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# *The* PASSENGER PIGEON

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*Published Quarterly By*

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# *The Great Horned Owl . . .*

By FRANCIS ZIRRER

When in early fall, after days of cloudless sky and warm sunshine, leaden clouds hang low over the northland woods; when columns of misting fog creep smoke-like through the forest; when heavy drops fall from branches, twigs and leaves and, rolling down the gnarled tree trunks, stumps and roofs, leave long wet streaks upon every surface; when the woods, so bright and lively before, at once become gloomy and forbidding; when an early pitch-black night descends upon the landscape, we might—if fortunate—hear the silence of the endless woods interrupted suddenly by an unearthly shriek, wild and penetrating, ringing widely through the forest—the terrifying scream of the Great Horned Owl.

This call—perhaps the most fearful animal sound of the North American woods—is given so rarely, so far from human habitation, and at such unusual times that many keen observers of nature, living within the territory of this owl, have never heard it. Others, woodcutters and such who spend nights in the woods, usually attribute it to wild cats and other woodland creatures—a settler in the wilds of the Olympic peninsula assured me that it was the cry of the mountain lion.

Hearing this scream from a distance of a few rods is enough to frighten the wits out of anybody who does not know the source of it. But, in spite of its terrifying effect, I believe that it signifies hunger, loneliness, perhaps even fear.

During the summer months, with the hungry young to feed, these owls are out early, as I have heard them calling at intervals all afternoon. But while the hooting is heard at any time of the year, the screaming begins usually not before the middle of July and continues until about the end of October—as long as the owlets (apparently the only ones that scream), though full-grown, still follow the old birds. Therefore I conclude that it is an apprehensive call of the young birds, similar in its cause to the plaintive wailing of the young Goshawks.

Although the owlets scream, at short intervals, usually several times in succession, there are times when the scream is given only once, giving the listener no clue as to the whereabouts of the caller. I have, upon many occasions, tried to locate the owlet. Owing to the darkness and rough ground I was not often successful. But whenever I did succeed I have always but once found only one bird on a branch or top of a stump, from three to twelve feet above the ground, and once at the base of a large tree.

Under these circumstances the owlet was relatively fearless, permitting an approach of less than twenty feet. The owlet at the base of a tree, however, let me come so close that I could touch it. But when I did so with a stick, the owlet fell on its back, hitting savagely at the stick with both feet; then suddenly darted to the side, and by flying or running or rolling with great speed over the ground—I do not know which as it was too dark to see distinctly—disappeared in the darkness. Perhaps the owlet was injured and could not fly.

When the call is given just once, the old owl is probably close and





GREAT HORNED OWL NEST

PHOTO BY CARL RICHTER

flies near before the young can call again. Once I came upon one which, of course, ceased calling at my approach. But when I retired behind a large tree and waited about ten minutes, the owlet started to scream again. It screamed five times in about four minutes when another bird, in the dim light barely perceptible, flew near and alighted next to the caller, which was then not heard again. It was too dark to be sure but judging by the movements the first bird received food, upon which the other departed. At another time the caller received food also, but when the movements indicating feeding ceased, both birds remained immobile on the top of the stump. When I looked the stump over next morning I found, besides two pellets containing rabbit's fur and bones, the tail of a flying squirrel. Judging by its fresh appearance, this was evidently the prey brought in the evening before.

A pair of these owls, which nested in 1931 in the woods on the banks of the Namekagon River, deposited its set of three eggs on the slightly hollowed top of a broken white pine stump, some five feet in diameter and about fifteen feet high. Next to the big stump there grew, almost touching it, a young balsam fir about twenty feet high, whose dense crown of branches screened the nest from above. Under this stump, which stood on its root as on stilts—indicating the enormous amount of fertile forest soil burned, blown away and washed off since the lumbering days—there was a hollow of considerable size, apparently utilized by the owls as a pantry. Hardly a day passed that I did not see in there one or more carcasses of snowshoe hares, cottontail rabbits, muskrats, various squirrels, mice, voles, and once a female Mallard with a hard-shelled though broken egg inside. But the chief prey consisted of house rats (*Epymis norvegicus*) of which I found as many as eight at one time. These the owls obtained on a large farm nearby, where we had then been living.

Although we kept a large flock of poultry, not once did I find as much as a chicken feather near the nest of the owls, or notice that our poultry had been molested. In destroying eggs and killing chicks Crows were far more annoying.

Remarkable, however, were the actions of the old owls when I came near the big stump, which sometimes happened several times daily. As long as I was just walking around but not going too close to the stump, the old owls flew from tree to tree to face me whenever the intervening

trees or the stump hid me from their sight. Perching on the lower branches, not over fifteen feet high, the owls peered at me attentively but without showing any hostility. In this manner I could induce the old birds to follow me from tree to tree around the stump. But when I approached the stump and bent to look into the larder, both old birds—one of them an enormous specimen—started to swoop uncomfortably close to my head but without striking. Under these circumstances I did not tempt the birds too long. The owls apparently considered the young high up in the nest safe enough, but probably thought the supply of food under the stump endangered.

### Surprise Attack

Although the owls did not attack me on any of my approaches to the stump, the larger one did so several weeks later, after the owlets were out of the nest and well able to follow the old birds. One late afternoon I was out with a gunny sack collecting some of those nearly indestructible pitchy pineknots, which make such hot fire and which are still intact after the rest of the trunk had withered to dust. While bending low to pick up several especially solid specimens of these knots, I felt a sudden rush of air on my head. I rose quickly, just in time to jerk up the half-filled bag of knots as a shield against the onslaught of the big owl which, with the wings spread and at such close range appeared truly gigantic. At the same time I had the owl, which evidently had aimed at my face, hanging entangled in the bag. Dropping the bag, jumping back and picking up a stick was a matter of a moment. But the owl evidently had enough of being dropped with the bag of knots on top of it; it let the bag go and flew to a red pine some twenty feet away, where I then saw one of the owlets perching. Unexpectedly and without looking around I evidently came too close to the tree with the young bird, and the old owl, perhaps misinterpreting my movements of throwing the bag of pineknots onto my shoulder and down again thought the owlet endangered.

It is a peculiar sensation and not easily or soon forgotten to have the furious bird, which at such moments appears twice as big as it really is, its eyes ablaze, suspended, though only for a moment, in front of one's face.

Although these owls visited our barnyard nearly every night, they were but rarely seen. As a sure sign of their presence, however, they left numerous pellets which they regurgitated nearly always at the same place, two eight foot posts near the hayloft. I examined many of these pellets but found mostly only the fur, skulls, bones, and occasionally tails of house rats, with which the farm was overrun.

In late summer and early fall, when on warm evenings our kitchen door was wide open and a long streak of light fell in the yard, these owls serenaded us nightly with a sort of soft monologue, quite different from any of their other calls. But any attempt to go near and surprise the caller met with failure. The birds vanished in the night before I could get more than a glimpse of them.

During the nesting time they were sometimes annoyed by Crows. In fact it was the Crows that betrayed the nest with their noisy clamor. I would not have thought of these wilderness birds as nesting in the rela-

tively narrow belt of timber which lined the Namekagon River at that place, and so near a farm. The owls themselves were not heard often, and never from the direction of the nest.

Later, when the growth of owlets forced the old birds to spend most of the day on the wing hunting, they were often annoyed by small birds of which the Kingbirds were the most persistent. To gain access to larger, more profitable hunting grounds, the old owls had to cross the wide river or an extensive meadow of many acres. There, in the open, they were mobbed by a swarm of small birds which, diving at the owl, attacked it bodily; even perching on the back of it and pecking vigorously at the neck and head of the big bird. Beating its wings as fast as possible, the frantic owl, with no attempt at defense, did its best to reach the shelter of the forest to get rid of its tormentors. On the wing, and followed by an ever increasing swarm of birds, the big owl evidently was helpless. After seeing these birds riding on the back of the big owl, I could not help thinking that the folk tale of small birds migrating on the backs of the big ones, might have some foundation after all.

After the young owls are able to accompany the old ones on their nightly excursions, they can be seen daily drying their damp plumage by the first warm rays of the morning sun. Perching on stumps, fence posts of abandoned settlements, or roofs of deserted woodland dwellings, with wings partly raised and feathers fluffed, the owls appear like balls of feathers almost as big as a bushel basket.

On the firelane leading north-south near Weirgor Creek in the north-western corner of Rusk County, I have watched four of these owls (the old pair with the young) morning after morning, perching nearly always on the identical small poplar stumps. There, miles from the nearest human habitation, the owls were relatively fearless, letting me pass within about fifty feet without showing alarm. They peered at me attentively but without changing the positions or smoothing the feathers. But when I turned slowly toward the nearest bird and came within about twenty-five feet, the owl deemed it advisable to leap from the stump and sail away, after which the others followed.

An early rambler in the woods, especially after the leaves have fallen, occasionally meets one of these owls, perched on a branch at various heights, without flying away as long as the person does not approach the tree too closely. Cocking sideways its big round head, adorned with feathery tufts, it looks contemplatively at the rambler below. But as soon as he advances a few feet toward the tree, the bird leaps from the branch, spreads its broad wings and disappears noiselessly among the trees.

At the end of September 1932 we moved to a log cabin in the heavy timber of the north-western corner of Rusk County, miles from the nearest human habitation. The long unoccupied dwelling with its underground, partly hollow logs and many crevices in the wall was inhabited by many small rodents, shrews and bats. These, in turn, attracted furred and feathered predators, including the Great Horned Owl.

The first night we were disturbed not only inside by many woodland mice, but also outside by something continually dropping on and running over the roof. When I went out to see what was causing all that noise,





JUST OUT OF THE NEST

PHOTO BY CARL KINZEL

I frightened what it was and for a while everything remained quiet. The night was almost as bright as the day. The full moon hung like a detached yellow disk in the intensely clear, crisp night sky, making every object, every twig and leaf clearly visible. Rigid, resembling a jagged wall, stood the great trees, hemming in the little dwelling from all sides. Stepping under a big maple, a few yards from the cabin, I waited. Before long I heard a slight rustle among the trees in the rear. Following the sound with my eyes I saw something stirring near the top of a tall balsam fir. A dark something leaped into space and floated lightly upon the roof. It was a flying squirrel. Then I saw others, from other trees, all around the tiny clearing, following the first one onto the roof or sailing across the clearing from one tree to another. The whole space above the cabin and the clearing had become alive with animated animal forms.

It was a pleasant, moonlit night and the pretty woodland creatures were frolicking. But it was also the harvest time. The summer of 1932

had been unusually favorable and bountiful. The trees and the shrubbery were loaded with fruit, seeds, acorns, nuts and nutlets. The little woodland folk were busy gathering them and at intervals playing a little. The many big, old trees offered not only food but storage and shelter in abundance. As I stood there watching these lovely, gentle creatures, of which I have never seen so many at any one place, gliding through the space and parachuting upon the roof, my eyes fell on a big spruce in the rear. There I saw a big dark form that I had not noticed before, leaping from a limb and floating noiselessly on broad, wide spread wings toward the roof. When I realized that it was that fierce, grim "flying terror of the night," the Great Horned Owl, I was actually stunned. I did not know what to do. My first thought was to help, to save one of the lovely little creatures from death; but years of necessary caution exercised in observing wild life restrained the impulse to move, to shout, to pick up and throw a stick at the owl.

I heard a dull thud as the owl struck, followed by an agonizingly shrill, broken, gasping shriek and a rolling patter of many tiny feet scampering from the roof; and I saw the big bird with a limp little body dangling from its talons, flying toward the trees in the rear and vanishing among the foliage. Then I heard a loud, triumphant hoot "whooh, whooh, whooh, whooa!" penetrating the stillness of the wilderness night.

### A Heavy Influx

The winter of 1932 to 1933 was unusually cold and snowy. Fierce snowstorms sifted enormous masses of snow over the woods. Temperatures dropped to forty and lower below zero for many days, even weeks at a time. In spite of this, shortly after the first of the year, large numbers of these owls started to congregate in the neighboring woods. It was near the pairing time for these birds, but this was by no means the only reason for the unusual numbers assembled. The snowshoe hare, the Ruffed Grouse, the red, the gray, the flying squirrel, the mice, the voles and other small mammals were at the peak of their abundance—but especially the hares. They furnished an easy prey and plenty of food for these fierce, voracious birds. The extensive tracts of heavy timber with many hollow trees and groups of dense evergreens offered all the shelter these birds required during the daytime. From late afternoon throughout the night their terrifying screams, piercing shrieks (the only time that we heard these screams besides the summer and early fall), booming hoots and maniacal guffaws reverberated through the silent winter woods. Although we have listened to these owls almost nightly for many years, we have never heard anything like it either before or since.

They serenaded us sometimes right around our cabin so that we could not go to sleep. When I went out to chase them away, I was surprised to see all these dark forms in the nearby trees—dozens and dozens of them. And these were not the only ones! In the distance, all around, I saw others. Although I was standing in the bright moonlight, the owls paid no attention to my presence, except to peer down attentively. When I started to wave my arms and shout at them, they decided to leave but flew only to other nearby trees.

I was puzzled as I had not come upon such large congregations of these owls since the winter of 1914 to 1915, on the the coast of British

Columbia, opposite the north-east end of Vancouver Island. There, in the innumerable bays and inlets surrounded with virgin forest, where the receding tide leaves many muddy and sandy flats bare, these owls (and many other wild creatures), driven by the deep snow and cold in the mountains, descended to the coast in numbers. There they subsisted on various furred and feathered game which abounds on the coast during the winter. However, these owls were also not averse to picking up a fish or any other seashore creature left stranded by the receding tide. I saw one catching a flat flounder-like fish about ten inches in length, left with many others in one or another of the numerous tidal puddles. Under the roost of one of these owls I found several pellets composed largely of scales, fish bones and broken crab shells, held together by what appeared to be the fur of some small mouse-like mammal. But to return to Wisconsin owls.

As I was anxious to learn more about their habits and behavior, I explored the neighboring woods thoroughly. Before long I found a number of these owls in hollow trees and among the dense snow-garbed foliage of evergreens.

