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Summer 1974

VOLUME 36, NO. 2



The Passenger Pigeon

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Spring Migration of Warblers in the Vicinity of Madison, Wisconsin

By WILLIAM HILSENHOFF

In 1962, to gain insight into the spring migration, I began recording numbers of each species seen or heard. Warblers and vireos especially interested me, and I have summarized 12 years of observations for the 41 species I had the pleasure of seeing. Almost all observations were made in Madison, either in the University of Wisconsin Arboretum or on Lake Mendota's Picnic Point, but occasional observations elsewhere in Dane County and neighboring counties have been included.

Species are listed in Table 1 in the order of their abundance, based on the average number seen and heard in 8 of the 12 years. The two years of highest and lowest abundance were not included because abnormal weather patterns often caused drastic increases or decreases in numbers. The highest year and lowest year columns in Table 1 illustrate how dramatic these fluctuations can be. When weather conditions that are not conducive to migration (Curtis 1969) last for extended periods, species that have already migrated into the area remain longer than usual and are counted in abnormally high numbers, and species that would normally migrate during that period tend to pass through very rapidly when favorable conditions for migration return.

Relative abundance in Table 1 is observed abundance, which is probably what is most important to the average birder. Species that migrate after the trees are in full leaf, those that have weak songs or sing infrequently, and those with very secretive habits are more difficult to find and are probably relatively more common than Table 1 indicates. On the other hand, the relative abundance of early migrants and those with loud and persistent songs may have been overestimated.

Comparison of Table 1 with the notations on abundance in Barger et al. (1960) show only a few wide discrepancies, the most noticeable being their classification of both the Nashville Warbler and the Pine Warbler as "fairly common". My observations showed the Pine Warbler to be quite rare, while the Nashville Warbler was the sixth most abundant species. Although it is extremely difficult to determine where to make the arbitrary divisions between "common", "fairly common", and "uncommon", etc., I have attempted to do this below.

Comparisons of Figure 1 with migration charts in Barger et al. (1960) show remarkable similarities in most instances. Figure 1 was prepared by computing the dates between which 80% or more of each species migrated, and indicating this period with a heavy black line or merely with a solid line in species seen less than 50 times. In species where a heavy black line appears, the combined heavy and thin black lines depict the period when 95% or more of the birds migrated. Dotted lines represent scattered observations. In the more common species even a thin black line represents the presence of more individuals than a

Table 1
Comparison of Singing Male and Intensive Censuses

Species	Scientific Name	Intensive Census			
		Nests Found	Additional Territories ¹	Misc. ²	T. M. B. Box ⁷
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1 ⁷			
Prairie Chicken	<i>Tympanuchus cupido</i>	1 ⁴			
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>			1	
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	1 ⁴			
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	1 ⁶			
Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	1 ⁶			
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	1 ⁵			
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	2 ^{3,4}			
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>			2	
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	1 ⁵	7		
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	3 ^{3,4}			
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>		3		
		12 ^{3,3}	10	8	2 ¹

¹Nest not found.

²Believed to be breeding birds, but nest not found and territory not detected.

³Plus one presumed re-nesting (first nest deserted).

⁴Nest found by walking and bush-beating.

⁵Nest found by watching adults carrying food.

⁶Nest found by author observing repeated presence of birds in same area.

⁷Man-made Kestrel Box.

pairs of Cedar Waxwings and Goldfinches, and I am fairly certain that none of these birds nested on the plot. A more intensive census would have a better chance to sort out chance sightings.

A singing male census also misses birds such as the Prairie Chicken and possibly the Kestrel, which can either stay hidden or move outside the plot during the entire two-hour census. A more intensive census is likely to turn up such birds.

On the other hand, my intensive census cannot be regarded as a perfect record of breeding birds on the plot. I have already found several nests that I might have missed. Some suggestions which might improve the accuracy of future censuses are:

1) Start the intensive census considerably earlier than June 22. It is the easiest, in my opinion, to find nests of ground-nesters by flushing females, and it is much easier to map territories when birds are singing actively — at the beginning of the breeding period.

2) Use more than one person for the census — probably three or four on 20 acres would be sufficient — so that the census period does not

over a period of weeks during which many nestings can be complete. Or, if censusing alone, call in outside help on one or two occasions. Line up 8 or 9 people at six-foot intervals. Have them drag a rope back and forth across the entire plot. Too many of these rope-dragging investigations might disturb the nests.

Is it actually easier to find ground nests by flushing incubating males rather than by watching the adults bringing food to the nest? One afternoon, I spent 5 hours (and a gallon of perspiration) trying to find a Meadowlark nest by watching the adults carrying food into the grass. I had absolutely no success. Several days later, with the help of the group of eager scouts, I found a Meadowlark nest in similar vegetation by flushing the incubating bird. This discovery took a total of about one half hour of walking the plot. On many other occasions, I spent long hours watching Savannah Sparrows carrying food into an area of grass and carrying away fecal sacs, but only once did this watch pay off (the A6 nest). Flushing birds by walking and bush-beating always proved more productive than watching feeding. All of the Clay-colored Sparrow nests as well as the Prairie Chicken, Mourning Dove and two out of the three Meadowlark nests were found by walking and bush-beating. Only the Brown Thrasher and Savannah Sparrow nests were found by watching adults carrying food.

Finally, what is the relative accuracy of the singing male and the intensive breeding bird censuses? I cannot answer this question with assurance, because there was too much room for error in the intensive census that I ran. I think that the intensive census **does** reduce sighting of transients, but more specific comparisons will have to follow between intensive censuses. I simply hope my experiences will prove helpful in the meanwhile.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Bill McKee, Josef and Sheila Schmutz, and Marc Aslam for help in the project. And a special thanks to the Drs. Hamstrom, who made the whole project a reality through their enormous amount of advice and assistance.

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HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE

Mary and Charlie Nelson

A Comparison of Two Breeding Bird Censuses on the Prairie Chicken Preserve Scientific Area

By WILLIAM S. McKEE

Delzell Hall, Rm. 128, UWSP, Stevens Point, Wis. 54

A Contribution of the Research Committee

This study was signed to compare the results of a traditional male census with a more intensive search for actual nesting Guidelines set forth by Van Velzen (1972) and Robbins (1970) in censusing and mapping single males. Methods for finding described below.

Study Area

My study area was the east half of the Prairie Chicken Scientific Area on the Buena Vista Marsh: SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, section R 7E, Portage County, Wisconsin. The Buena Vista Marsh is outwash plain and former glacial lake bed. During the early marsh was drained using ditches with the water flowing west to Wisconsin River. The land was subsequently farmed.

With the exception of an old one-room schoolhouse (since to the ground) and small clusters of jack pine, red pine, white pin cherry in the school yard, the area is slightly undulating land. The dominant grasses include timothy, quack, bluegrass introduced species. Minor depressions support sedges, willows, rushes. Until mid-June the low areas held up to a foot of standing water. As part of Prairie Chicken management four lanes of grass had been mowed the previous year. They ran the entire length of my area going north and south and varied from 20 feet to 270 feet in width. The mowed lanes were avoided almost entirely as nesting sites for all species (Figure 1). The surrounding area consists mostly of grasslands with some low areas holding more water and support willow thickets. There are also several corn fields in the surrounding area.

Methods

I looked for nests and plotted territories from May 16 to June 1. I divided the forty into 49 plots, 183 feet square, using red-tip markers. New data sheets with grid lines corresponding to the staked plots were used daily for each of the individual species. The data were transferred to a master map for each of the species, including the location of singing males, approximate locations of birds, the location of nests found and nest data, as well as the location of birds in the surrounding area. Territories were determined by the location of perches and flight paths of singing males, as well as interspecific interactions.

TABLE 1. Relative abundance of warblers and vireos in the Madison area.

Rank	Species	Ave. No. Per Year*	Lowest Year	Highest Year	12-Year Total
1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	313	140	850	4199
2	Tennessee Warbler	134	67	279	1673
3	American Redstart	122	74	200	1506
4	Palm Warbler	114	42	695	1883
5	Yellow Warbler	114	70	205	1468
6	Nashville Warbler	90	25	156	1077
7	Chestnut-sided Warbler	86	48	158	1097
8	Yellowthroat	84	52	117	1001
9	Blackpoll Warbler	79	27	204	1041
10	Red-eyed Vireo	73	30	195	969
11	Black and White Warbler	56	22	104	703
12	Black-throated Green Warbler ...	53	25	87	650
13	Ovenbird	49	30	118	654
14	Warbling Vireo	47	19	68	550
15	Magnolia Warbler	44	14	86	553
16	Northern Waterthrush	40	23	90	535
17	Blackburnian Warbler	36	21	62	452
18	Bay-breasted Warbler	30	8	75	385
19	Wilson's Warbler	26	6	59	329
20	Golden-winged Warbler	25	15	37	303
21	Northern Parula	16	6	30	194
22	Canada Warbler	15	3	67	217
23	Orange-crowned Warbler	14	4	51	201
24	Mourning Warbler	13	1	60	209
25	Cape May Warbler	11	2	30	137
26	Blue-winged Warbler	9	3	20	114
27	Yellow-throated Vireo	8	1	26	114
28	Solitary Vireo	7	1	16	94
29	Philadelphia Vireo	6	0	14	73
30	Louisiana Waterthrush	5	0	13	63
31	Connecticut Warbler	3	0	16	51
32	Cerulean Warbler	2	0	11	33
33	Pine Warbler	1	0	5	18
34	Black-throated Blue Warbler	0.9	0	3	12
35	Prothonotary Warbler	0.8	0	3	12
36	Hooded Warbler	0.5	0	6	14
37	Bell's Vireo	0.5	0	5	11
38	White-eyed Vireo	0.4	0	2	7
39	Kentucky Warbler	0.3	0	2	5
40	Worm-eating Warbler	0.1	0	2	4
41	Yellow-breasted Chat	0.0	0	9	10

Connecticut Warbler (uncommon)—The last warbler to migrate, it is usually found in the dense low shrubbery of woodlands where it is difficult to see. Fortunately its song is loud and distinctive.

Mourning Warbler (fairly common)—This very late migrant inhabits the dense low shrubbery of woodlands and forest edge. Although it responds quite readily to "squeeking", I suspect that its abundance has been underestimated because of its habits and relative infrequency of its song.

Yellowthroat (common)—An inhabitant of the swamplands, this species sings frequently and responds readily to "squeeking". It is one of our earlier migrants.

FIGURE 1. Migration periods of warblers and vireos in the vicinity of Madison, Wisconsin.

