



# The Redstart

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## ALONG THE TRAIL

by

Dorothy E. Conrad

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During the winter of 1940-1, the Brooks Bird Club had the privilege of cooperating with a number of agencies sponsoring groups of young people directly or indirectly interested in nature study. The method of this cooperation took the form of a series of publications and the supervision of activities in connection with the pamphlets.

The entire plan was the idea of Mary Kay and Charles Conrad, active Club members, both of whom were well acquainted with certain problems in youth training, and, knowing of the activities of The Brooks Bird Club and the willingness with which the various members offer their services to others the plan was evolved and projected. It was not however, before very much debate and consideration that the program was finally accepted and begun.

So that the scheme would not get out of bounds and so that a proper check on its success could be made, it was decided to limit most of the work to Brooke County in West Virginia. Here it was offered to the 4-H Clubs as a project that would conform with the requirements of activities under the new "Life Enrichment" program of that organization. For additional experiments, one Boy Scout troop and two high school nature clubs in Ohio and Marshall Counties, West Virginia, were offered the work.

In Brooke County, twelve 4-H clubs adopted the program as club projects with every individual in each of the clubs accepting membership in what was termed the "Along the Trail Club." It had been hoped that about one hundred boys and girls could be interested. When the preliminary work was finished, it was found that 345 members had signed up for the course.

The basis of the program was the preparation and distribution of five four-page pamphlets, one each month during the winter months. In each of

these pamphlets was the description and an outline drawing of six common birds. One page was devoted to a general article concerning bird study and the other to club news, questions and answers regarding birds and a series of bird questions. Every word written was selected with the fact in mind that the work was for adolescents; the descriptions were non-technical but accurate.

Each club leader was furnished with a copy of the publication (which also was entitled "Along the Trail") with each of the six birds very carefully copied from the most dependable illustrations that can be found. The coloring was done by hand, with artist's pencils, by the members of The Brooks Bird Club. The leaders' copies were used as models by the juniors who, as carefully as possible, colored their sheets to conform.

An ordinary manila filing folder was given to each member for filing the copies of "Along the Trail." The front of each folder was illustrated in colors with drawings and lettering designed by individual members. As a final entry for the contest, in the folder was inserted a very brief essay on some subject relating to birds, the subject and the material being selected by the club member without supervision.

A poster contest was announced but no attempt was made to obtain entries as the program seemed complete without this additional work. However the entries that were sent in were judged and proper awards made.

The climax of the program (and the formal termination of the work) was a Nature Field Day held in Wellsburg, W. Va. particularly for the 4-H clubs but other interested parties were invited. Under the supervision of Mary Kay and Charles Conrad there was conducted a program of games and entertainment. The making of awards was a fitting end to a winter of work.

Judging of the folders containing the "Along The Trail" leaflets was made on a previously announced basis. A committee of Brooks Bird Club members were the judges whose work was "cut out" for them. It was necessary to take each of the 123 completed folders and study them for individual interest, coloring of birds, identification, nature article, etc. In order to do this properly each item in this schedule was considered separately, the entire lot of folders being judged on one basis at a time. This meant that the judges were required to go through the completed entries at least four times and many were reviewed more often than that. Another 140 completed their folders but did not compete for any awards.

According to the pre-announced schedule of points on which the judges based their decisions, it was necessary that a minimum of forty out of a possible sixty-five points be obtained before any award could be made. The judges adhered strictly to this program with the result that but twenty-nine awards were made. Leaders of adolescents who were consulted on this point declared that there should be no allowances made other than those outlined in the original point schedule. The judges were so pleased with not only the number of returns but the apparent excellence of much of the work that they were tempted to ask permission to be lenient in judging the entries.

The awards consisted of an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" certificate, the variations in the judging being shown by colored stars. The certificate designed and executed by The Brooks Bird Club members was prepared on the mimeograph machine, the coloring, signatures, contestants' names all being filled in by hand. The completed work was very attractive, as was indicated by the smiles of appreciation on the faces of those whose work was deemed sufficiently satisfactory to receive the award.

Hand-prepared certificates were awarded to the outstanding leaders and to the outstanding club as well. Three one-year subscriptions to THE REDSTART were awarded the outstanding girl, boy, and club.

Previous to the Nature Field Day, a series of six Sunday afternoon field trips were conducted by various Brooks Bird Club leaders throughout Brooke County. These were well attended by members of "Along the Trail Club" and some of their friends. The leaders on these walks attempted to work into their discussions as much as possible of the material that had been presented in the publications and to continue the interest that had already been aroused.

Not only was the reaction of the members to the program of much surprise to those who sponsored it, but the reports received of the interest of adults working with children indicated that the work had received much favorable mention outside the immediate community where it had been carried on.

