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The passenger pigeon. Vol. XXI, No. 3 Autumn 1959

Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Autumn 1959

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The
PASSENGER PIGEON

A Magazine of Wisconsin Bird Study

Published Quarterly By

**THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY
FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC.**



AUTUMN ISSUE
VOL. XXI NO. 3

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Volume XXI, Number 3

Autumn (July-September) 1959

THE PASSENGER PIGEON, official publication of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc., is published quarterly at 101 Roby Road, Madison 5, Wisconsin. Classes of membership and annual dues: Active \$2.00 (Students under 18 years \$1.50). Husband-and-Wife \$3.00. Sustaining \$5.00. Life \$75.00. Patron \$100 or more. At least \$1.75 of each annual membership (\$1.50 in the case of student membership and Wisconsin library subscriptions) is set aside to cover subscription to The Passenger Pigeon. Send membership dues to the treasurer, Mrs. Alfred O. Holz, 125 E. Kolb St., Green Bay, Wisconsin. Send change of address to Mrs. Raymond Roark, 101 Roby Road, Madison 5, Wisconsin. Send manuscripts to the editor, Samuel D. Robbins, Adams, Wisconsin.

Second class postage paid at Madison, Wisconsin.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF CLIFF SWALLOW NESTING COLONIES IN WISCONSIN

By GLENN AUMANN and JOHN T. EMLIN, JR.

This report presents the results of a survey of the nesting distribution of Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) in Wisconsin. The survey was organized as a project of the Research Committee of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and was supported by the Society through two nesting seasons, 1957 and 1958. Many members participated. Non-members also contributed substantially, and we wish to thank all of them, especially the 385 postmasters and 621 rural mail carriers who carried the survey into many remote corners in all but one of Wisconsin's 71 counties.

Requests for information were published in *The Passenger Pigeon* in 1957 and 1958 and a progress report covering the first season's activities was printed in the 1957 autumn issue. Special form letters were also sent to all members in 1957 and to active participants in 1958.

A form letter was sent to each of the 595 post offices in the State in April 1957 enclosing 1200 questionnaire forms, enough for all the rural mail carriers. The response was excellent, and collectively these post office employees reported more than half of all the colonies recorded in the survey. Some inexperienced cooperators were obviously confused in their identification, but the questions were so worded that mis-identifications could be rather easily detected, and all reports relative to Bank Swallows, Barn Swallows and others were deleted. We were able to follow up personally on questionable or otherwise challenging reports.

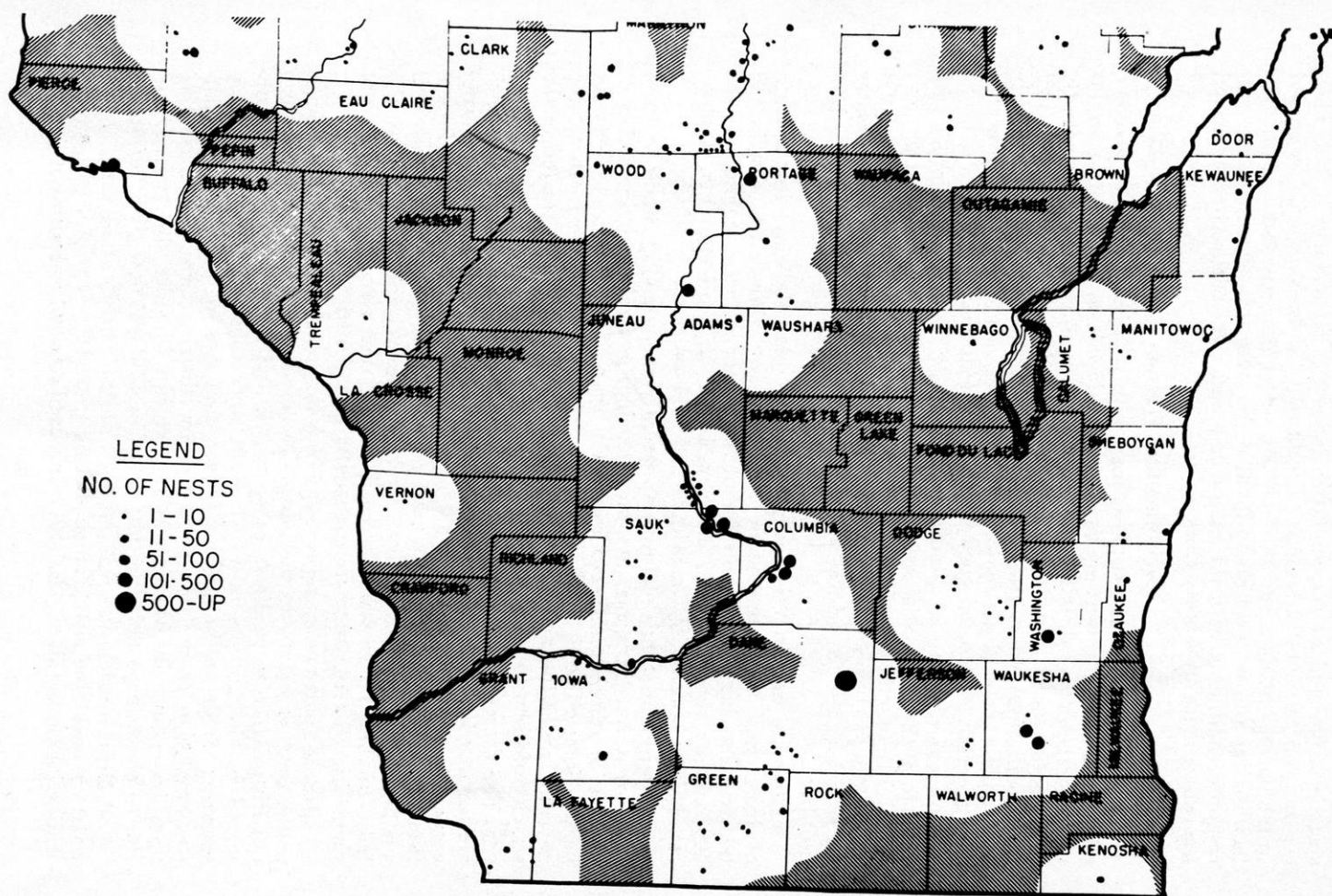
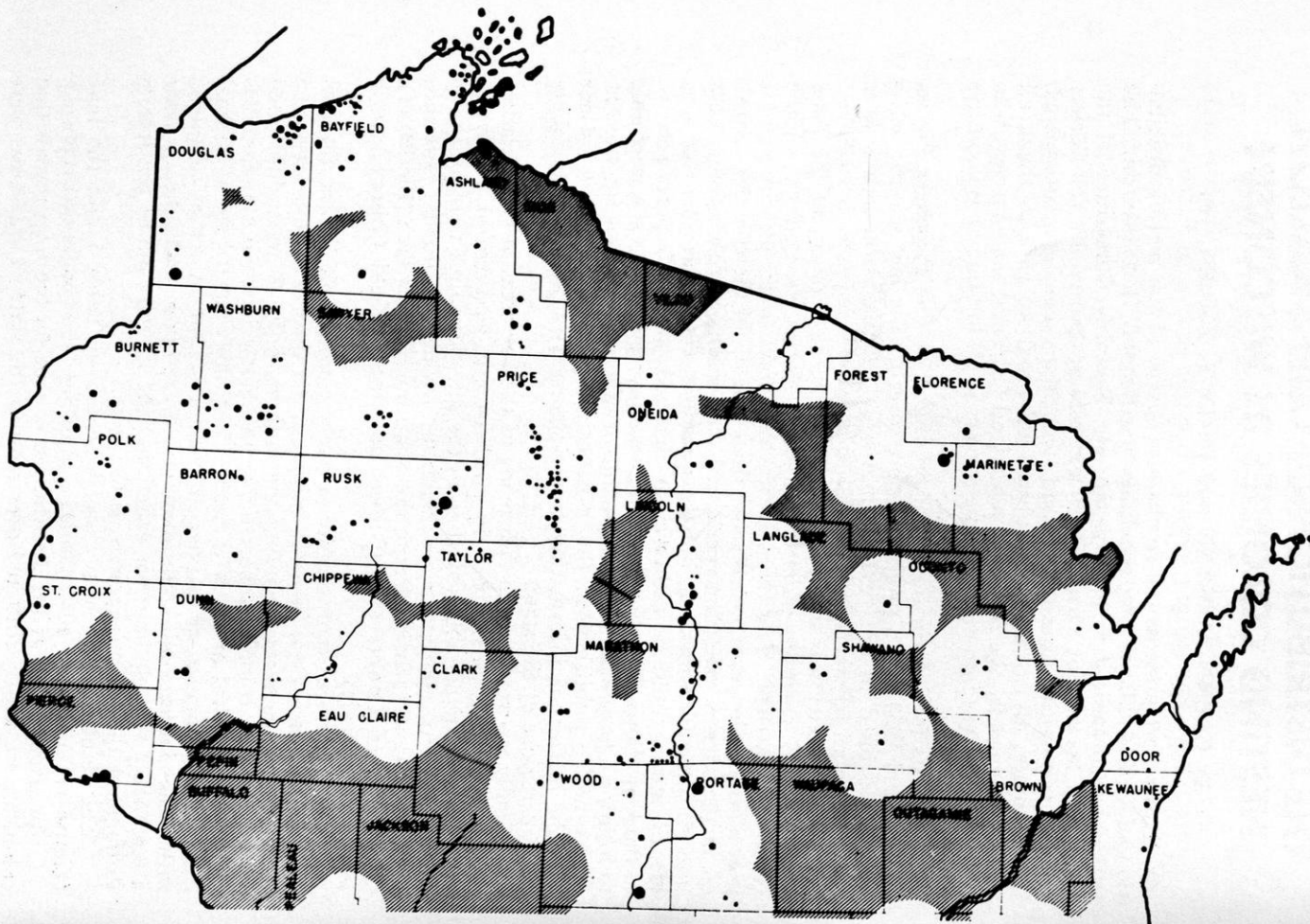
A notice published in the Wisconsin Agriculturalist and Farmer brought in further information from interested farmers in several important regions of the state.

Finally we were able to visit many of the key areas of Cliff Swallow distribution personally. Areas in northern and west-central Wisconsin which had relatively poor coverage in the questionnaires were also carefully rechecked. Active Society members provided invaluable assistance in these check-ups particularly in the Marathon County area (Bierbauer), the Washburn County area (Grewe) and the Bayfield County-Apostle Island area (Beale).

It is clear to us that, despite our very considerable efforts, the coverage in this survey was far from complete. Of the 197 colonies reported by W. S. O. members including the authors, only 23 were duplicated among the 217 colonies reported independently by mail carriers. Re-checking in critical areas, furthermore, invariably turned up additional colonies. Our figures, accordingly, must not be interpreted as complete; rather they indicate minimum numbers. More importantly they provide a reasonably reliable basis for examining the distribution of the species throughout the various regions of the state.

The results of the survey are presented in Table 1 and the map (Figure 1). A total of 405 colonies containing 11,534 nests was reported.

