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## CANADA GOOSE NEW SPECIES ON CHRISTMAS COUNT

**Second Highest Score, 39, in Schenectady's 24th Enumeration --- Troy Has 30 Kinds --- Crow and Starling Totals Down --- Ruby-crowned, Grackle, and Red-wing among High-lights of Area's List of 45**

A flock of a dozen Canada Geese flew low over the entirely open Mohawk River at Mohawk View Saturday morning, December 27; the wind was stiff, and the birds' flight slow. They became Species No. 76 on Schenectady's composite Christmas Count, and the feature of the 24th consecutive enumeration. The day was far from wintry, and so were the preceding days. Thirty-nine species were recorded, second only to the 40 of 1944.

The Troy area count of the following day set a new record with 30 species. It was the fifth count for that area. Two species -- Red-winged Blackbird and Swamp Sparrow -- were new for the area, bringing that composite figure to 38 species.

Adding the Schenectady and Troy figures, 45 species were seen, with the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Purple Grackle as added species of particular interest. Crow and Starling counts were down -- Crow because the roosts of earlier years are no longer used, and the Starling down because no attempt was made to count the downtown roosts.

### Composite Lists

**SCHENECTADY COMPOSITE:** Same overall area as in other recent years; Saturday, December 27; 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.; temp. 30° at start, 10° at finish; partly cloudy; wind east to northwest, 0 to 25 mph; no snow on ground; streams open, small ponds and marshes frozen. Twenty-seven observers in nine parties; 31 party-hours afoot, 20 party-hours by car; 50 party-miles afoot, 125 party-miles by car. Totals: 39 species; 2871 individuals.

**TROY COMPOSITE:** Same overall area as in other four recent years; Sunday, December 28; 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; temp. 4° at start, 20° at finish; clear; no wind; streams and lakes newly frozen in part. Seven observers in two parties; 7 party-hours afoot, 12 party-hours by car; 12 party-miles afoot, 110 party-miles by car. Totals: 30 species, 1838 individuals.

### Schenectady Observers

Party 1 - Thacher Park, Altamont, Meadowdale, Voorheesville; 6 party-hours, 2 miles afoot, 27 miles by car. Mr. and Mrs. Stephen C. Fordham, Samuel R. Madison.



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Party Species Individuals	SCHENECTADY, December 27										TROY, Dec. 28			
	T	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	T
	39	18	5	19	26	8	26	11	6	13	4	16	29	30
	2871	179	37	447	501	111	8526	174	80	45	13	444	1394	1838
Canada Goose	12				12									
Mallard	3				3							80	90	
Black Duck	13			1	12							900	800	
Pintail													1	1
American Golden-eye												6	3	9
American Merganser	50				14		50					62	20	82
Goshawk	1				1									
Cooper's Hawk													1	1
Red-tailed Hawk	4	1		3									1	1
Sparrow Hawk	8	2			5	1							2	2
Ruffed Grouse	8	2	1		2			3					1	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	20	1		12	2		4			1		1	5	6
Herring Gull	44		1	3	26		40					22	88	110
Ring-billed Gull	3				3								20	20
Mourning Dove	1									1				
Horned Owl	1						1							
Belted Kingfisher													1	1
Pileated Woodpecker	2						2							
Hairy Woodpecker	13			2	2		2	2	2	3		3	3	3
Downy Woodpecker	33	3	1	6	5		9	3	2	4		3	3	6
Horned Lark	6						6							
Blue Jay	43	1		7	8	3	4	7	10	3		33	8	41
American Crow	310	13		3	6	260	24	3	1			16	82	98
Black-capped Chickadee	178	18	4	25	43	11	47	5	5	14	6	54	22	76
White-breasted Nuthatch	28	4		4	2		10	3	1	4		3	2	5
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3							1		2		1		1
Brown Creeper	13	1		2	3		4	1		2		2	4	6
Winter Wren	3						3							
American Robin	1						1							
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3	2			1									
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1			1										
Cedar Waxwing	6			6										
Common Starling	918	20	30	12	42	770	12	22		10		102	29	131
House Sparrow	399	12		34	52	30	88	63	45	75		98	35	133
Red-winged Blackbird													1	1
Purple Grackle	1						1							
Evening Grosbeak	9			1			1		7					
Purple Finch	1						1							
Common Redpoll	164	5		5	36		118						2	2
Fine Siskin	13				12		1							
American Goldfinch	122	25			64	2	15	14		2		29	12	41
Slate-colored Junco	16	14			2							4	1	5
American Tree Sparrow	359	54		15	135	42	75		25	13		8	63	71
Swamp Sparrow													1	1
Song Sparrow	18	1		5	8		4						3	3

(In above tabulation the Herring Gull count is a new high)

Party 2 - Watervliet Reservoir; 2 party-hours, 2 miles afoot, 8 miles by car. Stephen C. Fordham, Samuel R. Madison.

Party 3 - Collins Lake, Riverside Avenue, Sunnyside Road, Gateway Bridge, Rice Road, Campbell Road, Poentic Marsh; 5 hours, 5 miles afoot. Donald Tucker.

Party 4 - VISOHERS Ferry area; 14 party-hours, 10 miles afoot, 40 miles by car. Alice Holmes, Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, Nelle G. Van Vorst, P. Schuyler Miller, Guy Bartlett.

Party 5 - Albany Airport, Karners, West Albany, State Farm Road; 5 party-hours, 2 miles afoot, 25 miles by car. Pauline Baker, Mrs. Lillian C. Stoner, Leon A. Wiard.

Party 6 - Niskayuna, Lisha Kill; Troy Road, Whitney Estate, Rosendale Road, Mohawk View; 10 party-hours, 20 miles afoot, 25 miles by car. James Staley, Jerry Hare, Floyd Downs, Peter Runge, Michael Shepard, Robert Goble, Dr. Malcolm E. McDonald, Rudolph H. Stone.

Party 7 - Central Park; 4 party-hours, 3 miles afoot. Mrs. R. F. Abell, Agatha Schuurman, Stephanie Podrazik.

Party 8 - Van Antwerp Road; 2½ hours, 4 miles afoot. B. D. Miller.

Party 9 - Feeding Stations; Mrs. C. J. Grace, Mrs. W. L. Butler, Mrs. Laura S. Beck.

Party 10 - Bluff Road; 2 hours, 2 miles afoot. G. Malcolm Andrews.

#### Troy Observers

Party 1 - Tomhannock Reservoir, Tamarack Swamp, Cropseyville, Troy; 5 party-hours, 3 miles afoot, 35 miles by car. Jack Crandall, Lester A. Giles, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Byron T. Hipple.

Party 2 - Areas along Hudson River from Congress Street Bridge to Stillwater, Hoosic River from Stillwater to Valley Falls, and Mohawk River from Cohoes to Vischer Ponds. Guy Bartlett, Rudolph H. Stone, Donald Tucker.

## CAPE ANN CHRISTMAS COUNT

Nelle G. Van Vorst

To participate in a Christmas Count in a new area and with other folk is always interesting. This was particularly true for two SBC members on December 21 when they joined some Massachusetts birders on their Cape Ann census.

The Weather Bureau predicted bad weather, but fortunately it was wrong, for Sunday proved to be merely a cloudy day with some sunshine and a 40° temperature. A northeast wind gave warning of what was in store for the vacationers who lingered in Swampscott.

The SBC members were guests of Massachusetts Audubon Society, which arranged to have two of its members, Mr. and Mrs. H. Halberg, call for them at 6:40 a.m. at the Statler Hotel. Mr. Halberg called attention to the flashing blue light atop the John Hancock Building; it meant it would be a cloudy day. The meeting place for all cars was at the Fisherman Statue in Gloucester. After greetings had been exchanged, and the four Barrow's Golden-eyes in the bay at Fort Stage Park eagerly studied, Mr. C. Russell Mason, executive director of MAS, started 8 groups of 30 total on their ways for the day.

The limits for the Halberg car were Straitsworth Inn to Plum Cove, where Consolidated Lobster Company has its plant, including Andrews Point and Halibut Point in Lanesville.

Following the shore closely, Mrs. Halberg first spotted two Pheasants in a low tree. From Bearskin Neck a Red-throated Loon and an Old-squaw were the only birds in addition to Gulls. Counts were high for Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, and many Kittiwakes were easily observed from Andrews Point. Here also the pure white Gannets with their black-tipped wings showed plainly against a black cloud. The expert diving and maneuvers of eight at one time entertained the birders. On the seaweed-covered rocks from the same vantage point a flock of 57 Purple Sandpipers was seen busily feeding. A killdeer was the only other shorebird for the day. The three Scoters -- American, Surf, and White-winged -- mingled with Red-breasted Mergansers and American Golden-eyes, a few European Cormorants, Horned and Red-throated Grebes during the trip from Andrews Point to Halibut Point.

A bit of inland exploring revealed a Mockingbird, which had never before been recorded on a Cape Ann census. The usual Chickadees, the two Nuthatches, Blue Jays, Starlings, Crows, and Song Sparrows were found.

The Boston birders, as well as the SBC members, were disappointed when no alcidae were seen from the shores that usually produced them. About 4 p.m., when the light was becoming poor, all cars headed toward the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary in Topsfield, where Essex County Bird Club was host. Here a social hour was enjoyed, and the records compiled. The total for all groups was 179, with six new ones for the Cape; included were 15,559 individuals.

## FLORIDIAN IMPRESSIONS

Beatrice Sullivan

A Purple Gallinule! No description, written or oral, in any way prepared me for this black-opal-done-in-feathers. Red bill, yellow legs, body of purple and blue and green, it came tripping across the lotus pads in Everglades National Park.

Most of the people on the National Audubon Society's Florida Wildlife Tour would have been content to stop right there at so-called Anhinga Trail. Here were numbers of these big, snake-necked birds that gave the place its name, as well as Wood Ibis, White Ibis, American Egret, Little Blue Heron, Louisiana Heron. And, as most of us on the trip were northerners, there were great exclamations at seeing half-submerged, long knobby logs unexpectedly rise and open vicious jaws -- the alligators. But the guide let us stay entranced only a while and then told us, "Come on; you haven't seen anything yet."

And so back to the station wagon we went, and on to lunch at Coot Bay. Why that particular spot is so named I don't know -- southern Florida seems to be full of coots.

The next intriguing thing was a motorboat ride on a tiny canal through a mangrove swamp. Keeping that canal open is

a task. In fact, we struck bottom a couple of times. Here again were Ibis, Herons and White Pelicans, the latter with their down-curved wings and down-pointing bills. Although there was no opportunity to watch the White Pelican dive for fish here, a close view of the Brown Pelicans elsewhere showed that they plummet downward, turning as they hit the water, and go under until only their tail feathers are visible.

In addition to the birds the canal offered another attraction -- a crocodile -- a creature of salt or at least brackish water. The alligator, we were told, prefers fresh. The crocodile was sunning himself in a sheltered nook, and it may have been because he was completely dry, but he looked as if he was covered with aluminum scales rather than showing the black color of the alligator. Also, the crocodile has a pointed nose instead of a blunt one.

Finally we reached Gator Lake and there it was, the high light of the trip! Into the deep blue sky there rose a living cloud of pink -- over a hundred Roseate Spoonbills. Excitedly we followed them along, and were quite close to them for some time, surely one of the outstandingly beautiful sights in the lives of each of us.

But the sun sets, even in Florida, and it was growing late as we rode back. Feeling that the day could have nothing more to offer we noticed, nevertheless, that our driver kept edging off toward the left of the road. Soon we knew why for there, slipping along through the dusk, was what was for most of us our first Limpkin.

The best of Audubon Trips must end, and the lights of Miami soon told us it was over.

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## MISTAKEN FOR A TREE

Barrington S. Havens

Those who maintain feeding stations are in an exceptionally good position for observing not only the appearance but particularly the habits of many species of birds which might ordinarily be quite strange to us. In my case it was the Brown Creeper.

My feeding station at Jenny Lake doesn't attract a great variety of species. The usual visitors are the ubiquitous Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, and an occasional White-breasted Nuthatch. A few Golden-crowned Kinglets and one or two Brown Creepers complete the traveling "happy family," but they do not patronize the feeder -- at least, they haven't in the past.

But the Brown Creeper is trying. On recent occasions I have noticed the bird flying from one tree trunk to another in the vicinity of the feeder (a cage of suet suspended from a wire), but his behavior was sufficiently peculiar to make me notice it. Then one day I saw him fly directly to the feeder and light on it. But before he had an opportunity to dip into the larder, a Chickadee lit there too and drove him away. The Chickadee didn't do so deliberately; evidently the Creeper is a shy species and becomes easily alarmed.

This caused me to watch for similar visits in the future. But I never did see the Creeper light on the feeder long enough to have a meal. He seemed to want to badly enough, but he never had sufficient courage to endure the presence of the Chickadees.

One interesting thing about the Creeper's behavior was an apparent "follow-the-leader" technique. He seemed to follow the other birds around and try to do what they did. If they visited the feeder, he tried to visit it.

When I hand-feed my Chickadees with sunflower seeds (I reserve this food as a special inducement), the birds quite often light all over me while awaiting their turns. While one sits on my hand looking around belligerently to make sure no other bird interrupts him when he does decide to select a seed, the others will perch on my head, my shoulders, or any part of my clothing they can cling to. On one occasion recently, while one bird was perched on my hand making up his mind which seed he wanted, another lit unexpectedly on my leg. I looked down quickly, and the movement scared the bird away. But not before I recognized him as a Brown Creeper and not a Chickadee.

Evidently he had seen the Chickadees come to me for food and had decided to investigate.

## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

### MEETING

Monday, February 23, 8 p.m.; Schenectady Museum, 37 Steuben Street. Annual meeting: election of officers and directors; motion pictures.

### AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Monday, February 2, 8 p.m.; Central Park Junior High School Auditorium, Elm and Bradley Streets. Fran William Hall, "South to Siesta Land."

### FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, February 15, 8:30 a.m. at Union Street and Palmer Avenue, or 9 a.m. at Saratoga and Ontario Streets, Cohoes. Green Island and Upper Hudson; Donald Tucker, leader, telephone 3-7205.

Sunday, March 8, 8:30 a.m. at Sunnyside and Saratoga Roads. Collins Lake and River Environs; the Voghts, leaders, telephone 3-2021.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Potomac Valley - History and Prospect, edited by Shirley A. Briggs and published by the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia, Inc., Box 202, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington 4, D.C.; 44-page 6x9 booklet, 75 cents. Six authors present the history and prospect of the Potomac Valley from the standpoint of naturalist and conservationist.

## S B C FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Esly Hallenbeck and Leon A. Ward, Co-chairmen

### DUCKS AGAIN

Upper Hudson, January 11

The heavy snow storm of two days earlier was probably the reason for the poor turnout for the Upper Hudson trip of Sunday, January 11. There were only the leader, and Mr. and Mrs. William R. Foote. The Hudson was not visited until afternoon, after the three met accidentally in Central Park. There was fog above Cohoes and the Mohawk, and rain after 2 p.m. Birds were very active. Mourning Doves were seen in three places; birds were seen frequently along road edges; a Grackle and a Flicker were found at Niskayuna; and the whole Redpoll count was contributed by Niskayuna. The duck count on the Hudson did not differ materially from that of the Christmas Count two weeks earlier.

Twenty-four species were listed: Mallard, 40; Black Duck, 1000; Pintail, one male; American Golden-eye, 6; American Merganser, 12; Sparrow Hawk, 4; Herring Gull, 24; Mourning Dove, 6; Flicker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Horned Lark, 23; Blue Jay, 8; Crow, 5; Black-capped Chickadee, 30; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Brown Creeper, 2; Starling, 55; House Sparrow, 125; Purple Grackle, 1; Redpoll, 250; Goldfinch, 20; Slate-colored Junco, 1; Tree Sparrow, 40.

## ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE

### EVENING GROSBEAKS, BREEDERS

It was previously known that the Evening Grosbeak is a breeding bird at Saranac Lake and a few other Adirondack locations. In Evening Grosbeak Survey News of January, 1953, George P. Sauter of Glens Falls reports:

"We had a most unusual experience this year (1952). One pair of Evening Grosbeaks remained with us most of the summer, visiting our feeder many times each day and quite often in the evening. About the 15th of July the adult birds were accompanied by two good-sized young birds, a male and female. Both young birds looked like females, being of the same color, the male being distinguished only by the large white patches on the wings. The adult male always fed the young male while the mother bird fed only the young female. The four Evening Grosbeaks continued to visit our feeders for about two weeks, after which the adult birds disappeared though the young continued to come to the feeders many times each day until the middle of September when they too disappeared except for one day the latter part of October, and haven't been seen since. I regret we were unable to band the young birds for I am of the opinion they will always consider this vicinity their home and possibly establish a colony which will remain with us throughout the year."

Evening Grosbeaks, incidentally, have not returned in numbers to Saranac Lake, where there was such a large breeding population during the summer, the Survey News reports.

Some listed arrival dates: Slingerlands, Dec. 5 (Grace); Ballston Lake, Dec. 13, two males, one female (Murname).


**RECENT S B C RECORDS**


Frazer R. Turrentino, Records Committee Chairman

Great Blue Heron	Jan. 4	Collins Lake		RS
Pintail	11	Green Island		RS
Canvas-back	Early Dec	Saratoga Lake		JV
Killdeer	Jan. 4	Collins Lake	(3rd winter rec)	RS
Mourning Dove	11	Forts Ferry Rd.	six	RS
	17	Vischer Ponds	flock 15	FK
Snowy Owl	Late Nov.	French's Hollow		EH
Yellow-shafted Flicker	Jan. 11	Niskayuna		RS
Downy Woodpecker	17	Vischer Ponds	flocked	FK
American Crow	Dec-Jan.		unusually scarce	
Winter Wren	Jan. 1	Troy Road		RS
American Robin	December	Ardsley Road	injured wing	MR
	Jan. 8	Elmer Avenue		RS
Eastern Meadowlark	1	Niskayuna		RS
Red-winged Blackbird	17	Vischer Ponds		FK
Purple Grackle	1	Niskayuna	two	RS
Pine Siskin	1	Troy Road		RS
White-throated Sparrow	4	Collins Lake		RS
Swamp Sparrow	1	Niskayuna		RS
Song Sparrow	1	Niskayuna		RS
Lapland Longspur	1	Niskayuna	five	RS
Snow Bunting	3	Vischer Ponds	100	FK

 KEY: EHallenbeck FKlemm MRix RStone JVoght


**NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF**

MORE CARDINALS

The Cardinal seems to be increasing its range, so we have hopes that within a few years we will have them established here. People who move here from Cardinal territory are not surprised when they see one here.

This happened last winter when one visited a feeding station on Clifton Park Road. Not only did one linger during the winter, but a pair was there all summer. No young were seen, however. The owner of the feeding station did not call anyone as she was familiar with the bird and not aware of its local scarcity.

-- Nelle G. Van Vorst


**STATE FEDERATION NEWS**

NEXT CONVENTION

SBC was host at the fifth annual convention of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, held at Schenectady May 24-25, 1952.

The sixth convention is scheduled at Bear Mountain Park May 23-24, with Rockland Audubon Society as host. Those not delegates at the meetings will have trips scheduled both Saturday and Sunday. Indications are that SBC will have a large number of its members at the convention. More later.



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## 1952 FIELD TRIPS SET NEW HIGH COUNT

### WITH 189 SPECIES LISTED LOCALLY

Esly Hallenbeck and Leon A. Wiard

SBC's field trips of 1952 featured such rarities as the Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Glossy Ibis, Mute Swan, European Widgeon, Barrow's Golden-eye, Ruddy Turnstone, and Orchard Oriole in local areas. In addition there were numerous out-of-season records.

The 28 field trips accounted for 189 species of birds, plus Brewster's Warbler, a hybrid. The 10-county total of 189 set a new high -- six more than the 183 of 1951 which itself was a record.

In the following table the page references are to the detailed reports in FEATHERS during 1951. The trips:

Key	Date	Place	No.Seen	Page
A	Jan.13	Upper Hudson	18	8
B	Mar. 9	Sunnyside-Collins	17	11
C	16	McCormack Road	17	37
D	23	Campbell-Schermerhorn Roads	21	37
E	30	Saratoga Lake	42	38
F	Apr.12	Tomhannock Reservoir	43	38
G	20	Vischer Ponds	49	38
H	27	Central Park	34	38
I	May 4	Central Park	39	38
J	7	Dusk Songs	19	38
K	11	Ladder-Meadowdale	42	39
L	17	Century Run	143	41
M	24	Federation No. 1	88	29
N	25	Federation No. 2	87	29
O	30	Karner	36	39
P	June 8	Alcove Reservoir	57	39
Q	22	Vischer Ponds	53	67
R	Jul. 20	Lower Hudson	49	67
S	Aug. 24	Vischer Ponds	65	68
T	Sep. 7	Vischer-Niskayuna	46	68
U	14	Lower Hudson	51	60,69
V	21	Watervliet Reservoir	44	68
W	Oct. 5	Karner	26	78
X	19	Central Park	17	78
Y	Nov. 9	Tomhannock Reservoir	22	78
Z	16	Saratoga Lake	31	78
a	Dec.27	Schenectady Christmas Count	39	1953-1
b	28	Troy Christmas Count	30	1953-1

**FEATHERS**

**February, 1933**

Common Loon		F		L					Y Z
Red-necked Grebe		F							Y Z
Horned Grebe		F							Y Z
Pied-billed Grebe		F G		L M N		S T	U V		
Dbl-crested Cormorant				L			U		
Great Blue Heron	B D	G		L		Q R S T	U		
American Egret						Q R	T U		
Green Heron			J K L	M N	P	Q R S T	U V		
Black-cr. Night Heron		G	J	L M N		Q R S	U		
Yellow-cr. Night Heron				L					
American Bittern		G	K L			Q R S T			
Glossy Ibis			L						
Mute Swan	D								
Canada Goose		E	K L						a
Mallard	A	E F G	L	M N		Q R S T	U V		Y Z a b
Black Duck	A	E F G	L	M N	P	Q R S T	U V		Y Z a b
Gadwall		G							
European Widgeon		G							
American Widgeon		G							
Pintail		F					T		b
Green-winged Teal		G							
Blue-winged Teal		G	L	M N		T	U V		
Wood Duck		E	L			S T	U V		
Ring-necked Duck		E F G							
Greater Scaup		E	L						
Lesser Scaup		E							
American Golden-eye	A	E F							Y Z b
Barrow's Golden-eye		E							
Buffle-head		E F							
White-winged Scoter									Z
Ruddy Duck									Z
Hooded Merganser									Y
American Merganser	A C D	E F	L						Y Z a b
Red-breasted Merganser		F							Z
Turkey Vulture			L						
Goshawk									a
Sharp-shinned Hawk		F	I	N		R			Y
Cooper's Hawk				M		R S T			b
Red-tailed Hawk	C	E F	L		P	R S	U		a b
Red-shouldered Hawk		E G	L	M O P		T			
Broad-winged Hawk			I	L			V		
Rough-legged Hawk			L						
Marsh Hawk		E F G	L	N		T	U		
Osprey		G				R S T	U		
Sparrow Hawk	A B C	E F G	K L M	P		R S T	U V		Z a b
Ruffed Grouse			L						Z a b
Ring-necked Pheasant	A B D	E F G H	K L	N		Q S	U		Z a b
Virginia Rail			L	N		Q	U		a b
Sora				N			U V		
Florida Gallinule			L	M N		Q R S T	U		
American Coot				N					
Ringed Plover			L	N		S	U		
Killdeer		E	H I	K L M	N	P Q R S	U V		Y
Ruddy Turnstone				N					
American Woodcock			J	L					
Wilson's Snipe									Y
Upland Sandpiper						Q			
Spotted Sandpiper			K L	M N	P	S T	V		
Solitary Sandpiper			L	M					
Greater Yellow-legs			L						
Lesser Yellow-legs						S	U		
Pectoral Sandpiper							V		
Least Sandpiper			L	M N					
Red-backed Sandpiper			L	M N					
Semipalmated Sandpiper			L	N		R S			
Herring Gull	A B D	E F G	L	M N		S T U			Y Z a b

FEATHERS

February, 1953

Ring-billed Gull	D	G	L					U	Z a b
Bonaparte's Gull			L						
Common Tern			L						
Black Tern					N		S		
Mourning Dove	C	E F G H	I J K L	M N	P	Q	S T	U	a
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			L			O	Q	U	
Black-billed Cuckoo			L						a
Horned Owl			L						
Barred Owl			L						
Whip-poor-will			J	L				V	
Common Nighthawk			L						
Chimney Swift			K L	M N O P	Q R S				
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird				L	M		S	U	
Belted Kingfisher	B	E F G H	I	L	M N	P	Q R S T	U V	b
Yellow-shafted Flicker	D	E G H	I J K L	M N O P	Q R		T	U V W	
Pileated Woodpecker			L					X	Z a
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		G	L					X	
Hairy Woodpecker	A C D	H	L	M			S	U W	Z a b
Downy Woodpecker	A B C D	E F G H	I K L	M N	P	Q R S T	U V W X	Y Z a b	
Eastern Kingbird			K L	M N O P	Q R S				
Crested Flycatcher			K L	M N O P	Q R S				
Eastern Phoebe		E F G H	I J	L	M N O P	Q R S T	U V W		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			L						
Trail's Flycatcher				L	M N	P	R		
Least Flycatcher				L	M N O P	Q	S		
Eastern Wood Pewee				M N	P		S		
Olive-sided Flycatcher					O				
Horned Lark		H	L	M					a
Tree Swallow		E F G	J	L	M N	P	Q R S		
Bank Swallow			L	K N			Q R S		
Rough-winged Swallow				K L	M N				
Barn Swallow			I J K L	M N	P	R S T			
Cliff Swallow			L	M N		S			
Blue Jay	A B C D	E F G H	I K L	M N O P	Q R S T	U V W X	Y Z a b		
American Crow	A B C D	E F G H	I J K L	M N O P	Q R S T	U V W X	Y Z a b		
Black-capped Chickadee	A B C D	E F G H	I	L	M N O P	Q	R S T	U V W X	Y Z a b
White-breasted Nuthatch	A B C	E F H	I	L	K		R T	U V	Y Z a b
Red-breasted Nuthatch		F H		L					a b
Brown Creeper	D	G	L					W	Z a b
House Wren		H	I K L	M N O P	Q R		U		Z a
Winter Wren	B	G	L	K N		Q R	U		
Long-billed Marsh Wren			L						
Catbird			K L	M N O P	Q R S T	U V			
Brown Thrasher		H	I J	L	M N O P				
American Robin		E F G H	I J K L	M N O P	Q R S T	U V W X			a
Wood Thrush			J K L	M N	P	Q R			
Hermit Thrush		G	L		P			W	
Olive-backed Thrush			L					X	
Gray-checked Thrush			L						
Veery			L	N O P	R				
Eastern Bluebird		E F G H	L	M N	P	R S	U		
Golden-crowned Kinglet		F G							Y Z a
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		G H	I	L				X	a
Water Pipit			L						Y
Cedar Waxwing	C	G	I	L	M N	P	Q R S T	U V W	a
Gray Shrike	C								
Common Starling	A B C D	E F G H	I J K L	M N O P	Q R S T	U V W	Y Z a b		
Yellow-throated Vireo				L	M N	P	Q	T U	
Solitary Vireo			I	L					
Red-eyed Vireo			L	M N O P	Q	S	U		
Philadelphia Vireo				N					
Warbling Vireo			L	M N	Q				
Black and White Warbler			I	L	M N				
Worm-eating Warbler			L						
Golden-winged Warbler			L	M N	P				
Blue-winged Warbler			L	M					



## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

### AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Thursday, March 19, 8 p.m.; Central Park Junior High School Auditorium, Elm and Bradley Streets. G. Harrison Orians, "By Erie's Changing Shores."

### FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, March 8, 8:30 a.m. at Sunnyside and Saratoga Rds. Collins Lake and River Environs; the Voghts, leaders, telephone 3-2021.

Sunday, March 22, 8 a.m. at Campbell and Rice Roads. Campbell and Sehermerhorn Road territories; Esly Hallenbeck, leader, phone 6-8579.

Sunday, March 29, 8:30 a.m. at Union St. and Palmer Ave. or 9 a.m. at Round Lake. Saratoga and Round Lakes; Sam Madison, leader, Delmar 9-3826.

## ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE

### SOUTHERNERS MAKE GOOD

The Tufted Titmouse, Turkey Vulture and Cardinal in two decades have become common in Rockland County, it is reported by Robert F. Deed in the Proceedings of the Linnaean Society, Nos. 58-62. He also notes rapid increases there for the Laughing Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Little Blue Heron, and American and Snowy Egrets.

