



# The Redstart

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J. Harold Olsen, Editor

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## NOTES FROM TERRA ALTA, W. VA.

by

William A. Lunk

As in previous summers, a record was kept of the species of birds found by the members of the group attending the mountain camp session of the Nature School conducted this year (1940) by Oglebay Institute at Lake Terra Alta, Preston County, West Virginia, the time including the two weeks from June 26th to July 10th.

From this base camp, instructors and students of the school made expeditions to such locations as Spruce Knob, Gaudineer Knob, Ice Mountain, Smoke Hole, Blackwater Falls and Greenland Gap, as well as Cranesville Glades, Swallow Falls, Brookside, and other areas not too far from camp. At all of these points interesting discoveries were made and these are included in the accompanying list.

The camp site, itself, is approximately 2500 feet above sea level with the surrounding hills reaching to about 2800 feet. In the course of the field trips from Terra Alta, observers of bird life worked in elevations up to 4800 feet - to the top of Spruce Knob, highest point in West Virginia.

The total camp list for 1940 is 112 species as compared to 113 in 1939, 119 in 1938, and 120 in 1937 of the nature camps held there during these years. The total of occupied nests found represent 35 species and these figures show an increase from those of the two preceding seasons. Following is the complete list compiled from the records of the group leaders. Species starred (\*) are those for which occupied nests were located during the camp period. The annotations, added at the present writing, make no attempt at completeness.

Great Blue Heron.  
Green Heron  
Lesser Scaup  
Turkey Vulture  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
\*Cooper's Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk

Cranesville  
Terra Alta  
One on Lake Terra Alta during entire period  
Common  
Nest not far from camp; four young

*Broad-winged Hawk	Nest about five mile north of Terra Alta
Marsh Hawk	
Sparrow Hawk	
Ruffed Grouse	Especially abundant near Brookside
Bob-white	
Kildeer	Fairly common
Woodcock	Terra Alta
Spotted Sandpiper	Fairly common
Mourning Dove	Common
Black-billed Cuckoo	
Great Horned Owl	
Barred Owl	
*Whip-poor-will	Nest at Terra Alta with two eggs
Nighthawk	
Chimney Swift	Common
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	
Belted Kingfisher	
*Flicker	
Pileated Woodpecker	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	
Red-headed Woodpecker	
Hairy Woodpecker	Rather Common
Downy Woodpecker	Common
*Kingbird	Common
*Crested Flycatcher	Not abundant near camp
Phoebe	
Acadian Flycatcher	Only noted along river bottoms
Alder Flycatcher	A few at Terra Alta
*Least Flycatcher	Very common
Wood Pewee	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Some splendid views on Gaudineer Knob
Horned Lark	Fairly numerous
Rough-winged Swallow	
*Barn Swallow	Abundant
*Cliff Swallow	A number of colonies located
Blue Jay	Fairly common
Crow	Common
Black-capped Chickadee	Terra Alta and most of the points visited
Carolina Chickadee	At lower elevations
Tufted Titmouse	Common
*White-breasted Nuthatch	Rather common
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Heard at Gaudineer Knob, etc.
Brown Creeper	One reported at Terra Alta and one at Gaudineer
*House Wren	Abundant
Winter Wren	Common in the spruce belt.
Bewick's Wren	
Carolina Wren	Not found commonly
Mockingbird	
*Catbird	Common
Brown Thrasher	Common
*Robin	Abundant
*Wood Thrush	Common
Hermit Thrush	Many, especially at Gaudineer Knob
Olive-backed Thrush	Gaudineer Knob
*Veery	Most numerous at Terra Alta

*Bluebird	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Found several places in the spruce belt
*Cedar Waxwing	Common
*Starling	Abundant
Yellow-throated Vireo	Heard along Cheat River
*Blue-headed Vireo	Fairly common
*Red-eyed Vireo	Common
Black & White Warbler	Common
Worm-eating Warbler	A few located
Golden-winged Warbler	One collected above Cheat River
Parula Warbler	
Yellow Warbler	
Magnolia Warbler	Common in places
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Fairly Common
Black-throated Green Warbler	Common in places
Blackburnian Warbler	Not common
*Chestnut-sided Warbler	Common
*Oven-bird	Rather common
Northern Water-thrush	Several near Terra Alta
Louisiana Water-thrush	
*Kentucky Warbler	Not common except at lower elevations
Mourning Warbler	Found at Gaudineer Knob, Red Run, etc.
*Yellow-throat	Abundant
Yellow-breasted Chat	Fairly Common
*Hooded Warbler	Common several places
Canada Warbler	Common at Terra Alta
*Redstart	Fairly common
*English Sparrow	
Bobolink	Abundant in fields above Terra Alta
Meadowlark	
*Red-wing	
Orchard Oriole	Not common
Baltimore Oriole	
Grackle	Fairly common
Cowbird	
*Scarlet Tanager	Fairly common
Cardinal	Not common in most places visited
*Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Not uncommon
*Indigo Bunting	Common
Purple Finch	Found several places
Goldfinch	
Towhee	
Savannah Sparrow	Fairly numerous not far from camp
Grasshopper Sparrow	Rather common
*Vesper Sparrow	
*Junco	Found commonly many places
Chipping Sparrow	
*Field Sparrow	Abundant
Swamp Sparrow	Fairly numerous at Terra Alta
*Song Sparrow	Abundant most places