An examination of the distribution of dots on the map reveals that colonies were widely scattered over most of the state. Large areas were



sparsely populated or unpopulated, however, particularly in the west-central and east-central regions as indicated by the shading. As an aid in tabulating the data and in analyzing the characteristics of this irregular distribution, we arbitrarily divided the state into seven districts corresponding roughly with the major lake and river basins, but delimited for convenience by county lines.

Environmental Features

A comparison of the swallow map with published maps of geology, climate and vegetation suggests that climatic factors are of little importance in restricting distribution within our boundaries. An apparently meaningful correlation, however, relates swallow distribution with soil type. Soils classified as gray brown, sandy or prairie types were sparsely populated except along major water courses, while gray soils over red clay generally supported good swallow populations.

An examination of conditions at a large number of colonies suggests that three essential environmental features for colonization are: (1) a cliff or cliff substitute with protecting overhang providing nest sites, (2) a fairly open landscape with meadows, marshes or open water for foraging, and (3) a local source of mud of a suitable texture for nest building.

Cliffs are rare in Wisconsin, but acceptable substitutes in the form of barns and other man-made structures are abundantly distributed nearly everywhere except in some of the northern forest regions. Of the 405 colonies reported, 63% were on barns, 18% on churches, schools, etc., 5% on houses, 2% on bridges and 11% on natural cliffs.

Continuous stands of forest apparently exclude Cliff Swallows from some areas, but lakes, marshes, and clearings generally provide sufficient patches of open country to support a scattering of colonies even in heavily forested sections of Wisconsin. The absence of birds from large parts of Iron, Vilas and Sawyer counties, however, may be related to the scarcity of open foraging situations.

The presence of fine textured soils with adhesive qualities appropriate for nest building may well be the principal limiting factor in many areas. Groups of swallows often make abortive starts at colony formation in areas lacking this essential element. Using the loose sandy soil available near by, they persistently build and rebuild only to have the fruits of their labors crumble away. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the sites are eventually abandoned.

House Sparrows are reported to be a suppressing factor in some parts of the state, especially in the south. Twenty-two observers reported serious disturbance to swallows by sparrows, and many instances were observed by the authors in which nests were taken over by marauding sparrows. It should be noted, however, that most of the reports of sparrow predation came from good swallow districts. For this reason we must have more information before we can consider the House Sparrow to be an important limiting factor in Cliff Swallow distribution.

A little information was obtained on the history of colonies. Many small colonies obviously change nesting sites every year. Larger colonies tend to be more stable. The oldest reported colony has continuously used

| District | Dominant Soil types | Number of colonies by size of colony | | | | | Total # colonies | Colonies per 100 sq. mile | Total # of nests | Nests per 100 sq. mile |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------|--------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| | | 1-10 | 11-50 | 51-100 | 101-500 | 500-up | | | | |
| #1 Lake Superior 2,784 sq. miles | Gray and gray-brown over red clay | 14 | 29 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 58 | 2.1 | 1596 | 57 |
| #2 St. Croix & Chippewa River Basins 14,669 sq. miles | Gray-brown and gray over red clay | 50 | 64 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 131 | 0.89 | 3540 | 24 |
| #3 Black River Basin 5,463 sq. miles | Sand gray-brown | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0.07 | 28 | 0.5 |
| #4 Upper Wisconsin River Basin 6,095 sq. miles | Gray and gray-brown over red clay. Sand in lower and upper sec- tion of district | 23 | 30 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 60 | 0.98 | 1487 | 24 |
| #5 Lower Wisconsin River Basin 7,043 sq. miles | Gray-brown Prairie | 40 | 12 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 61 | 0.87 | 1480 | 21 |
| #6 Lake Michigan Shore Fox River Basin 8,759 sq. miles | Gray and gray-brown over red clay | 15 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 32 | 0.37 | 1035 | 12 |
| #7 Rock River Basin 9,839 sq. miles | Gray-brown Prairie | 43 | 12 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 59 | 0.60 | 2368 | 24 |
| TOTAL | | 189 | 161 | 41 | 13 | 1 | 405 | 0.74 | 11534 | 21 |

the same site for 67 years. Annual cleaning of the nesting wall is favorable and may at times be necessary as preparation for a return to the same site. Of 45 responses to a question on population trends, 24 reported recent increases in colony size and 21 reported decreases. Of 30 responses to a question on the reaction of people to the presence of nesting swallows on their premises, 21 appreciated them and 9 considered them a nuisance.

In retrospect it is clear that a thorough coverage of all the state would require far more time than was available to us. It should be possible, however, for an active field observer to do a complete job on his home county in a single season. We suggest that W. S. O. members could undertake such surveys with much enjoyment and much profit. We would be glad to send suggestions for procedure plus details of the 1957-58 survey for any specified county to such members.

Department of Zoology
University of Wisconsin

More About Purple Finches

By EDNA KOENIG

Have you ever fed one and a half tons of sunflower seeds to Purple Finches in six months? If so, you have some idea of the number of birds which come daily to our bird sanctuary in the heart of this little village. We estimate there are about 600 Purple Finches. Last year at the peak there were around 200. This year at the Christmas count we mentioned 375 but after that they rapidly increased in number.

Yes, the Purple Finches have taken us over completely and a more interesting, entertaining, and friendly bird is hard to find. It has been said that birds are individuals. We heartily agree. No two finches seem identical and all have their particular mannerisms, which we have often observed at the feeders.

Sometimes when we wish to attract a great number of finches to one spot for visitors to see at close range, we spread about a quart of sunflower seeds on the small back porch and steps near which are some of the 30 feeders. In a few minutes the porch is covered with a carpet of friendly Purple Finches all chattering and perhaps talking about their good fortune. As more birds come they land on the backs of others already there in an effort to squeeze in to a feeding spot. Here one can see the males in varying degrees of red. There seem to be as many males as females—possibly more, for some young males are just beginning to show color and others, as yet, may show none at all. The older ones are beautiful in their fully developed coats of raspberry red. Whenever the finches become excited their head feathers are raised and give the semblance of a crest, but perhaps all birds do that for we have seen it in the case of Robins.

Often we are asked, "Why are these birds called Purple Finches?" Perhaps it would be more to the point to rename them the "raspberry



FINCHES CLUSTERED AROUND ONE OF OUR THIRTY FEEDERS.

PHOTO BY HENRY KOENIG

finch." We do tell visitors that always in late March and early April the droppings of these finches are definitely purple. It of course has nothing to do with their name but is a coincidence. What do they eat then but not in winter? Perhaps it is the buds of the basswood trees.

This has been a winter of deep snow and severe cold in Wisconsin, and many a sub-zero morning the finches came with humps of white frost or ice on their backs where their breath had frozen during the night. We were happy to be able to gather the finch family closely about us and keep it well fed. It is a routine part of our daily lives every evening without fail to put out the birds' breakfast, for they come early. At this time of year they feed about 12 hours, from six to six. Birds are good forecasters of bad weather, for on days before a storm they fire up furiously, and every branch of every shrub around the feeders is crowded with waiting birds until the shrubs look as if they have suddenly sprouted great leaves which dance about in the wind. On such days a feeder has sometimes two or three finches on a single perch, and should an Evening Grosbeak chance to be there, the wide back of this bird is used as a landing field by the finches, causing the grosbeak to leave. There are eight feeders hung from a plastic clothes line, and on this line the waiting finches sit as closely together as martins on a wire. Finches crowding on a certain feeder swing in chickadee fashion, upside down under the perches to get out of pecking range of the others.

Recently we were without sunflower seeds for a day because the half ton shipment was delayed by a blizzard. We had to rely on the wild bird mixture which we had gotten especially for the two Pine Siskins, two Juncos, and a single Goldfinch. (I must mention here that the Pine Siskins, with sharp bill and outspread wings, chase the finches from

the sill feeders in no uncertain terms.) When the seeds arrived we immediately went out to fill the feeders. While we were still at the first one Blackie Finch came to it. This finch is always the first on hand because it does not fight like the others and leaves when the feeders become crowded. This tame, trusting, half-starved finch came toward evening on Feb. 2, looking like a dark shadow in the window-sill feeder and ate until almost dark. Morning found it there again. Always when we were filling the sill feeders it came even before the window was closed. There have been gradual changes in its appearance; it is less dark now, but we do not know if Blackie is a male or female. Several years ago there was a similar experience with a starving very black finch with a missing upper mandible. This bird required special food until the mandible grew again. It proved to be a male and sang before it left in spring.

Feb. 14, the day of the second area bird count, a strange looking Purple Finch came and has returned daily. This bird has a pale pink head with a red stripe down the center, pink and white wing patches, and an ivory bill. We look for Pinkie and Blackie every day and usually see both.

During winters of deep, unceasing snow, hawks too have a struggle for existence and go where there are concentrations of birds. The morning of Jan. 18 the finches flew by the window like a cloud, and upon looking out not a bird was in sight. Then we saw the object of their sudden flight, for a hawk sat in the mulberry tree near the house. This day marked our introduction to what is thought to be a Cooper's Hawk. It was seen again a month later and thereafter was almost a daily visitor for a time. Whenever the birds fled in terror, hitting the windows and house in their hurry and thereby injuring or killing themselves, we knew the hawk was here. One sad day we lost four finches in this way. Upon returning from shopping we noticed feathers floating lazily down from the willow where, to our horror, sat the hawk eating a male finch, judging from the feathers on the snow below. We picked up three dead finches and two stunned ones which were taken into the house and put into the usual paper recovery bags. One bird was released in a few hours but the other couldn't fly well and was kept in a large cage for ten days.* On New Year's Day an injured finch which couldn't crack sunflower seeds was brought here. It was fed hulled seeds and after two weeks released. Similar incidents have taken place all winter. How we dread the thud of finches against the windows. We are unable to get at our screens this winter but next year we shall fasten them over the storm windows to protect the birds, and hope the hawk will not return.

We hope the birds encounter no DDT-sprayed areas during migration to their northern nesting grounds, for we are already looking forward to their return in fall. May they be accompanied by their many offspring for a bigger and better Purple Finch count next year. Last fall the first finch appeared on Oct. 10, and it was his singing which made us aware of him. These mornings of mid-March one is greeted by a breath-taking concert, for a finch chorus of several hundred voices is something never to be forgotten, and we hear no summer singing which

*The author has federal and state permits for keeping injured birds.

can possibly compare with it in beauty or volume. How I wish we had a recording of it! Perhaps another year we may have one.

The preceding report on the Purple Finches would be incomplete without an addition at this later date about our precious caged finch which has been with us over two months. This bird was found by us on the street in the early morning of April 17. It apparently had been struck by a car for it was unable to fly due to a broken left wing; it had lost the left eye and the head was bruised and bleeding.

We put this sad looking bird into a large cage with plenty of sunflower seeds, wild bird mixture, hemp, grit, and water. The cage also had in it the bare branches of a small tree for perching. At first the finch was hardly able to move about. We discovered it was unable to crack sunflower seeds so we fed it crushed, hulled ones. After 2 weeks we were elated to see the finch perch on a low branch of the tree. Thereafter it was able to hop about the tree and slept there instead of on the floor. Two days later we experienced a real thrill. We had been under the impression that our bird was a female, but about supper time we heard a lovely strong song which came from the Purple Finch. Since then we have been rewarded daily with its beautiful song.

