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# PASSENGER PIGEON

VOLUME XIII July, 1951 NUMBER 3



BLACK TERN AT NEST

PRINS BROTHERS

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN BIRD STUDY

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THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC.

#### NEWS . .

With this issue, Carl Strelitzer begins his career as editor of our field notes. He plans to send out cards seasonally as reminders to our regular contributors, but there are many members who, to date, have not gotten their names on this observer list. All members, as you know, are invited and privileged to send in any field note that seems to them to be of interest. At this time May day counts are due, nesting records will be of especial value, and annual lists of birds observed in the state should be prepared. All of these features combine to round out the statewide bird picture.

The Christmas bird census will be sponsored this year as usual, and the same rules and procedures will be in effect as last year. New Year's day may be included in

the period.

The Cedar Grove hawk-study trip, planned for October 7, was rained out this year. Mr. Thomas J. Stavrum, director of this activity, states that observers came



C. WILSON WHOOPING CRANES ON THE ARANSAS WILDLIFE REFUGE, TEXAS

from as far as Black River Falls and Kenosha in hopes that something could be accomplished. Because of the unfavorable direction of the wind that day, hawks did not begin to come in until during the afternoon, when most observers had left. Because of the rain, the picnic lunch was enjoyed under the protection of an abandoned fisherman's shed.

New appointment calendars and Christmas cards (in sets), painted by Roger T. Peterson, are available this year from our supply department. A number of new books also have reached the market-see our advertisement. Les Diedrich has a good variety of feeders ready for early distribution. The hardships of winter seem to be starting earlier than usual this

Members of the Wausau Bird Club and the Antigo Audubon Bird Club combined forces recently on a field trip to the Dells of Eau Claire Park.

The Nature Conservancy is the new name of a society national in scope, whose specific object is to preserve natural areas as living museums. This organization originally was called The Ecological Society

Dr. and Mrs. F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr., both members of our society, recently were elected corresponding members of the Hungarian Society of Ornithology, and the German Ornithological Society, respectively. Dr. Hamerstrom was one of five Americans to receive this honor since 1945. Mrs. Hamerstrom was elected in recognition of her scientific work and also of her economic help which she gave to European ornithologists after the last war. The German Ornithological Society is one of the oldest and most respected ornithological societies in the world.

The Membership Director is very desirous of getting all members on a calendar basis-all starting with January. This will simplify the work of several of the society's officers. Changes of this kind may be affected the next time you renew your mem-

bership.

An enthusiastic audience of 400 persons attended Allen Cruickshank's all-color motion picture, "Below the Big Bend," in Green Bay on October 22 to open the 1951-

(Concluded on page 114)

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#### **OUR NEW FRIEND THE WOOD DUCK**

#### By MILDRED ROSS LONSDORF

We have learned to know a new bird and encouraged it to build near our river this year. We read that the wood duck, one of the most colorful of the duck family and a bird that had been protected by law for several years, was becoming more plentiful. Because of the scarcity of hollow trees, which is their favorite nesting place, people had been urged to erect suitable tree box houses.

A friend who is also a lover of birds, built us a box according to instructions and he and members of my family took it across the river and hoisted it up into a tree. It was securely fastened about 18 feet from the ground and some 15 feet from the water's edge.

My husband vowed that no sensible bird would build so close to civilization and so easily visible from our log cabin windows. It had been up only three or four days when one morning we saw four drakes and a female duck swimming around in the river beneath it.

We weren't even certain they were wood ducks, but when we saw the female fly to a tree branch near the house and after a few minutes of inspection go inside, we were pretty sure. She stayed about five minutes and we could visualize her trampling the three or four inches of well rotted wood that we had been told to put in the bottom of the box.

Checking the wood duck's characteristics with our field glasses and bird books, we saw the down turned bill, his green crested head glossed with purple, the purplish red near the tail, the yellowish sides and the distinct curved black and white band along either side of the breast. They are smaller than the mallard and are a surface feeding bird, feeding on weed stems and seeds, on both land and water.

Our new found friend made three trips to the box that day, spending some time swimming around on the river as if to familiarize herself with the new surroundings.

The next day she came back with a mate and he flew up to the tree with her several times as though to give his approval. They followed this procedure for two or three days but by May 24 we were confident she was laying eggs. She made one trip each day, very early in the morning. All through the egg laying period Mr. Wood Duck was most attentive, sometimes flying to the entrance with her then back to the river where he waited quietly till she came to join him.

I continued to watch and check off the days as 1 had been told that the wood duck lays between 12 and 15 eggs. By June 6 we knew quite definitely our lady had laid her last egg and was ready to set. Most birds have a habit of feeding just at daybreak and I found the wood duck to be no exception. My husband had given up at this stage of the experiment as watching from 4 a. m. didn't appeal to him. Her morning trip from the nest could be anywhere from 4 to 7 o'clock and the evening one somewhere between 5 and 7:30 o'clock usually staying off from forty minutes to an hour.

After she was well into the incubation period, her mate went about his business and from then on was only occasionally seen. The incubation period is from 29 to 31 days for a wood duck so it meant careful and

close watching to keep my data accurate. Having watched this much of

the performance I surely didn't want to miss the grand finale.

On July 5, I noticed she made three trips off the nest to feed and she continued this every day till the morning of July 10. That morning was really a most auspicious one for both lady Wood Duck and myself. It may have been an old story to her but it was to be the thrill of my lifetime.

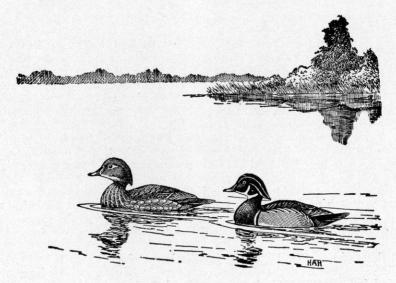
She came to the box entrance at 8 o'clock sitting there several minutes, then stretching her neck far out to survey the ground beneath. She would go out of sight then back to the entrance and I could tell from her evident excitement that something important was about to happen.

She flew to the river and seemed to be examining the shore line and the bushes along the edge, then back to the nest for another series of observations. I felt I could almost read her mind as she decided on which was the best spot on which her babies should land and the place on the ground from where she should call them out of the nest. It was as though I were watching the dress rehearsal of some big event and I

trembled with anticipation.

After she was satisfied that the stage was all set she flew to the river. When she started for shore I immediately focused my field glasses on the entrance hole of the box high up in the tree. In just about the time it would take her to get beneath the nest, I saw a small light colored bill come up over the lower edge and a little dark duckling, about the size of a baby chick, climbed onto the edge and with feet braced downward, plunged headlong with complete confidence, to the ground some 18 feet below.

There were four small cleats nailed to the inside of the box, below the opening, which formed a little ladder on which the babies could climb to the entrance, and in the matter of minutes six other little ducklings followed the leader. Still feeling that more babies might come out,



CUT COURTESY OF WISCONSIN CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

I neglected to watch what was happening below. When I decided that seven was to be her entire brood, I quickly looked for her and to my complete amazement saw her at least fifty feet upstream, sitting on a log with her little ducklings beside her, all sunning themselves. They had to swim to reach that log and I am sorry I missed that sight as I am told she has them follow her in a little cluster like a raft, and not single file as I have often seen the mallard do.

The big blue heron swooped down to the water close by and as if by magic the ducks disappeared behind the log and it was some time before I saw them again. The female no doubt took her babies into the little creek near by until they were old enough to brave the dangers of the

river.

The day they were a month old she proudly brought them by for our inspection and it was a beautiful sight to see. We hope to have other tree box houses placed before another spring. It was the last of April when we got this first one up and it seems we were lucky to have had a pair nest that late. We know it must have been because of the acute housing shortage.

We took the house down the next day and found four unhatched eggs and bits of down from the little blanket she had used to cover the

eggs when she left the nest to feed.

To me it was a wonderful experience and well worth the many hours loss of sleep. I know I have interested many others to put up homes for wood ducks, one of the most beautiful and interesting of the duck family.

