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# *The* PASSENGER PIGEON

VOLUME XIV *Summer Issue, 1952* NUMBER 2



RICHARDSON'S OWL

S. D. FELL

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN BIRD STUDY

*Published Quarterly By*

THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC.

## NEWS . . .

Jim Zimmerman has listed a number of study projects now in progress in which nearly all members may participate on page 68ff. of his **Outdoor Calendar**. Since there is not much time left in the calendar year for some of them, please take note immediately of those in which you are interested.

A large crowd enjoyed the Kenosha annual convention this year. Fine cooperation was shown by the local committee and the results were evident down to the last detail. The rustic atmosphere of the banquet table, the smooth operation of the schedule, the excellent speakers, and the accommodations offered to guests will be long remembered. Perhaps those members who could not attend this year because of distance will be able to get to Green Bay in 1953. Chester Krawczyk, convention chairman, has informed us that the Green Bay Bird Club already has rolled up its sleeves to prepare for it.

A new position, that of advertisement manager, has been created by the Board. Mrs. F. L. Larkin, who has sparked our advertisement program for the magazine in the past, was elected as director of this activity.

Because of the expense involved, the index to **The Passenger Pigeon** will be published at intervals of five years in the future, instead of three as in the past.

Records of birds nesting in Wisconsin, May day counts, autumn day counts, and general field notes are due now and should be sent to Carl Strelitzer. Mailing address will be found on the officers list. All field records submitted are noted in the permanent file under the species involved and help to fill out the statewide picture, even though, at times, it may seem that the more common of our field notes are ignored. Authors find these files useful and use them when writing articles on individual species such as the meadowlark now under consideration.

Gerald Vogelsang, who was membership campaign chairman, announces that last year's campaign was a success. Prizes were awarded during the last convention with Mrs. F. L. Larkin of Milwaukee winning first prize, Miss Ethel F. Gilman of Racine winning second prize, and Mrs. W. A. Peirce of Racine winning third prize. Jerry thanks all other members who worked hard on this campaign and expresses the wish that everyone will continue to be on the lookout for new members.

The secretary of the society, Miss Helen Northup, has summarized our last board meeting as follows:

"A meeting of the WSO Board was held on Saturday, September 6, at the home of the president, Sam Robbins, in Adams, Wisconsin. Mr. Krawczyk brought word from the Green Bay Bird Club that the 1953 convention will be held at Green Bay, probably the first week in May. The resignations of Thomas Stavrum and Bernard Kaiman were accepted. Mr. Kaiman is leaving the state to attend the University of Miami in Florida. David Block and Dixie Larkin were nominated to fill the vacancies on the board. Mr. Bradford presented a complete revision of the Articles of Organization, which will be presented to the membership at the next convention. Frank King has accepted the chairmanship of a committee to investigate the possibility of acquiring land for a sanctuary, either by purchase or gift. Harold Wilson was also named on the committee. Ways in which the WSO can help small groups to form bird clubs and carry on their programs were discussed, including a speakers bureau of experienced bird watchers from the larger centers. The meeting adjourned soon after three o'clock, after four hours of business and a pleasant picnic at noon in a neighboring picnic area."

The Richardson's owl on the cover was photographed on March 31, 1950, in the Town of Three Lakes, Oneida County, by S. D. Fell. The cut is made from a kodachrome original.

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# PHOTOGRAPHING THE RICHARDSON'S OWL

By S. D. FELL

Our cocker spaniel set off the chain of circumstances that resulted in the photograph of the Richardson's owl. Her frantic barking indicated that something unusual needed investigating—a raccoon whose curiosity about a beaver trapper's "set" under the ice of the stream had left him with toes firmly clamped in a big No. 3 trap. (For the comfort of the reader it should be stated that the raccoon was later freed with only minor damage to two toe-nails.) It was not until we had watched for some minutes the frantic efforts of this animal to free himself by climbing the trap stake, that we noticed this strange little owl, perched on the top rail of our fence, apparently taking in the show.

After a mad scramble for our bird guide and the binoculars, we soon identified the little fellow as a Richardson's. The yellow bill and pronounced facial discs ruled out the possibility of its being a saw-whet, which we hear occasionally at night but have never been lucky enough to see. (Incidentally, the latter's bell-like **ding-ding-ding** note can be even more incessant than the whip-poor-will's call. When I used to "stand the night shift", firing our maple syrup cooker, I often wondered when they ever found time to eat.)

On a chance that I might be able to get within six feet of this owl, I loaded the Bantam with Kodachrome, set it for six feet, at F5.6 and 1/50 of a second, and proceeded to stalk him very carefully. I found out later that these precautions were probably wasted effort, for when I made the exposure at six feet, he merely blinked his eyes and cocked his head a bit. I shot again at four feet and then at three, the shortest distance for which the little camera is graduated. Probably a good ground glass focusing reflex camera would have given me a successful shot at two feet or less, for I came within eighteen inches of him before the crunching of the snow under foot sent him winging to our clothesline post. He spent the rest of the day perching alternately on this post and the wood-pile, six feet away. A dozen times, I could have picked him up with an ordinary fish-landing net. It was easy to understand why the Indians called him "the blind owl", for apparently he sees practically nothing in broad daylight. His hearing seems keen, though, and possibly he has some of the bat's "radar equipment" for dodging obstacles, for at no time in his short flights back and forth did he come even near to collision with objects near his line of flight.

About the middle of the afternoon a wet snow started to fall, and before it grew dark enough for him to fly to the spruce and balsam thickets across the creek, he was white enough to pass for a miniature "snowy." Probably, we shall never see one of his kind again.

Clearwater Lake, Wisconsin



# THE BIRDS OF NEW GLARUS WOODS

By HOWARD L. ORIAN

The southernmost, and one of the smallest, of the charming state parks of Wisconsin is the little New Glarus Woods Roadside Park, traversed by State Highway 69. It is only twenty miles north of the Illinois-Wisconsin border, in Green County. The park consists of forty-three acres of natural oak forest, once very common in Green and adjoining counties of southwestern Wisconsin.

Near the center of the park, at the intersection of Highway 69 and the famous old 'Lead Trail', is a well-maintained picnic area, with fireplaces, campsites, and numerous tables for the convenience of tourists, and local picnic groups. The Wisconsin Conservation Department provides a caretaker for the three summer months. His duties are the policing of the picnic area, where the grass is kept mowed, the provision of an adequate supply of firewood, and the clearing of the one long nature trail. This wide path makes it possible for the visitor to walk through one of the most beautiful sections of the park without fear of the ubiquitous poison ivy, which seems to find this park as favorable an environment as do the birds. Along that nature trail, in plain sight this summer, were the nests of the least flycatcher, the red-eyed vireo, and the wood thrush. The latter nest was directly above the path, and one wonders how many of the hikers whose heads were less than four feet from this nest failed to discover it.

Most of the forty-three acres are untouched by the foot of man, except in the spring when the mushroom hunters comb it thoroughly for the choice morels. In fact, walking is not easy, once the heavy ground cover of ferns, May apples, and other plants has reached maturity. But for the person who has the fortitude to wade through this lush vegetation, the rewards are rich indeed. Because the woods is not dense, it provides ideal nesting sites for a wide variety of birds. And here and there one is pleased to come upon the yellow lady slippers. However, they are not easy to find in the dense growth. In fact, these plants have difficulty lifting their gold crowns high enough to catch the sunlight which filters through the oaks and walnuts.

It seems to this writer a conservative estimate that forty species of birds raise their young in this park and on its borders. The only sure proof of nesting is the discovery of the nest, or of young birds barely able to fly. But for practical purposes the presence of birds throughout the month of June is fairly conclusive evidence that housekeeping chores are tying them to that particular locality. We believe that occasionally some feathered Caruso will pour forth his matins in vain, because there is no lady love there to respond, but it is unlikely that this happens often. Most of the singing males in the topmost branches of the trees will be heard by some less brilliantly colored female somewhere betwixt the sky and the forest floor. It is on this evidence of singing males that I base my estimate of the number of species nesting there.

Ever since coming to Green County in the early summer of 1949 it has been my desire to make motion picture records of some of these shy denizens of the woods. That dream found partial fulfillment in 1951

when the nests of the ovenbird and the blue-gray gnatcatcher were located, and their home life spied upon. The four nestling gnatcatchers were located, and their home life spied upon. The four nestling gnatcatchers were banded, equalling the total of that species banded in the entire country during the two preceding years. The two ovenbirds were bravely endeavoring to satisfy the Gargantuan appetites of three cowbirds, all larger than the foster parents. One unhatched ovenbird remained in the nest, mute testimony to the tragedy which had taken place. Their excited protests when I approached the nest made me feel that such parental devotion deserved a happier outcome.

These two nests completed my photographic efforts in the New Glarus woods for 1951. The following year was to see the project continued with the privacy of at least three more bird homes invaded by the big eye of my one-hundred and two millimeter lens. With that object in mind I went into the woods the first week of June, and was gratified to find the nests of the redstart, wood thrush, least flycatcher, red-eyed vireo, and yellow-throated vireo. The same expedition brought me to an area where the Kentucky warbler was singing. It was a low ravine near the south edge of the woods. Nearby was a spot where a small amount of water was oozing out of the ground. In less dry weather it might qualify as a spring. At any rate there was just enough water to encourage an ovenbird to attempt to bathe. This suggested the thought that if one had a shallow bird bath there to catch this water before it soaked into the ground, the woodland birds might welcome it. So far as I knew then or know now, it is the only water to be found anywhere in the park.

The following Saturday afternoon a rough concrete bath was sunk into the soft earth, and a photographic blind tucked away in the underbrush ten feet distant. With a great deal of anticipation we watched the bath fill with sparkling clear, cold water. Monday morning I was there to receive the bird's verdict. The morning was warm and clear, and for two and a half hours before noon the sun shone directly on the bath. For about fifteen minutes I sat there waiting, and finally a catbird came and showed her appreciation by splashing water in all directions. Following her example the birds almost literally stood in line waiting their turn. Before noon that day one hundred and twenty feet of sixteen millimeter film had poured through the gate of my Bolex camera.

Since that time I have tried to visit this interesting spot once a week. There has never been a dull moment. If no birds were in, the mosquitoes managed to fill the minutes with activity. Later I learned that a DDT bomb is a good weapon to have within easy reach inside the blind. That assures a mosquito-less sanctuary in the heart of the woods.

Being busy with photographic efforts, I made no attempt to keep a record of the number of visits to the bath per hour, or of the greatest length of the periods of waiting. But I doubt that I ever waited longer than twenty minutes for a 'customer' to arrive. Sometimes three or four birds would dispute each other's priority at the same time. As usually happens, the victory went to the bird with the longest and stoutest bill, but not always. A very much surprised catbird was unceremoniously hustled off the premises by a determined and pugnacious indigo bunting.

Birds, like humans, must have their mellow moods, at which times it was not uncommon to see a tanager and an indigo bunting, or a

grosbeak and a catbird, sharing the bath with good grace. There was nothing to cause one to suspect that the presence of another bird was an occasion of friendly sociability. It was more a case of tolerating the other. Each bird seemed to live in his own little world. In fact, I do not recall that I ever saw male and female of the same species in the bath at the same time. Frequently, however, the male tanager would sit in a nearby tree while his wife was enjoying her bath, and when she left, he would follow her. Perhaps he was only making sure that she did not become so enamored of the bath that she would neglect the eggs in a nearby oak.

As these words are being written, my records show a total of twenty-four species of birds which I have seen at the bath. Not all of them came to bathe. Some only sought a fresh drink. Others would bathe but were never seen to drink. The cardinal was interesting. Only once did he come down to the bath, though two males made that corner of the woods ring with their loud songs. At the time of his solitary visit, he walked into the shallow water at the edge of the bath, and just stood there, with what seemed to me to be a puzzled look on his face, trying to figure out what to do next.

The most frequent visitors were the catbirds, with the indigo buntings a close second. The female redstart, who had built her nest almost thirty feet above my blind, was there regularly, averaging a visit every thirty minutes. Her husband must have been allergic to water. With ample leisure time at his disposal, he seldom came down to bathe, and when he did, it was with no great gusto.

Early in June, the rose-breasted grosbeaks were there, but apparently their nesting chores were finished at an early date, and they moved on to a different part of the woods. The same was true of the Kentucky warbler, which sang regularly in the area until late June; only to disappear, and be heard from no more. My very first visit to the blind was rewarded by the sight of this colorful little warbler.

The comic relief was provided by the red-eyed vireo, who was a persistent visitor, but who seemed bent upon performing the impossible trick of taking a bath without getting wet. He would fly down from his perch several feet above the water, plop right into the center of the pool, and out again in less than a second. Only once did I see this bird show any serious intention of bathing in normal bird fashion, and that idea was quickly abandoned.

