Oshkosh, in song (Kasper). Madison, Mar. 11 (McCabe-Thompson).

**Red-wing:** Wood County, Mar. 7 (Searles). Oconto, Mar. 7 (Richter). Madison, Mar. 3 (McCabe-Thompson).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Madison, Mar. 1 (McCabe-Thompson).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Wood County, Feb. 3 (Becker).

**Bronzed Grackle:** Average date of arrival in southern Wisconsin from Sauk County to Milwaukee was Mar. 2.

**Cowbird:** Three in Milwaukee, Jan. 1 (R. Bub). First migrants in Milwaukee, Mar. 16 (Sharp-Mueller).

**Cardinal:** More common than usual, Racine (Dr. von Jarchow). Also on increase in Sauk County (Kruse).

**Pine Grosbeak:** Madison, January 1 and on other days (Mrs. Koehler). Appleton, Mar. 7 (Mrs. Rogers).

**Towhee:** Milwaukee, Mar. 7 (Gordon Orians). Early.

**Vesper Sparrow:** Sauk City area, Mar. 19 (Derleth).

**White-throated Sparrow:** At feeding station, Pierce County, Dec. 24 to February (Buss). Accidental.

**Fox Sparrow:** Milwaukee, Mar. 14 (Sharp-Mueller).

**Song Sparrow:** Wintering in Milwaukee (Sharp-Mueller) and Madison (Anderson) areas, migrants of this species were first noted Mar. 15, Sauk City area (Derleth); in Oshkosh, Mar. 15 (Kasper); and in Oconto, Mar. 14 (Richter); Madison, Mar. 14 (McCabe-Thompson).

**Lapland Lonspur:** Oshkosh, Feb. 17 (Evans).

**Snow Bunting:** Milwaukee, Feb. 16, one (Steven-Diedrich). Portage County, Dec. 30 (Becker); and in Oshkosh, Feb. 17 (Evans).

## A NEW BOOK

**A Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology.** By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Burgess Publishing Company, 426 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis 15, Minnesota, 1946: 8½x11 in., v plus 248 pp. Profusely illustrated by Walter J. Breckenridge and others. \$3.50.

Those bird students whose regret has been that they never took ornithology in college may secure such an education by reading this book. It answers most of the questions asked by bird people who desire to do something worthwhile in ornithology.

For instance, in his chapter on bird populations, the author describes three methods of censusing: (1) Census by direct counting. (2) Census by sampling. (3) Census by the application of indices. He goes on to describe what bird populations are composed of, how they fluctuate, and how they vary with the type of habitat. This chapter ends, as all of them do, with a very complete bibliography for further study of the subject.

Charts, which show how to make notes in the field, are furnished for each subject.

There are seventeen other chapters in this book, each one carefully outlining methods of study. The internal anatomy, the feather tracts, external structure and the classification of birds is taken up in detail. Principles of bird territory, mating, nest-building, and the development of the young is described.

The study of bird ecology and bird communities as described here will interest Wisconsin ornithologists, for our state is favorably situated to offer a wide variety of types.

Several items of more than passing interest are reserved for the appendix: The preparation of a paper, field methods in ornithology, and a list of bird journals of North America.—N. R. Barger.

## **MOTHER LOVE IN A FOSTER HOME**

**By DORIS POLLEY HARTQUIST**

It had been a bad wind storm in June and Dad and I, on our early morning hike, noticed the ravages of the preceding night—husky branches lying on the ground and flowers bent beyond ever rising. Then on the pavement before us we saw that tragedy of the nesting period, the contents of a nest of three young robins, wearing their nesting coats, flattened to the ground. We stopped for a moment; all appeared lifeless, so we walked on.

Several hours later, passing by the same spot, we were amazed to find one of the young birds we had thought dead had struggled to the base of the maple tree for protection. Its mother, thrilled but worried, was coaxing and encouraging the youngster to the safety of the high grass surrounding the base of the tree. To this spot she brought food to the helpless baby. When we approached she flew frantically about, calling and warning the baby.

It was evident to us that the young robin, though tenderly cared for by the mother, could not live many hours on the busy corner, a prey to marauding cats. Dad and I had an inspiration—would it be possible to give the young bird a home and still not deprive the mother robin of her child? We remembered that last June a brood of three lusty robins had been raised in a large blue spruce outside our living room window and that the nest, secure and in good condition, was still in the tree. We placed the young robin carefully in a basket and, in full view of the alarmed parent, carried him over to his foster home. He snuggled down, satisfied.

We left the scene but quickly took up our posts at the window. How breathlessly we waited until the mother robin brought a worm to stuff down a hungry throat!