We keep the bird in our bedroom where there are window-still feeders at three of the six windows where other birds feed constantly. The cage stands on an old-fashioned tea cart from which we can extend the cage out of an unscreened window. The finch now takes at least one bath daily, generally in the morning, but does not flap its wings in the usual manner of a bathing bird. It stands in the large drinking dish and dips its head into the water causing it to spatter in all directions.

Our Purple Finch at various times has sung at every hour of the night. Once when we returned home at midnight it burst into song as we entered the house. The early morning song of the finch is clear and



A FEW OF OUR FINCHES FEEDING ON THE GROUND. CAN YOU COUNT 127 BIRDS?

PHOTO BY HENRY KOENIG

strong and is sung in short phrases. The later morning and afternoon song is usually a soft continuous warble. The evening song from about 5:00 to 8:00 during daylight saving time is again loud and clear. We have noticed that now toward the end of June, the bird's singing has tapered off considerably.

Because it looks as if the Purple Finch will be our guest for some time my husband made a still larger cage which fills the open window completely and can be pushed outside the window on a track any distance or entirely, so the window may be closed. This cage is 3 ft. long, 2½ ft. wide, and 2 ft. high. It contains a potted pyramidal arbor vitae tree the height of the cage, some bare branches for perching and exercising, a drinking and bathing dish, and the usual seeds. Every day we give the bird a supply of bridal wreath sprigs which are covered with aphids and the finch hungrily eats them, stems and all. It also likes wild sorrel, forget-me-not greens, strawberries, and grapes. As the summer progresses we shall experiment with various greens and insects. We are anxious for the honeysuckle berries to ripen.

Until just recently the little finch furnished music during all our meals and we could observe him while at the table. He seems fairly content for he has sung daily, especially on bright and sunny days. We made a tape recording of the two types of songs of the purple finch and expect to have a record made which can be played on the Hi Fi.

We assume that this finch was hatched last summer, and if the bird is with us long enough, it will be interesting to note when he first shows a change of color for he is still in female attire. And so there may be further mention of this bird at some future time.

215 Jackson Street
Sauk City

NEWS . . .

June seems like a long way away, but it is not too early to begin whetting your appetite for the next WSO annual convention, to be held at Adams June 3-5, 1960. Already engaged as banquet speaker is Charles Schwartz, Missouri, nationally famous conservationist and wildlife photographer.

Before long Program Chairman Fran Hamerstrom will be looking for papers and pictures to round out the rest of the program. We hope that by that time several WSO members will have studies they can report on, pictures to show, and exhibits that will make for a full, well-rounded program.

The J. N. Clark collection, consisting of some 600 specimens largely secured from the Dunn County region in the late nineteenth century, was recently donated by some of Clark's heirs to the State College at Eau Claire.

We welcome the Kellogg Seed Company to our family of advertisers. More and more people are discovering more enjoy-

ment with winter birds by maintaining substantial feeding stations. We recommend that this be done by more WSO members, and that they patronize our advertisers when ordering seed.

Another new advertiser is Harold Kruse, distributor for "Folbot," a collapsible but durable 17-foot boat ideally adapted for wildlife observation and photography. Being easily transportable, it can make possible exploration of hitherto inaccessible areas along rivers and flowages where wildlife abounds.

This is the final issue of **The Passenger Pigeon** to be processed by the present editor. So many pressing duties have engulfed him that he tendered his resignation at the September meeting of the Board of Directors, effective December 1. One of Madison's most active ornithologists, Mr. Eugene Roark, has been appointed to fill out the present editor's unexpired term. Mr. Roark is admirably suited for this job; at present he is editing monthly bulletins for the Madison Audubon Society and the Dane County Conservation League.

(more news on page 116)

BIRD FATALITIES AT A "TOWER" IN 1887

By WALLACE N. MacBRIAR, JR.

Most birders who are studying the mortality among our birds at television towers are well aware that high structures have been a problem to birds in migration for quite a number of years. This has been publicized recently by Charles Kemper and Clarence Jung who are at present studying the cause and effect of nocturnal collisions on the television towers of Wisconsin. This problem is also being studied cooperatively in many states elsewhere. Lighthouses have been notorious in the past for their contribution to the death of countless thousands of migrants. The Washington Monument is another well publicized structure that is a destroyer of bird life during adverse weather conditions.

It was of no minor interest to me that I came across data published in *The Auk** of 1888 that gave details of birds flying into the old Milwaukee Exposition Building during the fall of 1887. No longer part of this city's scene, it was located where the Milwaukee Auditorium now stands. The tower in the center of the building rose "over 200 feet above the street" and was "illuminated by four electric lights of 2000 candle power each." They were "lighted from 6:00 to 6:30 p. m. and turned out at 11:00 to 11:30 p. m., according to the condition of the atmosphere."

The weather prior to September 20, 1887 had been exceptionally mild and pleasant according to Kumlien. However, on the night of the 21-22 "it grew suddenly cooler with a raw cold north wind." This type of weather continued through the night of September 23-24 with the 24th turning into "a very pleasant day with light northwest wind." The 25th and 26th were evidently mild, fair days with southerly winds, but the weather turned "boisterous" on the 27th and it rained very hard on the 28th and 29th.

Though birds were reported killed during the nights of September 21-22, 24-25 and 25-26, they were not enumerated in Kumlien's account due to various reasons. Observations in the tower on the 27-28, 28-29 and 29-30 were made on birds as they passed the tower in flight, evidently none being killed on those nights.

Kumlien also states that "another interesting fact is that among the forty odd species and many times that number of specimens I only detected four adult birds."

"Apparently most of the birds were killed by coming in contact with the electric wires, as there was not a bruise nor hardly a ruffled feather on them. Some had flown against the lights and broken or bruised their bills, other had torn the skin or feathers from the side of the head or throat, and in two instances the wings were gone. Two or three had their necks broken.

"I estimate the number procured at about fifty per cent of those killed. A large number fell on inaccessible roofs, or were blown into the eave troughs during the high winds and lost."

*Kumlien, Ludwig, "Observations on Bird Migration at Milwaukee," General Notes, *THE AUK*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1888, pp. 325-28.



SCENE OF "TOWER" CASUALTIES IN 1887.

Kumlien shows the following species killed, principally on the nights of September 21-22, 22-23 and 24-25: Flicker, House Wren, Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Black-and-White Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Parula Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Connecticut Warbler, Yellowthroat, Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow and Song Sparrow.

While in the tower or on the street on subsequent nights Kumlien heard or saw flocks of thrushes and sparrows, and individuals of gallinules, rails and night herons.

In retrospect, before man's engineering ability enabled him to reach skyward and before he was able to reduce the darkness of night with modern illumination, did birds, flying ancient ancestral paths, encounter natural barriers to their migratory flight paths and be destroyed in countless numbers as is now apparent, today? In 1887 there were but few lighted buildings with consequent insignificant loss by this hazard. Today the confusion to migrating birds must be greatly increased with cities on every hand; high buildings with varying types of illumination from general lighting of the building to advertising billboards on their sides reaching to the highest floor; television towers piercing the clouds above, some as high as a quarter of a mile up; and many other types of man-made structures that are an aid to man's way of life, but a detriment in the path of birds' instinct in travelling to and from traditional summer and winter quarters.

Milwaukee Public Museum

EDITORIAL

One of the most significant contributions to ornithology made by W. S. O. during its twenty-year history has been made by members joining together in a series of cooperative research projects. The article on Cliff Swallow nesting colonies in this issue is a splendid example.

Some of the cooperative projects have been state-wide in nature. The Cliff Swallow study takes its place with previous studies of the Starling, Bald Eagle, Cardinal, Purple Martin, Dickcissel, Common Egret, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Meadowlarks, Red-tailed Hawk and Great Blue Heron as definitive works on the status of these species in the state. Several years ago a Research Chairman was appointed to give leadership and direction to these and other research projects.

Other projects have been nation-wide in scope, with W. S. O. members joining with ornithologists over a wide area in projects of wide significance and interest. The most notable example has been the annual Christmas bird count. Others have included a survey of Evening Grosbeaks, the banding of Mourning Doves, the fall hawk-watch, and the cooperative migration study conducted each spring and fall by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Within the past few years, however, participation by sizeable numbers of W. S. O. members in most projects has been declining. Increasingly those responsible for the state-wide cooperative research projects have had to look outside of W. S. O. for much of their raw data. The latest report from Prof. Howard Young on the progress of the current cooperative research project—nesting studies of the Robin—is that the reports from the entire state for the past summer can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Dr. Charles Kemper reports that response to his statewide spring night migrant project was limited to one full report and a few tiny fragments. Wisconsin was once among the leaders in the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service cooperative migration project, but has slipped recently.

This is a plea for renewed widespread participation by W. S. O. members in the following projects:

1. **Robin Nesting Study.** One need not be an active field observer to gather important information; by watching Robins nesting in one's own neighborhood, and keeping an eye on local spraying operations, one can make a real contribution to a project that is of vital importance. For details, see the spring 1959 issue, or write Prof. Howard Young, Department of Biology, Wisconsin State College, La Crosse.

2. **Evening Grosbeak Survey.** For years the B. M. Shaubs (159 Elm St., Northampton, Mass.) have been studying the habits and wanderings of the Evening Grosbeak, but need much more information from Wisconsin. Watch for these birds this winter; keep track of population changes, the ratio of males and females, etc.; and send your data to the Shaubs.

3. **Cooperative Migration Study.** The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service is learning much about the migration patterns of some common species by gathering arrival, peak and departure dates from observers in many

states. 22 common species are being studied, and fragmentary reports on even one of these species is welcome. For report forms, write the editor.

4. **Monitoring Nocturnal Chips.** Details of this project, headed by Dr. Kemper, can be found in the winter 1958 issue. If you take your dog for an evening stroll in springtime, you can keep your ears open and help with this project. Or five minutes spent in the back yard before retiring each evening would help.

5. **Christmas Bird Count.** Interest in this project has remained at a high level, but there are still large areas of Wisconsin that are not being covered. See pages 110-111 for directions.

The present Research Chairman is Mrs. John McEwan, 9064 N. Tennyson Drive, Milwaukee 17. If you have comments about these projects, or other projects you would like to see undertaken in the future, pass them on to the Research Chairman.

Our Family's Bird Jungle

By MRS. EARL SCHMIDT

Our Jungle is no more. It has made way for "progress" as so many natural bird sanctuaries seem to do with increasing frequency.

This seems like a good time to organize notes, observations and memories. Twenty years ago we moved to a short "dead end" street with only two other houses on it, and ours was the one at the north end where the small town ends and the farmer's fields begin. Birds were noted in passing as interesting or colorful parts of the nature, but life was spent chiefly in raising two children and other family affairs. Gardening, canning and cooking food, sewing, Church, school and general housemaking were time-consuming.

"The Jungle" was the family's affectionate name for the strip of trees, brush and wildflowers along the farmer's fence and extending from our lot to the woods about a half mile away. Children played in parts of the jungle now and then but the poison ivy discouraged this, and for the most part, it was permitted to stay wild and grow into a tangle with raspberry bushes, grape vines, Virginia creeper, etc. The two lots at the end of the street were the first to be "improved," which left a tight patch of cherry, wild plum and boxelder trees about fifty feet square adjoining our land on the north side.

