



# The Redstart

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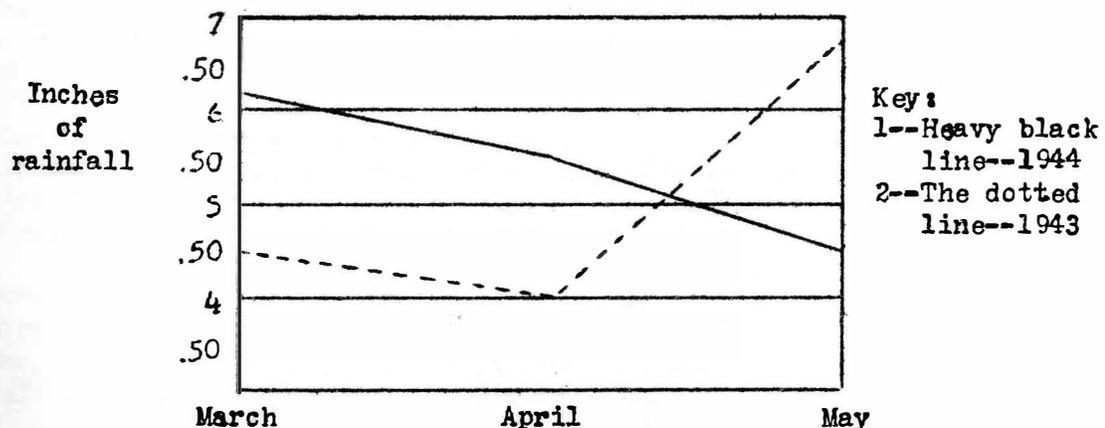
August 1944

## A REPORT OF THE 1944 SPRING MIGRATION IN OHIO COUNTY by Rhys Ritter

All material in this report is taken from the notes of those B.B.C. members, who have tried to keep check of the returning birds during this current spring, so that even though the club is hard-pressed by the absence of many of its bird devotees, the migration data would not be neglected.

There were few organized bird walks. Most of the field work was effected by small groups, who went birding in whatever spare time they might have, or by individuals, each working territory near his home. Thus, by breaking up into small groups we attempted to cover the maximum acreage of territory with a minimum number of people.

Weather Conditions. The winter of 1943-1944 was generally very mild in Ohio County. There were no heavy snowfalls, only occasional snow flurries disturbed what might have been a snow-free winter season. This clemency on the part of winter ushered in an early spring which probably accounts for the early migration dates. The rainfall for the months of March, April and May was unusually heavy. The extent of the precipitation for this spring is compared with that of last spring on the straight-line graph. (These averages are based on the records of the U. S. Lock No. 12, Ohio River.) The profuse rainfall together with high temperature so accelerated the foliation of plants that it seriously hampered birding, especially, the locating and identification of warblers.



Description of the Area. Ohio County, the second southernmost county in the northern panhandle of West Virginia, includes a wide variety of terrain, such as deep woodlands, thickets, meadows, marsh lands, and flood plains, to mention only a few. All of these offer splendid opportunity for field work. However, it is almost impossible to work all of these territories due to the far-reaching effects of the war. Therefore, a limited number of localities were chosen that most closely typified all the areas existing in Ohio County.

A high ridge from which one can see for many miles in every direction would be an excellent place to study the topography of an area. One need not look far in Ohio County to find such a place, for here we are in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Since high hills are so abundant in Ohio County and since they make such good observation posts, let us suppose we are on one of these ridges, and to make a more complete picture, let us assume we are standing in the yard of the writer's home. Here we are some 1,200 feet above sea level and we command a complete view of much of the territory worked this spring.

In the following paragraphs the writer will endeavor to present a comprehensive explanation of the area, based on the picture which is unfolded before us from our lookout, and to comment on the respective bird life. It must be remembered that these comments are strictly confined to spring migrant birds.

Simpson and Bachmann Farms. Looking towards the west we see a series of high ridges and deep hollows, which make up the Simpson and Bachmann farms. The summits of these ridges give way to extensive pasture lands, occasionally broken by plowed fields. Early in migration the fox sparrow was found frequently in the pasture lands and was heard singing quite beautifully on several occasions. Grasshopper sparrow, vesper sparrow, chipping sparrow, field sparrow were also recorded in these fields or in the case of the white-crowned sparrow along the woodland borders. Purple finches were also moderately common along these borders. In each plowed field at least one pair of horned larks could be found. Cowbirds were always abundant in the fields.

