



The Redstart

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Maurice G. Brooks, Editor

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APRIL BIRD LIST IN CENTRAL OHIO

by
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On April 13 and 14, 1943, I had the good fortune to observe some of the birds of central and south central Ohio. In the company of L. E. Hicks of the Ohio Wildlife Research Division, a two day field trip was made through seven counties, namely: Franklin, Madison, Fayette, Pickaway, Pike, Ross and Highland. Columbus, the capitol city, was the starting point of a triangular cut that took us across some of the prairies of Washington Courthouse, southwest into the hills near Hillsboro, then northeast to Chillicothe, then directly north over more prairies to Columbus.

Routes along the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers, O'Shaugnessy Dam, White Lake and other natural ponds and marshes that are very typical of certain areas of Ohio presented the opportunity to list species of waterfowl and birds that are found in and about such habitats. With such varied associations of prairies, lakes and marshes and woodlands, many interesting species were recorded.

The weather was phenomenal. Raw steady winds continued most of the time along with snow flurries that seemed to descend in clouds and that would give way to intermittent periods of inert sunshine. What should have been warm April showers were in reality overcast showers of feather-like flakes. The average temperature was 35 degrees.

The list given below is by no means complete or in detail, but will give an indication as to what might be anticipated in this particular section about the middle of April. Only common names are given and no attempt has been made to determine subspecies. All records were made by sight and should be considered as such.

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Black Crown Night Heron, Mallard, Black Duck, Gadwall, Baldpate, American Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveller, Ring-necked Duck, Scaup Duck, American Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Red Shouldered Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Bob White Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot, Killdeer, Wilson

Snipe, Upland Plover, Golden Plover, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Mourning Dove, Screech Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Blue Jay, Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Hermit, Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Migrant Shrike, Starling, English Sparrow, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Purple Grackle, Cowbird, Cardinal, Red-eyed Towhee, Goldfinch, Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, American Rough-legged Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Osprey, Song Sparrow, Chimney Swift.

---487 National Road
Wheeling, W. Va.

AN ACCOMPLISHED MOCKINGBIRD AT CHARLESTON

F. M. Chapman's "Handbook", quotes L. M. Loomis to the effect that the latter heard a Mockingbird, Mimus polyglottos, imitate 32 different bird songs in the space of ten minutes. In Volume III of Edward Howe Forbush's "Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States", W. L. Dawson is credited with having heard a Mockingbird which "changed its tune" 87 times in seven minutes, Mr. Dawson recognizing imitations of 58 different bird songs during that time.

A Mockingbird was heard on May 16, 1943, which imitated at least eight other species, in a vacant lot on McCorkle Avenue, near 40th Street, Charleston in the half-dozen haw trees which grow there. In one of these, Mrs. Handlan found a Mocker's nest in 1942. A mocker, presumably the same bird, had been heard in this location at least once each month since discovery of the nest last May.

On May 16, the writers stood within a short ten yards of a mocker which was perched on a telephone wire at the rear of the lot. In rapid succession, the bird was heard to utter the scolding notes of the Chickadee, and Starling, the nasal-sounding call of the Catbird, and readily recognizable songs of the Brown Thrasher, Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat and the Yellowthroat.

---John and Polly Handlan
409 - 41st St., S.E.
Charleston, W. Va.

FIELD NOTES

Brown Pelicans in Corpus Christi, Texas:

The writers have been in Corpus Christi for over seven months but due to the nature of their occupations have been unable to study the bird life as they might have, had they not been constantly "on the job." The notes taken are necessarily very sketchy and varied.

On Sunday, February 7, 1943, the writers visited the "T" head on the Bay of Corpus Christi to watch the sailing ships, the Coast Guard cutters, Police ships, Warden's boats, and civilian-owned water craft as they went about the regular Sunday life of fishing and boating. Down here, nearly every native has a boat or knows someone who does own one.

