

ADDITIONS TO "NOTES ON SOME SUMMER AND FALL
BIRDS OF THE CROOKED LAKE REGION, CASS
AND CROW WING COUNTIES, MINN."

BY ALBERT W. HONYWILL, JR.

UNDER the above title I gave a list which appeared in 'The Auk' for April, 1911, pp. 229 to 237. As the result of two more summers spent in the region mentioned I desire to add the following notes and list of eleven additional species.

The time covered was from July 29 to September 15, 1911, and from July 20 to September 6, 1912. During this time I made two trips of two days each, on August 18 and 19, 1911, and again on the 24th and 25th of the same month, to a part of the region which I had visited on only one previous occasion. I made three further trips to this region on July 29 and August 22 and 24, 1912. The observations made on these trips and likewise in the region previously described led me to add the following notes. Two years time has brought about several noticeable changes and no doubt the bird life of this region will undergo still further change as the country is opened up to farming. The advance in civilization is already making itself felt upon the bird life of this particular region and it is believed for this reason that these notes will prove of interest a few years hence.

The region above mentioned is located about two miles northeast from the head of Crooked Lake and contains two small shallow lakes and numerous sloughs. The first lake encountered on a walk from Crooked is known as Stake Lake and is the larger of the two mentioned. The name is derived from the fact that the course of an old lumber road, used during the winter season several years previous, was marked across the lake by several stakes, two of which still remain. This lake is perhaps a half mile in extent and is surrounded by a number of acres of meadow land which extend back from the water from a dozen to two or three hundred feet. During some years this is largely marsh land but the last two years were unusually dry. A walk around the lake revealed a Loon's nest only a few inches above the water and on a side of

the lake where the water was quite shallow. Pieces of egg shell remained in the nest. It was interesting to note that there was nothing in the vicinity of the nest which offered any concealment such as bushes or grass. A pair of old birds and two young occupied the lake and were undoubtedly the owners of the nest. There are practically no rocks along the shore so that it was probably for this reason that the Mallards would come out into the grass or even go up into the brush to sun themselves. I flushed a number from the edge of the brush which arose with quacks of alarm as I walked along. One bird was evidently moulting and was hardly able to make its escape. During 1912 the water was much lower both at Stake Lake and Ox Meadow. The lower water exposed rocks near the center of Stake Lake which were used by the Mallards in sunning themselves during the middle of the day.

The second lake, if it can be designated by such a name, is called Ox Meadow Lake. It is situated in the midst of a wild meadow and marsh land called by the natives Ox Meadow from the fact that several hundred head of oxen were formerly quartered there during the summer. These oxen were used in the winter for hauling logs but during the summer were allowed to run wild and feed on the luxuriant grass around Ox Meadow and Stake Lake.

Ox Meadow was teeming with bird life. As I walked out into sight of the meadow on my first trip I flushed a magnificent flock of Prairie Chickens. They arose from all sides, thirty-five in number, and after a short flight sailed off on stiffened wings until one by one they dropped into the tangled mass of hazel brush, briars and wild sun flowers a short distance from the meadow. At the waters edge stood a Bittern while ducks and grebes swam off at my approach but did not take flight.

On one occasion I spent over an hour lying in the tall grass near the waters edge watching the scene spread out before me. Pied-billed Grebes were numerous and would bob up and disappear among the lilies in a most interesting way. Further out I observed several families of Wood Ducks leisurely swimming along in single file. There were probably sixty to seventy birds in all while Mallards were even more numerous although they kept well towards the center of the lake. Occasionally a small band of Yellow-legs

would dart across the water, their white under parts flashing as they wheeled and turned. Nearer at hand two young Hooded Mergansers were feeding while overhead an occasional Swallow circled to and fro. As a finishing touch to this scene of wild beauty, teeming with bird life and activity, two deer appeared on the opposite shore. They stood with heads erect for several moments, intently listening, and then apparently satisfied that all was safe they commenced to slowly feed along the shore until something startled them and they dashed from sight.

Among the apparent changes which have taken place during the past two years should be mentioned a decrease in the number of Loons observed. This may possibly be due to the water level in the various lakes, particularly the smaller lakes and ponds, which in some cases are nearly dry. This undoubtedly has had some effect on the breeding of this bird but perhaps only locally. The Black Tern seems to be increasing largely in numbers each year while just the reverse is true in the case of the Great Blue Heron. This bird, formerly quite common, has decreased in numbers to such an extent that it was observed but once during the season of 1912. The Mallard is quite common for a region containing no wild rice. On August 22 a flock of over 250 birds was observed at Stake Lake. The Ruffed Grouse appears to be holding its own in numbers if indeed it is not increasing slightly while the Prairie Chicken is spreading its range rapidly with the increase of cultivated ground. The hawks are difficult of identification and there are undoubtedly others than those included in my first list which frequent this region. The Baltimore Oriole, which was with some uncertainty included in the previous list, has since been observed on several occasions in the vicinity of the camp. Among the Warblers there are undoubtedly several species which should be included in the list but their identification is uncertain. The fall migrants slip by quietly and in garbs confusingly similar which makes the work of adding to a local list doubly hard to a person denied the pleasure of witnessing the spring migration in the same region.