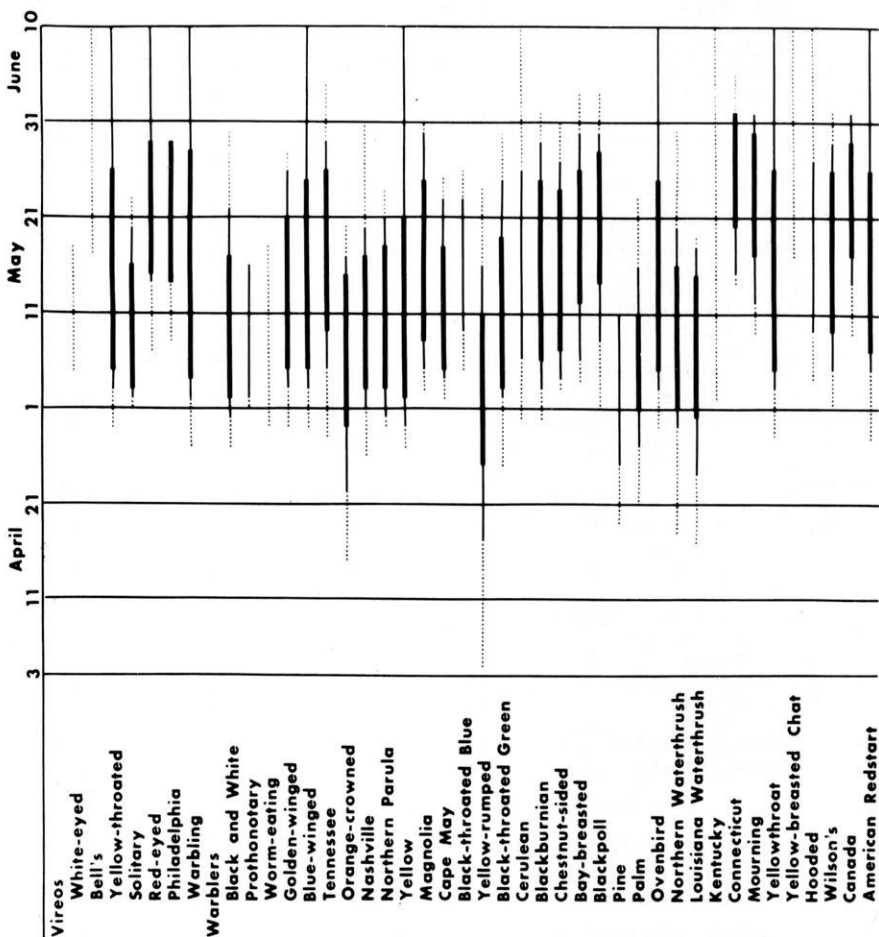


TABLE 2. Beginning dates for the main migration period of warblers and vireos in southern Wisconsin.

Date	Migrating Species
April 25	Yellow-rumped Warbler; Pine Warbler
April 29	Orange-crowned Warbler
April 30	Louisiana Waterthrush
May 1	Palm Warbler; Northern Waterthrush
May 2	Black and White Warbler; Prothonotary Warbler; Yellow Warbler
May 3	Solitary Vireo; Nashville Warbler; Northern Parula; Black-throated Green Warbler
May 4	Warbling Vireo
May 5	Yellow-throated Vireo; Golden-winged Warbler; Blue-winged Warbler; Cape May Warbler; Ovenbird; Yellowthroat
May 6	Cerulean Warbler; Blackburnian Warbler
May 7	Chestnut-sided Warbler; American Redstart
May 8	Magnolia Warbler
May 9	Tennessee Warbler; Black-throated Blue Warbler; Hooded Warbler; Wilson's Warbler
May 12	Bay-breasted Warbler
May 14	Philadelphia Vireo; Blackpoll Warbler
May 15	Red-eyed Vireo
May 17	Mourning Warbler; Canada Warbler
May 19	Bell's Vireo
May 20	Connecticut Warbler

Yellow-breasted Chat (rare)—Although large and distinctive, it is secretive and hard to find in its open, brushy habitat. Its presence is usually betrayed by its song. Most observations were in 1962 when a pair nested in the University of Wisconsin Arboretum.

Hooded Warbler (rare)—The song is loud and distinctive, making it easy to find in its woodland habitat when it is present.

Wilson's Warbler (common)—A fairly late migrant that is found in shrubs along the edge of woods or in more open areas, it sings rather frequently and readily responds to "squeeking".

Canada Warbler (fairly common)—Along with the Mourning and Connecticut Warblers, this is one of the last species to migrate. It sings loudly and responds to "squeeking", making its relatively easy to find among the dense woodland shrubbery.

American Redstart (very common)—This species can be found almost everywhere during migration, when it readily sings from shrubs and the lower tree canopy. Its song has several variations, one of which can be confused with that of the Bay-breasted Warbler. A fairly late migrant, it is one of our most common species.

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A COMPARISON

Two Breeding Bird Censuses on the Quarry Scientific Area, Wisconsin

By CHARLES MUNN

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A Contribution of the Research Committee

Singing male censuses of breeding birds have become common in recent years. This paper compares a traditional singing male census with a more intensive breeding bird census. The intensive census involved finding nests and determining territorial boundaries of singing males.

I hoped that in comparing the results of the two methods, I would be able to determine their relative accuracy.

Intensive censuses have been uncommon, however, and the purpose of this census is not only for comparison with the singing male census, but also to furnish some suggestions for future intensive censuses.

The study plot (fig. 1) is the south twenty acres of the Quarry Scientific Area in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ sec 2, T21N R7E, Portage County, Wisconsin. The surface of the area is mildly undulating grassland with occasional hazel thickets and scattered savannah-like stands of oak or smaller shrubs. There are only two unusual topographical features: an oak-covered knoll in the southeast portion and a bit of marsh in the southwest portion. The knoll rises about ten to twelve feet above the grassland and is rocky and extremely dry, while the marshy area dips about four feet below the prairie and has numerous clumps of small cottonwoods.

The predominant vegetation on the plot can be grouped as follows:

Trees and large shrubs

- Jack oak (*Quercus ellipsoidalis*)
- Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*)

Medium to small bushes

- Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)
- Willow (*Salix* spp.)
- Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

Ground cover

- Raspberry (*Rubus* sp.)
- Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*)
- Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.)

Grasses

- Quackgrass (*Agropyron repens*)
- Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)
- Poverty oatgrass (*Danthonia spicata*)
- Little bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*)
- Timothy (*Phlem pratense*)
- Turkeyfoot (*Andropogon Girardi*)

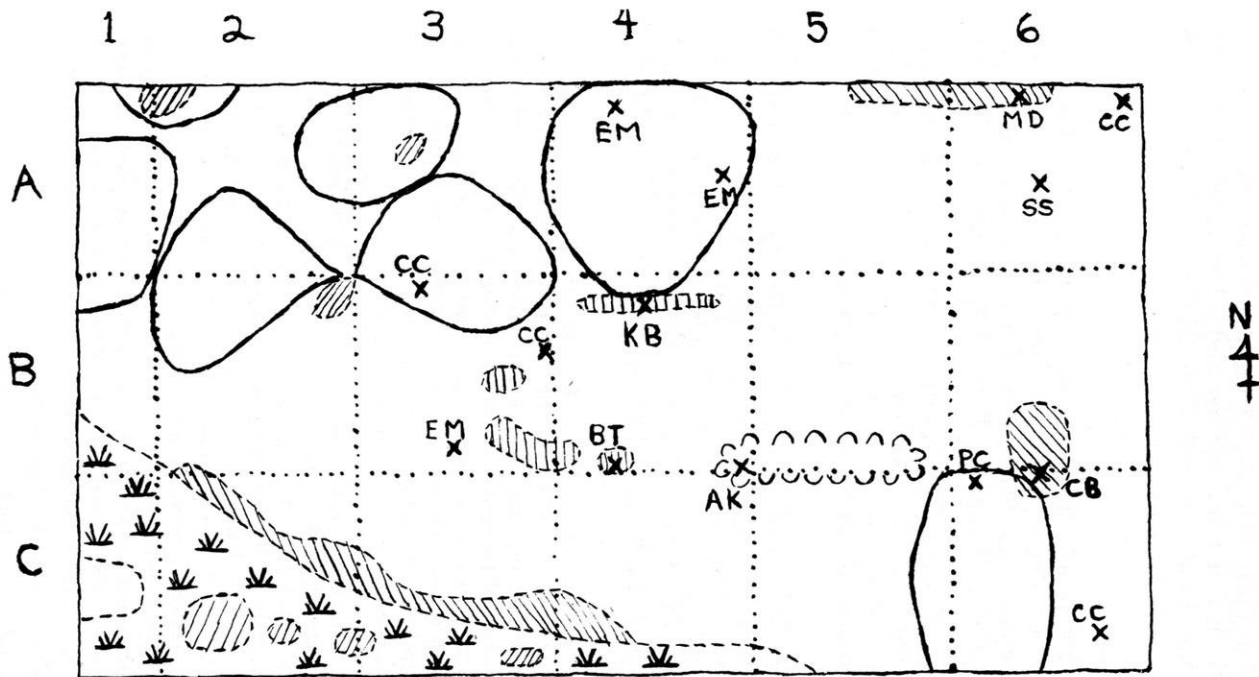


FIGURE 1 — QUARRY STUDY AREA LEGEND (1/8 x 1/4 mile: 20 acres)

.....	Grid lines		Hazel thicket	CC	Clay-colored Sparrow
	Territorial boundaries of Savannah Sparrows		Oak savannah	EM	Eastern Meadowlark
	Type boundaries		Small cottonwoods	KB	Eastern Kingbird
	Oak knoll	X	Nest	MD	Mourning Dove
	Marsh	AK	American Dostrel	PC	Prairie Chicken
		BT	Brown Thrasher	SS	Savannah Sparrow
		CB	Catbird		

I staked the plot, marking it off into squares approximately 220 feet on a side in order to make mapping of the plot easier. My surveying was faulty, however, in that I only got five and a half squares instead of six (see Figure 1), but the subdivisions of the plot served their intended purpose.

Singing Male Census

On June 21, 1973, from 5:30 a.m. to about 7:30 a.m., I censused the singing males (and non-singing males, females, and birds flying over) according to the method suggested by Samuel Robbins so as to be comparable with his census of the nearby Buena Vista Prairie and Meadow Scientific Area. The two-hour June 21 census covered not only my 20 acres, but also an additional 20 acres to the north. Data from the north 20 acres are not used here. I walked near the four edges of my plot and then across the middle, thus dividing the center into halves. On a prepared map, I recorded all birds seen and heard, including those which flew over the plot.

The results of this census were 13 Savannah Sparrows, six Song Sparrows, two Eastern Meadowlarks, four Red-winged Blackbirds (two males, two females), a pair of Green-winged Teal, a pair of Eastern Kingbirds, one Mourning Dove, a pair of Upland Plovers, one Brown Thrasher, one American Kestrel, and one Wilson's Snipe. The teal, plovers, and snipe were all flying over rather than actually on the plot.

