

# THE FLICKER

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## The Flicker

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# THE FLICKER

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## Wood Ducks at the Brackens

by

W. J. Breckenridge

Ever since we first built our home, "The Brackens," on the Mississippi River north of Minneapolis in 1940, we have enjoyed having frequent chances to observe wood ducks on the river or in the trees just in front of the house. It was not until our third spring (1942), however, that we discovered that a pair of these beautiful ducks nested in a certain basswood about 100 feet from our breakfast nook window. This tree leaned out over the steep river bank and had a cavity about 20 feet above the ground which was ideally situated to harbor a nest. The entrance was clearly visible from the window as long as the trees were not in leaf. Fortunately for us their choosing of nesting sites and the laying of their eggs takes place before the trees leaf out in the spring, so we had very good opportunities to observe their goings and comings.

In 1942 and '43 we were so elated over finding that we had the birds on our lot that we disturbed them as little as possible and as a result we got almost no data on the actual nesting progress of the birds or on their success. However, we feel reasonably sure that at least some ducklings were reared each year. In 1944, I risked disturbing them and investigated the nest a number of times. My check during early May revealed 18 eggs in the cavity and we had high hopes for a big wood duck hatch. However, on May 30, I checked the nest to find

only six eggs remaining. Apparently 12 ducklings had hatched and the female had decided not to wait for the tardy six but to get out with the dozen that were ready. Thinking, of course, that the six deserted eggs were infertile I opened them and found that all contained well formed embryos. Evidently a second female wood duck had slipped in from time to time after the original owner had started incubating and she had been responsible for the extra eggs.

During that same season, 1944, I had on several occasions seen a female wood duck enter a cavity in a tall, spindly, rotten, basswood stub not more than 50 feet from the other. At the nest the tree was not more than 9 inches in diameter and yet the bird squeezed in and did not reappear. It was so unsteady I dared not attempt to investigate it. About the middle of June the wind snapped off the stub right through the nest cavity, which was revealed to contain the characteristic mixture of rotten wood and down feathers of a typical wood duck nest. Apparently a brood had been reared in this nest also.

Naturally in the spring of 1945, we were on the lookout for our returning "Woodies" and spotted the first arrivals on March 23. Only a few days later we saw a female investigating the old nest cavity and felt assured that the nest would again be occupied. We were lucky in that our

breakfast hour seemed frequently to coincide with the wood duck's egg-laying hour. While at the table we would see both a male and female duck alight in a gnarled oak a few yards from the nest. After much neck-craning to thoroughly search the surroundings for disturbances, the female would fly over and alight for an instant propped by her tail and cling to the rim of the opening by her claws. She would then tip up and disappear within. The male watched from the nearby oak for ten or fifteen minutes until the female reappeared. Then both would fly off down the river. Rarely would we see anything of the birds about the nest tree at any other time of day during the egg-laying period. The exact date when incubation began I did not determine, but after she began brooding we could put her off the nest readily by tapping on the tree.

On April 15, an investigation showed 25 eggs in the cavity. This date was only 23 days after the birds arrival and we knew all was not well with the duck nest. Without doubt two females were laying in this particularly choice nest. Aside from this disturbance the family then began having squirrel trouble. A pair of gray squirrels moved in one day while the duck was away and piled leafy twigs on top of the eggs. The first I knew of it was when my investigating taps brought the squirrel instead of a duck from the nest cavity. I immediately scurried up and removed the twigs and the following day the duck was back on the eggs again. A few days later, however, the squirrel again invaded the nest and this time I removed not only a twig nest but 3 baby gray squirrels. This time I brought out my not-so-trusty .22 and took a couple of shots at the old squirrel, but failed to get it. What astonished me was that the squirrel did not damage the duck eggs but built on top of them. Later the squirrel actually brought in more

twigs and I think my shot was true that time since no more was seen of the intruder. On May 12, a brooding wood duck left the nest on my tapping the tree but none responded on the 13th, nor on the 14th. On the 15th I removed 3 eggs to check the progress of incubation and found 1 infertile and 2 with small embryos that were dead. Consequently, on May 16, I disappointedly climbed to the nest and removed the remainder of the deserted eggs and was really astonished to find that it contained 35 eggs!

On May 20, I noticed to my surprise a female wood duck enter the empty cavity and on May 21 an egg appeared. On the 26th there were 2 eggs and then on the 30th, 8 eggs! Obviously the two females were still at it, but the egg-laying contest finally ended a few days later with the nest containing 12 eggs. These were eventually deserted and on June 30, I removed this set. All but the three eggs which were destroyed in checking the incubation progress are now preserved in the Minnesota Museum of Natural History collection. This set of 47 eggs in all appears to be one of the largest sets of duck eggs ever recorded from any single nest. A careful check of their measurements was made and they varied from 37 to 41 mm. in diameter and from 49 to 55 mm. in length. However, the major part of them could be placed readily into two groups, one measuring from 38 to 39 mm. in diameter by 49 to 50 mm. in length, and the other from 40 to 40.5 mm. in diameter by 52 to 53 mm. in length. So this evidence seems fairly conclusive that only two females were concerned.

You can well imagine that we are anticipating with much interest developments at this nest this coming year, since the tree is still standing and with good prospects of surviving for several seasons to come. Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

# Winter Bird Counts, 1945

*compiled by*

George N. Rysgaard

The 1945 winter bird census conducted by members of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union recorded a total of 47 species and 3,227 individuals. The results of the individual groups appear on the table following the brief accounts of the census trips.

## Duluth:

(1) Members of the Lakeview Branch of the Duluth Bird Club participated in several short field trips in Lester Park, along the lake shore near the mouth of the Lester River, and a ten-mile ride along the North Shore between December 26 and January 4.

(2) The Duluth Bird Club conducted five census trips between December 23 and January 6, as follows:

December 23: North Shore from Duluth to Palmers; 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; 36 miles by car; temp. 19° F.; N. E. wind 30 mi. per hr.; overcast sky; observers: Ralph Boeder, Joel Bronoel, Olga Lakela.

December 24: Minnesota Point; 12:00 m. to 5:00 p.m.; 7 miles by foot; temp. 20° F.; wind 25 mi. per hr.; light snow falling; observer: Olga Lakela.

December 25: Chester Park, Kenwood Avenue, Arrowhead Road, Hunters Park, and Hartley Road; 7:45 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; 8 miles by foot; temp. 30° F.; wind 15 mi. per hr.; overcast sky; observer: Olga Lakela.

December 30: Congdon Park and Hunters Park; 8:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.; temp. 21° F.; wind 25 mi. per hr.; overcast sky; three inches fresh snow; observers: Hulda and Mabel Adams, Mary Elwell, Olga Lakela.

January 6: Duluth Harbor and Fond du Lac; 10:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; by car; temp. 33° F.; wind 21 mi. per hr.;

overcast sky and falling mist; observers: Hulda Adams, Mary Elwell, Olga Lakela.

Additional observations were submitted for the Duluth area by Henry Gilbert, O. A. Finseth, and Mr. Cox. St. Cloud:

The Christmas bird census by the St. Cloud Bird Club was conducted December 27, in the vicinity of the State Teachers College and on the islands in the Mississippi River. The following nine members were in the field between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.: Nester Hiemenz, Mrs. Trainor, Connie and Mary Jane Stelzig, Hildegard and Monica Misho, Loretta Rosenberger, Alys Mayman, and Lorraine Scales. The temperature was 15° F. with strong winds and a clear sky.

## St. Joseph:

Sister Estelle of the College of St. Benedict conducted an individual census in the region of the school on December 27. The temperature was 18° F.; clear sky and slight wind.

## Cedar Creek:

The Minnesota Bird Club conducted a winter census at Cedar Creek Bog in Isanti County on December 20. The temperature was 19° F. with a 25 mi. per hour N. W. wind and cloudy skies. The area of observation was about three miles in diameter and was traversed by the following 12 persons between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.: Dr. W. H. Marshall, Dr. J. L. Cass, Dr. R. H. Daggy, Don Jacobs, Mr. and Mrs. Lyman Newlin, Mrs. C. A. Corniea, Capt. G. N. Rysgaard, Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Mrs. Ruth Young, Theodore Melone, and Sam McIver.

## Minneapolis:

(1) Fourteen members of the Min-

neapolis Bird Club covered both banks of the Mississippi River from Camden to Coon Creek Dam on December 29, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The temperature was 25° F. accompanied by occasional misty rain. The following persons participated: Luther B. Gilbert, Mr. and Mrs. John S. D. Clark, George Rickert, William Longley, Byron Harrell, Bruce Auger, Larry Flahavan, Fred Blanch, Amy Chambers, Helen Towle, Ruth Hopkins, and Florence Nelson.

(2) Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Swedenborg made an independent census trip on the Harriet bridle path and along the Minnesota River from the bass pond to the Bloomington Ferry on December 29. A total of 25 species and 808 individuals was seen.

**St. Paul:**

A. C. Rosenwinkel observed 15 species on December 28 between 10:45 a.m. and 3:45 p.m., in the region of Indian Mounds and the State Fish Hatchery. The temperature was 25° F.

	Duluth	Duluth (Lakeview)	St. Cloud	St. Joseph	Cedar Creek (M.B.C.)	Minneapolis (Bird Club)	St. Paul (Rosenwinkel)	Minneapolis (Swedenborg)
Mallard .....			3					2
American Golden-eye .....	160	.73	.15			.45	.2	
American Merganser .....	2	.9	.10			.8		
Eastern Goshawk .....	1							
Cooper's Hawk .....					2			
American Rough-legged .....								2
Marsh Hawk .....								1
Ruffed Grouse .....	1				5			
Ring-necked Pheasant .....						.11	.8	.18
Wilson's Snipe .....								2
Glaucous Gull .....	5							
Herring Gull .....	355	.96						
Screech Owl .....				1				
Great Horned Owl .....	3	.1				.1		
Snowy Owl .....	3		.1			.1		
Barred Owl .....			.1					
Eastern Kingfisher .....								1
Pileated Woodpecker .....					5			
Red-bellied Woodpecker .....								2
Hairy Woodpecker .....	7	.1	.1	.1	.8		.1	.4
Downy Woodpecker .....	32	.12	.1	.2		.2	.4	.10
Blue Jay .....	14	.4	.1		.8	.5	.8	.15
Eastern Crow .....					.21	.2	.4	
Black-capped Chickadee .....	16	.27	.2	.6	.18	.27	.15	.48
White-breasted Nuthatch .....	2		.1		.6		.6	.9
Red-breasted Nuthatch .....	1							
Brown Creeper .....			.1					2
Bohemian Waxwing .....	7							
Starling .....	17	.35	.1	.12		.70	.2	.1
English Sparrow .....	23			100	.19	200	.3	300
Eastern Meadowlark .....								1
Red-winged Blackbird .....								.77
Rusty Blackbird .....								1
Brewer's Blackbird .....		.1						
Bronzed Grackle .....		.4						
Cowbird .....								7

Cardinal .....						1	2	7
Evening Grosbeak .....	.10		.10					
Purple Finch .....								2
Pine Grosbeak .....	.26							
Redpoll .....	.1			.1			3	
Goldfinch .....			.20		1	.23		.7
Slate-Colored Junco .....						.6	.2	.10
Eastern Tree Sparrow .....				105			9	277
Song Sparrow .....								.2
Lapland Longspur .....					300			
Snow Bunting .....	.10					300		
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>.38</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>.70</b>	<b>808</b>

—Minnesota Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### 1946 MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION MEETING

The Minneapolis Bird Club has very kindly invited the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union to conduct their state meeting this year at Minneapolis. They suggested that the Minnesota Bird Club act as cosponsors and that group has accepted their invitation. All the clubs in the state have been contacted and the date set is Saturday, May 18, at the height of the warbler migration. Be sure to circle this date on your calendars and plan to attend.

The tentative program calls for a field trip to be conducted in Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis, an excellent warbler territory. Groups may meet as early as 8:00 a.m. at the end of the car line near Glenwood Lake and parties will go out from time to time from there. Lunch will be served at a nominal cost at Glenwood Chalet where the afternoon program will also be held. Dinner is being planned at the Central Y.M.C.A. at 30 South 9th Street in Minneapolis. The evening program will be held at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History on the University campus on the invitation of the Staff of the Museum.

It is imperative that the club presidents compile lists of their members who are coming and send such lists to W. J. Breckenridge, Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota, at least a week in advance of the meeting in order that definite arrangements can be made for the luncheon and dinner. Individual M. O. U. members not affiliated with a local club should send in their names directly to the M.O.U. President, if they wish to attend. Prospective members are urged to attend and may make reservations either directly or through a local club. An organized field trip may be arranged for Sunday morning. Please indicate in reporting if you would attend such a field trip.

Anyone interested in presenting a paper at the meeting should contact Milton D. Thompson, Public Library Museum, 1001 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis 3, Minnesota. Please indicate the approximate time required to give your paper.

W. J. BRECKENRIDGE  
PRESIDENT

# History of the Duluth Bird Club

by  
Olga Lakela

The Duluth Bird Club was founded by a small group of interested people who from time to time met voluntarily for field excursions in the stimulating surroundings of Duluth. It originated from a common desire to compare notes and share observations on local bird life. It was inspired by the far-reaching influence of one incomparable personage, Dr. Thomas S. Roberts, through the living pages of his *BIRDS OF MINNESOTA*.

On the morning of April 24, 1937, the group assembled at the State Teachers College to discuss matters pertinent to organized study of the wealth of bird life in the immediate environment. Thus, during a heavy shower with spring migration well on the way, the Duluth Bird Club was formed with the expressed purpose of promoting the study of Minnesota birds. The fifteen people present became the charter members, electing the following officers: President, Miss Mary I. Elwell; Secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Philip J. Frost. Of the remaining charter members the following have held their memberships: Miss Hulda Adams, Miss Alma Chesley, Miss Mira Childs, Miss Louise Hall, Miss Evelyn Jones, and the writer. Miss Catherin Lieski transferred her membership to the Lakeview Branch on its organization in 1939. Two are deceased: Mrs. Philip J. Frost and Miss June Wendlandt. In memory of the latter, the Duluth Bird Club established in 1939, the June Wendlandt Award, consisting of four student memberships, annually granted to deserving students. The first so honored were Miss Margaret Jackson, Casimir S. Hero, Miss Betty Watterson, and Richard Bate-man.

In the spring of 1938, Dr. Gustav Swanson, then at the University of Minnesota, invited the Duluth Bird Club to join the proposed Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, initiated at St. Cloud in a conference of representatives from the Minneapolis and the T. S. Roberts Bird Clubs. The Duluth Bird Club favored the invitation by delegating a lone representative, the writer, to attend the organization meeting on April 13, at the University of Minnesota. Ten delegates represented St. Cloud, who with a large representation from Minneapolis, placed the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union on record electing the roster of officers from the three affiliating chapters. Miss Mary I. Elwell from the Duluth chapter became the Vice President. The writer recalls with pleasure the attendance of Dr. Thomas S. Roberts at the meeting and Dr. Arthur T. Henrici who contributed to the program by showing his motion pictures on ducks and other water birds.

The Duluth Bird Club was organized without a formal constitution. Before affiliation with the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union a membership fee of twenty-five cents was charged to cover the cost of mailing notices of the monthly meetings. At the time of the adoption of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union constitution the paragraph pertinent to student memberships in Article III was proposed by the Duluth chapter.

The membership in the Duluth chapter during 1937-38, doubled the original number. Between 1939-42, it exceeded forty. A group of interested bird students from Cloquet joined the Duluth Bird Club and attended meetings during those years. After organ-

ization of the Cloquet chapter, the regular membership fluctuated between twenty and thirty with student memberships seldom exceeding twenty.

The meetings of the Duluth Bird Club have been held in the biology laboratory of the State Teachers College on the second Wednesday, (the current year, changed to the second Thursday) of each month of the school year. The programs have been initiated by a committee with a program chairman, at present Miss Evelyn Jones. The study of bird identification by the use of manuals has been supplemented by assignments of reports on selected bird families. Almost every year water and shore birds, hawks, owls, warblers, and sparrows have been covered by illustrated talks by various members.

Some use has been made of local talent, of people qualified to pass on information on nature education. Here-with are mentioned G. S. Stevens, who showed motion pictures on birds and raccoons taken in his sanctuary at Fond du Lac, and O. R. Hamilton, who spoke on flight mechanism of birds. Mr. and Mrs. M. I. Smith have shown fine kodachrome slides on common birds on more than one occasion. The club has also sponsored nationally known lecturers, Dr. O. S. Pettingill, Jr., and Bert Harwell. Guests are welcome to attend the regular meetings; those with a special program are open to the public with a small admission charge.

Through field study the club membership has made an effort to contribute notes, nesting data, and population counts to THE FLICKER. The club members have helped to place on record in the state the red-throated loon and the varied thrush. Additional nesting data of the piping plover have been recorded, and sight records of avocet and Hudsonian curlews have been established. Student members who have contributed articles and com-

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pared data to THE FLICKER are Casimir Hero and John Tidball.

The second annual meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union was held in Duluth, May 28, 1939. Field trips were held on Minnesota Point, and on that day of fog and falling mist over ninety species of birds were identified. The nesting piping plovers were observed at close range from a blind. Luncheon was served to sixty-five members attending the convention; some twenty members attended from the St. Cloud chapter, including Professor G. Friedrich. The entire membership was delighted and felt honored by the attendance of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas S. Roberts. Dr. Roberts in his talk invited the membership to hold the next meeting at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, the construction of which would be completed at that time. The Duluth chapter also served as the host in the 1945, annual meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union on May 19.

In addition to having served as the first Vice President, Miss Mary I Elwell has been elected at successive terms to the offices of the Secretary-treasurer, and the President of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.

In the Duluth chapter, in addition to the first officers, the following have served: President, Miss Evelyn Jones; Mrs. T. J. Kitts; Miss Alma Chesley; Joel Bronoel. Vice President, Mrs. T. J. Kitts; Miss Alma Chesley; Mrs. Lee Taylor; Miss Frances Riddle. Secretary, Miss Catherine Vavra; Miss Christine Johnson; Miss Esther Larson; Miss Frances Riddle; Miss Mollie Korgen. Treasurer, Miss Alma Chesley; Miss Hulda Adams; Miss Harriet Lockhart. Regional Editors, Miss Marie Gleason; Miss Evelyn Jones; and the writer.

The writer feels enriched by the fellowship and fine cooperation manifested by the membership of the Duluth Bird Club. May its spirit never lag in the study of birds for their own sake. State Teachers College, Duluth, Minn.

## METAL WORKING WREN

Birds are funny. They'll build nests in the strangest places: and a favorite place, it seems, is in a Superior meter box. Such a box, it may be explained, used in some of our older installations, is placed directly ahead of the meter. Inside the box is considerable bare copper, in the form of leads, contacts, points, etc. All this is nicely sealed up with no one allowed to enter—not even birds.

But in a few cases it has happened that a “knockout” opening, a hole in the box about an inch across, has not been closed off; and then the wrens think it's a bird house made especially for them, and such nests as they build!

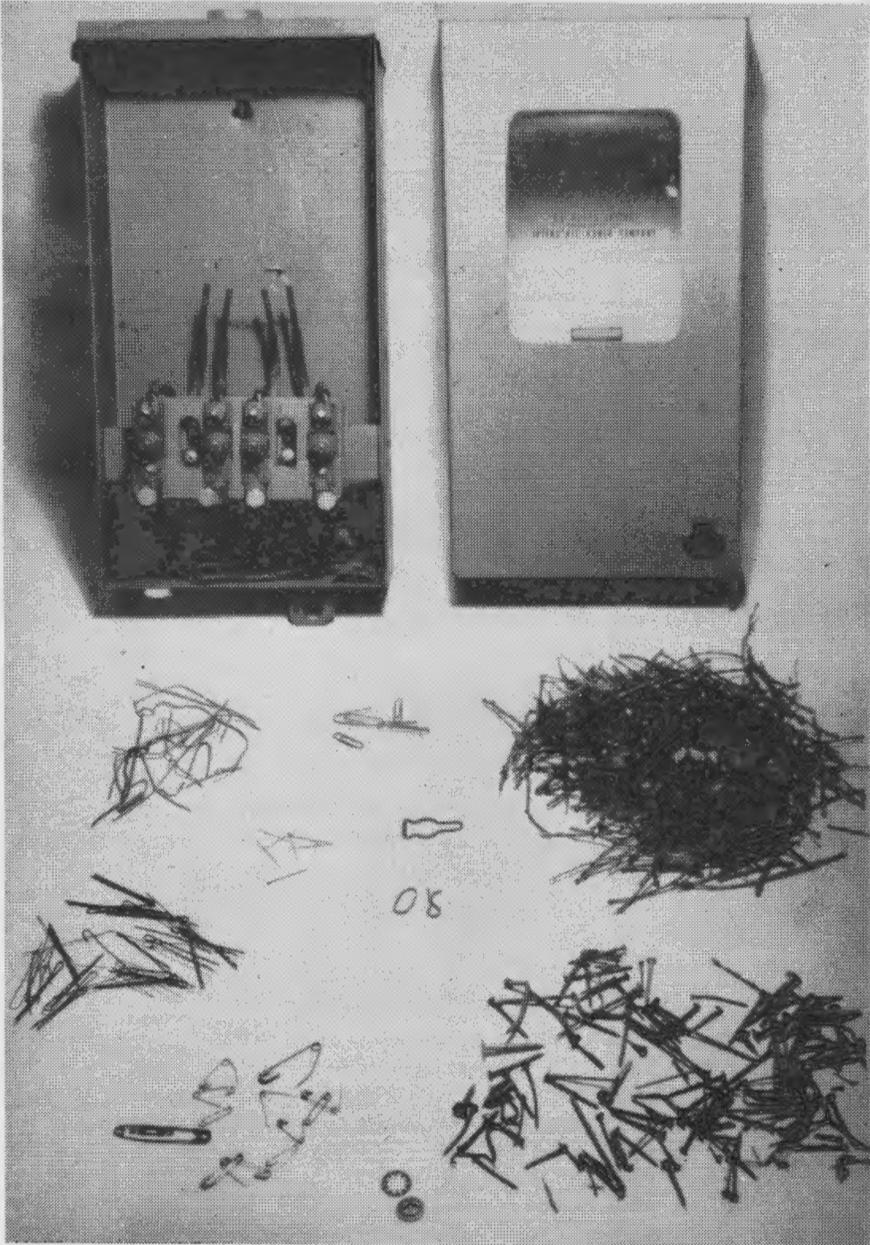
John Russell, inspecting installations in the Bemidji district recently, uncovered a prize, for not only had the wren dragged in a full sized nest, piece by

piece, through this small opening, but she had built it largely of metal. Shown. . . (in the picture) are most of the items used, and included are fourteen pieces of wire, one to five inches long, four paper clips, one quart of assorted twigs and strings, eight pins, one garter fastener, two rubber bands, twenty-eight hair pins, thirteen safety pins, one metal button, one lock washer and one-hundred fifteen assorted nails.

How all this could be laced together on top of “live” copper, without our little bird as much as scorching a wing, isn't explained. Yet here, where a single false move would be fatal, a family was born, fed and raised, without harming a feather. You couldn't do it!

(Arne Arneson, of Fergus Falls, sent in a copy of the October, 1945, issue of his Company's paper, HI-LITES, in which appeared the above article and picture of this unusual wren's nest. It is reprinted through the courtesy of the Otter Tail Power Co.)

On the next page is shown just what went into the making of this Metal Working Wren's nest. Believing one picture to be worth ten thousand words, here is the picture. You may see for yourself.



*Courtesy of Otter Tail Power Co.*

### Metal Working Wren Takes Over Meter Box

March, 1946

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## NOTES OF INTEREST

**ANOTHER SNOWY OWL YEAR**—It is becoming increasingly evident that 1945-46 is another year of abundance for the big arctic snowy owl here in Minnesota. Reports from Michigan and Wisconsin indicate a large wave of the birds in those states also. All definite records coming in to the writer so far this season have been recorded, but these undoubtedly represent only a random sample of what apparently is an unprecedented influx of these owls. Dr. Alfred Gross of Bowdoin College, Maine, has summarized the snowy owl occurrences for a number of years past in the AUK and we have been asked by him to collect all possible reports on these birds from Minnesota. Will readers please send in to the writer, or to Dr. O. S. Pettingill, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, all definite records and they will be forwarded to Dr. Gross.

The following are a few of the snowy owl reports so far collected: One seen by the writer on a muskrat house in a slough just north of Minneapolis. One taken in a muskrat trap at Medicine Lake near Minneapolis, reported by Ben Cohen, local game warden. One seen by Dr. William Marshall perched on the Administration building at the University Farm in St. Paul. One seen in northeast Minneapolis by George Rickert. Mrs. L. Koppen of St. Louis Park reported that one perched on her clothes line pole for some time. Two shot near Medicine Lake were reported by Capt. J. R. Miller. Mr. A. C. Rosenwinkel saw one at the State Fish Hatchery in St. Paul. H. M. Wilson reported seeing one near St. Cloud. State Refuge Patrolman Fairbanks reported 4 near Waskish, on Red Lake, one having been killed by flying into a wire. State Patrolman Laughy reported "several" seen near Baudette. Aside from these a number of others have been reported with less definite data and numerous newspaper articles have mentioned snowy owls being shot.

It is important for all Minnesota Ornithologists' Union members to help out in educating the shooting public to the fact that this bird is now protected in Minnesota and only those shot in the act of damaging poultry are being destroyed within the law. Undoubtedly the great majority of the birds shot are taken by shooters who simply shoot them because they are big and showy and perhaps they want to have them mounted. All such shooting is now prohibited by Minnesota law. —W. J. Breckenridge, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**WINTER BIRD LIFE IN THE DULUTH AREA**—The winter of 1945-46 has been notable for the presence of the larger owls, the great horned and its arctic variety, the barred and the snowy owls. They have been frequently observed in the field, and either as captured or killed specimens of curiosity, they have been featured in local newspapers with their glorified captors, unmindful or ignorant of the protection conferred upon wild birds by the 1945 State Legislature.

Attempts have been made by the writer and others to inform the public of the indiscriminate slaughter of hawks and owls. Yet, reportedly between eighty and one hundred destroyed owls have come to the attention of bird students in Duluth alone. Snowy and barred owls are known to have been killed along with the great horned owls. Similarly, the protected hawks have suffered

destruction. American rough-legged hawks during the fall flight are too often killed. One shot goshawk was reported in the early winter along with American rough-legged hawks.

The mid-winter bird count and subsequent observations reveal the scarcity of smaller birds. Nearly every day one hears pine grosbeaks and frequently small flocks of six to eight are seen, but evening grosbeaks are rare. The second week in January, five were seen on the State Teachers College campus by Miss Edith Peterson. They ate dried-up honeysuckle fruits and the scanty fruits that still remain on box elder and ash trees. The year is notable for absence of mountain ash fruits which is correlated by absence of winter robins. Bohemian waxwings have been observed once; woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches occur in small numbers. G. S. Stevens reported a slate-colored junco at his feeding station at Fond du Lac. —Olga Lakela, Duluth, Minnesota.

**ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE NESTING OF PIPING PLOVERS IN DULUTH**—For several years, between 1936-41, a colony of piping plovers nested on Minnesota Point, in the sand of the bayside beach addition south of the recreation grounds. Since no nests have been found there during the last few years, it was believed that the birds no longer nest in Duluth. Therefore, the finding of a nesting colony on July 8, on a small artificially made island near Duluth Harbor was not altogether without surprise. On that date, the writer observed eight adults alarmed and anxious, indicating nesting, but only a single nest with two eggs could be found. On July 25, Miss Mary I. Elwell with the writer returned to the island and found fourteen young out of the nest. Eight adults were counted, and a nest with two apparently infertile eggs.

The four-acre island of low relief is too close to the shore to serve as a haven for ground nesting birds as one might think on the first impression. Hikers row across with dogs and children; moreover, the wet sand is closing in with sand-bar willows and marsh vegetation leaving but a small area of higher dry terrain suitable for nesting ground. It is hoped that piping plovers will return to the area. At least, it is comforting to know that fourteen young plovers survived the hazards, increasing the population of the colony.—Olga Lakela, Duluth, Minnesota.

**FURTHER OBSERVATIONS OF THE RED-THROATED LOON IN DULUTH**—Curiously enough all observations on the red-throated loon in Duluth are summer records. Perhaps the species of the remote north finds Lake Superior a counterpart of the arctic waters.

In the morning of June 13, 1945, I explored Minnesota Point for additional plant species. On my return in the mid-morning as I was taking a long last look at Lake Superior, calm and expansive in the evanescent fog, the revealing shafts of light brought into view birds that quickened my breath. I retraced my steps for some distance for a closer view, as the birds were swimming in two formations, seven in each, toward the shore waters. Concealed in a blow-out of the sand ridge I waited; the birds unsuspectingly came to the very shore. They were red-throated loons in full breeding plumage. They swam in pairs, and one of a pair appeared a little larger, but there was no color distinction. So gracefully they moved in the calm waters of the shore less than twenty feet below me, that their reflection scarcely blurred into sinuous lines. I quietly left the observation post to find others in vain to share the arctic spectacle. The experience was almost duplicated on July 8, about a mile farther south on Min-

nesota Point, when I discovered three red-throated loons near the shore. Their throat patches appeared smaller than those of the mature birds. Thus, altogether, seventeen individuals were recorded, the largest number ever seen by the writer. —Olga Lakela, Duluth, Minnesota.

A CARDINAL FAMILY—On the fifth of August my husband and I discovered a Cardinal's nest in a small ash tree partly covered by a grape vine. When the wind allowed the leaves of the grape vine to be quiet, we could look directly into the nest from the sleeping porch of our summer cabin near Frontenac. There were three newly hatched young in the nest. They were very weak, naked, and their eyes were not open.

The next day, August 6, was very cool. The female cardinal sat on the nest quite a long while in the morning. My husband saw a house wren perch on the edge of the nest and peck the cardinal babies during the absence of the parents. The mother and father were feeding the babies with large green worms which they tried to bite into pieces. Sometimes they stuffed them down the mouths of the babies until they almost choked, then pulled them out and bit them in two. The female settled down on the nest for the night at six o'clock. We noticed that the crests of both the male and the female were always down when they were working around the nest unless they sensed an intruder.

August 7, the parents were feeding at intervals of as much as a half hour, and we began to understand why the cowbirds created such a havoc with cardinal broods in the early summer. The male was seen cleaning the nest as well as feeding.

August 8, the young birds seemed much stronger. They were able to hold their heads up to the edge of the nest. The eyes of one of them were beginning to open. The parents were busy feeding, and the female spent much time just standing on the edge of the nest and gazing at her young. She then settled down and seemed to pick invisible things from the sides of the nest and off the young. The male seemed to be working harder than the female on the feeding.

August 9, the female spent much time just looking at the young, who were quite quiet. The male whistled near by and the female left. The young cardinals wakened and opened their mouths. The male fed them and then cleaned the nest. The wind ended observations for the day by blowing a large leaf from the grape vine so it obscured our view of the nest.

August 10, two of the young had their eyes open. They filled the nest, but still we could see only down on their bodies, but the pin feathers on their wings were getting longer. The male discovered a chipmunk hunting in the leaves at the foot of the tree and took after him with great fierceness while the chipmunk retreated with the utmost haste, holding his little tail almost perpendicular. The male lingered around the nest during the absence of the female. First he cleaned the nest and then came up on the branch of a sumac not more than three feet from my face. The eyes of all three babies were open.

August 11, the young looked much older. Their heads no longer had more than a tuft or two of down and the dark gray pin feathers were very noticeable. The female fed large green worms and the babies took very large mouthfuls. We could watch them preening their little wing feathers. The ear openings were no longer visible. The nest seemed very full.

August 12, the babies looked brown and there were no longer any bare

spots visible. In the afternoon I discovered that the nest was empty and we were most concerned as there had been no crawling around or climbing on the edge of the nest as far as we had been able to see. We were reassured as to their safety when we noticed that the parents were chipping constantly in the ravine below the nest and continued to do this until dark.

August 13, the chipping continued and finally we discovered one of the babies perched in a small tree behind the sleeping porch. It looked gunmetal gray in this light and we could see just the beginning of a crest. There were still bare spots on its neck and under the wings. We were impressed with its helplessness.

August 21, there was a young cardinal in a tree by the cabin. Its feathers looked full grown. Its bill was dark, and there was just a suggestion of russet on the wings and crest. It flew about while the male had to hunt for it each time he wanted to feed it. The female was not in evidence and we concluded that she was busy with the other two babies, which proved to be the case when we saw her with them a few days later. —Nell M. Chamberlain, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Chamberlain presented the above article, "A Cardinal Family" as a paper at a meeting of the Minneapolis Audubon Society.

**BLACK-HEADED SAPSUCKER, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, AND CARDINAL**—I was interested in reading about the black-headed female sapsucker in the October issue of *THE FLICKER* and immediately went to get my notes which I had made last spring. Our sapsucker was black-headed also, but with the aid of field glasses I discovered a few red feathers around the edge of the black. She remained with us for nearly four weeks from April 18 through May 14, 1945, commuting frequently between a mountain ash and a maple tree in our yard. As the mountain ash bears scars of many years, we did not enjoy such a long visit from her. Her presence, however, did bring some pleasure, too. An early butterfly lingered long on the freshly opened holes. A ruby-crowned kinglet stopped to drink as he was passing by. A myrtle warbler thought each freshly opened sap cup more inviting than the one before and followed this female sapsucker closely, remaining as long as the sapsucker did. Though there were several myrtle warblers at different times the one which remained was so highly colored, the yellow crown so gorgeous, and its actions so predictable, that it seemed it must have been the same one which came on April 18, too. I'll have to admit that it sounds like a Ripley story.

Since 8 a.m., October 30, we have been having frequent short visits from a male red-bellied woodpecker. Several times during the past two winters a female has come to our feeding tray, but not the male. While living at St. Croix Falls a male came to our yard one very stormy Washington's birthday and remained for about ten days, never returning after that. Our daughter had a male, often last winter, at their country home at Hager, Wisconsin, directly across from Red Wing, but never saw the female. They are evidently becoming more common as the cardinal is in these northern states and are a welcome addition as they remain with us throughout the winter months. We have been feeding the cardinal for nine years, six years at St. Croix Falls and three at Hudson. The more stormy the day the more sure we are that our feeding trays will be filled with hungry, welcome birds. —Stella P. Owen, Hudson, Wisconsin.

**THE GREATER SCAUP IN MINNESOTA**—One of the birds that duck hunters commonly refer to in the late fall is the so-called "big bluebill." Whenever they

find a lesser scaup in a well-developed plumage many sportsmen think that they have bagged a different species of bird from the "little bluebill." Careful measurements and observation usually shows the bagged birds to be well fed and heavily feathered lesser scaup. We have not had too many records of greater scaup in Minnesota, as in the first edition of *BIRDS OF MINNESOTA*, Dr. Thomas S. Roberts records only three definite specimens of the greater scaup for this state.

