



# The Redstart

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Karl W. Haller, Editor

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## STATE BANS HELP FOR "VERMIN CONTROL CONTESTS"

by

John W. Handlan

The Conversation Commission of West Virginia no longer offers encouragement to so-called vermin contests conducted by hunters and anglers organizations within the state. Director T. D. Gray of the Commission recently announced that the state's official conservation agency has withdrawn offers of an award to contests in which a stipulated minimum number of birds, mammals and reptiles listed as "vermin" were killed.

For the past several years the Commission offered \$50.00 in prize money to supplement any other awards secured by any sportsmen's organization sponsoring one of these "vermin" killing sprees. Last year, the state offer was reduced by half, to \$25.00. With the advent of Mr. Gray as director, the Commission withdrew entirely its official encouragement of such contests.

In years past, THE REDSTART has condemned editorially the anti-vermin campaigns which formerly sent thousands of men and boys afield in closed seasons for game to kill a list of creatures ranging from the Bay Lynx to the ubiquitous Crow.

As a matter of record, the craze for such vermin-killing activities appears to have died a natural death in West Virginia. During 1941 only three organizations submitted lists of creatures killed as vermin to claim state prize money of \$25.00 in each instance.

Those of us who are interested in ornithology have ample cause for comfort in the recent Commission ruling on vermin contests and on the apparent dying out of vermin killing on an organized scale. Hawks and Owls were

principal sufferers in such affairs. The Accipitrine hawks (Goshawk, Cooper's and Sharp-shin) and the Great-horned Owl were the only species officially listed as vermin. But ornithologists know only too well that to the average gunner a hawk is a hawk and an owl is an owl -- know, indeed, that the average gunner cannot discriminate between species of these two families when he holds examples in his hand, not to mention his inability to identify hawks and owls in the field.

For example, a Marion county list sent to the Commission offices at Charleston, noted 24 "Goshawks" killed between April and September, 1941, in that county! Apparently the Marion countians have added a new resident species to the state list! Whatever those 24 "Goshawks" were, it is a pretty safe bet they were not Astur atricapillus!

Individuals, no doubt, will continue to shoot and pole-trap hawks and owls; continue to kill Sparrow Hawks for Sharp-shins and Cooper's Hawks and Red-tails and Red-shoulders for "Goshawks." Barn Owls and Barred Owls and Screech Owls, likewise, will continue to be sacrificed as "Great-horned Owls".

But it is a heartening thing that the organized vermin hunt appears to have died out and still more encouraging that the Conservation Commission has officially declined to encourage or foster such activities.

--Director of Education  
Conservation Commission of West Virginia  
Charleston, W. Va.

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#### WEST VIRGINIA CHANGES COLLECTING PERMIT PLAN

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Scientific collectors of West Virginia fauna are under new regulation since the start of 1942, it has been announced by T. D. Gray, director of the Conservation Commission of West Virginia, with headquarters at Charleston. J. W. Hosen, Jr., chief of the Commission's Division of Fish Management, drew up the new permit plan after consultation with various members of the Commission personnel.

Applicants for collecting permits (all permits automatically expire each December 31st) must submit with their applications the number of their state-wide hunting-fishing license, list the species and numbers of each to be collected, state the exact purpose of the collection, from what county or counties the collection is to be made, and note the place where the collection is to be deposited. Approved applicants for permits must pay a one-dollar fee in addition to the fee demanded for state-wide hunting-fishing licenses. The latter cost is \$2.00 to residents of the state and \$15.00 to non-residents.

Taxidermists and others who plan to collect for financial gain or for purposes other than scientific ones will be refused permits under the new plan.

--John W. Handlan  
409 41st Street, S. E.,  
Charleston, W. Va.

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MORGANTOWN FIELD TRIP

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Whenever it is possible to sandwich into our somewhat full schedule of activities, we climb into our cars and trek on down Morgantown way. Here on the banks of Cheat Lake in Monongalia County, West Virginia, we always find a welcome at the camp owned by the Connors family. The accommodations here just as we like them best, a camp building near the water with sufficient of the modern conveniences to permit a group to stay comfortably but sufficiently a "Camp" that we can enjoy bacon and eggs, a log fire, songs and square dances all without the trouble of dressing for "company".

So it was that on November eighth, the group from Wheeling went to Morgantown for an enjoyable weekend. The crowd was not large, the Wheeling members being: Carolyn Conrad, Mary Kay Conrad, Jean Semancik, Mabel Hopwood, Ruth Hissom, Charles Conrad, Donald Keyser, Dwight Koon and Byrne Waterman. Mary Jones came down from Youngstown, Ohio. Lester Koon came over from Fairmont, West Virginia. The representatives from the Morgantown area included Arthur Rybeck, Walter Ammon, William Bierer, Frank Conner and "Tubby" Boggs.

