

NOTES ON THE WINTER BIRDS OF HANCOCK
COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI.

BY ANDREW ALLISON.

BELIEVING that a series of local list will be a good prelude to a published list of the avifauna of Mississippi—"one of our best neglected States," an ornithologist of experience has called it—I have thought it advisable to put forward the following few remarks on the winter birds of Hancock County; more especially as the coast region of this State seems to be even less known than the interior.

Hancock is the most western of the three coastal counties of Mississippi. Its western border is Pearl River, and extensive salt meadows cover much of that part. The county seat, Bay St. Louis, is on the eastern border; and here the marshes are smaller, and low hills and flat pine barrens are the salient features. This town served as the base of operations for the four-day trip resulting in the records that follow.

The hills, as well as the flat lands, are more or less pine-clad; but oaks—*Quercus falcata*, *Q. stellata parvifolia*, *Q. aquatica*, *Q. laurifolia*, *Q. nigra*, and *Q. cinerea*—are very important; the live oak (*Q. virens*) is chiefly restricted to those hills bordering the bay from which the town takes its name. *Hicoria tomentosa*, *Magnolia foetida*, and *Oxydendron arboreum* are also common upland trees; the pine barrens are covered with the gall-berry (*Ilex glabra*); and *Callicarpa americana*—the 'Spanish mulberry'—is the most important of the dry-ground shrubs.

Between these hills are sluggish streams, draining into the marshes of the bay; in the low, wet, areas along these streams grow *Magnolia glauca*, *Nyssa biflora*—which also spreads farther up the hillside,—*Cyrilla racemiflora*, and *Cliftonia ligustrina*. Several species of *Smilax* climb over these trees; and of shrubs there are *Azalea nudiflora et viscosa*, *Vaccinium elliottii*, and, most important of all, the anise or rose-bay (*Illicium floridanum*). *Salix longifolia* occurs in more open places, and *Acer rubrum* is also common. These strips of low wet woods are called 'bay-galls.'

Where these streams empty out into the marshes, there are heavy swales of saw-grass (*Cladium effusum*); but the typical 'marsh grass' is *Juncus roemerianus*. Where pools occur in the marsh, there are *Sagittaria lancifolia* and *Pontederia cordata*.

The following observations were made by Messrs. H. H. Kopman, W. B. Allison, and the writer, February 13-16, 1904.

1. ***Podilymbus podiceps***. PIED-BILLED GREBE.—Two seen in the Bay near its head, where Jordan River empties into it.
2. ***Larus delawarensis***. RING-BILLED GULL.—Common.
3. ***Larus argentatus***. HERRING GULL.—Common; one was picked up dead, though unwounded, on Feb. 14.
4. ***Larus atricilla***. LAUGHING GULL.—Few seen.
5. ***Ardea herodias***. GREAT BLUE HERON.—One seen in the Jordan River marsh.
6. ***Rallus elegans***. KING RAIL.—Common, but inconspicuous.
7. ***Oxyechus vociferus***. KILLDEER.—Not uncommon on the beach.
8. ***Ægialitis semipalmata***. SEMIPALMATED PLOVER.—A few were seen in company with Killdeers, Feb. 13. This is our first winter record.
9. ***Zenaidura macroura***. MOURNING DOVE.—One only.
10. ***Cathartes aura***. TURKEY VULTURE.—Common.
11. ***Catharista urubu***. BLACK VULTURE.—Common; the two species do not mix much.
12. ***Buteo borealis***. RED-TAILED HAWK.—A large hawk seen at a distance on Feb. 16 must have been of this species.
13. ***Falco sparverius***. AMERICAN SPARROW HAWK.—Not common.
14. ***Syrnium varium***. BARRED OWL.—One only.
15. ***Dryobates villosus audubonii***. SOUTHERN HAIRY WOODPECKER.—A few.
16. ***Dryobates pubescens***. DOWNY WOODPECKER.—Uncommon.
17. ***Dryobates borealis***. RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER.—Common in the pine barrens.
18. ***Centurus carolinus***. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER.—A few.
19. ***Melanerpes erythrocephalus***. RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.—Two or three in the pine woods.
20. ***Colaptes auratus***. FLICKER.—Common; mostly in small flocks.
21. ***Sayornis phœbe***. PHŒBE.—Common.
22. ***Cyanocitta cristata***. BLUE JAY.—Common.
23. ***Corvus brachyrhynchos***. AMERICAN CROW.—Very common.
24. ***Corvus ossifragus***. FISH CROW.—Common.
25. ***Agelaius phœniceus floridanus***. FLORIDA RED-WINGED BLACK-BIRD.—Rather common in flocks.
26. ***Euphagus carolinus***. RUSTY GRACKLE.—One flock, in a pine clearing.

