

# **The passenger pigeon. Volume VII, Number 1 January 1945**

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# *The* PASSENGER PIGEON

VOLUME VII

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NUMBER 1



KILLDEER AT NEST

ORIAN

A MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN BIRD STUDY

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# NEWS . . .

The Annual Convention of The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology formerly scheduled for Madison in April has been postponed or cancelled in conformity with O. D. T. regulations. It has been proposed by the officers that the election for the new year be conducted by mail.

A new state bird club has just been organized in the East, namely the Maine Audubon Society. Its first bulletin, January, 1945, has been sent to us for exchange.

Hal L. Hollister, a Wisconsin ornithologist now living in New York, heard Cleveland Grant and Murl Deusing give their illustrated lectures there during the convention of the National Audubon Society. Both lecturers are Wisconsin men.

Mrs. T. J. Peterson trapped sixty English sparrows in one day recently on her place.

A systematic key to bird songs and calls, by B. S. Havens, is presented in the publication of the Schenectady Bird Club.

Earl G. Wright of Green Bay recently showed his new movies to The Kumlien Club in Madison. Featured among these were his new life history studies of the Florida gallinule, coot and killdeer.

We are sorry to hear of the death of another active member of our society. Earl T. Mitchell of Madison died in a hospital in Belgium from wounds suffered in action.

Murl Deusing showed his new film "Backyard Safari" to the Milwaukee Bird Club in January, and to a packed house at the Museum in February.

The Green Bay Bird Club now has nine members in the armed forces. At a recent meeting this club voted a year's subscription to The Passenger Pigeon for these members.

Fred J. Pierce, editor of Iowa Bird Life, specializes in helping you locate desired books and publications on Natural History subjects.

Dr. Herbert R. Mills, writing in The Florida Naturalist, reveals important and indispensable functions of water-fowl in the ecology of the sea. He states that while formerly non-game waterfowl were considered to have only aesthetic, recreational, or inspirational value; now it has

been demonstrated by long-term experiments that bird guano plays an important role in fertilizing aquatic plant life upon which aquatic animal life is dependent.

Rev. H. L. Orians showed his movies with lecture in Appleton during February to a capacity audience. The program was sponsored by Mrs. W. E. Rogers and her junior bird students.

The editorial committee recently appointed to search for suitable material for publication from Wisconsin ornithologists, consists of the following: Sam A. Thorn, Earl G. Wright and Mrs. H. J. Nunnemacher.

Incidentally all members are invited to contribute bird notes and observations for the seasonal tabulation to be found in each issue. These reports consist of the name of the bird observed, the number, the county or city, the date, and the name of the observer. Of course only items of special interest make news.

"The Prairie Chicken and Sharp-tailed Grouse in Early Wisconsin" by Dr. A. W. Schorger appeared in the Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Vol. 35, pp. 1-59, 1944. This paper virtually exhausts the history and habits of these two species in the state. The material has been gathered from over two hundred sources, listed in the form of bibliography, many of which are generally unknown.

Chester Krawczyk, a member of the Green Bay Club now in the armed forces, sent in a clipping from a Honolulu newspaper describing the Christmas bird census. It was the first since 1940, although prior to the war it was taken annually. Twenty-eight species are recorded, but the most abundant species was the barred dove.

**The Bluebird Trail.** Through the recommendation of Mrs. F. C. Marquardt, The Whitnall Park Garden Club of Hales Corners started a nature trail on the highway in 1943. Bluebird houses are placed at regular intervals, junior members will assist in checking their activities, and neighboring garden clubs are being encouraged to continue in their vicinity. Mrs. Henry Winn reports that the Plymouth Garden Club and junior members are making bluebird houses for highways 23 and 57 to extend from Kohler to the Manitowoc County line.

MEMBERSHIP FEE OF \$1 INCLUDES 75 CENTS FOR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE PASSENGER PIGEON, QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY, INC. SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS: SUSTAINING \$5; LIFE \$25; PATRON \$50 OR MORE. SEND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS AND DUES TO THE TREASURER, J. HARWOOD EVANS, 517 JACKSON DRIVE, OSHKOSH, WIS. SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO THE EDITOR, N. R. BARGER, 4333 HILLCREST DRIVE, MADISON 5, WISCONSIN.

ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER SEPT. 4, 1940, AT THE POST OFFICE OF MADISON, WISCONSIN, UNDER THE ACT OF MAR. 3, 1879.

# Sac Prairie Winter

By AUGUST DERLETH

Excerpts from the Sun Prairie Journal, 1943-1944\*



**26 December 1943:** In this afternoon's mild weather, the activity of birds in the marshes south and east of town, along the Wisconsin, was marked. Standing in a sunny place watching a trio of mergansers, I heard a swamp owl [long-eared] making its mournful cooing hoot—not really a hoot at all—far down along the river, while a pileated woodpecker called from the swamp owl's vicinity, far more clearly and challengingly. Along the Spring Slough to eastward two barred owls erupted into a flurry of calls, and subsided again, while all around me chickadee and junco songs were constant, the juncos in little flocks occupying prickly ash and willows and busily foraging in fallen leaves, making that steady melodic whispering of song, so typical of them, scarcely audible at any distance, and very pleasant.

**2 January 1944:** As I walked into the village this afternoon circa 12:45 by the sun's time, I was startled by the sudden rising from a field near the lane where I walked of a meadow-lark, obviously a non-migrant—though in this unseasonably warm weather, a venturesome migrant from the south would not have been out of order. The lark flew up and landed not far away, its yellow breast very bright in the sunlight. I stood for a little while after it has vanished, hoping to hear its voice; but no lark sound rose to reward my waiting.

**20 January 1944:** Crows flew overhead constantly in the marshes this afternoon—a mild, windy day, the southwest wind brisk but not cold in the sun. The crows were not in numbers, but flew over in straggling groups of two and three and four, widely separated, cawing with that pregnant-of-spring sound inherent in each cry, and I reflected what a pity it would be if the enemies of the birds had their way, and this raucous, defiant cry were not to sound again over this Wisconsin earth. It made me to recall how in my earliest memories the months of winter were associated with the cries of crows passing over the village on their way to the prairie west of town early every morning, and passing over once more on their way back to the hills and the marshes in early evening—an event which even in childhood seemed somehow to **lessen** the very length of the winter.

**23 January 1944:** As I was coming down Water Street this afternoon, I saw a bald-headed eagle flying low over the bank of the river nearby, and watched the bird take his leisurely way down the village shore, flying

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\*The SAC PRAIRIE JOURNAL is a daily-entry account of life as I see it in and around the Sauk Prairie country. It is concerned primarily with people, secondarily with nature. It was begun in 1935, and now measures about 1,600,000 words. 90,000 words of it were published under the title of VILLAGE YEAR in 1941 (Coward-McCann); and a second compilation, titled VILLAGE DAYBOOK will appear after the war. Other excerpts appear currently in **The Country Book**.



sometimes up over the middle of the street, sometimes just along the water's edge. It was the first eagle I had seen for some time, and I made immediate inquiry of some of the local hunters as to whether other birds had been seen, whereupon it developed that several eagles were known to inhabit the vicinity, which is to say, six or seven miles down the Wisconsin, where they had an eyrie. In any case, I was delighted to have evidence of this returning—as always at the reappearance of birds or beasts once more common in this region, but, since the advent of wantonly predatory men, considerably less so.

**2 February 1944:** I sat at the brook trestle reading today, and was surprised at the number of goldfinches in evidence throughout the afternoon, calling and singing on all sides. I estimated that there were at least half a hundred birds present.

**4 February 1944:** Walking out home tonight by way of the line fence and the cemetery, I heard the horned larks sing steadily in the fields—a thin, reedy sound, as always, but withal a very pleasant one, for it served as evensong to make me think of the songs to come at this hour of the day. The birds were quite plentiful and, while their preferred position seemed to be on ridges in the fields, two or three of them sat on the fence-posts, much in the manner of meadowlarks.

**8 February 1944:** On the way home tonight, in the south end of town, I heard a screech owl keening, a sound very welcome to the ear in the mellow, moist night. It arose, I thought, from one of the sheds or barns in that vicinity, and the thin, sobbing wail rose several times, fading only with the distance I put between us. But presently I heard the sound again, from another owl in my own woodlot, and at the same time a bell-like sound, or series of bell-like notes—not the saw-whet owl's call—but belonging to the screech owl, certainly a familiar sound, but one not commonly identified with the screech owl, though it is no less its author, since I had one evening stood directly beneath one of the birds along the path to my front gate and so identified it. But this was the owls' night—no less than four of them called around the house tonight, and one came up to peer into the east window of the studio, all screech owls; while out of the south, from the river less than half a mile away, the crooning notes of a swamp owl came from time to time. I felt much companioned whenever I paused in my work to listen.

**26 February 1944:** Following last night's rain, birds sang and cried volubly this morning—horned larks, goldfinches, chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, blue jays, and either meadowlarks or the starlings imitating them. I observed that birdsong continued until well into the mid-morning.

**27 February 1944:** On the way out from town this morning, I observed how the English sparrows had made holes in the uppermost part of Reinold Meyer's haystack adjoining the barn, some thirty or forty such holes at least, doubtless to keep them warm, though they opened to the north, rather than the sunny side. I watched the birds flying in and out of these holes as I went by, chirping constantly and quite cheerily. There were easily enough sparrows in evidence over the barn and in the yard to fill every opening in sight.

