

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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Nos. 1 to 5

STATUS OF "MARYLAND BIRDLIFE"

The breakdown in the publication schedule of MARYLAND BIRDLIFE has been described in general communications to Society members several times in the past six months, but further reference to it here seems appropriate.

The delay is the result of a combination of circumstances in no way the fault of the editors. In fact, Chan Robbins has repeatedly gone far beyond what he was asked to do, at personal inconvenience, to put copy into good shape on time. If any blame is due it can be placed on the President, who should have solved the various volunteer-work problems sooner than he did.

The program at Baltimore has been a very active one and club activities have been time-consuming. However, the delay in MARYLAND BIRDLIFE is especially regrettable, as the club publication is the one contact we have with the great majority of outlying members. Fortunately, solution of the problem now appears to have been achieved.

The present issue brings us up to the first of 1949. Two additional issues (January-February 1949 and March-April 1949) are already nearly complete and should follow this one very closely.

The present number differs from usual policy in one respect. All contributed articles on bird observations except those which are 'dated', such as the Season Reports, have been withheld and will appear in the first two 1949 issues. These include an article on brown thrashers by Hervey Brackbill, additions to the list of Maryland birds by Robert E. Stewart, an article on song sparrow studies at Lake Roland by Eleanor Cooley Robbins, a story of game bird propagation experiments at McDonogh by Ogden Ramsay, and a number of contributions by other writers. Thus the next two issues will be more orthodox in content, from an ornithological point of view.

Nevertheless, the present issue is no mere chronology of club events. Mr. Robbins' excellent articles on "The Season" are packed with a year's interesting and valuable notes on Maryland birds, many of them published here for the first time. The report on the Christmas Count, in spite of its lateness, is another outstanding paper on Maryland bird life. And some of the trip accounts include valuable observations.

We can now once again ask members to submit contributions to MARYLAND BIRD LIFE. All money saved by combined mailing of back numbers is earmarked for future improvement of the physical aspects of the paper, and there will be adequate space for notes from everyone. Please send in items for "The Season" or stories of any bird observations you feel may be of general interest; don't wait for something spectacular to turn up. Your "Season" notes for March and April -- last departures, first spring arrival dates, peaks of migration, etc. -- should be received before May 25; send them in now! All such notes should be directed to Editor Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Md.

Orville W. Crowder, President

Chase, Md., May 13, 1949

MARYLAND

BIRD LIFE

Volume IV

January - February, 1948

Number 11

THE SEASON

November and December, 1947

Temperatures during November and December averaged close to normal, and no unusually hot or cold spells were recorded. We had the wettest November on record for the State; nearly seven inches of rain fell on Baltimore during that month, and there was even more in Southern Maryland. In contrast, December was quite dry, and snowfall was below normal.

Ducks and Geese. The first brant, a flock of 18, were seen at Ocean City on Nov. 2 by I. R. Barnes and the D.C. Audubon Society. The local duck flight exceeded all expectations; particularly exciting was the concentration of 100,000 canvas-backs witnessed by many M.O.S. members on Dec. 7 at Carpenter Point, and recorded again by Bob Jasse who flew over the area on the 17th. Other counts higher than the ones shown on the various Christmas Counts were 25,000 scaup ducks in the upper Chesapeake on the Dec. 7 M.O.S. trip, and 500 blue-winged teal and 3,000 green-wings at Blackwater Refuge on Nov. 16 (W.S. Webster, Barnes, et al.). Webster discovered a male European widgeon at Blackwater in early November; it was identified by Barnes et al. on Nov. 16, and was still present in Christmas week.

Hawks, Shorebirds, Terns. A late pigeon hawk at Beltsville was seen on Nov. 10 by J. H. Fales and W. H. Ball. Shorebird reports were few, but 2 semipalmated plovers at Ocean City on Nov. 16 (Barnes and party) were past their usual departure date. Late tern reports, all from Audubon trips, were as follows: 1 common tern at Sandy Point on Nov. 1; 12 commons and 7 Caspians at Ocean City on Nov. 2; and 2 Royal terns and 17 Forster's terns at Ocean City on Nov. 16.

