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# *The Passenger Pigeon*

## TO ENCOURAGE STUDY OF WISCONSIN BIRDS

*Bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology*

Vol. III

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No. 4

### BIRD WATCHING AT LAKE KOSHKONONG

By JANE TUTTRUP

*Madison Bird Club*

Nearly a hundred years ago a young man and his bride walked seventy miles west from Milwaukee to buy government land and build their log cabin in the town of Sumner, Jefferson County, on the shore of Lake Koshkonong. Back in Sweden, before the marriage, before the ten-week voyage in an old sailing vessel, young Thure Kumlien, graduate of the University of Upsale, had looked at a map and chosen for his destination and his home the region of Lake Koshkonong, because of its "probable facilities for ornithological work." He could hardly have chosen more happily. Did he know that the world's greatest flyway of migratory birds is charted along this strip of land between the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan? Did he know that waterfowl follow the Rock River to Koshkonong on their way to the Wisconsin River and the North? Could he have seen in his mind's eye the gentle Rock as it flows along Blackhawk Island, marsh on the south, woods, and then marsh, on the north, to widen into this broad, splendid, but intimate lake? Did Kumlien suspect that here, on the irregular shore, and behind it for miles around, were distributed habitats as various as can well be found? And could he have known that this country west of Lake Michigan, in the Alleghanian area of the Transition Zone, is a great meeting ground for northern and southern species?

We read of early American field naturalists and the country they knew with envy and longing. Surely, we think, wherever one went a hundred years ago one found wild life in variety and abundance. Perhaps Thure Kumlien could have put his finger down almost anywhere on a map of America and so chosen a spot with "probable facilities for ornithological work." Perhaps he could have, then. The amazing and wonderful thing is that while most of the other areas which would have satisfied, in 1843, an energetic ornithologist are now industrialized or cultivated to a degree that eliminates the wilder birds, Lake Koshkonong is still a focal point of the spring and fall migrations and still a rich crowded breeding area. The Swedish naturalist observed and collected at Lake Koshkonong for forty-five years, and he called the attention of bird lovers to a place which, after another fifty years, they still seek out, whether for serious bird work or for the simple, exquisite pleasure of bird watching.

We have left to us few places like Lake Koshkonong. There are the Florida sanctuaries, where the remaining wood ibises and roseate spoonbills wheel above their nests; the almost impenetrable swamps where one may still find the ivory-billed woodpecker; bird islands in the Atlantic with murres and gannets thick upon the ledges; and here in Wisconsin the little islands off Door Peninsula with breeding colonies of mergansers and gulls, and the isolated reaches of the Central Sand Plain where the fortunate may still see the majestic, long-necked sandhill crane. But the amateur ornithologist of the Middle West wants, first of all, a piece of familiar, ordinary countryside where he can feel all around him the intensity of bird life freely lived, where man's heavy hand, in oversimplifying the landscape, has not reduced bird species to those least vulnerable and least specialized.

The birds still hold their claim to Lake Koshkonong's water, its sandy and pebbly beaches, its grassy and brushy marshes, its woods and gently sloping fields. Casual farming goes on, and a quiet resort trade—fishing in the summer, trapping in the winter, even hunting in the fall, in unprotected areas. But the place is still wild. Of course Thure Kumlien, should he come back, would miss many of the birds. The passenger pigeon is perhaps the only species that has entirely disappeared from our fauna, but the white pelican comes very seldom, if at all, to Koshkonong, the crossbill visits Jefferson County, where it formerly nested, only in winter, and many other birds are rare. The trumpeter swan which he sold for twenty dollars to Spencer Fullerton Baird, and which is still in the National Museum at Washington, could not now be collected at Koshkonong.

