

An Old Record of the Brown-headed Nuthatch in Iowa and Illinois.—

In a letter from Ed. S. Currier of Portland, Oregon, on November 27, 1934, he related having found the Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla pusilla*) at Keokuk, Iowa. Currier wrote as follows:

"I cannot find where the Brown-headed Nuthatch has ever been recorded from Iowa and therefore I will report an unusual flight or visit of these birds to Keokuk during May, 1893. On May 9 early in the morning I saw one in town and in the afternoon, while out of town a few miles, I saw five others. I shot two of them but the shot were too large and mutilated them so they could not be made into skins. On May 10 I saw three more in town during the early morning. On May 12 two were seen in Hancock County, Illinois, across from Keokuk. Two were seen in Keokuk on May 13. These are my only Iowa observations."

Due to the repeated opportunity which Currier apparently had to observe these birds and the added verification of specimens having been collected, I see no reason why this species should not be recognized on the Iowa bird list. These records of Currier's are believed to constitute the only known Iowa occurrence of this species. It is a rare permanent resident in southern Missouri and has occurred casually in Ohio and New York.—PHILIP A. DUMONT, *Des Moines, Iowa*.

The Effect of Certain Relief Projects on Bird Life.—During the last few years newspaper readers have been surfeited with items concerning relief and the expenditure of relief funds. Great stress has been laid upon projects which would give employment to the greatest number of men. One of the favorites, since it required no planning or trained supervision, was the cleaning of streams and ditches. On the other hand practically nothing has been written on the effect of these "clean-up" projects upon wild life. True, many general statements have been made, but no definite reports based upon actual research work have appeared. With a view of supplying this need even though in a small way, the following data are presented.

The area considered is about one-half mile of the Swan Creek Valley bordering the Toledo State Hospital grounds at the southwest boundary of Toledo, Ohio. The valley is fifty feet deep and averages five hundred feet in width. Although small in size, this area in the year 1931 contained several distinct habitats; one group of large trees and a few scattered throughout the section, two apple orchards, a few open prairie-like stretches, and several places covered with small trees and shrubbery with the usual briar and grapevine tangles. The creek itself was in a natural state, shaded by willows and sycamores, and typical sandbars, fallen-tree dams, and patches of water willow. The following year the first of the "clean-up" work was begun. The city of Toledo employed quite a number of men on relief landscaping the creek valleys about the city. This meant the cutting down of shrubs and dead trees, the thinning out of saplings, and the removal of practically all grapevines and briars. Nesting birds began to suffer.

In 1933 came the great C. W. A. army which finished the work of the city relief corps, removing any chance shrub which may have escaped, leveling the willows and sycamores at the stream's edge, and cutting down the banks at a steep slope. Swan Creek was transformed into a drainage canal.

It is not the purpose of this article to criticize this relief work or enter into the motives which prompted the "clean-up" campaign. Our wish is to bring home the great disaster which was brought upon our nesting birds. The follow-

ing tabulation brings this out forcibly. As these records are based upon several hours' work each day throughout the nesting season, they are probably as accurate as possible. When nests were not actually found, a singing male during the breeding season was recorded as a pair.

Pairs of nesting birds in a half-mile stretch of the valley of Swan Creek along the State Hospital grounds for the years 1931, 1933, and 1934:

Species	1931	1933	1934
Bob-white	2	0	0
Spotted Sandpiper	1	1	0
Mourning Dove	Common	Common	2
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3	0	0
Screech Owl	0	1	0
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	8	2	0
Flicker	Common	6	1
Alder Flycatcher	4	4	0
Crested Flycatcher	1	0	0
Eastern Kingbird	1	0	0
Wood Pewee	2	0	0
Phoebe	1	2	1
Rough-winged Swallow	1	1	1
Blue Jay	3	3	0
Carolina Wren	1	0	0
House Wren	6	2	1
Catbird	3	0	0
Brown Thrasher	6	3	0
Bluebird	2	0	0
Robin	Common	Common	2
Wood Thrush	3	0	0
Starling	6	10	4
Yellow Warbler	Common	6	1
Northern Yellow-throat	2	2	0
Bronzed Grackle	5	4	0
Baltimore Oriole	4	3	1
Indigo Bunting	2	1	0
Cardinal	4	3	0
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	0	0
Song Sparrow	Common	2	2
Goldfinch	4	2	0

If a minimum of ten nests is substituted for species marked "Common", we find a total of 127 for 1931, 78 for 1933, and 17 for 1934. In terms of percentage, this means a drop of 87 per cent in the number of nesting birds which can be accounted for only by the "clean-up" work. Multiply this decrease in numbers by ten since at least five miles of creek valley were denuded, and we arrive at some idea of the terrific loss of bird population along this stream.

Where did these missing birds go? A similar check during these years of the upland groves and fields of the Toledo State Hospital grounds shows that the number of birds there remained fairly constant. Only two species appear to have come up from the lowlands in 1934—namely, a Bob-white which nested in a currant patch, and a Spotted Sandpiper which, finding its usual sandbar removed, raised its young in the garden. An increase also was shown by Goldfinches, some of which may have come from the creek valley. But most of the missing birds seem to have vanished completely.—ARAMINTA A. BRANDENBURG and LOUIS W. CAMPBELL, *Toledo, Ohio*.