



The Redstart

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Edited by J. W. Handlan

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BROOKS BIRD CLUB REORGANIZES FOR NEW YEAR

Mr. Harold J. Bergner, of Wheeling, was re-elected president of The Brooks Bird Club at the annual meeting of that organization at the residence of Mr. Karl Haller, September 29, 1939.

Miss Beth Ann Waddell was elected secretary-treasurer of the Club, succeeding Miss Carolyn Conrad who had held the office for several years. The three members of the Club's executive committee elected by the membership are Messrs. Charles Conrad, Harold Olsen and Russell West. These three later selected Mesdames Polly Handlan and Elizabeth Etz as the additional two executive committeemen. An unusual tangle cropped up in the election of the executive committee when the three chosen by the membership were selected in a triple-tie vote. Club rules call for the nominee receiving the largest number of votes automatically to become chairman of the executive committee. The committee now is faced with the task of devising some means other than those designated by the Club by-laws in order to choose a chairman.

Selection of committees, adoption of a program for the next club year, plans for field trips and other business will occupy a meeting of the executive committee to be held in early November. Reports of various committee chairmen for the 1938-39 season showed that the club has been particularly active in the matter of field trips with Fymatuning Lake, the lakes of the Morgantown area, Pleasants County, West Virginia, the Tappan Reservoir area in Ohio and other points included as field trip goals.

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL JOURNALS

Notes of especial interest to Brooks Bird Club members or to amateur ornithologists in general are cited below as noted in various ornithological journals:

Auk, The, Vol. 56, No. 3, July, 1939: Dr. Edward C. Keney, of Cornell University, former student and instructor in the West Virginia Nature Training Schools, contributes an interesting note from New Castle, Pa. under the heading "Robin and Mourning Dove use the same nest." Two eggs of a Robin and one of a Mourning Dove were noted in the same nest in 1933. Both birds set on the eggs for several days before boys destroyed the nest. The following year, in the same location, two eggs of each species were hatched by a Robin and a Mourning Dove which alternated on the nest. The two parents fed and brooded the young for eight days. On the ninth day the four young were found dead.

Auk, The, Vol. 56, No. 4, October, 1939:- Mr. William Montagna, of Cornell University, formerly at Bethany and known to many members of the Brooks Club contributes to this issue a paper entitled: "Feeding Behavior of a Northern Shrike." The paper details observations made of a captive Shrike and its manner of handling both dead and living birds. Under "General Notes," Dr. Alexander Wetmore writes of "Western Olive-backed Thrush in West Virginia and Tennessee." The West Virginia specimen studied was a male taken at Enon, West Virginia. Maurice Broun's summary of "Fall Migrations of Hawks at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania," will be read with interest by any one sympathetic with the cause of so-called predatory birds. (American Ornithologists Union).

Bird-Lore, XLI, No. 2, Mar.-Apr., 1939:- Among the usual good special articles and features there is an excellent, brief discussion of "Nature Trails," by Roger T. Peterson. Aldo Leopold's "Game Policy - Model 1930" is worth the attention of any conservationist. It is briefly discussed editorially in this issue of THE REDSTART.

Bird-Lore, XLI, No. 3, May-June, 1939:- Peterson's special contribution is an interesting development of the topic "Small Nature Museums." It is interesting to note his advocacy of the small museum as a workshop for interested amateurs. There are suggestions for "telling the story" in simple, interesting fashions of which the keynote seems to be to "let the visitor do some thinking."

Bird-Lore, XLI, No. 4, July-August, 1939:- This issue contains E.C. Aldrich's "Invitation to Central California," accompanied by the usual pictograph. As each of these sectional or state papers has appeared this editor is interested anew in one day seeing in Bird-Lore a description of West Virginia's ornithological points of interest. We are even ready to suggest that Maurice Brooks, of West Virginia University, would do the job particularly well!

Bird-Lore, XLI, No. 5, Sept.-Oct., 1939:- Margaret McKinney writes of "Birds in a Hedgerow," an article crammed with suggestions for

planting food-bearing shrubs for birds. In this issue is the announcement that Miss Dorothy Treat, of Cleveland, Ohio, has accepted the directorship of the Junior Audubon Clubs with headquarters in New York. Miss Treat, formerly a member of the staff of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, spent two summers as naturalist assistant at Oglebay Park. For the past several years she has been a member of the camp staff of the Audubon Nature Camp in Maine.

Mr. John Kieran, New York sports writer and known to thousands for his participation in the "Information Please" radio programs, assumes the writing of book reviews in this issue of Bird-Lore. Mr. Kieran happens to be an amateur ornithologist of long experience. His sports column in the New York Times, familiar to this editor for many years, reflects the irrepressible good humor and lightness of touch which marks his contribution to "Information Please" as much as does his amazing fund of general information. We grinned with amusement as we read his review of a highly technical text. Nevertheless, we definitely prefer John Kieran as a radio personality rather than as a book reviewer!

In this issue the department, "The Season" is relegated to a supplement (in this case together with reports of the "Breeding-Bird Census) and Mr. Ludlow Griscom contributes a brief, general summary in the magazine itself. (National Association of Audubon Societies).

