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The Passenger Pigeon

Monthly Bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

Vol. II

February, 1940

No. 2

A BOOK ON WISCONSIN BIRDS

by Owen J. Gromme

During the many years since the publication of "The Birds of Wisconsin" by Kurlien and Hollister, a vast amount of data has been accumulated, and Wisconsin ornithological knowledge considerably enriched by numerous bird students. New state records have been established and the status of many species altered considerably. A rapid growing number of published notes and lists are scattered throughout the literature and much material of value still remains unpublished in the notebooks of observers throughout the state and elsewhere.

The need for an up-to-date checklist of Wisconsin birds is obvious, but the hard work, time and research required and expense involved in assembling the material has been a discouraging factor. The Museum has been the recipient of numerous requests that we fulfill this need. The general tone of the requests is to the effect that our collections of Wisconsin material and the excellent museum library and indices place us at a distinct advantage.

For a number of years the writer has been accumulating and indexing notes as opportunity presented. These notes include all of my own personal observations and studies in the field and laboratory. Included also are innumerable notes kindly sent to the Museum by observers throughout the state in the hope that some day they should prove useful. In the aggregate, the material now in hand is very considerable.

Needless to say, "Wisconsin Birds" has long been under consideration at the Museum. Very recently Dr. Ira Edwards, the Museum director, ordered that work shall proceed and that he be made acquainted with the general plan and scope of the work intended. This indeed came as welcome news and work is now under way.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON

Monthly Bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

Free to members. Membership dues per year 1.00

Send membership applications and dues to the treasurer.

Manuscript and field notes should be sent to the editor.

Treasurer: Karl W. Kahmann, Hayward, Wisconsin

Editor: W. E. Scott, Wisconsin Conservation Dept. Annex
20 N. Carroll St., Madison, Wisconsin

Our aim is to publish (the number of volumes as yet undetermined) along the general plan of the more recent works concerning the ornithology of a state. The plan calls for illustrations of all Wisconsin birds in color as well as a number in black and white. The work will, of course, be based upon the original work of Kumlén and Hollister. It is hoped that when completed it will also be representative of a number of contemporary Wisconsin ornithologists whose records are unquestionable.

It will be understood by all that an enterprise of this kind will to a large extent call for the cooperation of a wide variety of talent within the field of Wisconsin ornithology, particularly insofar as general observation, migration dates, etc., are concerned. It will probably be necessary to call upon a number of bird photographers to supplement our files, as well as upon the collectors who have in their possession bird skins and mounted specimens and eggs and nests which bear reliable data. The banding cooperators also are in possession of valuable notes.

There are a number in the state who have assembled indices and bibliographies of published material concerning Wisconsin authors and birds with the idea of publication or for other use. A copy of such files would very considerably enhance the completeness of the work, and proper acknowledgement will be made for the inclusion in every case where such materials are used. We already have a fine index to Wisconsin authors and their articles on Wisconsin birds, but hope to assemble as complete a file as possible.

We have already had numerous offers of cooperation in various forms which is much appreciated because the task confronting us is tremendous. Material has already been sent in and the point has been reached where it is necessary for us to devise a system whereby the clerical work

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and copying involved at this end be reduced to the lowest possible minimum. It will be readily understood that logical order of the notes sent to us is highly essential to the efficient filing and handling of items or groups of items. Jumbled notes in neither chronological nor systematic order will involve us in endless and discouraging work if we use them at all. Simplified charts with explanation as to their use to cooperators are now in preparation. Until receipt of these forms we request that further contributions be withheld. We hope to build up a correspondence with all reliable observers in the state and during the period of time involved in preparation for the actual publication to acquire and "digest" all usable data.

It is my intention that the handling of material at this end shall be conducted in such a manner that the accumulated items in the Museum files will be "under control" and up to date at all times. The system will be known to several of my colleagues so that in the unfortunate event of death, or if for any other reason I am unable to carry on, all work to date will be available. I will request that all data and forms be sent directly to me, care of the department of higher zoology, Milwaukee Public Museum.

