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# THE PASSENGER PIGEON

FOR VICTORY

TO ENCOURAGE STUDY OF WISCONSIN BIRDS

Vol. V

October, 1943

No. 4

(Old Series, Vol. V, January, 1944, No. 4)

## YOUR BIRD SANCTUARY

BY ALVIN M. PETERSON

*Onalaska, Wisconsin*

"My bird sanctuary?" Yes, your bird sanctuary. You can have one if you wish, provided only that you have a home and yard of your own, where you can spade and work the soil, have a bird bath, feeding devices, nesting boxes and shelves, and where you can plant and plant and plant. Even if you live in a rented place you can do much to help and attract the birds.

"My yard is too small; it is not well located; there are too many cats in the neighborhood; and there are not enough trees," you may think.



Bluebird at branch bird box.

—Photo by Alvin M. Peterson

True enough, perhaps. Yet there hardly is a yard so small and unpromising that it cannot be made into a little bird sanctuary, a haven for a few feathered friends. You will not have to do much to please the robin, house wren and chipping sparrow.

There are thousands upon thousands of yards in Wisconsin that could and should be made into sanctuaries for the birds. We cut, burn and otherwise use or destroy many trees each year; we drain swamps and marshes, remove underbrush, plow grasslands, and thus deprive many birds of nesting places. The nine-foot-channel project of the Mississippi River robbed thousands of song birds of homes and nesting places. The

land immediately above the dams was cleared of trees and underbrush, the gates closed, and thousands upon thousands of acres of land flooded. Granted that the nine-foot-channel project is an aid to navigation, provides additional spawning and feeding grounds for countless fish, is of help to numerous species of aquatic birds and fur-bearers, and that its advantages for outweigh its disadvantages, it still remains a fact that it robbed many small song birds of nesting and foraging grounds.

Every time we cut a tree, destroy a bush, burn over land, drain a marsh, make a fill, build a house, construct a highway, we are likely to rob some bird of a nesting place or a spot to find a bite of food. We are doing these things constantly all over the state. All told we thus rob many birds of nesting and feeding grounds each year. Isn't it possible that eventually the only suitable places that will be left for perching birds will be a few private wood lots, city, county and state parks, national parks and lands, shady streets and private yards? Then it will be doubly important that every yard at all suited to attracting birds be made into a little sanctuary.

#### **Bird Baths**

"But it will cost too much to make a sanctuary of the yard," you insist. No, because it can be done at little or no expense. A little gravel, cement and water will provide you with a concrete bird bath. Dig a saucer-shaped hole in the ground, say sixteen or eighteen inches in diameter and six inches deep, and plaster the sides and bottom with concrete. When preparing the concrete, take four shovelfuls of gravel and one of cement, mix well, add water and mix again until you have a suitable mud or mortar. Let the basin dry and harden for two or three days and it will be ready for use. Place it on a ledge, in the crotch of a tree, on a post or stump, or make a pedestal of some kind for it, fill with water and you will please many a bird.

Your bird bath is too simple and not attractive? Well, with a small amount of gravel and much less cement you can make something much better. Just mix and stir and ladle and experiment until you have something you like, because there is ample room for originality. Make something that pleases you and you will find that so long as it holds water it will please the birds also. Of course, you also can purchase bird baths. There are many types and sizes to be had at supply houses.

#### **Feeding Trays and Nest Boxes**

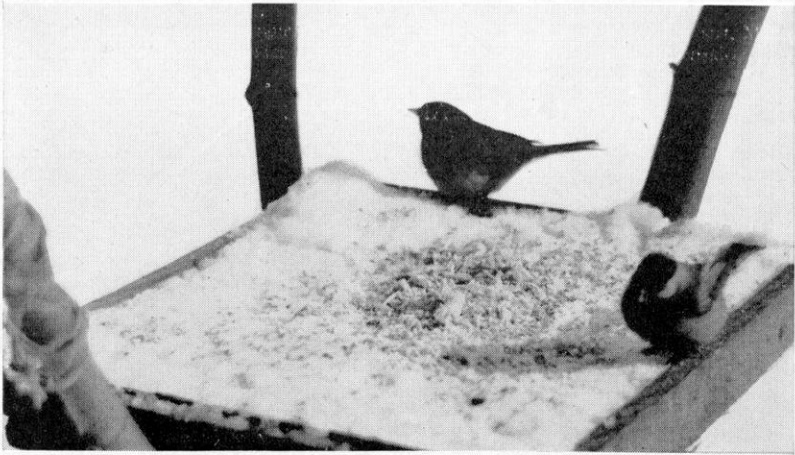
Take a board a foot square, or two feet long and a foot wide, give it a lath trim, and you have a simple food tray. Too simple and not attractive? Then fasten a row of small evergreen branches to one side for a windbreak and it will be much more attractive, especially when the branches have caps of snow. Or you can make something better, most anything that suits your fancy, or you can purchase something.

Also shovel the snow from a spot of ground in the yard, preferably on the sheltered side of a bush or evergreen, because some birds like to secure part of their food from the ground. The blue jay, cardinal, red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, tree sparrow and junco like to feed from the ground. Bob-whites feed entirely from the ground, so if there are any around and you wish to help and attract them, you must feed from the ground. Here scatter rolled oats, corn, wheat, screenings, chaff, seeds of a dozen kinds, table scraps, in fact anything you have at hand for which you have no other use and you will help many a bird.

There are many possibilities when it comes to providing the birds with nesting boxes and shelves. Excellent ones may be purchased or made out of various materials—lumber, concrete, metal, etc. Most of the boxes we have used have been made from hollow tree trunks and branches, since we are fortunate enough to have a wood lot. Whenever I cut a tree that has a hollow trunk or branch I save the hollow part.