For about the last six years—after the girls were in high school—more time was found to observe nature near our home. As the jungle dwindled we began to find our awareness of the nature drama came almost too late. Now we seriously began to observe the birds with a Peterson's Field Guide firmly in hand. A long-time pen pal in another city had recommended it, and it opened up a whole new world to be able to identify the various birds. There turned out to be several kinds of blackbirds and hawks, also various small flitting morsels full of cheeps and twitters. One small brown one, sang so constantly it awakened us all early every morning. This was the common Song Sparrow and this

particular one had an especially high-pitched song and so was named "Squeaky." It returned for four or five consecutive years; its favorite song perch was one of the posts of the fence behind our vegetable garden. It had competition in a pair of wrens. Killdeer flew over the house constantly from the grassy field across the street to their nests in the farmer's plowed field. Also in the field were nesting Meadowlarks each year. One summer we could not avoid noticing a certain Meadowlark which would perch on the top of the telephone pole on the corner of our lot, and sing steadily for about a half hour the same time each day. He faced the sunset and really tried hard to sing the sun up or down—it is difficult to say which idea he had. Also Catbirds always nested in the jungle.

Some of the birds were easy to identify but if we failed, we just turned to another puzzling one and pretended the first one did not exist. Just at first, when this business was so fascinating and serious, we found ourselves desperately trying to hold the book upside down and sideways for a better view of some part of the bird. Binoculars 7x30 were purchased as soon as we were able; then we really made rapid strides in identification, as we did not have to hide behind trees to peer at the feathered mites. The day a Field Sparrow stayed in a tree long enough to be positively identified was a day to record in the little green book. We stumbled into the house with eyes watering from the effort and short of breath. Another day during spring migration we happened to be looking out of the window just as a Towhee dropped into the top of a cherry tree, looked around and promptly flew on to the east. It was the only time a Towhee was seen so near our home.

Another day was thrilling when a Brown Thrasher stayed all morning and three Swainson's Thrushes (Olive-backed as they were known then) remained a whole three days. We found these thrushes arrived almost the same day each spring and fall as we kept careful records.

Frightened by Thunder Storm

After one thunder and wind storm a flock of Swainson's Thrushes ate the buds on the front sidewalk that had been blown off the large maple tree on the front lawn. At that short distance they could be positively identified. Another electric storm, on a warm summer day furnished a surprise. There was a Robin's nest about 15 feet above the ground in this large maple tree, and one of the pair was sitting on the eggs in the nest. We were on the glassed-in front porch watching the storm. As the lightning seemed to strike suddenly close-by the Robin peeped a shriek of terror and flew straight off the nest and out of the tree. It sat on a branch of the next tree, looked around, and flew back on to the nest as if ashamed.

As the lists were added to year after year, we began to see a pattern and received satisfaction in identification and a lengthening life list. Trips made with the car were made to locate new kinds of birds. The whole family became interested and watched for birds as they went to school or work. It brought them closer to the realization that there is a plan for everything in the world and a spirit that takes care of all.

Reading all we could find about various birds in the many books and magazines available at the library was necessary to learn the mean-

ing of what we saw. We finally lost the tendency to see a plaid bird with a red tail. We no longer looked for birds that would not possibly be in a given place. We looked for and found a vireo in the woods and a Great Blue Heron near water. We did not worry too much about being infallible to the detriment of pleasure. We did hope to be more accurate than the male Cowbird who put on his best dance and (reminiscent of the English dish called "bubble and squeak") sang his heart out in our jungle to four or five attentive female House Sparrows perched close by. The next morning he was seen with a female Cowbird on the plowed field so all was well.

Progress was slow and unsteady at best, and had to be laid aside during the barren days of winter—as we thought then. That is when we began to feed the birds. Suet was tied in a crotch of the old apple tree opposite the window above the kitchen sink which gave a good view. A feeder was hung on the clothesline that was tied from the house to the garage. This brought more interest to winter days.

So far we have counted 84 species of birds on or near our own land at one time or another. Many have nested but of course many only stay a short time or merely fly over.

While everyone realizes a town must build more homes in order to grow, this account is intended to illustrate what happens to wild birds in a small corner of the world. Our meadow has had five homes built on it. Our jungle is gone—also gone, slowly but surely, are the Song Sparrows, Catbirds, Meadowlarks, most of the Killdeer, and most of the migrants. We miss all of them.

Without considering poison spraying as a problem in itself, we have lost many of the old time common birds and wonder how they fare and where they have gone to try to continue to survive. Instinct is very hard or impossible to change.

All in all over the years this inexpensive hobby seems to grow in rewards, and can be indulged in at long or short periods while alone or in company with other kindred souls.

Membership in the WSO has made it more fascinating, as we can compare various phases and also enter into special projects we could not hope to accomplish alone.

450 Seventh Street
Hartford

1959 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Since it is becoming increasingly apparent that quantative studies of bird populations are needed, in order to determine the effect of such factors as changing habitat and increased use of insecticides, the Christmas bird count is taking on increased significance as a project of value. Last year 572 counts were taken throughout North America, many of them duplicating areas counted for a number of years, thus providing valid year-to-year comparisons of fluctuations in bird populations.

Wisconsin has had a good record of participating in this project, but it can be better. 35 counts were taken in Wisconsin last year; 34

were published in **The Passenger Pigeon**; 28 met nation-wide specifications of size and duration; and 18 were published in **Audubon Field Notes**. 25 were repeats of areas covered in each of the previous two years.

Many key areas in the state are not being covered in the Christmas count. Last year there was a hole in east-central Wisconsin—no count was received from Dodge, Fond du Lac, Winnebago, Calumet or Sheboygan County. The south-western portion (Green, Lafayette, Grant, Iowa, Richland, Crawford and Vernon Counties) had but two counts. Interesting spots in the north-eastern area (Shawano, Oconto and Marinette Counties) were missed. And the entire north-western region—with the exception of one Polk County count—was neglected. Observers in these areas are urged to organize counts. The following suggestions are offered:

Observers. Contact persons in your area whom you know to be interested in birds, and who have some competence in bird identification. If enough competent observers can be assembled, plan to divide them into two or more parties, so that more thorough coverage is possible. A count can be taken by one individual, but it is much better when several persons can cooperate.

Locality. Christmas bird count requirements are that the chosen count area should fit within a circle of 7½-mile radius. Choose an area of the right size so as to include the most varied type of habitat possible; include open water if possible; cover residential sections—particularly where bird feeders are in operation; include open fields and woods (different types of woods desirable).

Time. Pick a day between Wednesday, December 23 and Sunday, January 3, when observers can be in the field as much of the day as possible—eight hours or more. Be in the field soon after daybreak; the early hours are the times when birds are most active and noisy. An hour or so of driving roads near wooded sections before dawn, with frequent stops, can result in significant owl counts.

Counting Birds. Exact counts of birds should be made, or careful estimates where exact counting is impossible. Each observer should keep a running account in the field, rather than rely on memory later on. Observers should not be content with just recording one Chickadee when they hear one; they should investigate, and perhaps may find there are six Chickadees, several nuthatches and woodpeckers, and perhaps a kinglet or a Brown Creeper.

Weather Data. Extremes of temperature, sky condition, wind velocity and direction, amount of snow on the ground, presence of open water, all should be noted and included in the final summary.

Reporting. Reports should be sent to the Associate Editor by January 15. The Associate Editor has forms for reporting that are available on request, if you have not already received one. In addition, observers are encouraged to send results to Miss Elizabeth S. Manning, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y.; a request to Miss Manning will bring the correct reporting form to you.

WISCONSIN'S FIRST RUFF PHOTOGRAPHED

Here is photographic evidence of the first Ruff ever known to visit Wisconsin. The bird was first discovered on May 15, 1959, on a flooded field one mile west of Norway Grove in northern Dane County, by Mr. and Mrs. N. R. Barger, N. R. Barger, Jr., Mrs. R. A. Walker, and Sam Robbins. These photographs were taken by early morning light the next morning, and the bird was still present in the area on May 20 (see 1959 Pass Pigeon 73-74).



STANDING ERECT

PHOTO BY MARTHA LOUND



IN FEEDING POSE

PHOTO BY N. R. BARGER, JR.

The upper photo shows the bird standing in erect position, in which pose the bird appeared somewhat larger than a Lesser Yellowlegs. Note the medium-length sandpiper bill, the very dark head and breast, terminating in large dark blotches on the belly.

The lower photo shows the bird in feeding pose. The dark belly blotches are again evident. Note the ruffled effect of the feathers of the upper breast.

WISCONSIN'S FAVORITE BIRD HAUNTS

GREEN BAY

Most famous of the Green Bay area's birding spots is the four-mile-long west bay shore (Area A) where, in the spring migration, up to 20,000 Whistling Swans can be seen at one time. The shallow muddy edges are the traditional feeding places of the swans; swans and other waterfowl feed on the thick beds of underwater plants.

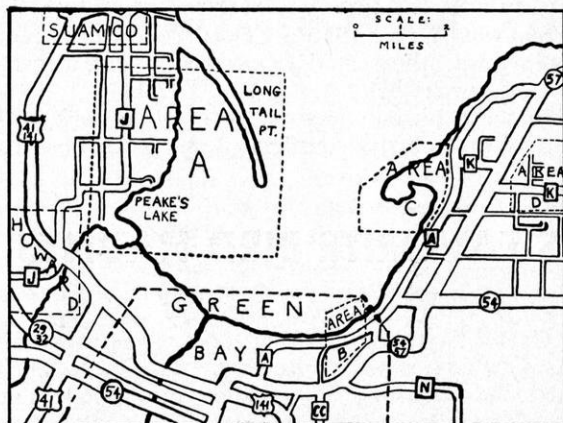
This area extends from the mouth of Duck Creek at the northwest edge of Green Bay on the south to the base of Long Tail Point on the north. Just north of the mouth of Duck Creek is a little muddy cove which is known to local duck hunters as "Peake's Lake," although it isn't a lake. This is a favorite feeding place of the swans. No public road reaches the edge of this cove, but several come within viewing distance of it.

Some years the "swan season" in Green Bay may last from about March 21 to about April 20. In average years highest concentrations are seen during the first week in April. Although the Fox River and the deep channel of the bay are usually open soon after the middle of March, the birds do not begin to congregate until their shallow water feeding spots are free of ice. This occurs usually during the last week or ten days of March.

An unusually short swan season occurs in years when an unseasonably warm spell comes along while their numbers are building up. Flock after flock may take off for the north before the rest of their fellows have arrived here from their wintering grounds along Chesapeake Bay and Carrituck Sound. In a poor swan year, local birders are happy to see 2,000 to 5,000 swans at one time on the bay. But in good years, when a cold spell holds them here for a week or more, numbers run from 10,000 to 20,000 or more.

The long arm of Long Tail Point, at the north end of Area A, is not always a peninsula, as shown on the map. In times of high water it is an island, cut off from the mainland at its "shoulder." The southern third of this arm is covered with shrubs and trees. In recent years, since the abandonment of the lighthouse at the end of the point, the wooded area has been a nesting site for a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons.

The stretch of water between the mainland and Long Tail's sheltering arm is a favorite gathering place for ducks of many species, geese and Coots—as well as swans—in late March and much of April. Early morning and early evening are the best times to see large flocks of swans close in-shore. During the day they are more apt to be off-shore, swimming in the water, resting on sand bars, or in the lee of Long Tail Point.