Though definitely an exasperation to the photographer, of interest to the bird watcher are the birds which obviously saw the bath, and other birds in it, but refused to use it themselves. The blue-gray gnatcatchers, for example, were often in the low bushes nearby, but seemingly were uninterested in the game the other birds were playing. The black-billed cuckoo, yellow-throated vireo, ruby-throated hummingbird, least flycatcher, white-breasted nuthatch, and downy woodpecker were in the immediate area, and though they perched on a walnut limb, they never went near the water.

The big surprises of the several visits to this interesting spot were the warblers. Like many others I am afflicted with 'warblermania.' The only ones I expected to see were the cerulean, which I knew to be a common nesting bird in the park, and the redstart, which is still more com-



mon. But to see first the Kentucky warbler, then the blue-winged, next the chestnut-sided, and finally the Canada warbler, was beyond my fondest expectations. My conclusion is that if one had unlimited time for field observation, he would be amazed at the variety of nesting species he would find in the southern part of our state. To be sure, I found the nest of no warbler other than the redstart, but the evidence is strong that others nested there also.

A list of the birds actually seen at the bath may be of interest: blue jay, cerulean warbler, catbird, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting, goldfinch, field sparrow, wood thrush, Kentucky warbler, redstart, red-eyed vireo, crested flycatcher, robin, towhee, chickadee, cowbird, ovenbird, blue-winged warbler, cardinal, chestnut-sided warbler, yellow-billed cuckoo, wood pewee, cedar waxwing, and Canada warbler.

You can imagine my disappointment upon visiting the park July twenty-fifth, after an absence of two weeks, to find that, despite copious rains, our spring had ceased to flow, and the bath was dry. But another summer is coming, and perhaps there will be more water, and more birds. Perhaps I can be there in time to take on film some of the migrating warblers, and who knows what else? Anticipation is always one of life's chief joys.

Monroe, Wisconsin

## **RIDING MOUNTAIN AND DELTA MARSH**

By MARGARET and CONSTANCE NICE

Manitoba was the goal of our leisurely trip through the northern prairie states in late May, 1951. On the first of June we reached the home of our friends Ralph and Lois Bird at Brandon. For the last ten days we had seen prairies and nesting birds in refuges and on potholes. Now our friends promised to show us a forest. They are both naturalists. Lois Gould Bird is a botanist, a friend from Oklahoma days. Dr. Bird is Entomologist in charge of the Dominion Field Insect Laboratory for Manitoba and is also a member of the Advisory Board to the Provincial Game and Fisheries Branch in Manitoba.

On June 2nd we drove sixty miles north to Riding Mountain National Park past caragana hedges planted as snow-breaks and meeting again the birds of the potholes. This is the famous Minnedosa pothole country, an example of the farm land which produces a high percentage of the ducks of the province. It is the site of transect population studies by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Delta Waterfowl Research Station, one young man spending weeks in the open, sleeping in his car and cooking his own meals.

On the shallower potholes loafed mallards, pintails, blue-winged teal and horned grebes. Many of the mallard drakes had already finished their part in family life and were sunning themselves in twos and threes on old muskrat houses. Blue-winged teal drakes would stand at their greatest height and alertness, while their mates beside them unconcerned-

ly sifted their morning snacks from the mud. Our only green-wing pair inhabited a well-wooded pond, while the gadwalls, baldpates, canvas-backs, redheads, lesser scaup, and the ridiculous ruddy ducks, as well as Holboell's grebes, preferred the larger and deeper ponds.

Franklin's gulls and black terns cruised overhead. Six species of shorebirds were recorded, among them Baird's and stilt sandpipers and ruddy turnstones. We were happy to see nine hawks—four ferruginous rough-legs, two red-tails and three harriers, one of which stooped at a Hungarian partridge, but missed. Both eastern and western kindbirds were noted. We saw barn and tree swallows and passed a colony of bank swallows. Under a bridge over the Minnedosa River a hundred and fifty cliff swallows were busily building their nests. *Icterids* were the best represented of the passerines, there being no less than six species. Exciting birds to us easterners were a spectacular magpie and an exquisite mountain bluebird.

Manitoba is by no means as dry and treeless as the Dakotas. Some of its inhabitants, however, are trying to change this by burning over and bulldozing the many thickets which have served as wind- and snow-breaks, thereby turning their land into fields to increase the wheat surplus.

It was a different world that we found on Riding Mountain—a northern coniferous forest of spruce, jack pine, and tamarack on a plateau rising gradually from the plain. Aspens were just leafing out; their new yellow-green was bright against the dark green of the spruces. Marsh marigolds glowed in the streams.

Our first birds were notable—in front of the excellent small museum there was a pair of evening grosbeaks. We drove through the tall, pointed black spruces with their understory of Labrador tea, cloud-berry, bearberry, blueberry and raspberry. Under a gloomy sky with a penetrating cold wind we explored the black spruces near Whirlpool Lake. The woods were silent, not a bird nor animal appeared, nor were there any flowers. Dr. I. M. Cowan of the University of British Columbia later told us that untouched taiga, unlike deciduous forest, produces little that is edible for bird or beast—some tamaracks and alders for browsing, tiny spruce seeds and a few berries for birds.

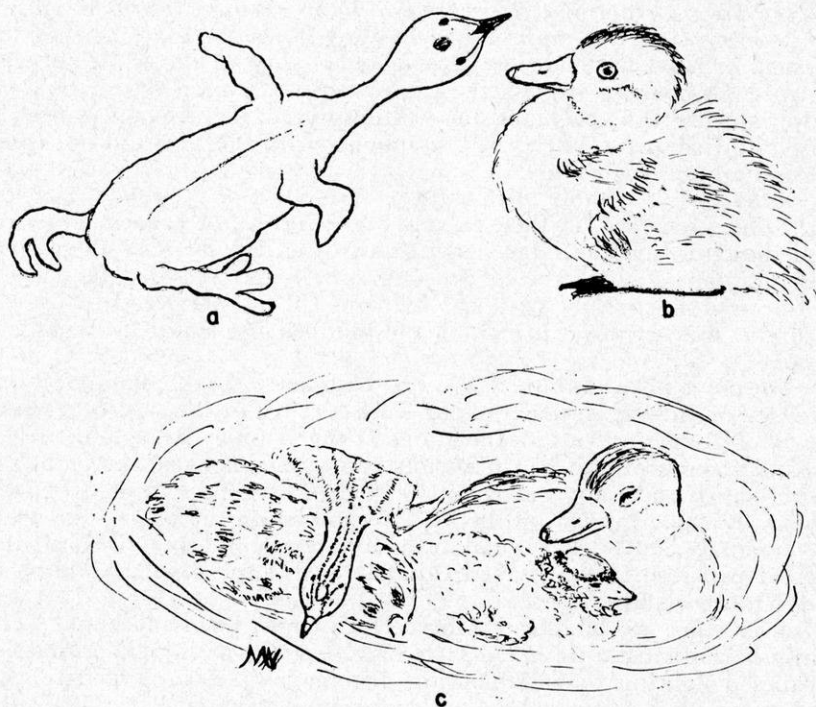
There was evidence of the over-abundance of elk—tracks, small willows and alders killed by browsing, and a little evergreen killed by having antlers rubbed against it. Elk are native in Manitoba; they took refuge on Riding Mountain before the advance of civilization. In the twenties this forest of 120 square miles was made into a park; now the elk have become too numerous for their range. They can be shot by rangers and the meat given to the Indians. Last year the season was opened outside the park so that farmers could shoot them when they found them eating from their feed stacks.

A pair of barn swallows was nesting in the camp shelter in which Lois heated the delicious venison pie she had made from a deer shot by her husband. For dessert we had tarts of saskatoon berries, related to our eastern juneberry.

We drove to the east end of the park and walked to a tower from which we viewed a great expanse of level farm land, once the bed of the ancient Lake Agassiz. To the east lay Lake Manitoba. The trees here

were mountain ash and immense paper birches, the shrubs—mountain maple, hazel, and high-bush cranberry. And the flowers on the forest floor! Star flower, Canada mayflower, Canada violets and exquisite nodding trilliums.

The east side of Riding Mountain drops abruptly to the plain 1,300 feet below. We drove down to the region of burr oaks (the only oak in



A. WESTERN GREBE. B. CANVASBACK, TWO DAYS OLD. C. HAPPY FAMILY IN THE PINTAIL NEST; FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: FRANKLIN GULL, EARED GREBE, COOT, CANVASBACK.

Manitoba), green ash, and Manitoba maple (box elder); then back up past blooming choke cherries to the conifers again.

A bear hurried across the road in front of us—exciting because he was a natural wild creature, not dangerously familiar and contemptuous of human beings like the bears of our western United States Parks. And here came a family of Canada jays, father, mother and three well grown young, fluffy and grey and white like enormous chickadees. Ralph pointed out an elk slipping off through the woods, his neutral colored bulk inconspicuous except to a hunter's eyes. Later he showed us a cow elk hurrying away, closely followed by her wobbly new baby. He did **not** suggest a closer approach, for a mother elk might strike at a person to



defend a small calf, and in the fall the bulls are dangerous. Motorists are warned not to get out of their cars.

The sun had now come out and the wind slackened. On a big patch of burned-over hillside above Clear Lake we found a wealth of birds—yellow-bellied sapsuckers and red-breasted nuthatches, veeeries and olive-backed thrushes, and five species of warblers, all in song—Nashville, myrtle, chestnut-sided, redstart, and ovenbird. Also five species of sparrows, all singing—chipping, clay-colored, song, fox, and white-throated.

On Lake Catherine there were two loons. Lois called them with a fine loon cry and they approached halfway down the lake, looking for a friend or rival. A golden eagle alighted on one of the white spruces. As Lois was cooking scrambled eggs for supper, a timber wolf howled! Ralph howled right back and the wolf answered, plainly he was nearer. Ralph howled again, but to our disappointment, the wolf did not come peering around the bushes.

This park is notable in that it preserves a bit of the real wilderness with some **carnivores** in their natural state, instead of concentrating on semi-domesticating the large **herbivores** to the detriment of themselves and the destruction of the forest. Our only regret was that for such a unique and fascinating park the Canadian Park Service provides no naturalist to interpret it to visitors and publishes no list of its fauna and flora.

On our trip to Manitoba\* we had had many notable days: 46 birds recorded on the day we spent in the Ruthven area in Iowa; 55 on each of the two full days in South Dakota, one at the Waubay Refuge, the other at Sand Lake; while in North Dakota the counts had reached 65 at the Lower Souris and 70 on the day at Des Lacs, Lostwood and the Kenmare region. But this day outdid them all: 55 species on the way to and from the mountain, and 30 additional in the forest—a proud total of 85. It was a great privilege to have taken this trip with such keen naturalists as Ralph and Lois Bird.

Ever since we had read Albert Hochbaum's brilliant book, "The Canvasback on a Prairie Marsh," we had longed to visit Delta. Florence Jacques' delightful "Canadian Spring" had made the desire even stronger. And now, at last, we were here, welcomed by Al himself, Director of the Delta Waterfowl Research Station.

The hatchery pond is a show spot with its array of waterfowl. Some of the ducks were pinioned, but there were enough wild drakes to encourage a hen who had lost her first set of eggs to swim about bobbing and diving until she had collected enough suitors to make it worthwhile to toll them off. The Canada geese were free-flying, descendants of pinioned birds. They migrate south in the fall, return in spring, and nest in the marsh sometimes miles away; as soon as the eggs hatch, back they lead their offspring to the hatchery pond for the free food.