Alvin M. Peterson, author of "Wild Bird Neighbors," "The A B C of Attracting Birds," and other books, has also written many articles for magazines over a period of twenty years. He has maintained a bird sanctuary all his life with outstanding success and has taken many pictures. Although his chief interest is with the birds, Mr. Peterson has written many articles about fish, fur-bearing animals and other natural history subjects.

There usually are natural or bird-made holes in such trunks and branches and the boxes consequently have suitable entrance holes. The size of a given trunk or branch and the entrance hole will determine the kind of bird for which it is suited. Cut the hollow portions into lengths ranging from eight to twenty or more inches, also depending on the bird or birds you wish to help. Many of the chunks will be open above and below. Boards nailed over the ends will provide roofs and floors. Bore entrance holes as needed. Lengths of hollow trunk often may be split lengthwise with a saw and two boxes made out of each length, though then boards must be nailed over the open backs. Even though you do not have a wood lot of your own, you may be able to get some suitable hollow tree-trunks and branches for bird boxes. I secure many from a friend who runs a wood-sawing outfit. Whenever he finds a desirable trunk or branch, he saves it for a prospective bird box. I have had the privilege of selecting many good ones from his collection. We have had excellent success attracting bluebirds, wrens and flickers with such boxes.



Junco and Chickadee—two small birds that are very hardy and useful.

—Photo by Alvin M. Peterson

Do you notice natural beauty spots when on your bird walks, spots that strike you as being especially attractive and suited to bird life? There used to be such a place in the State Fair Park, a brushy, wooded nook on the banks of Honey Creek; another was located a couple of miles west of the park: two or more ponds, a large open marsh, another that was overgrown with brush, many thickets, and a wooded hill to the north and west. There are a dozen such places around LaCrosse, perhaps as many around most of our larger cities, to say nothing about hundreds to be found about villages and in rural areas. Two things usually are necessary to make such places attractive to the birds: there must be many trees and considerable underbrush, hence food and nesting places; and there must be a pool, pond, creek or larger stream in the immediate vicinity, to provide water, nesting material perhaps, and some food.

Such spots suggest natural settings for bird sanctuaries, sizable ones usually. Fortunately, our yards need not be excluded by the requisites just enumerated, since we can provide them with pools or bird baths, trees, shrubs, vines and even perhaps small thickets, thus duplicating what we find in such natural sites.

#### Planting

It cannot be stated too emphatically that planting trees, bushes and vines is the most important single thing a person can do if he wishes to

help and attract the birds. Trees and perching birds go naturally together like peaches and cream, ham and eggs, corned beef and cabbage, or what have you? Have some trees, bushes, vines and flowers and the birds will come to you. The bird lover also must be a tree lover. We must all be Johnny Appleseeds. Johnny Appleseed, you will remember, was a pioneer hero named Jonathan Chapmann, who traveled widely up and down the Ohio Valley and planted apple seeds wherever he went.

Or we must all be Gus Boehlands, a merchant at Rockford, Illinois, who has given thousands of young trees to the people of his city—Chinese elms, American elms, white pines, Russian mulberries, sugar maples, red cedars, Norway maples and others. Mr. Boehland began encouraging the planting of trees in 1914. By 1925, he had given away more than 150,000 trees. A recent survey showed that more than 100,000 of these were full grown or nearly so, or at least large enough to furnish abundant shade, sizable quantities of fruit, or both. Little wonder, Rockford is known as the Forest City. You may be sure, too, that it is blessed with countless birds of scores of species.

Planting trees, then, is the most important consideration of all when it comes to attracting birds to the home and yard. Any tree, no matter how small and unpromising, appeals to the birds. To be sure, some trees are better than others, since some bear desirable berries, seeds, or nuts, or are especially attractive because of the nesting sites they afford.

Oaks strike me as being highly desirable for two reasons: mature trees usually have natural holes and cavities in them, or at least spots or place where holes can be drilled easily, and they yield crops of acorns. Maples, lindens and elms do not seem quite as good, mainly because they are lacking in one or both these respects. Nevertheless, the latter trees are an asset to any yard, and they have the advantage of being easily transplanted. Oaks, on the other hand, usually must be raised from seed.

Wild crab and thorn-apple trees are about as good as any for our purpose. They are rather small as a rule, short and wide spreading, with dense, rounded heads or crowns. Both branch freely; the heads usually are a mass of tangled branches. Birds frequent them at all seasons and nest freely in them; both produce fruit that eventually is taken by some birds; and both are highly attractive in the spring when in bloom. Needless to say, tame apple trees also are highly desirable. The birds, it seems to me, have an eye for beauty and safety and often select most appropriate sites in the preceding trees. I have not tried to transplant wild crab and thorn-apple trees so cannot say whether they are hard or easy to move, but I always have felt that places where they grow naturally are highly blessed.

Juneberry, Russian mulberry, cherry, both wild and tame, and hackberry trees are among the most desirable of all trees for attracting birds. To this list we should perhaps add the black haw and mountain ash. These trees are especially valuable because they produce berries or other small fruit the birds like. The cherries and Russian mulberry not only are easily transplanted but also may easily be raised from seed. The Juneberry is harder to raise, at least in some places. Cherries, Russian mulberries and Juneberries provide the birds with food in summer.

The hackberry tree is especially valuable because it retains its berries throughout the winter. The City of LaCrosse has thousands of these trees along its streets and is a refuge for many birds each winter. Robins nearly always winter in the city, making it, indeed, the city of winter robins; cedar waxwings also are numerous during the colder months, and flickers frequently to be seen. The robins usually are found in flocks, often containing from 20 to 40 birds, sometimes as many as one hundred or more. Here you usually are able to see robins every week and month of the year, thanks to the hackberry trees. Hackberry trees are easy to transplant, and they grow to a considerable height, in shape and size approximating the American elm.