Woodpeckers, Phoebe, Horned Lark. Hervey Brackbill reports 3 adult red-headed woodpeckers at Hillisdale Park through Nov. 14; only 1, a banded bird which bred there last summer, was still present at the end of December. A phoebe at Patuxent Refuge on Nov. 23 (Audubon Society) and 2 near Halethorpe (R.M. Bowen) were very late migrants. Twenty northern horned larks seen at Ocean City on Nov. 16 by the Audubon Society represent our earliest arrival date for this race.

Thrasher, Robin, Warblers. Mr. Fales last saw his thrasher on Nov. 2, a late date for the Silver Spring area; and the last Garrett

County robin was seen on Backbone Mt. on Nov. 15 by Phyllis H. Williams. A western palm warbler at Patuxent on Nov. 14 (Robbins) is one of the latest on record away from the coastal areas.

Finches and Sparrows. Not a single northern finch was reported and even the purple finch was very scarce, and late in arriving; the first recorded were at Patuxent, Nov. 14 (Robbins), and Marlboro, Nov. 15 (R.E. Stewart and R.A. Grizzell). Towhees were irregularly distributed through the southern part of the State, and 2 remained at Mrs. Alan Beerbower's feeding station near Towson through December. An early arrival date for the Ipswich sparrow was recorded by Barnes and party, who found 3 at Ocean City on Nov. 16. Bowen counted 8 vesper sparrows near Halethorpe as late as Nov. 1, and 5 were seen at Triadelphia Reservoir on the 8th (Stewart, Robbins). Bowen noted the first tree sparrow near Halethorpe on Nov. 1; at other localities this bird was late in arriving; the next date reported was Nov. 13 at Beltsville (Ball). A small flight of snow buntings occurred this winter, the first 4 birds being seen at Ocean City on the early date of Nov. 2, by Barnes and Party.

Chandler S. Robbins

DECEMBER MEETING FEATURES DR. ELLIOTT'S PICTURES

Dr. Myron A. Elliott, physicist of Washington, was welcomed by a large and appreciative group of Maryland Ornithological Society members and their friends when he gave his illustrated lecture at our meeting on December 12. Only a choice few of those present could understand the extraordinary technical skill involved in the construction of Dr. Elliott's 15", 30", and 50" lenses and in their use in bird photography. For most of us it was pure magic. The close-ups, taken so far away, gave us the pleasure of peeping into the private lives of bird families from California and the Utah salt flats to Maryland; from the banks of Florida's Swanee River to the waters off Key West. Many of us met the water ouzel of the West intimately for the first time. The Florida flamingoes in their vivid rose were accurately reproduced, but it was the shots of birds on the wing which proved most truly amazing.

Our President, Mr. Orville Crowder, was not in his usual place, and the Society missed his infectious enthusiasm. It was with real sorrow that we learned that his brother, Mr. Newton Wright Crowder, passed away suddenly on the afternoon of our meeting.

Dixie O. Stollenwerck

KEEP A BIRD LIST THIS YEAR

This is a good time to remind our more casual birders of the value and pleasure of starting at least a chronological record of the species seen, beginning with January 1. The more observations and notes, the better, but record at least the first date on which each species was seen, and the locality. The Supplies Chairman has the four-page check list, commonly used on club trips, and suitable for daily lists; 10 for 15¢. The "Blue List", 40 page Field List of birds of this region, makes a good annual check list; 25¢ a copy.

MARYLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, 1947

During late December and early January nearly four score Marylanders in 15 of the State's 23 counties participated in the 48th annual Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the National Audubon Society. All counts were made within the prescribed 15-mile diameter, although the ones from Hagerstown, Patuxent Refuge, Port Tobacco, and Eastern Bay (Kent Island) did not meet all the requirements concerning date and time which entitle them to be published in the March issue of Audubon Field Notes. They are all presented here, however, as they represent a fine cross section of the winter bird population of our State. The tremendous increase in birding activity within our boundaries during the past five years is shown by a comparison of the present counts with those of recent years. In 1942, for example, only two Maryland counts (Accokeek and Loch Raven) were published; the four observers who participated identified a total of 1755 birds of 50 species. This year with 78 participants (exclusive of the Washington, D.C., count), 127 species were identified, and the number of individuals was close to 328,500 -- nearly a third of a million!

Last year's summary pointed out that in over 40 years only two Maryland Christmas Counts had been made west of Montgomery County. A challenge to the westerners was well met; for this year three fine censuses were submitted from that area. At this rate we should have reports from nearly all counties next year; will yours be included?

The various counts are shown in tabular form this year, for ready comparison of one area with another. They are arranged from northwest to southeast to show the progression of abundance across the State. The Washington, D.C., count (which includes parts of Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties) has been inserted at its proper geographical position; although it is not strictly a Maryland census, it helps complete the picture and also shows the fine counts that may be obtained in this area by 65 observers traversing well-planned routes.

Most of the unusual occurrences stand out at a glance, since they are either the only records for the species, or are separated from other counts of the same species by several blanks. On the other hand, the secret of which species were missed by the various groups is given away by the gaps (though the habitats covered must also be taken into consideration).

In looking over the totals it is important to bear in mind that the relative abundance of various species for the State as a whole cannot be determined from these figures. We must not assume, for instance, that the brant is commoner than either the Canada goose, the turkey vulture, the cardinal, or the junco. The high brant count is the result of intensive coverage of the only area in the State where this species occurs, and probably represents almost our entire wintering population.

What is the commonest wintering bird? That depends upon where you live. The McCoolle and Old Town counts showed English sparrow in

the lead (although it is doubtful whether this species is actually the commonest one in Allegany County). If you live in the Hagerstown Valley or in the Kent Island area, the crow will very likely head the list. The Kolbs found the turkey vulture the commonest bird in the Loch Raven area on the day of their census, while a few miles away, at Chase, the baldpate was far in the lead. The highest tally of all was a conservative estimate of 190,000 red-wings flying northward at dusk over the mouth of the Sassafras River. Although no other areas showed high counts of this species, it is quite possible that the red-wing is the most abundant wintering bird in the State. At the Patuxent Refuge the junco is the commonest wintering species, while at Accokeek, in southwestern Prince Georges County, the starling took first place this year. The counts from Port Tobacco and Solomons gave first place to the ruddy duck. Across the Bay at Blackwater Refuge, the black duck and Canada goose were ahead, and at the coast, the scaup ducks far outnumbered everything else.

Since lack of space prevents a detailed discussion of the various counts, references to the highlights are given below in abbreviated form; further details may be ascertained by consulting the table:

High counts (those which represent the highest for the species in North America this winter are underscored in the table): horned grebe, whistling swan, brant, baldpate, canvas-back, buffle-head, old-squaw, ruddy duck, pileated woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, brown-headed nuthatch, Carolina wren, short-billed marsh wren, hermit thrush, red-wing, grackle, swamp sparrow.

Species rare at this season: American egret, gadwall, European widgeon, blue-winged teal, shoveller, goshawk, osprey, pigeon hawk, greater yellow-legs, longeared owl, pine warbler, Wilson's warbler, and white-crowned sparrow (also high count).

Species rare locally: phoebe at Loch Raven and Washington, catbird at Washington, ruby-crowned kinglet at Loch Raven and Carpenter Point, palm warbler at McCooles, and yellow-throat at Chase.

Species of spotty distribution (fairly common in some areas but rare or entirely lacking in others where they often occur): horned lark, white-breasted nuthatch, robin, cedar waxwing, myrtle warbler, towhee, and fox sparrow.

Species comparatively scarce this year: rough-legged hawk, sanderling and other shorebirds, mourning dove, blue jay, tufted titmouse, red-breasted nuthatch, golden-crowned kinglet, purple finch, and goldfinch.

