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The Passenger Pigeon

TO ENCOURAGE STUDY OF WISCONSIN BIRDS

Bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

Vol. III

October 1941

No. 10

SUMMER BIRDS OF NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN

BY HARTLEY H. T. JACKSON

Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.

The following notes on the summer birds of northwestern Wisconsin are not intended as a complete list of such birds. A few early fall migrants are included. Records in literature are not included, and in very few cases are citations made to literature. Nor are discussed physiographical, ecological, life zones, and other phases of

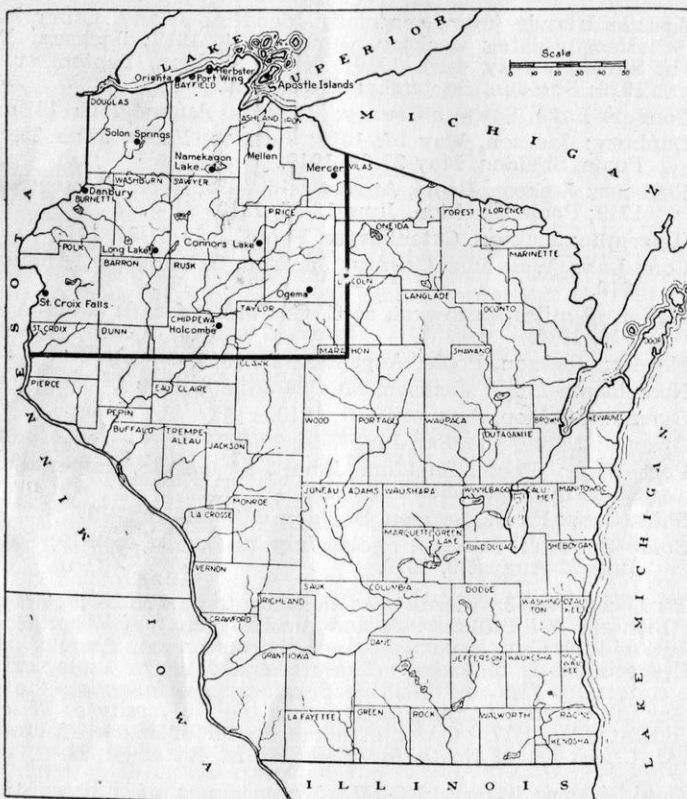


Fig. 1. Map of Wisconsin, showing region covered and principal field-work localities.

the study that will be featured in more detail in a report on the mammals of Wisconsin. Placed on record here are some of the ornithological results of a general land-vertebrate survey of Wisconsin undertaken cooperatively among the U. S. Biological Survey (now Fish and Wildlife Service), the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, and the University of Wisconsin, and entrusted under the general supervision of the author. Acknowledgments of cooperation and assistance are due many, but the helpful interest and splendid attitude of Dr. E. A. Birge and Prof. George Wagner of the University of Wisconsin cannot pass without specific mention.

Field work as covered in this account was conducted by Harry H. Sheldon and the late Arthur J. Poole, as well as by the writer. Sheldon spent practically all of his time on bird work, while Poole was engaged primarily in collecting reptiles and amphibians. The writer's time was occupied with ecological and mammal studies, as well as with birds and generalities. Prof. George Wagner was in the field with the author from September 6 to 10, 1919, investigating beaver problems, but during which time ornithological notes were made. Dr. A. I. Ortenburger, working chiefly on reptiles and amphibians was with the expedition in 1918. Principal localities, as indicated on the map (Fig. 1), field men, and inclusive dates of work at each station, follow:

Apostle Islands (more especially Madeline Island, Outer Island, Presque Isle): Jackson, June 19-24, 1919; Jackson, Poole, Sheldon, July 4-24, 1919; Poole, Sheldon, September 7-16, 1919; Sheldon, September 21-25, 1919.

Connors Lake, Sawyer County: Jackson, August 7-14, 1919.