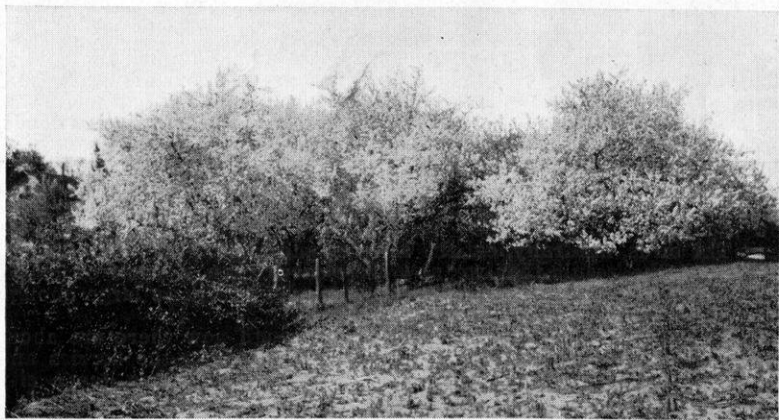
Plant some evergreens if possible, mainly because they attract certain birds you might not otherwise get to come to the yard. Any of the many ornamental kinds are good, as also are the white, Norway and Jack pines which are native to Wisconsin and rather easily secured and

raised. The red cedar\* is one of the best because it is easily transplanted, grows quite fast, is attractive, and bears a crop of bluish berries that persist throughout the winter. The juniper also is easy to raise and bears berries; its flattened, sprawling crown, however, may make it undesirable to some folks. Chipping and field sparrows often use it when nesting.

Space will not permit me to say more about particular trees. Plant trees native to the locality in which you live, or which do well when planted there, and you will attract many birds.

### Beginning a Sanctuary

We lived on a twenty-acre farm for 20 years, where we had a small bird sanctuary, perhaps a large one we should say, as it contained about two acres of ground. The refuge was located on the top and slopes of a low, rolling, wooded hill, and the yard was near the middle of the east edge. We have always regretted the fact that there was no pool, pond, creek or river in the immediate vicinity. We were interested in birds when we moved there and decided to do what we could to help and attract them. To accomplish this we set aside or reserved two acres for a bird sanctuary, a spot we hoped would afford us considerable pleasure and the birds some help.



Apple trees in bloom. Some birds are partial to apple trees and orchards, nesting in and securing food from them.

—Photo by Alvin M. Peterson

We had some ideas and a general plan as to what we hoped to do. We decided never to pasture our two acres, never to burn them over, to guard them against grass and brush fires started elsewhere, not to pick any wild flowers ourselves or allow others to do so, to encourage all sorts of plants to grow there if they would or could, and to help and attract not only the birds but certain other creatures also. We decided to plant a variety of trees, but particularly those most useful to birds, such as Juneberries, mulberries, cherries, etc., to plant many shrubs and to allow any that appeared of their own accord a chance to survive and become useful, to plant ivy, grape and bittersweet vines, and to have a few thickets.

We also decided to allow our refuge to develop more or less naturally, or to allow Nature more or less of a free hand there, and to see what happened. We were quite sure that some plants would appear of their own accord and were agreeably surprised when many of them actually did so. We also expected to have a bird bath or two, feeding devices, and many nesting boxes and shelves. The devices were to be simple and inexpensive. We were sure we could have a successful bird sanctuary without spending a great deal of money, hence that anyone who so de-

\* Wholesale planting of red cedar is objectionable near apple orchards as it harbors various species of fungus *Gymnosporangium*, which produces leaf rust of apple.

sires can have one. We intended to be guided by Nature in what we did, to study and learn, and to make use of whatever hints the birds gave us.

There we lived with the birds for twenty years—they were all about us, sometimes species we never expected to see, like the mockingbird—had a grand time and learned a great deal. The plan we adopted and followed, on the whole with little work and trouble, is far from being the only one, since there are many other possibilities and variations. But our plan worked, and so, I am sure, will the one you adopt for your yard or larger tract, if you decide to have a little bird sanctuary and to help, attract and to be honored, entertained and instructed by the birds. The main things necessary are to have some trees and bushes, the more the better, a few vines, if possible, many flowers, and not to remove or treat or doctor your old, crippled trees too soon and too well. Also it will be necessary to have a bird bath or pool of some kind, a feeding device or two and a bare patch of ground on which to scatter food in winter, and some nesting boxes and shelves. Have a few good boxes rather than many poorer ones, because the birds like elbow room when nesting. Only a certain number are likely to nest in a given territory, since they select and claim a given site and its surroundings and drive off others that trespass on what they consider their domain.

#### **Natural Increase of Vegetation**

If you have some trees and bushes to begin with, so much the better; then you will be sure to have some bird neighbors from the start, and, strangely enough, they will plant other trees for you. We had many bur and black oaks to begin with and planted many box-elders, cottonwoods, American elms, Chinese elms, catalpas, Russian mulberries, honey locusts, red cedars, junipers, apples, red cherries, two lindens, an ash and a canoe birch. A black cherry tree appeared of its own accord as also did a bushy choke cherry and at least two black haws. The black cherry now is almost full grown and bears a large crop of big cherries each year. The birds, naturally, eat the cherries and scatter the seeds far and wide, with the result that we now have more than a score of black-cherry trees of various sizes, some mere seedlings, others large enough to produce fruit.

There were no hackberry trees at first, though now there are about thirty, all of which the birds planted for us, securing the berries and the seeds they contain from several full-grown trees that line a city street a half-mile distant.

The squirrels also have been of considerable help to us in much the same way, planting many oaks and black-walnut trees for us. Our neighbor has a row of walnut trees along a fence near his windmill, from which squirrels, living in our oak grove, secure nuts in autumn and bury about the premises. A recent survey showed that we now have more than a score of young walnut trees, all of which were planted by these frisky acrobats.

