

FURTHER NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIRDS
OF HATLEY, STANSTEAD COUNTY, QUEBEC, 1919.

BY H. MOUSLEY.

THE season of 1919 has been the most eventful that I have experienced so far, during the past nine years. The weather conditions have not been altogether ideal, the great amount of humidity, and at times electricity in the air, making field work somewhat trying. The month of June was unusually hot, more nearly resembling July than Junes of former years, the temperature in the first week, ranging from seventy degrees in the early morning, to over ninety in the afternoon, and this state of things lasted on and off, more or less, throughout the remainder of the month, and that of July also. This prolonged spell of heat had a marked effect on the bird life of the district; judging from the increased number of Ruffed Grouse to be found in the fall, as compared with the last two or three years, when very wet Junes, depleted the young broods to an alarming extent. Strange to say, the very cold winter of 1917-18, as I have already remarked in my paper in 'The Auk' for October, 1919, produced a number of very early spring records, whereas the comparatively mild and open one of 1918-19, which one might naturally have expected to give rise to a crop of these records, failed to produce anything very startling. Two Robins were, however, seen on March 2, eighteen days ahead of time, and Prairie Horned Larks appeared on February 18, ten days ahead of any previous record. A Crow was seen on February 13, and a Brown Creeper on March 21, the former being twelve days ahead of time, and the latter twenty-three days. These four items, however, form the principal early records, although there were about a dozen others, which ranged from one day to seven days in advance of former years. In the fall however, the hot summer and comparatively mild weather prevailing towards the end of September, seem to have given rise to some unusually late records, especially amongst the warblers, the Nashville, Tennessee, Northern Parula, Magnolia, Black-poll and Blackburnian, being found well into the first week of October—a thing that has never occurred before.

Some of these records, such as that of the Nashville and Blackburnian, are as much as twenty-five days later than in previous years, the first named being seen as late as October 18, whilst the Ovenbird, Bay-breasted, Cape May and Chestnut-sided Warblers lingered into the last week of September, these records also ranging from eight days to twenty-two later than in previous years. The records of the Limicolae have been few and far between, owing to the almost drying up of "the marsh," but I was fortunate on June 2 and August 7, in observing two Semipalmated Sandpipers, a bird that has been absent for the past three years. This last remark applies almost equally well to the Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper and Semipalmated Plover, birds that at one time I used to see more or less regularly every year, but which now seem to have entirely deserted the district. A Wilson's Snipe was observed on April 27, and again in the fall on August 24, both of these dates forming early records. A couple of Killdeer (a bird rare in these parts) were on the marsh on August 11, and a pair were seen in a dry hilly pasture, about seven miles from Hatley on May 6, which may possibly have remained to breed. Two other noticeable features were the late arrival of the Solitary Sandpiper, which was not seen until May 23, and the failure of the Great Blue Heron to put in an appearance at all, in the spring, such events never having occurred before. Of the ducks, a pair of Black Ducks put in a record appearance on April 6, as well as two male Red-breasted Mergansers on the thirteenth, and in the fall I obtained a couple of female Blue-winged Teal on September 17, a bird I had never personally seen on the marsh before, which remark applies also to the Mergansers, although they both occur occasionally on Lake Massawippi. But by far the rarest visitors to my little marsh were a pair of Shovellers on May 31, and a Black Rail on September 23, both species being new to my list, and both of them being rare anywhere in this part of the country. Reverting to the land birds again, the only remarkable absentees were Meadowlarks and Migrant Shrikes, the former being seen on six occasions only, throughout the summer and autumn, whilst the latter was only noticed once on April 8. As an offset to this, Baltimore Orioles, Purple Finches, Goldfinches, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds,