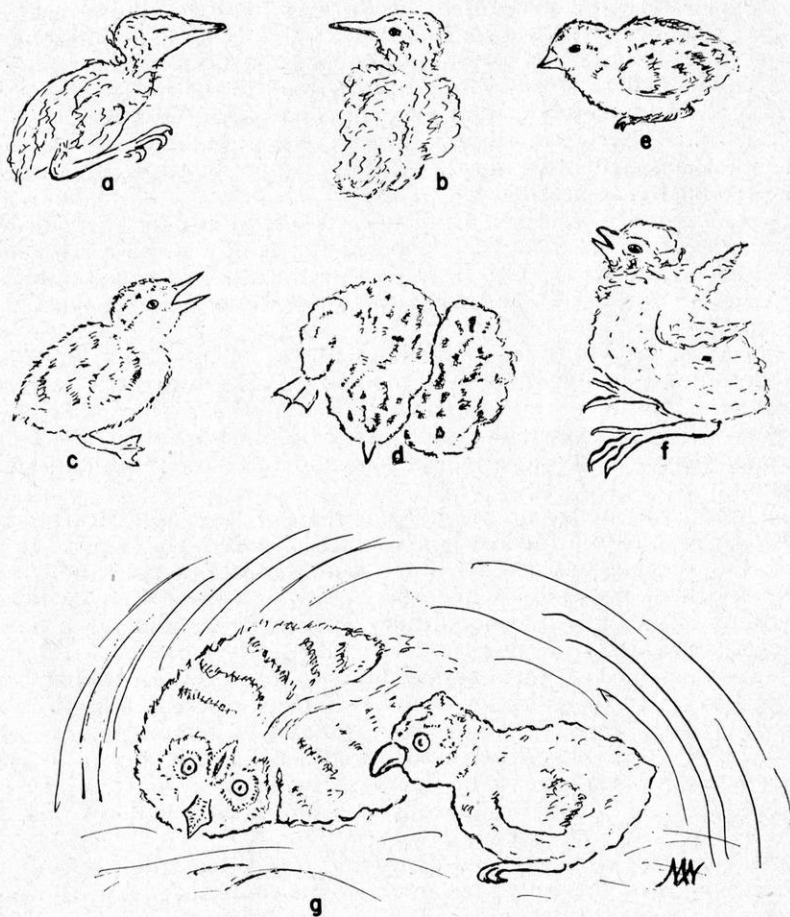
The progress of a goose family through the crowded yard was an impressive sight—head down, bill open, neck weaving snakily from side to side, the gander led the way, followed by two to four plump and wooly goslings, while the goose, in the same attitude, brought up the rear. We never saw any of the other inhabitants attempt to argue with

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\*Potholes and Prairies. 1951. Illinois Audubon Bulletin, No. 80:6-12.

the proud parents; even swans moved hastily out of the line of march.

The three whistling swans, which had been winged by hunters "in mistake for geese," were a beautiful and pathetic sight. Every few hours they would gather on a bank, giving haunting cries, which made us



FORSTER TERN: A. 10 MINUTES OLD. B. 90 MINUTES. C. 12 HOURS. D. 1 AND 2 DAYS. E. SHARP-TAILED GROUSE. F. COOT. G. SHORT-EARED OWLS.

think of the fabled death song of the European swan, waved their wings in preparation for flight to the North, and plowed across the pond.

Our cottage was a mile away from the station over a sandy, winding road along the ridge between Lake Manitoba and Cadham Bay. It was thickly bordered with choke cherries, hung with white tassels, and red-

osiers in bloom. Least flycatchers **chebecked** and alder flycatchers talked about a "great deal," while every few yards a yellow warbler proclaimed territory. Young snowshoe hares frolicked across the road and occasionally a deer bounded ahead of the car. Near the cottage was a marsh where yellow-headed blackbirds in spectacular plumage gave their curious songs.

Delta Marsh was a world in itself. The nesting colonies were the greatest wonder to us—such harsh screeches greeted us as we approached that of the Forster's terns. And what terrific commotion at the Franklin's gulls' colony, where downy young quickly took to the water. The adult eared and western grebes swam away in silence. On Cadham Bay were several white-winged scoters. The white pelicans were an amazing sight—135 of them swimming together. They seem somehow prehistoric—like pterodactyls reincarnated.

One night we went out from our cottage at two in the morning. Jupiter shone in the east, Vega stood in the zenith, while a half moon rode high to the south. On every side prairie marsh wrens bubbled, a night heron "quonked," and from far away western grebes gave their wild cries.

The meadows south of Delta were full of birds—vesper, savannah, and Leconte's sparrows, and western meadowlarks with their inspiring songs. One day we were shown nests: a bobolink's, a shoveller's and a harrier's—all with eggs, and a short-eared owl's with gnome-like babies in graduated sizes. It was a mouse year and these owls were unusually abundant.

Three times a day at the lodge we ate a large and hearty meal cooked by Mrs. Nan Mulder, whose husband cares for the "decoy" in the pond. Our companions were six to ten students from Canada, the United States and New Zealand, all fine boys deeply interested in vital things. There were many guests, among them a visitor from Finland, a nature photographer, and professors from Canadian universities.

It was the hatchery that engrossed most of our time, for we had come to Delta to watch the behavior of newly hatched ducklings, and this we did with many species. The boys kept bringing in sample eggs of other marsh birds, so after a while we acquired a menagerie of five to eight different species at a time. The ducklings would soon be transferred to the brooders, but the miscellaneous creatures stayed with us, and we cared for them as best we could.

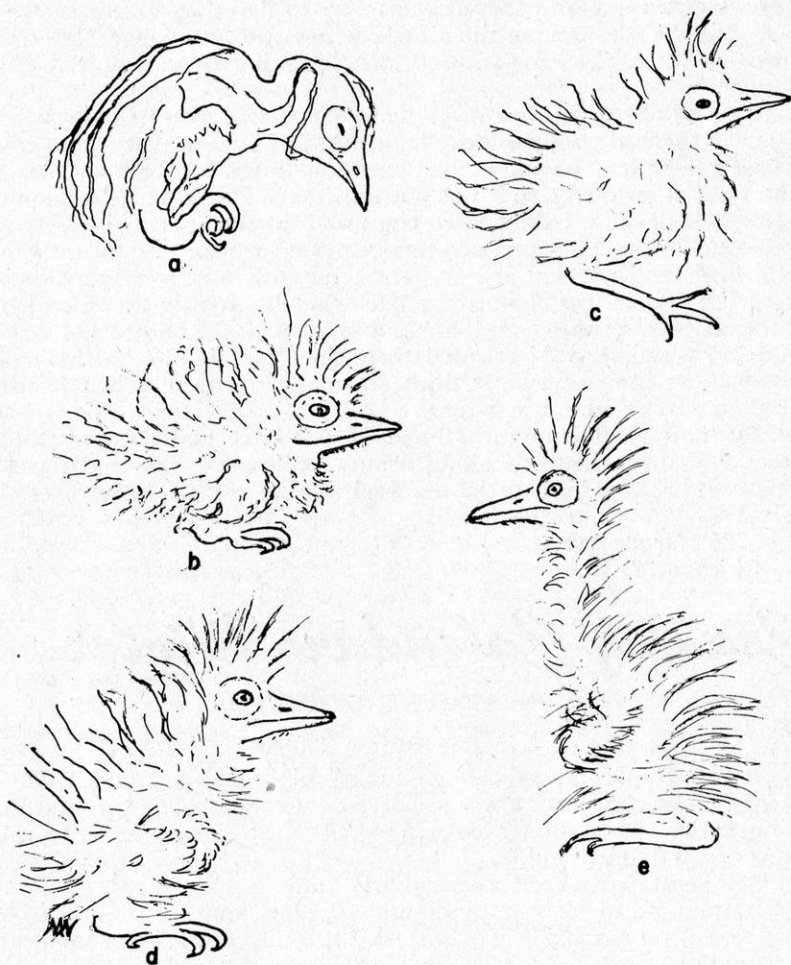
All the baby birds emerged damp and reptile-like, their down close to their bodies, objects only their own parents could love. After an hour or two of snuggling against other little birds in a second-hand pintail nest, they dried off, fluffed out and began to preen, stretch and take an interest in life.

Grebes may start to incubate with the first egg, so that the eggs hatch at intervals. For two days before the egg shows any sign of pipping, the infant may call—"Wait for me." Eared and pied-billed grebes were astonishing little things—striped on the back and head and both with much red on their faces. Western grebes were a silvery plush with a naked red spot on the forehead—they made us think of tiny seals. All these little grebes had a passion for climbing on top of the other little birds and draping themselves over their backs or over the necks of the



Franklin gulls, pinning them to the ground—such pushings and wriggings ensued, such outraged remarks once the gull was free.

The Forster's terns quickly learned the voice of the junior author, who fed them, so that every time she spoke, a clamor of raucous squawks broke out; she soon found it more peaceful to whisper. One of our strangest babies hatched from an American bittern egg. Some of the prettiest were sharptail grouse chicks with down of brilliant gold, soft



AMERICAN BITTERN: A. 20 MINUTES OLD. B. 12 HOURS. C. 24 HOURS.  
D, E. 48 HOURS.

and silky, shading into orange and brown on their backs and wings, and with leggings down to their toes.

The baby coots were too absurd for words—jet black body down sprinkled over with orange, bright red bills with black egg-tooth, bare

red crown, red down around the face, orange ruff around the neck, and tiny orange-tipped wings waved alternately as their owner weaved its head back and forth frantically begging for food. During the next five weeks they were with us they remained tame and confiding, adopting both us and the gulls as parents.

The Franklin's gulls, which seemed larger, browner editions of tern chicks, were as enterprising as the coots in feeding themselves. When they were two days old they began to try to fly; they would leap a half inch into the air, waving their little wings and shrieking. (We are inclined to think that, for young gulls, shrieking is an essential part of flying.)

One of our ambitions in going to Delta was to watch the behavior of newly hatched ruddy ducks. We could not believe that "from infancy ruddys are sullen, ferocious, bad-tempered birds"\*. Ruddies nest later than most other ducks, so it was not until June 25th that these important eggs hatched. The babies were charming, as docile and gentle as any other ducklings. They preened themselves vigorously and even the other little birds and nibbled at our hands, but this was merely evidence of precocity. Their legs were so far back that frequently they became discouraged with walking and hopped like toads. Ruddies are hard to raise in captivity, so Al released these ducklings in the hatchery pond; protected by their unusually thick down, they proved well able to care for themselves without a parent.

By the end of June our Choke Cherry Lane had become Wildrose Lane—a picture of breath-taking beauty. With two little gulls and two little coots riding in state in the back of the car we bade farewell to Delta.

5725 Harper Ave.  
Chicago 37, Ill.

## *Country Calendar: Winter*

By AUGUST DERLETH

### i. The Opium Eaters

It was Hugh who said, one January night in the woods along the Spring Slough that nature was as necessary to some men as opium to the opium eaters. "In a manner of speaking," he said, "I suppose we're opium-eaters of a different kind."

The figure struck me as peculiarly apt.

It was one of those rare nights, windless and still, air crisp with frost, and a full moon rising over the hills to the east, laving the meadows in its yellow glow—a fugitive from autumn met suddenly in winter: a night following an afternoon of thaw weather between snows. It was an apt figure because it the first such night since November, two months before, and perhaps it might be the last until March, two months to come, a kind of half-way mark in the snowy, icy weather which normally ended night hikes until another year, and because, moreover, I had felt like that without saying so—felt already the restless bearing in of winter,

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\*E. H. Kortright, 1948. *The Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America.*

of the snows and ice and cold that forbade the frequent journeys into woodland and meadow so much a part of the vernal seasons.

A singularly beautiful night, with the full moon already over the hills, standing above the dark line of trees on the crest of the ridge to the east, flowing its light down upon the Upper Meadow, the grove of trees dark to the southeast, and the ice of the Spring Slough, where the railroad and the trestle curve over it into the south: we stood there, feeling a light south wind rising, like the breath of the deep woods edging the west shore of the long slough, and tasted the autumn again in the odors rising, and the summer in the strong fragrance of decay, when the year's first foliage begins to rot even while the flower-season is at its height. Two months of winter weather gone by, two months of confinement to house and village streets, and in me surged steadily the tide of restlessness, the yearning for spring, the same tide recognizable without the need of any word in Hugh. The necessity for going into the woods, for seeking nature, was there. And this January afternoon and night: a pleasant workfree Sunday: afforded a breathing space, a moment of escape from the winter's temporary prison.

It is not that winter keeps any nature-lover from the woods, but rather that by and large the season prevents that kind of meditative hiking to which every nature-lover is given—temperatures between fifteen above and ten or twenty below are not conducive to leisurely walking in the woods and meadows.

Opium-eaters of a different kind! Perhaps. But that is not to say, as so many pseudo-psychologists would have it, that nature is an escape, because every nature-lover knows that all is not soothing peace close to the earth, but rather that there is manifest always a ceaseless war, the endless struggle to survive, and the marks of it are everywhere to see, in winter as well as in summer.

No, this kind of opium-eater has about him a core of inner strength no one else ever has. Something there is that marks his kinship with the earth, something that makes itself manifest in the lingering of an eye upon a bird, the way his body takes the winds, something that rises to quicken the pulse in midwinter at the thought alone of spring. The necessity of nature to him is stronger even than he is. Take him away from nature, and an essential part of him will shrivel and die.

There is a parallel, certainly. Opium-eaters of a different kind! Nature is the kind of opium that quickens every sense a man has, that enriches and enlivens his appreciation of the earth on which he lives, the earth to which ultimately he returns, as a part to its whole.