Nor must we overlook the fact that if you have trees of a given kind others of the same species will be sure to appear, some in large numbers, springing from seeds dropped by parent trees. Have an oak and others are sure to appear of their own accord and will grow and give you other oaks if given half a chance.

#### **Summary**

To recapitulate, we are depriving the birds of nesting and foraging grounds and should give them others to replace those we take. An easy way to do this, and one in which thousands of us can help, is to make little bird sanctuaries out of our yards. Plant trees, shrubbery, vines and flowers, because trees, bushes, vines and flowers do more to help and attract birds than anything else. Did you ever stop to think that if we plant a tree to replace each one that dies a natural death or is cut and used for some useful purpose or wasted, there will be as many trees in Wisconsin a century hence as there are now? Give the seedlings naturally planted half a chance and there will be more. Provide the birds with a bird bath or pool, if there are no ponds or streams near by, feed them in winter, and make and set out nesting boxes and shelves.

I

ADDITIONAL HINTS

1. The brown thrasher is likely to nest in a brush pile if you have one, provided there are birds in the neighborhood.
2. Cut and split your own wood and you'll be surprised at how many birds will be interested in what you are doing. There's a reason: the work dislodges many an insect pest.
3. No yard is too small for one to have sunflowers, excellent plants for attracting birds.
4. The bright-red seeds or berries of the asparagus attract many birds, but notably Bohemian waxwings.
5. Gather acorns in autumn. This is an easy and inexpensive way of securing large quantities of food for winter birds.
6. The wild columbine is easily transplanted and will attract many a ruby-throated hummingbird.
7. Supply your robin neighbors with a pan of mud when they are building their nests. They'll need it if the weather is dry and there is no stream or pond near by.
8. The Baltimore oriole will appreciate string and yarn when nest-building.
9. The cardinal and hermit thrush are likely to visit you if you have wild-grape and five-leaved ivy vines.
10. Have a vegetable garden, where you can spade and hoe. Robins and other birds like to hunt food about newly plowed or spaded soil. We have a large garden, and, in it, lark sparrows and horned larks have nested. Killdeer and vesper sparrows nest there almost yearly.

## II

## SELECTED LIST OF TREES, SHRUBS AND VINES

## TREES

White Pine*	Burr Oak*
Norway Pine*	American Elm*
White Spruce	Chinese Elm
Balsam Fir	Hackberry*
Hemlock	Mulberry (Russian)*
White Cedar	Fragrant Crab*
Red Cedar*	Mountain Ash*
Juniper*	Juneberry*
Black Walnut	Red Cherry*
Shag-bark Hickory	Choke Cherry*
Weeping Willow	Black Cherry*
Cottonwood	Sugar Maple
Lombardy Poplar	Scarlet Maple
Trembling Poplar	Box-elder
Hop Hornbeam	Basswood
Canoe Birch*	Wild Thorns*
Red Birch*	White Ash
Black Oak*	Hardy Catalpa
White Oak	Black Haw*

(All the above but the Weeping Willow, Lombardy Poplar, Chinese Elm and Mulberry are indigenous to and common in Wisconsin.)

## SHRUBS

Highbush Cranberry	Elder*
Gooseberry	Currant
Rose*	Blackberry
Red Raspberry*	Black Raspberry*
Japanese Barberry	Common Hazel
Spirea	Tartarian Honeysuckle

## Lilac

(Use tame varieties of berries for yards, both wild and tame for larger tracts. The Juneberry, Black Haw, Choke Cherry, Wild thorns and Crab sometimes assume shrub-like forms, hence might be listed above.)

## VINES

Wild Grape*	Five-leaved Ivy*
Bittersweet*	

(\*Considered highly desirable by the writer.)

## III

Thirty species of birds have nested on our twenty acres. Here they are, together with our opinion as to why they did so. If no reason is given, it is because, so far as we could discover, there was nothing we did that caused them to come.

1. Bluebird—Hollow-trunk and hollow-branch bird boxes.
2. Robin—Trees, vines, ledges, robin shelves.
3. Red-headed woodpecker—Oak trees and acorns they yield.
4. Flicker—Suitable trees and bird box made of hollow hickory.
5. Nighthawk.
6. Kingbird—Trees.
7. Wood Pewee—Trees.
8. Horned Lark.
9. Blue Jay—Trees.
10. Starling—Hollow trees.
11. Meadowlark—Tall, matted grass.
12. Orchard Oriole—Trees.
13. Baltimore Oriole—Trees, nesting material.
14. Vesper Sparrow.
15. Lark Sparrow.
16. Chipping Sparrow—Bushes and vines.
17. Field Sparrow—Bushes, juniper trees.
18. Rose-breasted Grosbeak—Trees of medium size.
19. Scarlet Tanager—Tall trees.
20. Purple Martin—Martin house.
21. Tree Swallow—Suitable hollow post.
22. Red-eyed Vireo—Trees.
23. Warbling Vireo—Trees.
24. Catbird—Bushes, vines, thickets, water.
25. Brown Thrasher—Brush piles, bushes, vines, thickets, trees.
26. House Wren—Boxes made of hollow branches.
27. White-breasted Nuthatch—Hollow tree.
28. Killdeer.
29. Bob-white—Tall, matted grass, suitable cover, winter feeding.
30. Mourning Dove—Trees.

Birds are so friendly and easy to please that you hardly can avoid helping and attracting them, a fact that leaves ample room for originality. Have a plan and do things that please you and you are almost sure to please the birds. Prune or dock your trees if you like. We never have done much of this, because we wanted the trees to grow as Nature intended they should. Allow the grass to grow tall and tangled, if you have a spot at all suited to the purpose, and you may get the meadow-lark and even the bob-white to come. Don't be in too much of a hurry to cut dead and crippled trees and don't fill the natural holes and crevices with concrete or other material, since wrens, bluebirds, chickadees, tree swallows, nuthatches and woodpeckers appreciate such trees and use the holes when nesting. Have some underbrush and a thicket if possible, to furnish cover and foraging grounds for bob-whites, field sparrows, chipping sparrows, catbirds and brown thrashers. Make your sanctuary attractive with flowers and you hardly can avoid attracting the ruby-throated hummingbird and goldfinch.

