



The Redstart

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

Vol. III, No. 11

Edited by J.W. Handlan

August, 1936

SOME BIRDS OF FORSYTH COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

by
Tom E. Shields

(Editor's Note: Following is a brief abstract of a paper presented before The Brooks Bird Club)

Forsyth County, North Carolina, constitutes part of the great Piedmont Plateau which slopes gradually from the mountains in the West to the coastal plain of the East. The county, of an average elevation of some 875 feet above sea level, has on its western border the Yadkin River and a reservoir of the City of Winston-Salem which has some six miles of shore line -- the stream and artificial lake constituting the only considerable bodies of water in the county.

Much of the county is planted in tobacco, corn, etc., but there are areas of woodlands, also. Deciduous trees prominent in the county's wooded portions are the Maples, Elms, Hickories, Tulip, Carolina Cottonwood and Persimmon. The coniferous forests are largely of Yellow Pine. A few Cedars are to be found.

In the course of a short visit to the county, between June 2 and June 15, 1935, I engaged in eight field trips for bird study, a total time in the field of about 24 hours. My visit in the county was so short as to permit a glimpse, only, of its bird life. Nevertheless, 64 species were recorded and nests of 16 species were located.

For the sake of brevity, most of the annotations concerning the 64 species recorded are here omitted as are the scientific names. All records were by sight. The list follows:

Turkey Vulture.

Coragyps atratus. Black Vulture. On June 9, I saw my first Black Vulture. In fact, I saw no less than 50 of these birds on that date. They were circling in the air in company with a Turkey Vulture and gave me an excellent opportunity to compare the different appearances of the two birds. -----
The Black Vulture looks smaller; moves about more; has a shorter, broader tail; and its head appears smaller than that of a Turkey Vulture.

Sparrow Hawk, Bob-white, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will.

Chordelles minor. Nighthawk. This bird is quite common in the City of Winston-Salem, where it can be heard frequently in the evening.

Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Kingbird, Crested Flycatcher, Phoebe, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Peewee, Rough-winged Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee.

Baeolophus bicolor. Tufted Titmouse. The Mockingbirds imitated this species more than any other, yet I found the Tufted Titmouse to be uncommon in the region.

Troglodytes aedon. House Wren. According to the literature of North Carolina ornithology which was available at Winston-Salem, the House Wren does not occur East of the mountains. However, I understand that recently it has been recorded a few times from the Piedmont section. I saw four individuals, three of them in full song. Also, I saw what I believe to have been an old nest of the species -----.

Thryothorus ludovicianus. Carolina Wren. I always thought this species was common in Ohio County (West Virginia) until I came to North Carolina. There are many more Carolina Wrens in Forsyth County and they nest anywhere which strikes their variable fancies. One nest, with four young, was atop a post in a shed. Another, with two eggs, was on top a corn stalk which was leaning in a corner of a shed.

Mimus polyglottos. Mockingbird. Mockingbirds are very plentiful in Forsyth County. They sing all day, even when it is very hot, but their night song far surpasses their diurnal vocal accomplishments. I found one nest, seven feet up in a sapling.

Catbird.

Toxostoma rufum. Brown Thrasher. This species is much more common in Forsyth County than in any other place I have been. They appear to sing more here than at my home and their song is a delightful thing to hear. I saw one nest, with two eggs and one newly hatched young, four and a half feet up in a "Sourwood" tree.

Robin, Wood Thrush, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Starling.

Vireo griseus. White-eyed Vireo. The only place where I found this species was along the Yadkin River, where it seemed rather common. There I found a nest, six and one-half feet up in the fork of an almost horizontal branch of a tree. The nest was of grasses, mosses and plant fibers and contained three young. It lacked the lichens usually found in the nest of the Red-eyed Vireo and seemed considerably deeper than the usual Red-eye's nest.

Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo,

Mniotilta varia. Black and White Warbler. In the pine woods and along the Yadkin, the Black and White Warbler appeared to occur in limited numbers. I saw adults feeding young.

Dendroica aestiva. Yellow Warbler. The species is said not to breed East of the mountains in the state, but I strongly suspect that it breeds in Forsyth County. The species was listed on seven field trips, but seemed nowhere common.

Dendroica pinus. Pine Warbler. Common in the pine woods. I was unable to establish a breeding record for the species, but am sure I saw adults with young. The young were so large as to have been capable of moving from their birthplace a considerable distance.

Prairie Warbler, Ovenbird (one very young one seen attended by adults) Kentucky Warbler.