Birnamwood, Wisconsin

#### THE PILEATED WOODPECKER

By ALVIN M. PETERSON

"About a week ago, April 4, 1948, and again today (April 10), we found many trees that had holes of various sizes in their trunks, clearly the work of pileated woodpeckers, birds that know how to make the chips fly. We parked the car near the brink of a high bank overlooking the Black River, at Camp Decorah in La Crosse County, near a large white oak that had sixteen scars or holes in its trunk and main branches, mostly fresh. A little farther off there was a lovely white pine that had eight fresh holes in its trunk. The tree was straight and tall, about sixteen inches in diameter at the base, and the exposed wood yellowish-white. Pitch was running from the holes, which were rectangular or oblong in shape. Seven were about three inches across, from four to six up and down, and from five to eight in depth, while the eighth was by far the deepest, actual measurements showing it was four inches across, nine up and down, and ten and a half deep." (From my notes for April 10, 1948).

We were parked near a gulley cut into the high bank, and along the left or west side of this, found eight oaks and oak stubs that had been more or less riddled by this bird. The most interesting of these trees had three fresh and six old holes in its trunk, the fresh holes larger than the others, the largest being  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches across,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  up and down, and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  deep. Later we took a walk up the valley and saw one white pine after

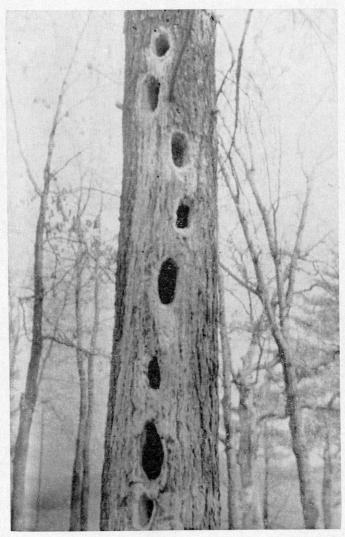
another that had pileated-woodpecker holes in them, some fresh, others old, and noted nine such trees in particular, that had 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 5, 6, and 20 holes respectively in their trunks. Many of the holes were so near the ground that we could look into them without climbing and could easily take measurements and see what the wood was like, etc., and none were in the upper half of the trunk. Expect many of these holes to be within eight feet of the ground.

We crossed a little side channel eventually, by means of a small log we dropped across, and reached a large wooded island where there were plenty of other pilated woodpecker signs: a stub 20 feet tall and two feet in diameter that had been nearly stripped of bark, and a tall dead red birch that had been chiseled, drilled, and hammered at until it looked more like a totem pole than a tree. There were holes and riddled stubs almost everywhere, and the trees probed for insect and other food included the red birch, canoe birch, white pine, black oak, white oak, soft maple, ash, elm, and poplar. This is a large bird, mostly black, with a red crest, a little white on each wing, and white stripes that begin at the base of the bill, run back over the sides of the head and neck, and end near the base of the wings; it is seventeen inches long, or about as large as the crow, needs a lot of food, and to get it goes at trees and stubs, mostly stubs and crippled trees, with hammer and tongs and is not satisfied with half-way measures.

Since there were signs everywhere, I fully expected to see one of the birds before the day was over (indeed, to see it was one of the purposes of our journey) and while we were eating our lunch in the back of the car, one came flying about forty paces from us. It was flying low and looked for a moment like a crow, but flew straight to a large black oak and alighted on the trunk in true woodpecker style. A glimpse of the red crest told us it was the bird we were looking for. It hammered at the trunk a few times and then flew on to those riddled oaks on the bank of that gulley, and I took after and tried to stalk it by advancing from tree to tree, always in such a way that I had something between me and the watchful bird. I managed to get within 20 paces of it before it saw me and flew across the side-channel and disappeared among the trees of that large wooded island.

We returned to Camp Decorah on April 15th, mainly to secure some pictures of the holes drilled by the pileated woodpecker in trees and to determine their exact distance from the ground. I noticed one pine, overlooked on the 10th, that had more than 40 holes in its trunk, two of recent make and quite large. I also found two holes (in other pines) that were about eight inches from the ground, one that was twelve, another that was fifteen, one that was two feet, and two that were three feet. The majority were from three to twelve feet from the ground, though I saw a tall poplar that had several holes about twenty feet from the ground. In addition to the forty or more holes, that first pine had a gash about ten feet long in its trunk, beginning at the base of the tree. This gash, I am sure, was made by pileated woodpeckers, who first drilled a vertical row of holes and then connected these when they tried to make other holes between them. However, since the bird is after insects, wood-boring ants to a considerable extent, it does some good, though from outward appearances it surely looks as if the cure is worse than the disease.

Back in 1938 we spent several days in the vicinity of Camp Decorah and often saw pileated woodpeckers there. Eventually I found a pair at a hollow tree, on that large wooded island where pileated woodpecker signs are so numerous, bobbing and tilting forward and looking the hole over as if they had decided to nest there. Like the other woodpeckers



THE WHITE PINE

they were noisy while thus engaged, but whether they actually nested there I never learned. One winter, in January, I ran across a pair of these birds in the New Amsterdam or McGilvray Bottoms, about 15 miles above La Crosse, and many times before that found pileated woodpeckers about the wooded slopes of Sugar Loaf Hill, at the foot of Green's Coulee, east of Onalaska. They also have been reported as frequenting Gunderson's Island, west of La Crosse, and at Dresbach, on the west bank of the Mississippi, opposite Onalaska.

On May 19th, 1948, we drove to Decorah's Peak, near Galesville, where we heard and saw a pileated woodpecker that flew down an attractive ravine near which we parked the car. We sat down and waited for it to return, which it did eventually, and watched it as it flew to an old weather-beaten stump. It clung to the stump for a while, then dropped to the ground and began to hammer at it. Soon it seemed to disappear in a hole, or was it only tipping or tilting forward to see what it could find at the bottom? We frightened it off after watching it for a considerable time and found that there were several holes in the ground at the base of the stump, the largest about 20 inches deep and nearly a foot across. Most of the holes were small and had been made by the bird to reach the partly decayed roots, which it had riddled to get at grubs and other forms of insect life in the wood.

We heard the bird's call again and again, a rather distinct "cuh, cuh, cuh", louder but otherwise much like the "cuh, cuh, cuh" of the filicker, and often heard it drumming loudly in true woodpecker style. On May 30th we were back and then it was busy drumming on a large dead tree that stood above the old road on which the car was parked. Since this bird is large, the drumming is correspondingly loud and may be heard for a quarter of a mile or more when conditions are favorable.

Onalaska, Wisconsin

#### THE GREAT BLUE HERON

#### By FRANCIS ZIRRER

In the beginning of April, when northern Wisconsin woods and bogs are yet buried under great masses of powdery, hard packed, discolored snow; when atmosphere drips with misty wetness; when hardly a living creature is seen or heard, and nature itself seems to breathe hopelessness and despair; there perhaps will emerge, from the thick, grayish haze, a pair of big, dark, bluish colored birds, like an apparition from another world. The great blue heron is here again! Bridging the dreary, depressing emptiness of endless woods on great, broad wings, the birds vanish as suddenly as they have emerged, as if they have been swallowed up by the creeping fog.

The first arrivals are often too early. They come at a time when the thermometer still drops to zero and below, and the lakes and ponds and the sluggish streams are sheathed still in a thick coat of ice. To find necessary food, the birds frequent, then, sphagnum bogs where the running waters, fed by underlying springs, open earlier or did not freeze at all; or follow the smallest streams and rills up to their sources where warm spring waters keep at least part of the stream open all winter. On March 30, 1933, when the woods were blanketed still with three feet of

snow, I surprised a great blue heron at a small spring in the middle of very heavy timber, trying to get at the frogs hibernating in the comparatively warm water of the spring. Although covering no more than three to four square feet of space and not over ten inches deep, the little rocky basin remained without a trace of ice all winter, sheltering under its projecting rocks a number of frogs and other animal life.

The great blue heron is an unusually wary bird, even in localities remote from human habitations. I have rarely seen it flying directly to its place of feeding. It usually alights first on a tall tree or large stump, some distance from the place where it intends to feed, and from which



PHOTO BY H. L. ORIANS

a clear view of the surroundings may be had. Raising and lowering its awkward bulk to conform with the height and distribution of forest or bog vegetation, swinging around the groups of intervening trees and keeping as much as possible behind the protective screen of dense evergreens or foliage of other trees, it flies low with slow, steady, deliberate strokes of its great, powerful pinions toward the accustomed tree or

stump, and first when very near, it rises slantingly on a relatively steep angle, for a bird of its size, and alights on the top. Once there, it remains motionless, and first when convinced that all is safe, leaps into space, and, flying low within the cover of trees, drops among the sedges and reeds with partly spread wings raised over its back and legs outstretched.

