

DECEMBER-JANUARY-FEBRUARY

1941-42

BIRD CALENDAR

of the

Cleveland Bird Club

38th Year

No. 1



Founded by Francis H. Herrich in 1905 for the
recording of Bird Activities

ARTHUR B. WILLIAMS

Edited by ~~John W. Aldrich~~ The Cleveland Museum
of Natural History

CLEVELAND, OHIO



THE BIRD CALENDAR

Edited by

Francis H. Herrick 1906-1931
S. Charles Kendeigh 1931-1938

John W. Aldrich 1938-1941
Arthur B. Williams 1941-1942

WINTER BIRD POPULATION NUMBER

During the period covered by this number of the Calendar our interest has been centered upon three groups of birds: (1) late migrants who have extended a few "last dates" from November into December; (2) winter visitors who often provide surprises in the nature of rare or unusual records; (3) the good old dependable permanent residents, who make up the bulk of our regular winter bird population. These latter are, for the most part, birds of woodland habitats.

An additional species for last year's record, received too late to be included in the last issue of the Calendar, is the Hudsonian Curlew. One was reported seen at Richmond beach Sept. 21, 1941 by A. T. Burch.

Contributors to this issue of the Calendar are:

James Akers	Arthur B. Fuller	Ralph O'Reill
Harold W. Baker	W. Earl Godfrey	Gladys E. Olson
Theodore Blase	Winifred Goodsell	Alice Porter
Al Bohn	Isabelle Hellwig	Margery Ramisch
B. P. Bole Jr.	Raymond W. Hill	Omar Ranney
A. T. Burch	James H. Jenkins	Margaret Suhr Reed
Harold Cantlin	Frank D. Johnson	Raymond Roth
Vera Carrothers	Edward MacArthur	Margaret Sherwin
Belle L. Clisby	J. O. McQuown	Merit B. Skaggs
R. E. Clisby	C. B. Margach	Marion Skaggs
Donelda Deutschlander	Ruby H. Margach	Gordon Spare
Gerhard Deutschlander	Margarette E. Morse	Harold E. Wallin
Edith Dobbins	Ruth Newcomer	S. V. Wharram
H. C. Dobbins	Donald L. Newman	Arthur B. Williams
B. T. Downer	Coon Hollow Bird Club - (Akron)	

Numbers of trips taken by our observers were not so many nor so extensive as usual, although Harold W. Baker's 14 trips seem plenty. Record for greatest number of species reported goes to Earl Godfrey and Ruth Newcomer, who reported 50 different species for the period. Total species from all reports combined is 93.

We note the shrinking of our contributors list from the all-time high of 55 reported in our last issue (this issue 44). Undoubtedly we face a curtailment for some time to come, both in numbers of observers and in available time for observations. For the sake of the record we should note that on December 8, 1941

the United States declared a state of war to exist. Two of those whose names appeared as contributors to the last issue of the Calendar are already in the armed forces of our country. These are:

James Black - to the United States Army
 Tom Downer - to the United States Army

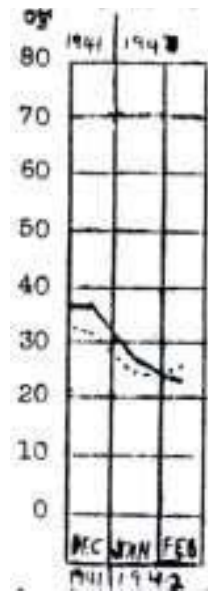
The calling of others is imminent. Still others of our group of bird reporters have undertaken various responsibilities in connection with the organization of home defense or war production that will cut seriously into the time available for bird study in the field. Under these conditions we hope that everyone who can will be diligent to collect such observations as are possible, and send them to the Editor even though fragmentary, so that the Calendar may continue to give a fairly accurate picture of the bird life of the Cleveland region even through the war period,

SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

With this issue we begin a new year of monthly temperature and precipitation charts based on records reported by the Cleveland Weather Bureau located at the Cleveland Airport. Solid lines represent current records; dotted lines, the normal expectancy.

Mean Temperature (the average of extremes) by months. Degrees Fahrenheit at left; months at bottom. Note the higher-than-normal

temperatures that prevailed throughout 1941 were continued into 1942.

