

kind. I never heard of a Heron laying down on its job of feeding and caring for its helpless brood. It does not require any court of domestic relations to compel these devoted birds to do their duty, as is frequently the case with human hoboos, who start a family, and leave it for some one else to care for and raise. That glorious parental instinct is better developed in birds than it is in some males of the genus Homo, I am sorry to say.

These wild and swampy woods were the home of the great northern Pileated Woodpecker, *Ceophloeus pileatus*, though as long ago as 1870 it was a rare bird in Ohio. Its loud shrill notes echoed through the woods and its habit of hammering on a dead hollow limb could be heard a mile away. I got a beautiful male bird once in mid-winter, while tracking wild turkeys in the snow. I did not get any turkeys, though I shot a fine Ruffed Grouse. I occasionally saw Ravens flying over the tree tops, uttering their dismal croaking. They made their nests in high trees, in the deepest and most swampy forests. The Canada Lynx, *Lynx canadensis*, and Wild Cats, *Lynx rufus*, were scarce. Foxes and Racoons were abundant. The Virginia Deer was almost extinct. In the fall of 1871, the water was very low in the lake. I crossed to the south shore and passed the night in a house-boat that was stranded in the mud. At daybreak, we went out to the edge of the brush, and took stations, sending a boatman back along a channel. At a signal, he hammered on the gunwale of his boat, and I never will forget the sight of the waterfowl as they rose in the air. I got a Canada Goose with each barrel, from a flock that passed within fifty feet over my head. Ducks came out in countless droves, all flying pell-mell for the open water. Other hunters joined in the shooting, which sounded like the firing line of a battlefield. Market shooters killed great quantities of Ducks and Geese for the market. As many as 100 Ducks in one day were bagged by one man, and when the weather turned warm, many birds spoiled or were wasted. In 1872, a party of Cincinnati hunters killed 960 Ducks in two weeks, but they only shot part of the time and not for the market. In those days there was no limit to the bag and what crude laws there were lacked enforcement. Now we have more comprehensive laws, with a strong attempt at their enforcement. The stable door is locked after the horse is stolen. One of the best features of our game laws is the prohibition of the sale of Game or any other wild birds.

In June 1919, I made a visit to Lake St. Mary's and looked for the birds species of former years, but they were mostly gone. A few Great Blue Herons were seen, but hardly anything else. In talking with good observers, who live near the Lake, I elicited these facts. Canada Geese yet visit the Lake in Spring and Fall in considerable numbers. Ducks are generally scarce; very few breed here. Most of the other water bird swarms are gone. Fishes are scarce, and consist mostly of Crappies and introduced Carp. The diminution of water birds is inevitable, because of changed conditions of environment, but much can yet be done to preserve some of them from extinction, by giving them proper protection and encouragement. Wild birds soon learn to know where they can obtain food and are protected. Wild Ducks on Lake Worth, Florida, in the town of Palm Beach, become so tame that they will almost eat out of one's hand, but out side of that protected area, they are as wild and wary as usual. The value of such a resort, as a bird refuge to the State of Ohio, can hardly be over-estimated. If stocked with food fishes, it is a valuable asset, and provides a resort where tired humanity can spend a few days close to nature. It will also furnish a safe resting and feeding place for the thinning ranks of water fowl in their long journey from their winter homes in the south to breeding places in the north.

## An Ornithological Reconnaissance of the Grand Reservoir, Ohio, in 1904

by W. F. Henninger

*Readers will remember the publication in the Cardinal of Lynds Jones's "Licking Reservoir Trip" (28:2(81-88), which describes a two-day birding outing in what we now call Buckeye Lake. Here his contemporary the Rev. Henninger, at the time a resident of New Bremen in Auglaize County, reports rather different results for an expedition two years later to another large artificial reservoir that had replaced a natural Ohio wetland, now known as Grand Lake St. Marys. It was published later that year in Jones's Wilson Bulletin 16(3):74-76. Henninger was a respected amateur ornithologist and collector of the day, with many publications and records. In his final sentence, Henninger refers to communications he must have had with Charles Dury about the latter's experiences at the reservoir decades earlier, the published account of which appears above. --Ed.*

The fact that in former years the Grand Reservoir, in Mercer and Auglaize counties, Ohio, was an interesting place for birds, as also that in Dawson's recent investigations<sup>1</sup> it received but scant attention, induced Mr. Karl Heilmann, of Tiffin, and myself to take a summer trip to the Reservoir, to find out what the conditions of bird life would be at the present time. Along the northern side of the Reservoir is the pike from St. Marys to Celina, the tracks of the Lake Erie & Western R.R. and the Western Ohio Traction Co. It is obvious that this part of the Reservoir showed nothing of interest concerning birds. The western part from Celina to the southeast showed us one interesting species, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, for the finding of this bird at this time of year would tend to strengthen Mr. Oberholser's only breeding record for this species in the state.<sup>2</sup> The basis of our work and supplies was Montezuma, on the southwest end of the Reservoir, a quiet little village, the monotony of which is changed only by the advent of a stranger, or an occasional dog fight in which most of the citizens participate with great glee. There we heard that the oil wells in the Reservoir had driven the nesting birds out quicker than anything else.