Danbury: Jackson, May 27, 1919; Jackson, Poole, June 25, 1920; Poole, Sheldon, May 27-30, 1919.

Herbster: Jackson, Poole, August 8-15, 1922; Poole, September 1-2, 1919; Poole, Sheldon, June 16-25, 1919.

Holcombe: Jackson, Ortenburger, Poole, July 27-31, 1918.

Long Lake, Washburn County: Jackson, Ortenburger, August 3-9, 1918.

Mellen (8 miles southwest, at C. G. Conley farm): Jackson, June 6-16, 1919.

Mercer: Jackson, Poole, August 23-28, 1919.

Namekagon Lake: Jackson, May 29-June 4, 1919.

Ogema: Sheldon, August 16-21, 1919.

Orienta: Poole, Sheldon, June 7-14, 1919.

Port Wing: Poole, Sheldon, June 3-5, and September 3, 1919; Sheldon, September 1-2, 1919.

Saint Croix Falls: Jackson, Sheldon, May 21-25, 1919.

Solon Springs: Jackson, Poole, July 29-August 4, 1919; Sheldon, July 29-August 9, 1919.

Birds collected on these expeditions are to be divided between the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the University of Wisconsin, and institutional numbers have been given the specimens. Place of deposit of all specimens is indicated. Those assigned to the Biological Survey's collection, Fish and Wildlife Service, have following the entry number the letters BS; those assigned to the University of Wisconsin are indicated by UW. Order of arrangement of species follows the A. O. U. Check-list of North American Birds, 4th ed., 1931.

Gavia immer immer. LOON. No specimen of a breeding loon was taken. Although loons from northern Wisconsin and Michigan have been considered *elasson* by some ornithologists, the subspecific name *immer* here employed is based on a specimen from Mamie Lake,

some 75 miles east of the region under consideration and previously discussed by the writer (Notes on Summer Birds of the Mamie Lake Region, Wisconsin, by Hartley H. T. Jackson, Auk, vol. 51, pp. 478-489, July, 1923). A critical study of a series of nesting birds is necessary to determine the taxonomic status of the northern Wisconsin loon.

Loons are comparatively common throughout most of the region, and breed on many of the more isolated small lakes. They were noted at Long Lake, Washburn County, August 3 to 9, 1918, and at Namekagon Lake, May 29, to June 4, 1919. The laughing calls of this species were heard daily, August 23 to 28, near Mercer, and on several occasions three individuals, possibly all adults though one may have been a young of the year, were seen flying together. On August 27 one of these birds became isolated from the other two when the two swerved suddenly from their course of flight and for several hours afterwards the lone bird was seen flying and calling in an attempt to locate its companions. A pair came to Connors Lake nearly every evening (August 7 to 14, 1919) from the vicinity of "Mud Lake", just north, which offered good nesting sites for this species and the pair had probably bred there. Sheldon frequently saw or heard loons at Port Wing, Orienta, and Herbster, June 3 to 25, 1919, during calm weather. They were common around the Apostle Islands, June 19 to 24, July 4 to 24, and September 7 to 16, 1919. Fishermen of the Apostle Islands occasionally catch loons in their nets and one man claims he has caught them 150 feet below the surface of the water. This same man says he knows of a fisherman who caught two loons on a set line (for fish) baited with pieces of herring in 120 feet of water and of another who caught one in a net at 50 fathoms (300 feet). The last statement is surely open to suspicion.

Colymbus auritus. HORNED GREBE. A few were seen just southwest of Madeline Island, Lake Superior, September 21 to 24, 1919, and one collected (271,303 BS).

Podilymbus podiceps podiceps. PIED-BILLED GREBE. A single specimen (3963 UW), the only bird of this species seen, was collected in the slough at Big Bay, Madeline Island, September 21, 1919.

Phalacrocorax auritus auritus. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT. The only individual of this species seen was collected September 21, 1919, by Sheldon on the slough at Big Bay, Madeline Island (3970 UW).

