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The PASSENGER PIGEON

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IMMATURE CARDINAL

PHOTO BY
EDWARD PRINS

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN BIRD STUDY

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THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, Inc.

NEWS . . .

The officers of the society have conducted two meetings since our last convention. Much progress has been made. The membership committee has been encouraged, anticipating that the enrollment for our tenth anniversary will be the highest in our history. The treasurer was authorized to purchase additional war bonds with money in our endowment fund. Interest on these bonds will give us future income. Prof. J. J. Hickey elaborated further on our combined conventions to be held in mid-April. The Wil-

NEST AND EGGS OF BLACK TERN. PHOTOGRAPHED ON JUNE 13, 1948, BY JAMES NEIS. NEST IS CONSTRUCTED OF A FEW OF LAST YEAR'S CATTAIL LEAVES LAID ON A BIT OF BOG.

son Club's portion of the program certainly will be a grand addition.

Mrs. Arthur Koehler and family have moved to California. Recent correspondence indicates that there are several excellent bird clubs in Los Angeles, where they live, and many birds of interest. Our society and many bird people, especially those around Madison, will miss both Mrs. Koehler and George, her son, as they did outstanding bird work while here.

J. Harwood Evans, chairman of our endowment fund, has just called our attention to a recent gift at the passing of Howard Clapp, a member of our society. Since our society is incorporated, we are empowered to accept endowments in any amount; so the thought is that many of our members may wish to include such a gift when they write their wills.

Those members who now have manuscript under preparation may wish to get it in our special anniversary issue of January, 1949. If so, the deadline will be January 15.

Since the editors, at last, have hopes of bringing our magazine up to schedule, it is desirable that members renew their subscriptions for 1949 before the end of December. Not only will such action make it possible for us to maintain our schedule, it will also save us postage. We obtain a very low rate when all of them are mailed at one time.

A new card check list of Wisconsin birds has been printed by our society. It is designed for several purposes. First, of course, to be used in the field; and secondly, to be used as an advertisement of our society. Our members long have been in need of a handy item which could be handed to a prospective member. This card has a short paragraph on the last page, describing what the society has to offer. They will be on sale by the supply department at a cost of 15 for 25c, or 75 for $1.00.

The society's supply department has sent out a letter, describing merchandise suitable for Christmas gifts, to all members. Obviously, this letter could include but a few samples of things carried in stock, so it is hoped that members will ask for other requirements.

Chandler S. Robbins, a brother of Sam Robbins, has written a short article for this issue. It deals with a newly established program sponsored jointly by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Audubon Society. Chandler is a biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

(Continued on page 152)

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Alaska Bird Notes

By J. L. DIEDRICH

The Milwaukee Journal-Public Museum Expedition to Alaska in October of 1947 undertook as its prime objective the collection of specimens,* materials and studies for two popular North American big game groups—the moose and caribou. Since the selection, preparation and handling of four exceptional, yet typical moose and six caribou requires considerably more time (and effort) than the usual trophy hunt, our limited schedule permitted very little opportunity to study the avifauna of this area. The following brief observations therefore must be considered as incidental, for they hardly do justice to a field so rich in bird life—especially since we were based for three weeks in the heart of that noted area—Ptarmigan Valley, truly a very appropriate name.

Our bird list began with a brace of common mallard hanging from the back porch of an Anchorage resident. He assured us that there did not appear to be a dearth of waterfowl on the flats heading Cook Inlet during the past waterfowl season, although only a few stragglers remained at this late date. The harbor at Anchorage had the usual patrol of herring gulls to be found at most water front cities. No doubt their number is vastly increased during the salmon canning season when food can be secured with little effort.

Ordinarily bird spotting from an airplane requires practice in fast perception; but we had no difficulties in spotting whistling swan on the open tundra lakes as we flew from Anchorage through the Rainy Pass at about 1,000 feet elevation. Pairs of adults and even the greyish immature birds, when mirrored on the dark waters, were all too obvious and certainly appeared to be twice their true size. Numerous small interconnected ponds—resembling a series of rice paddies—dot the flats west of the Susetna River and many of the larger ones are in possession of families of swan.

Our headquarters, the lodge of Mr. Bud Branham, renowned Alaskan flier and guide, was located on the shores of Puntilla Lake near the Rainy Pass, a beautiful body of deep water fed from the surrounding 2,000 feet snowy peaks. It is over a mile in length and, until it froze over on the twentieth of October, usually was graced with several whistling swans, a loon, and small flocks of scaup ducks feeding about the inlets and outlet.

As the ice formed on the higher mountain waters, it forced the waterfowl to descend to the lower levels of the valley where several days may be spent before they leave the country. On October 13th we had the opportunity of watching about forty swan flying down in formation from the upper valley and confronted by a very heavy and low overcast at the lower end of the pass. The group tried several times to penetrate this dense cloud bank and returned, only to circle the lake and attempt to find an opening from another angle. This milling about resulted in considerable confusion and at times split the group into two and three smaller parties. Eventually a wise leader rallied the flock and brought them to a spiraling elevation of well over 2,000 feet, sufficiently high to

*Under government permits.

clear the mountains to either side and into a more broken stratum of clouds. We were able to observe this in its entirety from a vantage point on a 900 foot ridge overlooking the lake and a large part of the valley. Twenty minutes of trial and error brought a solution to the general impass mother nature had set against a bird to which we conceded considerable resourcefulness.

The birds remaining after the freeze up and when winter had arrived in earnest are only the hardy permanent or winter residents. Their numbers may be small but their activity and enterprise in foraging for a living is indeed remarkable. As the snow line descends along the mountain sides, greater numbers of ptarmigan began to appear on the tundra and within two weeks after the first small groups had arrived, their ranks swelled from day to day until flocks of a hundred were not uncommon. In fact, we have been told that whenever the summer's hatch is favorable some flocks in early winter may number well into a thousand. This is, of course, before the predators, fox, mink, martin, weasel and owls have reduced them to a considerable extent.

To one unacquainted with their habits, the ptarmigan can be most illusive. Their usual behavior when disturbed is to "freeze" in a somewhat extended or upright pose—thus losing their normal full bodied appearance and consequently resembling nothing in particular when merged against a snowy background. A black beady eye is probably the first distinguishable feature noted and after close scrutiny possibly a form can be defined. A few birds have a delicate but definite pink tone or 'bloom'—these are exceptionally fine specimens in their prime and as far as could be determined, usually males.

Another way of detecting the presence of this "grouse of the north," as they are sometimes referred to, without practically stepping on them is to listen for a deep rattling 'croak'—almost identical to the sounds emanating from any good frog pond during the spring.

When flushed, they take to the air swiftly and if no obstructions occur, skim very close to the ground for a considerable distance before gaining much altitude. Of course they sometimes appear at considerable heights, 500 to 800 feet if moving across valleys. Our pilots always kept a sharp lookout for stray traveling flocks when flying at low levels. When winged this bird will run over the snow for more than a quarter mile at a considerably higher rate of speed than a man can maintain.

Their food, while we were there, seemed to be mostly the terminal buds of shrubs—willow in particular. Ptarmigan flesh although very dark does not have a strong or unpleasant flavor one would expect of a bird subsisting on such a coarse diet.

An equally famous fowl but not nearly as plentiful, in fact quite scarce this year, is the Alaska spruce grouse. This species is quite localized in habit and found only where spruce trees occur. Never more than a half dozen were noted during a day by all members of our party. They were seldom seen on the ground and usually found perched motionless on the lower branches of spruce or birch trees. The Alaskan variety is somewhat larger and a little more greyish than their Wisconsin counterpart. The crop contents of several specimens collected show that they fed exclusively on spruce needles although other foods such as bearberries, blueberries, birch buds, etc., were still available wherever spruce trees sheltered hillsides or creek bottoms.