The first bronzed grackles of the year called out along the brook this afternoon, and five of them were in evidence. I had thought at first they were redwings, but no, they were grackles, and were only briefly visible, taking themselves off quickly into that Pocket behind Lenson's farm. But subsequently I saw twenty of them.

A sparrow hawk spiraled up and tumbled repeatedly, beautiful in the sunlit blue over the Lower Meadow this afternoon, tumbling and turning though no mate was apparent, as so often hawks do. The smell of spring in air no doubt stirred him as it stirred me today.

Sauk City, Wisconsin, January, 1945.

## *Woodpeckers' Nests*

By B. L. VON JARCHOW

Woodpeckers build their nests by excavating hollows in trees and branches. These are gourd-shaped, oblong cavities with the axis parallel to the tree axis and the entrance at the upper end.

The literature gives only general and not always reliable information on this subject and is, at least as far as it is available to me, surprisingly lacking in any comprehensive study and specific information.

The data given below apply to newly built, used, and "ideal" nests. Old, unfinished, and modified cavities may vary in almost any detail. Other species of woodpeckers and squirrels frequently enlarge the entrance. The hollow may be opened below the entrance hole. Rodents work destruction, and weather and progressive decay produce profound changes. At times these nests are bored into trees already hollow, into walls of houses, and even into banks in the fashion of kingfishers, and then of course do not conform to the "ideal" nest. Of our Wisconsin woodpeckers, the flicker is generally the most slovenly, the hairy woodpecker the most exacting.

To be examined, these nests have to be dissected. They give shelter for the woodpeckers themselves, who retire to them for the night rests which they always spend inside hollows. They offer for other birds the best possible nesting cavity, and also furnish homes for squirrels and mice, and shelter for bats, wasps, and wintering butterflies. I have therefore been most reluctant in destroying them, in almost every case making first sure that, if left alone, unfavorable conditions were soon certain to bring about their deterioration anyway. It is unnecessary to state that the bulk of the nests found were left untouched, and information was obtained only if destruction of the nest could be avoided.

The entrance through which access to the nest proper is gained is always circular. The diameter is proportionately larger, the larger the species, and fairly constant with any single species. Thus, the average size for the downy is 3.2 cm., the extremes being 3 cm. to 3.6 cm., while in the hairy woodpecker the average size measures 4.6 cm., with 4.4 cm. and 4.9 cm. as extremes. Larger species of woodpeckers, for reasons unknown, quite regularly appear to make oblong entrances with the larger diameter in the vertical plane. A nest of the northern pileated woodpecker showed this feature in a pronounced degree, and two nests of the

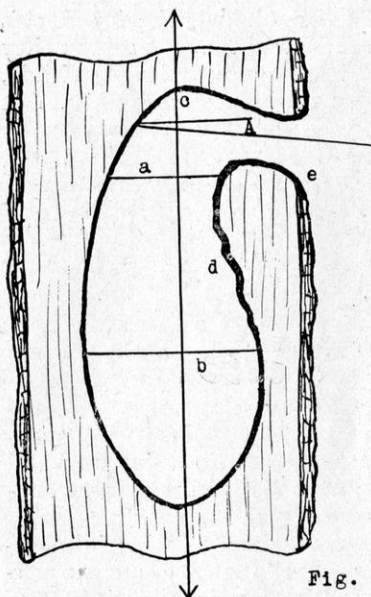


Fig. 1

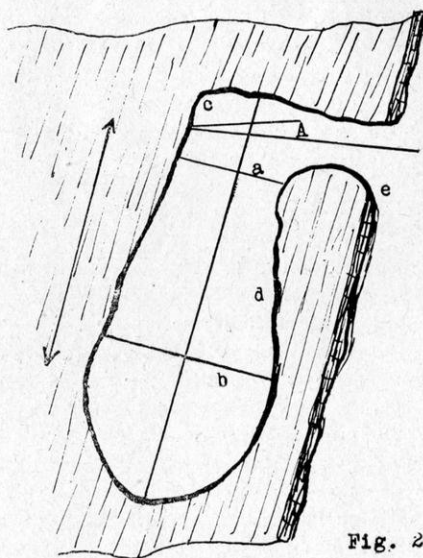


Fig. 2

entirely black European relative (crest red) showed the same oblong access hole. On the other hand, a nest of the southern pileated woodpecker, which I examined through field glasses, had a circular entrance. The ivorybill, I understand, quite regularly uses an oval entrance.

It is of interest to note that this entrance always leads slightly upward, the angle to the horizontal plane being between 5-6 degrees (Fig. 1A). This angle never changes, regardless of the inclination of the tree or branch (Fig. 2A), thus giving the hollow a different outline. Even from a section of a log containing a nest one may readily conclude what the tree's inclination was where it grew. The outer rim of the entrance is rounded, and it is interesting that the lower edge is much more rounded than the upper (Figs. 1e and 2e). This construction does not only make it easier for the bird to slide into its nest with ease, but it will be readily seen that together with the upward inclination it prevents rain-water from entering the nest proper. In no case have I discovered a nest whose entrance was drilled through thick bark. In trunks like those of pines or cottonwoods, the entrance was either bored between ridges of bark where it was already thin or it was chiseled down to a thinner layer (rare). In most of these trees the birds preferred a barkless wood.

The cavity itself is oblong with a pointed lower end. In the cross-section it is circular with the smallest diameter at the level of the entrance (Figs. 1a & 2a), and the largest about  $\frac{2}{5}$  up from the bottom (Figs. 1b & 2b). The total length is usually slightly more than the largest diameter, however the larger the species and therefore the nest, the longer the cavity is in proportion to its width, so that it appears more slender and deeper. Its highest reach is just at the upper level of the entrance (Fig. 1c). This feature allows the bird to rotate easily over the lower aspect of the entrance hole with the head down into the hol-



low. Again in the larger species the highest point of the cavity may be pushed toward the rear wall (Fig. 2c); however, having examined only a few of the nests of the larger species, I am not certain that this is always the case.

Below the entrance there is found, in most instances, a rougher finish to the wall than on the rest of the nest (Figs. 1d & 2d). It may be assumed that this arrangement permits the birds and especially the young to cling to the wall with more ease. The frequent bumps found at this level seem to confirm such assumption, especially since the young, when they are larger, hang to this part of the wall in groups of two or more for feeding or just looking out into the world.

The long axis of the hollow, as mentioned before, lies in the vertical plane, and is always parallel to the axis of the tree or trunk in which it was bored. If the tree is inclined, the axis of the cavity will be found inclined also, though trees of too much inclination are probably avoided, for at least I never saw a nest in a tree or branch inclined more than approximately 30 degrees. If the tree is thick the nest will be found closer to the side of the tree where the entrance is situated. The front wall of the inside may come close to the surface of the tree, but in no case pierce it. Such defect renders the nest useless for woodpeckers, though frequently the cavity is tapped by other birds. The greatest width is found where it is needed the most, at the level of the head of the birds sitting on the floor.

This floor is pointed. Woodpeckers do not carry in nesting material—except under unnatural circumstances, when more chips than usual are left at the bottom. Even birds which adopt these hollows for their own nests will carry much less nesting material into them than they usually do. Again a definite purpose is served with this construction. Pointed or oval eggs have their center of gravity towards the pointed end. If eggs are placed on such a hollow and shaken, they invariably roll with their pointed end toward the inside. I have repeatedly used starlings' eggs and rotated them on a hollow that was dissected from a woodpecker's nest, and found this tendency invariably true, at least when four eggs were used, and numerous observations on actual nests showed a similar tendency. Since the air space in an egg is found at the duller end, and wood does not permit access of air as found in nests of free nesting species, that air which is present within the confines of the cavity is thus made available to the embryo. Without doubt, however, incubation is made easier and more efficient, and the fact that downy, hairy, and red-headed woodpeckers to my knowledge never adopt nests unless they have a hollow bottom (von Berlepsch Nest), seems to prove that they cannot incubate eggs on a flat bottom, especially so since woodpeckers do not sit, but rather hang, on their eggs, as claimed by several observers. These species on the other hand are readily attracted to artificial cavities provided they have an excavated floor. That is true also of birds which do not carry in much nesting material, like the kestrel (sparrowhawk) and screech owl.

As the young grow up, sawdust and detritus gather on the floor which becomes more and more flat, making it easier for the birds to sit, and raising them to a little higher level, which allows more freedom for movement at the head. Since the floor is cut across the grain of the tree,

excellent drainage is provided in living or, like in most cases, dead wood. It may be added here that wood is an excellent insulator against heat and cold. It is also very absorbent and therefore the choice of material for artificial nesting boxes. Metal, clay, or porcelain are good conductors of heat and a poor choice. In cold weather the warm moisture inside such boxes condenses and is precipitated by the cold wall, leading to bad contamination and death of the brood. I speak here from experience in a number of cases. Unfortunately many bird books and manufacturers still advocate that type of bird-box, and thus add to bird destruction and not protection.

The entrance to the woodpecker's nest may be found pointing in all directions of the compass, even straight north. A survey of 280 nests observed through many years brought out the interesting findings that 52% pointed towards the south, southeast, or southwest. If nests inside woods were excluded, in which the corresponding proportion was 42%, the incidence rose to 60% in cases of trees growing in the open or at edges of woods running in a general direction from east to west. The influence of light is not deniable. This agrees with the findings in some 500 nests of Baltimore orioles seen in winter on automobile rides. They also were found predominantly on the southern aspects of the tree. Close presence of buildings which shaded the location influenced the choice in a definite way, forcing the birds to build more towards the northern side of the tree.