Ducks and geese stop off here in fall too, and small flocks of swans can be seen in November.

Along the west bay shore are marshes and fields that are attractive to shorebirds in spring. During May the low fields in the vicinity of the bay are often dotted with flocks of Golden, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Dunlins, Pectoral

and other sandpipers. Willets have been observed here several times. Wilson's Phalaropes have been seen here even in June. In the marshy areas Yellow-headed Blackbirds may be seen.

In the northwest corner of Area A, 1½ miles south of Suamico, a Great Blue Heron rookery is located near the Chicago Northwestern Railroad tracks. It can be reached by taking a wet foot-trail westward from C. T. H. "J." There are 75-100 nests in this rookery.

Along both the county and town roads of Area A are stretches of swamp and woodland. Willows, aspens, ash, elm, red maple and birch are typical trees, with an occasional pine or a patch of white cedar. This is a favorite spot for Green Bay birders. Birds seen and heard here, especially during June evenings, include the Wood Thrush, Veery, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Brown Thrasher, Catbird, Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, and various warblers.

The key to Area A is C. T. H. "J," which turns north off U. S. Highway 41-141 in the village of Howard (formerly Duck Creek), which edges the City of Green Bay on its northwest side. "J" maneuvers eastward to the vicinity of Peake's Lake and then bends northward. Various town roads lead toward the bay shore, giving good vantage points for the swans feeding in the shallow areas.

Green Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

On the northeast edge of the city, within city limits, lies the Green Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (Area B). Thousands of ducks (Mallards, Blacks), and many hundreds of Canada Geese winter over here each year, with the aid of a pond that is kept open by mechanical means. Both ducks and geese nest in the southern half of the 200-acre refuge, the nesting area protected by being closed to human traffic.

Among the song birds observed in the various types of habitat—landscaped picnic grounds, marsh, willow-alder-dogwood tickets, deciduous woodland—are Alder Flycatcher, Veery, Long and Short-billed Marsh Wrens, and Swamp, Henslow's and LeConte's Sparrows.

The city-owned sanctuary is open the year round, and is free to the

public. There is a glassed-in viewing room for cold weather visitors, overlooking the water area that is kept open in winter.

To reach the sanctuary, start east in the city on Highway 57, and near the eastern edge of the city, watch for Irwin Avenue. Turn left on North Irwin Avenue, follow one mile to the bay shore, turn right onto C. T. H. 'A,' and watch for the sanctuary sign.

Point Sauble

Point Sauble (Area C) on the east bay shore, is about five miles northeast of the city, just off C. T. H. "A." The several hundred wooded acres of this hook-shaped peninsula are privately owned and posted with "no trespassing" signs. Permission to hike in the area—there are no roads for cars—may be obtained from the owners through Green Bay Bird Club members.

Just about every duck found in Wisconsin has been observed off this point, or in the marshy cove between peninsula and mainland. Along the shore, shorebirds such as the Stilt Sandpiper, Dowitcher and Piping Plover have been seen. Caspian Terns are regularly seen here during migration, and occasionally wander this far from their Door County breeding grounds in summer.

In the wooded sections of Point Sauble a wide variety of song birds can be found either in migration or during the summer. Unusual species turn up here from time to time; the Yellow-breasted Chat has been observed several times, and the only Green Bay area record of the Magpie was obtained on this point on May 19, 1957.

Through late summer and autumn, Red-winged Blackbirds use the marshy edges of the point as night roosts. There are many such roosts all along the bay area, but this is one of the largest. During spring migration, Whistling Swans are observed here occasionally, but not in such large numbers as along the west bay shore.

Town of Scott

An interesting area of farmlands, evergreen swamps and hardwoods is located in the upper half of the town of Scott (Area D), east of Point Sauble. Parts of this area are particularly interesting in winter, for in some of the upland limestone rock sections of this area the red cedars abound, whose berries furnish winter food to fruit-eating species. Flocks of wintering Robins numbering up to 30 are invariably found here on Christmas bird counts; White-winged Crossbills have been seen feeding in hemlock trees, Purple Finches and Redpolls can be looked for in weedy thickets, and Pileated Woodpeckers inhabit the larger woodlands.

In summer Hermit Thrushes nest in some of the evergreen lowlands east of Highway 57 and north of C. T. H. "K."

To reach Area D, watch for C. T. H. "K" to turn east from Highway 57, 2½ miles north of the junction with Highway 54. Town roads leading both north and south off "K" are well worth exploring. One particularly good swamp can be reached from a town road two miles north of "K." Turn east off Highway 57 on the first town road past the Wequiock School and Wequiock Presbyterian Church. About one-half mile down this road is the Bob Gibson farm on the south side of the road. A small pond lies southeast of the farm, and beyond it an extensive swamp. A trail to this good birding area starts at the Gibson farm.—Clara Hussong.

MORE NEWS . . .

Word from Ralph H. Allen in Alabama (see 1958 Pass. Pigeon 144-147) tells that progress is being made in fighting the widespread fire ant eradication program that has caused such devastating losses in wildlife. "The Alabama Department of Conservation with the support of a number of sportsmen and the research organizations were successful in blocking a state appropriation of \$250,000 for each of the next two years requested by the Department of Agriculture to carry on the fire ant eradication program for the next two years. Without state appropriation the control of fire ants will of a necessity become the responsibility of the individuals who wish to control them on their lands. That is the way we believe it should be."

More good news about insecticides. Federal legislators passed Public Law 86-279 providing \$2,565,000 for a comprehensive study of the effects of chemical pesticides on fish and wildlife. This kind of research is desperately needed!

It is a compliment to **The Passenger Pigeon** and a publicity boost to WSO whenever requests come from other editors for permission to reprint an article that appeared in these pages. Permission was recently granted to reprint Sam Robbins' article on "Fun with Fall Warblers" (1959 Pass. Pigeon 57-65) in **New Hampshire Bird News**.

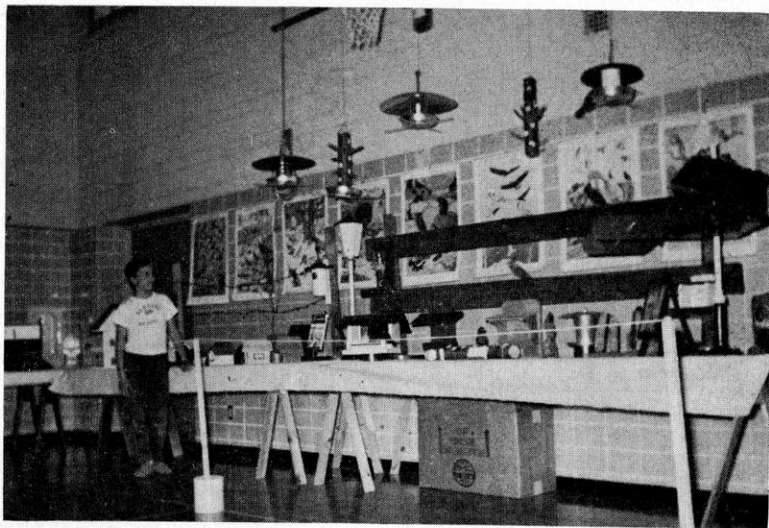
The latest membership report shows 502 active, 184 joint, 60 sustaining, 8 student, 15 life, 2 patron, 5 honorary, and 50 library—a total membership of 776. This is an all time high.

(more news on page 117)

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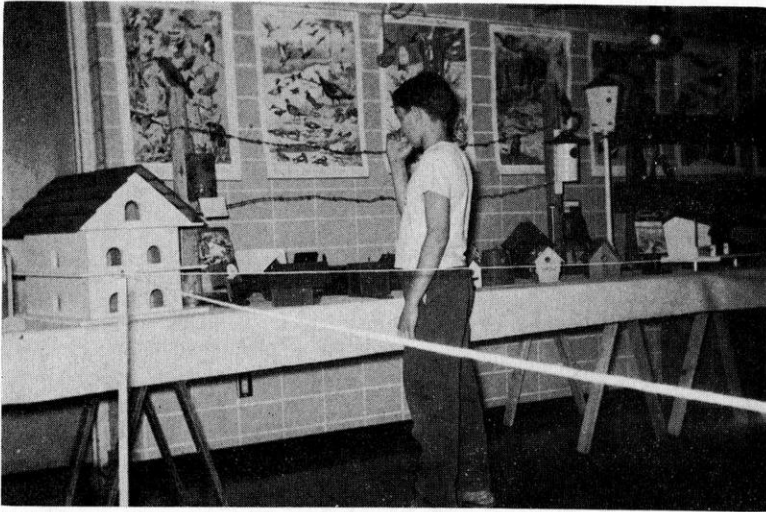
Hobby Show At Waukesha

Members of the Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club have been taking an active part in the annual hobby show conducted at Waukesha by the Y. M. C. A. and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. When this show was held in the spring of 1959, one of the winners was C. Peter Christianson, a long-time WSO member, who displayed a fascinating exhibit of home-made bird feeders and houses. The pictures below show some of the 100 feeders and houses made by Mr. Christianson in his basement workshop.



ORNITHOLOGICAL EXHIBIT

PHOTO BY C. PETER CHRISTIANSON



"THE PASSENGER PIGEON" IS INCLUDED

PHOTO BY C. PETER CHRISTIANSON

After making the houses and feeders, he gives them away to friends—especially young people—to encourage in others a growing love and appreciation for birds.

Hobby shows such as this are important to the good life. A creative hobby should be a part of the life of every person, and there is no finer hobby than bird study in one of its many forms. Hobby shows can be encouraged in many communities, and wherever they are staged, ornithologists have the opportunity to educate the public about all phases of bird study, and to stimulate an interest in birds among more people.

MORE NEWS . . .

When state legislators returned to Madison for the fall session at the State Capitol, they found that the Bald Eagle specimen in the chambers again looked like a bona fide Bald Eagle. Pursuant to action taken by the members at the last annual convention, the eagle was sent to taxidermist Karl Kahmann for a thorough cleaning. A beautiful job was done by the former WSO treasurer.

Birds and the U. S. Air Force are having trouble on two fronts. Out on Midway Island in the Pacific, Laysan Albatrosses use some of the airfield landing strips as nesting grounds, and the resulting collisions have resulted in some damage to aircraft. Efforts are being made to induce the birds to move their breeding grounds to neighboring islands; should this fail, a wholesale slaughter of the birds looms as a distinct possibility. In New Mexico a seven-mile stretch of rails

in a missile test track has become a favorite perch for partridge and quail. When rocket-powered sleds zoom along at speeds up to 3000 m.p. h., the impact with the birds puts dents and holes in the test mechanisms. Recordings of thunder, machine guns and hawk cries are being used to scare the birds off the rails at times of testing.

Last summer's campout at Wyalusing Park was a return to the site of the first campout seven years ago. Many of the same birds were seen again this year, some at very close range. Charles Kemper, Ed Peartree and Wallace MacBriar all came equipped with mist nets for banding purposes, and they made it possible for observers to see in the hand such unusual birds as Acadian Flycatchers, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Scarlet Tanagers. The composite list for the campout came to 86 species. Camps were set up on the ridge overlooking the deep and beautiful river bottoms, near the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers.