The big birds, disturbed in their retreat by rapping, showed themselves at the entrance to a tree cavity or peered from their perches in evergreens. Looking up at them I thought they would probably fly away; but instead they kept staring at me a while, and then turned their big round horned heads with an inexpressibly droll, bored, disdainful gesture, and withdrew into the cavity or hid deeper among the foliage. But when I, by repeated rapping, induced them to come out again, they snapped their beaks with such hollow wooden claps and distorted their facial features with such show of indignation that I could not help laughing. But at the same time I wondered whether one or another of these birds might be provoked to attempt an attack on my head.

But seeing these birds in broad daylight, I was not only amused by their antics, I was also surprised by their light whitish plumage, so different from Wisconsin owls.\* Of course there were some dark plumaged birds among them too, but never in the same cavity or on the same perch. I then began to think that these were not our native owls; perhaps, driven by the overpopulation and scarcity of food, they had come from the vast, unfrequented forests of the high north, where an owl may live its natural span of life with no interference by man. This would also account for their fearlessness.

In the snow and on tops of big charred stumps, I often found the remnants of a hare and rarely some other game. With the abundance of hares and the readiness with which they could be obtained, the owls apparently did not hunt much for anything else. Sometimes I found just a few drops of blood and bits of fur, then again a nearly whole carcass with just the head and a front leg or both missing. In fact, the woods were littered with the remnants of their prey; almost every large stump had to serve as a butcher's block. At first I was puzzled why only the

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\*Probably the Arctic Horned Owl (*bubo virginianus wapacutho*), a northern, lighter race of the Great Horned Owl which occasionally comes south to Wisconsin in winter. —Ed



head was taken and the rest of the body left, but when I later came upon several skulls and found them split and picked clean, I realized that the owls were after the brains. But how did the owls manage to detach the head or tear the body in two? The owls sometimes swallowed and later regurgitated such indigestible morsels as the feet of a hare. I found two pellets which contained besides fur nothing but the foot. I also have found a pellet containing both feet, beak and feathers of the Ruffed Grouse.

It was a quiet early September evening, shortly before dark. I was standing on the shore of a small woodland lake, surrounded by a sphagnum bog of considerable size. Hidden behind a clump of black spruce I was watching a flock of Ring-necked Ducks feeding in a little cove, about fifty yards to my left. A muskrat was eating a clam on the top of its lodge; another, with a leaf of white water lily in its mouth, was swimming toward the shore. Near the opposite shore, about two hundred yards away, a mink was following three Pied-billed Grebes, but which, diving and appearing again somewhere else, eluded it easily. From the distant end of the lake—some four hundred yards away—drifted in steadily, at short intervals, the booming hoot of the Great Horned Owl.

### Ventriloquism?

While watching the duck and looking around, my eyes fell upon a group of tall tamaracks which, growing close to the shore, stretched their outer longer branches some eight or ten feet over the water. There, about thirty-five feet above the water I saw two Great Horned Owls peering attentively at the duck underneath. Imagine my surprise when I realized that the hooting, which I thought was drifting in from the distant end of the lake, was in reality coming from these two owls. There was no mistake: whenever either of these owls opened its beak, the call drifted to my ears from the distant end, otherwise all was quiet. I waited and listened again and again, but always with the same result.

I cannot think of these owls as employing a sort of ventriloquism purposely to mislead the duck, but to solve the puzzle more observations are needed—and these would have to be made under similar circumstances. It would be well if the observers who have the opportunity to watch these owls, would pay more attention to their calls, to determine whether the call actually always comes from where the owls are perching.

On the little wilderness lakes where the woodland creatures are not unduly disturbed, these owls occasionally take the advantage of the buoyancy of water to lighten the weight of the prey, which they carry from one end of the lake to another, sometimes a distance of half a mile. In the bright moonlight or in the dim dawn of an early morning, one might see this owl, its feet in water, its wings beating impetuously, dragging its prey upon the surface of the water, while in its wake an ever widening stream of rippling wavelets indicate the course of the big bird.

Although I have watched these owls at every opportunity, found a number of nests, have been attacked upon many occasions and spent many nights in the open, I have never seen them attacking anything in water. Many a time at night, on a little woodland lake in the Hayward area, I have heard the excited quacking of the ducks, followed some-

times by the barely perceptible silhouette of the owl dragging its prey upon the water in the direction of its nest. I have also found the remnants of ducks on or about large stumps not far from the lake, by all appearances killed by this owl, but how the owl managed to secure them (on water or on land) I am unable to say.

But I did see this owl striking and killing a snowshoe hare where both owl and hare rolled and kicked over the snow for more than a minute before the hare ceased to struggle.

That this owl sometimes strikes its prey on the wing was evidenced late one afternoon in early September 1944 in the bog near the above mentioned lake. I was standing near one of these narrow logging roads lined with cedar, tamarack and black spruce, that lead across the bog in different directions. I was watching several red bats coursing after the insects some thirty to forty feet above the ground; suddenly a Great Horned Owl, which I had not noticed before, swooped after one of the bats, struck it almost immediately and disappeared with it among the evergreens.

A curious phenomenon arises in late fall when heavy rains, flooding the bogs and the streams that flow through them, are followed by sub-zero weather that covers the flooded surface with a mantle of ice. Persistent cold may drop the water level underneath the ice from a depth of several feet to less than one foot. Parts of the stream bed may even become dry, but the original mantle of ice remains. Where the stream bed is wide and flat, the ice breaks down; where banks are high and steep—not more than four to six feet apart, the ice remains as a vault above the stream all winter, giving shelter and access to food to many woodland creatures. Where the ice is broken and the stream bed exposed to daylight, tracks of small predators, mice, moles and shrews lead in and out. The wintering birds—especially the mixed flocks of Goldfinches, Redpolls and Pine Siskins—come down to drink, and perhaps find some seeds left there by the flood. So one needs not be surprised to find this owl seeking food or shelter or both, under the vault of ice.

While snowshoeing through the bog one winter forenoon, I came upon that part of the stream where the arch of ice spanned the stream bed three to four feet above the water. The winter of 1943 to 1944 had been more or less snowless; therefore the ice was practically free of snow. Taking the axe that I usually carried with me, I struck the ice several times in succession, which caused a drumming thunder rumbling over the surface. But I surely was surprised when about one hundred feet away, where the ice broke down sometime previously, two Great Horned Owls shot from under the ice and made haste to get away. I certainly did not expect them there.

The past winter (1955 to 1956) had been a hard one for our owls. Owing to poor crop of wild fruit, seeds, acorns and nuts last summer, the little woodland folk of mice, voles, squirrels and other small mammals—the daily bread of owls and many other predators—had become relatively rare. Considering also the unusual scarcity of the snowshoe hares in the northland woods since the summer of 1933 and the rarity of cottontail rabbits in this area, one does not have to be surprised at the diminished numbers of wintering owls, and at the strange actions of some that remained.

Last fall, before the first snow, two cottontail rabbits established their winter quarters under one of my wood-piles. They usually kept out of sight in the daytime, but at night and in the early forenoon they came out searching for food. To help them survive I placed some food under one of the wood-piles every night. As both were males they fought considerably. Standing on their hind legs they pounded each other with the front paws like two prize fighters, but occasionally varying the performance by jumping over each other.

About the middle of January one of these rabbits disappeared. But even though I searched the surroundings of the cabin and the yard thoroughly for suspicious signs, I could not find anything to throw some light on the cause or the manner of its disappearance. But I did think of the Great Horned Owls as I heard them calling nearly every night in the trees about my cabin or in the nearby bog; sometimes hooting, but most of the time just conversing in soft, gentle, subdued tones.

Two days after the disappearance of the rabbit, right after the first daylight, I heard the Blue Jays, of which about a dozen frequented my feeding trays all winter, screaming excitedly. Looking through the window to see the cause of the noise, I saw a Great Horned Owl perching on a branch some thirty-five feet above the ground. Its presence explained the whereabouts of the rabbit. After killing the first one, the big bird had returned for the other.

### Determination

Of course I was sorry for the rabbit, but notwithstanding my sympathies I do not like to interfere with nature's order. I was pleased to have this otherwise wary owl so close and in plain sight. I was afraid to frighten it away, therefore I waited over two hours hoping that the owl would tire of its exposed perch and fly away. But as the owl kept perching and by all appearances dozing, I finally went out to place some fresh food on the feeding trays. Walking slowly toward the trays which are about thirty feet from the cabin, I placed the food there and turned to look at the owl which was then not more than forty feet away. This was too much: the owl turned around, bent slightly forward, raised the ends of its wings an inch or two from its body, leaped from the branch, spread its wings and sailed (or rather floated) on set wings toward a group of black spruce where it disappeared. The method of these owls in getting away from the perch is a peculiar and intriguing performance, so different from most other birds.

This went on for three days. The owl remained on the same branch every day until noon, regardless of my moving around as long as I did not go too close in its direction. The third day one of the two red squirrels which came to the feeding trays every day, failed to show up. Most likely it had become another victim of the big owl.

The fourth day the owl perched on the same branch until about ten in the morning when it left the branch and flew away. Seeing it go I thought that it had gone for good. But imagine my surprise when I, later, glanced through another window. There, on a branch not more than ten feet from the roof of the cabin and some fifteen feet above the



ground, perched the owl; right above the open space between the wood-piles, evidently with the intention to be real close to the rabbit.

This, with a few exceptions, went on day after day. The owl remained on the same branch every day until about noon, when it left and disappeared somewhere in the nearby bog. In a few days the owl had gotten so used to my presence that it remained on the branch regardless of my moving around, even carrying in wood—and that right underneath the branch with the owl.

This, however, went on only as long as I was alone. When, sometime later, a man walked with me toward the cabin, the owl left its perch in a hurry. But, when a few days later, the same man came to the cabin alone, the owl showed no alarm at his approach. It had apparently been able to distinguish between one and two, but could not recognize the person.

In spite of the watchfulness of the owl, the remaining rabbit and red squirrel escaped. Evidently aware of the owl's presence, they did not show in the open as long as the owl was in sight.

Although the feeding trays were alive with birds, the owl, perching not more than twenty feet away, ignored them completely; neither did it make any attempt to feed from any of several fat raccoon carcasses, tied to the trees for the birds, unless it did so at night. And as long as it remained quietly at one place, the small birds—even Blue Jays—after the initial excitement and screaming, paid no attention to it. The birds, presumably, had gotten used to its presence. First when the owl left its perch to go for the rest of the day, the birds followed it with much scolding and screaming. But a minute or two later all became quiet again and the birds returned to the trays.

On Sunday March 4, the owl was as usual on the branch above the wood-piles. At eleven-thirty I casually glanced through the window, just in time to see the remaining rabbit crossing the snow from one wood-pile to another, a distance of ten feet. Surprised to see it at this time of the day, I stepped closer to the window and looked up to see whether the owl were still there. At that very moment I saw the owl dropping like a bolt of lightning at the rabbit. It looked as if some one had hurled with great force a brown bushel basket through the space. But the owl missed; the rabbit escaped under the wood-pile. A few moments later the owl flew up and settled on a beam of wood three feet above the ground. To see how close I could go I started slowly toward it. Watching me intently with its big, round, reddish-yellow eyes the owl let me come to a distance of about eight feet, when it leaped off the beam, spread its wings and disappeared in the distance.

Although I have a considerable amount of literature pertaining to this owl, I cannot find anything analogous to my experience here, except in Ernest Ingersoll's "Alaskan Bird-Life," page 37, a remark evidently by E. W. Nelson that "one October a Great Horned Owl used our wood-pile as a lookout station for several successive evenings."

Hayward, Wisconsin

# *A Badger in Britain . . .*

By GORDON ORIANs

I had been on the SS United States four days when Land's End, the rocky southwest tip of England, slowly appeared on the horizon to the northeast. Soon after a Gannet flew over the bow of the ship. After a steady diet of waves, shearwaters, and petrels, land and the birds associated with it were welcome sights. The following afternoon we sailed by the white cliffs of the Isle of Wight. As we entered Southampton harbor Herring, Common, and Black-headed Gulls joined the ship, and Carrion Crows, my first European land birds, flew about the piers as we docked.

My first good look at British birds was in the parks of London. During free time gleaned from a busy orientation period I walked around the flower beds in Regents Park, peering at my first diminutive European Robins. These tiny birds, no larger than sparrows, were hopping on the lawns and singing cheerfully although it was late September. Blackbirds, so like our American Robin in spite of their black plumage, pulled worms from the lawn. Chaffinches, the most common European finch—a bird I was to meet not only in England but also in France, the mountains of Switzerland, and far northern Scandinavia—took crumbs from the feet of park visitors.

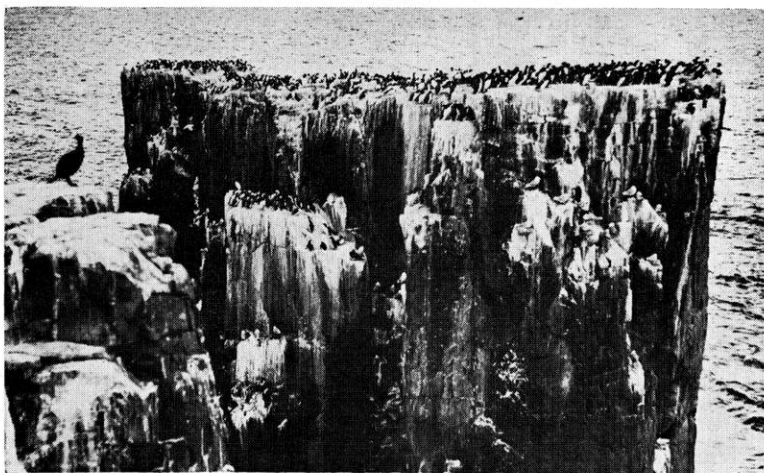
From this modest beginning with the common city birds I journeyed straight to Northumberland, northernmost of the English counties (shires). There on the North Sea coast I was introduced to a host of migrants and residents by E. A. R. Ennion, director of the Monks' House Bird Observatory. The first morning I was greeted by a bewildering array of new calls and songs. Pied Wagtails and Meadow Pipits chased flies in the yard and on adjacent sand dunes. On the beach Eiders drank fresh water from the tiny rivulet flowing into the sea. In a field across the road Lapwings and Curlews were busily feeding among vast numbers of rabbits whose burrows honeycombed the pastures. But seven months later when I returned to Monks' House I walked among hundreds of dying rabbits, victims of the dreaded disease Myxomatosis, which spread across the British Isles during my stay killing over 90% of the rabbit population.