When studying the following table, notice how the numbers of many species (the hermit thrush, myrtle warbler, field sparrow, and swamp sparrow, for instance), vary markedly from one section of the State to another -- all the way from the extremity of their winter range to an area of great abundance. Note also the progressive change in the tree sparrow--field sparrow ratio as you move from one end of the State to another.

MARYLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, 1947

	Mc Cool	Old Twn	Hag twn	Lox Rav	Cnse	Susq Flat	Patu xent	Wash DC	Acco keek	Port Tob.	Solo mons	East Bay	Blk- watr	Worc Co.
Common loon						2					4			18
Red-thr. loon											12			3
Horned grebe					1		2			3	79	300	30	63
Pied-b. grebe									1				1	
D-cr.cormorant														2
Grt.blue heron					4		9			7	3	8	17	12
American egret							2						5	
Blk.cr.nt.heron													2	
Whistling swan					930	3481				51		1500	154	
Canada goose					140	1564				185		50	1570	42
American brant														3730
Mallard			9		5	3	3	80	3				133	35
Black duck				37	45	1435		404	40	11		1000	1580	2130
Gadwall					1			3					56	
Europ.widgeon													1	
Baldpate					4775	10				1		2000	545	1
Pintail						506		205					114	13
Green-w. teal					18		18						509	
Blue-w. teal													38	
Shoveller													8	
Wood duck										2				5
Redhead					1505	18							20	
Ring-necked duck			1			158					4			
Canvas-back					1	43870		1		565		200	590	600
(gr)											8			
Scaup duck (lsr)					37	500				3	60	200	105	10000
Am.golden-eye					1	21		4	2	43	312	75	31	46
Buffle-head					10	6				2	171		37	642
Old-squaw											684			927
Wh.-wing scoter											10			565
Surf scoter											14			75
American scoter														71
Ruddy duck					98	245		86		1044	855		393	
Hooded mergsr.					2	6		4		4			4	7
Am. merganser				8	86	114		246	13	12		12	61	2
Red-br.mergsr.								1			8		20	7
Turkey vulture			7	237	26	65	19	204	50	40	72		128	144
Black vulture			2				1	24	65	17	46			
Goshawk									1					
Sharp-sh. hawk					1	1	1	1		1	3		4	2
Cooper's hawk	1				1		2	4				2	7	4
Red-tailed hawk				2?	5	2	3	6	2	4	6		12	5
Red-should.hawk					3		5	8	2	1			3	2

	Mc Cool	Old Twn	Hag twn	Loc Rav.	Cha- ss	Susq Flat	Patu rent	Wash DC	Acco keek	Port Tob.	Solo mons	East Bay	Blk. watr	Worc Co.
Rough-legged hawk					9	1		9	5	1	3		1	
Bald eagle					4	1	3	2		4	1		15	4
Marsh hawk			1							4			31	7
Osprey														1
Duckhawk								1						
Pigeon hawk													1	
Sparrow hawk				1	2	2	2	7			2		11	15
Bob-white					15		23	24		6				
American coot					1020	255		3		51			10	
Killdeer				3	14	4		50	12	2	24	2	11	158
Wilson's snipe										7				
Gr. yellow-legs													1	
Sanderling														1
Black-backed gull														7
Herring gull					57	7		454	30	5	203		66	277
Ring-billed gull					7	254		146	18	68	20		253	154
Bonaparte's gull											2			
Mourning dove				5			94	13	30	4	32	1	36	11
Barn owl								2					2	
Screech owl	1				1			2						
Horned owl											2		6	
Barred owl					2	1	2	4		1	1		2	3
Long-eared owl											2			
Kingfisher		2	1	2	1	3		9	2	2	2		7	5
Flicker				1	14	2	6	26	20	22	5		23	94
Pileated wdpr.		1					4						8	15
Red-bellied wdpr.					9	3	10	28	20	11			9	14
Red-headed wdpr.									30	3				
Sapsucker			1			2	4	5	3	4				1
Hairy woodpecker	1	1				2	18	19	9	4	2		16	13
Downy woodpecker	4	22	7	5	14	7	50	126	18	28	4		30	56
Eastern phoebe				1				1		1				11
Horned lark						79							2	154
Blue jay			2	2	33	5	23	101	50	63			18	1
Crow	12	27	119	16	106	11	67	546	40	175	286	2500	437	523
Fish crow					4	103		37	1	1	1	100	2	8
Blk-cap(?) Chick.	2													
Carolina chick.			18	10	32	7	119	328	35	61	21		95	118
Tufted titmouse	3	3	5		31	11	57	292	30	30	18		39	47
Wh.-br. nuthatch		10			12	2		142						25
Red-br. nuthatch								1			1			
Brown-hd nuthatch													52	
Brown creeper			1		10	5	20	27	4	5			11	12
Winter wren		3		6	2	2	10	13	8	2			20	20
Carolina wren	1	3	3	3	28	6	40	78	25	27	20		23	36