## ii. The Song of the Junco

While I walked one January afternoon along the Lower Meadow's edge, past the bank of osiers and mustard-colored willows leaning over the rim of snow-held meadow, I heard suddenly a whisper of song, the ghost of a song almost, coming from the osiers where constantly during my advance along the line of trees and bushes dividing woodland from meadow had risen only the subdued and sometimes querulous notes of juncos gathered there, fluttering up and back, as often winter birds do in this time of snow and cold. I stopped and listened for the song to



come again, and there it was, a pleasant unfamiliar little song, whispered from the heart of the osiers where they grew red against winter.

It was not such a song as might be expected to come from the snow-bound countryside; rather, it was of spring, and instantly the suggestion of spring grew like a tangible thing in the air where now the whispered song was joined by others in a kind of musical conversation. Yet there was no bird in evidence save the juncos, unquiet in the osiers and the willows, the common slate-colored junco (*Junco hyemalis*) making its variety of calls, the *tse-tse-tse* note so common in winter, the alarm *tchek* and the more rapid repetitive note similar to it. The birds were not alarmed by my presence, and presently left off giving the alarm note. The song, however, continued, rising from the brush where sunlight lay warmly, not a complex song at all, but a simple, primitive melody.

I stood scrutinizing the osiers in search of the fugitive singer. The other songs had faded and died away, but one singer remained, and presently I found him—a solitary slate-colored junco voicing its weak, uncertain melody. I tried to count its notes, and found the song varying between a simple trill and a rapid, repetitive series of notes on the same pitch. I counted notes from eleven to twenty-three before the singer joined his companions and made off for the brook, not far distant. I followed, hoping to hear the song again, but I did not, and soon I went on my way, thinking as often I had thought before that so much of nature remains to be discovered for, often as I walked in winter, I had never before heard the junco's song.

Indeed, I cannot remember having heard it before at any time, and yet thereafter I heard it often enough in March and April. Admittedly it is not a common winter song; doubtless the sun's warmth on that day brought that solitary bird to singing of the vernal season. It was my good fortune to be there at the osiers when he sang, and thus to add to my growing store of woodland songs another familiar melody, to be come upon again and again in after time.

### iii. Starling Mimicry

Of late years the songs of meadowlarks, the **bob-white** of quail and fragments of other birds' songs sound in the winter air not only in Sac Prairie, but throughout the middle west, as doubtless they rang out in the eastern states for some time before, and the careless observer reports the presence of meadowlarks, bluebirds, and other birds in the winter-held countryside. Any student of birds has no difficulty identifying the source as the common starling, usually perched high in a nearby tree, as if proud to advertise his accomplishments and fearful that they might be attributed to some other source unless he remains conspicuously visible.

Bird mimicry in Wisconsin was for a long time limited to the cat-bird and the brown thrasher, both easily enough identified, so that the appearance of the starling, whose talents in this direction were not much publicized beside his greater reputation as a pest among birds, bewildered the amateur ornithologists of Sac Prairie, as doubtless he was responsible for many bad and careless guesses throughout the midwest. None of the starling's mimicry is perfect, though I have heard very close imitations of both the meadowlark's song and the quail's **bob-white**. Some-

thing, however, is lacking in the starling's mimicry, even his most expert, the modulation of notes, the turn of a phrase—little things which inevitably betray the starling's identity to anyone at all familiar with the pleasant songs he imitates so nostalgically at winter's height.

Nevertheless, in any brief for the starling—and a brief in defense of the starling is of necessity extremely short—the bird's mimicry must be set down in his behalf. His thin, pale imitations have about them, however imperfect, something of spring, a quality of nostalgia and a promise of March and April coming. Like the occasional mild day, the starling's mimicry breaks the grip of winter, if only for a moment; his song drifts through the crisp air, pleasant to hear, even if no true naturalist is deceived for an instant. In his own way he is as constant as February's crows and March's redwings, and his mimicry is rapidly becoming part of winter's pattern in Sac Prairie.

Sauk City, Wisconsin

## FEATHERED OBSERVATIONS

By MARILU L. MADURA

Blue jays are my favorite birds. Perhaps this is because I have always lived among them and have closely associated with them since my early childhood. I have learned to like the contrast of the blue and the white of their coats; their remaining all winter with us; their pluck in surviving on meager rations; and their sudden shift to the soft side displayed by their tender babyishness at nesting time. I think their shrill screams, uttered in defiance when challenging or attacking the presence of some large intruder upon their home range, is not wholly inappropriate or inelegant. To me, their mock calls are studied accomplishments. I love to hear them chortle, whistle, trill, mew, or drop perfectly liquid notes from some densely screened tree limb in a nearby arbor. So it is that in my extreme moments, I think that the state of Wisconsin should have really adopted the Northern Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata bromia*) as its state bird. Surely, there is no better bird representative in the whole of the territory. To enumerate a few of his many virtues, I can say that, winter or summer, you can depend upon finding this handsome species in the northern, the western, the eastern, as well as in the southern portion of our state. He is a native son and is very loyal to his birthplace. No one can deny that he is bold and tenacious, clever and vivacious, alert and felicitous. Modeling upon such outstanding merits, how is it that he has been overlooked?

As I have stated above, I have had much association with the blue jays. My very first acquaintance with Chipper (my colloquial name for any of the blue jays—they all look alike, as nine peas in a pod) was at a very tender age, and I mean this for both of us. My home is situated among the primeval scrub oaks and jack pines of the sandy district of central Wisconsin, and a great many jays nest right up to the very gables of the house. In this habitat they invariably choose a scrub oak to build their nests upon. On one such nest, easy of access (eight feet), I concentrated my early attentions and constantly observed it in all its phases, from the first few twigs of construction to the hatching out of the speckled

eggs. I did it all from a distant step ladder, which brought me up to the same level as the nest and after my familiarity was established, I was accepted as a necessary evil, no doubt, by the birds. My studies, however, were rudely interrupted by the wanton raid of a huge pine snake, one sunny afternoon.

Blue jays, perhaps because of their very vociferousness, make a terrific clamor when their nests are being molested. The combined screaming of about a dozen brought me on the double quick, but the reptile had worked fast tragedy and I was barely in time to see the last of the brood (five) in the deadly process of being eaten alive! I screamed in my panic and thereby summoned help, which though very capable, succored only that last member from the snake's avaricious attentions. The other four, already swallowed nestlings were reached almost immediately by prompt incision, but they were found to be dead from suffocation and the effects of gastric juices.

The rescued Chipper, very wet but apparently uninjured, was just put back into his half-demolished nest. We hoped that the parents would resume their family life, but for some reason (probably the fearful odor that he retained from the snake) he repelled the old birds and they would not continue in taking care of him. So, it fell to my lot to assume foster parenthood.

3-21-48 *Drawn from life.*



*Domesticated Blue Jay*

*"Asleep on the Perch!"*

I fed the ugly little monster everything I imagined the parent birds would feed him (albeit abetted by table food in crises—and there were many of them), and he ate everything. He responded admirably well and became my first Chipper. Although he showed signs of runtiness, I attributed this to the snake episode, because I have reared many since then, entirely on table food (consisting of foods prepared for the usual human consumption), and they were perfect representatives of the species in the wild state.

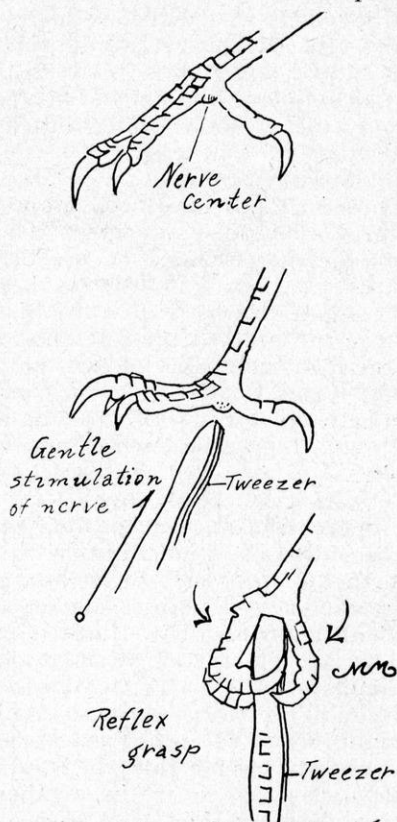
In feeding my first charge, I made my first practical observation in the department of scatology. Nature, to cope with the necessity of cleanliness, has evolved many ingenious devices to carry out her programs. I had watched the parent birds carry away the excrement from the nest of their young, but here at hand I found that after almost every tidbit that he received, Chipper would signal by wagging his pin-feathered stub of a tail and immediately thereafter deposit a bundle in my care. The bundle was efficiently



prepared for transportation by being securely encased within a thin, oily sac. I dutifully picked it up at one end with a pair of tweezers and discarded it. After he matured, however, Chipper forgot the convenience of the carrying sac and eliminated it altogether and grew careless of his droppings.

In the taking care of this blue jay, I also made another discovery, which reveals the bird's mode of successful locomotion from one perch to another. He was a very greedy individual, like all blue jays, and whenever I approached his cage (built for his own protection) he would flutter his fast developing winglets, and babyishly cry for his morsel, which I would extend to his open mouth with feeding tweezers. He soon improved by extending his neck as far out as it would go, and once when I was rather slow with the food, he extended himself so far as to lose his equilibrium and turn a half somer-sault on the perch to dangle in a backward position. Since he could not swing himself upright again, his only recourse from the predicament, was to fall down upon his head—which he did very aptly! Then he resumed the perch again and continued to ask for his morsel without the slightest note of any chagrin in his baby voice. It taught him a lesson, nevertheless, and he never quite repeated that same maneuver again. He began to hop from one perch to another to be near the food entrance. It was then that I noticed his wonderful dexterity and that he never failed to grasp the perch he landed on with an instinctiveness that was miraculously timed. When he happened to hop upon my finger in his next soiree, I could not help but feel his sure grasp upon the instant of landing. Disengaging his clutch, I accidentally touched the ball of one of his feet with the tip of the feeding tweezer and saw the claws respond with a strong reflex action. It is this "button" that nature has presented to the tree hopping bird that accounts for his wonderful ability to perch with such remarkable alacrity.

The domesticated blue jays have an abnormal love for taking water baths. They wet themselves thoroughly and sit in the sun to dry and preen. When dressed and dried completely, they will immediately partake of another soaking. Nor does cold weather seem to deter them in the least. Chipper would not hesitate in taking advantage of a cup of water when the mercury read 20 degrees below zero (of course he resided in the house).



*Leg Reflex of the Blue Jay.*

It was through bathing that I lost my first Chipper. In the summer months we do our laundry on the lawn. The bird was perverted in taking his splashes in the washer, using the reciprocator for a convenient perch to dry out on. One day, in rinsing out the clothes, we forgot about his absurd habit and left the rinse water in the tub while we hung the wash out on the line to dry. When the water was drained off later, we found the pitifully drowned corpse of poor old Chipper. The water line had been too high to permit him to get out of the tub or to stand up on the reciprocator inside. He was only two years old at the time.

Necedah, Wisconsin

## *Outdoor Calendar*

By JAMES H. ZIMMERMAN

### 1952 PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

**1. Lunar Bird Study.** This unusual project will be of special interest to members who will have access to a small telescope around October first, 1952. Though it was not intended that any further W. S. O. studies should be undertaken this year, the unusual opportunity to participate in a continent-wide study of nocturnal migration should be noted at this time, since an undertaking of such magnitude cannot be attempted again for some years, at least.

Since most migration occurs at night, it is best studied at that time. Three methods have been proposed for sampling the quantity of nocturnal migration in progress. The simplest is to count, from a roof-top or other quiet place, the number of call-notes heard per hour as the birds stream past, unseen, overhead. As yet, it has not been possible to determine to what extent the birds' altitude influences their audibility. Since the bulk of the migrants may fly higher at some times than at others, the reliability of this "chip count" has not yet been established. The second relative index of migration which shows some promise is the quantity of birds which can be observed as they mill about and pass through the vertical searchlight beam at an airport. In this case, the birds' altitude could also be determined very easily, by simple trigonometry. If it can be shown that the searchlight does not attract a greater proportion of migrants at some times than at others, it may prove to be a useful tool in studies of quantity and altitude of migration. The final method is to observe birds through a telescope as they cross the face of the moon. Again there are drawbacks. There is no way of knowing whether moonlight itself affects the amount of migratory activity. And since any observation of migration, to be meaningful, must be made simultaneously at many stations over a large area, the small number of available telescopes seriously limits the number of observers if lunar counts are to be used. Even worse, these observations can be made only on the few clear nights when the moon is full or nearly so; the effect of day-to-day changes in the weather on migration can be studied for no more than one short week each month. However, this restriction of observations to short periods does have one advantage in that it makes it

easier to co-ordinate observers on a large scale. Furthermore, the lunar method provides a more nearly absolute measurement of the number of migrants passing over the station per hour per mile of front than do the other methods. And, best of all, it yields an all-important datum which the others do not. That is, the direction in which each bird flies over the station. Therefore the lunar method is the least undesirable of the three at the moment. This fall, an intensive lunar study of the quantity and direction of nocturnal migration is under way on a scale which dwarfs all previous attempts on the American continent. During the full-moon periods of September 1-5, October 1-5, and, to a lesser extent, October 30-November 3, 1952, over 200 stations from James Bay to Chiapas and the Caribbean, and representing 46 of the 48 states, are simultaneously directing their telescopes at the moon. More stations are being added daily, as interested persons are found at new points to fill the many gaps in the network.

