



The Redstart

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Edited by Russell West

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THE 1942 FORAY
by
Russell West

After two Forays in Lost River State Park in Hardy County, West Virginia, both of them completely satisfactory and successful, it was with some reluctance that Holly River State Park was selected for the 1942 expedition. Bruce Griffith, the superintendent of State Parks, and Harold Fisher, custodian, both offered their complete cooperation, should we decide to vary our program and visit another state park. We decided to accept the invitation as the park was located in Webster County, which to us was almost entirely virgin territory for the study of life forms.

As conditions were very unsettled and rumors were current regarding the possibilities of obtaining satisfactory transportation, announcement of the 1942 Foray was withheld as long as possible. Even in May, the Executive Committee of the Bird Club could not be sure that a successful program and camp could be held. A list of names were drawn up representing the possibilities and it was decided that there were twenty who might attend. Counting only those who were sure of being present gave a list of but twelve members. It was with this number as a nucleus and the hope that a few additional members would attend that the first plans were announced for the Foray. It was on this basis that preparations were made and rates and costs determined. It was not at all displeasing to find that a total of forty-two members attended the Foray, most of them being in the Park during the entire week.

The weather from June-13-20 could not be considered ideal, the only day when much rain did not fall was on Friday. The weather, of course, did detract from some of the activities, but as most of the members had had considerable camping experience much work was done in the attempt to make a brief biological survey of Holly River State Park.

There are many members of the Brooks Bird Club who are not bird students but have their own preferences in the study of life forms. There are others who are good bird students, but in addition have either a specialized or a smattering of knowledge of other forms. The only thing which is lacking from our Forays and eliminates the possibility of a fairly complete biotic report is the assistance of a trained geologist.

Rather than have each individual work entirely on his line, we have formulated a plan of basing the week's study on the ecology of the area. Each day during the week, time is set aside and a specific habitat selected for discussion. During these hours each specialist and everyone else with any observations to make is permitted to name the life forms to be found in such a habitat and their understanding of the reason why these forms are to be found. This method gives a very complete word picture of an area and tends to spread the interests of one individual over the entire group.

It seems, however, that the work to be accomplished during the Foray is merely an excuse for the conduct of the week's camp. The gathering together of many individuals of various ages and both sexes, all with an intense interest in the out of doors seems to be the principal drawing card. It is our belief, also, that the diversified interests and talents of the members of the Brooks Bird Club makes the Foray attractive to many people.

The meals which are prepared under the supervision of Charles Conrad, the Foray director, can hardly be matched in any other camp. Besides, his executive ability and complete concentration in promoting a successful Foray could not be reproduced in any other individual.

Another factor which must have a great deal to do with the success of the Forays is the plan adopted for leadership. Every camper pays his full fee for the week. Every camper has the privilege of spending the week as he pleases - every camper has the opportunity of devoting time and effort to his particular line of endeavor. When one desires to study or collect in the field the life forms which interest him particularly, he always finds available a number of interested helpers. These people who follow the specialist quite naturally learn a great deal, yet at no time is the leader hampered by being required to conduct formal field trips or classes unless he is so inclined.

The out of doors and the study of natural objects must induce to a considerable extent a complete satisfaction in living in an individual. This is exemplified during the Forays by the singing. Before and after each meal, spontaneous group singing is the custom. At campfires it is always a feature, but after the day's work is finished and the group gravitates to one of the cabins, then the singing really begins. But no matter how late the group may be up, they are always out the next morning ready for another full day in the field.

We offer a salute and our thanks to the State Conservation Commission, the Division of State Parks and to the Staff of Holly River State Park. Their complete cooperation and their interest in our endeavors would be flattering if we did not know that they were following their usual policies. While we go into the state parks as a group, we know that individuals and smaller groups will receive the same fine and courteous cooperation. We recommend to everyone

the state parks of West Virginia. And we hope that conditions in 1943 will permit us to continue our Forays into these state parks.