Incidentally, Rockland Audubon Observer of January, in reporting on its 1952 Christmas Count of 70 species, included: Ruddy Duck, 200; Tufted Titmouse, 142; Myrtle Warbler, 280; Cardinal, 49; Field Sparrow, 11; White-throated Sparrow, 313 -- not to mention such species as Broad-winged Hawk, Phoebe, Mockingbird, Catbird, Dickcissel, and Savannah, Grasshopper and Chipping Sparrows.

### WESTERNER MAKES GOOD

Several SBC members have been introduced to the House Finch, a bird of the west which has become established as a breeder on Long Island. The Finch was one of the features of the State Federation field trip in 1949.

John J. Elliott and Robert S. Arbib, Jr., of the Linnaean Society of New York, report on these birds in "Origin and Status of the House Finch in the Eastern United States," in The Auk of January, 1953. They estimate the 1951 population at 280 individuals, in Nassau County, L.I., and Greenwich Township, Conn. Origin of the colonies seem to be caged birds released by bird dealers in 1940, following a ban on their commercial sale.

### FALL DUCKS

A fall duck census is one of the annual featured field trips of Buffalo Ornithological Society. The 18th was made October 12, 1952, and is recorded in the Society's Prothonotary of December, 1952. The list included 133 species of

birds and over 88,000 individuals. In addition there were nearly 88,000 unidentified birds reported in distant flocks of ducks or in overhead flocks of blackbirds. Twenty-one kinds of swans, geese and ducks were enumerated; nine of loons, grebes, cormorants and herons; and 22 of rails, gulls, terns, and shorebirds -- and a Raven. There were such counts as 369 Pied-billed Grebes, 806 Canada Geese, 681 American Widgeon, 2761 Coot, 559 Killdeer, 952 Herring Gulls, 1934 Ring-billed Gulls, 109 Bonaparte's Gulls, 880 Crows, 1853 Robins, 50,813 Starlings, 2966 House Sparrows, 8353 Red-winged Blackbirds, and 35 Cardinals.

#### FLIER IS FLOWN

A half-frozen, starved Woodcock was recovered at a service station in Syracuse on January 10 -- a stormy day after a series of mild days. The bird made the newspaper headlines when it was announced an airliner was flying the bird to Nashville, Tenn.

### NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

#### HOW MANY KIRTLANDS?

Kirtland's Warbler, unknown here, is one of the rarest. It is not known to nest outside the pine country of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, in a 50-mile radius. Winter records are only from the Bahama Islands.

Harold Mayfield, in The Auk of January, reports on "A Census of the Kirtland's Warbler." Thirty-two cooperators in 13 parties made a census in June, 1951, covering 1200 square miles. They found 432 males. He believes the total number of birds to be less than 1,000.

#### 1952. WEATHERWISE

The first winter was snowy, the spring was wet, summer was hot, autumn was dry, and the second winter non-wintery. Such was Schenectady's weather of 1952.

Average daily temperature was 1.8 degrees above the normal of 47.6. The year had no below-zero readings, and zero itself on only January 8 and 30. There were only 17 days when the temperature reached above 90, with the 98 of July 23 as the maximum.

Precipitation for the year was 2.33 inches more than the normal of 34.9. October was the driest ever, with only .86 inch -- the woods were closed, it will be recalled. February had 25.75 inches of snow, with 15.75 of it on the 17th and 18th. There were 14 thunderstorms, sleet on eight days, and fog on 37.

Barometric extremes were 29.02 and 30.47 inches.

#### TWICE AN AUTHOR

"Build or Be Your Own Bird Feeder" is the title of an article featured in the November-December issue of *Adventures Ahead*, General Electric magazine for students. Barry Havens is the author. The article suggests types of feeders and tells how to train wild birds to feed from the hand -- there is a photograph of a Chickadee so engaged.

"Know Your Evergreens" by the same author is featured in

the January-February issue. A condensed key chart is presented, and there is a page of drawings illustrating the identifying features.

#### DEEP SNOW

"My Birds in a Deep Snow" is the title of an article by Laura S. Beck in the January issue of Flower and Feather, published by The Chattanooga Audubon Society. Mrs. Beck, SBC member, tells of some of the many interesting experiences she has had in winter-feeding at her home.

#### LADDER'S FUTURE

For some time it has been evident that Indian Ladder and Thacher Park are undergoing changes. A favorite SBC spot for Peregrine Falcon, Worm-eating Warbler, Pileated Woodpecker, and numerous summering warblers. Such birds-of-the-wild are in process of losing the wildness they want. The park is to become more a "playground."

Jack Dumas, legislative correspondent of the Schenectady Gazette, writing from Albany in the January 30 issue, said:

"One of the projects to be launched out of \$135 million in capital construction appropriations for 1953-54 is a new swimming pool and other improvements in Thacher Park, estimated to cost \$400,000.

"The Conservation Department is trying to develop the park gradually into a major state recreation center. A department spokesman said federal controls have been eased and construction of the pool can start this year unless the legislature pares down Dewey's budget.

"A million-dollar development program started in 1950 is now virtually completed at the 1,000-acre park. Pipelines have been laid from Thompson Lake to the park and a new water system installed, serving all sections. A sanitary system, including modern toilet facilities, will be completed this spring.

"Next step is construction of the pool, planned for the northern section of the park, known as the Horseshoe. Plans, while they have not been made public, are believed to call for a 100 by 160-foot pool with adjacent bathhouse.

"In the same area, the department has plans for a 'playground' site, including a softball diamond, badminton, paddle-tennis, horseshoes, hand ball and shuffleboard facilities."

#### NOT TRUMPETER

Just after hunting season closed last fall Edmund Gilligan in his "Rod and Gun" column in the Sunday N. Y. Herald Tribune, wrote about seeing a Trumpeter Swan in Hudson's tidal marshes at Athens. He commented on the extreme rarity of the species, and referred to previous reports of Trumpeters in the area.

Two weeks later his column was again devoted to swans. Several readers had suggested the bird Mr. Gilligan had seen was either a Whistling or Mute Swan. Mr. Gilligan was inclined to agree.

#### "SPORTSMANSHIP"

Bill Walsh has a Fishing and Hunting column in the Erie (Penn.) General Electric News. In the January 30 issue, in

talking about hunting geese, he wrote:

"The nearest goose shooting of any kind is at Pymatuning Reservoir, but it is marred by a type of 'sportsmanship' during the early part of the season by the shooters who line up at 'Murderer's Row', a place where the geese are wont to leave the refuge. Here marksmanship is not the most needed attribute in the hunter who would take home game.

"Fleetness of foot often marks the successful waterfowler, for the man who first reaches a downed goose is the man who carries it away, even though another hunter may have killed the bird. Occasional fist fights erupt during this disgraceful part of the season and the true goose hunters do not shoot during this part of the season but wait until the snow, the driving rains, and the bitter cold have sent the necktie hunters scurrying to their firesides and the warmth of their beds in the morning."

## RECENT S B C RECORDS

Frazer R. Turrentino, Records Committee Chairman

Hooded Merganser	Jan. 1	Saratoga Lake	two pairs	RY
Sharp-shinned Hawk	17	Collins Lake		RY
	18	"		RS
Killdeer	18	Collins Lake		RS
	31	"		RS
	Feb. 4	"		RS
Ring-billed Gull	Jan. 20	Look 7		RY
Mourning Dove	Dec. 27	State Farm Rd.	several	LW
Belted Kingfisher	Feb. 8	Collins Lake		RY
Winter Wren	Jan. 2	Vale Cemetery		RY
	31	Collins Lake		RS
Hermit Thrush	9	Schen. urban		SP
	10	"		SP
	18	Collins Lake		RS
	Feb. 4	"		RS
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Jan. 4	Campbell Road	two	RS
	Feb. 7	Saratoga Lake	seven	RY
Red-winged Blackbird	Jan. 18	Collins Lake	one female	RS
	31	"	four	RS
Purple Grackle	11	Niskayuna		RS
Evening Grosbeak	4	Campbell Road	two	RS
	11	Saratoga Lake		RY
Common Redpoll	10	Schen. urban	70	RY
	11	Niskayuna	250	RS
Pine Siskin	11	Saratoga Lake		RY
	Feb. 7	"		RY
White-throated Sparrow	Jan. 17	Collins Lake	two	RY
	18	"	three	RS
	Feb. 8	"	four	RY
Swamp Sparrow	Jan. 17	"	two	RY
	18	"	four	RS
	31	"		RS
Song Sparrow	17	"	10	RY

KEY: SPodrazik RStone LWiard Yunick

(Records for inclusion in this summary should be sent in by the 3rd of the following month -- F.R.T.)



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March, 1953

## LEARNING TO COUNT

Barrington S. Havens

How do you count birds? At a feeding station, that is. This may sound like Foolish Question No. 387, but by the time you've finished reading this you may think differently.

Consider my feeding station at Jenny Lake, in the foothills of the Adirondacks. As has been explained in previous issues of FEATHERS, the Chickadees which frequent the boarding house in question have become so unafraid that they can be hand-fed.

When I start the winter feeding season in the fall or early winter there are usually some Chickadees in the vicinity which remember the conditions of the previous winter. These form the nucleus about which quite a flock of friendly birds eventually grows. It is easy, at first, to note how many of the birds come to you for their handout of sunflower seeds, but as time goes on and the number of free boarders increases, it's not so easy to count them. Yet one would like to know how many of them there are.

### One Seed, One Minute

Consider the circumstances. When one first makes an appearance and holds out a handful of sunflower seeds, the birds come quickly, for they are hungry. As each bird takes its first seed, it flies to some handy twig, where it pecks off the outer covering of the seed and then dines on the meat within. This takes a little time -- at least a minute, according to my observations. If the number of birds feeding in this manner is relatively small, and they all come at once for their first seed, there will be a brief lapse of time between the departure of the last one and the return of the first one for another seed.

Under these circumstances it's easy to count the birds which come for the free meal. One counts until the lapse of time occurs, and that's the total.

### More Birds, More Difficult

But if the number of birds is relatively large, like 8 or 10, one can't be quite so sure where one stands. By the time the last bird has taken its seed and departed, the first one may have conceivably finished its own seed and returned for a second. The situation is not helped by the fact that, with a comparatively large number of birds involved, competition can get quite keen around the dinner table, and two birds likely as not will perch on one's hand, beaks open and hissing at each other, until finally one



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drives the other away. Even then the victorious bird may not take a seed right away, but may perch on the hand a moment glaring around, so to speak, as if to say, "Anybody else want to argue about whether I'm first or not?"

All this, as I have said, takes time. And the net result is that one can't be sure when the last bird has left and the first one has returned.

There's still another complication. After the birds have satisfied the first keen pangs of hunger they don't stop coming for seeds, even though their crops are so full they can hold no more. Mother Nature has provided them with the instinct to hide any good food away in a safe place against the time of another famine. So the birds continue to come for seeds, which they carry off in all directions and tuck into the various nooks and crannies in the trunks of trees - and even in the foundations of your house, the gaps in the siding, or spaces between your store of firewood.

#### Return Trips Are Faster

Under these circumstances it takes much less time for a bird to pick up a seed, fly off with it, and return for more (Some even take two or three seeds at a time). And it's obvious that one will then have a steady flow of visitors -- and counting is just out of the question.

My solution to the problem is to do the counting the first time I make an appearance, when all the birds are hungry and eager to shuck and eat the first seed they take. Then, even though one can never be sure, one is more than likely to note a point where the birds stop coming, and one can decide that is the total number in the flock.

Even then I never feel sure. I content myself with the reflection that there are at least so many birds, allowing for doubtful cases. I prefer to err, if anything, on the safe side. Many times I have had the feeling that new birds, perhaps from some distance away, have arrived to augment the first total, but the only way I can check this hunch is to go inside the house for a while and allow the birds time to get hungry again. Then I make an appearance once more and start counting.

Oh, yes -- my total early this February, counting by this method, is at least 11 free boarders. But I wouldn't be surprised if there were more.

## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

#### AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Thursday, March 19, 8 p.m.; Central Park Junior High  
 School Auditorium, Elm and Bradley Streets. G. Harri-

son Orians, "By Erie's Changing Shores."  
 Wednesday, April 29, 8 p.m.; Central Park Junior High  
 School Auditorium. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., "Wing  
 Havens."

#### FIELD TRIPS

- Sunday, March 22 -- Campbell-Schermerhorn Roads. Meet at  
 Campbell and Rice Roads, 8 a.m.; Esly Hallenbeck, lea-  
 der, 6-8579.
- Sunday, March 29 -- Saratoga and Round Lakes. Meet at  
 Union Street and Palmer Avenue at 8:30 a.m., or at  
 Round Lake at 9 a.m.; Samuel R. Madison, leader, Del-  
 mar 9-3826.
- Saturday, April 4 -- Watervliet Reservoir. Meet at Van  
 Curler Garage, Washington Avenue, at 8 a.m., or at  
 Reservoir Bridge at 8:30 a.m.; Stephen C. Fordham,  
 leader, Albany 9-3015.
- Sunday, April 19 -- Vischer Ponds and Crescent Lake. Meet  
 at Union Street and Palmer Avenue at 8 a.m.; Nelle G.  
 Van Vorst, leader, 6-4351.
- Sunday, April 26 -- Central Park. Meet at Fire Tower at  
 7:30 a.m.; Viola Mabb, leader, 6-2626.

## OFFICERS AND TWO DIRECTORS ARE RE-ELECTED

Officers and two directors were re-elected at the annual  
 meeting of Schenectady Bird Club, Inc., held at the Schenec-  
 tady Museum February 23. The officers:

President: Miss Nelle G. Van Vorst, 67 Snowden Avenue, 6-4351.  
 Vice-president: Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, 24 Belvidere Avenue,  
 Albany, Alb. 2-3451.  
 Treasurer: Miss Viola Mabb, 1624 Becker Street, 6-2626.  
 Secretary: Miss Nellie Silliman, 216 James Street, Scotia,  
 4-7337.

Directors re-elected for two years are Alice Holmes and  
 Leon A. Wiard. Three directors holding over until next year  
 are Guy Bartlett, Samuel R. Madison, and Margaret Smith.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Birds of Massachusetts, by Henry H. Collins, Jr., and  
 with illustrations in black-and-white and in color by Roger  
 Tory Peterson; published by Caribou Press, Bronxville, N.Y.;  
 16-page booklet, 5½ x 8½, 25 cents. One of a series of  
 booklets designed primarily for persons with potential  
 rather than highly developed interest in wildlife. Forty-five  
 species are illustrated -- including Western Tanager, Summer  
 Tanager, and Canada Jay. Birds of the Everglades, by the  
 same author and illustrator, is another new title in the  
 series.

Birds of Washington Park, Albany, New York, by Dayton and  
 Lillian C. Stoner; New York State Museum Bulletin No. 344;  
 268 pages, paper cover, 5-3/4 x 9. Co-authored by an S B C  
 member; to be reviewed in subsequent issue.


**S B C FIELD TRIP REPORTS**


**Esly Hallenbeck and Leon A. Wiard, Co-chairmen**

TOO MUCH WATERUpper Hudson, Feb. 15

To make winter trips along the upper Hudson really successful requires open water in patches only, thereby concentrating the waterbirds. The river was entirely open on February 15 and the ducks were not at selected sites. And to make things more difficult there were snow and rain, and fog. Planes were grounded and, apparently, so were birds.

The 14 species:

Mallard, 20	Ring-billed Gull, 20	
Black Duck, 150	Blue Jay, 1	
American Merganser, 10	American Crow, 12	
Red-tailed Hawk, 1	Black-capped Chickadee, 4	
Red-shouldered Hawk, 1	Starling	
Sparrow Hawk, 2	House Sparrow	
Herring Gull, 12	Tree Sparrow, 2	-- Donald Tucker


**STATE FEDERATION NEWS**


Plans are being made by Rockland Audubon Society to welcome the Federation to the 6th annual meeting, which will be held at Bear Mountain Park, Rockland County. The meeting will be held May 23-24, and will afford members an opportunity to participate without the formality necessary if the meeting were held in a large city. Many hikes are planned, and with the conveniences of the famous Trailside Museum, an informative and enjoyable convention is expected.


**ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE**

CAYUGA LAKE BIRDS

In The Kingbird, October, 1952, Kenneth C. Parkes has contributed "Notes on Some Birds of the Cayuga Lake Basin." Among species included are Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Wood Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Brant, Blue Goose, Gadwall (breeding at Montezuma Refuge), European Widgeon, Purple Gallinule, Purple Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Great Black-backed Gull (becoming more common), Laughing Gull, Dovekie, Raven, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (breeding), Pipit (winter record), Prothonotary Warbler (breeding at Montezuma), Worm-eating Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler. The author recommends deletion of the European Cormorant and Least Tern from the check-list of the area.

BIG LIST

The Prothonotary of Buffalo Ornithological Society, January, reports a 1952 list of 262 species, identifiable subspecies and named hybrids.

The 24th BOS Christmas Count, made December 21, included more than 27,000 individuals of 70 species. The Purple

Grackle was a new species for their list. Among the records were 19 kinds of ducks, including 2 Harlequins and 10,000 Canvas-backs. There were 7 kinds of gulls, 2000 of them Herring, and with Bonaparte's outnumbering Ring-billed.

#### WINTER VIREO

The Goshawk of Genesee Ornithological Society, Jan-Feb, lists over 18,000 individuals of 69 species for Rochester's Christmas Count of December 28. Species seen were 2 more than the previous record. A Red-eyed Vireo was a record-setter. Also of interest were a Northern Yellow-throat, two Long-billed Marsh Wrens, and a Surf Scoter. Crows, 8033.

#### AT AMSTERDAM

The Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, February issue, reports:

"Dickcissels appeared at feeding stations quite frequently during the fall and early winter, including one found at the feeders of Mrs. D. DeGroff, of Amsterdam, N.Y.

"Mrs. Gerald Fitzgerald, of Birdhaven, Amsterdam, N.Y., is looking forward to another invasion of Evening Grosbeaks this year. Last season she made the enviable record of banding 1381 of these birds, even though she spent much of the winter in Florida. She also had 111 returns and 110 foreign recoveries, a remarkable number."

Evening Grosbeak Survey News, February issue, reports that a male Evening Grosbeak banded by Mrs. Fitzgerald last winter was noted at Northampton, Mass., in January.

#### LONG ISLAND GULLS

Ten years ago Herring Gulls nested at Gardiners and Cartwright Islands, and have now extended to Jones Beach and Jamaica Bay, a distance of more than 100 miles, Roy Wilcox of Speonk, L.I., reported in the New York Times recently. The spread is not viewed with pleasure since the gulls are now threatening colonies of Common Terns, Black Skimmers and Piping Plovers.



### NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

#### VANISHING SPECIES

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker, believed by some to have been extinct since lumbermen went into the virgin Singer Tract in Louisiana, has been found in Florida, says the National Geographic Society. Authorities immediately marked out a secret, guarded, 1000-acre reservation for this second largest woodpecker in the world.

The tiny Bachman's Warbler, unreported since the mid-thirties, was twice spotted in South Carolina in 1948 and once the following year. Denizen of southern swampy forests, the bird apparently used to be common over a limited range, but dwindled to real rarity when the south's virgin forests were cut.

Another warbler -- the Kirtland's -- similarly persists in small numbers in Michigan. It will nest only in pine-lands periodically swept by fire. Once when apprehension

for its survival was expressed, authorities considered deliberate burning of forests, but lightning set a natural blaze to save the day.

The California Condor barely holds its own on a reservation which cannot even be entered without special permit. Whooping Cranes, tall as a man, are reported down to about thirty individuals. The Cahow Petrel precariously survives on Bermuda, only place it was ever known to nest.

The far-ranging Eskimo Curlew has vanished, but experts think it might one day turn up again out of the Argentine pampas or the Arctic wilds, extremes of the bird's migrations. The pure Wild Turkey of the northeastern United States dwindles steadily. Neurotic flamingos, panicked by aircraft over their nesting grounds, show a tendency to leave the Bahamas. They are fairly plentiful in South America.

But the Trumpeter Swan, down to a few dozen individuals before the war, has made a thrilling comeback in the American West and Canada, as has the Roseate Spoonbill in Texas and Florida. American Brant, 90 per cent of which starved when the Atlantic coast ell grass on which they fed failed some years ago, have recovered satisfactorily.

Sadly, ornithologists report there is every chance the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Condor, and Whooping Crane will go the way of the Great Auk of the far north, the little Carolina Parakeet, the teeming Passenger Pigeons, the Labrador Duck, and the Heath Hen. There are so few left that even a minor natural catastrophe could spell the end.

Almost all extinct birds own their demise to man, the National Geographic Society points out. He killed them off himself, imported animals which destroyed them, or -- more important -- changed nature with his lumbering, his building, and his agriculture so that unadaptable types could not survive.

#### CITY HERONS

During November headlines in Boston newspapers were attained by a half dozen or more immature Black-crowned Night Herons. For a month or so they were daytime-roosters in a tree in the Public Garden.

#### FEWER CRANES

In 1939 there were only 15 Whooping Cranes; in 1949 the peak of 36 was attained. In 1952 the count was down to 22, one less than in 1951. Two of these rare birds were killed by hunters along the migration route from northern Canada to Texas; one was shot in Saskatchewan, and the other in Kansas.

"Each year it becomes increasingly apparent that illegal hunting is a factor in reducing the numbers of the Whooping Crane and increasing the threat of their extinction," says the National Audubon Society.

#### STATE MAMMALS

"More than 60 different species of wild mammals live today in New York State," writes Clay Seagears in The New York State Conservationist, Feb-March. "Nobody knows for sure precisely how many kinds. Undoubtedly nobody has ever seen all of them alive and in the wild. The total population, reaching into the billions, far outnumbers the birds."

ANOTHER FOR G-E

To that ever- but slowly-increasing list of birds recorded within or above the local General Electric plant there is now another species, the Great Black-backed Gull. One, maybe more, of them was with Herring Gulls soaring in the vicinity of the mammoth turbine building at the end of February.

Commented the G-E News of March 6: "Some unidentified large white birds seen swooping around Building 59 caused quite a stir among employes there last week. Spectators called them everything from the Ancient Mariner's Albatross to sea gulls from the Mohawk River to just plain ol' homing pigeons."

MAYBE THEY'LL BE SORRY

The New York Times of February 28 carried an item about a proposed commercial introduction of water-chestnut in Georgia. The news item indicated that the plant-introduction division superintendent of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is not averse to commercial plantings of the chestnut.

Perhaps Georgia should check with Albany and Washington about conditions in the Mohawk, Hudson and Potomac, among other areas, before permitting large-scale plantings of such a foreign pest, which is causing so much trouble now.

WILLIAMSTOWN'S GROSBREAKS

November 11 marked the initial appearance of Evening Grosbeaks in Williamstown, Mass., this season; last season's first arrivals were October 12. On November 11 a couple were seen passing through, but they did not deign to stop anywhere. On November 14 eight or ten were glimpsed in distant trees but they did not condescend to descend to our feeders. On Nov. 16 they were heard but not seen, and the same was true Nov. 23 and 29.

During December the number remained small. On Dec. 8 four were seen at Williams Inn but they did not come to the feeders, and did not come again. On Dec. 9 in another part of town a few were heard but not seen. On Dec. 22 some 15 or more came to the Williams Inn. A very few came to the feeders. This continued off and on until the end of the month. On Dec. 25 ten or more were seen in the sand and gravel at the edge of the roadway on School Street, about a quarter mile from Williams Inn. At the end of the month a very small permanent home flock was gradually forming.

During January the very small (for Williamstown) permanent flock of grosbeaks, which had begun to form in late December, increased steadily, and by the end of the month had reached about 150. They were still confined to a very small area of the town near Williams Inn and School Street. They came in early morning and quickly ate all the available food. They then remained for a while and "crabbed" violently for more food, while in other parts of town there were many feeders with choice food they might visit. Some were calling them the "dumb grosbeaks." No banded or marked birds were seen. This month the number of males and females seemed about the same; usually the males predominate. It might be added that, in those parts of town where there are no grosbeaks, there is an unusually large number of Goldfinches. They seem very happy and rejoice that their large dumb cousins are absent.

February saw the permanent home flock gradually increase from some 150 at the beginning of the month to perhaps 300 at the end. They still frequent chiefly that small part of town, but a lack of sufficient food there has caused them to spread out over a larger area. The number of females is now slightly larger than the number of males. This is the opposite of the case in previous years. No banded or marked birds have been seen. The numbers of Goldfinches and Purple Finches are usually large. -- Willis I. Milham

HOW MANY?

Barry Haven's article about bird-counting (page 17) recalls a feeding-station experience several years ago when "a pair" of Starlings were among the regular attendants. Sometimes two, or maybe just one, would show up irregularly each day during the winter; they were always wary at this rural feeder.

Late in the winter it was decided to eliminate the pair of Starlings in favor of more desirable species as summering breeders. Early one Saturday morning the two were shot -- before noon 17 were dispatched, with never more than two arriving together. How do you count feeder Starlings? --GB

## BRIEFING THE RECORD

Frazer R. Turrentine, Records Committee Chairman

Signs of spring are in the air; now is the time to really start field work. The Great Blue Heron, Killdeer and Hermit Thrush were observed repeatedly at Collins Lake during February. Four flocks of 60 to 100 Redpolls were reported during the last two weeks. Evening Grosbeak records started slim in mid-December, with only slight increase in January; flocks of 100 to 200 were reported in the latter part of February.

Canada Goose	200	Feb. 3	Niskayuna Wide Waters	pMM
Pintail	30	24	Vischers Ferry	MM
Old-squaw	1	20	Troy Dam	MS
Bald Eagle	Ad.	22	Putnam Hill	BB
		Mar. 1	Nisk. Wide Waters	RS
Great Black-backed Gull	3	4	Poentic Kill Outlet	RS
Ring-billed Gull		Feb. 27	Collins Lake	EH
Mourning Dove	2	26	" "	EH
Belted Kingfisher		Mar. 4	Poentic Outlet	RS
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	Feb. 6	Glen	EH
		23	Gordon Road	RS
American Robin		23, 25	Ballston	Mc
Eastern Bluebird		24	Curry Road	pMM
Cedar Waxwing	25	28	Slingerlands	PB
Myrtle Warbler	2	23	Schermerhorn Road	RS
Lapland Longspur	2	22	Six-mile Reservoir	M-T

KEY: per BBrown PBaker EHallenbeck MMacDonald  
RStone Mrs. McNamee M-T (Messrs. Maier and Taylor)

The above record of the Myrtle Warbler is only the second winter one for the species locally; it also appeared on the Christmas Count in 1947.

(... Species observed on SBC field trips are not recorded in this tabulation. Records for inclusion in this summary should be in by the 3rd of the following month. -- F.R.T. )



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April, 1953

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM ?

Nello G. Van Vorst

Most winters have found Saratoga Lake ice-bound, with the ice not out before early April, and sometimes even later. This winter was an exception; the ice went out particularly early, and the various ducks came in ahead of their normal arrival time.

Sunday, March 15 found the lake with large areas of the ice already gone, and the remainder breaking up. Along the western side in the Riley Cove vicinity, about opposite to Snake Hill, there was still ice. Major cracks were developing in it, however. One such crack left a long and narrow stretch of open water.

### Follow the Leader

A flock of eight or nine American Golden-eyes flew in to this open water. Soon they dived to feed -- one after another in quick succession, as is usually the case.

Hardly had they dived, however, before the ice shifted in the wind. The two large expanses of ice were pushed together, and remained in contact. Gone was that narrow stretch of open water.

### Four Hundred Feet to Go

The nearest open water was then at least 400 feet from the place where the ducks had submerged, and considerably farther away in other directions.

The dive of the ducks was observed by Harold John, a year-around resident at the lake shore there; he has supplied many of our reports concerning gulls, waterfowl and water conditions at the lake. For twenty minutes he watched for the birds.

The Open water did not reappear, nor did the ducks. Had they reached open water beyond, he would have been able to see them.

Two days later that area was free from ice. Even a week later, however, there were no reports of drowned ducks having been washed ashore anywhere around the lake -- but they probably did drown.



## S B C CALENDAR

Nelle Silliman, Secretary

### MEETING

Monday, May 4, 8 p.m.; Schenectady Museum -- Report by Dr. Malcolm E. McDonald, chairman of committee investigating possibilities of Karner Sand-barrens preserve

### AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR

Wednesday, April 29, 8 p.m.; Central Park Junior High School Auditorium, Elm and Bradley Streets. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., "Wing Havens."