Ardea herodias herodias. GREAT BLUE HERON. Not uncommon; usually seen individually, or occasionally in small groups of up to six birds. This species was noted at Holcombe, July 29, 1918; Lake Namekagon, May 31, June 1, 3 and 4, 1919; 10 miles southwest of Mellen, June 15; Big Bay, Madeline Island, June 21; and at Ogema, August 17, 1919. A colony was said to nest near Long Lake, Washburn County.

Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON. Sheldon noted this species at Orienta, June 8 to 13, where he often heard and saw a pair flying over timber along the shore of Lake Superior. These were probably the same birds going to and coming from their feeding place.

Botaurus lentiginosus. AMERICAN BITTERN. Sheldon saw two as they arose from a marsh along the shore of Lake Superior at Port Wing, June 3, 1919, and collected one (3978 UW), the oesophagus of which contain remains of crawfish. Near Herbster, on June 22, a bird was flushed from a marsh along Cranberry River and a nest found which held two downy chicks about four days old (269,931 BS). One was heard on Madeline Island, July 22; one was seen in the marshes

bordering the headwaters of the Saint Croix River, near Solon Springs, August 8; and a single bird flew out of a cattail marsh along Little Turtle River, near Mercer, the evening of August 23.

Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos. MALLARD. Mallards are reported to breed occasionally in the vicinity of Mercer. A flock of nine was seen flying over Tank Lake, near Mercer, August 23, 1919. Sheldon reports that six flew from the slough at Big Bay, Madeline Island, September 21.

Anas rubripes tristis. COMMON BLACK DUCK. Sheldon flushed one from cattails at the headwaters of the St. Croix River, near Solon Springs, August 8, 1919.

Nettion carolinense. GREEN-WINGED TEAL. A single bird was shot from a flock of three green-winged and one blue-winged teal on the slough at Big Bay, Madeline Island, September 22, 1919 (3975 UW).

Querquedula discors. BLUE-WINGED TEAL. One collected from a flock of four teal, of which three were green-winged, on the slough at Big Bay, Madeline Island, September 22 (3977 UW). The writer saw a flock of eleven fly from a slough at the mouth of Cranberry River, near Herbster the evening of August 9, 1922.

Aix sponsa. WOOD DUCK. A male seen flying over a road between dense woods 8 miles southwest of Mellen, June 7, 1919.

Nyroca affinis. LESSER SCAUP DUCK. Poole shot a male of this species on Upper Saint Croix Lake, August 1 (270,616 BS).

Mergus serrator. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. These "fish ducks" were frequently seen on Lake Superior, more commonly along the shores of the islands but also in the coves and inlets of the mainland. An old female and her brood of 14 downy young about two weeks old were seen by Sheldon and Poole June 9, 1919, near the mouth of Iron River. On June 11, the field men visited Iron River Falls, a mile and one-half above the mouth of the river, where they found what from all appearances was the same brood. The old bird arose and circled back down stream, leaving the young to care for themselves. Iron River Falls dash over boulders about 10 feet high. The ducklings, finding escape down stream to their mother shut off, tried in vain to scale the falls and would dart up the fall for at least two feet, only to be swerved back again into the stream. They finally gave this up, dived, and swam and took refuge under logs and foliage on the far side of the stream. Four of these were preserved as specimens (269,928 and 269,930 BS; 3971 and 3972 UW).

The writer saw a male bird on the slough near Big Bay, Madeline Island, June 21, and a female near La Pointe village, June 24. A female was collected near Michigan Island, July 18 (271,250 BS). A flock of nine half-grown young was seen on the shore of Outer Island, July 6. On a trip by launch to Sand Island, July 23, our party overtook a female merganser and her eight young about a week old. We gave chase and they easily kept pace with the boat traveling eight miles an hour. The mother would dive and leave the young to get along as best they could, but she would rejoin the youngsters whenever they would get a good lead on us due to necessary tacking the boat in the heavy sea. Two of the young appeared to be exhausted and lagged far behind the others, but when we were about to overtake them they dived and were not seen again.

