

## PHALAROPES OF THE WESTERN LAKE ERIE REGION

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PUBLISHED records of the occurrence of the three species of phalaropes at the western end of Lake Erie are very few. Early Ohio records are missing entirely since very little ornithological work was done west of Sandusky Bay until after the year 1920. In southern Michigan and Ontario much work was done from 1880 to 1908, after which until 1922, there is a complete absence of records of phalaropes due possibly to a scarcity of observers. Within the past fifteen years, however, so many occurrences of these birds have been reported at the western end of Lake Erie that the data should be summarized and the present status in this district indicated. In this paper the territory covered extends from Sandusky Bay and the "island bridge" of Lake Erie to the St. Clair Flats. My own field work has been confined largely to the vicinity of Toledo, Ohio. My observations and those of my brother, Bernard R. Campbell, were begun in 1926 although neither of us did any collecting until 1933, which explains the absence of specimens taken during earlier observations.

RED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

The Red Phalarope is by far the rarest of the three species. In Ohio, in 1882, James M. Wheaton (1882, p. 467) recorded the species as a rare transient and admitted it to the list of Ohio birds on the authority of R. K. Winslow. In 1903, William L. Dawson (1903, p. 539) wrote: "Rare migrant. No Ohio specimens known to exist in collections." The same year Lynds Jones (1903, p. 226) placed the bird on his hypothetical list because of an absence of specimens. In 1932, Milton B. Trautman (1932, p. 8) listed the Red Phalarope as casual. In Michigan, Wells W. Cooke (1910, p. 15) stated that this phalarope occurred as a rare straggler and Walter B. Barrows in 1912 (p. 165) declared it to be one of the rarest of the waders in Michigan. Instances of capture and sight records are as follows: October 24, 1888, one bird was shot by Ralph Brandreth at the mouth of the Raisin River, Monroe County, Michigan, and reported by Robert B. Lawrence (Auk, 1890, p. 204), who later mounted it. October 25, 1890, Robert B. Lawrence (1890a, p. 372) collected a female at Monroe, Michigan, which at the time of writing was in his collection. Arthur C. Bent (1927, p. 15) repeated the above records. Walter B. Barrows (1912, p. 165) mentioned Lawrence's record of October 25, 1890, and further stated, "a second (sic) specimen taken at Monroe, October 15, 1894, by Mr. Lawrence was kindly presented to the Michigan Agricultural College . . ." He also wrote: "According to McIlwraith, Dr. Garnier saw a flock of six at Mitchell's Bay

near St. Clair in the fall of 1880 and secured one of them (Birds of Ontario, 1894, p. 125)." My only records are: October 12, 1932, two birds were seen at Little Cedar Point, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio, by John Stophlet and myself. They were examined at a distance of twenty feet. On November 7, 1936, I saw one in Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio; and on October 10, 1937, I collected a female on the Maumee River rapids, Waterville Township, Lucas County. The latter specimen has been given to the Ohio State Museum.

#### WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Steganopus tricolor*)

Of the occurrence of this species in Ohio, Dr. James M. Wheaton (1882, p. 466) wrote: "Not common spring and fall migrant.—It is a common summer resident in northern Indiana, abundant in northern Illinois and undoubtedly is a not uncommon resident throughout the summer in some localities in northwestern Ohio." William L. Dawson (1903, p. 541) repeated this statement. The same year, however, Lynds Jones (1903, p. 64) wrote: "This phalarope is reported only from Erie County where it is stated it may breed . . . While it may breed in the northwestern part of the state, there is no record of its doing so." Erie County bounds on the east the territory I have covered in this report. No records are given for the western end of Lake Erie. In 1932, Milton B. Trautman (1932, p. 8) listed this form as a very rare migrant.