Intensive Census

From June 22 to July 12, 1973, I made my intensive census of breeding birds. This involved finding all possible nests and then trying to work out the territories of the pairs. I found two nest-finding techniques most useful: 1) walking the area with a stick and beating the grass and bushes, and 2) sitting quietly either in a blind, tree, or on top of my car and watching adult birds bringing food to young. I also had the help of eight Boy Scouts for about an hour one morning.

Territory mapping was a different story. Prolonged observation of the movements of singing males was usually necessary to get an idea of the extent of their territories. I also discovered that territorial boundaries could be determined by choosing one singing male and flushing him over and over until he had flown around the boundaries of his area. Sometimes two males of the same species fought at a perch. These fights helped to clarify territorial boundaries for me . . . and for them too. The Savannah Sparrows usually perched on dead mullein (*Verbascum thapsos*) stalks, and it was easy to force them to fly from plant to plant and outline their territory. Some of the other species, however, had nebulous territories, probably because there were not enough males to cause any competition in territory-holding.

The intensive census took about 85-100 hours of field work over a three-week period; my 26 visits to the plot were evenly divided between early morning and midday, because the singing peak was in the early morning, whereas I could map sparrow territories at any time of day.

Nests: I found 14 nests in my 20-acre plot (Figure 1), including a Greater Prairie Chicken nest with ten eggs.; The nests found and how they were found are listed in Table 1 along with other data from the singing male and intensive censuses.

I found a Warbling Vireo nest at a height of only about four and a half feet, but to my great frustration, it was just outside the study area.

Territories: The most numerous bird on the plot was the Savannah Sparrow; I estimated that there were eight territory-holding males and was able to work out the territories of seven. The exception was a male who continuously fed young at the nest in the square labelled A6 in Figure 1. By the time the young had fledged, the male had apparently stopped defending any territory. I never heard this bird sing. The other male Savannah Sparrows appeared to hold about a half acre to an acre apiece.

Male Clay-colored Sparrows were not so easy to see, because they wandered great distances (for instance, from the nest in northwestern B3 to the knoll and to the marsh) not only to get food for the young, but also to sing from conspicuous perches in oaks. As far as I can tell, the male at the C6 nest held all of the C6 square as well as some of southern B5 and B6. He also flew out of the plot to the southeast to sing and get food for his young. The male at the nest in A6 never ventured south into the middle of A6, but simply stuck close to his favorite singing posts in the oaks and oak bushes in the northern part of A6 and A5. I suspect that the two Clay-colored Sparrow nests in B3 belong to the same pair of sparrows, since the eastern nest was abandoned with only two eggs a day or two after it was discovered, and the other nest turned up about 13 days later with three newly-hatched young. Also, the territory of the only known male Clay-colored Sparrow in that part of the area included both nests. The data on these four nests suggests that Clay-colored Sparrows have larger territories than Savannah Sparrows.

There were three male Song Sparrows on the plot, but despite repeated searches in the small cottonwoods and shrubbery in the area of their singing posts, I could not find a nest. One of the males defended territory which included the marsh area in C2 and C3, while the other two took up singing perches just east and west of the knoll, respectively.

The single pair of Catbirds defended not only the bushes in northern C6 and southern B6, but also ventured north to the bushes and trees in northern A5 and A6 from time to time. Since the only other Catbirds were an eighth of a mile north of the plot, the Catbirds nesting in C6 might have a larger territory than a pair constantly challenged by other Catbirds.

The Brown Thrashers flew long distances from their nest even before their eggs hatched, as far as 3/16th of a mile north and perhaps 1/16th of a mile south, in both cases going wholly outside the study area. This leads me to believe that they held an enormous territory too big to map on my 20-acre plot.

In getting food for their ravenous nestlings in B4, the Kingbirds ranged throughout most of the plot, frequently traveling to C2, 3, 4, 5, B2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and A3, 4, 5. As with the Catbirds, the Kingbirds had no pressure from others of their species, so their territory might have been larger than usual.

I counted two pairs of Eastern Meadowlarks on the plot. They appeared to have divided the plot diagonally from northwest A4 to southeast C4. I feel that the eastern A4 Meadowlark nest is a re-nest, since the neighboring nest was abandoned soon after I found it, and both nests are in the same male's territory.

I could not determine the territory of the Mourning Doves nesting in A6; indeed, I only heard the male sing from one perch during the entire census: the jack oak just west of the nest.

The Kestrels obviously had a territory much more extensive than the 20-acre plot. They were repeatedly outside of the plot, but they did have a few favorite perches on the knoll and on the oaks just north of the marsh.

The Prairie Chicken simply incubated, and I have no way of determining what her territory was — if, indeed, she could be said to have one. On July 17, I found that 9 eggs had hatched, probably within 24 hours; the tenth had piped, but died before fully hatching.

I could have missed as many as seven Savannah Sparrow nests, three Song Sparrow nests, two Red-winged Blackbird nests, and maybe a Virginia Rail nest. Some nestings were completed before I could cover the area.

Discussion

It is evident from Table 1 that the intensive census was more accurate in determining the birds present on the plot than the singing male census. I recorded 25 pairs of breeding birds during the intensive census versus 17 pairs in the singing male census. Also, no Clay-colored Sparrows, Catbirds, Prairie Chickens, or Virginia Rails were recorded during the singing male census. The fact that this census was performed only once might help explain the large discrepancy. Several repeated censuses would probably have narrowed the gap.

With the data from the two censuses, I think that I can compare the two techniques in a few respects. During a singing male census, some unusual birds might appear by chance. For example, during the two-hour singing male census on June 21, I saw Common Grackles, a pair of Green-winged Teals, a pair of Upland Plovers, and a Wilson's Snipe in the area; I feel that these birds are extraneous and not really part of the breeding population of the plot. During my extensive census, I saw a pair of Indigo Buntings, many pairs of Grackles, several singing male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, a singing male Scarlet Tanager, a singing male Baltimore Oriole, numerous Bluejays, Yellow-shafted Flickers, a Downy Woodpecker, a Hairy Woodpecker, a Wilson's Phalarope, and numerous

Table 1
Comparison of Singing Male and Intensive Censuses

Species	Scientific Name	Intensive Census				Singing Male Census
		Nests Found	Additional Territories ¹	Misc. ²	Total Pairs	Projected Number of Pairs
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1 ⁷			1	1
Prairie Chicken	<i>Tympanuchus cupido</i>	1 ⁴			1	
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>			1	1	
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	1 ⁴			1	1
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	1 ⁶			1	1
Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	1 ⁶			1	
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	1 ⁵			1	1
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	2 ^{3,4}			2	2
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>			2	2	2
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	1 ⁵	7		8	6
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	3 ^{3,4}			3	
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>		3		3	3
		12 ^{3,3}	10	8	25	17

¹Nest not found.

²Believed to be breeding birds, but nest not found and territory not determined.

³Plus one presumed re-nesting (first nest deserted).

⁴Nest found by walking and bush-beating.

⁵Nest found by watching adults carrying food.

⁶Nest found by author observing repeated presence of birds in same area.

⁷Man-made Kestrel Box.

pairs of Cedar Waxwings and Goldfinches, and I am fairly certain that none of these birds nested on the plot. A more intensive census gives a better chance to sort out chance sightings.

A singing male census also misses birds such as the hen Prairie Chicken and possibly the Kestrel, which can either stay hidden or remain outside the plot during the entire two-hour census. A more intensive census is likely to turn up such birds.

On the other hand, my intensive census cannot be regarded as a perfect record of breeding birds on the plot. I have already mentioned nests that I might have missed. Some suggestions which might increase the accuracy of future censuses are:

1) Start the intensive census considerably earlier than June 22, for it is easiest, in my opinion, to find nests of ground-nesters by flushing incubating females, and it is much easier to map territories when the males are singing actively — at the beginning of the breeding period.

2) Use more than one person for the census — probably three or four on 20 acres would be sufficient — so that the census period doesn't drag

over a period of weeks during which many nestings can be completed. Or, if censusing alone, call in outside help on one or two occasions. Line up 8 or 9 people at six-foot intervals. Have them drag a rope back and forth across the entire plot. Too many of these rope-dragging investigations might disturb the nests.

Is it actually easier to find ground nests by flushing incubating females rather than by watching the adults bringing food to the nest? One afternoon, I spent 5 hours (and a gallon of perspiration) trying to find a Meadowlark nest by watching the adults carrying food into the grass. I had absolutely no success. Several days later, with the help of the group of eager scouts, I found a Meadowlark nest in similar vegetation by flushing the incubating bird. This discovery took a total of about one half hour of walking the plot. On many other occasions, I spent long hours watching Savannah Sparrows carrying food into an area of grass and carrying away fecal sacs, but only once did this watching pay off (the A6 nest). Flushing birds by walking and bush-beating always proved more productive than watching feeding. All of the Clay-colored Sparrow nests as well as the Prairie Chicken, Mourning Dove, and two out of the three Meadowlark nests were found by walking and bush-beating. Only the Brown Thrasher and Savannah Sparrow nests were found by watching adults carrying food.

Finally, what is the relative accuracy of the singing male and the intensive breeding bird censuses? I cannot answer this question with any assurance, because there was too much room for error in the intensive census that I ran. I think that the intensive census **does** reduce sightings of transients, but more specific comparisons will have to follow better intensive censuses. I simply hope my experiences will prove helpful in the meanwhile.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Bill McKee, Josef and Sheila Schmutz, and Marc Ashby for help in the project. And a special thanks to the Drs. Hamerstrom, who made the whole project a reality through their enormous amount of advice and assistance.

Help Save

HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE

Mary and Charlie Nelson

A Comparison of Two Breeding Bird Censuses on the Prairie Chicken Preserve Scientific Area

By WILLIAM S. McKEE

Delzell Hall, Rm. 128, UWSP, Stevens Point, Wis. 54481

A Contribution of the Research Committee

This study was signed to compare the results of a traditional singing male census with a more intensive search for actual nesting activity. Guidelines set forth by Van Velzen (1972) and Robbins (1970) were used in censusing and mapping single males. Methods for finding nests are described below.

Study Area

My study area was the east half of the Prairie Chicken Preserve Scientific Area on the Buena Vista Marsh: SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, section 26, T 22N, R 7E, Portage County, Wisconsin. The Buena Vista Marsh is on a large outwash plain and former glacial lake bed. During the early 1900's the marsh was drained using ditches with the water flowing west towards the Wisconsin River. The land was subsequently farmed.

With the exception of an old one-room schoolhouse (since burned to the ground) and small clusters of jack pine, red pine, white pine and pin cherry in the school yard, the area is slightly undulating open grassland. The dominant grasses include timothy, quack, bluegrass and other introduced species. Minor depressions support sedges, willows and bull-rushes. Until mid-June the low areas held up to a foot of standing water. As part of Prairie Chicken management four lanes of grass had been cut the previous year. They ran the entire length of my area going north and south and varied from 20 feet to 270 feet in width. The wet depressions and mowed lanes were avoided almost entirely as nesting sites by all species (Figure 1). The surrounding area consists mostly of more open grasslands with some low areas holding more water and supporting denser willow thickets. There are also several corn fields in the same section.