#### SELECTING AN EMBLEM FOR THE SOCIETY

Although the passenger pigeon has been used on the society's book plate and on convention programs, no official seal has been passed upon or designated officially. Since the robin is the state bird there might be some merit in using it in our designation. On the other hand, the passenger pigeon has become almost synonymous with our organization and might well be used. It is suggested herewith that the subject matter for the seal be selected and an artist be appointed to draw the illustration at our next annual convention.

**"A Guide to Bird Watching"** by Joseph J. Hickey is a new bird book setting forth an ecological approach to ornithology. It furnishes an outline for the bird watcher under such headings as Arrival of Migrants in Spring, Song, Territory, Pair Formation, Egg Laying and Incubation, Care and Feeding of Nestlings, Abandonment of the Nest, Sex Ratio, Populations Questions, Roosting, Bird Parasites, and Flocking Habits. This is only a partial description of the compendium of useful and practical information to guide the bird enthusiast who wants to really accomplish something with his hobby.

#### Save Your "Passenger Pigeons" for Returning Soldiers

The demand for back numbers of **The Passenger Pigeon** has been steady and rather heavy. Thus there will be nothing to offer our members, now in armed forces, when they return and wish to fill in the gaps. We have many interested members, now in the army, who cannot afford to continue their subscription for the duration, but will request a complete set of back numbers when they return. If you can locate any numbers of **The Passenger Pigeon** prior to the January, 1944 issue, please mail them to the treasurer of the society, who will save them for this purpose. Beginning with the January, 1944 issue the editor will have an extra supply printed to take care of this need.

#### W. F. KUBICHEK TO BE CONVENTION SPEAKER

W. F. Kubichek of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been engaged as the chief speaker of the sixth annual convention to be held in Milwaukee, April 22-23. Murl Deusing has been prevailed upon again this year to arrange for the convention. If we can judge by his success of last year, the coming meeting will be a **gala** event. As usual, those wishing to present papers or other features of the program, should submit titles, length of time required, and whether movie projector will be needed. Reservation cards, giving the location and hours of the convention will be mailed to members at a later date.

An annual summary of the bird records of 1943 will be made immediately for publication in the next issue. If anyone has heard of good records that have not been previously printed for 1943 in our paper, please send them in by return mail.



## THE AUTUMN SEASON

**White Pelican:** Flock of 37, Milwaukee County, Nov. 8 (Deusing). Flock of 17, Horicon, Nov. 7 (Burrows); a wounded specimen picked up by Burrows Nov. 11. These are the first November records we have seen.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** One at Prairie du Sac, Dec. 2 (Gastrow). Seldom found this late previously.

**Whistling Swan:** A lone individual off shore, Milwaukee, Dec. 18 (Jones).

**Canada Goose:** Heavy flight Oct. 23-25 which is the start of the Fall peak, Horicon (Mathiak). Flock of 40, Prairie du Sac, Dec. 9 (Gastrow).

**Turkey Vulture:** Lincoln County, Sept. 19 (Warden Chase).

**Goshawk:** One, Prairie du Sac, Nov. 18 (Gastrow).

**Bald Eagle:** Attacked by falcon, Prairie du Sac, Dec. 17 (Gastrow).

**Pigeon Hawk:** Sawyer County, Sept. 29 (Zirrer).

**Sparrow Hawk:** Vernon County, Dec. 20 (Miss Morse).

**Spruce Grouse:** Six, Forest County, Nov. 18 (E. D. Morrison).

**Killdeer:** Milwaukee, Nov. 21 (Mueller). Seldom observed this late.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Milwaukee, Dec. 1 (Mueller). Late.

**Mourning Dove:** Milwaukee, Dec. 3 (Rev. Mr. Orians). Six at Prairie du Sac, Dec. 9 (Gastrow). One at LaCrosse, Jan. 5 (Gatterdam).

**Saw-whet Owl:** Milwaukee, brought back to health by Miss Oehlen-schlaeger.

**Kingfisher:** Milwaukee, Dec. 7 (Sam Thorn).

**Barn Swallow:** Horicon, Oct. 7 (Mathiak). Two were observed at this late date.

**Hudsonian Chickadee:** Sawyer County, Oct. 30 (Zirrer).

**Tufted Titmouse:** Milwaukee, Oct. 19 (M. Cutler).

**Mockingbird:** Madison, all winter (B. H. Paul). Observed drinking from their bird fountain daily as hot water was used.

**Catbird:** One wounded, at Madison all winter (Mrs. Lindsay). Observed at food tray.

**Brown Thrasher:** One at Riley, Nov. 12 (Schorger). Late.

**Robin:** One in Madison, Dec. 24 (Alexander). Two at Prairie du Sac throughout December (Kabat). The usual flocks in LaCrosse (Gatterdam).

**Hermit Thrush:** One in Milwaukee, Nov. 3 (Mrs. G. Larson). Latest on record that we know of.

**Bluebird:** Menomonee Falls, Oct. 10 (W. DuMez). Late.

**Hooded Warbler:** Milwaukee, September (R. Corwin). Unusual.

**Canada Warbler:** Milwaukee, Oct. 10 (Mrs. Balsom). Latest on record.

**Bobolink:** Menomonee River, Oct. 6 (Mrs. Cutler, Simmons and Schwendener). Late.

**Red-wing:** Horicon, Dec. 18 (Mathiak).

**Evening Grosbeak:** Two, Poynette, Nov. 4 (Mossman). Five, Horicon, in November (Jones). Milwaukee, Dec. 18 (Mrs. C. Rumph).