Walter B. Barrows (1912, p. 168) stated that in Michigan the Wilson's Phalarope is far from common but he gives several records. Of those within our limits, he wrote: "Mr. Saunders records one killed at Mitchell's Bay, St. Clair Flats, in May, 1882 (McIlwraith, Birds of Ontario, 1894, p. 128) and J. Claire Wood (letter, July 28, 1905) says, 'In June 1900, my brother saw one specimen at St. Clair Flats, and Jesse Craven saw a pair there under circumstances that convinced him they were breeding.' May 9, 1906, Mr. J. Claire Wood saw a pair of these phalaropes in Ecorse Township, Wayne County." J. Claire Wood also collected a male and a female, May 19, 1907, in Ecorse Township, Wayne County, Michigan, which are in the University of Michigan Museum. P. A. Taverner (1906, p. 335) reported a female on May 5, 1906, in Ecorse Township, Wayne County, Michigan. Taverner further stated that he collected this specimen May 12. He also wrote (1908a, p. 204) that a few stop south of Detroit in each spring migration and gave a record for May 9, 1908. In 'The Auk' (vol. 25, p. 328, 1908) he reported that this specimen was collected. B. H. Swales and P. A. Taverner (Auk, 24: 140, 1907) reported a female taken in May 1906, at St. Clair Flats by Clarence Conely of Detroit. Of the Wilson's Phalarope, Wells W. Cooke (1910, p. 15) wrote: "Macoun records that a pair nested at Dunnville, Ontario, near the northeastern shore of Lake Erie." Arthur C.

Bent (1927, p. 35) listed this phalarope as breeding on the St. Clair Flats in Michigan and at Dunnville, Ontario. Among his "early dates of spring arrival" he gives "Ann Arbor, April 1; Detroit, May 1." My earliest dates of arrival for the Wilson's Phalarope are April 28, 1932, and April 28, 1934. The April 1 record quoted above is the earliest given for the entire United States and this suggests the possibility of an error.

More recent occurrences are as follows. On September 7, 1925, one bird was seen at Bay Bridge on Sandusky Bay by Milton B. Trautman (1928, p. 41). On July 12, 1931, I saw one in a flooded field near Bono in Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. On April 28, 1932, and May 15, one female, and on May 18, two females and one male were seen by Bernard R. Campbell and me at the mouth of Otter Creek, Oregon Township, Lucas County, Ohio. July 23, 1932, I saw an individual along the Maumee River bank in Riverside Park, Toledo, Ohio. May 21, 1933, I found one bird, apparently a male, in a flooded field near Bono, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. On September 3, 1933, two Wilson's Phalaropes were seen in the Little Cedar Point Marsh, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio, by Milton B. Trautman (1935, p. 321), Bernard R. Campbell and myself. April 28, 1934, I observed a female in a temporary pond in the Oak Openings, Monclova Township, Lucas County, Ohio. May 24, 1934, I saw a male in the Maumee River rapids, Waterville Township, Lucas County, Ohio. On September 29, 1935, I collected a male on the Maumee River rapids, Waterville Township, Lucas County, Ohio; the skin is in the Ohio State Museum. May 30, 1936, in the Erie Marsh, Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan, I saw three females and one male. The male was occasionally pursued by all three females and at times a female would perform a short courtship flight. On July 18, 1936, I saw three individuals in Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. Apparently two were females and one was a male. The male was collected and given to Ohio State Museum. July 25, 1936, I found one in Erie Marsh, Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan. I have found no evidence whatever which might indicate that Wilson's Phalarope nests in the area under discussion. The former extensive wet prairies of the Oak Openings west of Toledo which might have been suitable as breeding grounds for the Wilson's Phalarope, have now been drained.

#### NORTHERN PHALAROPE (*Lobipes lobatus*)

There are no early Ohio records for this phalarope at the western end of Lake Erie. Writing of the entire State of Ohio in 1882, James M. Wheaton (1882, p. 466) called it a "rare spring and fall migrant" and neither Lynds Jones (1903, p. 226) nor William L. Dawson (1903, p. 539) added anything to his statement. More recently, in 1932, Milton B. Trautman (1932, p. 8)

listed the Northern Phalarope as casual. In 1912, Walter B. Barrows (1912, p. 166) stated that this species "is hardly more than a straggler in Michigan . . . McIlwraith quotes Saunders' record of 'one found dead at Mitchell's Bay 1882' (Birds of Ontario, 1894, p. 127). . . I do not know of an actual Michigan specimen preserved anywhere." B. H. Swales (1913, pp. 111-112) in 1913, discussed the status of the species in Michigan, giving one record of a bird taken September 14, 1899, in Lenawee County, Michigan, and now in the U. S. National Museum. Swales also mentioned two specimens now in the collection of W. E. Saunders, of London, Ontario, that were taken by Phillip Burk at Rondeau, Ontario. One of these specimens was secured on October 10, 1906, and the other on October 20, 1906. In addition to these, another Michigan record not in our territory was given. In 1927, Arthur C. Bent (1927, p. 28) reported the capture of September 14, 1899, only.

