

COPY

T H E R E D S T A R T

Published Monthly by the Brooks Bird Club
Oglebay Park, Wheeling, W. Va.

VOL. 1, No. 9

Edited by Tom Shields

September 1934

ANNUAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 28.

The annual meeting of the Brooks Bird Club will be held at Oglebay Park Camp on September 28, 1934 at 8 P. M. Reports of officers and committees and election of officers for the ensuing year will be regular features. Announcement of the result of the field project contest, reading of the winning paper, and presentation of an award to the winner will also occur. Visitors are welcome.

----- J. W. Handlan

SKAGGS TO LEAD FIELD TRIP TO NILES

M. B. Skaggs, honorary member of the Brooks Bird Club, will lead the Cleveland Bird Club on a field trip to Niles, Ohio on September 16, 1934. Mr. Skaggs has invited members of the Brooks Bird Club to join this group and several have planned to take advantage of this opportunity to study water birds. Among these are Sarah Hine, Victor Kehrer and Tom Shields.

The Niles and Youngstown district contains several large lakes and shore and water birds are found there in considerable numbers. A trip to this region is worth while for any bird student. Any members of the Brooks Bird Club who desire to go on this trip, should communicate with:--

Tom Shields,
Brooks Bird Club,
Oglebay Park, Wheeling, W. Va.

ATTENTION, CORRESPONDING MEMBERS!

Corresponding Members are especially invited to attend the second annual meeting of the Brooks Bird Club at Oglebay Park on the night of September 28, 1934. The date, which falls on Friday, immediately precedes the Saturday and Sunday to be devoted to the annual Nature

School Reunion at Oglebay Park. This reunion is open to all corresponding members of the Brooks Bird Club.

Accommodations for visitors to the reunion will not be available until Saturday afternoon, September 29. Bird Club members who arrive in Wheeling on Friday, in time for the Club's annual meeting, will be accommodated in the homes of local active members, until time to register at Oglebay Park on Saturday. There will be no charge whatsoever for accommodations available in the homes of local members.

Corresponding Members who wish to take advantage of this opportunity to attend the annual meeting are requested to notify promptly:--

J. W. Handlan, Chairman,
Brooks Bird Club,
Oglebay Park, Wheeling, W. Va.

OUR POLICY REGARDING SUB-SPECIES

There has been much discussion among ornithologists concerning whether or not sight records of sub-specific birds should be published in trinomials. For instance, a number of ornithologists say that an observer who sees a Savannah Sparrow, does not know for certain whether this bird is Passerculus sandwichensis savanna or Passerculus s. labradorius or another sub-specific form, unless the bird be collected. It has been the practice of most ornithological journals to publish trinomials when the author uses them, but, since our publication intends to show only accurate records, it will be our policy not to show trinomials on sight records of sub-species. Instead, we will show such records as "Passerculus s. subsp."

Because of lack of space, scientific names will not be shown in lists which are published in THE REDSTART, but they will be shown in the articles and field notes.

---The Editor.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE REARED BY BIRD STUDENTS

During the second week of July, 1934, Mrs. Simpson of Warwood, Wheeling, found a young Baltimore Oriole, Icterus galbula, in a half-starved condition in her yard. She brought the bird to the Shields household in the hope that we could save its life. We fed it unsweetened custard with a medicine dropper and it revived. We continued this diet, varying it occasionally with mashed hard-boiled egg with milk. Later we fed it what moths and other insects we could find. The bird grew rapidly and soon was able to fly quite well. My mother, Mrs. Lucy Shields, and Mrs. Simpson took care of the young bird and reared it successfully.

This immature Baltimore Oriole became quite tame and would fly to us occasionally. It soon learned to catch its own food. Mrs. Simpson released it on several different days and it flew about in the

tops of the trees near her home during the day, but when dusk came it flew to her door to be put in its cage. One evening it did not return, but early the next morning it was on hand to be put in its cage. When the bird was hungry, it scolded us until we fed it.

The bird had many interesting habits, and we thought it the cutest bird we ever saw. I refused to let the women make a real pet of it for fear that it would not be able to take care of itself later.

On July 16, Mr. A. B. Brooks banded the Baltimore Oriole at the Oglebay Park Government Banding Station (#A 187565) and released it. We have not seen nor heard of the bird since, but hope to someday in the future.

-----Tom Shields

ALBINO SWAMP SPARROW AT TERRA ALTA

On the evening of July 10, 1934 at six P.M., I took a hike into the swamp at the west end of the lake at Terra Alta, W. Va. In a thicket of alder trees, I sighted a flash of white. Upon closer inspection through my binoculars, the flash of white proved to be a totally white bird, obviously an albino of some sort. The high grass and thickets of trees afforded plenty of cover, and I was able to approach to within ten feet of the bird, which proved to be a pure albino with the characteristic "red" eyes and legs. The bird was in the company of Swamp Sparrows, Melospiza georgiana, and its actions and general structure was typical of them.

