

five minutes after two, with a total of twenty-seven drummings. "Michigan Bird Life" gives as possible causes for the sound the striking of the wings over the back, striking of wings against sides, and a hollow log. In this instance the wings did not touch above the back nor did they strike the sides of the breast. The log, which was twenty inches in diameter, had a hollow center possibly two to three inches in diameter.

My conclusion is that the opening of the feathers permitted the formation of an air cushion which acted as a sounding board for the vibrations caused by the heating of the wings.

L. R. GLEASON.

ACTIONS OF COOTS DURING FREEZE-UP

Squaw Lake, Minnesota, where these observations were made, is in the north-central part of Minnesota, 32 miles by road, north of Deer River, and 120 miles north-west of Duluth. The lake is about 8 miles long, a series of bays completely covered with wild rice. This offers food for thousands of ducks and coot.

On the morning of October 28, 1923, a very cold north-west wind began to freeze the lake. The ducks, mainly lesser scaup and canvass-backs left the country, but the coots remained. They stayed in the open patches of water, as long as there were any, and then flew to places on the ice where it was strong enough to hold them. By 10 A. M. there were at least 2,000 birds on the ice in one of the bays. They were scattered about over a half square mile area in little groups of anywhere from 3 to 10. They did not seem to want to fly. Individuals would run about for a few minutes and then join a group. It was noticeable that coots strayed from smaller to the larger gatherings. By 2 P. M. the general sprinkling of birds was no longer in evidence. Instead, there were three large compact masses of Coots containing approximately 600 individuals each. They had gathered, evidently, to keep warm, and to protect themselves from the wind. The groups were about 15 ft. wide and 40 to 50 ft. long, running in a north-west-south-west line. The wind was from the north-west, so that the formation of the birds offered them maximum wind protection.

Two rafts of the coots stayed all night, and were on the lake most of the next day. Some 300 birds stayed out the second night, and were still in a compact flock on the ice the following morning. They spread out over the ice during the warm part of the day, but returned to their mass formation toward dusk. At the end of five days there were still about a dozen flying birds, and as many cripples in the flock. The rest had left. While the coots remained on the lake, they could have had little or no food, for the rice had been eaten off very thoroughly by the Indians, and upon examination of the ricebeds, when the ice was thick enough to hold a man, we could find no kernels about anywhere.

Only one coot did I notice; that was frozen into the ice alive. For two days it tried to free itself by flapping its wings and struggling. It could not release its feet, nor break them off. The morning of the second day, two herring gulls that had been circling over Squaw Lake, settled on the ice near the imprisoned bird. I watched the gulls carefully.

They did not touch the coot while it was alive. Their actions plainly showed that they were waiting for dead meat, for they never went more than thirty yards from the coot. The morning of the third day I found two gulls dragging the entrails of the dead bird about. When the ice was thick enough to walk on I examined the remains and found nothing but the head, wings and feet, held together by a few shreds of skin.

553 Prospect Ave., Milwaukee, Wis.

CLARENCE S. JUNG.

CROSSBILL IN KENTUCKY

The Crossbill, recorded for this part of Kentucky only once before, by Professor Gordon Wilson, January 19, 1920 (Auk, April, 1922), was seen by me at close range on the road from Tompkinsville to Gamaliel, Kentucky, on February 2, 1924. J. L. Crawford, Gamaliel, Kentucky.

* * * * *

Extracts from a letter from John A. Gillespie, Glenolden, Pennsylvania, to the Secretary: "Most of my spare time is taken up with my bird banding, but at the same time I have tried to keep in touch with my friends in the field. Here in southeastern Pennsylvania we have experienced one of the mildest winters for some time. Only twice has the thermometer reached 10°. Only one snowfall of any consequence has occurred, and that was gone in a day or two. Boreal species have been either very scarce or entirely absent. I have seen no Shrikes, Crossbills, Siskins, etc. and my fellow workers of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club say the same thing. White-throated Sparrows were very abundant in November, but only a dozen or so are in evidence now. Purple Finches are common. I imagine they wander about a good deal, for at times they are plentiful, and a day later are absent. Golden-crowned Kinglets have been absent since November 22. Every one else reports them as being plentiful, but in Glenolden we seldom see them in the dead of winter, no doubt on account of the scarcity of their natural food. Here the woods are made up mostly of beech, oak, tupelo, tulip poplar, and hickory. I imagine the Golden-crowned Kinglet prefers coniferous tracts.

"I rather expected more Fox Sparrows would winter than those present. On Christmas Day I saw but one. He wore a band and no doubt was one of "my birds".

"Nuthatches and Titmice have been common all winter; in fact, more so than usual. Woodpeckers of all kinds have been less common than usual. Brown Creepers are more plentiful than I have seen in five years. I have often heard of their tameness, but had it brought home to me rather forcibly the other day: I was leaning against a tree trunk watching one in a tree near by. Suddenly he flew to one of my young peach trees. This surprised me, for generally one sees a Creeper mounting the trunk of a mature tree, while in this case he was stationary. (Later I discovered he had been feeding on an old piece of suet, black with age, forgotten by me, but evidently not forgotten by him.) The next moment he was flying toward me and dropped to the foot of a telephone pole some twelve feet distant. Not finding much there to his liking, he flew to the foot of the tree against which I leaned,