(To be Continued)

SECOND STATE BURROWING OWL RECORDED

BY WALTER C. PELZER

Milwaukee Public Museum

On October 8th, while engaged in field work for the Milwaukee Public Museum, a Western Burrowing Owl, *Speotyto cunicularia hypugaea*, was collected for that institution.

The bird was observed along the Lake Michigan Shore at a point east of Cedar Grove in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. It was flushed twice from a shallow dried up slough, which was sparsely overgrown with willow and fringed with cattails, and finally from among the higher dunes. It was reluctant to leave the immediate locality. Having observed it only in flight, but feeling quite sure that it was a Burrowing Owl I collected the bird and it proved to be of the Western variety.

Mr. William Elder of the University of Wisconsin Zoology Department collected a specimen of the Western Burrowing Owl at Faville Grove, Lake Mills, Jefferson County, on April 9, 1939. (See Passenger Pigeon, Vol. I, No. 4, April 1939).

To the best of my knowledge our specimen would therefore constitute the second known record of the taking of this species in Wisconsin.

SANDHILL CRANES BREED AT NEW LONDON

BY REV. FRANCIS S. DAYTON

New London Public Museum

October 3, yearly, Sandhill Cranes congregate four miles east of New London in the Great Blueberry swamp. I have long suspected them of breeding up the Embarrass river in the marshes northeast of New London but this year two pairs established breeding sites in the Blueberry swamp, which is four miles long and from one to two miles wide. They were seen all summer. On September 23 I saw 13 congregated and now there are 17 of the great birds. Last year the flock grew to 33 before they set off southwest down Wolf river for winter quarters, probably Texas. This took place late in October. Under protection, these fine stately birds are coming back.

HOLBOELL'S GREBE AT TOMAHAWK

BY HARTLEY H. T. JACKSON

Fish and Wildlife Service

In the light of the request of S. Paul Jones for records of Holboell's Grebe in Wisconsin (Passenger Pigeon 3: 69, 1941) it might be well to report a mounted specimen of *Colymbus grisegena holboelli* examined September 12, 1917, by the writer in the barber shop of P. H. Paul, Tomahawk, Wis. The grebe was in company with three mallards when shot by Mr. Paul on the sawmill pond at Tomahawk, late in April, 1913.

SEPTEMBER FIELD NOTES

BY N. R. BARGER, EDITOR

(Kindly send field notes to N. R. Barger, 132 Lathrop St., Madison, Wisconsin, at the end of each month. Use A. O. U. order.)

Richter found a Horned Grebe squatted in the center of a road intersection at Oconto on Sept. 8. This was toward evening, so he suspects it mistook the road for a stream.

Black-crowned Night Herons Visible Migrating At Night

Something not often reported was a flock of several hundred Black-crowned Night Herons, visible high in the sky on the night of Sept. 28, in Milwaukee County (Jung). The latest report we received of Egrets was Sept. 8, in Dodge County (Loyster). Three Canada Geese were in Dodge County, Sept. 8 (Loyster). This is an early return date for that locality, unless the species is still to be found there as a summer resident. The first sizable flock of that species to go by Green Bay was a flock of twenty-five, Sept. 30 (Holtermann). The Bufflehead had arrived in Green Bay Sept. 28 (Holtermann). It is likely that this species does not breed there at the present time, although in early days it may have been a possibility. Zimmerman found about 400 Blue-winged Teal flocked at Lake Poygan, Sept. 4 but most of them were gone by Sept. 18.