Usually in these sheltered spots most of the other resident birds could be found at some time or other during the day. The Hudsonian chickadee travels in troups of six to eight combing the spruce and are always to be found about camp, searching for morsels at the dog kennels or feed cooker. Although this species is of the brown-capped variety and not quite as handsome as our chickadee, it nevertheless exhibits all of the personable characteristics of the friendly black cap.

Another bird we enjoyed immensely was the Alaska jay, a bird similar to our Canada jay but with more grey about the head and throat. Their sharp eyes kept a close scrutiny of our activities about camp and also in the field because they seemed to realize that eventually they would be rewarded with table scraps or bits of meat from the carcass we were working on. Often while trimming the flesh from a skeleton we

WE TRAVEL BY DOG TEAM, TOO.
BUD BRANHAM, ALASKAN OUTFITTER AND GUIDE, WITH HIS TEAM OF MACKENZIES.

would look up to see a carcajou, as they are referred to locally, industriously working away on the other end.

Northern ravens range over most of Alaska and Ptarmigan Valley certainly had its share. Groups of them continuously roved the tundra, river bottoms and mountain sides, visiting the offel of kills where, in company with American magpies, they vied with one another for an easy living. We have seen over seventy-five at the site of a bear kill, showing little fear of man unless disturbed by gun fire. However, just a little more contact with humans would soon change them to the wary bird as we know him in Wisconsin.

Whenever faint lisps were heard overhead we could expect large numbers of redpolls to drop to the birches and alders, feed for a short time and then move on again, shortly to be replaced by other flocks. Thus

a steady stream of birds would be constantly at the choice feeding spots throughout the day.

Sometimes several pairs of Alaska pine grosbeaks would be found in company with the redpolls but these flocks were not large or of common occurrence. Mr. Luke Elwell, our Alaskan guide and long time resident of the territory, states that at his home on the Kenai Peninsula he has often heard this sedate bird singing in the deep of a clear, cold winter night while roosting in the spruce trees about his place.

Two of the rarer North American owls were seen during our stay at Rainy Pass. The occasion took on a personal significance inasmuch as two new species were added to our life lists in one day, an opportunity that infrequently befalls an ornithologist. On this particular day several members of our group were out with the guide to check up on a wolverine set when we came upon a great grey owl nearby, hidden in a dense clump of spruce, and an American hawk owl not far away perched in an extreme upright position at the very top of a dead spruce. The great grey conveniently eluded us and we set about to collect the hawk owl but we were never quite able to get within gun range without sending the bird to another snag in the vicinity. Even after several ineffectual long range shots this bird invariably perched on the very tip of a snag and assiduously assumed its characteristic upright pose.

The bald eagle, usually associated as the characteristic bird of Alaska, did not appear to be numerous in this inland region. In fact, all told, I do not believe our party can account for more than two or three individuals, although these particular individuals were no doubt seen repeatedly on successive days.

Having secured nearly all of our required mammal specimens and foreseeing a slack period during the last week of the expedition, plans were drawn to have a party of four fly out to Port Heiden on the Bering Sea to collect a group of six emperor geese for display in our bird hall. This necessitated a return to Anchorage for re-outfitting and from this point we made the five hundred mile trip through the breath-taking Clark Lake Pass and thence to our destination along the Bering Sea side of the Alaska peninsula. Normally this would be an easy half day's run (our Grumman Widgeon cruises at 125 m.p.h.) but the weather is very unpredictable at this time of the year and consequently we were forced to lay over for an afternoon and night at Nak Nek, at the head of Bristol Bay and about the halfway point. In coming into Nak Nek a low overcast forced us to fly contact and we skipped across the brown tundra at a few hundred feet. However, as the ground pattern dizzily sped past, the monotony was at times relieved by catching a fleeting glimpse of scattering flocks of ptarmigan or the frantic scamper of a frightened fox beneath us.

The air strip at Nak Nek is located on the broad bend of a river of the same name and in the several hours of remaining daylight at our disposal we made a two mile tour on foot across the soft spongy moss of the tundra and along stretches of the river. This area, we were told, is for miles alive with many species of waterfowl, shore birds and cranes during the summer nesting season, but now the only common bird was the northern raven. These birds usually traveled in small dispersed flocks and were seen trailing along the river's course or heard far out over the endless brown and grayish flats. The river itself was host to a small

number of white-winged scoters and an occasional glaucous-winged gull.

Our approach to an out-of-the-way C. A. A. station at Port Heiden the following morning took on added interest, ornithologically speaking. Along the Bering Sea coast line and especially at the estuaries of the King Salmon, Dog Salmon and Cinder rivers increasingly large flocks of emperor geese were spotted feeding on the exposed bars or flying at low levels. They appeared silvery grey against the dark turbulent water or the black volcanic beach sand and river silt. Here and there small compact flocks of small shore birds were momentarily spotted. Their identity could not be determined, but to all appearances they resembled our sanderlings.

Port Heiden can boast of nothing more than an abandoned army base now used as an emergency air strip, staffed by less than a dozen

WAITING FOR THE PLANE TO COME IN AND PICK UP SPECIMENS.
LOCATION: RAINY PASS LODGE ON PUNTILLA LAKE, ALASKA; ELEVATION, 2000 FEET.
LEFT: O. J. GROMME, CURATOR OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY. RIGHT; K. C. GEBHARDT, CHIEF ARTIST.

people and another dozen native fishermen with their families who live in small shanties inadequately protected by a low grassy sand dune that skirts the bay. There are no trees to be seen anywhere and the monotony of a sullen Bering Sea is matched by an equally monotonous expanse of half flooded boggy tundra that starts at the very doorsteps of these hardy folks.

To this drab country thousands of emperor geese resort during the fall and consequently spend the winter on the same body of water along which they nest several hundred miles to the north during the brief summer. When the tide is out these geese cover the exposed bars and feed on mussles and other sea life. They are quite safe at this time but when the tide rises it backs up several feet of water on the grassy tide flats. When the birds come inland to feed and rest they can be successfully hunted and at this time they also fall prey to the numerous roving foxes in this area.

We collected our six specimens in less than two days of hunting and had time to take a series of study photographs. Although we saw several thousand "beach geese," as the natives call them, most reports indicated they were not nearly as numerous as a week or two previously. The explanation offered was that they evidently have moved out farther along the Aleutian chain.

Fairly large flocks of scoters were noted on the bay and herring gulls were quite numerous. The persistent raven somehow has managed to adapt himself to this land although webbed toes were not indicated as yet. Several pintails still remained at this late date and flocks of snow buntings were everywhere along the beach. The purple sandpiper is evidently a hardy individual too, since several pairs of them had elected to stay on despite the fact that this was the first week in November.

We had the thrill of watching a magnificent gyrfalcon coursing low over the tundra while we stood on a beach dune one afternoon. There is always a strong wind blowing in this country and we marveled at the little apparent effort exerted by this graceful flier in going either with or against the wind. Our vantage point was possibly twelve feet above the miles of surrounding low flat country and perhaps out of curiosity this individual came toward us from an angle well below the horizon and without as much as a full swing stroke gradually rose to a height of sixty feet, hovered directly over head momentarily and with a sudden easy sweep, glided down the shore line and across the bay.

I shall always consider the windblown tundra the falcon's true domain, where its austerity and power are truly matched by the equally stern nature of this bleak land and would not care to know this regal bird under any other circumstance.