**Pine Grosbeak:** One female, Milwaukee, Nov. 13 (Mueller).

**Pine Siskin:** Milwaukee, Oct. 3 (Doll).

**Towhee:** Milwaukee, Nov. 19 (Mueller). Latest we know of.

**White-throated Sparrow:** Milwaukee, Nov. 26 (Mueller). Late.

\* \* \* \*

## NOTICE

Notice (30 days in advance as required) is herewith given to alter the constitution during our next meeting to include such additional officers as the society may create at the coming convention.

## SALVAGING INJURED BIRDS

BY MISS ELIZABETH A. OEHLenschlaeger\*

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

### Saw-whet Owl

**March 21**—The little owl had been found by Mr. Brown of Whitefish Bay. Examination showed a badly bruised elbow, with slight bleeding, but no broken bones. The injury was swabbed with a boric solution. The bird was emaciated, so forced feeding was begun immediately after the injury was dressed. Small pieces of beef, about 1/3 inch square were pushed down the forcibly opened mandibles until about 1 1/2 inches one-half inch thick had been taken. Three more feedings, at three hour intervals, were given up to 10 p. m. The pieces of meat were dipped in clear water in order to provide a little more moisture and make deglutition easier. Efforts to bandage the wing proved futile—too much feathers and too little owl! All the bandages were promptly pulled off.

**March 24**—Began to feed voluntarily.

**April 1**—Wing healing rapidly. Short flights are taken from one piece of furniture to another in my room. Flies free in the bathroom at night.

**April 9**—Saw-whet seems completely tame. She has learned to sit on the small perch about 40 inches above the floor and flies up to it very easily. Eats out of a small glass dish which is placed on the floor of the bathroom beside a dish of water. Small pieces of chicken, squab, beef or an occasional sparrow or starling are her main diet, with young mice and cowbirds her "ice cream." One night I forgot to close the bathroom door and was awakened by a most unusual sound. Sweetie was perched on the foot of my bed and I was being serenaded.

**April 30**—Perfectly tame, perfectly trusting and exquisitely clean, she makes a lovely pet. She has a curious way of escaping when an attempt is made to capture her, flying off to some point of vantage, then turning around to face me. She would wait to be picked up and as a hand closed about her, rattle her tiny mandibles and let her feet hang perfectly limp. This performance would go on indefinitely.

**July 13**—The little owl has become very restless. Feeding has been carried on as before. Bathing was done in the little glass bowl from which she drank, or at times she was held for a moment under the shower. This latter she enjoyed very much. She made continued efforts to escape and finally was banded by Mrs. Owen Gromme, and we released her at dusk. She flew into a spruce about 20 feet away and was promptly mobbed by robins and chipping sparrows, and ducked from one tree to another until it became too dark for her tormentors.

**July 20**—Nothing has been heard of the saw-whet owl.

### Screech Owl—gray phase

**May 27**—Two young nestling screech owls were received from the Humane Society this afternoon. They arrived during our absence, and when we came home were greeted by wide open mandibles and a miniature bleating call—entirely unowlish! Primaries in the larger bird were fairly well down and part of the breast and back were feathered out, otherwise the bird felt as if it were covered with ten-penny nails. The smaller bird—very much smaller, in fact—seemed about four or five days younger. It was not very strong, its eyes were small and heavy and it showed little animation. They were given finely cut pieces of squab, bones and feathers included, at seven p. m. and again at ten p. m. Each meal amounted about a heaping dessert spoon full. They ate voluntarily and accepted the food promptly.

**May 28**—The youngsters were fed three full meals during the light hours of the day—eight a. m., one and seven-thirty p. m. It was the evening of a trial blackout, so the large bird decided to hop out of his box to do a bit of exploring. When lights were again turned on, he was picked up for a ball of gray yarn. The experience was painful!

**May 29**—Neither bird ate well today. The larger bird ate about a teaspoonful of finely cut squab; the smaller refused all food during the day.

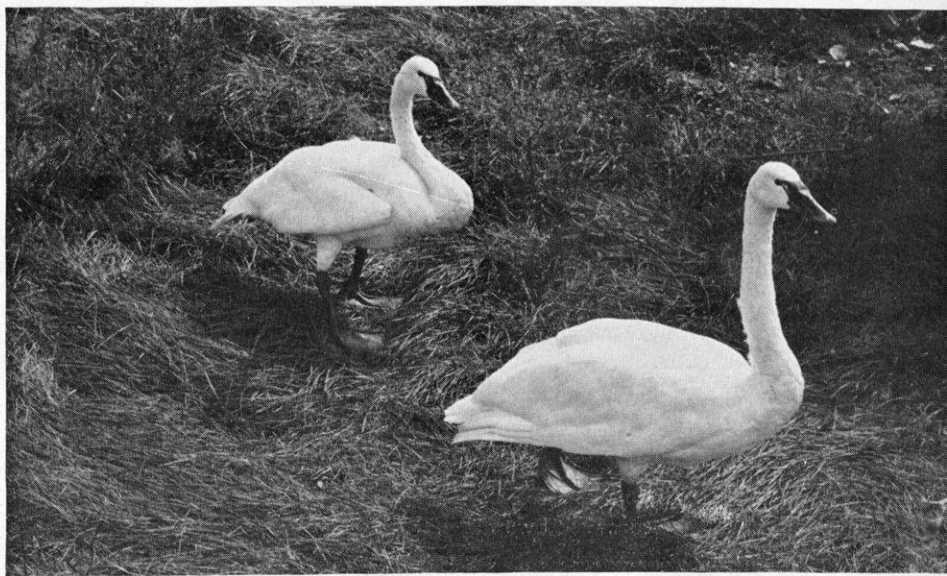
\* Miss Oehlenschlaeger, because of special qualifications, has a permit to care for wounded birds.—Ed.