### FIELD TRIPS

- Saturday, April 18: Vischer Ponds and Crescent Lake. Meet at Union and Palmer, 8 a.m. Leon A. Wiard, leader, Alb. 9-2010.
- Sunday, April 19: Same details as April 18 trip. Nelle G. Van Vorst, leader, 6-4351.
- Sunday, April 26: Central Park. Meet at Fire Tower, 7:30 a.m. Viola Madd, leader, 6-2626.
- Saturday, May 2: Washington Park, Albany. Meet at Union and Palmer, 5:40 a.m., or Northern Blvd. and State St., Albany, 6 a.m. Lillian C. Stoner, leader, Alb. 3-1591.
- Sunday, May 3: Central Park Breakfast Trip. Meet at Fire Tower, Golf Road and Oregon Ave., 5 a.m. Esly Hallenbeck, leader, 6-8579. Or meet at picnic grounds in park for breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; the Wiards and Madisons in charge. SBC will furnish griddle cakes, syrup and coffee; PLEASE bring your own dishes, utensils, and any other food you want. Remember -- the 5 a.m. walk will be cool, and the grass wet.
- Wednesday, May 6: Late evening trip for post-dusk songs and calls. Meet at Union and Palmer, 7 p.m. Nelle Van Vorst, leader, 6-4351.
- Saturday, May 9: All-day CENTURY RUN. Guy Bartlett, leader, 3-0014. Territory unlimited; pre-dawn to post-midnight, or any fraction thereof. A hundred species, and then some.
- Saturday, May 16: Helderbergs, Indian Ladder, Keadowdale. Meet at Van Curler Garage, Washington Ave., at 7 a.m., or Altamont Railroad Station at 7:30 a.m.; the Byron Hipple, leaders, Alb. 5-6913.
- Sunday, May 17: Same details as May 16 trip. Chester N. Moore, leader, 2-2763.



## STATE FEDERATION NEWS



The sixth annual meeting of the New York State Federation of Bird Clubs will be held at Bear Mountain Park May 23-24. In the past SBC has always been well represented at the convention, and this year will not be an exception. Notify Lois Maxon, 6-3025, promptly if you plan to attend; whether you prefer bus, to drive, or want automobile space; and if Saturday-night accommodations are wanted. Rockland Audubon Society will be the host.

## BIRDING IN TEXAS

Chester N. Moore

"Birding in Texas" is a pretty big subject! Everything in Texas is the biggest anywhere -- biggest cattle ranches, oil wells, gas wells, citrus and vegetable farms, and biggest concentrations of ducks, all the Whooping Cranes in the U. S., etc., etc.

But to bring this report down to the activities of two SBC members spending their first winter in the lower Rio Grande valley. These activities have been somewhat limited because the local bird club (at McAllen) has a very small membership and limits its programs to the regular monthly meetings and a few scattered Sunday-afternoon hikes, usually to the nearby Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. There the bird population has been much reduced this year by the absence of any water in this area. We missed all the wading birds -- egrets, herons, ibises, spoonbills, etc. However, I have been able to add about 50 species to my life-list, and expect or hope to add a few more during the final month of our stay here, for I haven't seen a Road-runner or a Chachalaca -- and one would not want to leave Texas without seeing those birds, especially the Road-runner.

I was privileged to take part in two Christmas counts. The larger one, at Atascosa, was held on a windy, cloudy day but yielded 151 species, which may be the highest total for any one count this season. Imagine seeing, and counting, 100,000 Pintails all packed together on the surface of one small, sheltered body of water (the number was estimated, of course), and hundreds of Geese (Snow, Blue, Canada) feeding on the open prairie.

In February we spent a few days with Mrs. Hagar at Rockport Cottages on the Gulf Coast and, although bothered by cold winds and rain, managed to hunt out a few new birds in addition to large flocks of Geese and Sandhill Cranes, which were assembling on the prairie in that neighborhood in preparation for the northward migrations. Just before leaving there we were very sorry to learn we had missed the opportunity for a boat trip to the sanctuary where all the Whooping Cranes in the U. S. spend the winter.

On One of our bird trips in the valley, to the Bensten State Park, we were puzzled for a while by the presence of a pair of Mute Swans on the small lake there, until inquiry revealed they had been introduced by Mr. Bensten and had not followed us from the Mohawk River.

Of course the birds in southern Texas are a mixture of eastern and western species, with quite a few crossing the Rio Grande from Mexico. A lot of them we had become acquainted with in the east, especially in Florida -- the Robins, Bluebirds, Meadowlarks are the same; but other species are slightly different. The Woodpeckers are the Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed; the Jay is a brilliant green and yellow bird; one flycatcher is brilliant vermilion with black wings and tail.

Sometime we hope to go to the west coast and complete our life list by including the really western species.

## A COOPERATIVE STUDY OF MIGRATION

SBC members have been asked to assist in a cooperative study of bird migration through the use of spring arrival dates. The announcement signed by James H. Zimmerman, John V. Dennis, and Chandler S. Robbins reads:

"During the spring of 1951, members of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology launched a new study of the age-old problem of bird migration. By plotting arrival dates on a map they hoped to discover to what extent spring migration is influenced by the weather and whether or not birds move forward steadily or by occasional long hops.

"Observations that spring indicated that the White-throated Sparrow, the only species then under study, moved northward by a series of hops, 7 to 10 days apart and that 300 miles might be covered in one hop. With such distances involved it was decided to increase the area under study. The support of cooperators from the Gulf to southern Canada was enlisted. New species were added -- the Mourning Dove, Baltimore Oriole, and Canada Goose.

"So encouraging were the results for the spring of 1952 that it was decided greatly to increase the scope of study. For 1953 the help of cooperators from the area east of the Rockies to the Atlantic seaboard is being enlisted. Additional species have been added. Of the 28 selected, 14 winter in part or entirely within our borders:

Canada Goose	Yellow-shafted Flicker	Myrtle Warbler
Marsh Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Amer. Goldfinch
Killdeer	Common Crow	Slate-col. Junco
Mourning Dove	House Wren	Chipping Sparrow
	Redwing Blackbird	Wh-thr. Sparrow

(Arrival dates for above species are desired wherever wintering individuals will not be confused with spring migrants; when in doubt, report first date anyway.)

"An additional 14 winter to the south of us:

Common Nighthawk	Barn Swallow	American Redstart
Chimney Swift	Purple Martin	Baltimore Oriole
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	Wood Thrush	Rose-br. Grosbeak
Eastern Kingbird	Blk & White Warbler	Indigo Bunting
East. Wood Pewee	Yellow Warbler	

"The arrival date only is desired for all species listed with the exception of the White-throat and Canada Goose. These latter are being studied in more detail. For them the following information is desired: dates of increases or decreases, main flights, date of departure of last birds, or, if possible, daily counts.

"If you are already keeping arrival dates, we will appreciate having your 1953 dates for the species listed. If there is still time to obtain arrival dates for late migrants, please send them to us. The study will continue for at least five years, so if you haven't heard about the project in time this year please plan to send in your reports for the spring of 1954 and thereafter."

Frazer R. Turrentine, Records Committee, has the details.

## S B C FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Esly Hallenbeck and Leon A. Wiard, Co-chairmen

The first two SBC field trips in March gave plenty of indications of early spring -- Flicker, Red-wings, Grackles and Song Sparrows, as well as had-wintered Great Blue Heron, White-throated and Swamp Sparrows on March 8; and Robin, Bluebird, Meadowlark and Field Sparrow March 22.

### Signs of Spring

Collins Lake, March 8

Collins Lake, and Sunnyside and Schermerhorn Roads were included in the March 8 trip. The time, 8:30 to 11; temperature, 15°; wind, NW 4 mph; weather, cloudy. Eleven observers, 23 species. The list:

Great Blue Heron, 1; Red-breasted Merganser, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Killdeer, 1; Herring Gull, 10; Ring-billed Gull, 2; Flicker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Horned Lark, 1; Blue Jay, 2; Crow, 11; Black-capped Chickadee, 4; Starling, 35; House Sparrow, 15; Red-wing, 92; Purple Grackle, 1; Redpoll, 25; Goldfinch, 27; Tree Sparrow, 14; White-throated Sparrow, 2; Swamp Sparrow, 1; and Song Sparrow, 7.

-- Jack Voght

### More Spring

Campbell-Schermerhorn, March 22

Campbell and Schermerhorn Roads produced 26 species on the March 22 trip, which had 6 observers. The time, 8 to 10:30; temperature, 36 to 45; no wind; clear. The list:

Black Duck, 10; Wood Duck, 6; American Golden-eye, 3; Red-shouldered Hawk, 3; Killdeer, 6; Herring Gull, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 6; Crow; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Robin; Bluebird, 5; Starling; House Sparrow; Meadowlark, 2; Red-winged Blackbird; Purple Grackle; Common Redpoll, 250; Pine Siskin, 6; Goldfinch, 6; Slate-colored Junco, 1; Tree Sparrow, 8; Field Sparrow, 1; and Song Sparrow. After the regular morning trip Mourning Doves and Horned Larks were added at Collins Lake.

-- Esly Hallenbeck

## NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

### URBAN CROWS

A number of years ago Crows by the thousands would be seen passing over Schenectady in high flight in late afternoon during winter, headed for their roosts in the Karner's pine plains. Those flights are no more, probably because the area is considerably more built up. At that time city crows were the exception.

More recent years have seen the Crow become a city bird to some extent. Around the college campus they are seen regularly in all seasons; and in various other parts of the city they will be found in early morning, or seen any time during the day in low flight -- and often dropping into the trees along the streets. Not many, and not noisy -- but a trend.

After all, if the Pileated Woodpecker can come into the city, why can't the Crow?

## THE YELLOW RAIL AND THE AOU MEETING

Lillian C. Stoner

The Yellow Rail is a bird many ornithologists had never seen until they attended the 70th stated meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union at Baton Rouge, La., October 20 to 24, 1952. There are a few records for this small rail in New York State, but most of them are for spring and fall migration months. After the breeding season the bird is known to winter in some of the southern states, including Louisiana. Its habitat there may be in marshy grasslands or hayfields. Since this bird is so shy and hard to see, dogs are sometimes used to flush it from its protective covering.

Both before and at the bird meeting we were told that if observers visited a hayfield not far from the city limits of Baton Rouge and watched the place where hay was being mowed, one might catch a glimpse of a lone individual of this species. However, my two roommates at this meeting, one lady from California and the other formerly from Canada but now from Rio de Janeiro, along with several others were unsuccessful in seeing the Yellow Rail on their first 3-hour field trip. Much of the time on that hot afternoon the observers were watching a dry and dusty field from a distance. The next day other ornithologists saw and captured one bird. It was taken to the museum and placed in a glassed case so all could see it.

The Yellow Rail is about 7 inches long (the Black Rail is even smaller, and the Sora is larger). While it is striped above, the general color of plumage is yellowish. The small white spot on each wing is not especially conspicuous unless the bird is in flight.

Many of us enjoyed staying on the campus of Louisiana State University, at Pleasant Hall. This guest house, with accommodations for 400, was formerly a dormitory. The city is three miles distant, and it is here one sees the famous high capitol which was built during Huey Long's regime.

### Southern Flavor

The papers and the well-planned sightseeing and field trips were all most interesting. The paper sessions were held in the auditorium and the court room of Law Building.

Since this was the most southerly meeting of the AOU, many southern and western members participated. From Oklahoma there were papers on "Nesting of the Hooded Merganser" and "History of the Ornithological Work at the University of Oklahoma." Then "Notes on Birds of the Big Bend Country of Texas," "Birds of Pine-oak Woodland in Arizona and Adjacent Mexico," "The Plumage Cycle of the California Gull," "A Fossil Hoatzin from the Miocene of Colombia" and many more subjects were presented by both northern and other members. As usual, motion pictures made up the program for the last afternoon session. One was "Behind the Flyways" with comments by Dr. F. C. Lincoln of Fish and Wildlife Service, the man who first proposed the idea of flyways for birds. Another was "Water Birds," a Walt Disney production now in U.S. movie houses. Parts of this film were secured from well-known photographers, all members of AOU. If SEC members are able

to see "Water Birds" in a local movie house they may see pictures taken by several speakers we have had in the series of Audubon Screen Tour lectures.

Some of us were disappointed that Dr. Lowery or Mr. Newman did not think it advisable to give a further report on lunar bird study. They hope all in different parts of the country will continue to cooperate, and do more work with telescopic study of birds that cross the moon. They mentioned the work done by SBC members last fall.

#### Audubon Park

Two trips of different nature were enjoyed by many. One day in late afternoon about 300 members and guests drove 35 miles to the new Audubon National Park. Here we enjoyed real southern hospitality as they served us a big (free) barbecue dinner. As we sat around under moss-laden trees and ate our half spring chicken and large portion of spare ribs, garlic bread and other good eatables, we could hear intermittently the colored trio if musicians play their instruments. Then i brief welcome speeches we learned that this feast was sponsored by the National Audubon Society and several state and local organizations. The partially restored ante-bellum home on these grounds was the house Audubon lived in for a short time while doing water-colors of 32 of his "Birds of America" pictures. Since it was late in the day and the crowd noisy, four Woodpeckers -- Downy, Pileated, Hairy and Red-bellied -- and a few Chickadees were the only birds recorded.

The all-day 300-mile round-trip to Grand Isle, which is really in the Gulf of Mexico and about 50 miles southwest of New Orleans, was a most enjoyable way to end the meeting. On the trip we crossed the Mississippi and went by some of the sugarcane fields, and on down by the famous Louisiana muskrat marshes, and along Bayou Lafourche. The oil fields here are among the largest in the Gulf area. Then, we went across the 3/4-mile bridge to Grand Isle. The isle is seven miles long and 1-1/2 miles wide, and has a 7-mile beach. At the little village here, which was headquarters for pirates, we saw a shrimp boat come in. The many Laughing Gulls (some in winter plumage) were not too greatly disturbed by us or by the boats.

#### Favorite with Migrants

Grand Isle is of interest to bird people because of the great number of migrating birds seen here, especially in the spring. For birds that come north from the tropics and fly across central Gulf of Mexico this is their first resting place. It is one of the places where lunar observation was first carried on. Not quite such great numbers of birds congregate here in fall migration. Our list of 51 on October 24 included both Brown and White Pelican, Cormorant, Frigate-bird, Egret, Blue and Snow Geese. This was said to be the Lesser; it was the Greater some of us had seen during the Montreal AOU meeting. Other identified birds included Caspian, Forster's, Royal and Sandwich (Cabot's) Terns, Sandling, Black-bellied Plover, Dowitcher, and Red-backed Sandpipers. En route we had seen Anhinga, many Vultures (more Black than Turkey); Marsh, Pigeon, Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Sparrow Hawks, and Osprey.



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A few of the group observed the Chuck-will's Widow and several Western Kingbirds. One Hummingbird and several Barn and Tree Swallows were probably on their way south. Much in evidence were the Mockingbird and Boat-tailed Grackle. Some Song and White-throated Sparrows winter here. It was good to hear the Towhee and Cardinal, but no one was especially interested in the Starlings and House Sparrows.

Much credit is due the local group for the careful plans which they successfully carried out at the meeting. We all felt Dr. Lowery and his committee which included Dr. O. W. Rosewall, the head of the zoology department and a long-time personal friend of the Stoner family, had done a grand job.

Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne announced that the 1953 meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union is scheduled in October at Los Angeles.

## AGAIN, CROSSBILLS

A pair of Red Crossbills were picking up gravel along the Wolf Hollow Road March 21. When Donald Tucker stopped his car they flew into a nearby evergreen. The record serves to introduce some other Crossbill items.

Robert Arbib, Linnaean Society, and Dr. Gordon M. Meade, Genesee Ornithological, were in Schenectady in March, at a State Federation committee meeting. Crossbills were a topic during general conversation. The story of Red and White-winged Crossbills in the Adirondacks, in the vicinity of Saranac, was about normal during this last winter, Dr. Meade reported. Long Island and New Jersey have had a real invasion, beginning in early February, and particularly of the White-winged. The birds seem to have arrived without their routes having been observed. SBC, for instance, had no reports. Newspaper feature articles and photographs of the White-winged have been numerous, for the birds are seldom seen there. Mr. Arbib reported Red Crossbills were the first invaders, with White-winged not much later. In the vicinity of Montclair, N.J., the flock of White-winged was estimated as at least 500.

Also of interest have been reports of nesting Red Crossbills. In the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, December, 1952, Dorothy E. Snyder reports on and has a photograph of a Red Crossbill nest at Gloucester, Mass., in March-April, 1952. In The Kingbird of this state's Federation, the April, 1952 issue carried a report of two family groups of Red Crossbills seen by Herbert G. Deignan of the Division of Birds, U. S. National Museum, between Gilboa and Conesville, Schoharie County, on July 22, 1951. In each case red, greenish, and duller streaked birds were seen.



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## BIRDS OF WASHINGTON PARK

NEW PUBLICATION

Birds of Washington Park, Albany, New York  
by Dayton Stoner and Lillian C. Stoner.  
New York State Museum, Bulletin No. 344,  
The University of the State of New York.  
September, 1952; 268 pages, 52 illustrations; \$1.60.

The long-anticipated publication of the Birds of Washington Park, by Dr. and Mrs. Dayton Stoner, has been realized. It is a book of 268 pages, including 52 illustrations, five tables of data, an annotated list of birds of Washington Park, 114 references, and a very inclusive index.

For the local birder as well as for the frequent visitors with a yen for hunting birds, this contribution to ornithological literature of the Albany area will be most helpful.

The authors begin their book with an interesting account of the history of Washington Park. This record states that "a Board of Commissioners of Washington Park was organized May 8, 1869" and property was "set apart and devoted to the purpose of a public park."

Figure 3, a map of the area made in 1891, shows the development of a 90-acre park with its lakes, drives and plantings, its paths and recreational features. On this map there have been designated good spots for observing birds. Unfortunately the designations are difficult to locate on the plate. However, the text and photographs give a great deal of assistance in guiding the bird-watcher to important birding territory in the park.

The section about Ecological Relationship of Vegetation, Lake, and Birds is especially good for this information. Botanist and bird student alike can enjoy reading about the trees and shrubs that have had such an influence on the bird life in Washington Park.

The five tables in the bulletin reveal a tremendous amount of data collected throughout the ten years of this study. The accuracy of this work is among its greatest values.

Perhaps Table 5, which covers observations of fourteen years, 1933-1946, will be the most useful. It gives not only the dates during which 122 species of birds have been recorded but also the nesting status of 26 species. Addi-



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tional descriptive material, systematically arranged, is included in 170 pages of notes on all species.

A description of the only occurrence of the Buffle-head reads in part: "It was with no little surprise and considerable satisfaction that the senior author, early on the morning of April 22, 1941, discovered a female Buffle-head on the waters of the park lake, west of the bridge. The bird permitted him to approach within 30 yards while it swam calmly about. ... By the following morning, April 23d, the duck had disappeared. Evidently it had settled on this small body of water during one night or early morning and had resumed its northerly journey during the next similar period."

Another single appearance of a species was that of the Red Crossbill which Table 5 shows as arriving on March 30, 1941 and departing on May 9, 1941. In the annotated list is the detailed record of numbers of individuals with the peak of 30 birds on April 30. On March 30 the first arrivals were two males and a female. The next occasion was on April 7 when Dr. Stoner observed a male. About his close-range view of this rare visitor he noted: "My attention was first attracted to the bird by its low, coarse note, one with which I was unfamiliar. Followed the bird for about 30 yards and it alighted on the very top of a slender tree 40 feet up, where I studied it for ten minutes in the brilliant early morning sunshine. The general coloration was distinctly reddish with rump bright red." Then there was an absence of crossbills from the park for two weeks, but on April 21 a flock of six was seen and, except for a very few occasional days, crossbills could be seen picking away at the cones of the larches, or even on the ground, until May 9. "On May 8, however, the last day they were observed, a flock of 22 individuals flew over the lake uttering the characteristic harsh 'chip' notes; the close formation in flight was plainly apparent. Their visit here had extended over a period of 40 days." This is good reading, especially for the bird lover.

One qualification of excellence for a book such as this one is a good bibliography. Mrs. Stoner has provided one, as well recommending five very useful guides for the bird student.

Birds of Washington Park, by the former New York State Zoologist and his wife is a most welcome aid to all who are interested in birds. It is a record by which the beginner as well as the experienced birder can check and double-check his observations. It will serve as a stimulus for enthusiastic birding everywhere, but especially in city parks like Washington Park in Albany, New York.

-- Dr. Minnie B. Scotland

## S B C FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Estly Hallenbeck and Leon A. Wiard, Co-chairmen

### EARLY CHIPPY

Saratoga - Round Lakes, March 29

The field trip of Sunday, March 29, indicated early spring. A Chipping Sparrow was among the 37 species listed. The sky was partly cloudy, the wind calm, and the temperature from 36 to 42. There were nine observers. The list: Common Loon, 1; Black Duck, 2; Ring-necked Duck, pair; Canvas-back, 1; Lesser Scaup, 120; American Golden-eye, 85; Buffle-head, pair; Old-squaw, 1; American Merganser, 41.

Killdeer, 1; Herring Gull, 9; Ring-billed Gull, 1; Mourning Dove, 5; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1.

Eastern Phoebe, com; Tree Swallow, 6; Blue Jay; American Crow; Black-capped Chickadee; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 2; American Robin; Eastern Bluebird, 3.

Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Cedar Waxwing, 25; Common Starling; House Sparrow; Eastern Meadowlark, 4; Red-winged Blackbird; Purple Grackle; Purple Finch, 2; American Tree Sparrow, 4; Chipping Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow.

-- Frazer R. Turrentine

### FIRST WARBLER

Watervliet Reservoir, April 4

A Pine Warbler was a high-light of the SBC field trip of Saturday, April 4, which had seven participants. The sky was clear, and the thermometer up. Thirty species listed:

Pied-billed Grebe; Canada Goose, heard; Black Duck, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Mourning Dove, Kingfisher, Flicker, Downy Woodpecker.

Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Robin, Bluebird, Pine Warbler, Meadowlark, Red-wing, Grackle, Cowbird, Slate-colored Junco, Song Sparrow.

-- Stephen C. Fordham

### FILLED PONDS

Vischer Ponds, April 18

Saturday morning, April 18, was just another of those days such as we had been having -- Jupiter Pluvius threatening but not doing much. Just another cloudy morning with an occasional light sprinkle and a raw breeze. Vischer Ponds were at a high level as a result of the dam at the lower end. Very few ducks were in sight on the water, but occasional flocks, mainly Pintails, would fly up from the wooded areas, circle, and return to the spot from which they had taken off. There were eight observers, and 44 species were seen:

Black-crowned Night Heron, 3; American Bittern, 1; Mallard, 10; Black Duck, 50; Pintail, 60; Blue-winged Teal, 3; Wood Duck, 2; Ring-necked Duck, 8; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Osprey, 3; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; American Coot, 1; Killdeer, 2; Herring Gull, 1; Mourning Dove, 12; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Flicker, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 3.

Phoebe, 3; Tree Swallow; Bank Swallow, 2; Barn Swallow, 12; Blue Jay, 2; Crow, 40; Chickadee, 2; Robin; Bluebird, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1.

Cedar Waxwing, 2; Starling; Palm Warbler, 1; House Sparrow, 10; Meadowlark, 2; Red-winged Blackbird; Rusty Blackbird, 20; Purple Grackle, 25; Cowbird, 15; Common Redpoll, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 1; Swamp Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow.

-- Leon A. Wiard

### PALM SONG

Vischer Ponds, April 19

A cloudy, disagreeable day was April 19. How any birds could be in sight was not understood by the birders -- ten of them. Water was high. A few song birds really did respond to the new Audubon bird caller; the Ruby-crowned Kinglet pealed forth his jubilant song, a Swamp Sparrow sang once so we knew his whereabouts, and probably for the first time for several the Palm Warbler sang his non-musical song. The 43 species:

Black-crowned Night Heron, 8; American Bittern, 1; Mallard, 8; Black Duck; Baldpate, 1; Pintail, 40; Green-winged Teal, 11; Blue-winged Teal, 2; Wood Duck, 4; Ring-necked Duck, 2; Osprey, 3; Sparrow Hawk, 4; Ring-necked Pheasant, 2; Mourning Dove, 10; Flicker, 7; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 6.

Phoebe, 4; Tree Swallow; Bank Swallow; Rough-winged Swallow, 2; Barn Swallow; Blue Jay, 2; Crow; Chickadee, 10; White-breasted Nuthatch, 4; Robin; Bluebird, 3.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4; Starling; Myrtle Warbler, 2; Palm Warbler, 1; House Sparrow; Meadowlark; Red-winged Blackbird; Purple Grackle; Cowbird; Redpoll, 1; Goldfinch, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 6; Field Sparrow, 2; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow.

-- Nelle G. VanVorst

### CANCELLED

Central Park, April 26

There was no trip on Sunday, April 26. The month had had its full share of rain; in fact, the normal was greatly exceeded. The morning of April 26 found rain aplenty, and no SBC members on hand for the scheduled trip in the park.

## BRIEFING THE RECORD

Frazer R. Turrentine, Records Committee Chairman

March was the second wettest on record locally, and above normal in temperature. Rainfall totaled 4.86 inches -- par is 2.75. More than 2 inches were received between the 24th and 28th. There were six clear days, 12 partly cloudy, and 13 cloudy. March temperature averaged 38.1 degrees, or 5.6 degrees above normal. Among records of interest:

Horned Grebe: Mar. 21, Saratoga Lake (EHallenbeck)  
 Great Blue Heron: Mar. 26, Crescent Lake (EH)  
 Canada Goose: Mar. 14, Crescent Lake (EH)  
 Blue Goose: Mar. 15, one, State Farm Road, (AHolmes, EH, and NVVorst)  
 Baldpate: Mar. 22, two, Vischer Ponds (GBartlett)  
 Pintail: Mar. 22, twenty, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Green-winged Teal: Mar. 22, four and six, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Ring-necked Duck: Mar. 22, fl. 15, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Greater Scaup: Mar. 21, Saratoga Lake (EH); Mar. 22, fifty, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Lesser Scaup: Mar. 21, Saratoga Lake (EH)

- American Golden-eye: Mar. 21, Saratoga Lake (EH)  
 Buffle-head: Mar. 18, two, Crescent Lake (EH)  
 Turkey Vulture: Mar. 29, four, Indian Ladder (MBS/Scotland)  
 Red-tailed Hawk: Mar. 23, one, Vischer Ponds (EH)  
 Red-shouldered Hawk: Mar. 23, two, Vischer Ponds (EH)  
 Bald Eagle: Mar. 21, Saratoga Lake (EH)  
 Marsh Hawk: Mar. 6, two, (MBS); Mar. 23, three, Vischer Ponds (EH)  
 Duck Hawk: Mar. 23, Vischer Ponds (EH)  
 Sparrow Hawk: Mar. 15, migration apparent, 15, (GB)  
 Killdeer: Mar. 18, one, city (RYunick)  
 Great Black-backed Gull: Feb. 23, four at Crescent, one at Niskayuna and two at Lock 7 (RY)  
 Herring Gull: Feb. 23, 250 at Saratoga Lake (RY)  
 Mourning Dove: Mar. 1 & 2, Collins Park (EH)  
 Kingfisher: Mar. 4, Collins Lake (EH)  
 Phoebe: Mar. 22, one, Vischer Ponds (EH); Mar. 23, ten, Vischer Ponds (EH)  
 Canada Jay: one March 15, State Game Farm (AH, NVV, EH)  
 Brown Creeper: Mar. 12, four, Collins Lake (EH)  
 Robin: Various records for Mar. 3 and daily starting Mar. 9.  
 Bluebird: Mar. 21, four, Indian Ladder (EH); Mar. 22, three, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Cedar Waxwing: Mar. 21, four, Saratoga Lake (EH)  
 Northern Shrike: Mar. 2, one, Indian Ladder (EH)  
 Meadowlark: Mar. 15, one, Chatham (GB); Mar. 22, six, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Red-winged Blackbird: Mar. 4, Scotia (EH); Mar. 12, flock, (AHeitkamp); Mar. 18, urban (RY)  
 Rusty Blackbird: Mar. 22, flock 7, Vischer Ponds (GB)  
 Purple Grackle: Mar. 4, Scotia (EH); Mar. 5, Ballston Lake (Mrs. HNHackett).  
 Evening Grosbeak: Mar. 12, flock 30-40, Ballston Lake (HNH)  
 Chipping Sparrow: Mar. 21, two, Indian Ladder (EH)  
 Field Sparrow: Mar. 28, Delmar Game Farm (EH)  
 White-throated Sparrow: Mar. 29, Collins Lake (EH)

(Species observed on SBC field trips are not recorded in the above tabulation. Records for inclusion in this summary should be in by the 3rd of the following month. -- F. R. T.)

## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

- Saturday-Sunday, May 23-24: New York State Federation of Bird Clubs, sixth annual meeting, Bear Mountain Park; all SBC members eligible to attend. See April Supplement for details, or communicate at once with Miss Lois Maxon, phone 6-3025.  
 Saturday, May 30: Karner Sand Barrens. Meet at Drive-in Theater, Stop 22, Albany Road, at 8 a.m. Mrs. C.G. Grace, leader, Alb. 9-1462.  
 Sunday, June 7: Alcove Reservoir Picnic trip. Schenectadians meet at State and Fehr, 7 a.m.; Albanians at Delaware and Kenwood, Delmar, at 7:45. Pauline Baker, Alb. 6-9782.


 ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE
IN "THE KINGBIRD"

Among articles in the December issue of The Kingbird, of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, are "Hungarian Partridge in New York State" by John Belknap, Gouverneur; "Pine-woods Sparrow in New York State" by Geoffrey Carleton, New York City; notes concerning Red-tailed Hawk, Goshawk, and an albino Horned Owl by Walter Spofford, Fayetteville. The Goshawk was nesting near Big Moose, and on occasions attacked persons in the vicinity of the nest.

Samuel R. Madison, SBC, reports as chairman of the Federation's conservation committee; and Frazer R. Turrentine has his usual regional report, covering October-December. A glance at the various regional reports show plenty of unusual birds and unusual dates.

IN "THE WILSON BULLETIN"

Kenneth C. Parkes of Cornell University reports on "Some Bird Records of Importance from New York" in the March issue of The Wilson Bulletin, covering some specimens in the collection at the university. He contributes information on Cory's Least Bittern, Long-tailed Jaeger, Little Gull, Arctic Tern, and Black-throated Gray Warbler.


 NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF
LEARNING TO COUNT

Barry Havens wrote on this subject in our March issue. Thereupon from Dorothy Caldwell, SBC member now of Natick, Mass., he heard as follows:

"Your 'Learning to Count' inspired me to dig out my bound copy of FEATHERS with a modest contribution of mine in April, 1941, and also to go back to some of my old notes. I had supposed that I had a dozen, more or less, Chickadees regularly visiting my feeding station at Mount McGregor and, as I wrote in my article, was greatly surprised when my total of banded Chickadees for that first season of my banding records came to 49. And I never at any time succeeded in banding all of the Chickadees that came to the feeder.

"I banded two birds with the totally inadequate trap I started with in December, 1937. I did not obtain a proper trap until January 6, 1938. As the two Chickadees banded in December were retaken after January 6, my record really stands as 49 Chickadees banded at that feeding station in about two months -- it might have been more had I started banding in the late fall. A great surprise to me it was that I was feeding so many different birds, and to learn how difficult it was to estimate accurately, even with the help of banding, just how many individuals actually visited the feeder each season.

"Unfortunately my banding station had to be abandoned when I came back to New England."

"OPERATION MOON-WATCH"

"Operation Moon-watch" is the title of an article by Stephen C. Fordham, Jr., SBC member and Supervisor of the Delmar Game Farm, in the March, 1953 issue of Bulletin to the Schools, published by the University of the State of New York. It is the annual Arbor and Wild Life Day issue of the Bulletin, and is the only one devoted annually to natural history and conservation interests. Mr. Fordham writes of lunar bird watching as conducted last fall at Delmar and at Collins Lake, Scotia, and he urges others to join in making such counts throughout the state. The Delmar installation is shown in a night photograph.

The cover picture of the Bulletin is from a painting by William C. Dilger, and shows a Bob-white in winter. "The Wild Turkey in New York" by Ralph H. Smith of the state Conservation Department is the other article on birds. There are several articles on botany, sanctuaries and conservation.

WASHINGTON PARK CROSSBILLS

Ten Red Crossbills were seen in Washington Park, Albany, by Pauline Baker on April 19. She also found a Screech Owl which the Hipplés had seen previously.

SEMI-ALBINO JUNCO

The Wiards, on Sunday afternoon, April 19, observed in a flock of Juncos on their lawn one with a white throat and neck. The white spot covered the left half of the throat and extended back and upward along a line just in back of the eye. The white area was roughly the size of a nickel.

LONG-EARS APLENTY

Back in 1937 the local Christmas Count featured a listing of six Long-eared Owls. They were together in evergreens in a woods between Watervliet Reservoir and Meadowdale. The owls were seen repeatedly at the same roost over a period of weeks. Since then local records for the Long-eared have been all too infrequent.

Now several have been seen, roosting in a spruce at the edge of Scotia. Indications are that the birds -- eight of them -- used the roost for several days; pellets were numerous in the area. The birds were identified by F. A. Hamilton in his yard. On an occasion when they flushed into flight he counted eight of them. It was in late March.

FEWER GROUSE?

Are Ruffed Grouse showing a decrease in local areas? It could be, for that is the report from other sections of the state. The Grouse has its ups and downs in population, and may vary from one region to another. The trouble with population counts in immediate SBC territory is that the number is always small.

DUCK STAMP

The 1953 duck stamp, 20th in the series of migratory waterfowl hunting stamps, is entitled "Early Express - Blue-winged Teal." Clayt Seagears of Albany is the artist.

HEAVY FLIGHT

The night skies of Tuesday-Wednesday, April 21-22, were loaded with migrants, and particularly with White-throated Sparrows, according to the reports of those out the next morning.

The front or main gate of G-E is hardly a place to expect many birds, but April 21 found these birds on the lawn for the day: Robin, pair (building nest in the Camperdown Elm); Starling, 2 (maybe more); House Sparrow, 5 ... but these were all "normal." Special guests for the day were: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, pair (the female also there April 22); White-throated Sparrow, 2; Purple Finch, pair; Purple Grackle, 3; Song Sparrow, 1. A Ring-billed Gull, three Crows, and numbers of Song Sparrows, Starlings, Robins and Grackles, not to mention Rock Doves, were seen in flight closer to Rice Road.

VULTURE TO NORTH

Along West Stony Creek at Pinnacle, in northern Fulton County, on Sunday, April 26 -- in advance of the late afternoon rain, RAIN, and hail -- hawks were much in evidence. Broad-winged predominated, with Red-tailed next. Of most interest was a Turkey Vulture, sailing north on fixed wings. Hermit Thrushes and White-throated Sparrows were the most vocal.

-- G.B.

LAKE GEORGE EAGLES

Fred Streever of Lake George wrote, in his "Field-Forest-Stream" column in the Schenectady Gazette:

"I saw a pair of great Bald Eagles out on the ice one day in mid-February. One of them had just captured a bluebill duck (Scaup) from a small flock in the bit of open water. Through the 36.5 diameter telescope I had an excellent view of the entire scene as the larger eagle (female, probably) tore the still-living duck into shreds and ate them leisurely. These great eagles with their conspicuously white heads and tails often escape identification. I have seen one or two Bald Eagles almost every winter at Lake George. Watch for them in winter among the flocks of gulls cruising the edge of partially open water! They are much larger and darker than the gulls and no other bird has the distinctive white head and tail. They appear clumsy in this sort of flight but that is misleading since they are able, on occasion, to move even faster than the bluebill ducks which are among our speedier waterfowl."

IT SAID SO IN THE NEWSPAPERS

Quoting a recent newspaper item: "In Baker, Ore., crows have been flying off with tickets placed on the windshields of automobiles by police for traffic violations."

HOPS

Says Roger Peterson in his "Bird's-eye View" in Audubon Magazine of March-April: "I, myself, had induced Chickadees to take sunflower seeds from my hand and was therefore eligible for membership in HOPS (Human Ornithological Perch Society)." National headquarters for HOPS is Schenectady.



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## CENTURY-RUN LIST IS LONGEST EVER

**Total of 154 Species Obtained -- Baldpate and Bufflehead Show for the First Time -- Three Groups Each Count More than 100 Kinds -- Again, Not One Owl -- Much of Ten-county Area Not Covered ... Nine Groups, with 29 Participants, Afield -- Previous High Was 145 Species (146 Varieties) in 1948 -- Rain Proved No Detriment ... Maybe It Helped**

May 9 -- Saturday -- found plenty of S B C birders out in time to greet the rising sun. What they greeted, however, was rain, and plenty of it. The weather did not interfere with records, and before noon there were clear skies. Foliage was well advanced, but lists did not suffer.

Three groups that remained out until after dark attained individual lists of more than 100 species -- 116 on the highest. Adding all lists of the nine parties, with 29 participants, showed 154 species -- a new high. In 1948 the count was 145 species, plus the hybrid Lawrence's Warbler.

There were no particularly outstanding species on the list -- maybe most noteworthy was the total absence of owls. The Baldpate and Bufflehead appeared for the first time on Century lists, becoming species 200 and 201 on the composite list. The composite also includes two hybrids -- Lawrence's and Brewster's Warblers.

### Those Participating

In the table the references show observers in groups as follows:

Group A Nelle G. Van Vorst, Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, Alice Holmes, Guy Bartlett in one car; Esly Hallenbeck, Jack Vogt, Chester N. Moore, G. Malcolm Andrews in second car. Half of time, two cars together. 3:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Areas covered together: Niskayuna Wide Waters, Crescent Bridge, Vischer Ponds, Meadowdale; first car only, Rosendale Road, Cohoes Falls, Saratoga Lake, Saratoga City, and Vly Road at night; second car only, Vly Road, Central Park, Karners, Indian Ladder. First car, 116 species; second car, 104; composite total, 126 species.

Group B Mrs. Lillian C. Stoner and Pauline Baker; 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Washington Park, Poute 144 south, Hudson River, Alcove and Basic Creek Reservoirs, Meadowdale, Slingerlands, Vischer Ponds, Rosendale and Vly Roads. 84 species.

Group C Barrington S. Havens, Jenny Lake; 41 species.

Group D Mr. and Mrs. George R. Cooley, Miss Ella Robinson. Hickory Hill, Rensselaerville. 42 species



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Group E Allen Benton, W. Taylor, K. Maier, W. Quinn;  
3:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Albany, New Salem, Leadowdale. 79  
species.

Group F Mr. and Mrs. Byron T. Hipple, 9:15 a.m. to 7  
p.m., and Mr. and Mrs. Paul O'Leary, 2:30 to 7 p.m. 77 spec.

Group G Mariam, Steven, David and Malcolm Fordham; 5 to  
9:15 a.m., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 4 to 10 p.m. Delmar Game Farm,  
Orchard Street, McCormack Road, Washington Park, Washington  
Avenue, Pine Bush, Slingerlands, Leadowdale, Castleton, Al-  
cove and Basic Creek Reservoirs, Lawson's Lake. 80 species.

Group H Samuel R. Madison, Leon A. Wiard, Mr. Sabin.  
4:30 a.m. to 10:45 p.m. 107 species.

Group X Individual records by others: Canada Goose, two,  
Saratoga Lake, J. Harold John, Jr. (also six on June 11);  
Whip-poor-will, heard 3 a.m., Mrs. W. H. Norris, Waverly  
Place, and heard before dawn, W. T. Cook, Baker Avenue;  
Evening Grosbeak, two at feeder, Joseph Pollak, Rosendale  
Road.

May 9, 1953	CENTURY RUN		154 Species
Common Loon	A	G	Bald Eagle
Horned Grebe	A	GH	Marsh Hawk
Pied-billed Grebe	A	GH	Osprey
Great Blue Heron	A	E	Sparrow Hawk
American Egret		EF H	Ruffed Grouse
Green Heron	A	E GH	Ring-necked Pheasant
Black-cr. Night Heron	AB	F H	Virginia Rail
American Bittern	ABC	EF GH	Sora
Least Bittern	A		Florida Gallinule
Canada Goose	B	E GHX	American Coot
Mallard	A	EF H	Killdeer
Black Duck	AB	EF H	American Woodcock
American Widgeon		H	Upland Sandpiper
Pintail	A		Spotted Sandpiper
Blue-winged Teal	A	H	Solitary Sandpiper
Wood Duck		DE H	Greater Yellow-legs
Ring-necked Duck		H	Lesser Yellow-legs
Greater Scaup		G	Least Sandpiper
Lesser Scaup	AB	F H	Herring Gull
American Golden-eye	B		Ring-billed Gull
Buffle-head	A		Bonaparte's Gull
White-winged Scoter	A	G	Common Tern
Hooded Merganser		G	Black Tern
American Merganser	AB	GH	Mourning Dove
Red-breasted Merganser	A		Black-billed Cuckoo
Sharp-shinned Hawk		H	Whip-poor-will
Red-tailed Hawk		GH	Common Nighthawk
Red-shouldered Hawk	A C	H	Chimney Swift
Broad-winged Hawk		H	Ruby-thr. Hummingbird

Belted Kingfisher	AB	GH	Golden-winged Warbler	A	E G
Yellow-shafted Flicker	AB	DEFGH	Nashville Warbler	A	CDE GH
Pileated Woodpecker	A	C H	Parula Warbler	AB	FGH
Red-headed Woodpecker		D	Yellow Warbler	AB	EFGH
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A	C GH	Magnolia Warbler	A	C E G
Hairy Woodpecker	A	FGH	Cape May Warbler	A	F H
Downy Woodpecker	AB	DEFGH	Black-thr. Bluc Warbler	ABC	EFGH
Eastern Kingbird	AB	EFGH	Myrtle Warbler	ABCDEF	GH
Crested Flycatcher	ABC	EFGH	Black-thr. Green Warbler	ABCDEF	GH
Eastern Phoebe	AB	DEFGH	Blackburnian Warbler	ABCDE	G
Least Flycatcher	ABC	F H	Chestnut-sided Warbler	ABC	EFGH
Eastern Wood Pewee	A	D H	Pine Warbler		FGH
Horned Lark	A		Prairie Warbler	A	GH
Tree Swallow	AB	EFGH	Palm Warbler		E H
Bank Swallow	AB	EF H	Oven-bird	ABCDEF	GH
Rough-winged Swallow	A	E GH	Northern Waterthrush		F
Barn Swallow	AB	DEFGH	Louisiana Waterthrush	A	
Cliff Swallow	AB		Common Yellowthroat	ABCDEF	GH
Purple Martin	A		Yellow-breasted Chat	AB	
Blue Jay	ABCDEF	GH	Canada Warbler		BC E
American Crow	ABCDEF	GH	Redstart	ABC	EFGH
Black-capped Chickadee	ABCD	FGH	House Sparrow	AB	DEFGH
White-breasted Nuthatch	A	D GH	Bobolink	AB	EFGH
Red-breasted Nuthatch		C	Eastern Meadowlark	AB	DEFGH
Brown Creeper		BC F H	Red-winged Blackbird	ABCDEF	GH
House Wren	AB	DEFGH	Baltimore Oriole	ABC	EFGH
Winter Wren		C	Purple Grackle	AB	DEFGH
Long-billed Marsh Wren	A	FGH	Brown-headed Cowbird	ABC	EFGH
Catbird	AB	DEFGH	Scarlet Tanager	AB	E
Brown Thrasher	AB	EFGH	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	ABC	E H
American Robin	ABCDEF	GH	Indigo Bunting		D
Wood Thrush	ABC	EFGH	Evening Grosbeak		X
Hermit Thrush	ABCDEF	H	Purple Finch	ABC	EFGH
Olive-backed Thrush	A	E H	Pine Siskin	A	H
Veery	ABCDEF	GH	American Goldfinch	ABCDEF	GH
Eastern Bluebird	AB	EFGH	Red Crossbill		F
Golden-crowned Kinglet		F	Eastern Towhee	AB	DEFGH
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	ABC	E GH	Savannah Sparrow	A	E GH
Water Pipit	A		Grasshopper Sparrow	AB	EF H
Cedar Waxwing	AB		Henslow's Sparrow	A	E H
Common Starling	AB	DEFGH	Vesper Sparrow	AB	DE G
Yellow-throated Vireo	AB	EF H	Slate-colored Junco	ABCDE	I
Solitary Vireo	A	C FG	Chipping Sparrow	ABCDEF	GH
Red-eyed Vireo	A	H	Field Sparrow	AB	DEFGH
Philadelphia Vireo		H	White-crowned Sparrow	AB	D F H
Warbling Vireo	AB	F H	White-throated Sparrow	ABC	EFGH
Black and White Warbler	ABC	EFGH	Swamp Sparrow	AB	DEFGH
Worm-eating Warbler	A		Song Sparrow	ABCDEF	GH

Of the 154 species, 31 were seen by one group only -- and each group contributed lone species. Included were: Group A, Least Bittern, Pintail, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Bald Eagle, Coot, Upland Plover, Greater Yellow-legs, Black Tern, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Water Pipit, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Water-thrush. Group B, American Golden-eye. Group C, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren. Group D, Red-headed Woodpecker, Indigo Bunting. Group E, Nighthawk. Group F, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Northern Water-thrush, Red Crossbill. Group G, Greater Scaup, Hooded Merganser. For

Group H, Baldpate, Ring-necked Duck, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Philadelphia Vireo. Group X, Evening Grosbeak.

Eight of the species had been seen in only one previous Century Run: American Egret ('48), American Golden-eye ('47), White-winged Scoter ('51), Hooded Merganser ('48), Bald Eagle ('48), Black-billed Cuckoo ('52), Purple Martin ('51), and Philadelphia Vireo ('50).

As for the "No Owls" which seems so usual, there were no records on the preceding or following day either. Closest records were: Barn Owl, May 6, Albany, Dr. Scotland; Barred Owl, May 12, Jenny Lake, Havens; Horned Owl, Rosendale Road, 8:45 p.m. May 14, Holmes and the O'Mearas; Screech Owl, Balltown Road, May 13, Bartlett.

Incidentally, in the 11 years of Century Runs there have been only 10 records of seven species, an average of less than one per year. There were none in 1934, 1947 or 1953. In 1949 there were Screech and Barred, and in 1951 Short-eared and Barred. The Barred has been seen in five other years, and the Long-eared in 1933. Neither the Barn nor Horned has appeared on the list; the one Screech Owl record is not much better.

The 1953 Century Run was held a little earlier than usual, and ahead of most other New York State runs. The local one is usually held on the first "two-digit" Saturday of the month. The season was advanced this year and a high count resulted, even though it was apparent that the late transients were yet to arrive -- local field trips of the following week-end were just about as high in individual counts.

## BRIEFING THE RECORD

Frazer R. Turrentino, Records Committee Chairman

APRIL had 17 days with rain, with snow or hail on five of them. It had only three fully sunny days. Precipitation amounted to 3.85 inches, which is .94 inch above normal. The strongest breeze of the month was a 65-miler on the 23rd.

April 6 and 20 were the coldest -- down to 33 degrees -- with rain; April 14 was 33 degrees with snow.

So far as birds were concerned, it was apparent that an early spring was in the making. Except for the SEC field trips, reported elsewhere, reports reaching the Records Committee were few -- too few. Among the reports:

Black-crowned Night Heron: 1, Vischer Ponds, April 24; Dr.

MBSScotland

American Bittern: 1, Vischer Ponds, April 24; MBS

Canada Goose: 3, Collins Lake, Apr. 9; EHHallenbeck. 1, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS

Mallard: 6, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24; MBS

Gadwall: 2, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24; MBS

Wood Duck: Pair, Collins Lake, Apr. 14 and 20; EH

Lesser Scaup: 1, Collins Lake, Apr. 1; EH

American Golden-eye: Two, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24; MBS

Turkey Vulture: 1, Scotia Bridge, Apr. 1, EH. 1, Vischer

Ponds, Apr. 24; MBS. 1, Bleeker (Fulton Co.) Apr. 26; GBartlett  
 Broad-winged Hawk: Summering pair, Bleeker, Apr. 26; GB  
 Osprey: 12, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS; Apr. 25, EH  
 Coot: 2, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Woodcock: 2, Rosendale Rd, Apr. 24, NVVorst and BSSullivan;  
 Apr. 30, Rosendale Rd, EH  
 Screech Owl: Apr. 19, Washington Pk, Albany, PBaker  
 Pileated Woodpecker: Apr. 26 & 28, Slingerlands, PB  
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Apr. 22, EH; 4, Apr. 24, EH  
 Tree Swallow: common, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Bank Swallow: 1, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Rough-winged Swallow: 1, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Barn Swallow: 25, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 House Wren: Scotia, Apr. 26, EH  
 Brown Thrasher: Urban, Apr. 23, ABallen  
 Wood Thrush: Rosendale Rd., Apr. 30, EH  
 Hermit Thrush: 1, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS; in song,  
 Bleeker, Apr. 26, GB  
 Golden-crowned Kinglet: 2, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Cedar Waxwing: 200, late March, CBrockway  
 Myrtle Warbler: 2, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Red-winged Blackbird: Resident for 3 years, CB  
 Cowbird: 15, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Red Crossbill: 10, Washington Park, Apr. 19, PB; several re-  
 ports, Apr. 18 to 26, latter at Colonie Golf Club  
 Savannah Sparrow: 1, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Vesper Sparrow: 1, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 Slate-colored Junco: Partial albino, Apr. 19, LAWiard  
 Field Sparrow: 3, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS  
 White-throated Sparrow: Singing, Apr. 20, EH, numerous  
 Apr. 23, EH  
 Swamp Sparrow: 12, Vischer Ponds, Apr. 24, MBS

## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

July - No meetings, no scheduled field trips.  
 The schedule of field trips for the remainder of 1953 is  
 to be distributed with the July FEATHERS.

## S B C FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Estly Hellenbeck and Leon A. Wiard, Co-chairmen

### RAIN

(A) Washington Park, Albany, May 2

It was dark, and raining, when SBC visited Washington Park, Albany, early in the morning on May 2. Seven participants, led by Mrs. Stoner, listed 23 species, with quite a few Myrtle Warblers and White-throated Sparrows, several Cowbirds, 25 Pine Siskins, and first-of-the-season records for the Park of the Catbird and House Wren.

### RAIN AGAIN

(B)

Central Park, May 3

It rained, and only two observers were out at 5:15 a.m. at the Fire Tower in Central Park. They sat in their cars most of the time and listened to the birds -- first the

Robin and then the Wood Thrush. A half dozen more observers were on hand for breakfast at the picnic grounds. The rain had just about stopped, but we had to stand to eat the good pancakes the committee had prepared. I think we ate more standing than we would have if we had been able to sit at the tables. The bird count was 27. -- Esly Hallenbeck

VESPER CONCERT

(C)

Rosendale Road, May 6

In the evening of May 6, the warmest day so far in the year, 13 SBC members gathered to hear evening bird songs. It was a little cloudy, but windless; so it was ideal. The Golden-winged Warbler was singing, and continued until dark. The Veeries, Towhees, Wood Thrushes and several other song-birds participated in the vesper concert.

As it grew darker and the faint glow of the sunset remained in the west, a few Black-crowned Night Herons flew over. Then attention was concentrated on the expected performance of the Woodcock. Someone called, "He is up!" Either there were no calls from the ground or the watchers did not hear them, for without warning the bird was in the air. Each one heard and enjoyed him. To make the evening complete, the Whip-poor-will staged his audible performance.

For many years this group has gone out, sometimes in weather so cold and windy that results were not satisfactory. 1953 really was perfect. -- Nelle Van Vorst

FULFILLED PROMISE

(D)

Ladder-Meadowdale, May 16

The scheduled trip to Indian Ladder for the Worm-eating Warbler fulfilled its promise. The warbler was found a short distance down from the top of the trail. For several minutes he sang, perched on a dead bough at eye-level, about 100 feet from the observers to yield all an excellent view.

The area at the top of the trail produced a number of other warblers, including Louisiana Water-thrush. Thereafter the group of four drove to the foot of the hill to seek the Golden-winged Warbler, stopping along the way to flush a Henslow's Sparrow so it could be studied by eye as well as ear. The Golden-winged was a short distance up the trail.

Indian Ladder had proved so interesting that little time was left for Meadowdale. Since it was after noon when the group reached the marsh, little was added to the trip list of 60 species. -- Byron T. Hipple, Jr.

RAIN, TOO MUCHMay 17 Trip Cancelled

The rain proved too much on May 17; the scheduled Ladder-Meadowdale trip did not materialize.

STATE FEDERATION TRIP

(E)

Bear Mountain, May 24

Twenty-one members of SBC registered for the annual meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, at Bear Mountain Park May 18-19, and most of them participated in the field trip of Sunday. If space permitted, much could be written about the trip. It was well arranged, well attended and well conducted. SBC members appeared in all the different field groups, so at least one SBC member was in on the record of each species. The morning list reached 110 species, with several individual lists of 80 or more.

Among species of particular interest to SBC members were Turkey Vulture, Laughing Gull, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, White-eyed Vireo, Lawrence's (hybrid) Warbler, Hooded

Warbler, Orchard Oriole, and Cardinal. The "abundance" of the Orchard Oriole surprised even Rockland County residents. SURE, RAIN (F) Karners, May 30

There remains no doubt about the relative commonness and widespread distribution of the Prairie Warbler in the Karner sand-barrens area. There were plenty of singing males despite the rain on Memorial Day. The number heard or seen was estimated at 25 males, with the Towhee having the only higher count, 30. Pine Warblers too were seen in added locations. The 14 observers accounted for 40 species in their two hours afield in the light rain; Mrs. Grace was the group leader.

COMPOSITE LIST

127 Species

In addition to the Century Run (p. 41) there were these six field trips in May:

Green Heron	EF	Eastern Wood Pewee	DE	Myrtle Warbler	ABCD
Black-cr. Night Heron	C E	Olive-sided Flycatcher	E	Black-thr. Green Warbler	DE
American Bittern	DE	Tree Swallow	DE	Blackburnian Warbler	E
Least Bittern	E	Bank Swallow	E	Chestnut-sided Warbler	DEF
Canada Goose	E	Rough-winged Swallow	E	Bay-breasted Warbler	E
Mallard	EF	Barn Swallow	CDEF	Black-poll Warbler	E
Black Duck	F	Blue Jay	B DEF	Pine Warbler	F
Wood Duck	E	American Crow	B DEF	Prairie Warbler	EF
Turkey Vulture	E	Black-capped Chickadee	BCDE	Oven-bird	CDEF
Sharp-shinned Hawk	E	Tufted Titmouse	E	Northern Waterthrush	DEF
Red-shouldered Hawk	E	White-breasted Nuthatch	DE	Louisiana Waterthrush	B DE
Sparrow Hawk	E	Red-breasted Nuthatch	B	Mourning Warbler	E
Ruffed Grouse	E	Brown Creeper	A	Common Yellowthroat	DEF
Ring-necked Pheasant	C EF	House Wren	AB DEF	Yellow-breasted Chat	E
Virginia Rail	E	Carolina Wren	E	Hooded Warbler	E
Killdeer	DEF	Long-billed Marsh Wren	E	Black-capped Warbler	E
American Woodcock	C	Catbird	A CDEF	Canada Warbler	DE
Spotted Sandpiper	E	Brown Thrasher	B EF	Redstart	DE
Solitary Sandpiper	D	American Robin	ABCDEF	House Sparrow	AB DEF
Greater Yellow-legs	E	Wood Thrush	BCDE	Bobolink	DE
Least Sandpiper	E	Hermit Thrush	A D	Eastern Meadowlark	DE
Herring Gull	A	Olive-backed Thrush	E	Red-winged Blackbird	DEF
Ring-billed Gull	E	Veery	C EF	Orchard Oriole	E
Laughing Gull	E	Eastern Bluebird	B DE	Baltimore Oriole	DEF
Mourning Dove	AB EF	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	AB	Purple Grackle	AB DEF
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	E	Cedar Waxwing	E	Brown-headed Cowbird	ABCDEF
Black-billed Cuckoo	E	Common Starling	AB DEF	Scarlet Tanager	DE
Whip-poor-will	C	White-eyed Vireo	E	Cardinal	E
Common Nighthawk	E	Yellow-throated Vireo	E	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	DE
Chimney Swift	DE	Solitary Vireo	E	Indigo Bunting	DEF
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	DEF	Red-eyed Vireo	DEF	Purple Finch	A DEF
Belted Kingfisher	B E	Warbling Vireo	E	Pine Siskin	A
Yellow-shafted Flicker	AB EF	Black and White Warbler	DE	American Goldfinch	CDEF
Pileated Woodpecker	E	Worm-eating Warbler	DE	Eastern Towhee	ABCDEF
Hairy Woodpecker	B DEF	Golden-winged Warbler	CDE	Savannah Sparrow	E
Downy Woodpecker	ABCDE	Blue-winged Warbler	E	Grasshopper Sparrow	D
Eastern Kingbird	DEF	(Lawrence's Warbler)	E	Henslow's Sparrow	D
Crested Flycatcher	DEF	Tennessee Warbler	D	Slate-colored Junco	AB D
Eastern Phoebe	A DE	Yellow Warbler	DEF	Chipping Sparrow	AB DEF
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	E	Magnolia Warbler	E	Field Sparrow	CDEF
Trail's Flycatcher	E	Cape May Warbler	D	White-throated Sparrow	AB
Least Flycatcher	EF	Black-thr. Blue Warbler	E	Swamp Sparrow	DE
				Song Sparrow	ABCDEF



## STATE FEDERATION NEWS



SBC was well represented at the sixth annual convention of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs on May 22, 23 and 24 at Bear Mountain Inn. There were 21 SBC registrants, probably the record; and Club members were active participants in the Saturday morning Council meeting, in the Saturday afternoon general program, and in the Sunday field trip. Rockland Audubon Society, sponsor of the meeting, is to be congratulated on the success of the convention; they even supplied good weather for the field trip, in contrast to the weather SBC provided the previous year.