RECORDS OF WINTERING WATERFOWL

Conservation Warden William Elliot reports that about 3,000 Canada Geese are wintering in the cornfields around Delavan and Lake Geneva, Walworth county, while Warden Willard Laesch estimates about 5,000 Mallards and Black Ducks staying in the springs on the south shore of Lake Koshkong. Warden Lawrence Hope estimated 1,000 Mallards wintering in the Burkhardt Refuge near Hudson, St. Croix county. This was better than a hundred percent increase over previous years. On the Red Cedar river south of Chetek and also northeast of Rice Lake, Barron county, Warden James Scolman estimated 1,500 wintering Mallards, while J. J. Russell of Madison reported 300-500 near Edgerton, Rock county, and Scott figured about 1,100 Mallards and 300 Black Ducks near Madison, Dane county, at Ginra, Taubesa, Token creek and Nine Springs between January 15 and 17 inclusive. Two Baldpates were also observed.

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE W. S. O. AT MILWAUKEE, APRIL 6

BIRD BANDERS' DEPARTMENT

Harold C. Wilson, Editor

Ephraim, Wisconsin

Paul W. Hoffmann, Wauwatosa, banded 448 birds of 22 species in 1939. Of this total, 164 bands were placed on White-throated Sparrows and 54 on juvenal marsh birds. Mr. Hoffmann is particularly interested in banding Black Tern juvenals and since 1924 has placed bands on 1170. The past year was very discouraging, only 4 terns being banded, although former annual totals banded of this species averaged 77 a year.

Carmen Beining, Platteville, laments the lack of returns of White-throated Sparrows. As with most banders, White-throats lead the list of birds banded, repeat often when in the vicinity, and then disappear never to return. Mr. Beining can console himself with one recapture at Racine, Wis.

In 1939 eight returns were trapped. One Brown Thrasher banded in June, 1936 returned in 1937, '38 and again in '39. A Robin banded in June, 1934 was retrapped again for the first time in April, 1939, an elapsed time of five years. A Robin was also reported from Arkansas.

Dr. B. L. von Jarchow, Racine, comments, "It has been most interesting to me that the Harris Sparrow, which I never saw from 1928 to 1930 in spite of careful observations and of which only a very few Wisconsin records existed prior to that time, is now increasing in numbers so much that last year it was a common species. Up to 1938 about 50 were banded by me."

"I have attempted rearing Bobwhites and releasing them on my sanctuary. Though over 420 birds were liberated, only two pair were seen on the sanctuary proper during the past season. They have been reported spreading along the lake shore and have been seen from one-half to several miles away, one report coming from Kenosha county and several from northern Racine county."

"This year Wood Ducks were raised on the sanctuary and liberated on my own pond and on one lake in Racine county. Over 50 Wood Ducks were released and it will be interesting to see if they return. In each case a female was released with 16 young just when they were able to fly."

Mrs. Arthur Koehler, Madison, puts two questions to bird banders: "A pair of Blue Jays were in a trap at the same time, banded 5-18-35. I caught them again in the same trap

BIRD BANDERS' REPORTS

5-14-37. Do they mate for life or was it mere accident that they happened to be together again?

"I would also like to ask if other banders find that Chickadees seem to have a definite daily feeding schedule. Certain individuals are always in the trap between one and two in the afternoon, while others may come between ten and eleven in the morning."

Lewis W. Mlitske, Merrill, reports 2 "freaks" visited his station last year. The first was a Robin with its right foot missing. Examinations revealed that the tarsus was entirely healed. While the bird sometimes used this stump in alighting, it was able to balance itself on wires and trees solely on one leg. The bird was not banded.

A Bronzed Grackle had its right foot turned under and back, causing it to walk on the back of its toes, nails pointing upward. Examination did not show whether the crippled foot had grown this way, or had at one time been broken and healed in its reversed position.

A. E. Steinbring, Ripon, recently retired from business and plans to devote much time to banding on his refuge. He has banded nearly 1,000 birds, using the regular sparrow trap most successfully. Of much interest is the fact that he elevated all of his traps, placing them on tables 2 feet above the ground. He has had as many as 44 English Sparrows in a trap at one time. These "mice with wings" as Mr. Steinbring calls them, are destroyed to make room for more beneficial species.