In the days that followed the mother stood watch over the new nest, never really content. Before the young robin was fully ready, she began coaxing him from the nest. Obediently he would tumble out but was helpless to fly even a short distance. We tried many times to return him but no attempt was permanent for no sooner would we get him back than she would urge him out. All we could do was to stand guard and

keep him in a box in our house at night. The mother never deserted our premises, always ready in the morning to feed and watch over her baby who was now looking more like a robin. One morning, to our delight and his mother's, the young robin spread his wings and awkwardly **flew** from his foster nest. We could not keep track of him that day and our last picture of the two was of the courageous mother teaching her only child successfully to fly.

Father F. S. Dayton, noted ornithologist, who watched the proceedings with interest, says "This trait of mother passion has been seen in many birds and is a deep-heated manifestation of the love of the mother for her offspring generally found throughout the animal world in its higher members."

New London, Wisconsin.

## NEW MEMBERS

### Patron

Nash, Guy, 1020 Oak Street, Wisconsin Rapids

### Sustaining

Drula, Miss Mary, 628 Doty, Green Bay  
Huff, H. R., Barron

### Active

Allen, Mrs. Chester, 725 Seneca Place, Madison

Atwood, W. H., State Teachers College, Milwaukee

Baeder, Walter, Losey Court, La Crosse

Balliet, Mrs. John M., 2 Brokaw Place, Appleton

Bakkom, Clifford N., Ladysmith

Beer, James R., Dept. of Wildlife Mgt., University of Wisconsin, Madison

Bennett, Mrs. E. E., Rt. 3, Wisconsin Rapids

Blick, Mrs. Frank J., 725 N. Mason Street, Appleton

Bockeridge, Miss Janet, Rt. 1, Nashotah

Bolzenthall, Miss Marion, 1367 Doty Street, Green Bay

Boyd, Miss Florence, Lake Geneva

Braasch, Miss Eleanor, 271 E. Wabasha, Winona, Minnesota

Bradford, Mrs. Lillian, 312 West Prospect Avenue, Appleton

Brazeau, B. C., 1125 South 3rd Street, Wisconsin Rapids

Bronson, Mrs. T. E., 1014 Yale Road, Shorewood Hills, Madison

Buchanan, Rollin, 310 North 23rd Street, La Crosse

Cannon, Mrs. J. G., 128 N. Appleton Street, Appleton

Cain, Miss DeVere, 3052 N. Maryland Avenue, Milwaukee 11

Clark, Dr. Ella, 2100 East Capitol Drive, Milwaukee 11

Cole, Wallace A., Northland College, Ashland

Constine, Miss Edith, 115 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh

Crawford, Mrs. John F., 236 Jones Street, Racine

Degner, Mrs. Elizabeth H., 318 Grant Street, Fort Atkinson

Delsart, Mrs. Gordon, 619 N. Maple, Green Bay

Diedrich, John L., 3125 W. Pierce Street, Milwaukee

Doane, Gilbert H., 112 Roby Road, Madison

Dooley, Mrs. J. W., 7724 W. Rogers Street, West Allis 14

Erskine, Mrs. Arthur, 6435 N. Richards Street, Milwaukee

Evensen, George R., West Salem

Fenner, Mrs. William, 513 Sixty-first Street, Kenosha

Fogwell, Mrs. David, 6510 8th Ave., Kenosha

Fox, Mrs. James, 527 North 24th Street, La Crosse

Gessner, Paul, Rockton Green House, Rockton, Illinois

Getter, Doyle, 4045 N. Stowell Avenue, Milwaukee 11

Gleason, John S., 3044 Summitt Avenue, Milwaukee 11

Gobis, Alex, 1424 Farwell Street, La Crosse

Goebel, Matilda, 409 South 22nd Street, La Crosse

Goedeke, Dr. R. H., West Salem

Gottsleben, Mrs. H. H., 1520 North Division Street, Appleton

Grange, Wallace, Babcock

Greeley, Frederick, 1121 Rutledge Street, Madison

\*This supplements the list of November, 1945, and brings it up to date as of about May 1, 1946.