To say that we enjoyed every moment of our sojourn in Alaska and reveled in the opportunity to explore the magnificent contrasts of nature and her wild life, is futile. These must be experienced to awaken a greater appreciation and, although as limited beings we can never hope to probe them completely, nevertheless, each of us is enthusiastically desirous of returning and more carefully examining the things we, in our haste overlooked and also to experience the many untold new delights.

Milwaukee Public Museum.
March, 1948.

CONVENTION OF 1949

April 21-24 in Madison

Combined With The

WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

Headquarters in The University Memorial Union

GREAT HORNED OWL BABIES

By ELIZABETH A. OEHLENSCHLAEGER

The most amusing owls which came to us* during the last two years was a pair of great horned nestlings, arriving the third of May. The exact date of their birth could not be determined as it had not been deemed sufficiently important to record. Their mother had begun their career in a rather careless manner by depositing her two eggs in the window-box of a summer home, owned by a man who had no love for the raptors; so, when he was informed of the event, had them shipped to one of the public institutions of Milwaukee "for its use." "Use" meant dead owlets, but the men to whom they were consigned had little taste for killing. So they proceeded to measure, color-note, weigh, photograph, sight-test, and nearly decided to count the down which surrounded their faces like the hirsuit adornment of an old Gloucester fisherman! After recording all these things with scientific care, it was deemed that they had fulfilled the designation of "use." Then the owlets were sent to the Hummocks in the crown of a well-worn garden hat.

From the very beginning, the entire family fell victims to their awkward yet exquisite charms. They ate with equal relish pieces of steak, mice, gophers, rabbits, cowbirds, sparrows, and starlings—everything was food for their incredibly large maw.

Their fine strong feet, exquisite tawny coloring, and great filmy eyes, added to an amazing intelligence, and a more than halfway friendly meeting of our advances, were an endless source of study and pleasure. Their four or five meals were so arranged that, whenever possible, the largest was a fresh-killed bit of some kind late at night—very often one of the hordes of cottontails which the Scotties would catch and bring home.

Except for feeding time, they spent most of their days sleeping. Their voices were a soft "tseep," entirely out of balance with birds of their size and appearance. Only when held tightly would there be a rattle of mandibles, and the "over on the back" fighting attitude.

There was an endless amount of preening and winnowing by the sixth of May; and when our hands stroked them, or, when fingers dug deeply into their down, they would close their eyes ecstatically and nibble a friendly "thank you" when we stopped. They could not successfully leave their perch, but fell, or threw themselves down to the lawn without spreading their wings; nor could we induce them to ride on the fist, for they were too young. But we did familiarize them with being carried, by walking with them in our cradled arms—where they also would go to sleep,

AT NIGHT ON THE TERRACE
PHOTO BY JOHN S. TAYLOR

*Miss Oehlenschlaeger has legal permits to care for birds.

once having found a position to their liking. At any time during the day or evening, one would be likely to find the two little owlets in some part of the house, anywhere from the library to the laundry, being fussed over by an admiring member of the household.

On May eighth, a field mouse came into one of the many traps scattered about the place. When it was offered to the larger of the two birds, she made one clutch at it and, holding it in an upright position, eyed it leisurely and critically, but made no effort to eat. After waiting a long time, I left her, being in a hurry. But, upon my return ten minutes later, I saw a large bulge on Sister's front, and no outward evidence of a mouse!

When being photographed, all of the martins and robins of the Hummocks came to the attack. Suddenly, Sister fluffed out her down and feathers, such as she had developed, and made as if to chase them. It was an interesting display of future ability to fend for herself.

The first feeding of the day was always a very interesting affair. They stood perfectly still and watched the approach of a meal; then, when the cage-door was raised, they took two hops to land on the threshold. Their heads weaved in a rotary motion, and they alternately raised their feet, almost like a dance of joy.

Their first few pieces of breakfast always brought on a little rough and tumble play, but it never developed into a serious set-to. After having eaten a cowbird, one of the birds made an interesting casting—it contained a large rubber band. Perhaps the cowbird had mistaken it for a worm!

By May 15th, the primaries and tail-feathers were coming down nicely, but their "horns" did not keep pace with the heavier plumage. They were merely little tufts of grayish-brown down. Their extremely stout legs were covered with hairlike feathers quite to the talons. At this time, any sudden unobserved intrusion brought a sharp hiss and much rattling of mandibles. Their playing was done in a large cardboard box, three by four feet and 30 inches high. It was placed in the sun where their rolling about was more like fat, roly poly puppies than birds. When tired, they stretched out full length, feet behind, and went to sleep. When walking, they had the peculiar rolling gait which is habitual with the penguins (or sailors)!

By May 19th, their eyes lost their veiled, rather expressionless look, changing to a brilliant gold and gray, while the outer eyelids began to have the tiny feathers which make the great horned owl's eyes so very expressive. They had learned to come to the fist, like falcons, but were rather deliberate about doing it. On occasions, they were too slow, so they were picked up and carried, either to the flight cage or to the night-quarters. This always called for a show of fury; but it was forgotten soon after, and they would play and eat according to their inclination.

The quill-sheaths of tail and primaries were beginning to fall, and their deep brown and gray mixtured feathers gave them a trim look which again made a violent contrast in their appearance, for the four to five inch long down which covered their tibia was of the most exquisite soft texture. When the wind ruffled them, they had the appearance of waving chiffon veils.

About this time, it was deemed advisable to begin training the owls to do a little hunting for themselves. Their flight-cages were large

enough to have them make a successful stoop upon any offered live quarry, but none of us were scientific or hard-hearted enough to do the teaching. A small rabbit, gopher, or other rodent was shot and then given them while "hot" and entire. Both birds would go to the attack promptly, and eventually, we found that this method had been sufficient for their self-support.

They were banded on June 3rd.

During this first week in June, they learned to deplume their own dinner, doing very well at the task. Also, someone, in mistaken charity or evil intent, opened the doors of their cages one night, and the owlets had a taste of nocturnal freedom. When informed in the morning that they were walking about, we left the breakfast table to investigate. When called, they willingly came towards us, and it was no little thrill to have the big birds partly flying and partly walking in their friendly advance. But neither would come to the fist; and, after spending some time in vain to induce them to enter their cage, I simply picked up Sister to carry her back. The result was, she hissed like a snake, bit and clawed at the heavily-gloved hands which confined her, and then struck her talons through five thicknesses of clothing into my hip, breaking the skin. The ear tufts were laid back, much in the same manner of an angry horse when wanting to bite. But, back into the cage went Sister and shortly thereafter, Brother, whose display of temper at having been "man-handled" was only a few degrees less intense.

By June 14th there was restlessness at dusk. Evidently the mental urge to hunt was disturbing them, so we decided to release them for the night. The fascinating speculation was, "what will they do." The door to their cage was opened and they lost no time in getting out. Upon flying to the roof, they made a tour of investigation.

Later in the evening, one of the Scotties barked furiously. Our investigation revealed the two owlets in the middle of the drive, quite indifferent to the dog's threats. My wager was on the two birds, so they were returned to the cage. Brother offered little resistance when picked up, but Sister showed fight in a decided manner. In the cage, they did their "hunting" in a saucer filled with pieces of steak.

Their friendliness and affection became more pronounced as they grew older. Whenever a gloved, or ungloved hand, came near to scratch them, they plainly loved the caress, and raised a foot in a definite "shake hands" gesture, until a finger was extended for them to grip. Any gesture to withdraw proved painful. During her remaining visit with us, Sister showed her tigerish disposition only once. In an effort to make her come to the fist, she suddenly went over on her back with a furious hiss. In time, however, she learned obedience.

By the twentieth of June, both birds had larger patches of strong smooth feathers on their breasts, and their chiffon down was flying all over their cages. Now, they descended to our feet to nibble at them when we entered. During the following week, their primaries and tails "came down" rapidly, changing their appearance entirely.