Within the last decade a number of observers have taken greater scaup in Minnesota during spring and fall migration. The greater scaup is either becoming more common in this state or bird students are becoming more observant, as several specimens of the greater scaup have been added to the collection of bird skins at the Natural History Museum of the University of Minnesota. Dr. William P. Abbot has been the chief contributor as he has sent in specimens to the Museum of a male taken at Perch Lake, Carleton County, on October 25, 1935; a female taken at Grand Marais on May 4, 1927; and a female taken at Grand Marais in October, 1945. Additional specimens of greater scaup in the collection include a male from Thief Lake taken on April 24, 1937; a female from Leech Lake shot on November 9, 1941; a male bagged on Ten Mile Lake on November 9, 1941 (same date as previous entry); a female shot on Sand Lake in Itasca County on October 28, 1942; and a female shot at Fergus Falls on November 11, 1944.

While hunting last fall on Hook Lake in McLeod County on November 10, 1945, with Alan Hollander and Bert Ojala, it was the writer's privilege to observe and bag some greater scaup. In the mixed bag of birds taken during a two-day shoot, there was included mallards, redheads, canvas-back, buffle-head, lesser scaup, and greater scaup. Four birds picked out of the bag were identified as greater scaup. The coarser and heavier character of the bill of the greater scaup was very evident in comparing it with the lesser scaup. When one examines the two birds in the hand, there is a striking difference in the bill which is more than 1 inch at the widest point, and the greater scaup also has a much heavier nail at the end of the bill. The wing measurement was 8.50 inches, while the body length of a typical bird was 18 inches. Of the four birds identified as greater scaup, one male bird was added to the collection at the Minnesota Natural History Museum at the University of Minnesota. —**Lewis L. Barrett, Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES ON DUCKS**—As we do not have many late fall migration records of some of our early migrant ducks the following observations may be of interest:

The blue-winged teal is usually thought of as a "warm weather" duck in Minnesota as most "blue-wings" leave for the South in large numbers in September and October. On November 10, 1945, a single blue-winged teal was observed in McLeod County. This single bird may have been a cripple although the bird took flight. However, as late as November 24, 1945, a group of four blue-winged teal were observed in Hennepin County.

Like the blue-winged teal the shoveler is usually thought of as an early migrant in the fall. While duck hunting in Ottertail County on November 18, 1944, a flock of about 20 shovelers were observed. Again in McLeod County on November 10, 1945, a group of 12 spoonbills came in to the decoys.—**Lewis L. Barrett, Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

**WINTER BIRDS IN AND NEAR THE TWIN CITIES**—The appearance of the

snowy owl in and near the Twin Cities was reported several times during late November and early December, 1945. One of these appearances was called to my attention on November 20, by Dr. W. J. Breckenridge. It was in a swamp north of Minneapolis, not far from the Mississippi River. This swamp at that time was frozen and covered with snow, and the owl, perched on a muskrat house at some distance, was almost invisible, its plumage was so white. After nearly two hours it flew to a dead tree where it perched and gazed solemnly down at a lovely companion, also white, a whistling swan that drifted in an open stream. The swan had lived there all summer, Dr. Breckenridge said, and he presumed it had been injured during migration so had not been able to fly North. The picture of a whistling swan and a snowy owl together, in a winter scene, is one for my album of memories.

A flock of red-winged blackbirds is again spending the winter in the Minnesota River bottoms. At the time of my Christmas Bird Count they numbered about two hundred fifty and among them there were two female red-winged blackbirds and three rusty blackbirds. On February 8, 1946, a cold windy day, I found that two cowbirds, two Brewer's blackbirds, and a bronzed grackle had joined them. Due to the scarcity of birds at this season, they made a gladsome picture against a landscape of hazy blue, black, and white as they wheeled about in a compact flock, finally alighting in a tree where they perched facing the wind and uttered a chorus of song as if it were spring.

It is unusual to see female "redwings" here in winter. Dr. Roberts lists only two records in his LOGBOOK OF MINNESOTA BIRD LIFE. Both reports were by A. C. Rosenwinkel, December 14, 1924, and January 16, 1926.

Out on Cedar Avenue near Nicollet the highway crosses a small stream. Nearby there is shallow open water all year and nearly every winter a Wilson's snipe lives there. On January 2, of this year, I saw one there and near by a cold looking mourning dove perched on a telegraph wire. It paid no attention to me until I approached to within a few feet of it. A week later a very pert flicker flitted among the trees at Bloomington Ferry Bridge and a beautiful rough-legged hawk hovered over the adjacent marshland. Two pileated woodpeckers spend some of their time at Purgatory Springs where they have stripped large patches of bark from dead trees. Some of these patches are several feet in length.

The evening and pine grosbeaks are sojourning in Glenwood Park this winter. The evening grosbeaks are quite tame and remain near by, chirping companionably, but the pine grosbeaks are more shy. Sometimes they come to take a bath in a little rill, preen and soon fly away.

Of course, all bird observers know one must spend a great deal of time in the field in winter in order to have a bird list of any length, and then too, it is not possible to see every specie of bird that could be here. However, the joy would be gone from birding if one could find them all; there would be no pleasant anticipation. It is easily possible for anyone spending two days a week in the field in and near the Twin Cities to list forty species or more from January 1 to March 1. My list dated from January 1, 1946, to February 11, 1946, contains the following species, numbering forty-five: ring-necked pheasant, blue jay, brown creeper, slate-colored junco, tree sparrow, hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, cardinal, black-capped chickadee, red-winged blackbird, rusty blackbird, mourning dove, Wilson's snipe, English sparrow, quail, northern shrike, starling, redpoll, goldfinch, robin, red-tailed hawk, northern flicker, rough-legged hawk, red-bellied woodpecker, evening grosbeak, pine

grosbeak, great horned owl, purple finch, bronzed grackle, cowbird, Brewer's blackbird, pileated woodpecker, crow, Hungarian partridge, Cooper's hawk, mallard, golden-eye, American merganser, Lapland longspur, sparrow hawk, cedar waxwing, barred owl, golden-crowned kinglet, and horned lark. —Mary Lupient, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**NESTING BIRDS OF PREY**—(Editor's Note: A fine list of nesting data was sent in by Ross Olson of St. Paul a little too late for inclusion in our nesting summary which appeared in the December, 1945, issue of *THE FLICKER*. The number of nests of the hawks and owls in his report was very unusual, however, so we are printing it as a separate note with his interesting annotations. Mr. Olson has a lively interest in the birds of prey and aside from being keen about studying these birds in the field, he has entered rather actively into the sport of falconry.)

**DUCK HAWKS:** Wisconsin, opposite the Winona Hills region. April 22, apparently the nest was on a ledge 30 ft. from top and 120 ft. from bottom. One hawk, probably the falcon, drove a crow away from near the nest, without attempting to kill it. May 19, only one bird left, no nest; someone had been shooting at top of cliff. Duck Hawk: Same general area as the preceding. April 22, 4 eggs, 50 ft. from top and 100 ft. from bottom of cliff. Eggs on sand and chipped rock in small ledge or recess. Falcon swooped but did not hit us. May 19, three 2-weeks-old young and one infertile egg. June 2, still there. Duck Hawk: Same area as preceding. Peregrine falcons at this cliff acted as if nesting on June 2. Later in year the owner said they raised one bird. Duck Hawk: North Shore of Superior. June 15, 3 young and infertile egg on ledge 75 ft. from top, 50 ft. from bottom. About 3½ weeks old. Food—herring gulls, jays and crows. While we climbed cliff one of the pair took its anger out on a passing gull and hit it with several short quick swoops finally forcing it into Superior. Left it unharmed. Duck Hawk, same area as preceding. June 9, 3 two-week old young. This eyrie was also visible from the top of the cliff. Young were placed behind some thorny bushes 30 ft. above the water and only 40 ft. from the top of the cliff. The nest could be climbed to from the water line since the ledge ran right down to the water. Duck Hawk: Lake Saganaga, four 3-week old young on June 12. Ten ft. from top and 50 ft. above the water.

**GOSHAWK:** St. Louis Co., June 9, 2 week-old young, 40 ft. up in aspen.

**COOPER'S HAWK:** Ramsey Co., June 22, 5 young, 2 weeks old, 40 ft. up in oak. Cooper's hawk: St. Paul, May 25, 4 eggs, 30 ft. up in maple, nest destroyed later.

**RED-TAILED HAWK:** Dakota Co., April 8, building. April 22, this nest deserted, but new nest with 2 eggs, 40 ft. up in oak. May 19, two newly hatched young. Red-tailed hawk: Diamond Bluff, Pierce Co., Wisconsin. Adult bird flew from near old nest on cliff, April 20; did not nest however. Red-tailed hawk: Bay City, Pierce Co., Wisconsin, April 22. Huge nest with 2 eggs on top of high bluff 35 ft. up in oak. Nest had been used for at least 4 years. May 19, two week and a half-old young.

**OSPREY:** Canada, 25 miles, N.N.E. of International Falls. Two young July 25, 40 ft. up in dead pine. One young bird died when very young.

**SPARROW HAWK:** Ramsey Co., 35 ft. up in cottonwood; April 14, 5 eggs. May 6, one young; 4 eggs. May 25, 5 fully fledged young. Sparrow hawk: St. Paul, May 6, flew from hollow in cottonwood, 45 ft. up. May 25, four partly in-

cubated eggs deserted. June 12, 4 eggs in new hollow, a red-headed woodpecker hole in same tree.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** Nine-mile Creek, May 27, 3 eggs, 20 ft. up in oak. Broadwinged hawk: Ramsey Co., May 16, 3 eggs, 25 ft. up in aspen. Towards evening a male was roosting near nest while female was incubating.

**RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:** Alma, Buffalo Co., Wisconsin. April 21, 2 eggs 35 ft. up in willow, nest lined with green branches. June 2, nest deserted. Red-shouldered hawk: April 22, flew from nest in hardwood swamp. May 19, 3 newly-hatched young, one garter snake, mother very brave. June 2, still there.

**GREAT-HORNED OWL:** Cedar Avenue and Minnesota River. March 4, 75 ft. up in cottonwood, probably eggs. Great-horned owl: Ramsey Co., April 15, 35 ft. up in oak, two-week old young. Flicker and pheasant remains. April 29, 2 young being fed pheasant, rabbit, flicker, and brown thrasher. May 19, young out. Great-horned owl: Dakota Co., Minnesota. One young bird shot just after leaving nest in May.—**Ross Olson, St. Paul, Minnesota.**

**OVER-BIRD'S NEST IN HUNTER'S PARK**—Some friends and I were running up a slight rise in a pasture on the Howard Mills Road in Hunter's Park, Duluth, just before twilight on June 6. Suddenly I heard a whirring noise as of wings beating frantically and was stopped very suddenly by a bird flying in my face. I stood still and watched the flight of the bird not realizing what it was until I heard the unmistakable "teacher—teacher" call of the oven-bird as the mother tried to coax me to come after her. Needless to say, I looked carefully at my feet, then dropped to my knees and there right before me, hidden by as much old dried grass as could be piled about, was a perfect oven-bird's nest. It was just like the outdoor ovens used by the Provincial French people in the Gaspé' district.

I pushed aside a few wisps of hay, though the opening left by the mother's hasty departure was large enough for us to get a fairly good look, when out came four wide open mouths clamoring for attention. All of us took an excited look, replaced the hay, and left the poor flustered mother who had been calling and calling in vain while she darted about approximately 50 to 100 feet from the nest.

We took careful note of the location of this unusual nest and though I could not visit it again, I was informed that the birds grew normally and were none the worse for our visit. —**Evelyn S. Palmer, Duluth, Minnesota.**

**THE START OF AN INTERESTING STUDY AT MILACA**—During the fall and winter of 1944 and the spring of 1945, I began a study of 265 acres of land that has recently been dedicated to conservation by the city and county fathers. This land is of mixed habitat, only about one-half mile from Milaca. It consists of areas of marsh land, open fields, two wooded areas (largely quaking aspen and oak), one of which has been grazed and the other not, a river edge where we have a colony of beaver, and areas thickly covered with scrub poplar, oak, and bushes (hazel, rose, blackberry, and raspberry). There are also two areas where in the last two years, the agriculture class and my conservation class have planted 15,000 red and white pine, red and white cedar, white spruce, and tamarack. The local council has purchased 160 acres more to be added to this tract this summer and future plans call for the flooding of the marsh area to make a duck lake. An interesting study in succession should unfold in the next few years as the conifers grow and the other plans for its development take

place. My study has since been interrupted by service in the Navy, so I missed out on getting more complete nesting records that I wanted but I will include the few I was able to get. I will also include a composite list of all those that I have recorded on the land since a year ago last September.

Migration List, Spring, 1945. (Date indicates when first seen. The asterisk (\*) precedes those few not seen on this area.) March 18—American golden-eye, marsh hawk, killdeer, robin, bluebird, eastern meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, song sparrow. March 24—great blue heron, \*Canada goose (flock of 44), red-tailed hawk, western meadowlark, bronzed grackle, fox sparrow. March 25—American merganser (10), brown creeper, golden-crowned kinglet. March 29—mourning dove, rusty blackbird. March 30—flicker, phoebe. April 2—hermit thrush, ruby-crowned kinglet, myrtle warbler, pine siskin. April 4—American bittern, belted kingfisher. April 21—purple martin, purple finch, swamp sparrow. April 25—blue-winged teal, yellow-bellied sapsucker, white-throated sparrow. April 28—tree swallow, cowbird, chipping sparrow. April 29—broad-winged hawk. May 6—brown thrasher, blue-headed vireo, black and white warbler, orange-crowned warbler, palm warbler. May 13—whip-poor-will, wood pewee, alder flycatcher, bank swallow, house wren, short-billed marsh wren, olive-backed thrush, gray-cheeked thrush, veery, parula warbler, yellow warbler, oven-bird, Grinnell's water thrush, clay-colored sparrow, Lincoln's sparrow. May 16—solitary sandpiper, chimney swift.

May 25—spotted sandpiper, crested flycatcher, catbird, wood thrush, \*black-throated green warbler, bay-breasted warbler, Connecticut warbler, northern yellow-throat, American redstart, Baltimore oriole, red-eyed towhee. May 26—black tern, ruby-throated hummingbird, least flycatcher, red-eyed vireo, Tennessee warbler, blackburnian warbler, black-poll warbler, mourning warbler. May 27—nighthawk, yellow-bellied flycatcher, warbling vireo, Nashville warbler, magnolia warbler. May 28—chestnut-sided warbler, \*Arkansas kingbird. May 30—lesser scaup duck, common tern, \*prothonotary warbler (on the Rum River), scarlet tanager. June 2—Wilson's warbler. June 3—black-billed cuckoo, cedar waxwing, yellow-throated vireo, Philadelphia vireo, Canada warbler, field sparrow. June 5—green heron, red-headed woodpecker, kingbird. June 7—rose-breasted grosbeak, bobolink, indigo bunting, Savannah sparrow.

The following, in addition to those in the above migration list, were seen on this land from September 3, 1944 to June 11, 1945, making a total of 126 species. Holboell's grebe, pied-billed grebe, mallard, ruffed grouse, ring-necked pheasant, sora, woodcock, Wilson's snipe, rock dove (domesticated), great horned owl, barred owl, pileated woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, barn swallow, blue jay, crow, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, prairie marsh wren, starling, magnolia warbler, pine warbler, goldfinch, Nelson's sparrow, vesper sparrow, slate-colored junco, and tree sparrow.

The following few nests were actually found. Many other species I am sure nested on the tract. September 4, 1944—Goldfinch, 3 newly hatched young and one egg. March 11, 1945—American woodcock, 4 eggs. Nest revisited June 5 and it was deserted although the egg shells left indicated a successful hatching. May 12—Bank swallow, 17 nestholes occupied in bank. June 4—Clay colored sparrow, two nests with 4 eggs each. Bluebird, nest 15 feet up in white birch. Downy Woodpecker. Least flycatcher, newly completed nest in crotch of aspen. June 5—Redstart, building nest. Yellow warbler, building nest. June 11—Catbird, nest with 2 eggs.—Pershing Hofslund, S/2c, Milaca, Minnesota.

## - CALL NOTES -

The St. Paul Bird Club is the ninth and latest society to affiliate with the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. Thirty-six of their members have already joined the state organization.

The officers of the St. Paul Bird Club are: Kenneth Morrison, president; Dr. Henry Bjorndahl, vice president; R. A. Kortmann, treasurer; Mrs. T. C. Beard, secretary; Mrs. R. M. Elliot and Brother Hubert Lewis, directors at large.

Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month, September through May, at 7:45 p.m. at the St. Paul public library.

After three years in the Navy, as a Celestial Navigation instructor, Milton D. Thompson is happy to be free from military rules and regulations and just be a civilian again. On January 2, he returned to his former position as Director of the Museum of the Minneapolis Public Library.

One of Mr. Thompson's outstanding accomplishments while in service was writing the Star Course for the Navigation Training section. He also took a navigation hop to Bermuda, and navigated a patrol bomber to Kodiak, Alaska.

Milton says flying over snow-capped Mt. Helens, Ranier, and up Puget Sound was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen, and the scenery became even more beautiful as they neared Yakitat, with the tallest mountains of the continent around them, snow-covered down to the water's edge. On the way back from Kodiak, he served as aide to Lt. Colonel Kolemko, Russian attache' at Washington. Thirty-six hours after leaving Kodiak, he was back in Norfolk. Such is the air-age!

Two Audubon Screen Tour programs presented in Minneapolis by the Min-

neapolis Science Museum Society, with which the Minneapolis Bird Club is affiliated, remain to be seen: March 25, "From Seashore to Glacier," by Edna Maslowski; and May 2, "From Coast to Crest," by Alexander Sprunt Jr. The programs are in the auditorium of Jefferson Junior High School at 8 p.m.

Mrs. Stella P. Owen of Hudson, Wisconsin, writes, "Only the beautiful St. Croix River separates us from my native state, Minnesota, so I find myself equally interested in the bird lore of each state and belong to both the Minnesota and Wisconsin Ornithological Societies, thus having the double privilege of enjoying both THE FLICKER and the PASSENGER PIGEON. I find the CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER equally worthwhile. Each magazine grows better and better. I eagerly await their coming.

"But this note is prompted by the notes from Montevideo on a black-headed female sapsucker. Maybe they will be as interested in ours as we were in theirs." (See Notes of Interest.)

Miss Rhoda Green, associate editor of THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER, and former director of the Minneapolis Public Library Museum, was married on Monday, January 7, 1946, to Robert C. Lyons. Mr. and Mrs. Lyons will make their home in Long Island, New York. Friends who wish to keep in touch with Mrs. Lyons may write to her at 11544—175th St., St. Alban's 12, Long Island, New York.

Miss Adeline Peterson reports that members of the Cloquet Bird Club at a recent meeting enjoyed the showing of two colored movie films obtained from the University of Wisconsin. The two were entitled: "Birds of the Woodlands," and "Birds of the Inland Waterways." These films proved profit-

able as well as entertaining.

In order to aid the new members especially, pictures of birds were put into envelopes with a key to each group. By attempting to identify them and later checking with the key, it was possible to learn markings of many of the more common birds.

Study of birds is on the program for the entire family when the Minneapolis Bird Club presents for the eighth year, ADVENTURES IN BIRDLAND, a popular non-technical course in the identification of the common birds of Minnesota. It is open to the public for a small fee.

The course consists of six lectures, supplemented with slides, motion pictures, and specimen exhibits of mounted birds and bird skins; three field trips, where the birds are seen in their natural habitat; and a review lesson.

All the lectures will be given by Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, curator of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota. Starting on Tuesday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m., at the Minneapolis public library museum, Dr. Breckenridge will tell the Bird Club how to identify surface-feeding ducks, diving ducks, and fish ducks. On March 26, he will discuss predators and game birds; April 2, shore birds and woodpeckers; April 9, aerial feed-

ers and perching birds; April 16, warblers; April 23, birds of the woods and fields.

The last meeting of the course, April 30, will be a review session, under the direction of the board of directors, at which about 100 bird specimens will be exhibited for identification. Each member tests his knowledge by seeing how many birds he can identify.

George N. Rysgaard is back in civilian life once more. He is museum assistant at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, and treasurer of the Minnesota Bird Club. Mr. Rysgaard is working for a Ph. D. degree at the University of Minnesota. In spite of his busy days, he took time out to compile the winter bird counts which are published elsewhere in this issue. It is through George's generous financial contribution to the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union that it has been possible to have pictures in THE FLICKER this year.

He is also responsible for getting a new member for the MOU, having added matrimony to his other undertakings. On Saturday, February 9, at Hamline Methodist church, St. Paul, the marriage of Frances Elizabeth Hupfer, daughter of Mrs. P. H. Clayden, Red Wing, Minnesota, and George Rysgaard took place.

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*The deadline for manuscripts for the May, 1946, issue of THE FLICKER is April 10. The editors urge you to contribute regularly, articles and notes, and to get them in as early as possible. It takes many typewritten pages to make an issue.*

## BOOK REVIEW

*MODERN BIRD STUDY* by Ludlow Griscom. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1945. 190 pages, fifteen photographs, 8 maps. \$2.50.

Ludlow Griscom in his book, *MODERN BIRD STUDY*, traces briefly the history of field ornithology from the collecting days of a generation ago to the present day technique of recognizing the living bird, entirely apart from color, by means of patterns and distinctive marks, tricks of flight, song, etc.

The author, with a background of thirty-five years of active and extended field experience, brings to his readers a wealth of information on the intelligence, capacity, adaptability, and distribution of birds. The chapters on the mysteries of bird migration are unusually well presented.

The first five chapters should appeal to every bird lover. The latter part of the book will interest those who wish to delve into the more scientific side of bird study. —SEVERENA C. HOLMBERG

**MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**  
**Treasurer's Report**  
**December 31, 1945**

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Cash on Hand, January 1, 1945 .....\$ 346.79

**Receipts**

Books .....	243.36
Memberships .....	182.75
Extra Flickers .....	1.75
Reprints .....	4.00
Donation (George N. Rysgaard to Flicker) .....	25.00

**Disbursements**

Books .....	\$ 210.96
Office Expense, Cash Book, Postage, etc. ....	4.15
Banking Expense .....	2.80
Publishing and Mailing Flicker—5 issues .....	193.60
Stationery .....	10.00
Expense Books, Postage, etc. ....	4.96

Total Receipts .....\$ 803.65

Total Disbursements ..... \$ 426.47

Cash on Hand, December 31, 1945 ..... 377.18

\$803.65 \$803.65

**Assets**

Cash on Hand, December 31, 1945 .....\$ 377.18

Investments in Books ..... 19.00

Total Assets .....\$ 396.18

Respectfully submitted,  
Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Treasurer.

# Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Affiliated Societies

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## **LAKEVIEW BRANCH OF THE DULUTH BIRD CLUB**

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Meetings are held at the St. Paul public library at 7:45 p.m., the fourth Thursday of each month from September through May.

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## The Flicker

Organ of the *MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION*

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# THE FLICKER

VOLUME 18

MAY, 1946

NUMBER 2

## Nest of the Winter Wren

by

Mrs. Rollo H. Wells

In the late spring of 1932, we had opened our cottage on Star Island, Cass Lake, as usual and made it in readiness for a later vacation. Among several chores, a fresh garbage pit was dug.

We did not return to the island until late in July. My husband and I both noticed that as we emptied refuse into the pit something appeared to dart out. It was quick as a flash; swift as lightning! We could not determine what it was.

But on July 23, after a thorough examination, we discovered a winter wren's nest in a recess of the pit wall about a foot below the surface of the ground. It was supported by large tree roots. One downward root, about as large as my little finger and twice as long, was at the entrance, making a perch. The wren was able to move up along this root on entering her nest.

After several days, the parent bird, no doubt the female, became accustomed to our throwing refuse into the pit and no longer left the nest until a shovel of sand was thrown over the refuse. Let me quote from my notes written on the following days:

July 28. While I hide behind a brush pile, my husband throws sand into the pit, which gives me an opportunity to concentrate on her movements. At the first sign of our activities, she appears at the opening, filling the round entrance. She is so much the color of her surroundings that in the darkness of

the forest I can not distinguish much. Soon she flies out and up on the ground, moving about rather unconcerned, and as Dr. Roberts says in his *BIRDS OF MINNESOTA*, "bobbing its head and jerking its body up and down." She scolds me, but only once, as I keep well hidden on my camp stool behind the brush. My! what a mere scrap of a bird, so tiny and dainty! Then again, when she stretches way up in her bouncing and jerking, her legs appear so long for her size. At times she moves along so mouse-like that I mistake her for a brown leaf fluttering by.

Several times in her absence I quickly put a ladder into the pit from which, at eye level and with the aid of a flash light, I can see the contents of the nest. I count six eggs. They are white, lightly speckled with brown. The entrance and sides make me think of the nest of an oven-bird. There is a rounded covering concealing her entirely from view. It is "artfully concealed," as Mr. Forbush says. It appears to be made of moss and fine twigs. Now returning to the nest, she picks up a feather and carries it in.

August 5. This makes thirteen days of incubation since the beginning of our observations. From the ladder I see no signs of the eggs hatching.

August 6. Fourteen days, and the eggs are in the process of hatching as we can easily see a bit of reddish skin

and fuzzy down after the wren leaves the nest. How strange to think the male is never seen near the nest, nor do we hear him singing.

August 11. Watching today, I discover for the first time two adult wrens. One is inspecting the bushes for insects, while the other broods the young. Since the sexes are alike, of course I can not tell them apart. They are so silent. This keeps enemies from knowing the locality of their nest. Even the babies do not call for food. When a parent stands at the entrance feeding them, not a sound do I hear.

August 15. The little yellow-edged mouths seem to be filling the nest. The wind is quieting down enough so that I can hear a weak lispng noise. I suppose it comes from the hungry babies as the parents are feeding them.

August 17. During a full hour today, I note that the parents bring food only seven times. There is a very large white pine near the wren's home. Often one of the wrens moves up the trunk, reminding me of the brown creeper on its eternal hunt for food.

August 19. The young birds are peering over the edge of the nest showing their beady eyes and a distinct but pale buffy line over their eyes. They are planning to leave soon.

August 21. Early in the morning the parents were at the back door scolding our dog. This indicated that the young had left the nest, and sure enough we found it so. We did not see the young out of the nest, as we left for Minneapolis soon after our wren experience. The next day my husband took the nest out of the pit wall and found one egg left behind.

Even though we did not hear the song of the wren this time, I had heard him sing on Star Island years before. The singer was in company with several young that were following him,

mouse-like, through a small opening into a wooden box and out again. This very picture is well described by John Burroughs who says in speaking of the winter wren, "Such a dapper, fidgety, gesticulating, bobbing-up-and-down-and-out-and-in little bird, and yet full of such sweet, wild melody!"

Florence M. Bailey in describing its song says, "Full of trills, runs, and grace notes, it was a tinkling, rippling roundelay. It made me think of the ruby-crowned kinglet, the volume and ringing quality of both being startling from birds of their size."

P. A. Taverner, in BIRDS OF CANADA, says, "It is perhaps the finest songster of the northern woods. Its song, strangely disconnected yet continuous, composed of jerkily jumbled trills and staccato notes, dies down as though about to cease, only to revive and continue with full vigour several seconds longer. The length of a complete typical song is between eight and ten seconds. . .the longest performance of any of our birds."

In Dr. Roberts' description of its song, he also says that it is "of considerable length."

Mr. Forbush refers to its song during the breeding season and says that he had searched assiduously where he thought surely a nest must be, but had never been able to find one. Could it be that he searched too close to where the wren was singing?

Since my acquaintance with the song of the winter wren is very slight, I am grateful to the above authorities for their excellent descriptions of its song.

When I gave the nest to Dr. Roberts for the museum, he was surprised to hear of this late nesting date. From the nesting dates in his BIRDS OF MINNESOTA, I would consider June to be their average nesting season.

The following is also from BIRDS OF MINNESOTA: Incubation period, house wren, 11 to 13 days (Knight); incubation period, Bewick's wren, 10 to 15 days (Burns); incubation period, Carolina wren, 12 days (Burns); incubation period, long-billed marsh wren,

10 to 13 days (Burns); incubation period, short-billed marsh wren, no records; incubation period, winter wren, no records.

Our record indicates the incubation period of the winter wren is at least 14 days. —Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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## BOOK REVIEW

**A LABORATORY AND FIELD MANUAL OF ORNITHOLOGY**  
*by Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Illustrated by W. J. Breckenridge. Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, 1946: 8½ x 11 in., V 253 pp., 20 pls., 28 text fig., 17 chapt. head. illus., 11 tailpiece illus., 2 charts, 1map. \$3.50.*

*The newly revised and greatly expanded photo offset edition of this publication should prove itself a valuable aid to the serious student of the field or laboratory. In general scope it provides an informational outline for both elementary and advanced courses of study in ornithology. The eighteen sections of the volume deal with pterylosis, internal and external anatomy, classification, plumage, laboratory and field identification, and ecological and life history considerations. All but two sections contain bibliographies of publications pertaining to the subjects concerned, and in the appendices are additional bibliographies divided into five categories for convenience of use.*

*With the various sections throughout the manual are blank laboratory and field charts on which students may record observations and data. Two of the appendices offer valuable suggestions on field methods and the preparation of manuscripts.*

*The material has been well organized for the purpose for which intended, and anyone planning a course of study in ornithology will find the work invaluable. The section heading and tailpiece illustrations by W. J. Breckenridge add much to the overall appearance and interest of the publication. Unfortunately, no acknowledgement is made for the use of many illustrations reproduced from the LOG-BOOK OF MINNESOTA BIRD LIFE and BIRDS OF MINNESOTA by Dr. Thomas S. Roberts. The few small errors of omission encountered are of the type frequently undetected and do not materially detract from the value of the manual. —G. N. Rysgaard.*

# Nesting of the Louisiana Water-Thrush

by

Sam Mc Iver

It was June 6 when we were at the mouth of a small stream that emptied into the St. Croix River near Stillwater. While we were looking for a place to eat, we heard the call of a bird. It grew louder, so we waited for the bird to appear. It was several minutes before it had worked its way along the edge of the river to within eyesight. With its characteristic walk and tail wagging, together with its white underparts, unstriped throat,

and white line over the eye, it was identified as the Louisiana water-thrush. It soon passed by us, but in a few minutes was on its way back and passed us again.

As we ate our lunch, we became aware of the fact that the water-thrush had come back and had been singing quite near us for five or ten minutes. My companion and I crept up to where we could watch it. On the other side of the little stream below the bank and



Photo by Sam McIver

Young Louisiana Water-Thrushes in Nest

near the water was a large flat rock. The water-thrush was walking around on this flat rock with its tail wagging continuously. It seemed to be nervous about something. After fifteen minutes of watchful waiting we saw the bird quickly run up the bank above the rock and disappear.

In a few minutes, it reappeared and then flew away. We immediately went over to where the bird had disappeared into the bank. In a cavity in the bank, hidden by overhanging grass, was a nest with five young water-thrushes.

Evidently they were about ready to leave the nest, because as soon as they were discovered, several of them burst out of the nest and scattered into the grass. The two that remained obligingly posed on the edge of the nest for their picture. The nest was situated in a cavity in a bank and was built of grasses and leaves and lined with rootlets.

We set our cameras up with remote control attachments hoping to get a picture of the parent bird when it returned to the nest. However, she was too wary and after about an hour of watching her walk under and all around our cameras but not near the nest, we gave up and removed our cameras so she could feed her young ones who were probably pretty hungry by then. We never could decide why she would come near the cameras and not the nest. She was evidently camera shy. As soon as we had retreated to a discreet distance, she returned to

the nest and began feeding the remaining young ones. We were wondering how she was going to find the others and feed them when we heard a feeble chirping about ten yards from the nest. The parent bird evidently heard it too, and because she flew to the spot, and through our field glasses we could see her feeding one of the missing young thrushes. She later located and fed the remaining young ones that had left the nest.

As we left to pry into some other bird family's private life. I kept thinking that even though it may be instinct, I could not help but be thrilled and amazed at the sight of a mother bird caring for her young.—**Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

**Editor's Note:** In Dr. T. S. Roberts' LOGBOOK OF MINNESOTA BIRD LIFE he says, "This year (1918) for the first time, the nest of the Louisiana Water-thrush was found in this region. This nest was situated in the bank of a brook running through a wooded ravine some ten miles south of Minneapolis. When discovered by the writer on June 6th it contained nearly fledged young, indicating a surprisingly early date for the arrival of the species in this latitude.

"From July 2nd to 4th (1927) Mr. Breckenridge was on the St. Croix River below Taylor's Falls and found the Louisiana Water-Thrush feeding young on the 3rd.

(June 9, 1929) "nest of Louisiana Water-Thrush, eggs hatching (Evans.)"

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—NOTICE—

*The deadline for manuscripts for publication in the September, 1946, issue of THE FLICKER is August 10. The editors urge you to contribute regularly and to send in your articles and notes as soon as you have written them.*

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# A Field Trip to Western Minnesota

by

Lewis L. Barrett

For nine "bird watchers" of Minneapolis a two-day field trip on April 6 and 7, 1946, to western Minnesota to witness the spring migration of waterfowl was like a dream coming to life. During the days of tire rationing and restricted gasoline supply most of these "bird enthusiasts" had looked ahead to the time when such a trip to western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota would be possible to view the spectacular phenomena of the goose migration. On Saturday morning, April 6, this ambition was approaching the stage of reality when the following group of "bird lovers" started their western jaunt from Minneapolis at about 8:00 o'clock in the morning: Donald and Eldeen Jacobs, Ruth Hopkins, Theodora Malone, Grady Mann, Sam McIver, and Lewis L. Barrett. The first stop was at Lake Minnetonka where the group was joined by Ethel and Lyman Newlin. The observations recorded in this article and the list of species included for the most part were shared in by the above named persons who are members of the Minnesota Bird Club.

Near the Lyman Newlin's home a number of species of birds were observed including wood ducks, and the pileated woodpecker. The group left Lake Minnetonka at 9:15 a.m. with a clear sky, southeast wind, and the temperature at 38° F. As we traveled in a westerly direction along U.S. highway No. 12, frequent stops were made at points of interest. While observing two hovering kingfishers and a pair of

mallard ducks near a marsh, Don Jacobs found a male red-winged blackbird with a broken wing. This bird became a part of our caravan, and was fed frequently along the way.

In observing lesser scaup ducks in some of the small lakes bordering the highway a very uneven sex ratio was evident in some of the counts made. Three typical counts that were made of flocks of lesser scaup ducks were as follows: 12 males and 3 females, 9 males and 3 females, 33 males and 5 females (plus 1 male redhead duck in this flock). These counts showing an unbalanced sex ratio between male and female lesser scaup are very similar to results observed earlier this spring by the writer in lakes near Minneapolis.

An Argus spotting scope which magnified about 20 times, equipped with a tripod, made possible some excellent views of the waterfowl observed during the entire trip.

At noon the caravan stopped at Willmar, Minnesota, for lunch and upon resuming our journey found that the sky had become clouded overhead with a strong southeast wind which made it seem colder. Pasque flowers observed in bloom along the railroad right of way were closed because of the cloudy sky. The thirteen-striped ground squirrel seemed to be staying very near the opening in his burrow as observations were made of the so-called gopher.