A good flight of hawks went through about the middle of September, particularly of Broad-winged in the Green Bay area. Deusing noted thirty-five Ospreys, Sept. 6, going by Sheboygan County. An Osprey was brought to the Prins Bros. Sept. 8, which had been shot by a B B gun. This gives us some idea of the power of this little play gun. Pigeon Hawks were observed, Sept. 2 in Racine (Prins Bros.); in Green Bay, Sept. 18 (Mrs. Hussong) and in Adams County, Sept. 21 (Philip).

On Sept. 21, Richter came across nine Sharp-tailed Grouse in Florence County. Also on Sept. 21, nineteen Sandhill Cranes were observed in Adams County by Philip. A concentration of shorebirds was noted in Dane County, Sept. 7, when Loyster counted about three-hundred Killdeer among a wide variety of shorebirds, on a small pond. About twenty Red-backed Sandpipers were present, which is an early fall date for them. The first Ruddy Turnstones to be reported, arrived, Sept. 6 in Racine (Zell). Several were seen on later dates. A flock of over a hundred Lesser Yellow-legs was seen Sept. 22 in Jefferson County by Buss. In this flock he noticed a Solitary Sandpiper with a broken wing, and a Pectoral Sandpiper with but one leg. The Prins Bros. report three Baird's Sandpipers, Sept. 6 at Horlick's Dam. On Sept. 21, Strehlow reports three Red Phalaropes in Oconto County; and Loyster a Northern Phalarope, Sept. 8, in Dodge County.

A large count of Bonaparte's Gulls, and Forster's Terns was made in Green Bay, Sept. 21, by the bird club, and Strehlow noted great flocks of Herring Gulls there, Sept. 30. Reports show the Caspian Tern to have been common on Lake Michigan during the first week in September. Alvin Peterson noticed a nest of the Mourning Dove about Sept. 13, with eggs unhatched, at Onalaska. This bears out the fact that their nesting season is long drawn out.

Nighthawk Migration Widely Observed

Nighthawks were migrating in great numbers the first part of September. Deusing estimated about five thousand going down the lakeshore in Sheboygan County, Sept. 7. Strehlow saw several hun-

dred on their way, Sept. 14 in Green Bay. The last of them had not left the state, however, during September. A gathering of fifty or more Hummingbirds were observed feeding in jewelweed, Sept. 20 by Mrs. Peirce. Kingbirds were observed until Sept. 18 (late) in Green Bay (Strehlow). The last Crested Flycatcher was noted Sept. 24 in St. Croix Falls, by Mrs. Owen. The nesting pair of Arkansas Kingbirds near Beloit reared four young this year (Jones), but one adult was accidentally killed. Purple Martins were not seen in Green Bay after Sept. 3, nor in St. Croix Falls after Sept. 9.

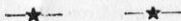
S. D. Fell saw some Canada Jays in Oneida County, Sept. 28. He does not remember seeing them there in summer. There is a great abundance of Blue Jays in St. Croix Falls this year (Mrs. Owen). One Raven was shot of two near Oconto, Sept. 20 by a hunter, says Richter. The remaining Raven circled the dead specimen a few times before leaving the scene. Mrs. Hussong saw a Raven in Brown County, Sept. 14, which is the first Raven record they know of for that County. Racine observers consider the Red-breasted Nuthatch to be more abundant than usual this year. The Brown Creeper had arrived in Green Bay by Sept. 17 (Strehlow); in St. Croix Falls, Sept. 24 (Mrs. Owen); and in Racine, Sept. 27 (Mrs. Peirce). An unusual number of Robins lingered on the Milwaukee Downer Teacher's College grounds, following a large crop of wild crab apples (Dr. Kinsey). The first Hermit Thrush returned to Green Bay, Sept. 18 (Mrs. Hussong). A good migration of Bluebirds was in progress near La Crosse, Sept. 29 (Loyster).

Ed Prins saw his first fall Golden-crowned Kinglet in Racine Sept. 7, which is early. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were noted in St. Croix Falls, Sept. 15 (Mrs. Owen); and in Green Bay, Sept. 18 (Strehlow). A young Cedar Waxwing was being fed Sept. 17 in Green Bay (Strehlow).