—113 Edgewood Street
Wheeling, West Virginia

GENERAL NOTES

Haller's Library Loaned to the Club:

When Karl (Mike) Haller, the former editor of this publication was putting his personal affairs in shape prior to induction into the U. S. Army, he came to the problem of his books. He decided to sell the more technical and valuable volumes but still he had to decide what to do with the more popular works on birds, mammals and other subjects. After talking it over with the executive committee, he offered the remaining books to the Brooks Bird Club as a loan while he was in the service. The one stipulation he made was that the volumes be available to the Club members only in their clubroom. The executive committee gratefully acknowledges this loan and accepts the responsibility for "the duration".

—Eva Hayes, Secretary
Morningside
Wheeling, West Virginia

West Virginia Conservation:

The August issue (Vol. VI, No. 5) of West Virginia Conservation magazine has two articles of particular interest to members of the Brooks Bird Club. The first is a brief account, accompanied by a page of pictures, of the Club's 1942 Foray in Holly River State Park. The second article is a continuation of M. G. Brooks' "Birds of Cooper's Rock Region". Single copies of this publication may be obtained without charge by addressing the Brooks Bird Club. As the annual subscription price is but fifty cents, it is suggested that this is an excellent, inexpensive publication. Subscriptions should be mailed to Conservation Commission of West Virginia, Dept. of Education, Charleston, W. Va.

—Editor

Annual Meeting:

The tenth annual meeting of the Brooks Bird Club will be held on Friday evening, September 25, 1942. On this date the retiring officers will present their reports on the activities of the year. This will be followed by the election of new officers including members of the Executive Committee. While only active members have the privilege of voting, corresponding members in attendance always

receive careful consideration to any recommendations or suggestions that they may present.

War conditions preclude the possibility of any glowing anticipations for the future. Of one thing we can be sure, the members of the Brooks Bird Club will continue their friendships and contacts no matter where they may be. In fact, the influence of the bird club through its "travelling" members in the armed forces, is being felt throughout the world. The Correspondents Column in THE REDSTART will prove that the binding ties of comradeship are not only continuing, but that others are being influenced by the attitude of bird club members.

The September meeting then, is of particular importance, for it will forecast, at least by inference, the possibilities of the continuation of the Brooks Bird Club ideals and activities.

—Eva Hayes, Secretary

Reunion for 1942:

Once again the leaves begin to change color and the air to take on snap that makes a wood fire welcome in the evenings. Once again it is time for the Brooks Bird Club to hold their annual reunion. But this time additional interest is being added for it is also to be a celebration of the tenth birthday of the Brooks Bird Club.

On September 25, 1942 the activities for the tenth year terminate. One month later, on October 31, 1942, during the annual reunion, the active and the corresponding members will gather together at the Jesters Club on Big Wheeling Creek near Wheeling, West Virginia. Then the ten candles will burn! The active members will give thanks to the visitors for the grand cooperation and backing during all of the years. And the corresponding members will express their appreciation to the Wheeling folks for formulating and carrying out ten consecutive annual programs. It will be a reunion!

Chairman Charles Conrad has already mailed out postcards which carry the preliminary notice of the date and a promise of a wonderful time. Reunions in the past have been remembered by all attendants. These memories carry a forecast of an active and interesting twenty-four program on October 31. No hint of the plans is being let out by the Executive Committee. As usual, when things happen at a reunion, they are a complete surprise to the visitors (Warning!).

Many of the members of the Brooks Bird Club are in the armed services and will not be able to attend. Many of them have already expressed the request that they be considered as being present. They will have a good reason for missing the event. It is hoped that very few other members find it necessary to send their regrets for they will be passing by one big grand reunion.