During the afternoon increasing numbers of hawks were observed as we traveled across the prairie with the following species much in evidence:

marsh hawk, broad-winged hawk, sparrow hawk, and red-tailed hawk. A group of 3 red-tailed hawks soared above a field and at times alighted on fence posts. One broad-winged hawk sat on a telephone pole within 35 feet of the highway, and as it took flight a pair of mallards flushed from a water filled ditch beside the road. One marsh hawk was observed to advantage against a dark railroad embankment, while another flew along hunting at fence-top height for about a hundred yards. Sparrow hawks and 3 migrant shrikes were observed, usually perched on telephone wires. Flocks of ring-billed gulls were observed in a number of fields as well as on many of the lakes. Small flocks of crows were in the fields with a typical flock containing 19 individuals. A number of flocks of bronzed grackles, rusty and Brewer's blackbirds were observed.

At Morris, Minnesota, we learned from Carl Johnson that one of the sloughs west of town had contained a flock of 80 swans until a few days before our arrival. Snow was lying in the fields between Benson and Morris, Minnesota. Skim ice had been found around the edge of some of the smaller ponds earlier in the morning, but the ponds were soon free of ice. Most of these ponds and smaller lakes along the highway between Morris and Herman, Minnesota, contained mixed flocks of waterfowl. Pintails were the most abundant "puddle ducks." Baldpates were observed in considerable numbers, several flocks containing from 20 to 30 birds. Mallards, blue-winged teal, and shovelers were found in some of the mixed flocks. Mallards and pintails in many cases apparently were paired.

Near Herman, Minnesota, the previous mid-week, a six-inch snowfall lay deep in the shaded ditches and the black moist soil clung to our boots as we hiked across a field. Carrion along

the highway, including 2 dead pheasants and a jack rabbit, attracted small flocks of feeding crows. One of the deeper small lakes near the highway afforded an excellent view of a mixed flock of ducks including more than 50 canvas-back, redhead, ring-necked ducks, lesser scaup, golden-eye ducks and shovelers. A flock of about 50 Canada geese passed overhead.

Late in the afternoon we arrived at Wheaton, Minnesota. Nearby is located Mud Lake and Lake Traverse, which was our immediate destination. From the highway we observed two great blue herons standing upon the old nests in a heron rookery in small trees at the north end of Lake Traverse. The next morning a group of 3 pied-billed grebes were seen, one of which was feeding upon a frog. Near the south shore of Mud Lake a flock of 80 redhead ducks presented a glorious sight in the bright sunlight. The sun came out from behind the clouds about 4:30 p.m. There was a chilling southwest wind blowing off Lake Traverse. This was a spot for hardy "bird enthusiasts." Many ducks plied back and forth across the highway with the scaup especially abundant. The dammed-up water in Mud Lake was being maintained at a high level and many of the diving ducks congregated there because of this condition. As the flocks of red-winged blackbirds surged over the wild rice and cat-tails a tremendous din seemed to arise from the marshy areas of Mud Lake.

Within the last few years the water conditions in the Mud Lake and Lake Traverse area have been raised considerably as a result of dams being constructed by army engineers for flood control purposes. Lake Traverse drains into the Minnesota River, while Mud Lake drains into the Bois de Sioux River which joins the Red River of the North. In order to prevent flooding of the land in the Red River Valley the

White Rock dam was erected at the north end of Mud Lake. This has so altered the water level that much of the Mud Lake marsh area is now permanently under water. At one time Mud Lake was rated as one of the best duck lakes in the entire country. As a result of the high water level much of the aquatic vegetation has been destroyed, and consequently the bulk of the blue and snow goose migration has shifted westward into South Dakota. While at Wheaton, Minnesota, it was reported that during the first week of April there was a concentration of about 300,000 to 400,000 geese in the Sand Lake Refuge area of South Dakota.

Continuing to the South Dakota side of Mud Lake, we traveled northward about 5 miles to a ridge of land where we hoped to watch the evening goose flight. We did not have long to wait before flying-wedge formations of geese began to take form in the western sky. At first in the distance, they looked like tiny bands of smoke or bits of clouds. As the geese came closer their V-shaped flocks were noticeable. Soon the peculiar call of the "wavies" could be heard and then their measured wing beats were evident as they passed overhead. Moving closer to the direct line of flight, we could now see the geese rising from the nearby corn fields where they had been feeding upon waste grain. Closer and closer the flocks seemed to come now as the light was beginning to fade. Several flocks of honking Canada geese passed overhead at practically tree top height as well as myriads of "wavies." Many small flocks of fast moving ducks filtered past the slower moving geese as we watched this magnificent water fowl spectacle overhead. As darkness took the place of day, we could still hear and see the shadowy outline of flocks of geese as they passed over-

head on their flight back to Mud Lake where the geese spend the night. As we climbed into our cars, we felt that we had witnessed one of nature's most thrilling spectacles, a show well worth traveling hundreds of miles to see and we had been fortunate to view it from grandstand seats.

That night as I thought over the day in the field my thoughts went back to the few previous times when the writer had observed "wavies" in migration. On November 4, 1944, while witnessing a remarkably heavy flight of ducks at Mud Lake a small flock of snow geese was observed. Again on November 12, 1942, a group of about 20 snow geese was observed to circle over a quarry pit on Johnson Street, northeast Minneapolis, as the geese were temporarily misled; they probably viewed the pit as a lake because of the overhanging fog. May 6, 1945, a flock of about 80 blue and snow geese were seen flying over Moore Lake which is near the outskirts of northeast Minneapolis. Seeing such great numbers of these geese in a single day seemed to dwarf these previous experiences.

Sunday morning we were up before dawn and were "bird watching." The day was cloudy with a northwest wind and a temperature of about 48° F. Four stately white pelicans arose from the north end of Lake Traverse and flew farther out in the lake, while a group of 6 American mergansers fished near the shore of a protecting point. Returning to the South Dakota side of Mud Lake to higher ground, we continued about a mile beyond our previous day's stand. From this point of vantage we watched the morning goose flight as the birds went out to the fields to feed. Looking eastward we could see flock after flock of geese rising from the lake below. As the mixed flocks of blue and snow geese

approached, their long lines sometimes shifted to one side of our observation area. Many passed overhead where their markings could be observed with the unaided eye. In these mixed flocks the blue geese were about five times as abundant as the snow geese. There were also some sizeable flocks of Canada geese. Leaving the main road and driving back from the lake a few miles the geese were observed feeding in the fields. Because of their wary nature, they were difficult to approach. At one time while hidden on a straw stack two Canada geese flew overhead within 35 feet of the observers. The shallow ponds in eastern South Dakota were teeming with pintails, baldpates, and mallards.

About 9:30 a.m., while standing on the highway between Mud Lake and Lake Traverse, a single white pelican was observed flying overhead. As this bird floated about in a circle in a stately and graceful manner, it was observed carrying a fish crosswise in its large yellow bill. This bird was followed by a flock of 59 white pelicans from the southeast and they made a most impressive sight as these accomplished fliers flew over at very close range. The observers watching below felt that they had viewed one of the most magnificent of our American birds. The white pelicans settled in a bay in Mud Lake where they floated on the water, appearing like a white snowbank of freshly fallen snow against the dark woods on the point in the background.

While enroute to Rothsay, Minnesota, a heavy migration of horned larks was

observed between Breckenridge and Rothsay. In the Breckenridge area considerable numbers of flickers were observed in migration over this prairie area. Many of us had previously thought of the flicker as chiefly a bird of the woods. While looking for the sandhill cranes west of Rothsay a large number of hawks were observed. During the two days in the field a total of 74 hawks were noted, including the following species: 12 red-tailed hawks, 28 marsh hawks, 14 sparrow hawks, 2 sharp-shinned hawks, and 8 unidentified hawks.

A marked concentration of diving ducks was evident in the chain of lakes between Fergus Falls and Elbow Lake and south to Glenwood. On these deep water lakes canvas-back, scaup, red-head, and ring-necked ducks were abundant with some golden-eyes, American and red-breasted mergansers. One lake which could be viewed to advantage from a bluff along the highway contained a concentration of about 1,000 canvas-back ducks. On a lake near Barrett, Minnesota, the sun illuminated some objects which looked like large white posts. Upon closer investigation they proved to be a flock of 7 swans feeding with a mixed flock of diving ducks.

Between Belgrade and Paynesville as the sun began to sink low in the western sky, 3 short-eared owls were observed from the highway. This was a fitting anticlimax to an "ornithological expedition" that was a most interesting experience.

The following 62 species were seen on this two-day trip, April 6 and 7:

pied-billed grebe, white pelican, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, whistling swan, Canada goose, lesser snow goose, blue goose, mallard, gad-wall, baldpate, American pintail, blue-winged teal, shoveler, wood duck, red-head, ring-necked duck, canvas-back, lesser scaup, golden-eye, American merganser, red-breasted merganser, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, broad-winged hawk, marsh hawk, sparrow hawk, ring-necked pheasant, coot, killdeer, herring gull, ring-billed gull,

mourning dove, short-eared owl, belted kingfisher, flicker, pileated woodpecker, downy woodpecker, horned lark, blue jay, crow, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, robin, bluebird, golden-crowned kinglet, ruby-crowned kinglet, migrant shrike, starling, English sparrow, eastern meadowlark, western meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, rusty blackbird, Brewer's blackbird, bronzed grackle, cowbird, slate-colored junco, vesper sparrow, tree sparrow and song sparrow. —Minneapolis Minnesota.

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### MINNESOTA NESTING RECORDS

*Members of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union are again urged to collect information during the spring and summer months on the nesting activities of Minnesota birds. These data should be mailed to the editor, or Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota, not later than September 20.*

*Those who have not collected data before may find the following helpful: Identify all nests by the flushed bird and not by the eggs or nest, record the name of the species, date nest was first found, dates when revisited, number of eggs or young, place found—at least the county, other notes on nest or young, name and address of the observer.*

*If detailed observations are made on one or several nests, over a period of time, the information should be written up as notes or articles for publication in THE FLICKER.*

*Members of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union have cooperated in collecting data for publication in THE FLICKER on the nesting habits of Minnesota birds each year since 1938. Many interesting and significant facts have resulted from these findings. There is still much to be learned about even some of our commonest species as well as the rarer Minnesota nesting birds and those suspected of nesting in our state.*

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### MEMBERS OF THE MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

*Arrangements have been made whereby the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union will get a small discount on all orders they get for Dr. Pettingill's new book; the discount going to the Union treasury for aid in publishing THE FLICKER. There is NO discount allowed to the individual, however. Send orders and remittances to Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Treasurer, Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, 212 S. E. Bedford Street, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. You may add this book to the ones listed in the October, 1945, issue of THE FLICKER:*

A LABORATORY AND FIELD MANUAL OF ORNITHOLOGY,  
Pettingill .....\$3.50

# History of the St. Cloud Bird Club

by

Mrs. George W. Lehrke

Bird lovers in St. Cloud had reported to each other, and sometimes to the newspapers, the arrival of the first robin and wren, the discovery of a humming bird's nest, or the visit of a flock of evening grosbeaks. We knew many people were interested, or as Florence Page Jaques writes, "would like to be interested." We felt the time had come for the organization of a bird club.

In response to telephone calls and notices in the newspapers, a group of people met in Room 101 of Central Junior High School, August 5, 1942. A program of bird films was shown. A club was organized and officers were elected.

Our annual meeting and election of officers is held in the fall. The following have served as officers: 1942-43, Mrs. A. J. Trainor, President; Nester Hiemenz, Vice President; Mrs. George W. Lehrke, Secretary; 1943-44, Mrs. A. J. Trainor, President; Miss Regina Martini, Vice President; Mrs. George W. Lehrke, Secretary; 1944-45, Mrs. A. J. Trainor, President; Miss Monica Misho, Vice President; Miss Loretta Rosenberger, Secretary; 1945-46, Miss Monica Misho, President; Mrs. Charles Beacom, Vice President; Miss Loretta Rosenberger, Secretary.

George W. Friedrich of the Teachers College faculty consented to act as the advisor for the club and has so continued to the present time.

Meetings have been held in the Committee Room of the Public Library the first Wednesday of the months October through March. Beginning next October, the meetings will be held the second Wednesday instead of the first

Wednesday; the meeting place will be the same.

A Christmas census of birds has been taken each year, 1942 through 1945. These winter trips have been in charge of Mr. Friedrich and Mr. Hiemenz.

Field trips are arranged for the months of April and May. The schedule of field trips for 1946, has been announced by Mrs. A. J. Trainor; the date and person in charge is as follows: Saturday, April 6, Martin Gov-ednik; Sunday, April 14, Nester Hiemenz; Sunday, April 28, tour of Saint Benedict's College campus, conducted by one of the Sisters; Sunday, May 5, Miss Connie Stelzig; Sunday, May 12, Miss Alys Mayman; Saturday, May 18, Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Meeting in Minneapolis; Sunday, May 26, picnic meeting and field trip at Paul Eiffert's farm.

Bird Club programs have been given by members; by Harold Searles, Thomas M. Kelley, and Kenneth Morrison of the State Conservation Department; and by Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, President of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.

Bird Life in moving pictures; playing of recordings of bird songs; studies of hawks, owls, ducks, game birds, bird migrations; bird recognition games; birds in art, poetry, and folk lore have all been the topics of bird club programs. Book reviews of such books as Florence Page Jaques, BIRDS ACROSS THE SKY, and THE GEESE FLY HIGH, and Leonard Dubkin's THE MURMER OF WINGS, have been found interesting and informative.

One project of outstanding interest

is in charge of Mrs. Hildegard Venie. A scrap book was purchased by the club for the preservation of bird pictures such as those by Dr. Breckenridge in the MINNEAPOLIS SUNDAY TRIBUNE. These, and pictures of birds from calendars, magazines, and other sources, have been contributed. Mrs. Venie has mounted the pictures very artistically, descriptions have been typed and poetry added. The whole scrap

book is a work of art.

The T. S. Roberts Ornithological Club of the St. Cloud Teachers College is affiliated with the St. Cloud Bird Club. These young people are an inspiration. Convocation programs at the Teachers College of interest to ornithologists are attended by bird club members. The public is invited to attend all meetings of the St. Cloud Bird Club. —St. Cloud, Minnesota.

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### FLICKER INDEX

*George Rysgaard sometime ago prepared a detailed 12-page index to the first six volumes of THE FLICKER, 1929-1936 inclusive. These were the issues that appeared in 8½" x 11" mimeographed form. This was never mimeographed for distribution to the members. Anyone interested in securing a copy of this index should correspond directly with Mr. Rysgaard at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. If a sufficient number of requests are received the index will be printed. An exact price cannot be set at the present time but it will probably be about fifty cents per copy.*

# Changes In Names Of Minnesota Birds

By Byron E. Harrell

Bird watchers usually find the nomenclature of the last edition of the A.O.U. Check-List as the best authority for any bird names that they have any occasion to use. It goes without saying that the studies of nomenclature and taxonomy did not stop when the Fourth edition of the "Check-List of North American Birds" was published. There are now enough changes to warrant a new edition, but this has had to be delayed. Meanwhile the changes through 1944 have been published in two supplements to the fourth edition (Nineteenth and Twentieth Supplements to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List of North American Birds, *Auk* 61 (3): 441-464, 1944 and *Auk* 62 (3): 436-449, 1945). This article is a list of the changes that involve the birds on the Minnesota list as given in Roberts' "Birds of Minnesota" (2nd Ed., 1936). After a quick survey of the literature on Minnesota birds since 1936, I have found only three additional species: Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*, now changed to *Xema sabini sabini*), Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius* subsp.), and Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*). Data on these reports can be found in Dr. Roberts' "Season" reports in *Audubon Magazine*.

There were two changes in families. The Osprey has been separated as the family *Pandionidae*. The family name *Perdidae* including our Bob-white, Chuckar Partridge, and Hungarian Partridge is discontinued, and the species are put in the family *Phasianidae* which has included our Ring-necked Pheasant.

Three names of our genera are changed due to a more accurate survey of the original literature. *Egretta* is replaced by *Leucophoyx*:

Snowy Egret, formerly known as *Egretta thula thula* becomes *Leucophoyx thula thula*.

*Nyroca* becomes *Aythya*:

Redhead, *Nyroca americana*, to *Aythya americana*.

The Ring-necked Duck, *Nyroca collaris*, to *Aythya collaris*.

Canvas-back, *Nyroca valisineria*, to *Aythya valisineria*.

Greater Scaup Duck, *Nyroca marila*, is now *Aythya marila nearctica* (the trinomial is added because of another subspecies out of our range.)

Lesser Scaup Duck, *Nyroca affinis* to *Aythya affinis*.

*Alle* becomes *Plautus*:

Dovkie, *Alle alle*, becomes *Plautus alle alle* (trinomial added because of another subspecies out of our range.)

Fifteen genera are included in other genera. *Dafila*, *Nettion* and *Querquedula* are included in *Anas*:

American Pintail, *Dafila acuta tzitzihua*, to *Anas acuta tzitzihua*.

Green-winged Teal, *Nettion carolinense*, to *Anas carolinensis*.

Blue-winged Teal, *Querquedula discors*, to *Anas discors*.

Cinnamon Teal, *Querquedula cyanoptera*, to *Anas cyanoptera cyanoptera* (trinomial added because of another subspecies.)

*Charitonetta* is included in *Glaucionetta*:

- Bufflehead, *Charitonetta albeola*, to *Glaucionetta albeola*.
- Astur* is included in *Accipiter*.  
 Eastern Goshawk, *Astur atricapillus atricapillus*, becomes *Accipiter gentilis atricapillus* (the species name is used because our species is considered the same as the old world form.)
- Oxyechus* is included in *Charadrius*.  
 Killdeer, *Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*, to *Charadrius vociferus vociferus*.
- Phaeopus* is included in *Numenius*:  
 Hudsonian Curley, *Phaeopus hudsonicus*, to *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* (the species name is changed to agree with the old world species.)  
 Eskimo Curlew, *Phaeopus borealis*, to *Numenius borealis*.
- Pisobia* and *Pelidna* is included in *Erolia*:  
 Pectoral Sandpiper, *Pisobia melanotos*, to *Erolia melanotos*.  
 White-rumped Sandpiper, *Pisobia fuscicollis*, to *Erolia fuscicollis*.  
 Baird's Sandpiper, *Pisobia bairdi*, to *Erolia bairdii* (the species name is changed to *bairdii* to agree with the original spelling.)  
 Least Sandpiper, *Pisobia minutilla*, to *Erolia minutilla*.  
 Red-backed Sandpiper, *Pelidna alpina sakhalina*, to *Erolia alpina sakhalina*.
- Scotiaptex* is included in *Strix*:  
 Great Grey Owl, *Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa*, to *Strix nebulosa nebulosa*.
- Antrostomus* is included in *Caprimulgus*:  
 Eastern Whip-poor-will, *Antrostomus vociferus vociferus*, to *Caprimulgus vociferus vociferus*.
- Penthestes* and *Baeolophus* is included in *Parus*:  
 Black-capped Chickadee, *Penthestes atricapillus atricapillus*, to *Parus atricapillus atricapillus*.  
 Hudsonian Chickadee, *Penthestes hudsonicus hudsonicus*, to *Parus hudsonicus hudsonicus*.  
 Tufted Titmouse, *Baeolophus bicolor*, to *Parus bicolor*.
- Nannus* is included in *Troglodytes*:  
 Eastern Winter Wren, *Nannus hiemalis hiemalis*, becomes *Troglodytes troglodytes hiemalis*.
- Corthylio* is included in *Regulus*:  
 Eastern Ruby-crowned Kinglet, *Corthylio calendula calendula*, to *Regulus calendula calendula*.  
 The specific name of ten Minnesota species has been changed. The old name is given, then the newer one.  
 White-faced Glossy Ibis, *Plagadis guarauna* to *P. mexicana*.  
 Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter velox velox* to *A. striatus velox*.  
 Eastern Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo borealis borealis* to *B. jamaicensis borealis* and similarly in the other subspecies.  
 Western Snowy Plover, *Charadrius nivosus nivosus* to *C. alexandrinus nivosus*.  
 Snowy Owl, *Nyctea nyctea* to *N. scandiaca*.  
 Olive-sided Flycatcher, *Nuttallornis mesoleucus* to *N. borealis*.  
 Northern Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon albifrons albifrons* to *P. pyrrhonota pyrrhonota*.  
 Eastern Yellow Warbler, *Dendroica aestive aestive* to *D. petechia aestiva*.  
 Scarlet Tanager, *Piranga erythromelas* to *P. olivacea*.  
 Common Redpoll, *Acanthis linaria linaria* to *A. flammea flammea*.

Greater Redpoll, *Acanthis linaria rostrata* to *A. flammea rostrata*.

Two Minnesota subspecies have been raised to full species.

Harlan's Hawk, *Buteo borealis harlani* to *B. harlani*.

Bronzed Grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula aeneus* to *Q. versicolor*.

Seven species are now considered as specifically similar to Old World forms which cause the following changes.

White-winged Scoter, *Melanitta deglandi* to *M. fusca deglandi*.

American Scoter, *Oidemia americana* to *O. nigra americana*.

Marsh Hawk, *Circus hudsonius* to *C. cyaneus hudsonius*.

Semipalmated Plover, *Charadrius semipalmatus* to *C. hiaticula semipalmatus*.

Wilson's Snipe, *Capella delicata* to *C. gallinago delicata*.

Long-eared Owl, *Asio wilsonianus* to *Asio otus wilsonianus*.

Northern Shrike, *Lanius borealis borealis* to *L. excubitor borealis*.

Northwestern Shrike, *Lanius borealis invictus* to *L. excubitor invictus*.

There are changes in the subspecific names of seven of our birds.

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura septentrionalis*, now Western Turkey Vulture, *C. aura teter*.

Greater Prairie Chicken, *Tympanuchus cupido americanus* to *T. cupido pin-natus*.

Arctic Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus subarcticus* to *B. virginianus wapacuthu*.

Northern Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata cristata* to *C. cristata bromia*.

Grey-cheeked Thrush, *Hylocichla minima aliciae* to *H. minima minima*.

Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra pusilla* to *L. curvirostra minor*.

Western Grasshopper Sparrow, *Ammodramus savannarum bimaculatus* to *A. savannarum perpallidus*.

Two of our forms are discontinued.

Common Black Duck, *Anas rubripes tristis* is dropped, so the Red-legged Black Duck, *Anas rubripes rubripes* becomes *Anas rubripes*.

White Gyrfalcon, *Falco rusticolus candicans*, is now included in *F. rusticolus obsoletus*, the Black Gyrfalcon.

Eleven of our forms add a trinomial because of subspecies described out of our area.

Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* to *C. noveboracensis noveboracensis*.

Glaucous Gull, *Larus hyperboreus* to *L. hyperboreus hyperboreus*.

Iceland Gull, *Larus leucopterus* to *L. leucopterus leucopterus*.

Red-bellied Woodpecker, *Centurus carolinus* to Western Red-bellied Woodpecker, *C. carolinus zebra*.

Red-headed Woodpecker, *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* to *M. erythrocephalus erythrocephalus*.

Brown Thrasher, *Toxostoma rufum* to *T. rufum rufum*.

Myrtle Warbler, *Dendroica coronata* to *D. coronata coronata*.

Over-bird, *Seiurus aurocapillus* to *S. aurocapillus aurocapillus*.

Painted Bunting, *Passerina ciris* to *P. ciris ciris*.

White-winged Crossbill, *Loxia leucoptera* to *L. leucoptera leucoptera*.

Swamp Sparrow, *Melospiza georgiana* to *M. georgiana georgiana*.

There are corrections in the spelling of the scientific names of thirteen forms.

Holboell's Grebe, *Colymbus grisegena holboelli* to *C. g. holböllii*.

Cooper's Hawk, *Accipiter cooperi* to *A. cooperii*.

Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis* to *P. haliaetus carolinensis*.  
 Western Sandpiper, *Ereunetes maurii* to *E. mauri*.  
 Alder Flycatcher, *Empidonax trailli trailli* to *E. traillii traillii*.  
 Bewick's Wren, *Thryomanes bewicki bewicki* to *T. bewickii bewickii*.  
 Sprague's Pipit, *Anthus spraguei* to *A. spragueii*.  
 Bell's Vireo, *Vireo belli belli* to *V. bellii bellii*.  
 Baird's Sparrow, *Ammadramus bairdi* to *A. bairdii*.  
 Western Henslow's Sparrow, *Passerherbulus henslowi henslowi* to *P. henslowii henslowii*.  
 Gambel's Sparrow, *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli* to *Z. L. gambellii*.  
 Lincoln's Sparrow, *Molospiza lincolni lincolni* to *M. lincolnii lincolnii*.  
 McCown's Longspur, *Rhynchophanes mccowni* to *R. mccownii*.

Of the recently recognized and rerecognized subspecies there are six that might occur in Minnesota. Specimens will have to be critically examined before most of them can be definitely accepted.

Ungava Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis interior*, may possibly occur on migration.

Hoary Ruffed Grouse, *Bonasa umbellus incanus*, definitely occurs in eastern North Dakota, but no Western Minnesota specimens were examined.  
 Nebraska Screech Owl, *Otus asio swenki*, occurs west of here and possibly in the western part of the state.

Boreal Flicker, *Colaptes auratus borealis*, definitely occurs in Minnesota on migration and possibly breeding in the northern part of the state.

Newfoundland Yellow Warbler, *Dendroica petechia amnicola*, will probably be found as a migrant and possibly a northern summer resident after the examination of specimens.

Western Song Sparrow, *Melospiza georgiana ericrypta*, occurs in North Dakota and may be our western breeder or migrant. —St. Paul, Minnesota.

# Bird Protection In Minnesota

By Kenneth Morrison

Shooters with itchy trigger fingers are reminded that all but 10 of the more than 300 species of birds that occur in Minnesota are protected by state law and, with the exception of certain game birds, cannot be killed or molested at any time.

Many people apparently have the idea that only the song and game birds receive any protection. Actually, all species of gulls, terns, pelicans, herons, loons, grebes, bitterns, as well as shore-birds such as sandpipers, plover, and phalaropes, are protected at all times by state law. The nests and eggs of these and all other protected species may not be molested.

Crows, starlings, English sparrows, cormorants, and magpies are not protected by either state or federal law, hence may be taken in areas where the shooting of guns is not prohibited. Most of the larger and some of the smaller communities in Minnesota have ordinances prohibiting the discharge of any type of gun within their city limits. Although they are not protected by state law, all species of black-birds receive protection under federal law and, therefore, may not be killed in Minnesota. The bronzed grackle is not protected.

The new game and fish code extends protection to all species of hawks and owls except the goshawk, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, and the great horned owl. The three unprotected hawks are narrow-winged, fast-flying, and relatively uncommon in Minnesota. For these reasons, they are seldom seen by gunners. The soaring hawks, whose food habits are almost entirely beneficial to man and which have been most commonly shot in the past, are now protected by state law.

MOU members should be alert to see that these bird protective laws are respected. Violations should be reported immediately to state or federal authorities. Each member of the MOU should consider himself a "one man crusade" to see that the public becomes better acquainted with the laws protecting birds. —St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Editor's Note:** MOU members will want to read **Hawks and Owls Win in Minnesota** by Kenneth Morrison, in the July-August, 1945, AUDUBON MAGAZINE. This article gives an excellent account of the effectiveness of the work of the MOU bird protection committee.

# NOTES OF INTEREST

SAW-WHET OWL, HAWK OWL, AND SANDHILL CRANES—In a willow thicket on Pigs Eye Island, St. Paul, a saw-whet owl was observed on January 19, 1946, and photographed by Frank Ostrowski, of the St. Paul Bird Club.

This owl was about eight inches long. Several mice empaled on stubs of branches were found in the owl's rendezvous.

This season we had two outstanding thrills on our weekly all-day bird hikes.

The chance to observe a hawk owl was quite a surprise as we were looking for great horned owls' nests at the time. Unlike the great horned owl, this one flew directly towards us and about 20 feet above our heads. It was later observed perching in a tree apparently unconcerned by Brother Pius' group watching it.

The lateral striping, long tail, and blunt owl-like head were at once striking. This bird was seen on February 23, on the east bank of the Minnesota River, north of the Cedar Avenue bridge, below Black Dog Creek.

Our second and greater thrill was on March 23, when we witnessed 78 sandhill cranes rising to clear the Minnesota River bluffs near the south boundary of Fort Snelling. The boys thought they were a pack of dogs howling and barking. After they passed us they aligned in perfect formation and began to give their calls in longer and deeper notes. The sun shone on them for a short time when they were two or three miles from us to give us an unforgettable sight. They then appeared much lighter in color than when they were near us.

As they were athwart us their extended long neck and stubby tail offset their almost ball-shaped body. —**Brother Hubert Lewis, St. Paul, Minnesota.**



Photo by F. Ostrowski

## SAW-WHET OWL

### WESTERN EXTENSION OF THE STARLING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS

—Between December 10 and 20, I was traveling from Seattle to Portland up the Columbia River to Pendleton, southeast across Oregon and Idaho and east across Montana, Nebraska to Omaha, and then north to Minneapolis. I encountered concentrated flocks of starlings a few miles west of Boise, Idaho. These flocks which contained one hundred or more birds made me starling conscious and I made an effort to notice their concentration as we drove eastward. In the valleys east of the Rockies I found starlings in every town along the highway. Going

through the Rockies I did not notice them but they were common in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and we saw them flying in the vicinity of every small town from there east.

Of additional interest were three different concentrations of hawks which we encountered in northeastern Colorado and western Nebraska. These were mixed flights which were predominantly buteos and marsh hawks. The American rough-legged and Swainson's were the most common buteos, and we had one opportunity of observing a golden eagle perched at less than 50 feet; he was a member of one of these concentrations.

By far the most abundant bird on the prairies of Nebraska in December was the horned lark. Along every mile of highway, we flushed flocks of several hundred horned larks, apparently picking up the wheat and gravel along the sides of the road. Among these horned larks we observed a very few snow buntings. —Milton D. Thompson, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A SCREECH OWL VISITOR—During November and the first week of December, 1945, a brown phase screech owl made its headquarters in my neighbor's 26-room martin house. We saw it frequently, peeping out of one of the entrances. It occupied one compartment on the south side, one on the north, and one facing east, hanging about according to the wind direction. Only three rooms were occupied and always it was one on the side away from the wind.

During this entire period I noticed a scarcity of English sparrows about our yard. Those few which came to my feeding station approached cautiously and from the side opposite the martin house. From this I concluded that the owl was preying on the sparrows.

Several times a flock of angry blue jays swarmed about the martin house and attempted to attack, or did attack, the owl. I've never heard jays make so much noise! Several of the boldest jays dashed into the occupied room, disappearing into it almost entirely, but always making a hasty exit. One day my neighbor saw the owl dash swiftly out of its observation hole, down to the ground in the adjoining yard where it picked up some small object and flew with it to a tree about half a block away.

Our visitor was last seen on December 5. A day or two later my neighbor attached a strong flood-light directly underneath the bird house to facilitate the sale of some thousands of Christmas trees stacked up all over the yard. I suppose the bright light, the continual disturbance by customers in the yard, and the sawing, chopping, and hammering were too much for one little owl, and it left in spite of a good food supply of English sparrows.

In March the martin house was taken down for cleaning. I was at hand to examine the various rooms. I found three rooms with quite a layer of sparrow feathers, and one yellow flicker's feather, two partly devoured English sparrows (head and chest missing), and a number of unbroken pellets. These I sent to Dr. W. J. Breckenridge at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History for examination. In these Dr. Breckenridge found the upper mandibles of seven English sparrows.

We are hoping that our "sparrow control" will return next winter and will add a few starlings to his menu for variation. —A. C. Rosenwinkel, St. Paul, Minnesota.

ARCTIC THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS—On March 29, 1946, a male and female Arctic three-toed woodpecker was observed at King's Point, Lake Minnetonka. The yellow crown-patch of the male was very noticeable.

On April 9, a winter wren was seen at Fruen's Park, Minneapolis.—**Anna J. Johnson, Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

TUFTED TITMICE IN MINNESOTA—Six tufted titmice came to a bird feeder at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Don Hamilton, Melody Hill, near Hopkins. Mrs. Hamilton said they came about the middle of November, 1945, and stayed several days. Then all of them left except one which remained throughout the winter, visiting the feeder every day. One day in February the Hamiltons were surprised to find that three more titmice had arrived to join the one that had remained behind.

March 9, 1946, Miss Severena Holmberg, Miss Amy Chambers, and the writer were invited by Mrs. Hamilton to visit her and see the titmice. The titmouse that stayed all winter had natural colored plumage, but the three new ones were bold, dashing fellows, very dark, almost black. Evidently during the winter, they had lived in a very sooty territory and needed a good bath. We were just in time to see them for two days later, March 11, all four left.

We enjoyed watching them come to the feeders which were hung eighteen inches from the window and ingeniously made to prevent squirrels from getting on them. These feeders are manufactured and sold by Mr. Hamilton.

March 5, 1946, a titmouse came to a feeder at "The Brackens," home of Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Breckenridge. Wallace E. Hamilton, Interlachen Park, reported that one came to his feeder on November 12, 1945, and stayed until December 6, 1945.

At Rushford, Fillmore County, two pairs of titmice nested last spring for the second time. This report was sent to Dr. T. S. Roberts by Miss Magelssen.—**Mrs. Mary Lupient, Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

PLUMAGE REVERSAL IN THE RING-NECKED PHEASANT—While hunting at Redfield, South Dakota, on January 24 of this year, Carl Lenander shot a ring-necked pheasant which appeared to be a young male. Upon closer examination he recognized it as distinctive in many respects, although the general plumage pattern was definitely male-like in character. Mr. Lenander brought the specimen to the Museum for examination and donated it to the collection.

The sides of the head which are normally naked and covered with brilliant red skin were completely feathered, and the ear tufts were lacking. The back feathers were typical of the male plumage; the rump showed but the merest trace of the characteristic green, and the lesser and middle coverts lacked the sharply defined pattern of normal male birds and were not as brilliant a rufous color. The throat, breast, abdomen, side, and flank feathers were of true male character as were also the upper and under tail coverts and central tail feathers. The outer tail feathers lacked the cross-barring or had indistinctly patterned cross-bars; the tail feathers were slightly shorter than average. The legs bore no spurs.

When the skin was prepared as a study specimen for the museum collection, the gonads were dissected out for examination. The bird proved to be a female in which the ovary had greatly atrophied. Geneticists have shown that the male and female types of plumage in domestic fowl are produced by sex-limited factors. In most breeds of poultry, the plumage of the two sexes is strikingly dif-

ferent, and in these, it is indicated that the characteristic female plumage is dominant and the normal male plumage is recessive and is sex-limited to males. When the female sex hormone is present, male plumage cannot develop. However, if the ovary is removed or atrophied by either disease or old age, the limiting action of the hormone is eliminated and male plumage is developed. Although there is no known genetic research on ring-necked pheasants, it is entirely possible that the same pattern of action occurs in this species to explain the occasional reversal of plumage characters in female pheasants.—George N. Rysgaard, Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

GLAUCOUS GULLS IN DULUTH—Each winter during the past eleven years a few glaucous gulls have been observed along the water front in Duluth harbor, and on the North Shore in St. Louis and Lake counties. Usually they are first noted in November and last seen in April. From two to three individuals of early winter, their numbers increase to six or seven before their northward migration. This current spring they appeared in greater numbers, twelve in a single count in a group of herring gulls. Their number may be higher, since it is difficult to determine the color of the wing tips when the gulls are sitting on ice facing the shore. At least three localities in the harbor are patronized by the herring gulls; the glaucous gulls are associated with them. They are best seen on the wing; at one time eighteen were observed. As they fly with herring gulls their wing spread is obviously longer. Two individuals have been seen from time to time by various club members in a large flock of herring gulls at French River, patronizing a fisherman's dock.