The long-awaited revision of "Wisconsin Birds—A Preliminary Check List with Migration Charts" is now in its final stages, and should be ready for purchase early in 1960. Two of the original authors, N. R. Barger and Sam Robbins, were joined by former Associate Editor Roy Lound in preparing the revision. No longer will it be called a "preliminary" checklist; the revision will have been based on a careful perusal of twenty years of field notes published in **The Passenger Pigeon**, on many years of personal field work in Wisconsin by the authors, and by consultant advice from a number of Wisconsin's outstanding ornithologists. Copies can be purchased through the WSO Supply Department, and should be ready before March 1.

We hope to review in a future issue an outstanding new nature reference book: "Complete Field Guide to American Wildlife" by Henry Hill Collins, Jr. This volume covers 1422 species of birds, mammals, snakes, turtles, lizards, salamanders, frogs, toads, fish and principal seashore life that inhabit the area east of the Rocky Mountains and north of the Carolinas and Oklahoma. We mention this at this time because a pre-publication saving of \$1.00 is available until December 31, 1959. The regular price will be \$6.95 for the regular edition, \$7.95 for the deluxe edition; if you order through the Supply Department before the end of December, knock \$1.00 off these prices.

(more news on page 130)

By The Wayside . . .

Loon Attacks Goldeneye. On August 4, I was watching a male Goldeneye in Oconto County. While the duck was quietly sitting on the water about a hundred feet from the densely wooded shore, it was attacked by a Loon. It was a sneaky underwater attack, and the poor duck lost many a feather. The Loon had been diving in the middle of the lake, about 170 yards away. All at once there was an explosion as the Loon came up immediately below the duck. The duck ran for shore, frantically beating its wings, while the Loon seemed to stand on its tail looking after it. The next day I could not find the duck.—H. Zell, Chicago, Ill.

Pine Grosbeak Behavior. Reports have it that the Evening Grosbeak has been more abundant than usual in the winter of 1958-59 in Wisconsin. Here in the Oconto area I would not say that this species is as plentiful as last year. This may be due to the fact that the box elder trees had fewer seeds than last year. Only scattered trees had seeds to compare with the crop during the winter of 1957-58.

In turn, the ash—both the black and the white—were heavily laden with seeds last fall and into the winter. When they first arrived, the Pine Grosbeaks fed almost exclusively upon the seeds of the ash. By the latter part of January the Pine Grosbeaks (more common than usual this winter) had the trees pretty well stripped, except for what seeds were torn off by the winter winds. After the Pine Grosbeaks had denuded the ash this winter, many departed; but those remaining have taken to eating the fruit of the sumac, and all flocks or individuals found feeding of late have been at the sumac.

Flocks of Pine Grosbeaks are made up mostly of females; usually if any males are present they are greatly outnumbered. I have wondered about this for some time, and on three occasions this winter I have witnessed the behavior of males that may explain this—although it may not mean anything. One morning last January while driving along the little used bay shore road, I came upon a number of Pine Grosbeaks feeding in a stand of black ash. Stopping the car I walked to this grove

of trees; and as I did so, the birds gradually drifted off. Among them I had spotted a male, and training the glasses on this individual, I could see at once that he was not feeding but preening his feathers; all the while a lone female, perched on the same limb as the male, kept feeding, although in the meantime the rest of the birds had left. I presume the only reason the one female remained is because the male was near at hand.

Less than half an hour later, and about two miles beyond on the same road and feeding on seeds of a black ash, I saw another group of a dozen grosbeaks, but only one red male. As I moved closer the females left, but the lone male continued feeding—paying no attention to the departing females. Can it be that the male Pines become so engrossed in their work? Or are they simply independent? This may explain why the males become separated from the flocks; but then why are there not more scattered males about? A similar incident happened on a previous trip.

I have also noted on occasions that the females “decoy” members of their own kind when feeding, and have seen fairly high flying individuals literally drop out of the sky to join the feeding birds upon the latter's beckoning calls. I have imitated their simple musical notes, and have had birds flying over turn and alight in nearby trees. It seems that when the birds want to attract high flying individuals they raise their call notes an octave or two higher.—Carl Richter, Oconto.

Sparrow Hawks and Bank Swallows. While netting Bank Swallows in Waukesha County on June 26, 1959, as part of a banding study project for the Milwaukee Public Museum, the following observations are worthy of record as they occurred at the two locations visited that day. The Bank Swallow colonies referred to are located in commercial sand and gravel excavations $3\frac{1}{2}$ air miles apart: (1) $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Goerkes Corner just south of new Highway 30, and (2) 1 mile west of Calhoun Road, (C. T. H. KX), on Lincoln Avenue.

At the first bank, after the netting and banding had been completed and motion pictures of the area were being made, I observed a Sparrow Hawk swoop into a group of swallows, grasp an individual in its talons, and disappear with its prey into a group of trees behind the swallows' nest bank. The other swallows seemed to pay only a momentary concern to the episode, pursuing the hawk briefly, then returning to the business of searching for insect food for their families.

At the other sand and gravel pit visited that day another Sparrow Hawk (or possibly the same one, since the distance between banks was only $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles) flew through the area while the nets were still in operation but made no visible attempt to secure a victim. It, too, alighted in a tree about 500 feet behind the Bank Swallow colony.

Although I visited other commercial pits on June 4 and 12, briefly to survey study possibilities, no hawks were observed on those dates. It will be interesting to note, as I concentrate more fully on other colony locations, whether the Sparrow Hawk will prove to be a major predator of the Bank Swallows or whether these were isolated instances that coincidentally happened at the two sand and gravel pits visited that day.—Wallace N. MacBriar, Milwaukee.



N. R. BARGER POINTS TO . . .



A LARK SPARROW NEST

PHOTOS BY C. A. KEMPER

Lark Sparrow Nest in Chippewa County. On May 23, 1959, my husband and I helped Dr. Kemper with his annual May-Day Count in Chippewa County. As our group walked along the wasteland area south of Chippewa Falls, we identified a Lark Sparrow. A moment later we noticed another fly from the ground. Upon walking to the spot where the bird flew up, we found a nest huddled against a small sapling and some tall grasses. It contained six eggs: four Lark Sparrow and two Cowbird eggs. The nest had a southern exposure and a few grasses arched over the top. It was in rather open country where most of the area had been excavated for gravel. Dr. Kemper secured the accompanying photographs.—Mrs. N. R. Barger, Madison.

Sight Record of Gyrfalcon.

While working near the farm buildings on the morning of February 14, 1959, I saw a large white bird alight in the field about 500 feet from the buildings, frightening away a Crow which had been feeding near a chunk of manure. The size and color of the bird immediately suggested a Snowy Owl, but the long pointed wings and the gull-like flight eliminated the possibility of it being an owl, and matched perfectly Peterson's description of the Gyrfalcon in white phase. The head appeared to be too small for the Snowy Owl. The bird remained in the field for only a few moments, and left before I could get my binoculars for a closer look. As a result I cannot offer this as a positive unquestionable sight record of the Gyrfalcon, although I am quite certain that is what the bird was.—Harold Kruse, Loganville.

Oregon Junco Trapped at La Crosse. On March 22, 1959, I observed an Oregon Junco in association with Slate-colored Juncos at a local cemetery. The observation was fleeting, so no permanent record was made. On March 24 I caught a strikingly plumaged Oregon Junco in one of my bird traps at the cemetery. The bird was held in the hand and examined. The head was almost jet-black, and was in sharp contrast to the reddish-brown back. The sides were a bright salmon-color, much more conspicuous than the pinkish tinge seen on some Slate-colored Juncos.—Howard Young, La Crosse.

The Call of the Long-billed Dowitcher. An ambition of several years' standing was realized on September 24, 1959, when I had an excellent chance to listen to the call note of the Long-billed Dowitcher in Wisconsin. I had twice had the distinctive call note of the Long-billed pointed out to me by ornithologists in New England; I had once seen a dowitcher

in early October that was probably "scolopaceus," but it was silent; other dowitchers I had seen in Wisconsin in fall were between early July and early September, and when call notes were heard, they were invariably the trebled guttural sound of the Short-billed Dowitcher. Then on September 24 I came upon a flock of large shorebirds feeding in a shallow stream in Selfridge Park in Ripon, consisting of two Greater Yellowlegs, one Lesser Yellowlegs, and 35 dowitchers. The dowitchers were all in the gray fall plumage; the darkness of the gray color, the tremendous length of the bills, and the late fall date all suggested the probability that these were Long-billed Dowitchers. But it was the call note that interested me most; the birds called frequently as they vied for choice feeding spots and occasionally flew short distances. The call given was strikingly different from that of the Short-billed. There was none of the harsh quality of the Short-billed call; these birds uttered notes that were more of the quality of the Solitary Sandpiper—clear and rather high-pitched. After the notes were given as single "pips," but once in a while a series of "pips" would be given in rapid succession—sometimes three or four notes together, sometimes as many as eight. On the basis of this experience, I would hazard the guess that the two species of dowitchers can very readily be determined by note once the observer has become acquainted with the calls. In fact, the striking difference between the call notes suggests that the two species of dowitchers can be distinguished much more reliably by ear than by eye.—Sam Robbins, Adams.



FIELD NOTES

Winter Season

December 1958–February 1959

By HOWARD A. WINKLER

The winter of 1958-59 was one of the most severe experienced in Wisconsin for many years, both from the standpoint of snow cover and prolonged periods of cold. There were few days during the entire period when the temperature ranged much above freezing, and below-zero nights were far more common than above-zero nights. Sub-zero readings had occurred over most of the state even before the period began, and breaks in the cold pattern were few and far between until late in February. Snow cover was moderate in most of the state through December—not enough to interfere with the Christmas bird count. But early in February heavy snows struck in all but the northwestern corner of the state.

Despite these rigorous winter days there was no great influx of winter finches. Evening Grosbeaks were quite well represented at feeding



BOHEMIAN WAXWING

PHOTO BY C. A. KEMPER

stations in most parts of the state; Pine Grosbeaks were almost entirely limited to the northern counties; and Redpolls and Crossbills were scarce in most areas. Purple Finches were present in exceptional numbers, but normally this species is considered a "winter finch" from southern Wisconsin on south; this winter scattered flocks could be found in central and northern Wisconsin, and numbers at some feeders in southern Wisconsin were phenomenal.

Nor were there significant numbers of most other northern wanderers. Numbers of Gray Shrikes were below par; Goshawks and Snowy Owls were very scarce. There was one sight record of a Gyrfalcon, which perhaps represents the most outstanding winter bird.

There was one conspicuous exception to this general rule: the Bohemian Waxwing. The beginnings of a winter influx of this straggler were reported in the last field note summary, and the comment that it might be "one of the heaviest flights of this species in recorded Wisconsin ornithological annals" was borne out by the entire winter season. Reports came from 16 counties—so widespread that if there had been observers reporting from all 71 counties, this species would have been shown to have virtually "blanketed" the state. Contrast this with other recent years, when there have been an average of three or four observations from the entire state in a winter, with most observations coming from the northern half of the state; Among last winter's observations were numerous flocks of over 100 birds. Actually this was part of an almost nation-wide invasion that spread from the Rockies to the Appalachians, dipping as far south as Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Texas and New Mexico. William W. H. Gunn, writing of the Ontario region (1959 *Audubon Field Notes* 291), commented: "One has to go back to the records of the previous century to find an invasion on the scale of the one that took place this winter." In the same issue (p. 312) Oliver K. Scott describes the invasion for the Rocky Mountain area: "This winter has seen the most massive invasion of Bohemian Waxwings we have on record."