In the following list are included those species not mentioned in the previous list.

87. **Larus argentatus.** HERRING GULL.—Two Herring Gulls were seen on Crooked Lake September 12, 1911. They were feeding upon dead fish and we were able to approach quite close to them in a launch before fear overcame their desire for food and caused them to fly a short distance away. At our departure they immediately returned to the fish and resumed feeding.

88. **Larus franklini.** FRANKLIN'S GULL.—This bird was seen on September 9 and 11, 1911, flying over Crooked Lake. On the latter date it flew within about 25 feet of my boat which gave me an excellent opportunity to observe it.

89. **Tympanuchus americanus americanus.** PRAIRIE CHICKEN.—A flock of about 35 birds was seen near Ox Meadow on August 18 and 19. A smaller flock, probably some of the same birds, was flushed from the lumber road between Ox Meadow and Stake Lakes on August 24, 1911. Again in 1912 the birds were found plentifully at the same place. The Prairie Chicken appears to be increasing in this vicinity quite rapidly. Several birds were flushed from the open brush land a half mile north of the camp and also from the road leading from the head of Crooked Lake to Stake Lake. Two years ago about 40 acres of land were cleared and planted about a half mile southwest of the camp. In 1912 about a half acre was planted to buckwheat for the express purpose of coaxing in the Prairie Chickens. About 30 acres were also planted to wheat and oats. This abundant feed appeared to bring about the desired result as a small covey of Chickens was several times observed either in the fields or in the brush adjoining. As no shooting is allowed in this vicinity we hope to see a notable increase in the flock next year.

90. **Pediocetes phasianellus phasianellus.** SHARP-TAILED GROUSE.—On August 19, 1911, an adult bird was flushed from the brush on an arm of higher ground between Ox Meadow and a swale to the northeast.

91. **Totanus flavipes.** LESSER YELLOW-LEGS.—Seen in small numbers on both Ox Meadow and Stake Lakes on August 18, 19, 24 and 25, 1911. Early in the morning of the 24th, as we sat by the fire in the front of the tent, a flock of three Yellow-legs and five Killdeer circled and alighted at the water's edge. Although we were not 20 feet away and made no attempt to be quiet or motionless, they appeared to be almost fearless and fed undisturbed. A few Yellow-legs were also observed in 1912 at the same place.

92. **Myiarchus crinitus.** CRESTED FLYCATCHER.—It was not uncommon to hear the characteristic call of this flycatcher from the depth of a small grove near the camp. The loud and long drawn "wheep" call note was often heard in August although at this time the Crested Flycatcher is generally supposed to remain quiet.

93. **Iridoprocne bicolor.** TREE SWALLOW.—On August 24 and 25, 1911, single Tree Swallows or flocks of four or five were seen over both Stake and Ox Meadow lakes. A few Cliff Swallows were seen at the same time and also on August 19 but at no time was either species common.

Tree Swallows were seen flying over Crooked Lake on September 5, 1911. In 1912 Tree Swallows were again observed upon several occasions, but never more than a few individuals were seen at one time.

94. **Riparia riparia.** BANK SWALLOW.— Although I knew that these birds occurred in this region because of the numerous nesting holes I had seen in several sand banks, it was not until the summer of 1912 that I actually saw the bird. Two pair nested in a small bank at the camp which had been formed by digging out sand for building purposes. The actual nesting bank was not over four feet high or eight feet long and it was interesting to note that the birds had started 22 different holes before they had succeeded in completing two that were satisfactory for nesting purposes. Some of these holes were only a few inches deep, others nearly a foot. In each case the birds had been discouraged because a large stone or a root obstructed further progress.

95. **Compsothlypis americana usneæ.** NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER.— I was shown the skin of an adult male that was found dead about the last of June, 1911.

96. **Dendroica coronata.** MYRTLE WARBLER.— Observed on August 18 and 26, 1911. In both cases only one bird was seen and that at a short distance from the camp.

97. **Certhia familiaris americana.** BROWN CREEPER.— This bird was inadvertently omitted from the original list. It was seen on August 28, 1908, and again on August 3 and 9, 1911.

SOME BINARY GENERIC NAMES.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F. R. S. E.

In the *Nov. Zool.*, Vol. XVII, 1910, pp. 492-503, I wrote: "On some necessary alterations in the nomenclature of birds," and there drew attention to the illegality of the "Brissonian genera" according to my interpretation of the International Code.

The second part, published six months later (Vol. XVIII, pp. 1-22, 1911), commented on the 20th Opinion rendered by the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature which, dealing with the Gronovian genera, ruled that these were admissible though Gronow was not a binomialist. This ruling was based on the interpretation of the word "binary": the Commission concluded