Among the Duluth birds, some individuals are in the mature glaucous white plumage; others are chalky white and still others gray white, the latter two presumably, being immature stages in plumage development. On gliding wings of pearly transparency, these stately visitors from the arctic are delightful to behold. Seeing them the first time, some Duluth bird lovers exclaimed, "their flight is different from the herring gulls!" Perhaps it is. The beat of the larger wing is leisurely and graceful, as the birds glide and poise on air against the sky.—Olga Lakela, Duluth, Minnesota.

SPRING MIGRATION OF SANDHILL CRANES—The sandhill crane is a bird that many bird observers have come to look for in Minnesota in recent years. Possibly this in part has been due to seeing the exceptionally outstanding museum group of sandhill cranes which was constructed by Dr. W. J. Breckenridge and Lee Jaques at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History. Many have also seen the motion pictures of the sandhill cranes taken by Dr. Breckenridge. Another film on the sandhill cranes taken by Ralph Woolsey and sent out through the Minnesota State Conservation Department has had a wide showing. Consequently, Minnesotans are becoming more "crane conscious."

There have been several records of sandhill cranes reported during the 1946, spring migration season. On March 23, a few miles southwest of Elk River, Henry Shellenberg of St. Paul observed about 200 sandhill cranes in migration. A small flock of sandhill cranes was observed at the Minnesota River bottoms near Minneapolis on March 24.

While in northwestern Minnesota on April 7, the writer talked to Otto Paulson and his son who reported that sandhill cranes had been in that area for more than 10 days previous to that date. Mr. Paulson lives about four miles

west and one mile north of Rothsay. The Paulson farm is located in an area of wild land with no cross roads for some three miles. Much of this area is extensive lowland with some bog and spring holes surrounded by a scrubby growth of trees. There are extensive areas of tall grasses. Mr. Paulson reports that cranes have remained about these spring holes previous summers. While in this area, the nine members of the Minnesota Bird Club, who took the trip to western Minnesota, saw a flock of 35 large birds which could have been sandhill cranes. They were in view about 10 minutes at some distance in the sky and during this time they broke their flock formation on a number of different occasions. —**Lewis L. Barrett, Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

# - CALL NOTES -

Just as this issue of *The Flicker* was going to press our organization lost one of its most cherished and influential friends in the passing of Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts. A suitable memorial paper will appear in the next issue of our magazine.

Due to the splendid support which the people in Minneapolis have given to the **Audubon Screen Tours** the past year, the Board of Directors of the Minneapolis Science Museum Society, with which the Minneapolis Bird Club is affiliated, has voted unanimously to continue these programs for the third consecutive year.

**Kenneth Morrison**, President of the St. Paul Bird Club, and **Joel K. Bronnoel**, President of the Duluth Bird Club, report that their Clubs are sponsoring the Screen Tours in their respective cities for the 1946-47 season, and it is rumored that Superior, Wisconsin, is booking them, too.

Neither the Twin Ports nor the Twin Cities should experience any difficulty in making a success of these popular natural science programs which were sponsored in 43 cities throughout the United States and southern Canada during the 1945-46 lecture season.

**Captain Martin Govednik**, an alert and enthusiastic ornithologist, returned from army duty in March and is now an assistant instructor in the ornithology classes of Dr. George W. Friedrich of the St. Cloud Teachers College biology department.

The **Minneapolis Bird Club** has accepted the invitation of the **St. Paul Bird Club** to participate in the Twin City Quiz program over station WCCO sometime this spring or early fall. The two Clubs should have a lot of fun as well as get some good publicity out of the venture.

**Whitney Eastman**, of the Minneapolis Bird Club, recently returned from a five-weeks' vacation in Florida where he spent a great deal of time observing the birds of that state, and developing a tropical tan. Mr. Eastman pursues his hobby of bird study with great zeal and usually has 200 or more species on his Minnesota list every year.

\* \* \*  
**Mrs. W. C. Olin**, Secretary of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union and a member of the Lakeview Branch of the Duluth Bird Club, has moved to St. Paul. Friends of Mrs. Olin may write her at 1077 Sterling Avenue, St. Paul 9, Minnesota.

\* \* \*  
Our readers will be glad to know that since **Roger Tory Peterson's** return from service with the U.S. Engineers, he has been busy revising both his **WESTERN** and **EASTERN FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS**. These books are indispensable for field use.

\* \* \*  
**Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill**, whose recent book, **A LABORATORY AND FIELD MANUAL OF ORNITHOLOGY**, is reviewed in this issue, was actively engaged in a lecture tour in January and the first part of February appearing on the Audubon Screen Tour programs.

Dr. Pettingill has a two-year leave of absence from his work at Carleton College during which time he is doing field work on the wintering grounds, migration lanes, and nesting grounds of the whooping crane.

**Dr. W. J. Breckenridge**, curator of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, gave an illustrated lecture at a meeting of the St. Louis, Missouri, Bird Club. On April 6 he showed pictures and spoke at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Ornithological Society at Appleton, Wisconsin.

The art work in the book, **A LABORATORY AND FIELD MANUAL OF ORNITHOLOGY**, was done by Dr. Breckenridge.

\* \* \*

The **St. Paul Bird Club** has become a branch of the National Audubon Society. This gives their members an opportunity to join both the local club and the national organization for a smaller fee than if they joined both organizations separately. About 30 of their members have joined both organizations. Membership in the National Audubon Society is optional, however.

\* \* \*

**George Rickert**, an ardent conservationist, sends in the following note on the passing away of several of our prominent conservationists and ornithologists.

We, the people of the United States, have suffered a most severe calamity, in the last few months through the death of several prominent men in the conservation field. **Robert Sterling Yard**, and his assistant, **Bob Marshall**, who helped make the National Parks system what it is today, can never be replaced. They practically gave their lives for the cause of better National Parks, so that we who enjoy these natural beauties and phenomena of nature can continue to enjoy and appreciate them in the future. They saved these last wildernesses for posterity, sometimes working against terrific opposition, mainly the greedy private interests who would destroy their natural beauties for private profit.

When we go to these parks and camp near a river, look for birds, fossils, plants, or otherwise follow our

natural science hobbies, we can thank these men for their foresight and untiring energy in helping to preserve these scenic wonders for us. They will go down in history along with **John Muir** and **Stephen Mather** as champions of the National Parks System. Mather paid the salary of Bob Yard out of his own income to have him do this work, because the Parks had no funds to pay Yard. How many men would do that for their country?

About the same time another great conservationist, **Dr. Henry Baldwin Ward** of the University of Illinois, and a leading member of the National Parks Association and the Izaak Walton League of America, died just as he had completed a wonderful eulogy on Bob Yard. **Louis Barret**, another pioneer in the Parks System, has also recently passed away. All four of these men were very active in the Wilderness Society and helped to preserve the remaining forests and wildernesses so that we can have some place to get away from civilization.

Along with them went that great ornithologist, **Frank Chapman**, who has interested thousands of people in birds. His books are on every bird lover's shelves. We have lost too many great men in the conservation and natural history field in all too short a time, but their work will live after them as a fitting memorial. We need such men today more than ever to help protect our natural resources from destruction. I, for one, will never forget what they did for us.

\* \* \*

**Editor's Note:** Ludlow Griscom's article, "Frank Michler Chapman, 1864-1945, A Tribute and Valedictory," in the January-February, 1946, issue of **AUDUBON MAGAZINE** is one that bird club members will want to read. Dr. Chapman was the Honorary President of the National Audubon Society.

THE FLICKER

# Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

## Affiliated Societies

### **CLOQUET BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Louise Stender; Vice President, Miss Doris Anderson; Secretary-treasurer, Miss Helen Berg; Editor, Miss Adeline Peterson.

Meetings are held the first and third Thursdays of each month in the Cloquet High School at 7:30 p.m.

### **DULUTH BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Joel K. Bronoel; Vice President, Miss Frances Riddle; Secretary, Miss Mollie Korgen; Treasurer, Miss Harriet Lockhart.

Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month of the school year at 7:30 p.m. at the State Teachers College.

### **LAKEVIEW BRANCH OF THE DULUTH BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Freida Beier; Vice-President, Mrs. John Thomas; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Wm. Wernowsky.

Meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. in the homes of the members.

### **MINNEAPOLIS AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Officers: President, Mrs. E. D. Swedenborg; Vice President, Miss Kern Bayliss; Treasurer, Mrs. Lloyd M. Steirly; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Floyd Brown; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Stuart S. Sutherland; Field Secretary, Mrs. C. R. Procter; Auditor, Miss Cathryne Yerxa.

Meetings are held the first Friday of each month at 2:00 p.m. at the Walker Branch Library. Field trips during April and May on Tuesdays, and Fridays.

### **MINNEAPOLIS BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Mr. Luther B. Gilbert; Vice-President, Miss Severena C. Holmberg; Secretary, Miss Florence Nelson; Treasurer, Miss Helen Towle; M.O.U. representative, Miss Gladys Peters.

Meetings are held the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Minneapolis Public Library.

### **MINNESOTA BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Lt. Warren H. Nord; Vice President, Lyman Newlin; Secretary, Mrs. I. A. Lupient; Treasurer, George N. Rysgaard.

Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, except in June, July, August, and September, at 8:00 p.m. at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History.

### **ST. CLOUD BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Monica Misho; Vice President, Mrs. Charles Beacom; Secretary-treasurer, Miss Loretta Rosenberger.

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month from October through March in the committee room of the public library at 8:00 p.m.

### **T. S. ROBERTS ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB**

Officers: President, Bob Tuttle; Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Huber; Adviser, G. W. Friedrich.

Meetings are held bi-monthly February through May at the St. Cloud Teachers College.

### **ST. PAUL BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Kenneth Morrison; Vice President, Dr. Henry Bjorndahl; Treasurer, R. A. Kortmann; Secretary, Mrs. T. C. Beard; Directors at large, Mrs. R. M. Elliott and Brother Hubert Lewis.

Meetings are held at the St. Paul public library at 7:45 p.m., the

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## The Flicker

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# THE FLICKER

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## A Memorial Sketch of Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts

by

William Kilgore

Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts died at Eitel Hospital, Minneapolis, on Good Friday, April 19, 1946, at the age of eighty-eight. In October, 1944, he suffered a stroke while visiting with a young student in the bird-room. From this stroke he recovered, returned to his active duties at the Museum, and seemed to be enjoying fairly good health until December 20, 1945, when he left the Museum never to return except for two short hours during the following January.

Dr. Roberts was born on the old Roberts farm near the city of Philadelphia on February 16, 1858. In the fall of 1867, when but nine years old, he came to Minneapolis with his parents, and this city has ever since been his home. Having finished the course in the public schools of Minneapolis, he entered the University of Minnesota in 1877. His work there was terminated after two years because of poor health. After spending some time in outdoor work as a land examiner with the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba, and the Northern Pacific railroads, he enrolled in the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania and was graduated as a Doctor of Medicine on May 1, 1885. He served internships in two Philadelphia hospitals and then returned to his home in Minneapolis and practiced medicine here for about thirty years, during which time he al-

so taught in the medical department of the University of Minnesota as Professor of Pediatrics from 1901 to 1913. On leaving this position he was given the title Professor Emeritus. In 1915, he retired from general practice and became Professor of Ornithology and Director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota.

On October 19, 1885, Dr. Roberts married Miss Jane Cleveland of Minneapolis, who died on October 7, 1932. By this marriage there were three children: Thomas C., John Carroll, and Catharine. On October 9, 1937, he married Mrs. Agnes Williams Harley of New Hope, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who had been a friend in his medical-student days and who passed away on July 14, 1946.

Dr. Roberts was a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1883, and was, for many years, a member of the Council. He also held memberships and fellowships in many other ornithological, medical, and scientific organizations. He was made President of the Minnesota Academy of Medicine, an honor that came to him twenty years after he had practically given up active practice. In 1940 the University of Minnesota gave him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science, and the following year the Minnesota chapter of Sigma Xi voted unanimously



*Courtesy Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*

**Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts looking over a volume of his monumental "The Birds of Minnesota," in his office in the Museum.**

that a testimonial be awarded him for distinguished service to science and to the state.

All through these years of an active and successful professional life Dr. Roberts maintained his interest in birds. He often remarked that he could not remember when he did not have an interest in them. It thus started early in life, with a boy's fondness and enthusiasm for everything pertaining to the outdoors, his interest centered on birds and became a ruling passion. His boon companion was an invalid father who had been advised to live outdoors as much as possible, and they searched the nearby fields and woods together, with horse and buggy, dog

and gun. Ducks and grouse were abundant and close at hand in those early days, and lakes and woodlands where the two enthusiasts hunted are now a part of the Minneapolis Park System. In those days wild pigeons by the thousands fed on acorns in the oak groves where now stand row after row of houses. Dr. Roberts had a boy's instinct for collecting which in those early days centered mainly on flowers and birds' eggs, but he soon learned to make a scientific bird-skin, and within a few years his bedroom housed a collection of six hundred skins. The study of birds was now his main interest and was encouraged and furthered by the close companionship of his



*Courtesy Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*

Here Dr. Roberts, William Kilgore, and Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge watch artist F. L. Jaques paint the background for the "blue goose group," which is now completed and may be seen at the Museum.



*Courtesy Museum of Natural History*

#### **DR. ROBERTS ON A FIELD TRIP**

On the left is the late Russel M. Berthel; center back, William Kilgore.

sympathetic and understanding father. His first bird book, presented to him by a much older bird enthusiast, was a copy of the *BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA* by Baird, Cassin and Lawrence. This book was heavy in every sense of the word, but it served him well and is still one of the many hundreds of bird books in his private collection, which collection he presented to the University with the request that it be left in the Museum to serve as a reference library. During his high school days he, with a small group of students similarly minded, formed a club which was called, "The Young Naturalists' Society." All their meetings were held in Dr. Roberts' bedroom where specimens of birds, birds' eggs, and pressed flowers were stored. From this small group three or four members became distinguished scientists in their various lines of interest. The botanical records kept by this society were later used in Warren Upham's, *FLORA OF MINNESOTA*.

Very early in life Dr. Roberts formed the valuable habit of keeping accurate journals and records, the first dating back to 1874. He also sought correspondence and made personal contacts with all persons interested in the birds of his state. This accumulated information formed the basis of his monumental two-volume work, *THE BIRDS OF MINNESOTA*, which has received national recognition from both professional and amateur bird-students. In 1938, for this notable work, he was given the Brewster Medal, awarded annually to the author of the most important work relating to birds of the western hemisphere, published during the preceding six years. It was published in 1932 by the University of Minnesota Press. The edition was soon exhausted and in 1936 the Press brought out a second and revised edition which is being rapidly depleted. Two years later, in 1938, the University of Minnesota Press published his

*LOGBOOK OF MINNESOTA BIRD LIFE*. This volume contained his bi-monthly season reports which had appeared in the magazine *Bird Lore*, now changed to the *Audubon Magazine*. These reports covered a twenty-year period from 1917 to 1937. This book was dedicated to all the many nature lovers and observers who had so generously and freely contributed their records and notes for the author's use. He continued to furnish these articles for this magazine up to the year of his death. His *BIRDS OF MINNESOTA* and the *LOGBOOK* were his two most outstanding publications, but throughout his long life he wrote many minor booklets, papers and short articles on birds. The first of these was entitled, *NEW BIRDS FROM MINNESOTA*, published in *Forest and Stream* in 1875, when the Doctor was but seventeen years old.

As has been stated earlier, after practical retirement from his medical work Dr. Roberts came to the University of Minnesota in 1915 to take up work as Professor of Ornithology and Director of the Museum. In the following year, 1916, he held his first bird class, and those classes he continued to teach up to the last year of his life. He took great pleasure and interest in these bird classes, which were the source of inspiration and help to many present-day bird students. In building up the Museum he was greatly aided by money contributed by his staunch and loyal friends, many of them old patients of his. After twenty-five years the Museum had outgrown its quarters in the Zoology Building, and in 1940, it moved into its new and present home, the beautiful and attractive building made possible only by Dr. Roberts' persistent and untiring effort and the generosity of a life-long friend, James F. Bell.

The writer's first acquaintance with Dr. Roberts harks back to nearly a half-century ago, and for the past

twenty-five years he has been associated with him in the University work. All those who knew this man admired him for his scientific attainments and his fine moral character, and loved him for his friendship and loyalty. May this Museum building and its contents, of

which he was so justly proud, stand long as a memorial to that distinguished Minnesotan, Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts. —Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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*The deadline for manuscripts for the December issue of THE FLICKER is November 10. Nesting data should be sent in at once in order to have time to compile the information.*

*It has been suggested that the name of your bird club be used with your name in the column, "Notes of Interest." If you like the idea, please indicate on your manuscript which club affiliation you wish used, as some of our contributors belong to several clubs.*

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#### MAGAZINES TO BE LOANED

For sometime the MOU has been accumulating publications of other ornithological clubs through exchange for *The Flicker*. These have remained largely unused at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History. It has been suggested that members interested in the use of these apply to Mrs. I. A. Lupient, 212 Bedford Street S.E., Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. Magazines should be returned prepaid within six weeks. Below is listed the publications available for such loan.

*The Nebraska Bird Review*—July, December, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945; January 1946.

*The Oriole*—June, September, December, 1941; March, December 1942.

*The Passenger Pigeon*—1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944; January, April, July 1945.

*American Museum Novitate*—1942, 1943, 1944; January, July, December 1945; March 1946.

*Audubon Magazine*—1943, 1944; January, February 1945.

*Iowa Bird Life*—September, December 1939; March, September 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943 1944; June, December 1945.

*Nature Magazine*—January, May 1945.

*The Cleveland Bird Review*—40th Year, No. 1, 2, 4; 41st Year, No. 1, 3, 4.

*The Jack Pine Warbler*—April, July, October 1942; April, July, October 1943, 1944, 1945.

*The Migrant*—December 1940; March, June, September, December 1941; March, June, September 1942.

## **The Minneapolis Audubon Society's Tribute to Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts**

*On the evening of the nineteenth of April our beloved Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts entered into the rest for which he had been longing. His loss is mourned all over our country, and thousands of friends and associates will pay eloquent tribute to his culture and scholarship, to the integrity of his character and scientific achievements, and above all to his great kindness and the warmth and loyalty of his countless friendships.*

*The laurels he won have brought honor to our city and our state and will long be treasured by coming generations, but to our Audubon Society belongs a wealth of beautiful memories peculiarly our own. Throughout the thirty-one years of our history we have been blest with his counsel, the rich fruits of his wisdom and experience, the inspiration of his spirit, and the assurance of his unfailing friendship, not only for our Society but for each individual member.*

*We have had the support of his generous, tireless help in our trials and perplexities and the joyful certainty of his responsive understanding when we have hastened to share with him our sometimes naive discoveries and successes. In all of these he never disappointed us, but always gave in fuller measure than we sought.*

*So it is that though he has gone before us for a while, he leaves with us these priceless memories as tokens that he is not lost to us, but will always be ours to hold in grateful remembrance, as a loved teacher and friend and as a pattern and inspiration to raise us to higher planes of service such as his.*

*"May God grant him a safe lodging and a holy rest, and peace at last."*

Note: The above tribute was written by Mrs. Frances S. Davidson at the request of the Minneapolis Audubon Society.

# Theodore Wirth Park, A Bird Student's Paradise

by

Lulu May Aler

Theodore Wirth Park is a half-mile-wide strip of wooded hills, glens, lakes, and undulating open spaces, extending for two and one-third miles along Minneapolis's west border, and threaded by Glenwood Parkway, a most attractive section of the city's encircling parkway system. This largest of our parks, now 681 acres, had its beginning in the Saratoga Springs acquisition of 64 acres in 1889. The acquisition, later named Glenwood Park, consisted of Birch Pond and the land east to Xerxes Avenue between Wayzata Boulevard and Chestnut Avenue—beautiful hilly country with trickling springs in its deep ravines, almost primeval oaks and elms, tamarack bogs, birches, willows, and other deciduous trees, wildflowers and birds in profusion.

Nothing was added until 1907, when the Board of Park Commissioners, under the leadership of its new superintendent, Theodore Wirth, undertook extension of the park to its present lengthwise boundaries, the Great Northern right-of-way on the south and 19th Avenue on the north. This encompassed Brownie Lake to the south of Birch Pond, the larger 38-acre Glenwood Lake to the north of it, and the Bassett Creek valley from there on to 19th Avenue. Smaller additions later brought it to its present acreage. In 1938, after Mr. Wirth became superintendent emeritus, it was renamed Theodore Wirth Park in recognition of his long service and sound planning.

Early in 1907, the year of the park's expansion, the Park Board acceded to the request of nature lovers headed by

a high school botany teacher, Miss Eloise Butler, that about 25 acres of the original acquisition be fenced in and preserved as a native botanical garden and bird sanctuary. Continuously since then, new plant species have been introduced in order to establish there as much as possible of Minnesota's flora. It now bears the name of Eloise Butler Native Plant Reserve in memory of its founder and first curator, whose devotion to the project terminated only with her death in 1933.

Time does not permit mention of other ardent participants in the conservation and development of this lovely park. The almost forty years of landscaping to enhance its natural beauty have brought both loss and gain in the bird population—loss of many breeding marsh birds due to reclamation of swamps, and gain in both winter and summer land birds due to the countless diversified plantings, especially evergreens and fruit-bearing shrubbery. The conversion of a farm into a nursery for production of practically all the hardy material needed for the park system and street tree planting added new bird habitats. Of the many recreational facilities provided, those of most ornithological interest, when not in use by humans, are the beach, the golf course, and the picnic ground brush pile.

The greatest concentration and variety of bird life occurs in the central area including the largest lake, the Reserve with its winter feeding station, and Birch Pond. Only three miles from the loop, ten minutes by Glenwood

streetcar, it affords remarkable year-round study opportunities for both individual enthusiasts and organized groups. The ornithology classes of the University of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Bird Club, Nature Study Group of the Woman's Club, and Minneapolis Audubon Society are among those that regularly schedule field trips here, while school teachers and leaders of young people's organizations delight in introducing their charges to its bird thrills.

My own sixteen years of bird watching in the park, confined mostly to this small, easily accessible area, have resulted in a list of 215 positively identified species; to these I could add a half dozen more reported by fellow observers; and there are doubtless others on record not brought to my attention. By dint of great self-restraint, I have excluded from my list several rare migrants seen a few blocks from the park, on the fringe of waves passing through it, but apparently not themselves setting foot or wing within its borders. My primary purpose in this paper is to show what avian riches one amateur can find in a highly diversified city park.

My brief summary starts with our permanent residents. We have ten present every year and at least a half dozen more represented some years. The regulars range from the big, weird, solitary barred owl of the dense woods to the gay, little, sociable goldfinches of the white birches. A comparative newcomer in this group is the soul-stirring cardinal whose pioneer pair arrived in 1932 and settled near the Reserve feeding station established that fall; they fared so well that their progeny now enliven the whole neighborhood. Among the irregulars in our permanent group, the species most often represented is the robin, which winters near open springs and thrives on cedar, sumac, and other berries plus handouts. We have had the red-headed woodpeck-

er once, and most recently the redbellied; the pileated, seen most often in winter, may have a permanent status in the park although I have no nesting record. Another huge, handsome guest breeding near is the great horned owl which usually pays us a midwinter visit.

Our winter colony always includes, in addition to Hennepin County permanent residents, several from northern Minnesota that do not nest this far south—juncos every year; purple finches, brown creepers, and evening grosbeaks quite often; pine siskins, golden-crowned kinglets, and red-breasted nuthatches less often. One eventful fall, we had both the Arctic three-toed woodpecker and the red crossbill; and one whole winter, we had the memorable treat of studying Hudsonian chickadees that joined a coterie of black-caps and other little birds continually circling through an evergreen area and patronizing the window tray of a neighbor whose pines nod across the fence to those in the park. Of the species that are transient throughout the state, we almost always have wintering tree sparrows, and once, a rusty blackbird stayed. Of the winter visitors to the state, the most likely to remember us is the redpoll; and fairly often, the pine grosbeak and Bohemian waxwing. No two winters bring exactly the same, so there is always the urge to go afield as often as possible lest we miss some rare adventure.

The number of species attracted by the varied winter habitats is, of course, greatly excelled by those drawn in summer to the even wider range of nesting sites. More than eighty breeding species have been recorded in the park or its immediate environs during my period of observation, the majority of regular occurrence. We can count on seeing the big, gawky offspring of the green heron on a flimsy platform of twigs in some tamarack or spruce near the marsh-bordered end of the lake,

and on hearing the whinnying notes of the elusive, little sora there or at a distant slough. Rattling kingfishers coursing directly across the lake with fish for nestlings in a dark tunnel contrast with gracefully maneuvering tree swallows gathering insects for young in an offshore nesting box. This box's earliest predecessor, nailed to a post fifty feet out in the lake, had the distinction of housing bluebirds the first spring.

While warbling vireos hang dainty cup-shaped baskets high in lake front trees, the red-eyed select smaller trees under the glen's leafy canopy, and the yellow-throated choose oaks up along the ridge. Every year a ruby-throated hummingbird saddles her tiny nest to a blending branch in the Reserve and introduces her fledgings to the flower-like bottles of sweetened water at the Curator's office windows. Indigo buntings, rose-breasted grosbeaks, and crested flycatchers, add to the beauty of our summer colony, and the field sparrow's trill from the grassy upland refreshes our spirits on even the hottest days.

Besides the many nesters enjoyed regularly, we have some not found every year, such as the woodcock in the swamp, cedar waxwing in the evergreens, redstart over the Reserve's dark pool, blue-gray gnatcatcher in hillside oaks above Birch Pond, and red-shouldered hawk in a tall tamarack top.

If our winter and summer colonies contain such a wide assortment, little wonder that in spring and fall great mixed throngs of migrants pass

through, and on occasion, linger awhile to enjoy the abundant food and cover. Location on the north-and-south stretch of parkway that also includes the Lake Harriet Bird Sanctuary brings the advantages of a very fine little travel lane through this part of the Mississippi Flyway. From the arrival of the redwing chorus in March to the departure of mourning warblers in June, an ever-changing panorama of migrants through exquisite, unfolding vegetation provides a festival of glorious music and pageantry; a bird walk at the climax in mid-May has revealed as many as 100 species. From the return of warblers in August to the exit of rusty blackbirds in November, a reverse shifting of travelers through autumn's kaleidoscopic colorings brings whispered snatches of song and spectacular scenes; at the peak in mid-September I sometimes identify 50 species in a morning while hordes of nondescripts dashing through luxuriant, variegated foliage doubtless contain more.

As tabulations make dull narrative, I shall note only a few group figures and highlights. We have been visited by all 5 of the common herons and bitterns, 15 kinds of ducks, the 3 mergansers, 11 hawks, 7 sandpipers, 5 gulls and terns, 8 flycatchers, the 6 swallows, 30 warblers (the rarest being the yellow-breasted chat, blue-winged and black-throated blue), and 17 species bearing the sparrow name—the choicest being Henslow's. Among the many other interesting visitors, the horned grebe, semi-palmated plover, tufted titmouse, whip-poor-will, and yellow-

headed blackbird deserve special mention. And I must add, from reports of luckier observers than I, the Wilson's phalarope, Arkansas kingbird, and western tanager which do not appear on my own list.

Each season unrolls new scenic beauty throbbing with characteristic bird life. Whether we feast our eyes on winter's snowy grandeur, spring's misty loveliness, summer's lush verdure, or autumn's gorgeous paintings, our ears catch the inspiring notes of

little feathered creatures. Tracing these 150, sometimes 175 species in the course of a year, with annual surprises that have built up a total of 215 species to date, is a never-ending series of thrills that make the park a bird student's paradise. The Park Board has preserved a marvelous heritage for us and future generations. —**Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

**Note:** This paper was prepared for the MOU annual meeting held at Theodore Wirth Park, May 13, 1946.

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#### HAWK AND OWL BULLETIN AVAILABLE

*Since the action of the last session of the Minnesota Legislature in extending protection to most species of hawks and owls, the Department of Conservation has received an expanded volume of inquiries for information about the identification characteristics and life histories of these birds.*

*To provide a source of authentic information about the birds of prey, the Department of Conservation is publishing Conservation Bulletin No. 10, MINNESOTA'S BIRDS OF PREY. It is a compilation of the five articles on hawks and owls that have appeared in recent issues of THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER. They were written by Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History.*

*It is believed that this bulletin will be particularly useful to teachers, youth group leaders, 4-H clubs, and others who seek material about the role of predatory birds in the scheme of things. The bulletin is available without charge from the Bureau of Information, 633 State Office Building, St. Paul 1, Minnesota.*

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# First Minnesota Nesting of the Philadelphia Vireo

By Don Jacobs

A pair of Philadelphia vireos were discovered feeding a single fledgling along the Gooseberry River in Lake County, Minnesota, on June 9, 1946. While on a three-day bird photographing trip along the north shore of Lake Superior, Sam McIver, Eldeen (my wife), and I spent one day at Gooseberry Falls. Since much of the day was cloudy and poor for photography, we spent the time birding.

A short distance above the middle falls on the east side of the river, we happened on to a vireo that was carrying food. It led us directly to the young bird which it promptly but unhurriedly fed. The young vireo perched motionless about four feet above the ground in a mountain maple. As we watched, the first parent flew a short distance away and began singing lackadaisically. The second parent soon appeared and fed the young one. We were unable to locate any more young, and since both parents seemed to devote their attention to this one bird, it was undoubtedly the sole survivor of the brood.

It was apparent from the juvenile down and the very rudimentary condition of the tail feathers that the bird had just recently left the nest, so we searched the vicinity for it. About thirty yards away, we found a vireo nest seven feet from the ground on a slender branch of a maple sapling. The nest was fairly well made but thin-walled and somewhat weather-beaten. It was trimmed with thin sheets of birch bark which is the case with many vireo nests.

The young bird was very strikingly colored for a vireo and could be confused with no other Minnesota species.

The entire body color was a pronounced yellow, brightest on the under parts. The olive gray wings graded into the yellowish back. Narrow black wedges tapered forward and backward from the eye.

The adults were very plainly marked almost identical with the warbling vireo, but with an indistinct yellowish wash to the under parts. This feature was easily noted when the adults came in to feed the young bird about 12 feet away.

The song was quite distinct although similar to that of both the yellow-throated and red-eyed vireos. Its pitch seems intermediate between these two and the intervals between the calls varies from the characteristic one-second interval of the red-eyed to the longer interval of the yellow-throated, ranging from two to four-second intervals. Its calls are less variable than those of the red-eyed vireo, but I was unable to conveniently match the words, "brotherly love," to the notes as has been suggested.

The Philadelphia vireo is an uncommon but consistent migrant in Minnesota and there are a few records of the bird occurring in the northern part of the state during the nesting season, but no previous positive nesting records are known. Minnesota is within the expected breeding range, however, and Dr. Roberts in *BIRDS OF MINNESOTA* states that, "Diligent search for the nest has been made throughout the northern part of the state from the Red River Valley to Lake Superior, without result thus far, though it seems probable that it will yet be found breeding along our northern boundary."  
—Minneapolis, Minnesota.

# Notes on 1946 Spring Migration

By Mary Lupient

Due to an unseasonably warm March the vanguard of the spring migration arrived early. A flock of six bluebirds was seen near Glen Lake on March 9, and hooded mergansers and herring gulls were on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis on March 11. In small areas of open water at the Cedar Avenue bridge, there were a few American and red-breasted mergansers on March 13, but by March 18, they had arrived in large numbers. Two early dates: tree swallows, March 18; fox sparrows, March 23.

Whistling swans were reported at Shakopee on March 24 and at Duluth on April 7.

Near the Twin Cities fewer ducks were observed this year possibly due in part to the fact that the ice left the lowlands early and the Minnesota River flooded a larger area than usual so that the waterfowl was less concentrated. The main migration of ducks appeared to be over by the end of the first week in April. A flock of eleven blue geese and another of about twenty-five Canada geese was seen flying over the Cedar Avenue bridge on March 25.

More than a dozen glaucous gulls were in Duluth Harbor during March and were last seen April 14. Much of April was warm also and by the latter part of the month, wild flowers were blooming three weeks earlier than normally in and about the Twin Cities.

A heavy snowstorm and hard freeze occurred in many parts of the state on May 11, killing blossoms on fruit trees and withering new leaves. Large concentrations of shore birds appeared on May 14 in the area adjoining the Minnesota River between Ft. Snelling and Lyndale Avenue. There were ruddy

turnstones, long-billed dowitchers, Wilson's phalaropes, black-bellied plovers, and a knot, besides the other species more commonly seen. Of the rarer species of shore birds, two were reported May 19, Hudsonian godwits and buff-breasted sandpipers. Five of the godwits tarried for several days at a pond on highway 36, just beyond the University Farm campus and two buff-breasted sandpipers were seen along the roadside near Brownton. Piping plovers and a Hudsonian curlew were on Minnesota Point, Duluth, June 10.

American pipits were more in evidence than is usual in the spring. The first report was April 23, and they were seen at various places near the Twin Cities until May 17.

The peak of the warbler migration was May 18, date of the MOU meeting in Minneapolis, and during the field trip members were able to check all species of warblers that usually pass through this territory. Even the rare black-throated blue warbler was on the list. Waves of any size were not reported throughout the season.

The erratic dickcissels appeared in goodly numbers this spring and were reported from several sections of the state.

It is interesting to note that after a severe winter the chucker partridge is still being seen on the north shore near Duluth. —Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Editor's Note:** If you would like to have The Flicker publish a column regularly on the seasonal migration of Minnesota birds, please send your notes to the editor. Field notes on the fall migration should be sent in now.

## NOTES OF INTEREST

THE 1946 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION—Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis was this year the scene of the annual meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. As is certainly not unusual the meeting occurred during the height of the spring migration—on Saturday, May 18, at a time when the countryside was most filled with hordes of birds, at a time when the teeming millions of birds were most brilliantly dressed.

What has been termed a "century list" (a hundred or more species) was on that day aggregated. Perhaps no one person identified a hundred species, but when at luncheon in the Glenwood Chalet, a list of the several groups' observations was tallied, there were 102 species of birds seen during the four hours from 8 a.m. to 12 m. These observations took place entirely within the park. Then, followed the afternoon program. Some of the eager enthusiasts, little wishing to be limited by the habitat of the park, motored to the other end of Minneapolis where marsh and shore-birds soon raised the list to 130 species for the day.

One is led to wonder at what the total might have been if groups of bird-watchers had been more widespread, in different areas, and in the field during the entire day. At the end of this article is a list of the species recorded.

Attendance at the meeting was heartening: Just a few more than 100 members were present when a count was made at noon—about one person per bird. Eight of the nine member clubs of the MOU were represented as well as some members-at-large from Brainerd, Fergus Falls, and Hudson, Wisconsin.

Following the luncheon, the annual business meeting was held in the Chalet, with Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, President of the MOU, presiding. Among the accomplishments of the business meeting are the following:

The dates of publication of *The Flicker* were changed. A regular quarterly basis supplants the uneven periods of issue. Henceforth, it is to be published in March, June, September, and December.