On July 13, the albino uttered the sharp "peep" characteristic of the Swamp Sparrow. On the dates July 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25, I observed the albino still in the company of the Swamp Sparrows. On July 26, I was rewarded for my efforts by hearing and seeing the albino sing the typical Swamp Sparrow song, which confirmed my suspicions as to the bird's identity.

-----Jim Handlan,
Morgantown, W. Va.

SEVEN PAPERS SUBMITTED IN CONTEST

Mr. Edward Raney, of New Castle, Pa., judge of the field project contest carried out during the past six months by members of the Brooks Bird Club, now has in hand the seven papers submitted in the competition.

Titles submitted by the seven contestants, two of whom are ineligible for first award in the contest, include: "A Study of the Bewick's Wren," "Wood Warblers of the Oglebay Park Region," "A Study of the Savannah Sparrow in West Virginia," "Shore and Water Birds of Brooke, Ohio and Marshall Counties," "Nesting Observations," "The Bird, the Nest and the Egg," and "Bird Nests of Oglebay Park."

The contestants are Miss Polly Alford, Mr. Merit B. Skaggs, of Niles,

Ohio, Mr. George Flouer, Mr. Tom Shields, Mr. Harold Bergner, Mr. Charles Conrad and Mr. J.W. Handlan.

Announcement of the judge's decision is expected at the annual meeting of the Brooks Bird Club on September 28.

---J. W. Handlan, Chairman,
Brooks Bird Club.

NEW MEMBERS

Ten new corresponding members have been added to the roll of the Brooks Bird Club since the August REDSTART was published. These new members are:--

Katherine R. McClure,
Millpoint, W. Va.

Ruth Trimble,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Alston Shields,
McMechen, W. Va.

Mabel Allison,
Aliquippa, Pa. & Ann Arbor,
Michigan.

Dr. A. M. Reese,
Morgantown, W. Va.

George B. Thorpe,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dr. A. J. Dadisman,
Morgantown, W. Va.

Elinore Humphries,
Wilkinsburg, Pa.

Edwin Dowler,
M'dsville & Morgantown, W. Va.

Eloise Winters,
Bridgeport, Ohio.

This makes a total of 20 corresponding members - 11 from West Virginia, 5 from Pennsylvania, and 4 from Ohio.

In addition to the new corresponding members, an active member was added to the club in July. Victor Kehrler of Martins Ferry, Ohio is the new member. We are glad to welcome all of these people to our club and hope they will invite their friends who are interested in birds, to join our group.

---Tom Shields.

ERRORS IN AUGUST REDSTART

Through error, the Niles Bird Club included in the list of Niles summer residents which was published in the August, 1934 issue of THE REDSTART, the Common Loon and Rusty Blackbird.

Maurice Brooks of French Creek, W. Va. called attention to the Rusty Blackbird, while M. B. Skaggs of East Cleveland, Ohio is responsible for the correction on the Common Loon.

Upon investigation it was discovered that these two birds should not have been included in the list. The Niles Bird Club and the Editor

both regret these errors.

-----The Editor

UNUSUAL BIRDS SEEN AT BELMONT HILLS

On August 26 and September 2, 1934, Victor Kehrer and I visited the Belmont Hills Country Club grounds in Belmont County, Ohio. This place is but 13 miles from Wheeling, but we found there four birds which I have never seen in the West Virginia Panhandle, which includes Wheeling. We also found several species which are rare or uncommon in the Panhandle.

We saw a Pigeon Hawk, Falco columbarius subsp., at close range on August 26, as it flew over the lake which is on these grounds. I believe this to be the first record for this species in Belmont County, and for the region as well. This bird has never been recorded in the West Virginia Panhandle.

On the same date, we saw two Cliff Swallows, Petrochelidon albifrons subsp., fly over the lake. This also appears to be a new record for Belmont County. Cliff Swallows are rare migrants in the West Virginia Panhandle.

On August 26, we observed a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Empidonax flaviventris, through 4X glasses at a distance of 10 feet. Although I realize the difficulty in distinguishing between this species and the Acadian Flycatcher, I am sure this bird was a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. It was smaller than an Acadian Flycatcher and had a yellow throat, buffish-yellow breast and yellow belly. It was very similar to the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher collected by Karl Haller at Avalon on May 17, 1934 (THE REDSTART, Vol. 1, No. 6). Apparently the bird was an early fall migrant. Although this species is considered a fairly common migrant in the Panhandle, I believe this to be a new record for Belmont County.