Methods

I looked for nests and plotted territories from May 16 to July 27. I divided the forty into 49 plots, 183 feet square, using red-tipped stakes as markers. New data sheets with grid lines corresponding to the 49 staked plots were used daily for each of the individual species. Each day the data were transferred to a master map for each of the territorial species, including the location of singing males, approximate flight path of birds, the location of nests found and nest data, as well as the activity of birds in the surrounding area. Territories were determined by plotting perches and flight paths of singing males, as well as interspecific and

intraspecific competition. These methods are traditional in breeding bird censuses.

Finding ground nests the size of a teacup, however, in a 40 acre field is a challenge. I tried four methods, one proved successful: simply beating the grass with a long stick as I walked through the field. I tried dragging a long rope (75 feet) through the field and looking for nests where birds flushed. Only one nest was found using this method. I tried using a hunting dog, but she failed to find even one nest as did eight cooperative Plainfield Boy Scouts marching in line through the study area. On June 12 Samuel Robbins ran an intensive singing male census as a check against my novice ear. His findings are compared with the actual nests I found and my traditional census.

Results

Table I compares the three sets of data: Robbins' one-day singing male census, my two-month census of territories, and nests actually found.

The nesting activity of the Barn Swallows, Starlings and Robins all occurred in or on either the schoolhouse itself or in the one-acre school yard. The three Barn Swallows nests contained a total of 17 eggs, of which 13 young were successfully fledged. The three Robin nests represent, I believe, the efforts of one pair. The first two nests built on the schoolhouse were abandoned due to my presence. The third nest was successful. A total of 12 Robin eggs were laid, of which only two young were successfully fledged. Two of the starling nests were deserted due to my activity, the third was successful. Of approximately eleven starling eggs two young were successfully fledged. Territories for these three species were not determined.

The Territories and nests of the five sparrow species, Meadowlark and Bobolink were all in the remaining 39 acres of open grassland. I did not define the territorial boundaries of the one or two pairs of Meadowlarks frequenting the study area; however I found one nest, destroyed by a predator—probably fox—which had killed one of the adults. There were two separate fox dens with young within one mile of the study area. There were three general areas of Bobolink nesting activity. One nest was found in which four, five-day old young had been killed by a predator.

I found no nests in either of the two Clay Colored Sparrow territories. One of these territories definitely contained no nest—only a singing male; I never saw a female, an intensive foot-by-foot search yielded no nest, and no feeding activity was observed. Four Grasshopper Sparrow territories were plotted and one nest was found. The nest, containing two eggs, was deserted several days after discovery. I saw food carried in one of the other territories. In two Song Sparrow territories I found one nest with two Cowbird eggs and three Song Sparrow eggs. One Cowbird and two Song Sparrows were successfully fledged. In the other territory I saw two young being fed. Four territories were determined for the elusive Henslow Sparrow, but I could find no nesting activity of any kind.

TABLE I
A Comparison of Two Censusing Methods

Species	One Day Census* Individuals	Two Month Census Territories & Pairs	Nests Found	Birds/ 100 Acres
Barn Swallow	1	3 pair	3	15
Bobolink	6	3 terr.	1	15
Clay Colored Sparrow	1	2 terr.	10
Grasshopper Sparrow	2	4 terr.	1	20
Henslow Sparrow	2	4 terr.	20
Robin	2	1 pair	3	5
Savannah Sparrow	46	23.5 terr.	14	122
Song Sparrow	2 terr.	1	10
Starling	1	2 pair	3	10
Western Meadowlark	4	1 pair	1	5

*The one day census also included at least one count of the following species: Common Snipe, Kingbird, Morning Dove, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Common Grackle, and American Goldfinch. These species were indeed common to the area, but did not nest on the study area (with the exception of the Cowbirds).

The 23.5 Savannah Sparrow territories consisted of 18 complete territories and eleven partial territories which extended north or west of the study area. The roads on the eastern and southern edges of the study area formed natural territorial boundaries (Figure 2). Nests were found in 13 of the 18 complete territories and feeding occurred in one of the partial territories. Of the 13 nests 5 were unsuccessful: two nests were victims of predators, two were deserted, I believe due to Cowbird activity, and one nest was probably deserted due to my visitors. A total of 35 eggs were laid in the 8 successful nests, with at least 26 young successfully fledged. Overall 26 young were fledged from 45 eggs. The average size of the Savannah Sparrow territories was 1.3 acres with a range from 0.9 acre to 1.9 acres.

Cowbirds were extremely active, but not very successful. Of 16 sparrow (all species) nests found 7 were parasitized by Cowbirds. I found 8 Cowbird eggs from which only one young fledged (from a Song Sparrow nest). At least twice Savannah Sparrows apparently removed Cowbird eggs during the course of egg laying.

Also of note is what I believe to be the first record of Wilson's Phalarope nesting in Portage County. Approximately 200 yards to the east of the study area, four pairs of Wilson's Phalarope stayed through the nesting season. No nests were found, but one young Phalarope was temporarily captured and photographed (Figure 3).

FIG. I
MOWED LANES AND WET AREAS

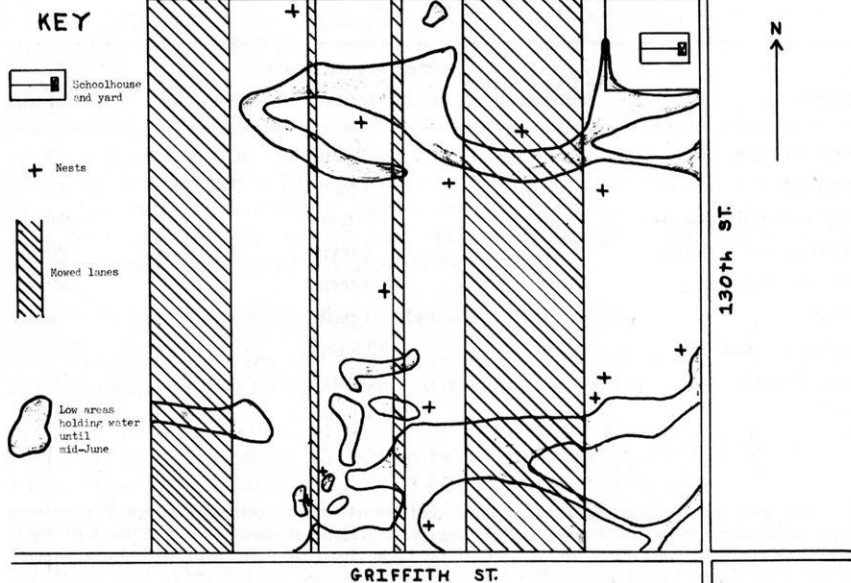
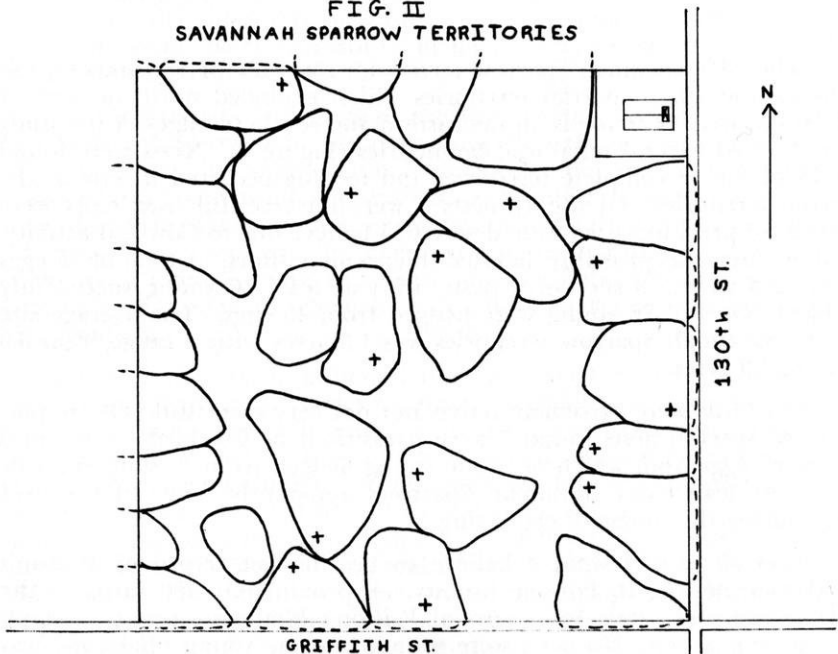


FIG. II
SAVANNAH SPARROW TERRITORIES



Discussion

As a traditional bird census this study was fairly successful. However, as a study comparing the results of a traditional census with the data obtained from an intensive search for nests, it was only moderately successful. The concept though remains valid and with some modifications in method, future studies may prove useful in determining a correction factor, or "nesting factor" to be used in conjunction with traditional censusing data.

The original intent was to determine how many singing males or established territories lacked the expected nesting activity. In only a few instances can I state with a reliable degree of certainty that there was no nesting where a singing male and territory was present.

The task of determining that singing males were **not** nesting was particularly difficult for several reasons. The first problem was the difficulty in observing nesting activity. Nest building, nest location, and even feeding was, with the sparrow species involved, quite secretive. Even after considerable searching and watching I found it difficult to be certain that I had not missed a nest or its related activity. I also believe that more accurate and valuable data could have been obtained if I had confined my efforts to one or two species. Herein lies my major recommendation for future studies. I believe that similar studies centering on a particular species, located on an area where that species is sufficiently abundant may provide useful information. Done on a large enough scale these data may eventually allow census takers to determine from singing male censuses the proportion of a population that is actually nesting, and could conceivably even prove useful in predicting future populations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Joe and Sheila Schmutz for their unfailing hospitality, Charlie Munn and Mark Ashby for their companionship, Drs. Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom for their guidance and considerable patience, and a special thanks to Sam Robbins who during an already hectic week of censusing took time out to help a fledgling bird student.

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FIELD NOTES

by NANCY and HAL ROBERTS

The Summer Season

June 1-July 31, 1973

Spring rains and a generally high water table made for good breeding habitat for water birds. Other weather conditions were quite stable; alternating hot and dry periods with cool and humid periods and few major storms in the state. Conditions would seem to have been favorable for successful nesting for many species.

