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The Passenger Pigeon

Monthly Bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

Vol. II

June, 1940

No. 6

COWBIRDS AS HOME WRECKERS

By J. B. Kendall

Green Bay

The Cowbird may in some ways be beneficial, but my past and present observations stamp this bird as a menace to many of our better birds. Of these, the Savannah and Chipping Sparrow are perhaps picked on more than any. Others that become foster parents to the Cowbird include the Oriole, Meadowlark and Bobolink.

I have observed Savannah Sparrow's nests containing only one of their own eggs to two or three Cowbird eggs. Also, it is common to see a Savannah Sparrow feeding two or three young Cowbirds, but not one of its kind. These have been common observations for the last four years.

The friendly and trusting little Chipping Sparrow that builds in our fence hedges, vines and ornamental shrubs is perhaps picked on by the Cowbird more frequently than the Savannah Sparrow. Seldom does a Chipping Sparrow bring up more than one young bird without human interference. Whether this is a correct balance by Nature I will not attempt to say, but it appears to be one-sided. This very morning I witnessed a female Cowbird carrying off the last Chipping Sparrow egg from a nest in a neighbor's ornamental evergreen shrub. Whether these Chipping Sparrows will stay and continue housekeeping is hard to say, but they show no outward signs of being disturbed.

Baltimore Orioles have been observed to be fostering two Cowbirds to one Oriole. This may be a shock to many bird students who have studied the domestic habits of Orioles, for the Oriole as a rule pursues and persecutes Cowbirds almost as much as a Kingbird likes to chase a Crow.

I have seen a Meadowlark's nest with five of its own and two Cowbird's eggs in it. The larks abandoned the nest, but I am not able to say that it was definitely because the Cowbirds deposited their eggs in it.

It would be easy to go on indefinitely with various cases of the depredations of the Cowbird. It is every bit as much a predator as the Blue Jay and others. This bird is cunning and deposits its "Fifth Column" to be brought up and supported by the enemy in preparation for ultimate control. She will wait her chance to strike, watching from behind a roof ridge on a garage.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON

Monthly Bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

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Manuscript should be sent to the editor, except that

bird field notes and bird banding data go to respective editors of these departments.

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Bird Banding: Harold C. Wilson, Ephraim, Wisconsin

FISHERMAN'S LUCK

By Wm. I. Du Mez, Milwaukee

My first bird catch is like a fisherman's story. "It was so big, but it got away."

Yes sir, I never had a Starling look so big to me as this one did that early Spring morning of May 22.

Tired, sleepy, eyes pinching, and, well, you know how it is to get up early on a gray morning. That's the condition I was in when I went to see what my trap had captured for me. Sparrows and more Sparrows (the English variety), as all that could be seen. While I was watching, a Starling dropped in front of the trap and strutted in. Well, I assure you that it didn't take a cold shower or a cup of coffee to wake me up that morning. I pulled the trap string and tried to hurry into my clothes, but clothes have a way about them when you try to rush. I was soon out in the yard with open band, pliers, and gathering cage, but behold an empty bird trap. Yes, Mr. Starling was my first catch, but he did not intend to be the first to wear one of my No. 2 bands. This smart fellow took advantage of the fact that the grass had grown too much during the past few days to allow the trap door to close completely.

The moral of this story, if there must be a moral, is: "Don't let the grass grow under your trapdoor."

I don't believe that any bird can ever give a person as big a thrill as the first catch of a Bird Bander.

BIRD BANDERS' DEPARTMENT

Harold C. Wilson, Editor

Ephraim, Wisconsin

Vernon C. Rossman, Waukesha, reports:

I have today banded my 10,000th bird. Perhaps this is a good time to recapitulate and take a backward look. I banded my first bird, a Blue Jay, on March 12, 1933. Today, just 7 years, 3 months, and 9 days later, I have reached a milestone. This period of time has been one of much enjoyment to me, and I look eagerly to the future, anticipating more enjoyable banding experiences.

White-throated Sparrows lead my banding list with 2,436 individuals. There were banded 1,487 Slate-colored Juncos; 902 Robins; 800 Bank Swallows; 612 Song Sparrows; 401 Fox Sparrows; 355 Bronzed Grackles; 323 Catbirds; 201 Starlings; 179 Blue Jays; 170 Giant Redwings; 125 Redstarts; 116 Hermit Thrushes, and 115 Brown Thrashers. These are species of which over 100 have been banded.