A committee was appointed to plan a memorial to Dr. T. S. Roberts. The members of the Memorial Committee are: Lewis L. Barrett, Dr. Olga Lakela, Dr. George Friedrich, Mrs. Gaylord Davidson, and Mrs. Richard Elliott.

A Resolutions Committee was named, and their several resolutions were duly adopted at the evening session. On the committee were: Ken Morrison, Luther Gilbert, Mrs. George Lehrke, and Miss Evelyn Jones.

The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. George Lehrke, St. Cloud; Vice President, Ralph Boeder, Duluth; Secretary, William Longley, St. Paul; Treasurer, Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Minneapolis; and Editor, Miss Severena C. Holmberg, Minneapolis.

With business out of the way for another year, a series of papers presented by members rounded out the afternoon program. The papers were: (1) "Theodore Wirth Park, A Bird Student's Paradise," by Miss Lulu May Aler; (2) "Birds of Lake Traverse," by Nestor Hiemenz; (3) "Nest of the Winter Wren," by Mrs. Rollo H. Wells; (4) "G.I. Notes," by members of the St. Cloud Bird Club, in which ex-soldiers told of birds they encountered outside of the

United States; (5) "The Status of Bird Protection in Minnesota," by Ken Morrison.

Reconvening in the auditorium of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History the group enjoyed a splendid evening program of color photography with slides by Don Jacobs and movies by Dr. Breckenridge and others.

Then the meeting adjourned, and an invitation was extended by the St. Cloud Bird Club to the MOU to hold its next year's convention in that city.

The MOU is grateful to the retiring president, Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, and to the following for engineering so successfully the 1946 meeting. Program Committee, Milton D. Thompson; Food Committee, Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Miss Melone; Field Trip Committee; Miss Amy Chambers, Don Jacobs; Transportation Committee, George Rickert; Publicity, Ken Morrison.

The MOU members look forward with eager anticipation to spring, 1947, and St. Cloud.

The following species were recorded on the field trip: Pied-billed grebe, great blue heron, green heron, America bittern, mallard, blue-winged teal, shoveler, wood duck, redhead, ring-necked duck, lesser scaup, ruddy duck, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, ring-necked pheasant, Virginia rail, sora, Florida gallinule, coot, semipalmated plover, killdeer, ruddy turnstone, Wilson's snipe, spotted sandpiper, solitary sandpiper, lesser yellow-legs, pectoral sandpiper, least sandpiper, red-backed sandpiper, long-billed dowitcher, semipalmated sandpiper, Wilson's phalarope, northern phalarope, herring gull, Forster's tern, common tern, black tern, mourning dove, black-billed cuckoo, barred owl, nighthawk, chimney swift, ruby-throated hummingbird, belted kingfisher, flicker, red-bellied woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, kingbird, crested flycatcher, phoebe, alder flycatcher, least flycatcher, wood pewee, tree swallow, bank swallow, rough-winged swallow, barn swallow, purple martin, blue jay, crow, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse, white-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, house wren, long-billed marsh wren, short-billed marsh wren, catbird, brown thrasher, robin, wood thrush, olive-backed thrush, gray-cheeked thrush, willow thrush, bluebird, ruby-crowned kinglet, cedar waxwing, starling, yellow-throated vireo, red-eyed vireo, warbling vireo, black and white warbler, prothonotary warbler, Tennessee warbler, orange-crowned warbler, Nashville warbler, parula warbler, yellow warbler, magnolia warbler, black-throated blue warbler, myrtle warbler, black-throated green warbler, blackburnian warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, bay-breasted warbler, black-poll warbler, pine warbler, palm warbler, oven-bird, Louisiana water-thrush, Connecticut warbler, yellow-throat, Wilson's warbler, Canada warbler, redstart, English sparrow, eastern meadowlark, western meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, Baltimore oriole, Brewer's blackbird, bronzed grackle, cowbird, scarlet tanager, cardinal, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting, purple finch, goldfinch, vesper sparrow, chipping sparrow, clay-colored sparrow, field sparrow, white-throated sparrow, swamp sparrow, song sparrow. —William H. Longley, St. Paul, Minnesota.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE MOU MEETING—I had never been to an MOU meeting before, so did not know what it was like. I had read in *The Flicker* where it was to be held, but that meant nothing to me. I didn't know where the place was and couldn't find it if I tried. So I didn't try. I had implicit faith in our driver, Mrs. Trainor; she would get us there. We were to meet at the end of a car

line. To the end of the car line we went. There was no one around that looked like a bird-gazer, peering at the trees with field glasses. We were at the end of the wrong car line, but we didn't know it. Oh, you know, we weren't from Minneapolis. We were used to only one car line that was no longer in existence. It has yielded its right-of-way to the motor bus. We concluded the group had already started or had not yet arrived. We decided to cheer up the birds while we waited for the crowd. Brother Hubert and some of his boys joined us. They were a congenial group and as gracious to help others find birds as they were anxious to see some themselves.

We finally managed to find the end of the right car line and felt right at home with the other folks gazing up into the trees or peering into bushes. There was little formality, or style to bother about. Birds are the same, no matter if it is someone from Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, or elsewhere looking at them. Dr. W. J. Breckenridge was among us directing the bird tour. We kept as close as possible to him because we felt he was the one who knew them. We followed him through the wet grass, brush, nettle, and swampy areas. No wonder there are many birds in Minneapolis when the natural habitat of birds is retained in the well-kept city parks. The cardinal gave us a loud call of welcome. We nearly had him puzzled when we returned his greeting. The rough-winged martin circled about in his quest for food.

At noon there was a hungry and tired yet amiable and well-mannered crowd that gathered at the Chalet. There was no rush for the tables, the way you would expect at a nylon counter, when lunch was announced. All of us found room and were well served.

After the luncheon, some photographers appeared and took pictures. You probably saw one in the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune.

The afternoon meeting was called to order by Dr. Breckenridge. It proved as interesting as the trip itself. It is evident that the MOU is made up of intelligent as well as very generous people. After the secretary's and treasurer's reports, several members offered various good suggestions for spending the money that has been accumulating in the treasury. It was finally decided not to give it all away at one meeting, but to leave some of it for future needs. One gentleman, Whitney Eastman, was so pleased with some of the suggestions that he promised to foot the bill that would make it possible to send about 25 complimentary copies of *The Flicker* to high schools and libraries in the state. Thank you! We hope you and many others like you will come to our meeting next year.

There were several interesting reports given at the afternoon meeting. Some of them were by ex-servicemen, who had been to distant lands and had had the opportunity to observe birds. There are two things that impressed me about these talks. One, that we do not need to go to the South Pacific or to India to see highly-colored songsters. We are apt to find more beautifully colored makers of melody here at home if we but look for them. The other impression was that the vulture, that grim scavenger in our desert area, is an honored member of the departments of some cities in South America. Vultures form the street cleaning squad, and do a very good job of it.

Following the afternoon meeting we scattered to various places before going to the Minnesota Museum of Natural History where we had an opportunity to see the display of many specimens of wildlife in their natural setting. There

was a little business to finish; the resolutions committee gave its report. The Union was invited to meet at St. Cloud next year. The invitation was accepted. After this short meeting, we were entertained by a series of lectures and movies on wildlife. They were just wonderful. I hope that many people will have an opportunity to see them.

I liked the meeting of the MOU. I liked the people who belong to it; I liked the officers. I liked most of all the spirit shown by the members. I am looking forward to the next meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.—Monica Misho, St. Cloud Bird Club, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER NESTS AT LAKE LINWOOD**—One of the highlights of the Minneapolis Bird Club's field trip to Lake Linwood on May 26, was discovering a red-bellied woodpecker's nest, the first for this locality. The nest was in a dead, broken-off tree about 30 feet up from the ground and 3 feet from the top of the tree. There were young in the nest as the woodpecker was observed bringing in food. Shells of a woodpecker's egg were found at the base of the tree. This striking bird and nest was observed by the seventeen members who participated in the field trip.

This find extends the known nesting territory of the red-bellied woodpecker some 35 miles northward. It has not previously been reported to be nesting north of the Twin Cities and rarely nests there. The bird is common in southern Minnesota.

In Dr. Thomas S. Robert's **LOGBOOK OF MINNESOTA BIRD LIFE** he reported as found in Minneapolis on June 2, 1926, "nest of Red-bellied Woodpecker, the first for this locality (Mrs. Davidson)."—Severena C. Holmberg, Minneapolis Bird Club, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**A ROSE-BREADED GROSBEEK-COWBIRD PUZZLE**—On May 18, 1946, while at work in the garden I noticed a female rose-breasted grosbeak busily building its flimsy nest in a red-berried elder bush nearby. Two days later I was astonished to find four eggs in the nest. On close inspection, however, three of them proved to be cowbird eggs. Not wanting to unduly disturb the nesting bird, I removed only one of the intruder's eggs. On May 22 the grosbeak had laid two more eggs so I slipped out one more of the cowbird eggs and the next day I removed the last one since the nest then contained the normal clutch of four grosbeak eggs. Thinking that the bird would settle down to incubating at that point I did not examine it until May 27, when to my surprise the nest contained seven grosbeak eggs. No adult birds were around and I became suspicious that it might be deserted. The following day I still saw no adults and on checking I found three eggs punctured as though by some other bird. I removed these hoping the birds would not desert the nest, but they did. On May 30 only one egg remained and the nest was empty on June 4. I am still puzzled over the explanation of this clutch. Did my progressively removing the cowbird eggs throw the reproductive physiology of the grosbeak out of line so as to result in the unusual number of seven eggs being laid or did another grosbeak intrude and disrupt the nesting resulting in its being deserted? —W. J. Breckenridge, Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**ANNUAL FIELD DAY OF THE DULUTH BIRD CLUB**—Joined by the Lakeside Branch, the Duluth Bird Club held the annual field trip on May 25. A clear sky with warm sunshine, the temperature 41 to 66 degrees F., with little or no wind made it altogether a delightful day.

Some thirty members gathered at Minnesota Point in the morning, separating into smaller groups to cover as much as possible of the shore and the sand ridge. As the cars were arriving at the end of the bay shore drive, two large shore birds were sighted flying over the grounds. We were conditioned to see a pair of Hudsonian curlews, they were so similar in color and flight pattern, but one was a trifle larger and appeared to have a straight bill, in contrast to the more familiar aspect of Hudsonian curlew, the other bird. Marbled godwit was the decision, the second record for Duluth known to the writer. In May, 1936, the writer sighted three marbled godwits on Superior Bay shore of Oatka Beach, Minnesota Point.

Despite the favorable weather, the field day did not coincide with shore bird movements, and waves of mixed flocks. Birds were few and scattered except for one large flock of black-bellied plovers. Yet, within some four hours, the combined list for the Point included seventy-six species.

Some observers spent the afternoon on Duluth Hills, close by swamps in Normanna township, and the North Shore, securing additional records to make the total list ninety-six species. The ducks were represented by four species; the hawks by five; the shore birds by fourteen; the warblers nineteen; and the sparrows thirteen. A blue-winged warbler is a new record for the Duluth area.

Several species common to the area were late in arriving or eluded observers on May 25. The following morning chimney swift, nighthawk, red-eyed vireo, piping plover, semi-palmated plover, mourning warbler, chukar partridge, Bonaparte's gull were observed. Wood pewee was first noted on May 30. The morning of May 26, was favorable for larger numbers of shore birds, red-backed sandpipers, and sanderlings especially, and a large flock of Bonaparte's gulls. Cedar waxwings, bobolinks, and scarlet tanagers have not been sighted yet. Although the number of species seen this summer is well over one hundred, the record for May 25, remains at 96 species. —Olga Lakela, Duluth, Minnesota.

**AMERICAN EGRETS IN MINNESOTA**—This past summer American egrets have again paid Minnesota a visit. They have appeared at widely separated localities and in exceptionally large numbers. The first report was July 15. On that date Leonard Berggren, Warden, saw 46 in marshes south of Hastings; July 27, Harvey Gunderson reported 11 in another area somewhat farther south in the lowlands along the Mississippi River.

When they first appeared in the marshlands adjacent to the Isaac Walton Bass Pond, Dr. W. J. Breckenridge reported about 30. Later, August 16, he estimated that there were between 75 and 100 scattered about the marshes accompanied by about 200 great blue herons, mostly juveniles. The egrets must have steadily increased in numbers for on the date of August 18, Miss Severena Holmberg and this writer spent two hours observing them in this same location. We made an actual count of 137 egrets and it is most certain that there were many more. Because they spent much of their time on the ground and that during the summer there was vegetation tall enough to obscure them, it was impossible to make an exact count. They were not shy. We approached to within 200 yards of about 40 that were grouped about on a mud flat. They appeared not to notice us at all, possibly because there was considerable activity among them. They sparred with one another, often jumping four or five feet straight up and at the same time flapping their wings. Occasionally two would stand face to face for a minute craning their long slim necks before they performed. Among them, here and there, great blue herons solemnly stalked as if disdaining the

playfulness of their glistening white cousins. Once about 20 of the egrets rose and circled, landing back at the same spot. They came down against a strong west wind and the grace and skill of their flight was delightful to watch.

For the most part they feed on frogs and small fish. One luckless fish fell into the mud from whence it was picked up, carried to a shallow pool and carefully washed, being dipped several times, then it was eaten. The tameness of the egrets was remarkable. A group of about 25 stood at the roadside in one of the ponds. We were upon them before they flew up, to soar about in circles above our heads. Against the blue sky in the bright sun they were a beautiful sight.

That the egrets were sojourning in several spots in the state was evidenced by the fact that Mrs. C. E. Peterson reported three at Appleton, Elmer Smith saw eight near Shakopee, and George Cole saw eight at a little lake near Osseo. The report from Appleton is of special interest because it is the northernmost record for the state to date. Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, Director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, is interested in receiving reports of American egrets being seen farther north than Appleton. —Mary Lupient, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**EGRETS NEAR HASTINGS**—On July 16, the writer got a tip from Dr. Surber that American egrets had been reported in the vicinity of Hastings. The morning of July 17, the writer and Walter Wettschreck motored to Hastings where game warden Leonard Berggren drove us to a location six miles southeast of Hastings on the Vermilion River where he had counted 46 American egrets on July 15.

In the course of about an hour we counted 30 of the large white birds though doubtless many others were hidden in the heavy vegetation along the river. The birds were extremely unwary and allowed Mr. Wettschreck to approach within 50 to 100 feet before showing any signs of alarm. Even then they merely rose into the air, flopped lazily about the vicinity for a minute or two and settled back to feeding in the shallows of the river. Wettschreck was thus enabled to get some close-up movies.

There are as yet no positive records of the birds nesting in this state so it is likely that most of them nested to the south of us and flew up for a short "vacation" before returning to their southern wintering grounds.

The increase in the numbers of egrets reported in Minnesota during recent years would seem to be a tribute to the effectiveness of the protection they now receive.

In the days of the feather trade, American egrets were very nearly exterminated. It is certainly to be hoped that other birds that are now close to extinction as the egret once was can be restored to relative abundance by rigid enforcement of state and federal protective laws.—Ken Morrison, St. Paul Bird Club, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**PILEATED WOODPECKERS WINTER IN FERGUS FALLS**—The pileated woodpecker has been observed several times this last winter in a tree across the street from our house. On February 7, 1946, one came to our feeding tray. The bird was first noticed on the ground under the feeding tray and then it started to climb the trellis towards the tray. There were several English sparrows on the tray and they flew down, apparently alarming the woodpecker who flew to a neighboring tree. The woodpecker did not eat any of the food (chicken scratch)

as far as I saw. There have been two pileated woodpeckers in our neighborhood, in town, all winter. —Arne Arneson, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

**CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR AND SPRAGUE'S PIPIT**—While I was on a trip to the prairie areas of northwestern Minnesota with Dr. E. S. Thomas, Curator of Natural History at the Ohio State Museum, and Mrs. Thomas and daughter, several interesting records were obtained. On July 31, 1946, a male chestnut-collared longspur was seen in a plowed field near Averill, Clay County. On the morning of August 1, while investigating a small prairie area near Foxhome, Wilkin County, Sprague's pipits were heard singing, and one was seen as it came to earth. During the last one-third of its dive it was accompanied by another pipit which had come up to meet it. They alighted in some vegetation where they remained several minutes before flying away. Thinking there might possibly be a late nest where the two alighted, we investigated the spot, but found no nest and the birds did not return. —Harvey L. Gunderson, Minnesota Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**SPARROW NEST, ORIOLE STYLE**—In some recent reading I saw the statement that the so-called "English sparrow" is not a sparrow, but a weaver bird. I have often seen their nests and my thought was that they were very amateurish weavers. But proof was forthcoming that they still retain the art.

I had closed up a number of nesting sites around the eaves of my house, leaving only one end of a wooden rain trough which the sparrows found available. One pair filled this with the usual pile of coarse hay; then came the heavy rains rendering it useless. Thereupon they brought up a great deal more trash, and a bunch of it about as large as a half-length of stovepipe hung suspended.

I had decided to tear down this unsightly mass, when one day toward the end of May I saw a female sparrow fly out of it. There was a round hole near the bottom. I didn't have the heart to destroy a bird structure so laboriously made; it was somewhat like an oriole's nest, but far from being as neat and strongly woven. Within a week the wind began to swing it back and forth and one morning the lower part was missing. I found it on the ground; it was almost solid feathers which, when damp, had made the structure too much like a pendulum. One piece of coarse twine was partly woven in it—perhaps all that the birds could find. There were no eggs. They may have been spilled out, or possibly the hen sparrow was doubtful of the stability of the structure and was cannily waiting to see how it would withstand a storm. Intermittently for about a month, the birds made other attempts to construct hanging nests, but each time stormy weather brought them down. They finally gave up. —Guy Atherton, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**BIRDS AT LAKE TRAVERSE**—Mr. and Mrs. Whitney Eastman, Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Phelps and Mr. and Mrs. Milton Thompson spent Saturday, July 27th, at Lake Traverse on the western border of Minnesota. This was our first visit since Mr. Eastman, Bob Feldman and I were there in June of 1942. A marked change has taken place in Lake Traverse. Dams installed at the lake's outlets have raised the water several feet.

The trees which grew around the lake and on the low bars running out into the lake are now dead skeletons standing in the water and in several parts of the lake they have become the nesting sites for colonies of cormorants and at least in one locality south and east of the north dam the nesting site of a mixed colony of great blue herons and cormorants. We were able to observe one and

occasionally two young cormorants in several of the nests. Cormorants appeared to us to have become far more numerous on the lake than in 1942. However, the difference in time of year may have had some bearing on this apparent increase in numbers.

Two species appeared definitely to have decreased. We observed not more than 50 white pelicans even though we drove the entire length of the lake. In 1942 we counted 150 in the air at one time in one area. The other species that appeared less abundant was the western grebe. This could very likely be due to us to have become far more numerous on the lake than in 1942. However, the open water and performing their fantastic courting performances. This year we were observing them during the period when they were caring for young. They were found in the bays, widely dispersed. At least fifty adults were observed each caring for one young grebe. Twice an adult bird (perhaps the same individual) was seen with two young, and one adult was observed caring for 3 young grebes. Obviously they are nesting in considerable numbers on the lake.

We found a pair of orchard orioles nesting about 35 feet from the ground in a small ash tree. The adults were feeding young in the nest. Two other orchard orioles were observed near the lake. Both the eastern and the Arkansas kingbirds were abundant. We had several very close looks at a beautifully marked Krider's phase of the red-tailed hawk, which repeatedly allowed us to approach within 50 feet of it before taking to the air. We observed several groups of shore birds around the shallow marshes along the highway on our return trip. Of particular interest was a group that included 2 knots. This group was on mud flats around a pond just west of Howard Lake.

It was the first time any of us had observed knots in Minnesota but Mr. Eastman was familiar with them in Florida and I have observed them previously in Staten Island.

The most common shore birds were the least sandpipers, pectoral sandpipers, and lesser yellow-legs. —Milton D. Thompson, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**WOOD THRUSH IN DULUTH**—On May 21, 1946, the writer received a killed specimen of a female wood thrush, found in Lester Park by Miss Mary Ober. This migration casualty is the first record of the species found in Duluth, east of 60th Avenue West. From this point westward to Fond du Lac and the adjacent Jay Cooke Park, wood thrush may be heard through the summer in the stands of hardwood forest. It appears that the species is extending its range to north-eastern Minnesota. The specimen is preserved in the bird collection of the Duluth State Teachers College. —Olga Lakela, Duluth, Minnesota.

**CARDINALS IN ST. CLOUD**—While working at the St. Cloud Hospital this spring, I took time to watch the birds as they arrived. The private grounds between the hospital and the Mississippi River favor bird study as there is plenty of food, water, and protection to encourage bird life. Sister Odette, who is a patient at the hospital, has been watching the birds there for the past two years.

About the middle of March of this year, we heard what we thought might be the whistle of the cardinal. On March 19, we saw the male perched on the top of the bare branches of an oak. On March 21, we saw both male and female—the latter not brilliantly red like the male but of a yellowish-brown color. In flight her feathers seemed to be tinged with red and her brilliantly red bill was very noticeable. We saw both birds frequently during the rest of March and

April. On April 13, Sister Odette was walking on a path alongside of which there was a small stream flowing from a spring to the river. She was surprised to see a vivid splash of red on a low branch just a few feet away. The male cardinal whistled and watched her and flew from limb to limb as though he were trying to attract and lead her away. She looked about and saw the female bathing in the little stream. As she came back to approach the female, the male came back and again claimed her attention. She followed him for a little distance as he moved away from the female and then suddenly he wheeled back to join his mate.

After the 12th of April they were most frequently found in the corner of a lot adjoining the hospital property. We watched for evidences of nest building and on the 18th I saw the female carrying a triangular bit of cardboard and slipping into a spruce tree. The male was nearby and the closer I came to the tree the louder grew his sharp, short chirp and the more did he flutter from branch to branch. As I watched him he flew from one low shrub to another. I followed a few steps and then stopped. He came back to a branch a few feet away from me and again tried to lead me away. We never saw the male carrying anything to the nest. His duty seemed to be distracting onlookers from intruding on the activities of the female.

On April 21, I found the nest on a bough of the spruce tree about seven feet from the ground. It was loosely constructed of dried grass, string, bits of rags and cardboard. During the next two weeks Sister Odette watched the tree from a distance and found the female, first working at the nest and then remaining on it. Not wishing to frighten the birds away we kept at a distance. On May 11, as I stealthily approached the tree, I heard the chip of the male as the female slipped off the nest and flew away. I climbed onto a box so I could look into the nest and found just one egg in it. On May 17 and 18, Sister missed the birds. She looked into the nest and found it empty. A week later she heard the familiar whistle coming from a distance but our birds did not return. Who or what was responsible for the empty nest and the departed cardinals we do not know. —Sister Estelle, St. Cloud Bird Club, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

**BIRDS AT LUTSEN**—At Lutsen on the north shore of Lake Superior the old highway runs southwest through a wooded section along the lake coming out on the new highway about a mile away. Since there is almost no traffic, a fine opportunity presents itself for the study of the songs and nesting habits of some of the migratory birds. In this territory I spent the week following June 24, 1946, and found 11 species of warblers as well as white-throated and chipping sparrows, robins, thrushes, cedar waxwings, vireos, and other birds that apparently were all nesting in the above mentioned area. Birds were everywhere. Warblers singing were black-throated green, chestnut-sided, mourning, blackburnian, parula, Nashville, bay-breasted, magnolia, oven-bird, northern yellow-throat, and American redstart. None of the warblers was seen carrying food so it was difficult to find the nests, but after diligent search I was rewarded by finding the parula's cradle of moss.

Two Lincoln sparrows sang in a hollow spot near the resort and the nest of one was found containing two young. The song of these sparrows was exceedingly sweet and soft. Song sparrows were singing there too, and both species sang at about the same interval. On a high ridge back from the lake in a grassy clearing around some old abandoned buildings, the grasshopper sparrow weakly and almost incessantly proclaimed its presence. A flock of pine siskins, seem-

ingly irresponsible and carefree, wandered about sometimes in the woods and often near the lake. Four wandering Bohemian waxwings were also noted once.

One morning it was very quiet along the old road bordered by beautiful blue *mertensia* and pale yellow *clintonia*. An immature duck hawk flew from perch to perch uttering its chattering cry. The only bird that seemed not to fear it was a Canada jay that stayed in the vicinity much of the time that the hawk was there. Far back in the deep woods at the end of an old logging trail, the hermit thrush sang its sweet serene song recalling my experience of finding it there some years ago.

Along the lake shore, where ancient lava flows dip gently into the water, erosion has formed rocky points and islets, also small bays with here and there a cliff. Along this picturesque shoreline, where the water is seldom still, is the home of the herring gull. A fisherman who has lived at Lutsen for many years told me that this spring, severe cold and violent storms that caused the waves to dash high on the rocks, had destroyed many of the early nests and young. During the week I spent there, I found one herring gull's nest with two downy young and one egg hidden on the shore so that it was partly covered by an overhanging rock. Another nest with two eggs was found in the open on a rock.

Single birds and several pairs of American mergansers and red-breasted mergansers were observed. One female red-breasted merganser was followed by seven small young. They were strong and swift swimmers even in rough water. Three common loons and a Holboell's grebe could be seen daily swimming about near the shore.

Quietly walking down the old road, I sometimes came upon deer. A doe and fawn were startled by me one morning, and once a young porcupine tried to scramble away so fast it fell headlong into a ditch.

At dusk, when all the birds were still except the olive-backed thrush, I gratefully remembered my dear and kind friend, Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts, who during his life, had made several observations along this road and in this area. Since there is no death, I hoped he could hear with me the thrush repeat again and again its beautiful bell-like notes as a silvery thin sickle of new moon hung for an instant over the high dark wooded ridge and slowly disappeared. —Mary Lupient, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## - CALL NOTES -

Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge has been appointed Director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History and Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota. He succeeds the late Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts with whom he has been closely associated for the past twenty years.

Dr. Breckenridge took his undergraduate work at the University of Iowa where he also spent one year as assistant to Professor Homer R. Dill, Director of the Natural History Museum at the University of Iowa at Iowa City. In 1934 he completed his requirements for the M. A. degree. His thesis was written on Marsh Hawks.

He then took more course work at the University of Minnesota and another thesis on Reptiles and Amphibians won him his Ph. D. degree in 1941. This thesis has since been expanded and published in book form by the University of Minnesota Press.

Dr. Breckenridge has had many articles published in outstanding magazines and has contributed numerous articles to The Flicker. He is an artist as well as an author and ranks as one of the outstanding wildlife photographers. He is a recognized authority in the field of ornithology and on any subject that concerns Minnesota birds.

This month the Minnesota Museum of Natural History is celebrating its sixth birthday. As MOU members pass through the doors of this magnificent museum with its modernistic entrance, they are happy to know that the work of Dr. Roberts is being expanded and carried on by such an able person as Dr. Breckenridge, past-president of the MOU.

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William Kilgore, Assistant Director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural

History, has spent many hours preparing the bibliography of Dr. Roberts natural history writings. It is to be hoped that the bibliography will be found useful. A glance at the years will reveal the fact that Dr. Roberts began publishing his notes very early in life and continued up to the last.

\* \* \*

The Wilson Ornithological Club will hold its 1946 annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, on November 29 and 30. Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge will be in charge of an exhibit of bird art produced by members of the armed forces. Anyone interested in exhibiting bird art should contact Dr. Breckenridge at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.

\* \* \*

The Audubon Screen Tours that have given pleasure to so many Twin City folks for the past several years are to be given in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth this year. Natural science enthusiasts should contact their local clubs for dates and information concerning the tours.

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Dr. Gustav A. Swanson, formerly an instructor at the University of Minnesota, has been appointed chief of the Division of Wildlife Research, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dr. Swanson has served as liaison officer on Pittman-Robertson research projects. Since October, 1944, he has been in charge of the Service's important co-operative wildlife research unit program and has a wide knowledge of the wildlife management field.

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George Rysgaard has given up his position as museum assistant in order to devote his entire time to the study of medicine. His position has been

taken over by **Harvey L. Gunderson** of Gary, Minnesota, who has recently returned from overseas service.

Mr. Gunderson is a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, and was taking graduate work at the University of Minnesota before going into the army.

\* \* \*

**Edmund Hibbard**, past president of the T. S. Roberts Ornithological Club, in a letter written on June 14, from Heidelberg, Germany, says that he has not been able to find a European bird guide so is somewhat at a loss to identify the birds. He hopes to be back chasing birds in Minnesota next spring. His address is T/5 Edmund A. Hibbard 37794853 Co. A—301st Sig. Opr. Bn., APO 172, c/o Postmaster, New York, N. Y.

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**Sister Estelle**, formerly of the St. Cloud Bird Club, has recently moved to St. Benedicts Hospital, 3000 Polk Avenue, Ogden, Utah. The following excerpts from one of her letters indicates that she is as keenly interested in the western birds as she was in those of Minnesota.

"From our windows we look out on beautiful scenery. Even native Ogdenites comment on the beauty of our location. Some day I hope you come through here and see for yourself. Between the mountain and us is a game preserve. The birds are a great attraction for me as you would expect them to be. It was good for my pride to have to say, "I don't know," over and over again when asked about birds or bird calls. Now that I have a copy of Peterson's birds west of the mountains, I am becoming familiar with many of them. So far, I now know the Lazuli bunting (I wish you could see and hear him as he is such a beauty and sings

so well), the long-tailed chat who says all sorts of things, the black-headed grosbeak, the western tanager, mountain bluebird, quail, magpies, and gulls. There are several others that I am watching. There are various species of hummingbirds. I can see that they are different, but so far have not fully identified them. It is most interesting to see how bird and plant life differs from Minnesota."

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**William Longley**, the new secretary of the MOU, is spending his summer vacation at Sand Lake Federal Wildlife Refuge, at Columbia, South Dakota.

\* \* \*

**Mr. and Mrs. Ken Morrison** have a son and heir. **Kenneth Douglas Morrison, Junior**, put in his appearance on April 24. He weighed 8 pounds and 10 ounces at birth and his grandfather says young Kenneth has practically doubled his weight since then. Perhaps Junior will some day follow in his father's footsteps and become president of the St. Paul Bird Club.

**Mr. and Mrs. Warren Nord** are re-joining over their 8 pound daughter, **Sherry Ann Nord** who was born on August 13. She, too, may follow in her father's footsteps and become president of the Minnesota Bird Club some day.

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The pictures of the MOU meeting, mentioned by Miss **Monica Misho**, elsewhere in this issue, appeared in the **Minneapolis Sunday Tribune** on June 2, 1946. About this same time another group of ornithologists, the **St. Louis Bird Club, St. Louis, Missouri**, was getting a full page of pictures in their local newspaper. The pictures were taken when on their bird walks in **Forest Park** which is considered an excellent bird sanctuary. **Wayne Short**, who helps push the Audubon Screen

Tours, is president of the St. Louis Bird Club which now has 1400 members. Detroit's club is the only one in the country that is larger. The Minnesota clubs have something to aim for.

\* \* \*

A St. Paulite has the sparrows licked. According to an article which appeared in the St. Paul Dispatch on May 20, 1946, John F. Oigard, 955 W. Central Avenue, St. Paul, has solved

the problem of keeping his martin house free of sparrows. The martin house is electrified, but in such a way that the birds get only a light shock and no harm comes to them. By keeping the landing shelves on only three sides of the martin house he can be certain that only sparrows are on the landing perches when the button is pushed.

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### TO MEMBERS OF THE MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

The University of Minnesota Press has published a large number of books of interest to naturalists, and an arrangement has been made whereby these books are now available to MOU members. The trade discount goes to the Union treasury for aid in publishing *The Flicker*. A 10 per cent discount will be allowed to members on "Birds of Minnesota," only.

Orders and remittances should be sent to Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Treasurer, Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, 212 S.E. Bedford Street, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.

Birds of Minnesota, Roberts (2 Vols., Revised Edition) .....	\$15.00
A Manual for Identification of Minnesota Birds, Roberts .....	2.00
Canoe Country, Jaques .....	2.00
Snowshoe Country, Jaques .....	3.00
Butterflies, Macy and Shepard .....	3.50
The Indoor Gardener, Abbott .....	1.50
The Northern Garden Week by Week, Abbott .....	1.00
Common Edible Mushrooms, Christenson .....	2.50
Guide to Spring Flowers, Rosendahl and Butters .....	1.00
Trees and Shrubs of Minnesota, Rosendahl and Butters .....	3.00
On Your Own, Graham and O'Roke .....	2.00
Reptiles and Amphibians of Minnesota, Breckenridge .....	2.50
Flower Family Album, Fischer & Harshbarger .....	2.50
A Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology, Pettingill .....	3.50
Birds in the Garden, McKenny .....	5.00

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# THE FLICKER

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## The Flicker

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# THE FLICKER

VOLUME 18

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## A Nesting of the Red-shouldered Hawk

by

Eldeen and Don Jacobs

We found what we thought must be the nest of a broad-winged hawk on May 5 of this year (1946). Probably, we reasoned, it belonged to the same pair of broad-wings that had nested near the Newlin home in the Deephaven woods at Lake Minnetonka during the previous year. The location was not the same, this year's nest being built about 200 yards north of last year's site, but since both nests had been built in the same vicinity we felt safe in assuming them to be the work of the same pair of birds.

Our suspicions as to the correctness of this identification were aroused with the very first examination of the nest. Not only was the nest a good deal larger than our broad-wings', but it contained a bit of "interior decorating" that was new. Sprigs of spruce and balsam were artistically arranged around the circumference of the nest and the shallow cavity was lined with chips of inner bark and a few scattered fluffs of down. The eggs resembled those of the broad-wing, being pale buffy with beautiful mottlings of rich shades of rufous and brown, but they were larger, approximately the size of a very large hen's egg. The call notes of the adults did not resemble the high pitched monotone of the broad-wing but reminded us far more strongly of one of the calls of the blue jay. It had December, 1946

a more nasal quality, however. Also, the tail seemed longer than is usual with the broad-wing. A careful check of these facts against available literature and a comparison of the size of the eggs with museum specimens succeeded in convincing us that we were actually dealing with a pair of red-shouldered hawks. Subsequent observations enabled us to see the rufous shoulders and the light-colored spots formed by the translucent feathers near the tips of the wings.

The nest was built in a basswood tree and was found by actual measurement to be 48 feet from the ground. It was 29 inches long by 20 inches broad and had a depth of 12 inches. The upper surface of this large stick structure formed an almost flat platform on which the eggs were laid and the young raised. When first examined it was found to contain one newly hatched young covered with pale buffy down and two eggs, one piped and one unpipped.

The nest was examined and photographed successively on May 5, May 30, June 2, and June 8. On the thirteenth it held three young and one frog, and one adult bird flew over the nest carrying another frog in its beak. Pellets found in the nest were made up chiefly of the skulls and hair of meadow mice, but one pellet also yield-



*Photos by Don Jacobs*

### THE RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

Upper Figure. A one-day-old nestling and eggs in nest containing evergreen sprigs and pieces of inner bark. May 5. Lower figure, Young birds at the age of 25 days. May 30, 1946.

ed the feathers of a yellow warbler, and one contained a white-footed mouse skull.

On May 5, the "interior decorating" consisted solely of evergreen sprigs, but on May 30 elm and hackberry branches were used as well. On June 2 all of these earlier decorations were present plus a new jack pine branch. On June 8 it was very attractively done in jack pine, spruce, hard maple, elm and willow. Although quite artistic this habit is believed by Bent to be for sanitary rather than ornamental purposes.

