



# The Redstart

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## SOME BIRDS OF A WEST VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN

by  
Charles Conrad

One hundred and five species of birds and 136 nests, representing twenty five species, were identified by students and instructors of the Oglebay Park Nature Training School camp at White Top Mountain, Randolph County, West Virginia, during the period of June 23 - July 1, 1935.

The nearest village to camp was Durbin, approximately seven miles distant, on the Greenbrier River. The camp itself was established on mountain meadows, at about 4,000 feet elevation, where life forms are characteristic of the Canadian Zone. The mountains were forested with northern hardwoods and Spruce and Hemlock, with undergrowth of Rhododendron and other shrubs.

Numbers in parentheses after names of various species in the accompanying list indicate numbers of nests of those species located in the course of the camping trip. Certain of the nests discovered were of especial interest. Two nests of the Hermit Thrush, Hyl-  
cichla guttata, constitute the first definite breeding records for the species in West Virginia, so far as can be determined. One nest of the Mourning Warbler, Oporornis philadelphia, likewise apparently constitutes a state record.

Adult Golden-crowned Kinglets, Regulus calendula, were seen feeding young, as were Black-billed Cuckoos, Coccyzus erythrophthalmus. Purple Finches, Carpodacus purpureus, were observed carrying nesting material.

A list of the birds identified during the duration of the camp

Green Heron	Robin (32)
Turkey Vulture	Wood Thrush
Red-tailed Hawk	Hermit Thrush (2)
Broad-winged Hawk	Olive-backed Thrush (1)
Marsh Hawk	Veery (1)
Sparrow Hawk	Bluebird
Ruffed Grouse (1)	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Bob-white	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Wild Turkey	Cedar Waxwing (4)
Killdeer	Starling
Woodcock	Mountain Vireo (3)
Spotted Sandpiper	Red-eyed Vireo (5)
Mourning Dove	Warbling Vireo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Black and White Warbler
Black-billed Cuckoo	Golden-winged Warbler
Screech Owl	Northern Parula Warbler
Barred Owl	Yellow Warbler
Great-horned Owl	Magnolia Warbler
Nighthawk	Cairns Warbler (1)
Chimney Swift	Black-throated Green Warbler (3)
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Blackburnian Warbler
Belted Kingfisher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Flicker (2)	Ovenbird
Pileated Woodpecker	Grinnell's Waterthrush
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Kentucky Warbler
Hairy Woodpecker	Mourning Warbler (1)
Downy Woodpecker (1)	Maryland Yellowthroat
Kingbird (3)	Yellow-breasted Chat
Crested Flycatcher	Hooded Warbler
Phoebe (6)	Canada Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher	American Redstart
Least Flycatcher	English Sparrow
Wood Pewee	Eastern Meadowlark
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Red-winged Blackbird (7)
Prairie Horned Lark	Orchard Oriole
Bank Swallow (1)	Bronzed Grackle (1)
Rough-winged Swallow	Cowbird
Barn Swallow (29)	Scarlet Tanager
Purple Martin	Cardinal
Blue Jay	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Northern Raven	Indigo Bunting
Crow	Purple Finch
Black-capped Chickadee (2)	Eastern Goldfinch
Tufted Titmouse	Red-eyed Towhee
White-breasted Nuthatch	Grasshopper Sparrow
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
Brown Creeper	Carolina Junco (15)
House Wren (4)	Chipping Sparrow
Winter Wren	Field Sparrow
Carolina Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Mockingbird	Swamp Sparrow
Catbird	Swamp Sparrow
Brown Thrasher (1)	Song Sparrow (3)

Editor's Note:- In the foregoing list, submitted by Mr. Conrad, racial designations have been avoided except in cases where it seems necessary, or advisable, to designate the sub-species of probable occurrence as a breeding race in the territory under discussion. The presence of many "northern" species in southern West Virginia is demonstrated in convincing fashion in this interesting list.

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THE SPRING MIGRATION NEAR WHEELING, W. VA.

B Y

John W. Handlan

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Consensus of opinion by observers of the 1936 Spring bird migration in the general vicinity of Wheeling, West Virginia, was that the annual phenomenon was more or less disappointing from the standpoint of number of species and individuals of those species recorded.

There was a general agreement that unreasonably warm weather very early in the season had hastened the growth of vegetation to a point at which observations of such birds as Wood Warblers was seriously handicapped when these migrants put in their appearance. There were unexplained scarcities of species ordinarily common here in migration and added numbers of a few species where a sparse, irregular migration has been the local rule.