---William A Lunk  
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GENERAL NOTES

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Annual Meeting and Election:

Some time ago a committee was named by the chairman of the Executive Committee to study the by-laws of the Brooks Bird Club and to suggest any amendments that might be considered pertinent. The first amendment suggested and passed by the membership outlines a new set of officers and revises the policies governing the management of the activities of the club.

Conforming to this new ruling, the election of the following officers is announced: President, John W. Handlan, to have charge of all regular or called meetings and the program for them; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Carolyn Conrad assumes the usual duties with exceptional completeness and accuracy to be emphasized; Director of Field Trips, Charles Conrad is to have charge of all arrangements for all field trips, forays, camps, etc; Director of Public Relations, Miss Dorothy Neuhard, to have charge of the extension services supplied by the club, publicity, contacts, etc; Editor Harold Olsen to have charge of the compiling and editing of material for THE REDSTART. Each of these chairmen has a committee to work with him toward the completion of the assigned tasks.

---J. H. O.

Nature Reunion:

More than 100 nature study enthusiasts were present for the annual Nature Reunion at the Jesters Club on Big Wheeling Creek near Wheeling, West Virginia on October 5-6, 1940. The splendid set of buildings offered pleasure and conveniences never before enjoyed by "reunionites" and if the comments received concerning the program are to be considered an indication of the success of the event, then it was, indeed, well worth the time and efforts of the active members of the Brooks Bird Club who were in charge.

Lack of space prohibits a review of all of the features of that week-end but the "chicken-in-the-rough" dinner, the colored slides and the photographs of the Bird Club Foray, the "opry" and the informal party following the dinner program deserve mention again in this journal as being the finest of all reunions.

We were particularly happy to welcome Mr. Merit B. Skaggs, an Honorary member of the Brooks Bird Club and vice-president of the Cleveland Bird Club and his wife. An enthusiastic participant of all activities was Dr. Lawrence E. Hicks of Columbus, Ohio, director of the Ohio Wildlife Research station, president of the Wilson Ornithological Club and secretary of the American Ornithologists Union. Dr. Hicks led the bird walk held on Sunday morning.

--- J. H. O.

West Virginia Nature Alumni Association:

In the course of the business meeting of the West Virginia Nature Leaders Training School Alumni Association on Sunday, October 6th, the group voted itself out of existence, to become inactive and to transfer its normal activities of conducting reunions to the jurisdiction of the Brooks Bird Club. The balance in the alumni treasury was voted to defray the expenses of the

1940 reunion program. The officers and active members of the two groups are virtually identical and this transfer will simplify the previously complicated set-up. The Brooks Bird Club will operate, in the future, all reunions.

--- J. H. O.

#### EDITORIALS

##### "With Sincere Appreciation":

It seems to have been a very short time since the editorial destinies of THE REDSTART were placed in our hands, five years ago. In those five years we have been acutely conscious of our personal shortcomings as an ornithological editor and as we continued to read the technically efficient and occasionally brilliant contributions of other editors in this field we have been more than ever conscious of our own deficiencies.

We have tried to keep foremost in mind at all times that THE REDSTART primarily is intended as a medium of expression, encouragement and promotion of amateur activities in bird study. Such success as may have been achieved in this direction is due, almost entirely, to members of the Brooks Bird Club who have been entirely unselfish in their willing efforts to do most of the work and permit such credit as has been involved accrue to the account of the Editor. This is written with sincere appreciation of this fine and generous spirit of cooperation.

Particularly is this true of Russell West who has been untiring in his devotion to this publication, has supervised with notable success its mechanical preparation and who has been a sturdy prop of its editorial enterprises. For Harold Olsen, new Editor of this publication, we could wish no finer thing than that the same support and consideration and patience which has been exhibited by the membership for the retiring Editor may be given him.