	McCool	Old Twn	Hag twn	Loc Rav	Chasse	Susq Flat	Fatu xent	Wash DC	Acco keek	Port Tob.	Solo mons	East Bay	Blk. watr	Worc Co.
Long-b.marsh wren													2	
Short-b.marsh wr.													20	12
Mockingbird	3	6	2	1	2	2	7	77	9	23	5		2	4
Catbird								1					1	3
Brown thrasher														2
Robin				2				2	4	36	38		1	15
Hermit thrush	2				2	2	14	16	4	18	9		16	60
Bluebird		5		36	17	1	2	70	22	16	64		68	63
Goldn-cr.kinglet			3	10	25	4	24	45	20	23	1		28	33
Ruby-cr.kinglet				1		1	1	10		5	1		3	4
American pipit													215	5
Cedar waxwing								33		12			1	15
Migrant shrike								1						
Starling	12	24	290	20	23	2400	29	5766	1000	76	265		250	723
Myrtle warbler				7	78	2		213	12	89	24		812	1790
Pine warbler													2	
(W)paln warbler	1												1	11
Yellow-throat					1									
Wilson's warbler														1
English sparrow	85	124	118		83	123	30	656	5	98	140		110	65
Redowlark				20	17		2	4	80	17	40		230	168
Red-wing					214	190000	51	40	140	368	785		1060	1490
Rusty blackbird							18	2	25	2			1	
Grackle					1	10000	1						306	63
Cowbird						100	3		1	1	12		21	84
Cardinal	11	61	30	19	32	11	43	274	40	62	33		28	52
Purple finch							5	4		1				15
Goldfinch			1	13	29	4	9	120	25	7	29		110	132
Towhee	1							14		15	6		21	9
Savannah sparrow							3	1	10				24	51
Sharp-tailed sp.														1
Vester sparrow										1				21
Junco	49	49	150	25	170	27	569	695	250	244	17		113	243
Tree sparrow	12	18	111	27	13	31	177	24	55	54	19		12	
Chipping sparrow													2	39
Field sparrow			5		5	12	45	108	50	31	4		125	169
White-crown sp.	13													
White-thr. sp.	15	12	2	26	101	26	90	563	250	197	124		108	400
Fox sparrow								18		2	4		20	11
Swamp sparrow		8		1	27	5	44	13	7	3			247	20
Song sparrow	9	3	5	17	40	24	86	342	175	75	62		211	112
TOTAL SPECIES	20	19	25	31	65	62	47	77	51	72	60		93	91
TOTAL INDIVID'LS	238	382	1966	530	10M	256M	1839	13M	2750	4064	4685	7950	12M	27M
No. party-hours	10	78	9	12	25	9	47	76	25	13	29	6	37	41
No. observers	1	10	1	2	18	3	11	65	4	6	3	1	9	9

McCoole, Allegany Co. (to 1 mile east, and north from McCoole along U.S. 220 to Dawson). Dec. 28; 8 to 6. Partly cloudy; 32° to 44°; wind NW, 15-30 m.p.h.; 9 mi. on foot, 12 by car. L. M. Llewellyn.