Gunderson, Mrs. Alf. H., 133 South 14th Street, La Crosse  
 Gunderson, Mrs. Gunnar, 1504 King Street, La Crosse  
 Gunderson, Mrs. Sigurd, 218 South 14th Street, La Crosse  
 Hall, George, Dept. of Chemistry, University of Wisconsin, Madison  
 Hehn, Dr. Anna L., 2446 North Lake Drive, Milwaukee 11  
 Helms, Mrs. Flora, 237 South Main Street, Lake Mills  
 Hennenkemper, Mrs. N. F., 718 N. 22nd Street, Milwaukee 3  
 Heth, Dr. C. M., 708 North 3rd Street, La Crosse  
 Hicks, Mrs. William E., 736 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh  
 Holmberg, Miss Severena, 4827 Woodlawn Blvd., Minneapolis 6, Minnesota  
 Holmes, Mrs. C. A., 8106 Chestnut Street, Wauwatosa 13  
 Holz, A. O., 125 East Kalb Avenue, Green Bay  
 Houser, L. M., 408 North Woods Street, Appleton  
 Houser, Mrs. L. M., 408 North Woods Street, Appleton  
 Jackman, Mrs. F. H., 202 Sinclair Street, Janesville  
 James, Mrs. Grace C., R. R. 4, Oshkosh  
 Jeffris, Miss Ruth, 602 South 3rd Street, Janesville  
 Johns, Edwin W., 2935 Losey Blvd. South, La Crosse  
 Johnson, Mrs. George, 2042 South 82nd Street, West Allis 14  
 Kaftan, Arthur, 809 S. Jackson Street, Green Bay  
 Karges, Mrs. R. A., 514 South 4th Street, River Falls  
 Kleivig, Miss Gene, 207 South Meade, Appleton  
 Kiehlbauch, John, R. 1, Box 63, Sturtevant  
 Kramar, Mrs. W. B., Mattoon  
 Kremb, Mrs. Byrd, 11 Union Street, Oshkosh  
 Krostag, Miss Irene, 320 Fremont Street, Kiel  
 Kull, Mrs. Grover, Genoa City  
 Lager, Edward C., Box 123, Prentice  
 Lawrie, Arthur, Lake Geneva  
 Library, Edgerton Public, Edgerton  
 Library, Madison Free, Madison 3  
 Library, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts  
 Library, Sauk City, Sauk City  
 Library, West High School, 30 Ash Street, Madison 5  
 Lockery, Mrs. Glen, Rosholt  
 Logeman, Mrs. L. M., 2007 N. Hulton Street, Milwaukee 12  
 Loyster, Earl L., Middleton Beach, Middleton  
 Lueck, Dr. George, 933 Rose Street, La Crosse  
 Lurvey, Conrad, Rt. 4, Oconomowoc  
 Mallow, Philip, 300 South 6th Street, Watertown  
 Meyer, Mrs. Dorothea, 307 Spaulding Avenue, Ripon  
 Meyer, Dr. Henry, 307 Spaulding Avenue, Ripon  
 Moody, Miss Charlotte, 6019 Eighteenth Avenue, Kenosha  
 Mueller, Arthur A., 414—15th Street, Oshkosh  
 Mueller, Miss Esther, Rt. 4, Box 583, Waukesha  
 Nature Club, Senior High School, Appleton  
 Naumann, Miss Amanda, Hillcrest, Beaver Dam  
 Nevitt, George, 250 Lake Drive, Oshkosh  
 O'Gara, William, 510 Eighth Street, N., Wisconsin Rapids  
 O'Shea, Mrs. Stanley D., 529 North Pinckney Street, Madison 3  
 Oversan, C. D., Dousman  
 Paepke, H. A., 1444 Jenifer Street, Madison  
 Peebles, Miss Edna M., Route 4, Fond du Lac  
 Pfeil, Walter, Granville  
 Pickert, Miss Doris, 123 E. Lawrence Street, Appleton  
 Plantz, Mrs. Rose, 322 E. Harris Street, Appleton  
 Prag, Miss Hilda, c/o Talcott Free Library, Rockton, Illinois  
 Prins, Edward, 403 Park View, Racine  
 Proksch, Mrs. John, 1511 South 8th Street, La Crosse  
 Quimby, Miss Arelisle, 1029 North 6th Street, Sheboygan  
 Quimby, Mrs. Frank K., 1500 Quincy Avenue, Racine  
 Ray, Miss Idella, Medina  
 Reinbecker, Mrs. John, 2349 South 78th Street, West Allis 14  
 Roberts, Mrs. Harold D., 29 E. Wilson Street, Madison 8  
 Ruhl, Miss Sarah, Lake Geneva  
 Russell, Miss Bess, 106 River Drive, Appleton  
 Russell, Harold, 920 E. Franklin Street, Appleton  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Scout Troop, 271 W. Grand Avenue, Beloit  
 Salamin, Peter J., 928 Erin Street, Madison  
 Schanen, William, Ozaukee Press, Port Washington  
 Schreiner, Miss Juanita M., 108 Edward Street, Fort Atkinson  
 Schmid, Mrs. T., 6720 Monona Place, West Allis 14  
 Schuessler, Miss Leone, Senior High School, Kenosha