---John W. Handlan

##### From the New Editor:

The Brooks Bird Club announces with this issue of THE REDSTART a new year of activities and the start of a new editorial regime for this journal. John W. Handlan requested during the annual meeting in September that he be relieved of his duties as editor and that some other member be elected to the office.

Mr. Handlan modestly permits the credit for such success as may have been achieved by THE REDSTART to pass to the members of the Brooks Bird Club. His "technically efficient contributions" are largely responsible for the interest in this publication and to its excellence in its field.

It is with pleasure that we announce the election of Mr. Handlan to the presidency of our club and his intention of continued support of its publications.

The editor assumes his duties fully cognizant of the high standards of scientific accuracy to which he must adhere and pledges his interest and time and effort toward that objective. He asks the continued cooperation of all members of the Brooks Bird Club toward making this journal one of the best that fills an important place among scientific publications.

---J. Harold Olsen

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL JOURNALSAuk, The, Vol. 57, No. 3, July 1940:

In this issue, W. E. Clyde Todd, of Pittsburgh, proposes three new races for Ruffed Grouse, one of them based on seven West Virginia birds taken by Karl W. Haller. This he proposes to call Bonasa umbellus monticola, the Appalachian Ruffed Grouse. It will be recalled that Dr. Alexander Wetmore referred a number of West Virginia Grouse to B. u. togata, a decision with which Mr. Todd does not agree. In the same issue, Dr. George M. Sutton and Thomas D. Burleigh describe a proposed race of the Warbling Vireo from Hidalgo, Mexico. There is an interesting section devoted to "Birds and the Winter of 1939-40", with word of interesting "out of range" appearances of certain species and heavy winter-killing of others. George Flower reports what appears to be the second reported record for the Yellow Rail in West Virginia, based on a specimen found dead in Ohio County, October 8, 1939 and now reposing in the study collection of the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh. A number of general notes of interest from Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky are included in this issue. Among book reviews is one by J. S. Wade of Paul Russell Cutwright's "The Great Naturalists Explore South America." The author of the book is related to the family of Mr. A. B. Brooks for whom the Brooks Bird Club is named.

Auk, The, Vol. 57, No. 4, Oct. 1940:

Among articles of this issue, the discussion by Margaret Morse Nice and Joost ter Pelwyk on the "anting" of birds was entirely new to this reviewer and suggests the desirability of additional observations of native birds. Under "General Notes", William A. Lunk and Maurice Brooks write of "Red Crossbills in the West Virginia Mountains". A young male, taken June 15, 1940 which, on measurements, appears referable to Loxia recurvirostra neogaea, described by Griscom as the northeastern race of the species. The only other two specimens taken in the state (in Ritchie County, July 1, 1889) are a male and a female referred to L. r. minor. The authors suggest additional, if inconclusive, evidence that there may exist a breeding population of Red Crossbills in the West Virginia spruce belt.

Grover M. Allen contributes a review of Todd's "Birds of Western Pennsylvania" to this issue. There is a review, also by Dr. Allen, of Milton B. Trautman's "Birds of Buckeye Lake, Ohio" which should interest many readers of THE REDSTART. (American Ornithologists' Union.)

Cardinal, The, Vol. V. No. 3, July 1940:

This issue is devoted almost entirely to a review of Todd's "Birds of Western Pennsylvania", by Bayard H. Christy, editor. Mr. Christy, incidentally, contributed considerable material to the publication which he here reviews. (Audubon Society of the Sewickley Valley.)

Condor, The, Vol. XLII, July-August, 1940:

Among technical and semi-technical material in this issue is one suggestive of possible application to local field study -- that of Frank Bene on "Rhythm in the Brooding and Feeding Routine of the Black-chinned Hummingbird." There is a similar suggestion in Rodgers' and Sibley's notes on frequency of occurrence of species in a given area. (Cooper Ornithological Club.)

Field Ornithology, Vol. 2, No. 6, June 1940:

William C. Legg, of Mount Lookout, W. Va., publisher of Field Ornithology, in this issue innocently reveals gist of an interesting article on a "new bird" for West Virginia which, he writes, has been accepted by the Auk from Mr. Maurice Brooks, of Morgantown. He notes visits to Mount Lookout, also, by William A. Lunk, George Sutton, William Montagna and Karl W. Haller, all known to members of the Brooks Bird Club. Don Eckelberry contributes a note on the King Rail at Barberton, Ohio and William Legg another on the Starling. Most of the contributions are far removed in a geographic sense, from Ohio-Pennsylvania-West Virginia area of chief interest to the Brooks Bird Club membership.