But even in Kumlien's day the wild turkey was being recorded for the last times. And there are species at Koshkonong now for which he had no records. The sharp-tail was the native chicken when he came, but during his years it retreated to the northern half of the state and has been replaced in southern Wisconsin by the true prairie chicken, or pinnated grouse, which formerly ranged only as far north as Chicago. Three exotics have become established in Jefferson County since the turn of the century—the ring-necked pheasant, the Hungarian partridge, and the starling. Our other exotic arrived there about 1870, when Kumlien was teaching at Albion Academy, a few miles from his home. A specimen was brought to him by a student who had shot it on the campus, and the naturalist exclaimed: "I have not seen that bird since I was a boy in my native land. It is the *Passer domesticus* or English sparrow." Several of the relatively new birds of Koshkonong are species that have extended their range northward, among them the tufted titmouse, the red-bellied woodpecker, and the cardinal. The western meadowlark, which even in the early 1900's, when Thure Kumlien's son Ludwig was recording the birds of Lake Koshkonong and collaborating on the state list, occurred in Jefferson County only in fall, now nests commonly alongside the eastern meadowlark in this part of Wisconsin.

These changes in the breeding birds of an area, in its spring and fall migrants, in its winter residents and winter visitors are part of the cumulative interest of bird watching, making it not of an individual nor of a generation, but a continuing shared body of experience. One of the bird watchers at Lake Koshkonong now is Thure Kumlien's granddaughter, Mrs. Angie Kumlien Main, who contributed a valuable letter of her grandfather's to an early issue of *THE PASSENGER PIGEON*. She is the author of "Bird Companions," in which she tells of being led by her uncle to an understanding of the killdeer and the savannah sparrow. Mrs. Main is now planning a study of a bird which interested her grandfather—the beautiful prothonotary warbler.

Finding this warbler for the first time, and learning more about it in a few hours' watch'ing than I had learned about many common species familiar enough at sight, was my introduction to Koshkonong's possibilities for immensely satisfying bird watching. I was invited to one of the simple, year-round cottages on Blackhawk Island. It was the twenty-first of May, and the little pail was a quarter full of moss and lichen brought there by the golden-mantled prothonotary and its only less brilliant mate. A week later the first egg appeared, to be followed by five others, creamy-white, spotted with reddish-brown. It was the nest-building I watched on my first day at Koshkonong. Hardly had I stationed myself a few feet from the grindstone when the male and female flew to near-by trees on either side. And then I heard their distinctive, ringing song, a clear, emphatic "sweet-sweet-sweet," as they communicated with each other about approaching the nest. Almost at once they became quite fearless, although perfectly aware of my presence. The male's shining black eye was upon me as he posed on the rim of the pail, displaying to advantage the white markings on his blue-gray tail. He then bent his head to drop a sizable moss tussock from his sharp, straight, glossy black bill.

Sometimes the two were at the nest at once, doubling my own excitement and pleasure. I had not just caught a fleeting glimpse of a new bird, the sort of thing which in itself makes a day's outing unforgettable. I had been within a few feet of the male and female at the nest, had watched them bring moss and lichen on many trips, had learned the characteristic song and heard several variations of it. I had barely taken time to greet my host. He, of course, was delighted about the nest over his grindstone, and thought to warn his neighbor against planning to sharpen anything.

An immediate indication that this is, first of all, bird country, is the unusual awareness of bird life among nearly all the human inhabitants. On a walk to the end of the island we stopped to admire some fine game bantam hens with their young spotted chicks, and to wonder about some crows held captive beneath the chicken wire. The store-keeper whose yard it was began at once to show us his wild bird tenants, apparently finding them more interesting than the bantams. He was particularly enthusiastic about the "yellow wren" that was building in an old tin can nailed up on the side of the house. I frowned in bewilderment, never having heard of a yellow wren. The bird was, of course, another prothonotary. Its colloquial name was really not at all surprising, for had not this golden beauty adopted a wren-like nesting habit? Although the yard was small, crowded in between boat livery and road, it boasted four more pairs of nest-builders. Least flycatchers were in the trellis, true wrens in the other wren house, Baltimore orioles in the elm they had used the year before, and bluejays in one of the conifers. On the other side of the road—the Rock River side—every other cottager, seemingly, had erected a martin house. Here, too, nest-building was in progress. The full tide of bird life, at its height in late May, was sweeping over the narrow island as well as over the lake, the river, and the deep marshes: it was invading territory supposedly dominated by man, and human life seemed secondary to the urgencies of bird mating and bird breeding.