An Osprey, Pandion haliaetus subsp., which we saw at the lake on September 2, has been at this place for a least 6 weeks, according to a fisherman with whom we talked. Victor Kehrer has seen this bird several times during the latter part of August. He also saw an Osprey there in the spring of 1933. While we watched this bird, it dived for a fish and missed its prey. We heard it giving its call several times. The Osprey is a rather rare migrant in the Panhandle.

We saw a Broad-winged Hawk, Buteo platypterus, there on September 2. This is probably a new record for Belmont County, although this species is considered as a common migrant in the W. Va. Panhandle.

Red-headed Woodpeckers, Melanerpes erythrocephalus, which are rare in the Panhandle, are very common at Belmont Hills. We also saw a Turkey Vulture, Cathartes aura subsp., and a few Kingbirds, Tyrannus tyrannus, and these species are uncommon in the Panhandle.

-----Tom Shields.

SIGHT RECORD OF LEAST SANDPIPERS

Several examples of what appeared to be the Least Sandpiper, Pisobia minutilla, were observed at close range at Beech Bottom Swamp, Brooke County, West Virginia, August 26, 1934. The observers were John Handlan, George Flouer, Charles Conrad and the writer. The birds were very tame and fed within 12 to 15 feet of the observers.

The species appears not to have been listed previously for the West Virginia Panhandle.

----Harold Bergner,
Wheeling, W. Va.

SHRIKE SEEN AT OGLEBAY

On September 3, 1934, Miss Polly Alford, John Handlan, Harold Bergner and myself observed a Shrike at Woodside, Oglebay Park. Each person observed this bird several times through high powered glasses. A check-up was made by Handlan, Bergner and myself and we agreed it was a Northern Shrike, Lanius borealis. When first sighted, two birds were seen. This is a West Virginia Panhandle record.

----Charles Conrad,
Wheeling, W. Va.

MOCKINGBIRD IN EASTERN OHIO

On the 23d of August, 1934 I observed a Mockingbird, Minus polyglottos subsp., at the Belmont Hills Country Club, Belmont County, Ohio. The white wing bars were very distinct.

----Victor J. Kehrer, Jr.,
Martins Ferry, Ohio.

VIRGINIA RAIL AT JACKSON'S MILL, LEWIS COUNTY, W. VA.

Most W. Va. bird students, separated as we are from sea and lakes, view with a great degree of interest almost any water or marsh bird which may turn up. I was therefore much pleased to have the opportunity of studying at close range a Virginia Rail, Rallus limicola subsp., recently.

On the morning of August 18th, 1934, I was walking with a group of boys along the West Fork River near Jackson's Mill. A movement in the Water Willow plants that lined the river caught our attention, and in a moment we saw, very close to us, a Rail which proved to be the above species. It was not easily alarmed, and stayed in full view for at least fifteen minutes. We got on a bridge directly above it, and so observed it from every angle.

As I noted in the August issue of THE REDSTART, water bird life has been unusually abundant at Jackson's Mill this year and I shall be interested in knowing if this condition is general.

-----Maurice Brooks,
French Creek, W. Va.

FIELD NOTES FROM NILES, OHIO

Monday evening, July 23, 1934, five of the Niles Bird Club parked along a road near Meander Lake. We had been watching a large bird in the distance, flying toward us, apparently a Hawk of some kind. As it drew near us it appeared to be about sixty feet high. When it was almost directly over us we found it, beyond doubt, to be a Bald Eagle, Haliaeetus leucocephalus.

-----Ralph E. Tucke,
Niles, Ohio.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS NEST IN BELMONT COUNTY, OHIO

In reading the August issue of THE REDSTART, I found that Red-headed Woodpeckers, Melanerpes erythrocephalus, were considered as a rare nesting species in this locality. For the past three or four years I have seen many nests of this bird, and have thought nothing of it. These birds have nested in great numbers on the Belmont Hills Country Club Golf Course beyond St. Clairsville, Belmont County, Ohio. I believe that there were ten or more nests there this summer.

-----Victor J. Kehrer, Jr.,
Martins Ferry, Ohio.

NEST OF OSPREY SEEN IN MONTANA

While at Glacier Park, Montana, I had an excellent opportunity to observe the nest of an Osprey, Pandion haliaetus subsp. On the morning of August 18, 1934, at Waterton Lake, on the American side, we saw three young on the nest with the mother bird in a nearby tree. The nest was several yards back from the shore, perched on the top of a dead tree. It was a flat, rudely constructed nest of twigs and branches, and quite high from the ground. While we watched, one of the young flew to the same tree in which the mother bird sat. These birds are rather numerous in the Park, as there are so many lakes there containing fish.

-----Bertha Quantz,
Wheeling, W. Va.