Among the rarer birds captured are: 8 Harris's Sparrows, 5 Gambel's Sparrows, 1 Connecticut Warbler, 1 Yellow-breasted Chat, 1 Goshawk (first to wear a Biological Survey band), 1 Alder Flycatcher, 3 Broad-winged Hawks, 3 Duck Hawks, 1 Blue-headed Vireo and 1 Tufted Titmouse.

States visited by my banded birds and numbers reported show Louisiana leading with 7 recoveries of Mourning Doves, Cowbird, Robins, Flicker, and Bronzed Grackles. Illinois, Texas, and Mississippi each have 4 recoveries of Cowbird, Bronzed Grackles, Meadowlark, Marsh Hawk, Cedar Waxwing, Robins, Brown Thrasher, and Slate-colored Junco. Arkansas and Tennessee each have two recoveries of Marsh Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Robin, and Bronzed Grackle. Oklahoma was visited by a Bronzed Grackle; Minnesota also by a Grackle. A White-throated Sparrow crossed national boundaries and was reported from near Winnipeg. A Kingfisher was shot in South Carolina; a Catbird in Kentucky; and 2 Robins were recovered from Florida and Georgia. This gives me a grand total of 32 out-of-state recoveries. Thirteen birds were recovered in the state outside of Waukesha, and about 175 have returned to the original point of banding.

The "oldest" bird from the time of banding to recovery is that of a Red-shouldered Hawk, banded on April 7, 1934 and shot within 12 miles of place of banding in October, 1938, a lapse of four years and six months.

The only bird trapped which was banded by another co-operator was a White-throated Sparrow banded at Milwaukee, Wis., 13 miles distant, 14 days previously. Another bird, a Robin, banded at Milwaukee, was found dead at Waukesha. A Goldfinch shot here was found wearing a band placed on the bird by S. H. Weakley of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON

Harold C. Wilson, Ephraim:

The 19th of June I had the pleasure of taking Samuel A. Thorn and Herbert Hart of Milwaukee with several others to Sister Islands to band the Herring Gulls. We banded 1,054 Gulls, 37 Red-winged Blackbirds, and 1 Crow. The trip home was so rough that some members of the party will remember it for a long time.

As the storm prevented our going to Hat Island the following day, Mr. Thron decided to band young Eagles in a nest near Baileys Harbor. He later wrote as follows:

"I had a great time with the eagles. The nest is about 70 or more feet up in a big Norway pine. I got the climbing hooks from the telephone folks and got up to the nest rather easily but with much care. Then it took me about half an hour to work enough material out of one edge of the nest so that I might get onto the nest safely. I took a breathing spell for a few minutes before going onto the nest. As I got my head up to where I could see the two birds they stretched their great magnificent wings and took to the air for their "maiden flight" unbanded. It was such a glorious sight and they took the air so well that I do not regret the experience in the least, but I would like to have them carry the Survey bands.

"The two old birds did not offer to put up any fight. They soared high overhead and at times were out of sight. When the young left the nest, the old birds came near and then went over to a tall dead tree on the point some half mile away. NEXT YEAR I'M GOING FOR THEM ABOUT JUNE 1ST."

NEWS NOTES

The Kumlien Bird Club of Madison at their meeting of June 4, elected Professor Aldo Leopold president and Irven Buss secretary-treasurer. At this same meeting the members discussed the success of the May Day bird census, which produced one of the largest lists ever secured.

The U. S. Government Printing Office has advised the editor that National Museum Bulletin No. 167, Part I, "Life Histories of the Birds of Prey" will not be reprinted as previously stated "due to our inability to obtain the original 102 cuts."

E. W. Strehlow, reporter for the Green Bay Bird Club, has prepared report forms for the club's members and finds that he now receives a better return of bird records each month.

Cleveland P. Grant spent most of the summer taking more of his excellent movies in the vicinity of Babcock, Wood County. He again photographed the Sharp-tailed Grouse.

MAY FIELD NOTES

by N. R. Barger, Editor

Kindly send field notes to N. R. Barger, 450 N. Few St., Madison, Wisconsin, at the end of each month.

Pursuant to our policy we will introduce a few of our observers each issue, this time from Madison. They are all over the age of 18.