An earlier study<sup>1</sup> (made in 1948 at only 30 stations, mostly in the south) leaves no doubt about the ability of this technique to produce important results. Some highlights of the findings obtained in spring, 1948, follow. (1) The quantity of migration increased at most stations from negligible amounts at dusk to a peak near midnight, and then declined steadily to zero before dawn. This remarkable parallel with the rise and fall of restlessness observed through the night in European birds kept caged during the migration season indicates that the majority of night migrants start and stop their flight **during the night**. (2) Night migrants were quite uniformly scattered through the sky over each station; flocking seldom seemed to exist. (3) While the density of flight recorded on the east coast of Mexico was much heavier than that recorded at any other place (it reached a peak of 216 birds crossing the moon per hour in April), it was not thought to be sufficient to account for the considerable flight densities observed in many states to the north and northeast; therefore, some birds must cross the Gulf. Heavy flights, aimed north, observed off the north coast of Yucutan, further indicated the occurrence of direct transgulf flights in spring. (4) The direction in which the majority of the birds flew over a station often was **different** on successive nights. It may be concluded, tentatively, that night migrants must not be following local landmarks and topographic features like river valleys; and that, on the other hand, the weather does exert a marked influence on the course the birds take. They must not have been flying in a direct line from their winter to their summer home; for they seemed to travel by a system of "pressure pattern flying," in which they tended to fly with the prevailing air currents, whatever these were at the time. Such behavior would require a most remarkable power of orientation in birds; they would have to be able to find their way back to the same breeding ground each summer without taking the same route twice, and perhaps never following a direct one. That such may be the case is also suggested by the fact that the migratory flyway of certain localized breeders like the Harris' sparrow is several states wider, east to west, than their very restricted wintering and summering areas. The

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<sup>1</sup>Lowery, G. H. A Quantitative Study of the Nocturnal Migration of Birds. Univ. Kans. Publ., Mus. Nat. Hist., 3 (2); 361-472. 1951.



observations of flight direction in the 1948 study are of interest also in regard to another phenomenon of migration, the occurrence of waves. Since the air tends to flow in toward the center of a low-pressure area, the fact that birds fly with the wind would help explain why hurricanes, and even the common cyclonic storms in the Middle West, seem to concentrate birds near their center.

The fall, 1952, lunar bird study, which is expected to give an overall quantitative picture of continental migration and its major flyways that has never been possible before, will be of special interest because it is not yet known if any of the results obtained in spring in the south apply also to migration in the fall and in more northern latitudes. The hours of peak flight each night in fall need to be compared with those in spring. The fact that a low-pressure area, which generally moves eastward in the Middle West, will be moving away from fall migrants that may be flying south ahead of the cold front on a cyclone's southwest side, instead of overtaking the birds (as it does with the spring migrants that push north with a warm front on a cyclone's southeast side) will provide an important means of testing the present theories about the effects of weather on migration, which were developed from spring observations alone. And we have a chance, at last, to find out whether night migration is heavier in the Wisconsin River Valley, for instance, or along the Door County peninsula and the west coast of Lake Michigan, than it is over adjacent land or over the lake. (No Wisconsin stations participated in the 1948 study, and those that did observe in adjacent states were hampered by cloudy weather during the full-moon periods.) Winkenwerder's conclusion, in his pioneer telescopic work at Madison and Beloit in 1902, that the majority of migrants did follow the Rock River Valley, are now in doubt because he erred in his calculations. The pamphlet describing in detail the aims and methods of lunar bird study (sent to all cooperating stations by the Museum of Zoology of Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, which is undertaking this project) suggests techniques for the study of physiographic effects, altitude of flight, and other topics worthy of investigation. Such studies could be made locally in any year, but fall, 1952, may be the only time when, in return for contributing data to the continent-wide study, we may have all our data converted into actual hourly flight density (in terms of numbers of birds per hour per mile of front for each compass direction over the station), and thus returned to us in a form suitable for our own further interpretation in regard to any problems we wish to investigate. The Louisiana Museum of Zoology says it would like nothing better than to have observers make full use of its computations and prepare papers of their own on local aspects of nocturnal migration. Not only is this a rare opportunity for us, but we, in turn, with our unusually extensive state-wide network of field-notes cooperators, could provide a major contribution to the overall study by making observations at more points than is possible in other states.

The procedure is simple. Any telescope of 15 power or over, with a field large enough to include the whole moon, may be used. A 20X spotting scope is ideal\*. An adjustable lawn chair and a shade for the observer's unused eye are recommended for

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\*If one's eyesight is good, a firmly supported 8X binocular will detect enough birds to give a useful index of flight direction, but long watches with a binocular may be tiring.

comfort. Observers work in pairs, taking turns observing and recording in quarter- or half-hour periods. When the observer is ready, the time is recorded in the first column on the record sheet. When a bird crosses the moon, the time is recorded in this column. Next the observer, imagining the moon to be an upright clockface, with 12 o'clock always at the uppermost point, identifies the point of entry and departure of the bird on the moon's disc in terms of the nearest half-hour, such as "9:30 to 6:00." These figures are recorded in columns 2 and 3, headed "in" and "out". If there is time to note further information before the next bird is seen, the focus (sharp, fair, poor) and the estimated length of the bird (as multiples or fractions of Tycho) are noted in columns 4 and 5. Tycho is a large crater, surrounded by long radiating lines, located one-seventh of a lunar diameter inward from the edge of the moon's disc. Focus and size help in distinguishing birds from bats and insects. In column 6, one further states, when possible, whether the object was probably a bird (bird?), definitely a bat (bat), etc. Finally, at the right, one may enter such remarks as relative speed, type of flight, shape of wings, or the presence of more than one bird at once. The columns are arranged in decreasing order of importance, so that if, rarely, the birds come too fast, one will record at least the most vital data for every bird, especially the time and direction of flight. When the watch ends, the time must again be recorded. Every interruption, including clouds that obscure the moon, are entered as a "time out" and a "time in". Thus the flight density per hour of actual observation of the moon may be computed. The compass direction of flight can be determined from the observed direction of flight, the time, and the latitude of the station. (Note: After one has had some experience with the full moon, such as will occur from September 30 to October 6, 1952, it is possible to extend observations over a longer period by reading the imaginary clock-face as if all of it were still visible, and by recording at half-hour intervals the angle of tilt of the partial moon, in order that the decreased size of the sample being taken of nocturnal migration on nights before or after the full moon may be accounted for in computing the flight density per observed bird for each directional vector. Records of hourly variations in flight density will be very valuable. Many stations, where there is enough help, will observe continuously throughout the night, especially on target night, the date when all stations should be in operation. Target night is October 2, or the first non-cloudy night following it. If weather effects are to be investigated, observations should be made on as many nights as possible through the period of September 30-October 6. Where help is limited, it will pay to choose a fixed 2- or 3-hour period as close as possible to the best time for observing the maximum flight density each night. Peak hours are not always apparent from a perusal of the raw data; but one may be guided by the fact that, as the moon rises toward its greatest altitude, the flight density per observed bird increases. Trial observations should begin as early as possible, such as September 28 or 29, so that if the rest of the period happens to be cloudy, some data will have been gathered anyway. It should be emphasized that data from watches when few or no birds are seen are just as important as those at times of heavy flights. At Madison, the frequency with which birds were seen has varied, within a week in fall, from a total lack of migrants in several hours to an exciting three birds per minute which really kept observer and recorder busy.

Over a dozen cooperating stations (including only four of Wisconsin's 23 known local bird clubs) have already been located in the state. Some of these will have made lunar counts during the full-moon period of August 31-September 6, and the rest will be ready by the end of September. If enough additional Wisconsin stations can be found by then, we will be in a position to make our own intensive state-wide study which will give the W. S. O. considerable renown. This is one of the few serious studies of birds which any one, regardless of their ornithological experience, may take part. And, aside from the scientific aspects, it is an entertaining and stimulating experience to be able actually to watch nocturnal migration in progress. Any one who wishes to participate may receive further information, including a full set of observational forms and the thoroughly informative booklet, by writing to this department immediately. (If the supply of booklets runs short, or

if there is not time to receive further instructions before October 1, the paragraph above is all that is needed to get started.) Even if a station can devote too few hours to the study to obtain hourly and day-to-day variation in the flight, it will still be making a unique and valuable contribution to the over-all picture of fall migration which cannot be substituted for by observations elsewhere; the cooperation by everyone will be most sincerely appreciated.

## **2. Spring (1952) Migration of Geese, Doves, White-throats and Orioles.**

This year, we are surprisingly close to our goal of having at least one migration report from every county, and we can easily reach it if every one who saw one or more of these four birds last spring will return the questionnaire enclosed in the winter **Passenger Pigeon** (Vol. 13, No. 4). While it is definitely preferable and far more productive to ask certain observers, by a personal letter with an enclosed postcard to watch for certain birds in the coming season, it was thought that to enclose a questionnaire in every copy of the magazine this year would aid in locating additional ocooperators. This it did. But the gain of 17 new observers in 1952 was far outweighed by a loss of 41 of those who responded to the individual letters sent out in 1951. In many cases, the questionnaire was probably laid aside with the magazine. Letters will soon go out to a large number of members in search of information on the spring, 1952, migration of the four birds in the questionnaire. It will save this department much labor if those who read this can send in a report right away. Since this study of migration of individual species is a long-term project, members can be expected to be asked for data, year after year, fall and spring, until we shall have accumulated reports from nearly every county in each of several successive years. Next year, however, the more efficient individual letter method will probably be resumed; so only those who have responded by then will henceforth receive requests for notes on migration. Participants are to be reminded of the fact that, while this study requires hard work, we are learning things which could not be learned without the cooperation of the remarkable network of W. S. O. field observers which has now been built. Their generous assistance is much appreciated.

## **3. Fall (1952) Migration of White-throats and Geese.**

The questionnaire in this issue, due in January, continues the study of migration of individual species referred to in the last paragraph and also seeks evidence of migration in general through September-November which may be compared with the weather and with the results of the lunar bird study. It is important to direct our attention to migration in fall, since we know so much less about the movements of birds at this season as about those in spring. While the reports received last fall were less numerous than those in the spring of 1951, they were surprisingly good and showed that a fall study is definitely worth while. It is hoped that every county will be heard from this time. Again, it will save much later correspondence if everyone who sees a goose or a white-throat will turn in a report. (Incidentally, it is not too late to report on white-throats and myrtle warblers observed in fall, 1951. The results of that survey will be presented soon. As always, remember that a poor report is better than none.)



**4. One-day Fall Tally.** As a further means of focusing attention on migration in autumn, members are reminded that now, in addition to those at the year's end, in May, and in midsummer, there is to be a one-day count in the period September 13-October 5. It should be reported in the usual manner to the field-notes editor, (Strelitzer) who will now summarize and present four one-day counts each year, instead of only a Christmas and May-day tally.

**5. One-day Breeding Bird Tally.** As explained in the last issue on pages 29 and 47, the summer tally, made on some date between June 21 and July 13, inclusive, should be sent **immediately**, along with the May-day tally and **both** spring and summer field notes (and nest cards), to Mr. Carl L. Strelitzer, 2219 36th Street, Milwaukee 15, Wisconsin.

**6. List of Summer-resident Birds.** This department wishes to obtain lists of all the summer birds observed in the period June 21-July 13 (or for which there was evidence of breeding if the species was noticed outside of this period). Species observed on the one-day summer count by a club or individual should be included in this list. This project is not new. It was initiated in 1948 (see discussion on back cover of **Passenger Pigeon** 10:1) with a request for nesting reports. Nest cards should be sent in, as always, to the field notes editor. But nests are less often found than singing males, immature birds, or other evidences of the fact that the species spent the summer where it was observed. If the bird is unusual, later attempts can be made to find a nest. But at present we need reports in large quantity, from every county, to fill out the summer range maps of each species in the state, and also to help us prepare our future "Where to Find Birds in Wisconsin". Different symbols will, of course, be used on the maps to distinguish between actual nests and the auditory and visual records of each species that are now being sought. The check-list of the more common breeding and migrant birds of the state, enclosed in this issue, may be used to report the summer birds found in the yard, town, county, or on a vacation trip in Wisconsin; or one may instead list, after each species, the locations at which it was found in this or previous summers. Please see the last Outdoor Calendar for the legend to be used, and then return the card, even if very few species were observed, to this department by mid-October. (This report is a requirement in the contest; see No. 12 below.)