**July 13**—The development of the little owls progressed quite normally. They ate all kinds of meat without hesitation—a number of rats and *spermophiles*—also a pair of red squirrels which had played havoc with some of our small birds' nests. They also relished an occasional meal of fresh fish. No effort was made to tame them—they remained fiercely belligerent and after banding by Mrs. Owen Gromme, they were ready to go at once. They were permitted to fly out of the flight cage without their customary supper in order to encourage them to forage at once. They were fully feathered, excepting only the head—but their "ears" were very large. One of the youngsters decided to take a bath—he was too soaked to fly and was returned to the cage to dry.

**August 3**—Both birds call from the trees surrounding the house.

#### Whistling Swan

**April 7**—The swan was captured among the shore vegetation of a small lake near Thiensville by Mr. Ray Killa. It was brought by him to the Wisconsin Humane Society, which in turn brought the bird to me. The swan was exhausted and very frightened on arrival. It was placed in one of the empty rooms in the poultry house, water and grain was placed conveniently within reach and it was allowed to rest. Observation indicated a broken humerus and slight bleeding.



Whistling Swans

—Cut Courtesy Wisconsin Conservation Department

**April 8**—A shot has fractured the bone. While compound, it is not completely protruding and the fractured ends have begun to thicken, but are not properly aligned. The bird keeps pulling the wing in an upward movement; pain and an effort to place the wing in proper position seems to motivate the action. A generous touching up with oil of salt over the injured area provided a hurried first aid. The swan trumpets loudly when held and struggles violently.

**April 9**—Gangrene is present. Dr. Lange probed for shot but found none. The feathers on and around the injury were clipped and full strength Metaphane applied. In spite of a weak condition, the swan fights bravely and gives a timid peck at us with his mandible. No splint could be applied until the gangrene has subsided. Full strength Metaphane over the infected area twice daily was directed by Dr. Lange. The swan seems to eat fairly well. It is very light for its great size but no

accurate weight could be given in the absence of accurate scales. Apparently the bird has struggled with the injury for some time.

**April 10**—The discoloration around the wound is a little less dark, but the wing droops more. Antiseptic application was made at 10 a. m. and 4 p. m. A slight infection has appeared in one eye. No food was taken.

**April 11**—Less discoloration, but more drainage of the wound. Metaphane was *poured* over rather than *applied*, to the wound. A little grain was taken. The wing dangles badly, but the bird rests in a sitting position much of the day which in turn places the wing nearly into a normal position.

**April 12**—A slight thickening of the upper end of the humerus is noted. His head was wet, apparently he had searched—and found—food in the bottom of the tub filled with water.

**April 16**—Daily applications of Metaphane have helped to heal the injury and subdued the gangrene, but not enough to allow permanent splinting. In order to keep the wing from dangling and dragging the primaries over the floor, these were clipped close to the upper end. The general condition of the swan is much improved. It has learned to feed grain from the tub of water, but still refuses to take the lettuce. He has begun to recognize the man who brings his grain and pulls at his clothing when it is not promptly forthcoming.

**April 18**—Our widower-cob picks at the window from the outside while the whistler does the same from the inside. What would the lonely cob do to an equally lonely whistler? It might have all kinds of interesting results to let the two together when out-of-doors—but the cob is mean! The wild bird's wing remains in a nearly normal position today.

**April 19**—This afternoon the swan fought furiously when captured. The wing was dangling between its legs in a very bad position, so was tied firmly with three inch gauze strips, hoping that it will remain in position. In spite of difficulties, the bird becomes stronger every day.

**April 20**—The bandage was torn off this morning and it may be an additional injury will be the result of the tangled bandages. It was decided to let the bird entirely alone and see what will develop.

**April 29**—There has been a definite improvement from day to day in the position of the wing. The external injury no longer drains. A decided belligerency has crept into the bird's behaviour toward me. He has not quite figured out that he has had to be helped in his distress—or die.

**May 6**—The whistler was released in the southwest corner of the duck pool today. He trumpeted loudly, but made no effort to fly when dropped into the water. Our cob came over from his corner to investigate, but neither bird seemed either interested or looking for trouble.

**May 9**—All is quiet in the pool. The whistler seems very content to be out in the open.

**May 29**—Still the same. The area above the fracture is a little higher than the normal position and the natural alignment. The clipped coverts and scapulars have been replaced, but the primaries are still short. The swan eats well, but is not often out of the water. Mr. Owen Gromme of the Milwaukee Public Museum identified "him" as a first year female.

**August 9**—Summary: If the whistler's primaries have been renewed and the bird seems strong enough to migrate this autumn, it will be given its freedom after Mr. Gromme bands it. Otherwise it will be given to the Milwaukee Zoological Gardens. Not being able to splint the wing is regrettable, but the condition of the external injury made it impractical. When the swan preens and stretches her wings there seems no difference in the strength or position of the beating.

#### Upland Plover

**June 22**—A lone nestling was found by Mrs. Reimar Frank of Whitefish Bay. It was very weak, evidently the runt of one set. Mrs. Frank searched for the mother and the other young birds for some time and over considerable territory, but found no sign of the flock. The bird was placed in a small basket with a hot water bottle to keep it warm. Efforts to force feed it proved futile. It died some time during the night.

## BY THE WAYSIDE

**A Survey of Starling Nesting Sites.** During the years 1941 to 1943 I located seventy starling nests in the city of Milwaukee. Most of these nests were located in 1942, the year of most extensive search.

Of these nests forty-six were in various types of crevices of buildings, which constituted 65.7% of the whole. Sixteen, or 22.8% were in tree lows found chiefly in parks. The remaining eight nests, or 11.4% were in bird houses.

