



The Redstart

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

Vol. IV, No. 9

Edited by J. W. Handlan

June, 1937

THE SPRING MIGRATION OF 1937

by

Russell West and J. W. Handlan

(Editor's Note: Mr. West directed the compilation of notes by all club members who contributed their personal records for this annual composite list. The brief foreword is by the Editor, and is the result of comparing comments by virtually all active members of the club as to their impressions of the 1937 migration period.)

The 1937 Spring bird migration in the general vicinity of Oglebay Park was as satisfactory in general as the 1936 migration was unsatisfactory. An unprecedented warm period in April and early May, followed by unseasonable cold weather later in May appeared to have much to do with prolonging the migration season to a noticeable degree.

In consequence, species which in ordinary years were observed only for a few days in this territory were in evidence as much as two weeks, or longer, the Blackpoll Warblers being a case in point. The Wood Warbler migration, always a chief interest for inland observers, was especially impressive this season. Pine Warblers, only, of the species listed on the local "all-time" list were not recorded. Wilson's Warbler, a comparative rarity in Spring in this section, was recorded a number of times. Chestnut-sides and Ovenbirds seemed less common than in past years.

It was an excellent season for the observation of migrant thrushes. Even a Gray-cheeked Thrush was reported -- a substantiation of the specimen taken here several years ago.

The early warm weather provided one drawback to observation -- an early and heavy crop of foliage in trees and shrubs which, at times, made observations more difficult than usual.

Certain oddities cropped up in the local field. For example, no local record appears to have been made of the American Bittern during this migration season. Rails, likewise, were not observed.

The composite list presented below omits sub-specific designation so far as possible for obvious reasons. It includes, too, certain species whose status as migrants is not definitely fixed, with the possibility that some are regularly represented here as winter visitors. In order to conserve space, numerals represent months as well as days of months:

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| 1. Green Heron 5-4 | 37. Wood Thrush 4-24 |
| 2. Baldpate, 4-4 | 38. Hermit Thrush 4-4 |
| 3. Blue-winged Teal 4-4 | 39. Olive-backed Thrush 4-18 |
| 4. Ring-necked Duck 3-13 | 40. Veery 4-25 |
| 5. Ruddy Duck 4-10 | 41. Gray-cheeked Thrush 4-24 |
| 6. Black Duck 4-4 | 42. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 4-17 |
| 7. Broad-winged Hawk 4-17 | 43. Ruby-crowned Kinglet 4-11 |
| 8. Rough-legged Hawk 4-18 | 44. Yellow-throated Vireo 4-28 |
| 9. Sharp-shinned Hawk 4-18 | 45. Blue-headed Vireo 4-25 |
| 10. Marsh Hawk 4-10 | 46. Red-eyed Vireo 4-25 |
| 11. Osprey 4-11 | 47. Warbling Vireo 4-24 |
| 12. American Coot 4-4 | <u>WARBLERS</u> |
| 13. American Woodcock 4-12 | 48. Black and White 4-24 |
| 14. Wilson's Snipe 4-4 | 49. Worm-eating 4-25 |
| 15. Solitary Sandpiper 4-24 | 50. Goldenwinged 5-15 |
| 16. Lesser Yellowlegs 4-28 | 51. Blue-winged 4-24 |
| 17. Mourning Dove 3-27 | 52. Tennessee 5-16 |
| 18. Yellow-billed Cuckoo 5-7 | 53. Nashville 4-22 |
| 19. Black-billed Cuckoo 5-16 | 54. Parula 4-24 |
| 20. Nighthawk 5-22 | 55. Yellow 4-15 |
| 21. Chimney Swift 4-17 | 56. Magnolia 5-8 |
| 22. Hummingbird 5-16 | 57. Cape May 5-16 |
| 23. Kingbird 4-24 | 58. Black-throated Blue 4-28 |
| 24. Crested Flycatcher 4-18 | 59. Myrtle 4-24 |
| 25. Acadian Flycatcher 5-15 | 60. Black-throated Green 4-24 |
| 26. Phoebe 3-30 | 61. Cerulean 4-27 |
| 27. Least Flycatcher 5-2 | 62. Chestnut-sided 4-28 |
| 28. Wood Peewee 5-15 | 63. Bay-breasted 5-2 |
| 29. Bank Swallow 5-9 | 64. Blackpoll 5-2 |
| 30. Rough-winged Swallow 4-20 | 65. Ovenbird 5-2 |
| 31. Barn Swallow 4-18 | 66. La. Waterthrush 4-3 |
| 32. Purple Martin 4-5 | 67. Kentucky 5-2 |
| 33. House Wren 4-17 | 68. Md.(?) Yellowthroat 4-18 |
| 34. Bewick's Wren 4-6 | 69. Yellow-breasted Chat 5-8 |
| 35. Catbird 4-14 | 70. Wilson's 5-16 |
| 36. Brown Thrasher 4-17 | 71. Hooded 4-28 |