But, as there is an exception to every rule, so it is also with the herons. At my present dwelling near a little lake in Court Oreilles area I saw, during the summer of 1949, great blue herons flying unconcernedly from one part of the lake to another within twenty to thirty feet of people fishing in boats. About the possible cause of such unusual familiarity I

am unable to say anything.

As the little lake is situated at the base of a relatively steep, some 60 to 90 feet high, partly wooded ridge, the herons, flying from one lake to another, must rise to a considerable height in order to clear it. If everything at my dwelling, which is situated at the base of this ridge, remains quiet, the birds fly unconcernedly over. But my presence outside, though some 120 feet below their line of flight, causes the birds to immediately make a speedy and wide detour, and reach the lake by another route. When flying above the ridge and over my dwelling, a strong head-wind handicaps them greatly. Frequently, the birds remain stationary for a number of seconds, or, are even driven backwards, but, flapping laboriously, they usually overcome the strong current, drop lower where the wind is not so strong and reach the shore.

#### Have Look-out Towers

Near the ponds and streams set in, or flowing through, a sphagnum bog, the herons select, usually, for their lookout tower the top of a tall black spruce. The peculiar tendency of some of these tall, slender trees to form above the more or less irregular pyramid of scraggly, progressively shorter branches, a small, pear or cone shaped crown of short, dense, dark green twigs, affords a perfect camouflage to these big birds. Not just one, but upon numerous occasions, while scrutinizing with a binocular from a distance, or approaching on foot some of these trees, I have seen what I had taken for the pear or cone-shaped topmost crown of the spruce suddenly detach itself from it, and, either descend to the pond, or,

frightened by my approach, disappear among the trees.

On the secluded woodland ponds with high, steep slopes, however, the herons select for their watchtower one or another of those, often gigantic, broken, charred trunks of white pine or hemlock—the relatively rare reminders of the primeval forest—which one, occasionally, still meets in the northland woods, and to which the birds come daily. Alighting on top of one of these giants, often fifty to eighty feet above the ground, the bird surveys the shores of the pond and descends only when convinced that all is safe. Of course, one may sometimes see and observe another unusual or rare bird on the top of these trunks. Therefore it is advisable for the observer to approach the ridges surrounding these ponds with the greatest possible precaution. A careless movement or sound on his part would alarm the bird (or birds) and cause it to fly away. But if not disturbed, the heron not only maintains a surprising regularity in its feeding schedule, it may also display traits which would otherwise remain unobserved.

#### In Beaver and Porcupine Habitat

One warm summer afternoon, I was standing well concealed behind a dense group of young balsams on the ridge of a steep slope above one of these secluded woodland ponds, waiting for the appearance of a family of beavers. (When all is real quiet, beavers come out early, either to lie in the sun and stretch themselves lazily on the top of the lodge, or to play and gambol in the clear, cool water of the pond. Here they, swimming and diving, race above and under water; roll over and over, and slap the water with their broad, flat tails so that it foams and churns, the waves roll over the surface and splash toward the shore; while the sound echoes and reverberates from the neighboring slopes.)

On the opposite shore, at the entrance to an inlet leading to a small bog at the bottom of a narrow gully, and about thirty feet to the right of the beaver lodge, there stood, with all its roots in water, an enormous withered stump of hemlock about thirty-five feet high. In the water, and projecting some forty feet farther into the pond, was the upper part, presumably, of the big hemlock, broken off many years previously. At the farthest end of this log there sat a big, fat porcupine, shredding and eating a thick, yardlong root of yellow water lily, undoubtedly brought

up from the bottom of the pond by beavers.

While waiting for the appearance of beavers and watching the porcupine, I heard the familiar hoarse croak of the great blue heron. Turning toward the direction of the sound, I saw the big bird floating on set wings from the wooded ridge and alighting on top of a big, charred trunk of white pine, which, standing on the distant end of the pond, reached with its broken top just a little below, and not more than about thirty feet from the ridge. The great stump, an enormous bole of more than five feet in diameter and some eighty feet high, I saw, many times previously, occupied by different large birds, including many great blue herons.

But the big bird had barely settled on the comparatively narrow shelf of the pointy, jagged top when, coming from the same direction, another great blue heron descended from the ridge toward the big trunk and tried to alight on it. The sudden attempt nearly unbalanced the first comer. Bending its body backward, and trying to maintain its hold, it received the newcomer with raised, slightly spread, jerkily moving wings and hoarse, scratchy croaking. A short struggle ensued, accompanied with much unsteady, violent, jerky flapping of wings, wide open, threatening beaks, blazing yellow eyes, and excited, angry croaking; while each bird, though swaying dangerously back and forth, did its best to maintain its, evidently, precarious position on the top of the trunk. But finally the newcomer was forced to give in; unable to keep its hold longer, it was pushed off. The thrust which finally unbalanced it must have been delivered with a considerable force, because the bird, apparently unable to open its wings entirely, slid along the straight, smooth bole some twenty feet before it was able to spread its wings and arrest the fall.

#### Nearly Knocked Out by a Broadwing

After it had regained control of its movements, the bird flew with slow, measured wing beats along the shore and alighted on the above mentioned hemlock stump. But, if the poor heron arrived at the pond with the purpose of finding food, it had no luck that day. It had barely settled down and closed its wings when I heard a loud, shrill ke-wee, ke-wee, ke-wee, and saw a big brown bird shooting with tremendous speed toward the heron from behind, bowling it over and knocking it off the stump. Evidently frightened, and croaking fearfully, the heron caught itself in midair some twenty feet above the water; but, before it could get away more than a few yards, another brown bird shot forward and struck it with such force that it knocked it out completely. Then I saw that the attackers were a pair of broad-winged hawks, which, as I have ascertained later, had a nest with young in a large aspen in the narrow gully about a hundred feet from the rear of the big hemlock stump.

Folding its wings, the heron went down like a stone. In falling, it struck the water so close to the snag with the porcupine on it, that it brushed the head of the big rodent with one of its wings, while the hawks, screaming excitedly, circled over that part of the pond and the adjoining gully. Until then, the porcupine had been shredding the big root without, apparently, paying the slightest attention to the spirited encounter above. But now, feeling the sudden impact of the big bird on its head, the porcupine reared on its hind legs and shrank back with such force that it tumbled off the snag. Of course it scrambled immediately, though clumsily, back to its former hold, raised its back and bristled its quills; but then, almost at once, evidently thinking it over, relaxed and waddled as fast as its clumsiness would permit toward the shore where it ascended the nearest tree.

The heron, however, which recovered from the sudden thrust as soon as it struck water, tried first to gain a hold on the top of the big snag; but, after several unsuccessful attempts, being evidently unable to climb out of water and too wet to fly away, gave up, and started to swim toward the shore, which it gained soon, using both its wing and feet to do so. Once out of water, it presented a sorrowful spectacle standing there dripping wet, bedraggled, and with a streak of blood oozing down the side of its head. But when the hawks, still flying above and screaming, made several stoops at it, but without striking, it hastened to a clump of willows where it got out of sight.

About twenty minutes later, after I had gone to the other side of the pond to learn something about the bird's reactions when facing a human being directly, I could not locate it. The heron either had changed its position and hid elsewhere, or recovered sufficiently to go

away for good.

#### Approach Human Dwellings During Migration

After their arrival early in spring when food is scarce, the birds frequent practically every pond or slough, every stream or puddle as soon as it is partly free of ice, sometimes very near a dwelling. One fed daily, every morning for nearly two weeks, directly in front of our windows and not more than twenty feet away. Near dwellings they do this only early in the morning; elsewhere one may see them at any time of the day. If food is plentiful, and the birds are not frightened or disturbed, they arrive almost on a minute.

At this season the herons do not appear to be gregarious. One or two, and very rarely more, may be seen on a pond of some ten to twenty acres at any one time, and even then very rarely closer than a few hundred feet from one another.