Samuel R. Kadison was renamed chairman of the conservation committee, and Guy Bartlett was elected vice president.

SBC has an unusual area within its boundaries, Edward D. Treacy pointed out in his afternoon-session paper on "Bird Population of the Albany County Barrens." In 1952 a 30-acre tract in the center of the Albany-Schenectady sand barrens had a resident population of 45 pairs of birds, representing 18 species. Only six were common. He found distribution closely correlated with vegetational type.

Allen H. Benton, SBC, and Robert S. Arbib, Linnaean Society, gave the audience something to think about in their paper, "Opportunity Unlimited for New York Birders." It was a plea to members to expend more energy in securing data on population dynamics, migration routes, breeding bird populations, life history, etc., rather than on simply building bigger lists. It was aimed at stimulating clubs and individuals to putting their time to better use.

Mr. Benton appeared on the program again during the symposium on "Problems Involved in Establishing a Uniform System of Keeping Regional Records." He discussed territorial coverage problems, using a map prepared by Hazel Ellis of Keuka, pointing out the duplications in reports on favored areas such as Montezuma, and urging new boundaries of regions in the new state book.

The field trip of Sunday is briefly reported in this issue, page 46.



## NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

THOSE GEESE

Records of locally summering Canada Geese are increasingly common. Fred Klemm saw a flock of about 30 over Niskayuna on the morning of May 17. F. A. Hamilton saw a pair over the Mohawk at Scotia on May 31. During early and mid-June Nelle Van Vorst was seeing a pair regularly on Watervliet Reservoir.

SEMI-ALBINO

In mid-May the Records Committee received a report of a semi-albino Robin in the Schermerhorn Road area. It had a few dark patches in its plumage.



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## VACATION WITH BLUE BOY Frances Miller Winiarski, Queens Village

Living in New York City as we do, our feathered friends here on our tiny city lot are mainly limited to Robins, Starlings and House Sparrows. So, imagine the wondrous experience it was for the four of us (Mr. Winiarski, our 7- and 4-year-old boys and myself) fresh from the Big City, to adopt, and successfully raise to maturity, a Blue Jay!

Not unlike the fellow who always tells the same joke, "we Winiarskis" have gained the reputation of starting each new conversation with "Have we told you about Blue Boy?"

Perhaps because it is about a bird, and because Blue Boy created such a stir of interest among our upstate friends, you may find the tale of interest.

### Novice Fledgling

It all began with an impromptu stroll after supper one evening in July, 1952, at Jenny Lake, near Corinth. It was that hour of a summer's day when it's sunlit in the fields or on the lake but eventide among the tall pines. A sudden turn into a needle-carpeted dell brought us to him -- there, on a large boulder he sat, a baby Blue Jay -- a novice fledgling, weakly sitting back on his "elbows", propped up by a stump of a tail. As we approached he flapped his wings feebly, and silently opened his mouth. Our 7-year-old said, "He thinks you're his mother, Mother'." And for the four weeks following so we were, his "mother by proxy."

Our first problem was "What shall we do?" If we picked him up, would he die under our amateurish care; or, if we left him, would he perish in the uncertainties of a fast approaching night? The woods were silent except for the distant vespers of a thrush -- there was no raucous Blue Jay mother urging her errant young son home to bed. So we took a chance and carried him home. Then there followed a most wonderful experience for us all -- one which became the talk of the hill, and which daily brought more and more curious callers. At first, I'm sure, it was to see if he were still alive, but as days grew into weeks it was to hear of his latest antics.

### Room and Board

"Room and Board" -- those were the two primary problems that presented themselves. Blue Boy (for that, as you've already surmised, was the name decided upon) first lived in a grocery carton, with an easily changed mattress of pine needles. We could see that squatting on the box bottom was



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rapidly damaging his incomplete tail feathers and, knowing he must strengthen his claws by perching, we were fortunately able to borrow a bird cage.

We learned we were probably breaking a law by caging a wild bird, but we had taken on a responsibility, and at this point there could be no turning back.

In his cage Blue Boy could be sunned and aired daily and, with the cage covered against the night's chill, bedded away and kept quiet until our hour of rising. He soon became a very loud and insistent "star boarder."

### Hungry, and Co-operative

The food really posed a problem. I'd tried to feed baby birds before, only to have them sicken and die; but here was a new challenge. Besides being very hungry, Blue Boy was also cooperative, and before too many tries my fingers were successfully guiding repeated morsels of milk-softened bread deep down into his throat, where I could feel the constricting muscles take over. The food apparently reached its proper destination for he soon began to noisily request frequent feedings, and showed definite signs of growth and improvement. Hard-boiled egg yolk was a welcomed addition to his diet, and as Blue Boy became a big boy he rejected the insipid bread and milk, preferring the crumbs of egg yolk, bits of hamburger, shreds of fish, cheese, worms -- in fact he liked anything, and we soon referred to him as "our garbage can." We never went swimming, for a drive, or anywhere, but that the last thing we did before we left, and the first thing we did upon our return, was to feed Blue Boy. It was like having a baby on a two-hour schedule!

To teach him to fly was a problem, to be sure. Does flying come naturally, as swimming to a fish wriggling from its egg, or does the mother bird have to show how it's done? Several times each day Blue Boy was released for his exercise. At first he'd only hop along the ground, or was content to ride about upon our shoulder. In fact, for several days our 7-year-old Bruce paraded the length and breadth of Tawiskarou, proudly displaying "His Bird" perched there on his shoulder. Gradually, however, Blue Boy managed longer and higher trial flights. Always our hearts were in our mouths, and often he'd suddenly lose altitude, crashing into a tree trunk or bushes, and require rescuing.

### Turnabout

As his flying ability improved we feared losing Blue Boy. Would he fly too far, become lost, and be unable to fend for himself? But no, it was here we learned that no longer were we Blue Boy's captors ... instead, he had adopted us! Although he now had complete freedom, spending the days and nights in the trees, he was apparently always within sound of our voices. We could call, and he would answer. When we

opened the door in the morning he was there to swoop down upon our head or shoulder, begging for food. During the day when he'd become hungry he'd start calling, at the same time working his way down limb by limb. If we went calling at another cabin Blue Boy would follow us, swooping down, making his presence known.

When we first had him I wondered if Blue Boy might be imperfect, the runt, pushed out of the nest. His feathers looked so scrubby, his neck was scrawny and completely bald; but here again we had an interesting lesson. Those tail and wing feathers which were little more than tufts protruding from a hard quill casing were no problem to Blue Boy. With his beak he'd work down each quill with a rapid biting movement. Then, giving himself a thorough shake, he sent down a snowy shower of cast-off quill. Day by day his showy plumage took shape, and by the end of the month he was a beauty, with a showman's skill in displaying his fine feathers, glistening in the sunlight with a sheen far exceeding any man-made fabric.

It is strange, but so many of our experiences with this Blue Boy of ours seemed to be instigated by him. When he rejected the softened bread as food, he still accepted a drink of milk squeezed from the bread. His first drink of water came after he had his freedom. He flew down while one of us washed our hands at the outdoor washstand. He perched on the edge of the basin, cocked his head at the rippling pool, flapped his wings and opened his beak, as he still did for food -- and drank the drops of water as they ran from our fingers! From then on the sound of sloshing water brought him down for his drink.

#### First Bath

So too resulted his first bath. One day while I was rinsing clothes in a basin set upon the ground Blue Boy appeared, walked around on the ground, listened intently to the sound of the water, hopped up on the edge, looked a moment as I proceeded with the clothes, and then -- plop. He was down in the water, on top of the rinsing clothes, taking his first bath.

Oh, he was a mischief! He'd count the buttons on your shirt, hide kernels of corn up your cuffs or under your collar. He walked in the soft mortar of the new chimney, poked holes in the toothpaste and shaving cream tubes, and for some time he sported a gay splotch of green feathers -- the result of a forced landing on my oil paint palette. His curiosity and his delight in everything knew no bounds.

Blue Boy had a voice of varying quality. If he was hungry or desired attention, his voice was strong, raucous and shrill; but when perched on your shoulder, curiously examining a morsel of new food, or peering with his sharp beedy eyes into the maze of your ear, or pulling at a strand of hair or a bright ear-ring, his voice was a soft conversational twitter, almost a purr, somewhat pigeon-like, vibrating in his chest. He seemed to hold attachment for us that went beyond his need for food. Even when his appetite was satisfied he would stay, just to play, to explore the many intricacies of this thing called "civilization."

Yes, it was a sad day when we packed up and returned to

New York, without Blue Boy. We had reluctantly convinced ourselves it was best to leave him in his home surroundings, and we firmly assured the boys Blue Boy was safer at Jenny Lake than if subjected to the dangers of New York City and its many cats.

Since that day we have greedily welcomed any word about Blue Boy. He has adopted, for a short time, several families, always seeming to prefer those with children. He's been seen in the company of another jay, and some have written they suspect Blue Boy is not a Boy at all. He's flown several miles down the mountain to a farmhouse, flies in an open window, helps himself to food on the table, plays with the children -- may even stay overnight.

#### A Known Character

He is, in a way, a known character -- he has been tagged, and his number has been registered in Washington. At one time he had not been seen for days, and it was learned that a year-round resident had caged him as a pet for his children. But news travels fast. One of Blue Boy's friends heard of his plight, pleaded for his freedom -- there's always the law.

The last word we've had was that Blue Boy had flown several more miles, down to the site of the new Sacandaga Dam. It was reported he was annoying the workmen to such an extent that a Conservationist was called to catch him. We doubt that Blue Boy annoyed anyone but the foreman, for he is such a quick and intelligent bird, such a clown, so inquisitive, and up to so many tricks that he was surely slowing up the progress of the New York Waterways by taking the men away from their work.

We understand the Conservationist released Blue Boy in Corinth, and since then we have had no word. Has he adopted some town folk, has he fallen prey to a cat, or will we see him next summer at Jenny Lake? There are still unanswered questions, but we are still looking for word of his whereabouts, for he is certainly a remarkable bird, and not one to remain unnoticed.

Although Blue Jays reputedly are outlaws of the woods and have never been high in the esteem of bird lovers, for us, his "parents by proxy" there never will be another such bird. We wish him well, good health, fine feathers, and many sons to carry on his name.

## AT FLORIDA'S TIP

Mabel W. French

This is a report on the two-day Audubon Tour featuring Cuthbert Lake and Florida Bay, taken January 16 and 17, 1953. Our first unusual bird was a Swainson's Hawk, sighted in a truck garden near Homestead. On the Gator Lake trip of December 30 there were eight of these hawks in that area; there was quite an invasion of these hawks of the western plains in south Florida that winter. All we saw on both days were on the ground -- never perching.

The next stop was at Anhinga Trail, a board walk built over Anhinga Slough, a swampy strip winding between higher

pineland and the grassy glades. Miss Sullivan gave such a vivid impression in her recent "Florida Impressions" (FEATHERS, January, 1953, p. 4) of wild life in this spot that anything more would be superfluous, so I will simply say the Purple Gallinules were still craning their necks to study their human observers, this time accompanied by a Sora.

### Into a Tropical Jungle

From the trail we followed the road into Everglades National Park territory. A tropical jungle bordered the road on either side for much of the way. At one point for a mile or more the glossy green mangroves were aflutter with hundreds of both American and Snowy Egrets, the latter predominating, accompanied by a sprinkling of Louisiana and Little Blue Herons, and a lone White Ibis. A large percentage of the egrets were wearing their airy nuptial plumes. They were not in anything approaching such numbers December 30; recent heavy rains had caused a shift in the population.

Near the above point two otters furnished some entertainment. They pranced across the road in front of the car and jumped into a ditch, where they put on some water acrobatics. One finally vanished among the red mangrove stilts and the other bounced out of the ditch, hustled across the road in back of the car, and slid into another ditch. One is seldom far from some kind of a ditch in south Florida.

After lunch at Coot Bay the station wagons back-tracked to West Lake, where we boarded the Audubon motor launches, "Egret" and "Ibis." The "Egret" is the home of our guide, "Hawk" Bennett, during the summer while he is guarding the bird colonies off Duck Rock on Florida's west coast. Hundreds of Coot went skittering ahead of the boats, their feet racing along the surface of the water, often with the waves striking them back. That pumping motion made by Coots and Gallinules when swimming is because they strike backward with both feet at once.

### Dynamited Passages

We passed from West Lake to East Lake, and thence to Cuthbert Lake, by passages dug and dynamited through the snarls of mangrove and buttonwood. These channels were not straight as a yardstick like the much longer one connecting Bear and Gator Lakes, but was curving and even narrower. Across the opening into Cuthbert was a locked gate -- to keep the birds in, according to Mr. Bennett.

Out in Cuthbert lay our objective, an island almost white with nesting Wood Ibis. Some of the stick platform nests could be distinguished, although we could not go near enough for close inspection. We were cautioned to speak quietly and to make no sudden motions to startle the birds. If one Ibis took flight the whole colony would leave with a rush, probably damaging both eggs and young. American Egrets were nesting with the Ibis, but mainly in the inside of the isle.

On our way out of Cuthbert we were fortunate to have the rare Short-tailed Hawk sail over our boat and hover by the shore. Our bird was in the light phase of plumage, and looked from beneath just like Peterson's illustration. Its black cheek marks were very conspicuous. Only a few scattered mature White Ibis were seen that day, but we did dis-

cover eight or ten of the brown and white immature in flight. After leaving the boat landing we headed back toward Florida City, to take the road to the Keys. The night was spent in the Key Haven Motel, at Tavernier on Key Largo.

Birding began the next morning before we had even boarded the Audubon Society's large boat. While waiting on the dock we were thrilled by a long pink line of Roseate Spoonbills, drifting across Florida Bay. The color of the water of this bay reminds me of old-fashioned milk glass shot through with streaks of deep green, purple or even rose. A Great White Heron fished on a bar so close to shore we could see its yellowish legs. A Man-o'-war Bird flew over -- maybe a Lady-o'-war, for its white breast proclaimed it a female. Later we were to see many more, including males and immature, one male dropping so low that its inflated reddish-orange throat patch showed plainly.

#### Winds Unwelcome

Before we returned to the dock at noon we estimated we had seen 15 to 20 Great Whites. These herons, the largest of the continent, hate wind. Our attention was called to the way they shrank behind the scanty shelter of even tiny bushes whenever the stiff breeze sweeping over the bay struck them. They have so much surface to be hit by wind that hurricanes hurl them to their death.

Reddish Egrets frequently appeared, always as singles. They like open mud flats, just lightly washed over. They dashed about at their fishing, accompanying their efforts by various awkward gyrations and with their head feathers all awry. It was our good luck to record several full-plumaged adults, one immature, and one in the white phase.

We touched at several Keys, each of which had its special birds. Bottle Key presented nesting Ospreys and a few Great Whites. Manatee Key's exhibit was a huge Bald Eagle nest, with one eagle on the nest and its mate perched on a branch above it. The eagles stole the nest from Ospreys and enlarged it.

The climax was reached at Stake Key with a possible 400 Spoonbills who simply ignored us and went on about their private affairs. Most of the Spoonbills of the Gator Lake trip, had been so pink I assumed they were adults, but I discovered they had all been immature in various stages of development. It takes Spoonbills three years to attain their full plumage, and they never breed until they acquire it. Until then they roam about in flocks, of which the Gator Lake group was one. Here at Stake Key were the birds with carmine shoulders and the orange feathers showing in the pink above the tail base, the latter being most conspicuous just before they alighted. Many passed so close to the boat that we did not need binoculars to see them in detail. Up in the thickets of the Key we could watch parents pumping sustenance into their young. On a mud bar two large, pale pink young ran around after their parent, begging for food she was getting impatient for them to find for themselves.

After the Spoonbills even the Brown Pelican rookery at Cow Pens seemed an anticlimax. Why "Cow Pens" I do not know, unless the mud bars make a pen. Anyway, we got stuck

and had to be poled off. On this Key pelicans nested on the outside, and Man-o'-war Birds on the inside.

There was only one disappointing feature of the morning, and that was the comparative scarcity of shore birds. Five or six common species, including Willet, were identified, but that day the wind was blowing in a direction to blow them out instead of into the bay. Also, Florida Bay is so shallow that it is impossible to bring the boat near enough to the flats to see small birds well.

#### Dock Show

As we came into the dock our leader put on a show with the gulls and terns. Standing in the stern and calling in a peculiar way, he tossed pieces of bread and cookies. Soon he had a following of Ring-billed and Laughing Gulls, Forster's and Royal Terns, with one immature Pelican in their midst. They mainly snatched the snacks from the surface of the water, but occasionally caught a bit in mid-air.

The trip back to Miami was comparatively uneventful, but nothing more was needed to make the memory of the day last as long as memory itself endures.

## GANNETS

Beatrice Sullivan

We stood on the high sand hill near the Nauset Coast Guard Station -- where the next land east is Spain. It was early spring and the stillness was broken only by the pounding surf of the Atlantic, which is so startlingly blue at this portion of Cape Cod, and the planes flying high above us. These were in formation for the bombing practice a few miles away at First Encounter Beach.

But it was the Gannets that amazed us. They were flying north to their nesting ground. At first they came in groups of two or three, almost at eye level and near enough that we could see the yellow on their heads. And then in larger numbers, on they came.

For a half hour there was no time when we could not see these big white birds with black wing-tips flying low and sometimes diving for food. The shore birds failed us entirely, and there were few gulls -- but what a show the Gannets put on for us inlanders.

### BRIEFING THE RECORD

Frazer R. Turrentine, Records Committee Chairman

May was warm, wet and, birdwise, good for the records. Many end dates, both arrival and departure, show in the Century Run statistics of May 9 and in the composite list for other local field trips during the month (See both reports in FEATHERS, June).

Through May 18 rainfall amounted to 5.48 inches for the month; to 14.19 inches since March 1; and 19.46 inches so far for the year. Among recent bird records of interest are those on the next page.

Green Heron	May 8, Collins Lake, EH
Canada Goose	200, May 6, Niskayuna, RY; 25, May 17, EH
Wood Duck	May 1, Mariaville Lake, HC
White-winged Scoter	37, May 6, Niskayuna, RY
Spotted Sandpiper	10, May 15, Selkirk, MBS
Greater Yellow-legs	Two, May 15, Selkirk, MBS
Lesser Yellow-legs	Two, May 15, Selkirk, MBS
Pectoral Sandpiper	Four, May 15, Selkirk, MBS
White-rumped Sandpiper	May 15, Selkirk, MBS
Least Sandpiper	15, May 15, Selkirk, MBS
Sanderling	May 3, Collins Lake, EH
Bonaparte's Gull	Two, May 7, Alcove Reservoir, LCS
Common Tern	Five, May 6, Niskayuna, RY
Black Tern	Four, May 6, Niskayuna, RY
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	arrived May 15, Sum.res. Scotia, EH
Black-billed Cuckoo	arrived May 12, Sum.res., MWF; May 31, Scotia, EH
Chimney Swift	Three, May 3, Collins Lake, EH
Pileated Woodpecker	May 4, Central Park, EH
Least Flycatcher	May 1, Albany, MBS; May 7, MWF, EH
Eastern Wood Pewee	May 23, MWF
Cliff Swallow	May 7, Collins Lake, EH
Brown Creeper	Two, May 7, Collins Lake, EH
Catbird	May 5, MWF; 6, May 8, Collins Lake, EH
Olive-backed Thrush	Five, May 7-8, Collins Lake, EH; May 17, MWF
Veery	May 8, Collins Lake, EH
Cedar Waxwing	30, May 8, Scotia, EH; 20, May 12, EH
Warbling Vireo	May 6, Scotia, EH
Black and White Warbler	May 1, Albany, MBS; May 3, MWF; May 7, EH
Tennessee Warbler	May 12, MWF
Nashville Warbler	May 6, Collins Lake, EH; May 10, MWF
Parula Warbler	May 15 and 16, MWF
Yellow Warbler	May 6, Collins Lake, EH
Magnolia Warbler	May 7, Collins Lake, EH; May 7, MWF
Cape May Warbler	May 2 to 17, MWF
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	May 7, Collins Lake, EH
Myrtle Warbler	May 12 to 17, MWF
Black-thr. Green Warbler	May 8, Collins Lake, EH; May 14 to 24, MWF
Blackburnian Warbler	May 8, Collins Lake, EH
Chestnut-sided Warbler	May 7, Collins Lake, EH
Bay-breasted Warbler	Two, urban Schenectady, May 6, RY
Black-poll Warbler	May 16 & 29, MWF; May 17, Collins Lake, EH
Oven-bird	May 1, Albany, MBS
Common Yellowthroat	Two, May 8, Collins Lake, EH
Canada Warbler	May 8, Collins Lake, EH
Redstart	May 7, Collins Lake, EH
Bobolink	Two, May 3, Collins Lake, EH
Baltimore Oriole	May 6, Scotia, EH; May 7, MWF
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	May 7, Collins Lake, EH; May 6, six, EH; May 8, MWF
Purple Finch	Apr. 28 and daily through May, MWF
Eastern Towhee	May 3, MWF
White-crowned Sparrow	May 6 through 11, and May 17, MWF; May 6, Collins Lake, EH; May 15, Selkirk, MBS
White-throated Sparrow	May 16, MWF
Fox Sparrow	May 3, Collins Lake, EH

KEY: HC Cole; MWF French, Loudonville; EH Hallenbeck; MBS Scotland; LC Stoner; RY Unick



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## "Operation Moon-Watch"

### A New Way To Study Bird Migrations

STEPHEN C. FORDHAM JR  
*Supervisor, Delmar Game Farm  
New York State Conservation  
Department*

There are many species of the animal kingdom which take advantage of the moon; among them, of course, is man himself. From the dawn of time, no doubt, there have been couples who have professed a liking for watching the moon pass through the heavens. It is more likely, though, that there was not any serious intent to study but rather to seek the contentment that came while falling under the spell of its radiance.

The first real attempt to study the moon with the use of a telescope by Galileo Galilei, probably in the year 1610, gave to us the ideas of mountains and craters in the moon's structure. Today we know of the 100-inch reflecting telescope of the Mount Wilson Observatory at Pasadena, Calif., and its big brother, the 200-inch mirror of Palomar Mountain. Many fine pictures have appeared in current publications.

#### How "Operation Moon-Watch" Started

But for you and me, and others scattered over Canada, United States and Central America, a new and very interesting phase of bird study has developed. The catch words, "Operation Moon-Watch," could be described easily as a study of bird migration at night by means of the moon and a telescope. How this all developed is an interesting story.

In 1946 George H. Lowery Jr, curator of the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, was looking for the answers to some puzzling problems of bird migration. These were, namely, the magnitude of the coastal flight of birds around the "Gulf" and the magnitude of those flights directly over the Gulf of Mexico from Yucatan to Texas and Louisiana. He read of the work done during the early 1900s concerning bird counts with a telescope and the moon, but these works had certain fallacies. With the aid of Professor W.A. Rense, also of Louisiana State University, a formula was devised for correcting recorded bird observations to a number of birds per mile of an intercepted flight path. This formula was a necessity for correcting low angle observations as compared to those taken as the moon approached its zenith.

This article by an S B C author was published originally in Bulletin to the Schools, The University of the State of New York, March, 1953. That was the Arbor and Wild Life Day number of the Bulletin, and is the only one devoted annually to natural history and conservation interests.

### Progress Each Year

In 1948 the lunar bird studies made considerable progress with some 200 cooperators in Canada, United States and Central America. In the fall of 1952 the number of cooperators was enlarged once more and the compilation of data collected through January 1953 is now in progress. As one can see, with the addition of all these willing hands much additional information could be gathered to support or disprove present theories concerning bird migration and the concept of flyways.

One of the features of daylight observations, which often proved misleading, was the inability to distinguish actual migration from resident birds. Lunar bird watching eliminates most of this problem, for only a few species are night-flying feeders and hence most of the birds seen with a telescope could be assumed to be in flight for but one purpose—migration.

### We Know Not What or Why

At present we know very little of what makes a flyway or why birds seek the paths they do over our continent. Very little is known of the effects, if any, of large bodies of water on migrating land birds or the effects of mountains, peninsulas and coastal islands on the passage of both waterfowl and land birds. Lunar bird watching should aid us in determining more adequately the usage of these well-defined water and land masses. Specifically, they could be judged more accurately as a barrier or a contributor to what is termed a funneling action in the formation of a flyway.

It is a skip and several jumps from Galileo's piece of organ pipe and two watch lenses to our modern 20-power telescope, but do not let that discourage you. With six- and eight-power binoculars the passage of birds across the face of the moon, particularly during the fall migration, can be seen. You will not be able to identify species except in very rare cases of members of the heron or owl families. With a clear, quiet night, you can add to your pleasure by listening for the calls of birds passing in flight. With practice several species can be added to your lists in this manner.

### Recommended Equipment

For the serious bird-watcher who would like to join the ranks of those already engaged in lunar bird study, it is best to have available a 20-power telescope. Perhaps your school science class, local bird club, Boy Scout troop or friends can help you in this respect. The mounting of your telescope is important only to the point that it should be sturdy to eliminate vibration. Camera tripods are very adaptable and the same hold true for the more expensive surveyor's tripods. For a chair, the most practical is the adjustable, canvas-backed with enough length to support shoulders and head. During an evening the moon will pass from a low near the horizon through its zenith, nearly overhead, so the adjustable features for chair and tripod are desirable.

If possible a group of several interested people should work together during an evening of moon watching. One individual can operate the telescope while another acts as a recorder. By taking turns at the telescope and with the help

of alternates a very enjoyable evening can be spent by the group. Of course in the late fall it would be fine to elect a committee of one for the hot drink and sandwiches. The brisk air of the November full moon is very invigorating.

#### Some Data

The writer is not versed in spherical trigonometry nor the formulas involved in correcting observations. To give you, however, an idea of the observations for two stations on the night of September 3d, 1952, the following condensed table is made:

Eastern Standard Time September 3-4, 1952	Number of Observations	
	Delmar Game Farm Delmar, N.Y.	Collins Park Scotia, N.Y.
6:30 - 7 p.m.	3	..
7:01 - 8	60	169
8:01 - 9	143	94
9:01 - 10	100	41
10:01 - 11	69	42
11:01 - 12	43	25
12:01 - 1 a.m.	35	9
1:01 - 2	20	13
2:01 - 3	17	13
3:01 - 4	13	*
4:01 - 5	10	*

\* Station closed at 3 a.m.

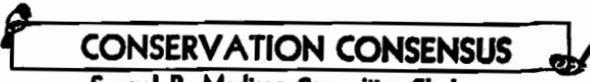
All data collected for an evening are forwarded on forms supplied by Louisiana State University. Included is a form for describing your station location and the weather for the evening. Corrected observations will be returned for any personal use the individual desires.

#### Rivers and Mountains

The writer, in cooperation with members of the Schenectady Bird Club, was interested in learning the effects of the juncture of two such large rivers as the Hudson and the Mohawk. The Hudson is already a noted north-south flyway, particularly for waterfowl. The Mohawk, flowing eastward to the Hudson, is also believed to have a marked effect on the flight path of migrant birds. The Adirondack, Berkshire and Catskill mountains, all neighbors of ours, exert their influences as well, but the how and the why leave much for us to discover in the future.

We hope with the aid of others on Long Island, upstate New York and those people westward along Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, to add much to the bird migration picture. From the alerting call "bird," from the individual at the telescope, to the group discussions later as to the effects of the weather, rivers, lakes and mountains, you will enjoy this new phase of bird study. Perhaps your hobby has been astronomy or bird watching. During the spring and particularly in the fall, turn your telescope to the moon for some interesting bird counts and observations.

NOTE. The Delmar Game Farm is located ten miles southwest of Albany and four and one-half miles from the Hudson River. The Collins Park station was located across the Mohawk River from Schenectady, N. Y.