Schultz, Miss Elma, Rt. 1, Hortonville  
 Scribner, Charles W., High School, Appleton  
 Seelman, Mrs. Henry, 2727 N. Murray Avenue, Milwaukee 11  
 Sell, Mrs. Herbert, Box 181, Mercer  
 Shaw, John R., 225 Owen Drive, Madison 5  
 Simpson, Rev. D. M., 5117 Nineteenth Avenue, Kenosha  
 Smith, Mrs. L. P. C., 2019 South 82nd Street, West Allis 14  
 Smith, Mrs. E. R., Rt. 1, Two Rivers  
 Sperry, Dr. Theodore, 1910 Keyes Avenue, Madison 5  
 Stoll, Mrs. R. E., Rt. 1, Nashotah  
 Stollberg, Bruce P., Box 132, Ladysmith  
 Stury, Mrs. Anton, 6421 Sheridan Road, Kenosha  
 Swearingen, Robert, Box 5, Mercer  
 Tessen, Mrs. Fred, 209 W. Parkway, Appleton  
 Thompson, Dan, 521 E. Mifflin Street, Madison  
 Thompson, Dr. Pearl, 2287 N. Lake Drive, Milwaukee  
 Thornton, Erwin H. C., 8416 N. 66th Street, Milwaukee 9  
 Tilloson, Miss Esther, 591 Jackson Drive, Oshkosh  
 Tischer, Harvey, 3608 N. 12th Street, Milwaukee 6  
 Trautman, Mrs. Herbert, R.F.D., Franksville  
 Trautman, John, 1425 North Morrison, Appleton  
 Trautman, Mrs. John, 1425 North Morrison, Appleton  
 Vandesteeg, Dr. C. H., 444 Losey Court, La Crosse  
 Wechselberg, Mrs. C., 2310 E. Bradford Avenue, Milwaukee 11  
 Weisskopf, Audrey, 6428 N. Richards Street, Milwaukee 11  
 Wells, Mrs. Hilda M., 815 E. Franklin, Appleton  
 Wettengel, Geo., 915 E. Alton, Appleton  
 Wettengel, Mrs. George, 915 E. Alton, Appleton  
 Williams, Mrs. Mildred, Training School, Stevens Point  
 Wold, Clarence, 1109 First Avenue N., Park Falls  
 Wollangk, Miss Orpha, 64 School Street, Oshkosh  
 Works, Mrs. Lawrence P., 816 Christiana Street, Green Bay  
 Wright, Clark G., Box 135, Rockton, Illinois

**Student**

Bell, David G., 515 North Garfield Avenue, Janesville  
 Bouffard, Larry, 229 Gray Street, Green Bay  
 De Mars, Wayne, Rt. 6, Green Bay  
 Hansen, Richard, 535 South Park Avenue, Oshkosh  
 Hinze, William, 255 Scott Street, Oshkosh  
 Koller, George, Jr., 8224 West North Avenue, Wauwatosa  
 Larson, George P., 512 Caroline Street, Neenah  
 McEathron, Ann, 121 E. Roosevelt Street, Appleton  
 Murphy, Peter, 1003 Prospect Avenue, Janesville  
 Schubert, Karl, 2635 Pine Street, La Crosse  
 Wakeman, Roy, 221 Faurview Avenue, Waukesha

## OFFICERS

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## *A Varied Thrush in Wisconsin*

On February 13, 1946, this very rare and interesting bird, the varied thrush, appeared at the backyard feeding station of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Allen of Janesville, Wisconsin. Since it was not one of the common winter residents, it attracted immediate attention. The station is ideally located for observations from a nearby window. The varied thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*), a male, was almost a daily visitor to the station until February 28th, the last date it kept company with the blue jays, tufted titmice, cardinals and evening grosbeaks.

Fortunately Mr. and Mrs. Allen had the patience to take 16 mm. color movies of the bird feeding at their station. These were shown to a group of interested Madison ornithologists on May 14th, 1946.

To find this thrush east of the Mississippi River is a wonderful record in itself, but to have the bird appear during the winter months is all the more amazing. Its normal range is far west, in the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and the northwestern part of Montana. However, spotty records of this individual have been listed in a number of the eastern states.

There is one other known state record of this bird but it has not appeared in print. On October 26th, 1944, Mrs. H. R. English of Madison, Wisconsin, observed one at her bird bath for a couple of hours. It did not repeat at her station.

Mr. A. W. Schorger of Madison, Wisconsin, informed me there is one more indefinite record for Sauk County. At this printing there wasn't sufficient time to trace this observation. When the information is obtained, it will be presented as a note in the bulletin.

Other observations may have been made in the state but have not appeared in print. If there are any such records, it would be important to have the data published for future reference.

With an ever-increasing number of people becoming interested in "birding" and setting out feeding stations, new and interesting bird observations will be forthcoming. Only by letting these records become widely known through the means of the press can they be of any value to other ornithologists.

Harry G. Anderson,  
Madison, Wisconsin.