#### Alert to Danger

While feeding, the heron is evidently very alert to the slightest suspicious move or unusual sound, and, therefore, difficult to approach. The bird seems to sense the presence of a human being, or rather that all is not as it should be. If, while feeding, the bird had just raised one foot to move farther, it will suddenly stop and freeze in this position with one foot raised. If the bird assumes this pose and keeps it while it moves its head and looks around, the observer may rest assured that the bird has sensed something unusual and is alert—ready to fly away if necessary. Occasionally, though not often, the suspicion subsides and the bird, after holding this pose a while, relaxes and starts again to feed. Just what causes the bird to become suspicious is hard to surmise. Perhaps it is a sudden, though only slight, change in the activity of other denizens of the bog or woods, which, although not perceptible to, or appreciated by the observer, is only too well understood and appreciated by the keen senses of the heron. But it is self-understood that if the bird actually sees a suspicious move or hears an unusual, unaccustomed sound, it does not first freeze into a pose or wait longer than absolutely necessary; it leaps up, spreads its wings and makes haste to get away.

Most frequently, however, the bird maintains this pose for many minutes, but finally, presumably after it gets tired like anybody else, it rises, flies low and vanishes out of sight. In the earlier years of my observation of these birds, I always thought that it had gone for good, therefore I did not take any precautions. I usually arose into view from my crouching position or walked away. In later years, however, I learned differently. While watching one of these birds which retained its frozen pose for nearly ten minutes and then flew away, I did not move. I remained hidden behind the dense foliage of small evergreens and watched the rows and groups of tamarack behind which the heron disappeared. On the other side of a narrow arm of the pond, in the rear of the first two or three rows of these trees, not over twenty feet high, I saw the bird alight on one of the lower branches, which, thin and relatively weak bent under the weight of the bird, causing it to sway and flap with its wings until, with considerable effort, it obtained a safe hold upon the branch. Standing there in an upright position the heron waited—its outline, though accentuated by an occasional movement, barely perceptible through the dense green screen of the young, lacy foliage of tamaracks. When all appeared quiet and I made no move, the heron would, after a reasonable time, quit its none too comfortable perch, drop once more at its old, accustomed place and start again to feed. I have seen this or a similar performance upon so many occasions that I am persuaded to consider it a common though perhaps not so well known trait of this bird.

In the wild Totogatic area, where I spent the winter and spring of 1948 to 49, I have seen in spring the same performance almost daily. At a wide but shallow basin, three miles east of Totogatic flowage, slightly below where Totogatic river tumbles over a series of narrow ledges, there is a favorable locality for observing this trait of the heron. But since the

said basin is surrounded with leaf trees mostly, the birds cannot vanish out of sight as completely as in the dense evergreen bogs. Here the birds, when alarmed but not frightened, perch beyond the first two or three rows of hardwoods, which, stretching their branches over the rushing woodland stream, offer better, safer perches but not so much concealment

until the woods become green.

In the beginning of April, 1945, after an abnormally early disappearance of snow, I saw at the distant end of a nearby pond and about fifty yards from it, three of these birds jumping up and down, swaying back and forth, turning about and flapping with their wings. In the sunny and abnormally warm but foggy atmoshpere I did not know at first what they were. In the distance they appeared like long, dark rags on a clothes line, swaying violently in the wind. First, when I came near them and the strangely moving, nodding, bowing and waving apparitions arose and flew away, I realized that they were the great blue herons.

#### **Sometimes Nest Singly**

Although they usually nest in communities of few to very many pairs, one may occasionally come upon a pair nesting singly. In the beginning of June, 1938, I came upon such a nest in a tall elm at the edge of a large marsh one fourth of a mile east of Buck Lake. Although I did not disturb or frighten the birds or attempt to climb the tree, both old birds circled above the tree tops, croaking excitedly.

#### **Post-breeding Conversations**

After the breeding season is over and the young herons are able to accompany the old birds on their excursions, in our area usually during the first half of July, two or three families of them occasionally assemble in suitable localities; usually a heavy but not too dense timber, where a great broken down tree, large stumps or big prostrate tree tops with many wide spreading limbs left by the lumbermen, offer convenient perches, for the purpose of conversation or a sort of conference. There the birds perch about three to eight feet above the ground and two to three yards from one another and call, wail, yowl, and croak loudly. The noise that they occasionally make may be heard wholly one half a mile and more away. During a long session, the birds move about considerably, changing positions and selecting new perches. Sometimes the session is relatively short, then again it may last many hours. Upon one occasion the birds started shortly after nine in the forenoon and were still at it at one-thirty in the afternoon when I frightened them away by my somewhat careless approach. Upon dispersing, the birds, eleven of them, did not fly away in a body; each bird took its own course and direction and disappeared among the trees. Although very noisy before, upon dispersal they vanished like so many shadows.

About the cause or the purpose of these lengthy and noisy meetings, one can only speculate; though, for the birds, undoubtedly, they must

have a certain and definite meaning.

Hayward, Wisconsin April 26, 1951

#### **NESTING TREE SWALLOWS**

By ALFRED S. BRADFORD

For the past ten years a pair of tree swallows have occupied the bird house in front of our cottage on Big St. Germaine Lake in Vilas County.

They arrive early in April, apparently mated, but, for the first few weeks unattached single birds are forever interfering with their domestic peace. The air is filled with circling wings and angry twitterings. As all tree swallows look alike to human eyes, one cannot tell the sex of the



interlopers or their degree of success in supplanting one of the pair in the affection of the other.

Construction of the nest is very leisurely. In 1951, the birds were still gathering material as late as the 25th of May. Most of the work appears to be done by one of the pair, apparently the female.

Once laying starts, the birds take up a regular routine and display smooth teamwork. They never leave the nest unguarded and change on

the average of every fifteen to twenty minutes. The swallow approaching the box utters a soft, liquid note audible at a distance of twenty to thirty feet. Sometimes the brooding bird promptly flies out and the other takes its place. At other times, it maintains its place and the newcomer perches on the roof or clings to the face of the box. Often both birds are present for several minutes. The male, at least we believe it is he, spends very little time actually brooding. During his tour of duty, he usually sits on top of the house and while there often utters a low, contented liquid twittering audible only a few feet. Both birds when in the box, spend much time sitting in the doorway with just their heads sticking out.

They are completely indifferent to our presence and that of other birds. The only animal that is instantly attacked is the red squirrel. The moment one appears he is swooped upon and driven away with angry twitterings. One bird only makes the attack and the squirrel stands not upon the order of his going although we have never seen him touched.

The young birds hatch in late June and at this time in certain years, we have noticed a peculiar phenomenon. A dozen times a day, from two to six adults appear and endeavor to take possession, or, to at least gain entry to the nesting box. These attacks are always made in even numbers and last from ten to fifteen minutes. The bird we take to be the female is constantly on guard inside the box while the male drives away the intruders. As he pursues one, another clings to the face of the box and endeavors to make entry. The female aggressively meets the bird at the door. The air is filled with swooping angrily twittering birds that never appear to touch each other and yet seem to be in deadly earnest. Our guess is that the intruders are mated pairs that were unsuccessful in raising their young and either wish to destroy or take over the progeny of the successful pair.

By mid-July these attacks have ceased and the parents are able to feed their young without interruption, and by the end of July the latter have left the nesting box. We have not been fortunate enough to see them emerge nor do they appear ever to return there or even to its vicinity once they have taken wing.

Unless interfered with by other swallows, both parent birds are constantly on the wing, as their young have voracious appetites. The droppings from the nest are carried over the lake and allowed to fall in the water.

Over the years we have put up other nesting boxes to try to attract more tree swallows. We find they will not tolerate each other in close proximity. Also, there must be a clear entrance. A box set back among the trees or even one partially surrounded by branches will not be used. Occasionally, it may be briefly occupied but within a few days it is abandoned.

The indifference of the swallows to human beings, other birds and all animals save the red squirrel leads one to believe they have few enemies. But the appearance in certain years of adult pairs that have apparently been unsuccessful in their nesting implies that at times there is a large percentage of failure. Perhaps this is due to the weather conditions or to limiting nesting sites; although, if the latter is the cause, the search for nesting places should start in April—not in late June.