Warbling Vireos remained until Sept. 29 in Racine (Mrs. Peirce). She also found a specimen of the Philadelphia Vireo dead in her yard. The last Yellow Warblers were seen in Green Bay, Sept. 3 (Strehlow); Cape May Warblers, Sept. 17 (Mrs. Hussong) Myrtle Warbler, Sept. 3 (Strehlow) and Connecticut Warbler, Sept. 24 (Mrs. Owen). Palm Warblers were abundant during the last week of September in southern Wisconsin.

Baltimore Orioles were observed last in Green Bay, Sept. 6 (Strehlow). Flocks of about two hundred Brewer's Blackbirds were in Green Bay the latter half of September (Strehlow); and in Jefferson County, becoming heavier toward the end of the month (Buss). Great flocks of Bronzed Grackles were migrating in Sheboygan County, Sept. 7 (Irwin Burg). This species was found eating acorns of white oaks in Milwaukee by Dr. Kinsey. The acorns had germinated because of excessive rain.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak was last observed in Green Bay, Sept. 27 by Mrs. Hussong. Redpolls arrived in Green Bay Sept. 17, which is early (Strehlow). The Lark Sparrow, not often observed, was last seen in Green Bay Sept. 23 by Holtermann. A Field Sparrow was still feeding young Sept. 1 in Washington County (Schaeffer). White-crowned Sparrows were abundant in Green Bay beginning with Sept. 15. White-throated Sparrows appeared Sept. 7 in both St. Croix Falls (Mrs. Owen) and in Racine (Zell).



Lists of new members and changes of address will no longer be carried in monthly issues of the bulletin but the editor will be happy to furnish such information to any member desiring it.

LESSER SCAUP BREEDING AT GREEN BAY

BY F. R. ZIMMERMAN

Wisconsin Conservation Department

Two records of the breeding of the Lesser Scaup in Green Bay were secured by the writer and party on September 18 of this year when a brood of six young were observed near Longtail Point and another brood of nine young were seen near Baby Bass Channel. The old nesting site of the former brood was found. Local residents stated that they had been watching the birds all summer. None of the young could fly very well and there is no doubt in the writer's mind that these were, without question, juvenile birds reared in Green Bay.

NEWS NOTES

Mr. Harrison F. Lewis, Chief Federal Migratory Bird Officer for Ontario and Quebec recently sent the following report on to Professor Aldo Leopold: "An unusual southward movement of Canada Jays appears to be in progress. In the past fortnight they have been observed several times in the Transition Zone, in Ottawa and vicinity, where they have not been seen for many years past, and where they are known to occur only when extensive movements of the species takes place."

The Society Library secured during the past month reprints on ornithological subjects from Dr. Oliver L. Austin and Murl Deusing.

The Wilson Ornithological Club will hold its 27th annual meeting at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) on Nov. 20-23. Some of the headliners on the program include George Sutton, Cleveland Grant, Roger Tory Peterson, Lawrence Walkinshaw, Olin S. Pettingill and Murl Deusing. The auction of 10 original bird paintings by Sutton (small size) will be a special feature. All members are urged to attend this meeting as the program is filled with excellent subjects.

Part 9 of "The Birds of North and Middle America" by Robert Ridgway and (continued by) Herbert Friedmann of the U. S. National Museum is just off the press and available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. for 40c. This is a descriptive catalogue covering the Cranes, Rails, Coots and Gallinules, Grebes and Bitterns, and is very well worth the price to any scientific worker wanting detailed and accurate descriptions.

F. R. Zimmerman, who acted as Assistant Editor of the Society bulletin for over a year, has resigned his position with this issue because of pressure of work in his position as Biologist for the Conservation Department Waterfowl Research Project. He did excellent work while assisting on the bulletin and his services were greatly appreciated.

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