The new report form with the possibility of commenting on relative abundance brought some interesting results. Of the 53 reports received, 31 took the opportunity to comment on the abundance or scarcity of one or more species. The species reported scarce or below normal numbers by two or more observers included Great Blue Heron, Marsh Hawk, Upland Plover, both Cuckoos, Nighthawk, Hummingbird, Kingfisher, Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Purple Martin, Bluebird, Warbling Vireo, Ovenbird, Bobolink, Dickcissel and Vesper Sparrow. The species reported by two or more observers as having higher than average numbers included American Kestrel, Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Jay, House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Grackle and Indigo Bunting. The birds noted to be scarce by the most observers were the Bluebird and Purple Martin. The abundance of Indigo Buntings was noted by the most observers with only slightly fewer reporting larger numbers of Robins.

The season produced a number of rarities such as nesting Avocets and possible sightings of the Gray-headed Chickadee and the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. A few new record dates for arrival or departure were produced; however, there were fewer record-breakers than in the 1972 season. Changing the end of the summer season from August 15 to July 31 resulted in fewer observations of returning migrants; most noticeably of shorebirds.

Following are the highlights of the summer season:

Common Loon: The nest and juveniles discovered in Oconto county are south of their usual range (Woodcock). Two were present in Juneau county near Mather on July 22 (Leshner). Usual numbers noted in northern counties.

Red-necked Grebe: One was located at Crex Meadows, Burnett county, on June 21 to 29 (Gamache); two near Roberts, St. Croix county, on June 24 (Robbins); two on June 8 at Rush Lake, Fond du Lac county (Tessen) and in Winnebago county (Parfitt).

- Double-crested Cormorant:** Nestings were reported in two areas only; at least 40 on July 15 in Green Bay with lesser numbers before and after mid-July (Tessen); up to 27 nests (Chipman) and 75 birds on June 3 (Donald) reported at Grand River Marsh, Green Lake county. Other observers in the latter area were Tessen, Greenman, Parfitt and Shepard. Leshner reported that there were none in La Crosse.
- Little Blue Heron:** One adult was located in Oconto Marsh on July 29 (Lintereur).
- Great (Common) Egret:** One was found in Taylor county on July 3 (Evrard); one on June 13 near Suamico, Brown county (Barlament, fide Cleary) one on June 4 in Trempealeau county (Lender); two at Grand River Marsh, Green Lake county, on June 8 (Tessen); twenty on June 12, three on July 21 in La Crosse county (Leshner); Vernon county (Weber, Morse). Jim March reports that the breeding population at Horicon Marsh was average but the birds were more widespread than usual because high water in the marsh forced them into more distant feeding areas. Also noted in Ozaukee county (Bintz).
- Cattle Egret:** Found in Oconto county on July 29 and 30 (Lintereur); 16 were observed in Winnebago county on July 23 (Parfitt) and 6 in Grand River Marsh, Green Lake county, on June 3 (Donald) where one was observed carrying food to a thicket on the southeast edge of the marsh on June 8 (Tessen).
- Yellow-crowned Night Heron:** One noted June 7 at Abrams, Oconto county, is remarkably far north. Birds were found at the usual location in La Crosse county with two on June 24 (Tessen) and on July 10, 21 and 29 (Leshner). In Vernon county (Leshner) and one or two noted in Grand River Marsh (Tessen, Donald).
- Least Bittern:** Farthest from the expected south and east locations were birds in Iron county on June 8, Vilas county on June 9 and Jackson county on June 11 (Robbins).
- Mute Swan:** One was found June 16 at the west end of Lake Butte des Morts, Winnebago county (Parfitt). Another flying over her house on June 1 was presumed to be a Mute Swan (Erickson).
- Canada Goose:** Largest numbers for an area were the 290 at Green Bay on July 29 (Cleary). Nine adults were counted at La Crosse Lock & Dam #7 on July 24 (Leshner).
- Gadwall:** Jim March, DNR, reports unusually large numbers of breeding pairs statewide. Nesting appears to have been successful with one female having 18 young in mid-July at Green Bay (Tessen).
- Pintail:** Again, unusually large numbers of breeding pairs throughout the state were reported by Jim March. Found in Chippewa county on June 2 (Robbins); Outagamie county (Robbins, Tessen); Winnebago county (Tessen); Brown county (Wierzbicki); Columbia county on June 8 (Tessen) and July 1 (Robbins).
- American Green-winged Teal:** Many reports throughout the state although Jim March's report indicates that the breeding population was below average. Birds were found June 21 to 29 in Crex Meadows, Burnett county (Gamache); June 2 and 23 and probably thereafter in Chippewa county (Robbins); thirteen in Taylor county on July 11, including broods (Evrard); Barron county (Goff); Marinette county (Lintereur, Lindberg); Oconto county (Woodcock); Brown county on July 25 (Wierzbicki); Door county (Erickson); and July 18 to 25 in Whitnall Park, Milwaukee (Strehlow).
- American Widgeon:** Two were present in Taylor county on July 2 (Evrard) and in Oconto county on June 19, July 8 (Woodcock) and July 30 with brood (Lintereur). Nested in Outagamie county (Tessen); was seen in Green Bay on July 15 only (Tessen). Present in Dane county through the season (Ashman).
- Northern Shoveler:** Breeding population appeared to be high with nesting evidence in Chippewa, Barron, Brown, Door, Oconto, Marinette, Outagamie, Winnebago (where a female with 18 young was seen on July 4 by Tessen) Columbia, Dane, Ozaukee, Waukesha counties.
- Redhead:** Possible late spring transients were those on June 8 at Rush Lake, Fond du Lac county, and 10 in Columbia county the same date (Tessen); remained to June 9 in Ozaukee county (Bintz) and until June 11 in Racine (Erickson). July observations were made in Oconto Marsh (Lintereur) and at Green Bay (Tessen).

- Ring-necked Duck:** The only evidence of breeding was a brood of seven in Taylor county on July 23 (Evrard). Others located were three in Chippewa county on June 2, one near Roberts on June 24 (Robbins); one at Rush Lake on June 8 (Tessen); an adult near Mather, Juneau county, on June 18 (Leshner) and one on July 29 in Door county which lingered through the end of the period (Erickson).
- Canvasback:** The only report was of birds present until June 2 in Ozaukee county (Bintz).
- Scaup:** Greater Scaup lingered in Ozaukee county until June 2 (Bintz). Lesser Scaup were found in early June in Chippewa (Robbins), Fond du Lac and Columbia (Tessen), Winnebago (Parfitt) and Milwaukee (Basten) counties. July observations included Green Bay (Tessen) and Winnebago (Schultz) counties.
- Common Goldeneye:** Nesting at Baileys Harbor on June 16 and observed at Plum Island on July 3, both locations in Door county (Erickson).
- Hooded Merganser:** Birds were again nesting in La Crosse county where 5 adults and one young were located on July 21 (Leshner) and one was seen on June 24 (Tessen). Other observations were June 27 in Douglas county (Robbins), a brood of four in Taylor county on July 2 (Evrard) and Barron county (Goff).
- Common Merganser:** Noted only in Vilas county (Bradford and Forest county where one was noted in June 27 (Hilsenhoff).
- Red-breasted Merganser:** A high of 17 on June 27 on Washington Island, Door county, where the species was present throughout the period (Erickson).
- Turkey Vulture:** Farthest north were the ones in Taylor county on June 26 (Evrard) and Marinette county (Lindberg).
- Goshawk:** One was found on June 27 in Forest county (Hilsenhoff). One was flying over Powell Marsh in Vilas county on June 8 (Robbins); on July 7, one was briefly but carefully noted west of Cornell, Chippewa county (Kemper and Robbins). An immature was present in Wood county on July 11 (Follen) and an adult was observed in Juneau county near Mather on July 22 (Leshner).
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Noted in Barron (Goff) and Wood (Follen) counties. More unusual was the observation on June 30 in Rock county (Brakefield).
- Cooper's Hawk:** Found in the following counties; Vilas (Bradford), Taylor (Evrard, Fadness), Marinette (Lindberg), Jackson — two locations (Robbins), Wood (Follen), Juneau (Leshner) and Milwaukee (Donald).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** A pair nesting in Portage county (Baumgartner) was the farthest south report.
- Bald Eagle:** Observations were made in Douglas, (Robbins), Vilas (Bradford), Sawyer (Greenman), Price (Hardy), Barron (Goff), Taylor (Evrard, Fadness) Oconto where two immatures were in the nest near Lakewood (Woodcock), Wood (Follen) counties.
- Osprey:** Reported in Douglas, Vilas, Sawyer, Marinette, Taylor, Wood, Outagamie, Green Lake and Ozaukee counties.
- Peregrine Falcon:** An adult was perched in a dead tree in the eastern part of Grand River Marsh on June 8 (Tessen).
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** One was near Exeland, Sawyer county, on June 21 (Robbins); reported scarce in Price county (Hardy); a brood of 9 in Taylor county on July 26 (Evrard).
- Sandhill Crane:** Many reports from usual areas.
- King Rail:** One in Horicon Marsh on June 3 (Donald) and one July 18 in Green Bay (Tessen).
- Yellow Rail:** One was heard in Powell Marsh, Vilas county, on June 8 (Robbins).
- Semipalmated Plover:** An early fall migrant was in Green Bay on July 15 (Tessen).
- Black-bellied Plover:** Approximately 300 were still in Racine on June 1 (Donald). Earliest fall return was on July 7 in Mead Wildlife Area, Marathon county (Hoffman), two days earlier than the previous record.
- Ruddy Turnstone:** Six at Green Bay on June 9, four there on July 31 (Tessen); one at Racine on July 1 (Erickson) and in Brown county on July 25 (Wierzbicki).