27. **Quiscalus quiscula aglæus.** FLORIDA GRACKLE.— A few.
28. **Megaquiscalus major.** BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE.— Fairly common on the beach and in the marshes.
29. **Astragalinus tristis.** AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.— Rather common, in medium-sized flocks among deciduous trees.
- [**Spinus pinus.** PINE SISKIN?— Doubtful; a flock of supposed Siskins seen Feb. 13.]
30. **Poocetes gramineus.** VESPER SPARROW.— Rather common in the clearing; in song.
31. **Passerculus sandwichensis savanna.** SAVANNA SPARROW.— Sparingly present in the extensive clearings.
32. **Zonotrichia albicollis.** WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.— Locally common in thickets.
33. **Chondestes grammacus.** LARK SPARROW.— We found this species in the pine clearings, about equally common with the Vesper Sparrow, and in song. Up to this time we had found it only very rarely.
34. **Spizella socialis.** CHIPPING SPARROW.— Very common in large flocks in the pine clearings; a good many in the town.
35. **Melospiza georgiana.** SWAMP SPARROW.— Common in suitable situations.
36. **Pipilo erythrophthalmus.** TOWHEE.— Only a few.
37. **Cardinalis cardinalis.** CARDINAL.— Rare! This is hardly normal, though it is never as common here as is *C. c. magnirostris* in lower Louisiana.
- (38. **Progne subis.** PURPLE MARTIN.— A spring bird, of course, and so hardly in keeping in this list; a few were present, being seen and heard nearly every day of the trip.)
39. **Lanius ludovicianus.** LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE.— Common; the small size of the resident pine woods form was noticeable.
40. **Ampelis cedrorum.** CEDAR WAXWING.— Only a few heard.
41. **Helminthophila celata.** ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER.— Conspicuous when present, and not at all uncommon in the deciduous woods, though always single.
42. **Dendroica coronata.** MYRTLE WARBLER.— Very common, and ubiquitous; present even on the sandy beach.
43. **Dendroica vigorsii.** PINE WARBLER.— Very common, singing often.
44. **Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea.** YELLOW PALM WARBLER.— Common; always more or less gregarious, and associated with the preceding.
45. **Geothlypis trichas ignota.** FLORIDA YELLOWTHROAT.— Two heard.
46. **Anthus pensilvanicus.** AMERICAN PIPIT.— Not common; on the beach and in cultivated lands.
47. **Mimus polyglottos.** MOCKINGBIRD.— Common; many in song.
48. **Toxostoma rufum.** BROWN THRASHER.— Noted only twice.

49. **Thryothorus ludovicianus.** CAROLINA WREN.— Very common.
50. **Thryomans bewickii.** BEWICK'S WREN.— Noted twice.
51. **Troglodytes aëdon.** HOUSE WREN.— Not common.
52. **Cistothorus stellaris.** SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN.— Not uncommon.
53. **Sitta carolinensis.** WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH.— Very conspicuous; we saw it in company with Bluebirds and Pine and Yellow Palm Warblers, even feeding with them on the ground, in one instance.
54. **Sitta pusilla.** BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH.— Abundant among the pines.
55. **Bæolophus bicolor.** TUFTED TITMOUSE.— Very common.
56. **Parus carolinensis.** CAROLINA CHICKADEE.— Common.
57. **Regulus satrapa.** GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET.— Common; the characteristic kinglet of the conifers.
58. **Regulus calendula.** RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.— Less common than the preceding.
59. **Hylocichla aonalaschkæ pallasii.** HERMIT THRUSH.— Common in low thickets; almost unknown here for a few years after the snow of 1895, this bird has again become as common as ever.
60. **Merula migratoria.** AMERICAN ROBIN.— Over great tracts of young pine, cleared land, and burnt forest, we often walked, seeing hardly any birds but these; they flushed before us at almost every step, and soon became an important feature of the landscape.
61. **Sialia sialis.** BLUEBIRD.— Very common, and in fine song.