Restlessness toward evening became more pronounced, so, on June 27th, we decided to liberate the owls at least for the nights. Most of their time, after libration, was spent in trying out their wings, picking up small pieces of wood or sticks, using, sometimes one, and on occasions, two feet.

Suddenly tragedy stalked. Sister's appetite failed completely; her great golden eyes became tired and dull. A slight yellowish exudate from nares and mandibles indicated the source of the trouble. An examination disclosed a violent inflammation of the mucous membrane of throat and tongue, with large patches of pus over the entire area, and a most offensive odor. She died on July 1st. Subsequently, during the A. O. U. meeting in Washington, a member of the Falconer's Club informed me, after we had compared symptoms, that one of his peregrins had apparently died of the same type of infection. Research in the falcon's case had shown that a bacterial growth originating in the crops of pigeons, which had been fed to the hawk, were identical with the bacteria taken from the throat of the bird. Since this information was given me, the crops of all fowl given our hawks and owls have been removed before the food was offered.

The smaller, remaining bird proved to be a most devoted friend. Although at liberty, he remained close to the house. The call, "O, Brother," brought him even during the day. As mentioned before, it was the Scottish terriers that brought home the young cottontails which the owls relished so much. Sitting on a broad terrace with us would be the great bird, quietly waiting for food. If no rabbit could be produced, steak, calves liver, or other fresh meat, would be placed on a plate beside us. The owl ate his meal leisurely and well mannered—a marvelous lesson in adaptation. A meal of rabbit was something different. He would carry it a few feet away to the ground and "worry" it for a short time, then pick it up and return it to the table where he repeated the process a number of times. It was a queer sensation to hear the crunching of the rabbit's bones, and the tearing of the tissue, but when through, there were no scraps left.

We had, during the owl's visit with us, a flock of young turkeys about six weeks old, pedigreed and white in color, running about the lawns near the house. One of the most amusing spectacles was to see the owl fly down among them, scatter them a bit, after which the turkeys would gather again, look at the owl curiously and noisily, whereupon Brother would hop into the flock once more to continue **ad infinitum.**

The reaction of a little silkie hen with a brood of quail was very different. One very bright moonlight night, she suddenly began a wild cackling. Upon investigating, we found the owl walking around the cage. I held out my fist to him, he hopped on, and together we returned to the house. He flew up to a beam of the south terrace to rest, but later that night collided with the living room window without damage.

An enforced vacation removed me from the scene for about ten days, but on the first night of my return, I turned on the light. A few seconds later, I heard a thump on the glass roof of the veranda under my window, and a soft "tseep" with an upward inflection. There sat the great owl rotating his head. Suddenly he went through all the movements of bathing—he had seen his reflection in the glass roof beneath and thought it was water. He remained beneath the window long after the light was turned off, begging. At five a. m., I went to the icebox, brought out some large pieces of steak and a dishpan full of water; after which the persistent "tseeping" was silenced and I could go back to sleep.

On July 17th, we weighed Brother, and he scaled exactly three pounds. That evening he did not return, but suddenly appeared the next morning. After feeding him a big breakfast, we photographed him. He, now, was full grown, frightfully fierce looking, and with behavior like a scared baby. For a number of days, the turkey-silkie comedy continued; mother silkie refused to be pacified, the turkeys remained indifferent.

Only one more act in the drama needs to be recorded. On July 20th, seven night-blooming cereus blossoms were to open in our little conservatory. On such occasions, guests were invited to attend "The Queen of the Night." As we walked towards the glass house, someone suddenly said, "Here comes the big fellow!" I could not help ducking down a bit as the owl, in his silent flight, suddenly veered and settled on my hatless head. I stood quietly while reaching up my ungloved hand to take him on my fist. But he was off, as silently as he had come —he had not used his talons!

The opening of a number of night-blooming cactus blossoms is one of Nature's most exquisite marvels. We usually have four lighted candles in the little house in order to observe the flowers better. The little group of guests were quietly watching the unfolding of the fairylike blossoms, when a little scratching noise made us look up. There, on the roof, sat the great horned owl, peering through the glass at us. The flickering candlelight reflected in his eyes and a soft "tseep" came down to us through the ventilators. It was an experience never to be forgotten—the fiercest of the night-flying raptors and the most exquisite of night-blooming flowers bound together by a little understanding and patience.

On the evening of July 21st, while walking in the dusk, the owl accompanied us, flying from tree to tree, from post to post, to the chicken-coop, garage and house; but it was his final night with us. What happened to him we do not know, but his skeletal remains and a few feathers were discovered on a rubbish heap, on October 26th. Band number 813977 identified Brother.

1500 East Fairy Chasm Road
Milwaukee 1, Wisconsin

JUST RECEIVED!

The Supply Department has received the following new items:

Correspondence Folders. Kodachromes by Henry B. Kane. Box of ten folders with envelopes, $1. An exquisite production. Subjects are: Hepaticas, scarlet tanager, bullfrog, barred owl, and skunk; all in their natural habitat and color.

Road to Survival. By William Vogt. A book highly praised. $4.

Birds Over America. By Roger Tory Peterson. Unique adventures and observations with eighty pages of photographs of excellent quality. $6.

The Insect Guide. By Ralph B. Swain. A guide to North American insects with 330 in full color. $3.

THE BIRDS OF WISCONSIN

By L. KUMLIEN and N. HOLLISTER

With Revisions by A. W. Schorger

(Continued from last issue)

Porzana noveboracensis (Gmel.). **Yellow Rail.**

Summer resident. This little rail is not nearly so rare as generally supposed, though by no means common. We have authentic records from Racine, Milwaukee, Elm Grove, Delavan, Janesville, Milton, etc., and even breeding records as far north as Brown County. There appears to be no record for the western part of the state, but this does not necessarily imply that the bird does not occur there. The note of this rail is not generally recognized by observers and owing to its retiring habits and the difficulty usually experienced in flushing it from the grass it is very seldom seen.

[One was taken near Delavan by Ned Hollister (**Auk** 19,1902:197), October 11, 1901. H. L. Stoddard (**Auk** 34,1917:64) collected one in Sauk County, April 23, 1908, and another in Columbia County, May 1, 1911. Warner Taylor took one in Dane County, May 2, 1920. Another was taken in Kenosha County, October 12, 1932, by W. A. Weber. C. H. Richter found it nesting at Oconto in 1940, 1941, and 1942. (**Pass. Pigeon** 2,1940:92; 3,1941:65; 5,1943:3).]

Porzana jamaicensis (Gmel.). **Black Rail.**

Although Mr. Nelson (1) found this species breeding in northeastern Illinois and considered it of not very rare occurrence, it seems to have almost entirely escaped the Wisconsin ornithologists as yet. In fact, the only record we are aware of is the following: August 20, 1877 (2), a marsh hawk was killed by Frithiof Kumlien from a muskrat house on the border of Lake Koshkonong. When noted first it was eating something, and this proved to be a little black rail. We are quite sure of having seen it on one occasion, but the above is probably the only authentic record for the state as yet.

[The Black Rail should be dropped from the list as there is no specimen.]

Ionornis martinica (Linn.). **Purple Gallinule.**

Exceedingly rare straggler from the south. Most of the records obtainable are far from satisfactory, but the bird is without question entitled to a place in the Wisconsin list. Barry's list of 1854 says "a few breed here every season" (Racine); but inasmuch as the same list does not mention the following species we are inclined to think a mistake has been made, especially as Dr. Hoy's list of 1852, from the same locality, does not include it. Dr. Hoy procured it later, however, at Racine, and we once handled a specimen said to have been shot north of Milwaukee, about 1860. One other specimen was also sent to Thure Kumlien in a decomposed condition at an early day, some time in the fifties. This specimen was killed near Janesville, and there can be no doubt as to its authenticity.