- Solitary Sandpiper:** First fall arrival was July 10 in Ozaukee county (Bintz).
- Willet:** One way observed in Milwaukee, June 5, (Basten).
- Greater Yellowlegs:** Earliest fall birds arrived in Ozaukee county on July 7 (Bintz).
- Red Knot:** One at Green Bay between the electric plant and incinerator on June 9 (Tessen).
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** Earliest fall date was July 18 in Green Bay (Tessen), in Rock county (Brakefield) and in Racine (Erickson).
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** A spring migrant in Racine on June 1 (Donald) and a fall bird in Green Bay on July 15 (Tessen) were the only reports.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** A late spring bird in Green Bay on June 9 (Tessen); one in Ozaukee county on July 1 (Bintz). This like in 1972 may represent a bird that never went north.
- Least Sandpiper:** Early fall returnees were the two in Chippewa county on July 5 (Robbins).
- Dunlin:** Lingered in Ozaukee (Bintz) and Green Bay (Tessen) until June 9. Fifty fall birds had arrived in Brown county on July 27 (Cleary).
- Dowitcher:** First fall arrivals were two Short-bills in Outagamie county on July 14 (Tessen).
- Stilt Sandpiper:** Earliest fall bird was one on July 21 in Green Bay (Tessen).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 45 spring transients in Green Bay and 20 in Outagamie county on June 9 (Tessen). Early fall birds arrived in Ozaukee county on July 10 (Bintz).
- Western Sandpiper:** The only observation was of two in Outagamie county on July 22 (Tessen).
- Ruff:** One was seen in Green Bay on July 21 and 27 (Tessen). See **By the Wayside**.
- Sanderling:** Last spring migrant was in Racine on June 1 (Donald); on July 15 the first fall migrants arrived in Green Bay (Tessen).
- Avocet:** A pair hatched out three chicks in the Town of Trenton, Dodge county (March). Hopefully more details will be published on this.
- Wilson's Phalarope:** Found in Brown county on July 9 (Wierzbicki). Nested east of Shioc-ton, Outagamie county; several at Kaukauna in mid and late July; eight in Green Bay on June 9 and 15 there on July 21 (all Tessen).
- Northern Phalarope:** One on June 15 in Ozaukee county (Bintz).
- Ring-billed Gull:** Found in Vilas county (Bradford); seven in Taylor county on July 5 (Evrard); two on June 12 and one on July 21 in La Crosse county (Leshner) in addition to the expected observations along Lake Michigan.
- Bonaparte's Gull:** One was discovered in Mead Wildlife Area, Marathon county, on July 7 (Hoffman); present to June 2 in Ozaukee county (Bintz) and two in Milwaukee on July 30 (Basten).
- Little Gull:** Four were present on July 15, two on July 22, in Green Bay (Tessen). See **By the Wayside**.
- Forster's Tern:** Two were present in Brown county on June 27 (Cleary) where they were found to be nesting in Green Bay (Tessen); found in Oconto March (Lintereur and Lindberg); two in Outagamie county on June 17 (Robbins); 58 in Winnebago county on July 6 (Parfit); Milwaukee county (Donald) and one in Racine (Erickson).
- Common Tern:** The 13 found in Vilas county on July 26 (Thomas) are far from the usual Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan locations.
- Caspian Tern:** Found in Marinette county (Lindberg); a high of over 45 in Green Bay on July 21 (Tessen) and two on Washington Island, Door county, on June 27 (Erickson).
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Present in Rusk, Marinette, Door, Buffalo, Jackson, Wood, Portage, Winnebago, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Vernon, Ozaukee, Waukesha and Milwaukee counties.
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** Unusually low in Bayfield county where one was seen on July 3 (Roy).

- Screech Owl:** Present in Marinette (Lindberg), Outagamie (Tessen), La Crosse (Leshner), Vernon (Weber), Milwaukee (Donald), Rock (Mahlum), Racine and Kenosha (Erickson) counties.
- Barred Owl:** Reported in Marinette (Lindberg), Oconto (Woodcock), Barron (Goff), Wood (Follen), Portage (Baumgartner), Outagamie (Tessen, Bradford), Winnebago (Tessen) and Waukesha (Walker) counties.
- Short-eared Owl:** One report only, from Wood county (Follen).
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Two present on Rock Island, Door county, on July 4, were unusual there (Erickson).
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** An immature bird was discovered on June 8 east of Helena, Iowa county, by Alan Rusch who is familiar with the bird in Oklahoma and Kansas.
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Seven were present in Douglas county on June 27-8; also in Vilas on June 8, Ashland on June 9 (Robbins). Three were in Forest county on June 27 and present in Price county (Hilsenhoff).
- Acadian Flycatcher:** One was found on June 8 at Honey Creek, Sauk county (Tessen). One was present on June 29 on Washington Island and one on July 4 on Rock Island, Door county (Erickson).
- Trail's Flycatcher:** Both Alder (wee-bee-o) and Willow (fitz-bew) were heard from the same listening post in Florence county on June 8; the Alder from an alder swamp and the Willow from an adjacent willow meadow. Alder was also found in June in Juneau, Jackson, Iron, Vilas, Ashland, Chippewa, Sawyer, Polk, Washburn and Douglas counties. Willow was observed June 29 in Chippewa county and June 30 in Sauk county (all Robbins). Three Willow Flycatchers were present in Door county on June 27 (Erickson).
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Found in Douglas county on June 27-8, two in Iron county on June 9 (Robbins); one in Adams county on June 24 (Tessen) and nine in Winnebago county (Schultz).
- Gray Jay:** Three were in Iron county on June 9 (Robbins) and were found in Oneida county (Donald).
- Boreal Chickadee:** Found southwest of Three Lakes, Oneida county (Donald).
- Gray-headed Chickadee:** On July 3, one was noted on Plum Island, Door county (Erickson). The bird was carefully observed for a fifteen minute period under excellent conditions and all markings were noted. However in the absence of substantial evidence, this should be considered hypothetical yet.
- Tufted Titmouse:** Found in Wood county (Follen); scarce in Vernon county (Weber); in Door county on June 27 (Erickson).
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Away from the expected northern locations were the two found June 2 in Jackson county and one in Juneau county near Mather (Robbins); one in Vernon county July 3 (Hoffman) and one until June 26 in Dane county (Ashman).
- Brown Creeper:** Robbins reports the species scarce; he found one on June 17 in Outagamie county and one on June 28 along the Brule River in Douglas county. Found also in Oconto county (Hafeman); believed nesting north and northwest of Appleton, Outagamie county (Tessen) and one on July 3 in Vernon county (Hoffman).
- Winter Wren:** Twelve were present in Douglas county along the Brule River on June 27; in Iron, Price and Ashland counties on June 9, Menominee county on June 17 (Robbins). Two were in Taylor county on July 1 (Fadness) and 13 in Door county on June 27 (Erickson).
- Carolina Wren:** One was observed June 3 in Madison (Barger).
- Mockingbird:** Two were observed in a yard in Door county and were believed to have raised young (Erickson).
- Curve-billed Thrasher:** One is still present in Buffalo county, unmated but building nests and laying eggs. Attempted to incubate on three nests (Maier).
- Swainson's Thrush:** Robbins found none anywhere. Reports came from Brown (Wierzbicki), Winnebago (Schultz), Manitowoc (Albrecht) and Ozaukee (Bintz) counties.

- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** On June 14, a nest was found at the base of an oak tree in Marinette county (Lindberg). Birds were found in Door county (Erickson); Sauk county at Honey Creek (Tessen) and near Denzer (Robbins); Manitowoc (Albrecht); La Crosse (Tessen); Dane (Ashman); Ozaukee (Bintz); and Waukesha (Bielefeldt) counties.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** An estimated seven to ten were in Winnebago county (Schultz). See **By the Wayside**. One found June 29, singing in Pines in Door county, is suspected to have been nesting as it was heard and seen several times on different days (Erickson). Robbins found five in Douglas county on June 27-8.
- Loggerhead Shrike:** One in the usual spot in Sauk county (Robbins, Tessen). Also in Marinette county (Lindberg).
- Bell's Vireo:** Noted on June 19 in Buffalo county (Maier); east of Millston, Jackson county (Robbins); and one on June 8 along railroad tracks southeast of Sauk City (Tessen). Absent from La Crosse county (Leshner).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** One was found on June 11, north of Necedah, Juneau county, and two near Hortonville, Outagamie county, on June 17 (Robbins). A pair, nest and young birds were found in Portage county at Stevens Point (Baumgartner).
- Tennessee Warbler:** A late spring transient was singing in Milwaukee on June 12 (Donald). Early fall migrants were present in Dane county on July 23 (Ashman).
- Northern Parula Warbler:** On June 27, there were 55 singing along the Brule River, Douglas county, making it the most numerous warbler present (Robbins).
- Cape May Warbler:** One was found June 28 north of Solon Springs, Douglas county, where they have been located each of three years previously (Robbins). Also found along the Brule River, Douglas county, Ashland county, Iron county (Robbins); two at two locations in Forest county (Hilsenhoff).
- Black-throated Blue Warbler:** One was discovered on June 25 in Vilas county (Thomas).
- Cerulean Warbler:** Farthest north was one on June 20, singing near Cadott, Chippewa county (Robbins), and nest located Marinette county (Lindberg).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** Farthest south was the one singing in Milwaukee on June 12 (Donald) which may have been a late migrant.
- Palm Warbler:** One was found singing near Powell, Iron county, on June 8 (Robbins). Also found in the Three Lakes area where it has been known to nest (Donald).
- Northern Waterthrush:** There were reports of one or two only at a number of northern locations. Farthest south were observations in early June and late July in Oconto county (Woodcock).
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** One in Sauk county at Honey Creek on June 8 (Tessen) and again in Sauk county on June 30 (Robbins).
- Kentucky Warbler:** One was heard and seen well at Honey Creek on June 8 (Tessen) and at Bert Law's Bottoms on June 30 (Donald).
- Connecticut Warbler:** Robbins sends this report: "On June 27, covering more thoroughly a jack pine area east of Solon Springs where I found 18 last year, I counted an astonishing 41 singing males. On June 28, I found an additional three west of Gordon, Douglas county, four on June 9 in Iron and Ashland counties."
- Mourning Warbler:** Farthest south were two in Sauk county on June 4 (Hilsenhoff). Nine were found on Washington Island, Door county, on June 27 (Erickson).
- Wilson's Warbler:** Present in Manitowoc county (Albrecht) and Ozaukee county (Bintz) on June 1. The sighting of one in Mead Wildlife Area on July 7 is most unusual (Hoffman).
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Fared quite well with more than usual in Chippewa county (Robbins), and two new colonies in northern Winnebago county (Tessen).
- Orchard Oriole:** Three were located in Trempealeau county on June 19 (Lender); one in La Crosse county on July 7 (Leshner); an immature was seen on June 7 in Waukesha county (Bielefeldt).

- Dickcissel:** Reported in scarce numbers in Vernon (Weber), Waushara (Chipman) and Rock (Brakefield) counties. Elsewhere numbers were apparently normal.
- Evening Grosbeak:** Four were present in Douglas county on June 27 (Robbins); in Wood county on July 6 (Follen); in Waushara county until June 6 (Chipman, Greenman).
- Purple Finch:** Farthest south was the pair believed to be nesting in Ozaukee county; were seen regularly in June by local people (Barger).
- Common Redpoll:** One sensational report of one on June 27 on Washington Island (Erickson).
- Pine Siskin:** Largest number was the ten in Mrs. Maier's yard, Buffalo county, on June 25. Nested in Outagamie county north of Appleton (Tessen).
- Red Crossbill:** A total of 23 were found in six locations in Jackson county on June 2 (Robbins). On June 28, there was a flock of 23 near Solon Springs, Douglas county (Robbins). Found in Portage county on July 24 with no evidence of nesting (Baumgartner).
- Le Conte's Sparrow:** Reported by Robbins in Vilas county at Powell Marsh on June 1, on June 11 at Bear Bluff marshes, Jackson county, on June 21; five on Breeding Bird transect near Exeland, Sawyer county and one on July 9 near Ladysmith. Also noted in Marinette county (Lindberg).
- Lark Sparrow:** A pair stayed in Portage county with no evidence on nesting (Baumgartner). Found in Sauk county on June 4 (Donald) and two on June 8 (Tessen).
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** Farthest south were the nesting birds found June 3 in Waukesha county (Bielefeldt). Also found in Sauk county on June 4 (Donald) and June 8 (Tessen).
- White-throated Sparrow:** Farthest south mid-season birds were those in Dane county in late June (Ashman).
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** Three were found in Iron county on June 9 (Robbins), and were located at Three Lakes in Oneida county (Donald).

