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The PASSENGER PIGEON

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ROBIN AT NEST

HANS ZELL

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN BIRD STUDY

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THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, Inc.

NEWS . . .

Since The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will complete its tenth year with the close of 1948, a special anniversary issue of The Passenger Pigeon is being planned. This will be the January issue of 1949. To make this an outstanding number we can use the help of our members. Photographers are invited to send a few of their best bird photographs. Thoughts on what to include in this issue will be welcome. Some of our members, especially former officers, have old correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other material that may furnish interesting reading of our first ten years. Any cooperation will be appreciated in making this publication a success, and credit will be given to all.

Demonstrations of how to paint birds, how to band birds, how to feather mark them, how to make mounted specimens, **et cetera**, are things we always have wanted to see. The program chairmen for the 1949 convention announce that such demonstrations are one of many new features on the coming program. Since the Wilson Ornithological Club will combine with us, the meetings will begin on Thursday morning, which about doubles the length of our usual convention. All sessions will be held in the University of Wisconsin's Memorial Union, beginning April 21 and ending Sunday, April 24. The president of The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will preside on Saturday, which has been our principal day in the past; while Thursday and Friday will be under the rule of the Wilson Club. Field trips will be conducted on Sunday.

OSCAR GANTSCH MEASURES A TURKEY VULTURE ACCIDENTALLY CAUGHT IN FOX TRAP. LA CROSSE-VERNON COUNTY LINE.

Mr. Howard Clapp of the Pabst Farms, who was a member of our society from the start, passed away early this summer. In lieu of flowers, Mr. Page, vice president of Kraft Foods, Chicago, sent our society $20 and Mrs. Clapp has also sent us $20 in his memory.

Mrs. C. R. Decker has stimulated much interest in our society recently through her column in **The Milwaukee Journal.** Not only did our supply department sell many bird feeders, but we also added many new members.

The society is indebted to Mrs. W. E. Scott this year again, for carefully taking down in shorthand the principal speeches of our last convention.

We are entirely out of number four—**The Passenger Pigeon** with the red cover for 1947. Since the society could use several copies of this issue to fill current requests we would like to buy back as many as possible. Also, we have been asked to call for copies of any issue for the period 1939 through 1941. Please contact the editor if you can cooperate in supplying these back issues.

Mrs. Juanita Worthington, treasurer for the Waukesha convention committee, announces that $27.43 has been sent to the society's treasurer after all convention bills were paid.

Recent committees not heretofore announced are the following: Research Committee—John T. Emlen, chairman, Irven O. Buss, and Mrs. Winnifred Smith. Library Committee—Walter E. Scott, chairman, Alvin L. Throne, Mrs. A. P. Balsom, Mrs. W. E. Rogers, and Miss Ellen Hoffman. Committee on Constitution—Clarence S. Jung, chairman, Alfred S. Bradford, and Howard L. Orians.

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ORNITHOLOGISTS AS HUMAN BEINGS

By GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON*

Ornithologists are usually so full of enthusiasm and so engrossed in their bird observing, census-taking, photography, or banding that they don't seem to need the stimulus of association with an intimate circle of friends and collaborators. But what I have seen and felt today, as I have attended these fine meetings, has led me to believe that ornithologists respond to, and perhaps depend upon, each other just as much as other people do.

I have given serious thought to what I should say to you this evening, for I long have realized how powerful the right word, spoken at the right time, can be. Having travelled widely, I have wondered whether I should tell you of some far away region. Having made a long-time study of the fluctuations of the bird-life of the Edwin S. George Wildlife Reserve (near Pinckney, Michigan), I have wondered whether I should discuss these interesting and thought-provoking fluctuations. Recently I have finished a book about the birds of Mexico. In this neighboring republic I have encountered during the past 10 years many birds which were wholly new to me. Among these was a tiny stub-tailed wren known as the white-bellied wren. When I first saw this bird, in the wild pineapple thickets of southwestern Tamaulipas, I had no idea what its name was. I wasn't even sure that it was a wren, though its song was certainly wrenlike. I became fairly well acquainted with its callnotes, appearance and behavior. When I looked it up in the books I found that it had been described by John Gould in 1836, but that not a single word had been published about the **living** bird for 60 years after its discovery. A few specimens had been collected and sent to Europe. Various ornithologists had written about the dried skins, but no one had published anything about the nest and eggs. In 1896 Frank M. Chapman had written a few lines about living white-bellied wrens which he had observed in Yucatan. More recently the species had been discussed briefly by such authors as Cole and Wetmore.

I began my quest for the little bird's nest 9 years ago. In 1938, 1939 and 1941 I found unoccupied, retort-shaped nests which looked as if they might be white-bellied wrens' nests, but I was not sure. Last year, along the Rio Sabinas, not far from the isolated hill village of Gomez Farias, Tamaulipas, about 400 miles south of the U. S. border, I took up the trail again. My hosts, Ernest Edwards and Robert Lea, and I had many disappointments. Several nests which we found were old and unoccupied. Some of them may have been dormitory nests in which male birds slept. Some may even have been 'dummy' nests. We weren't sure that white-bellied wrens had built them. Finally, on June 2, along the main highway just south of Victoria, at a point known as the Mesa de Llera, I discovered a **bona fide** nest—and four beautiful eggs. These were tiny, pale blue, and glossy. Their color was a complete surprise, for I hadn't known that any wren in the world laid blue eggs. Now, of course, I know that at least one other kind of wren lays blue eggs; but when I found that nest and saw those 'first' eggs, I thrilled at sensing

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Banquet address delivered during the convention of 1948.

that I was adding a few more facts to the great store of human knowledge. Every person within hearing distance of me at this moment,—every ornithologist in this country in fact—may have this thrill and satisfaction of discovery, for innumerable facts, even about our commonest dooryard birds, remain to be found out and put to use.

To state this clearly now and then, to emphasize the need for gathering facts about common birds, is a good thing. At the George Reserve I have found that we are far from understanding certain differences in the way some of our well known birds behave and develop. Why should the cardinal, Henslow's sparrow and grasshopper sparrow all have a complete postjuvenal molt—but not the Savannah sparrow, field sparrow, and chippy? Why should the rose-breasted grosbeak's natal down be white, while that of the cardinal is gray? Why should the lark sparrow walk while the vesper sparrow doesn't? Why should the female cardinal sing while the female towhee doesn't? Why should the male rose-breasted grosbeak share the duties of incubation and sing on the nest, while the male indigo bunting practically never goes to the nest? These are questions which cannot be answered without much careful study.

Back in 1931 I had a glorious experience in adding a bit to our knowledge concerning the Harris's sparrow. There were four of us in the Carnegie Museum expedition which journeyed that year to the west coast of Hudson Bay. The Harris's sparrow's nesting ground was more or less known, for Seton, Preble and others had seen the birds in summer or even collected young birds. But the eggs themselves had not yet been found in a 'wild' nest. Our birding-ground was the tree-limit—the border line between the stunted spruces and tamaracks and the treeless tundra. We were an eager, determined company as we put up camp at the edge of the townsite of Churchill. A week after we had established ourselves, four Canadian ornithologists arrived—four more men, each as determined as we to be the first to find that much-talked-of nest. What had started out as a contest among individuals became an international affair! I have never seen such determined and whole-souled rivalry. My companions and I were so obsessed that we talked in our sleep. We had to walk several miles daily in getting to the nesting ground proper. We worked hard for weeks, and so did the Canadians. We were a trifle suspicious of our competitors. We wondered if they might not find the nest and say nothing about it. As the days passed our determination became stronger. Among ourselves we had an understanding that anyone who found the nest was to fire his shotgun three times **as loudly as possible,** then, after a pause, once more. This was to be the signal for foregathering at the first nest. (You might try this sort of signalling some time!)

I happened to be the lucky man. On finding the nest I fired the shotgun, but waited for my friends in vain. Some time later, while I was looking for other pairs of Harris's sparrows which might have a nest in the vicinity, I chanced to see Bert Lloyd in the "bush" ahead of me. At that moment, just as I was about to call out, I was smitten with doubt. What if the nest which I had found was not a Harris's sparrow after all! What if I had misidentified those two birds which I had collected! I sank to my knees, opened my collecting creel, and re-examined those all-important specimens to make sure that they

were not white-crowned or Gambel's sparrows. When I called to Bert and told him my news I was struck with the expression of pure joy which spread over his face. Bert was not jealous—he was simply glad. And two of us instead of one began wondering how many other nests had been found that morning!

The leader and sponsor of our expendition was John B. Semple, a man we all called 'JB,' an aggressive, successful inventor and manufacturer who had accompanied us because he enjoyed being in the field. We had all expressed a wish that JB might find that first nest, at the same time entertaining private hopes that we ourselves would be the first. When I thought of JB I wondered how he would take the news. He took it wonderfully. However disappointed he may have been, he showed no rancor, no jealousy, nothing but boyish joy and enthusiasm.

JB suggested that I go to the Canadian 'camp' that evening to ascertain whether they had found a nest. They lived in a freight car on a siding. One of the party was 'at home' skinning birds. I found it hard to break the news, for I didn't want to gloat and I dreaded hearing that they had found a nest. The glad, almost gay response I shall never forget. No they had not found the nest, but what wonderful news! And

AS DR. SUTTON ADDRESSED THE CONVENTION

Frank Farley, who met me in the field the following day, shook my hand in congratulation and said heartily: "Well, you know I'd have enjoyed tremendously finding that first nest; but since I didn't find it, at least I'm mighty glad I was here when it **was** found!" That is the spirit which makes a man proud of his calling, proud of his friends, proud of the human race. Finding the first nest was a wonderful experience, but hearing Frank Farley's comradely words was more wonderful still.

On the way from Chicago today, our train passed a pied-billed grebe on a little pond. I thrilled at seeing the bird reflected so perfectly in the calm water. It was indescribly beautiful. I realize now that thrills of this kind await an ornithologist wherever he may go. This is one

reason for my enjoying bird study so much. Telling of this simple experience helps me to relive it at this very moment. Sometimes I wonder if we ever really experience anything until we have at least attempted to share the experience with others.

I want to tell you a little of my pursuit of the blue goose's nesting ground. When, as a boy, I stumbled upon such phrases as 'nest and eggs unknown' I was almost violently impatient. I wanted to **do** something about such gaps in knowledge. Before I knew it I was on the trail of the blue goose. In 1920 I went "down" the Labrador. In 1923, in James Bay, I helped collect material for a habitat group of blue geese. In 1926 I accompanied an expedition to the east coast of Hudson Bay and for the first time saw that wonderful wilderness of straggly spruce, rock and tundra. In 1928 I met Sam Ford who had been the Hudson's Bay Company's representative on Southampton Island when the trading post was established there in 1924. Sam had talked with Eskimos who had **seen** blue goose nests. All at once I was laying definite plans for going to Southampton. To do the job thoroughly I knew I would have to be there for a whole year. I took the Company supply-ship, the **Nascopie,** in mid-July, sailed northward for a month, and lived the year through in order to be there during the spring and summer. That was before the days of air routes in the north.

In the midst of my pursuit of the blue goose's nesting ground, I found myself much interested in the Eskimos—the people upon whom I depended for travelling. I developed a great admiration for these people. While living among them I learned something about their language and religion. Let me tell you an experience I had one winter day in the land of the Eskimos.

That day I was walking back to the trading post following my long trap-line. My trail took me along a rocky ridge which was easy to follow for it was free of snow. When I came to the end of the ridge I was bewildered because I could not find my trail. I had travelled that way earlier in the day and there had been no wind, so the tracks should have been plainly visible. Anyone who has experienced winter in the far north knows that losing one's trail is not good. Already the sun had set and the light was becoming dimmer. I retraced my steps, paying more attention than I had to the snow at either side of the ridge. Failing to find a trail leading off in any direction, I returned to the end of the ridge, to the point at which my trail should have been, and looked closely at the snow. At first I saw nothing. Then I saw a tiny black spot which seemed to grow larger and rounder. There, almost at my feet, was the eye of a drowsy ptarmigan. The ptarmigan was **in** my footprint. The neat white bird filled the track, making it perfectly level with the snow surface. While I had been following the trap line a flock of ptarmigan had come upon my trail. Opportunists that they were, they had appropriated the conveniently sized tracks and settled down for the night. As I walked along what should have been **my** trail the ptarmigan opened their eyes and looked at me, but did not leave their "warm" beds.