Some of the group, being even more anxious than the others (or having the time to do so) started on Friday evening, stopping over at the home of Lester Koon in Fairmont for the night.

The weather being cold and with a light fall of snow offered additional inducement to keep a roaring log fire in the fireplace. But as usual, the group (or some of them) rose early on Sunday morning to greet the birds. The list of birds was not large, but it was interesting and very typical of the season and the territory. In the order found, they were: Robin, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Towhee, Crow, Winter Wren, Blue Jay, Brown Creeper, Cardinal, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tufted Titmouse, Chickadee, Junco, Song Sparrow. The ducks seen on the surface of the lake were too far away for accurate identification but the "experts" named them Black Ducks.

Don Keyser, as usual, was the center of one of the high-lights of the trip. Early on Sunday morning, Don, of the exploring nature, decided to attempt a short trip on Cheat Lake using as his mode of transportation a kyak which he had located. Walking down the pier, Don stepped into the kyak - with one foot. The boat began to move before Keyser could put his other foot where it belonged. Result: Keyser sprawling in the cold waters of the lake. None of the group had carried any extra clothing for the overnight trip, so it was necessary for Don to borrow a piece of equipment here, and another, there. The completed outfit was a sight for sore eyes (or a sight to make the eyes sore!).

I. B. (Tubby) Boggs, the magician - he always has a trick or two up his sleeve - offered his bit in the form of a basket of delicious apples.

So again, we wrote in the club diary - "We enjoyed another trip to Morgantown".

--Byrne Waterman  
13 Edgewood St.,  
Wheeling, W. Va.

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 REUNION BIRD NOTES
 

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Always a feature of the annual Nature Reunion each fall is the Sunday morning nature hike. Again this year, 1941, the reunion was staged at the very suitable and well-equipped Jesters Camp, located on Big Wheeling Creek some five miles above Elm Grove, West Virginia.

About forty-two re-unioniters attended the walk which was lead for the second straight year by Dr. Lawrence E. Hicks of Ohio State University at Columbus, Ohio. The trail selected by the leader took the group along the creek bank and through numerous open fields and wooded sections. The territory covered proved to be very good as is seen when one notes the list of thirty-four species that was recorded.

The weather was excellent for the morning of October 12, with a bright warm sun and a clear sky although the temperature was low enough during the night to have a heavy frost.

The list of species recorded by the group were as follows:

Green Heron	Carolina Wren
Ruffed Grouse	Robin
Bob-white	Bluebird
Killdeer	Cedar Waxwing
Spotted Sandpiper	Starling
Mourning Dove	Myrtle Warbler
Screech Owl	Palm Warbler
Kingfisher	English Sparrow
Flicker	Meadowlark
Pileated	Cardinal
Red-bellied	Goldfinch
Hairy	Junce
Downy	Chipping Sparrow
Crow	Field Sparrow
Carolina Chickadee	Swamp Sparrow
Tufted Titmouse	Song Sparrow
W. B. Nuthatch	Tree Sparrow

The writer feels it his duty to make some comments on a number of the species recorded. Of particular interest to most of us was a flock, upwards of twenty-five Tree Sparrows, observed in the bushes along the creek bank. To many of us it is a thrill whenever we record the Pileated woodpecker, however three were seen flying at one time by a number of the group. A woodpecker hole was noted and upon pounding the base of the tree a red-bellied flew out. For the second straight year several Palm Warblers were observed and carefully checked with binoculars. Also of importance is the early date recorded for the arrival from the north of the Tree Sparrows and the Juncos. The Screech Owl as well as the Ruffed Grouse was heard.

--Charles Conrad  
 418 Warwood Avenue  
 Wheeling, W. Va.

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EDITORIAL

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With the first draft of selectees in January, 1941, our former President, Harold Bergner, was moved from his home in Wheeling to the armed forces of the United States. Since then many other active and corresponding members have been drafted or have offered their services for the protection of our country.

Those of us who stay at home buy defense stamps, defense bonds, join the Red Cross, donate to the U. S. O. and join the Civilian Defense Units, to say nothing of the ladies who sew for the Red Cross and knit for the soldiers and sailors. We produce steel, glass, china and many other items that are essential to the war effort. Still we believe that we can do more. So we continue the activities of the Brooks Bird Club, and continue the publication of THE REDSTART.

For those who must remain at home, the Brooks Bird Club is a builder of morale, it helps us to face the difficulties of today and tomorrow. It gives us a comradeship that has been a feature of the organization for ten years. And it keeps us in some contact with those who have offered their services to the defense of the nation.