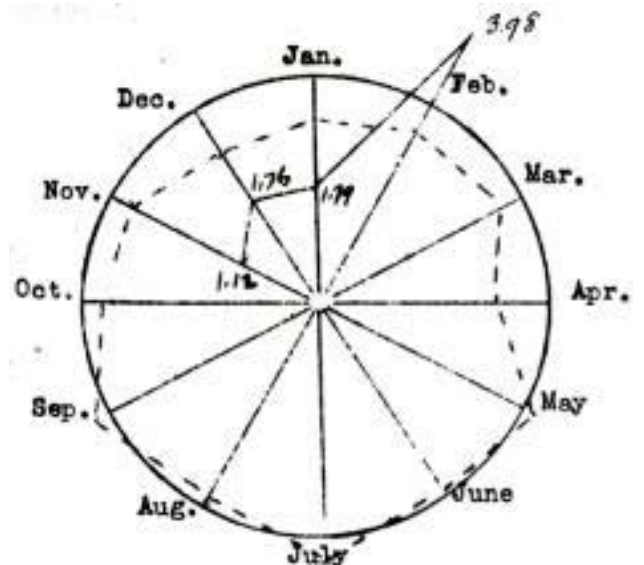


The winter as a whole has been a mild one. The only periods near or below zero were a few days in the fore part of January and about a week of scattered days in February. No extreme conditions developed that might have adversely affected the bird population.

Heavy precipitation in February counterbalanced the deficiency of January making an excess over normal for the two months of 75 hundredths

of an inch of water. This should help to make available plenty of ground water for early spring growth.

Precipitation - by months. The length of each "spoke" of the wheel, from center to circumference equals three inches of water. Actual precipitation records are marked on the spokes and then connected to see at a glance the entire precipitation pattern for the period charted.



These conditions account for the unusual number of straggling migrant birds that have been reported throughout the winter.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

(Taken December 27th from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

Using the same organization as last year, the 1941 Christmas Bird Count was again directed by Merit M. Skaggs. Thirty seven observers in 13 groups covered the Lake Erie shore from Gordon Park to Fairport, and the country inland to Shaker Lakes, Gates Mills, and the Holden Arboretum. Types of country covered included beech-maple and hemlock woods, the Chagrin River and Euclid Creek valleys, farms, orchards, open fields, lake beach and marsh, sparsely wooded areas. The total of 49 species recorded came close to the 1940 record (52), and the total of individual birds noted surpassed that of 1940 (3055 birds in 1940 - 5157 birds in 1941). The rarest bird reported was the Purple Sandpiper, which appeared on our Christmas list for the first time. These records are included in the following tabulations.

SPECIES OCCURRENCE RECORDS

In interpreting the following records it must be borne in mind that they are at the best, fragmentary, and that during the past winter especially, aside from the regular weekly census of ducks along the Lake Erie shore, our observations have been neither so continuous nor so inclusive as they have been during the last two years.

For convenience of study our winter bird population is divided into the following five groups.

1. Migrant Species (whose "last dates" have been extended into December or later)Common Loon - Dec. 7(5), 14(4).'Horned Grebe - Dec. 6(2), 20(1). (see also "Entering Stragglers", page 4)Pied-billed Grebe - Dec. 9(1).Canada Goose - Dec 14(5), Jan. 3(2), 4(6).Mallard - Many Dec. records. A few wintered.Black Duck - Many Dec. records (more than Mallard). Some wintered.Gadwall - Dec. 8(5).Baldpate - Dec. 6(6), 7(70), 14(41), Jan. 1(19).Pintail - Dec. 7(3), Jan. 25(3).Shoveler - Dec. 10(3), 14(1), 27(2).Ring-necked Duck - Dec. 7(17), 14(8), 27(2), Jan. 1(5).Redhead - Dec. 7(1), 14(2), 27(2), Jan. 4(2), 11(1).Ruddy Duck - Dec. 7(3).Coot - Dec. 6(117)- Pymatuning Reservoir - Vera Carrothers.Hermit Thrush - Dec. 2(2) - Austinburg - S. V. Wharram.Ruby-crowned Kinglet - Dec. 30(3).2. Wintering Ducks and Gulls

Lesser Scaup - Our most abundant wintering duck. Flocks of 3,000 to 10,000 reported in Dec., decreasing in numbers after Jan. 4, but still present in flocks of hundreds through Feb.

American Goldeneye - Many Dec. Jan. and Feb. records.