Where the terrain was too steep for pasture lands, the deep and semi-deep woodlands replaced the open country. The forestation of these sections yields itself fundamentally to two different kinds of trees, the American beech and a mixture of oaks. On those hillsides with northern exposure, the beech predominates. On the southeastern slopes the oaks reign supreme. These wooded areas are always productive territory for warblers. The black and white warbler, worm-eating warbler, Tennessee warbler, magnolia warbler, Cape May warbler, black-throated green warbler, myrtle warbler, cerulean warbler, Blackburnian warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, black-poll warbler, pine warbler, ovenbird, Louisiana water thrush, Kentucky warbler, hooded warbler, and redstart were all listed in these sections this spring.

The thrush population was also represented here in substantial numbers. The olive-backed thrush was the most noteworthy, for it was the most numerous, and all through its stay, sang very nicely. The wood thrush, hermit thrush and the veery were also welcome visitors to our woodlands.

Of course other species of birds were found in the forests beside the warblers and thrushes. The crested flycatcher, phoebe, Acadian flycatcher, least flycatcher, ruby-crowned kinglet, the yellow-throated vireo, red-eyed vireo, scarlet tanager, and rose-breasted grosbeak were all present.

However on a few of the hillsides where there is a more or less gradual descent we find not the thick woodlands, but instead, marshy thickets. The trees in these thickets are composed chiefly of crabapple, willow, and sycamore. Here the white-eyed vireo was commonly observed. Nashville and blue-winged warblers were rather common. Yellow-breasted chats were the most numerous and conspicuous of the warblers. Both species of cuckoos were frequently listed in this locality.

Pleasant Valley. Let us again resume our position on the ridge, and this time face northward. Some 550 feet below us stretches a valley about two miles in length to about a quarter of a mile wide. This valley is the principal residential district of Wheeling. It is located approximately three miles east of Wheeling's business district on U. S. 40. From our 1200-foot perch the thick foliage obscures many of the dwellings. This combination of moderate forestation combined with the many houses seems to be attractive to many species of birds. For instance the yellow and black-billed cuckoo, chimney swift, ruby-throated hummingbird, purple martin, wood pewee, house wren, wood thrush, yellow-throated vireo, warbling vireo, yellow warbler, Baltimore oriole, cowbird and rose-breasted grosbeak, were all commonly observed, not to mention many species of warblers and sparrows. Of course it must be understood that in commenting on the bird life of a certain locality, it is almost impossible to cover all of the birds. However, this coverage should give a general picture of the birdlife.

Wheeling Creek. It would be difficult indeed to work this stream from its origin to its mouth, for its course extends out of Ohio County and even out of the state. So a small section of the creek, extending the length of Pleasant Valley, was thoroughly worked, and by so doing the birding group hoped they had chosen a section typical of the entire creek. Of course, it must be realized that this method can only be a partial success in yielding birding dividends.

The many pebbled beaches, the numerous flood plains, the willows, and sycamores that grow from the muddy banks make this a very productive bird territory. The horned grebe, green heron, spotted and solitary sandpiper, bank swallow, rough-winged swallow, red-wing, and grackle were all frequent visitors at the creek area. On a broad flood plain that fringes the creek, at least three woodcocks were observed for a period of two weeks.

Wheeling Park. On the eastern boundaries of Pleasant Valley lies Wheeling Park. Much of the park is devoted to recreational facilities, but a large tract of land is beyond the ramblings of the average stroller, and is heavily forested. This area much resembles the wooded sections of the Simpson and Bachmann farms, and therefore has many of the same birds. An exceptionally early observation on the black-poll warbler was recorded here on April 30. Canada warblers were found frequently in the wilderness area of the park, but were scarce in the other areas worked this spring. On a small artificial lake in the park a pied-billed grebe stayed for several days.

