



The Redstart

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BIRDS OF CAMP SUMMERS

by

I. B. Boggs

Camp Summers is located along the left bank of the Greenbrier River, ten miles southeast of Hinton, county seat of Summers County. This 20-acre tract of land, at the lower end of a small valley, has an approximate elevation of 1400 feet above sea level. The terrain in this area is that of the Appalachian highland—rugged—with hills and narrow valleys which are devoted to general farming. To the north and west of the camp are small farms. To the south and east are wooded hills which rise high above the main camp site.

Generally speaking, this particular situation is not conducive to great numbers of bird species. Neither does it afford adequate food and shelter for a large population of those present. It does appear, though, to offer a fair index to the birds that one would find in the lower altitude sections of the county during the nesting season.

My observations of the birds hereabouts have extended over a period of ten years, usually for a week at a time, during the months of July or early August.

The birds which are listed below have been observed within the camp or on its immediate surroundings. Since they were present during July and August, it is presumed that they are for most part nesting species of this and nearby areas.

Eastern Green Heron, Butorides virescens virescens. Frequently seen following the river's course.

Wood Duck, Aix sponsa. A mother with seven young ones, seen by A. H. Lough during the summer of 1943.

Turkey Vulture, Cathartes aura septentrionalis. Seen on several different occasions, in flight only.

Sharp-Shinned Hawk, Accipiter velox. A chance one, frequenting the woodland borders.

Cooper's Hawk, Accipiter cooperi. Occasional

Red-Tailed Hawk, Buteo borealis. Rarely seen.

Sparrow Hawk, Falco sparverius. Not common about camp.

Bob-White, Colinus virginianus. Fairly common.

Killdeer, Oxyechus vociferus vociferus. Quite common—as many as 30 seen in camp and in a bordering field where they nested each summer. Some young were seen.

Spotted Sandpiper, Actitis macularia. Always present along the river shores.

Mourning Dove, Zenaidura macroura. Never plentiful, but seen fairly regularly.

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, Coccyzus americanus americanus. An occasional bird seen among the trees bordering the river.

Screech Owl, Otus asio. Often heard at night time.

Barred Owl, Strix varia. Heard twice only near the camp.

Eastern Whip-poor-will, Antrostomus vociferus vociferus. Not often heard.

Chimney Swift, Chaeturia pelagica. Seen almost daily in small numbers.

Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, Archilochus colubris. Seen occasionally.

Eastern Belted Kingfisher, Megaceryle alcyon alcyon. Frequently seen and heard

Flicker, Colaptes auratus. Always a few about camp.

Pileated Woodpecker, Geophloeus pileatus. Rarely seen or heard.

Hairy Woodpecker, Dryobates villosus. A few observed in the woodland bordering the camp.

Downy Woodpecker, Dryobates pubescens. The most common species of woodpecker in this locality.

Eastern Kingbird, Tyrannus tyrannus. Not more than a pair or two seen during any summer.

Crested Flycatcher, Myiarchus crinitus. Usually a pair on the wooded hillside.

Eastern Phoebe, Sayornis phoebe. Nested about camp buildings and nearby rock shelves along the roadside.

Acadian Flycatcher, Empidonax virescens. Found along a small stream which flowed from the border woodland, usually a single pair.

Eastern Wood Pewee, Myiochanes virens. Common.

Rough-Winged Swallow, Stelgidopteryx ruficollis serripennis. Commonly seen flying over camp.

Barn Swallow, Hirundo erythrogaster. Infrequent visitor in camp.

Purple Martin, Progne subis subis. Nested on nearby farm. Often seen over camp.

Crow, Corvus brachyrhynchos. Observed frequently.

Carolina Chickadee, Penthestes carolinensis. Present but not numerous.

Tufted Titmouse, Baeolophus bicolor. More numerous than the chickadee.

White-Breasted Nuthatch, Sitta carolinensis. Often seen within the camp bounds

Carolina Wren, Thryothorus ludovicianus. The only wren observed hereabouts.

Catbird, Dumetella carolinensis. Common.

Brown Thrasher, Toxostoma rufum. Observed, but not common.

Robin, Turdus migratorius. Not numerous.

Wood Thrush, Hylocichla mustelina. Present but not plentiful.

Eastern Bluebird, Sialia sialis sialis. Fairly common.

Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Polioptila caerulea caerulea. Nested within camp bounds

Starling, Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris. Not common. A few on adjoining farm.

Red-Eyed Vireo, Vireo olivaceus. Always singing his monotonous song.

Yellow-Throated Vireo, Vireo flavifrons. Occasionally present.

Eastern Warbling Vireo, Vireo gilvus gilvus. Present but less numerous than the Red-eyed.

Black and White Warbler, Mniotilta varia. Frequents the wooded area.

Parula Warbler, Compothlypis americana. An occasional one singing about camp.

Eastern Yellow Warbler, Dendroica aestiva aestiva. Present in small numbers each summer.

Cerulean Warbler, Dendroica cerulea. Usually one or two males singing about camp.

Louisiana Water-Thrush, Seiurus motacilla. Found along the river and the smaller stream within camp.

Kentucky Warbler, Oporornis formosus. One in the hollow bordering camp grounds.

Yellow-Breasted Chat, Icteria virens virens. Could be heard in fields across the river from camp.