Bufflehead - Regularly recorded in small numbers Dec. and Feb. but not in Jan.
Hooded Merganser - Dec. 6(8), 7(61),14(44),20(2),27(4),28(2),Jan.1(11),Feb.1(5),8(2).
American Merganser - Very many Dec. Jan. Feb. records.
Red-breasted Merganser - Very many Dec. Jan. Feb. records.
Herring Gull - Recorded regularly in numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.
Ring-billed Gull - Recorded regularly in somewhat lesser numbers than Herring Gull.
Bonaparte Gull - Regularly recorded in numbers Dec. Jan. Feb. - (500;2000;445)

3. Wintering Stragglers - (Migrants present in small numbers)

Horned Grebe - Feb. 18(1) - (see "Grebe in a Tub"; page 7
White-winged Scoter - Dec. 7(2), 20(2), 21(2), Jan. 17(2).
Surf Scoter - Dec. 21 (1).
Double-crested Cormorant - Jan. 4(1).
Greater Scaup - Jan. 14(4). Lake shore at W. 107th St. With Lesser Scaups. Carefully compared with others by telescope. Merit Skaggs.
Great Blue Heron - Jan. 3(1), Rocky River valley - Edith Dobbins. Jan. 14(1), North Olmstead - Picked up alive but in very emaciated condition - W. E. Godfrey. Jan. 26(1), Parma. Picked up dead on Ridge Road. Frank D. Johnson.
Green Heron - Jan. 1(1), Akron. Coon Hollow Bird Club.
Turkey Vulture - Jan. 1(1), Akron; Coon Hollow Bird Club. Feb. 14(1), Near Clague and Lorain Roads - H. W. Baker.
Sharp-shinned Hawk - Dec. 9(1), 15(1), 27(2), Jan. 3(1), 6(1), 22(1), 25(1).
Cooper Hawk - Dec. 14(1), 27(4), Jan. 3(1). 4(1), 18(1), 22(1), 24(1), Feb. 6(1).
Red-tailed Hawk - Small numbers reported throughout Dec. Jan. Feb,
Red-shouldered Hawk - Dec. 6(1), 27(3), Jan. 4(1), Feb. 22(1), 28(1).
Bald Eagle - Jan. 25(1).
Marsh Hawk - Dec. 10(1), 14(1), 27(5), Feb. 15(1).
Pigeon Hawk - Feb. 24(1); Austinburg, S. V. Wharram.
Coot - Dec. 20(1), Akron Reservoir, W. E. Godfrey. One also reported regularly along Lake Erie shore Jan. Feb.
Mourning Dove - Dec. 8(2), 14(7), 27(20), 29(4), Jan.1(1), 6(1), 10(8), 3(2), 17(2).
Belted Kingfisher - Dec. 9(1), 21(2), 27(7), 29(1), Jan.31(1), Feb.22(1).
Flicker - Dec.3(2), 10(1), 16(1), Jan. 27(1), Feb.15(1).
Red-headed Woodpecker - Dec.20(1), 21(5), Jan. 25(2).
Crow - Dec.4(2), 7(13), 8(5), 27(1), 30(3), 31(1), Regularly reported in small numbers in Jan. increasing in Feb. to Feb. 28(27).
Robin - Dec.9(1), 27(1), Feb. 17(1), 27(1).
Meadowlark - Jan. 10(5). Parma. Frank D. Johnson.
Rusty Blackbird - Feb. 20(1), 22(1), South Euclid - C. T. Downer.
Bronzed Grackle - Dec. 8(3), 29(3), Jan. 4(3), 18(3), 25(3), Feb.3(1), 17(3), 27(1).
Red-eyed Towhee - Dec. 2(1), 27(9), Jan. 18(1), 25(4), Feb.10(1),15(2),18(1),23(2).
Song Sparrow - Dec.7(5),8(1),14(1),27(6),28(3),30(2),Jan.1(3),10(5),11(3),17(2). 20(1),25(2),Feb.15(4),17(1),28(1),27(5),28(2).

4. Winter Visitors - (Species of more northerly range wintering here)

Goshawk - Dec.9(1), Willow. Raymond Roth
Roughleg - Dec.7(6), Feb.8(1).
Purple Sandpiper - Dec.27(1), 31(3). (See comment page 8)

Glaucous Gull - Jan.11(1), 15(1), 20(1).

Iceland Gull - Feb. 20(1). Lake front at East 72nd St. W. Earl Godfrey

Great Black-backed Gull - Jan.17(1),Feb.18(1),20(2),21(1),24(3),25(1),27(1).