Those ptarmigan! How often had I observed them on days when the low-hanging sun was reflected in the bottom half of their eyes and blue shadows fell on the **tops** of their shoulders. How often had I marvelled that in the biting cold (the thermometer had stood at 30 to 50 below zero most of the time) they could race merrily about eating willow

buds without bothering to put on or take off anything in the line of clothing. No overcoats, no leggings, no galoshes, no zippers! Only that beautiful coat of snow white plumage which they could lift or press down, thus varying the thickness of the insulative layer which kept them warm. How easy it was for an outsider to remember with satisfaction the comfortable civilization to which he would return when the winter was over! How easy indeed! But these ptarmigan had no more southerly clime to dream of. This tundra, now snow-buried, was their home from the year's beginning to its end. And what of the ptarmigan which lived even farther north: how did they pass the 'long winter night' at the high latitudes of north Greenland or Grinnell Land? Did they feed by moonlight? Did they have some sort of daily routine comparable to that of normally diurnal birds? I found it hard to believe that they actually passed the entire winter in the darkness. Reading of their migrations, I decided that most of them probably moved southward to latitudes at which they could glimpse the sun at least occasionally.

DR. SUTTON PAINTING IN THE FIELD. HE DIPPED HIS BRUSH DIRECTLY INTO THE WAKULLA RIVER, FLORIDA

Toward the end of winter a man who is new to the far north is apt to feel that summer will never come. February is perhaps the longest month of all. By April the sun is climbing, the days are bright, and water trickles down the rocks at noon. In early May there may be migrations of guillemots and eiders along open leads in the salt water, and the fur of the caribou and foxes begins to change from white to brown. In 1930 we had the wildest blizzard of the winter about the end of May and first of June. In the midst of that memorable storm a snow bunting announced its arrival with a cheerful chirp. Anyone in Wis-

consin who thinks that the call of a spring bluebird is thrilling ought to hear the chirp of a spring snow bunting in the far north. During that storm two or three large flocks of male buntings (the advance guard of the great northward migration) joined forces near the house in which we lived. The only exposed ground was at the bottom of a deep canyon which the wind had gouged out immediately around the base of the house. The dogs chased the birds and occasionally caught one. The Eskimo children began shooting at them with little bows and arrows. This was a bit more than Jack Ford and I could stand, so we contrived a trap with a dishpan propped up with a stick to which a long string was attached; weighted the pan down with gunny sacks and rocks; put crumbs under it; and pulled the string from a window not far away when the birds went under to eat. Before long we had caught all the buntings and brought them indoors. Never was there a merrier flock of birds! They gathered under the great kitchen stove, but not on top of it. After accustoming themselves to our several small rooms, they began to sing. We were transported by the gay music. To our surprise they never attempted to fly through the windows—which had not, admittedly, been washed for a long time.

The birds had the run of the place. I recall particularly one bunting which happened to alight on a gyrfalcon specimen which was lying on its back, museum-style, on my table. The bunting looked down, suddenly seemed to realize that it was standing on a much-feared ancient enemy, and gave a sharp alarm cry which stopped the singing all through the house.

When the storm ended we opened the windows and out flew the buntings. I like to think that at least one of them stayed there at the post. Three weeks later, buntings built a nest in a crevice under the window near which I worked upstairs. They raised six young ones.

In completing my work on Southampton Island, I couldn't have got on at all without the Eskimos. They knew all about dog-driving and arctic weather and snow-house building. When I first saw them I was amused by their appearance. They were short and broad and their clothing was a funny mixture of the barbaric and the civilized. I never shall forget one woman who was dressed Eskimo-style save for her shiny **high-heeled** shoes. With these she hobbled among the rocks, dreadfully uncertain as to her equipoise, but proud as could be. I didn't become really acquainted with the Eskimos until I began my dead-of-winter work. Then I lived with them. It was on a caribou hunt to East Bay, a long journey from the trading post, that I began to realize why I admired them so. Up to that time I had **imagined** what their life was like. At East Bay I saw for myself. Civilized man can sit back luxuriously and read about life in the northern winter, but the Eskimo **lives** it, and what is more he loves it. He may be childlike and simple and unlearned by certain standards, but for all that he is marvellously fit and happy.

If there is one thing about the Eskimos which I admire above all others it is their ability to pass time gracefully during the long, 'shut-in' winter. Winter in the far north is very difficult for the white man in some ways. But the Eskimo thinks of it as the time for travel with the dog-team, for caribou hunting, for long stories in the skin-tent. The Eskimo has learned to make certain tasks last as long as possible in win-

ter. A man who, when necessary, can skin a white fox in five minutes, can make the same job last 5 hours if a blizzard is raging outside. That sort of thing I call practical management of one's life. Fancy finding satisfaction in the loss of part of a rifle in a snowhouse! Why satisfaction? Because turning everything upside down and inside out during the course of the search may take a very great deal of time, and time spent that way is spent pleasurably and gracefully. I recall a little hole which developed in a pair of bearskin trousers I had been wearing. Mending such a hole could, conceivably, have been a ten-minute job. But my Eskimo friend looked upon the patch as a "time consumer" and cut and sewed accordingly—for several hours. The result was a work of art —in its way.

During a nine-day blizzard the stories and songs can be very, very long. Indeed, they can run on indefinitely. In one of their best-liked games the Eskimos catch a little ball in the cupped end of a piece of bone held in the hand. The bone fragment is usually from the pelvis of some large mammal, the cup at the end being the socket of the ball-and-socket hip joint. Near this socket is attached a long slender thong at the end of which is the little ball. The trick is to toss the ball into the air and catch it in the cup. A story accompanies the game. The story progresses as the successful player continues tossing and catching the ball. The game goes thus: "I started on a walrus hunt" (toss and catch). "I hauled out the dog sledge" (toss and catch). "I caught the dogs and harnessed them" (one toss and catch for each of several dogs). "I went the first mile on my way to the ice-floe" (toss and catch); and so on. When one person misses, the bone and ball are passed to the next, and he proceeds on **his** walrus hunt, hoping, of course, to get farther and to bring back many walruses. Thus may the game occupy hours and hours of the interminable winter.

I greatly enjoyed seeing my first snow-house built. I never shall forget the beauty of the lowly structure's immaculate interior when a candle was lit. Most Eskimo men know how to built these **igloos,** but an **igloo** lasts only about a week. It is not a permanent place of abode. If the Eskimos are obliged to live in a snow-house instead of their permanent skin-house (**tupek**), they build a new **igloo,** which overlaps the one in which they are living, and cut through the wall and move into the new house when the old one begins to fall to pieces. A family or hunting party may live in a series or 'chain' of snow-houses for several weeks.

On our caribou hunt at East Bay we lived in two overlapping snow-houses. On that hunt we had a terrific blizzard. During the blizzard I suddenly remembered that it was Thanksgiving Day. I wanted to do something special for my two companions, so I made them a drawing of a turkey gobbler in full display. The Eskimos showed their appreciation by pointing at the drawing and making loud animal sounds of approval. Since I had fond recollections of roast turkey, I made another picture of a featherless turkey lying on its back in a platter. They offered the comment that this turkey must be cold indeed without its feathers. This drew a laugh from me. Then they asked a question which 'stopped' me: Why did the strutting gobbler have no feathers on its head?

At the post Jack Ford had given me a can of French peas with which I was to celebrate Thanksgiving. In our snow-house we had a Primus stove, which was burning brightly. I put the little can on the

blue flame to thaw it out, for it was frozen hard. Sitting back and going on with my work, I forgot all about the peas and my failure to punch a hole in the can. There was a furious explosion of course, and hot peas shot upward in all directions. For an instant it seemed that all had been lost. But when we **saw** the peas, each lodged neatly in the snow, I got out my forceps and we went after them one by one. That was one of the best Thanksgiving dinners I ever ate—raw caribou, stewed seal blubber, and selected French peas straight from an **igloo** roof.

Eskimos marvel at a white man's books, for they believe that these have been made wholly by hand. They know nothing of the mechanics of printing and believe that someone has **drawn** each of those letters. One Eskimo man watched me taking movies and became very much interested. Finally he declared that he was going to make his own camera. I asked him what he proposed to do about the film. To him this was a simple matter. I would send him the film and he would get his wife to put the perforations in it. Most Eskimos don't understand at all the process of reading. They have neither alphabet nor spelling. Their language is highly complex and probably far from primitive, though 'civilized man' is found of thinking of all languages, aside from those he uses, as primitive. Eskimo words are full of prefixes, suffixes and infixes. While the Eskimos have no printed literature aside from that which has been published for them by certain missionary groups. etc., they have all sorts of songs and stories—some tribal, some personal —and this is a 'literature' of a very denite sort. The tribal stories are memorized and passed down from person to person. Sometimes the Eskimos turn one of their songs or poems into a sort of game, singing over and over such a phrase as **Oovungah ai-yi-yi!** (I am happy!), seeing how long each person can say it without taking a fresh breath. Often whole families or villages get together for story-telling fests. Certain chosen men tell the stories. Many of the stories are funny; some are sad; some point a moral.

I heard many times a story about a snowy owl which was lucky enough to catch two Arctic hares at the same time, one in each foot. The hares jumped about screaming in fright, but the owl held onto them. Finally the hares quieted down, formed a plan, and ran off, carrying the owl with them. They ran one to one side, the other to the other side, of a sharp rock. The owl was struck hard on the chest and killed.

This was the whole story—but what was its meaning? At last, too curious to stand the suspense longer, I inquired. My Eskimo friend listened patiently to my queries but did not answer immediately. He consulted with some of the other men before giving me the explanation. A day or so later, after I had forgotten the matter, he came to me asking if I still wanted to know the meaning of the story. I said that I did. Without a trace of a smile—in all earnestness in fact—he said: "The story means that a person should watch where he is going!"

We ornithologists have work to do, and well may we "watch where we are going." We can deeply enjoy our bird study, especially if we believe in the sum of human knowledge to which we are adding. Perhaps our work will take us to far places. If we are fortunate enough to see many parts of the world and to become acquainted with the people of other lands, we will have a chance to grow in stature. The people

with whom we work may seem merely funny to us—as the Eskimos at first did to me—or they may interest and inspire us, helping us to find and realize our greatest selves. An ornithologist's chief interest may be ornithology; but his first duty is to be a human being.

A ROAD-KILL MUSEUM

By GEORGE BECKER

Although birding is an activity enjoyed by hundreds of people in Wisconsin every year, there are on the other hand many thousands whose interest in avian lore is measured behind the sights of a gun or in casual observation. This brings to mind the many people who come to me all agitated with: "I saw a bird all yellow below and kind of grayish on top. What is it?" Just about then any bird student is ready to pull hair.

There is an interest in birds but it is scantily cultivated. People await the first robin and then forget the arrival of dozens of more spectacular species. Or they contemplate a spot where they vacationed last summer which was alive with the "twitter of birds." I'd ask, "What kind?" "Oh, all kinds!" would come the answer without further definity.

At the seventh convention of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, the principal speaker, Herbert Stoddard, deplored seeing the passing of the natural history cabinet. He maintained that, "Not so many years ago homes devoted a bit of space to the acquisition of mounted birds, animals, rocks and the like. Participation in the collection was in itself an act of learning. When folks visited the neighbors, they saw new items which they envied and which were later recognized in the field.

A few years ago people were more nature conscious. Their identification ability extended beyond the common repertoire of robin, sparrow, bluebird, blackbird and crow. Varieties of sparrows, warblers, water birds and even today's rarities as the passenger pigeon, parakeet, eskimo curlew and on into dozens of varieties were displayed and labeled. The traffic in skin and egg collecting was a considerable business in those days. And it goes without saying that probably a few of our species have suffered because of these collectors. Certainly the ivory-billed woodpecker was eliminated in certain sections in such manner."

Without further ado we assume that promiscuous collecting is a thing of the past. If we were to educate our people in true enjoyment of birding and so help many overcome serious cases of "city jitters" we'll have to awaken fascination with a new type of museum—not "natural history," but let's say "road-kill museum."*

Birds meet their end in innumerable ways. Like human beings, they are subject to accidents which snuff out life. In this day of super highways, the daily toll runs into hundreds of birds and animals in Wisconsin alone. Songbirds and many animals are protected the year around in this state. However, your local game warden will certainly give consideration and sometimes will even assist in building up a road-kill museum. And it can be a worthwhile and instructing hobby.