## CONSERVATION CONSENSUS

Samuel R. Madison, Committee Chairman

### WHY NOT A FEDERAL HAWK LAW ?

Stanley Oliver Grierson of Katonah, N. Y., full-time Educational Representative for the Bedford Audubon Society, was one of the speakers at the recent convention of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, held at Bear Mountain. He urged increased hawk protection, saying:

"The battle to protect our useful hawks goes back many years, and yet conservationists have only succeeded in reducing the practice of hawk-shooting. They have by no means stopped it. It is true that many states have laws protecting some of the birds of prey, but most of the time the laws go unenforced.

"Connecticut is outstanding in having a model hawk law that protects all the birds of prey, except if one is caught in the act of destroying personal property.

"There are some other states that protect all hawks but the Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Goshawk, but because these three are exempt from protection, all hawks in the state are in jeopardy.

"To the average layman all hawks are either 'Chicken Hawks,' 'Hen Hawks,' or perhaps 'Pigeon Hawks.' Having thus identified a hawk, he feels justified in killing it. If our hawks did not fly low over the same narrow migration routes year after year, their misidentification by gunners would not be of any great importance.

"Facts show, however, that a vast percentage of the North American hawk population from widely scattered areas concentrate into relatively narrow flight-lines during the spring and fall migration. Gunning along the flight-lines still takes a very heavy toll of useful raptors. Hawks protected in one state are shot for bounty in another, or just to satisfy the ego of some gunner practicing for the coming hunting season.

"In many states ardent conservationists are trying to get protection for all hawks as a means of preventing the useful types from being killed by mistake, but these people make little headway against the organized gunning element and unsympathetic State Game Commissions.

"Would it not be better if we would all join forces and unite in one big effort to have all hawks added to the Federal Migratory Bird Act, with the provision that they would come under Federal protection only during their migration period, namely from September 1 to November 30, and March 1 to April 30?

"Such a bill would require the efforts of all conservation groups all over the United States, but it would stand a better chance of becoming a law than if we tried to enact such legislation on a state-to-state basis. Education over a period of years will reduce the occasional violation, but only a well-enforced Federal regulation will halt the mass slaughter that still goes on."


 NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF
 
WILLIAMSTOWN'S GROSBEAKS

Part of the 1952-1953 story of Evening Grosbeaks at Williamstown, Mass., was told in FEATHERS, March, page 23-24, by Willis I. Milham. That story was through February.

March began with approximately 300 grosbeaks in Williamstown, strongly concentrated in the Williams Inn and School Street areas. A few days later the Williams Inn ran out of sunflower seed and was unable to secure more for several days. A few grosbeaks left Williamstown in disgust, and many more scattered over the rest of the town. During the last half of the month the number increased again until it was larger than ever, and the extreme concentration was re-established. The ratio of females to males remained about two to one, the opposite of previous years. Only one grosbeak banded outside of Williamstown was seen in March. A female with a broad aluminum band on the right leg was seen March 10 and 18. A female with only one leg appeared at the feeders during the month; last year there was a male with one leg. During the month Mrs. S. Lane Faison, who lives at College Place about 100 yards from Williams Inn, fed about 100 grosbeaks daily, and banded nearly 25.

April is the migrating month for Evening Grosbeaks. At the beginning of the month there were about 300 concentrated in a relatively small area, with females predominating. At the end of 10 days the number had dropped about 30 per cent because of migration. During the next 10 days the number increased rapidly, with the birds spread out over a larger area of the town. The number of males became equal to, and then surpassed, the number of females. Migrants apparently came in, loitered for a time, and mingled with the established home flock. During the last 10 days the number decreased steadily and rapidly, and at the end of the month there were perhaps 70 left. No birds banded or marked outside of Williamstown were observed.

May is the "going, going, gone" month for the birds in Williamstown. At the beginning of the month there were about 70; by the 5th the number had dropped to perhaps 20; by the 10th there were less than three -- and this date can thus be considered the departure date. The following have been the departure dates since 1940:

May 10, 1940	None in 1945	May 20, 1950
Apr. 22, 1941	May 24, 1946	None in 1951
May 10, 1942	May 21, 1947	May 24, 1952
None in 1943	None in 1948	May 10, 1953
May 10, 1944	May 11, 1949	

MORE GROUSE

The question was asked in FEATHERS of May, page 39, if the Ruffed Grouse was showing a decrease this year in the local area, as has been noted in other sections. "No, the Ruffed Grouse are not showing a decrease in the vicinity of Jenny Lake. The number of birds both seen and heard this spring was noticeably greater than normal," Barry Havens replied.

## BRIEFING THE RECORD

**Frazer R. Turrentine, Records Committee Chairman**

"Briefing the Record" is particularly easy this month -- the dearth of material received by the Records Committee is outstanding. Monthly summaries of local bird records, along with weather information, have been published monthly, with May the last month included. Summer records will be consolidated into one report, upon receipt of data by the committee. Breeding records are particularly desired.

## S B C CALENDAR

**Nellie Silliman, Secretary**

- Sat. Aug. 22 - Field trip, Vischer Ponds. Meet at Union and Palmer at 7 a.m., or Ponds at 7:30 a.m. Leader, Guy Bartlett, 3-0014.
- Sun. Sep. 13 - Field trip, lower Hudson River. Leader, Mrs. Lillian C. Stoner, Alb. 3-1591. Details in September FEATHERS or supplement.
- Sat. Sep. 19 - Field trip, Indian Ladder; hoped-for Broad-winged Hawk migration. Meet at Osterhaut Cabins, above New Salem, at 7:30 a.m. Leader, Leon A. Wiard, phone Delmar 9-2010.
- Sun. Sep. 20 - Field trip, Watervliet Reservoir. Meet at Reservoir Bridge at 8 a.m. Leader, Samuel R. Madison, Delmar 9-3826.

### **Wilson's Ornithological Club Meeting Was Close to**

#### **KIRTLAND'S WARBLER TERRITORY**

**Lillian C. Stoner**

Kirtland's Warbler was the bird many were eager to see when they attended the 34th annual meeting of the Wilson's Ornithological Club at University of Michigan Biological Station, Douglas Lake, Michigan, on June 14-17. In fact, two of the five field trips planned were to Kirtland's Warbler Country in central Michigan. The other trips were to a bog area, to Wilderness State Park, and to upper Michigan where water birds and land birds, including the Sandhill Crane, could be observed.

The Wilson Ornithological Club (WOC), originally a mid-western organization, now has members in many parts of the U.S.A. It has been holding its meetings of late years in country or mountain regions where camp-life may be enjoyed.

#### An Ideal Site

The University of Michigan Biological Station is located on Douglas Lake, in the northern part of the southern peninsula of Michigan. It consists of a campus of 30 acres on a tract of 8,850 acres. Pellston and Cheboygan are respectively 6 and 12 miles to the west and the northwest. It is an ideal place both for a nature meeting or for the University's eight-week summer school, which has been carried on for 44 years and which now has a staff of 18 members.

The two-day paper session of WOC was preceded by an evening of pictures. One of the films, "South of Siesta Land" given by Fran William Hall, was the same lecture SBC members enjoyed recently in the Audubon Screen Tour Lecture Series.

In the absence of the president, Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge of University of Minnesota, who was on an Arctic expedition, the presiding officer of the 1953 meeting was the first vice-president, Burt L. Monroe of Anchorage, Ky.

#### Papers and Films

The program of some thirty papers was augmented by several very fine extra films. The first paper, "A History of Ornithology at the University of Michigan Biological Station" by Dr. Theodora Nelson of Hunter College of the City of New York, was of especial interest to the writer because she and her late husband spent the summers of 1919 and 1920 at this station. Dr. Dayton Stoner taught both the entomological and ornithological courses those two sessions. He was the first bird bander at this station, and his paper, "Nesting Habits of the Hermit Thrush in Northern Michigan," was one of the early publications on this subject.

Birds in different areas of Michigan and surrounding regions were brought out in several papers; other bird studies were described in still more. Some were given by representatives of U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan State College, and Universities of Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, Colorado, and Kansas. Many of the speakers illustrated their reports with bird skins, slides and films. Other films equally enjoyed were those of Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. (in charge of ornithology studies at the station), Lawrence I. Grinnell, Harold S. Peters, and John M. Jubon. The next WOC meeting is to be held June 11-13, 1954, in the Cape May region, so great interest was attached to the last-mentioned film.

#### Cattle Egret

Mr. Jubon, East Millstone, N.J., explained that he was an amateur bird photographer and that Mrs. Jubon would make the comments on the pictures. This was the couple's first presentation, and their excellent films contained pictures of a bird new in this country -- the Cattle Egret. These were seen in a protected area in southern New Jersey. It is probably the first time U. S. pictures of these birds have been shown at a U. S. scientific meeting. The Cattle Egrets look much like our American Egrets but they actually light on the backs of cattle and feed on the ground near them, so they are rightly named. There have been several records this last year for the bird in southern and eastern U.S.A. (including Massachusetts). This, so far as the writer knows, is the first year the bird has been noted in this country. Records give this as an African species which was taken to Venezuela, and now ornithologists are hopeful it will stay in North America.

#### Winter Wren in Song

Included in the 212 birds recorded for the Michigan Biological Station region are 17 members of the warbler family. Reese's Bog is within easy walking distance of the station. On a 6 to 8 a.m. trip on June 16 to this area some 50 observers listed over 60 species. Included were 11 warblers, all

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nesting in the territory. These were Black and White, Nashville, Parula (heard frequently), Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian (heard several times), Oven-bird, Northern Water-thrush, Yellow-throat, Canada, and Redstart. The full song of the Winter Wren was most outstanding in the early part of the field trip as it was repeatedly given by many individuals. Many of the records for the trip were the same the writer listed on a trip to the same locality on July 19, 1919. No one listed the numerous mosquitoes and black flies on either trip.

### Morning Chorus

From our cabin at night we could hear the Whip-poor-will calling its name over and over. In the early morning we heard the Purple Martins chirp as they were coursing about for food before returning to their multiple-roomed houses. These houses were on top of tall poles near the shore of Douglas Lake; the station's Library Building was some 75 feet back from the shore. From the lake side of our cabin the Loon, Spotted Sandpiper and Ring-billed Gulls were calling. Then from wooded areas back of the cabin the voices of Least Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and some warblers were much in evidence.

### "Tame" Kirtland's

Either before, during or after this WOC meeting most people took trips to Kirtland's Warbler country. This bird is not known to nest in any other state, and only in certain parts of northern Michigan. We saw and heard this unique bird in a burned-over, low Jack Pine area about 60 miles southeast of the Biological Station. Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne led us to a nest which was on the ground.

The female stayed on the nest, which contained five eggs, until our leader lifted her off with his hand. She did not fly far, and was soon joined by the singing male. The song, given repeatedly, was quite short. Other pairs were seen and heard not far off.

Both Dr. Van Tyne and Harold Mayfield have made an extensive study of this warbler. They report that it is found only in a few places in Michigan, and always in burned-over spots where the Jack Pines are very small. The birds seem to leave the locality when the trees become taller.

Prairie and Pine Warblers were seen and heard in the above-mentioned area, but we did not get a glimpse of the Clay-colored Sparrow which has been reported from there.

### 1658 Enjoyable Miles

En route home the writer saw several Turkey Vultures, Cardinals, etc., but throughout the middle section of Michigan and east of Port Huron, and on east into and across much of Canada, the Savannah Sparrow seemed to be heard most often, even more often than the Song Sparrow. I drove 1658 miles all alone, and enjoyed every minute of it.



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## Planting on the Thruway

NELSON M. WELLS  
*Director, Landscape Bureau  
New York State Department of  
Public Works*

### The Use of Native Plants and Soils in Highway Design

Each engineering project presents new problems with regard to the conservation of natural resources and the restoration of the natural character of the countryside. Vast scars on the land will result from the construction operations necessary in building the New York State Thruway. The residents of the State may be assured, however, that those who are responsible for the design of this undertaking are giving careful consideration to the preservation and restoration of all natural features along this route and provision of a cover to heal these scars of construction.

When a new highway is built in New York State today, it is customary to strip off the layer of topsoil, save it and replace it on the newly graded surfaces. This is being done so that topsoil will not have to be taken from farmlands for the growth of grass on the highway roadsides.

This policy is of particular significance on the New York State Thruway. Because of the width of this major thoroughfare required to serve a volume of traffic at high speeds, because of its length of 535 miles extending across the entire State and because this highway is being constructed within two or three years, the need of topsoil for seeding over 7000 acres of land within a brief period of time would otherwise be a serious draft on farmlands. The fact that no topsoil is planned to be taken from farms is of great significance to every citizen.

#### Grasses for Subsoils

Along highways in general, and perhaps applicable to parts of the Thruway, is the method of growing grasses and legumes where there is no topsoil whatever. Some of these soils come from excavations made 50 feet below the surface in mountainous areas. This revegetation is possible as a result of a careful analysis of the soil, selection of the kinds of grasses known to be tolerant of the growing conditions and feeding of them with chemical fertilizers. It is

Concern has been expressed frequently by conservationists when the subject of the New York State Thruway is brought up. This article is particularly encouraging in answering the questions which are so often raised. It was published in Bulletin to the Schools, The University of the State of New York, March, 1953 — the Arbor and Wild Life Day number of the Bulletin.

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a new practice which is proving to be economically sound in many situations.

During World War II when many airfields were being built, a great deal of seeding was done on subsoil without the use of topsoil. The successful growth of grasses is evidently more dependent upon the physical quality of the soil -- that is, the proportion of fine grain particles in relation to the coarser materials -- than to the amount of organic matter present. This is somewhat different from the generally accepted practice of establishing a lawn or growing farm crops where it has been considered necessary to place the seeds in the top layer of a soil which is thoroughly weathered and has a high content of organic matter.

#### New Topsoil Is Created

Seeding on subsoil is being done more and more along highways, particularly where the objective is to check erosion and not necessarily to produce lawn qualities. Such seeding is often accompanied by a thin covering of hay or straw which helps to check erosion and also favors the growth of young seedlings. Some of the plant foods, particularly the nitrogen, may need to be refurnished for a few years, but in a surprisingly short time the annual sloughing off of the grass roots produces a dark-colored layer of good topsoil in place. Thus new topsoil is being created, instead of drawing on the existing supply of one of our most valuable natural assets.

Plantings being designed for the Thruway will also be of value and interest to the residents of the State as well as to the users of the highway.

#### Karners Has Special Soil

The strip of land to be used for this route passes through a considerable range of soils. Most of the soils encountered have resulted from the action of the glaciers which once covered this land. In Westchester, Orange and Ulster counties are many soils which are stony or gravelly and tend to have a fairly high acid quality. Northward toward Albany along the valley of the Hudson river and westward along the Mohawk valley the soils tend to have more clays and silts. Westward toward Buffalo and along the shore of Lake Erie are found a great variety of soils; most of these soils have an alkaline quality. A vast swamp occurs at Montezuma. Other special soil conditions are to be found in limited areas such as the tract of land between Albany and Schenectady where the sand is similar to that found along the seacoast and if not pinned down by vegetation will form into dunes through the action of wind currents.

Between the most northerly and the most southerly sections of the State there is a difference of several weeks in the length of the growing season. Other differences

exist in the amount of precipitation and the depth of snow, differences in extremes of winter cold and summer heat and in thawing and freezing cycles.

Throughout this range there is represented a considerable variety of plant life. Plants from the coastal plain of our eastern seaboard exist here. Others which traverse the bridge of the Appalachians from the regions of the north and the regions of the south meet their limits of tolerance in this area. Each type of soil, each variation of temperature and each variation of exposure harbors a different group or association of plant life.

#### Plantings Will Be Local

The study of the soils and the study of the local plants is the basis for plans for planting along the Thruway. In general the oaks, tuliptrees, flowering dogwoods, mountain laurel and azaleas are found in the regions of acid soil. Other conditions favor the growth of hickory, ash, maple or hemlock. The kinds of plants used will vary according to the soil conditions and the growth native in each locality. Native plants and trees are to be featured and perpetuated even though the original forest cover may long since have been cleared away for farms or settlements. The use of truly indigenous species should insure their best success and longevity.

By and large, the amount of planting on the Thruway will not be as extensive as has been common along parkways. Most parkways have a fairly continuous belt of plantings along each side so that the views of the traveler are confined to the limits of the public holdings. Parkway are actually elongated parks within man-made scenery and they are built for passenger cars traveling at moderate speeds. The Thruway, on the other hand, involves rather different conditions. It is geared for great volumes of mixed traffic of trucks, buses and pleasure cars. Travel will be at rapid speeds. Most of the route lies in valley lands with views to distant hills, woods and lakes. It does not follow the location of older highways, so a minimum of hamlets and farmsteads lie immediately adjacent; consequently there is no general need for screening and the countryside itself will become the roadsides for the users of the Thruway.

#### Plans for Interchanges

One basic feature of the Thruway is that cars can not enter and leave it at farmhouses or crossroads except at controlled points known as traffic interchanges. This obviates the need for traffic lights while facilitating the free flow of traffic. These interchanges, however, involve grading and construction over a considerable area of land. Some 90 interchanges are planned to be built and a single interchange may cover as much as 60 acres of land or the area of many New York State farms. It is in connection with these interchanges that the greatest amount of new planting will be required.

The interchange areas on most parkways are kept mowed. On the Thruway the interchanges involve areas several acres in extent within the loops of the roads which are the result of the large radius curves involved. It would be costly to mow these areas; they serve no purpose in themselves and

groves of trees are considered to be the most nearly self-maintaining cover for the land. At the same time these groves will conserve moisture, provide food and cover for wildlife and add materially to the scenic interest for the traveler.

New plantings can be established in any one of several ways. The ground can be left unmowed and natural seedlings will come in. Seeds can be planted or seedling plants can be set out, as in reforesting work. Each of these methods postpones the effectiveness of the results for a number of years. Going to the other extreme would be a method of setting out trees which are several years old, to get a fairly mature effect immediately. Trees 12 to 30 feet high, however, are not only costly to buy but will require special soil preparation and intensive maintenance, and the chances of their survival is reduced in proportion to each degree of their size.

An intermediate size of plants has therefore been adopted. Shrubs will ordinarily be two to four feet high and large growing trees will be only six to eight feet in height. These sizes are considered large enough so they will not be susceptible to the greatest injury from rodents or to smothering by weed growth, and they can be set out in the existing soil by scalping back the turf but without preparing actual tree pits or shrub beds.

#### Screen Plantings

The planting scheme at these interchanges includes a moderate amount of planting near the bridge structures to soften and subordinate their artificiality in the scenery, a certain amount of screen planting where required, perhaps some planting in the medial zone between the opposing lanes of traffic to reduce headlight glare, plantings to aid the motorist in quickly determining his route of travel, and the groves of native trees within the interchange loops. Some of these latter trees will be fast-growing, short-lived kinds to act as windbreaks and nurse trees, but basically the long-lived forest tree species such as oak, hemlock, beech, walnut and sugar maple with their understory forest associates will be planted according to the local soils and the local climatic conditions.

These principles of saving and using the existing topsoil and avoiding the use of topsoil, where possible, are conservation measures of considerable magnitude. The restoration and featuring of native growth is also promising from the long-range point of view. No part of such work will be conspicuous to the casual observer but if the new plantings blend unobtrusively with their surroundings it will mean that the work of planning has been successful.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers, Arthur C. Bent. 19th in this noted series of bulletins. 734 pages, including 83 pages of photographs, paper-covered, \$4.50. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. (SI3.3:203).

# Tame Grosbeak Has Easy Life

Patty Barnes

A downy ball of soft black and yellow feathers on a perch -- the object remains stationary. Suddenly it moves, a head is thrust forward, and a shrill, harsh blast rends the early morning air as Pete, my Evening Grosbeak, stretches first one leg and then the other. He spreads his wings, ruffs his feathers, and hops from perch to perch.

## A 1949 Cripple

I found Pete on our front lawn hopping because of a wing injury in May, 1949. I brought him indoors and with help I proceeded to erect a wire-mesh cage approximately three feet high, four feet long and one and one-half feet wide, on a grassy plot in our back yard. I included a small wooden shelter in the rear of the cage. One portion of the cage was also covered to protect the bird from the sun and rain. Perches were constructed at different levels of elevation to afford plenty of exercise. It was my hope that I would be able to release the bird in the fall. While he was in the cage I supplied him with sunflower seeds and water only. He relied on nature for all other nourishment.

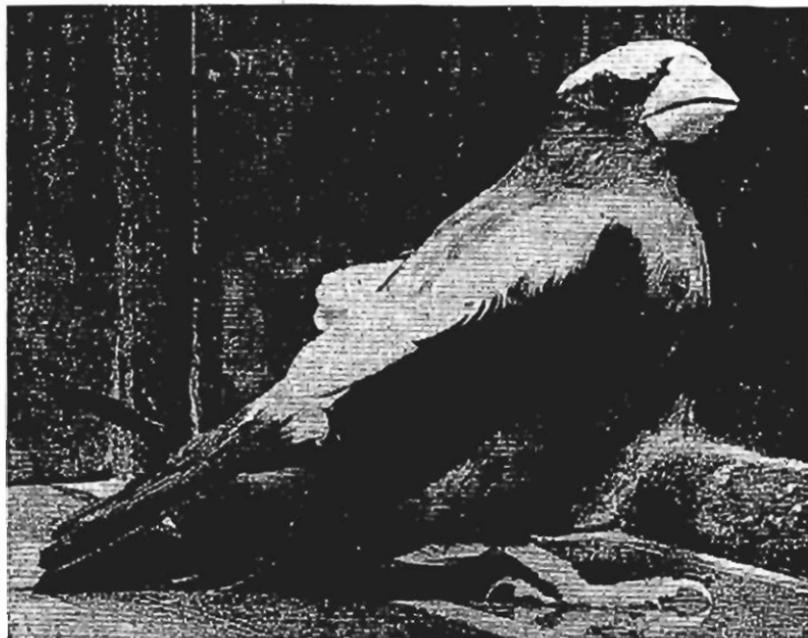
His emotional state while in the cage I observed to be interesting. At all feedings he was nervous, timid and very hostile. He would hide in the rear of the cage until he was certain of being alone. While attempting to hold him, he would clamp a vise-like grip on my hand and assistance was needed to pry his beak open. All this time his wing continued to droop.

While he was in the cage he became the object of much attention paid him by other birds, principally House Sparrows and Blue Jays who swooped down over the cage constantly, screeching and scolding at Pete.

## Still Unable to Fly

In mid-October I released him, hoping that he would be able to fly. At the end of thirty minutes I realized that Pete would always be crippled, and so I recaptured him. In November I took him from his outdoor cage and put him in a much smaller one near a window in our kitchen. He reacted well. Though he was nervous, he showed no signs of beating himself against the cage bars. Within an hour he seemed very much at home.

I continued to give him sunflower seeds. I have made so many mistakes with Pete that I often wonder how he manages to survive my blunders. When he was first placed in the cage I neglected to give him gravel to aid his digestion. I noticed that he broke up the empty sunflower seed shells and ate them in place of the missing gravel. To his regular diet I added cherries, raspberries, grapes, apple cores, crisp lettuce, cranberries, watercress, blueberries, corn on the cob, squash seeds, cantaloup seeds, young tender sugar-maple buds which he seemed very excited about, and also raisins which he neglected. I supplied him with charcoal, gravel and cornmeal. He pecks at the bark of pine branches and



**WELL, HERE I AM—**  
This evening grosbeak tried to get away from the photographer, but he didn't quite make it.



**NOT SO BIG AFTER ALL—**  
Patty Barnes holds her unusual pet for a more formal portrait.

—(Gazette Photos—Sellers)

strips them clean of the pine needles which he seems to suck on as he runs them through his beak. He also sucks on little pebbles, turning them over and over in his beak so rapidly that he gives the appearance of chewing gum.

His moulting I have noticed to be irregular; occasionally he loses a tail or wing feather, but until this year there had been no signs of extensive or complete moulting. This spring, contrary to his usual habits, Pete moulted all his tail and wing feathers. His colors always brighten considerably in the spring, and reach a peak during the summer when he is outdoors. His colors now are not as bright as when I found him; the yellow parts seem to have assumed an olive tint. His beak peels and at times is scaly; it also turns green periodically. He sharpens his beak on the bars of his cage.

His feet become calloused and I apply vaseline to the irritated areas. However, Pete eats the vaseline as fast as it is applied. Recently my attention has been focused on Pete's legs, which seem to have unusually prominent scales on them. I am now bathing his legs in an antiseptic lotion.

#### No Bath

Pete is supplied with a bowl to bathe in, but contrary to the birds on the wing, Pete refuses to take a bath. Occasionally he will deign to hop in and out of his bowl, but usually I sprinkle him with tepid water, after which he preens himself for hours.

He sounds like a House Sparrow, having a harsh monotone chirp. At times though his chirp becomes soft and sweet, and I am able to detect the hint of a melody. A loud, sharp squawk is heard when he is hungry or wishes attention. He responds to the sound of voices, the hum of the electric mixer, vacuum cleaner, running water, and sometimes to artificial bird whistles as he answers with the same call over and over again, cocking his head from side to side.

#### Thoroughly Domesticated

Because of his sleeping habits I call Pete a thoroughly domesticated bird. He will sleep whenever the room is darkened and quiet. Time seems to be no factor as he will continue sleeping in the morning long after the birds outdoors are up and feeding. He sleeps balanced on one leg, the other hidden in the down of his breast and his head tucked under his good wing.

His excellent health seems to indicate that he has been able to adjust to such unusual surroundings foreign to him. I often attribute this to the fact that Pete spent his early adjustment days in an outdoor cage where he was able to live a fairly normal life despite his confinement. According to the color of his plumage when found, he was then about two years old or more, which means that he is now at least six years old.

#### At Science Congress

On April 25 of this year I entered Pete in the New York State Science Congress, at Albany. Here Pete was on exhibition for the entire day as I lectured to hundreds of interested spectators. Pete was amazingly patient, considering

the many fingers poked in his direction. Toward midafternoon he appeared restless and continually chirped and pecked at the bars of his cage.

#### A Celebrity

Pete has become quite a celebrity, having made his debut on television. Because of a growing interest in bird lore, he has made many visits to nature-study groups in schools of the area.

On April 29 of this year we spotted a male and a female Evening Grosbeak in our box elder tree. It happened that Pete was outdoors in his cage. The female remained in the tree but the male anxiously surveyed the cage from all angles as he flew back and forth.

#### Invitation to a Scrap

With his bright colors shining brilliantly, making Pete's drab attire appear even more colorless than ever before, the visiting male settled on the top of the cage. Furiously he covered the entire cage, seeking an opening. With a loud shrill blast he began pecking at the bars, as he vainly sought to fight Pete. Nervously Pete hopped from perch to perch, but never uttered a sound. Finally frightened away by playing children, the grosbeak gave up his futile attempt and rejoined his waiting mate in the box elder.

#### Pete Goes Camping

During the summer we take Pete with us camping at Lake Eaton, N.Y. On our trips Pete and I share the back seat of our car. He is a most congenial traveling companion, chirping away, whether with joy or dismay I often ponder.

How he revels in the soft woodsy earth and pine needles when we remove the bottom tray of his cage. The chipmunks are very interested in the sunflower seeds, and dig under the cage to get at them. It is not unusual to hear Pete give his cry of alarm, and find him clutching the topmost bars of his cage as the mischievous little scavenger scurries away.

Pete has had many other exciting adventures at Lake Eaton; some of them will be related by Mrs. E. W. Scott in next month's FEATHERS.

## CONSERVATION CONSENSUS

Samuel R. Madison, Committee Chairman

#### LONGER DUCK SEASON

Of interest because the dates affect birders' field-trip plans is the federal announcement of duck-hunting dates for 1953. There will be five added days, making the season the longest since 1945. New York State, and other Atlantic flyway states, may establish their own dates between October 1 and January 10, comprising either 60 consecutive days or two periods of 27 days each.

Field investigations indicate that the fall flight of Atlantic flyway ducks will be better than in 1952, Secretary of Interior McKay has announced. Bag and possession limits are unchanged -- four a day, and eight in possession.



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## PETE'S CALLERS

Genevieve E. Scott

Those of us who camp at Lake Eaton regularly know Pete\*, Pat Barnes' Evening Grosbeak, quite well. He has always been a model camper. No noisy parties, no late campfires, no zipping up and down the lake in an outboard when decent folks are trying to sleep. In short, the Conservation Department's ideal.

But not this summer! Oh, no! This summer Pete had callers. And they kept our end of the campsite in a state of intense excitement the better part of a week.

We had all been at Lake Eaton about a week, and had seen the usual feathered residents. In addition, Mrs. Barnes saw a male grosbeak cross the road between the state campsite and Long Lake. She also saw several in the evergreen trees in back of Adirondack Inn, in Long Lake Village.