A tribute should be paid to Mary Kay and Charles Conrad for the contribution of many excellent ideas to their basic plan as well as their supervision of the entire program. Compliments should also be given to the many active members of The Brooks Bird Club whose unflagging desire to pass on to others the benefits of their training gave them the will to devote their time and energies to the preparation of all the issues of "Along the Trail." Theirs was the job of composing, editing, and mimeographing not only the bird drawings and descriptions but the informal articles and questions on the subjects of birds. The great amount of time that was spent on the careful coloring of the leaders' copies is a splendid compliment to their abilities and to their willingness to work.

To Club leaders and teachers of elementary schools everywhere, The Brooks Bird Club offers this program not only for the instruction of youth on the subject of bird study but for their consideration for working the methods into other types of programs as well.

Samples of "Along the Trail" can be obtained from the Club headquarters by anyone interested. Additional data of this use by teachers of the above outlined publications can be obtained through the Club. Those desiring information can be assured of the complete cooperation of all the active members of the Club.

-- 423 Warwood Avenue  
Wheeling, W. Va.

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GENERAL NOTES

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Huntington Bird Club Organized:

The new Huntington (W. Va.) Bird Club has organized and will begin its first official year May 1, 1941, when dues become collectable for the ensuing twelve-month. Officers of the club are N. Bayard Green, president; Kendall Webb, vice-president; Miss Rachael Wilson, secretary; Edward Seiber, field secretary; and Dr. Frank Gilbert, treasurer. All are Huntingtonians with the exception of Seiber whose home is in Buffalo, New York, and who is a senior at Marshall College Huntington. Green and Gilbert are members of the Marshall faculty. In this connection it is interesting to note that Green is an outstanding herpetologist and Gilbert is a well-known botanist.

-- J. W. Handlan

Migration Dates for Birds of Central Ohio:

a 14-page mimeographed report of "Migration Dates for the Birds of Central Ohio" (Release no 159) has been published by the Ohio Wildlife Research Station at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, compiled by Donald J. Borrer of the Department of Zoology and Entomology at OSU and instructor of undergraduate ornithology courses.

The report is based primarily, upon the records of various members of The Wheaton Club. Lawrence E. Hicks distributed some copies to members of the Pittsburgh Audubon Society and the Brooks Bird Club during the "spring round-up" at Pymatuning Reservoir April 5-6, 1941.

Two hundred and ninety-nine species and sub-species are listed for Central Ohio and an additional 71 are given as having been recorded elsewhere in the state to bring the total list of species and sub-species of birds for Ohio to 369.

--J. H. O.

Spring Field Trips:

Field trips, primarily for the study and observation of migrating species of birds are already in progress and will continue throughout the months of April, May and June on each Sunday morning. The members meet at the club-rooms at 113 Edgewood Street before "scattering" to cover the desired territories. Corresponding members and friends are always welcome. Various out-of-town field trips are planned as well.

--J. H. O.

No West Virginia State Bird:

The readers of THE REDSTART will recall that the Senate of the State of West Virginia favored a resolution to consider the Tufted Titmouse as the state bird. The House of Delegates did not concur - so there is no state bird.

--J. H. O.

Dartmouth Natural History Club:

The Editor has received, from time to time, the publication Dartmouth Natural History Club Notes of that organization and several of its papers and Annual Reports. Through correspondence with Richard "Dick" Weaver of that club and associated with the Dartmouth College, an exchange of journals and publications will continue.

--J. H. O.

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1941 BROOKS BIRD CLUB FORAY

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The Brooks Bird Club invites its members to participate in another one-week ornithological foray to be held June 14-22 inclusive with headquarters at Lost River State Park in Hardy County, West Virginia.

John W. Handlan wrote in March of 1940: "Cabins in the park, where members will live, are equipped with electric lights, running water and shower baths, comfortable spring beds, lounges and other furniture. Bed linens and blankets are provided as is fuel for cooking and heating....The executive Committee (of the Brooks Bird Club - Ed.) will do its best to assist those without their own means of transportation to secure a "ride" to and from the park, but cannot assume responsibility for this transportation. Occupants of each car will arrange with the car owners the matter of sharing costs of transportation."

Wrote Olsen in August 1940: "At Lost River Park, we found ourselves in a preserve of more than 3500 acres, of which less than 100 acres are "developed" to permit building of cabins, a swimming pool, playground, tennis courts, etc. The park is a semi-wilderness area, with its remote sections made comparatively easy of access by bridle paths and foot-trails. This area offered elevations which ranged from 1,800 feet above sea level to 3,200 feet at the highest point in the park.

"The park area is generally mountainous and rugged and is covered with a mixed deciduous and coniferous growth with exceptionally heavy undergrowth of Laurél in most sections. Occasional rocky, barren cliffs and steep declivities occur. A few magnificent Hemlocks and White Pines give some idea of the type of timber which once must have occupied a section of this great area. Forest fires have not touched the park since its acquisition by the State in 1934, but previous to that time a number of damaging fires occurred, the scars now covered by the rapid growth which ordinarily succeeds such disasters.

"Magnificent views from lookout points within the park, the courtesy and the consideration of Andrew Eye, Park Custodian and George Flouer, his assistant, and the novelty of urban comforts and facilities in a wild, mountain section all played a part in making bird study and other "naturizing" in this area a marvelous experience."