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*Mr. Becker has permits, both federal and state, which allow him to possess specimens of protected species.

I have used my collection in my biology classes and before scout groups. Where the spoken word falls flat, the mounted specimen or skin delivers an oration. Generally the question is forthcoming, "Why did you kill all those nice birds?"

Then I would have to mollify the questioner with the explanation that I didn't shoot a single one of those birds, that the majority of the specimens were picked up off the road, that they had just been killed by cars, that I skinned them out quickly and mounted them, and don't you think that that is far better than allowing the birds to rot or be beaten to pulp on the pavement? And then I recruit the questioner and listeners in bringing to me birds and animals which they find. When the birds are brought in, these young people always learn by asking questions. This form of proselyting is infectious.

Very often one has to discard the specimens because they have become "ripe," but at times one has to overcome squeamishness in order to preserve a rarer species. I say rarer in that some species are with us for such a short time and so seldom fall prey to an accident that a single find must needs be preserved. Just recently we prepared an evening grosbeak which was found dead in a backyard, and had been so for several days. The feathers on the bird were beginning to slip but the finished product proved an asset to the collection.

During the spring migration a friend called saying that he had picked up a warbler outside of his house. When I got the bird (it turned out to be a Canada warbler) I lost no time converting it into a museum piece though the few moments I worked with it were far from pleasant.

For one so inclined, his or her (my wife has done several birds by herself) collection will reach a showable size within a short time. Back in 1942 Port Edwards was alive with cedar waxwings. On a stretch 200 yards long on the highway just out of town I counted ten freshly-killed birds, two of which I mounted. If I had had the time, I could have constructed a regular habitat group with the eight birds that were salvageable. At the time I was new at the game but even then it took me only 50 minutes to put up each bird. To this day the birds are as fresh looking as they were when I mounted them.

The summer of 1941 red-headed woodpeckers were particularly abundant in Portage county and had the bad habit of flying low over the highways. I counted 16 dead birds on a two-mile stretch. Half of these birds hadn't been dead more than a couple of hours.

Orioles, cowbirds, red-wings, grouse, sparrows, flickers, thrushes and swallows fall victim to onrushing cars. Others meet with queer accidents. My only great blue heron had drowned in a trap set for beavers. Our hummingbird had flown against a screen and forced its bill so tightly into the mesh that it died in its struggle to escape. The yellow-bellied sapsucker had broken its neck against a steel bridge girder. A chipping sparrow of the collection was accidentally taken in a mouse trap. Window panes of large size which allow vision from the front to the rear of the house often fool the birds into believing that they are entering a passageway, and solid contact with the glass often proves fatal.

A good simple guide in bird and animal preparation is Leon Pray's **Taxidermy,** selling for the price of only $1.00. Materials such as stove pipe wire, excelsior, boric acid, cotton, pliers, etcetera, can be found around the house; and for those who have odds and ends lying around, the taxidermy workshop and kit will cost nothing. For those who must buy their items, a workable thrown-together kit will run in the neighborhood of two dollars. And to begin with, buy yourself a few dollars worth of patience. The sledding at the beginning may be a little tough, but once you get the knack, everything goes.

Certainly it behooves us to be recognizant of the wastefulness of the times and to make in turn our little contribution to preserve something worthwhile. Mounting birds is a challenge. I haven't done a specimen yet with which I am completely satisfied. As soon as I have finished one, I am eager to begin with another to employ a new idea and see if I can correct my latest error. It gives me a satisfaction to see that I have preserved a part of the natural scene instead of allowing it to disappear through distintegration. It gaves me a satisfaction to know that I have instilled in others a greater knowledge of birds by viewing my efforts, and by developing in them an interest in a fascinating hobby for themselves.

176 Garfield Avenue
Clintonville, Wisconsin
Spring, 1948

TEN DAYS WITH THE WINTER BIRDS

By ALVIN M. PETERSON

Our bird-feeding activities in January and February, 1947, were confined mainly to a flock of twelve cardinals and about forty bob-whites and determined or shaped by efforts made to help some gray squirrels that long had been living in the oak grove and pasture—when it became apparent that the acorn crop here was a failure and we must take steps to keep our bushy-tailed neighbors from starving.

Ours was not an isolated case, since acorns were scarce elsewhere; along the St. Croix River many squirrels drowned when they attempted to swim the stream and find food on the other side. The bob-whites, too, were likely to suffer, as these birds eat many acorns in winter.

We had an old sweetcorn patch east of the house where there were many ripe ears—these we gathered for the squirrels, beginning to feed the animals in mid-autumn and offering them a dozen ears once or twice a week and placing the food beneath some oaks in the grove and at the west end of the pasture.

We hoped the corn would also be found by some bob-whites often seen in the neighborhood, most often about the asparagus patch, adjoining the grove and 30 rods east of the house. The young birds in the flock were hatched in the grove at the base of a seedling oak, and the grove, asparagus patch, and orchard were home to them.

The corn disappeared, but were the bob-whites and squirrels getting it? or was it being taken by some stray chickens that often visited the grove? By December we knew the birds and squirrels were getting part at least, because we seldom left corn beneath the trees without noticing that the squirrels soon were scampering up and down, leaping from branch to branch, feasting, full of life and good spirits. The bob-whites, too, were getting part, we concluded, since they remained in the vicinity and grew and prospered.

While the corn helped the squirrels and bob-whites, it was some partly spoiled squash we dumped at the end of the garden that first attracted the cardinals. Ten arrived the middle of January and spent much time about the squash, eating both the seeds and flesh; to further help them we placed a shallow box on the bird bath, filled it with ashes, and scattered crumbs, nut and meat scraps, and ripe sweetcorn on top. However, the birds paid scant attention to the box for several days, preferring to feed from the ground in the garden and giving most of their attention to the squash. Their favorite refuge when frightened was a plum thicket two rods distant.

The birds were daily visitors from the start and eventually a brilliant male began to visit the box on the bird bath, advancing our story to January 28th, when it began to snow late in the day. The next day a strong east wind took most of the snow from the ground south of the house, and there the cardinals and a large flock of English sparrows fed much of the day, more or less ignoring the box on the bird bath. To help the birds, we scattered corn on the bare ground, to supplement the many grass and weed seeds they seemed to be finding, placing most of it near a little spruce standing five feet from the foundation and directly

in front of a south window. The weather was mild and by night the lawn had been pretty well scratched over.

January 30th—The wind reached gale proportions during the night, shifted to the northwest, and Thursday morning it was cold and stormy and the snow badly drifted. The cardinals came as soon as it was light, visiting the food box and bare spot near the spruce, where considerable corn still was to be found. The birds carried the corn to some rose bushes along the foundation, where they were sheltered from the wind, and had breakfast, most of them eating beneath the window where we could watch them.

A kernel of corn is too large for a cardinal to swallow whole so it takes it in its beak and presses upon it, moving the lower mandible slightly as if chewing and gradually reducing it to bits. Often the kernel is broken into but two or three parts, and the bird drops all but one and then crushes and eats this before giving its attention to the rest. This habit gives the English sparrows a chance to get an easy meal, of which more later. The cardinals were pretty hungry and remained near the spruce until 1:30 p. m., when we looked out and found the spot empty.

Five minutes later they were back and at 1:50 I counted eight beneath the window, all so near I could have reached out and touched them had it not been for the glass.

We had other guests during the day—two starlings at the box, several English sparrows on the ground with the cardinals, three blue jays, a junco, and some tree sparrows, the latter more pert, sleek, and streamlined than their English cousins, as if wearing better-fitting and cleaner clothes.

Of most interest were about twenty bob-whites that visited the oaks at the end of the pasture in early afternoon and feasted upon some corn placed there for the squirrels, eating for a spell and then settling down in a compact group and resting on the south side of a large oak, where they remained much of the afternoon. Occasionally one rose on tip-toe, flapped his wings, and then settled down again, and sometimes all the birds stretched and craned their necks when something alarmed or roused them. Once three leaped and played like half-grown chickens, indicating they were healthy and vigorous.

January 31st—All night long the storm raged, the wind howling and roaring and a heavy snow falling, until by Friday more than 16 inches of the white powdery stuff had fallen and there were drifts four and six feet deep. Highways were impassable and transportation almost at a standstill. This storm was one of the worst in the history of the state and the one in which the Johnson Creek farmer and his wife and daughter lost their lives.

The cardinals were here by 7:00 A. M. and busily eating beneath the window; with them were some English sparrows. English sparrows are unable to eat whole corn but the sly rascals knew how to get an easy meal and sat near the cardinals and waited for the crumbs to fall, then dashed forward and grabbed them. The sparrows became more bold as time passed and the cardinals so tired of being bothered that they often squared off as if to strike with their beaks or feet. Still the sparrows persisted, and the red birds at last were obliged to fly off and eat elsewhere.

February 1st—I went outside before it was fully light this morning to sweep some light snow from the feeding place and found that the cardinals already were here—there were tracks in the snow and I heard the musical "chimps" of several coming from the oaks along the drive. I scattered some corn on the ground and by 7:00 A. M. all ten of the birds were having breakfast, one beside the bird bath, five near the spruce, three near the foundation, and another beneath the pine, all with a kernel of corn at which they were hard at work, pressing, biting, chewing, mincing like so many little grist mills.

February 2nd—It was ten below this morning but the cardinals came as soon as it was light. The English sparrows were very bothersome during the day, following the cardinals about and watching for a chance to steal food. The cardinals at last were obliged to turn their backs, hop off, and even hide beneath the spruce to evade them; occasionally one flew as far as the oaks along the drive.

During the morning a particularly bold sparrow dashed up to a cardinal and took food from its beak. The cardinals that stand their ground square off, face their persecutors, and go through all the motions of pecking without actually doing so, and the sparrows only retreat a few hops and then at once return.

On such days the cardinals are here from morning till night and we can look out at any time and find them beneath the windows; they come and go continually and the day is one long meal. The birds look small when on the ground, not much larger than a sparrow, which they resemble much, having long tails, feeding largely from the ground, taking seeds, grain, and berries, and having "chimp" alarm notes. It is easy to tell the females from the males, as they have considerable gray about their suits, and most of the males are such a rich, deep, dark red as to appear almost black when seen at a distance on cloudy days.

I chanced to step to the window during the afternoon and found a beautiful crested bird perched in the top of the little spruce, a cardinal I assumed. But was it? It was a delicate wine-color with a tinge of tan or drab and all fluffed out until it seemed larger than a cardinal. I was taken aback, since I expected to see only cardinals in the yard, and it took me a moment to realize the bird was a waxwing. My gaze shifted to the wings, which were brightly marked with white, indicating it was a Bohemian waxwing, a rare bird seen but once before during 30 years of bird-watching, when a large flock visited our asparagus patch for several days one winter and feasted upon the red berries of the plants. Two others were perched in a nearby elm.

The bob-whites arrived around noon and remained until frightened off at 4:30 p. m., spending most of the intervening time huddled at the base of the large oak, on a spot from which I had shoveled the snow and scattered corn. There was much activity there during the afternoon, as several jays, sparrows, and cardinals also were there as well as two frisky squirrels. The bob-white stood up now and then, stretched, flapped their wings, and craned their necks when a half-dozen jays or sparrows suddenly took wing as if alarmed about something; and there was a grand explosion when I drew near with a pan of corn, the birds flying eastward toward the grove.

February 3rd—The thermometer registered 34 degrees this morning but dropped to 10 at noon. There were some bob-whites in the

corn patch early in the day, but were they the ones I had been feeding in the pasture? I think not and am quite sure there are two flocks around, since I once flushed a flock I estimated to contain forty birds, at a time apparently when the two flocks happened to be together. Early in the afternoon the familiar twenty arrived at the large oak and acted as if they found little food, a surprise because I had thrown out a generous supply the previous evening. I went out to shovel snow at 2:00 p. m., when they were huddled at the base of the tree, and they began to stretch their necks as if alarmed. All at once the flock took wing, flying across the knoll toward the orchard.

I started after to see if I could discover where they spent the night, walking southeastward to an old garden, and at the base of an oak found where they often had rested or spent the night, a slight depression in the bare ground which was well covered with droppings. I swung northward beyond the garden and crossed the pasture, finding the wind cold and sharp and shielding my face as best I could with my hands while wading through snow two feet deep. I frightened the birds from some brush at the edge of the orchard and they flew back across the pasture, bound presumably for the weedy old garden.