Swamp Sparrows and Blue Jays were unusually numerous, whilst the Black-billed Cuckoo was seen more often than usual. Amongst the warblers, the Cape May, Black-poll and Wilson's, were observed both in the spring and fall, the two latter being seen on more occasions than in any previous year. In the spring, however, the Black-poll kept up its reputation for rareness, only one male being seen, the same as in 1917 and 1918, which fact still further strengthens my already expressed opinion that this species does not pass to its northern breeding grounds by way of Hatley. In the fall, however, judging from last year's experience when seven birds, and again this year when thirteen were seen, it now looks as though a portion of the birds pass through Hatley on their return journey south, arriving from the north probably by way of the St. Francis River. At all events this state of things has existed for many years past, both at Montreal and Quebec, where in spring the birds are scarce, but in the fall more general, the same as they are apparently now at Hatley. An unusual wave of the rarer Tennessee Warblers took place in May, when between the twentieth and twenty-sixth, no less than twenty examples were seen. The greatest surprise of all, however, was the obtaining of an example of the rarest of eastern warblers, the Orange-crowned, on September 29. The Warbling Vireo, a bird hardly ever seen since the great Vireo year of 1912, bred in a maple tree opposite my house, and the Philadelphia, the rarest of the Vireos, and a bird I saw only for the first time last year, and that very imperfectly, was quite abundant in the fall, as from September 1 to October 1, I saw it on eight occasions, and obtained two or three examples. I hope this Vireo may be swinging this way, for it is certain from what I now know of it, that it has not been here before last year. otherwise I could hardly have failed to notice it. When seen, it was always in the company of Chickadees or Warblers, more especially the latter—its smallness, sleek appearance and entire yellow underparts being good field marks, differentiating it from the Red-eyed and other Vireos. My little House Wrens bred again in the same locality as last year, this being the only pair I know of in the district. Another pleasing item in connection with this Wren locality was the finding there of a nest of the Olive-sided Flycatcher, and

thus being able to add this somewhat rare and uncommon bird to my breeding list. The nest which was located on July 23 was saddled on a branch of a spruce tree, 37 feet above the ground, four feet from the trunk, and five feet from the tip of the branch, and was composed outwardly of coniferous twigs and usnea lichen, which latter also formed the entire inside lining. Its dimensions were: outside diameter five, inside two and a half inches; outside depth two, inside one and one-eighth inches. What it contained on this date I cannot say, but certainly not young birds, or even incubated eggs, judging from the behaviour of the parents. I was unable to climb to it, and had later on to cut down the tree, before I could obtain possession of the nest. In locating it I adopted the tactics explained in my "Singing Tree" paper¹ and the system worked splendidly, the nest being found well within the magic circle, or just thirteen yards from the favorite "singing" or "observation" tree of the male. This nest was presented *in situ* to the Victoria Memorial Museum at Ottawa, together with that of the Warbling Vireo mentioned above. In the case of the latter, the male sang almost as frequently from the same tree that the nest was in, as he did from an apple tree six yards away. The same thing happened again, when the second nest was constructed, the male occupying the nesting tree, which in this case was also a maple, almost as much as he did the old maple, the site of the first nest, and which he now used as his favorite "singing" tree, it being seventeen yards from the new nest. The time occupied in building the second nest, and laying a fresh set of eggs (which I did not molest), was eleven days. Both nests were in similar situations, and both were alike in construction, in fact everything except height above ground conformed to the tables given in my paper, "A study of subsequent nestings after the loss of the first."² Referring to this paper, I was surprised to find that I had not drawn attention to the somewhat interesting fact that second or third nests, as a rule, are built in higher situations than the first, the same as this Vireo's was, the second nest being thirty-seven feet above the ground, whereas the first was only sixteen feet. Can it be that some intuitive or tele-

¹ Auk, Vol. 36, 1919, No. 3, pp. 339-348.