Appleton, Wisconsin

### THE MIGRATION OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON IN WISCONSIN

By A. W. SCHORGER

Prior to approaching extinction the passenger pigeon (Ectopistes migratorius), rather than the robin, was the "harbinger of spring" in Wisconsin and many other states. Regarding its migration C. W. Townsend (U. S. National Museum Bull.. 162,1932:401) wrote: "Despite a rather voluminous literature, actual data bearing upon the seasonal movements of the passenger pigeon are decidedly scarce." It is true that the technical journals, due to late founding, contain but few data; however, a survey of the files of Wisconsin newspapers furnished several hundred references to the migration of this pigeon. In many cases these references are specific as to the date and give some idea of the volume of the movement and the condition of the weather.

A sufficient number of the dates have been used to give a view of the extent of the migration and its height. The year is important since the spring movements were guided largely by the state of the weather. The unusually early dates of appearance in some years represent sporadic incursions having no bearing on the main migration. February dates were found for only seven years: Janesville, February 9, 1848; Janesville, February 18, 1873; Appleton, February 21, 1874; Two Rivers, February 20, 1877; Randolph, last of February, 1878; Mineral Point, February 26, 1880; and Town of Fairchild, Sauk County, February 7, 1882. In most years the majority of the migrants entered the state in March.

1844. Green Bay, April 2; Lake Mukwanego, Waukesha County, April 14; Lake Koshkonong, April 21.

1845. Milwaukee, May 7.

1846. Madison, March 12, "for several days"; Lancaster, March 14; Platteville, March 23.

1848. Janesville, February 9; Milwaukee, March 24, flying southward.

1849. Milwaukee, March 20.

1850 and 1851. No early dates.

1852. Beloit, April 14.

1853. No early dates.

1854. Green Bay, March 23, immense flocks "the last few days."

1855. Lancaster, about March 14; Kenosha, March 15, flying southward for "a day or two"; Watertown, April 5, "continually flying"; Madison, April 7, "daily flying"; Oshkosh, April 13.

1856. Horicon, April 2, "the past few days"; Green Bay, April 3, "the past few days"; Manitowoc, April 3; Newport, Columbia County, April 8; Watertown, April 10; Menasha, April 12.

1857. Very late spring. Lake Mendota opened May 6. Horicon, May 8; Richaland Center, May 12; Monroe, May 13; Watertown, May 14.

1858. Mild winter. Watertown, March 13; Horicon, April 2; La Crosse, April 20.

- 1859. Madison, March 12; Watertown, March 17; Sparta, March 21; Stevens Point, March 25; Baraboo, April 7, abundant "of late."
- 1860. Oconto, Saturday, March 10, killed last week (c. March 3); Raymond, Racine County, March 14, "the past few days"; Watertown, March 15; Manitowoc, April 23; flying southward over Chicago on March 10.
- 1861. Fond du Lac, April 6; Milwaukee, April 9, flying southward on 13th; Wautoma, April 10; West Bend, Monday, April 15, "during the past week"; Green Bay, April 18.
- 1862. Appleton, April 11; Fox Lake, April 16, "for the past few days"; La Crosse, April 18; Kewaunee, April 23.
- 1863. Watertown, March 26, seen "daily"; La Crosse, April 10; Appleton, about April 11; Madison, April 28.
- 1864. Madison, March 28, "flying for several days"; La Crosse, March 29; Mineral Point, Montello, March 30; Stevens Point, April 13, "great numbers for several days"; Osceola, April 23.
- 1865. Fond du Lac, March 18; Milwaukee, March 22, "for some days"; Whitewater, March 24; Racine, March 29; Ripon, March 31; Mineral Point, April 26, large numbers the past few days; Oshkosh, May 4, clouds of pigeons for "many days".
  - 1866. Very few migrants. Racine, April 11; Osceola, April 28.
- 1867. Late spring. Madison, April 9; Shawano, April 11; Green Bay, April 13; Brandon, April 16, flying southward; Milwaukee, April 16, flying southward; Burlington, April 17; Osceola, Saturday, April 17, large flocks going northward during the past week.
- 1868. Brandon, March 10; Baraboo, March 12; Green Bay, March 14; Lancaster, Oshkosh, March 17; Watertown, March 18; Shawano, March 22, large flocks on 26th.
- 1869. Burlington, Busseyville, March 26; Oshkosh, March 27; Shawano, March 29; La Crosse, March 29, April 15; Portage, April 17, millions for the "past week".
- 1870. Appleton, April 16, appeared about a month ago (c. March 15); Somers, Kenosha County, March 26; Madison, March 28, "the past few days"; Baraboo, March 30; Manitowoc, March 31, "last few days"; Green Bay, April 7; Sturgeon Bay, April 14.
- 1871. Wautoma, March 2; Baraboo, Portage, March 6; La Crosse, March 7; Columbus, March 8, flying southward; Platteville, March 9; Black River Falls, Fond du Lac, March 11; Watertown, Wednesday, March 15, "myriads . . . last week".
- 1872 Milwaukee, March 25; Portage, Waukesha, March 28; Janesville, Columbus, March 29; Jefferson, Wednesday, April 3, "last week"; Manitowoc, April 11, flying southward, "masses of snow still remaining in the woods".
- 1873. Late spring. Janesville, February 18; Beloit, February 22, Whitewater, February 22, "one of the coldest and most disagreeable days of the season"; Janesville, Monroe, March 15; Baraboo, March 16; Mineral Point, March 20; Prairie du Chien, March 21; Shawano, March 22; Sparta, April 15, "large numbers".

1874. Small migration, with most of the pigeons passing through the middle of April. Appleton, Thursday, February 26, "last week" (c.

February 21); Janesville, March 2; Outagamie County, March 7; Kenosha, March 19; Wisconsin Rapids, April 11; Montello, April 13; Two Rivers,

April 14; Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, April 16.

1875. Large migration, the height being reached during the first week in April. Janesville, March 16; Tomah, Saturday, March 27, "this week"; Elkhorn, March 27; Beaver Dam, Two Rivers, March 30; Sheboygan Falls, April 2, several flocks flying southward "the past few days"; Beloit, Waterloo, April 1.

1876. Open winter. Watertown, January 3; Two Rivers, January 11, "Pigeons were seen in different parts of the state during the recent warm weather"; Clinton, Rock County, February 16, "a few days since"; Winneconne, March 4; Darlington and Two Rivers, March 7; Monroe, March 9; Eureka, Kingston, Princeton, Waupaca, March 10; Baraboo, Chilton, Fort Howard, Montello, Pewaukee, Weyauwega, March 11; Janesville, Juneau, March 15; Osceola, April 9, immense numbers; Sturgeon Bay, April 27, "large numbers the past few days".

1877. Late spring. Migration took place throughout April. Two Rivers, February 20, reported; De Pere, Weyauwega, April 7; Kilbourn (Wisconsin Dells), Wautoma, Whitehall, April 11; Baldwin, Dodgeville, April 13; Black River Falls, Fond du Lac, April 14; Portage, April 21,

"countless flocks"; River Falls, April 21, "thick".

1878. Randolph, last of February; Reedsburg, March 1; Spring Green, March 6; Beaver Dam, March 7, "for a few days"; Arena, March 8, "last few days"; Albion, Darlington, March 8; Kellnersville, Saturday, March 9, "this week"; Leeds, March 9, "for several days"; Durand, Ottawa, March 9; Lancaster, Meeme, March 11; Kewaunee, Friday, March 15, "innumerable . . . the past week".

1879. Migration rather small and prolonged. Black River Falls, March 9; Madison, March 10; New Lisbon, Richland Center, March 13; Wisconsin Rapids, April 3, "innumerable"; Galesville, April 17, "small

numbers"; Oconto, April 19; Berlin, April 26, "a few".

1880. The height of the migration was reached during the first week in April. Lake Geneva, February 25; Mineral Point, Thursday, February 26, "this week"; Marcellon, Columbia County, March 20; Sturgeon Bay, Waupaca, La Crosse, March 25; Racine, March 28; New Lisbon, March 29; Baraboo, Spring Green, Two Rivers, March 30; Carlton, Fort Howard, Fond du Lac, Marinette, March 31; Sturgeon Bay, April 8, "myriads"; Oconto, Saturday, April 10, "myriads . . . this week".