Were more of us to take walks to the fields and woods when blizzard conditions prevail, face the biting wind, wade through the snow, and notice how slim the chances for finding food we would be more thoughtful of our wild neighbors. We ride to work in heated automobiles, busses, and street cars, live in automatically heated houses, where the temperature varies but a degree or two for weeks at a time, forgetting that the birds are out in the bitter cold, braving deep snows, and exposed to icy blasts without so much as a bite to eat.

February 4th—The thermometer registered zero at sundown last night and remained there during the night, and a bitter northwest wind howled and roared; a small amount of snow also fell. When I first looked outside I found that all the corn scattered beneath the window the previous evening had been eaten during the night, the culprit a rabbit that has been making his home under the brooder house. I had seen him frequently during the winter, mostly toward morning or when chased by dogs, and knew he had made many a meal on squash, even suspected he helped himself to corn, as I often found tell-tale tracks running to the feeding places. Now, I knew he was a grain-fed fellow and would make a good stew.

The snow this morning was covered with rabbit tracks, mostly east of the house, where it actually has been trampled down and bunny had nibbled at a squash and devoured much corn. Worse still, I am beginning to suspect that our long-legged neighbor has many friends and that these too are feasting and frolicking around the house at night.

I don't like the idea of feeding a 'raft' of rabbits the rest of the winter, especially when they have such prodigious appetites, and I can't trap, poison, or shoot them, so what to do If I don't feed them they may kill our shrubbery, so suppose I'll have to ration corn, giving the cardinals only a little more than they can eat clean and allowing the rabbits to get the rest.

February 5th—All ten cardinals were here before 7:00 a. m. today, a cold morning with the mercury at eight below, and now four well-worn rabbit trails run westward from the house, up a little hill, over

a stone wall buried beneath a huge snowdrift, and on to a ravine a block west where rabbit tracks are fully as numerous as here. There must be more than one rabbit around and all are living high, thanks to our squash and corn!

Yesterday afternoon the bob-whites sat for a long time on the south side of a neighbor's shed, two rods from the oak in the pasture, where they were protected from the wind and within easy reach of food. I took a pan of corn to the oak in the afternoon, so they'd be able to make out a supper, and found that they hadn't eaten what they had been given earlier in the day. The birds were in plain sight and stretched their necks but didn't fly off, though today when I tried to do the same they took to their wings with a roar.

Early in the month we began to suspect there were more than ten cardinals and late this afternoon we found that there actually are twelve, three counts coming out the same. It's hard to be sure, since the birds move around continually and some feed on the east side of the house and some on the south and must be counted from different windows.

And now the sparrows are following the cardinals as far as the drive in their efforts to take corn from them. English sparrows, surely, owe part of their prosperity to their wits!

Febuary 7th—There was a marked decrease in the feeding activities of the birds today. True, eight cardinals, a junco, and a couple of English sparrows were here early in the day but since then have been few and far between. There are several reasons for the change: a favorable turn in the weather, the amount of food to be found elsewhere, numerous patches of bare ground, the nearness of spring, when the birds get restless and move around more, etc.

I walked as far as the oak in the pasture and found the bob-whites on the far side, getting nearly up to it before they took wing with a roar. They had eaten most of the corn from which the squirrels had eaten the germs, so I scattered some more beside the oak. Later, the birds returned and ate this also, leaving a vast array of tell-tale tracks in the snow to tell the story.

The past ten days have been highly interesting and enjoyable and during that time we have seen three Bohemian waxwings and fed about one hundred English sparrows, three starlings, a few juncos, several tree sparrows, a half-dozen jays, twelve cardinals, many bob-whites, three or more squirrels, and how many rabbits? But not until February 13th did we learn for sure that there actually were two flocks of bob-whites, about 40 birds all told, when I flushed both within thirty minutes of each other a quarter of a mile apart, one in the grove, the other in a neighbor's raspberry patch a block to the west.

Onalaska, Wisconsin
Spring, 1947

THE BIRDS OF WISCONSIN

By L. KUMLIEN and N. HOLLISTER

With Revisions by A. W. Schorger

(Continued from last issue)

Olor columbianus (Ord.). **Whistling Swan.**

Migrant. During late fall, just before the larger lakes freeze over, this species is not at all rare in suitable localties. In the spring it is less regular, being much more numerous some years than others. Large numbers yearly visit Lake Koshkonong, and they are of regular occurrence at Delavan Lake, sometimes in goodly flocks. On Koshkonong they sometimes remain as late as May 1. Not commonly found on Lake Michigan, often common along the Mississippi, but probably more abundant in the Rock River Valley than in other parts of the state. April 2, 1896, four specimens were procured from a large flock on Lake Koshkonong. Two of these were full plumaged birds, perfectly white with black feet and bills, the latter with the usual yellow spots. One younger (?) specimen had the bill clouded and blotched with pink, and the toes and **tarsi** somewhat mottled. The fourth had a plain pink bill, with no spots, and **tarsi** and toes milk white. Two of these are in the Hollister collection and two in the Kumlien collection. We are somewhat at a loss to account for the color of the bills and feet in two of the specimens, as, if characteristic of the young, all the young should show it; but we have procured a good many of the young (of the year?) in fall, and although many were in the dark plumage, **all** had black bills and feet. One other specimen in the Kumlien collection, killed in October, is of a uniform dingy ash color, with typical feet and bill, yellow spot included. Very variable in size also, some specimens fully as large as the next. The Kumlien collection contains a specimen which measured sixty-two inches in length.

Olor buccinator (Rich.). **Trumpeter Swan.**

At the present day the trumpeter swan is surely a very rare bird in Wisconsin, and it is not certain that it could, at any time during the past sixty years, have been called common. In the early forties "swan" were reported as nesting in southern Wisconsin (Dane and Jefferson Counties), and if this is true it was no doubt this species. Thure Kumlien had a juvenile specimen obtained somewhere between 1842-45 in Jefferson County, with down on the head and primaries still soft, color a dingy ash. This specimen was still in existence in 1900, and doubtless is yet. During the fall of 1857 a large flock alighted on the prairie east of Stoughton during a heavy snowstorm, was seen by some farmers, who reported the birds as unable to fly on account of the heavy snow and sleet, and over twenty were killed. Six of these were procured by Thure Kumlien and preserved. In the past fifteen years we have handled but two specimens. One was mounted for a hunter, who procured it from a flock of three on Lake Koshkonong May 6, 1893! This specimen contained **ova** the size of an ounce leaden bullet. A very large, fine male was also killed by L. K. on Rock River in March, 1892. Doubtless it occurs more frequently along the Mississippi River than in other parts of the state.

[Thure Kumlien sold a mounted specimen to the Smithsonian Institution (U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 81,290, April 20, 1880) for $20.00. A. W.

Schorger, (**Pass. Pigeon** 8,1946:54). H. L. Coale (**Auk** 32,1915:88) stated that the Milwaukee Public Museum has a specimen merely labelled "Wisconsin" and that there are two specimens at Lawrence College without any data.]

ORDER HERODIONES: HERONS, STORKS, IBISES, ETC.
FAMILY PLATALEIDAE: SPOONBILLS

Ajaia ajaja (Linn.). **Roseate Spoonbill.**

By reference to Rev. A. C. Barry's list of 1854 we find the following regarding this species: "Found along the Mississippi within the bounds of our state, and occasionally about our small lakes in the interior." The sole actual and positively authentic record, however, entitling the spoonbill to a place in the present list, is from the fragments, head, wing and leg, of a specimen procured by Indians at Indian Ford, on Rock River near Janesville in August, 1845, and preserved by Thure Kumlien. These remains are still extant in the Kumlien collection. Several early references to the peculiar red birds taken or seen in southern Wisconsin no doubt refer to this species, but are not authentic. When the bird was common and ranged north to southern Illinois, it doubtless wandered at times, after the breeding season in late summer, to our southern limits, as is the case with other species of **Herodiones.**

FAMILY IBIDIDAE: IBISES

Plegadis autumnalis (Hasselq.). **Glossy Ibis.**

Rare straggler, usually in late summer. In August, 1862, a collector employed by Thure Kumlien shot one of these birds on a large mud flat on Lake Koshkonong. The bird fell in tall grass in miry soil and he did not succeed in finding it. His description of the bird aroused Mr. Kumlien's curiosity, and the next day a more extended search was made, which resulted in the specimen being found, in such a state, however, that only enough was preserved for identification. In September, 1872, T. and L. Kumlien saw seven on a large mud flat near Black Hawk Island, Lake Koshkonong, but did not succeed in getting within range. A specimen was shot on Lake Horicon (now Horicon Marsh) November 3, 1879, and is preserved in the Milwaukee Public Museum. We have positively seen this bird on the Mississippi near Prairie du Chien in August, some twenty years ago.

FAMILY CICONIIDAE: STORKS AND WOOD IBISES

Tantalus loculator (Linn.). **Wood Ibis.**

There are recorded several captures of this southern species within the state. Can be classed only as a very rare midsummer straggler at the present day, however. It is, or was, supposed to ascend the Mississippi in July and August quite regularly, on hearsay evidence alone. Rev. A. C. Barry in 1854 refers to a specimen shot at Milwaukee "a year or two since," which may be the same specimen referred to by Dr. Hoy in 1852, as "in the Museum of the Wisconsin State Historical Society at Madison, which was shot near Milwaukee, September, 1852." We were informed, however, that the specimen in Madison was shot on the Mississippi at

La Crosse in 1852, and the Milwaukee specimen was preserved in the Museum of the old Natural History Society there. Dr. Hoy also procured a specimen at Racine in September, 1868 (1). A specimen was mounted by S. Sercomb at an early date, killed on Rock River, between Janesville and Edgerton. This specimen was seen and examined by Thure Kumlien, but as it was the property of a private individual, we do not know if it is still in existence.

FAMILY ARDEIDAE: HERONS, BITTERNS, ETC.

Botaurus lentiginosus (Montag.). **American Bittern.**

Common summer resident in all suitable localities from the southern tier of counties northward, but most numerous in the southern third of the state. A few remain in the fall until severe weather sets in, sometimes even into November. The idiotic practice of so-called "sportsmen" invariably to kill these birds as they are flushed from the grass and along the shores of lakes has gradually reduced their numbers until they are not nearly as numerous as formerly. We have reared the young from the nest and kept them through the winter, and we only regret that Elliott Coues did not have our experience with them to add to his incomparable article on the life history of the species in his "Birds of the Northwest."

Ardetta exilis (Gmel.). **Least Bittern.**

Very abundant summer resident on all reedy swamps and lakes. This delicate little bittern, apparently so weak that it is a wonder it holds its own as it seems to do, does not remain after severe frosts in the autumn. A common breeding species, depositing its five to seven eggs (not three or four as often stated) on its frail nest among the tall rushes. A summer resident even to the shores of Lake Superior, but much more common in the southern counties.

Ardetta neoxena (Cory.). **Cory's Least Bittern.**

In June, 1845, Thure Kumlien found some Indian children playing with a small headless heron, using it as a target for bow and arrow practice. This was at an Indian encampment on Black Hawk Island, Lake Koshkonong. The bird was new to him and he secured it and later sent a color sketch to Dr. T. M. Brewer. Brewer pronounced it probably some southern species or a different plumage of the least bittern. A copy, or in fact the original sketch, is still in our possession, and it plainly shows the specimen to have been a typical **Ardetta neoxena.** No others were found and the matter was lost sight of by both Dr. Brewer and Kumlien. Neither was the bird ever found by L. Kumlien during many years of careful marsh collecting in the same locality. Its claim to a place in the present list, therefore, rests principally on the capture of a full plumaged male by Mr. C. E. Akeley on Lake Koshkonong, May 22, 1893, and preserved in the Field Columbian Museum, Chicago (2).

[Now generally considered to be a color phase of the Eastern Least Bittern.]

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1. Letter from Dr. Hoy to L. Kumlien. Nelson, Birds N. E. Ill., gives the date as 1869.