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1. Birds of N. E. Ill., p. 134, 1877.
2. Possibly 1879, the last figure is badly blurred.

There are also two or more other records about which there is suspicion. We once purchased a specimen labeled "Wis.," but could trace it no farther, and believe the locality may possibly have been substituted to suit the occasion.

[There is no specimen for Wisconsin.]

Gallinula galeata (Licht.). **Florida Gallinule.**

A common summer resident as far as the north central portion of the state, and in less numbers to the shore of Lake Superior. Has apparently increased in numbers during the past thirty years, at least locally. We have reared the young of this species and the next a number of times, setting the eggs under a hen and feeding the chicks on baked cake, composed of cornmeal, oatmeal, bran and beef. An excellent table bird, and a very interesting species whose life history we think is but imperfectly known, and worthy of the closest investigation. We have found as high as seventeen eggs in one nest, although ten to fourteen is the common number. As soon as the first eggs are deposited incubation begins, the sun doing the work by day and the female parent by night. The first hatched young are thus two weeks old ofttimes before the last egg is hatched. The young as fast as hatched are cared for by the male, but are to a certain extent competent to care for themselves very soon. A ventriloquist of extraordinary powers.

Fulica americana (Gmel.). **American Coot.**

Very abundant spring and fall migrant on all the lakes and larger rivers. A breeding species in considerable numbers anywhere in the state, but by far the greater number pass beyond our borders to nest. Nests in similar localities to the preceding, but is otherwise very different in its habits, the coot frequenting open water like a duck, while the gallinule, rail-like, seeks the cover of grass or rushes. Arrives early and remains until the lakes freeze over. Apparently has not decreased in numbers during the past thirty years. This bird is very liable to become bewildered during its nocturnal migrations and is often found in cities and about the outbuildings of farms a long distance from water. Known to most of our gunners as the "mud-hen" or "pull-do" (1).

ORDER LIMICOLAE: SHORE BIRDS

FAMILY PHALAROPODIDAE: PHALAROPES

Crymophilus fulicarius (Linn.). **Red Phalarope.**

Small flocks may be met on Lake Michigan and Lake Superior in autumn, and occasionally straggling individuals wander to the larger inland lakes. Four specimens, one adult female and three young of the year were taken on Lake Koshkonong September 3, 1891. We have but a single state record for the early part of the season, a solitary female killed by Thure Kumlien on Lake Koshkonong June 4, 1877. This bird was only just beginning to show the red summer plumage and there was nothing to indicate that it would have bred that season. We have seen flocks of waders on Lake Superior in October that were no doubt this

1. A corruption of the French **poule d'eau** (water hen), as the bird is called in Louisiana. Trumbull, "Names and Portraits of Birds," New York, 1888, p. 117.

species, but stormy weather and distance prevented positive identification. We know of no other wader, however, except the next, that would light on the icy waters of Lake Superior many miles from land in late autumn. Our acquaintance with this species in the arctic regions makes us feel sure of the identification; and Dr. Hoy notes it from off Racine in November, 1847.

[Rare migrant. H. L. Stoddard (**Auk** 40,1923:319) collected one in Sheboygan County, October 8, 1921. One was seen in Dane County by J. S. Main (**Auk** 53,1936:212), September 22, 1935.]

Phalaropus lobatus (Linn.). **Northern Phalarope.**

Much more common than the red phalarope. Noted on Lake Michigan and Lake Superior in September and October, and a regular spring and fall migrant on Lake Koshkonong, though more often taken in fall than spring. Frequently taken on Lake Koshkonong in August, and once as early as August 3 (1873). Often found in the open water of the larger lakes swimming with the coots far from shore. Birds in breeding plumage are rare in Wisconsin; even such as are procured in May and June are still principally in the winter dress. Twenty-five years ago it was no uncommon occurrence to have a flock of half a dozen or more light among the duck hunters' decoys on Koshkonong. Even when feeding with other waders along the shore it will be most often found outside the shore line, where it must swim instead of wade in order to feed.

[Several specimens have been taken both in spring and fall in recent years.]

Steganopus tricolor (Vieill.). **Wilson's Phalarope.**

This, the most beautiful of all our waders, is a common summer resident in Wisconsin, breeding in larger or smaller colonies in many different parts of the state. Such breeding colonies are found near Pewaukee, at three different places near Lake Koshkonong, at Albion, Whitewater, Packwaukee and Green Bay, and, in fact, at any suitable place. One colony at Lake Koshkonong has been known to have more than two hundred pairs on the marsh at one time. Arrives in southern Wisconsin in full breeding plumage. At some localities in the state the bird appears to be a rather rare migrant only.

[Nests in small numbers. Young were found at Fond du Lac by O. J. Gromme (Yearbook Mil. Pub. Mus., 1923:46) in the spring of 1922, and at Madison by J. S. Main (**Auk** 57,1940:424), July 4, 1939. Both eggs and young have been found in Oconto County by C. H. Richter. (**Pass. Pigeon** 1,1939:46; 2,1940:101; 3,1941:66).]

FAMILY RECURVIROSTRIDAE: AVOCETS AND STILTS

Recurvirostra americana (Gmel.). **American Avocet.**

Specimens of this peculiar wader were taken by Thure Kumlien at different times from 1844 to 1875. Three were shot on Lake Koshkonong September, 1873. Bred in Green Bay in 1879, where downy young were seen in the possession of a taxidermist by L. Kumlien. Those taken by Thure Kumlien were more often taken in September and October, and were principally young birds. A specimen in the Milwaukee Public Museum is labeled "Wis." At the present time it must be considered as exceptionally rare.

[The following are the last records for the state: male, Dodge County, September 7, 1908; male, Waupaca County, October 21, 1921. Both specimens are in the Milwaukee Public Museum. (H. L. Stoddard, **Auk** 40,1923:321).]

Himantopus mexicanus (Mull.). **Black-necked Stilt.**

Very rare straggler. As far as we are aware the only record of this species for the state is that of Dr. Hoy, who states that "he met a small flock of these singular birds near Racine, April, 1847." The single specimen preserved in his collection was probably taken at this time.

FAMILY SCOLOPACIDAE: SNIPES, SANDPIPERS, ETC.

Philohela minor (Gmel.). **American Woodcock.**

Summer resident. Rapidly diminishing in numbers, though not an uncommon bird in suitable localities throughout the state. On the evidence of Thure Kumlien, Dr. Hoy, and others this species increased from the early forties up to say about 1870. From that time on to the present its numbers have decreased, from too close shooting, settlement of the country, and the draining and drying up of its natural resorts. An early breeder in bottom lands along streams, the eggs sometimes found in April. In fall remains until we have had very sharp frosts.

Gallinago delicata (Ord.). **Wilson's Snipe.**

Still a common species in most parts of the state—we might say abundant if it were not that we should be at a loss to express its numbers in former years. Arrives in southern Wisconsin early in April, and a large portion have passed north before May 1. A goodly number nest within the state as yet, even in the southern part. We procured two sets of eggs at Lake Koshkonong in May, 1891, and one set May 20, 1893, and were it not for the fact that the nest **can not** be discovered unless one flushes the bird, a good many might still be found. Mr. S. R. Hartwell, of Milwaukee, writes that it is still found to some extent in Waukesha County in summer, but that the nest is rarely found. He obtained a set of four eggs May 30, 1890, near Waukesha. Thirty-five years ago a nest was no rarity at all. By September 1 it begins to return from the north, yet unless there have been sharp frosts it is not very plenty until October, and it remains until well into November. A few are always found about open spring holes all winter. Of late so persistently hunted that it has materially decreased in numbers, even during the past ten years or less.