George Arner's now celebrated lines: "I want to thank every one of you for helping me to spend the finest week of my life -- so far. I say, so far, because I intend to return next year" present the picture adequately. The

week was a success - ornithologically and socially -- and members are urged to send in their reservations early for this year's foray, only a limited number of persons can be accomodated. Send reservations, and requests for information to the Brooks Bird Club, 113 Edgewood St., Wheeling, W. Va.

Taken from the Brooks Bird Club 1941 Foray Announcement:

The 1941 Foray of the Brooks Bird Club will be held at Lost River State Park from June 14-21, 1941. This will be a repetition of the now famous camp held at the same place last year. Sponsored by the Brooks Bird Club for members only, the Foray is intended to offer to a small number of individuals an opportunity to spend a week in pleasant surroundings and good company while studying the plants and the animals of the mid-Appalachian region.

Lost River State Park is located in Hardy County, W. Va. with an area of 3,500 acres. It is just as wild and free as when George Washington lived in nearby Virginia. Thickets of smaller trees and shrubs and great forests harbor an abundance of wild life that can hardly be equalled anywhere else in the country. It is an ideal place to study and enjoy the our-of-doors. Yet carved from this wilderness is the camp area with its comfortable cabins and winding roadways. It's a wonderful place to spend a week.

Cost of the week in the Park will be sixteen (\$16.00) dollars per person. Two dollars (\$2.00) of this must accompany the application. The balance of fourteen (\$14.00) dollars is to be paid on entrance to the Park. The registration fee cannot be refunded as it is used to reserve the cabins. The amounts include cabins, bedding, meals, etc.

Reservations must be sent immediately. We have promised the State Park authorities a list of the names of the members of the 1941 Foray in advance.

Campers must be members of the Brooks Bird Club, twenty-one years of age or over, in good health. As this is a cooperative affair, the Club hereby disclaims any responsibility for the individuals.

Transportation will be a problem for the individual. Those having cars should get in touch with President George Breiding, 487 National Road, Wheeling, West Virginia. Arrangements will be made to fill the cars with passengers. The costs of such transportation will be adjusted by the passengers with the drivers thus reducing the cost of bringing cars.

Equipment to bring will depend entirely upon the tastes and the hobbies of the individual. Do not bring bedclothes, bed ticks or towels; these things are furnished by the Park. Bring clothing suitable for the out-of-doors and be sure to be prepared for some rainy weather. Flashlights, notebooks, and binoculars are suggested.

Food is an important item in the success of any venture of this sort. The food that Director Conrad buys is the best. And when Chef Cromes prepares it --!! The quantity is sufficient to fill the hungriest camper, and some of the campers will be plenty hungry.

Campfires are features of the Foray. At the Lost River State Park, we will hold a big campfire every night, each one under a different leader and each leader with plenty of good ideas. At campfires (or at any other time) someone may start a song that swells as other voices join in. So when you come to the Foray, you will hear plenty of singing. Many of the songs will be original parodies written by and for Brooks Bird Club members.

Leisure time will include every minute that the camp is in operation. Opportunities will be presented for nature study and recreation yet no one will be required to take part in any activity. As the camp will be equipped with all the necessary conveniences, there will be no work for the campers to do. The cook and his helpers will take care of the meals permitting the campers to devote all their time to doing just what they want to do.

Highlights of the week will include a series of walks and discussions conducted by the group leaders. The general subject will be the ecology of Lost River State Park. During the discussions each group leader will offer his observations and the entire conversations will give a clear picture of the habitat areas in the territory. Campers will be invited to contribute notes and questions to expand the conversations.

In no respect can this be considered a school, yet those who attended the 1940 Foray agreed that the methods used were incomparable for anyone who wanted to learn more of the out-of-doors. The plan outlined is very simple. No instructors are used. Instead, those who have had some training or who have specialized in some line of biology are designated as group leaders. These leaders conduct field trips and lead discussions for those who want help. No dry text books are used but there will be many reference books available for use by the campers. Each member will be requested to review the report for the 1940 Foray since the work will be based upon that publication.

The 1941 Foray will be a camp that will enrich the life of everyone who attends. To quote Director Conrad: "A camp where there is a warm, friendly feeling of companionship, with songs all its own, sung in a way that makes you want to sing on and on; a camp where a cheerful campfire is held every night, conducted by leaders who know how. For the thirty-five members who will be accepted, this will be an experience than can never be duplicated."

THE REDSTART is published monthly by and for the members of the Brooks Bird Club. Corresponding membership may be obtained upon payment of \$1.00 which includes a twelve-month subscription to THE REDSTART. Members are invited to send in for publication, pertinent field notes. These are subject only to editing to insure the greatest possible accuracy and consistency with editorial policy. Memberships, field notes and correspondence should be addressed to the Brooks Bird Club, 113 Edgewood Street, Wheeling, West Virginia.