2. Cherrie, Auk, XIII, p. 79.

Ardea herodias (Linn.). **Great Blue Heron.**

Rather common spring migrant. Nests in communities in different sections of the state, less frequently of late years than formerly, however. Breeding rookeries are found usually in large tamarack swamps, but at times in second-growth oak. Breeds from the southern tier of counties northward. The largest rookery we have ever visited was a short distance west of Two Rivers. Others are, or have been, at Fox Lake, Stevens Point, Waukesha, Barron County and other points; also, frequently, scattering pairs are found among the colonies of night herons or even singly. By the middle of August the young begin to spread over all sections of the state, and "blue cranes" are then abundant until fall.

Ardea egretta (Gmel.). **American Egret.**

Twenty-five to fifty years ago the egret was a common bird on the larger marshes and swamps bordering the inland lakes and rivers. Of late years, thanks to the barbarous plume hunters, rare, so rare at the present time that three or four individuals only visit Lake Koshkonong each year where hundreds were found thirty years ago during August and September. A few single birds or small flocks rarely visit Delavan Lake during the early fall. Fifty years ago specimens were occasionally taken on Koshkonong in June, but were never found nesting. Young, unable to fly, were taken from a colony in a tamarack swamp near Jefferson in July, 1863. It was found breeding with a large colony of great blue herons to the westward of Two Rivers in June, 1880. Also reported as nesting near Waukesha in 1866.

[Has been common in late summer in recent years. In 1939 this species nested in the Trempealeau bottoms. (I. R. Gabrielson, **Wilson Bull.** 51,1939:240). At least one pair nested in the Horicon Marsh in 1943. (E. T. Mitchell, **Pass. Pigeon** 5,1943:49-50).]

Ardea candidissima (Gmel.). **Snowy Heron.**

A rare and irregular visitor from the south during August and September. Has been procured on Lake Koshkonong from time to time for the past sixty years, but usually only one or two at a time, from the large flights of **egretta** which formerly visited the lake. The only adult bird in early summer that we have ever known in the State was taken on Koshkonong in June, 1860, and is preserved in the Kumlien collection. In August, 1886, Mr. H. L. Skavlem shot six of these birds from a flock of egrets, also on Lake Koshkonong. This is the last authentic record of any numbers that we know of. Of late years very rare. We have never been able to trace a capture of the snowy heron north of Milwaukee, Madison and La Crosse. Dr. Hoy's note on this species as a common bird, "nesting in communities in tamarack swamps," refers to the preceding species, or possibly the night heron, and was a conclusion formed by finding the snowy herons in the swamps in August, and even July, not knowing of their habit of northward migration in late summer.

[One was taken in Kenosha County by J. L. Diedrich, August 29, 1947. It is in the Milwaukee Public Museum. (**Pass. Pigeon** 9, No. 4, Oct., 1947: back cover).]

Ardea caerulea (Linn.). **Little Blue Heron.**

Rare accidental straggler. A single individual was shot on Root River, Racine County, August 28, 1848, by Dr. P. R. Hoy. A single wing of a decomposed specimen was preserved by Thure Kumlien. This was

found on the shores of Lake Koshkonong in the early fifties. Both of these were young birds in the white plumage, and no doubt straggled northward with other young herons. These, we believe, are the only authentic records for the species in Wisconsin, and can only be considered as purely accidental.

[O. J. Gromme recorded (**Auk** 47,1930:559) approximately 25 seen in various localities in southern Wisconsin in the summer of 1930. Two were collected. Eighteen were seen in Waukesha County by C. M. Flory (**Auk** 51,1934:511), July 26 and 27, 1934. On July 31, 1934, A. W. Schorger (**Auk** 51,1934:533) collected one of five found in Dane County. C. Jung (**Pass. Pigeon** 3,1941:57) saw one along the Milwaukee River, June 10, 1941; and H. Philip **ibid.** 3,1941:73) saw another in Jefferson County, July 29, 1941.]

Ardea virescens (Linn.). **Green Heron.**

Common summer resident. Does not nest in colonies, but usually in scattered pairs, sometimes two or three together in a favorable place along some wooded stream or pond. Found as far north as the shores of Lake Superior at least. Somewhat diminished in numbers of late.

Nycticorax nycticorax naevius (Bodd.). **Black-Crowned Night Heron.**

Common summer resident. Always somewhat erratic in distribution, sometimes frequenting only the thickest and most retired woods and swamps, and to a considerable extent nocturnal, or rather crepuscular in habits, it is easy to get a wrong impression of its numbers, and many people never suspect its presence. There is also no doubt that the night heron is much more numerous in Wisconsin than formerly. Large colonies, or breeding rookeries, have been located to our knowledge at Lake Koshkonong, Albion, Stoughton, Fox Lake and Delavan, as well as in many other localities. Seems to nest indifferently in trees or on the ground in marshes. The marsh nests that we have examined have always been placed among the cane (**Phragmites phragmites**), and not the wild rice, as stated by Nelson and others.

[**Nyctanassa violacea violacea** (Linnaeus). **Yellow-crowned Night Heron.**

While there is no specimen for Wisconsin, this species is entitled to a place on the state list due to the one found in Milwaukee, May 15, 1941, by Mrs. Phelps Wyman. (**Pass. Pigeon** 3,1941:76; **Auk** 58,1941:569). The identification was subsequently confirmed by O. J. Gromme.]

ORDER PALUDICOLAE: CRANES, RAILS, ETC.
FAMILY GRUIDAE: CRANES

Grus americana (Linn.). **Whooping Crane.**

Formerly of regular occurrence in the southern and western part of the state during migrations, unquestionably breeding to some extent. Thirty or forty years ago it was not rare to see a few among the enormous flocks of sandhill cranes during the October migrations, and even flocks composed entirely of this species. Of late years adults are exceedingly rare, and the last record we have of a Wisconsin capture was in October, 1878, when a fine old bird was shot in Green County and sent to Thure Kumlien. Even as long ago as 1840 they were rare along Lake Michigan, while they occurred in numbers along the Mississippi River and the west

central part of the state. Among the flights of the common crane that often remain upon the larger dry marshes for two weeks or more in October, there are noticed a few large "yellowish" specimens that are presumably the young of the year of the whooping crane, but they are so shy that approach is practically impossible. Newspaper and other reports of flocks of "white cranes" and of specimens shot in various parts of the state of late years, refer to the American egret, and not to this species.

Grus canadensis (Linn.). **Little Brown Crane.**

Rare straggler during early spring and late fall. During the latter part of March and the first part of April, 1894, a lone crane kept with a flock of Canada geese on Rock Prairie, near Johnstown, Rock County, for some days, and appeared to act as chief sentinel while the geese fed in the fields, always flying away with the geese when alarmed. This bird was killed on April 4 (1894) by L. Kumlien, and proved to be a fine plumaged male of this species—and very small. It is now preserved in the Museum of the Whitewater Normal School. At least one other, that we are positive of, was shot in Dane County late in the fall of 1879, and came into the possession of Thure Kumlien frozen stiff. This specimen was formerly in the Museum of Albion Academy.

Grus mexicana (Mull.). **Sandhill Crane.**

In an early day a very abundant migrant and common summer resident, from the southern border of the state northward. Although at the present time entirely absent from most thickly settled portions of the State, there are still many localities, even in southern Wisconsin, where it occurs regularly in good numbers. On the "Big Marsh" near Delavan cranes occur every spring and fall in numbers from one hundred to two hundred and fifty, remaining for nearly three weeks at a time. A nest of two eggs was procured on this marsh May 30, 1883. One of the eggs is preserved in the Hollister collection, the other having been broken. They were reported as nesting on the immense marsh near Palmyra, in 1898, and a few certainly bred near Mauston in 1896. The last authentic record for nesting in southeastern Wisconsin was of two pair which bred near Jefferson in 1900. There are also nesting records for Marquette and Plover during the past ten years, and unquestionably in many other places unknown to us. We have seen numbers of nests, but never noted one built up like a flamingo's nest as described by Dr. Hoy in 1852, although this might have been necessary in a very wet locality. So wary are these birds that of all that occur on the Delavan Marsh yearly we have known of but two being killed at this place in many years.

[Still nests in the state in small numbers.]

FAMILY RALLIDAE: RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS.

Rallus elegans (Aud.). **King Rail.**

Summer resident, much commoner than twenty-five years ago. A regular breeder in suitable localities throughout the state, but far less plenty west of the Rock River Valley than east of it. The value of this bird for table purposes has come to be recognized in many sections, and it is regularly hunted with a dog. Occurs in much higher and drier situations than any of the other rails, and often frequents stubble fields when not too

far away from the marsh. We have found the oesophagus literally crammed with oats, and in the latter part of the summer and early fall the birds subsist largely on grasshoppers.

Rallus virginianus (Linn.). **Virginia Rail.**

Rather common summer resident, but in no such numbers as the next. To be found almost anywhere in low swampy land and, except when it first arrives, in late April, keeps well under cover unless flushed. There is no question that this species has become more abundant than formerly in southern Wisconsin. The Virginia rail possesses the power of ventriloquism to an extraordinary degree, and its note is also exceedingly variable. A specimen kept alive in a wire netting enclosure in a large spring one summer taught us that there was hardly any note or noise commonly heard in the marshes that he could not imitate, so wonderful were his powers of mimicry. Nests in rather higher situations than the sora.

Porzana carolina (Linn.). **Sora.**

A very abundant summer resident. Breeds in suitable localities over the entire state. Arrives in spring from May 1 to 10, and moves southward after the first sharp frost, although belated individuals are sometimes found well into November. Formerly not molested by gunners, but has gradually come to be considered a game bird and large numbers are shot in the wild rice marshes from the first to the middle of September. Large numbers of their nests are destroyed by the rising of the water on their breeding grounds, and many of the migrating birds are killed by flying into buildings and wires; but with all this destruction the little sora seems to hold its own in numbers in a wonderful way.

(Continued in next issue)

1948 May Day Counts

The "May-Day Count" business in 1948 was not good. Only seven counts were made, and two of these did not start until the early morning singing period was over. Moreover, most of the counts were taken before the peak of the migration had occurred. Had some of them been taken around May 21-23, the results might have been considerably better. As it was 72 observers took part in the seven counts, and recorded a collective total of about 185 species, nearly 15 below the 1947 total. A summary of each count follows:

Madison: May 16; 164 species. Eight groups of observers touched most parts of Dane County. The more unusual finds: Loon, European partridge, upland plover, Bewick's wren, ruby-crowned kinglet, prothonotary warbler, orchard oriole, Brewer's blackbird.—Kumlien Club.

Milwaukee: May 19; 151 species. Eight observers covered the city parks, Lake Michigan shore, Milwaukee River, and other selected points in and about Milwaukee. 14 hours were spent in the field, with favorable weather conditions for observation. Some of the best finds included: Old-squaw, king rail, ruddy turnstone, dowitcher, Forster's tern, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied and olive-sided flycatchers, red-breast-

ed nuthatch, hermit thrush, Philadelphia vireo, Connecticut warbler, junco, tree and Lincoln's sparrow.—John Muir Bird Club.

Milwaukee: May 20; 147 species. Weather conditions were good for twenty observers to spend 11 hours afield, covering selected portions of Milwaukee and the surrounding area within 20 miles of the center of the city. Highlights included: Blue goose, ruddy turnstone, sanderling, Forster's tern, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, olive-sided flycatcher, brown creeper, hermit thrush, ruby-crowned kinglet, Philadelphia vireo, prothonotary, orange-crowned and Connecticut warblers, junco, Harris's and Lincoln's sparrows.—Bird Group of the Milwaukee City Club.

Green Bay: May 16; 133 species. Eleven observers covered Green Bay and surrounding territory in Brown and Kewaunee Counties. The more unusual finds: Caspian tern, orange-crowned and Connecticut warblers, and orchard oriole.—Green Bay Bird Club.

Neillsville: May 20; 106 species. Two observers spent 13 hours in the field, with good weather favoring them, covering the city of Neillsville and certain selected spots in southern Clark County within a radius of 15 miles. Best finds: Prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse, bob-white, upland plover, yellow-bellied sapsucker, blue-gray gnatcatcher, Brewer's blackbird, clay-colored sparrow.—Mr. and Mrs. Sam Robbins.

Cedar Grove: May 16; 101 species. Five observers compiled this total in 3½ hours of afternoon birding, covering the Cedar Grove area and Port Washington harbor. Highlights: Bald eagle, Forster's and Caspian terns, winter wren, Philadelphia vireo, orange-crowned and Connecticut warblers, and Lincoln's sparrow.—John Muir Bird Club.