1973 OBSERVERS

Marjorie Albrecht, Thomas Ashman, Mrs. Irving Auld, N. R. Barger, Elmer and Lorna Basten, A. M. and F. M. Baumgartner, J. Bickford, John Bielefeldt, Tom and Carol Bintz, Alfred S. Bradford, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Brakefield, Mrs. Irma Chipman, Edwin S. Cleary, Jerome C. Diebold, Mary Donald, Mrs. John A. Ecker, Louise Erickson, Jim Evrard, John Fadness, Don Follen, Sr., Alan O. Gamache, Alta Goff, Delbert Greenman, Mrs. Karl E. Hafeman, Maybelle Hardy, Mrs. Francis Harmer, William Hilsenhoff, Ron Hoffman, Rockne Knuth, Mrs. Henry Koenig, Harold Koopman, Ruth Lender, F. Z. Leshar, Harold Lindberg, Greg, Philip and Len Lintereur, Gyda Mahlum, Merton and Lorena Maier, Jim March, Margaret Morse, Mrs. Edward Natzke, Bruce D. Parfitt, Sam Robbins, Albert Roy, Jr., Alan J. Rusch, Mrs. Charles Schnek, Clark Schultz, Elmer Strehlow, Daryl Tessen, Mrs. Linda Thomas, John Walker, Viratine E. Weber, Melvin Wierzbicki, John Woodcock.

By the Wayside . . .

Ruff at Green Bay: While checking the shorebirds in a pond along the dike road in the marsh west of the electric plant at Green Bay, I noticed a shorebird working along the shore which appeared different. It was larger than the Killdeer and Lesser Yellowlegs feeding around it. However, what attracted it to my attention was its rich brown color and light cheek patch. Upon closer examination I also noticed its brown-black upper breast, slightly curved bill, yellowish at the base and light legs. The bird was a male Ruff, still in partial breeding plumage. It closely resembled the one that I saw two years ago on Weyauwega Lake except the cheek was more noticeable lighter in this bird. It continued to work

along the edge of the pond for over an hour. At that time a motorcycle went by, flushing all the shorebirds. While the Ruff circled, the two white patches on the rump were also noted. In flight the breast appeared much darker, almost black, and the back looked deeper brown, than when feeding. It was still feeding along the edge of the pond when I left. The observation occurred between 7:00-8:15 p.m. on July 21 using a 15-60x (zoom) scope. I was pleasantly surprised to see the bird again on the evening of July 27 when it alighted with a group of Lesser Yellowlegs in the same pond. However, at this time it only remained for about ten minutes. Daryl Tessen, Elgin, Illinois 60120

Little Gull: Tom Erdman clued me on the presence of five Little Gulls that he had discovered in the Green Bay area in early July. On July 15 around 7:00 p.m. while watching the Forster's and Common Terns from the incinerator lookout at the west end of Green Bay marsh my attention was drawn to a smaller bird that looked about half the size of the terns. It had some black on the head but it was incomplete. The wings were rounded, in contrast to the terns, and there were dark and light contrasting areas on the upper portion. The tail was white. It appeared to be an adult bird in semi-winter plumage. The bird circled and flew over the area for several minutes affording an excellent view of it. Subsequently it flew westward across a road and out over the bay. About five minutes later three more birds appeared in flight over the marsh. The markings of these three were identical to that of the earlier bird. After several minutes of flight they landed amongst the reeds in the marsh. I did not see them any more that evening. Observation was made with a 15-40x (zoom) scope. On July 22 two birds were observed in flight over the same area during the evening. Daryl Tessen, Elgin, Illinois, 60120

Ruby-crowned Kinglet nested in Oshkosh: A pair of Ruby-crowned Kinglets nested successfully within Oshkosh fledging an estimated 5-8 young this season. This occurred at Riverside Cemetery from which all the following observations were made. This lies entirely within Section 10, T18-N, R1-E. May 26, June 2, June 9: On each of these dates a Ruby-crown was heard singing in the northern part of the cemetery during late morning or early afternoon. The bird was glimpsed on one or more of these dates but identification rested chiefly on its song. I assumed the bird was a tardy transient and expected on each occasion that the following weekend would find the bird absent. June 16: The bird was again heard in the same location and since I was aware that the lateness of the date was unusual visual confirmation of the identification was sought and found. The bird was seen at close range with 7x binoculars and the ruby-crown was visible. An attempt was made to find some evidence that the bird was paired and breeding. This effort was too perfunctory and consisted wholly in listening to the bird and trying to keep it in sight — with no great success — for a period of about a half hour. The inadequacy of this effort was conditioned in part by my assumption that the bird was most probably a non-breeding individual arrested for some reason somewhat short of its summer home. June 22,

30, July 4: The bird was seen and/or heard on each of these dates in the cemetery. On the latter date the bird was again located about midday and I decided to stop and listen to it for a while. To this date the bird was always located by its singing. It did not sing frequently but regularly and I never had to wait longer than 15 minutes to hear it. The bird was subsequently seen twice at close range with a beakful of food and after my surprise diminished the rest quickly followed. The focus of the birds activity was found to be a particular locus on a particular branch about 20 feet high in a Norway Spruce. Both adults were seen simultaneously for the first time bringing food to this spot. The nest could not be clearly distinguished except as a certain opacity in the branch about $\frac{3}{4}$ of its length from the trunk. The nestlings could not be seen from the ground. On July 10, fledglings were heard from at least three separate locations near but not in the nest tree. One was seen being fed by the female; it seemed able to secure some of its own food, it flew and its tail was not markedly shorter than its parent's. It was not as active nor as assured in its movements as the adults. The adult male was heard and seen in the vicinity on this and all subsequent dates but was never seen to feed the fledglings in contrast to feeding of the nestlings. On July 14 and 21 all were found within the cemetery at some further distance from the nest tree. Several efforts to count them resulted in the above estimate as all were not visible at once. On July 29, an hour or more was spent trying to locate the birds, without success. Clark Schultz, 448 Jefferson St., Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901

Avocets nesting in Dodge County: On May 22, 1973, Mr. Richard Hunt, Wetland Wildlife Research Leader with the Wisconsin DNR at Horicon, reported seeing an avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) in Sec. 9 (T12N, R14E) of Trenton Township, Dodge County. The bird was on a shallow seasonally-flooded wetland lying within the junction of county highways A and W, about 4 miles southeast of Fox Lake. The wetland and its surrounding area were owned by a Mr. Edgar Messer. Five days later (May 27), I also saw a single avocet (either the same bird, or its mate) on the Messer wetland. When I again passed this area on June 9, 2 adult avocets (their behavior suggesting a mated pair) were seen flying about and giving repeated calls. Their attention was focused on a dog that seemed to be chasing them along the shoreline of the pond. The behavior shown by the avocets (much wing-flapping, aerial acrobatics, calling and repeated landings) seemed to be of a "distractive" nature. No chicks however were seen during this visit (all my observations were made from a vehicle).

On June 13, 1974, Mr. John Beule, also of the Wetland Wildlife Research Group, visited the Messer farm to photograph the adult avocets and also young birds, if present. The adult birds no longer were using the large wetland at this visit. They had moved to a much smaller pond, lying just north of the original larger area. Besides the 2 adults, 3 avocet chicks were also standing in the pond. The chicks were "light tan



This fine photograph of a male *Ruff* was taken on May 15, 1974 by Fred Leshner near La Crosse, Wisconsin.

or brownish" in coloration. While the chicks were present, the adult avocets were quite attentive to them. As John was preparing to photograph adults and young, he was interrupted by a passer-by. Before he was again free to take pictures, the young birds had disappeared into the vegetation and were not seen again. Apparently the disturbance caused by the approach of the second car had frightened them off. John was able to get a series of excellent slides (colored) of the adults (see picture above), but none of the chicks.

On June 15, John returned to the "avocet" ponds, accompanied by Mr. Bill Wheeler, also of the DNR, to make another attempt at photographing the chicks. Neither adult nor young avocets were seen on the Messer pond. Two adult avocets were finally located just east of Highway W (Sec. 10) on another seasonally-flooded pond in a cultivated field. However, no young were seen. This was our last observation of either adult or young avocets in the area. John later talked to Mr. Messer who indicated that his dog was harassing the adult avocets (and chicks?) throughout the spring. This may have ultimately resulted in the loss of the young and abandonment of the area by the parents. It is also possible that the chicks were actually present on the 15th but not observed.

A partial review of ornithological literature from Wisconsin and examination of past volumes of "The Passenger Pigeon" indicated that

John's observations represent the first modern (and perhaps the only) record of avocet chicks in the state. Unfortunately, the additional observations and photographs which could have better documented the presence of young were not obtained.

Petersen's "A Field Guide to the Birds" lists the avocet as "very rare east of the Mississippi". The latest spring records I found for Wisconsin were a single adult seen and photographed near Eau Claire on May 18, 1968 (Charles Kemper, *The Passenger Pigeon* 31(1):214) and an unknown sighting on May 28, 1969 (Kent Froberg; In "Extreme Arrival and Departure Dates", Sam Robbins, 1970, *The Passenger Pigeon* 32(3):104). Most of the Wisconsin observations were before May 15 or after September 1, and have become more frequent since 1960. Dodge, Dane, Columbia, Fond du Lac and Milwaukee counties were the more common locations.

The wetland utilized by the pair of avocets in 1973 tends to dry out in most summers and has been cultivated in some years. Even though 1973 spring water levels were unusually high, the area eventually dried out and was plowed (August or September).

In 1973, heavy fall and spring precipitation created an abnormally large amount of temporary wetland acreage in southcentral Wisconsin. Water conditions in the more permanent areas were also excellent. The avocets seen near Fox Lake represented only a small segment of the many shorebirds and waterfowl attracted into that area by the available water. Many birds frequently associated with prairie nesting habitats were unusually common. Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) and pintail (*Anas acuta*) ducks, which were present in above average numbers (and apparently nesting), were 2 examples. Apparently birds that are normally seen only as migrants in Wisconsin responded to the abundance of wetland habitat and remained to breed. The spring of 1973 must have been an especially good one for avocets since earlier (early May), groups of 3 (R. Hunt) and 15 (Robert Personius) of these birds were observed on the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. James R. March, Group Leader, Farm Wildlife Research, Wis. DNR, Box D. Horicon, Wisconsin 53032



Letters to the Editor

5 April 74

Route 4

Rice Lake, Wis. 54868

Dear Dr. Kemper:

On 2 April 1974, Wayne Norling, a graduate student in Biology at UW-River Falls and I were observing some swans, geese and gulls along the Mississippi River near Hager City Wisconsin.