Wilson Bulletin, The, Vol. 52, No. 2, June 1940:

In view of recent experiences of Brooks Bird Club members in observing the Oven-birds, the article by Harry W. Hann on "Polyandry in the Oven-bird" is of considerable interest. George M. Sutton's and William Montagna's paper on "Washed Birdskins" has much in it besides a description of methods used to launder birdskins. Wheeling district observers are referred, particularly, to casual remarks on the Chickadees. Perhaps most of the taxonomists busily engaged in racial divisions might note, with profit, remarks in this connection. M. B. Skaggs has a field note in this number recording a sight record of a European Widgeon at Pymatuning Lake, Pennsylvania. The Wilson Club's membership roll still records comparatively few West Virginia members of this fine organization.

Wilson Bulletin, The, Vol. No. 3, October, 1940:

Pierce Randall writes of the "Seasonal Food Habits of the Marsh Hawk", an article of general interest in this number of the Bulletin. William Montagna has an article on Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrows, based on data gathered in Maine. Kalmbach and Aldous, reporting on results of Crow banding, note an astonishingly large total (20 percent) of banded birds killed. Miles D. Pirnie's Wildlife Conservation Committee report deserves reading, particularly that section of it which discusses relationships with certain organizations labelled as "sportsmen's" groups. Pierce Brodkorb's review of Volume 4 of Peters' "Check-list of Birds of the World" coincides with this reviewer, anew, that the average amateur ornithologist can't keep pace with changes in technical nomenclature! After some consideration, we decided not to toss our A. O. U. checklist out of the window!

Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne, editor of the Bulletin starts his review of Todd's "Birds of Western Pennsylvania" with: "We welcome the publication of Todd's long-anticipated "Birds of Western Pennsylvania." and closes with: "We hope that our several criticisms of several minor points will not cause anyone to miss the fact that this is one of the most scholarly, useful and attractive bird books yet published." In between the introductory and concluding sentences are others highly critical of "minor points" in the work. There's little doubt but that the reviewer went over his assignment with the figurative fine-toothed comb! We enjoyed Aldo Leopold's review of Trautman's "Birds of Buckeye Lake, Ohio" and sincerely recommend it to readers of THE REDSTART. (Wilson Ornithological Club).

--- John W. Handlan  
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FIELD NOTESPhiladelphia Vireo in Cleveland, Ohio:

May 19, 1940 was a warm, sultry day, one of those that make you want to take life easy and avoid much walking. Accordingly, Mrs. Skaggs and I strolled around Shaker Lake here in Cleveland, stopping from time to time to watch for a while. Soon the birds were coming closer to us, apparently forgetting that we were there. A Magnolia Warbler and a female Blackburnian Warbler came down to feed in the lower branches only six or eight feet above us and so close that our field glasses were useless. Then, as they moved away, we saw a small gray bird with no bright colors moving toward us in a slow, deliberate manner. A Vireo, we thought, but kept our eyes on it. However, we soon saw that the breast was a dull sulphur yellow in color. It was, without a doubt, the seldom seen Philadelphia Vireo. We sat quietly and the bird came so close that Mrs. Skaggs could have touched it - quite a thrill, for we often have to identify the warblers and the vireos from only fleeting glances.

So, once again, the old statement that if you remain in a favorable spot and are quiet, you will usually see some of the wild life has been proven true. We advise everyone to try it when you are in the out-of-doors - perhaps some of your trips, too, have been bird runs instead of bird walks!

---Merit B. Skaggs,  
The Cleveland Bird Club.

Two New Species for Terra Alta, W. Va.:

Comparatively inaccurate ornithological bookkeeping of various field expeditions to Lake Terra Alta, Preston County, West Virginia and its immediate vicinity makes it difficult to know whether or not this species of bird, or that, reported on a "Terra Alta list" actually occurred in the vicinity.

But to the best knowledge of the writer, the Olive-sided Flycatcher, Nuttallornis mesoleucus and the Wilson's Warbler, Wilsonia pusilla have not been included in published records of birds seen at the lake itself. Gordon Spare, of Donora, Pennsylvania, and the writer watched an Olive-sided Flycatcher for more than five minutes at Terra Alta on September 1, 1940. Mr. Spare, alone, found a number of examples of Wilson's Warbler near the lake on the same day and on September 2nd in company with Edwin Dowler and Kenneth Charles, also of Donora, again observed a number of warblers of this species in the same situation. Both species were seen in the marshy, weed-grown area between the hard-surfaced road and the lake at the upper end of the lake.

The Olive-sided Flycatcher was included in a bird list of the first Oglebay Institute Nature Training School at Terra Alta in 1940 but actually was observed at Gaudineer Knob many miles from Terra Alta camp according to information from William A. Lunk, Jr. of Fairmont, who prepared the nature school's mountain camp bird list.

---John W. Handlan  
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