Excreta was present around the circumference of the nest but was exceeded by the whitewash which covered both the earth and the bushes surrounding the base of the tree for a diameter of at least 30 feet, rendering the nesting area very easy of location from the ground. This bespattered appearance of the landscape was readily explained when Don had the temerity to pick up one of the young birds and hold it over the edge of the nest for the observers below to see. Confidently and competently the youngster ejected a forceful stream of whitewash scoring a direct hit upon the object of his wrath whereupon bedlam and hilarity reigned among the ungrateful observers.

Although Don often worked at the nest for long periods of time, the parents never made any real attempt to attack him. On a few occasions they flew in with food, but always veered to one side when they saw him or flew directly over, a few feet above his head. Their manner at these times was not one of attack, but rather of helpless concern. At other times one or the other of the adults would perch on a dead branch some 30 yards away, observe him closely, and make infrequent flights of reconnaissance.

The young were at all times extremely wary and would back as far from the photographer as they could get  
December, 1946

and still dangle on the rim of their nest. They would emit the same kee-aah, kee-aah alarm cry of the adults, thereby exciting the parents and bringing them to the scene to investigate. Throughout the nest life of the young birds they seemed continually harassed by a swarm of small gnats which crawled over their heads and around the ear cavities in particular. The birds seemed to pay very little attention to these pests other than to frequently blink their eyes. When last seen on June 8 they were very well developed and the wing coverts of the young were margined with rufous. They were as wary as ever, but now the largest of the young did not hesitate to attack Don's hand furiously with beak and claw. We were not able to return after this date, but we left believing that after another week the young would be out of the nest. Lyman Newlin later reported seeing the young and the parents circling over the area on several occasions.

Among the interesting observations made on these young hawks one at least appears not to have been previously described or discussed. This is a difference in the color of the ceres and of the unfeathered portions of the legs among the young birds. There are two rather distinct types so the character may well be sex differences. In one type the cere and legs are dull yellow; in the other type both structures are pale cream, almost white. Precisely the same difference was noted the previous year in a brood of two young broad-winged hawks. The differences are observable in newly hatched young and are still distinct when the young leave the nest. Whether or not the character is lost with age is not known. Assuming that the male has the greater amount of pigment, there were two females and one male in the red-shouldered hawk nest. —Minneapolis, Minnesota.

See also Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 1947)

# Minnesota Nesting Records, 1946

William Longly and Byron Harrell

Another nesting season has passed, and it is here accounted for. Many people have obligingly prepared lists of the nests which they were able to find and of the other evidences of nesting they noticed, and they have sent them to *The Flicker* or to the Museum of Natural History. From these lists the data in this article have been gathered. Without doubt, many more bird-watchers found nests which would prove of interest but were not reported. Perhaps many more species would be represented here had we access to the records of such observers.

From Duluth, Dr. Olga Lakela incorporated with her report the findings of the following people: Mrs. Arthur Roberts and Henry Roberts, Rose Shimmick, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Baeder, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Broenel, Mrs. Richard Northup, Mary Elwell, Byron Bray, Alma Chesley, Hulda Adams, Warren Hamerston, and Harry Kahn.

From the Twin Cities we have used reports of these observers: Brother Hubert Lewis, Brother J. Pius, Thomas Meyer, Lewis L. Barrett, Oscar Owre, Lulu May Aler, Milton D. Thompson, W. J. Breckenridge, A. C. Rosenwinkel, Bob Larson, Carlyle Sather, George Rickert, Mrs. I. A. Lupient, Tilford Moore, Byron Harrell, Wm. H. Longley, Severena Holmberg, Janet Sanford, and Eldeen and Don Jacobs.

It may be of interest to note, for matter of comparison, the results of the past six nesting seasons, although the reasons for the similarities or differences may be of little significance (if those reasons could even be ascertained). The inclusion of colonies in which several hundred pairs may be

nesting somewhat complicates these figures, which are only approximate.

Yr.	Species	Ind. Nests.	No. in Col.
1941	..... 86	800	200
1942	.....110	1220	100
1943	..... 94	400	1500
1944	..... 98	1200	1200
1945	.....107	1800	200
1946	..... 93	546	500

Nesting of 150 species is represented in these articles for the past six years. This total does not include at least three species, nesting of which has come to the attention of the authors. Dr. Ralph Dawson found the nest of an Arctic 3-toed woodpecker in Itasca Park, early July, 1945; a cormorant colony on an island in Lake of the Woods contained several hundred large young in early July, 1945. A cursory inspection of several past issues of *The Flicker* shows that the king rail has recently nested here, although it was not recorded in this regular series of articles on nesting.

Some of the nests not reported in these years are those of the black duck, gadwall, green-winged teal, sharp-shinned hawk, marsh hawk, pigeon hawk, prairie chicken, barred owl, short-eared owl, winter wren, the golden-winged, blue-winged, parula, and palm warblers, and any of the sharp-tailed sparrows. These, and a few others unmentioned, nest commonly enough in this state so that they should not be overlooked. Incidentally, few people include the English sparrow in their lists, probably because they feel it is too common; however, English sparrows should be noted along with the others. We should emphasize that, though we may speak of "nests", it is important

to include young birds out of the nest even if the nest is not found when it is evident that the birds were raised in the vicinity. The nesting of many birds is more easily noticed by the appearance of the young, especially the ducks and hole-nesting species whose nests are rather inaccessible. Records of young out of the nest have much more value than merely notes of nests, the contents of which are undeterminable.

Suggestions for keeping records in the most convenient and usable form will appear in a later issue of *The Flicker*.

Some nests reported lacked sufficient data for use in this report.

**COMMON LOON.** 1 young, Aug. 12, Cook Co., Mrs. Arthur Roberts and Henry Roberts. Most loon nesting of late has been seen in the Arrowhead country where it nests most commonly. It should be found anywhere north of the Twin Cities.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE.** 1 egg, May 12, Goodhue Co., Barrett; 1 young, June 25, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert. Nests throughout the state.

**GREAT BLUE HERON.** Building nests, May 11 and 12, Ramsey and Anoka Co., large young on June 1, some out of nests on June 13, Bro. Hubert. The Ramsey Co. colony contained 22 nests, that in Anoka contained 72 nests.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.** Eggs, May 12, Anoka Co., young out of nests on June 13, Bro. Hubert. About 100 nests were counted. A colony just north of St. Paul has gone the way of most large heron colonies. All the trees are dead, and the birds no longer find conditions there to their liking.

**MALLARD** 5 eggs and 1 pheasant egg, May 26, Hennepin Co., Longley; 8 young, May 26, Ramsey Co.; 11 young, June 2, Ramsey Co., Moore; 9

young, June 29, Benton Co.; 12 eggs, Wright Co., Barrett. Pheasant eggs are often found in upland-nesting ducks' nests, where they probably never hatch.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL.** 1 egg, June 25; 8 eggs, June 27, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 11 young, July 7; 9 young, July 14, Ramsey Co., Moore; 5 young, June 27, Benton Co., Barrett. When duck nests are found by man before the clutch is complete, very often the nest is deserted. That is one danger of disturbing the nesting birds.

**SHOVELER.** 11 young, July 23, Wright Co., Barrett. Although the shoveler is said to be one of the most common of our nesting ducks, it has been reported in but two of the last six years.

**WOOD DUCK.** 10 eggs, April 6 (25 eggs on May 11, six left on May 18; thus 19 were presumed hatched), Hennepin Co., Breckenridge; 12 young, May 26, Ramsey Co.; 5 young, Aug. 6, Meeker Co., Moore.

**RING-NECKED DUCK.** 3 broods (7, 8, and 9 young), Stearns Co., Barrett.

**RUDDY DUCK.** 6 young, July 17, Kandiyohi Co., Barrett. The ruddy is nesting more commonly in the eastern part of the state. From the LOGBOOK of Dr. Roberts, it is evident that the abundance of this bird, and others, is cyclical; then, this increase may be only temporary.

**AMERICAN MERGANSER.** 15 young, Aug. 9, Lake Superior, Barrett.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.** 3 nests (7, 8, and 9 eggs), June 22, Beaver Island, Lake Superior, Mrs. Arthur Roberts and Henry Roberts.

**COOPER'S HAWK.** Building nest, April 26, young on June 11, Hennepin Co., Aler, 1 egg, May 12, Goodhue Co., Barrett. This bird may be the commonest nesting hawk of the state; surely it is more widespread than is apparent.

**RED-SHOULDERED HAWK.** 3

large young, June 2, Washington Co., Longley; May 13, 3 young, Hennepin Co., Eldeen and Don Jacobs. The fact that as many nests of this bird as of the red-tailed hawk have been found in the last six years may be explained by the concentration of observers in the southeast and central part of the state where the red-shoulder is most common. The first nest of this species was found in 1934.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK.** 2 nests, April 25, Ramsey Co. and June 1, Anoka, Bro. Hubert.

**BALD EAGLE.** Large young, July 24, Remer, Bob Larson. Occasional pairs remain in the wilder parts of the state. One wonders if the effectiveness of the Federal protection will be proved by an increase of the eagle in the next few years.

**RUFFED GROUSE.** 12 young, June 7, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert. Brother Hubert has stated that the parent with this brood was so tame that it allowed itself to be petted.

**HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE.** 10 young, July 17, Kandiyohi Co., Barrett.

**CHUKAR PARTRIDGE.** 9 young, Aug. 9, Lake Co., Barrett.

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT.** 10 young, July 9, Kandiyohi Co., Barrett; 7 young, July 17; 5 young, Aug. 14, Ramsey Co., Moore.

**VIRGINIA RAIL.** 2 large young, July 7, Ramsey Co., Moore. 5 young, Aug. 1, Hennepin Co., Barrett.

**COOT.** 6 young, June 27, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 young, July 10, Kandiyohi Co., Barrett. It seems that, in spite of a large clutch, the coot does not have large broods. Personal experience of the author indicates this to some extent, however, more records are needed.

**PIPING PLOVER.** 3 nests (3, 3, and 2 eggs), June 26, Harbor Island, Duluth, Lakela. This bird was little known

in Minnesota until recently when it has been found rather regularly nesting near Duluth.

**KILLDEER.** 4 eggs, April 18; 4 eggs, April 21; 4 eggs, May 11, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 2 young, May 7, Hennepin Co., Longley; 2 young, June 26, Harbor Island, Duluth, Lakela; 3 young, July 7, Ramsey Co., Moore; 3 young, July 28, Duluth, Rose Shimmick.

**WOODCOCK.** 4 eggs, May 30, Rice Co., Barrett. This is only the second nest reported in six years.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER.** 4 eggs, June 5, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert; 2 young, July 5, Duluth, Lakela.

**HERRING GULL.** 93 nests (total of 16 eggs, 82 young), June 4, Knife Is., Lake Superior, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Boeder, and Mr. and Mrs. Joel Broemel; 2 eggs, June 5, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert; 135 nests (58 eggs, 44 young), June 22, Beaver Island, Lakela; 21 nests (17 eggs, 12 young), June 22, Mattson's Island, Lakela.

**COMMON TERN.** 9 nests (6 with 3 eggs, 2 with 2 eggs, and 3 young out of the nest), Harbor Island, Lake Superior, Lakela.

**BLACK TERN.** 13 nests (6 with 1 egg, 3 with 2, 3 with 3, and 1 nest being built), May 30, Hennepin Co.; 2 nests (2 eggs, and 3 eggs), June 9, Ramsey Co., Longley and Harrell; 7 nests with eggs, May 30, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

**MOURNING DOVE.** 2 eggs, April 17, Ramsey Co., Longley; 1 egg, May 19, Hennepin Co., Barrett; 2 large young, May 30, Hennepin Co., Longley; 2 large young, May 31, Hennepin Co., Aler. Other nests were reported by Bro. Hubert, but in all only 13 nests were reported whereas usually 50 or more are listed.

**SCREECH OWL.** 4 young (in bird house), May 3, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

**NIGHTHAWK.** 2 nests, June 16, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert, (No data); 1 young, August 3, Lake Co., Lakela.

**CHIMNEY SWIFT.** Gathering nesting materials, May 28 and June 28, Olmstead Co., Moore; July 17, 5 young, Janet Sanford. Few persons find evidence of swifts nesting. They frequently are seen breaking twigs from trees in spring, and their presence about chimneys or other likely nesting places indicates their nesting; yet their nests are rarely accessible.

**RUBY - THROATED HUMMING-BIRD.** 2 eggs, June 17, Chisago Co., Thompson. A nest found at Itasca Park in 1945, by Dr. Ralph Dawson was not included last year.

**FLICKER.** Eggs, April 30, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 5 eggs, June 25, Hennepin Co., Thompson; 3 young out, July 25, Duluth, Lakela.

**RED - BELLIED WOODPECKER.** Young in nest, June 2, Washington Co., Longley. This is the first nest reported since 1941.

**RED - HEADED WOODPECKER.** Young, June 22, June 30, in Dakota Co. and Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

**KINBIRD.** 2 young out of nest and 3 young out, Aug. 4, Duluth, Lakela. Usually many more nests are reported.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD.** 3 young, Aug. 22, Becker Co., Barrett. Only nest reported in the past six years.

**CRESTED FLYCATCHER.** 5 eggs, June 26, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge; 5 eggs, June 27, Benton Co., Barrett; young, June 2, Washington Co., Longley.

**EASTERN PHOEBE.** 5 eggs, May 8, Ramsey Co.; 3 eggs, June 5, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 eggs, June 9, St. Louis Co., Ralph Boeder; 2 eggs, May 12, Rice Co., Longley; 4 young out, June 15, Beltrami Co., Owre.

**ALDER FLYCATCHER.** Building, June 4, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert.

Nests have been reported for only two of the last six years.

**LEAST FLYCATCHER.** 1 egg, June 1, Anoka Co., Bro. Hubert; 3 eggs, June 13, Beltrami Co., Owre.

**WOOD PEWEE.** Building, June 13, Anoka Co., Bro. Hubert; Building, June 13, Beltrami Co., Owre.

**HORNED LARK.** 4 eggs, March 27, 4 eggs, May 1, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert. We hope that the single March nest does not indicate that most Minnesota ornithologists are fair weather birders.

**TREE SWALLOW.** 7 nests with young, June 18, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 3 young out, July 7, St. Louis Co., Byron Bray; 5 young left, July 22, St. Louis Co., Mrs. Arthur Roberts; building, May 14 (1 egg, May 25), Ramsey Co., Moore.

**BANK SWALLOW.** 75 pairs, building and feeding young, June 18, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert. Almost any of our readers could have reported one or more additional colonies if they had taken the time to record and report them.

**BARN SWALLOW.** Building, June 9, St. Louis Co., 2 nests with young, June 18, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 young, June 22, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge.

**CLIFF SWALLOW.** Building and incubating, June 6, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert; 12 nests, July 5, St. Louis Co., Lakela.

**PURPLE MARTIN.** Young out, July 24, Ramsey Co., Moore. Birds farther afield may seem more appealing, but we should look in our own back yards once in a while.

**BLUE JAY.** 2 eggs, April 27, Dakota Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 young out, July 26, St. Louis Co., Lakela; building, April 5, Ramsey Co., Longley; young out, June 30, July 7, July 14, Ramsey Co., Moore.

CROW. Building. March 30, Ramsey Co.; young out, Aug. 6, Stearns Co., Moore.

BLACK - CAPPED CHICKADEE. Young out, June 11, Hennepin Co., Aler.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH. Building, April 6, Anoka Co.; young in nest, May 12, Washington Co., Bro. Hubert.

HOUSE WREN. 3 young out, July 15; 3 families of 3 out, July 25, St. Louis Co., Lakela; 2 young, August 3, Hennepin Co., Barrett.

CATBIRD. 4 eggs, May 28, Dakota Co.; 4 eggs, June 20, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; young out, June 28, Olmsted Co., Moore; 1 egg, June 21, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge.

BROWN THRASHER. 2 eggs and 1 cowbird egg, May 26, Anoka Co., Moore.

ROBIN. Building, April 3, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 3 eggs, May 4, Ramsey Co., Moore; 3 eggs, June 9, Crow Wing Co., Barrett; 4 eggs, May 19, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge.

HERMIT THRUSH. 3 eggs, June 6, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert.

OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH. 1 egg and 2 cowbird eggs, Anoka Co., Bro. Hubert. This report was without details, so it may represent a mistaken identification of a veery's nest.

VEERY. 4 eggs, June 5, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 eggs, June 9, St. Louis Co., Joel Bronoel; 3 eggs, June 26, St. Louis Co., Lakela; 5 eggs, June 14, Beltrami Co., Owre.

BLUEBIRD. Young, May 25, Dakota Co., Bro. Hubert; 3 young, May 19, Hennepin Co.; 4 eggs and 1 young, Stearns Co.; 3 young, July 23, Wright Co., Barrett; young, May 19, Hennepin Co., Aler; 4 eggs, May 19, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge; 3 young, July 21, Anoka Co., Moore; 3 young, July 4, Crow Wing Co., Severena Holmberg.

CEDAR WAXWING. 3 young, July 25, St. Louis Co.; 4 young out, Sept. 4, Lake Co., Lakela; 5 young leaving, Aug. 15, Winona Co., Bro. Hubert.

STARLING. Young out, July 7, Ramsey Co., Moore.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO. 3 eggs, June 4, Anoka Co., Bro. Hubert; 3 young out, Aug. 7, Stearns Co., Moore.

RED-EYED VIREO. 2 pair building June 3 and 13, Anoka Co., Bro. Hubert; deserted nest with 4 cowbird eggs June 17, Hennepin Co., Thompson.

YELLOW WARBLER. 4 eggs, May 30, Hennepin Co., Longley; building, June 13; 4 eggs and 1 cowbird egg, June 13, Beltrami Co., Owre; 4 eggs and 1 cowbird, July 4, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge; 23 nests, June 1 to 13, Anoka Co., St. Louis Co., and Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER. 3 eggs, June 13, Beltrami Co., Owre. There have been reports of chestnut-sides for only two of the last six years.

PARULA WARBLER. 2 young, June 29, Cook Co., Lupient.

PINE WARBLER. 3 large young, June 13, Beltrami Co., Owre. Our northern readers should watch for nests of this bird; two years' reports do not indicate its abundance.

OVEN-BIRD. 1 young and 4 eggs, June 22, Lake Co., Mrs. Richard Northup. It has only been reported in two of the last six years.

YELLOWTHROAT. Young just out, June 26, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 young out, Aug. 12, Ramsey Co., Alma Chesley; 5 eggs, June 9, Ramsey Co., Longley and Harrell.

REDSTART. 2 young out, Aug. 5, Stearns Co., Moore; 15 nests, June 1-13, Anoka Co., Bro. Hubert.

BOBOLINK. 1 egg, June 25; young out, June 27, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

Reported for three of the past six years.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK.** 3 young and 2 eggs, July 3, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert. Reported for three of the past six years.

**WESTERN MEADOWLARK.** 3 eggs, May 5, Anoka Co.; 4 eggs, May 18, Hennepin Co., Barrett.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD.** 1 egg, May 13, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 3 eggs, May 19, Hennepin Co., Rickert; 50 nests (18 building, 25 with eggs, 6 with young, 1 with young out), May 30, Ramsey Co., Harrell and Longley.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE.** 2 nests with young, June 25, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert. In Minnesota this species occurs in local groups, one of which has been in an area in St. Paul; since this area has been worked, these orioles have been reported more often than many more abundant birds.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE.** 2 young out, July 17, St. Louis Co., Lakela; young out, July 7 and 28, Ramsey Co., Moore; 8 nests, May 16 to June 23, Dakota and Ramsey Cos., Bro. Hubert.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD.** 3 eggs, May 18, Hennepin Co., Barrett; 2 eggs, and 2 young, June 9, Ramsey Co., Longley and Harrell; 6 nests, May 7, to June 11, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

**COWBIRD.** Eggs or young were noted with six species as follows: brown thrasher, red-eyed vireo, yellow warbler (3), chipping sparrow (2), song sparrow.

**CARDINAL.** Young out, May 3, Hennepin Co., Aler; 2 young, May 12, Goodhue Co., Barrett.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK.** Eggs, June 1, and 2 eggs, June 24, Dakota Co., 3 eggs, June 4, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert. 1 egg and 3 cowbird eggs, May 20, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge.

**PURPLE FINCH.** 3 young out, July 26; 2 young out, July 27, St. Louis Co., Lakala.

**GOLDFINCH.** 4 young out, Sept. 3, St. Louis Co., Lakala; 217 nests (5 eggs, July 6, to 4 young, Sept. 3), largely in Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

This phenomenal record is the result of a surprising concentration and careful recording of locations.

**LARK SPARROW.** Building and 3 eggs, May 25, Dakota Co., Bro. Hubert.

**SAVANNAH SPARROW.** 3 eggs, July 4, Hennepin Co., Breckenridge and Harvey Gunderson. Reported for two of the six years.

**CHIPPING SPARROW.** Young, Aug. 4, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert; 4 eggs, June 12, Cook Co. Hulda Adams; 4 young out, Aug. 20, St. Louis Co., Warren Hamerston and Harry Kahn.

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW.** 1 egg, May 30; 3 eggs, July 27, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.

**LINCOLN SPARROW.** 2 young, June 30, Cook Co., Lupient.

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.** 3 eggs and 1 young, June 14, Beltrami Co., Owre; 3 nests with 5 eggs, June 4, 5, 7, St. Louis Co., Bro. Hubert. Found in two of the six years.

**SONG SPARROW.** 4 eggs, May 12, Rice Co., Longley; 3 eggs, June 1, Anoka Co.; 3 eggs, July 27, and 3 eggs, Aug. 6, Ramsey Co., Bro. Hubert.  
—St. Paul, Minnesota.

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*The MAINE AUDUBON SOCIETY BULLETIN for July, 1946 states that no less than 1,000 records of snowy owls were reported in Maine during the 1945-46 invasion. This Bulletin is on our exchange list.*

# Planting for our Winter Birds

By

Mathilde Henkel

Our gardens in winter are forlorn and dreary, late blooming flowers are blackened by frost, semi-hardy plants are covered with straw or are swathed in burlap against winter's icy blast before snow mercifully covers them with a warm white blanket. The last cheerful note of the oriole has sounded from the elm on the boulevard, the cat bird no longer sings in the lilac, the chipping sparrow has flown from the barberry hedge. All is sere and brown and the silence broken only by the rustle of the dry leaves and the twittering of the ever present English sparrow.

If we planted our gardens, school grounds, and park areas with more forethought we could have landscapes that in their own way would lend as much color to the winter scene as flowers add to the summer picture. Not only would carefully chosen trees and shrubs add color of their own but would attract birds whose color would rival the most gaudy flowers of summer!

We still do not know all the answers to bird migration but it is common knowledge that birds can withstand very low temperatures if they have an ample food supply. It is a recorded fact that many birds stay in Minnesota as long as there is an abundance of certain seeds and berries. Cedar waxwings have been known to stay until the last mountain ash berry is gone and then "like the Arab they fold their tents and silently steal away" presumably to go where there are more mountain ash berries.

Feeding stations have done wonders to attract birds to our door yards but

they are not entirely adequate for our winter birds. As a rural state the debris of harvest is enormous. Fields, orchards, and gardens yield a tremendous amount of food. The seed eaters, quail, grouse, pheasants, and cardinals find corn, wheat, and other seeds in the harvested fields; goldfinches, snow buntings, and purple finches find weed seeds, hemp, ragweed and wild lettuce. The cedar waxwings may have a rather riotous time on frozen apples! However these plentiful supplies of food may be covered with several feet of snow, and these same birds may come to your very door yard to eat the seeds and fruits you have provided for just such an emergency.

There are few large cities in Minnesota compared to the innumerable small towns and villages, and the large lots on which many homes in these smaller communities are built afford an excellent place to plant a large variety of our native trees, shrubs, and vines.

The average lot provides a rather spacious lawn with room for a vegetable garden. The garden, more often than not, has a fence against which shrubs and vines may be planted. If these shrubs and vines are allowed to become tangled they add the additional advantage of providing a place into which birds may dodge to escape from their enemies. The garage provides a place on which to train vines and also softens the harsh outlines.

There are few towns and villages that do not have a small park or picnic ground which if properly planted would become a haven for wild life

in winter. Very frequently these areas adjoin a farmer's open field or meadow, giving added protection during severe winter storms to species found in the open such as quail, grouse, and pheasant.

The beauty of many of our native shrubs does not lie entirely in the foliage and bloom of summer. In winter a mass of shrubbery may exhibit a beauty all its own in the autumnal color of its leaves after the first frost has touched them. Even when denuded of leaves the interesting variation of bark color adds color to the generally drab landscape. Many shrubs and trees bear fruit which remains on the branches far into the winter and range in color from the soft pale color of the dogwood to the brilliant orange of the mountain ash.

The landscape planting around our homes should have the dual purpose of beautifying our home grounds and attracting birds. If a discriminating choice is made they will not only add beauty but provide food and cover for our birds. A variety should be planted so as to avoid monotony of tone and form, and to offer a diversity of fruits and seeds for the longest period possible.

Many shrubs and trees which are highly desirable from an avian standpoint do not submit kindly to cultivation or they cannot be readily used where space is at a premium or the variation of the soil is limited. The following trees and shrubs are suggested because they will fit appropriately into home planting and can be readily obtained. Fruits and berries of wild plants are considered to be more desirable to birds than cultivated varieties and since they add as much beauty, if not more, to the landscape than exotic plants they should be planted wherever possible.

The brilliance of the mountain ash

(*Sorbus americana*) is familiar to most and yet it is too seldom planted. It is easily grown and perfectly hardy, and will bear an enormous crop of red-orange fruit if two or more trees are planted, the staminate and pistillate forms are both necessary to insure fruit. The tree holds the fruit far into the winter. It is a rather large tree growing well up to thirty feet. But who would begrudge it that much room if it brought a flock of the aristocrats of the bird world, the cedar waxwings to your door yard? Besides these, the rare visitants and cousins of the cedar waxwings, the Bohemian waxwings are also fond of the fruit as are the pine and evening grosbeaks, and red-headed woodpeckers.

A shrub which bears brilliant red fruit and is especially well liked by the cedar waxwings and evening grosbeaks is the high bush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*). It is native to a large part of southern Minnesota and is also available from local nurseries. Its clusters of white bloom add interest to the garden in spring, but its greatest beauty is in the fall when the leaves have turned to scarlet and its brilliant fruit to ruby red, which is often persistent until May.

Since the cardinal is found more and more abundantly in Minnesota we should plant the common elder (*Sambucus canadensis*), if for no other reason than to attract this beautiful bird. Wherever the cardinal is known it is a favorite bird, not only for its brilliant plumage, but for its song, which is heard practically the year round. Certainly since it is established here we should do every thing possible to attract this beloved bird. By providing an abundant harvest of elder berries and later sunflower seeds, a thicket of shrubs and evergreens, this bird will more than repay you with his cheery whistle and bright pres-

ence. The common elder grows abundantly in Minnesota and has beautiful white cymes after most shrubs are through blooming, and a wealth of fruit in late summer. Plant it along the garden fence or next to the garage and you will not only have a beautiful shrub when in bloom but a feast for red-headed woodpeckers, flickers, and blue birds which may linger late into the fall.

Another shrub which should be a "must" for the cardinal if not for other birds is the mulberry (*Morus rubra*). It bears prolifically, a dark purple fruit. Besides the cardinal a host of other birds eat the fruit, among them the bob-white, red-headed and downy woodpecker. The nurseries provide this shrub and like the mountain ash both the staminate and pistillate forms should be planted. In our climate it does not grow to more than shrub size although it reaches tree size in warmer regions.

The nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) or sheepperry, is a valuable native shrub or small tree. It is often used for ornamental planting. One southern nursery calls the black haw the "date tree," relished by the older generations. It is showy, easily grown and eaten by birds fond of elderberries and mulberries and is also known to be eaten by purple finches and pileated woodpeckers. The tree blooms late in May and has bluish black fruit ripening in late August.

The hawthorns are known to all who are familiar with the spring scene in southern Minnesota. It is found along the edges of woods, in fence rows or standing in solitary splendor in meadows. The red-fruited thorn (*Crataegus mollis*) and dotted haw (*Crataegus punctata*) are both native to southern Minnesota; the former does not extend as far north as the Twin Cities although it is perhaps per-

fectly hardy much farther north. It is well adapted to horticultural use and development. It has a mass of beautiful white flowers in May or June and red fruit in fall which is especially attractive to quail, purple finch, and the grosbeaks. Being very thorny it also provides good protection from predacious birds.

Bechtel's crab is a small ornamental tree which has found much favor in Minnesota because of its beauty and hardiness and could be planted as an alternate to the native hawthorn.

Even though the beautiful flowering dogwood is not native to Minnesota or considered hardy enough to withstand the rigors of our winters there are several dogwoods abundant in the state. The red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) is common throughout the state, and will do particularly well in low wet places. It blooms in May and bears white or lead colored fruit. It is especially desirable for its winter effects, for it has purplish-red or bright red stems and branches which are attractively conspicuous against snow and have a tendency to become more vivid in spring. Other forms of dogwood are the round-leaved (*Cornus rugosa*) which is common throughout the wooded areas, and the paniced dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*, formerly *paniculata*) which is common in the wooded and prairie regions. The round-leaved is one of the most attractive of the dogwoods, and the fruit, although not plentiful, is attractive. It has the added advantage that in cultivation it does best in rather shaded positions. The fruit of the paniced dogwood is white and is set off to advantage by the bright red fruit stalks. Ninety-three species of birds including the cardinal, purple finch, flicker, downy and hairy woodpeckers, bobwhite, and cedar waxwings feed on dogwood berries. No bird lover's garden should be without one or

nore of these native dogwoods both for garden effects and for providing food throughout the long winter.

The wild cherries retain their fruit long enough to be an attraction both to migrating and winter birds. The choke cherry (*Prunus virginiana*) is a shrub or small tree particularly beneficial in protecting cultivated fruits from the ravages of birds. Where naturalistic planting is possible it is a very desirable tree. The black or rum cherry (*Prunus serotina*) is the largest of the cherries native to Minnesota. Besides producing fruit eaten by eighty-four species of birds it is valuable in attracting insects which in turn attract birds which do not eat fruits. It has showy blooms in May or June usually two weeks later than the choke cherry. The fruit ripens in late August or September.

Who in Minnesota does not know the staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) in the brilliance of its autumn coloring and velvety red berries? Where mass effects are desirable it is highly recommended for ornamental planting. It is a rapid and vigorous grower. Many authorities tell us that the staghorn sumac is often a life saver in the bird world, in that birds do not relish its fruit, it is seldom eaten unless forced by hunger, thus the berries stay on the shrubs and birds returning in spring to find the ground frozen or covered by an unseasonable snow, will resort to the sumac. Surely we could spare a corner for this colorful shrub!

Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) is not only a highly ornamental vine but it is manna to quail, cedar waxwings, Bohemian waxwings and evening grosbeaks. The flower is not significant but the coral colored berries add brilliant color to the winter landscape.

The common grape (*Vitis riparia*, formerly *vulpina*) is familiar to everyone; it grows abundantly

throughout the state. It is a fast grower and long lived and can be effectively used in many places. The fruit is eaten by fifty-seven kinds of birds. The vine holds the fruit well, is desirable to supply food in late winter.

The woodbine or Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus inserta* formerly *vitea*) is a hardy vine, there is danger of it overrunning everything else if care is not taken where it is planted. Thirty-nine birds eat the berry including the flicker, blue bird, and purple finch.

The American basswood (*Tilia americana*) is a good shade and lawn tree perfectly hardy and has a pleasing pyramidal form. The evening grosbeak is very fond of the seeds. If on a frosty morning you would waken to find a flock of these large handsome, fearless birds you would be well repaid for including it in your planting. This tree was formerly more commonly planted than at present, since the woods where it was native have been gradually cut down; the scarcity of the evening grosbeak has been attributed to this.

The box elder (*Acer negundo*) is a tree especially good for prairie regions, for its ability to thrive in dry areas makes it a valuable tree. It has a broad bushy crown. Crossbills, evening grosbeaks, and purple finches eat the seeds.

The American elm (*Ulmus americana*) and all of the maples are a part of every city and town and village in Minnesota and rightly so, they are less significant for furnishing food for our winter residents, but even so they should be abundantly planted for the protection and nesting sites they offer and for their natural beauty.

The oaks are important in providing acorns for flickers, quail, pheasants, and red-headed woodpeckers. The

northern bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is naturally one of the most common trees in Minnesota. Its slow growth and difficulty in transplanting saplings discourages its being planted to any large extent, however it is a fine ornamental tree and its culture should be encouraged.

The scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*) is easily grown from seed and successfully transplanted. It is a very desirable tree if for no other reason than its beautiful autumn foliage.

No planting is adequate unless it includes some of the coniferous trees, not only for their aesthetic value but for their protection from blizzards, snow and sleet, and as a refuge from enemies. The seeds from the cones and the cedar berries provide food for many of our winter birds. The pines, spruce, and hemlocks produce cones which are eaten by the pine and evening grosbeaks, pine siskins, and cross-bills. As for varieties, your local nursery will be able to help you choose the trees most suited to your location. The Colorado blue spruce and the Black Hills spruce seem to be more commonly used than native varieties.

Numerous horticultural forms of the red cedar and junipers are available. If valuable apple orchards are in your vicinity the red cedar should not be planted for it is host to apple rust. Cedar berries are eaten by purple

finches, cedar waxwings, red polls, pine and evening grosbeaks, flickers, cardinals, blue birds, and forty-five other species.

In winter be sure to provide sue for that tiny black and white bundle of energy, the black-capped chickadee. He will not only be the most friendly and sociable bird you can attract, but he will be the most diligent in helping you take care of your trees and shrubs. No egg, larvae, or insect is too small to escape the piercing eye of the chickadee as he pokes and prys into every nook and cranny, all the while sending forth his cheerful de-dee, chckadee-de-dee!

Since the war has ended there may be a great urge to establish memorials to express our everlasting gratitude to those who made the supreme sacrifice Living memorials in the form of parks, roadside planting, picnic areas, and bird sanctuaries would be far more desirable than the guns and cannonballs of our earlier wars and the already out-moded buildings of World War I.

If every person responsible or influential in planning community memorials would use foresight, the memorials would add greater beauty and impressiveness year by year and could be so planned as to preserve some of our native trees and shrubs for all time as well as provide shelter and food for our resident and migrating birds.—Detroit, Michigan.

*The deadline for manuscripts for the March, 1947, issue of THE FLICKER is February 10. The tenth of the month preceding the month of issue has proved to be satisfactory for the deadline, and that plan will be followed again this year.*

# Nesting of the Tree Swallows

by

Tilford Moore

For three years we have been observing the nesting activities of a pair of tree swallows in our back yard in St. Paul. In 1944 and 1945, these birds used a box originally intended for wrens. It was a simple box with a shed roof and a bottom which rested on cleats and was removable. Its doorway was 1", and was 5' 8" up on a wooden post. We called this box No. 6.