Mrs. Lelva Maxson, Milton, banded 400 birds of 29 species last year. Catbirds, White-throats and Chickadees lead the list. A White-throat stayed at the station until the middle of December. As for returns, she writes:

"I had 2 Catbirds return and die in the trap one VERY hot day--aside from them I have had no losses.

"A Red-headed Woodpecker banded 6-27-37, returned in 1938 and also on 6-16-39.

"Indigo Bunting banded 6-26-38 returned 6-14-39.

"I have never had but one foreign return, that of a Chickadee banded in Illinois."

Walter J. Mueller, Milwaukee, had a Red-headed Woodpecker repeat 26 times in one day.

THE PASSERINE PIGEON

Edward Prins, Racine, writes that he finds cracked corn is the best bait for Cardinals during the winter months. Corn cracked too fine is not eaten. Prins says, "When I supplied coarser cracked corn it was readily eaten. The flat top and automatic spring trap give the best results. As to birds of the sparrow family, I have noticed the scattered feed is eaten first. If the food is in a pile, they scatter it from habit before eating from the cage. By placing heaps of food in strategic places they will feed away from them toward the traps.

"Woodpeckers and Nuthatches which feed on suet can be caught in traps with large entrances by locating the trap close to their habitual feeding station, emptying the feeder suet into the trap. The trap must be near the original feeder or the birds may be unable to find the newly located food."

BY THE WAYSIDE

Carl Richter reports the following observation regarding the morning and evening flight of the Herring Gull across Green Bay: "While helping set gill nets on the ice of Green Bay, four or five miles eastward from Oconto harbor, I observed two flights of the Gull, to and from the harbor to, I imagine, Lake Michigan. In the morning soon after daybreak the gulls were seen coming from the east, from a point the shortest distance across the Bay. This westward flight continued until about 9 or 9:30 A. M. The birds all seemed to be flying in the direction toward the Oconto harbor, where fishermen toss fish-inwards and remains on the ice after dressing fish. About 3 to 3:30 P. M. the return or eastward flight began. On 'dark days', snowy or foggy weather, the birds generally flew low, near the ice, but always along the same course, the shortest distance across the Bay, most likely to Lake Michigan here they spend the night."

Mr. Max Zielinski of Milwaukee recently reported the shooting of an albino Coot at Muskego Lake in Waukesha county in October, 1939.

A general increase in wintering Mourning Doves and decrease in Red-headed Woodpeckers was noted for the Madison region this year by members of the Hummel Club.

BIRDS AND EGGS IN THE OSHKOSH PUBLIC MUSEUM

By J. Harwood Evans

(Mr. Evans prepared the following summary on January 13, 1940. The public is invited to inspect the collection and records at any time. It is hoped that other summaries of this type may be made available soon through THE PASSENGER PIGEON--ed. note).

BIRDS

All mounted and in good condition, 210 specimens of about 150 to 160 species.

Record data available.

THE UNUSUAL SPECIES

Least Tern	Green Lake, Wis.	Mitchell, no date
White Pelican	" "	" "
Sand-hill Crane	Golden Lake, Wis.	I. Perkins 9-2-23
Long-billed Curlew	Nebraska	Hatch collection
Passenger Pigeon (male)	Winn. Co. Wis.	No data
Turkey Vulture (female)	" "	10-24-30
Snowy Owl (female)	Oshkosh, Wis.	11-23-29
" (male)	Freemont, Wis.	H. C. Race
		11-11-26
Am. Hawk Owl	Oshkosh, Wis.	Crawford
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Prairie du Chien	I. Perkins 6-1-30

ALBINO'S

Cooper's Hawk	Lake Poygan, Wis.	Henry Lee
American Coot	Oshkosh, Wis.	Geo. Nichols 9-'25
Eastern Crow	" "	C. B. Terrell
Eastern Robin (partial)	" "	R. H. Buckstaff

Due to a grant of 500 from our county board, we are going to add quite a few missing birds to our collection this year, so that by next year we should have some more.