Watertown: May 16; 80 species. One observer was in the field from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m., in Watertown and surrounding area. He reports that the results were disappointing, with no particular highlights.—Philip Mallow.

By the Wayside . . .

A Breeding Record of the Bewick's Wren. On April 7, 1945, we made our first acquaintance with a Bewick's wren, which in the company of its mate, came to our lawn and garden and proceeded to make itself at home. Two or three days after its arrival it built its nest fearlessly on a cross-beam underneath the floor of our back veranda. Both birds spent much time on the clothesline ten feet from our door. The male sang frequently until the female began incubating, when he was noticeably silent, only indulging in an occasional burst of song when a safe distance from the nest. At no time did he sing with the persistence of a house wren, but was almost as tame. Within 15 feet of the nest of the Bewick's wren was a pair of house wrens who strongly resented the presence of the Bewick's; sharp skirmishes would ensue when both species were in the vicinity at once. Only one of three eggs hatched,

perhaps because of the extremely cold spell which lasted through most of April. When I visited the nest in the absence of the old birds, I often found the eggs quite cold. The adult birds became tame during their stay with us, and would carry insects to their lone baby even though we were on the veranda or standing close on the lawn. They soon coaxed the young bird over to a tree grown cliff across the road where we occasionally saw them for several days. The Bewick's wren has re-appeared here each spring, in late March or early April, but no subsequent nest has been found.—Ethel Allis Nott, Reedsburg.

(Editor's note: Miss Nott has been keeping bird records for many years, and has contributed regularly to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. We are happy that she is now contributing to **The Passenger Pigeon** as well.)

Cedar Waxwings Courting. On March 20 a pair of cedar waxwings attracted my attention by their peculiar actions. As I watched the birds, they exchanged a berry back and forth more than thirty times. Could this be a form of love-making for this species?—Mrs. Melva Maxson, Milton.

Other Longspurs in Wisconsin? Huge flocks of longspurs fed across the corn stubble over a period of weeks this spring. At first I thought them all horned larks, but later when I walked out over the fields, I was surprised to find that snow buntings and these longspurs made up the largest number, with only a very few larks. Every day for more than a week I made the trip out across the fields to watch them; if it was near to dusk they were not so easily frightened, and I sometimes got within fifty feet of them. There were great numbers of Lapland longspurs, both male and female. There also seemed to be large numbers of chestnut-collared longspurs, a few McCown's, and perhaps a few Smith's. The chestnut-collared were especially conspicuous; the male seemed always to be on guard, sitting on a corn stub, and once even sat in the top of a small tree giving a rather sweet little song that was entirely new to me in my bird watching. I hope to spend more time watching for these birds next spring.—Mrs. Glen Fisher, Oshkosh.

(Editor's note: Mrs. Fisher lives on a farm just outside of Oshkosh, and is well situated to observe longspurs during their spring migration period. She has made careful and detailed observations of the important field marks, and this plus the distinctive song noted lends strong support to the credibility of the report. Mrs. Fisher herself concurs in the decision to consider these records hypothetical, hoping that further corroborating evidence may be obtained another year. However the editors felt it advisable to bring this to the attention of our readers at this time, because it may open the door to more careful observation by other observers, and to new ornithological knowledge.)

A Cormorant Eats a Heavy Meal. On April 19, on the Mississippi River near Grant County, I saw a cormorant that seemed unable to fly, and started to chase it in my speed boat. The bird dove once, and when it reappeared, it disgorged 16 sheepshead fish, three to four inches in length. Then the bird was able to fly.—Warden O. J. Valley.

THE SPRING SEASON . . .

(All field notes for the period of June 1 to August 31 should be sent immediately to Rev. Samuel D. Robbins, Mazomanie, Wisconsin.)

The 1948 spring season had certain unusual features, some of which are enigmatic. The limited movement of early migrants, occasioned by the mild weather of the last two weeks in February, came to an abrupt halt early in March when a severe cold spell came on. The first real wave was thus delayed until the normal dates, March 19-21. The migration proceeded pretty much on a normal schedule, until early May when cool and rainy weather slowed up the birds. The second week in May was particularly unfavorable for migration, and not until May 20-21 did really favorable conditions return. Those two days provided the peak of the migration season, and continued warm weather thereafter sent the late arrivals through fast, so that the migration was virtually completed by May 25.

One of the puzzling factors in the spring migration is the observation that the wave of May 20-21 was by no means as heavy as might have been expected. After two weeks of poor weather, it could be expected that birds held up in that time would have come on with a grand rush; but while those two days did represent a peak, it was not a large one. Without such a great wave, the May migration seemed to be poor for most of the state's observers. Evans in Oshkosh wrote: "This has been the poorest year I have ever experienced, as far as warblers, vireos, thrushes and some shore-birds were concerned. Most of the warblers I saw were either singles or very, very few; and I saw fewer species than usual." Similar expressions came from a number of other observers. In Neillsville, Robbins found some documentary evidence of the same sort. Totaling numbers of certain species seen from day to day during the migration periods of 1947 and 1948, with number of trips and time in the field roughly the same, he arrived at these figures:

Species	1947 Total	1948 Total
Magnolia Warbler	99	48
Grinnell's Water-thrush	85	10
White-throated Sparrow	300	75
Canada Warbler	20	4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	45	6

These were the more extreme examples, but to a lesser extent the trend was general. It seems that a considerable number of our early May migrants went over us or around us.

Another interesting sidelight was the fact that although the season was not early as far as the general arrival of most species was concerned, many early state records were broken or tied. Some of this is probably due to increased observation by more birders in a wider coverage of the state. But in addition there were a surprising number of very early arrivals: Golden plover in Milwaukee, catbird in St. Croix Falls and Kenosha, crested flycatcher, bank swallow, palm warbler, and Louisiana water-thrush in Milwaukee, olive-backed thrush in Jackson County, and Baltimore oriole in Milton.

The spring shore-bird flight was somewhat disappointing. Pectoral sandpipers were numerous, but most other species were poorly represented. Nor was there much evidence of a major hawk flight. The only specific report on hawk migration was from Kaspar in Oshkosh: in contrast to 1947 when 498 hawks were counted over the city in spring migration, only 311 were seen in 1948, all but about 80 on the peak day, Apr. 24. The spring flight of ducks and geese was one of the bright spots in the entire migration. The flocks of thousands of birds in the Horicon Marsh area in late March and early April was an encouraging sight; but it is too early to indicate to what extent, if any, these birds are coming back. The following are the season's highlights:

Lesser Loon: Remained in Milwaukee until May 30 (Mrs. Balsom).

Red-throated Loon: One in Milwaukee, Apr. 29 (Mrs. Balsom).

Holboell's Grebe: Seen twice in Madison, on Apr. 9 (Loyster), and Apr. 30 (Barger).

Horned Grebe: Arrived near Appleton, Apr. 1 (Mrs. Rogers). Earliest date on record. One was seen in Dane County, Apr. 2 (Hale). Remained on Lake Superior, in Douglas County, through May 13 (Hopkins).

Eared Grebe: Members of this species provided thrills for a number of Madison observers; one was present in Madison, Apr. 20-27 (Keitt, Hall, et al); two were seen together in Dane County on May 23 (Barger, Prins et al).

Pied-billed Grebe: An early arrival was noted in Rock County, Mar. 10 (Kaspar).

Double-crested Cormorant: First noted on Delavan Lake, Mar. 28 (Mrs. Pierce); last seen in Milwaukee, May 30 (Mrs. Balsom).

American Egret: Two spring records: Burnett County, Apr. 24 (Stone); Horicon, Apr. 25 (Burrow-Truax).

Green Heron: Arrived in Waupaca, Apr. 18 (Mrs. Peterson).

Black-crowned Night Heron: First noted along Milwaukee River, Mar. 25 (Lake).

American Bittern: Another early arrival: Racine County, Mar. 29 (Larkin-Orians).

Whistling Swan: Noted in various areas of the state, first in Winnebago County, Mar. 18 (Lemke-Robinson); last in Burnett County, May 4 (Stone).

Canada Goose: The peak of the flight at Horicon was around Mar. 22 (King).

White-fronted Goose: Two individuals were carefully studied at Horicon, Mar. 24 (Mathiak).

Snow Goose: An unusual number of spring reports between Mar. 17 and May 5, from Racine, Milwaukee, Dane, Columbia, Dodge, Winnebago, Eau Claire and St. Croix Counties.

Blue Goose: Seen in Milwaukee, Mar. 17 (Mrs. Larkin), early; seen there again on May 20, and on two intervening dates. Noted also in Dane County on Mar. 21 (Barger et al) and May 9 (Hall et al); and in Chippewa County, Apr. 4 (Robbins).

Gadwall: One in Madison, Mar. 7 (W. Roark) is early.

Wood Duck: One in Madison, Mar. 21 (Barger).

Canvas-back: Several were seen near La Crosse, Mar. 11 (Roy Wenger). Still present near Two Rivers in late May (Mrs. Smith).

Old-squaw: Last noted in Milwaukee, May 20 (Gordon Orians).

Ruddy Duck: Five still present in Milwaukee, May 30 (Mrs. Balsom).

Turkey Vulture: Reported on at least ten occasions during the spring months: in Milwaukee, Dane and Dodge Counties in the south; La Crosse and Vernon Counties in the west; Adams, Winnebago and Waupaca Counties in the central section; Oconto County in the north-east; and Sawyer county in the north-west.

Goshawk: Green Bay, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Weber).

Cooper's Hawk: An early arrival was noted in Waukesha County, Mar. 20 (Mrs. Larkin et al).

Broad-winged Hawk: About 211 were counted over Oshkosh on the peak day, Apr. 24 (Kaspar).

Bald Eagle: Mercer, from Mar. 7 on (Mrs. Sell); Burnett Co., Mar. 19 (Stone); Milwaukee, Mar. 21 (Frister); immature near Stevens Point, Apr. 22 (Mrs. Hughes); Madison, Apr. 24 (Mrs. Walker); adult in Hayward, Apr. 30 (Kahmann); Cedar Grove, May 16 (Mrs. Larkin et al); two adults over Neillsville, May 27 (Robbins).

Marsh Hawk: Two in Horicon, Mar. 4 (King).

Duck Hawk: The only spring record is of a bird in Madison, April 17 (Scott).

Pigeon Hawk: Milwaukee, Apr. 2 (Mary Donald) and Apr. 9 (G. & H. Orians); Hudson, May 7 and May 13 (Mrs. Owen).

Spruce Grouse: One found dead in Three Lakes, Mar. 12; others known to be in the area (fide Scott).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Outagamie County, May 8 (Mrs. Tessen).

Hungarian Partridge: Eight in Kaukauna, Mar. 7 (Wolfe-Walworth).

Bob-white: Noted in Clark County, May 20 (Robbins). Rare in area.

Sandhill Crane: Two in Dane County, Mar. 21 (Barger, Edmunds et al). Earliest date on record. Only spring report.

King Rail: Arrived in Milwaukee by Apr. 19 (Mrs. Larkin).

Yellow Rail: The Oconto County birds returned again; two were found there on Apr. 26 (Carl Richter).

Golden Plover: The only spring record is of a remarkably early bird in Milwaukee, Mar. 19 (Gordon Orians).

Black-bellied Plover: Seen near Oshkosh, May 20 to 29, with a peak of 150 or more on May 23 (Mrs. Fisher); noted in Milwaukee, May 21 (Gordon Orians); 23 counted in Kenosha County, May 30 (Mrs. Higgins).

Ruddy Turnstone: Present in Winnebago County, May 15-29 (Mrs. Rogers, Kaspar, Mrs. Fisher). Also seen in Milwaukee, May 18-21 (Gordon Orians).

NEST AND EGGS OF THE UPLAND PLOVER. PHOTOGRAPHED IN DANE COUNTY, JUNE 8, 1938, BY DR. I. O. BUSS.

Hudsonian Curlew: At least two birds were seen under very favorable conditions in Milwaukee, May 18 (Gordon and Howard Orians).

Upland Plover: This species is well represented in central Wisconsin this year, being reported from Manitowoc, Brown, Winnebago, Calumet, Outagamie, Clark, St. Croix and Burnett Counties. One in Green Bay, Mar. 28 (Mrs. Weber), is especially early.

Willet: Oshkosh, May 20 (Kaspar).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Arrived in Milwaukee, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Larkin et al.).