On July 11, 1953, I heard the grosbeak's call, and thought Pete was either hungry or scolding a bit. But then, from another direction, came another grosbeak call. I realized that other grosbeaks were very near. In a few seconds a male and female came to the trees above Pete's cage.

### A Scolding Visitor

The male sat on a bare limb a few feet from the ground and issued dire warnings to his lady. But she, the shameless hussy, wanted to become better acquainted with the strange gentleman. She came closer and closer to the stump where Pete sat in his cage, and finally hopped up the inclined portion of the stump a few inches at a time to say "Hello" to Pete.

In the meantime her jealous mate was swooping down at Pete's cage, and his grosbeak curses left no doubt as to their meaning. Pete ruffled his feathers until he looked twice as large, and chirped occasionally, but otherwise was a model host. He was not very friendly to his human friends. In fact it was evident that he would have preferred living a normal grosbeak life.

Pat and Mr. Scott sat as still as statues, trying to get some pictures. They didn't have a blind nor a "go-away-ster" but managed to get a few shots as evidence that we weren't having hallucinations. We spent most of the afternoon watching the birds and even converted a few non-birders.

\* Pete's story was told by Pat Barnes in FEATHERS, September, 1953, pages 69 - 72 inclusive.

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The next day one female and two males came to visit before lunch. In the afternoon a lone male appeared and spent a long time eating sunflower seeds Pete had thrown out of his cage. Every day there were grosbeaks around the Barnes' camp. They cleaned up Pete's discarded seeds, ate popcorn, and pecked away at some salty grease on a stump. They seemed quite at home, and began to accept Pete quite well. One handsome male perched on Pete's cage -- alas, at a time when no cameras were handy.

#### Stubby-tailed Youngsters

On Wednesday, July 15, a flock of 11 birds fed in the yellow birches across the road before going to visit Pete. We never managed to count more than eight at a time on the Barnes' site. Some of the birds were very immature -- their stubby tails told on them. It was a thrill to share our pleasure and excitement that day with Nellie Silliman.

And so on through that week. A few at a time or only one bird, but Pete and the never-ending supply of sunflower seeds kept them coming. Before we left camp Sunday morning there were two beautiful males feeding around Pete's camp -- but he had left two days earlier and was back in Schenectady.

#### August Birds

We wondered if the grosbeaks would continue to visit Lake Eaton, and had a chance to verify that they did. On August 15 we were there for the week-end and heard the birds several times. In addition, several campers told us they had seen the birds often.

Was this a freak year for the Long Lake grosbeaks, or will they be there next year? We will let you know next fall. We hope the Adirondacks will be home to many summering Evening Grosbeaks, and that they will visit Pete again.

Incidentally, Harold Sisson of Schenectady on three occasions saw four Evening Grosbeaks feeding along the shoulder of the road near Meacham Lake during the first week of July.

## THE GRACKLES OF WASHINGTON PARK

Neel Aivaz\*

During May, 1953, a study was made of a nesting colony of Grackles in Washington Park, Albany. The nests were in a grove of large evergreens in the southwest corner of the park, some 50 yards from the lake. Five nests were found, all near the tops of trees at nearly 50 feet from the ground and usually four to six feet from the trunk.

The Grackle's day seemed to be divided into five main

\* Contribution of the Department of Biology, New York State College for Teachers, Albany, New York

periods. From dawn through most of the forenoon the young were fed. Then for perhaps two hours the adults were occupied in securing food for themselves. The mid-afternoon hours were ones of relative inactivity, with occasional feeding trips. From about 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. was feeding time again. Thereafter they lapsed into inactivity.

The female did most of the actual feeding of the young, but was followed on every trip by the male. He would perch in a nearby tree while she searched for food, then accompany her back to the nest and perch while she fed the young. Occasionally he would find it necessary to defend his territory against a neighbor. Territories appeared to extend about two trees away from the nest, a distance of perhaps 30 to 40 feet. The feeding area was largely around the park lake. There was no evidence that any pair defended a feeding territory.

Several young Grackles had left the nest prematurely and were perched in lilac bushes below the nest, being unable to fly. Whenever a person or dog approached the young birds the air was filled with circling, screeching Grackles, both males and females. These young were fed by the females until they were able to fend for themselves.

#### Continued Pair Association

The feeding period for the adults was marked by continued pair association. Feeding was mainly along the shore, but occasionally the birds would fly low over the lake and pick something up in their bills from the surface. Feeding was not confined to one area. They frequently flew back and forth over the lake.

One of the most striking features of the Grackle is the mating or territorial display, which the male sometimes performed even after there were young in the nest. He would puff himself up, ruffle his feathers, thrust his head forward and partially extend his wings, seeming about to burst as he emitted his hoarse, rusty-hinge song.

I found that Grackles, as colonial birds, live rather amicably with their own kind. As parents both sexes are dutiful and conscientious, and as mates they seem extremely attached and faithful during the nesting season.

## ALONG THE ST. LAWRENCE

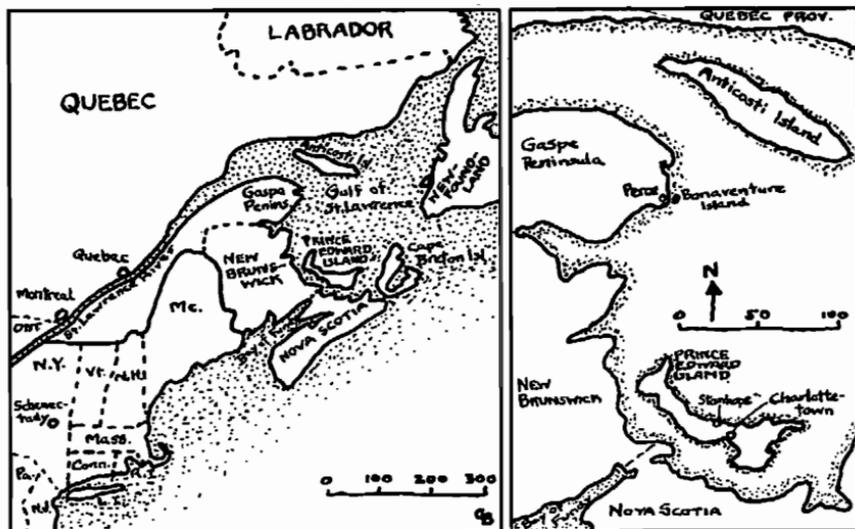
Dr. Minnie B. Scotland

This vacation story is being written in mid-August on the M. V. Fleurus as it sails up the St. Lawrence River on its return to its home port, Montreal. Less than three weeks ago this 1104-ton ship started with its 50 passengers on one of the most interesting short cruises ever experienced by this writer.

To make the vacation even more pleasant, a stop-over between trips of the Fleurus had been arranged at Prince Edward Island. This tiny, sea-girt province of the Eastern Maritimes has been described as a "red and green fairyland set in the green waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence." It is called by a variety of names: The Island, The Garden of the Gulf, Spud Island, and The Million-acre Farm. From these

titles one can quickly realize that P.E.I. is important, has rich red soil, and that potatoes are its main farm product. Lush green fields separated by dark green spruces, winding red roads, and blue sea lapping the long beaches where difference in tide levels is negligible, gives something of a picture of The Island. The importance of P.E.I. is due particularly to the fact that the first meeting to discuss the Union of Canada took place in Charlottetown, today the capital of this, the smallest of Canada's provinces. The title Cradle of Canadian Confederation has been given to P.E.I.

The above is but a background for the reporting of some fine birding during 11 days on the north shore of the island, at a place called Stanhope Beach. Daily walks along the



sandy shores, only a few steps from the hotel, gave opportunity for repeated observations of waterbirds. The first evening, from a rise on the golf course known as Sunset Hill, 24 Great Blue Herons were counted. They posed immovably in the shallow water and then with a very distinctive cry lifted themselves, flew a short distance, and settled again in a fixed position. Along the water line there were sandpipers, running, and out over the water gulls and terns sailed back and forth.

The next morning, on the really first bird walk, birds were observed in large numbers, and with the leisure necessary for satisfactory identification. Among the shorebirds were Piping and Ringed Plovers, Ruddy Turnstone, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, and Sanderling. There were three species each of gulls and terns: Herring, Great Black-backed, and Bonaparte's Gulls, and Roseate, Common, and the less common Arctic Terns. The only duck seen throughout the 11 days was the Black Duck.

There were many Bank Swallows, coming and going to and from their nests in the red cliffs that rose occasionally along the shore. Barn Swallows' nests with young birds in them were located in a fish house. Adult birds were greatly

annoyed, and began squealing as they darted across the space in the empty building. Savannah Sparrows were everywhere on the dunes. Song Sparrows were in the minority.

A birder gets much encouragement when she finds someone equally serious about learning the way of birds. This birder saw at breakfast one morning a copy of Peterson at the place of one of the hotel guests, and later spotted the owner with his binoculars. He was a bird-bander from Halifax who was studying the land birds while spending the summer with his wife and daughter on P.E.I. The privilege to go on three trips with him was valuable since the areas back from the shore thrived with nesting birds and summering species. Common birds found were Kingfisher, House Sparrow, Flicker, Phoebe, Crow, Robin, Red-wing, Grackle, and Cowbird. Brown-capped Chickadees were more common than Black-capped. Kingbirds were abundant. A fine flock of Cedar Waxwings was seen, and a White-throated Sparrow was heard as he sat on a branch of a spruce tree. White outer tail feathers of Juncos were flashed by a number of these birds in the ground.

The warblers were the "problem children" because many of them were in their immature plumage. However, identification of the Nashville, Magnolia, Pine, Yellow-throat, and Redstart was made. A Purple Finch and a flock of Pine Siskins were found in the same area. The tremendous growth of spruces on P.E.I. makes an excellent cover for all these birds, and almost an impossible barrier for the birder to penetrate.

For a complete tally of birds on the entire cruise the several Nighthawks that flew throughout the day in Charlotte-town should be mentioned. Then, the shore trip at Gaspe and trip around Bonaventure Island gave to the list the Gannet, Double-crested Cormorant, Common Eider, Black Guillemot, and Common Murre.

Now that 48 species of birds have been reported (and there were many more that might have been seen, no doubt), the writer has stepped out on the deck of the Fleurus and whiffed the air. It contains the odor of the forest fires raging in the Quebec woods. The sun is blurred by the smoke. The natives long for rain and are sending to the U. S. for the rain-maker. One can understand their anxiety, for lumbering is big business in eastern Canada. To the birder the question occurs -- to what extent is the bird life affected by such huge fires?

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## SAP DRINKERS

J. Murray Hollister

While watching for the nesting spot of a Purple Finch at Lake Mansfield, Vt., I happened to sit underneath a black birch tree. My attention was drawn to the many hornets and wasps, as well as flies, taking the sap from a small cluster of woodpecker holes. Soon a Downy Woodpecker came for a drink of the sap. It came six or eight times, and after each drink gathered food from the dead limbs. It then flew into the woods a short distance, undoubtedly to deliver food to its young. At one time the mate returned with him, and both took a drink. During this period a Ruby-throated Hum-

mingbird took the sap five times, while the Downy Woodpecker was away.

I had noticed a chipmunk watching from a rock about 25 feet away, and assumed that it was interested in me; but evidently it also wanted a drink, as during a period when the birds were away it appeared at the holes and spent minutes lapping the sap. The outer bark of the tree, just below the holes, was high enough to catch some of the sap. The time was long enough for the Hummingbird to come twice and go away without disturbing "Chippy."

This observation was a case where birds, insects, and a chipmunk took drinks from the same holes, located about three feet from the ground in a birch tree, while I sat on a stool not over eight feet from the fountain, over a period of less than an hour.

Several days later the Sapsucker was seen (with the aid of binoculars) working at the cluster of holes. It seemed to be cleaning them out, as no drilling was done and no insects were present.

The nest of the Purple Finch was not found; but the effort brought an unusual reward.

## What an Amateur Birder Can See IN NORTH CAROLINA

Mary Guy

If you are interested in birds, part of the fun in traveling comes from finding species new to you. Moving from Schenectady to North Carolina in 1947 was an exciting opportunity for learning about more groups of birds.

To residents of the northern states the mockingbird is representative of southern bird life. *Mimus polyglottos* is a novelty to travelers from the north, but it is equally strange to see Bluebirds and Flickers every month of the year. Familiar spring migrants such as the White-throated Sparrow and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are common winter residents in the Carolinas, and they disappear in April or May. It is startling to see five or six species of warblers listed on the state-wide Christmas counts, especially when one of the species is the Orange-crowned Warbler. Fortunately for the newcomer there are many local bird groups and an active state bird club.

One of the first things to be learned is that North Carolina is divided into three zones which run from the northern boundary to the southern boundary of the state. From the western mountains to the coastal lowlands there is more variability in temperature and bird life than there is between the northern and southern ends of the zones themselves. The zones extend in a like manner through South Carolina, and the two states have approximately the same bird species. Because of this unusual environmental similarity, interested groups from the two states have combined, and the Carolina Bird Club actually represents the entire North and South Carolina region. This organization publishes "The Chat", a quarterly magazine. There are two books on bird life of the area, "Birds of North Carolina" and "South Carolina Bird Life."

If you begin with the coastal strip of lowlands you find more species than in the Piedmont, the middle section, or in the western mountain section. In the lowlands there are both fresh and salt water marshes, and throughout the year the temperature is higher than in the Piedmont or the mountains. The long line of "outer banks" along the coast adds to the variety of the habitat and to the species of birds inhabiting the area, because on one side of the banks one finds the salty ocean water and on the other side there are fresh-water sounds.

Near the coastline in the northeastern part of the state are Pead Island National Wildlife Refuge and Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. Mattamuskeet is well known for its wintering flock of Canada Geese, which are the most numerous of the species on the refuge. After the rise of the full moon on winter nights a visitor can see large flocks flying out to feeding grounds and returning. The noise the geese make on those nights is tremendous; they can often be heard close overhead, even though mist and darkness prevent their being seen. Small numbers of Blue Geese and Snow Geese winter at Mattamuskeet and sometimes large flocks of the latter remain near Pea Island which is one of the "outer bank" islands a number of miles to the north of Mattamuskeet. Whistling Swans, Mallards, Black Ducks, Pintails, Baldpates, and Green-winged Teal are the species that winter in great numbers in these refuges. There are always flocks of Myrtle Warblers. Since the myrtle shrub is exceedingly common along the coastline an extremely large population of these warblers spends the winter along the coast of both Carolinas.

Cape Hatteras is about the same latitude as Mattamuskeet, while Cape Lookout and Cape Fear are progressively farther south along the coastline. There are often reports of oceanic strays picked up on the capes. The Ground Dove is found on Smith Island, like Bulls Island in South Carolina which will be mentioned later, has sub-tropical vegetation, and lies at the outlet of the Cape Fear River.

The Cape Fear River basin is in the southernmost part of North Carolina. Here the habitat is so varied that at Wilmington, N.C., a greater number of species is reported throughout the year than in any other part of the state. There are many varieties of shore birds and water birds, including Oyster Catchers, Black Skimmers, all the eastern species of heron, egrets, many sandpipers and plovers, and gulls and terns. About three times as many species of ducks are seen as in the refuges but, of course, none of the species occurs here in the same quantity. The Swainson's Warbler nests here. Bachman's Sparrow nests in this region, and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker is found in the swamps close to the city of Wilmington. Painted Buntings breed nearby. Anhingas occur here and also nest farther inland in Lenon's marsh, a large swamp close to Lumberton, N.C. As illustrations of the variety of bird life throughout the year, consider the figures of 143 species and 128 species reported from Wilmington for the 1953 spring census and the 1952 Christmas count respectively.

Off the coast of South Carolina, not too far from Charleston, is interesting Bulls Island. Palmetto is abundant here.

So are live oaks, Spanish moss, bayberry, and cassine, an unusual type of holly. The most interesting bird group living on the island is a flock of Turkeys said to be the purest strain in the United States. In the summertime pairs of Painted Buntings are common in clearings in the forested part of the island; the multi-colored males are easily located by their loud, warbling song. In the winter ducks are plentiful in the swampy section. A trip in a jeep or a walk around the island roads on a January day will allow study of many ducks and sparrows, and possibly a Florida Gallinule will be seen.

West of the lowlands is the Piedmont, a rolling, often sandy area that begins about 125 miles west of the ocean and continues westward for about the same distance. The number of species of birds is much less than in the coastal area and the typical spring and Christmas counts from groups in the Piedmont will list from 60 to 90 species and from 40 to 60 species respectively. There is an overlapping of western and eastern species in the Piedmont, as one would expect. For example, the Solitary Vireo (rare in the eastern part) and the Brown-headed Nuthatch (rare in the western part) both occur in the Piedmont. The birds listed as common for the whole state can be found in the Piedmont, and small groups of ducks and water-loving birds occur especially along streams or in swampy places.

The mountainous region on the west has a bird fauna that probably resembles the check-lists of upstate New York. Ravens live in the wilder sections. Veeries, Winter Wrens, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and such warblers as the Canada, Black-throated Blue and Chestnut-sided nest on the mountain ridges. Ruffed Grouse are year-around residents in the higher altitudes. It is easy to hear the drumming of the grouse, and during the summer hens can be flushed with broods of chicks.

Along the upper mountain trails in the nesting season every tree seems to hold a pair of Carolina Juncos guarding a nest. The juncos are as numerous as the Myrtle Warblers along the coast in the winter. However, the Juncos only migrate down the slopes when cold weather comes.

The Golden-crowned Kinglet also breeds in the mountains, and can be found there throughout the year. Although no point of concentration has been found yet, the western region of the Carolinas is being checked in the cooperative Broad-winged Hawk migration studies which are being carried on by the Audubon Society.

## S B C CALENDAR

- Nov. 15, Sun. Field trip, Saratoga and Round Lakes; Union and Palmer, 8 a.m., or Round Lake, 8:30 a.m. Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, leader, Alb. 2-3451.
- Dec. 10, Thu. Second Audubon Screen Tour, "Oddities in Nature," Walter H. Shackleton.
- Dec. 26, Sat. Schenectady Christmas Count (See details in  
Dec. 27, Sun. Troy Christmas Count next issue)



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## SANCTUARY QUAIL

Nelle G. Van Vorst and Dr. Minnie B. Scotland

On an extensive tour of the New England states this summer we were always alert for the birds along the way. Just from the car and on short walks we recorded 72 species and, being conservation-minded, we watched for the loss of life among the birds and other animals.

We found that the rabbits were found most frequently, and then skunks. There were not many birds; of those we could recognize, the Robin was the commonest. We struck, but did not kill, a Ruffed Grouse that walked directly in front of the car.

Before we reached Mystic, Conn., we decided to hear and perhaps see a Bob-white at the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary. About 4 o'clock one afternoon we drove to the sanctuary to see the warden, T. P. McElroy. He was not home, so we just walked through the workshop to an open door leading to the trails. Just as we reached the doorway the loud, clear whistle of the Bob-white greeted us. As one of the party scanned the field she said, "There he is, on that rock." He was facing us and calling loudly. A perfect picture he was.

From the workshop four trails were posted. The moss-covered trails through the filtered sunshine were most inviting, so we took one for a short distance. While sauntering on our way many birds called -- the Yellow-billed Cuckoo seemed to lead, and the Bob-white would call frequently. Right then and there we decided to make an early trip the following morning.

This we did, and were well repaid. It was a beautiful morning, and more than 30 kinds of birds bid us welcome. The Bob-white led the calls, and later the warblers, vireos and thrushes took over.

When away from home it is always well to look up the sanctuaries in the vicinity where you are stopping. This Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary at Mystic is an incorporated community enterprise supported entirely by interested citizens through memberships and contributions. It maintains 125 acres of land, has a trailside museum and the series of nature trails, promotes conservation education, has a year-around program of field trips and activities, operates a bird-banding station, has series of adult and youth lectures, and publishes a quarterly bulletin, among other activities. Members, now totaling more than 500, reside in 18 states and the District of Columbia.

## SOME RENSSELAER COUNTY NOTES

Allen H. Benton, Department of Biology, N. Y. State College for Teachers, Albany

Of SBC's ten counties, Rensselaer County is one of the least studied. Regular field trips to Tomhannock Reservoir and its vicinity cover only a small part of the county, and that not the most interesting. The altitudinal range in the county extends from 25 feet at the Hudson River to 3000 feet on some of the Taconic peaks, and its bird life is correspondingly variable.

In July and August, 1953, the author spent much time tramping over the hills and forests of Rensselaer County. Since the purpose of the summer's work was not bird study, only incidental observations were made, but there were enough to indicate the need for further study. Notes on a few of these birds may stimulate others to make similar excursions.

The most interesting parts of Rensselaer County, ornithologically, are at the higher elevations, 1000 to 3000 feet above sea level. These begin near Grafton, Poestenkill and West Stephentown, and extend eastward to the Massachusetts border. Within ten miles of Troy the Hermit Thrush is a common summer resident, and the song may be heard in the morning and evening hours until early August. This bird may be expected at any spot where the elevation approaches 1500 feet, and where there are reasonably thick forests.

In the moist forests of similar elevation, the whistle of the White-throated Sparrow may be heard, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are seen in the many stands of dead trees. In deeper forests, Barred Owls are common. One of the big thrills of the summer was calling a Barred Owl to a tree directly over the campsite by an imitation of his call.

At the extreme elevations, approaching 3000 feet, several species are found which are usually associated with the Adirondack region during breeding season. The Broad-winged Hawk nests in the mountain-top forests of the Taconic and Berkshire ranges. Slate-colored Juncos frequent the grassy balds found at the tops of many of these peaks, and family groups may be seen in late summer, indicating they nest there. A single Blue-headed Vireo was seen near Petersburg, in suitable nesting territory. More of this species might have been recorded had it not been too late in the season for much singing.

The extensive forests, many of them protected by the Capital District Game Refuge, are excellent cover for Ruffed Grouse, which were common this year. Pileated Woodpecker work was evident in many places, although only one was seen. Purple Finches appeared to be nesting near Alps, where the Northern Water-thrush, Blackburnian Warbler, and Chestnut-sided Warbler were also seen.

Many unusual birds undoubtedly await discovery in Rensselaer County. In preparation for the State Federation's projected State Bird Book, SBC members should extend the club's coverage into such relatively unstudied areas, and increase our knowledge of the bird population of our area.

## S B C FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Esly Hellenbeck and Leon A. Wiard, Co-chairmen

### SONG OF THE CHATS

Alcove Reservoir, June 7

On Sunday, June 7, the group met in Delmar. There were the Madison family, the O'Maras, Leon Wiard, and the writer. We took the short-cut to Clarksville and then Routes 143 and 32 in the Reservoir area. Time out for lunch -- it was wet, but we enjoyed the hospitality of the empty baseball grandstand and the visits of the Phoebes to their nest.

The high spot of the trip was the song of the Chats -- not one but two on either side of the road overlooking the water. One Chat came into clear view and put on a beautiful visual and vocal show. It was something!

Another lovely moment was early on the back road when we heard the Hermit Thrush sing to a quiet and lonely world.

-- Pauline E. Baker

### LOTS OF WAXWINGS, AND MISSES

Vischer Ponds, August 22

There was no doubt concerning the most abundant bird on the SBC field trip of August 22 at Vischer Ponds. It seemed as though every tree in sight was loaded with Cedar Waxwings, with immature plumage much in evidence. As to the most rare, a White-eyed Vireo was seen by Mabel W. French. There were 10 observers, and 52 species recorded. -- Guy Bartlett

### EGRETS? YES

Hudson River, September 13

Did it rain? No. Was there a fog near the river? No. Did we go? Yes, 20 SBC members and friends took the round trip from Albany of about 80 miles down and back along the Hudson River on September 13.

The temperature was 60° at the start and 66° at time of our return, and even though the sun broke through the cloudy sky before we had made many of our 11 stops, the weather was chilly. Possibly this affected the birds, as no great numbers were observed.

A few American Egrets were spotted here and there on the down trip, but the greatest number at one location was counted at the 1 p.m. lunch-time. As we watched the reedy, swampy east side of the Hudson River from the little park near the west entrance of Rip Van Winkle Bridge, 20 birds were seen. Some were feeding down in the water or standing in the water at this low-tide time; others were flying about.

In all a total of 48 large white birds were definitely counted during the trip. This number is very near the 50 listed by the writer on a scouting trip on September 9.

On that trip, taken four days earlier, some 25 Tree Swallows were observed in a flock which also included a few Barn Swallows. Then, not far from the Swallow group there was a Palm Warbler persistently wagging its tail, and at some distance a Warbling Vireo and a Yellow-throated Vireo could be heard.

The September 13 list shows 45 species and 1043 individuals. The Cedar Waxwings seen in three tree-tops were estimates, just as were the small or large flocks of Red-wings, Cowbirds, and Goldfinches.

Not identified with certainty were three other species --

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a Tern, a Magnolia Warbler, and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. These are not included in the day's list. Peterson says of the last-mentioned species that expert ornithologists cannot safely distinguish the Acadian and Yellow-bellied in fall migration, so of course we don't know which we did see.

The sunny day, the trip, and the birds were enjoyed by all, even though our list was far short of the counts made years ago when we were able to take the Stoner Boat Trip, which was named for my late husband. The writer's records include 300 American Egrets seen on one of her boat trips in 1948.

Information from William J. Shufelt, whose daughter lives at the river end of Hamburg Boulevard, states that on June 28, 1953, they could see 25 large white birds across the Hudson River from that locality.

So we say, "Egrets? Yes."

-- Lillian C. Stoner

#### HAWK WATCH

#### Indian Ladder, September 19

On the morning of September 19 nine people gathered at Osterhout's, on the Thacher Park road above New Salem, to count a hoped-for flight of hawks. Plans were quickly made and the party broke up into three groups, each to be located at a special vantage point to view the flight and filter out each available hawk. One group went to Cass Hill, southeast of the main escarpment; the second group went up the hill to the broadcasting station; the third was located at Indian Ladder itself.

There was a strong wind from the south, but the hawks were there -- one per person over a period ranging from four to six hours. The party at Cass Hill saw one Sharp-shinned, that at the broadcasting station four Sparrow Hawks, while the party at the Ladder came up with a varied hawk count of one each of Peregrine Falcon, and Sparrow, Marsh and Red-tailed Hawks, plus a Pileated Woodpecker.

It seems quite apparent, from this and past experiences, that a hawk-counting party at Indian Ladder must be a spontaneous affair. Weather conditions count too much so far as the hawk flight is concerned. Indian Ladder should give good results, not spectacular but interesting. The line of the escarpment is right, except that it does face into our prevailing winds. A day with easterly winds might possibly give good results. The diversity of species seen this year is an indication of what might be obtained on a day with proper flight conditions.

Maybe next year, eh -- who knows?

-- Leon A. Wiard

#### NOT A MUTE

#### Watervliet Reservoir, September 20

The Canada Goose family which grew up on the reservoir had a guests to greet the SBC field-trippers of Sunday, September 20. With the Canadas was a large white goose, a barnyard escape -- it was definitely not a Mute Swan.