1881. Late spring and a small migration. Pigeons wandered about in the state until the end of May without nesting. Darlington, April 1; Florence, April 3; Two Rivers, April 5; De Pere, April 7; Wautoma, April 17; Maiden Rock, Pierce County, April 21; Hartford, April 27, "for the

past week".

1882. Mild winter. The year is notable for the large numbers that arrived in February and remained to nest. About forty localities reported arrival during this month. Town of Fairfield, Sauk County, February 7; Markesan, Thursday, February 9, some shot the first of the week; Baraboo, Richland Center, Waterloo, February 9; Genoa City, Walworth County, February 10, "every day now"; Beaver Dam, Markesan, Princeton, Waupun, February 10; Lodi, Saturday, February 11, "this week"; Elroy, Fond du Lac, Milwaukee, Montello, Portage, Racine, February 11.

1883. Small, late migration. New Lisbon, Thursday, April 3, "flying the past week"; Prairie du Chien, April 3; Fond du Lac, Green Bay, April 4; Friendship, April 7; Appleton, April 19.

1884. Arena, March 23; Berlin, Mineral Point, March 27; Wautoma, March 28; Portage, Fort Howard, March 29; Coloma, Darlington,

Prairie du Sac, April 4.

1885. New Lisbon, March 27; Tunnel City, March 31; New Richmond, April 1; Galesville, April 2; Dodgeville, Wild Rose, April 3; Amherst, April 5; Chetek, Menomonie, Weyauwega, April 7; Hancock, April 10.

**1886.** Madison, March 20; Mineral Point, March 25; Hancock, March 26; Boscobel, March 30; Shullsburg, April 1; Two Rivers, April 13; Green Bay, New Richmond, Weyauwega, April 14; Algoma, Mount Morris, April 15; Darlington, April 16.

1887. Mineral Point, March 12; Dodgeville, March 19; Two Rivers, Tuesday, April 5, "flying last week"; Bancroft, April 6; Wisconsin Dells, and Town of Oakdale, Monroe County, April 7; Coloma, April 8;

Tomah, April 9; Eau Claire, April 11.

1888. Darlington, Wisconsin Dells, Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, March 19; Wautoma, about March 19; Two Rivers, March 20; Prairie du Sac, April 3; Boscobel, April 12, "the last few days"; Mount Morris, Waushara County, April 12; Prairie du Chien, New Richmond, April 17.

**1889.** Very few records. Lawrence, Brown County, about March 16; Two Rivers, March 19, "on the wing in some portions of the state".

1890. Kirby, Monroe County, March 18; La Crosse, March 24; Madison, March 26; Briggsville, March 29; Prairie du Chien, April 1; Two Rivers, April 8; Wautoma, Wisconsin Rapids, April 11; Bancroft, April 18; Friendship, April 19.

1891. Prairie du Sac, April 3; Two Rivers, April 19; Kirby, April 21; New Richmond, April 22.

1892. Only one record. Sparta, April 5.

**1893.** Kirby, April 5; Wautoma, April 14, "A few flocks . . . this spring . . . nearly extinct".

1894. Kirby, March 7; Wautoma, March 8; Whitewater, May 4.

1895. No spring reports.

**1896.** Kirby, April 1.

1897. Kirby, April 21, pairs and very small flocks; Meridean, Dunn County, April 20, three seen and one taken; April 26, three seen; April 27, two seen (J. N. Clark).

1898. Meridean, May 5, a pair seen; Two Rivers, March 22, "now said to be extinct".

1899. Kirby, April 19, "a few". Considerable publicity resulted from the publication of a report of a flock of passenger pigeons, a mile in length, seen at Lime Ridge, Sauk County, early in May. Authenticity is very doubtful. The following reports appeared in Recreation (Vol. 11, Aug., 1899:134-5): Amherst, May 28, five seen; Amherst, about 100 in April; Amherst, May 28, four seen; Spring Lake, a few small flocks last spring; Wautoma, about 120 last spring; Wautoma, three seen last spring.

### Walden West: VII

#### BY AUGUST DERLETH

I wonder often, seeing my fellowmen go about their daily excursions, how many of them are aware of the presence of birds, how many would notice immediately that they were gone if all the birds were suddenly removed from the landscape. For, ultimately, of course, everyone would recognize that something was wrong, even if at first it could not be determined what it was, for the birds eventually make themselves heard and seen, if but for fleeting moments, and their loss would be as inevitably noticed.

It is incredible, yet it is not only possible but true in the majority of cases that a man can walk through the summer woods and take so much for granted the songs of pewees and wood thrushes, the cries of crested flycatchers and ovenbirds as to hear them not at all. And by the same token he is as unaware of the perfume of herbs and flowers, of bark and foliage, of blade and root and the soil itself, the musk of decaying logs and leaves and all the distillation of the woods in summer.

Many a man, in fact, knows but three birds—the English sparrow (and all small birds automatically become to him "sparrows"), the robin, and the pigeon. The common man is coming to know also the brilliant cardinal (though he cannot tell the difference between a cardinal and a scarlet tanager) and the mourning dove; and, if he lives in the country, he also knows crows, owls, and hawks, (most usually called "chicken hawks"), all to be hunted and destroyed assiduously with no regard for intelligent conservation. Undeniably, the average man would not miss the warblers, the tanagers, the flycatchers, most of the sparrows, and countless thousands of other little-known birds; he might gradually come to miss those birds he knows.

I ask myself why there is this lack of knowledge, even of interest, in these fascinating and pleasant aspects of man's world. Is it because of the inculcation of false values in our schools?—the emphasis upon material gain, the imposition of what Edgar Lee Masters called the "merchant philosophy"? Many a man is so busy pursuing the phantoms of wealth or success that he takes flight through life without once having known the singular beauty of any aspect of his world—the trees, the sky, the flowers, the birds—and, most pathetic, dies without ever knowing what he has lost.

How many times I have stood in conversation with one of my fellowmen, and felt my pulse quicken at the breath-taking **zoom** of the wind in the wings of a sky-coasting nighthawk, at the nostalgia of pewees, at the lyricism of wood thrushes, at the querulous note of a nesting bird close at hand but invisible to the eye; only to observe no alteration in the bearing of my fellowman to show that he had heard, or, if by some chance he had, that he had known the source of song or cry or other sound!

What indeed has happened to mankind that we have substituted the crass pursuit of dollars and the idolatry of conventions for an understanding and appreciation of the singular beauty of the earth around us?

For the earth is the common heritage of all men, and its aspects of beauty are the only beauty to endure.

\* \* \* \* \*

Few birds take my eye and my imagination as do the hawks, and, particularly, the red-tailed hawk which nests in the hills near Sac Prairie and is so commonly seen soaring aloft, with the sunlight burning in a sheen of red from its tail. I have written elsewhere of its magnificence, its aloofness, the precision of its wheeling and soaring, and its appeal to the imagination which doubtless involves some identity of self with the bird, but there are other aspects of its existence which are as provocative—its fear of kingbirds, for one, its screaming defiance of passersby during the nesting season, when it floats high overhead making its shrill kee-yew sound and resound over the woods, often suddenly stilled at its cry.

I observed last summer a singular variation of its pattern. Whenever I passed over the hill where it had its nest, the red-tailed hawk rose to hang screaming above, warning against my intrusion; but when, on other occasions, I came not alone, but with another, to lie sunbathing on the hilltop, our presence elicited no sound from the circling hawk, which came to wheel above us where we lay, spiraling down and up again, its head turning this way and that, scrutinizing us, but no sound rising from its throat. There was no alteration in this pattern, and I found no explanation for it. Alone, I stirred alarm cries; accompanied, nothing but silence from the hawk above. Was it that the solitary figure suggested to the bird some danger which was not evident to it in the perhaps noisier approach of two walkers?

One day its screams brought up a kingbird, risen out of its own nest to drive valiantly at the hawk with incessant effort. The larger bird banked, wheeled, and soared away, with the smaller hard upon it, pursuing and darting in against the hawk for almost a mile before the kingbird turned, floating downward, and came back to its nest. The hawk presently returned, since its own nest was in the vicinity, too; but this time flew far higher, far up against the blue, and did not tempt the kingbird to renew the battle. There it lay against heaven, quartering the earth below, where the solitary walker could hear its defiance drifting down in its cries for as long as he was within range of the hawk's keen

vision.