Red-backed Sandpiper: Dane County, May 16 (Hall); Appleton, May 17 (Mrs. Rogers); Milwaukee, May 18-21 (Gordon Orians et al.); Oshkosh, May 21-26 (Kaspar-Evans); Oconto County, May 31 (Carl Richter).

Dowitcher: Three in Jefferson County, May 4 (Mallow); Milwaukee, May 12-19 (Mrs. Larkin, Treichel, et al.); Oshkosh, May 20-22 (Kaspar); one near Madison, May 22 (Robbins).

Marbled Godwit: One was present near Appleton, May 3 and 4 (Mrs. Rogers et al.).

Hudsonian Godwit: One watched for 45 minutes in town of Muskego, Waukesha County, May 29 (S. Paul Jones and Charlie Nelson).

Sanderling: One in Milwaukee, May 19 (City Club), is the only report.

Wilson's Phalarope: Two males in Dodge County, Apr. 24 (Mallow); two in Rock County, Apr. 28-30 (King); Oshkosh, Apr. 29 (Evans); Dane County, May 1 (Mrs. Walker); five in Jefferson County, May 4 (Mallow); Milwaukee, May 8 (Mrs. Larkin et al.).

Bonaparte's Gull: Waukesha County, Mar. 28 (Mrs. Larkin-Miss Donald). Early.

Forster's Tern: Sheboygan, Apr. 27 (Springer). Earliest date on record. Seen also in Milwaukee, May 2 (Hunter et al.), and May 20 (Mrs. Balsom); and at Cedar Grove, May 16 (Mrs. Larkin et al.).

Common Tern: Early arrivals noted in Milwaukee, Apr. 18 (Gordon Orians); Oshkosh, Apr. 22 (Evans); and Madison, Apr. 29 (Mrs. Walker).

Caspian Tern: Arrived in Oconto County, Apr. 24 (Carl Richter), and in Green Bay, Apr. 25 (Mrs. Weber).

Barn Owl: Milwaukee, Mar. 18 (Miss Donald); two in Oshkosh, Apr. 19 (Kaspar); one came down chimney in Milwaukee, May 6 (Mrs. Larkin); Madison, May 19 (Edmunds).

Burrowing Owl: Milwaukee, Mar. 23-29 (Gordon Orians et al.). Details on back page.

Long-eared Owl: Clark County, Apr. 1 (Robbins).

Short-eared Owl: Milwaukee, Mar. 22 (Gordon Orians) and Apr. 10 (Mrs. Larkin); Waukesha County, Apr. 2 (Robbins); Oshkosh, May 21 (Evans).

Saw-whet Owl: One in Manitowoc, Mar. 9 (Merle Pickett).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: An early arrival was noted in Milwaukee, May 2 (Meyers); one in Oshkosh, May 5 (Mrs. Fisher); one in Hudson, May 8 (Mrs. Owen).

Belted Kingfisher: Arrived in Milwaukee, Mar. 20 (G. & H. Orians); Loganville, Mar. 22 (Kruse); Mercer, Mar. 25 (Mrs. Sell).

Flicker: Migrants reached Racine by Mar. 12 (von Jarchow), and Rhinelander by Mar. 26 (Miss Almon).

Pileated Woodpecker: Stevens Point, Mar. 1 (Mrs. Hughes).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Oshkosh, Apr. 27 (Evans); Milwaukee, May 1-21 (Mrs. Decker); Richland County, May 23 (Robbins).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: First reported from Milton, Mar. 26 (Mrs. Maxson); two migrants still in Madison, May 23 (Barger et al.).

Eastern Kingbird: An early arrival was seen in Milwaukee, Apr. 19 (Mrs. Simmons).

Crested Flycatcher: Another very early species in Milwaukee, Apr. 21 (Gordon & Howard Orians).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Milwaukee, May 6 (Mrs. Balsom). Early. Only spring record, this year.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Seen on three occasions between May 15 and May 24 in Milwaukee (Gordon Orians, Mrs. Balsom et al); seen also in Mazomanie, May 23 (Barger, Hall et al.); Wyalusing Park, May 23 (Edmunds); Racine County, May 31 (Mrs. Hook).

Bank Swallow: Early arrival noted in Milwaukee, Apr. 4 (Dr. Hehn). Earliest date on record. The Loganville population is way down this spring, reflecting the effects of last year's flood.

Barn Swallow: First in Kenosha, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Higgins).

Tufted Titmouse: Present in Milton from May 16 on (Mrs. Maxson).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Rhinelander, Mar. 26 (Miss Almon); present in Mercer through May 7 (Mrs. Sell); Milwaukee, May 4-19 (Mrs. Gimmler et al.); Appleton, May 15 (Mrs. Rogers).

Brown Creeper: Remained in Milwaukee until May 19 (Bill Jackson).

Winter Wren: Early arrivals were reported in Madison on Mar. 21 (Barger-Hall), and in Milwaukee on Mar. 23 (Mrs. Balsom); remained in Neillsville through May 18 (Robbins), and in Oconto County throughout the period (Carl Richter).

Bewick's Wren: At least six birds were seen in Sauk and Dane Counties. First noted in Reedsburg, Mar. 25-30 (Miss Nott); North Freedom, Apr. 17 (Kruse); Loganville, Apr. 19-May 3 (Kruse); Madison, Apr. 21-May 2 (Barger, Robbins, Mrs. Walker, Keitt); Mazomanie, May 16-23 (Barger-Hall).

Carolina Wren: Singing bird at Onalaska, Apr. 6 (Peterson).

Prairie Marsh Wren: Seen first in Milwaukee, Apr. 25 (Mrs. Balsom). Early.

Short-billed Marsh Wren: Seen on May 1 in Milwaukee (John Muir Club), and in Oshkosh (Evans).

Mockingbird: One of the birds that wintered in Milwaukee remained until Apr. 23 (Mrs. Schwendener).

Catbird: Ordinarily this species does not reach Wisconsin until about the first of May, but this year there were a surprising number of early records. Most notable is the bird seen in St. Croix Falls on Mar. 9 (Glenn Riegel); this bird probably spent the winter somewhere in this area. Another in Kenosha, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Higgins), is the earliest arrival date on record. On Apr. 25 individuals were seen in Madison (Mrs. Walker), Milwaukee (Mrs. Larkin), Oconto (Carl Richter), and Reedsburg (Miss Nott). The next day birds were seen in St. Croix Falls (Heinsohn) and Oconomowoc (Peartree).

Wood Thrush: Arrived in Kenosha, Apr. 25 (Mrs. Higgins), and in Oshkosh, Apr. 26 (Mrs. Fisher).

Hermit Thrush: An individual in Milwaukee on Mar. 22 (Treichel) ties the state record for early arrival. Other early birds were seen on Mar. 25 in Madison (W. Roark), and in Waupaca (Mrs. Peterson).

Olive-backed Thrush: Another very early straggler was carefully observed in Jackson County on Mar. 31 (Stone). Earliest date on record. Also early were individuals in Milwaukee, Apr. 17 (Mrs. Nunnemacher), and in Oshkosh, Apr. 24 (Mrs. Fisher).

Willow Thrush: Arrived on Apr. 24 in Milwaukee (Gordon Orians et al.), and in Oshkosh (Evans).

Gnatcatcher: Southern Wisconsin birds were present in Milwaukee, Dane, Columbia and Sauk Counties from Apr. 19 on. A report from central Wisconsin is furnished from Clark County where several birds were seen in two places, May 17 and 20 (Robbins).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: First, Madison, Mar. 25 (Emlen).

Pipit: One spring report: Milwaukee, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Balsom).

Bohemian Waxwing: Flock of 16 in Hudson, Mar. 6 (Mrs. Owen); up to 25 in Polk County, Mar. 2-18 (fide Heinsohn); three in Neillsville, Mar. 23 (Robbins).

Northern Shrike: Black River Falls, Mar. 2 (Roberts); Milwaukee, Mar. 13 (Orians-Mueller).

Migrant Shrike: Milwaukee, Mar. 22 (Gordon Orians). Early.

Bell's Vireo: A bird of this species was heard singing and carefully watched in Waupaca, May 16 (Mrs. Peterson).

Blue-headed Vireo: Arrived in Two Rivers, Apr. 27 (Mrs. Smith).

Red-eyed Vireo: Arrived in Madison, May 2 (Emlen).

Philadelphia Vireo: Individuals reported from Milwaukee, Madison, Mazomanie, Ripon, Appleton and Neillsville, all between May 15 and 24.

Black & White Warbler: Arrived in Kenosha, Apr. 15 (Mrs. Higgins). Early.

Prothonotary Warbler: Various observers reported this species at spots along the Wisconsin River bottoms in Dane, Sauk, Iowa and Grant Counties, all on May 16. Other reports: Milwaukee, May 9 (John Muir Club); Milton, May 16 (Mrs. Maxson); Mazomanie, May 23 (Hall et al.).

Blue-winged Warbler: Milwaukee, May 6 (Mrs. Larkin); Wyalusing Park, May 8 (Edmunds); Madison, May 15-16(Mrs. Walker et al); Spring Green, May 16 (Mrs. Balsom); Loganville, May 22 (Kruse); Mazomanie, May 23 (Hall); Juneau County, May 23 (Robbins).

Brewster's Warbler: One was observed under favorable conditions in Milwaukee, May 20 (Miss Donald).

Tennessee Warbler: Present in St. Croix Falls on Apr. 25 (Heinsohn). Earliest date on record.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Birds observed on Apr. 19 in Madison (Robbins) and Milwaukee (City Club) tied the early state record for this species. Subsequent observations were made in Kenosha, Appleton, Green Bay, Neillsville and Black River Falls.

Nashville Warbler: First, Madison, Apr. 26 (E. Roark).

Yellow Warbler: Arrived in Madison, Apr. 25 (Mrs. Walker).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Another early arrival: Milwaukee, Apr. 30 (Mrs. Balsom). Earliest date on record.

Myrtle Warbler: First in Madison, Apr. 4 (Emlen); last seen in Clark County, May 30 (Robbins).

Black-throated Green Warbler: A Milwaukee bird on Apr. 19 (Mrs. Balsom) is another record-breaker.

Cerulean Warbler: Noted in Kenosha, May 18 (Mrs. Higgins). Also seen and heard in Neillsville, May 21; Adams County, May 22; and Iowa County, May 23, all by Robbins.

Pine Warbler: Arrived in Sauk City, Apr. 17 (Edmunds); Madison, Apr. 19 (Scott-Robbins); Eau Claire, Apr. 21 (Miss Almon); and Rhinelander, Apr. 25 (Miss Almon).

Prairie Warbler: In Reedsburg a male of this species was carefully observed on May 17 (Miss Nott).

Palm Warbler: Seen first in Milwaukee, Apr. 6 (Doll-Campbell). Earliest date on record.

Louisiana Water-thrush: Milwaukee, Apr. 4 (Gordon Orians et al.). Earliest date on record.

Kentucky Warbler: One was trapped and banded in Milton, May 9 (Mrs. Maxson). Also seen in Wyalusing Park, May 23 (Edmunds).

Northern Yellow-throat: Milwaukee, Apr. 26 (Gimmler). Earliest date on record.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Milwaukee, May 6 (Mrs. Balsom); Milton, May 16 (Mrs. Maxson).

Canada Warbler: One in Milwaukee on May 6 (Mrs. Larkin et al.) ties the early state record.

Bobolink: Noted in Madison (Barger-Hall) and in Oshkosh (Kaspar), both on Apr. 25, tying the early state record.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Arrival in Oshkosh noted on Apr. 14 (Evans).

Orchard Oriole: One in Onalaska, May 14 (Alvin Peterson); Green Bay, May 16 (Bird Club); two in Mazomanie, May 16 and 23 (Barger et al.); pair in Two Rivers, May 23 (Mrs. Smith); one in northern Wood County, May 25 (Robbins).

Baltimore Oriole: This is another species that arrived quite generally a week or so earlier than usual. Especially early was the bird in Milton, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Maxson), being the earliest date on record. Other early birds were found in Dane County, Apr. 24 (Paul Rauschenbush); Loganville, Apr. 25 (Kruse); Reedsburg, Apr. 27 (Miss Nott); and Appleton, Apr. 28 (Mrs. Rogers).