Snowy Owl - Dec. (9 single records), Jan.31(1),Feb.22(1). (See comment page 8).

Red-breasted Nuthatch - Regularly recorded in some numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.

Brown Creeper - Regularly recorded (usually single records) Dec. Jan. Feb.

Winter Wren - Dec.10(1), Feb.22(1).

Golden-crowned Kinglet Dec.17(1), 27(24), Feb.1(12).

Northern Shrike - Dec.23(2).

*Purple Finch - Jan.21(65),28(30), Feb.22(60),25(30),28(15).

*Redpoll - Regularly recorded Dec. Jan. Feb.

*Pine Siskin - Regularly recorded in small numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.

*Red Crossbill - Dec.8(20), 12(6).

Slate-colored Junco - Regularly recorded Dec. increasing in numbers Jan. Feb.

Tree Sparrow - Regularly recorded Dec; increasing in numbers Jan. Feb.

Snow Bunting - Dec.6(2),21(15),Jan.18(1),25(1),Feb.9(25),19(20),22(1),25(20).

*Lapland Longspur Feb.1(30), 13(20), 24(10).

*All records from Austinburg, O. by S. V. Wharram. Some Snow Buntings also.

5. Permanent Residents - (Species present throughout the year).

Sparrow Hawk - Regularly reported Dec. Jan. Feb.

Ruffed Grouse - Regularly reported in small numbers (1 to 5) Dec. Jan. Feb.

Bobwhite - Regularly reported in small numbers (2 to 19) Dec. Jan. Feb.

Ring-necked Pheasant - Regularly reported Dec. Jan. Feb.

Rock Dove - Present in some numbers in downtown Cleveland and occasionally elsewhere as a wild bird.

Screech Owl - Regular single reports throughout Dec. Jan. Feb.

Great Horned Owl - Regularly reported Dec. Jan. Feb.

Barred Owl - Regularly reported Dec. Jan. Feb.

Pileated Woodpecker - Regularly reported Dec. Jan. Feb., and apparently slightly increasing and occupying new territory.

Red-bellied Woodpecker - Regularly reported in small numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.

Hairy Woodpecker - Many Dec. Jan. Feb. records.

Downy Woodpecker - Very many Dec. Jan. Feb. records.

Prairie Horned Lark - Regularly reported in small numbers Dec.,increasing in Jan. Feb.

Blue Jay - Many Dec. Jan. Feb. reports. Apparently increasing.

Black-capped Chickadee - Regularly reported in numbers, concentrated in favorable localities, Dec. Jan. Feb.

Tufted Titmouse - Regularly reported in numbers, concentrated in favorable localities, Dec. Jan. Feb.

White-breasted Nuthatch - Regularly reported in numbers, concentrated in favorable localities, Dec. Jan. Feb.

Carolina Wren - Dec.31(1).

Cedar Waxwing - Jan.4(2), 18(26),21(3),25(5).

Starling - Regularly reported Dec. Jan. Feb. Apparently in lesser numbers than usual.

English Sparrow - Regularly reported in numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.

Cardinal - Regularly reported in small numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.

Goldfinch - Regularly reported in small numbers Dec. Jan. Feb.

SOME WINTER BIRD POPULATION STUDIES1. Wet Beech-Maple Forest - 30 Acres.

Location: Cedar Road and Gates Mills Boulevard. Censused
by: Vera Carruthers and Margarette E. Morse. Coverage:
Nov. 29; Dec. 27; Jan. 11, 17, 31; Feb. 23, 28.

Winter resident bird population.

Downy Woodpecker	6	
Black-capped Chickadee	10	
Tufted Titmouse	9	
White-breasted Nuthatch	6	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	
Cardinal	6	
Red-eyed Towhee	2	
<u>Species - 7</u>	<u>Individuals -</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>Birds per 100 acres</u>	<u>137</u>	(about 20% of summer nesting population number)

2. Beech-Maple-Hemlock Forest - 65 Acres.

Locations North Chagrin Metropolitan Park.
Censused by: Arthur B. Williams.
Coverage: Nov. 29; Dec. 20, 27, 1941; Jan. 17, 24; Feb. 7, 14, 21, 1942.

Winter resident bird population.