The Cormorants had ceased to nest since 1886, the Gadwall even before that. One of the natives told me he had not seen a young duck for the last four years, though Mallards and Blue-winged Teal were supposed to nest there still. This did not seem very encouraging and the first day on the water, which was higher than for the last 13 years, only confirmed this. We saw great numbers of the Great Blue Heron, flocks of 18 and 25, and one Coot, the only one seen on the trip, and one bird which by elimination was thought to be the Sandhill Crane, but identification was not as satisfactory as it should have been. As soon as we reached the oil derricks bird life was extinct.

We rowed back in a fierce gale and concluded to start out bright and early the next morning on the pike to St. Marys. So 6 a.m., July 2, found us out on the road with hip boots, gun and camera. After walking nine miles to the east we turned off to the Reservoir, and three miles east of the oil wells struck a place which was promising. The trees fringing the Reservoir were standing in about three feet of water, mostly willows, water ash and a few oaks. With their green arches they were keeping almost every ray of sunlight away from the oozy recesses beneath. Spotted Sandpipers

<sup>1</sup>Dawson, L. 1903. The Birds of Ohio. Wheaton Publishing Co, Columbus.

<sup>2</sup>Oberholser, H.C. 1896. A Preliminary List of the Birds of Wayne County, Ohio, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Wooster, OH. The author reported four immature birds near Wooster 7/12/91.

and Redstarts were common and in a few moments I saw a female of the Prothonotary Warbler<sup>3</sup>, which we observed for about five minutes. Later on in a similar place we saw another female of the same species. This would indicate that it is still a very rare summer resident at the Reservoir. The call note, to my ear, faintly resembled the chirp of the Yellow Warbler, while the colors in general, setting aside the size, would remind one of the Blue-winged Warbler minus the wing bars.

In this shady retreat we also found the Chestnut-sided Warbler in several specimens. Most likely they had bred in the neighborhood. Rowing across a space of open water we soon entered a dense swampy margin and here was the only place where the Long-billed Marsh Wren could be found, and then sparingly only, not to be compared with the vast

numbers at the Sandusky Bay marshes. Bitterns were booming plentifully, but the Least Bittern was not there. Gallinules and Rails were also absent, while a Wapakoneta sportsman, who is also a practical taxidermist, had found a nest of the King Rail on the previous week off Russell's Point at the Lewiston Reservoir [now Indian Lake]. After poking around in the cat-tails for a while, we suddenly started a female Blue-winged Teal, but in spite of a very



An old wetland, located along Kittle Rd on GLSM's south side.

diligent search we did not find the nest. The bird was in an excellent condition and flew rapidly away, proving that she was in no way a crippled bird. Evidently the Blue-winged Teal is a rare summer resident at the Grand Reservoir. No other water birds were seen. Tree Swallows and Martins were very common and I am surprised to see how commonly, in northern Ohio, the Purple Martin takes to the woods and swamps to nest, and rare comparatively the species is, while in southern Ohio, it is hardly ever seen away from the bird houses and is a common bird.<sup>4</sup> The ordinary land birds were all common at the Reservoir with the exception of the House Wren, which was rather rare. All told 67 species of birds were heard or seen.

It certainly does not pay an ornithologist to make a visit to the Grand Reservoir, except in the migration seasons, the Licking Reservoir [now Buckeye Lake] no doubt being the most profitable inland body of water in Ohio. The interesting things which Mr. Dury found at the Grand Reservoir in former years are gone for good, and after coming to this conclusion we wearily tramped the nine miles back to Montezuma, packed our grips and went home.

<sup>3</sup>Clark & Sipe (1970, p. 52) state of this species that they "find no mention of it by Henninger." Here is one.

<sup>4</sup>Peterjohn, in *The Birds of Ohio* (2001, p. 347) writes "Since 1900, Purple Martins have only been known to nest in houses provided by people."



A Ross's goose, scarcer in eastern than western Ohio, spent a couple of weeks playing catch with birders in Lake Co in November. Photo by Gary Meszaros there 28 November.