The swallows first investigated the box on May 8, 1944, but didn't enter until the 15th, and then only with difficulty, whereupon we enlarged the hole to 1½". We saw the swallows mating on the 21st and 28th. On June 6 we found their eggs, two of them, on the ground some 10 feet from the box. As a wren had been about, in and out of the box since May 19, we tentatively blamed it. Neither species was seen again until the 8th, when both returned. The swallows again set to singing, mating, and building, but on the 24th, one smashed egg and two that had been pierced were found under the box. We photographed the pierced eggs to show the ⅛" holes which probably were the work of the wren. Further proof was found in the composition of the nest which was opened July 2. There was a small nest of grasses buried under a mass of sticks. We put the box up again and when we took it down September 4, we found a strange nest which had been built by the wrens. About 95 per cent of it was sticks; most of the remainder was wire. There were 44 fence twists (that is the part of chicken netting where two wires are twisted together) all so badly rusted that they looked like twigs. Most of these were single twists, some were

double and triple, and one was a complete hexagon. There were two hair pins, two bobby pins, and eleven other wires, one of which was bright, with sharp points. Some three dozen cottony cocoons helped to fill the box clear to the hole.

In 1945 the swallows appeared on April 23, and showed interest in the box, but were kept away by English sparrows building there. On the 26th we removed the second nest of the aliens and kept the bottom out until the swallows returned on the 28th. We saw them building on the 4th of May. On the 6th a second pair of swallows thought they would like the box, but we believe the original pair managed to keep possession. On the morning of May 10, we looked out to see the female swallow flopping about the entrance, apparently trapped. It developed that a sputz (English sparrow) had gotten into the box and caught the swallow on her return. We got the sputz out of the box and both swallows immediately attacked it. Then the male swallow got into the box, but the sputz decoyed him out and took his place. There it quickly caught a swallow again, and again we went to the rescue. When we went to work both swallows were close to the box and we found them there when we returned. The last we saw of the swallows that evening was a head protruding from the box, its owner apparently planning to roost there, and that is where we first saw it the next morning. All that day they kept close watch. They went through the usual motions of the nesting season until the 22nd, when they disappeared. On the 24th we opened the

box and found the female dead on her nest. There was a hole in her head; of course we blamed the sputz. We buried her and removed the box bottom. On June 9 a pair, possibly the same male, came and looked into the box, but we couldn't find the bottom before they left. A wren later carried in a few sticks.

During the winter I made a new box of bluebird size with the hole  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ". This No. 8 was the same style as No. 6, but superior to it because it had a hinged front which may be opened without disturbing the nest. Thus, the 1946 season began with two boxes about 20 feet apart. The swallows returned April 24, and after looking over both boxes, began building in both, but finally settled on No. 6 about May 18. The sparrows, meanwhile, had taken No. 8. On the 22nd we witnessed a fight between the species, much like that of 1945. The sputz managed to catch a swallow at least five or six times, each time falling to the ground with his victim about the time one of us arrived. To give the sputz something else to think about, we opened their box, No. 8, and removed the nest together with four eggs. I was away for some days, and upon my return the folks showed me that the sputz had evicted the swallows from No. 6 and had taken it for their own despite a swallow egg in it. The swallows consoled themselves with No. 8, in which we found an egg on the 30th. There were six eggs on the 8th of June and on the 16th. The 23rd and 28th showed six nestlings, but on July 7 the box contained only two well-grown young. These flew on the morning of the 9th, but one seemed to have flown prematurely for it was in the garden all day and was preparing to roost on the lawn that night. Fearing for its safety, we put it into an open cigar box on top of No. 8, and covered it with an old hat

until dark. About 4 a.m. a heavy rain came up, and to prevent its drowning we brought it into the house. At 6 we awoke to hear an adult calling, so rushed the youngster out to his cigar box, but the adult had gone. The youngster called continuously, flew twenty to thirty feet from one perch to another, and finally the adult returned as I left for work. They were about most of the day, but left before evening.

When we opened No. 6, we found a swallow's egg as part of the floor. It was broken in the taking out of the nest. One piece of shell washed off white and unmarked. A family of sparrows had been raised on it.

The three-year nesting effort of this pair appears, at first glance, to have been singularly luckless for it took at least three adults three years to raise two young to the flying stage. However, their luck was about average, possibly better. We know of but one casualty among the adults who worked on this project—the female killed on the nest in 1945. The young of 1946 replaced her and provided a spare to replace any other death unknown to us.

CONCLUSIONS: (1) Bird boxes should have some means for inspection of the contents without destroying the nest. (2) English sparrows will gladly build in boxes "shoulder high" despite published statements that this height makes them sparrow-proof. (3) English sparrows can get into, build in, and raise families in boxes without perches as well as native birds can—again despite published statements to the contrary. (4) In spite of apparently spectacular losses, native birds are able to keep up their numbers with only a little luck. —St. Paul Minnesota.

# Birding High Lights of the 1946 Season

by

Lewis L. Barrett

When one is travelling in the North Star state, ones attention is frequently attracted by the plants, rocks, land formations and wild life. In many parts of Minnesota there is an abundance of animal life. Often the bird life is a conspicuous part of our state's fauna. "Bird watching" is a pastime that may take one to many places of varied habitat that occur in our state. During this year it was my privilege to visit more than 60 of the 87 counties of Minnesota. It was quite natural in these travels for some of my attention to be focused on the bird life. Whether one is far afield or in his own back yard there is much of interest to be observed in the out-of-doors. Birding is a hobby that may be enjoyed throughout the year. In order to keep accurate records of our observations a bird diary, a check list, or some other method should be employed. The following notes on the 1946 season may be of some general interest.

March 23. According to the calendar, spring has arrived and some of the plants and animals are showing signs of returning life. Willow trees, box elders, and cottonwoods are well budded. Garter snakes have emerged from their winter hibernation. A number of bird migrants have arrived at the Bass Pond in the Minnesota River bottoms near Minneapolis. Included among these are the phoebe and kingfisher. While herring gulls and ring-billed gulls rested on the extensive mud flats, a rough-legged hawk soared overhead. Feeding out in the deeper water were lesser scaup, American golden-eye,

hooded merganser, American merganser, and red-breasted mergansers. The returning waterfowl included small flocks of American pintails and mallards. A wedge-shaped flock of Canada geese passed high overhead. Spring must be here.

March 31. The American elms and soft maples are flowering. Today at Lake Minnetonka there was considerable evidence of bird courtship on the part of the paired wood ducks and the head-bobbing shovelers. Two pairs of black-capped chickadees were excavating nesting cavities in trees. A broad-winged hawk was carrying nesting material. We hunted for the nesting site of a pileated woodpecker, but did not locate it. Down in the flooded lowlands of the Minnesota River near Shakopee, a single whistling swan rested near the highway.

April 14. The spring flowering hepaticas, bloodroots, and wild ginger are in blossom—even the dandelions are flowering. At Lake Harriet a flock of 10 horned grebes and a Holboell's grebe were sighted.

April 18. More grebes, as both the pied-billed and eared grebes are at Lake Johanna in Ramsey County. Some purple finches objected to the presence of a barred owl in a nearby oak tree.

April 28. Near highway 65 about 10 miles north of Minneapolis, Dr. R. F. Ehlke, Byron Harrell, and the writer watched the courtship display of the Wilson's snipe. Several snipe were heard and observed producing their

"bleating" flight song. A broad-winged hawk sighted in a tamarack tree gave its "pee-wee" call. As we listened to the bird chorus at the Carlos Avery Game Refuge in Ramsey County, we heard the drumming of the ruffed grouse in the distance.

May 4. A brown thrasher is building a nest in the lilac hedge in our yard. At a marsh near the city on Cedar and 60th Avenues South, Florida gallinules, sora, and yellow-headed blackbirds could be studied from the highway. Three Bonaparte's gulls were on Lake Calhoun.

May 5. Near Moore Lake in Anoka County an American bittern gave his familiar "pump-er-lunk" call while displaying the two large tufts of white neck feathers for the female bittern who watched nearby. The upland plover's flight song was distinctly heard as we watched the aerial performance of this very striking bird.

May 6. A group of ponds on Portland Avenue, south beyond the city limits of Minneapolis, has proved to be a splendid place to study shore birds this spring. Today one pond harbored about 135 shore birds, including the following species: long-billed dowitcher, semi-palmated plover, killdeer, semi-palmated sandpiper, white-rumped sandpiper, spotted sandpiper, solitary sandpiper, Wilson's snipe, and greater yellow-legs. The most common species were lesser yellow-legs, least sandpiper, pectoral sandpiper, and a group of 15 Wilson's phalaropes.

May 12. When the day for the annual field trip, taken by the Minneapolis Bird Club members to Frontenac, had arrived we found an inch of snow covering the ground, the temperature at freezing, and a brisk north-west wind. At 3:30 a.m. our car, which included Jerry Paul, Janet Sanford, and the writer, joined the caravan of cars motoring to Frontenac with pros-

pects not too bright for our birding expedition. The leaves of the maples, oaks, and walnut trees were badly nipped by the heavy frost of the previous night. Snow covered the telephone poles, tree branches, and vegetation as far south as Red Wing. The woods were cool throughout the day and although insect life was lacking the abundance of birds was very gratifying. By 7:30 a.m. we had observed 60 species of birds. Our list for the entire day, including a stopover at the Portland Avenue ponds near Minneapolis, totaled 115 species. This was a birding experience long to be remembered. The wind-swept Sand Point at Frontenac did not harbor many shore birds of unusual interest except for a group of 4 western willets. Included among the birds tallied for the day were the following species of particular interest: duck hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, Forester's tern, Caspian tern, great horned owl, red-bellied woodpecker, ruffed grouse, cliff swallow, American pipit, blue-gray gnatcatcher, red-eyed towhee, and white-crowned sparrow. All six members of the swallow family and the three kinds of herons found in the state were listed. After seeing a pair of adult Cooper's hawks, we found their nest in a red oak tree. Jerry Paul climbed this tree and discovered in the nest a single white egg with rusty brown markings. A cardinal's nest in a spruce tree contained two young.

May 15. At a pond in Ramsey County a Hudsonian godwit was seen in a flock of 25 shore birds. A pied-billed grebe's nest built on a hummock contained 2 white eggs. Two young killdeer were out of the nest, one of which I captured for observation much to the mother's distress until it was again released.

May 18. Today was the annual meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union at Glenwood Park. It was my

privilege to serve as leader for a group of folks from Duluth who wanted to see a cardinal and a scarlet tanager. We saw both of these with the cardinal obligingly singing at his best. At one time in the glen at Glenwood Park, 4 scarlet tanagers were in view. Among the newly arrived bird migrants the following were included: Virginia rail, black-billed cuckoo, crested flycatcher, least flycatcher, Alder flycatcher, olive-backed thrush, gray-cheeked thrush, veery, yellow-throated vireo, blue-headed vireo, red-eyed vireo, Philadelphia vireo, black-throated blue warbler, black-throated green warbler, yellow-bellied sapsucker, and indigo bunting. The ponds on Portland Avenue South, contained these interesting shore birds: 8 red-backed sandpipers and 4 long-billed dowitchers. Nearby we found 4 ruddy turnstones. My list for the day tallied 95 species of birds.

May 19. Back at Glenwood Park again, and this was a good day for warblers, with 18 species recorded. A white-breasted nuthatch was carrying food to its young in a basswood tree with the nesting cavity located about 6 ft. from the ground. A mourning dove was building a nest, a pair of bluebirds carried food to their 3 offspring. Of special interest was a tufted titmouse, yellow-bellied flycatcher, orchard oriole, and Harris' sparrow.

May 26. Members of the Minneapolis Bird Club took a field trip to Camp Ajawah on Linwood Lake in Anoka County. While en route to this area we observed the long-billed marsh wren and short-billed marsh wren and found the "dummy" nests of the latter bird. Dickcissels and Savannah sparrows were near the highway. At Camp Ajawah our attention was given to the red-shouldered hawk, wood peewee, olive-sided flycatcher, cerulean warbler, and red-bellied woodpecker. On the ground below the basswood tree in which the red-bellied woodpecker was

nesting, egg shells were discovered, and the adult bird was seen carrying food into the nest. Other nests found included those of the tree swallow, barn swallow, and least flycatcher.

May 30. While on a field trip with the Minnesota Botanical Society at Nerstrand woods in Rice County, we found considerable evidence of beaver including a beaver dam, tracks, freshly cut trees and chips. A woodcock was flushed from her nest which contained 4 brown eggs. A ruby-throated hummingbird was feeding upon nectar in the blossoms of the Virginia water leaf. Tree toads were calling in the woods, and a small red-bellied snake crawled across the forest floor. Of the flowers in blossom the yellow lady's slipper, nodding trillium, and large-sized Jack-in-the-pulpits were a special delight.

June 1. Near Mother Lake, south of Minneapolis, was a flock of black-bellied plover. A small flock of baldpates included 6 drakes and 2 hens.

June 8. A robin's nest in a red cedar tree contained three young birds. A veery sang in his best form this evening while Al Hollander and I fished at Lake Emily in Crow Wing County. We went to sleep in our tent listening to the continuous calling of a whip-poor-will, which was still serenading us at 2 o'clock in the morning.

June 27. The bird chorus seems to have diminished as this is a time for rearing the young birds. On a pond in Benton County, a female blue-winged teal had 5 young swimming under her guidance, while a hen mallard had 9 young in her brood. A crested flycatcher's nest located in a birch stub contained 5 eggs. A bluebird's nest in a willow contained 4 eggs and 1 young.

July 3. Three broods of ring-necked ducks near Albany in Stearns County averaged 8 young. Dickcissels and bobolinks were common near the road-

sides.

July 5. A Wilson's snipe was still producing its "bleating" flight song in Isanti County, while a common loon rested on a small lake near Cambridge.

July 9. This would have been a very warm day but for a strong southwest wind. Today I saw my first American egret at Ole Lake in the northwestern corner of Kandiyohi County. The bird was flushed from a bed of yellow pond lilies on the west shore of the lake, and it flew to the south into a brisk wind. Immature coots and grebes are common in the nearby slough, while immature yellow-headed blackbirds are out of the nest. A hen pheasant had a brood of 10 young. Black terns are moulting. A big white-tailed buck deer was sighted feeding at the edge of a grain field south of Sibley State Park.

July 11. Today while at Big Kandiyohi Lake south of Willmar, we found 2 American egrets among some great blue herons. A flock of a dozen lesser yellow-legs was observed. Yellow water buttercups and white water buttercups are blossoming. Flickertails are common in this area.

July 17. The Arkansas kingbird is about as common in Kandiyohi County as the Eastern kingbird. I counted as many as 30 Arkansas kingbirds in one day. The oven-bird is still singing here. A ruddy duck had a brood of 6 young. A hen Hungarian partridge led her 10 offspring across the highway.

July 23. A female bluebird was feeding the 3 immature birds out of the nest, while a hen shoveler had a brood of 11 young on a pond in Wright County. A group of 6 Baltimore orioles were undergoing the moulting process.

July 30. While driving on a country road in Wright County, a Cooper's hawk was observed sitting in the middle of the road with a purple martin in its grasp. The hawk flew away with this smaller bird still in its talons.

This was the first time that I had actually seen the Cooper's hawk carrying its prey. Thinking back to previous experiences with this hawk—on one occasion it was sighted eating a pheasant. Another time while duck hunting near Osakis the hawk passed over our blind to alight some 50 yards down the point where it proceeded to eat the breast of a blue-winged teal which we had shot.

August 1. A pond near Maple Plain contained 3 adult and 5 young Virginia rails which were busily feeding. An albino pheasant was found in Wright County.

August 7. A pair of cliff swallows had reared a family of young in their globe-shaped nest made of clay; it was located under the eaves of the barn on the Bernard Nordell farm near Annandale.

August 8. While driving north of Two Harbors today with Mrs. Barrett and our three boys, we saw a hen chucker partridge and her 9 young. Our first overnight stop was at Castle Danger. While Ronald, Roger, Bob and I were waiting for a tasty supper of lake trout to be prepared under my wife's skillful hand, we sat on the rocks in front of the cabin and watched an American merganser swimming in Lake Superior with her brood of 15 offspring. In the trees overhead we could see and hear the cedar waxwings which were feeding on the abundant insect life. The waxwings were also feeding on the fruits of the red-berried elder and raspberries.

August 9. Today while driving along the North Shore, we saw a flock of 7 common loons flying over the water. The shaggy throat feathers of a raven were evident as it perched in a tree. A Canada jay was observed.

August 10. Near Pigeon River in Cook County, we watched a pigeon hawk sitting in a spruce tree near the

highway, while a second pigeon hawk showed the dark barring under the tail. Sparrow hawks were common in this area.

August 19. On a small lake, about one mile south of Lowry in Pope County, 5 American egrets kept company with a group of blue herons and about 300 puddle ducks. It was interesting finding these large white birds this far north in the state as just a few days before this, I had watched a group of more than 20 of these birds near the Bass Pond south of Minneapolis. On August 27, near Shakopee in the lowlands of the Minnesota River, 37 American egrets were counted accompanied by about 120 great blue herons. The large concentrations of American egrets must have remained in this state for a considerable period of time as on September 22, more than 125 American egrets were found on Mud Lake near Green Isle in Sibley County, and 3 American egrets were found on the Minnesota River bottoms near the Bass Pond as late as October 13.

August 21. Cliff swallows nested this summer on the Sidney Fallstone farm near Sebeka in Wadena County. An Arkansas kingbird fed her 3 young as they perched on a wire fence. While I sat in the car watching, an American bittern speared and ate a frog within 10 feet of the highway.

August 22. Today I stopped at the Otto Paulson farm near Rothsay in Wilkin County. None of the sandhill cranes which stopped here last spring had apparently remained in this remote area for nesting.

September 10. While I worked in the garden, a partial albino robin hopped about the lawn. A gray-cheeked thrush, a sparrow hawk, and 3 yellow-throated vireos were included among the southward bound migrants.

September 14. Al Hollander, Ken

Whitaker, and the writer drove to Long Lake near Willmar where we observed the flocking waterfowl. Blue-winged teal were present in very large concentrations. Good sized flocks of ruddy ducks and shovelers were in evidence. Six black ducks were noted with interest. Palm warblers were migrating south. We watched a pocket gopher at work digging his burrow.

September 21. Dr. R. F. Ehlke, Jim Ehlke, Ronald Barrett, Roger Barrett, and the writer watched a tremendous migration of night hawks today as we camped at Florida Lake in Kandiyohi County. After 5 o'clock in the afternoon as we sat about the campfire preparing our evening meal more than 300 night hawks passed overhead. Today there was a marked migration of flickers and tree swallows. Wood ducks were commonly flushed along a small river.

October 5. My son Ronald and I opened the duck hunting season at Long Lake near Willmar. Most of the hunters' bags in this area were largely blue-winged teal and shovelers. Some bags included mallards, pintails, baldpate, green-winged teal, red-heads, lesser scaup, and ruddy ducks. A big flock of cormorants were sighted. It rained here until afternoon and conditions were poor for birding so we left for home early. The woods were a mass of color as the weather cleared with the reds and oranges of the maples, yellows of the elms and poplars, and scarlet of the sumac predominating in the autumn landscape.

October 12. It froze last night and there was ice on the puddles today near Correll in Big Stone County. The low temperature was a stimulus to southward migrating flocks of robins, flickers, bluebirds, meadow larks, rusty blackbirds and red-wings. The brushy patches harbored migrating flocks of white-throated sparrows, fox sparrows,

Lincoln's sparrows, song sparrows and juncos. This morning as I sat in my blind on Marsh Lake I counted 10 flocks of Canada geese which numbered from 12 to 50 birds. This fall has been an interesting one from the viewpoint of seeing the southward goose migration as these big birds passed over the city. On October 9 about 11:15 a.m. between 200 and 300 Canada geese flew over Pillsbury School where the children could see them to advantage. On October 10 a small group of white-fronted geese passed over northeast Minneapolis. On October 14 as the Marshall-Edison football game drew to a close a big flock of Canada geese disappeared into the western sunset. On October 29 a flock of about 50 Canada geese flew over our home about 5:30 p.m.

October 13. In the bag of ducks taken near Dumont in Traverse County by Fred Peichert and the writer there were included blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, shoveler, redheads, bufflehead, lesser scaup, and ring-necked ducks. More than 20 hawks were counted in a noticeable movement with the marsh hawk, broad-winged, and red-tailed hawks predominating. Two ospreys were sighted, and about 60 Wilson's snipe were tallied.

October 26. Today while hunting near Hanley Falls, Ronald found a flicker with a broken wing. A heavy migration of coots covered the nearby sloughs. We found pheasants less abundant than in past years in Lyons and Redwood counties. A flock of black-bellied plover were observed on ploughed ground.

November 3. Someone has called November the month with no butterflies, no bees, and no birds. Today Damian Jones and I saw all three of these—a mourning-cloak butterfly, a honeybee, and birds. To one who enjoys

being afield in the brisk November weather, nature still offers much of interest in the out-of-doors. As nature prepares for the cold season that lies ahead, many of the trees are bare of leaves and some of the animals have started hibernating. Fewer species of birds may be observed in the field at this time of year as many species have migrated south to more sunny climes. As we watched from our blind, located on a small island in Hook Lake in McLeod County, redheads, lesser scaup, buffle-heads, mallards, shoveler, and American mergansers passed by. A single cormorant visited our decoys, as well as a pair of Jack snipe. Three flocks of snow geese numbering about 60, 40, and 35 birds passed overhead. Each of these flocks first appeared in the western sky as an irregular white line. As the flock approached, we could hear the honking of the "wavies." Closer the snow geese came while we hugged our blind hoping for a good shot at each flock. One of the three flocks was in apparent gun range and we tried for a goose without results. As long as the geese fly high they are perfectly safe.

November 9. This has been an unusually warm fall. This morning the air had the feeling of winter as Ken Whitaker and I stood on a pass between two lakes in McLeod Co. where we watched 5 majestic whistling swans fly over, headed southeast. The ducks were not very numerous with an occasional flock of lesser scaup. Other ducks noted included mallards, baldpate, ruddy ducks, golden-eye, and a single black duck. Hooded mergansers were present in some numbers and that is usually looked upon by the duck hunter as a sign that the southward movement of ducks is about completed. One coot and a Jack snipe tarried about a marsh, while a rough-legged hawk in the black phase flew over this marsh. Mixed flocks of red-winged

blackbirds and bronzed grackles were in a barnyard. The wood lots contained small flocks of tree sparrows, juncos, goldfinches and a few purple finches. Straggling flocks of Franklin's gulls and ring-billed gulls flew over as they headed for their roosting grounds for the night. Driving homeward late

in the day, we carried a mental picture of 5 huge birds gliding overhead like big white bombers, and as we watched the first snowfall of the season come down, we felt that Minnesota is an extremely interesting state in which to live. —Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## The Mourning Dove

Music remembers sorrow, even as cherished love:  
A pensive strain entwines the twain  
In the call of the mourning dove.  
A little lad in wonder . . . listening . . . alone . . .  
The wafted call held me a thrall  
With its dulcet, yearning tone.  
Softly, oh winds of summer! bring to me once again  
Beauty and dream, the wild dove's theme  
Searching the hearts of men.  
Wistful and lovely cadence, mystical requiem  
For souls fled of beloved dead,  
Calling farewell to them.  
Gone is the mighty woodland, swept by the saw and blade,  
Broken and mute the living lute  
In echoing forest glade.  
Man is ruthless reaper, master of ax and fire,  
Proud of the game to slay and maim  
In the greed of his desire.  
Still in the ravaged covert the dove calls as of yore,  
Voicing a plea in melody  
The wilderness to restore.

—GUY ATHERTON.

*"Once they are gone, the trees and the grasslands and the clean bright water, the screaming wild fowl, the beaver and antelope, we can only remember them with longing. We are not God; we cannot make America over again, as it was in the beginning. But we can come to what is left of our heritage with a patriot's reverence."*

—DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE.

# Notes on the 1946 Fall Migration

By Mary Lupient

The occurrence of American egrets in unprecedented numbers provides the most notable record for the 1946 fall migration in Minnesota. They appeared in various localities, north to Appleton in the west, reported by Mrs. C. E. Peterson, and to Isanti County in the east. The greatest concentration of egrets, however, was in the marshlands of the Minnesota River from Ft. Snelling to below Shakopee. At times more than two hundred could be counted within an area bounded by the range of vision. Their first appearance was at Hastings, July 15, and the last report was made by Oscar Owre, Jr., on October 13. He saw them at the Cedar Avenue bridge. This is the only record of American egrets appearing in Minnesota in such numbers. Dr. Robert's *BIRDS OF MINNESOTA*, credits Dr. Hvoslef of Lanesboro with reporting one egret seen in July, 1884, which is the earliest record. Several other records are mentioned in this work, but in each case the number of birds is small. So far, the American egret has not been found nesting in Minnesota. It comes north after the nesting season to wander in marshes where food is plentiful. This year's invasion is an indication that after being nearly exterminated for its plumes, this beautiful bird is increasing in numbers to a point where the species is safe, for the present at least.

Near the Twin Cities a few shore birds began appearing in July, and by August 8, there were hordes of pectorals, yellow-legs, and sandpipers on the mud flats adjacent to the Minnesota River and elsewhere. On that date a flock of eleven willets was observed. The number of shore birds began to dwindle after August 15, but a few

pectorals, yellow-legs, and Wilson's snipes were still feeding at the Izaak Walton Bass Pond, November 9, date of this writing. Baird's sandpipers, buff-breasted sandpipers, sanderlings, and two knots were reported on September 14, at Minnesota Point, Duluth, by Dr. Olga Lakela. In a report dated October 6, she states, "After a prolonged heavy rain the boulevard at Minnesota Point became flooded. Sunday evening, a number of plovers gathered there to feed. There were at least a dozen golden plovers, mostly young, but three were definitely of adult aspect. Black-bellied plovers were more numerous. They were rather musical in contrast to their usual behavior, whistling and chirping in a melodious fashion, especially the golden plovers." October 20, Dr. Lakela reported black-bellied plovers, ruddy turnstones, and sanderlings on Minnesota Point.

The fall migration of warblers progressed as usual. A few appeared in Minneapolis on August 13, and from that date on they passed through in small bands. September 17 and 18, a steady stream of warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other small birds hurried through the Twin Cities area.

In Beltrami County near Cass Lake, Oscar Owre, Jr. observed a huge wave of myrtle warblers unlike anything he had ever seen. They arrived September 26 and lingered until September 29, when they began to disappear along with a Nashville warbler that was with them. September 25, in this same area, he observed two Hudsonian chickadees among a flock of black-caps.

Nelson's sparrow was seen on October 2, at the Izaak Walton Bass Pond by Dr. W. J. Breckenridge. Ten days

later, October 12, Nelson's sparrow was again seen at the Bass Pond by Whitney Eastman.

The unusual sight, in autumn, of thirty whistling swans was also reported by Dr. Breckenridge. They flew over his home on November 3, traveling at a height of about one thousand feet and would have passed unnoticed but for the fact that their gabbling and honking cries called attention to them.

A large flock of blue and snow geese flying over Medicine Lake near Minneapolis was reported by H. J. Paul, October 9, and another flock on October 11. A flock of about five hundred blue and snow geese was seen by Miss Ruth Woolverton on White Bear Lake, November 3. In the western part of the state hunters found the flight of geese about normal, but the number of ducks was less than usual, there and elsewhere. The crop of pheasants is considered by hunters to be somewhat light, which is due in part to the fact that cover is plentiful. Also a much greater number of licenses were issued which lessened the possibility of obtaining the limit.

A snowy owl with a wing spread of 5 ft. 3 in. was caught in a trap near Grand Marais by W. E. Shemild, who brought it to the Minnesota Museum of Natural History. Several were reported at Duluth and one at Shakopee, which may presage another invasion of snowy owls into the southern half of the state.

In a letter to this writer Whitney Eastman describes the following occurrence, "October 6, at the Izaak Walton Bass Pond a duck hawk plummeted out of the heavens and neatly picked out one of the lesser yellow-legs before the flock had raised more than ten feet from the ground. The killer took his prey over on the shore, and we watched him devour it. I have seen eagles and other birds of prey strike

swift and hard, but I have never observed anything of this nature which happened so fast."

A migration of sparrow hawks, numbering between four and five hundred, was seen on September 10 near Two Harbors by Lyman Newlin. There are reports that other species of hawks common to Minnesota migrate along the ridge back of the North Shore, which leads to the supposition that they take advantage of air currents flowing along the ridge. From Duluth comes the shocking report that hawks in migration over Hawk Pass have been used for target practice and slaughtered in large numbers. Hawk Pass is in the outskirts of Duluth on Kenwood Parkway back of the Villa Scholastica. Reports from her pupils caused Miss Evelyn Jones, instructor in the public schools and member of the Duluth Bird Club, to make an investigation. In a letter to this writer, Miss Jones states, in part, "September 30, five of us visited the area and found about three dozen dead birds covering the hillside. A blind covered with crows stood on the peak of the hill. It was reported that many of the men and boys had already carried off many of their trophies and that taxidermists took their pick of the dead birds. One boy was heard to have bragged that he had killed forty-two in a day and ninety so far this season. October 5, the first wave of snowy owls reached this area. Live, dead, and wounded ones were reported and four were seen at taxidermists, besides Richardson's owls which were just beginning to arrive. On inquiry, I learned that last year there were sixty snowy owls at taxidermists to be mounted. On October 13, three Duluth Bird Club members visited the hill about noon and picked up eight recently killed hawks, mostly immature, and adult red-tails. By this time guilty boys had discontinued shooting when they learned a

law had been passed a year ago protecting most hawks and owls. However, men and older boys still persisted. October 27 and 28, a few recently killed hawks were found. November 4, I saw more hawks and owls at taxidermists, one a dark phase of Swainson's hawk and one a white-headed immature red-tail. Hawk Pass is beyond houses and overlooks the city dump. Rats on the dump, we think, must be an attraction and the valley leading through the hill must have helpful air currents to aid migration. Birds reported killed here were: red-tailed hawks, broad-winged hawks, marsh hawks, rough-legged hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, a few

ospreys, long-eared owls, barred owls, snowy owls, crows, woodpeckers, and robins. From elsewhere birds that had been shot and brought in were Canada jays, hawks, and great blue herons." Miss Jones, in her letter, further states that she, her pupils, and members of the Duluth Bird Club are putting on a very vigorous campaign through the local newspapers and by every other means possible, to inform the public of the fact that most of these birds benefit mankind and are protected by law, and hope that they have stimulated them so as to lessen this wanton killing. —Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### GIFT SUGGESTIONS

*Does this Christmas or Birthday Gift suggestion offer you that "something different" you have been looking for?*

*The usual material gifts are still restricted both in quality and quantity so, why not give a different kind of present—a Gift Membership in the MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION. This will entitle the new member to four issues of THE FLICKER. The dues for a member at large are \$1.00.*

*Remember, too, the book list in the September issue of THE FLICKER. These books may be purchased all the year around, not just at Holiday time. Send all orders to the Treasurer, 212 Bedford Street S.E., Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.*

### HAVE YOU READ THESE ARTICLES?

Master Builders of the Air by Hugo H. Schroder. Travel, September, 1946.

The author discusses the nesting habits of the bald eagle and cites one instance of a nest having been used for a period of thirty-five years. The article is illustrated with photographs by the author.

Cormorant Fishing. Life, September, 1946.

The photographs and story tell how the Chinese have for centuries been using the cormorants as fishermen in the canal and river near Peiping.

A Bird in the Hand by Louise de Kiriline. Photographs by Kimball, Cruickshank, et al. Audubon Magazine, September-October, 1946.

Those who are doing bird banding will be interested in Louise Kiriline's experiences in bird banding at one of the most northerly stations in North America.

Birds of Timberline and Tundra by Arthur A. Allen. The National Geographic Magazine, September, 1946. 8 illustrations, 24 natural color photographs.

## NOTES OF INTEREST

GREATER SCAUP, WHITE-FRONTED GEESE AND HOYT'S HORNED LARKS NEAR FORT WILLIAM, ONTARIO—The Ontario Lakehead cities of Fort William and Port Arthur lie only 40 miles from the Ontario-Minnesota boundary at Pigeon River. Like northern Minnesota we are situated in the Canadian Zone of the Boreal Region but many species considered as summer residents of Minnesota have not yet been recorded locally. These include the black-crowned night heron, least bittern, towhee, and yellow-billed cuckoo. The white-breasted nuthatch, purple martin, Baltimore oriole and brown thrasher are of rare occurrence and there is but one breeding record each for the catbird and indigo bunting. On the other hand the spruce grouse, ruby-crowned kinglet, Arctic three-toed woodpecker and olive-backed thrush are of regular occurrence. (From the west there has been a recent intrusion of western meadow larks and clay-colored sparrows. The prairie sharp-tailed grouse is the local form of *Pedioecetes*. Holboell's grebe breeds regularly at Whitefish Lake, 50 miles southwest of the Lakehead.) These differences are to be expected as we lie at the border between the Canadian and the Hudsonian Biotic Provinces. (Dice, L. R. *The Biotic Provinces of North America*. Univ. Mich. Press, 1943). The narrow strip of land from Port Arthur to the boundary including the lower courses of the Kaministiquia and Pigeon Rivers is included in the Lake Superior West Section of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region but elsewhere the area lies in the Superior Section of the Boreal Forest Region characterized by its spruce, balsam, poplar, white birch and jackpine (Halliday, W. E. D. *A Forest Classification for Canada*. Forest Service Bull. 89. Ottawa, 1937). In consideration of our close proximity, and the heavy tourist traffic between Minnesota and our Lakehead district it was thought MOU members might be interested in the following bird observations made within a radius of 50 miles of Fort William:

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*).— From a knowledge of their northern breeding territory and of their eastern wintering grounds including Lake Ontario, where rafts of thousands may be seen, one would expect that the greater scaup would be a common migrant throughout northern Manitoba, and that it would be of regular occurrence in Minnesota and north-western Ontario. On the contrary there are extremely few specimens in Manitoba collections and it is an uncommon bird in Minnesota. Records of its occurrence at the Canadian Lakehead may be of some importance. Duck-shooting is carried on in three main areas, viz: at Whitefish Lake which is 8 miles in greatest length, at Hurkett, 50 miles north-east of Fort William, where there is a Bay of limited extent at the base of Black Bay, Lake Superior, and about the Harbours of Port Arthur and Fort William. In the first two locations there are extensive beds of wild rice; in the last-named region the attraction is the waste grain from the elevators. Shooting season opens September 15 and due to the freeze-up is usually over by the end of the first week in November. The lesser scaup (*Aythya affinis*) is a relatively common fall migrant, and with the ring-necked duck (*Aythya collaris*) forms the bulk of the local shooting. The latter breeds locally and its numbers are rapidly augmented by migrants from the north commencing with

the first autumn storms, which usually occur by the end of September or during the first few days of October. Lesser scaups appear in numbers during the second week in October, my earliest record being September 21, 1942. Each year, particularly late in the season, there are reports of "Big Northern Bluebills", to which little importance should be attached since by that time most birds weigh more than they do early in the season. On November 6, 1943, I shot three drake ring-necks. Two of these weighed 2 pounds, 1 ounce each and the third was an ounce heavier; in September, 1941, lesser scaups weighed two pounds, five ounces. Drake greater scaups are said to average two pounds, one ounce, lesser scaups one pound, fourteen ounces and ring-necks one pound, eleven and a half ounces. (Kortwright, F. H. *The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*, Washington, D.C., 1942).