Barred Owl	2 - evidently paired.
Pileated Woodpecker	2 - male and female.
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2 - male and female.
Hairy Woodpecker	6 - 3 males, 3 females.
Downy Woodpecker	12 - 6 males, 6 females.
Blue Jay	6 - apparently 2 groups or families.
Black-capped Chickadee	24 - usually in small flocks or family groups.
Tufted Titmouse	18 - usually in small flocks or family groups.
White-breasted Nuthatch	21 - usually observed in pairs.
Red-breasted Nuthatch (only nonpermanent resident species)	23 - ranges more widely than other species and seems not to travel regularly in pairs.
Cardinal	9 - 6 males, 3 females. Three pairs apparently _____ same as nested last summer.
Species - 8; individuals -	125
Birds per 100 acres -	<u>192</u> - about 50% summer nesting population number.

Other species not confined to the area but noted therein.

Sharp-shinned Hawk	1 - Nov. 28 and Jan. 3.
Cooper Hawk	1 - Jan. 3
Red-eyed Towhee	4 - after Feb. 7
<u>Slate-colored Junco</u>	<u>10</u> - after Jan. 17 in varying numbers.
Species - 4; individuals -	<u>16</u>

Comment - Birds were usually found in four groups or companies, of which the owls, pileated woodpeckers, and jays were not a part. The largest company, numbering approximately 44 individuals, was apparently confined to the area, while the

others overlapped a little on the edges. On one cold, windy day, two groups had apparently united in a favorable situation. Chickadees, titmice, and white-breasted nuthatches were concentrated in the area in numbers in excess of the summer breeding pairs of these species here. Of special interest is the fact that so many birds were still associated in pairs or in groups probably representing relationships carried over from last summer. On March 7th the winter companies had broken up, and the number of chickadees, titmice, and white-breasted nuthatches had apparently been reduced to near summer proportions.

3. Winter Bird Population at the Aurora Sanctuary

During December, January, and February, 21 species of birds were noted at the Bird Club's Sanctuary at Aurora. The list is as follows

Cooper Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-tailed Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Brown Creeper
Marsh Hawk	Blue Jay	Cardinal
Ruffed Grouse	Crow	Slate-colored Junco
Ring-necked Pheasant	Black-capped Chickadee	Tree Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	Tufted Titmouse	Song Sparrow

"Of special interest was the fairly common occurrence of the Pileated Woodpecker and the Red-bellied Woodpecker. Crows seemed to 're-appear' after the middle of January, and late in February Red-shouldered Hawks began to be seen. This species nested in the beech woods of the Sanctuary last year.

Although we have no direct proof for it, we suspect that the winter feeding program had some effect on the appearance of the Ring-necked Pheasant in the Sanctuary for the first time. Three large feeding shelters were constructed early in the winter and a mixture of bird seed was placed under each as often as possible."
Gerhard Deutschlander.

COMMENT AND EDITORIAL

We are glad to welcome to the ranks of our contributors the Coon Hollow Bird Club of Akron, numbering 12 members, Miss Helen H. Hahn, Secretary.

We salute the Bureau of Animal Population, University Museum, Oxford, England, which thrills us by acknowledging promptly by post-card, with thanks, the receipt of our Sept-Oct-Nov. number of the Calendar. We are glad to know that war has not entirely disorganized the Bureau.

Grebe in a Tub.

On February 18th a live Horned Grebe was brought to the Museum of Natural History by Mr. R. W. Sherman, who found the bird in a helpless condition on a snowbank along Parkwood Drive near St. Clair Ave. Placed in a small tub with a few inches of water in it, the grebe soon became very active and gave a star performance of catching and eating a few small fish transferred from one of the Museum's aquaria.

The bird did not seem at all frightened by the group of people who watched its

every motion. To these on-lookers, the structure of the grebe's feet, and the position of the legs with reference to the body, appeared as marvellous adaptations of these structures to the job of propelling the body through the water. The lobed toes made possible a readily expanded or contracted paddle blade; the ankle joint provided a powerful fulcrum for the kick stroke, which could be made either forward or backward; and the position of the legs extending horizontally at right angles to the extreme rear of the body transformed the whole mechanism into a very powerful and efficient propeller. No side-wheeler this!

Snowy Owls - The 1941-42 Flight.

These spectacular visitors from the far north this winter provided many a Clevelander with one of the most thrilling sights in the bird world. Altogether our observers reported seeing 17 Snowy Owls - 6 in November, 9 in December, 1 in January, and 1 in February. Inquiry of four of our local taxidermists late in February disclosed that they had received a total of 11 birds sent in for mounting. Twenty other sight records are reported by the taxidermists as having been made or received by them.