Of twenty nests found in 1941, ten or 50% were known to be occupied again in 1942. Of the remaining ten, seven were not observed again, one was deserted by the birds, and two were closed up by repair work. Eleven of the seventy nests were known to have been destroyed later. One of these was in a tree hollow and six were in crevices of buildings.

I believe that most of the starling nests destroyed in Milwaukee meet their fate as a result of repairs made on buildings at a time when there are still fledglings in the nest.

Starlings seem to prefer nesting sites about buildings, probably because they are higher up as a rule, and therefore less accessible to enemies. Bird houses being the most accessible to enemies seem to be least popular with them. I have found too that they seem to prefer bird houses attached to buildings to those on poles or in trees.

In contrast to city nesting sites, five out of six nests, or 83% found in the country, were in tree hollows. The sixth was in a building. This difference is probably due to the existence of a larger number of trees containing hollows and a corresponding reduction in number of crevices in buildings.—**Donald Bierman, Milwaukee.**

**Miscellaneous Notes of Interest.** A Cardinal was found to have been trapped in *Cynoglossum (officinale)*, called hound's tongue, until it died. **Dr. Muchenhirn** of Madison discovered this accidental case of death and turned it over to Prof. Leopold who is collecting data on such incidents.

**Mrs. Axley** of Washburn is observing both Evening and Pine Grosbeaks feeding on highbush cranberries this winter. She also states that there are many ducks wintering at the mouth of the bay, near the Apostle Islands. Bald eagles keep a sharp eye on the fishermen of the area, to pick up the residue, she adds.

**Mr. Zirr** points out that Mourning Doves eat salt. "They busy themselves most of the summer around the blocks of salt placed by farmers in pastures, especially if it be near trees or woods." Zirr adds, however, that upon investigation he learned that Bent quotes J. A. Spurrell, Iowa, as one who observed the same.

Sunflowers set up in the porch box bring the **Chickadees** around like bees to honey, comments **Mr. Thorn** of Milwaukee. The stalks are still crowned with the head of seeds to this date.

**Dr. Gatterdam** reports that when he looked into his bird houses on his place recently he found eight flying squirrels and the usual population of Screech Owls making themselves at home.

Many reports of Redpolls have been received for southern Wisconsin this past fall and winter. It has been pointed out by **Wallner** of Madison, that this may be a "mass invasion." A large flock of them, observed in November by Mueller, was so tame that the plant stems could be shaken under them.

**Prof. Leopold** has called attention to what may be the first instance of determined actual damage to trees by Pine Grosbeaks. While studying forest tree diseases in Oconto County, Dr. Honey of Madison, found large flocks of Pine Grosbeaks taking both terminal and lateral buds of white pines planted from 1934 to 1936. Dr. Honey states that the damage was heaviest on those trees having overhead cover of trees of other species. While the grosbeaks have been known to eat pine buds for years, it appears that no one has noticed previously actual hindrance to growth of trees as a result.

## NEWS NOTES

It has been very encouraging to note the renewed interest in taking out sustaining memberships this year. Many who were formerly of the active membership category have increased their annual dues to sustaining. This increase in funds will make it possible to publish more illustrations taken by members, and more pages of valuable bird information.

The Wisconsin Check List booklet containing migration charts is again selling rapidly. Since the supply is getting low and may be exhausted this season, members are advised to purchase their supply immediately. Members are still entitled to five for a dollar, whereas the price is twenty-five cents per copy to outsiders.

W. L. McAtee, of the U. S. Department of the Interior, has been collecting unusual and local names of North American Birds for thirty years. In order to make the dictionary he is compiling as complete as possible he has requested that our organization make a collection from Wisconsin and publish the results in **The Passenger Pigeon**. This list in turn could be incorporated in the dictionary. The editor will welcome these lists of bird names, so please mail yours by April 15, 1944. **Old timers** throughout the state should be consulted especially for this interesting material.

Mrs. R. A. Walker, Madison, Wis., recently has been named state bird chairman for the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation. In this capacity, Mrs. Walker, a charter member of our society, is obtaining many members for us. District bird chairmen have been appointed in sections of the state as follows: Mrs. Leland C. Dietsch, Plymouth, of the Sheboygan district; Mrs. W. A. Pierce, Racine, of the Milwaukee district; Mrs. C. Frees of the Fox River Valley district; and Mrs. E. R. Mitchell, Madison, of the Madison district. These district chairmen, in turn, advertise our society.

The Cleveland Grants, well known to all Wisconsin bird people, and who have maintained headquarters previously both in the New England states and in the middle west have taken up residence again in Wisconsin. It is a pleasure to welcome home two former Wisconsin bird people who went out and won national fame. Recent showings of their new film have been enjoyed both in Milwaukee and Madison.

The Shorewood Opportunity School in collaboration with the Bird Group of the City Club, the Milwaukee Bird Club, and the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, has arranged five lectures with motion pictures in color, from the National Audubon Society. There remain three lectures: Friday, March 24, 8 P. M., "Wonders of the Southern Wilderness" by Alexander Sprunt, Jr.; Saturday, April 15, "Birds That Haunt the Waterways," by O. S. Pettingill, Jr.; and Saturday, May 5, "From Seashore to Glacier," by Edna Maslowski. Our representatives, Mrs. Balsom and Rev. Mr. Orians, have secured many new members for our society through these meetings.

At the December meeting of the Milwaukee Bird Club, Walter Pelzer gave a talk on "A Day at Horicon Marsh," and Mark Doll showed movies of hawk banding, and some nesting and feeding station scenes.

The Kumlein Bird Club, Madison, has enjoyed programs this year as follows: "Song-bird Phenology," by Prof. Leopold; "Some Parasites of Birds," by Dr. Morgan; "House Wren Nesting Studies," by Robert McCabe; and "A Study of Red-wing Ecology," by H. P. Thomsen.

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