For examples, the Black-throated Green Warbler, Dendroica virens, ordinarily one of the most common migrants of the spring, was present in far less than average abundance; the Blackburnian Warbler, Dendroica fusca, probably most abundant migrant of the 1935 spring season, was markedly reduced in numbers in 1936. The Chestnut-sided Warbler, Dendroica pennsylvanica, was virtually absent. On the other hand there appeared to be an unprecedented number of Bay-breasted Warblers, Dendroica castanea, ordinarily uncommon in spring migration here.

One pleasant feature of the migration was the presence of numerous Olive-backed Thrushes, Hylocichla ustulata. Local observers who never before had heard the song of this species, heard it again and again, this spring, at Oglebay Park. One bird was heard singing there as late as May 30. Compilation of "earliest arrival dates" from the records of the Brooks Bird Club's active membership showed the following results; the dates being recorded in numerical order of months and days:

## BROOKS BIRD CLUB BIRD MIGRATION RECORDS--SPRING, 1936.

Green Heron, 4-18

## SHORE BIRDS

Woodcock, 3-7

Wilson's Snipe, 3-29

Sp. Sandpiper, 4-30

Sol. Sandpiper, 4-25

Gr. Yellowlegs, 3-15

Mourning Dove, 3-11

## CUCKOOS

Yellow-billed, 5-8

Nighthawk, 5-17

Chimney Swift, 4-23

Hummingbird, 5-10

## FLYCATCHERS

Kingbird, 4-30

Crested, 4-25

Acadian, 5-12

Phoebe, 3-11

Wood Pewee, 5-8

## SWALLOWS

Bank, 4-25

Rough-winged, 4-16

Barn, 4-7

Purple Martin, 3-31

## WRENS

House, 4-25

Bewick's, 4-17

Catbird, 4-26

Brown Thrasher, 4-18

## THRUSHES

Wood, 4-21

Hermit, 4-25

Olive-backed, 5-3

Veery, 5-11

Blue-g. Gnatcatcher, 4-19

Ruby-c. Kinglet, 4-19

## VIREOS

Yellow-throated, 5-3

Blue-headed, 4-30

Red-eyed, 4-23

Warbling, 4-29

## WARBLERS

Black and White, 4-28

Worm-eating, 4-18

Golden-winged, 5-3

Blue-winged, 4-29

Tennessee, 5-12

Nashville, 5-3

N. Parula, 5-9

Yellow, 4-28

Magnolia, 5-2

Cape May, 5-9

Black-throated Blue, 5-9

Myrtle, 4-25

Black-throated Green, 4-18

Cerulean, 5-7

Blackburnian, 5-3

Chestnut-sided, 5-8

Bay-breasted, 5-8

Blackpoll, 5-9

Pine, 5-9

Ovenbird, 5-2

La. Waterthrush, 3-29

Kentucky, 4-29

Md. (?) Yellow-throat, 4-30

Yellow-breasted Chat, 4-30

Hooded, 5-3

Canada, 5-8

American Redstart, 5-1

Yellow-throated, 5-3

## BLACKBIRDS

Red-winged, 3-8

Orchard Oriole, 5-3

Baltimore Oriole, 4-28

Br. Grackle, 2-28

Cowbird, 3-23

Scarlet Tanager, 5-3

## SPARROWS

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 5-3

Indigo Bunting, 5-3

Savannah, 5-3

Grasshopper, 4-28

Vesper, 3-28

Chipping, 3-25

Field, 3-22

White-crowned, 4-26

White-throated, 4-26

## FIELD NOTES

Lesser Scaup at Terra Alta In June. On Sunday, June 14, we saw two Lesser Scaup Ducks, Nyroca affinis, at Lake Terra Alta, Preston County, West Virginia. The two were male and female and were together upon the water of the lake. No young were seen, but the presence of the pair at Terra Alta in mid-summer would indicate a possible breeding record.

--Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Brooks  
Morgantown, W. Va.

Bob-white at a City Home. On the morning of June 11, I heard and saw a female Bob-white, Colinus virginianus, on the roof of our home, just outside a third-story window. A male of the same species was perched in a nearby Sycamore tree, about 25 feet above ground. The male sang the familiar notes of his species, and the female answered with a two-note call. This observation was made in a densely populated section of Wheeling, West Virginia and very near the National Road (U. S. Route 40) upon which a constant stream of automobile traffic passes. The birds remained upon their seemingly incongruous perches for several minutes before they took wing.

--Walter Ammon  
4 America Ave.  
Wheeling, W. Va.