Check-up with the Milwaukee Weather Bureau showed that winds prevailing during the nesting season have no influence on the direction of the entrance. The inclination of the tree, however, is of importance. The lower side is always preferred, more so as the inclination of the tree increases. If the trunk or branch is too inclined it is avoided, and I still have to find a nest on the upper side of a greatly inclined tree.

As to the wood itself that was chosen for the nest, almost all species of trees were involved, even branches of hawthorns. The choice simply seems to be influenced by the softness of the wood. That explains the preference for poplars, birch, basswood, and some fruit trees belonging to the rose family. And even these trees are preferred when they have died. Ninety-two per cent of all the nests seen were in wood in various process of decay, and only 8% in perfectly healthy trees not showing any sign of decay. These usually belong to the species named above. No nest was ever discovered in a living hardwood tree such as oak. On the other hand, if decay had progressed too far, or woodpeckers had more or less drilled into the wood, the nests were not built in such wood. Wood exposed to light and direct flight, just dead or dying, is usually the woodpecker's choice. As to the height, no rule could be stated, the lowest being three feet from the ground.

It is to be noted that probably all these species build hollows just for shelters during almost any time of the year and frequently, apparently just for the fun of it, chisel numerous cavities which they never finish. Such borings of course do not conform to the nest specified above, and usually even in their dimensions are far removed from the "ideal" nest.

Racine, Wisconsin, January, 1945.

# Aaron Ludwig Kumlien

By A. W. SCHORGER

This country has been so replete with opportunities that it has been unusual for a son to follow in the footsteps of his father. An exception was Aaron Ludwig Kumlien, son of the eminent naturalist of Lake Koshkonong, Thure Kumlien. It can be said with justice that in some respects he exceeded him in innate ability. One of five children, he was born at Busseyville, Wisconsin, March 15, 1853. His aptitude for natural history blossomed under the tutelage of his father. The latter in a letter to T. M. Brewer, dated March 31, 1872, wrote: "Ludwig is a great one for pets. He has now a pair of mourning doves that he has had 2 years. The male is so tame that he will alight on my head, and allow me to stroke him any time. He will coo whenever I ask him to (unless he sees strangers). He will coo sometimes evenings, after dark, and is almost sure to coo even then if on the flute I play a melancholy tune." The list of migratory birds prepared by the son in 1869, when he was only 16 years of age, showed that he had great promise.<sup>21</sup>

He attended Albion Academy for a time and was a special student at the University of Wisconsin for two years, 1875-76 and 1876-77. The library of the Wisconsin Historical Society has two volumes of his drawings in water color that were exhibited at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. They are of considerable merit. One volume is on plants while the other contains drawings of butterflies, fish, mammals and birds. It is probable that they represent the earliest drawings extant of Wisconsin birds.<sup>22</sup> During his student days at Madison, he was with the U. S. Fish Commission in Texas for a brief period in 1876. A few birds collected by him and an associate in Waller County, Texas, on December 12 and 13 of this year, are now in the U. S. National Museum.

At the close of his university work he was appointed Naturalist to the Howgate Polar Expedition of 1877-78. In 1879 he was on the staff of the United States Fish Commission. A study of the fishing industry of Lake Michigan afforded an opportunity for observations on the birds in the upper portion of the lake. He was a contributor to the reports of George Brown Goode, The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States, that appeared between 1884 and 1887. J. A. Allen used Kumlien's Arctic notes in his History of North American Pinnipeds (1880). He also provided some data for North American Birds, by Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway.

He was a member of the firm of H. P. Leavens and Company, Milwaukee, manufacturers and dealers in sacks and twines, during the years 1883-86. Business proved distasteful and he was not happy until he returned to scientific work.

Kumlien was for a time on the staff of the Public Museum of Milwaukee. One of the biographical references<sup>23</sup> mentions that he was "Determining Collector" for this institution in 1886. The Museum Report for 1887 states: "During the last three or four months an important piece of work of permanent value was accomplished by Messrs. Thure and Ludwig Kumlien, making the ornithological collection hereafter as far as it goes a thoroughly reliable source of information and a credit to the institution. Mr. L. Kumlien also prepared a catalogue of all the birds now in the collection, giving in tabulated arrangement all the items of description and desirable remarks."

During the period 1887-88, he was in search of a position where he could devote all his time to the natural sciences. On September 20, 1887, he wrote to William Brewster: "I think I wrote you that the office of Custodian and Secretary of our museum was vacant and that I was a candidate for the position. I had the most flattering letters from Baird, Allen, Goode, Bean, Ridgway and a great many others besides influential friends here and moreover had filled the place for about six months for the retiring Custodian. The election was held yesterday and a boy\*not yet 19, with no experience and no particular fitness for the place was elected but then he had two uncles on the board of trustees and that accounts for it. It only shows how such matters are frequently worked. Of course I was disappointed and sooner than again engage in business I would accept almost any kind of Natural History work." He wrote again on July 10, 1888: "I am still drawing and lithographing spiders, but would

\*The Fifth Annual Report of the Public Museum (October 1, 1887) states that William M. Wheeler, "hitherto a teacher in the city high school has been elected to fill the vacancy."



like to get a position somewhere where I could do scientific work of some kind. I will be through by Sept. or sooner if necessary."

He was unsuccessful in securing the kind of employment that he desired most and accepted an instructorship at Albion Academy in 1889. He held this position until 1891 when he was made professor of physics, natural history and physiology at Milton College. This chair was retained until his death. Prof. Edwin Shaw<sup>24</sup> said of him: "He was a lover of nature, living nature, . . . and any strange bird or plant, or any living thing, attracted his eye or ear at once, and he was not content till he had found out all there was to know about it; so that even as a child he knew more about the natural history of the vicinity of Lake Koshkonong . . . than is given to most men to know even at the close of a long life spent in its study. . . . As a teacher he was inspiring. His method was to guide and direct, not to drive. His fault as a teacher, if fault it may be called, was that he had little patience with the idle, the shirk, or the dolt. . . . I have been told that sometimes in his class lectures his language was couched in expressions more forcible than elegant, but if you study his writings . . . you will find a style of English that is not only clear and concise but vigorous and charming as well."

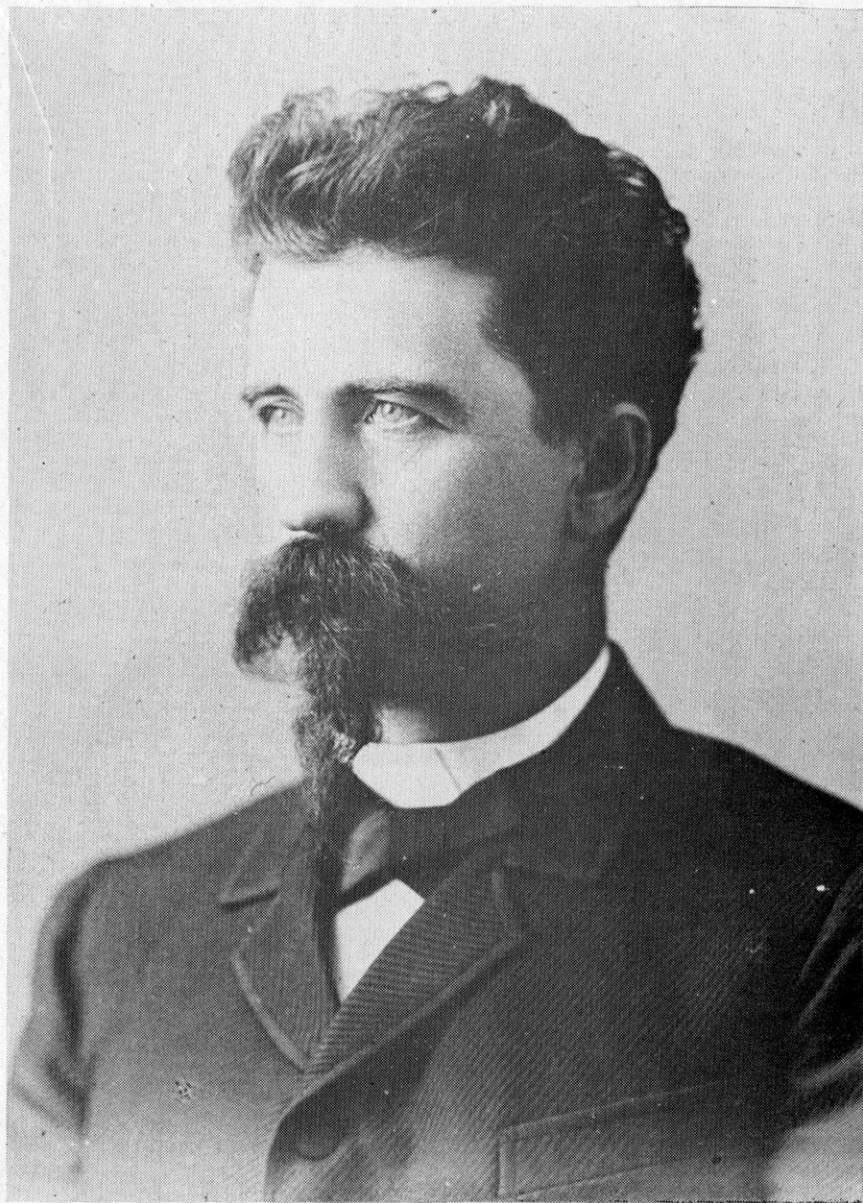
Kumlien had an unusual personality. This is shown vividly in a letter received from H. H. T. Jackson, who writes: "I became personally acquainted with Ludwig Kumlien several years before I entered the Academy of Milton College where I had my first class under him I believe in the fall of 1898,—physiology if I am not mistaken. I should say that Kumlien as a teacher was an excellent field naturalist. I don't believe he really enjoyed teaching. He always when teaching seemed to me to be yearning for the woods and marshes. Possibly I got this impression because of my own urges, and I knew that he was sympathetic. Yet he spent many indoor hours with his bird and egg collection, preparing specimens, and reading. Some of his students seemed to get little from his teaching efforts. Usually it was not long before he told them so. Other students were inspired and enthused. There seemed to be no halfway ground. Often he would wander widely from the study assignment for the class, and would talk for almost an entire class period on some inspiration of the moment. These talks were always instructive and suggestive. He delighted in demonstrating some point by a story or example, frequently entirely fictitious or drawn from mental 'whole cloth.' One day he was talking to his class about the assimilation of fat in the body. A smart aleck boy piped up 'I suppose if I ate nothing but lard I would become a hog.' Kumlien, often sarcastic, with a twinkle in his eyes replied: 'I would not care to say.' Then continued: 'A butcher in northern Wisconsin one fall captured a live bald eagle. He knew that oil of raptors was very valuable, so hoped to obtain a good supply by fattening the eagle through the winter by gorging it with waste scraps of mutton. In the spring he killed the bird in order to gather his supply of oil. He tried out the fat, and was dismayed to find he had only mutton tallow.'"