BIRD'S EGGS

1426 eggs of 216 species. Good condition with records. Kept in glass-topped drawers, in small boxes. Many of these are from other sections of the country. We purchased two collections as follows:

The Mitchell Collection, 1928, Green Lake, Wisconsin

The Hatch Collection, 1925, Oakfield, Wisconsin

The Boose Collection of 300 eggs, Poy Sippi, Wisconsin, was donated to us in 1936.

JANUARY FIELD NOTES

Material for this department should be sent to the editor at the end of each month.

SOUTHEASTERN AREA--E. W. Strehlow of the Green Bay Bird Club reports a total of 21 species observed. Jan. 1, Rufed Grouse and Red-headed Woodpecker by Strehlow; Hairy Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch by Mrs. Fred Garrett. Jan. 3, Snow Bunting. Jan. 7, Downy Woodpecker, No. Horned Lark, Crow, Pine Grosbeak, Redpoll, Tree Sparrow and Chickadee by Mrs. Clara Hussong; Robin by Strehlow. Jan. 12, Tufted Titmouse. Jan. 13, White-breasted Nuthatch hopped up rear steps for seeds, Mrs. Fred Garrett. Jan. 23, Screech Owl, Kendall. Jan. 28, Mallard near Stiles, Oconto county.

For the Madison area, Barger reports as follows: A notable number of half-hardy birds have survived the snow and subzero winter. Two White-throated Sparrows have been feeding at Main's lunch counter. Mitchell feeds a Red-headed Woodpecker regularly in his back yard. A Robin was observed by Stephenson as late as Jan. 21. A week after the blizzard, Barger counted over 100 N. Horned Larks in one flock, 7 Cedar Waxwings and one Kingfisher. The Mourning Dove has occurred frequently: Feeney, Barger, Zimmerman, and Leopold saw small numbers. Aside from spring-fed marshes, there is little place for ducks in January, but Feeney notes 2 Baldpate wintering in the Arboretum. Sam Robbins saw a male Bufflehead, Jan. 1. There have been a few Tufted Titmice January records. Mrs. Walker records the Cardinal in song, January 12. Jackson observed a small flock of Rusty Blackbirds after the blizzard. A small number of Raptors have come to our attention: Schorger sighted a Short-eared Owl, Jan. 17 on a fence post. Feeney noted Long-eared Owls again in the Arboretum, Jan. 10. He also has made a good winter record in finding a pair of Sparrow Hawks. On Jan. 10, he observed a Cooper's Hawk.

C. T. Black reports for the Faville Grove area a Song Sparrow on the 6th, Flicker on 6th and 15th, Robins in Lake Mills up to the 15th, Short-eared Owl on the 21st (hunting at 2 P. M. in bright sunlight) and Mourning Doves, Cooper Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Redpolls, Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs throughout the month. He also states that a male Bobwhite, killed by a Cooper Hawk on the 17th, was weighed and found to be in good physical condition. However, he expects quail losses of at least 30%.

JANUARY FIELD NOTES

Fairfield found an injured American Coot on the ice of Lake Mendota on the 9th, and a Wilson Snipe with Scott at Oregon on the 6th. Prairie Chicken were observed by Scott on the 21st at Cherokee Marsh (8), by Warden Al Koppenhaver on the 10th at Brooklyn Marsh (40), on Dec. 15th at Mazomanie (20), on the 28th near Hope (14), on the 13th at Lodi (23) and during January, near Poynette, where George Ressler found 16 on February 2. Warden Charles Schlumpf also saw a flock of 20 Prairie Chicken northeast of Albany on the 25th. Zimmerman and Hopkins found 2 Long-eared Owls and a Meadowlark at Deansville Marsh on the 21st. Bussewitz reports two Mourning Doves in the tamaracks southeast of Watertown on the 31st and estimates a 100% increase over previous years on Flickers (15-20 being present) which feed upon sumac berries and food found on the tamarack trunks.