John S. Main, an "old timer", is still actively observing birds. He is a charter member and past president of the local Kumlien Bird Club. Because of his scientific interest in bird study, Mr. Main's writings and talks are creative and instructive.

Wm. S. Feeney, Biological Observer of the University Arboretum, is also an ornithologist of first rank. He is actively observing and banding birds the year around and does bird photography, especially of the Raptores. He is a member of the Kumlien Club.

Sam Robbins, a native of New England and student of birds for nine years, keeps a detailed journal of daily observations in the field, noting the peak of the migration in each individual species, as well as the departures and arrivals. He also keeps a record of the number of hours spent in a given area, a fact essential to scientific study and one often neglected by bird students. Now attending the University of Wisconsin, Robbins hopes to be in the state several years.

Inasmuch as THE PASSENGER PIGEON is to be printed from now on, this department will follow the plan adopted in this issue, namely, to summarize bird notes sent in. Columnar forms take too much space and would be much too expensive. However, observers should continue to send complete lists, as there is no other way of forming judgements for summarizing a species. Use the A. C. U. order. Unusual records should be explained. Most of our observers in the past have failed to do this with the result that unusual records are scorned by many of our readers.

All observers are agreed that the migration this year was late with the peak of the warbler migration placed at about May 20. Paulson of Green Bay observed the unusual Holboell's Grebe there, May 3. Loons lingered till the 15th in Dane County (Robbins) and in Oneida County until the 31st (Mitchell). The Great Blue Heron was reported from many points in the state but always in singles.

THE PASSINGER PIGEON

There is a good representation of Black-crowned Night Herons, one at Appleton by Mrs. Rogers, one at Horicon by Scott, and seven in Dane County in five days by Robbins. William Vogt, while in Dane County found American Egrets May 20. There is also a report of this bird from Door County, May 1 (Peter-silka). Dr. von Jarchow notes an increase in American Bitterns around Racine this year, and the Least Bittern, a late migrant was observed at Green Bay, May 25 by Krawczyk, and in Dane County, May 30 by Barger. The latter observer also noted three immature Whistling Swans in Dane County May 5. Some indication that the Canada Goose may be resuming nesting activity in Wisconsin this year is furnished from two sources: E. E. Ripper of the Biological Survey found three Canada Goose eggs freshly punctured and eaten by a predator, on the Town Line Ditch, Horicon Marsh, near Mayville, Dodge County, May 30. They were identified by Irven Buss of the University of Wisconsin. Five Canada Geese were observed in Green Lake County, May 12, by Robbins.

Ducks lingered late this year. Pintail were present in numbers at the close of May in Dane County. Other such records were made by Scott, Main and Barger when they found the Redhead, Green-winged Teal, and Hooded Merganser till the end of May. Mrs. Rogers reports the American Merganser at Appleton, May 11, and Lydia Barnstein, the Red-breasted Merganser at Manitowac, May 18. The latter was recorded by Schorger in Dane County, May 12, also a late date. Dr. von Jarchow noted Old Squaws on Lake Michigan at Racine, May 23, and Robbins sends a late date for the Golden-eye at Green Lake, May 12. The Wood Duck is scarce. Rahmann found but one at Hayward and the Kumlien Census in Dane County showed scarcely a dozen. The Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, Canvasback and Lesser Scaup lingered in small numbers in Dane County until their average date of departure.

The Hawk situation is not bad, unless observers took special pains to send in all records. Dr. von Jarchow noticed at least one Cooper's Hawk in almost every wooded lot around Racine. Robbins observed three Sharp-shinned Hawks in Dane County, May 5. Richter of Oconto, sends in interesting notes on this bird between May 2 and 5: "A Sharp-shinned Hawk flew over the city pursued by Starlings, the latter uttering notes I have not heard previously. Two days later one was discovered eating an English Sparrow in a yard, from which all other birds had fled. Next day one was eating a Robin in the yard". A Rough-legged Hawk was observed in Green Bay by the club, May 12, and Barger

MAY FIELD NOTES

noted the Red-shouldered Hawk in Sauk County, May 7. Kahmann found the Rough-legged at Hayward as late as May 27. A "circle migration" of Broad-winged Hawks, estimated at 50 birds was seen by Jones at Waukesha, May 15. The Bald Eagle was observed in Dane County, May 12 (Bussewitz), in Green Bay, May 26 and in Hayward, May 7 (Kahmann). The Osprey was almost totally lacking, only two being reported, that of Robbins, May 5, in Dane County, and that of Kahmann at Hayward. Of the Falcons, a surprising number of Pigeon Hawks were seen. One for Green Bay, May 18 by Cleary; one for Columbus, May 11 by Robbins; one for Oconto, May 17, Heisel; and one for Adams County, May 4 by Scott. One Duck Hawk was reported, that of the Hammerstroms, Dane County, May 12. The Sparrow Hawk was noted regularly in most areas, even in Hayward, where Kahmann saw one May 5.