"Ludwig Kumlien was one of the most interesting men I ever knew. . . . I spent many days with him in the field around Milton and at Lake Koshkonong. He was an exceptionally keen observer and exceedingly careful about identifications. . . . He questioned me in person on my record of the nesting of the barn owl in Green County because the nest was in a hollow in a bur oak tree, instead of in the customary building or cave. Actually, I handled the live owl myself, which was in the possession of a young man living near Monticello."

Kumlien had great influence on Ned Hollister who was to become a noted mammalogist. Hollister never attended Milton College but the acquaintanceship was nevertheless highly effective. On the death of Kumlien, he purchased, in 1903, his collection of about 1500 specimens.

He was an expert taxidermist and in addition to his teaching duties he prepared numerous ornithological exhibits for institutions in Wisconsin and other states. His large personal collection was obtained in part by exchange. On November 18, 1886, he wrote to William Brewster: "I have some skins of *Ectopistes* I am quite sure, but they are in my skin collection at my father's place in Busseyville, and as he is here in our museum I can't get them until I go out there which may be in some weeks." On November 20, 1886, he sent some eggs to Brewster. Among them were three of the passenger pigeon of which he wrote: "I think I have some better eggs of *Ectopistes* at my father's and when I go out there will send you better ones."\*

\*The Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, has 33 letters from Kumlien to Brewster covering the period 1886-1902.



AARON LUDWIG KUMLIEN

He was married to Annabelle Carr in December, 1892. She and the three children resulting from the union are still living.

The first opportunity to show his scientific ability came to Kumlien when he was appointed to the Howgate Polar Expedition.<sup>5</sup> The latter sailed from New London, Connecticut, in the schooner Florence on August 2, 1877.\* The members shipped as

\*The date August 3 given in Bulletin No. 15 is incorrect.

part of the whaling crew and received one-fiftieth of the proceeds from the sale of bone and blubber. Only one whale was taken so that each member received only about \$80.00 for the year's work.

His letters home describing the voyage are full of interest. No opportunity was lost to make collections. His first bird was a *Buphagus skua* (northern skua), the captain lowering a boat so that it could be recovered. By the time the ship anchored in Niantic Harbor, Cumberland Gulf, he had prepared 150 skins and skeletons of birds. On September 24 he wrote: "By the way we had fresh meat for dinner. Now you would not eat it, but we thought it was very good. The lot comprised one *Larus glaucus* [glaucous gull], 2 *Rissa tridactyla* [Atlantic kittiwake] and 2 *Uria grylle* [black guillemot]. How is that for game?" He accommodated himself quickly to the customs of the Arctic and on one occasion, having lost his lunch, he ate raw three Lapland longspurs. While exploring at Cumberland Gulf, he discovered a small lake that he named Caroline Mann after a lady who subsequently became his first wife.

The Florence, after an absence of fifteen months, docked at New London on the morning of October 30, 1878. The ship was in grave danger during the stormy return passage and was in fact reported lost. Kumlien collected in all 84 species of birds of which four were stragglers. The grey-cheeked thrush taken on board off the coast of Newfoundland on October 22, 1878, is now in the collection of the University of Wisconsin.\*

The collections made comprised not only birds, but also mammals, fishes, and anthropological material. He received high commendation for his results. Drawings were made under extremely trying circumstances. Conditions that would have appalled most people were accepted cheerfully by Kumlien and his letters show great buoyancy of spirit.

The official account of the expedition reveals that he had felicity in writing. In discussing Esquimo customs he said: "They appear to have marriage rites sometimes, but we could induce no one to tell us, except one squaw, who agreed to, but only on condition that we become one of the interested parties and she the other. This was more than we had bargained for, and although generally willing to be a martyr for the cause of science, we allowed this opportunity to pass without improving it." Regarding the northern eider he wrote: "It was amusing to see a male alight beside a nest, and with a satisfied air settle himself down on the eggs, when suddenly a female would come to the nest and inform him that he had made a mistake,—it was not his nest. He started up, looked blankly around, discovered his mistake, and with an awkward and very ludicrous bow, accompanied by some suitable explanation, I suppose, he waddled off in search of his own home, where he found his faithful mate installed."

It was customary at the time for the collector to retain a portion of the specimens for personal disposition, this being a part of his modest compensation. His relationships with the members of the Smithsonian Institution were most satisfactory. On November 9, 1878, he wrote: "... there are over two thousand specimens to go over ... I have been with Ridgway for the last three days on the bird skins, bird skeletons and eggs. They stripped me pretty well for my skins were mountable. I heard Baird ask Ridgway how my birds were. 'Robert, how are Kumlien's birds? They look well to me.' 'They are excellent Professor, and for this reason I have been obliged to take a larger series than I otherwise should have done as they are in such good condition for mounting.' 'Well, have him make out a list of what he wants and give him as good a lot in exchange as we can spare, as he has done remarkably well.' ... So far I consider this cruise one of the best that I ever made, even though I did not make a cent which I will. Bye the bye Harvard College has offered \$500.00 for the third set [seals] as then I should have had nothing for Milwaukee or Madison or Boston. ... I had a three hours talk with Prof. Baird this P. M. God bless him. He is a man, and so is friend Wilson and Ridgway."

Thure Kumlien in a letter to Ludwig, written apparently in September, 1878, quotes from a letter received from President Bascom of the University of Wisconsin: "Bless Ludwig's return! I hope to be able to purchase something of him so whatever you do, remember the University. ... " The father was anxious apparently to see what his son looked like while in the Arctic for he admonished him: "Don't throw away your arctic costume—the inhabitants, if such there are, can be removed. Don't

\*The writer noticed this specimen some years ago. Kumlien's original label, without species identification, is still attached. Some one had added an additional label, *Hylocichla fuscescens*!



cut your hair or shave your beard if you can get along without doing so." This request appears to be somewhat of a strain on filial devotion.

A gull collected by Kumlien in Cumberland Sound on June 14, 1878, was identified by him as *Larus glaucescens*, a bird of the northern Pacific. A few years later Brewster,<sup>25</sup> after careful examination of the skin, described it as a new species, *Larus kumlieni*. Dwight,<sup>26</sup> with much material at his disposal, advanced conclusive evidence that *kumlieni* is a hybrid between *leucopterus* and *thayeri*, so that Kumlien's gull has been removed from the list of valid species.

Numerous notes were furnished to Cook<sup>27</sup> for his unfortunate bulletin on the birds of Michigan. Kumlien was hasty in stating that such species as the red-throated loon, red phalarope, northern phalarope, long-billed dowitcher, stilt sandpiper, etc. bred in northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He was convinced that some of the northern shorebirds bred in Wisconsin for on November 18, 1886, he wrote to Brewster: "This coming May I intend to procure the eggs of the Solitary Tattler if it takes a week. I was a little late this year but I have found the nest I am positive, in some scrubby willows about 4 feet up in a very miry springy place. . . . I could almost catch the parents while near the nest but the surroundings were such that the young escaped my notice. . . . I would rather nothing were said about the Solitary Tattler's nesting, as if it should by any chance get into print some fellows here would suspect the locality and might get ahead of me as they have any amount of leisure and I have not."