Oglebay Park. Located two miles north of Pleasant Valley, this well-known park is the chief tramping grounds for the majority of the B.B.C.'s active members. It justly deserves this attention for it offers many conveniences as well as a good bird-hunting ground. Many who read this report have at one time or another visited Oglebay, therefore, no description of the area will be given. However there are a few spots within the park that deserve comment. One of these places

is Telescope Hill. This is, to my knowledge, the only place in Ohio County where bobolinks are found. Another spot is the Serpentine Trail. It is unusually good warbler country.

Century Day. I have commented on century day at this time, for it can be directly associated with the five localities mentioned previously. The Simpson and Bachmann farms, Pleasant Valley, Wheeling Creek, Wheeling Park, and Oglebay Park were all worked thoroughly. This walk was one of the very few trips in which the active members really got together and concentrated their efforts to make the day a success by recording 102 birds.

#### Master List for Spring Migration

All birds in the following list are arranged in chronological order and include only spring transient visitors and summer residents.

Meadowlark	2/20	Cerulean Warbler	4/27
Grackle	3/11	Pine Warbler	4/27
Red-wing	3/14	Yellow-throat	4/27
Phoebe	3/20	Kentucky Warbler	4/28
Woodcock	3/24	Red-breasted Nuthatch	4/29
Bewick's Wren	3/24	Mockingbird	4/29
Vesper Sparrow	3/25	Scarlet Tanager	4/29
Purple Martin	3/22	Purple Finch	4/29
Chipping Sparrow	3/28	Nashville Warbler	4/30
Cowbird	3/29	Black-poll Warbler	4/30
Fox sparrow	3/30	Yellow-breasted Chat	4/30
Louisiana Water Thrush	4/1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4/30
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4/7	White-eyed Vireo	5/3
Brown Thrasher	4/10	Redstart	5/3
House Wren	4/10	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5/5
Wood Thrush	4/14	Wood Pewee	5/5
Myrtle Warbler	4/14	Tennessee Warbler	5/5
Barn Swallow	4/15	Cape May Warbler	5/5
Hermit Thrush	4/15	Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/5
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/15	Ovenbird	5/5
Chimney Swift	4/16	Crested Flycatcher	5/6
Rough-wing Swallow	4/16	Black-billed Cuckoo	5/7
Bank Swallow	4/22	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	5/7
Catbird	4/22	Veery	5/7
Yellow Warbler	4/22	Black-throated Blue Warbler	5/7
Grasshopper Sparrow	4/22	Canada Warbler	5/7
Pied-billed Grebe	4/23	Eastern Kingbird	5/9
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4/23	Least Flycatcher	5/9
Warbling Vireo	4/23	Acadian Flycatcher	5/13
Black and White Warbler	4/23	Bobolink	5/13
Olive-backed Thrush	4/24	Broad-winged Hawk	5/14
Worm-eating Warbler	4/24	Solitary Sandpiper	5/14
Blue-winged Warbler	4/24	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	5/14
Baltimore Oriole	4/24	Magnolia Warbler	5/14
Blackburnian Warbler	4/26	Bay-breasted Warbler	5/14
Horned Grebe	4/27	Orchard Oriole	5/14
Green Heron	4/27	Savannah Sparrow	5/14
Spotted Sandpiper	4/27	Northern Water Thrush	5/20
Yellow-throated Vireo	4/27	Nighthawk	5/23
Red-eyed Vireo	4/27		