During the autumn shorebird migration Dr. Ennion devotes a large share of his time and energy to trapping and banding ("ringing" in England) these waders on the beaches. The first morning we drove between trim stone walls, fields, and sand dunes to the beach where small flocks of Oystercatchers, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwits, Knots, Redshanks, Sanderlings, and Purple Sandpipers fed among the seaweed and rocks exposed by the slack tide. Setting our nets on the sand we ran lines to the dunes, eased into comfortable positions, and waited. Gannets fished offshore and strings of Cormorants and Shags flew low over the water. Eiders swam among the rocks catching crabs which they delicately de-legged before swallowing. Finally when the rising waters slowly pushed the shorebirds towards our nets Dr. Ennion caught a Dunlin and I was fortunate to capture the first Bar-tailed Godwit ever ringed in the British Isles.

We returned to Monks' House via some upland pastures where every night large flocks of European Golden Plover, a species distinct from our American Golden Plover, gathered to roost. In the fading light we counted several hundred of the birds, in their brown fall plumage, together with some Lapwings and Curlews.

The next morning we were off in the car for Budle Bay where vast mud flats were exposed by the ebbing tide. One mile from the observatory we passed Bamborough Castle beneath which were cliffs where in recent years the Fulmars have nested. These oceanic birds which have so miraculously multiplied and extended their range in the British Isles during the past century are even breeding on ledges in a gravel pit several miles from the sea.

We reached Budle Bay just as the tide was slack and watched flocks of Mute Swans and Shelducks wading in the mud and swimming in the shallow channels which crossed the flats. Many shorebirds, predominantly Redshanks, fed in the mud; and a few Scaup, a rather local bird in Britain, waited for the return of the tide.



THERE IS STANDING ROOM ONLY FOR THESE MURRETS ON ONE OF THE FARNE ISLAND STACKS.

The biggest attraction in Northumberland is the Farne Islands, formerly a retreat for the early monks who built a chapel there, but now a bird sanctuary with accommodations in the monks' old buildings. In May I returned to Northumberland to spend a week on the Farnes studying birds with Dr. N. Tinbergen of Oxford, one of the world's foremost students of animal behavior. After a short boat trip from the fishing village of Seahouses we landed on the Inner Farne, largest of the islands, and were suddenly in the midst of some of the finest sea bird colonies in the North Atlantic.

From the windows of the monks' old building we could see about forty of the four hundred Eider nests on the island. They were scattered throughout the grass, in the garden, and even on top of the garden wall.



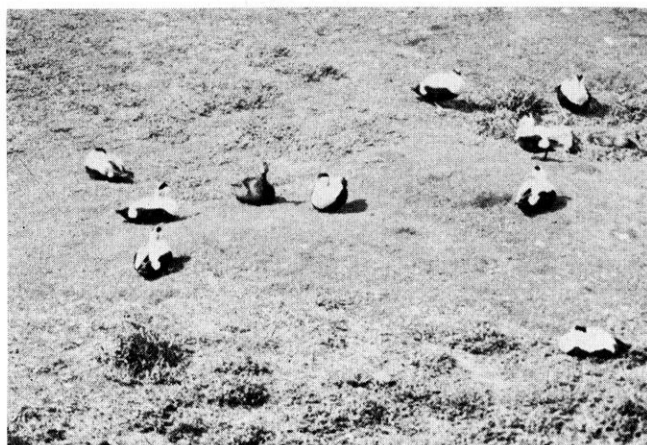
## EIDERS NESTING ON THE INNER FARNE



DRAKES  
COURT  
FEMALE  
NOT YET  
ON EGGS



FEMALE  
ON NEST



FEMALE  
HAS HER  
CHOICE  
LATE IN  
SEASON

The few ducks that had not yet laid were followed about by large groups of vigorously courting drakes. From a blind on the beach I was able to photograph most of the courtship of the striking black, white, and green drakes.

On the scattered sandy beaches four species of terns (Common, Arctic, Roseate, and Sandwich) were arriving and forming pairs by means of an elaborate courtship, most of which was performed high in the air. The Kittiwakes, arriving slightly earlier, had already paired and were building their nests on the ledges which they shared with Shags, Murres, Fulmars, and Razorbills. Atlantic Gray Seals, here reaching their southernmost breeding site in the North Sea, fished at the base of the cliffs. Several times we watched them catch lumpsuckers, curious bottom dwelling fish, which they ripped up and devoured before our eyes.

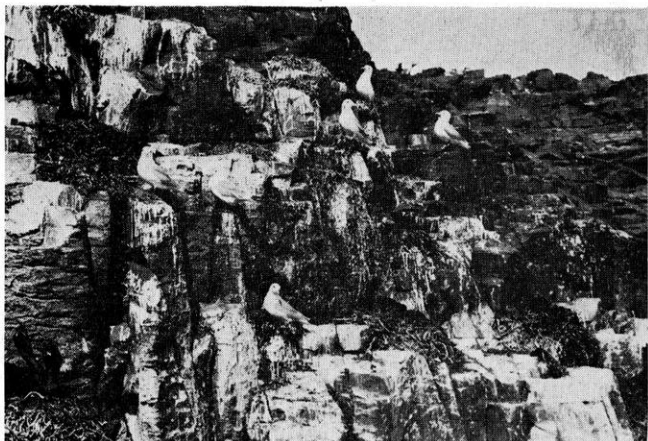
The days on the cliffs were peaceful in spite of the cold wind which brought snow flurries to the islands and a substantial snowfall on the distant Cheviot Hills. Dressed warmly we wedged ourselves firmly into some crevice to observe the private lives of hundreds of birds. Here the ornithologist had all the advantages of working in a zoo without having to feed and water the birds. Kittiwakes built nests, courted, and mated within twenty feet; Fulmars soared past almost within arms reach; and Shags had to be lifted from their nests if we wished to count the eggs.

Though the English Midlands with their quaint hedges offer nothing as spectacular as the Farnes, nature there is not without its charms. A few miles from Oxford lies the University owned Wytham Estate, one of the most intensively studied tracts of ground in the world. Walking through the woods I continually passed small bird boxes for titmice, large ones for owls, large nets for gathering falling insect larvae, and smaller tins for catching their droppings. Sometimes I went to Wytham alone but more often I accompanied some research worker, perhaps Mr. Southern who was studying Tawny Owls and Wood Lice; David Snow, who was finding nests of the Blackbird; Dennis Owen, titmouse and jay man; or Peter Davies, who was searching for Song Thrushes.

On any trip, no matter who my companion might be, I was likely to see the six species of titmice found in most English woods. Coming from a state where at most only two rather dull species of titmice are found in a given woods, I was not prepared for mixed flocks of Great Tits, Blue Tits, Marsh Tits, Willow Tits, Coal Tits, and Long-tailed Tits. Nor was I prepared for the bright yellows and blues of some of the species. Also new for me were the great flocks of Wood Pigeons and Stock Doves which rocketed from the beech trees at our approach. During the autumn we saw thousands coming to roost in the evenings and I was reminded that North America once had pigeon flocks much greater than this, now lost forever.

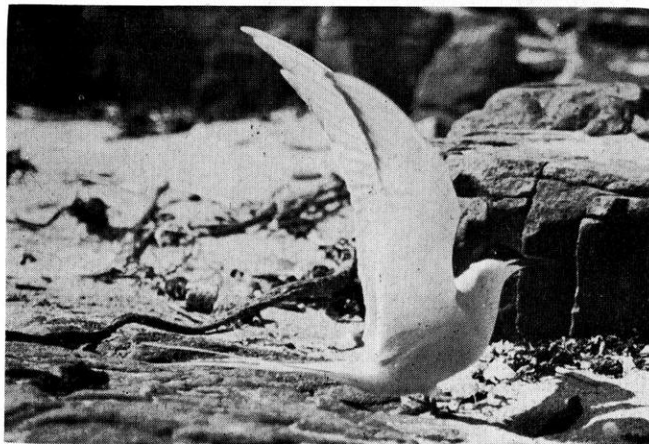
At dusk, when the last Blackbirds sang, the Long-tailed Tits gathered in their communal roosts, and the Tawny Owls roused themselves from their diurnal slumber, I went to the woods to hear the celebrated Nightingale. At first the song was a great disappointment to me. I did not think it compared to the bell-like song of Hermit Thrushes in northern Wisconsin but gradually I learned to like it. It is the atmosphere of quiet, warm spring evenings and fresh green leaves which gives to the

## MORE SCENES FROM THE FARNE ISLANDS



SHAGS AND  
KITTIWAKES  
TOGETHER  
ON LEDGES

INCUBATING  
SHAG LOOKS  
AT CAMERA



ARCTIC TERN,  
SUSPICIOUS  
OF A BLIND,  
PREPARES TO  
TAKE FLIGHT

song of the Nightingale the quality which has endeared itself to so many Europeans.

The fields and hedges typical of so much of England have their own bird life. The diurnal Little Owls sit on fenceposts and stumps, perhaps watching Corn Buntings and Yellow-hammers, or listening to the piping of the tiny migratory Quail in the grain. But I did not need to travel far to see birds for the Botanic Garden behind my office was as good a place as any to watch them. In a fifteen minute walk I could see Swifts, Wrens, Robins, Chiffchaffs, Spotted Flycatchers, Hedge Sparrows, Starlings, Greenfinches, Goldfinches, Chaffinches, House Sparrows, and several species of titmice and thrushes. From my desk I often watched the Blackbirds hunting worms on the lawn and contesting territorial boundaries in the flower beds.

In Europe I saw many unusual things including old buildings and new birds, but perhaps my greatest surprise was provided by a bird I knew well from Wisconsin, the Florida Gallinule, known in England as the Moorhen. I first encountered them in London's parks where they ran about on the lawns like chickens, snatching food from the visitors. I soon discovered that this bird, so shy and retiring on our side of the Atlantic, is the most widely distributed and adaptable water bird in Europe. Its nests are found along every stream in England, even in the middle of large cities, the only requirement being a bit of vegetation. One even nested in a tiny clump of cattail in a small pond in the middle of the Botanic Garden. Why should this species behave so differently on opposite sides of the ocean?

A trip to Wales was an enjoyable event. From Oxford one travelled through rich farming country where the scattered woodlots held great rookeries. These were rookeries in the true sense of the word, as the nests belonged to Rooks, the sociable crows so typical of the English countryside. Scattered among the farms were flooded gravel pits harboring breeding Great Crested Grebes, Little Grebes, Tufted Ducks, Coot, and, of course, Moorhens. Once the Severn River was crossed the land slowly became hillier and the forests more extensive, until one crossed the Welsh boundary, scene of so many battles in centuries past.

During my three trips to Wales I had only begun to tap the wild beauty of the ancient mountains. In December I travelled by train through the dirty mining country of south Wales to the bleak southwest coast where strong winds confine trees to the sheltered valleys. Here, in a Victorian fort built to protect a bay which nobody tried to enter, I lived for two weeks, gathering—for future analysis at Oxford—the records of thousands of Manx Shearwaters banded and recaptured on the island of Skokholm. We had hoped to visit Skokholm but the December storms kept us land bound so I had to content myself with walking along the rugged sea cliffs where the Ravens played in the updrafts. The Chough, a crow-like bird with red legs and decurved red bill, was the bird I had most wanted to see in Wales. I walked the cliffs nearly every afternoon for a week before I discovered a party feeding on a rocky stack below me. Once quite common on the British seaboard, Choughs have decreased alarmingly in recent years and are now restricted to certain sections of rugged Welsh coast.



My second trip to Wales was with Bruce Campbell, secretary of the British Trust for Ornithology, and one of the best nest finders I have known. Walking through the Forest of Dean, where he was studying Pied Flycatchers, he nonchalantly found the nests of Robins, Wood Warblers, and Blackcaps without seeming to take his eyes off the path. In an area growing up with small pines and shrubs he showed me my first Grasshopper Warblers and the only Red-backed Shrikes I saw in Europe.

In the summer my wife, Betty, and I went to the heart of the Welsh mountains where the high country is a great sheep pasture shared only with Ravens and Meadow Pipits. In secluded valleys in the mountains the Red Kite, reduced to a few pairs in Britain, is making its last stand. To see this rare bird we followed a winding road into the mountain mass until it could no longer be negotiated by car, and walked the rest of the way into the sheep hills. Suddenly a Kite appeared over the hills in the late afternoon sunlight, and for fifteen minutes it searched the hillside for carrion before disappearing behind the crest of a ridge. After a picnic supper with the Ravens on top we descended to a tiny pub in the valley. Before going to sleep we walked along the river in the lingering summer twilight. At a bridge we looked up, and there, soaring in the pink sky, were four of these magnificent fork-tailed hawks, perhaps one-third of the British population. This was a perfect climax to our adventures with British birds.

350 Berkeley Park Boulevard  
Berkeley 7, California

## A BLACK RAIL IS SEEN

By MAE and ALVIN PETERSON

It was May 12, 1956. It was apparent to us that it was going to be a good day for our May-Day bird count. We had listed plenty of birds around home, many more driving to the La Crosse airport, and more than we expected on French Island—one of the best places around. We had stopped at Indian Hill and the Second Causeway in La Crosse and were on our way to Grandad Bluff where we added the Bewick's Wren, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush and Scarlet Tanager to our list. After lunch we continued down Garber's Coulee to Barre Mills and the Swamp Road, adding the Bobolink, Crow and Hairy Woodpecker.