The short period between the passage of many of the shorebirds northward and their return caused numerous persons at that time to believe that the birds had bred locally. In 1891 Kumlien<sup>10</sup> published several papers on the breeding birds of Wisconsin, and his line of reasoning is shown as follows: "I have shot the young of *P. lobatus* [northern phalarope], full fledged on the 23rd of July, and on several occasions in the first week of August on Lake Koshkonong. Though I have not seen the adults during the breeding season, within the state, the above records would indicate that some of these birds occasionally nest far south of the latitude generally assigned to them." In 1903 he wrote that he had found on more than one occasion that the presence of the birds in a given locality in summer was not evidence of nesting.<sup>20</sup>

The annual reports of the Natural History Society of Wisconsin for the years 1878-79 and 1879-80 show that Kumlien was at work on, and had apparently nearly completed, an annotated list of the birds of the state. The fruition of this project was long delayed and it was not until 1903 that he published jointly\* with N. Hollister the first extensive work on the birds of Wisconsin.<sup>20</sup> No other publication of equal scientific value has appeared during the intervening forty years. The authors stated: "Our whole aim and object has simply been to bring our knowledge of Wisconsin ornithology, as regards occurrence and abundance, up to date, and to present a carefully compiled list of all those specimens and sub-species which have positively been known to occur within the limits of the state at any time, with as exact, simple, reliable and accurate an account of such occurrence as possible." The statement that many parts of the state have been inadequately explored still holds true.

The publication was based largely on information collected by the Kumlien family, beginning with Thure Kumlien's arrival in 1843, and extending over a period of nearly sixty years. The number of species and subspecies described is 357. In the light of present knowledge it is necessary to eliminate certain species and subspecies, such as the black-throated loon, arctic tern, greater snow goose, Cory's least bittern, belted piping plover, willow ptarmigan, Richardson's merlin, long-tailed chickadee, western wood pewee, Traill's flycatcher, Alma's thrush, etc. Cory's least bittern is now considered to be a color phase, while the belted piping plover is only a variant of the piping plover. The western wood pewee was included on the authority of Coues. Several western forms identified by Brewster are very questionable, e.g. Traill's flycatcher (*Empidonax trailli*, now *Empidonax trailli brewsteri*). Oddly, he considered the eastern and western forms of the house wren about equally divided, while today the former is decidedly uncommon. One specimen of the willow thrush (*Hylocichla fuscescens salicicola*) was identified by him. At present the willow thrush is widely distributed while the veery (*Hylocichla fuscescens fuscescens*) is rare. Alma's thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata almae*), described by Oberholser<sup>28</sup> from the west, was never accepted as subspecifically distinct

\*The late H. L. Skavlem, of Janesville, told me in 1922 that he had expected to appear as coauthor but that Hollister took his place. The substitution must be considered fortunate as Hollister had a good scientific background.

from *swainsoni*. It should be borne in mind that before the manuscript went to press, Kumlien died and Hollister was engaged in field work in Alaska.

Poor health troubled him during several periods. In November, 1886, he was so crippled with rheumatism as to be unable to walk. A sojourn of several months at Hot Springs, Arkansas, produced a marked improvement.<sup>29</sup> Cancer of the throat, from which he suffered intensely for several months,<sup>30</sup> resulted in his death at Milton, Wisconsin, on December 4, 1902. He was buried in the village. His death marked the close of three score years of invaluable scientific work on the birds of Wisconsin by the Kumlien family.

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Madison, Wisconsin, January, 1945.

# *A Bird Study In The Madison Cemetery*

By MRS. ARTHUR KOEHLER and GEORGE KOEHLER

During January, 1944, I read J. J. Hickey's book, "A Guide to Bird Watching" and decided to do as he suggests, that is, to watch one area over a long period of time. He says the time is past when we can rush from one "oasis" to another searching for rarities to add to a list. Due to the gasoline shortage I chose an area near by, the Forest Hill Cemetery, two blocks from my home and made my first census Jan. 21. From the Superintendent of Grounds I obtained a small map of the cemetery 8 by 10 inches which I copied over and over so that I could use a fresh map for each trip. I interested my high school son in the project and he was a great help both in the miles of walking and in keeping the records.

The cemetery is an irregular, rolling tract bounded by a county highway, a railroad track, a golf course and the back yards of a street of city houses. First we made a "physical survey" of each of the 41 sections noting the kinds of trees and just getting acquainted generally. The Superintendent told us that there are 80 acres and 5 miles of roads. We decided to add a little edge territory along the south by the edge of the golf course and railroad for that part is wild and seemed especially good for birds. So probably our area includes about 90 acres, a little too big for a thorough survey but there seemed to be no place to divide it.

We made five trips during January and February with an average of 8 species and 41 individuals. Of course juncos, jays, chickadees, nuthatches, crows, and 3 kinds of woodpeckers formed the bulk of the population. We kept a temperature graph and an individual graph and it was interesting to see how closely the two curves followed each other. For instance on Jan. 22 the temperature was 45 degrees and the wind was light and we saw 10 species and 57 individuals while a week later the wind was brisk northwest, the temperature was 34 degrees and we saw only 4 species and 12 individuals.

## **First Indication of Spring Migration**

On March 11 we noticed the first indication of spring migration for there was a marked increase in crows, jays and juncos and the jays were more noisy. The wind was in the south, the temperature 45 degrees and our count went up to 107. On March 19 we saw our first indication of nesting interest. Two nuthatches were cleaning out a woodpecker hole in section 31 and a hairy woodpecker was drilling a new hole in section 4, but neither of them really built there.

The first day of spring, March 21, was clear and pleasant though the temperature was only 26 degrees. Flocks of redwings were flying over, a mourning dove was singing and bluebirds, killdeers, meadowlarks and robins were seen and heard. A crow, closely followed by her mate was carrying twigs to a tall Norway spruce in section 27. Juncos were really singing for the first time.

On the evening of April 4 about 9 o'clock a neighbor boy called to tell me there were a "lot of big black birds" in the cemetery. I went over at once and found that many of the large Norway spruces held 10-12 of them. They would take off with much noise and whistling wings when we tapped the trees. We could not believe they were mourning doves as indicated by the whistling wings for they looked so large and black and did not seem to be shaped right. We went home and got flashlights and tried to see them before they flew but the spruces were so thick we were unsuccessful. I went again next morning before sunrise. Most of them had left but there were enough there to assure me that they were mourning doves. This only shows how poor light can fool the eye. We saw about 150-200 and there were probably many more in trees we did not tap. There were none in the cedars though these are just as numerous and have as thick foliage.

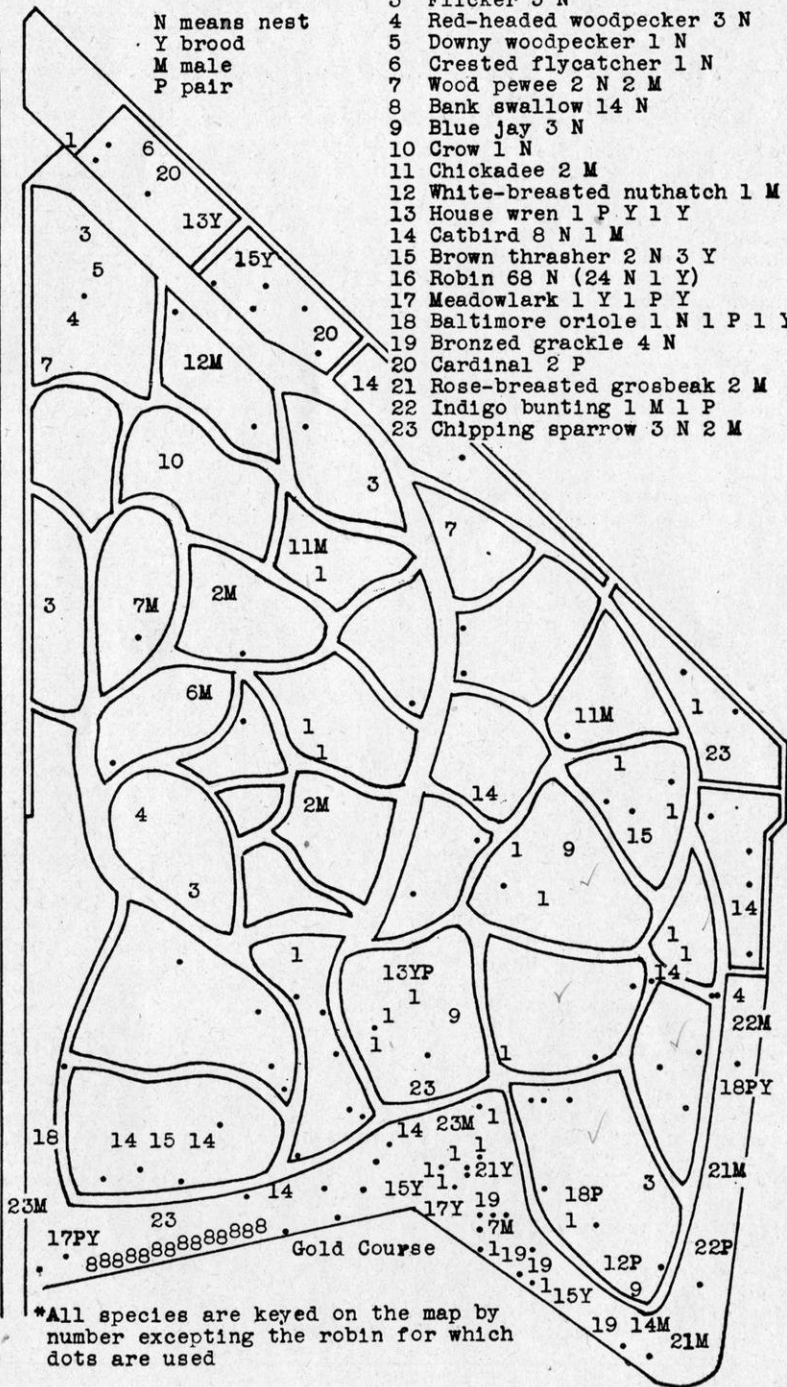
Even though the temperature all spring was below normal we felt by April 9 that spring was well on the way. Nine new species were observed that day: hermit thrush, fox sparrow, phoebe and cowbird to name a few. The robin count jumped to 40 and the junco to 86. Many people have asked me how I can be sure I do not count the same bird more than once. Of course we can't be sure but we have a system which is fairly satisfactory. My son and I take adjacent sections and if we see a bird fly from