Back of Blackhawk Island is Mud Lake, now an expanse of wet marsh, the home of mink and muskrat, the home, too, of teals and grebes, herons and bitterns, coots, gallinules, and rails, or northern-yellow-throat and swamp sparrow, of prairie and short-billed marsh wrens. At sunset the air is full of giant red-winged blackbirds, flocking noisily to the marshes, bending the willows and the slender cat-tails with their weight, the gorgeous epaulettes of the breeding males spread in display for the act of singing. A new bird watcher was with me in the rowboat that slipped out the river and into Lake Koshkonong, under the clouds of red-winged blackbirds. He rightly welcomed rare bird and common bird alike, and I had, through his eyes, new vision for the beauty of the redwings. It was worth sinking to the ankles in mud to show him that the female was a striped brown bird, in no way resembling her mate, and that the eggs in the woven cradle among the reeds were blue, scrawled with black.

The marsh, I think, is more nearly impassable to man than any other of our temperate zone wildlife habitats. This is probably why its birds are abundant but little known. Natural economy is carefully balanced; territories are claimed and defended; birds and their eggs are preyed upon by other birds, small animals, turtles and snakes. The marsh breeder is alert to every sound, and towards a strange sound is especially wary. Man seldom sets foot in a marsh except to take of its wildlife with gun or trap; even Thure Kumlien entered these marshes to take nests and eggs for zoologists in the East and in Europe, and to shoot birds for their skins. In his day it was necessary for an ornithologist to collect specimens—necessary to ornithology itself. Today men go into the Koshkonong marshes with great difficulty—go in up to their knees—with the new, non-lethal weapons of ornithology.

Muri Deusing, Peter Steib, and Carl Kinzel of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology have spent many hours, over a period of three summers, in mosquito-ridden blinds, not only observing but taking still photographs and motion pictures, in black and white and in color, of marsh breeders.



In time the birds grew accustomed to the sound of the movie camera. The Florida gallinule turned her eggs, the bittern swayed from side to side with the motion of the reeds, the chicks of the pied-billed grebe climbed upon their parent's back. Mr. Deusing works at the Milwaukee Public Museum, where Thure Kumlien worked in the last years of his life, where he was mounting skins when he died.

Like Mr. Kumlien's grand-daughter, Mr. Deusing is interested in the prothonotary warbler. An aggressive female stole hemp for nest-building from his tent-rope, but he wanted to find them nesting in a natural situation. He succeeded in getting splendid movies of a pair that had appropriated a woodpecker's hole some six feet from the ground in one of the scrubby willows between the marsh and the lake. In just such a hole, on the memorable day of my first prothonotaries, I found a pair of chickadees nesting. To me the chickadee had been a guest at the suet station and a lively songster of snow-filled woods. Although I knew that they were permanent residents, I had never found them in the breeding season. Just outside the row of willows, on the strip of sand where he had beached our boat to follow the redwings, a pair of spotted sandpipers succeeded in deceiving us completely as to the whereabouts of their nest, which may have been but a few feet away. We shoved off into the lake and rowed to the next point. Then, on the outermost rock, stood four of the most beautiful shorebirds I had ever seen. As we came nearer they took flight together, and the calico-pattern of their wings was fully displayed. Ruddy turnstones!—another new species, but above all another exquisite sight. As we rowed back in the last light there passed overhead, on supremely graceful wings, many black terns. They, too, were going home to the marshes, to their nests on the tops of old muskrat houses. When the mist of dusk had settled over the marsh we heard the whinny of the sora rail and the wooden-pump sound of the "shite-poke." "You must come back," our host said, "when the cranes come. I will let you know."