My own local observations cover the period from November, 1937, to the present (November 7, 1946). I heard of no greater scaup during 1938-39-40 but on October 30, 1941, shot three "bluebills" one of which was a male greater scaup at Whitefish Lake. On November 5, between 200 and 300 scaups were noted and five were shot, all marila. These records were confirmed by the staff of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology. On November 4, 1942, a mixed bag of 16 "bluebills" was made at Hurkett after all inland marshes had frozen a week previously. Greater scaups were included in this shoot. None was noted in 1943; in 1944 illness precluded personal observations but no greater scaup were reported by reliable observers. On October 28, 1945, at Whitefish Lake I shot two greater scaup from a flock of thirty birds.

There is a heavy spring duck migration through this area but at that time observations are practically confined to that portion of Thunder Bay in the region of the Harbours. As in the fall these ducks are largely attracted by the grain about the elevators. They arrive as soon as there is sufficient open water. During the past nine years (1944 excepted) the earliest arrival date for the lesser scaup has been April 11, 1942, the latest, May 9, 1943, the average date of arrival being April 24. During the same period the average date of arrival for the ring-neck was April 30, with an early of April 17, 1942, and a late of May 14, 1946. In northern Minnesota, the lesser scaup arrives on the average April 14 and the ring-necked, April 12. (Roberts, T. A., *The Birds of Minnesota*. Univ. Minn. Press, Minneapolis, 1936). Admittedly it is usually impossible to separate the scaups in the field but on two occasions unusual circumstances permitted us to make identification of greater scaups as certain as any field observations could be. On May 9, 1943, I watched several hundred bluebills at close range in bright sunlight with 8x binoculars from behind a sheltering ridge. Many approached within a few yards. It was easy to pick out 5 ring-necked ducks and 5 lesser scaups; the remainder were quite distinct and were identified as greater scaups. On April 18, 1945, a raft of some 2,000 bluebills was present in the Fort William Harbour. Approximately a third were ring-necked ducks. The following day when conditions were ideal for observation, some 1,300 ducks were present 200 of which were ring-necks. Ten per cent of the remainder were *affinis* but the remainder were obviously marila. By May 22, only about 25 scaups remained. One of those, shot by a poacher was procured by Mr. R. D. Windsor, Fish and Wildlife Specialist, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. I forwarded it to the R.O.M.Z. where its identity as a greater scaup was confirmed.

No greater scaup were observed personally during 1946 nor were there reports of any seen by other observers. Bluebills arrived in the spring on April 17 and were observed on many occasions until May 14, but at no time were conditions favorable for their study. The fall has been one of the mildest on record and instead of the lakes and marshes being frozen over by late October they are still open at the end of the first week in November and there has been little ice to date. The duck flight has been one of the poorest ever experienced. Relatively few lesser scaup and ring-necks have been seen and no greater scaup have been reported. Only long term observations will prove or disprove my theory that there is a regular spring movement of the greater scaup through the Lakehead when I would expect the species to be of regular occurrence along the northeast Lake Superior shore of Minnesota. In the fall I believe we are at the edge only of their south-easterly route. Migration probably occurs late in the season when the large northern lakes have frozen over. A knowledge of their autumn date of arrival on Lake Ontario would be of value in this regard.

**WHITE FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*).**—On April 12, 1946, at about 6:00 p.m., I saw two white-fronted geese feeding on the Lakehead Exhibition grounds in the City of Port Arthur. The birds were close to the well-travelled highway between Fort William and Port Arthur. On April 18, a goose of this species was present on the same grounds. On both occasions the birds were observed with binoculars at close range, and in good light. This is the first record of the occurrence of this species at the Lakehead and one of the few for Ontario.

**HOYT'S HORNED LARK (*Otocoris alpestris hoyti*).**—Horned larks are uncommon local migrants. There are two specimens from Rosspport, 120 miles north-east of Fort William, collected May 29, 1936, and now in the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology. One is a male *praticola*; the other is a female *alpestris*. (Baillie, J. L., Jr. and Hope, C. E. The Summer Birds of the North-east Shore of Lake Superior, Ontario. Cont. Roy. Ont. Mus. Zool. No. 23, 1943). From November 10, 1937, to November 7, 1946, my own notes contain only six records of horned larks. On November 21, 1937, I saw two very pale birds at Fort William and on April 8, 1939, two dull-colored larks were noted 8 miles west of that city. On September 25, 1941, another pale bird was seen north of Port Arthur. On October 23, 1943, several were seen at Whitefish Lake which were quite pink in color. No yellow was noted on any of these birds but the throats obviously could not be studied. Unfortunately none was collected.

On October 21, 1945, I saw a lark at Hurkett, 50 miles north-east of Fort William on the north shore of Lake Superior. In the field it resembled the pinkish-sided birds noted in 1943 at Whitefish Lake. It was collected and proved to be a specimen of Hoyt's horned lark (*O. a. hoyti*) the first record for this region. I revisited this area October 27, 1946, and collected a lone lark which also proved to be *hoyti*. These two birds are now in the collection of the Ontario Museum of Zoology.—A. E. Allin, Regional Laboratory, Ontario Department of Health, Fort William, Ontario.

**A CONCENTRATION OF WOOD DUCKS AT HASTINGS, MINNESOTA**—The King Midas Flour Mill at Hastings is located on the Vermilion River. Just below the mill pond the river has carved a deep gorge through the limestone, for a distance of about half a mile. In these limestone walls are several large caves.

For several years the men of the King Midas Mill have thrown waste grain and chaff into the river just below the mill pond to attract wood ducks which come to feed in the early morning and late afternoon. They usually come over high, circle several times and then drop in either near the grain or a short way downstream and swim up.

On October 1, 1946, Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, Ken Morrison, and the writer investigated the situation to see what the photographic possibilities were. Just before six o'clock the ducks began arriving. The writer counted 87 but there was so much milling around that a closer estimate would be 100. About 35-40 per cent of these were males in full breeding plumage.

People living in the vicinity told us that many of these ducks were shot by young boys with rifles. The gorge tends to concentrate the ducks, giving more opportunity to shoot at them, and the rough terrain and caves make it difficult to catch these boys.

Although the people enjoy seeing the ducks come in to feed, it would seem advisable not to attract them unless they are able to curb the activities of the young boys and their rifles. Harvey L. Gunderson, Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**NELSON'S SPARROW**—On October 12, while I was sitting leisurely in my duck blind at the Wopetu Maza Gun Club on the Minnesota River, a Nelson's sparrow in gaudy plumage perched on a weed a few feet away. He stayed around close by, seemingly unafraid, for an hour. I saw him again in the same spot the following day.

The pictures of this sharp-tailed sparrow do not do this gaudy little fellow justice. In the bright sunshine the prominent cheek patch appears almost orange. The white stripes on the back give the bird a wren-like appearance. He is a proud little show-off at this time of year, but try to locate him at nesting time in his natural marshy habitat. This appears to be a late record for the Nelson's in this region. —Whitney Eastman, Minneapolis Bird Club, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**TWIN CITIES, A GOOD BIRDING AREA**—Our Twin Cities have always proved to be a fruitful area for bird students. To support this assertion, I can report having positively identified 162 species of birds in the Twin City area in the period from January 1, 1946, to the end of October. A few particularly favorable areas visited fairly regularly were the Izaak Walton Bass Pond Preserve (5 trips), the Sucker-Vaidnais Lakes—Municipal Forest area (9 trips), the State Fish Hatchery grounds at Indian Mounds Park and adjacent swamp lands and hills (5 trips), and the City Dump wastelands—Calvary Cemetery—Como Park route (12 trips). Had several trips to Theodore Wirth Park and to the Mississippi River in the neighborhood of Pig's Eye Island been included in the observation areas, a greater number of species could, no doubt, have been recorded.

Among the more interesting observations were the following: A feamle hooded merganser was seen at the Bass Pond as late as June 22. A pair of wood ducks was found feeding in a slough near the Minneapolis Airport. A flock of beautiful eared grebes approached within a few feet of the shore when I used my parked car as a "blind." (I have found this method good for allaying suspicion of waterbirds under observation). This was on Vadnais Lake on April 18. Dickcissels and bobolinks appeared in greater numbers than usual this year. On October 19, there was a considerable number of waders on the mud-flats of the drained-out bass ponds at the Izaak Walton Preserve. Apparently only four

species were represented—pectoral sandpipers (23+), killdeer (35+), Wilson's snipe (30), lesser yellow-legs (15), and two greater yellow-legs among the lesser.

Many bird students find bird-migration records an interesting phase of bird study. The following are a few fall "first-dates" of arrivals from the north and a few "last-seen" dates:

FIRST SEEN. Myrtle warbler, September 11; white-throated sparrow, September 12; brown creeper, September 13; ruby-crowned kinglet, September 13; slate-colored junco, September 24; golden-crowned kinglet, September 28; rough-legged hawk, October 12; tree sparrow, October 6; redpoll, October 26.

LAST SEEN. Baltimore oriole, September 15; purple martin, September 15; black tern, September 9; brown thrasher, September 26; nighthawk, September 26; northern yellow-throat, October 12; kingbird, October 13; catbird, October 3.

In general, the mild fall has caused many migrating birds to linger longer and to leave on a much later-than-average date.—A.C. Rosenwinkel, St. Paul, Minnesota.

CONCENTRATION OF FLICKERS AND BLUE JAYS—On September 10, 1946, while riding north on Minnesota State Highway 89 along the west shore of Lower Red Lake, my wife, Myrtle, and I observed a concentration of flickers and blue jays. For a distance of some ten or twelve miles as we drove along, mixed flocks of flickers and blue jays were flushed from the brush and trees at the side of the highway. We made no attempt to count the birds because they were so numerous.—Leonard C. Lustig, St. Paul Bird Club, St. Paul, Minnesota.

OBSERVATIONS ON CHIMNEY SWIFTS—This summer I did a little spying on a pair of swifts which annually nest up in the end of our hay mow. It was the fifth year that a pair had nested there, although I do not know if it has been the same pair each year.

I did not realize that they started nesting so early in the summer and when I first looked on June 29, I found a completed nest with five tiny white eggs in it. Last year's bracket of sticks had loosened so I brought it down to study. It was cleverly made, and the sticks were still firmly cemented together.

I watched the nest and on July 17, I found that the eggs were hatching. The swift that was sitting on the nest seemed tamer that day for I got my hand within a few inches of the nest before it fluttered to the wall where it clung watching me. The eggs that had hatched were neatly cut in half it seemed, for there were only two pieces left of each egg. The babies were very tiny, absolutely naked, and then had closed eyes. They reminded me of infant mice with their pink bodies and dark bulging closed eyes.

On July 18, when I visited them, their eyes were still closed, but it was evident that they had been growing for there was no empty space left in the nest. They had some feathers too, which came in two rows down their backs. At this time they were rather queer looking.

When the young swifts were a week old, they did not appear much different except that they were growing.

They continued to grow feathers until I could plainly see the resemblance to a bird. On July 24, two of the young swifts had their eyes open. They all had their eyes open. They all discovered that they had vocal cords, for they certainly could chatter. It was amazing how they all started and stopped simultaneously. I could not find their reasons for starting or stopping when they did for some-

times they started when everything was still, and sometimes they started after I had been purposely making noise or vibrations for some time.

July 31, when I went to see them, they had vacated their nest and were clinging onto the wall. I did not go all the way up, because I did not wish to disturb them, but I could see that the nest was empty although there were only four young birds on the wall. It was the first time that I had noticed that one of them was missing. I did not know if the nest had become too small for five growing swifts or if one had developed ahead of the nest and had flown. They were fully feathered, but they looked quite different from the older swifts. The young swifts' heads and backs were light, nearly ash grey colored while their parents were a uniform black.

A few days later they were flying around outside, however, they continued to cling to the wall for some time during the nights.

There was also a chimney swift's nest with four young in our ice house, but since they were not so easily watched I did not visit them as often. They hatched one week later than the ones in the barn. This year there was a brood raised in a neighbor's barn also. --Janet Sanford, Minnesota Bird Club, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**MARSH HAWK CAPTURES SICK YELLOW-LEGS**—August 29, 1946, 12:00 M. A marsh hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) sailed low over a group of feeding lesser yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*) in the shallows of Sand Lake, South Dakota. The yellow-legs flew away, as shorebirds do at the approach of a marsh hawk. But one yellow-legs could not fly; he only stumbled and flapped along and stood up, calling. He probably was suffering the first stages of botulism. When the hawk recognized the bird's condition, he came back, circled to come above it against the wind and made a slow, hovering sally at it. It seemed that the hawk feared the upturned beak of the yellow-legs or feared to get his feet wet, for he flew in again and again each time to flare off hesitantly. The yellow-legs sometimes faced the attack, sometimes kicked away spread-eagled on the water, always calling beseechingly.

Presently another marsh hawk appeared, and now there were two hawks engaged in swooping. The second one proved more adept at hunting, however, and on the sixth attempt he extended one long yellow foot, grasped the sand-piper and bore it away to the shore where he settled down to feeding. Both hawks were in the young plumage, apparently birds hatched that year.

It would seem that any shorebirds which are captured by marsh hawks are necessarily incapacitated in some way. Almost invariably the flocks of shorebirds rise into the air at the first approach of the hawk and offer him little opportunity to catch them.—William H. Longley, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**OSPREY IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY**—In June, 1946, several members of the Duluth Bird Club with the writer made a trip to Cloquet River, Fredenberg Township, about 19 miles north of Duluth to locate the reported nest of the bald eagle. The last three miles, to reach the river, was covered by foot trail through luxuriant mixed forest. Along the trail many common birds were identified. A song unfamiliar to the hikers led to a black-throated blue warbler. Among others identified were scarlet tanager, olive-sided flycatcher, Blackburnian, chestnut-sided, and Canada warbler. Along the trail where it followed a narrow point, Joel Bronoel located the nest of the veery with four eggs.

The nest in question turned out to be that of an osprey. It was built on the top of a charred tree trunk devoid of branches, about 25 feet high and 500 feet from the shore. The bulky structure of twigs seemed too heavy for the not too substantial tree trunk, and it was inaccessible. Two adult ospreys were observed on the nest and also in flight.

Most residents of that area refer to the osprey as the bald eagle. The nest is several years old, fifteen as estimated by some residents of the township, and has been used to rear young each summer. A student record of the bald eagle with two young, *The Flicker* 14 (4): 34, 1942, concerns the same nest. The error is herewith corrected. This current year no observation of young was made.—Olga Lakela, State Teachers College, Duluth, Minnesota.

**NOTES ON HAWKS**—On September 4, 1946, hawks were the most conspicuous birds on the North Shore of Lake Superior from Duluth to Lutzen. The sparrow hawk was most frequently seen, perching on telephone wires, on the road railings and high outcroppings of rock along the highway. The number killed on the highway was surprising. From Gooseberry State Park toward Tofte, seven freshly killed hawks were noted. On the return trip two were seen, and there was no evidence of the remains of the seven, so quickly the speeding wheels clear the highway.

The other species of hawks observed were: osprey, sharp-shinned hawk, pigeon hawk, marsh hawk, and red-tailed hawk.—Olga Lakela, State Teachers College, Duluth, Minnesota.

**DESTRUCTION OF HAWKS WITHIN DULUTH CITY LIMITS**—From bits of casual evidence, it has been known for several years that destruction of hawks has been taking place in Duluth. Mass shooting within the city limits, however, did not come to the attention of conservation-minded people before the fall migration of 1946.

When public school children reported that many hawks were being shot in Kenwood Park, an investigation was made. The place of shooting was discovered to be centered on the highest cliff directly across from the College of St. Scholastica to the northeast, less than one-half mile from Kenwood Avenue. Westward, the cliff overlooks the city dumping grounds adjoining the property of the Northwestern Gun Club; to the northeast one commands a view of the North Shore and Lake Superior. The cliff overlooks a gorge of a creek tributary to Chester River. The wooded valley forms a "pass" between the hills of the Villa grounds and Bayview Heights, a continuous strip of forest almost to Lake Superior through Chester Park. Over this "pass" the hawks are known to soar. In the dense woods of the valley they stop to rest and become targets of the hunters.

The writer first inspected the area on October 19. A blind, baited with crows, had been constructed on the top of the cliff facing the wooded valley. The hillside was littered with scores of hawks, decayed beyond salvage. Some were mutilated by removal of talons, tails, or wings; the ground was strewn with feathers; the rocks were blood-stained—altogether a sight revolting to human decency. On the tree-covered slope were freshly shot specimens, more than one could carry. Seven of these, including five red-tails, one American rough-leg, and a barred owl were collected and promptly shipped to Dr. W. J. Breckenridge. On the following day from the same woods, thirteen red-tails, one marsh hawk, one broad-wing, and a sharp-shinned hawk were collected and most of them also, shipped to the Minnesota Museum of Natural History in Minneapolis for stomach

analyses. Later, additional specimens were found indicating the shooting period lasted until the closing days of October. Just how many were killed cannot be estimated. It was reported that many were carried away by local taxidermists; many decayed before the slaughter was known.

It is believed that some of the shooting was done by adults. At least one target shooter from the Gun Club was encountered on the cliff where the torn-down blind had been re-constructed. Juveniles carrying their guns were also to blame. Shooting was not restricted to the larger birds alone, woodpeckers and song birds were found shot in the same woods alongside of the hawks.

For public information, the writer has from time to time written notes for the local papers on the value of bird life. Last January, a column on owls appeared on the editorial page as a result of the indiscriminate shooting of snowy owls and others in Duluth. Clarence Anderson, a staff writer of the *Duluth News Tribune*, requested information on hawks for an editorial which appeared in the Sunday issue on October 20, 1946, under the caption, "Hawk Trouble." The writer gave Mr. Anderson the use of available literature on Minnesota hawks. The article was informative and well received, except for a misunderstanding of the title by some readers, who affixed the trouble to hawks instead of to the hunters.

How can shooting in city parks be stopped? The writer has tried to get information from various sources. The conservationists refer one to the City Park Board and the latter to the City police. Most leading citizens say it is a matter of education of the youth.

The adults must learn, along with the youth, the place of hawks in nature; first, for economic reasons, as based on the stomach analyses of the thirteen specimens containing food. According to Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, one rough-leg contained a meadow mouse; two sharp-shins, each juncos; ten red-tails: 1, meadow mouse; 2, 13-lined ground squirrels; 3, short-tailed shrew; 4, short-tailed shrew; 5, junco, one mouse and shrew; 6, short-tailed shrew; 7, 3 short-tailed shrews; 8, red-backed mouse and long-tailed shrew; 10, 2 red-backed mice and 1 long-tailed shrew. Some of the stomachs opened were empty. If hawks flying through Duluth were given a chance for a meal, might they not help in the city-wide problem of rat eradication? And second, learn for moral reasons to respect each thing in its place in nature, and help and protect all things placed in man's trust. —*Olga Lakela, Duluth State Teachers College, Duluth, Minnesota.*

**OPEN SEASON ON MOURNING DOVES**—The St. Paul Bird Club at its September meeting passed a resolution of protest against an open season on mourning doves. There was a short discussion, but when the President, Ken Morrison, called for the "ayes" the response was so unanimous that he didn't need to call for the "noes."

One of the objections made against the resolution was that the birds are hunted in the South. The answer to this was that while we can't stop the southern shooting, we can help to keep alive the birds that we have in the North; and we can refrain from offering discouragement to southern friends who are trying to secure their protection. Another objection was that the mourning dove is abundant and is a prolific breeder. This is hard to prove either way without some authoritative evidence.

The evidence for it is the apparent abundance of the doves in their migrating season, when they sit conspicuously on roadside wires in flocks of a dozen or

more, giving the impression to many people that there must be millions of them in the state. But these birds probably come from all over the Northwest, including the southern region of western Canada; they are using the Mississippi flyway, as do so many other birds. However, if they are not abundant in their own nesting localities, it is unfair for us to deprive those localities of the doves, as they are a very enjoyable woodland attraction to many nature lovers.

The true test of their abundance is the nesting record, and here we have some direct evidence. Dr. Roberts, in *THE BIRDS OF MINNESOTA*, cites reports turned in for fifteen years—1915-1930—in which among the nests discovered (they are hard to find) fourteen were reported as containing eggs. In none of these were more than two eggs found, though Dr. Roberts says that literature reports findings of three eggs, and he cites one nest in which there were two young and one egg.

One reason why the passenger pigeon was so easily exterminated was that the female laid only one egg in a season. Nature keeps a species pretty close to its food limits and just about even with its natural enemies. Man has probably made the food conditions for the mourning dove more favorable, and has destroyed its enemies, but has also stepped in as its greatest enemy, by poaching, by regarding it as a game bird, and by removal of vast areas of woodlands.

As compared with other game birds the mourning dove is **not** a prolific breeder. Pheasants commonly lay a dozen or more eggs; ducks and geese fill their nests.

If our children are to have the delight of hearing the melodious and mystic call of the mourning dove, we must make a determined effort to protect it throughout America. I would like to see other bird clubs pass resolutions to protest against any open season on these birds, and join us in a campaign to remove them nationally from the list of "game". —Guy Atherton, St. Paul Bird Club, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Editor's Note:** The plight of the mourning dove is also expressed by Guy Atherton in his poem, "The Mourning Dove," which is printed elsewhere in this issue.

**ON A BLACKBIRD FLYWAY**—My home happens to be located on a blackbird flyway. In late summer the flocks fly in the morning from the Mississippi River bottoms, two miles southwest, to Tanner's Lake, two miles northeast, where they find boggy meadows of wild rice on which they feed. The morning trip starts a few minutes after sunrise and continues for an hour or so; the evening return begins sparingly in the early afternoon, rises steadily till it reaches large proportions and is mostly completed well before sundown.

This vicinity, especially on rainy mornings, is a half-way stop, trees being plentiful and gossip one of the necessities of these birds. Apparently a debate goes on about who will go where, and the question is not settled for half an hour. Presently a visit to one of the cornfields nearby may cause the birds to rise in black swarms. Others have departed for the rice meadows. I think all of them really prefer rice.

One chilly, rainy morning the whole flock decided to forage close to home. They gathered in the woods of Battle Creek glen and after a short confab descended on a ten-acre cornfield. I watched them, off and on for an hour. At first they came in hundreds, a continuous flight; toward the last they came in

groups of two or three dozen. They spread over the field and moved about restlessly for half an hour, but finally settled down to business, each bird having found a satisfactory breakfast table. I believe there were at least 20,000 birds. It needs little figuring to approximate the damage they did on this one day. Multiply it by a month and the loss is something to set us thinking in terms of remedies. An examination of the field showed that most of the ear husks were partly stringed, the ends of the cobs bare two or three inches.

We have killed off so many hawks and owls that our farms near water-courses and lakes are now pretty much at the blackbirds' mercy. Every time we shoot a hawk or owl we probably give life to a hundred of them, which will eat or damage their weight in corn several times over, say half a bushel per bird, fifty bushels. By exposing the corn ears to the weather the birds damage, perhaps, more than they eat. With corn selling at \$1.30 per bushel the hawk's or owl's death will cost us about \$65 for one year. Rather expensive sport.

Against these figures we must place the benefit the blackbirds provide, though the balance seems to be against them. In the spring they follow the plow or cultivator, and if the gardener shows interest by placing worms conveniently for them, they will hop, literally, at his heels. Probably at such times most of their food is earthworms, the soil builders, which we would rather preserve; but very likely they consume enough harmful insects to more than balance that account, and they eat many weed seeds.

Blackbirds are not protected by Minnesota conservation laws, but the Federal enactments include them. No farmer is likely to have to meet the law if he shoots them out of his cornfields. Dr. Roberts stated that he once inspected a 60-acre field so completely devastated by them that it was not worth harvesting. He cited another instance where they ruined ten acres a day, and commented that with Minnesota's ten thousand lakes, we have a too generous share of them. There have been some reports of their ravages around my neighborhood. They are especially fond of sweet corn, and it doesn't take them long to clean a small patch.

It seems likely that near the Twin Cities, we get a large number of blackbirds that have retreated from the colder northern country and make a temporary stop here to rest and refresh themselves, as the numbers are not noticeably large through the summer, and toward the end of September the migration wave thins out, so that where there were thousands only hundreds remain. In the frosty mornings of early November only scores remain, alighting for short periods in the leafless trees and confining their gossip to a few sharp calls.

It is hard for one person to time the rate of flight. I estimate that a given flock will pass over a half-mile space in one minute—thirty miles and hour—and this is what one would expect of a bird not built for fast flying. Occasionally swallows curve about beneath the flocks and one sees the contrast in flight ability. The swallow, probably, was developed over the ocean—terns are called sea swallows—and it may have had a few million years more practice.

To realize the extent of our blackbird population, one must remember that these birds occupy the entire Mississippi valley and the valleys of all its tributaries, even to the smallest creek, and that they are abundant wherever a river or lake is located throughout the continent from north to south. We may well credit them with having discovered a way of life which greatly favors their survival. They are large enough to permit effective foraging, but not meaty enough

to warrant the hunter in wasting a charge of birdshot, or even an arrow; though if we are to believe the old nursery rhyme about the "four-and-twenty blackbirds baked into a pie," our little friends were not always so fortunate. It is said that Italian immigrants still hunt them, along with other small birds. The big flocks compel the hawks and owls to fight for their prey; the nesting site in a swamp is inaccessible to many predators. Rarely is a nest raided by a snake, but the serpent is likely to nurse some skin lacerations, as the mother bird is a valiant fighter.

There must be some potent natural deterrent to their increase, as the several varieties doubtless have occupied their present range at least since the end of the last glacial epoch (30,000 years ago). It seems probable that various destructive agencies in their winter homes account most largely for their decimation. Their numbers seem fairly constant, so far as a lifetime's casual observation warrants an opinion.—Guy Atherton, St. Paul Bird Club, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**CHANGES IN NAMES OF MINNESOTA BIRDS—ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS**—The following changes in nomenclature of Minnesota birds in addition to those appearing in my earlier list (*Flicker* 18 (2):35-38, May, 1946) are due to official changes which appeared in the Twenty-first Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check List of North American Birds, *Auk* 63 (3): 428-432, July, 1946.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *Hedymeles ludoviciana*, to *Pheucticus ludoviciana*.

Red-backed Sandpiper, *Erolia alpina sakhalina*, to *Erolia alpina pacifica*.

White-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta carolinensis carolinensis*, to *Sitta carolinensis cooki*.

Bohemian Waxwing, *Bombycilla garrula pallidiceps*, to *Bombycilla garrulus pallidiceps*.

Rock Dove *Columba livia livia* to *Columba livia* (this bird is regarded as a member of the fauna by the A.O.U. Check-List but not by Dr. Roberts).

In the earlier list the Varied Thrush should have been listed as the northern race, *Ixoreus naevius naevius*. The Violet-green Swallow, *Tachycineta thalassina lepida*, should have appeared in the list of recently added species. Curlew, line 9, *Caprimulgus*, line 22, *Plegadis*, line 38, and *aestiva*, line 47 are misspelled on page 36. Page 36, line 24, should read, "Penthestes and Baeolophus are.....". Page 38, line 1, should read, "Osprey, *Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis* to *P. haliaëtus carolinensis*." Page 36, following the last line, add "Holboell's Redpoll, *Acanthis linaria holboelli* to *A. flammea holboellii*. —Byron E. Harrell, St. Paul, Minnesota.

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

*The dates for the Christmas Bird Count are December 21 through December 29. The regulations, which are the same as last year, may be found in the November-December, 1945, issue of AUDUBON MAGAZINE. All clubs or individuals who cooperate in taking the Christmas Bird Count should mail their notes to the editor as soon after the count as possible so the data can be compiled for publication in the March issue of THE FLICKER.*

## - CALL NOTES -

Olin S. Pettingill, Jr., Ph. D., of the Carleton College faculty at Northfield, Minnesota, was named secretary of the American Ornithologists' Union at their meeting on September 2-5. This was the first full annual meeting since 1942.

Brother Hubert Lewis, a member of the St. Paul Bird Club, and physics instructor at Cretin High School, St. Paul, has retired to the Christian Brothers retreat house at Glencoe, Mo. He plans to join the St. Louis Bird Club. For the past four years Brother Hubert has been observing the nesting habits of the eastern goldfinch in the vicinity of Highland Park, St. Paul, Minnesota, and this year he and Brother Pius found 220 nests in that area.

In the Twin City Quiz program over WCCO on November 11, between the St. Paul Bird Club and the Minneapolis Bird Club, the St. Paul Club came out ahead. Both clubs, however, enriched their treasury, and the members as well as the contestants had a lot of fun out of the program.

Members of the St. Cloud Bird Club met for a picnic supper on August 28, at the home of the president, Miss Monica Misho. The event was a farewell party for Mrs. A. J. Trainor, first president of the St. Cloud Bird Club and past secretary of the MOU. Dr. and Mrs. Trainor will make their home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Dr. Trainor is affiliated with the Veterans' faculty.

A tour of the spacious grounds of the Misho home gave evidence of their interest in bird houses, feeding stations, and the planting of shrubs to attract birds.

The annual winter series of free

public lectures on wildlife subjects at the University of Minnesota's Museum of Natural History was resumed on Sunday, November 3, and will be continued each Sunday at 3 p.m. through March 30, 1947.

The majority of the programs are presented by Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, Director of the Museum, Harvey L. Gunderson and Donald Lewis, members of the Museum staff.

The schedule of the remaining winter programs is as follows: December 29, "Pribilof Island Fur Seals"; January 5, "Minnesota Winter Animal Life"; January 12, "Early Man in Minnesota," Dr. Lloyd Wilford, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota; January 19, "Wilderness Trails on Mt. Rainier," Warner Clapp, Photographer, University of Minnesota Photographic Service; January 26, "Silver Fox Farming"; February 2, "Afield in the Tetons," Clayton Rudd, D.D.S., Minneapolis; February 9, "Local Summer Birdlife"; February 16, "Courtship of Birds"; February 23, "Spring Flowers," Dr. Ned L. Huff, Assistant Professor of Botany Emeritus, Department of Botany, University of Minnesota; March 2, "Waterfowl Conservation"; March 9, "Some Colorful Local Birds"; March 16, "Wild Flowers and the Camera"; March 23, "Insects in Their Surroundings," Dr. Ralph Dawson, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Minnesota; March 30, "Naturalist's Tour of Minnesota."

The Museum which is located at University and Seventeenth Avenues Southeast, Minneapolis, is open to the public, free of charge, from 9 to 5 week days, 2 to 5 Sundays and most holi-

days, and from 7 to 10 p.m. on Mondays from October to April.

Florence and Francis Lee Jaques of CANOE COUNTRY fame are back at the University of Minnesota campus for a six weeks' stay. Mr. Jaques, who is a noted artist-naturalist, is painting the background for the elk habitat at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History.

These nationally noted exhibits are constructed, with infinite patience, in the Museum's workshop on the third floor under the supervision of Dr. W. J. Breckenridge, Director of the Museum.

Dr. Arnold B. Erickson has returned to Minnesota after spending a year in Georgia as Associate Biologist with the United States Public Health Service. Dr. Erickson is now working on the Pittman-Robertson program of the Minnesota Conservation Department, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The ornithological-minded people of Rochester, Minnesota, are considering organizing an Audubon Society. It is to be hoped that their Society will be completely organized before the next issue of *The Flicker* goes to press so that their Club can be added to our list of affiliated societies.

The St. Paul Bird Club has selected the cardinal as their official club emblem.

Mathilde Henkel of Detroit, Michigan is a new contributor to *The Flicker*. Miss Henkel is one of our members at large.

Miss Mollie Kogen, secretary of the Duluth Bird Club, has resigned that position. She will leave soon for Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, where she will take graduate work in geography.

#### BACK COPIES OF THE FLICKER WANTED

*The files of the M. O. U. are entirely lacking in certain early issues of THE FLICKER. Anyone having copies previous to 1938 who would consider parting with them would render the organization a great favor if they would contact Mrs. I. A. Lupient. Frequent requests come in for early numbers to complete the files of some members, and we are very anxious to accommodate such interested persons.*

*A masterpiece along the line illustrated by swallow and martin is the nest of some of the South American oven-birds (*Furnarius*)—for instance, of that species (*F. rufus*) which is called the "hornero" or baker. The nest is about the size of a child's head, and may weigh 8 to 9 pounds; it is built in a conspicuous place—on a tree or post, or house roof. It is made of mud and dung strengthened, as in the swallow and martin, with some hair or dry grass, which is also used as an internal lining. The walls are of almost brick-like strength when well baked, and it is sometimes the work of months to build them. The oven-bird's bill is quite small, and it has to work slowly, pellet by pellet; moreover, when dry weather sets in, it is difficult to get material. But the chief peculiarity of the nest is an inner chamber; there is an ante-room and a bedroom, as Prof. Trail neatly puts it.*

—Thomson, "*Biology of the Seasons*," 163

# Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

## Affiliated Societies

### **CLOQUET BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Louise Stender; Vice President, Miss Doris Anderson; Secretary-treasurer, Miss Helen Berg; Editor, Miss Adeline Peterson.

Meetings are held the first and third Thursdays of each month in the Cloquet High School at 7:30 p.m.

### **DULUTH BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Joel K. Bronoel; Vice President, Miss Frances Riddle; Secretary, Miss Helen C. Smith; Treasurer, Miss Harriet Lockhart.

Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month of the school year at 7:30 p.m. at the State Teachers College.

### **LAKEVIEW BRANCH OF THE DULUTH BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Freida Beier; Vice President, Mrs. John Thomas; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Wm. Wernowsky.

Meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. in the homes of the members.

### **MINNEAPOLIS AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Officers: President, Mrs. E. D. Swedenborg; Vice President, Mrs. Harry W. Rice; Treasurer, Mrs. W. L. Harris; Recording Secretary, Miss A. Glasoe; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Stuart S. Sutherland; Field Secretary, Mrs. Gaylord Davidson; Auditor, Miss Cathryne Yerxa.

Meetings are held the first Friday of each month at 2:00 p.m. at the Walker Branch Library. Field trips during April and May on Tuesdays, and Fridays.

### **MINNEAPOLIS BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Evelyn Behrens; Vice President, Luther B. Gilbert; Secretary, Miss Florence Nelson; Treasurer, Miss Helen Towle.

Meetings are held the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Minneapolis Public Library.

### **MINNESOTA BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Lewis L. Barrett; Vice President, H. J. Paul; Secretary, Mrs. I. A. Lupient; Treasurer, Harvey Gunderson.

Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, except in June, July, August, and September, at 8:00 p.m. at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History.

### **ST. CLOUD BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Miss Monica Misho; Vice President, Mrs. Charles Beacom; Secretary-treasurer, Miss Loretta Rosenberger.

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month from October through March in the committee room of the public library at 8:00 p.m.

### **T. S. ROBERTS ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB**

Officers: President, Bob Tuttle; Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Huber; Adviser G. W. Friedrich.

Meetings are held bi-monthly February through May at the St. Cloud Teachers College.

### **ST. PAUL BIRD CLUB**

Officers: President, Kenneth Morrison; Vice President, Dr. Henry Bjorndahl; Treasurer, R. A. Kortmann; Secretary, Mrs. T. C. Beard; Directors at large, Mrs. R. M. Elliott and Brother Hubert Lewis.

Meetings are held at the St. Paul public library at 7:45 p.m., the fourth Thursday of each month from September through May.