The Mexicans own dirty scows and yachts and ply back and forth with loads of wet sea shells, fresh shrimp, fish, crabs, and almost anything that can be found in the sea.

Gulls and terns abound, shrieking constantly as they fly about the boats looking for pieces of food to be thrown overboard. We decided to watch these boats and their gatherings of birds to list the different species. Most exciting to us was to find two Eastern Brown Pelicans, presumably Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis, floating calmly near the rudder of one of the Mexican's boats. Needless to say, a camera was whipped out and the "find" recorded.

The Mexicans, seeing the interest being taken in the pelicans, wanted to show that they were old friends and threw shrimp into the sea to bring them closer. The pelicans would rise half-way out of the water and push and flop their way to the bait.

More pictures were taken, at a range of about five feet. The birds finding no more shrimp to eat, flew each to a pile sticking three to four feet out of the water and began to preen their feathers and look at the spectators out of their small pig-like eyes.

They were the ugliest, most awkward looking things the writers had ever seen on a bird walk and the writers wished several times that a movie could be taken of them to send back home.

---Rachel and Harold Olsen
502 Del Mar Blvd.
Corpus Christi, Texas

Virginia Rail in Nicholas County:

During migrations of recent years, Robert Richardson, Keslers Cross Lanes, W. Va., and Alton McClung, Mt. Lookout, W. Va., reported sight records of birds they thought were Virginia Rails. Also, the writer has a few sight records.

On September 10, 1943, a definite record was established for Rallus virginianus, in Nicholas Co. when Leonard Shaffer brought me a specimen that he had found dead near his home. The specimen was sent to Professor Maurice Brooks, West Virginia University, who suggested this note.

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

A. O. U. COUNCIL MEETING

The Sixty-first Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union was held

at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, October 20, 1943.

Due to travel restrictions, the usual five-day meeting with program sessions was dispensed with; all activities being condensed into a stream-lined one-day business session to meet requirements of the by-laws and incorporation rules. Fifteen members of the Council, 19 Fellows, and 11 Members were present. On Wednesday evening the group was entertained at the University Club by Dr. Leonard O. Sanford, of New Haven, Conn.

Officers elected for the new year were as follows: President, James L. Peters, New York City; Vice-Presidents, George Willett, Los Angeles Calif., and Hayes Lloyd, Ottawa, Canada; Secretary, Lawrence E. Hicks, Columbus, Ohio; Treasurer, J. Fletcher Street, Philadelphia, Pa.; Editor, John T. Zimmer, New York City; new members of the Council; Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, Cleveland; Ludlow Griscom, Boston; Dr. Alden H. Miller, Berkeley.

The Brewster Medal Award was made to Dr. Alden H. Miller, Berkeley, Calif., for his publication on "Speciation in the Avian Genus Junco". Two Fellows were elected: Dr. S. Charles Kendeigh, Champaign, Illinois, and Austin L. Rand, Ottawa, Canada.

In addition to 155 new Associate Members, 5 new Members were named: Dean Amadon, New York City; Robert J. Niedrach, Denver, Colorado; Frank A. Pitelka, Berkeley, Calif.; Julian K. Potter, Collingswood, N. J.; Terence M. Shortt, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The 1944 meeting, if conditions permit, will probably be held in New York City in October.

---Lawrence E. Hicks, Secretary
American Ornithologists' Union
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

EDITORIAL

THE REDSTART has demonstrated its vitality by surviving through ten volumes, and is now early in its eleventh year. It seems proper that the new editor should have a word to say concerning his policies for the journal.

First of all appreciation should be expressed for the unstinting labor and enthusiasm of past editors. Fully as much credit should go to those members of the Brooks Bird Club who have done the physical work of cutting stencils and mimeographing and mailing the publication. These have been labors of love, the only recompense being the satisfactions attendant on furthering our knowledge of birds.