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 72. Hooded Warbler 4-28 | 83. Rose-breasted Grosbeak 5-2 |
| 73. Canada Warbler 5-16 | 84. Indigo Bunting 5-2 |
| 74. American Redstart 4-24 | 85. Savannah Sparrow 4-4 |
| 75. Blackburnian Warbler 4-24 | 86. Grasshopper Sparrow 4-18 |
| 76. Bobolink 4-30 | 87. Vesper Sparrow 4-4 |
| 77. Red-winged Blackbird 3-12 | 88. Chipping Sparrow 4-4 |
| 78. Orchard Oriole 5-1 | 89. Field Sparrow 3-27 |
| 79. Baltimore Oriole 4-27 | 90. White-crowned Sparrow 5-2 |
| 80. Grackle 3-12 | 91. White-throated Sparrow 4-11 |
| 81. Cowbird 3-28 | 92. Fox Sparrow 4-4 |
| 82. Scarlet Tanager 4-25 | |

Oglebay Park
Wheeling, W. Va.

THE PYMATUNING LAKE GATHERING

by
George B. Thorp

On May 8 and 9, 1937, a crowd of amateur ornithologists to the number of more than 60, gathered at Linesville, Pa., to observe the bird life of the Pymatuning Lake district. The observers hailed from various places in Western New York, Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio, the largest delegations coming from Buffalo, Erie and Youngstown with delegations of 16, 13 and 10, respectively. One came from Hamilton, Ont. and two from as far south as Cadiz, Ohio.

On Saturday, May 7, various groups went on expeditions encircling the upper end of the lake, stopping at such points of interest as the Great Blue Heron rookery, the mud flats and ponds at the western end of the Andover Causeway, and returning by way of the main causeway which separates the upper level, of game refuge, from the main part of the lake. Observations by these afternoon expeditions resulted in a composite list of 122 species observed.

The crowd, which, for lack of any specific appellation has been referred to as "The Pymatuning Gang," was quartered for the night at the Traveler Hotel and nearby tourist homes. The hotel served for headquarters and our meals were obtained there. Saturday evening passed pleasantly in the form of an informal social occasion at the hotel.

Early in the morning of May 8, Bert Outdette, warden in charge at the game refuge, conducted the group on a pre-breakfast expedition around the refuge. Stops were made along the Linesville causeway and then various points along the southern boundary, which includes various types of habitats. This plan enabled us to record many different species. The feeding grounds on the north side of the refuge were visited by some of the party on the return to the hotel.

Later in the morning, the group assembled at Hartstown, several miles above the lake and to the south of the refuge, where there are extensive swamps and small ponds which have not been affected by the formation of the main lake. Part of this area, in fact, drains to the southward.

At Hartstown, the group divided into small units and spread out to various choice spots in the neighborhood, which is especially fine for observation of warblers. Rain interfered with these trips, by making observation difficult.

However, the number of species added to the Saturday composite list by these Sunday field trips brought the total composite list for the week-end to 139 species.

Before the group broke up, following dinner at the hotel, it was tentatively decided to make a Fall expedition to Hawk Mountain, in eastern Pennsylvania, tentative dates chosen being Oct. 16 and 17.

The "sponsors" of this group, which has no formal organization, are Arthur H. Woodward, Erie, Pa., Harold D. Mitchell, Buffalo, N. Y., Grant M. Cook, Youngstown, O., Frank A. Hegner, Sewickley, Pa., John W. Handlan, Wheeling, W. Va. and George B. Thorp, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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FIELD NOTES

Audubon's Caracara in the Lower Kissimmee Prairie and Upper Everglades. During February, 1936, I listed the Audubon's Caracara, Polyborus cheriway auduboni, for the first time. This was on the highway between the Kissimmee River and Vero Beach, Florida. The bird I saw was busily engaged in tearing away at a Skunk which had been killed on the highway. It took flight as I approached closely in my car, finally alighting in a scrubby Live Oak in a palmetto thicket.

During February, March and April, 1937, I made frequent trips to the Kissimmee Prairie, just south of Lake Kissimmee, but rarely listed the Caracara. In the lower Kissimmee Prairie, I found this species more common and its numbers seemed to increase southward. One evening, I listed fifteen birds of this species in the upper Everglades, along the western border of Lake Okeechobee, a section which is a blending of the prairie and everglades.