SPRING MIGRATION RECORD  
FOR  
HANDLAN CHAPTER OF BROOKS BIRD CLUB

Records presented below were compiled by various members of the newly formed Handlan Chapter of the Brooks Bird Club. The majority are those recorded for Charleston, W. Va. and vicinity, where weekly field trips were taken throughout the spring and early summer months. In some instances notes are included of first arrivals noted in counties other than Kanawha. A few of the birds included may eventually be found to be winter residents of the Kanawha Valley.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
<b>HERONS</b>		
American Egret	Pleasants	May 9, 1944
E. Green Heron	Putnam	April 1, 1944
Black-crowned Night Heron	Brooke	April 9 "
<b>DUCKS</b>		
Pintail	Putnam	February 27
Blue-winged Teal	Kanawha	April 18
Wood Duck	Putnam	February 27
Scaup (sp?)	Kanawha	April 2
American Goldeneye	Wood	March 25
Hooded Merganser	Greenbrier	March 27
American Merganser	Kanawha	April 1
Red-breasted Merganser	Kanawha	March 25
<b>HAWK</b>		
Broad-winged Hawk	Kanawha	April 9
Marsh Hawk	Brooke	April 8
<b>SHORE BIRDS</b>		
American Coot	Putnam	April 1
Spotted Sandpiper	Monongalia	April 20
" "	Kanawha	May 7
Solitary Sandpiper	Brooke	May 9
<b>GULLS</b>		
Bonaparte's Gull	Kanawha	April 2
<b>DOVES</b>		
Mourning Dove	Putnam	February 27
<b>CUCKOOS</b>		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Kanawha	May 6
" " "	Brooke	May 8
Black-billed Cuckoo	Kanawha	May 7
<b>GOATSUCKERS</b>		
Whip-poor-will	Kanawha	April 13
Nighthawk	Kanawha	April 25
<b>SWIFTS and HUMMINGBIRDS</b>		
Chimney Swift	Kanawha	April 13
Hummingbird	Lincoln	April 22
<b>FLYCATCHERS</b>		
Eastern Kingbird	Kanawha	April 30
Crested Flycatcher	Kanawha	April 16
E. Phoebe	Hancock	March 1
Acadian Flycatcher	Kanawha	April 30
Least Flycatcher	Kanawha	May 3
Wood Pewee	Kanawha	April 30

## SWALLOWS

Rough-winged Swallow	Kanawha	April 14, 1944
Barn Swallow	Kanawha	April 16
Purple Martin	Kanawha	April 13

## WRENS

House Wren	Monongalia	April 20
" "	Kanawha	April 22
Bewick's Wren	Monroe	March 18
" "	Kanawha	May 14

## MOCKERS

Catbird	Kanawha	March 27
Brown Thrasher	Kanawha	April 5

## THRUSHES

Wood Thrush	Kanawha	April 14
Olive-backed Thrush	Kanawha	May 1
Veery	Kanawha	May 7
"	Brooke	May 8

## OLD WORLD WARBLERS

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Kanawha	April 14
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## WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing	Kanawha	May 14
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## VIREOS

White-eyed Vireo	Kanawha	April 22
Yellow-throated Vireo	Kanawha	April 23
Blue-headed Vireo	Kanawha	April 9
Red-eyed Vireo	Kanawha	April 23
Warbling Vireo	Kanawha	April 21

## WOOD WARBLERS

Black and White Warbler	Kanawha	April 9
Swainson's Warbler	Kanawha	May 7
Worm-eating Warbler	Kanawha	April 23
Golden-winged Warbler	Kanawha	April 29
Blue-winged Warbler	Kanawha	May 1
Tennessee Warbler	Kanawha	April 29
Nashville Warbler	Kanawha	April 29
Parula Warbler	Kanawha	April 22
Yellow Warbler	Kanawha	April 13
Magnolia Warbler	Kanawha	May 1
Cape May Warbler	Kanawha	April 21
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Kanawha	April 23
Myrtle Warbler	Kanawha	April 16
Black-throated Green Warbler	Kanawha	April 9
Cerulean Warbler	Kanawha	April 29
Blackburnian Warbler	Kanawha	April 30
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Kanawha	April 30
Bay-breasted Warbler	Brooke	May 8
Black-poll Warbler	Kanawha	May 14
Pine Warbler	Kanawha	April 2
Prairie Warbler	Kanawha	April 23
Palm Warbler	Kanawha	May 3
Ovenbird	Kanawha	April 16
Louisiana Water-thrush	Kanawha	March 26
Kentucky Warbler	Kanawha	April 16
Yellow-throat	Kanawha	April 21
Yellow-breasted Chat	Kanawha	April 17

Hooded Warbler	Kanawha	April 16, 1944
Wilson's Warbler	Kanawha	May 28
Canada Warbler	Brooke	May 7
American Redstart	Kanawha	April 16
BLACKBIRDS, etc.		
Redwing	Putnam	February 27
Orchard Oriole	Kanawha	April 22
Baltimore Oriole	Kanawha	April 22
Rusty Blackbird	Pocahontas	March 26
Bronze Grackle	Kanawha	March 20
TANAGERS		
Scarlet Tanager	Kanawha	April 23
Summer Tanager	Kanawha	April 21
SPARROWS, etc.		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Kanawha	April 23
Indigo Bunting	Kanawha	May 6
Pine Siskin	Kanawha	March 21
Savannah Sparrow	Kanawha	April 6
Grasshopper Sparrow	Brooke	May 7
" "	Kanawha	May 14
Vesper Sparrow	Pocahontas	March 27
" "	Kanawha	April 18
Chipping Sparrow	Kanawha	March 16
White-crowned Sparrow	Kanawha	May 9
White-throated Sparrow	Kanawha	April 10
Swamp Sparrow	Brooke	April 9