—Editor

FIELD NOTES

Behavior of Ruffed Grouse:

Hearing the "thunder" of the Ruffed Grouse when it is flushed suddenly in the forest could thrill almost anyone. In company with "Si" Wills, John Handlan and a representative of radio station WCHS, the writer was in a car going up the trail leading to the Bailey Lookout Tower in Watoga State Park in Preston County, West Virginia on August 28, 1942. Topping a ridge, the driver called our attention to two birds along the rutted road. Desiring to have the radio man hear the noise caused by the wings of the flushed bird, Wills blew the auto horn - the Ruffed Grouse stared at the car. Wills pounded the side of the car - and the bird walked to the side of the road. Undaunted, the driver got out of the car and threw sticks and stones at the Grouse - they ran a few yards to more dense cover and further efforts to flush them failed miserably. There was no doubt that these two birds were thoroughly wild, in fact it is possible that they had never before seen a human being. Yet their disdainful attitude and their total lack of fear was a surprise (as well as a disappointment) to us.

— Russell West
113 Edgewood Street
Wheeling, W. Va.

Missing Birds:

Even a brief acquaintance with the birds of a particular area induces the student to the belief that it is possible to anticipate individuals of a certain species in certain habitats. And this is true, but apparently not to the extent that students seem to believe.

Consider extreme cases of several birds that winter within the area near Wheeling, West Virginia. During some winters, it is possible to find small flocks of Robins in many of the more protected hollows. Yet during other winters, these birds are almost entirely absent. In the winter of 1940-41 in one section of Ohio County, Towhees were reported in comparatively large numbers.

Now consider further several summer residents of this or nearby areas. The Blue Jay is common the western portion of Belmont County, Ohio; in the eastern part of the county, these birds are infrequent and on this side of the Ohio River, (in Ohio County, W. Va.) the finding of a Blue Jay is an occasion for considerable comment and discussion. Here in Ohio County, W. Va. the Kentucky Warbler and the Carolina Wren are frequent nesting birds. During the summer their songs are typical of the narrow valleys in the hills. Yet not many miles away in any direction, these birds, if not entirely absent are rare. This, despite the fact that the countryside seems as typical of the required habitat for Kentucky Warblers and Carolina Wrens as that in the local area.

What are the variations that induce birds to accept certain habitats and yet nearby areas of the same apparent quality do not carry any birds of the same

species? Again, why is it that certain birds will accept an area for a few years and then desert it for other years? There must be some recognizable factors that cause these changes. Yet what they are, no one seems to understand. Further, few ornithologists seem to have any interest in the matter.

Most game commissions have "technicians" who are engaged in the study of the habitat requirements of game animals and they are doing fine jobs as is evidenced by the amount of game that is taken by hunters every year.

On the other hand there are many professional and thousands of amateur ornithologists who completely ignore the possibilities of such studies in connection with species that are of economic or aesthetic value. Most of the professionals are devoted to laboratory work. The amateurs spend most of their time preparing daily lists of birds "observed" (by observed is simply meant that they were seen long enough to be identified and the probability is that many of these identifications are incorrect). The work of both groups is of some value but not enough to be a proper return for the time and effort expended.

The acquaintanceship of the amateurs with their local habitat areas and the work of the professionals offer a sound base for a complete study of the problems suggested in this paper. Only one thing is necessary. That is the inducement to do the job. Probably, also, the work requires the efforts of a champion, someone with a national reputation who is willing to devote time to the direction of the project and the accumulation of data. There is little doubt that the work would prove to be of value not only in regard to the direct results, but as usual when a number of interested people are devoted to a work, the by-products are of as much, or more value, than the achievement of the original destination.

—Editor

Richard R. McAdam, Sgt. Tech.

After being flown from his location at Hunter Field, Savannah, Ga., to Charleston, South Carolina for an emergency operation, Richard R. McAdam, Sgt. Tech., died in the Stark General Hospital on September 9, 1942. His body was returned to Wheeling for burial. Many who have visited Oglebay Park during the past several years will remember "Dick". He was active in out of doors work even during his years in high school. His particular interest was in reptiles and it is probable that had he received training in this work, he might have become famous. Sgt. McAdam was a local member of the Brooks Bird Club. Just before leaving for active service, he accompanied Grover Crawford and a troop of Boy Scouts on a week's camping trip to the camp grounds at Terra Alta.