Back at Onalaska, we drove north to Midway and there took a country road to a nearby mud flat where sandpiper, herons, ducks, rails and Yellow-throats were numerous. Here cat-tails, arrowheads, marsh grasses, sedges and rushes come within six feet of the concrete, and there is all too little space for parking a car. Get out on the wrong side of the car and make a misstep, and you may find yourself in a ditch full of water. Here hundreds—yes, thousands—of shore and other water-loving birds spent days and weeks during the 1956 spring migration. Many of these were still around, and we added the Yellow-headed Blackbird, Dowitcher, Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits, Red-backed, Pectoral, Least and other

Sandpipers, and Green-winged Teal to our list, giving us well over a hundred species for the day.

The real find here, however, was a Black Rail. It was seen twice, briefly, while running from one clump of vegetation to another, at a distance of not more than ten feet. Near it were two Virginia Rails—also bent on keeping out of sight and getting farther from the human intruder standing at the side of the road. Soras could be heard constantly; although we did not actually see and Soras this day, we have seen them many times before—sometimes in considerable numbers. The Black Rail was much smaller than the Virginia Rails we saw, and decidedly smaller in size than the Sora. The only coloration we could see was black.

The next day, May 13, we were there again—indeed, we had been there almost daily for weeks—and met Mr. Leo Egelberg of La Crosse. Mae spotted the Black Rail again briefly, in the very same spot where it was seen the previous day. Alvin and Mr. Egelberg hurried to the spot, but missed seeing it.

(Editor's Note. Records of the Black Rail in Wisconsin are almost non-existent. The following account is contained in **Birds of Wisconsin** by Kumlien and Hollister with revisions by A. W. Schorger (p. 31): "On August 20, 1877, a Marsh Hawk was killed by Frithiof Kumlien from a muskrat house on the border of Lake Koshkonong. When noted first it was eating something, and this proved to be a Little Black Rail." Mr. Schorger adds that the Black Rail should be dropped from the state list as there is no specimen. The observation of Mr. and Mrs. Peterson is hardly sufficient to warrant the positive inclusion of this species on the state list, since only momentary glimpses of the bird were possible. But, coming at a time of year when there is no possibility of confusion with immature rails of other species, it constitutes a valuable hypothetical sight record.)

## NEWS...

Note that two new advertisements appear in the back pages of this issue: from the R. H. Burton Company specializing in binoculars, and from the Helen Gunnis Music Shop specializing in records of all kinds. When answering advertisements, be sure to mention **The Passenger Pigeon**.

It is high time to lay in your supply of sunflower seed and mixed bird seed for feeding the birds this winter. See back

cover. And if you're looking for Christmas gift suggestions, consult the Dark Room about photographic supplies, or the Orchard Fair about bird feeders and a variety of other gifts. When you patronize W.S.O. advertisers, you not only benefit them—many of whom are W.S.O. members—but also benefit yourself and W.S.O.

Because Mrs. H. M. Williams is moving away, her job as circulation manager has been taken over by Mrs. Eleanor Miles, 2134 Kendall Avenue, Madison 5, Wis.

(more news on page 142)

## W. S. O. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

By HOWARD YOUNG

Since 1939 the W.S.O. has shown a steady growth in size that is gratifying to all of us. Along with this has been an equally important expansion in Society activities. Among these are the popular cooperative research programs, which are significant in that they indicate growing interest among the members beyond the "list-chasing" stage of bird study. Furthermore they have resulted in the addition of concrete information on Wisconsin bird life which is hardly available from other sources.

This is written now to promote the cause of such activities, and to familiarize newer members with the past program. The following is a list of cooperative projects so far completed:

- 1939 Spread of the Starling in Wisconsin
- 1940 Bald Eagle Range and Population Study
- 1941 The Spread of the Cardinal Through Wisconsin
- 1942 A Range and Population Study of the Purple Martin in Wisconsin
- 1946 Further Studies on the Cardinal
- 1947 The Dickcissel in Wisconsin
- 1949 The American Egret in Wisconsin
- 1950 The Yellow-headed Blackbird in Wisconsin
- 1951 The Red-bellied Woodpecker in Wisconsin
- 1953 Meadowlarks in Wisconsin
- 1955 The Red-tailed Hawk in Wisconsin

The inclusion of such worth-while studies has given **The Passenger Pigeon** a respected place among journals of its kind. Continued and expanded activity of this sort will further strengthen our Society. In addition to the regularly scheduled W.S.O. research projects, there are other studies which members have contributed to in the past, and which are worthy of future support. The following are listed as reminders:

1. The Christmas Bird Counts—records should be made available to **Audubon Field Notes** and to **The Passenger Pigeon**. These studies are of greatest value if the same areas are censused in consecutive years. For directions see **1955 Pass. Pigeon 110**.

2. The Night Migration Study—listening for “chips” at night, and counting the number of migrants passing over the face of the moon is an intriguing new kind of birding. See **1949 Pass. Pigeon 64-65**.

3. Banding Mourning Doves—the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service will need our assistance in banding as many young doves as we can next year.

4. Many members have carefully compiled large amounts of ornithological data over the years, some of which might be usable in the forthcoming **Birds of Wisconsin**. Owen J. Gromme of the Milwaukee Public Museum is heading up this work, and should be contacted for details. See **1956 Pass. Pigeon 29**.

5. The Audubon Breeding Bird Censuses involve checking a given area for all nesting species. Contact **Audubon Field Notes** for details. A study of this sort is ideally suited for a club project.

6. The B. M. Shaubs, Northampton, Massachusetts, desire Wisconsin contributors for their excellent Evening Grosbeak survey. See **1956 Pass. Pigeon 13-15**.

7. Contributors are also needed for the U. S. Fish & Wildlife distribution and migration study—a nation-wide project. See **1955 Pass. Pigeon 32**.

If you have suggestions for further W.S.O. research projects of this nature, they will be gladly received. A study on the Great Blue Heron is now near completion; when it is finished, a new project will then be announced.

Wisconsin State College  
La Crosse, Wisconsin

# W. S. O. SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

## Discount Offered to Members

Effective November 1, 1956, W.S.O. members will receive a 10% discount on all purchases of \$1.00 or more from the Supply Department. The Store Committee and the Board of Directors feel that members of the Society are entitled to receive this discount as a special service. Educational and professional conservation workers will also continue to receive the same discount as in the past. To simplify mailing and to insure that you will receive the discount you are entitled to, please note on your orders if you are a W.S.O. member, a teacher, or a professional conservation worker.

Remaining copies of the 1956 Supply Department catalogue will be mailed free of charge to all members of the Society. Those who have already purchased copies at 10c apiece will be entitled to a refund, if they so desire, either as cash or to be applied to a future order.

In addition to the 10% discount, special clearance sale prices will be announced on pictures, stationery and a few other items.

## Christmas Gift Suggestions

For that amateur naturalist on your gift list, what better gift is there than a good FIELD GUIDE! The Supply Department Book Store has a wide selection of field guides on all phases of natural history, including the favorite PETERSON SERIES, the AUDUBON BIRD GUIDES, the GOLDEN NATURE SERIES, the PICTURED-KEY SERIES and many others. Consult our Supply Department catalogue for a complete listing, including descriptions and prices. Order from Harold G. Kruse, Hickory Hill Farm, Loganville, Wisconsin.

## Binocular Clearance

We are having a clearance sale of discontinued makes of binoculars at greatly reduced prices:

Bausch & Lomb Zephyr .....	9x35	\$150.00
Hertel & Reuss .....	7x50	80.00
Hertel & Reuss .....	7x35	54.00
United .....	7x35	30.00
Stadium Glass .....		16.00

Order from Edward W. Peartree, Downy Dell, 725 North Lapham St., Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

## Stationery Clearance

Appointment Calendars for 1957 .....	\$1.00
Christmas Cards .....	1.00

All other prints and stationery marked down for clearing. Discounts 10%-50%. Not all items left in stock. Order immediately from Mrs. Harold Liebherr, 2150 W. Marne Ave., Milwaukee 9, Wisconsin.

## BOOK REVIEW

### A LABORATORY AND FIELD MANUAL OF ORNITHOLOGY—

Olin S. Pettingill, Jr., Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, Minn., \$5.00.\*

In the introduction to the current edition of his **Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology**, Olin S. Pettingill, Jr. states that the book is intended as an aid to ornithological study at the college or university level. It meets that objective well. However, there is enough explanatory text in the book to make it an aid to any person, whether professional or amateur, who wishes to learn more about birds.

The manual is divided into twenty sections which deal with the subjects of external structure, feathers, plumage, migration, bird ecology, bird territory, bird song, mating, bird population, etc. Each section is richly adorned with line drawings and an explanatory text. This text is sufficient so that any person can gain an understanding of birds and their activities. There are exercises for the "student" to follow and a very complete list of references in every section. If one were to read all of the references listed he would have sampled a great part of the world's ornithological literature. There are excellent suggestions for field activities in conjunction with migration, bird census, nest building and bird territory.

There are seven appendices to the text giving information on field methods, how to prepare a manuscript, and several bibliographies including a list of current ornithological periodicals. A person can learn a great deal about birds by using Pettingill's **A Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology** as his guide. His acquisition of knowledge would be equivalent to having completed a university course in the subject. This, of course, assumes that he has enough self-discipline to read all of the explanatory text, follow the directions for activities, and has access to the references listed by the author.

I feel that the book is well organized and designed to meet the purpose for which it was intended, a college lab manual. I do feel that any person can benefit from use of the manual, or parts of it. The users of this book will share some of Mr. Pettingill's vast experiences in the field of ornithology.—Harold G. Liebherr.

\*Available from the W.S.O. Supply Department.

## *By The Wayside . . .*

Edited by MARTHA and ROY LOUND

**Eastern Glossy Ibis in Horicon Marsh.** On May 14, 1956, at about 5:00 P. M. on a rather cold windy day, I saw a pair of Eastern Glossy Ibis just south of the Marsh Road and past the first bridge east of East Waupun in Horicon Marsh. Paul and Marilyn Imler of Waupun were with me.



The remarkable curved bill was probably the most arresting feature which we noted as we studied one bird wading and feeding in shallow water at a distance of about forty feet from our parked car. A horseman rode up to our car and frightened the bird away, but within minutes two Glossy Ibis flew over us and made a nervous attempt to alight but flew on. We discussed their wingbeats and agreed that they were more like that of a cormorant than anything else we were familiar with. We went on to see warblers, etc., and were busy for about 45 minutes with small birds. Then Marilyn Imler and I drove back, and there was one Glossy Ibis about 100 feet off the road feeding unconcernedly. We watched it for 15 minutes or more. In sunlight the neck and body were bronze-chocolate, the wings showed iridescent green like those of a Green-winged Teal, and the thighs also were bronze. But the enormous decurved bill was the one most remarkable feature. It was about crow sized.—Dr. Raymond B. Dryer, Poynette.

(Editors' Note: Wisconsin has a few records of this species dating from the 19th century, the last being a specimen shot at Horicon on Nov. 3, 1879, but Dr. Dryer's observation is the first known record since then. In recent years birds of this species have done some occasional wandering northward along the Atlantic Coast from their normal range in southern Atlantic coastal states. Since Dr. Dryer's account was written, other sight records of this species have been made at the same place in July and August of this year, and details of these observations will appear in the next issue of **The Passenger Pigeon**. They show conclusively that the birds are the Eastern species. It is significant to note that others of this species turned up this spring in Illinois, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, New Jersey and Newfoundland.)

**Yellow Rail in Iowa County.** Quite early on the morning of May 19, Dick Wills, Dave Dunham and I were searching for Leconte's Sparrows in the meadow in northeastern Iowa County about three miles west of Mazomanie. We had walked about quite a bit with no success, and I was about 15 feet ahead of the others as we were heading back to the car. As I turned around once, up flew a bird which I instinctively thought was a Yellow Rail. Judging from the boys' positions, Dave must have passed within two feet of it without flushing it. They were about 20 feet past it when it flew. I was about 35. We were between it and the sun. I first noticed a strong almost golden yellow color in the head and breast region and an extremely prominent white patch in the wings. It was definitely rail-shaped, smaller than a Sora. The back was somewhat darker than the underparts. Dick saw the bird just after I did, Dave about a second later. The bird flew about one to one and one-half feet above the ground for a distance of about 40 feet to the north, into some taller weeds and sedge, and disappeared; we could not locate it again. Although we saw the birds for so short a time, there is no doubt of its identity. Since this is the same place where Sam Robbins and Paul Jones saw one several years ago (Sept. 28, 1953), and since the habitat is what it is, it is possible that the species may nest there.—Tom Soulen, Waukesha.

**Avocet in Dane County.** On May 6, 1956, while with N. R. Barger, Buddy Barger and Nils Dahlstand on a birding trip, we had the good luck to turn up an Avocet. We were headed north of Madison, toward

Goose Pond in Columbia County. The first stop was a small flooded area in a corn field in front of a farm house. Along with a few Pectoral Sandpipers and Lesser Yellow-legs there was, less than a hundred feet from the highway, an unmistakable tall bird—cinnamon color on head and neck, long upcurved bill, bluish legs, large white wing stripe. I got out and tried to get closer to photograph it, but it was shy and flew away out of close range. As it flew there was a flashing black and white pattern of body and wings. The legs dangled behind, and the bird gave out a loud whistling call somewhat mindful of a Greater Yellow-legs. I returned to the car while Norval and Nils flanked the bird on opposite sides. The bird approached the car, and I photographed it from the car at a distance of 65-75 feet. The bird flew off toward a neighboring flooded pasture; but when we returned about four hours later, 7:00 P. M., the bird was back in the area where we had first seen it.—Charles A. Kemper, Chippewa Falls.

(Editors' Note: Another spring report of the Avocet came from the Elmer Bastens in Milwaukee on May 5. On Sept. 4, 1955, it was observed in Dane County by Mrs. Davidson; on Sept. 22, 1955, one was seen in northern Winnebago County. Previous to these, there had been but three 20th century records for Wisconsin.)