—W. R. DeGarmo  
State Conservation Commission  
Charleston, W. Va.

#### Marsh Hawk Breeding in Cranesville Swamp .

On June 13, while making a brief visit to Cranesville Swamp in Preston County, W. Va., a nest of the Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) was found. The nest contained six young, one of which was very small and in a weakened condition. The nest was among a fairly dense growth of chokecherry (*Aronia* sp.) and huckleberry (*Gaylussacia*) and was constructed largely of sedges (*Carex* spp.).

While searching for and examining the nest only the male made any efforts to defend the nest. These actions were very bold and were of great help in locating the nest. The female, when flushed from the nest, retired to a distance of over one-quarter mile, and indicated no great concern.

It was interesting to note that there were no indications of remains of birds or mammals at the nest.

—W. R. DeGarmo  
State Conservation Commission  
Charleston, W. Va.

#### Black-throated Green Warbler in Wayne County, W. Va.

During two days spent on Cabwaylingo State Forest, June 17 and 18, Black-throated Green Warblers were found to be fairly common in the hemlock groves along Twelvepole Creek and its tributaries.

No nests were found but pairs of birds were noted. The occurrence of the birds is of interest due to the low elevation of the area which is approximately 725 feet.

Parula Warblers were also found to be fairly common and occurred in the same type of timber as the Black-throated Green Warblers.

--W. R. DeGarmo  
State Conservation Commission  
Charleston, W. Va.

#### Ducks at Tappan Reservoir.

On April 7, 1944, Vera Carrothers, Margaret Perner, Marion Skaggs and the writer spent an hour or two observing birds at Tappan reservoir, located in Harrison County, Ohio. Small flocks of ducks were scattered about the main body of the lake and a good many were noted in the inlets on the other side of the road. One group of about 80 baldpate were feeding in a wheat field and although we looked them over carefully we could find no European widgeon among them. Two male and one female wood duck swam across one inlet near the dam. The two most plentiful ducks were the lesser scaup and the redhead. The total species of ducks noted was 13. In addition to those noted above, we listed the following: mallard, black, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, ring-necked duck, canvasback, and all three of the mergansers. It was evident that Tappan reservoir is a good place to see ducks as there seemed to be plenty of food and they were not being molested.

--M. B. Skaggs  
Cleveland, Ohio

#### 1944 FORAY

Beginning Sunday June 11, 1944, members of the Brooks Bird Club spent their annual week's foray of bird study at Tomlinson Run State Park, Hancock County, W. Va.

Tomlinson Run State Park is an area of 1389 acres which is divided into an activities area and a wilderness area. The altitude ranges from 700 feet to over 1200 feet above sea level. A newly developed 30-acre lake offers such recreation as boating, swimming and fishing. The park is considered a geologic island for it is composed of a sandstone formation while the surrounding territory is limestone. Deciduous trees make up the woodlands, but some hemlock and Canadian yew are found. In one section along Tomlinson Run rhododendron is the dominating plant. Abandoned farmlands acquired by the park are becoming a dense tangle of brush and thickets. Open fields and former orchards, and the lakeside area in addition to those mentioned above, offer many opportunities to study a variety of habitats and associations. The park is an excellent place to observe plant and animal life of the Carolinian life zone with slight evidence of plant life of the Canadian life zone. To give details of the work and pleasant times of the 1944 Foray is not practical here. These will be published in the foray report in the near future.

Bird study was stressed to the utmost, while ecology was a close second. To get some idea of the representative trees and shrubs, flowering plants, ferns and their allies, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, some members devoted attention to these subjects. Ideal weather conditions permitted many excellent field trips.

--George H. Breiding  
108 West Woodruff, Columbus, Ohio