He did, and as I followed the narrow road along the Rock River on an August afternoon, I saw a magnificent American egret flapping slowly downstream. The "cranes" had come; dozens of them, in their juvenal wanderings, had come to share this river and these marshes with great blue herons, American bitterns, green herons, and least bitterns. We saw these all that day, resting on oars a few feet from the marshy shore. We saw, too, small flocks of lesser yellowlegs feeding congenially together, and here and there a solitary sandpiper. We saw a sora rail on one side of the river, a king rail on the other. Flocks of ducks flew over our heads, large, powerful mallards and little blue-winged teal, their specula shining in the sun. Never have I felt so close to the strangely beautiful birds of marsh and shore.

A storm blew up very suddenly, and against the purple-blue sky the egrets, most striking of all, flew singly downstream until the last one, who had stood on a half-floating log so long we weren't sure he was real, rose slowly and flew downstream, too. After the rain the yellow-headed blackbirds flew across the river to feed upon the little lawns in front of the row of cottages. Thure Kumlien had sold skins of this beautiful western bird for fifty cents apiece, in the days when they were desired for the glass cabinets of eastern drawing-rooms.

The other day, I saw Lake Koshkonong in winter. I followed the trails of mink and muskrat, flushed lone cock pheasants and whole flocks of hens, watched an excited band of redpoles swirl about in a light snow-fall and settle down to feed in the brushy part of the marsh. The lake is still frozen, but I know that as soon as patches of dark water appear among floating blocks of ice, Canada geese will honk overhead and circle over Lake Koshkonong, looking for a place to land, and a few weeks after them, in broader V's, black lines of double-crested cormorants will follow.

(Author's note: Details of Thure Kumlien's life have been taken from Publius V. Lawson's article on Thure Kumlien, in the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 20, pp. 663-681.)

## MARCH FIELD NOTES

By N. R. BARGER, Editor.

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

As most observers are aware, the spring migration was late during March, and practically all species reported began to be noticed after the opening of spring, March 20.

The first Pied-billed Grebe reported was in Dane County, March 30 (Barger). The Great Blue Heron was on time, the earliest being on March 15, near Milwaukee (Deusing). Records in five other counties placed this species after the first day of spring: Dane County, March 22 (Elder); Sheboygan County, March 23 (Schmidt); Columbia County, March 23 (Deerwester); Brown County, March 29 (Paulson); and Waukesha County, March 30 (Jones and Nelson). The American Bittern was sighted, April 6, near Racine, during the annual field trip of the W. S. O. (Dr. von Jarchow). Dr. A. M. McDermid secured an early record for the Whistling Swan, March 7, flying up the Rock River near Beloit. The earliest elsewhere were two near Milwaukee, March 30 by Oldenburg; and a flock over Appleton, March 31, by Mrs. Rogers.

Practically all species of ducks made their appearance on time. As far as we know at this time, there is a shortage in numbers of nearly every species, and many suitable ponds are entirely neglected by them this season. One Blue-winged Teal noted by Alvin Peterson near Onalaska, Mar. 7, was exceptionally early as compared with the other records of this species. Deerwester reports the only Wood Duck record we have this spring, a pair near Poynette, March 22. Members of the W. S. O. who live in the interior were pleased to find several White-winged Scoters and a flock of Old Squaws near Racine, during the field trip of the annual meeting, April 6. Courtship displays among American Mergansers were noticed as early as Feb. 23, by King of Manitowoc. Feeney saw three of this species on Lake Superior, March 5.

The latest record received of the Goshawk was March 12 at Green Bay (Strehlow). The Cooper's Hawk arrived in Dane County, March 24 (Thompson); and in Waukesha County, March 30 (Jones and Nelson). A good migration of Red-tails, Marsh Hawks and Duck Hawks was in progress, March 15 and 16 (Deusing). The Red-shouldered Hawk made its first appearance, March 12, in Racine (Prins); and in Madison, March 20 (Sperry). The Broad-winged Hawk reached Madison, March 30 (Barger). What appears to be an early record is that of an Osprey, shot in Iowa County, March 7, and reported by Warden Koppenhaver. Dr. Gatterdam has been pleased to have two Sparrow Hawks in his back yard, going into a squirrel house which was received from the State Conservation Commission. The house is on a pole, twenty-five feet above the ground. The hawks spend the nights there and of course there is the hope that they will nest. Mueller observed them, March 5, near Milwaukee; and Prins saw them using a bird house, March 6, near Racine. They also arrived at Poynette, March 6 (Bussewitz).