**7. Termination Dates of Song.** On the same check-list just referred to, the last date when song was heard, the last date of daily song, or any late dates for song may be reported. This, another long-term project, was explained in the last Calendar. We are especially interested in **any** July or August dates when song was noted for species not included on the chart presented a year ago.

**8. The Cardinal's Song.** It will be of great interest to see what observations others around the state have made in this or previous summers about the kinds of songs their cardinals sing (see questionnaire and discussion in last issue). This is not an easy study, and it will take time. No further questionnaires are to be sent out, except to replace those returned with some comments on the project or a report of the observer's

experiences. Those who do not return a report for 1952 may use their questionnaire in future years.

**9. Frogs and Toads Seen or Heard.** As explained last time, this study hopes, through the years, to accomplish for these amphibians the same objectives outlined for birds in projects 6 and 7 above—namely, the breeding ranges, ecology, and song periods of each species in Wisconsin. Please return the questionnaire enclosed in the last issue even if only one frog or toad was seen or heard in 1952. Data from previous years will also be of use. To those who report, a fresh copy of the questionnaire will be furnished for 1953.

**10. The Kingbird Survey.** This is the last call for reports on the range and population study of kingbirds in the state. Please return the questionnaire to Mrs. E. R. Smith, Two Rivers, Wisconsin, right away.

**11. The Meadowlark Study.** Now is the time to sit down and summarize one's summer and fall observations on meadowlarks before they are forgotten. Some of the things to make note of, together with the objectives of this cooperative Minnesota-Wisconsin project, are listed in the last issue on page 42. Mr. Bud Lanyon will summarize and write this article.

**12. Contest to Name the Shrub.** To date, no one has volunteered to name the plant bearing the Acadian flycatcher's nest (**Passenger Pigeon** 13:4:152). This species, which becomes a large, rather open shrub, is found on cool slopes and in wooded valleys throughout the state, with the possible exception of the northernmost counties. The photograph, though reduced to one-third or one-fourth natural size, is clear enough so that even the nest material can be identified. To provide an incentive, this department will award a one-year active membership (\$2.00) in the W. S. O. to the first person to name correctly **either** the shrub **or** the nest material. (In each case, either genus or common name will be accepted.) Further rules follow: The entry must accompany a report on summer birds (No. 6 above). The contest, which closes at midnight Monday, November 10, 1952, is open to any member or non-member who has not visited the site of the nest. Names of all persons who submit correct guesses will be printed. Duplicate prizes will be awarded in the event of a tie. (Note: If you have photographs suitable for future contests of this sort, or ideas on this subject, they will be appreciated. The double objective is to stimulate both an increased membership and an interest in our flora and fauna.)

This list of 12 projects may seem to be a staggering undertaking for a single year. But it simply demonstrates how much there is to be learned about nature. It is hoped that everyone will find an interest in at least one of them.

2114 Van Hise Avenue  
Madison 5, Wisconsin



# FEEDING THE BIRDS THE YEAR AROUND

By MRS. HENRY KOENIG

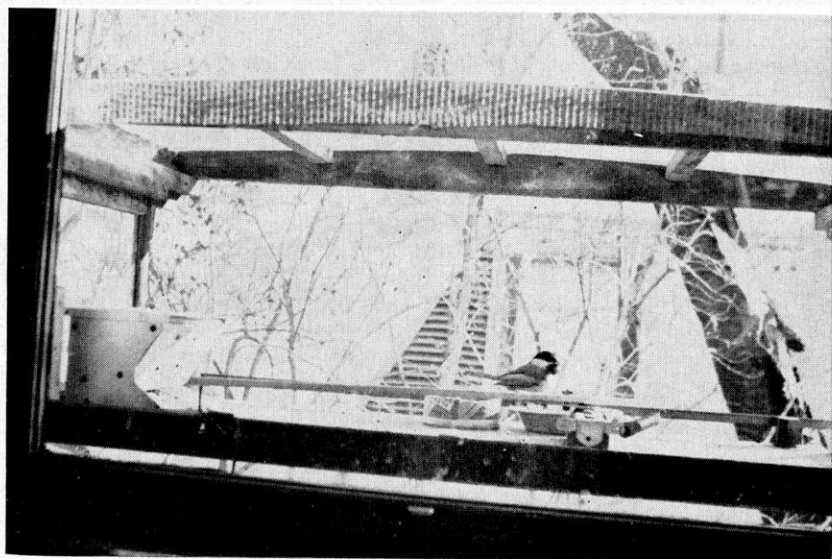
I had often noticed a beautiful male cardinal in the dogwood just outside the bathroom window on the east side of our house and I longed for a means of feeding the birds during the winter.

On November 26, 1949, my husband completed a feeding station and put it on the sill of a small window which faces the south and practically touches the dogwood mentioned above. In fact, during severe weather this dogwood seems to twist toward the north clockwise and its branches actually extend into the feeder. This station is about 18 inches long, 12 inches high, and 12 inches deep. The roof, both sides, and the back, are of transparent plastic and the front is entirely open. It can be supplied with seeds from the house by raising the window and lowering the plastic back, which is held up by a little spring catch. During the first winter, I fed the birds cracked corn and wheat by placing it on the floor. There were also some muskmelon seeds which I had saved during the summer, and canary seeds. At first I put the food on the snow near the feeder and the cardinals came to eat. Later three chickadees joined our family. According to my notes, the cardinals hadn't gone into the feeder by February 1, but two weeks later they were feeding in it. We had expected to take the feeder down during the summer but the birds continued to come, that is, it was used entirely by the cardinals and their young the first summer. I gave them drinking water daily. When cold weather came my husband put a double floor into the feeder, insulating the lower one. He cut a hole into the upper floor just large enough to hold an individual aluminum pie plate. He next did some wiring so that an electric light bulb could be used under the water dish to keep the drinking water from freezing. Sometimes we used a 25 watt bulb, but during severe weather a 50 or 60 watt, which kept the supply of water available even when it was 38° below zero one morning. It is surprising to note how important water seems to be to the birds even though there is snow on the ground.

A second feeding station was made by my husband on August 27, 1951. This feeder was two and one half feet long with plastic roof, glass sides, and was open at the back. The roof extended beyond the floor to keep the rain and snow out as much as possible. The birds immediately went into the new station and seemed to prefer it to the old one. The sparrows and squirrels came too. My husband thought a self-feeder might eliminate the trouble so he made one for each station. At first they were afraid, but later nothing seemed to keep them out. He finally made what he called a "sparrow sweeper" which takes care of the sparrows pretty well. A long arm of wood is fastened to a spring which is set and held fast by a catch to which a string is attached. The string is long and reaches into the next room, which is the kitchen. From there I can pull the string. Then the catch releases the long arm which sweeps by the self-feeder and pushes out the offenders. It is released with quite a force due to the spring. On the first morning after it was installed my husband got up before daylight to start his vigil. A sparrow came and met his fate and thus began the education of the sparrows. The bird he hit was



dazed by the blow so that it could be put out of its misery and dropped to the ground below. Believe it or not, no sparrow attempted to enter that feeder for several months—at least not my knowledge. The cardinals could once again eat in peace without always being followed by a sparrow. I didn't like the idea of dead sparrows but something had to be done. The sparrows were being fed in the back so they should have been satisfied. Later a sparrow would come into the feeder now and then, and it took all my willpower to pull that string. There were no more casualties, however, I have seen the feathers fly on occasion. They must hear some warning for they usually leave before the sweeper



reaches them. Some have become smart enough to eat behind the sweeper for I often put crumbs on the floor. The sweeper has little effect on the squirrel. I believe the only way we can keep the squirrel out is to cut away all shrubbery so that it cannot jump from it. The squirrel used to go on the roof and then come down between the roof and the window, entering the feeder from the back. We put an addition on the roof, making it almost touch the window so that this avenue was closed. Then one day when I was in the den I heard a commotion of scratching and clawing. The squirrel had jumped from the bush to the window sill and clawed its way up, again entering the feeder from the back. Then my husband closed the space between the sill and the feeder so it could no longer enter there. The reason for the space in the first place was that we had raised the level of the station so we could look into it better from a sitting position.

Since the squirrel still continues to come, my husband has a plan in mind to attempt to keep it from disturbing the bird's food. He expects to hang a framework of horizontal wooden bars on a spring across the front of the feeding station. When the squirrel jumps to the bars, the

weight of the squirrel will be enough to extend the spring and the framework will swing below the feeder. When the animal jumps off, the framework will again come up to the feeder. It will take three bars, about three and one-half inches apart, and these can serve as perches for the birds.

My husband recently made a suet feeder which we hung on a wire along with two doughnuts and two grapefruit halves filled with a paste of peanut butter, seeds, crushed suet, and nuts. Here the chickadees and nuthatches can eat to their heart's content. The suet feeder looks like a little house having a roof and two walls. The other two sides have bars made of round sticks. These sides taper to a point at the bottom and as the chunks of suet get smaller they settle and are always within reach. The suet is put in at the top as the roof is on a hinge. The chickadees and nuthatches have begun to eat from these feeders. There is always a piece of suet in the honeysuckle bush at the back door, winter and summer, for the birds continue to come and we cannot disappoint them.

Nothing in this world has given me more pleasure than our birds. Several years ago I knew very little about them but our daily observations are fascinating and have made them our dearest friends; in fact, they seem like a part of our family. My last thought before retiring at night is of the birds, for, I then refill the feeders and clean out the sunflower hulls which the cardinals leave. In the morning our first visitors (at about 7:10) during the beginning of January are the cardinals and chickadees which we watch from our breakfast table.

Sauk City, Wisconsin

## THE SPRING FIELD SEASON

By BERNARD D. KAIMAN

Members of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and their guests enjoyed three fine field trips this spring in various parts of the state. Many added to their life lists some of the rarer birds of Wisconsin, and all reported having had a wonderful time while taking part in the fascinating birding experiences offered by these field trips.

The first trip on the spring calendar was the **whistling swan** trip to Oshkosh, Sunday, April 6th, which despite a somewhat brisk breeze, turned out to be the first beautifully warm and sunny day of the early spring season. John Kaspar, an ornithology teacher at the University of Wisconsin, led the group along the shores of Lake Winnebago, stopping at intervals to see the flights of ducks resting near the shore, and other roadside birds. The big find, however, was a great flock of hundreds of the big white swans swimming and feeding just offshore, and giving the group an excellent opportunity for observation at close range. The interest in swans is quite keen, John explained, because they are considered a reliable bird indicator of spring. They arrive in Wisconsin within a week of the official coming of spring and seldom get caught in the spring blizzards, as often happens to the Canada geese. Many other facts about the life history of the whistling swan were brought out in the group's discussion of this, our largest common waterfowl, so that all profited by learning something about this interesting bird.

A total of 55 species of birds was seen including 14 species of ducks, a lesser yellow-legs, several species of hawks, gulls, blackbirds, and sparrows, and all were well satisfied with this glimpse of the early spring migration.

Members and guests present were: Mrs. Walter Rogers and three guests, Appleton; Mrs. Robert Craig, Mrs. C. H. Gephart, Mrs. Robert Thomson, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Higgins, and Mr. and Mrs. James King, Kenosha; Mrs. R. A. Walker and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Kaiman, Madison; Olive Palmer, Ruth Tollefson, Sherwood Cranney, Allie Kruger, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister, Milwaukee; Ed Peartree, Oconomowoc; James Beck, James Fiedler, George Brandenstein, Marlin Tagatz, Arthur Techlow, Clarisse Radke, Stanley Wellso, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank King, Oshkosh; and Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Peterson, Waupaca.

The second field trip will be long remembered by those members who went to Plainfield April 26 and 27 to observe the prairie chickens on their booming grounds. Invited by Fred and Fran Hamerstrom, wildlife biologists and renowned authorities on Wisconsin grouse, the group had a wonderful opportunity to participate in the work of the Conservation Department grouse project of checking band numbers and life-history details, while crouched in the blinds at dawn.