Something implicit in this bird suggests the spirit of the wild, something that is not in the pensive pewee, not in the lyric vireo, not in the mocking brown thrasher, not even in the eagle, something that symbolizes the defiance of one wild creature against the encroachments of all the false values of what man is wont to call civilization.

Sauk City, Wisconsin

#### **BOOK REVIEWS**

AUDUBON WATER BIRD GUIDE. By Richard H. Pough. New York. 1951. 352 pp. \$3.50.

Here is the second bird guide written by Mr. Pough and sponsored by the National Audubon Society. It is a companion volume to "Audubon Bird Guide" published several years ago. The title of the present volume is somewhat misleading, as it contains descriptions of the gallinaceous birds, hawks and their allies, and pigeons, as well as the ducks, herons, shorebirds, et al., that are usually classed as water birds. Described are the water, game and large land birds of east and central North America from southern Texas to central Greenland. The text for each species covers identification, range, mating habits, notes on the past and present status of birds, food habits, and methods of attracting them. The notes on habits are particularly valuable, since they present a good many facts on ecology and species management that are not ordinarily found in field guides of this type. Don Eckleberry has contributed 485 color portraits and there are 138 black and white drawings by Earl L. Poole. The color plates are generally good, although the iridescent purples and greens found in such species as the pigeons and scaups are much too bright, a common failing in color reproduction. This book is to be recommended as a good source of concise information on the species it describes; not complete, to be sure, but more than adequate for the average bird-watcher.—James B. Hale

### BIRD GUIDE—LAND BIRDS EAST OF THE ROCKIES. By Chester A. Reed. New York.. 1951. 238 pp. \$1.50.

This is a revised edition of the old pocket-sized classic first published in 1906. The format remains the same, with one-page descriptions and a small color plate of more than 300 species of land birds. Waterfowl, marsh birds, shorebirds, upland game birds, gulls, terns, and raptors are not included. The text includes general notes, and comments on nest, range and voice of each species. Information has been revised in light of recent knowledge and is reasonably up-to-date. Colored illustrations have been printed from new plates, but still retain the fuzziness and tendency to be too yellow found in the original editions. However, this little volume still remains as a handy pocket identification guide.—James B. Hale

### BIRDS OF MONTEZUMA AND TUZIGOOT. By Henry H. Collins, Jr. 1951. 14 pp. 25c.

This is the first of a series of booklets on our national parks and monuments to be published under the auspices of the Southwestern Monuments Association, Box 2011 J, Santa Fe, New Mexico. It is illustrated both in color and with black and whites—all by Roger T. Peterson. The booklet is designed to acquaint the average park visitor with the bird life of the various national parks.—N. R. B.

### THE BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT. 1950. 40 pp. 1s. 6d.

The British Trust for Ornithology promotes the study of birds in England very much in the same way as American bird clubs do here. This annual report is more than a report inasmuch as it summarizes much of their current field investigations. Considerable attention is devoted to bird-banding or bird-ringing, as it is called there.—N. R. B.

#### THE BIRDS OF WISCONSIN

#### By L. KUMLIEN and N. HOLLISTER

With Revisions by A. W. Schorger

(Continued from last issue)

Hylocichla fuscescens (Steph.). Wilson's Thrush.

A common migrant and a regular summer resident in the northern half of the state. Breeds sparingly farther south, even to the southern counties. Most abundant in southern Wisconsin during the spring migration from May 7 to May 25.

[A very rare migrant at the present time.]

Hylocichla fuscescens salicicola (Ridgw.). Willow Thrush.

A single specimen taken at Delavan, May 6, 1899, and identified by Mr. Wm. Brewster, is the sole claim for introducing this race here. We are of the opinion that a careful examination of the migrating **fuscescens** will reveal numbers of this form, especially, it would seem, in the western part of the state.

IThis is the breeding form in the state and the commonest of the nesting thrushes.1

Hylocichla aliciae (Baird.). Gray-cheeked Thrush.

A common migrant. Most abundant in deep woods with underbrush, or second-growth, keeping mostly, however, near the edges and openings, but ever ready to retreat to the depths of the thicket at the first alarm. Arrives early in May, the majority passing north at once, some stragglers only remaining until the last of the month, and all returning early in September on the way to their winter home.

Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni (Cab.). Olive-backed Thrush.

An abundant migrant, and possible summer resident in suitable localities in the northern part of the State. Arrives in southern Wisconsin early in May, usually a few days later than aliciae, with which it is much associated, not confining itself so closely to the woods, however, being a common bird in towns and even along the roadsides, or wherever there is cover. In the fall it is especially common through the middle of September, in scattered, woodland-roving flocks. This is one of the birds that one most frequently finds dead beneath the ever increasing network of electric wires that annually cause the death of thousands of individuals of the low-flying, night migrating species.

ILocally a fairly common summer resident in the northern part of the state. Nesting as far south as Racine (Pass. Pigeon 4,1942:104) about a century ago is questionable since the eggs cannot be located. T. S. Roberts (Birds of Minnesota, 2,1932:129) shows a photograph of a nest in Price County, Wisconsin, taken on June 19, 1912. Dixie Larkin (Pass. Pigeon 8,1946:24) found a nest at Pelican Lake, Oneida County, in 1945.]

(Continued in next issue)

### By The Wayside . . .

**Crow Attacks Cooper's Hawk.** I saw an interesting attack made by a crow on what appeared to be a Cooper's hawk. After the crow chided him for a while, the hawk got tired of dodging, and on the last swoop the two met. The crow bounced back in the air about ten feet and lost all further interest in hostility.

Last year I saw a similar occurrence with a red-winged blackbird, but there the blow struck was so severe the blackbird was killed. On each occasion the hawk, apparently, turned over on its back in the last minute and struck with its talons, although, of course, I could not be sure.

—Alfred S. Bradford.

### The Spring Season . . .

#### By CARL L. STRELITZER

(An Explanation by the New Field Notes Editor: Filling the shoes of Sam Robbins is not the easiest job in the world—even when everything goes well. This summer I had to move twice and was married, with the result that I had very little time left to take care of the field notes. Those included in the present report came to me of themselves, and no effort was made to secure records from all observers. As a result, those notes which have been missed should be summarized in the annual report for 1951. Please send any notes still on hand for the spring season, therefore, plus those for the summer months of May, June, and July to: Carl L. Strelitzer. 2430 South 16th Street, Milwaukee 15, Wisconsin).

The spring season was generally later than usual, but enough single birds of many interesting species came early to supply intriguing observations, if not lengthy lists.

Three of the more unusual grebes were observed during the period—the Holboell's, eared, and western. A spring date was established for eight American Egrets in Waukesha County. The prize of all, however, is the spring record of an adult little blue heron near Oshkosh, by J. Harwood Evans, et al.

Of the waterfowl mentioned, equally important is the record of the harlequin duck observed by two parties at Milwaukee. This species has been regarded as accidental. The turkey vulture was mentioned but once.

Another rare species, the American hawk owl, was seen under favorable conditions for identification by Mrs. F. L. Larkin, et al. Red crossbills, evidently, were well scattered in the state this spring, records being made even in the southern counties. N. R. Stone observed the rare white-winged crossbill in Burnett County on March 2.

Loon: Green Lake County, Apr. 6 (S. D. Robbins). Milwaukee County, Apr. 7 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Red-throated Loon: Positively identified by Mrs. F. L. 1 arkin in the Milwaukee area, Apr. 21.

Holboell's Grebe: Three in Green Lake County, Apr. 17 (S. D. Robbins).

Eared Grebe: Dane County, Apr. 30 (S. D. Robbins).

Western Grebe: Milwaukee County, Apr. 28 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom). Double-crested Cormorant: Dane County, Apr. 1 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

Great Blue Heron: Milwaukee County, Mar. 25 (Emil Urban).

American Egret: Eight adults in breeding plumage were seen by Eldon Hunter and Robert Frey, Waukesha County, Apr. 4.

Little Blue Heron: One observed in adult plumage near Oshkosh, Apr. 29, by J. Harwood Evans and Earl Smith. Unusual, especially in spring.