Very few Owl records were made. They show a few Horned and Barred, but the most interesting is that of Rossman, when he banded a Short-eared Owl (immature), at Waukesha, May 28. A record for the Turkey Vulture in Door County was sent in by Moeler, May 13. This latter is an exceptional record, but not at all unlikely for the shore of the lake.

Game birds were almost lacking. Keeney has noted the Chukar Partridge in Dane County, and Barger the Hungarian Partridge (pair). In his study of the Woodcock, Keeney banded 33 nestlings this year. Scott records the dancing of twenty Prairie Chicken May 5, Adams County, where the Kumlien Club observed them from blinds. A few were seen in Dane County by Jackson.

Dr. von Jarchow observed a notable increase in Sora Rails around Racine this year. Other reports do not state any change in numbers. The Yellow Rail, which is rare in the state was seen by Richter, May 10, in Oconto County; and by Cleary, May 18, in Green Bay. A single King Rail was observed by Barger and Jackson, May 12. The Florida Gallinule was reported from Oshkosh, Appleton, Green Bay and Dane County. On May 30, John Main and Jackson Main found what was probably one of the best spring records in that they identified a Hudsonian Curlew in Dane County. This bird is extremely rare here although there are some previous records. The Semi-palmated Plover arrived May 3 (Robbins) which is a few days early for the Dane County average. The only Golden Plover record comes from Green Bay, where a few were seen May 26 by the club. This club also reports the Piping Plover for the same date. Black-bellied Plover were noted there by the club May 26, and in

THE PASSENGER PIGEON

Dane County, May 12 and May 30 by Barger when from 6 to 8 were seen. Evans of Oshkosh is the only one apparently who saw Ruddy Turnstones. On May 21 he reports a flock of about 150. The uncommon Sanderling was noted in small numbers by Robbins for Dane County, May 30; this was the only report. The rare Baird's Sandpiper was reported only by the Hammerstroms and Main, May 12 for Dane County. The White-rumped Sandpiper, also rare, was seen on May 12 and 30, but in small numbers, by Barger. The Dowitcher which may be found in Dane County during the two middle weeks of May, formerly called the Long-billed, is now regarded as the Alberta variety. This is on the basis of specimens collected. They were poorly represented here this year, only two records being made. Spellum has noted an increase this year in numbers of Upland Plover about Viroqua. This is corroborated by Mrs. Rogers of Appleton who saw from six to eleven a day during the first week of May. Evans of Oshkosh saw six on May 8, and Richter records them at Oconto, May 13. In Dane County two were seen by Barger May 30. The Wilson Phalarope usually in singles was present in Columbia County May 17, where Scott found 5 females and one male in the same place. A rather late date for the Bonaparte's Gull was secured by Robbins for Dane County, where he saw six, May 27. Mrs. Rogers, on May 1 observed about 200 of them at Appleton. The Black Tern and the Common Tern arrived on time according to Robbins. the first week in May, in Dane County, but the Common Tern reached its "peak" May 18. The Forster's Tern, a bird probably more common than is supposed, was noted by Paulson at Green Bay and in Dane County May 17 by Robbins.

Cuckoos were particularly late. Robbins reports both species, May 15 for Dane County. The next were Green Bay, May 21 for Black-billed (Mrs. Hussong); and May 26 at the same place for the Yellow-billed (club). A rather early date for the hummingbird in Dane County was secured by P. E. Jones, May 12. Ben Logan noted a rather large flock of Chimney Swifts at Platteville, May 17, flying around a chimney in ring formation. An albino Flicker record has been sent in by Mrs. Rogers of Appleton. The bird was seen May 3.