**Kirtland's Warbler in Door County.** In the Green Bay Bird Club's list of 168 species seen on our annual May Day Count, held May 20, is the Kirtland's Warbler. None of us had even seen one before, but, as one after another of us said, if it isn't the Kirtland's, it isn't anything else "in the book." We followed our usual schedule of dividing into groups, with each group covering certain areas close to Green Bay and then going on up to a local YWCA camp near Fairland, just over the line in Door County, along the bay shore and about 25 miles northeast of Green Bay. It was here we saw the Kirtland's. Our own group, composed of Ray Hussong, Mildred Van Vonderen, Esther Rahn and me, were the first to reach the camp and the first to see the bird. We had stopped at a birdy spot just about a block from the buildings and watched such warblers as Redstarts, Magnolias, Myrtles and Wilson's, when we spotted the "new bird." We had observed the Canada at close range shortly before and could mark the differences. This bird appeared to be about the same size, perhaps just a bit larger with a longer tail, gray above, yellow and white beneath; the yellow at the sides, and less so on the chest, marked with dark streaks. It flitted from small stunted cedar to cedar, or chokecherry, and flitted its tail more vigorously than the Palm Warbler and held it uptilted more often. We watched it at close range with field glasses, and with naked eyes when it came too close for good focusing. Ray took movies of it, but they may be no good for identification as it was drizzly and other warblers kept taking the spotlight. I returned to the spot five or six times from noon to late afternoon to show other club members our new bird, and each agreed that it must be the Kirtland's. The strip where we saw it is narrow; just a bit of vegetation between the beach road and the white limestone rocks which edge the bay shore. Several times it came to rest on the limestones, twitched its tail and also spread it a little but not as widely as the Magnolia and the Redstart. When this happened we could see two

whitish spots near, but not quite at, the end of its tail. There appeared to be only one bird of this species, and it didn't utter a sound. The rainy, drizzly day, until late afternoon, was excellent for warbler watching; all species could be seen at eye level instead of at the tops of trees. Both the rain and the lack of insects up above probably accounted for the lower positions of the warblers. Some of them hunted for food right on the ground. There was little singing, and not even many call notes. I had hoped that other state birders would see the Kirtland's, windblown perhaps from its Michigan destination. Fairland is a bit of a town a few miles west of Brussels; both are on Highway 57 in Door County, and the camp is about a mile west of the highway. It is directly west of the spot in Michigan where the Kirtland's Warblers are known to nest.—Clara Hussong, Green Bay.

(Editors' Note: There have been five previous sight records of this species for Wisconsin, but no specimen has ever been taken.)

**Summer Tanager in Adams County.** May 11, 1956, was one of those days to which ornithologists look forward eagerly. Up until then the migration was markedly behind schedule; but during the previous evening a warm front had passed, and many new arrivals were expected this morning. Quite a few new arrivals had been spotted when I approached a grove of scrub oak and jack pine near the east shore of Castle Rock Lake. Here I noted my first tanager of the spring, but on first glance the only unusual thing appeared to be that the first tanager should happen to be a female. The second glance started my heart pounding, for this bird did not have the dark wings I expected, the wings were almost the same uniform olive yellow color as the back. Quickly I moved to the side in order to see the bird's underparts, and when I saw the brighter yellow color—almost with a tint of orange—on the throat and breast, I was sure I was looking at a female Summer Tanager—the first I had even seen in Wisconsin. The bird was about ten feet up in an oak and was seen with 7X binoculars at a distance of forty feet. After less than a minute of observation time, the bird flew across a drainage ditch into an inaccessible area; but excellent light and the unobstructed view made possible by this spring's late foliage development assured a positive identification.—Sam Robbins, Adams.

**Blue Grosbeaks at Whitnall Park, Milwaukee County.** We had entered Whitnall Park from Hales Corners in late afternoon on May 23 and were driving toward the Administration Building when we saw a group of all blue birds feeding in the grass on the right side of the road. Using binoculars, and consulting Peterson's **Field Guide**, we found these birds—the males a rich dull blue and females brown, both with tan or buffy wingbars and heavy bills—to correspond with the pair of Blue Grosbeaks pictured in Peterson's book.

As automobiles whizzed past, the birds would move back or fly across the road; but they always returned, intent on feeding. There were more grosbeaks in small close groups on the left side of the road near shrubbery, so we parked the car and tried without success to approach them from behind the shrubbery. We then drove back, letting the car coast slowly until we were beside the grassy slope north of the road. The late

sun was on the meadow; there were Chestnut-sided Warblers, Goldfinches and Chipping Sparrows feeding with the Blue Grosbeaks, so we were able to compare their size. All appeared to be feasting on dandelion seeds. As we watched from the car, we were within 15 feet of some of them. We estimated approximately 40 Blue Grosbeaks scattered over the area in small groups and judged there were about even numbers of males and females. All birds fed as long as the sun lingered on the slope.—Mr. and Mrs. L. P. C. Smith, West Allis.

(Editors' Note: While this is the first time that Mr. and Mrs. Smith have seen the Blue Grosbeak in Wisconsin, they are familiar with the species since they previously saw it on one of their several trips to Rockport, Texas. Previous records of this bird are very scanty. There are no published sight records within modern times. While there are reports of specimens taken by Kumlien at Lake Koshkonong, Dr. Hoy at Racine, and an unknown person at Milwaukee, these specimens have all disappeared.)



# FIELD NOTES

By MARTHA and ROY LOUND

**SPRING SEASON**

**MARCH-MAY 1956**

The 1956 spring season, especially the month of May, will long be remembered by many of us as a highlight in our birding careers.. All too often many migrants pass through our state in one or more waves so rapidly that they may be gone in a few days or even hours. Or sometimes weather patterns are such that marked waves just do not develop, and migrants slip by in unobtrusive manner. Consequently many observers whose birding is confined largely to weekends and holidays often miss out on much of the migration. Many of us have dreamed that some spring would be different—that the birds would come and linger a while before continuing their journeys northward—and that with them would come many of their rarer cousins who might find something to keep them here or attract them back in future years.

The dream almost came true in May 1956. Cool weather throughout April delayed the migration, and also slowed the foliage development markedly. When a series of well-marked low pressure systems passed over the state at strategic times in May, a rush of migrating birds followed in each instance; because trees were not well leafed out or "insect-ed" out, even tree-top warblers and vireos tended to loiter and feed on or

near the ground, giving observers an admirable opportunity to see and study them.

Paralleling the late spring migration, particularly in the central and northern areas, was the prolonged stay of many winter residents. Scattered observations of Evening Grosbeaks, Redpolls, Pine Siskins, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were recorded well into May.

Nor was it solely the spectacular quantity of birds that marked the spring period. The quality was equally remarkable—or more so. The list of rarities found in Wisconsin this spring cannot be matched by the records of any other season since **The Passenger Pigeon** began publication in 1939, with the possible exception of the spring of 1950 when a severe storm led to the establishing of sight records for three new Wisconsin species. See **1950 Pass. Pigeon 171**.

Consider the following array of rarities for 1956. The first well-documented sight record of the Black Rail for Wisconsin was established on May 12 and 13 at La Crosse by the Alvin Petersons. A second occurrence of the European Goldfinch was noted on May 5 and 6 in Ozaukee County when Stan Moulson photographed a bird. Another second state record was that of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, also seen in Ozaukee County on May 12 by the Elmer Bastens. A Purple Gallinule in Milwaukee on May 5, photographed by members of the Milwaukee Public Museum staff, was perhaps the fourth state record, although two early specimens have been lost. The Blue Grosbeak also made its fourth appearance in the state, its first in the twentieth century, and again the specimens of the three earlier records are missing; this year's record is of a remarkable flock of over 30 birds in Milwaukee on May 23 by the L. P. C. Smiths. A Kirtland's Warbler studied in Door County by Mrs. Clara Hussong and many others on May 20 was the sixth sight record for the state; none has ever been collected, but this year's bird is as well documented as a sight record can be. The Townsend's Solitaire seen at Cedar Grove on March 31 by Dick Wills, Mrs. R. A. Walker and others, was the seventh Wisconsin appearance. Although the Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen frequently in 1954 and established itself as a breeder in 1955, the birds seen on the breeding grounds near Racine on May 12 by Ed Prins, J. Allan Simpson and others, constituted only the eighth Wisconsin visit for this species.

Still other species were seen that are equally rare in our day, but were more numerous in the nineteenth century. The Eastern Glossy Ibis made its first known pilgrimage to Wisconsin since 1879, two being seen at Horicon Marsh east of Waupun on May 14 by Raymond Dryer, Paul and Marilyn Imler. There had been but three twentieth century records for the Summer Tanager prior to 1956; this spring there were four widely separated records from Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Adams and Polk Counties. Ruling out probable escapees, there appear to have been but four previous records for the American Magpie in the past fifty years; but the bird seen at Cedar Grove on April 3 and 4 by Helmut Mueller and Dan Berger was probably a storm-blown bird from the west. The Avocet had been reported from the state but five times since the time of Kumlien and Hollister (two of them in the fall of 1955); this spring it was found at Milwaukee on May 5 by the Elmer Bastens, and in Dane County on May 6 by Charles Kemper, N. R. Barger and Nils Dahlstrand.



Several of these outstanding records are described in detail in "By the Wayside."

### March

The first few days of March were seasonably mild. As early as February 28, large flocks of Canada Geese were seen at Oconomowoc, and many more were present by March 4. By March 2 the number of American Mergansers was up considerably and migrant Marsh Hawks were present. Red-wings were back in some numbers by March 6, and there were reports that the Great Blue Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Killdeer, Robin, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, and Rusty Blackbird were commencing their northward migration.

Then came storms and cold weather. A series of polar fronts, each followed by an invasion of arctic air, resulted in colder than seasonal temperatures for the remainder of the month except for a few warm days on March 20, 21, 25 and 26. A blizzard hit central Wisconsin on the night of March 6, and blizzard conditions prevailed on March 10 and 11 as the worst storm of the year spread over most of the state. Heavy snow, falling temperatures and driving winds halted all activities in some areas. On March 27 and 28 many south central counties were glazed by a freezing rain which was accompanied by strong winds, resulting in considerable damage to trees and telephone lines.

An outstanding feature of the weather during March was the heavy snowfall over many sections of the state. Monthly totals ranged from less than ten inches along the southern edge and the northeastern section to over 30 inches in certain central parts. By the end of the month, the southern fields were again bare, but most of the central and northern counties still had from 12 to 20 inches of snow on the ground. The March bird migration in southern Wisconsin was about normal in spite of the relatively cold weather, but it did not advance into the snow-blanketed areas farther north.

### April

The first few days of April were milder than normal, and bird migration rapidly caught up close to schedule in the central and northern areas. The delayed March migrants began flooding into the central counties on April 2 and 3 and continued their push northward, and early April migrants began arriving on schedule with the belated March birds. Several tornadoes occurred on April 3—one in the southwestern part of the state in the late forenoon, one in the central section about 1:00 P. M., and one in Green Lake and Winnebago Counties at about 2:00 P. M. What effect these tornadoes and other weather disturbances had in detouring rare birds into the state is problematical, but it is interesting to note that the Magpie was found at Cedar Grove on the day of the tornadoes and the Swainson's Hawk was found there the following day.

Then the weather changed. Northerly winds brought cooler temperatures and snow to most of the state on April 6 and 7, and temperatures continued below normal the rest of the month and through the first week of May. Bird migration during this period was generally

pushed behind normal, not so much in the southern counties but strikingly so in the central and northern sections. Sam Robbins made the following interesting observations for Adams County: "Pine Warblers and Louisiana Water-thrushes which usually arrive around mid-April did not appear until early in May; Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows apparently did not arrive until about May 10 compared to a normal arrival date of around April 25; Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were first seen on May 12 although they sometimes appear as early as April 23; and Bewick's Wrens were first on location on May 14 although the usual time is a little after mid-April." His conclusion is that the main push, as well as first arrivals, of a number of migrants which usually arrive in mid or late April was delayed anywhere from two to six weeks, leading one to wonder where these birds were in the meantime and why they insist on returning to that area instead of taking up residence elsewhere after being pushed so far behind schedule.

Curiously, there were certain species that did not follow this pattern. The herons, bitterns, hawks, swallows and most sparrows arrived approximately on schedule. Hermit Thrushes were reported to be more numerous than usual, but other early April migrants such as the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Myrtle Warbler, were numerically below par throughout the month. The heavy influx of finches during the winter period was reported in the Winter Season Field Notes (See 1956 Passenger Pigeon 82): Redpolls were still present in good numbers late in March, but they dwindled off rapidly during the first week of April. The number of Evening Grosbeaks began building up early in April in the central counties, reaching a peak in early May that did not diminish until near the middle of the month.

## May

Like March and April, the average temperature for the month of May was somewhat below normal. The weather pattern was generally cold and wet, with rainfall in many parts of the state exceeding twice the normal monthly total. The first few days in May continued the backward April trend; but during the W.S.O. convention at Beloit on May 5 and 6, when field trips were made near that city and also in the Milton area, it was noted that a real bird migration had commenced. This push affected only the southern edge of the state at first, but by May 10 it increased in tempo, reaching its height on May 12 due to the moving in of a low pressure area on the previous day. Another heavy push of birds occurred on May 21 and 22. Notice how many of the rarities turned up during or after the three waves, May 5-6, 11-12, 21-22. After May 24 the migration began to taper off, although there were still a few migrants around at the end of the month.

During the heavy pushes birds seemed to be everywhere, and their numbers were truly astounding, but this was probably at least partly due to the unusual numbers of some species. Sam Robbins reported that he saw more Blue-headed Vireos, Grinnell's Water-thrushes and Wilson's Warblers in Adams County during May this year than in the previous four springs put together. No other specific reports on the relative abundance of any particular species were received, but it appears likely that

many species excelled in numbers while others may not have been any more numerous than usual.

Here is a summary of the season:

**Loon:** First reported from Dane Co., March 18 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

**Red-throated Loon:** Five in Ozaukee Co., March 4 (Bill Foster). Reported for the first time from Adams Co., May 2, 3, and 24 (Sam Robbins).

**Holboell's Grebe:** Barron Co., April 8 (John Butler and Bob Wiese); Adams Co., April 28 (Sam Robbins and Bill Foster); Wood Co., May 5 (Dick Wills and S. A. Tisdale).