English Sparrow, Passer domesticus domesticus. A few seen within camp, more on adjoining farms.

Meadowlark, Sturnella magna. Observed on adjoining farm.

Red-Wing, Agelaius phoeniceus. On farm adjoining camp grounds.

Orchard Oriole, Icterus spurius. On bordering farm.

Baltimore Oriole, Icterus galbula. Infrequently seen among river-bordering trees.

Grackle (sp). Infrequently seen.

Cowbird, Molothrus ater. Found on dairy farm adjoining camp.

Scarlet Tanager, Piranga erythromelas. Uncommon within camp. Scarce in neighborhood.

Cardinal, Richmondia cardinalis. Fairly common.

Indigo Bunting, Passerina cyanea. Common.

Eastern Goldfinch, Spinus tristis tristis. A few present within camp.

Towhee, Pipilo erythrophthalmus. Present but in small numbers.

Vesper Sparrow, Poocetes gramineus. Seen each summer along the highway and within the camp area.

Eastern Chipping Sparrow, Spizella passerina passerina. Fairly common.

Field Sparrow, Spizella pusilla. Fairly common.

Song Sparrow, Melospiza melodia. Common.

— Oglebay Hall
Morgantown, W. Va.

FIELD NOTES

Swans Over Cleveland

Some of the thousands of football fans in the Municipal Stadium in Cleveland on November 18, 1944 gaped upward, forgetting for the moment the football game being played on the field below them, as strange noises came from the sky. Overhead in a nearly perfect and enormous "V" many large birds swept over the stadium, calling back and forth to each other. Nearly all of the observers supposed the birds to be geese. As the birds went over the big stadium, the roars of the crowd seemed to disturb them somewhat, as they lost their formation at the vertex of the "V". In a few minutes they passed over Shaw Stadium, in East Cleveland, and before they passed out of sight, had re-formed into a gigantic wedge in the sky.

About four miles to the southeast, a little later, the writer heard a sound like the distant baying of dogs, but soon realized that the sounds were coming from the sky. Using a field glass, I soon noticed the large size and the pure white color of the birds, and knew them to be Whistling Swans, Cygnus columbianus. The calls were not as loud as those of Canada geese, but were loud enough that I heard the birds before I saw them. As they went overhead in an almost perfect "V", I counted 82 birds in the left side of the wedge. Since the sides of the "V" were nearly equal and only 7 or 8 birds were inside the formation, there were about 160 to 170 birds in this one flock. This was the largest group of swans that it has been my pleasure to see in flight, and it certainly was a grand sight. The time of day was about 2:30 P.M.

About 4 o'clock, I heard more swans coming and this time estimated there were about 100 birds in a flock about a half mile south of the line of flight of the previous flock. This flock did not maintain such a perfect wedge.

The flight of both flocks was in a southeast direction, and it is possible that they were on their way to the wintering grounds which stretch southward from the Chesapeake Bay region to the Carolinas.

Man has but recently learned that in group flying, a "V" formation is practically mandatory, but our waterfowl have known this for ages. Here's hoping that our conservation efforts and game laws will insure, to all posterity, the marvelous sight of waterfowl "V's" across the skies of America.

-- M. B. Skaggs
The Kirtland Bird Club
Cleveland, Ohio

Death of a Downy Woodpecker Caused by a Digestive Disorder

On July 3, 1943, a female downy woodpecker, Dryobates pubescens was found standing on a doorstep of McGilvrey Hall on the campus of Kent State University. The bird made no attempt to escape when it was picked up and examined. No

bones were broken and no injury was apparent except for a small bald patch at the back of the head. Very likely it had suffered pecking from other birds and had been driven out of the woods. As it made no effort to fly, it was placed in a cage with food and water until the following day. At that time, it was banded and liberated, but refused to fly. Repeated efforts to induce the bird to fly failed. When released from elevations above ground it could not maintain flight but simply glided to the ground. The bird was then returned to the cage. On July 5, it made several short flights about the animal room where it was released but it was obviously a sick bird and was returned to its cage. On the following day it died. A post-mortem examination disclosed the liver to be diseased, and the horny lining of the gizzard, which was empty, was green in color. Death was attributed to digestive disorders and starvation.

— Ralph W. Dexter
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio

THE FORTHCOMING WEST VIRGINIA CHECK-LIST

West Virginia bird students will be interested to know that the long-delayed state check-list on which the Editor, with much help, has been laboring, has at last gone to press, with the first galley proof having been read.

The check-list will be published as a bulletin of the West Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, and will be for free distribution. It contains a foreword by Dr. George Miksch Sutton, and the reproduction of an original drawing of the northern crested flycatcher done by Louis Agassiz Fuertes for a bulletin written by the Editor's father, Fred E. Brooks, in 1907.

The main list contains 310 species and races now known to occur in West Virginia together with a list of hypothetical species. For some of the more interesting species, county breeding records have been included. It is hoped that the bulletin will appear early in 1945.

— M.G.B.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

THE REDSTART will, as in past years, be glad to have for publication the tabulated results of bird counts made throughout the tri-state area, whether or not these have been made in accordance with the regulations of The Audubon Magazine. These will be published in the January REDSTART, and it is hoped that they may give a fairly adequate picture of the winter bird population in our territory.

— M.G.B.