Cleary, of Green Bay records the accidental Arkansas Flycatcher May 18; and Evans noted the Wood Pewee somewhat early at Oshkosh, May 8. The Crested Flycatcher arrived on time in Dane County, May 6 (Robbins). Four reports of the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher were received: Jones of Waukesha, May 21; Cuthbert, May 12, and Robbins. May 27, both of Dane County; and the Green Bay Club, May 12.

MAY FIELD NOTES

Large flocks of swallows suffered from the snow and cold this year. The Cliff Swallow at Wausau (described elsewhere in this issue); Martins and Tree Swallows doubtless were thinned to some extent. The Cliff Swallow, usually regarded as a late migrant, arrived in Dane County, May 6 (Robbins); in Oshkosh May 8 (Evans); in Manitowoc on the same date (Barnstein) and even in Hayward May 8, when Kahmann saw at least 75. Robbins recorded the Brown Creeper May 11 in Dane County, their usual date of departure; and at Green Lake, May 12. The same applies to the Red-breasted Nuthatch which he saw last in Dane County, May 15; and to the Winter Wren, last date in Dane County May 18. All the thrushes arrived the first week in May according to Mitchell in Dane County. Robbins notices the peak of the Gray-cheeked Thrush migration to be May 21 this year. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher arrived on time at Waukesha, April 30, when Cuthbert caught one in hand. Both the Golden-crowned Kinglet and Ruby-crowned departed from Dane County on their average dates, May 8th and May 19. Mitchell and Robbins recorded the Pipit in Dane County during the second week in May. No other reports were received of Pipits.

Scott sends in the only Philadelphia Vireo record. He saw two in Crawford County, May 19, which seems to be their average date of arrival for that latitude. The other four usual Vireos arrived on time according to Mitchell and Robbins in Dane County.

All the Warblers that ever occur in Wisconsin were reported with one or two extra warblers of irregular occurrence this far north. Strehlow and three others observed a Hooded Warbler at Green Bay, May 19, at a distance of little over four feet. This was on a rainy day when birds were feeding very low. Although this is an exceptional record, the Hooded Warbler being a southern bird, it is hardly possible that it could have been mistaken at this distance by four people. The other is a sight record of a Sycamore Warbler at Madison by Robbins. He tried to get someone to collect this specimen, but it could not be found by the time the collector arrived. The Prothonotary Warbler arrived in Milwaukee, May 13 (Schaeffer) and was found around Madison this year by Scott and Robbins. Scott also found it in Crawford County. The Green Bay Club sends in a date for the Blue-winged Warbler for their area, May 19. The Tennessee Warbler, often regarded as a nuisance among bird lookers, because of its numbers, reached its peak this year, May 22 (Robbins). Evans noticed a flock of forty Bay-breasted Warblers at Oshkosh, May 20. The only Cerulean records came from the

THE PASSENGER PIGEON

Wisconsin River in Dane County, whereas, records of the Connecticut Warbler were made in many places. The Hammerstroms and Mains made an early record for it in Dane County, May 12. The Yellow-breasted Chat was found in Appleton, May 11 by Mrs. Rogers, two birds being counted. Evans found the Cape-May Warbler to be at its peak, May 20 at Oshkosh, and at the same time, Robbins placed the peak of the following warblers in Dane County: Canada, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Mourning, and Black-poll. The Oven-bird reached its peak on the 15th, and the Grinnell's Water-thrush on the 14th. Incidentally, collected specimens from Dane County show that the Grinnell's is more abundant than the Northern Water-thrush.

Seven Bobolinks were observed singing in unison on a fence, by Main and Scott, May 5. This was, indeed, an experience the thrill of which will long be remembered. Yellow-headed Blackbirds have made quite a showing. They were noted at Appleton, Green Bay, Oshkosh, and, of course, in Dane County. Three records were made of the Orchard Oriole in Dane County, and all were immature males. Strehlow of Green Bay observed one, May 21, at his home, but did not state its age or sex. Liebmann of the same city notes the Rusty Blackbird there May 6; and Sister M. Martha has a record of the Brewer's Blackbird in Door County May 9. Richter, of Oconto, comments on large flocks of Blue Jays roving about, May 18, with apparently nothing else to do. He wonders why they were not busy with feeding and caring for nestlings. A Scarlet Tanager (male) not yet completely molted was found by Barger in Sauk County, May 7. It is not often that such a specimen reaches our borders, although one or two have been previously noted.