**Horned Grebe:** First reported from Bayfield Co. on April 4 (David Bratley); last reported from Dane Co., May 21 (N. R. Barger).

**Eared Grebe:** There were reports of this rare species from four counties: Milwaukee Co., April 21 (Allie Krueger); Columbia Co. first reported on April 26 (Howard Winkler) and seen by many observers through May 30; Dane Co., April 23 (Roy Lound) and May 18 (Mrs. R. A. Walker); Polk Co., May 1 (Mrs. Lester Pedersen).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Dane Co., March 2 (Dick Wills); Adams Co., March 27 (Sam Robbins); Barron Co., March 29 (John Butler and Bob Wiese).

**White Pelican:** Four were seen on Petenwell Flowage, Adams Co. on May 15 (Dixie Larkin, Sam Robbins and S. Paul Jones); one seen in the same place on May 30 (Sam Robbins, Dick Wills and S. A. Tisdale).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Two observations on April 5: Jefferson Co., (Mrs. H. W. Degner) and Adams Co. (Sam Robbins).

**Great Blue Heron:** Many March reports, the first from Lafayette Co. on March 4 (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch).

**American Egret:** Seen with surprising frequency this spring: Dodge Co., April 8 (Mrs. Howard Higgins); Lafayette Co., April 14 (Ethel Olson and Lola Welch); Milwaukee, April 21 (the Carl Fristers); Rock Co., May 3 (John Wilde); Burnett Co., May 10 (N. R. Stone); Jefferson Co., May 13 (Elizabeth Degner); Dane Co., May 13 (Dr. J. G. Waddell); Adams Co., May 15 (Sam Robbins and S. Paul Jones); Columbia Co., May 30 (Eugene Roark).

**Little Blue Heron:** An immature bird which was part blue and part white was reported from Racine Co. on May 12 (Ed Prins and Mrs. Walter Peirce).

**Green Heron:** First arrival noted in Lafayette Co., April 23 (Ethel Olson and Lola Welch).

**Black-crowned Night Heron:** First reported from Jefferson Co., March 22 (Elizabeth Degner).

**Yellow-crowned Night Heron:** The birds which completed a successful nesting season in 1955 in Racine Co. have returned to the same area. Two birds were observed standing on the old nest on May 12. As many as four birds have been reported at one time (Ed Prins, J. Allan Simpson).

**American Bittern:** Waukesha Co., March 31 (Mrs. L. E. Compton); Burnett Co., April 18 (Norman R. Stone).

**Least Bittern:** An early report from Burnett Co., May 5 (N. R. Stone).

**Eastern Glossy Ibis:** Two birds were observed on Horicon Marsh, Dodge Co. on May 14 by Dr. Raymond B. Dryer and Paul and Marilyn Imler. See "By the Wayside."

**Whistling Swan:** There were numerous reports representing a total of sixteen counties: Adams, Barron, Bayfield, Brown, Burnett, Chippewa, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Juneau, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Waukesha and Winnebago. First report was from Winnebago Co., March 21 (Mrs. W. E. Rogers); last report from La Crosse Co., April 30 (Alvin M. Peterson).

**Snow Goose:** Reports of migratory birds from Adams, Bayfield, Burnett, Columbia, Dane, Jefferson, La Crosse, Milwaukee and Rock Cos. between April 5 and May 20. Most unusual report came from Milwaukee where a mixed flock of 39 Snow and Blue Geese were seen resting on Memorial Drive, April 28 (Mary Bromm).

**Blue Goose:** Reports of migratory birds from Adams, Columbia, Dane, La Crosse, Milwaukee and Rock Cos. between April 10 and May 10.

**Gadwall:** First reported in Dane Co., March 17 (Sam Robbins and David Walker).

**Baldpate:** First reported in Dane Co., March 2 (Dick Wills).

**Pintail:** Adams Co., March 2 (Sam Robbins).

**Wood Duck:** Jefferson Co., March 19 (the L. E. Comptons).

**Harlequin Duck:** The Harlequin Duck which wintered for the second year in the Port Washington Harbor was last reported on March 31 (Dick Wills).

**White-winged Scoter:** A male was observed in Ozaukee Co., April 14 (Dick Wills, et al.).

**Ruddy Duck:** An unusually heavy flight reported on Lake Winnebago (Mrs. W. E. Rogers).

**Turkey Vulture:** Southern Wisconsin reports from Waukesha Co. on March 28 (Emma Hoffmann) and Dane Co. on April 26 (Dick Wills); one central Wisconsin report from northern Adams County on April 23 (Elmer Becker and Sam Robbins); seen in the northern section of the state in Florence Co. on April 19 (Mrs. Howard Higgins); in Sawyer Co. on April 20 (Karl Kahmann), and in Barron Co. on April 21 (John Butler).

**Goshawk:** Two in Forest Co., April 1 (the Roy Lounds); one in Marathon Co., April 4 (Tom Soulen, et al.).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** First report from Adams Co., March 6 (Sam Robbins).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Migrants noted in Winnebago Co. on April 9 (Mrs. Glen Fisher), and in Brown Co. on April 11 (Ed Cleary).

**Swainson's Hawk:** One seen at Cedar Grove, April 4, the day after tornadoes struck in three different locations in the state (Dan Berger and Helmut Mueller).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** One late migrant, in Marathon Co. on May 20 (Wausau Bird Club).

**Bald Eagle:** Nesting activity was reported from Adams Co. (Sam Robbins) and Marinette Co. (Carl Richter).

**Osprey:** First noted in Waukesha Co., April 5 (the L. E. Comptons); followed within a few days by reports from Jefferson, Brown, Adams, Barron and Burnett Counties.

**Duck Hawk:** April 3 is earliest date, Dane Co. (Tom Soulen).

**Sandhill Crane:** In addition to records in Jefferson, Waukesha, Adams and Wood Counties, where this species is often seen, birds were seen in Burnett Co. on April 9 (N. R. Stone), and in Manitowoc Co. on May 12 (John Kraupa).

**King Rail:** Adams Co., May 24 and 30 (Sam Robbins); Milwaukee, May 13 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

**Virginia Rail:** First report from Adams Co., May 3 (Sam Robbins). Late for first arrival.

**Sora:** Earliest arrival date: April 17 in Chippewa Co. (Dr. C. A. Kemper).

**Yellow Rail:** Two reports of this rare species: on May 15 one was seen scurrying across a county trunk road west of Friendship in Adams Co. (Sam Robbins); on May 19 one was flushed west of Mazomanie in n.e. Iowa Co. (Tom Soulen, Dick Wills, Dave Dunham)—see "By the Wayside."

**Black Rail:** A bird thought to be of this species was glimpsed in a marsh near Onalaska on May 12 and 13 (the Alvin M. Petersons). See pages 116-117.

**Purple Gallinule:** During the May 5 weekend, the Milwaukee Museum received a call from an individual at the Veteran's Hospital at Wood, reporting a bird which seemed to be in difficulties. Upon investigation Museum personnel found a Purple Gallinule, hungry but otherwise in good condition. The bird was captured and taken to the museum for a few days where it was fed and photographed; then it was turned over to the Milwaukee Zoo. (Reported by Dixie Larkin). The last previous sight record of this species was at Horicon on April 21, 1944, by Watson Beed and Russell Neugebauer (see 1944 Pass. Pigeon 76). The only previous state records are three specimens from 100 years ago, mentioned by Kumlien and Hollister, but now lost.

**Florida Gallinule:** Earliest report from Walworth Co., April 21 (Mrs. H. W. Degner).

**Piping Plover:** Reports from Milwaukee, May 13 (the C. P. Fristers, et al.), and from Appleton, May 16 (Luther Rogers).

**Semipalmated Plover:** Earliest report is from our most northern county, Bayfield, April 29 (David Bratley)

**Killdeer:** Waukesha Co., March 1 (the L. E. Comptons) followed by reports from most parts of the state by the third week in the month.

**Golden Plover:** The C. P. Fristers reported this species in Milwaukee Co. on March 31. Thereafter they were reported in unusually large numbers from various localities through May 30. A flock estimated at 260 was reported from Goose Pond, Columbia Co. on May 10 (Dick Wills, Dave Dunham).

**Black-bellied Plover:** First reported from Columbia Co., May 2 (Tom Soulen) followed by reports from Adams, Chippewa, Dane, Juneau, Milwaukee, Waukesha and Winnebago Cos. A flock estimated at 100 was seen at Goose Pond on May 20 (the Roy Lounds).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** A heavy migration of this species was reported by Mrs. Walter E. Rogers from the Lake Winnebago area. Other reports from Adams, Columbia, Dane, Manitowoc and Milwaukee Counties between May 5 and 30.



**Woodcock:** The first report came from Fond du Lac Co., March 21 (Rev. George Henseler).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Seen in Dane Co., March 15 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

**Hudsonian Curlew:** Three reports were received this year, the first since October 1952 (1953 Pass. Pigeon 43). One bird in Ozaukee Co., May 19 (S. Paul Jones); one bird in Columbia Co., May 20 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, et al.); nine birds in Winnebago Co., May 22 (Mrs. W. E. Rogers, et al.).

**Upland Plover:** Earliest report from Ozaukee Co., April 14 (Dick Wills, Tom Soulen, et al.).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Arrived by April 26 in Bayfield Co. (David Bratley) and Jefferson Co. (Mrs. H. W. Degner).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Waukesha Co., April 22 (the L. E. Comptons).

**Willet:** Jefferson Co., April 16 (Mrs. H. W. Degner); Columbia Co., April 28 (the Howard Winklers, the N. R. Bangers, the Roy Lounds); Milwaukee Co., May 1 (Mary Donald, Karl Priebe); Dane Co., May 2 and 13 (Tom Soulen).

**Greater Yellow-legs:** Walworth Co., March 11 (Ed Prins)—a very early date.

**Lesser Yellow-legs:** Lafayette Co., March 31 (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch).

**Knot:** There were reports from two counties on May 26: Columbia (the Roy Lounds and others); Milwaukee (Karl Priebe, Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Dane Co., April 1 (Mrs. R. A. Walker) was the first report.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Reports from three counties: Dane Co., May 18 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills); Columbia Co., May 22-26 (Dick Wills); Milwaukee Co., May 28 (Karl Priebe, Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Jefferson Co., April 26 (Mrs. H. W. Degner); Milwaukee Co., May 8 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

**Least Sandpiper:** Many reports with the first on April 8 in Winnebago Co. (the C. P. Fristers).

**Red-backed Sandpiper:** The first report is from Brown Co., May 5 (Edwin Cleary) and the last from Columbia Co., May 30 (Dick Wills).

**Dowitcher:** This species was more numerous than ever previously noted in the spring (Tom Soulen). Between April 27 and May 27 reports were received from Adams, Chippewa, Columbia, Dane, Jefferson, Lafayette, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Reports from three areas: Dodge Co., April 14 (Mrs. Howard Higgins); Dane Co., May 13 (Eugene Roark); Columbia Co., May 24 (Dick Wills).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** First seen in Dane Co., April 21 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills).

**Western Sandpiper:** Mrs. A. P. Balsom reported this species present in Milwaukee, May 15-20. No other reports.

**Marbled Godwit:** There were more reports than usual of this species. One in Columbia Co., April 30 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills,

Bill Foster) and again on May 4 (Sam Robbins); one in La Crosse Co., May 10 (Alvin M. Peterson); two in Winnebago Co., May 15 (Appleton Audubon Society); two in Dane Co., May 20 (Eugene Roark).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** This species was unusually numerous. Five birds were reported at Goose Pond, Columbia Co. on April 28 (the N. R. Bangers, the Roy Lounds). Between that date and May 30 numerous individuals reported from three to nine birds present. Other reports came from Chippewa Co., May 9 and 10 (Dr. C. A. Kemper); La Crosse Co., May 13 (the Alvin M. Petersons); Dane Co., May 13, 14, 18 and 22 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Eugene Roark, Dick Wills); Waukesha Co., May 14 and 17 (the L. E. Comptons); Milwaukee Co., May 20 (Mary Donald, Karl Priebe).

**Sanderling:** Reports were received from Brown, Columbia, Dane, Jefferson, Manitowoc and Milwaukee Cos. between May 5 and May 30.

**Avocet:** Two reports of this western species: Milwaukee Co., May 5 (the Elmer Bastens); Dane Co., May 6 (Dr. C. A. Kemper, N. R. Barger, N. P. Dahlstrand). See "By the Wayside" for Dr. Kemper's report.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Between April 22 and May 30 reports were received from Brown, Chippewa, Columbia, Dane, Jefferson, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Waukesha and Winnebago Counties.

**Northern Phalarope:** Single birds were reported by Mrs. H. W. Degner from Jefferson Co. on May 13, and by Mrs. R. A. Walker from Dane Co. on May 14. The following birds were observed at Goose Pond, Columbia Co.: two on May 24 (Dick Wills); six on May 26 (the Roy Lounds, et al.); three on May 28 (Dick Wills); still present on May 30 (the C. P. Fristers).

**Black-backed Gull:** Mrs. Howard Higgins reported one present at Kenosha on March 3.

**Franklin's Gull:** Reports from four localities: Milwaukee Co., April 30 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom); Columbia Co., May 5 (Dick Wills); Waukesha Co., May 5 (Mary Donald, Karl Priebe); Dane Co., May 13 (the Roy Lounds).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Between March 21 and May 17 this species reported from Adams, Barron, Bayfield, Dane, Manitowoc, Marinette, Milwaukee and Outagamie Counties.

**Forster's Tern:** April reports from Green Lake Co., April 15 (Mary Donald, Karl Priebe) and Dane Co., April 24 and 29 (Mrs. R. A. Walker and Dr. J. G. Waddell). May reports from Adams, Brown, Columbia and Dodge Counties.

**Common Tern:** First report from Jefferson Co., April 1 (Mrs. H. W. Degner); many thereafter.

**Caspian Tern:** Milwaukee Co., April 27 (Karl Priebe); Brown Co., May 5 (Edwin Cleary); Dane Co., May 10 (Eugene Roark); Jefferson Co., May 13 (Mrs. H. W. Degner); Bayfield Co., May 27 (David Bratley).