Old Town, Allegany Co. (1/4 mi. north and 3 mi. south along Potomac and C&O Canal). Dec. 20; 8:30 to 4. Fair; 22° to 30°; no wind. Observers together; 6 mi. by car, 4 on foot. Helen B. Miller, Nellie Thomas, Virgil Twigg, Jack Carder, George Voit, Robert Funkhouser, Donna Hogbin, Joanne Crabtree, Charles Devers, Eldon Long.

Hagerstown (and vicinity, accessible points on Potomac River, and greater part of land bounded by Sharpsburg Pike, Route 11, and the river. Jan. 2-3, 1948. (Four hr. rain and snow, 3 hr. cloudy, 2 hr. clear; 32° to 39°; 15 mi. on foot, 115 in car. Wm. B. Green.

Loch Raven, Dec. 26; 6:45 to 4:45. Snow until 9 (4 in.), then partly cloudy; 28° to 36°; wind NW, 4-8 m.p.h.; ice on all smaller estuaries; 15 mi. afoot, 20 by car. David and Haven Kolb.

Chase (west shore of Chesapeake from Middle River to north shore of Gunpowder, inland to B&O RR. Dec. 21; 6:45 to 5. Clear; 22° to 40°; wind NW, 1-12 m.p.h.; ground bare, ice covering upper parts of most creeks; 18 observers in 5 parties; 32 miles afoot. William Berry, Gorman Bond, Ed Bougourd, Robert Bowen, Florence H. Burner, Compton Crook, Orville Crowder, Mrs. Emily N. Elder, Irving E. Hampe, Pearl Heaps, Werner Juhle, Haven Kolb, Ruther Lenderking, Wm. McHoul, August Selckmann, Stephen Simon, Albert T. Swann, Jr., Etta Wedge.

Susquehanna Flats--Sassafras River (Havre de Grace, Perry Pt., Carpenter Pt., Elk Neck, mouth of Sassafras). Dec. 20; 8:12 to 5. Clear; 5° to 32°; wind NW, 5-10 M.P.H.; ground bare; small bays and estuaries frozen. Observers together except for 1 hr.; 4 mi. on foot, 36 by car. Brooke Meanley, Chandler Robbins, Robert Stewart.

Patuxent Refuge. Jan. 16, 1948; 7:35 to 4:30. Clear; 14° to 40° to 34°; wind SW, 10 m.p.h.; 1-in. crusted snow; ponds and bayous frozen; 11 observers in 7 parties; 55 miles on foot. Durward L. Allen, Roy A. Grizzell, Leonard M. Llewellyn, Seth H. Low, A. C. Martin, Robert T. Mitchell, Arnold L. Nelson, Chandler S. Robbins, Robert E. Stewart, Gustav A. Swanson, F. M. Uhler.

Washington, D. C. (see Wood Thrush 4 (Jan., 1948):25-28).

Accokeek, Charles Co. (2 square miles on east side of Potomac just below mouth of Piscataway Creek). Dec. 22; 8 to 4:30. Clear, but hazy in p.m.; 28° to 40°; no wind; ground bare; water open. Observers in pairs, alone at times; 13 miles by foot. A. A. Baker, Edwin T. McKnight, Thomas B. Nolan, W. W. Rubey.

Port Tobacco, Charles Co. (areas about the village and Brentland Wharf). Jan. 7, 1948; 7:25 to 5:15. Clear, good visibility; 26° to 40°; wind NW, 20 m.p.h. Observers in pairs; 18 mi. by foot, 24 in car. Clarence Cottam, Ira N. Gabrielson, A. L. Nelson, C. S. Robbins; also Dale Sanders and F. M. Uhler in p.m. counting waterfowl.