The green on the Teal was clear with a metallic sheen in

the scope. A Woodcock flushed about five feet in front of us. The count, 45 species. -- Samuel R. Madison

NOT MANY

Karners, October 4

Two aren't many observers, and 14 aren't many species -- but those were the records for the Karners trip of October 4. -- Frazer R. Turrentine

EVEN FEWER

Central Park, October 17

The count for the Central Park trip of October 17 was an even dozen species, and two observers. Again the Pileated Woodpecker was recorded there -- but that no longer seems unusual. -- Pauline E. Baker

THE COMPOSITE

104 Species

The composite list for the seven field trips reported above includes a total of 104 species. The key:

A	Alcove Reservoir	June 7	62 species
B	Vischer Ponds	Aug.22	52
C	Hudson River	Sep.13	45
D	Hawk Count	Sep.19	6
E	Watervliet Reservoir	Sep.20	45
F	Karner Sand Barrens	Oct. 4	14
G	Central Park	Oct.17	12

Pied-billed Grebe					E
Great Blue Heron		B	C		E
American Egret			C		
Green Heron		A	B	C	
Black-cr. Night Heron			B	C	
American Bittern			B	C	
Canada Goose					E
Mallard			B	C	E
Black Duck		A	B	C	
Green-winged Teal					E
Blue-winged Teal			B	C	E
Wood Duck			B		E
Sharp-shinned Hawk				D	
Red-tailed Hawk				D	
Red-shouldered Hawk			C		
Broad-winged Hawk			C		
Marsh Hawk			B	C	D E
Osprey		A		C	
Peregrine Falcon				D	
Sparrow Hawk		A		C D	E
Ring-necked Pheasant		A	B	C	G
Florida Gallinule			B		
American Coot					E
Killdeer		A	B	C	F
American Woodcock					E
Spotted Sandpiper		A			
Solitary Sandpiper			B		
Greater Yellow-legs					E
Herring Gull			B	C	
Ring-billed Gull				C	
Mourning Dove		A	B	C	E
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		A			
Black-billed Cuckoo		A			
Chimney Swift		A	B	C	
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird			B		
Belted Kingfisher		A	B	C	E
Yellow-shafted Flicker		A	B	C	E
Pileated Woodpecker					D G
Hairy Woodpecker					E
Downy Woodpecker			B	C	E
Eastern Kingbird		A	B	C	
Crested Flycatcher		A	B		
Eastern Phoebe		A	B	C	E
Least Flycatcher		A	B		
Eastern Wood Pewee		A	B		
Horned Lark		A	B		
Tree Swallow		A	B	C	
Bank Swallow		A	B		
Barn Swallow		A	B	C	
Blue Jay		A	B	C	E F G
American Crow		A	B	C	E F G
Black-capped Chickadee		B	C		E G
White-breasted Nuthatch		B	C		E G
House Wren		A	B		
Long-billed Marsh Wren			C		
Catbird		A	B	C	E
Brown Thrasher		A			
American Robin		A	B	C	E F G
Wood Thrush		A			
Hermit Thrush		A			
Veery		A			
Eastern Bluebird		A		C	E F
Ruby-crowned Kinglet					G
Cedar Waxwing		A	B	C	E
Common Starling		A	B		E F G
White-eyed Vireo			B		

Yellow-throated Vireo	B			
Red-eyed Vireo	A	B	E	
Golden-winged Warbler	A			
Yellow Warbler	A		E	
Magnolia Warbler		B	E	
Myrtle Warbler		B		F
Black-thr. Green Warbler	A	B	E	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A			
Bay-breasted Warbler			E	
Pine Warbler			E	
Oven-bird	A			
Common Yellowthroat	A	B	C	
Yellow-breasted Chat	A			
Black-capped Warbler			E	
Redstart	A	B		
House Sparrow	A	C	E	F G
Bobolink	A	B		
Eastern Meadowlark	A	C	E	
Red-winged Blackbird	A	B	C	
Baltimore Oriole	A	B		
Purple Grackle	A	C	E	F
Brown-headed Cowbird	A	C	E	
Scarlet Tanager	A		E	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	A	B	E	
Indigo Bunting	A		E	
Purple Finch	A			
American Goldfinch	A	B	C	E F G
Eastern Towhee	A	C	E	F
Savannah Sparrow		C		
Grasshopper Sparrow	A			
Henslow's Sparrow	A			
Vesper Sparrow	A			
Slate-colored Junco				G
Chipping Sparrow	A			F
Field Sparrow	A			
White-throated Sparrow				F
Swamp Sparrow			E	
Song Sparrow	A	B	C	E F

## FLORIDA'S WIDE OPEN SPACES

Mabel W. French

On the evening of February 9, 1953, I was one of a company gathered in the lobby of the Southland Hotel in Okeechobee, Fla., to meet Alexander Sprunt, the leader of the Okeechobee-Kissimmee Audubon tours, and his assistant, William Wylie. Here questions were asked and answered, and the procedure for the two days' tour explained to us.

Both trips were entirely by station wagon, for at present the Audubon Society is unable to finance adequate boat service on the lake. The party was divided into two groups. The first day the group to which I was assigned went on the "Lake Route" with Bill Wylie, and the second day on the "Prairie Route" with Mr. Sprunt, the other group going on the tour in reverse order. Our noon meal on the lake route was a hot lunch served at a fishing camp. On the prairie route by lunch time we would be about 40 miles from any such service, so we were directed to order sandwiches from the hotel the night before, to be delivered to us at breakfast. Oranges would travel with us in the station wagon, and Warden Glenn Chandler would meet us with a camp stove and coffee, all of which we enjoyed picnic style on the shore of the Kissimmee River.

Those of us who had been on the Everglades National Park tours (FEATHERS, 1953, pages 4 and 52) out of Miami found these trips out of Okeechobee of much more leisurely, and different, nature. On the first there were miles of city traffic to be cleared before birding could begin, and then the objective was to get from one bird concentration point to another with a limited time available. Okeechobee is a sprawled-out southern community with the woods in its backyard. We could begin birding with the Ground Doves in the hotel yard, and Boat-tailed and Florida Grackles in the park across the road from the hotel. In the willow oaks of the park was a wandering group of small birds featuring a Yellow-throated Vireo which was believed to be the first winter

record for Florida. The term "Lake Route" is rather misleading for, because of the high level around it, we saw very little of the lake itself.

We started by driving south on Route 78, over which I had ridden coming north the day before, and along which I had already done good birding. For several miles were scattered flocks of from 50 to 100 Glossy Ibis, feeding with the cattle in low-lying pasture land, for this is the heart of Florida's cattle country. I had imagined meeting these exotic-looking birds in some dim swamp, so finding them by the highway feeding with the cows was a distinct shock. We were told this is what they habitually do. On the combined two days I examined at least eight such groups of glossies. In nearly every instance they were accompanied by White Ibis. In one case these were replaced by Snowy Egrets, and there were generally some American Egrets, Little Blue Herons, and Boat-tailed Grackles about. We watched one of the latter dive-bomb a Glossy Ibis in order to capture some food particle the ibis was extracting from the mud. They regularly parasitize the glossies, whose long curved bills can reach tasty morsels at a depth the grackles cannot reach. These flocks of glossies were fascinating to watch as they occasionally arose and went through a wheeling, drifting flight at a low level, thus enabling the sunlight on the birds in motion to bring out the bronze and green tints in a plumage that in shadow appears black.

This road also produced six Caracaras, four in flight, one perched on a mound of dirt by the road, and another seated under a cabbage palm. The long, stout legs were conspicuous on the standing birds, and nearly all were near enough for the pink about their faces to be seen clearly.

Some of the information imparted by our guides was nearly as interesting as the things we saw. We were told that we should not expect to see kites. The Swallow-tailed Kite migrates south of Florida for the winter and seldom returns before late March or April. The Everglade Kite is reduced to 15 or 16 individuals that keep out in Lake Okeechobee where they can be reached only by air boat. White-tailed and Mississippi Kites are purely accidental in Florida. We also learned that in the Okeechobee valley there are no Woodcock, but plenty of Wilson's Snipe and Bob-white, which we recorded. No geese or swans, but several species of ducks, including Blue-winged Teal, Baldpate and Pintail, of which we saw hundreds; no Brown Pelicans, but occasional White Pelicans which we did not see; no small sandpipers, except the Least; and, surprisingly in that land of cattle, no Cowbirds, but thousands of Red-wings.

There was a Barred Owl that had been spending the day in the same tree for weeks; a Ring-necked Duck with a crushed lower mandible, by itself in a ditch, probably dying as it could not eat; an Anhinga that spent much time day after day on the guy-wire of a telephone pole, hitching up and down; and an immature Little Blue Heron in changing plumage, the white back washed with light blue-gray. This transition, once begun, is a fairly quick process, being completed in a very few weeks.

The next day was prairie day, and Oh! those Kissimmee prairies! They stretch as far as the limit of vision, with

cloud masses arching overhead. Down among the grass and scrub palmetto the little prairie flowers were coming into bloom, including hundreds of thousands of tiny sundew plants growing so close as to give the ground a reddish tone.

It was Warden Chandler who drove ahead and located the Florida Sandhill Crane, a dozen of them. Mr. Sprunt set up his telescope and we were able to obtain real close-ups of the magnificent birds. They were in an obliging mood, for occasionally one would fly, demonstrating its peculiar wing-beat, and they repeatedly gave their resonant, penetrating call, which seemed to have the very spirit of the prairie.

Our first stop at a Burrowing Owl's mound failed to find the owners at home -- or else they were very much at home, under ground. At a later stop we did see such owls. The day was not all spent on the prairie; we passed through much pineland and there were swampy fingers reaching toward the road. Across the lily pads covering one of these fingers ran two Limpkins, well in the clear. We listed White-eyed Towhees, and our attention was called to the small amount of white in the wings and tail, compared with our Red-eyed.

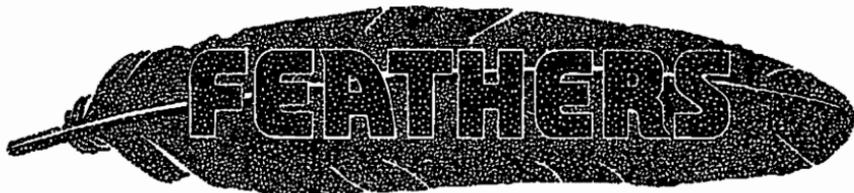
At several points were flocks of Wood Ibis. When feeding all headed in one direction, with heads down and backs to us they resembled flocks of sheep. Two cypress trees side by side, just fluffing out in spring green, held over 15 Cardinals. A grove of moss-hung live oaks and cabbage palms yielded Yellow-throated and Orange-crowned Warblers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. At one point in open pineland the telescope was set up so we could watch a pair of Bald Eagles on their nest, and catch the gleam of their yellow eyes.

We recorded 83 species during the two days, of which only the high-lights have been mentioned. The, to most of us, new and strange settings in which we saw them added interest to even the birds we knew well. Certainly we were all willing to agree with Mr. Sprunt's statement, "You people have seen a part of Florida that few tourists know exists, and that fewer yet ever see."

## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

- Thu., Dec. 10 - Second Audubon Screen Tour, "Oddities in Nature" by Walter H. Shackleton of Louisville, Ky. Central Park Junior High School Auditorium, 8 o'clock (Season tickets only).
- Mon., Dec. 14 - Regular SBC meeting, and Christmas Party. Special program, refreshments, and completion of plans for annual Christmas counts. Pine Room, First Methodist Church, 8 p. m.
- Sat., Dec. 26 - Annual Christmas Count, Schenectady's 15-mile circle. A count in which all may, and should, participate.
- Sun., Dec. 27 - Annual Christmas Count, Troy area. Details from Field Activities Co-chairmen, Messrs. Hallenbeck and Wiard.



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## EVENING GROSBEAK - NEW SUMMER RESIDENT LOCALLY

Years Ago a Rare Winter Visitor in This State, Recently It Became a Breeding Bird of the Adirondacks, and Now Has Summered at Broadalbin

The Evening Grosbeak has probably become a breeding summer resident within 22 aerial miles of Schenectady -- at Broadalbin.

Harking back a number of years, New York State records of Evening Grosbeaks were something to brag about. The birds were rare, and only occasional, winter stragglers from the west. As today's bird students well know, the picture has changed. The birds are seen hereabouts practically every winter, sometimes in large numbers and from autumn to late spring, especially at those feeding stations well provided with sunflower seeds.

### The East in Summer

The bird has recently become a breeding summer resident of New York State, and of other northeastern states. Several years ago reports began to come in, from Elk Lake, Saranac and other truly Adirondack regions. The 1953 summer left no doubts about the bird being well established, and expanding its breeding territory.

Now the Evening Grosbeak has been found as a summering -- and probably breeding -- bird well within SBC territory, and to the south of Adirondack State Park. Margaret A. Fitzgerald of Bird Haven, Amsterdam, SBC member, has supplied the information. Incidentally, Mrs. Fitzgerald banded 863 Evening Grosbeaks from March 6, 1953, through the migration.

On June 8 a small flock was recorded in Walter Elwood's yard in Amsterdam. That was the last record of the season for the immediate vicinity of Amsterdam.

### At Broadalbin

A small flock was recorded June 10 at Broadalbin. For purposes of the record, Broadalbin is in Fulton County, eight miles north of Amsterdam; is just to the east of the southern tip of Sacandaga Reservoir; and is just outside the southeast corner of Adirondack State Park.

Two pairs of Evening Grosbeaks appeared at the feeding tray of Mrs. Cecil Finch, Broadalbin, on July 10. On July 11 two females were feeding immature males there -- grayish yellow wings, brown tail, lemon yellow instead of white in wings, bill horn-color, no distinct head markings. No bands were seen on any of the birds.

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On July 26 Evening Grosbeaks were recorded at Gloversville, seven miles west of Broadalbin and 11 miles northeast of Amsterdam.

#### In the Adirondacks

In FEATHERS of October, Genevieve Scott referred to breeding Evening Grosbeaks observed at Lake Eaton and at Meacham Lake.

During the summer reports were also received, by Alice Holmes, of Grosbeaks at Indian Lake, where a few were observed by several people from July 4 to 21. For a few days there were records of only one bird, a young male. Then two adult females were seen. Still later four young were recorded, still being fed by their parents.

These observations were by Miss Rhea Marco, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Haig and Mr. and Mrs. H. R. McBride, all of Schenectady, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Crane and Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Bare of Indian Lake, on the lawn of the Bare home. The birds were also seen by other people at added locations along the lake. Granger Davenport, active in the New Jersey Audubon Society, stated this was the second time to his knowledge that Evening Grosbeaks had nested in that area.

The Bulletin of the Maine Audubon Society, July, 1953, has an item by James Bond and C. Chandler Ross, in which they reported observing a juvenile male Evening Grosbeak on June 28, 1953, a few miles west of Paul Smith's in New York's Adirondacks.

#### Summer Population Large

Writing in the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, June, 1953, pages 262-264, Christopher M. Packard says: "There is irrefutable evidence that there is a large summering population (of Evening Grosbeaks) extending from Ontario across Quebec, into Maine, and as far east as New Brunswick, where we have a record of adults feeding young in the nest as early as 1940. The extent of this population is just now coming to light."

It is also of local interest to recall that an SBC field trip at Watervliet Reservoir on August 21, 1949, featured a loudly chirping, restless male Evening Grosbeak -- but that hardly indicated local breeding.

A survey of the literature and a check-up on the records of the numerous bird clubs within the state might show a larger range, but all other summer, and possible breeding, records at hand are well within Adirondack State Park, with Glens Falls (FEATHERS, January, 1953, p.7) the exception.

Broadalbin represents a real extension of summer range for this most interesting species. It remains to be seen if the birds are in that area again next summer -- and in other areas just as close to Schenectady.

-- G.B.



## NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

### EXTENSION COURSE

An extension course in bird study is being offered by New York State College for Teachers at Albany, under the guidance of Allen H. Benton of the Department of Biology, and SBC member. It will be an adult course, open to all. There will be 16 sessions from 8 to 11 o'clock on Saturday mornings, beginning February 16. The charge is \$20.

### IN THE KINGBIRD

The Kingbird of July, 1953, features a photograph of those who attended the meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs at Bear Mountain during the spring. Plenty of SBC members are included. And the photograph was made by Bess Wood of Albany, SBC member.

"Opportunity Unlimited for New York Bird Watchers", a talk given at the Bear Mountain meeting, is also included. The authors -- Allen H. Benton of SBC and Robert Arbib of The Linnaean Society of New York.

### MORE ABOUT SAP DRINKERS

In FEATHERS of October, page 77, J. Murray Hollister related his observations of birds, mammal and insects feeding on the sap of a black birch tree. Included were hornets, wasps, and flies; two Downy Woodpeckers, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and, days later, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; and a Chipmunk. It was at Lake Mansfield, Vt.

In The Wilson Bulletin of September, published October 31, were two general notes of similar observations. Lawrence Kilham of Bethesda, Md., reported on 1952 observations at Tamworth, N. H., on a yellow birch drilled by Sapsuckers in previous years. He noted a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, two Black-throated Blue Warblers, a Cape May Warbler, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers feeding on the sap. He also called attention to previously published reports of both hummingbirds and warblers feeding at sapsucker-drilled trees.

In the same issue H. Lewis Batts, Jr., of Kalamazoo, Mich., reported on 1952 observations at Macon, Ga. He observed a Pine Siskin and then a Goldfinch at the sap between visits of the Sapsucker.

### CATTLE EGRETS

In her report concerning the Wilson's Ornithological Club meeting this spring (FEATHERS, August, pp. 62-64) Mrs. Stoner referred to the Cattle Egret, a foreign bird suddenly being recorded in this country. The bird is obtaining widespread publicity, with several illustrated articles about it already in print.

The Cattle Egret, of about Snowy Egret size, is a native of Africa, southern Europe, and western Asia. It is also known as the Buff-backed Heron in Europe.

Among current articles, all interesting reading, are: "Was My Face Red?" by Richard Borden, in The Bulletin of The

Massachusetts Audubon Society, April, 1953, pp. 139-140, with a photograph of two feeding beside a cow -- he had photographed the birds in Florida in March, 1952, without knowing the species; "Newcomer from the Old World" by Alexander Sprunt, Jr., in Audubon Magazine, July-August, 1953, with several photographs of nests and birds in Florida; and "Occurrence of an African Cattle Egret (*Ardeola ibis ibis*) in Massachusetts" by William H. Drury, Jr., Allen H. Morgan, and Richard Stackpole, in *The Auk*, July, 1953, pp. 364-5 -- they collected the first North American specimen in Wayland, Mass., April 23, 1952 (another was recovered, dead, at North Truro, Cape Cod, in November, 1952). Writing on "The Status of the Cattle Egret, *Ardeola ibis*, in the Eastern Cape Province" in *Ostrich*, 23, 1952, pp. 186-218, G. J. Skead discusses range expansion of the Cattle Egret in Africa and mentions possible correlation with its invasion of America.

"The Cattle Egret in South America" by F. Haverschmidt was published, with photographs, in Audubon Magazine of September-October, 1953. The bird has been a resident in South America for more than 20 years.

Mabel W. French in FEATHERS of last month described her recent Florida trip. "I was keenly interested in the article 'Newcomer from the Old World' by Alexander Sprunt," she said in an accompanying note. "The first of those Cattle Egrets found near Okeechobee was discovered by Warden Chandler February 12, the very day I left Okeechobee. Had I only timed my tour dates three weeks later, I should probably have had them on my list since, according to Mr. Sprunt, they were seen on every Audubon trip during March."

### HOPS

The Human Ornithological Perch Society (HOPS for short, and the only known other bird club with headquarters in Schenectady) has an imitator, it has been discovered. But the imitator claims previous existence. Writing on "Guests on My Window Sill" in *Lifetime Living*, November, 1953, C. B. Colby says, "Assorted sparrows, starlings, chickadees, downy woodpeckers, flickers, nuthatches, bluebirds, juncos, and even the dead-end-kid blue jays come zooming in to feed, fight, and yackity-yack just 30 inches from my typewriter (at a window-ledge feeder). I've been able to feed some of the old-timers from my hand, which qualifies me for membership in the 'Order of Pan' founded by that great naturalist Ernest Harold Baynes back in 1903. It's quite a thrill to have a wild bird think enough of a mere human to take a chance and land on his finger. Try it after the birds have become familiar with you. Just be patient, quiet, and remember to make no sudden movements."

And -- speaking of HOPS -- Len Howard of England has recently written a book, "Birds as Individuals." In August of 1952 an article concerning Len Howard and her birds was written for the *Christian Science Monitor*. One of our members sent it to me with the suggestion we make her a member of HOPS. This we did. When Roger Tory Peterson went to England to write, he mentioned HOPS in his Audubon Magazine article. Recently I have had a letter from Len Howard acknowledging HOPS membership and telling the birds that make her eligible: Great Tit, Marsh Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Willow Warbler, Chatfinches, Sparrows,

Gulls, Robins. A Blue Heron tried to perch on her, but she stopped it. -- Nelle G. Van Vorst

### HEPS, or BAMLU

I note that the "HOPS" are still active. This summer, while sitting in the sunshine reading, a Red Admiral butterfly landed on my hand for a 15-second visit. How about a "HEPS" organization? -- J. Murray Hollister

Dear Murray: Maybe HEPS (Human Entomological Perch Society) is too all-inclusive, since flies, mosquitoes, ants, chiggers, as well as Cimex lectularius and Pediculus capitis (polite terms for you-know-whats) all qualify entomologically. Maybe your new club should be more exclusive -- say BAMLU (Butterflies And Moths Like Us). -- X

### DICKCISSELS

Just a little outside SBC territory, Howard Nash and his sister, Mrs. Ludlow, had a visiting Dickcissel at their home in North Bennington, Vt., from December 28, 1952 to April 13. He consorted with House Sparrows. -- Pauline E. Baker

Margaret A. Fitzgerald has various records of Dickcissels at her Bird Haven banding station in Amsterdam. Most recent was during the summer, when she banded a semi-crippled female.

### THE QUESTION OF PREDATORS

The following editorial was published in the September, 1953, issue of The Bulletin of the Chemung Valley Audubon Society:

Several fellow birders have appeared so surprised and resentful that predators have appeared at their feeding stations meant only for birds that Dr. A. A. Allen, of Cornell, was asked what to do about it. Was it ever justifiable to do away with one creature to save another that we like better, or, in other words, to interfere with the balance of nature? Most of us have been practicing the philosophy of Dr. Harold Axtell, not destroying anything, but letting everything work out its normal existence.

Following is Dr. Allen's viewpoint: "With regard to predators, just as soon as you increase the number of birds on a given area above that normal for the region, you are setting up a feeding station for predators of all kinds, and they will increase until the food supply goes down. It is my belief if anyone wants to maintain a greater than average number of birds in any area, he must reduce the predators. That, of course, does not mean that all predators have to be eliminated over the entire area, but it does mean that if you have a red fox that hunts over your grounds, or a Sharp-shinned Hawk, or a Cooper's Hawk, if he finds better feeding there than he does elsewhere, he's going to stick around until the meals get scarce. And if you want your birds to continue numerous, you've got to get rid of them. That, likewise, holds for gray squirrels, red squirrels, chipmunks and rats and blacksnakes, and pilot blacksnakes.

"On the other hand, if you are satisfied with the so-called balance of nature, where no one species increases beyond the normal for that particular area, and if you enjoy

foxes and Horned Owls, and Sharp-shinned Hawks just as much as you do songbirds, why then there is no need of any sort of control. Certainly when you start feeding the songbirds and making things more attractive to them so that they increase, and do not at the same time feed the predators in the same way, you are bound for trouble; and worse than the hawks and owls and foxes will be the neighbors' cats if they ever find out you are running a feeding station for their benefit."

But if one decides to eliminate a predator, he must remember that there are laws to observe and permission to obtain. It is simpler on the whole, as well as more interesting, to let anything come, study and learn its habits and personality and enjoy it along with the birds.

### THOSE OWLS

Starlings by the thousands and "gutter" pigeons by the hundreds occupy Schenectady's downtown buildings at this time of the year without gaining newspaper space. Another did, however, in the Gazette of November 12. Said the item:

"It was not a question of 'what' but 'who' when Patrolman William Van Horn checked the door of the Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. building at 511 State street early this morning. While trying the door to see if it was open, Van Horn heard a sudden racket overhead that sounded like a burglar falling through a skylight. Before he could recover, the officer thought he was being beaten over the head with a wad of newspapers. It was then he saw the prominent features of the 'unknown intruder.' The 'who' turned out to be an owl trapped in the high ceiling of the doorway. Van Horn said at the moment he wasn't quite sure who was more scared."

There was no doubt about the identity of the Screech Owl, for the next morning the Gazette published a large picture of the small owl peeking through the window of 511 State St.

That was not the only Screech Owl to have been "trapped" locally during November. On November 2 a gray Screech Owl was retrieved from a fireplace in a Lexington Avenue home. During the previous night the homeowner had heard plenty of activity in the chimney. That morning he opened the fireplace damper, and down came the owl. A little rest along the wall of the kitchen, and it was released.

### LIFER

This summer I had a three-week trip in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island. Between Digby and Yarmouth we went out on the stony beach at Grosses Coques. A bird larger than a sandpiper was noisily calling from a pier. The tide was coming in; we were intruding, and perhaps we were near a nest. Then he spread his wings and circled, still calling. I knew from the beautiful striking markings on his broad wings that he was a Willet. My Peterson assured me; a new bird for -- Pauline E. Baker

### BY WHOM THE BELL'S TOLLED

Said the Associated Press recently about Troy: "That big bell on St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church started tolling early today and kept it up for an hour. Continued tolling of a bell - at an odd hour - is generally the solemn signal

of a priest's death. But the pastor, the Rev. James A. Nolan, was alive and well, he assured worried parishioners who telephoned the rectory. Father Nolan called an electrician, who climbed to the bell tower, opened the relay control box and found a bird's nest built across the relay points. The weight of the nest had closed the circuit and started the bell ringing. There was no bird around, and no eggs in the nest."

## BRIEFING THE RECORD

Frazer R. Turrentine, Records Committee Chairman

### BREEDING LOONS

Harold John of Saratoga Lake came into the office all excited one morning in late June as he had seen the loons with their one young. Earlier in the summer he told me he was almost sure the loons were nesting at Manning's Cove, as they were so disturbed when he approached a certain marshy section. This is probably the first record of loons nesting in that area. -- N.V.V.

### BREEDING GEESE

Again this year the Canada Geese raised five goslings on Watervliet Reservoir, making the second season. The adults were not pinioned, but are believed to have been Delmar Game Farm birds. -- N.V.V.

### BLUE-WINGED

Of special interest during the summer was a Blue-winged Warbler on the edge of a patch of woods touching a neighbor's backyard. It is the only one I ever saw in Loudonville, or anywhere else in the Albany area. It was seen on August 4. -- Mabel W. French

### BIRD HAVEN NOTES

Purple Finch - 365 banded between April 6 and August 14, 1953; government band left, gold band right. Included were 64 immature on and after June 28. First brood to feeder on June 28; second brood to feeder August 1.

Cardinal - Male, late May and June.

Purple Martin - 1 ♂ Apr. 8; 1 ♂, 2 ♀ Apr. 11-14; 2 ♂, 2 ♀ May 2; 4 ♀ until June 24; no breeding record.

Parula Warbler - 1 ♂ Aug. 7; ♀ or immature Aug. 12 and 13.

-- Margaret A. Fitzgerald, Amsterdam

### NIGHT FLIGHT

There were several observers reporting heavy migrations after dark August 7 and 8. Wood Pewees dropped in locally in large numbers. Nighthawks were also common in daytime flight.

### SCOTIA CARDINAL

A ♂ Cardinal was easily observed at Collins Lake on August 16, but it did not stay there. -- Esly Hallenbeck

### BROWN-HEADED

A Brown-headed Chickadee, in company with and easily dis-

tinguished from Black-capped, was seen by Bradley L. Wilson on August 23, at his camp near Pinnacle, Fulton County.

#### SUMMER SUETER

A Downy Woodpecker of the season was among the birds to visit the feeding station of Mrs. W. H. Norris during the summer.

#### PILEATED

A Pileated Woodpecker was frequently seen, particularly in early July in flight across the Saratoga Route 50 and Middle Line Road, between woods back from the roads.

#### OWL FOOD

One of the foods noted regularly for a family of Screech Owls within the gates of G-E's Campbell Avenue Race Track plant last summer were squabs of the too-abundant Rock Doves.

#### PEREGRINED HERON

Great Blue Herons summered in the marshes below Campbell Avenue last summer, as did Wood Ducks and, for a time, Canada Geese. On August 5 one of the herons was seen to flinch; a Peregrine Falcon, or Duck Hawk, swooped at the standing bird but swerved when still several feet away.

#### JENNY LAKE RECORDS

Among the various records for Jenny Lake by several SBC "residents" at this lake within Adirondack State Park:

Ruffed Grouse common and tame, right at the camps; bred.

Breeding summer residents: Solitary Vireo, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch commonly, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Hermit and Olive-backed Thrushes, Horned and Barred Owls, Oven-bird, Redstart; Myrtle, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian Warblers; Common Yellowthroat, Black and White Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk, Tree and Barn Swallows, Catbird, Blue Jay, Crow, Red-eyed Vireo, Red-winged Blackbird, Black-capped Chickadee, Whip-poor-will, and Chipping, White-throated and Song Sparrows, plus Winter Wren probably. And numerous others, with Pileated Woodpeckers within hearing range.

Ospreys as visitors October 10 to 18; Fox Sparrow and Ruby-crowned Kinglets November 1.

Two unwelcome species seen frequently, each as a small flock at dusk -- Starling, and Rock Dove.

## S B C CALENDAR

Nellie Silliman, Secretary

- Thu., Dec.10 - Second Audubon Screen Tour, "Oddities in Nature" by Walter H. Shackleton. Central Park Junior High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.
- Mon., Dec.14 - SBC meeting, and Christmas Party; Pine Room, First Methodist Church, 8 p.m.
- Sat., Dec.26 - Schenectady's annual Christmas count. The field trip in which ALL should participate. Details from Esly Hallenbeck.
- Sun., Dec.27 - Troy's annual Christmas Count, also an SBC feature trip.