SOUTHWESTERN AREA--Watson Hall of Highland reports a Saw-whet Owl picked up dead on the 31st, a Kingfisher observed on the 10th and 6 Wisconsin Snipe on the same date, all near Highland, Iowa county. None of the latter two were found after the 14th. Ben Logan of Platteville recorded 8 Red-bellied Woodpeckers near Seneca on the 25th, but not a single Red-headed Woodpecker, previously common there in winter. He states that Luther Zellmer's feeding station at Platteville had as regular visitors in January the Red-bellied Woodpecker, Bronzed Grackle and occasionally a Robin as well as more common birds. Scott on the 28th found about 500 Starlings at Mt. Horeb, 2 Red-tailed Hawks near Barneveld, a flock of Lapland Longspurs near Belmont and a total of 15 flocks of Horned Larks in 160 miles of driving in this area. Ted Theobald near Barneveld reports 40 Cardinals, 40 Bobwhite and 60 Pheasants at his feeding station and states that 30 Mallards stopped at a spring hole on his land on the 21st.

CENTRAL SAND AREA--Frances Hammerstrom at Plattefield records on Jan. 13 and 14 the Red-tailed Hawk, 19th, the Mourning Dove, and 5 dead Starlings at Hancock on the 18th when the temperature was 28 below zero. She states that last year no Juncos were seen in that region in January but that this year they are abundant. On the 25th, Warden Bill Field and Zimmerman observed in the towns of N. Millston, S. Millston and N. Knapp of Jackson county, 1 Wilson Snipe, 6 Mallard, 4 Ruffed Grouse and 25 Sharp-tailed Grouse.

(Concluded on next page)

NEWS NOTES

A paper on the Upland Plover at Faville Grove, by Irven O. Buss is being sent to all members with this issue of THE PASSENGER PIGEON, through the kind donation of Prof. Aldo Leopold and the editor. Mr. Buss is anxious to secure all Wisconsin records on this bird to further his studies and members are requested to send any data they may have directly to him at 424 University Farm Place, Madison, Wis.

Strehlow reports that the Green Bay Bird Club, on their trip to Lena to see Jack Kinziger's collection of mounted birds and animals were much interested in the 5 Passenger Pigeons, the Great and Little Blue Herons, Mutant Pheasant, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, and Northern Pileated Woodpecker. The 5 Passenger Pigeons belong to a party in St. Paul and he is asking \$500 for them.

The discovery of a new species of warbler in West Virginia by Karl W. Haller was recently announced by the Smithsonian Institution, according to the newspapers. The bird is called Sutton's Warbler, Dendroica potomaca and is supposedly a fertile cross between two other species.

Sister M. Martha, of Sturgeon Bay, reports that the Rev. Clement Smith of Roseire has a private collection of mounted birds and eggs. She also reports that the Salvatorian Fathers at St. Nazianz have a collection of about 100 birds and some eggs. Her own small collection consists chiefly of game birds and birds killed by accident.

Strehlow reports that Mrs. Fred Garrett's feeding stand has been visited by both Robins and a Tufted Titmouse during January. She feeds both squash and pumpkin seed as well as suet; but most of all she furnishes fresh water (hot) every day. All the birds drink except the Woodpeckers.

JANUARY FIELD NOTES (Concluded)

TRANSITION AREA--Carl Richter at Oconto saw a Marsh Hawk on the 6th, Lapland Longspurs on the 7th, first Evening Grosbeak on the 15th, 3 Am. Golden-eyes on the 28th with some Mergansers, and also resident species, including the Great Horned and Screech Owls. On Jan. 20th, a friend, R. Bikowski, brought him an adult male E. Meadowlark which was injured by his dog after the dog caught the bird in a marsh along the Oconto River east of the city of Oconto. Bikowski took the injured bird to his cottage but it died an hour later.

MORE JANUARY FIELD NOTES

(Editor's Note: The following notes were received after the paper for February was prepared on the 15th. It is hoped that in the future all notes of the previous month will at least be in the Editor's hands by the 10th of the month, if they cannot be sent in according to schedule on the 1st.)