## Small Number of Spruce Grouse Seen

In a survey of Forest and Iron Counties, conducted March 19 to 21, by Scott, Feeney and others, a small number of Spruce Grouse were seen. More were counted than they had expected to find. A small number of Sharp-tailed Grouse were also found. Four Hungarian Partridge were seen near Oshkosh by Evans, March 29. A flock of twenty-four Sandhill Cranes circled around the game farm at Poynette, March 22, attracted by the captive birds of that species. They gave up, however, and flew away at a high altitude (Bert Barger). The majority of the Killdeer reported arrived around March 22, but Prins and Madsen saw their first one, March 8, near Racine; and Strelitzer notes one, March 16, for Milwaukee. The first Woodcock was checked by Prins, also March 8, near Racine. The first winnowing of the Wilson Snipe was reported by Richter, of Oconto, March 31. The Glaucous Gull was last seen near

Milwaukee, March 2, by Mueller. Mourning Doves came in about March 22, according to the reports and were heard cooing almost immediately.

#### **Barn Owls and Saw-Whet Owl Found**

Seven Barn Owls were discovered by Vander Bloemen in Manitowoc County, March 7; and Holterman reports one for Green Bay, March 23. Any record of this species will be of interest. A Saw-whet Owl was brought to the Prins Bros., March 16, someone having caught it very easily in a pile of brush. A pair of Screech Owls had two eggs in its nest near Racine, March 31 (G. Prins). Horned Owls had begun their hooting by March 7, in Vilas County (Feeney). Another Snowy Owl appeared at Green Bay, March 7 (Strehlow). Short-eared Owls, not so often observed around Madison, made their appearance there several times during March (Robbins and Barger).

Several Arctic Three-toed Woodpeckers may be seen on most trips in Vilas County, according to Feeney. Kahmann reports a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers mating, March 26, near Hayward. One Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen at St. Croix Falls, early in March, by Mrs. Owen; and Strehlow mentions three at Green Bay. We now add to our long list of wintering sapsuckers, a record from New London by Dayton, and a record from Plymouth by Schmidt. We do not remember a winter when so many were observed. The Phoebe reached Hayward by March 25 (Kahmann). This must be a little in advance of the usual arrival date that far north. Three eggs were found in the nest of the Prairie Horned Lark near Milwaukee, March 30 (Kristof).

Both Canada Jays and Ravens occur regularly in the northern portion of the state (Feeney), but when one reaches the southern half it is of interest. Oldenburg sends a sight record of a Raven near Milwaukee, March 22. Crows reached the latitude of Madeline Island, March 5 (Feeney and Dahlburg); and were present in numbers at St. Croix Falls by the middle of March.

#### **Several Hudsonian Chickadees**

Feeney and Scott observed several Hudsonian Chickadees in Forest County, March 20 to 21. State records of this species are quite rare in late years. It will be interesting to follow these individuals to see how late they will remain in the spring. A White-breasted Nuthatch is again inspecting a Bluebird house in the yard of Mrs. Owen, at St. Croix Falls. It used the house last year for its nest. Twenty-five Red-breasted Nuthatches were counted in Green Bay the first of March—more evidence that many of them wintered in the northern part of the state this past season. The first flocks of migratory Robins reached the southern part of the state from the 18th to 20th, and reached the northern sections about two or three days later. Bluebirds were about two or three days behind the Robins. This information is based on records of twenty observers. Strehlow identified a single Pipit, March 7, 8 and 14, at Green Bay, which is early. A few Cedar Waxwings wintered at St. Croix Falls this season (Mrs. Owen). Starlings have increased in numbers along the Mississippi this year, from notes of Mr. Peterson, of Onalaska, and Mrs. Owen, of St. Croix Falls.