Key to  
THE STUDY AREA\*

N means nest  
Y brood  
M male  
P pair

- 1 Mourning dove 16 N (8 N 1 Y)
- 2 Black-billed cuckoo 2 M
- 3 Flicker 5 N
- 4 Red-headed woodpecker 3 N
- 5 Downy woodpecker 1 N
- 6 Crested flycatcher 1 N
- 7 Wood pewee 2 N 2 M
- 8 Bank swallow 14 N
- 9 Blue jay 3 N
- 10 Crow 1 N
- 11 Chickadee 2 M
- 12 White-breasted nuthatch 1 M 1 P
- 13 House wren 1 P Y 1 Y
- 14 Catbird 8 N 1 M
- 15 Brown thrasher 2 N 3 Y
- 16 Robin 68 N (24 N 1 Y)
- 17 Meadowlark 1 Y 1 P Y
- 18 Baltimore oriole 1 N 1 P 1 Y
- 19 Bronzed grackle 4 N
- 20 Cardinal 2 P
- 21 Rose-breasted grosbeak 2 M
- 22 Indigo bunting 1 M 1 P
- 23 Chipping sparrow 3 N 2 M



\*All species are keyed on the map by number excepting the robin for which dots are used

one to the other we call to each other "I counted that one" and so we try not to duplicate. He says we probably miss as many as we duplicate for the monuments are bad for hiding ground feeders.

The juncos reached 113 on April 16 and then gradually dropped to one by May 14. The first one was back on Sept. 6. The robins reached 195 on April 21 and then went down to about 150 for the summer population. The white-throats reached their peak of 150 on April 30 and were down to 9 by May 14. There was a wave of kinglets, both kinds, on April 14, 66 in fact but never again so many. The sapsuckers, too, reached their peak of 30 on that day and the total census was 470 for the day.

On April 30 we spent much time hunting nests and found 6 robin nests and 2 mourning doves, so we made one of our maps into a "nest map" and plotted each nest on it. As new nests were found their numbers could easily be added. We had to make a nest map four times during the season for as nests matured or were destroyed we found the map cluttered with many numbers which were of no further use. We soon felt the need of a larger map on which we could plot all the nests so we copied a four foot map belonging to the Superintendent of Grounds. On this we plotted all the nests and could thus see the concentration points. We kept a Kardex file on each nest adding new data each time we visited it.

On May 1 I went to the cemetery very early in the morning. About 7 o'clock I heard a strange song which I knew I had never heard before. The bird sang over and over at about 10 second intervals. When I found him in section 1 I did not know him: a plain little greenish yellow bird with wing bars and an eye ring. He sang over and over and posed for many grand views. When I got home Peterson's Western Guide and Dr. Roberts' "Birds of Minnesota" helped me identify him as a Bell's vireo. It is always fun to add one to a "life list" and especially to learn his song so well.

#### Mirror Found Useful in Nest Study

On May 1 I found my first baby robin. The nest was in a white spruce about one foot above eye level. It had contained two eggs and later only one so I expected further predation. When I put my hand in and found only a very soft little morsel I was startled. I was afraid I had hurt it by my touch. So the next day I fastened a tilting hand mirror to the end of a lath and then I could see into nests without touching and could watch nests much higher than I could reach. I was glad to see that the robin was doing well.

From May 1 on, nesting activities seemed much more interesting than census and we found we could not do both on the same trip. So we decided to census only once in 2-3 weeks after the migration peak was passed and make as many nest trips as we could find the time for. During the height of the migration our species reached 50 and the individuals 495. The last week of May we had over 100 nests active at one time so it was impossible to visit them all on the same trip.

During the early part of May we found several robin nests built in oaks and maples. However so far as we know only 3 of those early nests in deciduous trees were successful while 15 of them were deserted after completion. In some we saw the female sitting for a few days. There were many squirrels and chipmunks on the area. Perhaps they caused the destruction of these very exposed nests. A large percent of all the nests found were in young white spruces from 5-15 feet high, especially in those which have been pruned to make them grow thick. There are over 500 of these on the area and it became quite a game to peek quietly into each one, sometimes a robin flew out, sometimes a dove or perhaps a grackle or catbird. Most of the nests were a little above eye level so the mirror was very useful.

Ninety-two robin's nests were found before June 15, 56 of them being in these young spruces. Forty-nine of them reached maturity. With the aid of the mirror we were able to see into 39 of them and watch the daily developments. Seven of the nests matured 1 young, 6 had 2, 15 had 3 and 11 had 4, making 108 young, an average of 2.8 per nest. Assuming that the 49 nests had this average, about 117 young were raised on the area during the early part of the summer. We were unable to continue the study during July and August so later nestings are not known. On June 20 a census of young robins showed 94. We probably missed some and some had died during those first 3 weeks of their lives.

Of the 43 nests which failed, 28 were abandoned before eggs were laid in them, 11 after the eggs were laid and 4 after the young were hatched. My investigation was the cause of disaster to one of them. The mother kicked so hard as she flushed the nest was tipped and the eggs spilled. One female sat 19 days on 3 eggs before she abandoned them. One nest was built on the ground on the steep bank near the bank swallows. Of the four which met disaster after the young were hatched, one was

unusual from beginning to end. The completed nest was found April 30 in a small spruce, 4 feet above the ground, but no eggs were found in it until May 18. The young hatched June 1. On the night of June 8 the mother and young were killed after a great battle, for breast feathers were scattered throughout the tree. Tail feathers, primaries and one foot were found. The young were almost completely devoured. A barred owl was seen on the area twice in the preceding week.

There was a great difference in the nervousness of different female robins. One was so nervous and excitable she would flush while I was still several yards away and would dash at me scolding, while another mother did not seem to mind me a bit. When I put my hand within a foot of the nest she would step off and hop along the limb about 18 inches while I looked in and then right back on the nest. Her nest failed while the nervous one raised 3 young. After the tame mother abandoned her nest a mourning dove laid one egg in it but never incubated it.

At the suggestion of Mr. N. R. Barger we made a special study of mourning doves' nests. Of the 24 nests which we found, the height varied from 3 to 11 feet with an average of 5.8. Twenty of them were in the young spruces, three were in red cedar and one in a truncated mulberry. We noticed that most of them seemed to be on the southern side of the trees so my son took his compass and found that all but one were between east and west toward the south. We could not see any reason why they should be so orientated for there was no more food in that direction than in any other. In fact seven of them were so placed that it was impossible for the doves to feed toward the south, other trees were so close on that side. One nest was on the north northwest side of a spruce in a wide open space. If this feature is noticed next year we shall try to find the reason for this peculiar orientation.

Only 12 young from all the 24 nests lived long enough to fly, four had 2 and four had 1. Of the 16 nests which failed completely, 11 were abandoned before any of the young were hatched, two failed while the young were very tiny and three were broken up by a cold rain June 8-9. This storm seemed to be very hard on the young doves for 6 of them were picked up dead under the nests.

The nest which we called number 18 was one of the most interesting we found. Originally it was a robin nest found May 8 completed but with no eggs. For some reason it was abandoned by the robins and on May 19 I discovered that a mourning dove had added a few twigs on top to flatten it out and was sitting on one egg. On May 29 she was incubating 2 eggs but on June 4 the nest was empty with no trace of eggs. On June 24 we found she had added a few more twigs and was sitting again. By July 11 two young had hatched but on July 18 one of the young had disappeared and the other was very sickly. I doubt if it lived. I did not have a chance to visit it again for some time. On August 15 I was showing an interested friend some of the things I had found on the area and started to show her this nest. I was much surprised to find a mourning dove sitting on 2 eggs again. Of course I am not sure it was the same pair for I have no way of marking them. On August 28 there were 2 young in the nest about 6 days old. On Sept. 6 the nest was empty so I am not sure they lived. We collected the nest and found the third time it was used nothing was added except a few grasses for lining. Another robin nest was built about 3 feet below nest number 18 and was in use during June and July while the mourning dove's second attempt was in progress.

On June 1 I made a special "song trip" for I wanted to see which one woke up first. I went to the cemetery with flashlight and notebook at 3:45 while it was still entirely dark. I hoped no one would see me for they would surely have thought me crazy. Sitting in the north end of section 16 I could hear all over the area. The nighthawk, of course, was the first I heard (4 o'clock) and at 4:05 the mourning dove gave his first coo but did not finish his song. At 4:06 a pewee talked very softly but 4 minutes later he called again much louder. At 4:20 the young robins began calling for breakfast and at 4:21 a black billed cuckoo called a few soft "cu cu's." The jays, grackles, catbirds, crows, grosbeaks, buntings, crested flycatcher, oriole, goldfinch and chickadee woke in this order. By 5:30 the air seemed filled with song though by 5:15 the robins had eased off considerably. Of course we must remember this is "war time" and it should be really an hour earlier.