The number of Caracaras in the Everglades, proper, is probably limited, as the range of Audubon's Caracara in the southeast seems to be limited chiefly to the Kissimmee Prairie, which is a very isolated territory.

Four of the birds I watched were seen together. Another was laboriously extracting dried meat from an old turtle shell. The bird stood on a rock, twisting and pulling at the shell, but the shell finally slipped and dropped from the rock. The bird hopped after it to the ground and continued its work there. This observation was made within 30 feet distance and was continued for more than ten minutes. The thing which most impressed me about the Caracaras was their indifference to man until approached very closely.

---Chester Shafer
Dorcas, W. Va.

Nesting of Ruffed Grouse in Hancock County, W.Va. A nest of the Ruffed Grouse, Bonasa umbellus, was found in the new Tomlinson Run State Park, in Hancock County, April 30, 1937, by Phil A. Crammer, engineer, and Charles Ritter, chairman. The nest, which was found to contain 14 eggs, was on the edge of a ravine under a litter of dead tree branches. I saw the nest a day or two later than the date above and observed that the brooding female Grouse remained in the immediate neighborhood when she was flushed from her nest. No further observations of the nest were made for fear of our trails to it leading predatory animals to the location.

---Earl M. Vanscoy
Elkins, W.Va.

The Sycamore Warbler in West Virginia. On the afternoon of April 29, Maurice Brooks and the writer were enroute from Morgantown, W.Va. to Huntington, and were "birding" along the way. We turned East at Gauley Bridge and made a short trip along the New River gorge. We observed a group of warblers in a wooded ravine above the highway, a few miles beyond the dam. Among them we identified a single Sycamore Warbler, Dendroica dominica albilora, evidently a female. The bird was carefully observed for seven minutes through 7x glasses and all distinguishing marks were seen clearly.

The morning of April 30, the writer saw another Sycamore Warbler, this time a male, moving, appropriately enough, in a clump of Sycamore trees, on the bank of the Ohio River about five miles above Huntington.

The Sycamore Warbler is a regular breeding species in Scioto County, O. and in adjacent counties on that side of the river. There seems to be no reason to disbelieve that it must occur, also, on the West Virginia side of the river as a breeding bird, especially since there appear to be many suitable habitats: swampy, Sycamore-lined bayous where small streams empty into the Ohio. The writer believes that future investigation will add this species to the list of breeding birds of West Virginia.

Neither of the birds observed, was seen closely enough to determine accurately whether the line between the eye and bill was yellow. They were identified as D. d. albilora rather than as Yellow-throated Warblers, D. d. dominica, on the assumption, as commonly accepted, that the former species is more likely to be found in West Virginia.

---Abe S. Margolin
Dept. of Botany & Zoology
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A Sight Record of Kirtland's Warbler in West Virginia. While observing a flock of warblers near Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, W.Va., on May 19, 1937, the writer had the good fortune to see a bird answering in every particular, the description of Kirtland's Warbler, Dendroica kirtlandi. Light was good, the bird was observed at close range with good glasses. The combination of dark back, yellow breast, spots along the sides, and prominent wing-bars seemed unmistakable.

Unfortunately, the bird was on the land of the Cooper's Rock State Park, and its collection was impossible under the circumstances. We realize that full standing on West Virginia's bird list cannot be given this species on a sight record, but we think it best to publish this observation, looking forward to a time when a specimen may possibly be secured.

--- Maurice Brooks
I. B. Boggs
West Va. University
Morgantown, W.Va.

EDITORIAL NOTES

A Suggestion for 1938. So far as the Editor has been able to ascertain, no local individuals or organizations are making a breeding bird census in response to the nation-wide proposal of "Bird-Lore." Mrs. Handlan and the writer mapped an area in Oglebay Park and did some preliminary work there to this end, but were unable to complete the project. It is suggested to local observers that, even though it is now, of course, too late to start such a nesting census that it might be well for them to select suitable territories for such a census in 1938. During the remainder of this season and in early Fall they might well acquaint themselves thoroughly with all physical details of the area to be surveyed, note such abandoned nests or young birds as may still be found there and, in general, learn everything possible to learn about the area itself and something about the birds which nested in it this season.

Such preparation would give anyone interested a "running start" on a breeding bird census for 1938. Incidentally, the nesting census plan seems a very practical manner in which one can acquaint himself with the ecology of birds.