The migration of both Eastern and Western Meadowlarks averaged March 23 for the southern half of the state. We did not receive any records of these species north of that. The earliest record received for the Western variety was March 10, at Poynette, by Bussewitz. The Eastern variety could not be separated as many individuals wintered. The bulk of the Red-wing migration went through around the 25th of March with the Bronzed Grackles perhaps a day or two later. Cowbirds did not reach any numbers until the end of the month.

A small flock of Evening Grosbeaks were seen March 18 in Forest County by Feeney; and in Brown County, March 21, by Strehlow. The latter also counted seven Pine Grosbeaks, March 1, for the same area. A small flock of Purple Finches were in Superior, March 13 (McCarthy); and were very numerous in Appleton during the week of the 25th (Rogers). Redpolls were recorded in most sections, but Siskins occurred only in two places—Door County, March 14 (Wilson); and in Iron County, March 13 (Dahlberg). White-winged Crossbills were seen in Forest County until March 20 (Feeney). The latter observer notes the



first Juncos for the latitude of Rusk County, March 25.

The Field Sparrow arrived on time in Dane County, March 22 (Bussewitz). On the other hand the Fox Sparrow was late, the earliest date this year being March 25 in Waukesha by Rossman. Flocks of migrating Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings went through the state between March 22 and March 31. The former species was thought to be much more abundant than usual by many observers.

#### IN MEMORIAM—MISS LYDIA BARNSTEIN

Miss Lydia Barnstein passed away on March 12, 1941, in Manitowoc. She was a member of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology and very active in the study of birds in and around Manitowoc. She was also active in securing new members for the society. Her death will be a loss to her many friends and we extend our sincere sympathies to her survivors.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Miss Eunice Rueppel to 331 N. Ashland Avenue, Green Bay.

NEW MEMBERS: William Oldenburg, 3204-A N. 14th St., Milwaukee; Kenosha History and Art Museum, Civic Center, Kenosha; Mrs. George Nielson, 1556 Kearney Ave., Kenosha; Mrs. W. O. Hinz, 4222 Mandan Crescent, Madison; Gilbert H. Doane, 2006 Chadbourne Ave., Madison; Mrs. Ada B. Fjellman, Minong; Earl Sugden, Yuba; Mrs. Davis H. Speirs, 703 W Elm Ave., Urbana, Ill.; Mrs. Anthony Rohlfing, 1502 E. Hartford Ave., Milwaukee; Mrs. G. B. Larson, 2519 N. 44th St., Milwaukee.

#### THIRD ANNUAL MEETING A SUCCESS

The Third Annual Convention of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology, held at Racine on April 5 and 6, proved to be our most successful meeting since the organization of the society. At the business meeting, the reports made by the secretary and treasurer were accepted. There are to be no changes in the policy of publishing the PASSENGER PIGEON during the coming year. The society recommended and appointed a committee to study the possibilities of erecting a monument to the last Passenger Pigeon that was killed in the state. The executive committee was empowered to decide where the society's library is to be housed; either at the Milwaukee Public Museum or the University of Wisconsin. A motion was made and passed that the fourth annual meeting will be held at Green Bay; dates to be announced later. The nominating committee submitted the following names and they were elected by unanimous vote as our new officers for 1941: President, Murl Deusing, Milwaukee; Vice-President, Mrs. Clara Hussong, Green Bay; Secretary, Mrs. Walter E. Rogers, Appleton; Treasurer, J. Harwood Evans, Oshkosh; Editor, W. E. Scott, Madison. Members-at-Large: Owen J. Gromme, Milwaukee, and Dr. B. L. von Jarchow, Racine. The editor announced his selection of assistants to be the same as last year with F. R. Zimmerman as Assistant Editor; N. R. Barger, Field Note Editor; and Harold C. Wilson as Editor of the Bird Banding Department.