Nesting of the Upland Plover in Hancock County, West Virginia. An Upland Plover, Bartramia longicauda, nesting record was made in a rye field near a small stream in Hancock County, West Virginia, June 7, 1936. Four eggs were found, apparently about to hatch. However, the rye was plowed under, the nest being left intact with a small section of rye left standing. The single adult bird seen left the nest after the plowing and the eggs were not hatched. This record was verified by Mr. Maurice Brooks and Mr. I. B. Boggs, of West Virginia University, Morgantown.

--Walter C. Cumbel  
New Cumberland, W. Va.

Albino Robins at Wheeling, West Virginia. A nest of the Robin, Turdus migratorius, which held three young birds, two of them true albinos, was found at Warwood, Wheeling, W. Va., May 4, 1936. Relatives of the writer called the nest to his attention. The nest was upon the top of a porch post, some fifteen feet from the ground. Residents of the home were unaware that the young birds were unusual until the nestlings were large enough to raise their heads well above the nest. Mr. A. B. Brooks was informed of the find and, on May 5, made photographs of the full-fledged young, banded them and kept one of the albinos alive for further study. The third bird of the brood was found to have normal plumage. A female adult, which fed the young, had a slight whitish "wash" on either wing but otherwise was of normal plumage.

--Charles Conrad  
Wheeling, W. Va.

Nesting of the Bobolink in Hancock County, West Virginia. The Bobolink, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*, has been an annual visitor in Hancock County, West Virginia, during regular periods of migration. However, observations of the past few years, has disclosed the presence of a few summer residents of the species.

During the current season, Bobolinks again were seen. Three pairs were first observed in late April, and these remained beyond the migration time. As the season progressed a search was begun for a nest. A nest with five small young was found by the writer on the evening of June 13, 1936. The nest was in an open meadow, built in a small depressed area with the top of the nest level with the ground. In addition, the nest was of open type and very difficult to see, several hours of hunting being required in the immediate vicinity before the discovery was made. It was noted, during observations of the adult birds, that both male and female would alight eight to ten feet from the nest site and then walk to it through the grass.

Mr. Maurice Brooks and Mr. I. E. Boggs, of West Virginia University, Morgantown, examined the nest and verified the find.

--Walter C. Gumbel  
New Cumberland, W. Va.

Editor's Note: Printed records of the presence of Bobolinks in West Virginia in breeding season are very rare, and records of actual breeding definitely within the State virtually unknown. It is understood that Surber recorded the nesting of this species within the state, many years ago, but his publication of it is not now available to the Editor. Mr. Gumbel's find appears to be a record for the Northern Panhandle, however, and one of very few for the entire state.

#### EDITORIAL

Greetings to the Nature Training School. The Brooks Bird Club, through its official publication, THE REDSTART, is happy to welcome to Wheeling, West Virginia, its headquarters city, the staff and students of the Ninth Annual Oglebay Park Nature Training School.

The School affords, not only an interesting and vital experience to those who participate in its affairs, but serves as a splendid stimulation of local interest in bird study and the other natural sciences.

That the institution makes a strong impress upon those who have been its students is amply attested by the remarkably large number of competent young naturalists who have used the School as a stepping stone to professional and avocational interest in natural science.

Water Birds of Four Allegheny Lakes. The Editor has received from Mr. Maurice Brooks, of West Virginia University, Morgantown, manuscript detailing finds of Mr. Brooks and student ornithologists on four West Virginia and Maryland lakes during the 1935-36 scholastic year at the State University. The manuscript will be published, in two parts, in the July and August editions of THE REDSTART, respectively. The forthcoming publication of records is of particular importance and interest to students of ornithology throughout this region.

Hancock County "Possibilities." - A one-day field trip in the Tomlinson Run Section of Hancock County, West Virginia, recently, has accented to Northern Panhandle outdoors enthusiasts the possibilities of the region in botanical and ornithological fields. The area mentioned has markedly "northern" affinities and promises to yield bird breeding records of interest, in particular. Least Flycatchers and Black-throated Green Warblers, for example, have been recorded there this nesting season. The Chestnut-sided Warbler is to be looked for, there, and as Dr. George M. Sutton has suggested, the southern race of the Black-throated Blue Warbler may turn up in Hancock County as a breeding species. The Golden-winged Warbler seems another possibility as a summer resident.

Finds recorded in this issue of breeding examples of the Bobolink and Upland Plover will be, perhaps, the start of a succession of new Panhandle records. Certainly, the Tomlinson Run Park area is one of the most beautiful and readily accessible woodland spots in this entire region and it undoubtedly will attract more and more of the attention of ornithological interests in this locality.

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