SOUTHEASTERN AREA.--Edward Prins reports for the Racine area: "Hans Zell saw three Brown Thrashers in a city park only two of which were seen during the rest of the month. He also saw a Wilson's Snipe and a Rusty Blackbird Jan. 4. On Jan. 13, both George and Edward Prins saw a Mallard and a Black Duck on Lake Michigan. The same day Dr. von Jarchow reported that a Cooper's Hawk killed a rabbit on his place. January 20, George Prins reports a Field Sparrow in a city park. Jan. 26, Dr. von Jarchow saw a Pine Grosbeak as well as a Red-tailed Hawk, the latter being still present. Jan. 27, a Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Sparrow Hawk, and several Purple Finches were at or by the Prins brother's feeder. January 28, Hans Zell saw two Red-headed Woodpeckers. The same day the Hoj Nature Club saw 30 Redpolls and a Mourning Dove. A Florida Gallinule was seen all month with the zoo ducks. Dec. 28 G. Prins found a Red-throated Loon frozen in the lake ice which had choked on a 11 and seven-eighths long whitefish. It is my opinion that these birds are more common on the lake than is expected. This is because the birds are not closely enough observed. We once saw three of them near a Common Loon and the difference could then be seen. Their call was also quite different. On Jan. 28 a Hairy Woodpecker was seen eating poison sumac berries which he seemed to relish."

Carl Strelitzer reports for the Milwaukee Area that various records were obtained on the Public Museum Bird Club Hike to Jacobus Park and the lake front on the 7th, when the following were seen along the lake, although most of the harbor was frozen: Black Duck, Mallard, Golden-eye, Pintail, Scaup Ducks, American Merganser and both the Herring and Ring-billed Dulls. Deusing, Dall, Steib, Kinzel, Schwartz and Strelitzer of the Milwaukee Bird Club were in the group. On the 4th, Strelitzer observed one Baldpate and one Pintail still in the Juneau Park lagoon in a small patch of open water.

Mrs. Walter E. Rogers states that ducks have been working on the river in open waters since Christmas. On Jan.

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29 she counted 500 at the mouth of the Fox at Neenah. There were a few American Mergansers and the rest were Golden-eyes. About 12 Herring Gulls were on the edge of the ice along with the ducks. There have been no Evening or Pine Grosbeaks so far this winter, whereas they usually are seen by the last of January. As to the ducks, she believes they scatter during the day over the area between Kaukauna and Neenah and seem to concentrate at Neenah in late afternoon.

Conservation Warden Wm. Elliott reports over 42 Chukar Partridge about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Whitewater and 200-300 Prairie Chicken about 4 miles south of that city. Warden Royce Dallman of Rock county reports 30-40 Prairie Chicken near Evansville on Dec. 15, 1939, while Warden Bill Field of Dodge county estimates about 10 flocks in that county.

SOUTHWESTERN AREA.--P. A. Lawrence, custodian of Wyalusing State Park (Grant county) observed 12 Bald Eagles there on Jan. 15 and states that this is a usual winter population.

NORTHERN AREA.--Neil LeMay, of Hayward, reports one to two pair of Spruce Grouse seen in the town of Winter, Sawyer county, in the Fall of 1939, and two to four of these birds seen in December, 1939 by Henry Brandt near his lodge on Lost Land Lake.

LECTURES BY CLEVELAND P. GRANT

Cleveland P. Grant will lecture and show colored movies at the April 6 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology in Milwaukee. Movies taken in Wisconsin, include a comparative study of the courtships of the Sharp-tailed Grouse, Prairie Chicken and Ruffed Grouse. Pictures of the Ruffed Grouse drumming are reported to be particularly unusual. Wisconsin nesting pictures include the Ruffed Grouse, Great-horned Owl, Woodcock, Killdeer, Blue-winged Teal, Chipping Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole. Out-of-state movies show Greater Snow Geese at their stopping ground east of Quebec city and some shots of the Arctic Tern and Puffin taken at the Bay of Fundy.