[It is not certain that this species is increasing even after several years of prohibition of shooting. An occasional nest is still found.]

Macrorhamphus griseus (Gmel.). **Dowitcher.**

Formerly a common migrant, now exceedingly rare. We have but one specimen of this form of the dowitcher in our collections, from Lake Koshkonong, although hundreds were formerly killed. There are, in the Milwaukee Public Museum, two specimens, these also from Koshkonong, taken in August, 1886. See remarks under next species.

[The status of the Eastern Dowitcher (**griseus**) and Long-billed Dowitcher (**scolopaceus**) is uncertain. The latter has been considered the more common form. The Milwaukee Public Museum has seven

specimens of **griseus,** two of which were identified by A. Wetmore and H. Friedmann.]

Macrorhamphus scolopaceus (Say). **Long-billed Dowitcher.**

In order to rightly understand the following it is necessary to have some knowledge of the conditions as they existed in southern Wisconsin, and especially about Lake Koshkonong, from about 1865 to 1875. In the first place the shore birds, with the exception of the woodcock, and to a limited extent the jack snipe, were undisturbed by the gunners. No one thought of shooting them in the spring, and the consequence was that thousands upon thousands gathered upon the mud flats and remained for much longer periods than now. At this time also we recognized no specific difference between **scolopaceus** and **griseus,** for although we were well aware of a difference, especially in the length of the bill, there was every intermediate degree in measurements between the larger and smaller in this respect, and we had not classed them as distinct species. Consequently, these remarks must unfortunately apply to both species, as at this day we are utterly at a loss to say which species predominated, though we think **scolopaceus** did. Our collection to-day contains but one of each species, so that this is no guide whatever. As to the numbers of dowitchers that frequented Lake Koshkonong thirty to thirty-five years ago, during May, June, July, August and September, we forbear to attempt an estimate, as the younger generation would set it down as fabulous. Common as they were, often through July, but always less in this month than any other from May to October, but **very** few bred. Young still unable or barely able to fly were taken on several occasions. There is positively no question that considerable numbers bred in Wisconsin from 1865 to 1875 and in 1872 and 1873 as far south as Lake Koshkonong. In August the fully fledged young returned from the north in great flocks. The dowitchers were probably never as plenty on Lake Michigan as along the Rock River Valley. We incline to this opinion because Dr. Hoy did not find them in any numbers along the lake, and when he saw the flocks during a visit to Lake Koshkonong in June, his exclamations and gesticulations can only be imagined by those who were favored with his acquaintance. Nelson speaks of them only as a "rather common migrant" in northeastern Illinois in 1876. In Wisconsin at the present time they are known only during migrations and then sparingly. A few appear in May and June, and a very few at that, and again in August and September, but so irregularly that they may pass as rare. We have here a good illustration of what continual spring shooting can accomplish. For years the dowitchers were shot over decoys on Lake Koshkonong for the Chicago market, in May and the first half of June, until they have been practically exterminated. We are informed that from 1877 to 1880 two men averaged ten dozen a day during May and June!

[**Limnodromus griseus hendersoni** (Rowan). **Inland Dowitcher.**

This form was described by W. Rowan (**Auk** 49,1932:14) in 1932. The more recent paper by H. B. Conover (**Auk** 58,1941:376) leaves little doubt that it is a valid subspecies. One was taken at Madison by J. S. Main (**Auk** 57,1940:424), July 16, 1939). I have a specimen taken at Mad-

ison, May 12, 1940. Without doubt there are other **hendersoni** in the collections in the state.]

Micropalama himantopus (Bonap.). **Stilt Sandpiper.**

Migrant and doubtless a former summer breeder to a limited extent. Of rather irregular occurrence, sometimes rare and again in such numbers that a dozen might be killed at a single shot. We have never seen them along Lake Michigan and they were almost unknown to Hoy. No doubt the greater number pass up the Mississippi, a considerable number branching off and passing up the Rock River Valley, and finding a place like Lake Koshkonong, just suited to their tastes, remain there longer than elsewhere. During the seventies they were rather common about Koshkonong, especially during the latter part of July, August and well into September. We have taken young barely able to fly, readily running them down; these had the head and upper neck still in the natal down, and if they were not hatched at Lake Koshkonong, certainly they could have come but a short distance. But few are taken in full breeding plumage, and at the present day they are decidedly rare in spring. Mr. J. N. Clark has taken the stilt sandpiper in Dunn County, three or four specimens in August and September, 1896; and Mr. W. E. Snyder reports a single capture at Beaver Dam.

Tringa canutus (Linn.). **Knot.**

Thirty years ago a rather common migrant in May and June, and more sparingly in autumn. Of late years decidedly rare at any season. When common it was often taken in full breeding plumage. We have several times, especially in 1872 and 1873, the famous snipe years at Lake Koshkonong, taken knots in June and July, but there was no evidence that they were nesting, and if we are not mistaken they have been taken in mid-summer in Louisiana. Rarer on Lake Michigan, where we have seen small flocks in May several times in 1881-83.

[One was taken in Sheboygan County, September 6, 1940, by O. J. Gromme. One bird was banded in September, 1939, in Milwaukee County (C. L. Strelitzer, **Pass. Pigeon** 1,1939:136), and four near Milwaukee, September 23, 1940 (E. L. Loyster, **ibid.** 5,1943:1). There are several sight records.]

Tringa maritima (Brunn.). **Purple Sandpiper.**

Rare migrant. Dr. Hoy states in his list of 1852 that this species was "greatly abundant" at Racine, from April 15 to May 20. As far as our personal observation goes we are inclined to think that the bird occurs only as an exceedingly rare straggler, at least at the present day. We have never seen, much less procured, one in the state. In the collection of the Oshkosh Normal School is a specimen which was said to have been taken at Bay View (Door County) in May, 1881.

[There is a female in the Milwaukee Public Museum found at Wind Point, Racine County, November 8, 1942, by George Prins. (O. J. Gromme, **Pass. Pigeon** 4,1942:88).]

Tringa maculatta (Vieill.). **Pectoral Sandpiper.**

Twenty-five years ago an exceedingly abundant migrant during May, September and October. Of late, thanks to spring snipe shooting, the

bird has decreased in numbers until now it is hardly common. Nelson speaks of a few remaining through the summer in northeastern Illinois (1877), and a few formerly spent the entire summer about the Koshkonong marshes, but there was never any evidence of breeding. At an early day, probably some time in the fifties, Thure Kumlien sent June skins to John Cassin, of Philadelphia, and Cassin, supposing it sufficient evidence that the pectoral sandpiper bred in Wisconsin, published a statement to this effect, on no other evidence, however, than the date when the birds were shot. It has been stated by different authorities that the bird breeds in Wisconsin, but no doubt they can all be traced to Cassin's premature conclusions. More numerous in the interior than on Lake Michigan.

Tringa fuscicollis (Vieill.). **White-rumped Sandpiper.**

Of regular occurrence at about the same time as the next, but by no means an abundant species. The white-rumps are in fine breeding plumage by the first week in June, and the females then contain **ova** the size of large peas. Small flocks of a dozen or less are sometimes found about Lake Koshkonong until the middle of June, and they are back again with barely full fledged young by August 1. It thus stands to reason that some of them, at least, can not go far north to nest. We have no evidence, however, that they ever breed in Wisconsin.