And down deep in our hearts we know that those who are fighting for us and those who are preparing to fight for us remember the campfires at Terra Alta. We know that they remember the parties and the meetings and the good fellowship that we have enjoyed for so long.

So we are telling you in uniform. As long as we are able to continue to be active as a group, you are one of us. We tell those of you who are not in uniform but who are performing valuable service to the nation, you are one of us. As long as we are able to keep in contact with you, we will do so. THE REDSTART is your publication to tell you of our activities as a group. THE REDSTART is your publication to tell others of your address.

We guarantee everyone who has ever been connected with the Brooks Bird Club that we will keep your name on file and that we will keep you posted on our activities. We assure you that if you send a postcard to the Brooks Bird Club at 113 Edgewood Street, indicating your postal address that you will receive not only THE REDSTART, but our notices of activities, and once in a while a personal letter from one or more of our members.

You do your job in the protection and the preservation of the United States of America and we will do our job in putting out the things you need and what is more, we will do our best to keep in touch with you in as many ways as possible.

So drop us a postal, and see if we neglect or ignore you. We won't. We are the Brooks Bird Club and you are one of us.

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WEST VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

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We are proud to acknowledge in the pages of THE RFDSTART an article in the November 1941 issue of West Virginia Conservation. This article entitled, "Organized Use of Parks" was written by R. Bruce Griffith, the new director of State Parks of the State of West Virginia.

This full-length article outlines the group use by the Brooks Bird Club of Lost River State Park during the years 1940 and 1941 for their summer camping expedition which they call the "Foray". Mr. Griffith went into considerable detail regarding the bird club and a few of their activities as well as outlining the use made of Lost River State Park for the Foray. We were very much pleased to read the article for it gave us assurance that our activities were being carefully studied by the Division of State Parks, and it forecasts our continued pleasant relationship. The work done by the Division of State Parks in the State of West Virginia during the past few years has been of inestimable value to the citizens of this state.

We, of the Brooks Bird Club, are very proud of our continued fine relations with this Division and we have offered our services, as individuals, and as a Club in any capacity that the State Park Commission might wish to assign to us. We have a well-organized group of expert campers made up of people with recognized ability in numerous biological fields.

Our services and our abilities will be used in the future, as in the past, in the promotion of the activities of the various parks within the State of West of West Virginia

--Corresponding Secretary

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GENERAL NOTFS

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Technicians Added to Biological Survey:

Steps have been taken to add the names of Charles B. Pierle, head of the Division of Game Management of the Conservation Commission of West Virginia, and J. W. Heslen, Jr., head of the Commission's Division of Fish Management, to the Biological Survey Committee of the West Virginia Academy of Science. Both are technically trained for their work and, as full-time workers in their respective fields, should have much to contribute to the knowledge of the state's wildlife resources. J. W. Handlan, director of Education for the Commission, has been a member of the Academy committee since its formation several years ago.

--John W. Handlan  
409 41st Street  
Charleston, W. Va.

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FIELD NOTES

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Winter Record for House Wren in Nicholas County, W. Va.:

On December 7, 1941, I was birding in a thicket when a House Wren, Troglodytes aedon, was seen and another one heard. By "squeaking" one of the birds was attracted to me. It was observed closely for some moments in good light.

Bewick's Wren, Thryomanes bewicki, is a common winter resident in this section of Nicholas County, usually becoming quite vocally active in January, but this is my first winter record for the House Wren.

--W. C. Legg  
Mt. Lookout, W. Va.

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THE EDITOR'S TRIP

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Within the near future we plan to carry a somewhat lengthy article by our Editor, Karl W. Haller in which he describes and discusses his recent trip into the Canadian north country in company with Mr. W. E. Clyde Todd. Being the junior member of the expedition, Haller is not in a position to publish much information on their findings of the bird life of the area. We believe, however, that the article will be widely read by the members and friends of the Brooks Bird Club.

Since his return to Wheeling, Haller has given the active members of the Club some of his impressions and at a recent meeting showed a large number of colored slides from pictures taken during the trip. The fact that he kept the attention of the meeting for almost three hours indicates that the pictures were good and that Haller was able to give a very interesting talk, highlighting the events of the trip.

We are sure our readers will look forward to this firsthand account of the Hudson Bay region from one of our most active members.

--Charles Conrad  
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Wheeling, W. Va.

THE REDSTART is published monthly by and for the members of the Brooks Bird Club. A corresponding membership may be obtained upon payment of one dollar which includes a twelve-month subscription to THE REDSTART. All members are permitted to contribute field notes for publication. The Brooks Bird Club, 113 Edgewood St., Wheeling, W. Va.