While glassing a group of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*), we noticed an immature bird that was obviously larger than the other immature and mature Herring Gulls next to it. We observed the bird much closer with a 30x spotting scope and found the tail was tipped with a band of white, the back was darker in color than the grayish back of the Herring Gull, it had a much whiter head, and the primary and secondary feathers (observed when the bird made false starts) were quite dark in color. We consulted Robbins et al. *Birds of North America* and it appeared to us to be a Great Black Backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). After 10-15 minutes more careful observation we concluded that in fact it was an immature Great Black Backed Gull.

Another interesting sighting this week was made by Keith Dueholm, another student at UW-River Falls, and myself. On 4 April near Spring Valley Wisconsin, Pierce County, we observed two adult Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) resting in a large tree. We were able to get about 100 feet from them in order to make positive identification.

Sincerely yours, Craig Faanes

Additions and Deletions to Extreme Arrival and Departure Dates

Passenger Pigeon, Fall 1970, Vol 32, No. 3

1. On page 101, **Black-billed Plover**, under Fall Arrival column, delete July 9, 1967, insert July 7, 1973. Delete Dennis Gustafson, insert Ron Hoffman.
2. On page 102, **Red Knot**, under Spring Departure column, delete June 8, 1972, Tom Erdman and Brother Colomban, insert June 9, 1973, Daryl Tessen.
3. On page 103, **Baird's Sandpiper**, under Exceptional Dates, insert July 1, 1973, Tom and Carol Bintz
4. On page 105, **Ruff**, under Fall Arrival column, insert July 21-27, 1973, Daryl Tessen; transfer Aug 15, 1968, Tom Erdman to Exceptional Date column.
5. On page 105, **Avocet**, under Summer Status column, insert first meeting record 1973, Jim March.
6. On page 107, **Northern Phalarope**, under Exceptional Dates insert June 15, 1973, Tom and Carol Bintz.
7. On page 107, **Little Gull**, under Summer Status column, delete "2 July dates" and insert, "rare breeder".
8. On page 114, **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, under Summer Status column, delete "1 recorded", insert very rare. Under exceptional dates, insert June 8, 1973, Alan Rusch.
9. On page 116, **Gray-headed Chickadee**, insert between Boreal Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse in Species column, on page 117, under Exceptional Dates insert, one hypothetical sight record, June 3, 1973, Louise Erickson.
10. On page 119, **Curve-billed Thrasher**, under Exceptional Dates, insert still present in summer 1974.
11. On page 133, **Common Redpoll** under Exceptional Dates, insert, one on June 27, 1974, Louise Erickson.

WSO HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

to
SAMUEL D. ROBBINS

Well known to two generations of Wisconsin birders, Sam Robbins is an outstanding example of a dedicated amateur ornithologist whose expertise in the field and at the typewriter has done much to stimulate the serious study of birds in Wisconsin during the past thirty-five years.

One of Sam's first WSO projects was collaboration in the preparation of the popular pamphlet, "Wisconsin Birds, A Preliminary Check List with Migration Charts," first published in 1942. His extensive field observations led to his being chosen editor of the Field Notes Department, and for a quarter century he served with distinction as associate editor and editor of **THE PASSENGER PIGEON**. At the 25th Anniversary meeting in 1964, Sam was honored with the Silver Passenger Award for distinguished service to the Society.

In addition to serving as board member and president, he has contributed scores of papers for publication in **THE PASSENGER PIGEON**. These have dealt largely with geographic distribution and abundance of birds and with organized bird counts, but have also included such varied subjects as "Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts," a series that he originated, a tabulation of extreme arrival and departure dates for every Wisconsin species, a twenty-five-year history of ornithological progress in Wisconsin, and techniques for studying fall warblers in the field. He has also served as regional editor for **AUDUBON FIELD NOTES** and has written the continental Changing Seasons summary for that journal.

The cooperative Summer Bird Count that he initiated throughout Wisconsin in 1961 and directed through 1965 was a predecessor of the Breeding Bird Survey now being sponsored on a continental basis by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service; Sam has continued to serve as the very efficient Wisconsin coordinator for this Survey.

His latest project, a book detailing the distribution and status of the birds of Wisconsin, represents the culmination of his three dozen years of field work in this State, coupled with many thousands of observations by other WSO members — these records having been made available through the WSO permanent bird note file that Sam established in the early years of the Society.

It is with utmost pleasure that The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc., presents to Samuel D. Robbins the *HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD* for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Ornithology.

Presented May 18, 1974

WSO SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD

to
MARY DONALD

Ability, skill, and a lifetime interest in bird study aptly describes one phase of activity of our recipient of this year's *SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD*.

Because of this activity she has contributed generously of her time and knowledge to stimulate others to become interested in ornithology. Her dedication to support the work of organizations is manifest in her record of fifteen years as president of City Bird Club and no less than thirteen years devoted to working for our Society.

In 1948, '49, and '50, she served as secretary of WSO, and for the past ten years, she has served as a member of the Board of Directors of our Society. Her enviable record of field work for WSO includes many years as leader for not one but two Christmas Bird Counts annually and her participation in the annual Breeding Bird Survey for Chandler Robbins for the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, working in five different areas.

In addition to all of these activities, she has been, and still is, the editor of our Badger Birder for the past ten years.

For this superb service record, The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology presents the *SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD* for Outstanding Service to the Society to *MARY DONALD* and with it, the genuine appreciation of its members, officers, and directors.

THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC.
May 18, 1974



Mary Donald

Sam Robbins

BOOK REVIEWS

THE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIRD NAMES, by Ernest Choate. Published by Gambit Inc., Boston, Mass. 261 pp. Price \$6.95
Published 1973

This is a pocket sized book which much resembles the recently reviewed **"Words for Birds"**, by Edward S. Gruson. It is smaller, making it more convenient to carry with one if he should be so inclined. Unlike the latter it is in alphabetical rather than check list order. This would be an advantage to the novice who would certainly find it easier to locate. It is also more condensed and less illustrated, and not quite as attractive as the Gruson book. It is also less expensive and perhaps more accurate in some details.

Personally I found both books wanting as neither could tell me the origin of the word "Saltator", a species I recently encountered in Mexico. Will somebody out there who knows write in and inform me please. — C. A. Kemper

* * *

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A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO by Richard Ffrench. Illustrated by John O'Neil. Portraits by Don R. Eclselberry. 512 pages. 5"x7"; 28 color plates; 8 full-page portraits; 26 black-and-white identification plates. Price \$12.50 Published by Livingston Publishing Company.

This is a handsome book that is a hybrid between a field guide and a regular shelf library type regional bird book. The author is a teacher who lives in Pointe-a Pierre, Trinidad. He has lived there since 1955 and is an ornithologist by vocation. The book is a publication of the Asa Wright Nature Center and is sponsored by the Cornell laboratory of ornithology.

The small geographic area involved in this book encompasses a fabulous avifauna. It has features of continental North and South America, oceanic birds of the Atlantic, and representative features of the West Indies.

A very interesting introduction has a description of the Ornithological History, a general environmental discussion, including geography, physiography, climate, rainfall, vegetation if both Trinidad, and Tobago, on ecological discussion, a breeding summary, a migration summary, augmented by tables, maps and photographs. The introduction discussed nomenclature, habitat and status, sources of information, methods of measurements, etc. There is a brief discussion of conservation. The species accounts seem quite good and encompass a good deal of information in a condensed fashion. In addition to description of the bird, there is an account of habitat and status, range, measurements, voice, food, nesting and behavior data.

There has to be a comparison between this book and the **Birds of Trinidad and Tobago** by G.A.C. Herklots, previously reviewed. One might ask why there has to be a second book on the same subject. Personally I can't answer this from this distance. However I do perceive that this book is better illustrated and more comprehensive — and more expensive.

I would suggest each reader have both guides with him on his next trip to this glorious area and decide for himself which is the more useful guide.

On reviewing this book I discovered a difference in measurements in bird books. For example — a Sanderling in this book is 7.5 inches long, in Robbins — Birds of North America it is 6.5 inches long, in Herklots it is 7 to 8 inches. A Western Sandpiper is 6 inches in this book, 6¼ inches in Herklots, and 5¼ inches in Robbins. As a result of this comparison I researched further and found that Robbins recorded measurements are generally about 10 to 15% less than Roger Tory Peterson's. Check it out for yourself some evening in your own library.
— C. A. Kemper

Letters to the Editor

July 24, 1974

Dear friends:

We finally had a lovely rain overnight, which was much appreciated by man and birds, and our thirsty land. It seems our nesting birds have had a successful summer, as most of them have brought their babies for us to see and some have already gone on their way. "Curvi" is fine and is presently incubating on her nest. Her first nesting attempts were robbed by Grackles. I think we told you about the enormously long beak she was growing. Well, it got to be just unbelievably long and curved. The top mandible was at least twice as long as the bottom and very, very curved, so that she had to eat and drink by tipping her head to one side or other and scooping things in. Bill Drazkowskis of Winona was here to photograph her in that stage. I haven't seen how they came out. But anyway, two days later we saw her at the feeders with a normal length bill — just half of what it had been before. She ate and banged corn kernels as if she had no pain so it could not have hurt her, as if it had been broken in an accident, so we think it just dropped off. Isn't nature one surprise after another? We are wondering though, what will ever become of our dear Curved-bill as Merton and I have decided we must sell our home and yard, and I am sure she cannot survive a winter without a well stocked feeder, such as we have provided. Our dearest wish would be if we could sell to some bird lover, as our yard needs such an owner. So perhaps you can pass the word to anyone who may be interested. There are six city lots where the birds have been thriving — 300 x 100 feet in all.

My doctor has been insisting for years that I must give up all gardening etc. — because of the wear and tear on my arthritic spine, so I guess we can't keep our yard and health both.

Sincerely,
Lorena & Merton Maier
Buffalo City, WI

May 27, 1974

Dear Editor:

While looking for shore birds in Bayside area we noticed 18 Ruddy Turnstones along a flooded area. As we moved along very slowly (in our car) a total of 107 Turnstones and 50 Black-bellied Plovers were counted.

As darkness fell our headlights caught the flashing white under wings of many, many more shore birds as we (Bernard Chartier, my wife and I) moved slowly through the area on Cinder Road.

This was a once in a lifetime experience of nearly 30 years as a bird watcher.

We could see swarms of bay flies over the area — the birds were eating those that had fallen to the ground.

Gordon Delsart
619 N. Maple Ave.
Green Bay, WI 54303



UPLAND SANDPIPER
Photo by Peter G. Connors

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