Solomons, Calvert Co. Dec. 21; 5:30 to 4:30. Clear, 30° to 44°; wind N to NE, 5-15 m.p.h. Observers separate; 145 mi. by car, 18 on foot, 29 by boat. Edwin M. Barry, Coit Coker, George F. Kelly.

Eastern Bay, Queen Annes Co. (area on and immediately adjacent to Kent Is.) Dec. 21; 10:30 to 4:30. Waterfowl only. F. M. Uhler.

Southern Dorchester Co. (Blackwater Refuge, Bishops Head, Fishing Bay, Savannah Lake, Elliott Is.) Dec. 21; 6:30 to 6:15. Clear; 28° to 46° to 36°; ground bare; fresh water ponds and brackish marshes frozen; 9 observers in 4 parties; 23 miles on foot, 14 in boat, 86 by car. E. Baldwin, I. R. Barnes, R. Jasse, L. M. Llewellyn, M. B. Meanley, C. S. Robbins, N. Shelton, R. E. Stewart, J. Willoughby.

Southeastern Worcester Co. (7 1/2 mile radius centered 5 mi. SE by E of Snow Hill). Dec. 22; 6:45 to 4:45. Clear; 28° to 43°; wind NW, 0-10 m.p.h.; ground bare; ponds frozen; 9 observers in 5 parties; 94 mi. by car, 20 on foot, 28 by motorboat, 10 by canoe. E. Arnold, I. R. Barnes, J. H. Buckalew, N. Hotchkiss, L. M. Llewellyn, M. B. Meanley, C. S. Robbins, R. E. Stewart, J. E. Willoughby.

Chandler S. Robbins

THE STOKES TACKLE PELEE'S PHEASANTS

We usually stay within Maryland in reporting bird matters, but when popular and faithful members like the Stokes move away and undertake ornithological studies, it is good to pass along a bit of news from time to time. Alice and Allen recently took up their new station on Pelee Island, in western Lake Erie, where Allen is starting a two-year study of the pheasant population. Here is a short excerpt from Allen's letter of October 15:

"Our house is right on the north shore of the island, so we get many migrants as they jump across from Pelee Point (Ontario); however, the bulk of them go down the east side in a well-wooded stretch. In the evening the grackles and redwings flock into those small marshes by the tens of thousands.

"You might be interested in knowing something about Pelee's pheasants. Almost every evening just before dusk, Alice and I set out, the baby in the back seat, and start crusing the roads for pheasant counts. By now we know many of their favorite haunts. Two nights ago, we parked on the road and watched 60 birds cross the road in front of us as they went from fields to woods to roost. From our house in the evenings we hear the cocks squawking as they fly up into the trees to roost. Still later I hear them again as some islander is probably "shining" them. There is no doubt that there is a good deal of illegal killing of pheasants. I don't begrudge the islanders a few, but I don't like to see other people come in and take them out of season. However, I have resolved to keep 100% clear of the enforcement angle so that the islanders will have full confidence in telling me what they observe."

CLUB EVENTS

(November-December, 1947)

BENGIES POINT, NOVEMBER 1. Mr. Ramsay's trip was planned as a rowboat venture, but choppy water kept it ashore on Bengies Point and other shores of Dundee Creek. Twelve members spotted 39 species, including 2 bald eagles, 1 yellow-bellied sapsucker, a flock of robins, 8 towhees and 2 hermit thrushes. Most plentiful of the waterfowl were baldpates (1200) and ruddies (270).

FEEDING STATION ROUND TABLE, NOVEMBER 21. The monthly meeting in November took a new turn as four speakers shared the floor in a round-table discussion of feeding station techniques and records. Mr. Arthur Fast, of Arlington, Va., told of his remarkable banding of 875 cedar waxwings last winter; Hervey Brackbill discussed things to look for in the actions of birds at feeding shelves; Mrs. Herman F. Kuch, Jr. told of feeding experiences at Pikesville; and Mr. Crowder acted as moderator.