**Green Heron:** Crawford County, Apr. 28 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen). Also in Milwaukee County on same date (Mary Donald-Mrs. C. R. Decker).

Black-crowned Night Heron: Milwaukee County, Apr. 7 (Emil Urban).

Whistling Swan: Quite numerous this year and seen for the first time in many new locations. Mar. 18 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin). Apr. 8 (S. D. Robbins). Apr. 10 in the Green Bay-DePere area, where the largest concentrations seem to have been (Mrs. Clara Hussong).

Canada Goose: Milwaukee, Feb. 24 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin). The main flight did not come through until in April.

Snow Goose: Over Milwaukee, Mar. 15 (Mary Donald).

**Blue Goose:** Milwaukee area, Feb. 24 (John Hoogerheide) and on Feb. 25 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

Gadwall: Milwaukee, Apr. 29 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Pintail: Milwaukee, Feb. 20 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Green-winged Teal: Milwaukee, Apr. 5 (Mrs. Elizabeth Gimmler).

Harlequin Duck: A single individual was observed in Milwaukee on Mar. 25 by Mrs. F. L. Larkin. On Mar. 26 it was seen by Ollie Krueger.

White-winged Scoter: Milwaukee area, Apr. 4 (John Hoogerheide). American Scoter: On Lake Michigan, Apr. 21 (S. D. Robbins).

Turkey Vulture: A single bird in Ozaukee County, Apr. 27 (Mrs. Elizabeth Gimmler-Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Cooper's Hawk: Milwaukee, Mar. 4 (Dan Berger).

Broad-winged Hawk: Eau Claire County, Apr. 16 (Lois Almon).

Rough-legged Hawk: Last seen on Apr. 22.

Bald Eagle: Washington County, Apr. 8 (Dan Berger). Marsh Hawk: Burnett County, Feb. 28 (N. R. Stone).

Osprey: Wood County, Apr. 28 (Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister).

Duck Hawk: Observed on Feb. 2 by Mary Donald.

Ruffed Grouse: Green Lake County, Apr. 17 (S. D. Robbins).

European Partridge: Wintered in large numbers along the Lake Michigan shore this year.

**Sandhill Crane:** Flock of 26 seen flying over Green Lake County on Apr. 15 by S. D. Robbins.

Killdeer: One lone individual, perhaps the same one, observed in Milwaukee County on Feb. 25 (Ollie Krueger), and on Feb. 26 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Woodcock: Burnett County, Mar. 14 (N. R. Stone). Madison, Mar. 22 (C. D. Besadny).

Wilson's Snipe: Milwaukee County, Mar. 7 (John Hoogerheide).

Greater Yellow-legs: Milwaukee and Madison areas, Apr. 24 (Mrs.

R. A. Walker and Mary Donald).

Lesser Yellow-legs: Milwaukee County, Apr. 25 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin). Least Sandpiper: Waukesha County, Apr. 29 (Mrs. C. R. Decker

and Mary Donald).

Semi-palmated Sandpiper: Milwaukee County, Apr. 28 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Bonaparte's Gull: Milwaukee County, Apr. 5 (Mrs. Elizabeth Gimler-Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Forster's Tern: Milwaukee County, Apr. 22 (Mrs. C. R. Decker).

Common Tern: Milwaukee County, Apr. 22 (E. D. Cleary).

**Black Tern:** Waukesha County, Apr. 29 (Mary Donald-Mrs. C. R. Decker).

Barn Owl: Milwaukee County, Apr. 6 (John Muir Club).

American Hawk Owl: South Milwaukee, Feb. 24 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin, Dan Berger, and John Hoogerheide). Seldom observed in Wisconsin.

Saw-whet Owl: Milwaukee County, Apr. 19 (Robert Frey).

Long-eared Owl: Milwaukee County, Apr. 8 (J. Reich).

Nighthawk: Crawford County, Apr. 28 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Milwaukee County, Apr. 29 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Milwaukee County, Mar. 22 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Kingbird: Dane County, Apr. 28 (Mrs. R. A. Walker). Crawford County, Apr. 29 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen).

Phoebe: Crawford County, Mar. 26 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen). Milwaukee County, Mar. 27 (Mrs. A. L. Throne).

Northern Horned Lark: Dane County, Feb. 28 (S. D. Robbins).

Prairie Horned Lark: Eau Claire County, Feb. 19 (Lois Almon).

Rough-winged Swallow: Waukesha County, Apr. 15 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Barn Swallow: Milwaukee County, Apr. 15 (A. L. Throne).

Cliff Swallow: Dane County, Apr. 30 (S. D. Robbins).

Purple Martin: Dane Conty, Mar. 31 (Harold Mathiak). Milwaukee County, Apr. 9 (Rufin Jankowski).

Canada Jay: Burnett County, Mar. 2 (N. R. Stone). Only report.

House Wren: Dane County, Apr. 30 (S. D. Robbins).

Winter Wren: Cedar Grove, Mar. 30 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Catbird: Madison, Apr. 30 (N. R. Barger).

Brown Thrasher: Milwaukee County, Apr. 25 (Mrs. Elizabeth Gimler-Mrs. Arthur Erskine).

Hermit Thrush: Milwaukee County, Apr. 7 (Emil Urban).

Olive-backed Thrush: Madison, Apr. 19 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: Dane County, Apr. 24 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

Bluebird: Milwaukee County, Mar. 4 (Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Dane County, Apr. 18 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

Migrant Shrike: Dane County, Mar. 25 (S. D. Robbins).

Black and White Warbler: Milwaukee County, Apr. 29 (John Muir Club).

Yellow Warbler: Dane County, Apr. 29 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

Prothonotary Warbler: Milwaukee County, Apr. 29 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Myrtle Warbler: Milwaukee County, Apr. 5 (Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister).

Blackburnian Warbler: Crawford County, Apr. 29 (Mrs. Martin Paulsen).

Palm Warbler: Dane County, Mar. 27 (S. D. Robbins).

Northern Yellow-throat: Milwaukee County, Apr. 18 (Emil Urban-D. Hart).

Bobolink: Dane County, Apr. 28 (S. D. Robbins).

Eastern Meadowlark: Milwaukee County, Feb. 26 (Mrs. C. R. Decker).

Western Meadowlark: Dane County, Mar. 6 (S. D. Robbins). Milwaukee County, Mar. 8 (Mary Donald and Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Baltimore Oriole: Madison, April 30 (N. R. Barger). A pair. Brewer's Blackbird: Dane County, Apr. 23 (S. D. Robbins).

**Bronzed Grackle:** Madison, Mar. 5 (Mrs. R. A. Walker). Milwaukee County, Mar. 7 (Mary Donald and Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

Cowbird: Madison, Mar. 27 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

**Evening Grosbeak:** A few in Milwaukee County, Mar. 8 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin-Mary Donald). Madison, Mar. 26 (S. D. Robbins).

Purple Finch: Dane County, Feb. 27 (S. D. Robbins).

Redpoll: Milwaukee County, Feb. 24 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin).

Pine Siskin: Burnett County, Mar. 2 (N. R. Stone).

Red Crossbill: Washington County, Mar. 17 (Dan Berger). Milwaukee County, Mar. 20 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom). Platteville, Apr. 4-10 (Mrs. Grace Martin). Milwaukee County, Apr. 22 (Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister). Also observed at Land O'Lakes by Fred Babcock.

White-winged Crossbill: Burnett County, Mar. 2 2 (N. R. Stone).

Towhee: Milwaukee County, Mar. 6 (Jack Spear-John Hoogerheide).

White-winged Crossbill: Burnett County, Mar 2 (N. R. Stone).

Savannah Sparrow: Milwaukee County, Apr. 14 (Mrs. F. L. Larkin. In Green Lake County, Apr. 19 (S. D. Robbins).

White-throated Sparrow: Milwaukee County, Mar. 29 (John Hooger-

heide).

Fox Sparrow: Milwaukee County, Mar. 4 (John Hoogerheide). Lincoln's Sparrow: Madison, Apr. 18 (Mrs. R. A. Walker). Song Sparrow: Eau Claire County, Apr. 3 (Lois Almon).

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#### NEWS . . .

(Continued from page 86)

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