Geothlypis trichas. Yellowthroat. Common. The song of the species here sounds very different to me than that of birds resident near my home. Thus far, I have noted three distinct "regional" songs of this species, in the West Virginia Panhandle, the West Virginia mountain region and the North Carolina plateau, respectively.

Yellow-breasted Chat, Hooded Warbler (adults with young), American Redstart (adults with young), English Sparrow, Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Purple Grackle.

Piranga erythromelos. Scarlet Tanager. According to Pearson and the Brimley's, this species does not occur East of the Mountains, However, I saw at least two pairs of Scarlet Tanagers in the county. In fact I listed this species as often as I did the Summer Tanager.

Piranga rubra. Summer Tanager. Strangely, I found that this species and the preceding one resided in the same situations. Imagine seeing a pair of Scarlet Tanagers and a pair of Summer Tanagers all together! I did!

Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Goldfinch, Towhee, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow.

The most remarkable difference I noted between the bird life of Forsyth county and that of northern West Virginia was the complete absence of the Song Sparrow from my North Carolina lists. That is the only locality I have visited where Song Sparrows seemed not to occur. ----- I believe the most important of my records was discovery of evidence that the Scarlet Tanager may be a breeding bird East of the North Carolina mountains. The recordings of the House Wren appear to me to be next in importance.

Wheeling, W.Va.

WATERFOWL ON FOUR ALLEGHANY LAKES

by
Maurice Brooks

(Continued)

Editor's Note: In the July issue of The Redstart, Mr. Brooks presented some brief descriptions of four Alleghanian lakes and waterfowl recorded on them in the course of a winter ornithological calss at West Virginia University, Morgantown. The four lakes are Lake Lynn (Cheat Lake) principally in Monongalia County, W.Va., Deep Creek Lake, in Garrett County, Maryland, Mountain Lake in Garrett County, and Lake Terra Alta, in Preston County, West Virginia. In the first half of this paper, Mr. Brooks birefly defined the status of nineteen species. His recordings continue with:

20. Nyroca americana. Redhead.

Lake Lynn: March 7, 1936 (15); March 8, 1936 (4).

Deep Creek Lake: April 18, 1936 (4); April 25, 1936 (1).

Lake Terra Alta: March 28, 1936 (5); April 8, 1936 (7).

21. Nyroca collaris. Ring-necked Duck.

Lake Terra Alta: April 8, 1936 (5).

22. Nyroca valisineria. Canvas-back.

Lake Terra Alta: March 28, 1936 (1).

23. Nyroca marila. Greater Scaup Duck.24. Nyroca affinis. Lesser Scaup Duck.

Scaup Ducks are, by far, the commonest species of wild ducks found in our area. They were seen on all four bodies of water during the fall and spring, usually in good sized flocks. Not a trip to Lake Lynn was made during March and April without these birds being seen. Last noted on May 9, 1936 at Lake Lynn. Both species were identified.

25. Glaucionetta clangula americana. American Golden-eye.

Lake Lynn: March 31, 1936 (6); April 5, 1936 (3);
April 8, 1936 (1).

Deep Creek Lake: April 19, 1936 (1)

Lake Terra Alta: March 28, 1936 (1).

26. Charitonetta albeola. Buffle-head.

Lake Lynn: Nov. 13, 1935.

Deep Creek Lake: April 18, 1936 (23); April 19, 1936 (17);
April 25, 1936 (14); April 26, 1936 (21); May 3, 1936 (11).

Lake Terra Alta: March 28, 1936 (1).

27. Clangula hyemalis. Old-squaw.

Lake Lynn: April 28, 1936 (1)

28. Erismatura jamaicensis rubida. Ruddy Duck.

Lake Lynn: March 29, 1936 (3).

Deep Creek Lake: Dec. 15, 1935 (5).

29. Lophodytes cucullatus. Hooded Merganser.

Lake Lynn: March 20, 1936 (3); April 11, 1936 (1); April 29,
1936 (1).