BOMBAY HOOK, NOVEMBER 23. Our first club visit to this very interesting National Wildlife Refuge on Delaware Bay brought out 18 members, and produced a most interesting series of observations totaling 42 species. Chief attraction among the ducks, and principal objective of the trip, were the shovelers, of which 80 were counted. Forty mourning doves and 20 meadowlarks were noted, and the flocks of redwings totaled thousands. A number of members got their first good look at vesper sparrows, and enjoyed a long, close observation of a migrant shrike. But the crowning achievement of the trip, and "life-list-new" bird for almost all of us, was the close and continuous observation of the avocet. This western shore bird, present this year at Reading reservoir, Penna., here at Bombay Hook, Delaware, and in North Carolina, stayed within 25 yards of the telescope for a half-hour-- too close for good focusing. The tawny color of the neck was missing in its winter plumage, but otherwise the spectacular appearance of this gem left nothing to be desired. We watched its characteristic side-sweeping method of feeding, and came back time and again for further study. Lester Wood lead this most successful trip ... although he worried us no end by keeping the official list in shorthand we couldn't read!

PERRY POINT & CARPENTER POINT, DECEMBER 7. This field trip to the Susquehanna Flats provided one of the grandest sights of ducks ever witnessed by any of us ... including Bob Stewart, who sees lots of birds. From a high point of land at Carpenter Point we looked out over a portion of the famed Susquehanna Flats and gasped at raft after raft of canvasbacks, stretching into the far distance where the 20-power telescopes merely showed that there were more rafts beyond. Of the ducks we could see well enough to block out and count, we estimated well over 100,000 canvasbacks. Other records of the day included 25,000 scaup, 90 baldpate, 100 ruddies, 120 Canada geese, 60 swans, as well as ten other species of waterfowl.

A L L E G A N Y A C T I V I T I E S

On November 7, Mrs. Helen B. Miller, who has been doing a marvelous job of carrying bird information and color pictures to school groups throughout the county, visited the Seventh Grade Bird Club at Fort Hill High School and gave a talk on "Birds and Where to Find Them". After the talk there was a period for questions, and a number of observations were reported by the pupils.

The week-end of November 8-9, Mr. Crowder made another trip to Allegany County, and full advantage was taken of his presence for a rapid round of bird talks and field trips.

Saturday morning dawned rainy, but cleared to windy and cold as we started on a cross-county jaunt. Nan Livingstone, Robin Andrews and Helen Miller met Mr. Crowder and drove to the first stop - Cresaptown. There we met 18 members of the Junior Club and were joined by Mildred Willison, Margaret Baker and Sara Wright. Weather conditions were rough, and observations started slowly. However, quite a number of birds were studied and many likely spots for future attention were noted.

Next we traveled to Westernport, where we were met by members Hazel Inskip, Mae Meese and Mrs. Beulah Beck, as well as 15 juniors. The group hiked up a steep hillside back of town, and were rewarded by a number of good observations, including a close-up of myrtle warblers and a Baltimore oriole nest.

The same afternoon, the group moved on to Eckhart, meeting Miss Imogene Caudill, Mrs. Chester Wonn, and 20 juniors. The wind had stepped up to near gale force by now, but there were good looks at killedeers and flocks of bluebirds. Miss Caudill's enthusiastic hospitality wound up with refreshments at the school for all hands, and finally a square dance!

On Sunday, with Mr. Crowder still leading a group of 10 members hiked along the C & O Canal near Paw Paw, where the canal goes through a brick tunnel in an arm of Town Hill Mountain. Myrtle warbler, white-throats and song sparrows were the most plentiful birds here.

The regular meeting of the Allegany County Club in November was held at the Public Library, and enjoyed a talk on Bird Feeding Stations by Kendrick Hodgdon, Feeding Station Chairman.

Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Miller spend two days on famous Bull's Island, near Charleston, S.C., in December, and reported on their trip at the December monthly meeting of the Country Club. Plans for the first Christmas Count were also discussed at this meeting.