Wilson Bulletin, The, Vol. 51, No. 2, June, 1939:- Mr. Karl Haller contributes to this issue a note on "Long-billed Marsh Wren in Mason County, West Virginia." A specimen taken by Haller and identified by him as belonging to the race iliacus of Telmatodytes palustris was so confirmed by Dr. H. C. Oberholzer of the U.S. Biological Survey. (Wilson Ornithological Club).

--- J.W.H.

EDITORIAL NOTES

"Game Policy -- Model 1930:-" The foregoing title is employed by Mr. Aldo Leopold, widely known conservation worker and authority in the field of game management in Bird-Lore for March-April, 1939. It will be recalled that in 1930 the now defunct American Game Association took the leadership in an effort to establish a national policy in regard to game and to game-lands. Leopold's brief summary of the results thus far of this plan of nearly a decade ago is worth the reading of anyone interested in wildlife conservation. It is not the purpose here to reproduce it entire or in part but to call attention to one comment by the author in connection with the problem of natural predation. Leopold writes:

"One of the most interesting 'discoveries' of the decade is that science now sees in the effects of predation the same principle that every observing sportsman has seen in the effects of gunpowder. Those who have watched game-birds under fire have long asserted that moderate killing does not change next year's population. Those who have now measured game-bird populations under predation tell

game-bird populations under predation tell us the same thing. Moderate loss, whether by gun or tooth or claw, simply has no effect. Many sportsmen, however, do not recognize their own doctrine when it is applied to Hawks instead of guns. In predation, however, there is some kind of automatic adjustment that tends to keep losses moderate. I wish we could claim the same for gunpowder. To this extent, the Hawks are more civilized than we are."

Sportsmen do have difficulty in applying this doctrine to Hawks and to Owls and to other predatory animals. Furthermore, even those who might accept the idea that normal, natural predation is not bad for a game species are quite unwilling to admit of room for both shooting and natural predation -- and perhaps they are correct, for as Mr. Leopold suggests, gunpowder has no tendency to keep losses moderate. Nor, apparently have sportsmen generally grasped the idea that Hawks and Owls do not prey exclusively on game.

In virtually every state game law is provision for the protection of "song and insectivorous birds." How many people have heard sportsmen denounce Hawks for the taking of a Bluebird or a Horned Lark? There are extremists in the matter of bird protection, of course, who deplore the fact that Hawks kill small birds and would be willing to sacrifice the Hawks to protect song birds. No sensible ornithologist or, put it this way, friend of birdlife has this attitude. Certainly Hawks take small birds! Some of them, indeed, such as the little Sharp-shinned Hawk, make small birds the major item of their diet. And yet the sportsman is far too prone to cry "impractical sentimentalist" when friends of birds protest the needless killing of Hawks.

This is no brief against hunting game. Hunting is a recreation for thousands and one of considerable economic contribution, so far as that goes. And, as Leopold indicates, moderate game kills have little effect on game populations. Be it said, further, that in West Virginia at least and perhaps in the country at large, laws which define open seasons and bag limits have been imposed by the hunters themselves, in the last analysis. Those of us who believe in wildlife conservation but who are not hunters scarcely could have done it without the sportsmen's help. We're too small numerically, even though from the non-hunting conservation ranks have come some of the great "conservers"

It all seems to revolve back to the fact that hunters and non-hunters essentially are interested in the same thing, take widely divergent paths to attempt to obtain it and spend far too much time and effort damning one another. We non-hunters need to spend some time cultivating our hunter acquaintances, ascertaining and understanding their viewpoint and doing our best to permit them to understand ours. That seems to this observer a far better plan than indiscriminate tossing about of sharp criticisms.

Good Work by High School Clubs:- Nature Clubs at Triadelphia High School, Wheeling, and at Union High School, Benwood, respectively, have begun plans to duplicate their good work of 1938-39. Each Club is raising funds to establish a scholarship for one or more club members at the 1940 session of the West Virginia Nature Training School. These high school clubs, particularly that at Triadelphia High, once officially were under the wing of The Brooks Bird Club. Individual members of the latter organization still serve as occasional field trip leaders, speakers and demonstrators before the clubs. The two clubs have served as "feeders" to the Brooks organization and, at present, each is represented by at least one active member in this adult organization. From the Triadelphia Club have come a number of active members who continued their interest in bird study after graduation from high school.

The Brooks Bird Club Needs Members:- Active or Corresponding Members of The Brooks Bird Club are prone to forget that the organization always is open to new members. Particularly is this true in connection with the Active Membership which is naturally somewhat restricted to those actively interested in bird study. There surely exist in the general vicinity of Wheeling more people who are keenly interested in bird life than are listed on the club's rolls. It is true that Active Members must be active -- that they must be voted upon for active membership and that they must be reasonably diligent in attendance at meetings. It should be recalled, also, that Corresponding Membership is open to local applicants as well as to those whose residence forbids active participation in the affairs of the Club.

Present members of the organization need constantly to be alive to the possibility of adding additional members. The membership secretary cannot do the job alone. Any interest in birds is evidence of the potential membership possibilities of the person who evinces this interest. The Brooks Bird Club does not pretend to scientific standing; it is not a formidable, technical organization. It is an organization for amateur ornithologists and one which has led many of its members toward membership in the more technical ornithological organizations. Its active membership presents a varied cross-section of Wheeling District's population, with many vocations and ages from 15 to 40 represented.

Members of the Club need to constitute themselves "committees of one" interested at all times in adding to the membership rolls of The Brooks Bird Club.