This makes a total of 48 birds thus reported. Undoubtedly some of these records are duplicates, yet on the other hand we cannot assume that all Snowy Owls present were seen and reported.

With one exception (Akron) these reports are based on observations on an area relatively close to the Cleveland lake front. If we consider the Cleveland region as extending along the Lake Erie shore from Lorain to Painesville (about 30 miles each way) and as far south as Akron (30 miles from the lake shore) then we have an area unreported upon about four times the size of that which the reports cover. It thus seems reasonable to suppose that from 100 to 150 Snowy Owls may have invaded the Cleveland region this winter.

This we must not think of as a resident population. November and December records were relatively numerous, January and February records scant. An additional record comes from 75 miles South of Medina (O. T. Downer).

It is instructive to note that Snowy Owls, while here, seem to have subsisted largely on Norway rats. This is evidenced by at least one stomach examination as well as by direct observation in a few cases. One report was to the effect that at a certain refuse dump in the Cuyahoga Valley where rats were numerous, there were as many as "a dozen big white owls" in December and January, roosting under the bridge and feeding upon the rats.

Purple Sandpiper - The "Rockweed Bird".

One of the rare birds to be recorded here this December was the Purple Sandpiper. Arthur Fuller recognized the first on December 22 at Richmond beach. On December 31 Raymond Hill saw three at about the same place. Returning later with his motion picture camera, Mr. Hill was fortunate enough to secure some very good pictures of one bird.

Unlike the rest of the sandpiper tribe, the Purple Sandpiper is not an August and September migrant, but a real winter visitor. Nesting in the far Arctic, it also winters farther north than any other of our shore birds. On the rocky offshore islands and ledges of the New England coast, where the rockweed, washed by the sea, furnishes an abundant food supply of small molluscs and crustacea, "it lives by the wintry sea, seemingly revelling in the commotion of the waters,

feeding at low tide among the rockweed, and when overtaken by the oncoming surge, merely running and fluttering up the rocks to safety". At other times "it may be found sunning itself contentedly when the thermometer registers near the zero mark." (Forbush).

In the Cleveland region the Purple Sandpiper must be considered as a rare visitor - an occasional straggler from its normal sea-coast winter haunts.

UNUSUAL NESTING HABITAT TABLOID

In view of the possibility, reported in the June-July-August 1941 issue of the Calendar, that the Slate-colored Junco may be nesting in the Cleveland region elsewhere than on Little Mountain just east of Cleveland, we select the nesting habitat of this species for the subject of our tabloid description in this issue.

Will all observers who have access to cool, wooded ravines on the Plateau east of the city pay special attention this spring to such places, in an effort to locate additional Junco nesting territories?
Ed.

Nesting habitat of Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) on Little Mountain - The writer began an intensive study of the plant and animal life of Little Mountain in 1932. Here, in a magnificent forest of white pine and hemlock, the Slate-colored Junco was discovered as a regular nesting species. The record of seven years of observation is as follows: 1933, 1 pair; 1934, 4 pairs; 1935, 9 pairs; 1936, 10 pairs; 1937, 10 pairs; 1938, 7 pairs; 1939, 6 pairs (of which 2 pairs had 2 broods each).

In addition to these records, a small colony of Juncos was found in 1936 in the deep, hemlock-studded ravine known as Stebben's Gulch, 2 miles south of Little Mountain.

Every one of the junco nests found on Little Mountain was in exactly the same type of place. On this sandstone mesa the brows of the ledges and rocky outlying chunks of puddingstone have curling forelocks of Polypody fern, and it is under the overhanging fronds of these that the Juncos place their nests. As the ferns are on the very edges of the cliffs, it is frequently a matter of some danger to get into positions from which the nests can easily be seen or discovered.

The nests themselves are made of rootlets of various ferns, that of the Polypody being especially favored. There is a thin lining of dry sedges and grass. The whole structure is very compact, and is placed well down in the roots and hanging dead fronds of Polypody. When danger threatens, the female bird tumbles out and downwards into the crevasse facing her; in this she flies for twenty feet or more before rising into the low yellow birches and hemlocks lining the ledges. She is very touchy about having her nest approached too closely; she will abandon it unless her clutch of three, four, or five eggs is nearly ready to hatch.

B. P. Bole, Jr.