During its comparatively brief history THE REDSTART has published more detailed faunal lists, and more notes dealing with West Virginia birds, than have ever appeared in any other publication. Anyone who writes of the State's ornithology must make constant reference to Haller's list of the birds of Putnam,

Mason, Kanawha, and Cabell counties, to Polings lists of the birds of the Eastern Panhandle, to Shields' notes on the birds of Pleasants County, to mention only a few of the leading articles which have appeared in these columns.

In assuming the editorship the present incumbent proposes to follow as closely as he can the best policies which the journal has exemplified. These might be summarized as follows:

1. THE REDSTART will have its greatest usefulness if it devotes its columns to matters ornithological in West Virginia, and in the neighboring territories which have similar biological conditions. We are, of course, interested in the observations made by our members in distant places, but these should be subordinated in our columns, in so far as possible, to more local material.
3. It is hoped that our activities, and the reports on them, will cover West Virginia as adequately as possible. The sessions of the Oglebay Nature Schools, the Brooks Bird Club forays, and numerous field trips in the State have been reported in THE REDSTART, yet there are many sections of West Virginia concerning which we know little, ornithologically speaking. It is to be hoped that we may find regular contributors who will tell us more of the bird life of the Bluefield region, the Big Sandy valley, the valley of the South Branch of the Potomac, and other regions where relatively little work has been done.
3. The editor approves the action of the Brooks Bird Club in publishing separately the B.B.C. Mail Bag. This digest of letters from members of the club in service is invaluable to other members, but its interest does not extend to outsiders who will be looking for articles and notes dealing primarily with birds.
4. The present policies for handling sight records will be continued; i.e., sight records will be treated as such, and subspecific determinations in the field will ordinarily not be recognized. A doubtful record, once it gets into literature, is very difficult to correct or eliminate, and THE REDSTART should do everything possible to avoid starting or perpetuating ornithological data insufficiently backed by evidence.
5. It is hoped that the journal may regularly contain leading articles dealing with the ornithology of this region, a strong section of carefully prepared field notes, reviews of new publications dealing with birds of our region, news of the national societies to which many of our members belong, and occasional articles dealing with other fields of science related to ornithology.
6. The editor has a decided preference for articles and notes which present careful observations made on a few, or a single, species, rather than for faunal lists collected and published without annotation. Notes dealing with the ecology, the food habits, and the general behavior of birds are of much greater general interest than

are faunal lists without elaboration. Through such observations, carefully made and recorded, even the rankest amateur may hope to add to the sum total of ornithological knowledge. May we, whenever possible, say 'where the bird was', and 'what it was doing there'.

In working toward these goals the full cooperation of every bird student in our region is solicited. A little time spent in preparing and submitting the observations which have interested you will go far toward making THE REDSTART continuously a journal of live ornithology.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

As has been its custom, THE REDSTART will devote a portion of its space in the January issue to the publication of bird counts made in various parts of the State. The Wheeling group will make a count as usual, there will be one from the Morgantown region, and other groups and individuals are invited to submit the results of their day in the field, even though these observations are also to be submitted to The Audubon Magazine.

MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASED

At the November meeting of the executive committee and the regular meeting of the Brooks Bird Club, a motion was made and approved to raise the yearly dues of the membership to one dollar and fifty-cents. Those who have recently paid their dues are considered paid-up. All others owing dues will be expected to send in their dues at the new rate effective January 1, 1944. Increased cost of paper, envelopes and postage were the chief reasons for the boost in price. Then too, THE REDSTART and announcements of all activities of the club are sent free to our members in the armed forces. All over-seas mailings must be forwarded first-class which doubles the postage cost.

The new publication, The B.B.C. Mail Bag, a round-up of news and letters from corresponding members to be issued monthly will be sent free to those in uniform. All others in the organization who desire to receive this newsy little journal will subscribe for a fee of fifty-cents a year to defray printing and mailing costs.

--- Norma L. Jepson
Membership Committee