The first day of the meeting was held at the Women's Club. Paintings were exhibited by Owen J. Gromme of the Milwaukee Public Museum, Earl G. Wright of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, H. Albert Hochbaum of Delta, Manitoba, and Dr. B. L. von Jarchow of Racine. A number of field sketches of birds, in water color, by Earl G. Wright were especially good as was his excellent painting of the Snow Geese in a snow storm. Owen J. Gromme's paintings of the Humming Bird, Juncos, Black-capped Chickadee, and Wood Ducks were among his best. Dr. B. L. von Jarchow's painting of the Old Squaw was invigorating. Hochbaum's fine water colors of the waterfowl showed plainly steadiness of hand.

The photographs shown covered a variety of bird subjects. Dr. Howard J. Lee's exhibit showed artistic touch. His Waterfowl shots, both in air and water, were excellent. The Prinz brothers also exhibited some fine subjects. The Duck Hawk picture by King was especially good.



Wilson's exhibit of bird banding equipment, literature, and records was very educational.

Lee Steven of the Milwaukee Public Museum opened the program with a paper on the hawk banding operations of the museum. This fine work is revealing much data on hawk migrations. F. R. Zimmerman of the Wisconsin Conservation Department showed some slides of waterfowl and pointed out some of the more common recognition marks. Dr. Lee could not be present due to urgent business. Wright's talk and color films on Birds of the Arid Southwest were interesting; depicting the bird life in the desert region. Professor Leopold began to band Chickadees as a hobby on his Wisconsin River farm, but the returns have given food for thought on the mortality rate of these little birds. His talk, illustrated with slides, is an excellent example of what can be done with a hobby.

The banquet was attended by 148 members and their friends. Evans did an admirable job as toastmaster and officers were called upon to say a few words from time to time. With the introduction of the main speaker, W. J. Breckenridge of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, the group adjourned to the main hall. Muri Deusing showed some colored films of the nesting of Great Blue Heron in Wisconsin. His talk and pictures were interesting. Several shots of Black-crowned Night Herons were also included. Mr. Breckenridge showed his movies of Bird Life in Minnesota. The films on the booming of the Sharp-tailed, Pinnated, and Spruce Grouse were especially interesting. His colored shots of song bird life were beautiful, but the audience "drank in" the pictures of the Sandhill Cranes, Blue and Snow Geese, and Avocets. In photographing the Avocets, Mr. Breckenridge used a telephoto lens on several of his shots and brought out the striking coloration of these beautiful birds. 180 members and their friends attended the evening pictures and lectures.

The Dr. P. R. Hoy collection was also visited at the Racine County Court House. Here is housed a large collection of the birds, mollusks, and other items collected by Dr. Hoy. His old guns and bird books are also to be seen.

On Sunday, April 6, the remaining program was held at the Hotel Racine which was attended by 100 people. A bird trip was taken Sunday morning and especially interesting were the Old Squaws and White-winged Scoters that were seen inside the breakwater at Racine. A film on the Audubon Summer Camp in Maine was shown and Mrs. H. J. Anderson gave an excellent talk on Dr. Hoy, one of Wisconsin's early naturalists. Wallace Grange talked on songbird management. In studying a songbird population, he found that out of 65 introduced species three were decimated due to the ruthlessness of man.

W. E. Scott gave a paper on the status of the Spruce Grouse in Wisconsin which was illustrated with slides. He estimated that there are approximately 500 to 800 birds in the state at the present time. These birds occur in Forest, Florence, Iron, Vilas, Price, Sawyer, Bayfield, Ashland, Oneida, and Taylor Counties. Counties where they were once reported, but are now evidently gone include Langlade, Lincoln, Chipewewa, Douglas, Marinette, and Oconto.

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Bird Banders' Dept. Editor: Harold C. Wilson, Ephraim, Wisconsin.

Membership fee of \$1.00 includes 75 cents for subscription to THE PASSENGER PIGEON, monthly bulletin of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology.

Send membership applications and dues to the treasurer.

Send manuscripts to the editor, field notes to the field note department editor, and banding data to the bird banders' department editor.

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*Affiliated with the Wisconsin Conservation League.*