The eager group of hardy enthusiasts gathered Saturday evening at Plainfield, where Fran Hamerstrom explained the work that was being done, and outlined the details to be noted. All were assigned to their places and the group reluctantly dispersed for the short night after a wonderful session of warm camaraderie and fascinating ornithological discussion. Many slept in their sleeping bags under the pleasant night sky, while others took advantage of the fine local inns. At 2:30 a. m. before even the birds were stirring, the group rolled out in the predawn to occupy the blinds, and to observe the birds in their amazing courtship dances and territorial flights on the booming grounds, certainly one of the most spectacular sights in Wisconsin ornithology. At about eight o'clock of an unusually beautiful spring morning, the birds' activity slackened, and the tired but satisfied birders began trooping in to make their reports and to enjoy a hearty second breakfast amid the warm atmosphere of good fellowship that prevailed.

Other birds were seen during the two days to make a total of nearly 90 species. Reported were sharptailed grouse, cormorants, horned grebes, Cooper's and broad-winged hawks, golden plover and other shore birds, and pine and palm warblers.

The response to the announcement of this trip was enormous and many were quite disappointed as only 25 members could be chosen to participate, because of the limited number of blinds. Many came hoping to get a chance at some absentee's place, and some of these hopefuls were accommodated, with some good-natured crowding in the blinds. We hope to make this field trip available again next year to give others a chance to take part.

Those present included: Mr. and Mrs. Harold Roberts, Black River Falls; Charlotte Churchill, Alice Fosse, Helen Northup, Helen Schroeder, Richard Hunt, and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Kaiman, Madison; Merle Pickett, Lillian Marsh, and Dave Block, Manitowoc; Lissa Decker, Dixie Larkin, Karl Priebe, Howard Rathlesberger, Lee Steven, Emil Urban, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Frey, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister, Milwaukee; Ed Peartree, Oconomowoc; Dr. and Mrs. B. L. von Jarchow, Racine; Margaret Morse and Lois Webster, Viroqua; S. Paul Jones, Waukesha; and Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Flanagan, Whitewater.

The third field event was the Campout, a new venture for the Society, but so successful that it is felt that this too, should be planned for next year. The beautiful bluffs of Wyalusing State Park were quite thoroughly censused by an eager group of members and friends who had a wonderful time in the thickets and fields with the rarer warblers and other more southern types of birds that characterize this pseudo-Carolinian zone region. Not the least of the good times was afforded by the fun and spirit of comradeship that was found as all experienced some little mishap of camping. It appears that everyone seems to have forgotten some needed item of equipment, which, however, led to much good-natured sharing and trading that strengthened the friendly atmosphere.

Important behind-the-scene help was extended by Paul Lawrence, genial superintendent of the park, whose interest and care kept the program running smoothly. Harold Burgess, affable manager of the Federal Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge, welcomed the group, and led one party by boat for a fascinating tour through the sloughs of the Mississippi River. Much of the success of the campout can be attributed to the help of these two loyal members.

Another important factor in the success of the campout was Jim Zimmerman's botany field hike. Jim, author of the popular feature **Outdoor Calendar**, has accepted



the task of writing up the report of the census work of the campout. This should prove to be very interesting, considering some of the finds reported by some of the group.

A large delegation from the Wausau Bird Club was present, including Mrs. James Colby, Bertha Pearson, Dan Kozlovsky, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Andrews and son David, Mr. and Mrs. David Bierbrauer, Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Bugbie, and Mr. and Mrs. John Teeple. Other members and friends present were: Mr. and Mrs. Harold Liebherr, Beloit; Mr. and Mrs. Landon Thomas, Edgerton; Mrs. Donna Heuermann and nephew, Kenosha; Mr. and Mrs. Harold Schick, La Crosse; Mrs. Catherine Crocker, Ellen Hoffman, Helen Northup, Helen Schroeder, Mrs. R. A. Walker, Mr. and Mrs. Norv Barger and daughter Elaine, and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Kaiman, Madison; Dixie Larkin, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Adams and daughter Margaret, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hayssen, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister, Milwaukee; Mr. and Mrs. Ed Peartree, Oconomowoc; Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Peterson, Onalaska; and Dr. and Mrs. B. L. von Jarchow, Racine.

## THE MADISON AUDUBON SOCIETY'S 1951 SUMMER BIRD CENSUS

By JAMES H. ZIMMERMAN

The Madison Audubon Society began an annual summer bird census in 1951, using double post-cards sent to members. The addressed portion of the card read, on the reverse,

"What kinds of birds nest in Madison, and how is each distributed in the city? This is a project in which everybody can participate, and the results will be presented at the first fall meeting. It is not even necessary to find the nest; since the last spring migrants are gone by mid-June, and the first fall wanderers come in late July, it is safe to assume that any species seen or heard during this interval are breeding birds. This should prove to be a worthwhile study, and it will be interesting to compare future years with the results of this first census. We cannot hope to record numbers, nor can the whole city be covered. But our members are well-scattered. All we need is a list of the birds noticed within sight or earshot of the house, or on the way to work. Hang up the attached card in a convenient place and then mail it in August after marking as follows: X adults seen or heard; N nest found; Y fledged young seen or heard; H bird house used."

The return-addressed half of the card bore on the reverse a list of the 41 commonest species in the area. The objectives were: (1) To provide a project open to participation by all members which might further stimulate interest in local bird life. (2) To determine, by some more objective and thorough method than the erratic reporting of field notes at meetings, what birds live in the vicinity, and where and how frequently each is found.

Every one of the 41 species listed on the card was observed by at least one of the 38 members who reported, and 20 additional breeding birds were found by them in the Madison area. This report will not enumerate all the birds found in the survey; that list will be filed, along with the 1952 lists of summer birds sent in by W. S. O. members and bird groups around the state, for future use in mapping the distribution of each breeding bird in Wisconsin (see Outdoor Calendar). But some of the results of the Madison survey may be of interest for comparison with other localities. When arranged according to the number of members reporting each, the 35 species most frequently noticed appear as follows:

37 robin	24 b. c. chickadee	16 yel. warbler
36 house wren	24 nighthawk	16 redhead wpr.
36 blue jay	22 b. thrasher	16 downy wpr.
35 m. dove	20 c. waxwing	15 r. n. pheasant
34 starling	20 c. swift	15 mallard
33 catbird	19 killdeer	14 crest. flyc.
32 cardinal	19 song sparrow	13 chip. sparrow
31 Eng. sparrow	19 crow	13 wood thrush
31 flicker	19 w. b. nuthatch	13 r. b. grosbeak
29 b. oriole	19 cowbird	13 hairy wpr.
29 b. grackle	18 hummingbird	12 screech owl
25 p. martin	16 wood peewee	

While there naturally was great variation in the amount of time spent outdoors and in the extent of area covered by each observer, this tabulation does show, in a very rough way, which species were the most widely distributed, abundant, and conspicuous at Madison.

Of over half of the 61 breeding species, either nests or young birds were observed, and there was little doubt that all of the remaining birds had bred in the area in 1951. The 12 of which evidence of breeding was most often noticed were: House wren (17 reports of young birds, 22 of active nests,) robin (21, 13), catbird (18, 10), English sparrow (12, 5), mourning dove (11, 6), starling (11, 3), flicker (10, 4), blue jay (10, 3), oriole (8, 5), grackle (8, 4), cardinal (9, 1) and martin (7, 1). Young or nests were found by one to four persons for each of 24 additional species. Only one nest containing cowbird eggs was reported. Bird houses were used by only four birds: wren (15 reports), martin (4), English sparrow (2), blue bird (1), starling (0), tree swallow (0).

Not all species enjoyed the same distribution. After observations of those who covered the same areas were combined, it was found that the reports could be divided conveniently, for comparison, into two nearly equal groups, 17 within the city proper, and 15 at the edges of town. (By edge is meant close proximity to a field, wood, lake, marsh, golf course or cemetery.) None of the 32 species found in the city proper was absent from the edge areas. (These 32 included the species in the first list above, with the exception of killdeer, song sparrow, crow, pheasant, mallard and grosbeak, and with the addition of red-eyed and yellow-throated vireos and rock dove.) Reports of 11 of these 32 were about evenly divided between city and edge, whether they were found at nearly all of the points in both regions (robin, jay, mourning dove, wren, English sparrow, cardinal), at only a few (yellow-throated vireo), or at an intermediate proportion of the areas (martin, grackle, swift, nuthatch). As might be expected, a considerable number (16) of these 32 birds were more common at the edges than in town. Waxwings and thrashers, for example, increased from 5 and 4 reports, respectively, in city, to 11 and 13 at edge; and chipping sparrows, yellow warblers, pewees and crested flycatchers each increased from 2 or 3 to 8 or 9. More interesting, perhaps, were those which were more often reported in the city than at its edges. The fact that nighthawks were mentioned in 13 of the 17 city reports, as against only 8 of the 15 edge reports, reflects the distribution of gravel-roofed city buildings on which these birds nest. And the scarcity of rock doves on the edges (1 report) could be explained by the presence in these residential areas of neither farm buildings nor city structures to support the pigeons' breeding colonies. The surprisingly low over-all

frequency of pigeon reports (6 out of 32), also noted in the case of swifts (17 of the 32), may mean that these birds, which range far and wide every day beyond their localized nesting areas, are not always noticed when they fly high. No good explanation can be offered for the apparent decrease on the edges of town of starlings (16 in city, 11 at edge), red-headed woodpeckers (8, 4), and screech owls (7, 2). Though the west side, which has the most trees and the largest yards, was the most favorable part of the city for birds, all of the 32 species seemed to be well-distributed about Madison, with the exception of the wood thrush, which was restricted, in the city proper, to the west side.

Beside these 32 birds, the edge areas had a total of 29 additional ones, of which those observed at the most points were song sparrow (12 of the 15 edge reports), rose-breasted grosbeak (10), crow (10), pheasant (9), and, near water, killdeer (9) and mallard (8). After these came bluebird (5), warbling vireo (5), and 21 rarer species. To the total of 61 birds reported, one could add the 34 species which bred within 10 miles of Madison in 1951, of which 20 were to be found close to town at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum on Lake Wingra. With the addition of at least ten more which are known to have bred near Madison in the previous few years, though they were not noticed in 1951, one may say that it is possible to find over 100 breeding birds in the Madison area, and over 80 within walking distance of the city. And, although it is doubtful that they breed in the area, certain other birds were found in the summer at Madison. Several of the observers saw great blue herons and ring-billed gulls in 1951, and among the rarities that year were a barn owl, seen by many in town on July 3rd, and a male hooded warbler, which stayed through June and July at the Arboretum.

This study will be continued each year at Madison. When a larger number of members can be encouraged to participate, it will be possible to show the location of breeding pairs of each species on maps of the city. These maps will be kept on file for reference by those who may wish to find and observe a particular species at Madison in the summer. The maps will also be of great value, in time, in showing any changes in the distribution and abundance of each bird that may occur from year to year. And, aside from local interest, surveys of this sort would be of great value for comparison if they could be conducted by several groups around the state. Bird clubs could collect much information about the birds of a city, or even of a whole county, with little effort on the part of any individual observer, by asking, at least, for brief reports from every member who has birds in his yard or who makes a field trip or two. A more thorough way to survey the summer birds would be to assign parties to different portions of a city or county; even on a single day or two, an enthusiastic club could cover a considerable area in that manner. It was only a few years ago that ruddy ducks were first discovered nesting in a Dane County marsh. And 1951 was the first time, in the more than 20 years during which the Arboretum's birds have been under observation, that cerulean warblers were known to have spent the summer there. Equally interesting discoveries are bound to result from every survey that is made. And the more we can learn about the birds of each town and county, the sooner the W. S. O. can publish its "Where to Find Birds in Wisconsin."



# By the Wayside . . .

Edited by CARL L. STRELITZER

**Winter Wrens Nesting at Solon Springs, Wisconsin.** The finding of a winter wren nest is always of interest to ornithologists, and as Kumlien and Hollister, *The Birds of Wisconsin*, 1951, fail to mention a record of a nest in Wisconsin, a report that was received by me as editor of *The Flicker* should be of interest to readers of the *Passenger Pigeon*. During the summer of 1951, Miss Helen C. Smith of Duluth, Minnesota, discovered a pair of winter wrens, *Nannus hiemalis*, carrying food near her cabin at Solon Springs, Wisconsin. Following the birds, she found them disappearing into the tangled roots of a fallen tree. Later four young were seen being fed near the cabin. After the wren family departed, she crawled into a cavity under the upturned roots of the tree, and with the aid of a mirror and a flashlight she found the nest among the rootlets about 1½ feet above the ground. It was constructed of small twigs, plant stems and moss woven together, with a small opening on the side. The nest was collected and is now in the collection of the University of Minnesota, Duluth.—P. B. Hofslund, Biology Department, University of Minnesota, Duluth.