Comments on the season varied considerably in different areas of the state. Mrs. Lester Pedersen writes of Polk County: "We have had a very open winter here, with just an inch or two of snow at times, and that didn't stay on the ground very long. This was a very poor winter to see any but the usual resident birds here." Quite a contrast in Edwin Cleary's report for the Green Bay area: "Many unusual species of birds have been observed wintering in the Brown County region. In fact, this winter period will be remembered by bird observers as one of the best they have ever experienced. The following species have been seen in exceptionally large numbers at feeding stations: Red-bellied, Hairy and

Downy Woodpeckers, Blue Jay, Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Starling, House Sparrow, Cardinal, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Junco and Tree Sparrow." The balance that probably best expresses the situation for much of the state was noted by Alfred Bradford in Appleton: "The season was marked by an almost total lack of Pine Grosbeaks and Redpolls. I saw only one small flock of Longspurs. On the other hand we had the first large flight of Purple Finches I have seen in many years; all the feeding stations in Appleton had them. We had more Juncos than usual."

Winter observations were sent in by 34 observers, covering Burnett, Polk, Bayfield, Marathon, Shawano and Oconto Counties in the north; La Crosse, Adams, Waupaca, Outagamie, Brown and Manitowoc Counties in the central sector; and Vernon, Sauk, Dane, Rock, Columbia, Waukesha, Sheboygan, Milwaukee and Kenosha Counties in the south. Added to these are the Christmas bird counts: 34 counts sampling the December bird life in 27 counties. A total of 111 species was recorded, among them Wisconsin's first mid-winter record of the Eared Grebe.

Horned Grebe: Two in winter plumage observed at Neenah on Feb. 21 and 28 (Daryl Tessen); one found in the snow at Two Rivers on Jan. 10 later died (John Kraupa).

Eared Grebe: Earl Loyster and Ray Kyro picked one up in a corn field in Rock County on Feb. 12, following a heavy snow. It was alive when found, but subsequently died.

Great Blue Heron: At least two wintered in Adams County (Sam Robbins).

Canada Goose: An estimated 375 wintered at Green Bay (Ed Cleary), and three were recorded on the Wausau Christmas count on Dec. 28. A few early migrants were noted in Rock County on Feb. 27 (Mrs. Joseph Mahlum).

Blue Goose: Five wintered at Green Bay (Ed Cleary).

Pintail: Individuals wintered at Madison and Milwaukee.

Green-winged Teal: One in Adams County, Dec. 27 (the Roy Lounds & N. R. Bangers).

American Widgeon: Two on the Racine Christmas count, Dec. 27.

Shoveler: Two wintered in Madison (Tom Ashman, Tom Soulen, Bill Hilsenhoff); one on the Racine Christmas count, Dec. 27.

Wood Duck: Male wintered in Milwaukee (Harold Bauers, Allie Kruger); noted on the Adams and Wausau Christmas counts.

Redhead: Noted on the Lake Geneva Christmas count, Dec. 21.

Canvasback: Seen on Christmas counts at Beloit, Lake Geneva, Madison, Milwaukee and Cedarburg.

Greater Scaup: A bird wintering in Madison was determined to be of this species. Wintered in numbers along Lake Michigan.

Lesser Scaup: Wintered in Madison (Bill Hilsenhoff); noted on Christmas Counts at Adams and Dancy.

Oldsquaw: None noted away from Lake Michigan.

White-winged Scoter: Noted on Dec. 21 on Christmas counts at Milwaukee and Lake Geneva; seen in Ozaukee County on Jan. 26 (Harold Bauers).

Ruddy Duck: Seen on Christmas Counts at Cedarburg and Hales Corners on Dec. 29.

Hooded Merganser: One at Cooksville, Rock County, on Jan. 1 (John Wilde et al.); one in Milwaukee in mid-December.

Goshawk: One in Adams County, Dec. 15 (Sam Robbins); one in Forest County, Dec. 31 (Roy Lound).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: One in Sheboygan County, Jan. 6 (Harold Koopmann); one in Outagamie County, Feb. 2 (Alfred Bradford); reported on Christmas counts at Wausau, Kewaunee, Waukesha, Madison and Mazomanie.

Cooper's Hawk: Wintered in Waupaca (Florence Peterson) and Milwaukee (Harold Bauers) counties; noted at Sauk City from Jan. 18 on (Edna Koenig); found at Madison until Jan. 24 (Bill Hilsenhoff); seen in Waukesha County on Feb. 23 (Emma Hoffmann); reported on Christmas counts as far north as Adams, Bancroft and Mishicot.

Red-tailed Hawk: The most northern reports were from Christmas counts in Buffalo and Chippewa Counties (C. A. Kemper).

Red-shouldered Hawk: Found on Christmas counts in eight areas, as far north as Chippewa Falls (C. A. Kemper) and Two Rivers (John Kraupa); remained in Madison through January (Bill Hilsenhoff).

Rough-legged Hawk: Numerous reports from southern and east-central Wisconsin, but in fewer numbers than in other recent winters.

Bald Eagle: Observations limited to the open water areas of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, and apparently down in numbers. The 21 birds on the Adams Christmas count was down from 34 the previous year; noted also on Christmas counts at Mazomanie and La Crosse.

Marsh Hawk: A surprising number of reports, considering the severity of the winter; noted on nine Christmas counts, including areas as far north as Kewaunee and Shiocton. Later dates include Jan. 11 at Two Rivers (John Kraupa) and Feb. 15 in Sauk County (Harold Kruse).

Gyr Falcon: One in white phase seen in Sauk County on Feb. 14 (the Harold Kruses). See "By the Wayside."

Sparrow Hawk: Instead of being limited to the southern counties, found as far north as Adams, Waupaca, Shiocton, Green Bay and Wausau.

Prairie Chicken: 68 counted on the Christmas count at Bancroft (Fran Hamerstrom et al.).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Wintering birds found in Bayfield (David Bratley) and Price (V. N. Sylvan) Counties; one flushed in Adams County on Dec. 27 (Tom Nicholls, Mary Walker).

Gray Partridge: Small flock noted in northwestern Dane County, one mile from Sauk City, on Feb. 14 (Tom Ashman); scattered other reports from usual haunts in eastern Wisconsin.

Coot: Wintered in Madison (many observers); seen on Christmas counts in Buffalo, La Crosse, Adams, Brown, Walworth and Rock Counties.

Common Snipe: Again wintered in Adams County in spite of severe cold, indicating that if open water remains available this species can stand sub-zero weather; also found on Christmas counts in La Crosse, South Wayne, Mazomanie, Madison and Lake Geneva.

Glaucous Gull: One at Marinette on Feb. 21, resting in company with 35 Herring Gulls on ice on the Menominee River on the Wisconsin-Michigan line.

Mourning Dove: Christmas count figures show the remarkable total of 751 birds found in 17 areas in the early part of the winter; that considerably fewer birds survived to the end of the winter is suggested by the fact that the re-take of the Mazomanie count showed a drop from 250 to 73 birds; one that did survive was far north in Shawano County (the Russell Rills).

Screech Owl: A few can still be found outside southern Wisconsin, as witness Christmas count birds at Wisconsin Dells, Adams and Two Rivers, one near Plainfield on Dec. 29 (Fran Hamerstrom et al.), one at Appleton on Dec. 5 (Alfred Bradford), and one in Polk County off and on from Dec. 27 to Feb. 8 (Mrs. Lester Pedersen).

Snowy Owl: Only reports: Madison, Dec. 20; Beloit, Dec. 21 (Christmas count); Adams County, early February (Bill Barton); Columbia County, Feb. 22 (Donald Cors).

Long-eared Owl: Small flocks reported on Christmas counts at Racine, Hales Corners, Milwaukee and Madison; other individuals seen or heard in Kenosha, Rock and Adams Counties.

Short-eared Owl: Noted in Rock County on Dec. 15 and 21 (Frances Glenn, Bernice Andrews); two at Lake Geneva and one at Milwaukee on Christmas counts on Dec. 21.

Saw-whet Owl: One was again found wintering in a cedar swamp in the University Arboretum at Madison (Roy Lound et al.).

Belted Kingfisher: The 15 individuals seen on Christmas counts is about the same as in recent years. At least three Adams County birds and one near Sauk City were still present in mid-February; how well the others fared is not known.

Flicker: One present in Rock County from Dec. 21 to Feb. 26; only one was found in the Mazomanie area on Feb. 14 where there were eight on Jan. 1; other records in December and early January from Green Bay, Appleton, Waupaca, Milwaukee, Racine, Waukesha, Lake Geneva, Madison and South Wayne.

Pileated Woodpecker: For the first time in years, one spent the winter in the University Arboretum in Madison (many observers); one came regularly for suet at the feeder of Mr. & Mrs. Hy Hunter near Green Bay.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Apparently it is only the forested regions of northern Wisconsin that have not been covered by the spread of this species; northeastern records this winter include one in Shawano County from Dec. 22 on (the Russell Rills), one wintering in Waupaca (Florence Peterson), and another in Green Bay (Ed Cleary).

Red-headed Woodpecker: Numerous reports from as far north as Polk, Portage, Waupaca and Manitowoc Counties, but not in the large numbers that have occurred in some winters.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: One in Appleton, seen on Dec. 3, 14 and 22 (Daryl Tessen).

Horned Lark: Wintered in more than the usual numbers in southern Wisconsin; migrants had reached Marathon County by Jan. 29 (the Spencer Dotys).

Gray Jay: Only report: eight in Forest County, Dec. 31 (Roy Lound).

Raven: Reports from Forest and Bayfield Counties.

Boreal Chickadee: Eight in Forest County, Dec. 31 (Roy Lound). No others reported.

Tufted Titmouse: This species keeps rights in step with the Red-bellied Woodpecker, even to the point of being found in the same north-eastern counties—Shawano, Waupaca and Brown—this winter.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: An average year, neither abundant nor scarce; the largest concentration was one of 17 in Forest County, Dec. 31 (Roy Lound).

Brown Creeper: Restricted as usual to the southern portion, being noted on Christmas counts as far north as La Crosse, Adams, Portage and Manitowoc Counties.

Robin: Northern records include one in Burnett County on Dec. 2 (Norman Stone), and one in Marathon County on Jan. 16-17 (the Spencer Dotys). The usual sprinkling of scattered individuals and small groups in central and southern Wisconsin.

Hermit Thrush: One in Madison, Jan. 23 (Bill Hilsenhoff); "I have in past years occasionally seen this species as late as the first week in January, but then in mild winters and near open water; this bird was at least a mile from open water, and far from any feeders as far as I know."

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Three on the Racine Christmas count, Dec. 27.