**Black Tern:** Very early straggler reported from Rock Co. on April 1 (Melva Maxson); next reported from Dane Co., April 29 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dr. J. G. Waddell).

**Mourning Dove:** March 1 reports from Jefferson Co. (Mrs. H. W. Degner, N. P. Dahlstrand) and Kenosha Co. (Mrs. Howard Higgins).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** First report from Dane Co., May 9 (Dick Wills); reported as far north as Burnett Co., May 28 (N. R. Stone).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Dane Co., May 9 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dr. J. G. Waddell).

**Great Horned Owl:** A nest with two eggs was reported in Oconto Co. on March 2 (Carl Richter).

**Richardson's Owl:** This rare northern visitor was found in a spruce swamp in Washburn Co. on March 27 by Diane and W. S. Feeney. The bird was observed sitting on a low branch and did not flush until the observers were very close.

**Saw-whet Owl:** The bird wintering at Madison was last seen on March 22 (Tom Soulen). On the evening of March 23 Sam Robbins heard one near Nekoosa in southern Wood Co., and individuals in four locations in northwest sector of Adams Co.; individuals were heard in two other locations just west of Friendship on April 5 (Sam Robbins); and still another Adams Co. bird was heard at Roche a Cri Park on May 15 (Dixie Larkin and S. Paul Jones). Other records: Waukesha Co., April 1 (the L. E. Comptons); and Barron Co., April 4 (Eugene Butler).

**Whip-poor-will:** Earliest arrival reported from Madison, May 1 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

**Nighthawk:** Arrived first in Madison, May 6 (Dr. J. G. Waddell, Dick Wills, Tom Soulen). All reporting counties had arrivals between that date and May 30 when it was first noted in Bayfield Co. (David Bratley).

**Chimney Swift:** Arrival dates for the state vary from April 27, Rock Co. (Melva Maxson) and Dane Co. (Dick Wills) to May 27, Vilas Co. (Fred Babcock).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** First report from Kenosha, May 7 (Mrs. Howard Higgins).

**Flicker:** Arrival date March 4 in Kenosha (Mrs. Howard Higgins) and Waukesha (the L. E. Comptons) Counties; not until mid-April did it reach all parts of the state.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Noted in Rock Co. on May 6 (Melva Maxson and the Roy Lounds); not often seen in this section of the state.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Lafayette Co., March 31 (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch); as far north as Bayfield Co. by April 9 (David Bratley).

**Eastern Kingbird:** An early bird reported from Vernon Co. on April 27 (Richard Weber); the May 11-12 wave brought birds to all parts of the state.

**Western Kingbird:** One bird at Green Bay on May 5 (Ed Cleary); two seen near the shore of Castle Rock Lake on May 24 (Sam Robbins) were the first ever recorded for Adams Co.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** On May 12 the Elmer Bastens saw an immature Scissor-tailed Flycatcher sitting on a telephone wire along C.T.H. "C" in Ozaukee Co.; it flew into a nearby field and the Bastens watched it for 1¼ hours, noting the pinkish cast and long tail. The only previous record for the state was made on Oct. 1, 1895, when L. Kumlien collected an adult male at Milton.

**Crested Flycatcher:** May 6 reports from Dane, Jefferson and Rock Counties.

**Phoebe:** A March 27 report from Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker) with the bird reported in all parts of the state by April 10.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Earliest report from Milwaukee Co. on May 6 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom) with arrival dates from La Crosse, Dane, Jefferson, Racine, Waukesha, Chippewa and Adams Counties following from May 7 to May 21. A heavy flight was noted in Chippewa Co. (Dr. C. A. Kemper and the N. R. Bangers and in Adams Co. (Sam Robbins).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Kenosha Co., May 15 (Mrs. Howard Higgins); Dane Co., May 27 (Dick Wills); Brown Co., May 29 (Edwin D. Cleary).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Dane Co., May 6 (Dr. J. G. Waddell), but it did not reach Bayfield Co. until May 30 (David Bratley).

**Least Flycatcher:** First report from Dane Co., May 3 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills) with reports from all parts of the state by May 12.

**Wood Pewee:** Earliest report is from Jefferson Co., May 5 (Elizabeth Degner).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** First noted on May 8 at Madison (Mrs. R. A. Walker) and Milwaukee (Mary Donald). A good flight was reported in Chippewa Co., on May 20 by Dr. C. A. Kemper and the N. R. Bangers.

**Tree Swallow:** Jefferson Co., March 26 (Mrs. H. W. Degner).

**Bank Swallow:** Ethel Olson and Lola Welch, Lafayette Co., April 15.

**Rough-winged Swallow:** Dane Co., April 15 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Eugene Roark).

**Barn Swallow:** Columbia Co., April 14 (Bill Foster and Sam Robbins).

**Cliff Swallow:** April reports from Lafayette Co., April 15 (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch) and Adams Co., April 25 (Sam Robbins).

**Purple Martin:** March 31 report from Lafayette Co. (Ethel Olson and Lola Welch) with reports following on April 1 from Jefferson Co. (Mrs. H. W. Degner) and Columbia Co. (Eugene Roark). By April 3 the bird was reported as far north as Chippewa Co. (Dr. C. A. Kemper).

**Canada Jay:** Fred Babcock reported the species present all winter in Vilas Co., Raymond Stefanski reported it on March 15 from Marinette Co., and the Roy Lounds on April 1 from Forest Co.

**American Magpie:** One individual was observed at Cedar Grove on April 3 and April 4, the day of and the day after the tornado (Helmut Mueller and Dan Berger).

**Hudsonian Chickadee:** Only one report for the season: Forest Co., April 1 when at least six different individuals were observed (the Roy Lounds).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** There were many May dates with the latest ones falling on May 20, Dane Co. (the Roy Lounds); May 22, Shawano Co. (Mary Staeger) and May 27, Bayfield Co. (David Bratley).

**House Wren:** First reports are on April 22: Lafayette Co. (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch) and Waukesha Co. (the L. E. Comptons).

**Bewick's Wren:** Dane Co., April 2 (Dick Wills); La Crosse Co., April 6 (Alvin M. Peterson); Adams, four singing birds present (Sam Robbins).

**Carolina Wren:** Only one report for the period: Rock Co., April 6 (Melva Maxson).

**Long-billed Marsh Wren:** First reported from Rock Co., May 6 (Melva Maxson, et al.).

**Short-billed Marsh Wren:** Ethel Olson and Lola Welch reported it present in Lafayette Co. on April 26; the next report was on May 2, Dane Co. (Dr. J. G. Waddell).

**Mockingbird:** Reports from Milwaukee Co. on May 13 (Lillian Logemann, Amelia Simmons, Marian Allen) and from Adams Co. on May 29 (Sam Robbins).

**Catbird:** First report from Rock Co., April 29 (Melva Maxson).

**Brown Thrasher:** Slow in arriving with only three April reports: Lafayette Co., April 16 (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch); Dane Co., April 21 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills); Waukesha Co., April 25 (the L. E. Comptons). By mid-May the bird was present throughout the state.

**Robin:** A few birds wintered, but it appears that the first migrants reached the southern part of the state the first few days in March but did not reach the northern counties until the last part of March and first few days in April.

**Wood Thrush:** Arrival dates varied from May 2 at Milwaukee (the C. P. Fristers) to May 19 in Bayfield Co. (David Bratley).

**Hermit Thrush:** March 29 dates from La Crosse Co. (Alvin M. Peterson) and Jefferson Co. (Mrs. H. W. Degner).

**Olive-backed Thrush:** Reported from Dane Co. on May 3 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills).

**Gray-checked Thrush:** Some early dates: Outagamie Co., April 28 (Alfred Bradford); and Chippewa Co., May 2 (C. A. Kemper).

**Veery:** First reports are on April 29 from three different and widely scattered counties: Lafayette (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch); Sauk (Mrs. Henry Koenig); Washburn (Diane Feeney).

**Bluebird:** Late February dates from Lafayette, Vernon and Sauk Cos. with March dates following from Dane, Waukesha, Milwaukee, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha and Chippewa Cos.

**Townsend's Solitaire:** This species which was first seen at Cedar Grove in Ozaukee Co. on December 29, 1955, was again observed in the same location on March 31 (Dick Wills, Mrs. R. A. Walker, et al.).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** There were three April and many May dates of this species which reaches its northernmost limits in Wisconsin. April dates are from Jefferson Co., April 9, when a dead bird was found by Mrs. H. W. Degner; Ozaukee Co., April 14 (Dick Wills, et al.); Lafayette Co., April 28 (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Several late dates: Rock Co., May 7 (John Wilde); Dane Co., May 15 (John Wilde); Green Lake Co., May 19 (Sam Robbins); Bayfield Co., May 22 (Mrs. Gordon Bly).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** April 1 arrival dates were received from Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker), Rock Co. (Melva Maxson) and Waukesha Co. (Ed Peartree). It was reported still present in May in 15 different counties, with Sam Robbins reporting the latest date, May 24 from Adams Co.

**Pipit:** It was first reported from Jefferson Co., on April 15 (Mrs. H. W. Degner) and last reported from Columbia Co. on May 13 (Dick Wills, Tom Soulen).

**Northern Shrike:** Numerous reports during March and these two April reports: Bayfield Co., April 3 (David Bratley); Marathon Co., April 5 (Mrs. Spencer Doty).



**Migrant Shrike:** Two exceptionally early reports from Dane Co., March 4 (Dr. J. G. Waddell) and Milwaukee Co., March 5 (Mary Donald).

**Bell's Vireo:** Alvin Peterson reported it in La Crosse Co. on May 12, and it was reported from at least two different locations in Dane Co. between May 12 and 26 by many observers.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** First reported from Milwaukee Co. on May 3 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom), with reports from as far north as Barron Co. by May 11 (Eugene Butler).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** This species was reported as unusually common in several localities with a first arrival date from Rock Co. on May 1 (Melva Maxson); late migrant noted in Adams Co. on May 30 (Sam Robbins, Dick Wills, S. A. Tisdale).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Earliest report from Milwaukee Co., May 3 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** The following counties reported this species: Waukesha, May 9 and 11 (Ed Peartree); Kenosha, May 11 (Mrs. Howard Higgins); Dane, May 12 and 13 (Eugene Roark); Fond du Lac, May 12 (Rev. George Henseler); Milwaukee, May 12 (Mary Donald); Rock, May 12 through 20 (John Wilde); Bayfield, May 16 through 30 (David Bratley); Adams, May 17, 21, 22 (Sam Robbins); Barron, May 27 (Eugene Butler).

**Warbling Vireo:** Reported from Dane Co., May 7 (Dr. J. G. Waddell) and had spread as far north as Burnett Co., May 12 (Norman R. Stone) and Bayfield Co., May 14 (David Bratley).

**Black and White Warbler:** Reported present in all counties from which reports were received with a very early report from Ozaukee Co., April 14, (Dick Wills, Tom Soulen, et al.).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** One as far north as Green Bay, May 20 (Ed Cleary); other May reports from Rock, Dane, Lafayette, Milwaukee, Crawford, La Crosse, Iowa, and Adams Counties.

**Worm-eating Warbler:** One report of this southern species from Wyalusing State Park, May 12 (the Howard Winklers).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Reported from Rock and Dane Cos. on May 6 (Melva Maxson, N. R. Barger); reported as far north as Barron Co., on May 12 (Eugene Butler).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Seen far north in Burnett Co. on May 20 (N. R. Stone); between May 8 and 29 this species was also reported from Dane, Lafayette, Milwaukee, Vernon, Sauk, Iowa and Jefferson Counties.

**Brewster's Warbler:** Four good reports of this hybrid: Milwaukee Co., May 11 (Mary Donald and others); Adams Co., May 18 (Sam Robbins); Waukesha Co., May 20 and 24 (the L. E. Comptons); Dodge Co., May 21 (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

**Tennessee Warbler:** Earliest date is on May 6 from Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker) and Jefferson Co. (Mrs. H. W. Degner); the latest date is May 31 from Adams Co. (Sam Robbins), and Brown Co. (Edwin Cleary).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** First seen on May 2 in Adams Co. (Sam Robbins) and Dane Co. (Dick Wills); last seen on May 27, Dane Co. (Dr. J. G. Waddell).

**Nashville Warbler:** Exceptionally numerous this spring with Dr. J. G. Waddell reporting a very early arrival in Dane Co. on April 28.

**Parula Warbler:** Many reports, with the earliest on May 6; Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker) and Rock Co. (Eugene Roark, Mrs. A. P. Balsom).

**Yellow Warbler:** Arrival May 3 in Brown Co. (Edwin Cleary) and Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker, Dick Wills).

**Magnolia Warbler:** Two very early dates: Jefferson Co., April 18 (Mrs. H. W. Degner) and Dane Co., April 29 (Dr. J. G. Waddell).

**Cape May Warbler:** The earliest report is on May 6 from Dane (Mrs. R. A. Walker) and Rock (Mrs. A. P. Balsom, et al.) Counties.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Between May 6 and 22 the species was reported from Rock, Jefferson, Dane, Manitowoc, Kenosha, Brown, Milwaukee, Marathon and Adams Counties.

**Myrtle Warbler:** Spread rapidly over much of Wisconsin in the early April wave, being noted at La Crosse on April 3 (Alvin Peterson) and in Marathon Co. on April 4 (Tom Soulen).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** An April 27 date from Rock Co. (Melva Maxson).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Reported on May 12 from Kenosha Co. (Ed Prins) and Madison (Mrs. R. A. Walker); noted in three areas in Adams Co., May 18-30 (Sam Robbins, et al.); May 20 dates from Milwaukee (Mary Donald) and Green Bay (Ed Cleary); May 30, Waukesha Co. (Ed Peartree).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** Rock Co., May 5 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom, et al.).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Early straggler in Lafayette Co. on April 23 (Ethel Olson and Lola Welch); next reported in Rock Co. on May 6 (Eugene Roark, et al.).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** Kenosha, May 7 (Mrs. Howard Higgins) was the earliest report.