CORRESPONDENTS

Casd. Walter Ammon, Fort Belvoir, Va.:

We start at 5:30 A.M. have ten minutes to fall out, have till 6:10 to clean up the barracks, beds, etc. and then eat. After this we have breakfast, police up area, physical exercise till about 7:45 when we fall out for classes. They are from 8:00 till 12:00 - lunch - classes 12:30 to 4:30, supper 5:00 and then study period from 7:00 to 9:00 and lights out at 10:30. All of the free time in between we can squander as we want as long as our lockers are ready for continual inspection, shoes shined, rifles clean, bayonettes clean, etc. Everywhere you go it's at exaggerated attention and marching, or at double time (regular old West Point stuff, you know).

Some of the subjects we have are mapping, aerial photography, sketching, demolition, organization, command, physical training, fired bridges, flotaing bridges, assault (however you spell it) boats, tools and equipment - and others that we haven't gotten to yet.

Each day we have some job in commanding the rest of the Company as the officers go along only to keep up a steady stream of yelling to do this and that in at least ten different ways.

Well, I've tried to tell you something about what I've been doing so let me in on a little more of the Wheeling activities.

Pvt. Paul West, Glendale, Calif.:

It is a wonderful morning in California, the sun is shining and the bird is singing. I think there is only one or two birds in this part of the country. Wheeling is a long way from here, but I feel like it is just a few miles. Why? Because I get a letter or two every day telling me about the goings-on. Time has been going so fast because we are kept busy. It seems like we have been in only a couple of weeks. I have been receiving THE REDSTARTS which you send and have received a letter or two from the club. You don't know how welcome mail is here in camp. It sure is grand to have your name called out at mail call and if you get more than one letter, it makes you feel good to take the envious razzing of the other boys.

Raymond Dwight Koon, C. M. 2/C, Dutch Harbor, Alaska:

I was pleasantly surprised a few days ago to receive the group letter from the club. Many happy thoughts ran through my mind while reading it. I remembered the grand times at Terra Alta and last year's Foray. I look forward to the time when I may return and see you all again. I am anxiously waiting a detailed description of this year's Foray and all of the other club activities. Keep writing and letting me know what you are all doing. I'll be with you in my thoughts wherever you go.

Ensign Theodore Frankenberg, Chicago, Ill.:

We seem to have about seven and one-quarter minutes to ourselves each day and after you make the bed and shine your shoes, you can do just as you please with the remainder of the time. That is, providing that you don't need the time to study lessons. Therefore, people don't get very long or frequent letters from the Navy's young hopefuls who are stationed here. If I'd ever concentrated on birds for a month as we do on our lessons here, I would be giving lectures to Chuck and Maurice. We have musters for meals, muster for class formations and several other things. Someone just cracked, "Muster, can you spare a dime!" so you see I am bound to be reminded of the gang. To get a little extra "light" on celestial navigation, I went down to the Adler Planetarium here on Saturday. Wish now that I'd paid more attention to Ammon, instead of memorizing Handlan's story about Grandpappy, Cromes and Squint-eye.

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To The Readers:

We've been getting letters from our boys in the armed forces - both direct to the Club and to individuals. You can see in reading the extracts of these letters that we've been including in THE REDSTART that the boys are anxious to keep in touch with the gang back home. Won't you all write to them? -- you may say that you don't know all of them personally - but you are interested in birds and in the out of doors - and so are they and a one-page letter could be filled in no time at all.

These boys are doing a good job - but they want to know that we understand that they're doing a good job - and we can tell them so in postcards and in letters. It's up to us to tell them. We're proud of them - just as proud as punch - and writing them is the one SURE way we have of letting them know. So, let's all get busy and write!

—Jean E. Semancik
Corresponding Secretary

THE REDSTART is published monthly by and for the members of the Brooks Bird Club. A corresponding membership may be obtained upon payment of one dollar which includes a twelve-month subscription to THE REDSTART. All members are permitted to contribute field notes for publication.

The Brooks Bird Club
Wheeling, W. Va.