On the border between the golf course and the cemetery there is a bank which houses a colony of bank swallows. On June 15 when the sun was at just the right angle we investigated them with the help of the mirror to throw a beam of sunshine into the tunnels. We found that 14 of the holes were occupied. In four of them we could see or hear young. In two others we could see the mother sitting while in the others the nests were clearly seen. The tunnels were 18-24 inches deep and all but one



of them were fairly straight. This one was curved but we could hear young calling in it. Most of the nests were lined with tan colored feathers but one was lined with snowy white feathers probably taken from the breast of the mother. The next time the colony was visited on June 20 we found that someone had dug out the nests and hung the babies with strong grasses all in a row. Only one nest had escaped and only a few adults were flying around. We could see where someone had jumped down from the golf grounds to the soft bank. The tracks looked like those of youngsters. The cruelty of some children is beyond belief.

We estimated that we put in 144 hours on nest trips and made 31 census trips averaging 6-7 "man-hours." Then keeping the records added many more hours. Now we are trying to figure out how we can do a better job next year without putting in any more hours. We have learned so much this year we are sure we can do better next year.

Madison, Wisconsin, November, 1944.

## *Christmas Bird Count, 1944*

**Appleton.** (river banks 25%, lake fronts and hardwoods 25%, city parks and streets 13%, ravine and cemetery 12%, open fields, swamp-tamarack, willow and alder 25%). Dec. 29; dawn to dusk. Cloudy; mist last two hours; 4-6 inches of snow; wind SW, 3-5 m. p. h.; temp. 27° at start, 30° at return. Three observers in one party. Total hours afield, 8 (4 on foot, 4 by car); total miles, 66 (4 on foot, 62 by car). Mallard, 30; black duck, 175; American golden-eye, 475; American merganser, 27; red-tailed hawk, 1; herring gull, 18; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 5; blue jay, 2; chickadee, 8; white-breasted nuthatch, 6; brown creeper, 6; robin, 1; northern shrike, 1; starling, 30; English sparrow, 300; junco, 4. Total, 17 species; about 1090 individuals.—Mrs. Walter E. Rogers, Mrs. H. L. Playman, Walter E. Rogers.

**Green Bay.** (city and surrounding country, including every type of ground.) Dec. 17; 8 a. m. to 4. Partly cloudy around noon; 2-5 inches snow on ground; wind N and NW, 11-17 m. p. h.; temp. 24° to 26°. Observers in four groups. Mallard; scaup; American golden-eye; American merganser; red-breasted merganser; bald eagle (Paulson); pheasant; herring gull; mourning dove; red-bellied woodpecker; hairy woodpecker; downy woodpecker; blue jay; crow; chickadee; white-breasted nuthatch; red-breasted nuthatch; starling; English sparrow; rusty blackbird (Wright); goldfinch; junco; tree sparrow. Total, 23 species.—Adris Weber, Eunice Rueppel, Grace Church, Mrs. Andrew Weber, Al Wetli, Paul Romig, Earl Wright, E. O. Paulson, Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Hussong.

**Madison.** (around Lake Mendota on foot excepting area within city limits; wooded hills 65%, lakeshore marsh 10%, farmlands 25%). Dec. 24. Overcast; wind W, 15 m. p. h.; ground covered with snow; lakes and rivers frozen; temp. 10° to 20°. Observers together. Total hours 9. Mallard, 4; black duck, 2; wood duck, 1; golden-eye, 1; red-tailed hawk, 1; red-shouldered hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 1; bobwhite, 18; pheasant, 60; coot, 1 (frozen); rock dove, 20; mourning dove, 8; kingfisher, 2; hairy woodpecker, 6; downy woodpecker, 12; blue jay, 30; crow, 600; chickadee, 70; white-breasted nuthatch, 12; brown creeper, 15; robin, 3; golden-crowned kinglet, 11; starling, 8; English sparrow, 300; goldfinch, 18; junco, 150; tree sparrow, 300; white-throated sparrow, 1 (feeding station); song sparrow, 1. Total, 29 species, about 1657 individuals.—Arnold S. Jackson, Jr. and N. R. Barger.

**Milwaukee.** (area bounded by W. Adler on N., W. Schlinger on S., 76th St. on E. and 121st St. on W; woods, marsh and open fields.) Dec. 30. Cloudy; little wind; 14 inches snow on ground; temp. 30. 5 hours on skis covering about 7 miles. One observer. Pheasant, 26; herring gull, 18; saw-whet owl, 1; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 3; blue jay, 2; crow, 3; chickadee, 13; starling, 6; English sparrow, 53; goldfinch, 6; junco, 7; tree sparrow, 7. Total, 13 species, about 146 individuals.—Arthur D. Doll.

**Milwaukee.** (a section along the Milwaukee river north of Milwaukee, including a winter feeding station. Also Estabrook Park, Juneau Park and a section of the lake front near South Shore Park). Dec. 28. Fair; wind NW, 10 m. p. h.; temp. 8° to 18°. Hours afield 3½; miles by car 20, on foot 3. Canada goose, 1; mallard, 20; black duck, 5; green-winged teal, 3; scaup, 100; golden-eye, 70; bufflehead, 16; hooded merganser, pair; American merganser, 600; red-breasted merganser, 150; red-tailed hawk, 1; herring gull, 300; rock dove, 150; downy woodpecker, 6; blue jay, 1; crow, 6; chickadee, 4; tufted titmouse, 1 (at feeding tray); white-breasted nuthatch, 3; brown creeper, 1; robin, 2; starling, 125; English sparrow, 300; cardinal, 3; junco, 7; song sparrow, 3. Total, 26 species, about 1962 individuals.—Don Bierman, Gordon Orians, H. L. Orians.

**Racine.** (Racine Harbor, open fields and little woods around Racine. Short open stretch on Root river.) Dec. 23; 9:30 a. m. to 4 p. m. Cloudy until 11 o'clock, later sunny; moderate NW wind; 7 inches snow. Golden-eye, 47; old-squaw, 1; American merganser, 55; pheasant, 4; herring gull, 130; mourning dove, 6; kingfisher, 7; crow, 8; robin, 2; starling, 29; English sparrow, 14; junco, 9; tree sparrow, 13; song sparrow, 2. Total, 14 species, 319 individuals.—Hans Zell.

**Waupun.** (from Horicon, north by car on roads adjacent to the marsh, thence east on Chester Road across marsh, thence south to Horicon, thence north on ice of Rock river to Four Mile Island, with stops and foot trips at Raddatz woods, Brecker farm, Mieske farm, Burnett Ditch, Ewald Pieper farm, Alois Feucht woods and Four Mile Island.) Dec. 27; 8 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. Dark, snowstorm, 5 inches snow fell during day; 8 to 12 inches snow; wind E, 5-10 m. p.h.; temp. 11° to 15°. Three observers together. Total hours afield, 9½, total miles on foot 4½. American rough-legged hawk, 6; European partridge, 43; pheasant, 94; herring gull, 1; screech owl, 1; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 5; blue jay, 4; crow, 68; chickadee, 9; brown creeper, 5; northern shrike, 1; starling, 8; English sparrow, 510; red-winged blackbird, 13; bronzed grackle, 1; goldfinch, 12; junco, 7; tree sparrow, 270. Total, 19 species, 1,059 individuals.—S. Paul Jones, Harold Mathiak, Watson E. Beed.

**Summary:** Again the Christmas count was restricted to southeastern Wisconsin. Twenty-three people took part in seven counts in six localities. The largest local list was 29, but the combined totals amounted to 51. But three species were represented on all counts; Starling, English sparrow and junco. Late dates were secured for the wood duck, robin (four localities), rusty blackbird, bronzed grackle, white-throated sparrow, and song sparrow (three localities). There were no northern visitors of special interest, but a saw-whet owl, a red-bellied woodpecker in Green Bay, and a tufted titmouse were notable.

## BY THE WAYSIDE . . .

**Saw-whet Owls in Waupun.** On January 13, at about 7:45 a. m., while walking to the refuge office in the post office in the city of Waupun, I heard the call of the saw-whet owl. The bird was soon located in an elm tree at about 30 feet from the ground and was clearly silhouetted against the morning sky. The little owl was observed for about 5 minutes when it was finally flushed by other pedestrians. During the time I observed it the owl repeated its call at about 5 second intervals. I thought it unusual for the bird to be calling at this time of year.

A saw-whet owl was taken in a steel trap by a trapper on the federal part of Horicon Marsh late in December. Since it had suffered only a badly pinched toe, it was released.—Watson E. Beed, Refuge Manager.

**White Pelicans On Lake Koshkonong.** Four white pelicans spent six weeks of the summer on a small pond at Thiebeau Point on Lake Koshkonong. The birds fed elsewhere but returned in late afternoon and settled on the pond, nor would they be driven away.—Mrs. Melva T. Maxson, Milton.

**Young Wood Pewees Get Honeysuckle Berries.** During the period from August 4 to 19, three young wood pewees perched frequently on the clothes line and telephone wire in the yard. In addition to the fare of insects I saw the old bird feed them honeysuckle berries.—Margarette E. Morse, Viroqua.