- Deep Creek Lake: April 18, 1936 (4).
- Lake Terra Alta: March 28, 1936 (6); April 8, 1936 (5);
April 25, 1936 (3).
30. Mergus merganser americanus. American Merganser.
- Lake Lynn: March 8, 1936 (17); March 9, 1936 (5); March 11, 1936 (9); March 21, 1936 (2); March 23, 1936 (3).
April 8, 1936 (4).
- Deep Creek Lake: March 28, 1936 (3); April 18, 1936 (7);
April 19, 1936 (3).
- Lake Terra Alta: March 22, 1936 (3); March 28, 1936 (18);
April 8, 1936 (6); April 19, 1936 (2).
- Mountain Lake: April 4, 1936 (5); April 18, 1936 (3); April 19, 1936 (3).
31. Mergus serrator. Red-breasted Merganser.
- Lake Lynn: Nov. 6, 1935 (1); April 8, 1936 (2); April 12, 1936 (2); April 15, 1936 (2); April 16, 1936 (2); April 18, 1936 (1); April 20, 1936 (1); April 28, 1936 (4).
- Deep Creek Lake: April 18, 1936 (3); April 19, 1936 (7);
April 25, 1936 (21); April 26, 1936 (5).
- Lake Terra Alta: March 28, 1936 (5); April 8, 1936 (4);
April 25, 1936 (2).
- Mountain Lake: April 19, 1936 (2).
32. Fulica americana americana. American Coot.
- Lake Terra Alta: Oct. 12, 1935 (1).
33. Oxyechus vociferus vociferus. Killdeer.
- Common breeding species at all four bodies of water; first seen at Lake Lynn on Feb. 28. Winters casually about Lake Lynn.
34. Capella delicata. Wilson's Snipe.
- Common in swamps about all four bodies of water from March 28, 1936 to May 3, 1936. Observed at Lake Terra Alta on Oct. 3, 1935. May breed sparingly around Deep Creek Lake.
35. Bartramia longicauda. Upland Plover.
- Mountain Lake: April 26, 1936 (1).
36. Actitis macularia. Spotted Sandpiper.
- Common breeding species around all four bodies of water. First seen at Deep Creek Lake on April 19, 1936.
37. Tringa solitaria. Solitary Sandpiper.

Birds of this species, presumably of the eastern race (T. s. solitaria), are fairly common in migration around all four lakes. Handlan has noted individuals at Lake Terra Alta in summer, and I have seen them on several occasions in summer around Deep Creek Lake. First noted at Lake Terra Alta April 25, 1936.

38. Totanus melanoleucus. Greater Yellow-legs.

Lake Terra Alta: April 26, 1936 (3); May 3, 1936 (5); May 17, 1936, (1).

Mountain Lake: April 18, 1936 (3).

39. Totanus flavipes. Lesser Yellow-legs.

Lake Terra Alta: May 17, 1936 (1).

40. Pisobia melanotos. Pectoral Sandpiper.

Lake Terra Alta: May 9, 1936 (2); June 5, 1936 (2).

41. Larus argentatus smithsonianus. Herring Gull.

Common during late February, March, April, and early May around Lake Lynn and Deep Creek Lake. Not noted at the two smaller lakes.

42. Larus delawarensis. Ring-billed Gull.

Seen a number of times at Lake Lynn and Deep Creek Lake. First noted at Lake Lynn on March 20, 1936. Last seen at Deep Creek Lake on May 9, 1936.

43. Larus philadelphia. Bonaparte's Gull.

Lake Lynn: April 22, 1936 (1).

Deep Creek Lake: April 25, 1936 (2).

44. Sterna hirundo hirundo. Common Tern.

Lake Lynn: April 29, 1936 (1).

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EDITORIAL

Reducing the Cost. There is an interesting tendency to offer to the public standard ornithological works in new, cheaper editions and at a fraction of their former cost. For example, the former three-volume set of "Birds of America," for which T. Gilbert Pearson was chief editor, now is available in one volume at a cost about one-fifth the original set. More recently, Beebe's monograph on the Pheasants has been offered to the public in similar fashion.

These cheaper editions are not, of course, collector's items in any sense, nor are they intended to be. One who could afford the originals would, of course, prefer to have them rather than their cheaper prototypes. The important thing is that the cheaper editions put such works within the purse-range of thousands of students of ornithology who, otherwise, would be unable to own them.

It is interesting to note, too, that the "Birds of America" this summer was holding its place well in the forefront of non-fiction offerings to the public.

The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the Brooks Bird Club will be held at Oglebay Park the evening of September 25, and a committee on arrangements is at work to make the occasion an interesting and enjoyable one. Corresponding Members within traveling distance are especially invited to be present for the presentation of annual reports, election of officers, other business and social features of the occasion.

The Redstart is distributed, free, to all members of The Brooks Bird Club. Active Members (who are elected to membership) pay annual dues of \$1.00. Corresponding Members (membership upon application) pay annual dues of 50 cents.

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