Recent occurrences are as follows. On May 21, 1922, Dr. Frank N. Wilson (1923, pp. 184-185) discovered two Northern Phalaropes on a small pond fifteen miles west of Detroit, Michigan, and succeeded in photographing one. However, when the picture was printed in 'Bird-Lore,' it was titled in error "A Red Phalarope in Michigan." September 13, 1924, Harold S. Peters (Geist, 1928, p. 7) collected a specimen at Bay Point, Ottawa County, Ohio, now in the Ohio State Museum. May 22, 1926, an individual, apparently a female, was seen by Louis A. Klewer and myself (1930, p. 6) in Washington Township, Lucas County, Ohio, in a flooded field. May 30, 1927, I (1930, p. 6) saw a female in the same location. On September 16, 1928, I found two individuals in a marsh near Gypsum, Ottawa County, Ohio. January 1, 1932, a Northern Phalarope was seen by John Stophlet at Little Cedar Point, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. On January 14, 22 and 28, Roger Conant and I watched it for some time. On January 22, the bird was accompanied by a Red-backed Sandpiper (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*) and on January 28 by three. This phalarope was very tame. Examined within a distance of ten feet, it was carefully distinguished from the Red Phalarope. August 21, 1932, I saw one in the Little Cedar Point Marsh, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. September 4, 1932, I found one at Little Cedar Point, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. On September 3, 1933, a group of three was seen by Milton B. Trautman (1935, p. 321), Bernard R. Campbell and myself in the Little Cedar Point Marsh, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. These accompanied the two Wilson's Phalaropes mentioned previously. May 22, 1934, one was seen on the Maumee River rapids, Waterville Township, Lucas County, Ohio, by John Stophlet. September 9, 1934, two females were collected by Milton B. Trautman at North Cape, Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan, and given to the University of

Michigan Museum at Ann Arbor. May 7, 1935, Bernard R. Campbell and I found a female in the Erie Marsh, Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan. This bird was collected by my brother and presented to the University of Michigan Museum. September 15, 1935, I found an individual in the Little Cedar Point Marsh, Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, Ohio. May 30, 1936, I saw three Northern Phalaropes,—two males and one female as far as I could judge by their appearance,—in the Erie Marsh, Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan. These birds were near the four Wilson's Phalaropes previously mentioned. On August 22, 1936, I collected a male in the Erie Marsh, Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan; it is now in the University of Michigan Museum. September 27, 1936, I found a group of four on a mud flat near the mouth of the Maumee River in Toledo, Ohio. Of these, a male and a female were collected and are now in the Ohio State Museum. The female weighed 37.9 grams, which is 10.9 grams more than the weight of the male; however, the female had a wing length of only 102.5 mm. against 105 mm. of the male. October 4, 1936, I found one bird still remaining at the above location.

#### SUMMARY

From the above occurrences I conclude that the status of the three phalaropes at the western end of Lake Erie is as follows: (a) The Red Phalarope is a very rare migrant which has been noted only in the autumn, arriving October 17 (5) and leaving November 7 (1). The extreme migration dates are October 10, 1937, and November 7, 1936. The digit in parenthesis after these and the following averages indicates the number of years upon which the average has been computed. (b) The Wilson's Phalarope is a fairly regular though not numerous transient, slightly more common in the spring than in the autumn, and formerly a rare breeder in Michigan and Ontario. The average arrival and departure dates for spring are May 4 (5) and May 22 (5) with extreme dates of April 28, 1932 and 1934, and May 30, 1936. Fall migration averages July 18 (3) and September 13 (3). Extreme arrival and departure dates are July 12, 1931, and September 29, 1935. I have found nothing which might indicate that the species has bred in the portion of Michigan and Ontario under discussion, since 1900. (c) The Northern Phalarope is a fairly regular but not numerous transient, somewhat more common in autumn than in spring. Arrival and departure averages for spring are May 7 (1) and May 25 (5), with extreme dates of May 7, 1935, and May 30, 1927 and 1936. Fall averages are September 7 (8) and October 12 (2) with extremes of August 21, 1932, and October 20, 1906. There is one occurrence in winter, January 1 to 28, 1932.

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*Toledo, Ohio*