**A Varied Thrush at Manitowoc.** The varied thrush was a daily visitor at our food tray from January 24 through the month of February. Generally, it came before seven, again in mid-morning, at noon, and in mid-afternoon. It fed very rapidly, pecking and lifting its head for a wary glance. It was eating at a block of frozen lentil soup when we first saw it, but it also seemed to like cooked vegetables and cracked grain, and it was seen once at the suet. Toward the last it seemed unafraid to feed with the English sparrows, but generally it would fly away at the approach of the blue jays, mourning doves, chickadees, or evening grosbeaks. After feeding, it sometimes rested for twenty minutes before disappearing.

About thirty people saw it at our feeder, and it was seen twice at our neighbor's, and once at a feeder one-half mile south of us—across the river valley. Our neighbor got two colored pictures that are quite clear. One is a side view showing the bill and eye-line well, while the other shows the throat color.—Lillian Marsh and Merle Pickett, Manitowoc.

**Whip-poor-wills Scarce in Brown County.** On May 30, 1951, I observed a whip-poor-will. What makes this record unusual for me is that I had not seen it here since May 3, 1941. Years ago this species was plentiful in Brown County.—Edwin D. Cleary, DePere.

**Rare Gulls Seen at Kenosha.** On March 30, 1952, I saw what I readily identified as an immature Iceland gull. I reported the bird to Mrs. C. H. Gephart and then returned and located it again. After observing it for about twenty minutes I was virtually positive of its identification. . . . The last time I saw it was on April 21, 1952. A previous record (unpublished) which I made of this species was on April 6, 1951.

A glaucous gull was first seen in the Kenosha Harbor on April 29, 1952. It was in dull plumage. This individual was seen by many W. S. O. members during the Kenosha convention.

It may be that these two species of gulls occur more regularly on the Great Lakes than is generally supposed.—Richard J. Gordon, Kenosha.

**Turkey Vulture Seen During Kenosha Convention.** Immediately following Sam Robbin's convention address, I stepped outside of the building for a smoke. After I finished, I took out my binoculars to watch some purple martins. While following one of them, I spotted a bird in the distance. Disregarding the martin, I concentrated on the larger bird. As it soared toward the west, it banked and I saw the dihedral of its long wings, the silvery appearance of the underwing, and its small head.—Carl L. Strelitzer, Milwaukee.

**Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk in Oconto County.** On December 8, 1951, a ferruginous rough-legged hawk was seen from a distance perched in a lone poplar. At first I had thought it to be an immature bald eagle because of its size. On closer approach, the lightness in plumage was noticeable, even when its back was toward me. I was able to get within 75 feet of the bird, when it turned on the limb on which it was perched and "eyed me". This was enough to help identify the bird. As I walked nearer, it took to the air and its heavy flight brought it nearly to the ground. After a flight of about a hundred yards, it again alighted into another lone poplar and I was again able to get within less than a hundred feet of it. Again the bird took off with the same heavy flight, almost dropping to the ground, and flew in the direction of another tree about a quarter of a mile away. Their flight in taking off is heavy, yet in the Dakotas, I have seen them leave fenceposts with less effort than this individual.—Carl Richter, Oconto.

**Albino Robin in Appleton.** On August third my wife and I saw an albino robin on the Riverview Country Club property in Appleton. The bird was all white with a very slight bluish cast and just an indication of color on the lower breast. Its eyes were pink.

I have never seen a more perfect specimen alive or in a museum. The bird was very conspicuous and I imagine its life will be a brief one. The first amateur taxidermist that sees it will run for a gun. However, I was interested to note that at least half a dozen players passed close to the bird without giving it so much as a glance.—Alfred S. Bradford, Appleton.

**Conflict Between Starlings and Bluebirds.** On April 18 this year, we hung a bluebird box about thirty feet from our summer cottage at Richford, in Waushara County. The very next day large numbers of bluebirds arrived, and we were happy to see a pair examining our box. First, one went into the box and then sat on the fence while the other went in. They flew away together, then, but returned in an hour. One sat on top of the box while the other went in. As I watched, a starling chased them away, and tried to enter the hole. Unsuccessful, he, too, flew away.

Again the bluebirds returned, one sitting on the top while the other was inside. The starling flew at the one keeping watch; he flew around and around the light post to which the box was attached, as if waiting for his mate. When she came out, the starling chased both of them away. An hour or so later, I found the male bluebird dead on the ground beneath the box, and the only visible injury was on his head; his eyes seemed to be hurt. I attributed the death to the starling.—Mrs. Henry Pochmann, Madison.

# The Winter Season . . .

By CARL L. STRELITZER

(Field observations for the periods March through May, and June through August are due now and should be sent to Carl L. Strelitzer, 2219 South 36th Street, Milwaukee 15, Wisconsin. If you have not sent in your notes for these periods, please do so at your early convenience.)

The winter season of 1951-52 was characterized by an abundance of snow with a lack of extended periods of extremely cold weather.

Waterfowl were seen at late dates in various localities where they normally do not winter. The grebe and green-winged teal observations were notable, and two sight records of the rare harlequin were made.

Although "hawks seemed to decline after the beginning of November and were almost absent during December and January" around Waukesha (Tom Soulen), both the bald and golden eagles were sighted, and two reports of the ferruginous rough-leg were received.

In spite of the deep snows, gallinaceous birds were in evidence, and a very early woodcock was seen.

Our Arctic visitor, the snowy owl, was infrequently seen, but doves, kingfishers, and various woodpeckers persisted.

Among the perching birds, the varied thrush observed in Manitowoc was the prize, while the probable wintering of a towhee in Madison commands attention.

Three species of wintering blackbirds deserve recognition, and the presence of pine grosbeaks in numbers at seven scattered localities will arouse the envy of many observers.

**Horned Grebe:** Milwaukee County, November 18 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin); Dane County, November 18 (John Wilde); last date seen.

**Western Grebe:** This casual visitor was seen along Lake Michigan in Milwaukee County on Jan. 2 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin), at Port Washington in Ozaukee County on Jan. 1 (Mary Donald), with one still present on Feb. 23 (Tom Soulen).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Waukesha County; last seen on Nov. 2 at Saylesville (Tom Soulen).

**Mallard:** Adams County, Dec. 6; unusual in central Wisconsin during this season (Sam Robbins).

**Baldpate:** Lawrence Jahn reports that a bird of this species, banded at Horicon in 1950, was recovered in the Dominican Republic in January, 1952.

**Green-winged Teal:** Dodge County, Jan. 5; late record (William Field).

**Canvasback:** Milwaukee County, Dec. 5; last seen in Milwaukee Harbor (Mrs. Martin Paulsen).

**Old Squaw:** Sheboygan County, Jan. 31 (Harold Koopman); late straggler.

**Harlequin Duck:** Milwaukee County; this rare duck was seen on Nov. 1 and again on Nov. 8 in Milwaukee Harbor (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Dane County, Jan. 1 (William N. Roark); wintering.

**Golden Eagle:** Sauk County; seen in January (Frank Adamski).

**Bald Eagle:** Two widely separated records. Dec. 6 at Madison (George Knudsen) and Dec. 15 in Marinette County (Carl Richter).

**Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk:** Oconto County, Dec. 8 (Carl Richter); See **By the Wayside**. Fond du Lac County, Feb. 1 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin); infrequent visitor.

**Ruffed Grouse:** Seven flushed from a patch of wintergreen where they were feeding on Dec. 1 in Oconto County (Carl Richter). Also heard drumming, Jan. 30-31, in St. Croix County (W. D. Barnard).

**Prairie Chicken:** Dunn County, Jan. 16; somewhat outside of the central Wisconsin range of this species (A. G. Champney).

**Woodcock:** Hartmann's Creek, Jan. 3; unusual record (Sid Miller).

**Mourning Dove:** Observed on Jan. 13 in Milwaukee County (Dennis Conway), and on Jan. 14 in Fond du Lac County (Mrs. Glen Fisher).

**Snowy Owl:** Less commonly seen this past winter than in former years. Only three observed in central Wisconsin counties all winter (Fred Hamerstrom et al.); one in Manitowoc County on Jan. 12 (J. Kroupa).

**Belted Kingfisher:** One present around open water until Dec. 18 in Waukesha County (Ed Peartree); last seen in Waukesha County on Dec. 30 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen).

**Flicker:** Price County, Feb. 1; extremely uncommon winter resident (Harold Jordahl).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Waushara County, Feb. 23; unusual in this part of the state (Norbert Damaske).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Two seen in Juneau County Nov. 11; one at the fish hatchery near Madison on Dec. 30 (Eugene Roark); and one seen in Fond du Lac County on Feb. 1 (Mrs. Glen Fisher).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Burnett County, Jan. 19; uncommon winter resident (N. R. Stone).

**Prairie Horned Lark:** Milwaukee County, Feb. 23; seen on south side of city (Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Strelitzer).

**Crow:** Brown County; more birds seen during December and January of this year than during 34 years of winter bird observing (Edwin D. Cleary).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Seen in nine localities on Christmas censuses (See preceding issue).

**Winter Wren:** Milwaukee County, Nov. 4 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin); late.

**Robin:** Waukesha County; last seen in Oconomowoc on Nov. 4 (Ed. Peartree). Birds wintered in northern Wisconsin—Burnett County Dec. 28 (N. R. Stone); Brown County (De Pere), Dec. 1 (William J. Fisk); and in southern Wisconsin (Jefferson County) where one was heard in song on Jan. 29 (Lawrence Jahn).

**Varied Thrush:** Manitowoc, Jan. 24 (Merle Pickett—Lillian Marsh et al.) See **By the Wayside**.

**American Pipit:** Milwaukee County, Nov. 8; irregular visitant (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

**Myrtle Warbler:** Milwaukee County; last seen Nov. 25 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Winnebago County; one male was noted at Oshkosh on Jan. 12 and again on Feb. 2 and 22 (Stanley Wellso).



**Red-winged Blackbird:** Price County, Jan. 8; rarely winters this far north (Boris Popov).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Dane County, Jan. 2 (William Roark); uncommon.

**Purple Finch:** Wood County, Dec. 29 (Dennis Conway); uncommon winter resident.

**Pine Grosbeak:** In addition to the birds reported from Baraboo, Milwaukee, and Monroe on the Christmas counts, a flock of 16 was seen north of Milwaukee on Dec. 5 (Mary Donald); one at Sussex, Waukesha County, Dec. 5 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen); two north of Adams, Adams County, Jan. 3 (Sam Robbins); and one at Manitowoc Feb. 7 (J. Kroupa). Small flocks and single birds were seen during the two weeks before Christmas at Balsam Lake in Polk County (Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Hermsstad). On Jan. 12, five were seen near Lake Koshkonong, Rock County, and three were observed in the same locality on Jan. 29 (C. J. Skelly).

**Pine Siskin:** Milwaukee County, Nov. 10 and Dec. 2 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin); uncommon.

**Red-eyed Towhee:** Dane County, Jan. 27 (Gratia Stavrum et al.); this bird apparently wintered in Madison.

**Lapland Longspur:** Waukesha County, Feb. 17; a flock of 200-300 birds was estimated to flush when a marsh hawk flew by (Tom Soulen).

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The Field Notes Editor regrets to announce that, during the process of moving, three Christmas counts were misplaced and could not be included in the previous summary. The Appleton count, made by certain members of the Appleton Audubon Society and compiled by Mrs. W. E. Rogers; the Mt. Calvary count by Rev. George Henseler; and the South Wayne count by Mrs. Ethel Olson and Mrs. Lola Welch were omitted. The Appleton count follows:

APPLETON (7-mile radius centering in Appleton, east to Kaukauna, southeast to the lake front and Neenah; city park and streets 5%, riverbank 20%, cemetery 10%, fields 20%. lake front 40%, hardwoods 5%)—Dec. 29; 7:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Snowing in a. m.; temp. 20° to 30°; wind W. 5 m. p. h.; ground covered with 12-in. snow. Ten observers in one party. Total party hours, 9 (5 on foot, 4 by car); total party miles 57 (5 on foot, 52 by car). Mallard, 1; Black Duck, 130; Am. Golden-eye, 342; Am. Merganser, 33; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 17; Herring Gull, 9; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Blue Jay, 6; Crow, 82; Black-capped Chickadee, 29; White-breasted Nuthatch, 7; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 6; Common Starling, 48; House Sparrow, 319; Cardinal, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 7. Total, 19 species; 1049 individuals.—Harold Brown, Cora Harvey, Ann McEathron, Mrs. Carroll McEathron, James McEathron, Mrs. H. L. Playman, Mrs. Walter E. Rogers, Charles Scribner, James Strieby and Mrs. Dale Vawter.

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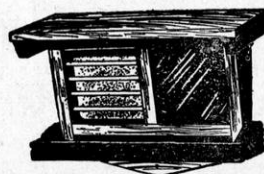
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