Tringa bairdii (Coues). **Baird's Sandpiper.**

Regular migrant in small numbers. Most often found in May, but frequently in August and up to the middle of September. In 1872 and 1873, the years the waders remained in such numbers the entire summer at Lake Koshkonong, they were the most abundant ever known, before or since. With the exception of these two years we have no records of summer specimens, and even at that time had no suspicion that those remaining bred. Mr. Clark finds this sandpiper a regular migrant in Dunn County, and has sent us specimens. Contrary to our observation he finds **bairdii** more common than **fuscicollis.**

Tringa minutilla (Vieill). **Least Sandpiper.**

Common migrant, especially in May and August. Arrives about May 1 and a few remain until well into June. The greater part are back again by the middle of August, many having already returned by the first of the month. We have known of at least two instances of this bird's nesting within the state, and from specimens seen in various parts of the north and central portions of the state, suspect that, at least twenty years ago, it bred in some numbers. Dr. Hoy, in 1852, called it common, and stated that it nested in the reedy marshes. Nelson also found it nesting on the Calumet marshes in northeastern Illinois in June, 1875. A breeding female, shot June 10, 1876, on Lake Koshkonong, and now in the Kumlien collection, has the entire back black, with merely a slight edging of rusty color on the tips of the inner tertiaries. It can hardly be called as plentiful in Wisconsin as the semipalmated sandpiper, and, contrary to the case with that bird, is more abundant on the interior lakes than on the shores of Lake Michigan.

(Continued in next issue)

BY THE WAYSIDE . . .

A Belligerent Catbird. Last year a pair of catbirds nested in a lilac bush near our garage. When there were young birds in the nest, I decided to get a closer view. Standing on an up-turned glass battery jar, I looked in and saw four young birds, whereupon the old catbird flew at me and gave me a sharp peck on the forehead. Although we had tamed the adults sufficiently to eat from our back door, the instinct to protect their young won out.—Mrs. T. J. Peterson, Waupaca.

A Water Thrush Catching Flies. On July 24 I observed a Grinnell's water thrush catching insects on the wing after the manner of flycatchers, along a dried-up drainage ditch in its nesting area. It made short flights after an insect a number of times, but was never seen to return to the same perch which it had just left, as flycatchers do. The water thrush sometimes returned to the same bush or sapling, but never to the same perch.—Carl H. Richter, Oconto.

Vireo Chases Hawk. The same day I came upon a broad-winged hawk sitting in a tree and making complaining sounds. As I watched, I noted a red-eyed vireo diving at it, and then alighting in a limb just above the one on which the hawk was perched. The vireo was also complaining—not because of my presence, but because of the hawk. When the hawk took wing, the vireo followed in close pursuit, and again alighted in the tree just above the hawk as it settled on a branch. All the while the vireo called angrily; it was plain to see that it had no fear of the hawk. I believe the smaller species recognize the broad-wing as a less dangerous type of hawk.—Carl H. Richter, Oconto.

Orioles Fight Off Cowbird. This spring a female cowbird was seen near a new nest of the Baltimore oriole, with designs of laying one of her eggs there. The orioles made quite a fuss. The male called for help, and at least eight other male orioles arrived in less than a minute. Together they chased off the cowbird.—Mrs. Steve Klimowitz, Stevens Point.

THE SUMMER SEASON . . .

Field notes for the summer season have been reserved for the next issue to permit us, eventually, to get the magazine on schedule. Thus, records for the fall season (September 1 to November 30) will be due next. Please send them in as soon as possible. Address the Rev. Samuel D. Robbins, Mazomanie, Wisconsin.

YOUNG BARN OWLS. NEST WAS IN BARN LOFT NEAR MADISON. PHOTOGRAPHED IN AUGUST BY GEORGE HALL.

Distribution and Migration Program of the Fish and Wildlife Service

By CHANDLER S. ROBBINS

In 1885 the U. S. Biological Survey (now the Fish and Wildlife Service) commenced the systematic recording of observations on the distribution and migration of North American birds. Through the years, by adding observations made by Fish and Wildlife Service personnel throughout the country, by copying or clipping articles from the principal ornithological journals, and by securing the cooperation of selected professional and amateur observers in the United States and Canada, the number of observations on file has been increased until they now number well over two million.

This file furnishes the basis for the descriptions of ranges of North American birds in Bent's "Life Histories," in the A. O. U. "Check-List of North American Birds," and indirectly for almost all other books on North American birds.

The manner of reporting observations has been improved from time to time. Early in this century the main concern was the arrival date in spring, and whether or not the species remained to nest. When that information had been obtained, emphasis changed to include more observations of the fall and winter seasons, and to get a rough approximation of relative abundance through use of the terms: "common," "uncommon," or "rare."

At the present time an effort is being made to place observations on a numerical basis so that comparisons can be made between different localities, and over a period of years at the same place. The term "uncommon" may not mean the same thing to one observer as it meant to another fifty years ago; but a definite count or careful estimate of the number of individuals actually seen in a given number of hours afield can be used for comparisons at any later date.

In order to obtain fuller coverage of North America, the following steps are being taken:

1) The list of volunteer cooperators of the Fish and Wildlife Service is being completely revised and expanded;

2) In localities where there is a club, museum, or college group, an effort is being made to have an experienced ornithologist in that group compile all records from the vicinity;

3) In areas where no such group exists, competent individual observers are being solicited.

Ever since 1917, the National Audubon Society has been publishing Season reports in which the records of observers in selected areas of the United States have been summarized after each season. These summaries have gradually been increased in scope, and are now being published together with the Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding and Winter Bird Censuses in **Audubon Field Notes,** a periodical now edited jointly by the Audubon Society and the Fish and Wildlife Service. These two organizations are now combining the efforts of the two distinct groups of correspondents, making all of the observations available for immediate

publication, and then filing them for permanent reference in the distribution and migration card file of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

For several years, bird migration in parts of Wisconsin has been summarized in **Audubon Field Notes** under the Minnesota and Middle-Western Regions. Now, as a result of a complete reorganization of regions according to natural areas, the entire State of Wisconsin is included in the coverage. The prairie section, comprising the southern tier of counties, is part of the Middle-Western Prairie Region, edited by Harold Mayfield, 2557 Portsmouth Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, while the rest of the State has been assigned to the Central Northern Region, edited by Harvey L. Gunderson, Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. By having observation cards mailed first to the regional editors of **Audubon Field Notes,** and then forwarded to the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland, no duplication of effort is involved.

Fortunately, Wisconsin already has a network of active observers who contribute their notes regularly to the field notes editor of **The Passenger Pigeon.** The fine summaries that appear in each issue are already being clipped and pasted on 2"x5" cards for the Fish and Wildlife Service files. More detailed data are desired, however, both for summarization in **Audubon Field Notes,** and for the Fish and Wildlife Service files. For comparing the migration and the breeding and wintering populations from one year to the next, and for comparing the abundance of each species from one part of the country to another, it is necessary to have observers throughout the continent record the same data in the same way. The new cards distributed by the Fish and Wildlife Service call for not only the arrival and departure dates, but the date of maximum abundance during each migration period, and the number of individuals recorded on each of these dates. They also have spaces for the maximum number of individuals recorded in one day during the breeding and winter seasons. To aid further in making comparisons, an estimate of the time each observer spends in the field is requested.

Local groups throughout Wisconsin are urged to give careful consideration to this project. (It need hardly be pointed out that all compilers must be thoroughly familiar with the bird life of their particular areas, and must exercise the utmost care in accepting records from the less experienced.) Since many parts of the State lack local bird clubs, amateur and professional ornithologists who are thoroughly familiar with the birds of their own localities are also being asked to cooperate individually in this international program.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will be pleased to hear from all interested persons and groups. Correspondence may be addressed either to Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland, or to your Field Notes Editor.