Bohemian Waxwing: The invasion that began in October and gathered momentum in November continued strong throughout the period; sometimes lone individuals were seen, sometimes there were small groups of five to ten, often flocks of 50-100 were encountered. By late December flocks of 40 or more had been recorded in Polk (Mrs. Lester Pedersen), Marathon (the Spencer Dotys), Juneau (Tom Nicholls-Mary Walker) and Winnebago (Daryl Tessen) Counties; in January flocks of that size were observed in Manitowoc (John Kraupa), Brown (Harold Kruse-Sam Robins), Outagamie (Daryl Tessen), Waupaca (Florence Peterson) and Vernon (Margarette Morse) Counties; in February sizable flocks reached Dane (J. G. Waddell et al.) and Rock (Florence Peterson) Counties. Smaller flocks were sighted in Adams, Bayfield, Fond du Lac, Milwaukee and Sauk Counties.

Cedar Waxwing: During December this species was widespread and numerous in southern Wisconsin, being recorded on ten of the southern Christmas counts; numbers decreased as the winter progressed, but some remained to mix with the Bohemians that finally reached the southern counties. A few Cedars were seen as far north as Waupaca and Green Bay, and one was recorded on the Wausau Christmas count.

Northern Shrike: During the Christmas count period birds were recorded from 16 areas representing all parts of the state; the only later records were in Waukesha County on Jan. 28 (Emma Hoffmann), in Polk County from Jan. 12 to Feb. 22 (Mrs. Lester Pedersen), and in Waupaca County during January and February (Florence Peterson).

Myrtle Warbler: One near Mazomanie on Jan. 1 (the N. R. Bangers & Roy Lounds), the second consecutive year that this species has been found on the Mazomanie Christmas count. No one was surprised that the bird could not be found on the Feb. 14 re-take of this count, after weeks of sub-zero temperatures and 18 inches of snow.

Meadowlarks: The re-take of the Mazomanie count showed 28 birds on Feb. 14 where only one was found on Jan. 1; it would appear that either these birds are widely spread out inconspicuously on open fields

when snow cover is light, or else that some definite migration is under way by the middle of February. Wintering birds were found as far north as Brown and Waupaca Counties.

Redwing: Madison again had a huge wintering roost of an estimated 5000 birds; late December dates came from Wausau, La Crosse, South Wayne, Mazomanie, Waukesha, Milwaukee and Racine. A Feb. 25 date in Waupaca County (Florence Peterson) suggests early migration.

Rusty Blackbird: One in Polk County, Jan. 18-Feb. 17 (Mrs. Lester Pedersen); a one-legged bird at Appleton, Dec. 29 (Daryl Tessen); recorded on Christmas counts at Madison and Mazomanie.

Common Grackle: Wintered successfully at Green Bay (Ed Cleary); one at Appleton, Dec. 2-Feb. 5 (Daryl Tessen); one in Polk County until Jan. 9 (Mrs. Lester Pedersen); noted at Beloit, Jan. 6 (Frances Glenn-Bernice Andrews); late December dates from La Crosse, South Wayne, Madison, Waukesha, Milwaukee and Racine.

Cowbird: 77 counted in the huge blackbird roost near Madison on Dec. 21; three noted on the Waukesha count.

Evening Grosbeak: Not the very best, but certainly one of the better years for this species. These birds tend not to stay long periods of time in areas where there are no bird feeders, coming in for a few days or weeks and then disappearing; but those with an inexhaustible supply of sunflower seeds often end up with an inexhaustible supply of Evening Grosbeaks.

Purple Finch: The Mazomanie-Sauk City Christmas count had the distinction of registering the highest total (780) for this species of all North American counts—due largely to the prodigious feeding program of the Henry Koenigs. Other feeders attracted large numbers all winter long, and observers in central and northern Wisconsin recorded the birds where ordinarily they are absent in winter. Truly a banner flight.

Pine Grosbeak: More common than usual in the Oconto region (Carl Richter), with other northern Wisconsin observations being made in Bayfield (David Bratley), Price (V. N. Sylvan), Marathon (the Spencer Dotys), Langlade (Tom Soulen) and Forest (Roy Lound) Counties; central Wisconsin observations were made in Waupaca (the Russell Rills), Outagamie (Daryl Tessen) and Brown (Ed Cleary) Counties; the only southern record was of four birds in Madison on Dec. 21 and 27 (Tom Soulen).

Hoary Redpoll: Roy Lound identified four individuals in Forest County on Dec. 31.

Common Redpoll: A scattering of December reports, as indicated by its inclusion on eight Christmas counts; but thereafter the birds disappeared, with the only later record coming from Waupaca County, Feb. 20 (Florence Peterson).

Pine Siskin: The 115 birds on the Christmas count in Forest County on Dec. 31 (Roy Lound) is surprising, for most of these birds are south of Wisconsin in winter. Small numbers noted in Antigo on Dec. 21, Wausau on Jan. 10 (the Spencer Dotys), Kewaunee on Dec. 28 (Elmer & Millie deCreamer, Roy Lukes), Mishicot on Jan. 4 (John Kraupa et al.), Appleton on Dec. 6 (Alfred Bradford), Plainfield on Dec. 30 (Fran Hamer-

strom), Sauk City from Jan. 22 on (Edna Koenig), and Madison from Dec. 14 (Tom Ashman) to Jan. 1 (J. G. Waddell).

Goldfinch: When snow is not deep and weeds seeds are plentiful, this is one of the winter's most common birds; note that seven of the Christmas counts enumerated over 200 of this species. Note also that when the re-take of the Mazomanie count was taken on Feb. 14, with 18 inches of snow on the ground, the numbers were cut from 1465 (highest of all North American Christmas counts) to 238.

Red Crossbill: Only report: Eight in Portage County, Dec. 30 (Fran Hamerstrom).

White-winged Crossbill: No repeat of the influx of the previous winter; the 58 birds counted in Forest County on Dec. 31 (Roy Lound) constituted the only winter record.

Towhee: One at a feeder in Baraboo, Dec. 9-20 (Mabel Geissler); one at Kenosha, Dec. 28 (Mrs. Howard Higgins).

Savannah Sparrow: Straggler in Green Bay, Dec. 21 (Ed Cleary), first winter record for the area.

Vesper Sparrow: Late birds seen on Dec. 21 on the Beloit and Waukesha Christmas counts.

Slate-colored Junco: Numbers up in central Wisconsin.

Oregon Junco: Wintered in Vernon (Margarette Morse), Sauk (Harold Kruse) Waukesha (Emma Hoffmann) and Waupaca (Florence Peterson) Counties; noted also on Christmas counts at Mazomanie, Madison, Waukesha, Milwaukee, Wisconsin Dells and Bancroft.

Tree Sparrow: The count of 2927 in Waukesha County was the highest for any North American Christmas count.

Field Sparrow: Careful observation of flocks of Tree Sparrows and listening for the distinctive chip are paying off with yearly discoveries of wintering birds; noted this year on Christmas counts at Adams, Mazomanie, Beloit and Waukesha.

Harris' Sparrow: One noted at Beloit on Dec. 21 (Darrel Cox).

White-throated Sparrow: Appleton, Dec. 20 (Daryl Tessen); Adams County, Dec. 27 (Sam Robbins); Milwaukee and Beloit Christmas counts on Dec. 21.

Swamp Sparrow: Noted on Christmas counts in Madison, Waukesha and Milwaukee, but not noted thereafter.

Song Sparrow: Decidedly fewer than usual. One wintered at Green Bay (Ed Cleary); seen on ten other Christmas counts, but not found later than January 10.

Lapland Longspur: Scattered wintering in southern counties is suggested by Christmas count birds at Beloit and Cooksville, birds in Columbia County on Jan. 11 (Donald Cors), and a few individuals near Sauk City on Jan. 1 and Feb. 14 (Sam Robbins et al.); wintering in central Wisconsin is less certain, but 12 were seen near Shiocton on Dec. 25 (Alfred Bradford) and birds were present in Brown County from Jan. 29 on (Ed Cleary).

Snow Bunting: Few flocks in scattered locations: Polk, Langlade, Shawano, Outagamie, Waupaca, Portage, Dane and Kenosha Counties.

1961 CONVENTION SITE

Because it has become customary for the vice-president to be in charge of the annual convention, and because a nominating committee needs to select candidates for nomination to each office, it is advisable that cities wishing to bid for the convention site should contact the president well in advance of the previous year's convention. Thus cities wishing to be considered as sites for the 1961 convention should communicate with President Hussong by March 1, 1960.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- December 23, 1959-January 3, 1960 (State-wide)**—Christmas bird count period.
- January 10, 1960 (State-wide)**—Results of Christmas birds counts should be sent to the Associate Editor, and to Miss Elizabeth S. Manning, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y.
- January 10, 1960 (Green Bay)**—Annual banquet of the Green Bay Bird Club.
- January 15, 1960 (State-wide)**—Data for nation-wide "cooperative migration study" should be sent to Mr. Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland.
- January 18, 1960 (Madison)**—Wildlife Research Seminar, with F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr., speaking on "Characteristics of North American Prairie Grouse Range," at the Forestry and Wildlife Building at 7:45 p. m.
- February 8, 1960 (Manitowoc)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Eben McMillan speaking on "The Shandon Hills," at Washington J. H. S. auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- February 9, 1960 (Madison)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Eben McMillan speaking on "The Shandon Hills," at West High School auditorium at 7:30 p. m.
- February 15, 1960 (Madison)**—Wildlife Research Seminar, with L. B. Keith speaking on "The Ten-year Cycle—Indices and Theories," at the Forestry and Wildlife Building at 7:45 p. m.
- March 1-10, 1960 (State-wide)**—Field notes for December through February should be sent to the Associate Editor.
- March 6, 1960 (Milwaukee)**—WSO late-winter field trip to the Lake Michigan shore, meeting at McKinley Beach at 8:00 a. m.
- March 15, 1960 (Madison)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Alfred M. Bailey speaking on "Wildlife Down Under," at West High School auditorium at 7:30 p. m.
- March 16, 1960 (Milwaukee)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Alfred M. Bailey speaking on "Wildlife Down Under," at Shorewood Auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- March 17, 1960 (Manitowoc)**—Audubon Screen Tour, with Alfred M. Bailey speaking on "Wildlife Down Under," at Washington J. H. S. auditorium at 8:00 p. m.
- March 31, 1960 (State-wide)**—Field notes for December through March should be sent to Mrs. Anne Dodge, Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota, for inclusion in "Audubon Field Notes."
- June 3-5, 1960 (Adams)**—WSO annual convention.

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MORE NEWS . . .

Have you sent in your observations on nesting Robins for the past year? The last issue of **The Passenger Pigeon** carried a questionnaire seeking information about migration and nesting data on the Robin, and on any known spraying in your neighborhood. It was hoped that at least 100 readers would turn in questionnaires—at least with partial information—because the Robin is a species which is easily seen and watched by nearly everyone. If you gathered information, and have not yet

submitted it, please send it immediately to Prof. Howard Young, Department of Biology, Wisconsin State College, La Crosse. If you did not gather information this year, make it a point to watch more closely in 1960. The immediate and long-term effects of DDT-spraying on Robins and allied species needs massive and careful study. A scattered few individuals cannot do the job alone. But a large number of alert bird-lovers, each watching for Robins and their nests in their own neighborhood, can supply vitally needed information, whether or not they live in areas now being sprayed.



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