Jones of Waukesha noted the Dickcissel there May 30 and reports have come in from the western half and southern portions of the state that this bird is here in numbers this year. The Evening Grosbeak lingered till May 14 at Oconto according to Miss Heisel. For the information of those interested in the range of the Cardinal, Gerondale, of Door County, observed one there May 12. Spellum, of Viroqua, banded an albino English Sparrow (female) in May. One Lark Sparrow was found in Dane County, May 12, (census) by Barger and others. Why were not more reported? Rossman of Waukesha banded three Harris' Sparrows in May, and Cleary of Green Bay saw one there, May 20. This is another sparrow worthy of some study in Wisconsin. The Clay-colored Sparrow, often overlooked, was observed this year from Hayward to the southern border of the state. The erratic Pine Siskin was common in Dane County in May this year (Robbins). The same observer found

MAY FIELD NOTES

Tree Sparrows lingered as late as May 3 in Dane County. Rossman of Waukesha noted an abundance of Juncos this year, but a scarcity of White-throated Sparrows. Observers from all points sighted a few White-crowned Sparrows; the same is true of Lincoln Sparrows, but the latter species was reported only in singles. Late reports of the Lapland Longspur came in this year. Mrs. Rogers saw a large flock of them at Appleton, May 11; Scott noted them in Columbia County and in Adams County May 4 and 5. Only two records for the Leconte's Sparrow were received, that of Richter, May 10, at Oconto; and that of Mrs. Hussong, in Green Bay, May 12.

Nesting data is of great interest to Wisconsin observers inasmuch as it tells definitely what birds are summer residents. We have a number of nesting records for this issue, and hope that our contributors will make it a point to send in many more.

A nest of the Meadowlark containing 3 eggs was located by Mitchell in Dane County, May 22. On the same date he found a nest of the Blue-winged Teal, containing 14 eggs. A nest of the same species, found by Barger, May 30, contained but 7 eggs. Hanson of Racine observed young Robins out of the nest, May 23; and Logan of Platteville found them able to fly May 30. Kahmann, of Hayward, recorded Ospreys building their nest, May 26. Young Upland Plovers, according to Spillum of Platteville, were able to follow their parents, May 30. He states, however, that hawk and owl nesting was late this year. In Oconto County, Richter found 3 downy young Red-tailed Hawks in the nest about 4 days old, May 13. Fresh eggs (3) of the Broad-winged Hawk were also discovered by him there, May 17. Rossman located nests of the Bobolink Black Duck, Marsh Hawk and Henslow's Sparrow, at Waukesha, May 30, but failed to give information about their contents or stage of development. P. Whitney of Oconto County counted 11 eggs in a nest of the Mallard May 7. The Woodcock (Richter) had four eggs May 13, at Oconto. Richter also contributes the following: Starling, four eggs well advanced in incubation, May 20; two nests of the Prairie Chicken, 15 eggs and 10 eggs, May 24; Sora Rail, May 27 with 9 eggs, incubation begun; Red-winged Blackbird, May 27, four eggs (fresh); Virginia Rail, May 28, with 8 eggs and incubation begun; American Bittern, May 28, 4 eggs with incubation slight; Blue-winged Teal, May 28, 15 eggs; Leconte's Sparrow, May 27, 4 eggs (fresh); and Song Sparrow, May 31, with one egg and two eggs of the Cowbird (fresh).

BY THE WAYSIDE

Elsewhere in this issue some mention is made of the fact that birds feed low in the trees during protracted rains, warblers coming down where they could be observed almost at arm's length, and so forth. In May 17, Barber and party had the good fortune of counting 117 birds, many of them ordinarily feeders in the trees, down on the sand beach and along the water's edge of Devil's Lake in Sauk County. Twenty-one species were sitting on the sand. Needless to say, the four Scarlet Tanagers, the three pairs of Baltimore Orioles, the three male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and the Blue Jay furnished the color. Flat on the sand and feeding, were such birds as the Wood Pewee, Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows, Bank Swallows, a Clay-colored Sparrow, Kingbirds, four species of Thrushes, Least Flycatchers, not to mention the usual Robins, Cowbirds, and Red-wings. It was raining, but the inconvenience of rain may often be rewarded as in this case; it was a beautiful sight requiring very little effort on our part.

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Conservation Warden John Adamski reports that on May 15, 16 and 17 the streets of Sparta in Monroe County were filled with Redstarts with males in the greatest numbers. The birds were feeding on something which was not identified, but because of this attraction 20 to 25 of them were killed by cars.