Note: The Rev. Samuel D. Robbins, Mazomanie, Wisconsin, will collect Wisconsin records under this program. Thus, you may apply to him for cards such as are furnished by these national organizations. By sending these records to Sam, our state magazine will have full use of them, and much duplication of effort on the part of the observer will be avoided.

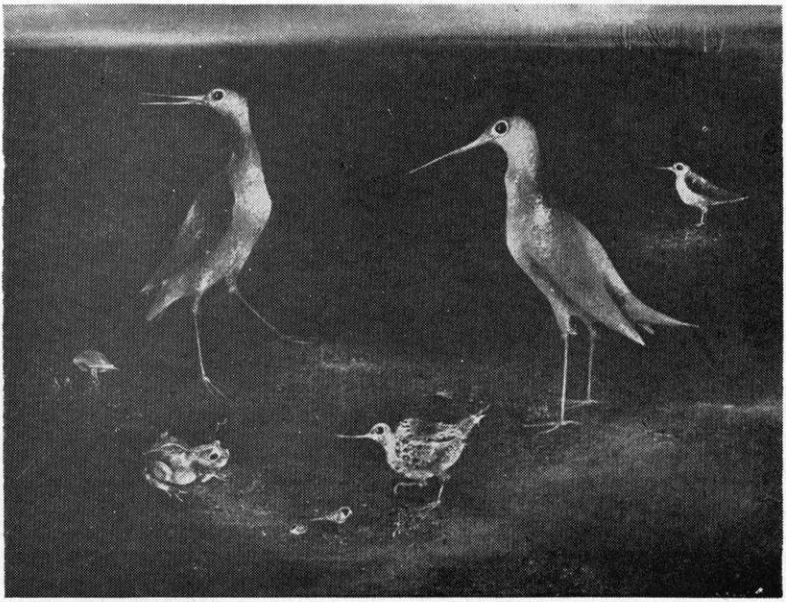
NEWS . . .

(Continued from page 130)

Mrs. George Wettengel, Appleton, passed away in June. Mrs. Wettengel was a member for years. We expect to have a longer write-up in another issue.

The Madison Bird Club has been revived again after a short period of inactivity. Thomas J. Stavrum is president; Miss Joan Kirk, secretary; and Leon Edmunds, treasurer. It conducts monthly meetings and frequent walks. Anyone who is interested in birds, and, especially, newcomers to the study of birds are invited. The club has been very active in the field, studying nests as well as the migration. Photographs, secured by its members, will be published in The Passenger Pigeon whenever possible. The nest of the black tern, and young of the barn owl, included in this issue, are the first of this series.

The Christmas bird count will be published as usual in our January number. If any of our members could make counts in the west and north, this year, their reports would be a valuable addition. Heretofore, most of them have been from the southeast.



WISCONSIN NIGHT MIGRANTS . . . BY KARL PRIEBE

THIS PAINTING, EXECUTED IN COLOR BY A WISCONSIN ARTIST, WON A $500.00 AWARD AT THE STATE FAIR. IT WAS ONE OF THIRTY-TWO PAINTINGS PROVIDED AS A CENTENNIAL ART COLLECTION BY GIMBEL BROTHERS. CUT, COURTESY OF GIMBEL BROTHERS, INC., AND WITH PERMISSION OF THE ARTIST.

BOOK REVIEW

BIRDS OVER AMERICA. By Roger Tory Peterson. New York, 1948, 6¾x10 in. xiii 342 pp., 103 photos., $6.00.

It was a decided pleasure to read this book and it is an equal one to recommend it to others, for this is a book that can be read and enjoyed by all bird watchers from the rankest of amateurs to the most experienced of professionals. Sooner or later it seems that every ornithologist of note or of literary bent gets around to writing an anecdotal book about birds and bird watching, and Roger Peterson of Field Guide fame proves to be no exception. However just as Mr. Peterson's Field Guides

were new and different so does his compilation of anecdotes and personal experiences differ from the many similar books. Mr. Peterson tells his story in such a straightforward and readable manner that we sometimes fail to recognize the fact that we are learning a good deal of new and valuable information. I daresay there is not a single bird student who will not learn something new from this book.

Mr. Peterson takes us with him on a wide variety of ornithological excursions; a May Day Count, a Christmas census, and an everyday field trip as well as to several of the most interesting spots in the country; Cape May during Fall migration, the Singer Tract in search of Ivory Billed Woodpeckers, and at sea in search of albatross. He includes some fascinating discussions about bird populations, attempts to introduce exotic species, ecological communities, and similar topics. Throughout the book we also get intimate glimpses of some of the leading present day ornithologists, Griscom, Sutton, our own Joseph Hickey, and others.

The many excellent photographs remind us that in addition to his many other talents Mr. Peterson ranks near the top as a bird photographer.—George A. Hall.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON
THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC.

CUMULATIVE INDEX TO VOLUMES 8-10
1946-1948

COMPILED BY ELLEN A. HOFFMAN, MINNIE A. HOFFMAN AND HELEN E. SCHROEDER

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(A) INDEX TO BIRDS

(B) SUPPLEMENTARY INDEX OF SIGNED ARTICLES, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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Jensen, Jens. **Siftings.**

If you can supply any of the above, please notify N. R. Barger, 4333 Hillcrest Drive, Madison 5, Wisconsin, stating price desired.

In addition to books required to fill immediate orders, the Supply Department will purchase books on birds and related subjects which you no longer need. Please send list, and state lowest price that will be accepted. It is understood that our society must make a reasonable profit on books sold, after the postage has been paid. From past experience, we know that many members will be willing to donate books, no longer wanted, to the society for resale. This is a generous service to the society that is appreciated. It should be encouraged.

If books are donated to the society, under the above program, which are not salable after a reasonable trial, they can be transferred to the librarian, Mr. Doane, who, in turn, will place them in the society's library; or exchange them for other titles through the library exchange.

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Manuscript for the Passenger Pigeon

Articles of general interest on Wisconsin birds are published in **The Passenger Pigeon.** They should be based on original studies, that is, they should present some new angle of the subject treated. There is no limit to the number of aspects that may be treated, and there is probably no bird student in Wisconsin who could not write an article of interest.

Manuals, such as Hickey's "Guide to Bird Watching" and Pettingill's "Field and Laboratory Manual," may be consulted for suggestions on how to organize the material, as well as how to attack chosen problems.

Manuscript should be typed on one side of letter-size paper, double-spaced. Photographs should be included if possible, but they should be of excellent quality, clear, and of good contrast.

Record of a Buff-Breasted Sandpiper in Wisconsin

On July 31, Howard L. Orians and son, Gordon, made a sight record of the buff-breasted sandpiper on the steel mill property in Milwaukee. At our request, Mr. Orians supplied the following:

"There isn't much to say further than that. We went down to the lake shore for a walk an hour or two before sunset. Not many birds were in evidence that evening. But when we came to a little pool or puddle of water, less than an inch in depth, and about a hundred feet from the shore of the lake, we saw two birds wading and bathing. The first glance showed that one was a killdeer, and that the other was not. Fortunately, the other bird was very tame, so that we were able to study it at close range with the 8x binocular.

"In the case of many of the shore birds, one must hesitate before being sure of his identification. In this case, however, there was no possibility of mistaken identity. . . . There is no other shore bird with that uniform buff color over pretty much the whole body, and especially on the breast. The bright yellow legs also were very plainly apparent.

"I am sorry that I was not able to get pictures of this rare visitor. We were close enough to get pictures, but had no idea when we left our house that evening that there was any occasion for taking the camera along."

Kumlien and Hollister mention a few early-day records of this species, but it has been rare indeed since that time.—N. R. Barger.