Brewer's Blackbird: This species has spread its range over a considerable portion of the state, especially the central and north central regions. Spring records come from Milwaukee, Waukesha, Dane, Wood, Clark, Outagamie, Oconto and Oneida Counties.

Evening Grosbeak: By no means as plentiful in central and northern Wisconsin as in the spring of 1947. Reported from Burnett County, Mar. 21 (Stone); Hudson, Apr. 6 (Mrs. Owen); Mercer, Apr. 2-14 (Mrs. Sell); and an odd bird that seemed out of place in Milwaukee, May 15 (Mrs. Schwendener).

Redpoll: Most observers searched in vain for this species all winter and early spring. The only birds turned up were in Rhinelander, Mar. 26 (Miss Almon), and in St. Croix Falls, Mar. 27 (Heinsohn).

Pine Siskin: Only four reports: flocks of hundreds in Mercer, Mar. 15 (Mrs. Sell); Two Rivers, Apr. 11 (Mrs. Smith); Rhinelander, Apr. 18 (Miss Almon); Neillsville, May 13-18 (Robbins).

White-winged Crossbill: Heard in song in Rusk County, Mar. 2 (Feeney). Flock in Oneida County, Mar. 14 (W. E. Scott and Burt Dahlberg).

Towhee: Early arrival noted in Milwaukee, Mar. 20 (John Muir Club).

Savannah Sparrow: Arrived in Milwaukee, Mar. 21 (John Muir Club).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Kruse in Loganville and Robbins in Neillsville report this species to be unusually scarce this year.

LeConte's Sparrow: One in Sauk County, Apr. 16 (Kruse).

Lark Sparrow: Two in Onalaska, May 4 (Alvin Peterson); Spring Green, May 16 (Mrs. Balsom); two near Lone Rock, May 23 (Robbins); Black River Falls, May 8 and thereafter (Roberts).

Junco: Remained in Milwaukee until May 20 (Mrs. Decker).

Tree Sparrow: A late straggler was seen in Milwaukee, May 19 (Miss Donald). Latest date on record.

Chipping Sparrow: Early arrivals noted in Milwaukee, Mar. 21 (Mrs. Balsom et al.), and in Waupaca, Mar. 29 (Mrs. Peterson).

Clay-colored Sparrow: In addition to birds on their breeding range in central and northern Wisconsin, migrants were reported from Onalaska, May 3 (Peterson); Milwaukee, May 5 (Gordon Orians); and Madison, May 14 (Scotts).

Field Sparrow: Early birds seen in Oshkosh, Mar. 19 (Mrs. Fisher); in Milwaukee, Mar. 20 (City Club); and in Onalaska, Mar. 23 (Peterson). The Oshkosh bird is the earliest on record.

Harris's Sparrow: Three in Onalaska, May 6 (Peterson); Loganville, May 9 (Kruse); Mercer, May 13-19 (Mrs. Sell); at a feeder in Milwaukee, May 10-14 (Miss Donald), and seen later in that area on May 23 (Mrs. Balsom-Dr. Hehn).

White-crowned Sparrow: Most observers found this species less common than usual. First and last birds reported from Appleton, Apr. 24 (Mrs. Rogers) to May 26 (Mrs. Tessen).

Gambel's Sparrow: A bird of this race spent five days in Milwaukee at Miss Donald's feeding tray, May 10-14. It was in company with a dozen or more white-crowned and two Harris's sparrows, and was seen by many observers.

White-throated Sparrow: Remained in Milton through May 27 (Mrs. Maxson); in Milwaukee until May 28 (City Club); many were present in Mercer throughout May (Mrs. Sell).

Lincoln's Sparrow: One in Milwaukee, Apr. 21 (Mrs. Larkin) is unusually early. Several were banded in Oshkosh (Kaspar) and Two Rivers (Mrs. Smith) during the first three weeks of May.

Swamp Sparrow: Migrants appeared in Madison by Mar. 21 (Barger et al.).

Lapland Longspur: Scattered reports in March and early April from Dane, Milwaukee, Winnebago and Outagamie Counties. Latest date in Ripon, May 2 (Paul Cors). See "By the Wayside" column for further notes on longspurs.

The Student's Page

By MRS. N. R. BARGER

The May Day census is always a big event in the lives of ornithologists, young or not so young. Since the peak of the spring migration is at hand, it is always a great deal of fun, or shall we call it satisfaction, to see how the total for the day grows, or whether a previous record can be reached or even passed.

Alan Keitt, 13, a keen, quick, yet careful observer was the youngest participant in the Kumlien Club's May Day census this year. He will be in the eighth grade at Madison West High School this coming fall and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George Keitt. His father is a scientist in the Plant Pathology Department in the University of Wisconsin.

He has always been interested in birds, Alan says, but did not begin to count or keep records until last year. Then, his total list was 140 species, but this year, he proudly informs us, the list already has reached 170.

The following story gives us a good idea of what a May Day can be like for those who let neither weather conditions nor other hardships hinder them from producing a good list:

THE MAY DAY CENSUS

By Alan Keitt

R-r-r-r-ring!! No response.

R-r-r-r-ring!!! Finally I turned a weary eye toward the alarm clock, which of course was out of order, because it said five after three a. m. Then with sudden reality I remembered that I was being called for, to go on the annual May Day Census sponsored by the Kumlien club of Madison. After eating a rather sparse breakfast to fortify myself, I heard Mr. Barger's car outside. When we had picked up several other members of our party, which numbered six, we started on our venture.

Our first stop was somewhere east of Madison on highway 30. We walked back to a certain lake (I have no idea of its name) and saw two upland plover.

After this, we wandered about on some country roads until we came to a small, flooded cornfield. Here we saw some red-backed sandpipers, semi-palmated plovers, and a bird which, after some controversy, we decided was a least sandpiper.

By now I was completely lost, so I will not try to describe our location.

After some more driving we flushed two Hungarian partridge along the road. We stopped here and walked back to some woods and bottoms. Golden-winged warblers and Wilson's warblers were in abundance here. On the way back to the car we saw several indigo buntings and my first bobolink of the year.

Our next stop was at Crystal Lake. On the lower side of the lake there is a thick stretch of woods which is very good for warblers. After we had hiked for some time we found a blue-gray gnatcatcher. On the way back we got an exceptionally good view of a prothonotary warbler, one of our best finds.

Next we started to the place where several contingents of the Kumlien Club had planned to eat lunch. On the way we saw a semi-palmated sandpiper.

After lunch, which was eaten in the rain just outside of Sauk City, we started on along the banks of the Wisconsin River. We stopped on the river-bank across from Ferry Bluff, where we saw two orchard orioles. We left our car here and were driven by another member of the club to Mazomanie, about seven or eight miles away.

The land around this part of the Wisconsin River is divided into three levels. The first is the natural farmland, then some steep bluffs (being on the south side of the river, the bluffs were not so extreme), and third is the vast bottom country.

When we were left at Mazomanie it was about three in the afternoon. Here we started the six or seven mile hike to the car. On one edge of Mazomanie we found a blackpoll warbler, which was the only new bird we saw on the farmland level.

The distance from Mazomanie to the bluffs is about three miles. There was a rather stiff wind blowing, and to add to our discomfort, intermittent showers. At the bottom of these bluffs was a small stream bordered by a thick band of woods which was fairly good for warblers.

Since this stream was not fordable we had to make a detour to a road which crossed the stream. We had followed this road but a short distance when we heard a Bewick's wren, however we did not find it because of the shortage of time. In order to keep on our course we then left the road. In some rather open woods we made two of our best finds, a pileated woodpecker and a bay-breasted warbler.

Next we came into the bottom lands, which were about the most rugged I have ever walked through. It is a level stretch of grass, water, and mud.

We had hiked about a mile and a half when we came to a small river which we could not get across. We now had a choice of two alternatives to walk down the stream and try to find a fallen tree, or make a detour of several miles. To save time we chose the former.

Animal signs were in abundance along this stream. We found an otter slide, deer and raccoon tracks, and several partial beaver dams. We finally got across the stream on a beaver dam, which stretched about a third of the way across. The remaining distance was too far to jump or wade, so we rigged up a very makeshift bridge, consisting of two poles and some sticks to balance ourselves with.

At this point we noticed a large dark mass in the distance which filled the air, reminding one of grasshopper swarms. It was a huge migratory flock of swallows made up of all species, although bank swallows were prominent. They flew about us so thickly and at such close range, it seemed, that we could have captured many with very little effort.

By this time the water was nearly up to our knees. On the last quarter mile back to the car we saw another orchard oriole. When we finally got to the car it was after 7:30. We stayed a few minutes to listen for a whip-poor-will but did not hear it, so started for home. This ended about the most eventful day of my life. Our total list was 121 or 122, with 26 new ones for me, raising my year's total to 156 species.

SCENES OF THE CONVENTION

BY EDWARD AND GEORGE PRINS

ABOVE—LEFT TO RIGHT: J. HARWOOD EVANS, DIRECTOR; MRS. EVANS; DR. GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON, CHIEF SPEAKER; REV. HOWARD L. ORIANS, TOASTMASTER; MRS. ORIANS; AND CLARENCE S. JUNG, AUCTIONEER. THE PAINTING IS BY A EUROPEAN ARTIST, BEING AUCTIONED OFF FOR EUROPEAN RELIEF.

BELOW—EDWARD PRINS IS DEMONSTRATING SOME BIRD HOUSES OF OUR SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.

THE SOCIETY IS INDEBTED TO THE PRINS BROTHERS WHO, AT OUR REQUEST, FURNISHED THESE PICTURES AND THE ONE ON PAGE 93.

(CONTINUED FROM REAR PAGE)

followed the bird from post to post until we were absolutely sure of our identification, and then excitedly returned to share the 'find' with others.

The bird remained for a week, and was seen by several observers. One perch seemed to be its favorite resting place, four pellets being picked up there. Taking advantage of this preference, we set up a blind about fifteen feet away, and within an hour we were able to secure motion pictures of this bird as a permanent record of this unusual visitor.

There have been but two previous authenticated records of the burrowing owl for the state of Wisconsin. William Elder, of the Department of Zoology of the University of Wisconsin collected one in Faville Grove, Jefferson County, April 9, 1939. Walter Pelzer, of the Milwaukee Public Museum collected another at Cedar Grove, Sheboygan County, October 8, 1941.

When a stranger from a distance turns up so unexpectedly far from home, an explanation is sought, usually without success. Occasionally, winds of cyclonic velocity will drive some bird far out of its normal range. It is possible that this particular burrowing owl may have been the victim of that kind of circumstances. On the fifteenth of March a severe storm centered over the state of Iowa, reaching into Illinois, and to some extent into Wisconsin. This was followed by a similar disturbance on the 19th. This is offered as a possible explanation of the appearance of this common bird of the prairies in the heart of the city of Milwaukee.

So the 'mill' produces again. These 128 acres along the shore of Lake Michigan, south of downtown Milwaukee, have come to be known among birders as the 'mill,' because it was for many years the site of a large steel mill. This spot, which had already offered such unusual finds as the Hudsonian curlew, mockingbird, red phalarope, marbled godwit, and willett, now has added this rarity to the ever-growing list.—H. L. Orians.

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Another Burrowing Owl in Wisconsin

One of the greatest thrills of bird observing is that one never knows when he sets out what may be caught in the range of his binocular. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred it is the expected which is seen, or which surprises one by its absence. And to the confirmed bird watcher nothing more than that is necessary to send him out again and again.

Such a morning was March 23rd of this year. My son, Gordon, and I had gone down to the lakeshore shortly after sunrise to watch the flocks of early migrants hurrying to their summer homes in the north. It was a morning of the 'big parade.' Meadowlarks were singing; killdeers filled the air with their loud complaints; the soft warble of bluebirds could be heard high overhead; and the hungry kingfisher's rattle was clearly audible in the distance. Mixed flocks of redwings, grackles, and cowbirds straggled by. In the lake most of the species of ducks were to be found, including canvasbacks, old

squaws, baldpates, and the mergansers. We started for home, highly pleased with the discoveries of that hour.

Turning aside to examine the cocoon of a cecropria moth on a nearby shrub, I startled an owl which was resting on a slab of concrete—I might add that the owl also startled me. The bird alighted on a post fifty yards away, and Gordon, turning the glasses on it, said that it was a burrowing owl. We

(CONCLUDED INSIDE COVER)