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Karl Kahmann of Hayward reports on July 8 that up to that date he had seen only one Killdeer and one Kingfisher during his various trips through northwestern Sawyer County this year. He states that this is most unusual as many more should have been seen, and requests an expression of opinion from any members having like experiences or a possible explanation.

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I. J. Perkins of the Milwaukee Public Museum sends in the following good records too late for the usual notes: April 2, nest containing three almost fully grown young Great Horned Owls. Two young were reared in the nest last year; nest located about 25 feet from ground in small oak tree on heavily wooded island one mile east of Golden Lake, Waukesha County. March 30, four Sandhill Cranes observed near same location as the owl nest, and on April 14 two were seen doing considerable calling. March 3, two Bald Eagles were seen on same location, one almost mature and the other immature. (continued on next page)

COLD WEATHER AFFECTS THE CLIFF SWALLOWS

By William Urban, Rothschild

During a very cold rain which turned into snow on the evening of May 15 a flock of approximately 300 Cliff Swallows spent the night in a partly sheltered spot on the electric light wires and up against a house. The window drip cap apparently had a leak and a warm draught of air came from the house. The Swallows sat on the 4 inch ledge and were resting on each other's backs until they four high. More would try to pile on but then all four would fall off and immediately there would be a scramble to get back to the warm spot. Each ledge held about 30 birds. The remainder of the flock sat on the wires huddled close to each other and when one would leave the wires to try to get on the window the others would shift along the wire until they touched each other again.

The day of the 16th was very cold, not over 40 degrees, but more Swallows came until there were approximately 1000 birds. In this flock were Barn, Bank, Tree and Cliff Swallows. These birds mingled together, stayed overnight and moved on the morning of the 17th, when the weather warmed.

This is the largest flock of Cliff Swallows we (Braben-ber also a witness) have ever observed in this area. This observation took place one mile south of Wausau, Wisconsin in the village of Schofield.

BY THE WAYSIDE(Continued)

Horicon Marsh is again covered with water as the result of the recent heavy rains, but it is possible much of this water will run off before the fall migration of waterfowl. The rains were also credited with the destruction of numbers of duck nests here as well as elsewhere and it is believed pheasants also suffered to some extent. Lowlands throughout southern Wisconsin were filled with water of unusual depths.

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Earl Loyster reports that on a recent trip to Four Mile Island in Horicon Marsh (Dodge County), he observed a very large heron rookery. His estimates of the number of nests ran as high as 500, with Black-crowned Night Herons far outnumbering the Great Blue Herons. Loyster visited the marsh to study waterfowl nests and luckily found a number of them before the heavy rains wrought their destruction.

NEWS NOTES

An unusual duck, weighing about seven pounds, was found nesting in a tree at the Royal Bixby home near South Wayne, in Lafayette County, according to the newspapers. Identification was not possible at the time of this newspaper announcement, but it is hoped the local members of the Society will investigate and report on the species of this bird.

The Conservation Department has announced the inauguration of research projects for the study of Wisconsin Pinnated and Sharp-tailed Grouse, Waterfowl and Pheasants. This is good news for the state's ornithologists.

Owen Gromme of the Milwaukee Public Museum has three field crews active this summer in studying the birds in parts of Wisconsin needing further investigation before publication of his proposed book on Wisconsin birds.

The following new members have been reported by Treasurer J. H. Evans:

- Carr, Miss Anna M. State Teachers College, Waukesha
- Cunningham, James W., 4425 Main St., Kansas City, Mo.
- Frazier, Miss Anita, 520 Buffalo St., Manitowoc
- Wysocki, Harry, 2518 N. 2nd St., Milwaukee
- Young, Howard, 603 West Avenue, Waukesha

The Society now has approximately 280 members.

Among those enjoying themselves this summer (or possibly are working a little) are J. H. Evans, who is at the Culver Military Academy at Culver, Indiana, and Alvin Throne, who is at the Lost Lake Nature Camp in Florence County. This note should remind all members that bird notes taken on trips during the summer months in Wisconsin may be of unusual value and should be reported in more than usual detail.

The next issue of THE PASSENGER PIGEON will be printed. Members are urged to spread the good news among their fellow bird students. Dr. B. L. von Jarchow's article on the Wood Duck will be featured in this coming issue.