**Black-poll Warbler:** First date was May 9 from La Crosse (Alvin Peterson) and Milwaukee (Karl Priebe).

**Pine Warbler:** John Wilde's April 26 date from Rock Co. was the earliest one received.

**Kirtland's Warbler:** Beautifully seen by many members of the Green Bay Bird Club in the town of Fairlands, Door County, on May 20. See "By the Wayside."

**Palm Warbler:** Earliest date is from Lafayette Co., April 23 (Lola Welch and Ethel Olson).

**Ovenbird:** Early straggler in Lafayette Co., April 23 (Ethel Olson and Lola Welch); next reported from Madison, May 3 (Mrs. R. A. Walker and Dick Wills).

**Northern Water-thrush:** Dane Co., April 27 (Dick Wills); and as far north as Chippewa Co., May 4 (Dr. C. A. Kemper).

**Louisiana Water-thrush:** Columbia Co., April 28 (Bargers, Winklers, and Lounds).

**Kentucky Warbler:** Reports from three areas: Ozaukee Co., May 11 (Mary Donald, Karl Priebe); Dane Co., May 12 (Mrs. R. A. Walker); Grant Co., May 15 when 8 to 10 singing birds were reported present at Wyalusing State Park (John Wilde).

**Connecticut Warbler:** May reports from Adams, Bayfield, Brown, Dane, Fond du Lac, Grant, Jefferson, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Vernon, Waukesha, and Winnebago Counties.

**Mourning Warbler:** Earliest report on May 9 from Madison (Mrs. R. A. Walker) and Milwaukee (Karl Priebe).

**Northern Yellow-throat:** Dick Wills' May 2 report from Dane Co. is the first.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Several reports this year: Dane Co., May 11 (Dick Wills, Tom Soulen, et al.); Milwaukee Co., May 15 (Lisa Decker); Fond du Lac Co., May 16 (Rev. George Henseler); Racine Co., May 17 (Mrs. Howard Higgins); Brown Co., May 20 (Edwin Cleary).

**Hooded Warbler:** The only report this year was Ed Peartree's backyard observation in Oconomowoc of a male bird on May 9 at an estimated distance of six feet.

**Wilson's Warbler:** Earliest report is from Jefferson Co., May 2 (Mrs. H. W. Degner). Unusually numerous.

**Canada Warbler:** Mary Donald's May 8 report from Milwaukee Co. is the earliest, but by May 11 it was reported as far north as Chippewa Co. (Dr. C. A. Kemper).

**Redstart:** Two May 6 reports: Dane Co. (Dr. J. G. Waddell) and Rock Co. (Melva Maxson, et al.).

**Bobolink:** April 30 for Brown Co. (Edwin Cleary), Columbia Co. (Dick Wills, et al.) and Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker, et al.).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** A very early report from Marathon Co. on April 2 (Mrs. Spencer Doty). The next report was from Dodge Co. on April 14 (Mrs. Howard Higgins, Mrs. H. W. Degner).

**Orchard Oriole:** An unusual number of records from widely separated sections of the state: Dane Co., May 10 (Mrs. R. A. Walker); Jefferson Co., May 11 (Elizabeth Degner); Brown Co. one on May 13 and three on May 17 (Ed Cleary); Manitowoc Co., May 16 (John Kraupa); Waukesha Co., May 18 (the L. E. Comptons); Chippewa Co., May 20 (Dr. C. A. Kemper); La Crosse Co., May 22 (Alvin Peterson).

**Baltimore Oriole:** Madison, April 30 (Mrs. R. A. Walker, et al.).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Noted in Waukesha Co. on March 25 (Ed Peartree) gradually spreading over much of Wisconsin during April.

**Cowbird:** March 3 dates from Jefferson Co. (Elizabeth Degner) and Waukesha Co. (the L. E. Comptons).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Rock Co., May 6 (Melva Maxson, et al.).

**Summer Tanager:** It is remarkable that with only three previous 20th century records for this species in Wisconsin, it should be reliably reported on four separate occasions this spring. On April 30 a male was found dead in Manitowoc Co. (John Kraupa), and the skin was on display at the W.S.O. convention; a female was sighted in Adams Co. on May 11 (Sam Robbins)—details to be found in "By the Wayside"; Dixie Larkin reported a male from Milwaukee on May 13; Mrs. Lester Pederson saw a male in Polk Co. on May 18.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Rock Co., May 5 (Melva Maxson).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Mr. and Mrs. L. P. C. Smith saw 30 or more birds of this species feeding on the ground in Whitnall Park, Milwaukee on May 23. See "By the Wayside."

**Indigo Bunting:** Early arrival in Polk Co., April 29 (Mrs. Lester Pederson).

**Dickcissel:** One very early straggler was trapped at Clarence Jung's banding station in Milwaukee on April 24. The next arrivals were more normal: Milwaukee, May 20 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom); spreading to La Crosse, Rock, Jefferson, Adams and Dane Counties between May 22 and 30.

**Evening Grosbeak:** Present in many parts of the state until well into May. Last reported from Bayfield Co. on May 28 (David Bratley); present well into May—sometimes in large numbers—in Rock, Door, Manitowoc, Adams, Marathon, Chippewa, Vilas, Shawano, Fond du Lac and Polk Counties.

**Purple Finch:** Late dates for this species, in areas where it is not a summer resident, were: Madison, May 18 (Dick Wills); Green Lake, May 19 (Sam Robbins); and Fond du Lac Co., May 28 (Rev. George Henseler).

**Pine Grosbeak:** Last reported from Marinette Co., March 21 (Raymond Stefanski).

**European Goldfinch:** On May 5, just north of Thiensville, Ozaukee Co., Stan Moulson saw an European Goldfinch feeding with a flock of American Goldfinches. He returned the following day with four companions and again located the bird and photographed it. Mr. Moulson is familiar with the species because it nested near his boyhood home in Oxford, England. The only previous state record was established on May 12, 1935, when one was collected at Milwaukee by Clarence Jung.

**Hoary Redpoll:** Two reports: Adams Co., March 2 (Sam Robbins); and Columbia Co., March 4 (the Roy Lounds).

**Common Redpoll:** The unusually heavy flight of the previous winter continued through March and the first days of April, with a flock of over 1000 birds still to be seen in central Wisconsin on April 4 (Tom Soulen). Very late reports came from Marinette Co. on May 15 (Raymond Stefanski), and from Brown Co. on May 21 (Ed Cleary).

**Pine Siskin:** Lingered well into May in most counties; last reported from Madison, May 27 (the Roy Lounds).

**Red Crossbill:** Many observers saw a flock numbering up to 12 birds in Madison through most of March. Two flew over Adams on March 22 (Sam Robbins). None were recorded in April, but Tom Soulen reported three birds in Dane Co. on May 29.

**White-winged Crossbill:** Several birds of this species mixed with the flock of Red Crossbills in Madison during March, with a peak of six counted on March 19 (Dick Wills).

**Towhee:** A few arrivals were noted in southern Wisconsin in late March: Rock Co., March 23 (Melva Maxson), and Madison, March 31 (N. R. Barger); but the April migration was so retarded that no arrivals were noted in central Wisconsin until early May, with arrivals in northern Wisconsin even later.

**Savannah Sparrow:** First reported from Portage Co., April 5 (Tom Soulen).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** While the normal arrival date for this species is the last week of April, first arrivals this year were not noted until May 12—the same date being noted for Dane (Eugene Roark), Lafayette (the N. R. Bargers, the Roy Lounds), and Adams (Sam Robbins) Counties.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Dane Co., May 4 (Dick Wills). Unusually late in arriving.

**Nelson's Sparrow:** A single bird was seen in McKinley Park, Milwaukee, on May 3 (Karl Priebe, John Wilde, Olga Porter). The viewers were within ten feet of the bird and were able to study it for about ten minutes.

**Vesper Sparrow:** Dane Co., March 31 (N. R. Barger), followed by reports from as far north as Barron Co., by April 3 (John Butler, Bob Wiese).

**Lark Sparrow:** Reported in three counties: Adams, April 23 (Sam Robbins); La Crosse, May 10 (Alvin Peterson); Dane, May 20 (the Roy Lounds).

**Slate-colored Junco:** Last reported on May 17: Barron Co. (John Butler, Bob Wiese) and Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker).

**Oregon Junco:** Dane Co., March 4 and 7 (Dick Wills); three in Adams Co., April 7 (Sam Robbins, Ed Peartree, Nellis Smith); Waukesha Co. until April 22 (the L. E. Comptons).

**Tree Sparrow:** Last reported from Chippewa Co., May 13 (Dr. C. A. Kemper).

**Chipping Sparrow:** Manitowoc Co., April 6 (John Kraupa).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Arrival dates varied from April 22 in Madison (Mrs. R. A. Walker and Eugene Roark) to May 20 in Burnett Co. (N. R. Stone); other records came from Adams, Barron, Bayfield, Brown, Chippewa, Milwaukee, Polk, and Rock Counties.

**Field Sparrow:** Rock Co., March 26 (Melva Maxson).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Between May 1 and 21 it was reported from the following counties: Barron, Bayfield, Chippewa, Dane, Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, Polk, Shawano, Waukesha and Winnebago.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** April 28 date from Lafayette Co. (Ethel Olson, Lola Welch) and Washburn Co. (Diane Feeney). There were three reports of the Gambel's subspecies: Oshkosh, May 10 (Eunice Fisher); Adams, May 11 (Sam Robbins); Waukesha, May 12 (the L. E. Comptons).

**White-throated Sparrow:** A few birds wintered; migratory birds were reported from Milwaukee Co., April 4 (Mrs. A. P. Balsom) and Marinette Co., April 12 (Mrs. Spencer Doty), but did not become common until after April 20.

**Fox Sparrow:** March 11 reports from Dane Co. (Dr. J. G. Waddell) and Waukesha Co. (Ed Peartree, et al.) but did not reach most of the state until the first few days in April.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Many reports from April 30 to May 25. Earliest: Dane Co. (Mrs. R. A. Walker); last: Fond du Lac Co. (Rev. George Henseler).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Winnebago Co., March 24 (Stan Wellso).

**Lapland Longspur:** Large flocks were reported, with the largest estimated at 1500 (Rock Co., John Wilde). Last reported from Adams Co., May 15 (S. Paul Jones, Dixie Larkin, Sam Robbins).

**Snow Bunting:** An unusually late report from the Green Bay Bird Club on May 20.



## CHANGE IN FIELD NOTE POLICY

To lighten the load of the Associate Editors, we are now asking observers who wish to contribute records to **Audubon Field Notes** to write directly to the regional editor, Dr. Harvey L. Gunderson, Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. Because it was impossible to synchronize our seasons with those of the national publication, there has been needless duplication of reporting, posting and corresponding. Reports for the August-November period should be in Dr. Gunderson's hands by November 30. Keep sending regular quarterly reports to the Roy Lounds at their new address: Forest Park, Balden Street, Route 3, Madison.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- November 20, 1956 (Milwaukee)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Alexander Sprunt, Jr., speaking on "Cypress Kingdom," at the Shorewood High Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- December 1, 1956 (Green Bay)**—Green Bay Bird Club Christmas party at the Y.M.C.A.
- December 1-10, 1956 (State-wide)**—Field notes for August 16 through November should be sent to the Associate Editor.
- December 6, 1956 (Madison)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Walter H. Shackleton speaking on "Rhapsody in Blue Grass," at West High School Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- December 10, 1956 (Manitowoc)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Walter H. Shackleton speaking on "Oddities in Nature," at the Washington J. H. S. Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- December 22, 1956-January 1, 1957 (State-wide)**—Christmas Bird Count dates.
- January 20, 1957 (Green Bay)**—Green Bay Bird Club annual banquet.
- January 28, 1957 (Milwaukee)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Albert Wool speaking on "Ranch and Range," at the Shorewood High Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- January 30, 1957 (Manitowoc)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Albert Wool speaking on "Ranch and Range," at the Washington J. H. S. Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- February 15, 1956 (Madison)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Tom and Arlene Hadley speaking on "Into the North Woods," at West High School Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- February 18, 1957 (Manitowoc)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Tom and Arlene Hadley speaking on "Into the North Woods," at the Washington J. H. S. Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- February 22, 1957 (Milwaukee)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Walter H. Shackleton speaking on "Rhapsody in Bluegrass," at the Shorewood High Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- March 1-10, 1957 (State-wide)**—Field notes for December, January and February should be sent to the Associate Editor.
- March 3, 1957 (Port Washington)**—W.S.O. field trip to Lake Michigan shore, meeting at Smith Brothers Parking Lot at 8:00 a. m.

## W. S. O. OFFICERS—1956-57

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## MORE NEWS . . .

The dates for taking Christmas Bird Counts this year are from December 22 through January 1. Counts should cover as much as possible of a single day, but should not be spread over more than one day; they should cover a territory not more than 15 miles in diameter, and cover that territory as thoroughly as possible; counts or estimates of individuals should be as accurate as possible; reports should include weather conditions and names of participating observers. For further details on directions for Christmas Bird Counts, see 1955 Pass. Pigeon 110-111.

As Evening Grosbeaks appear in your area this winter, we hope you will keep

notes on them: dates, size of flocks, percentage of males, feeding habits, etc. The information should be forwarded to B. M. and M. S. Shaub, 159 Elm Street, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Additional contributions for the Prairie Chicken Survival Fund have been received from Richard Gordon, Mrs. Earl Schmidt, Alma Prucha, Grace Swenson, and the Central Junior High School of Muskegon, Michigan.

Other Christmas gift suggestions from the W.S.O. Supply Department are mentioned on page 119. All W.S.O. members now receive a 10% discount. If you don't yet have your catalogue, write for it right away.

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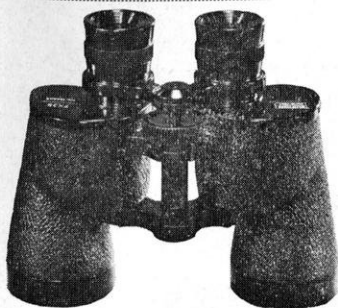
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