**Possible Nesting of Snow Geese in Wisconsin.** Mr. Charles Koehn of Oshkosh tells me of a pair of snow geese that nested last season on an island off the south shore of Lake Poygan, six miles from Winneconne, near his cottage. He thinks the female may have been wounded. The male remained with her and they nested and raised two young. Mr. Koehn was within twenty-five feet of the nest on several occasions but did not bother them as he was afraid they might leave.—J. Harwood Evans, Oshkosh.

**Some Food Habits of the Mourning Dove.** Mourning doves not only eat salt, they eat and apparently appreciate charcoal also. During the late summer and fall they visited our garden where ashes are thrown, daily picking and eating bits of charcoal.—Francis Zirr, Hayward.

**Starling Banding Recovery.** A starling banded on Jan. 15, 1940 by R. A. Conyers, Independence, Mo., was found dead in our barnyard last September.—Russell Weisensell, Sun Prairie.

**A Snowy Owl Goes to School.** This afternoon Lee Hansen and I went on a hike with our skis. Lee was late so I went to look for him and met him at the McKinley School. While we were talking to each other we noticed a large white object on the roof of the school. Lee asked what I thought it was and I said I didn't know, but we should walk over and see. When we were near we saw it was a bird of about two feet high. It looked like an owl, so we stopped but not soon enough, because it turned and flew. Its wing-spread was about six feet. As soon as it was out of sight we went straight over to Mrs. W. S. Peirce's house where we looked it up in her bird book and identified it as a Snowy Owl.—Richard Warner, Racine.

**Some Notes from Viroqua.** Among the regular bird visitors to our food shelf this winter has been a tufted titmouse. This is the first year



since 1928 when we were able to attract it. Perhaps I should also report the lark sparrow seen last June 22 while driving from Sauk to Richland County. First it was heard singing and upon stopping I found it sitting near the road in full view. On June 28 a female cardinal was seen feeding a young cowbird on the food shelf, but a male cardinal which was present did not assist. On Aug. 5 a towhee's nest with two young was found.—Margarette E. Morse, Viroqua.

## THE AUTUMN SEASON . . .

(Field notes should be sent to the editor at the end of each of the four seasons. They should be turned in promptly and the A. O. U. order may be followed. All members are invited to participate.)

The following is an annotated list of the more unusual observations of the season.

**Holboell's Grebe:** Dane County, Oct. 24 (Schorger). Rare.

**White Pelican:** Four, Lake Koshkonong, summer of 1944 (Mrs. Maxson). See article elsewhere in this issue.

**Green Heron:** One, Hayward, Aug. 6 (Kahmann). Not often seen in this vicinity.

**Black-crowned Night Heron:** Fifteen, Appleton, Oct. 21 (Mrs. Rogers).

**Whistling Swan:** Eleven, Oconto, Dec. 11 (Richter). Two hundred, Hayward, Nov. 27 (Kahmann). Two flocks, Oshkosh, Nov. 17-18 (Evans). Seldom seen here in fall. Two, Madison, Dec. 1 (Herbert Anderson).

**Snow Goose:** Two flocks, Hayward, Nov. 25 (Stevens).

**Mallard:** Two, Hayward, Nov. 13 (Zirrer).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Several, Hayward, Nov. 11 (Zirrer).

**Hooded Merganser:** Several, Hayward, Nov. 22 (Zirrer).

**Turkey Vulture:** Oconto County, Nov. 11 (Richter). Uncommon.

**Prairie Chicken:** Oconto County, December (Richter).

**Piping Plover:** Racine, November (Zell). Rarely seen.

**Black-bellied Plover:** Four, Appleton, Oct. 20 (Mrs. Rogers). Also one on Oct. 21. One brought to Sam Thorn, Milwaukee, during last week of October.

**Woodcock:** One, Hayward, Nov. 4 (Zirrer). One, Milwaukee, Nov. 5 (Doll).

**Sanderling:** Milwaukee, Nov. 12 (Deusing and Bierman); Nov. 22 (G. Oriens). Late.

**Red Phalarope:** Milwaukee, Oct. 21 (H. L. Oriens). Casual in state.

**Herring Gull:** Hayward, Nov. 29 (Kahmann). Late for this vicinity.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Milwaukee, Nov. 12 (Deusing). Late.

**Mourning Dove:** Found wintering sparingly from Green Bay southward.

**Arctic Horned Owl:** Hustisford, Nov. 12, reported by Gromme elsewhere in this issue.

**Whip-poor-will:** Hayward, Oct. 3 (Zirrer). Late.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Waushara County, Nov. 19 (Buckstaff and Evans).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Waupaca, Dec. 6 (Mrs. Peterson). Feeding from corn on cob.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Black Earth, December and January (Mrs. Scott). Feeding on chimney surface, apparently finding hibernating wasps. One reported by Mrs. Angie K. Main, seen Dec. 25 at Lake Koshkonong by Frank Bingham.

**Canada Jay:** Waupaca, Dec. 8 (Mrs. Peterson).

**Tufted Titmouse:** Milwaukee, Nov. 23 (Mrs. Floyd Jackson). Two, banded by Mrs. Maxson, Milton.

**Robin:** Wintering again as usual in many parts of southern Wisconsin.

**Hermit Thrush:** Menominee Falls, Nov. 26 (Mrs. Martin Paulson). Also Milwaukee, Nov. 12 (DuMez). Both late dates.

**Bluebird:** Large flocks in Appleton, October 3-10 (Mrs. Rogers).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Observed hovering at the suet log on Dec. 10 by Mrs. Rogers. Both species of kinglets were migrating heavily on Sept. 27 in Appleton.

**Pipit:** Milwaukee, Oct. 10 (Gordon Orians).

**Meadowlark:** Dane County, Dec. 17 (Barger).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Appleton, Oct. 3 (Mrs. Rogers). Late. Male in winter plumage.

**Evening Grosbeak:** Florence County, Nov. 25 (Richter).

**Red Crossbill:** Six, Madison, Nov. 5 (Schorger).

**Junco:** Still present near Hayward, Dec. 4 (Zirrer).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Immature, banded in Milwaukee, Oct. 8 (Sam Thorn).

**White-throated Sparrow:** Many migrating, Milwaukee, Sept. 29 (Bierman); Appleton, Sept. 27-Oct. 21 (Mrs. Rogers).

**Snow Bunting:** Marinette County, flock of 100, Oct. 11 (Mrs. Husong). Milwaukee, Oct. 18 (H. L. Orians).

**The Green Bay Bird Club.** This local club meets on the second Sunday of each month (with some exceptions) for a field trip beginning usually at 1:30 and lasting until dark. From April through November the trip is followed by potluck supper and business meeting with program in the spot where the trip was held. During winter, they disband at dark and meet again for a program and business meeting, which is usually held at the Neville Museum at 7:30. Field trips and meetings are open to the public. The exceptions to the second Sunday are: March, when they meet on the third Sunday, in order to be sure of seeing some of the earliest migrants; April, when they select the best "Swan" Sunday, usually the first Sunday of the month; and December, when they choose the Sunday nearest Christmas, in order to take the bird count. At present there are 82 paid-up members.

**The City Club Bird Group.** This local Milwaukee club meets on the fourth Monday of the month except during December, July and August. It is not necessary to be a member of the City Club to belong, and anyone interested in the study is cordially invited to attend the meetings. Several bird trips are conducted during the year, particularly during the May migration and at Christmas. The president of the group is now Mrs. H. J. Nunnemacher, 2815 E. Newberry Blvd., and the secretary is Mrs. A. P. Balsom, 2209 E. Stratford Ct., both of Milwaukee.

*Another Record of  
Bubo Virginianus Subarcticus  
(Arctic Horned Owl) For Wisconsin*

On November 12th, 1944, three young men from Milwaukee were hunting near Hustisford, Wisconsin. They shot a great horned owl and upon their return to the city decided to have the bird mounted as a trophy. Fortunately they brought it to the museum hoping that one of the taxidermists would prepare it. As contrasted with other skins the light color of this bird at once proved it to be an Arctic horned owl.

After having learned its identity and that the bird is very uncommon in Wisconsin the boys decided to donate it to the museum. It proved to be a female, and becomes museum catalogue number 18253. The boys who donated the specimen are Roger Kraetz, Robert Lindmann and Imbert Schulz, all of Milwaukee.

We have in the museum collections two other specimens of *subarcticus* which were taken in Wisconsin. One was taken at Ashland, Wisconsin, in January, 1886, and the other at Columbus Lake, Oneida County, on October 28th, 1932, by Mr. Paul Hoffmann. These are the only Wisconsin specimen records that I know of at present.

Kumlien and Hollister give it as, "A rare winter visitant, at least in Southern Wisconsin. Taken by Hoy at Racine and by Kumlien at Lake Koshkonong."

J. N. Clark of Meridian, Dunn County, Wisconsin, in Wilson Bulletin No. 24, p. 7, states "One nearly white, seen December 2 and 3. This is the only one observed in Wisconsin."

The Reverend Francis Dayton of New London, Wisconsin, informs me that "My only record for the New London District was a fine example of one on exhibit in an exhibit of the Game and Fish Association of Freemont, Waupaca County, which I attended the 17th to 22nd of November, 1936, where a local taxidermist exhibited some rare birds and mammals, among them a fine example of the Arctic Horned Owl. A very rare bird. It was taken just to the south of the Village of Freemont along the Wolf River."

—O. J. Gromme,  
Curator of Zoology  
Milwaukee Public Museum