² Auk, Vol. 34, 1917, No. 4, pp. 381-393.

pathic influence prompts birds to seek a higher and safer site for their second or third ventures, or is it merely a coincidence in the cases that have come under my notice? It is an interesting problem and will repay further study. Dr. Chas. W. Townsend's Labrador Chickadee (*Penthestes hudsonicus nigricans*) and the Acadian (*Penthestes hudsonicus littoralis*) were both seen and obtained, the former on August 27 and September 26, and the latter on August 12 and September 17, and I can only repeat that the shyness of the former was, as on former occasions, in striking contrast to the tameness of the latter. Possibly the event that gave me as much satisfaction as any was the taking of an example of the Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*) on September 10. A sight record which I had previously made in May, 1917,¹ may have been looked upon by some with a certain amount of scepticism, and, in thus vindicating myself, I had also the pleasure of being the first to definitely add the species to the Quebec list. The present site was about three miles south of that previously recorded, but the nature of the ground was identical—a low damp meadow—much overgrown with long, rank, tussocky grass, and with a small stream running through the center of it. The bird flushed near this stream, from a tuft of grass, and alighted for a few seconds, low down in an alder bush, and this time I was taking no chances but fired instantly, although at very short range. I sent the bird in the flesh to the Victoria Memorial Museum at Ottawa, and Mr. Taverner tells me they have been able to make quite a respectable skin of it. On September 24, I came across my first Gray-cheeked Thrush. Of the Hawks and Owls I have not much to record, except that an example of Cooper's Hawk was shot on a farm near my house on September 1, whilst in the act of killing a fowl, this bird being new to my list. A Screech Owl (in the gray phase) was taken alive on the veranda of Mr. A. Nichol's house in the village on March 14, but died the following day. This bird was given to me in the flesh and has since been mounted by Mr. Greer, and is now in my possession, it being the second record only that I know of for the district. Wilson's Snipe, which have been re-

¹ Auk, Vol. 35, 1918, No. 3, p. 305.

ported as unusually abundant near Quebec, have almost failed to put in an appearance on the marsh—one on the early date of August 24, and three on September 14 being all that I have seen. A Bobolink was caught on the marsh on October 12 with a damaged wing, but otherwise it was in fine condition and plumage. White-crowned Sparrows were seen on September 18, and Tree Sparrows, which appeared on September 26, are still here October 31. These are the earliest fall dates I have. Fox Sparrows, which are always scarce, were noted on October 20, but only two examples. The last Myrtle Warblers lingered until October 22, just two days short of my previous latest record—October 24, 1916. Having now given a general idea of the season, I will proceed with the annotated list of the new species added since 1918, carrying on the numbering from where it previously left off.

169. ***Spatula clypeata*** (Linnaeus). SHOVELLER.—Very rare transient; May 31, 1919. I am indebted to my younger son for being able to add this rare migrant to my list. He and a friend had been fishing in the marsh on the above date, and on coming home to dinner at noon, he casually remarked that they had seen a pair of ducks, one of which was very handsome, and both had very large wide bills, and had allowed a near approach. It can be imagined I hurried through the meal, and at once made for the marsh, and there at the far end, riding lightly on the water, were a pair of Shovellers, which allowed me to approach and watch them for some considerable time, within a distance of twenty yards or rather less. At this range, it required neither a gun nor yet field glasses to prove their identity, for irrespective of the brilliant colors of the male, their extraordinary bills alone formed an easy field mark for identification, and one which my young son had not failed to notice. At length I moved, and the motion I suppose after remaining still for so long, must have startled them, for up they got and headed in the direction of far-off Saskatchewan or thereabouts, where I hope they were successful in rearing a brood, and that next year they will visit "the marsh" again. They are somewhat small ducks, and the female and young at long range, if the bills were indiscernible, might be mistaken for female Blue-winged Teal.

170. ***Creciscus jamaicensis*** (Gmelin). BLACK RAIL.—Very rare transient; September 23, 1919. Whilst crossing a little stream running through the center of "the marsh," on the above date, I had occasion (owing to the treacherous nature of the ground) to make use of a small

tree trunk that spanned the stream. Finding I was losing my balance by going slowly, I finished the remaining portion of the trunk at a run, as one often does in such cases, and landed with some little impetus in the swampy grass on the other side. Judge of my surprise, when up got a tiny dark bird from almost under my feet, and with feeble and hesitating flight, made for the nearest cat-tail bed just twenty yards distant, into which it dropped abruptly, as if utterly exhausted by its vain endeavors to simulate anything approaching a speed flight. I should certainly have hesitated in publishing this record, had it not been for the fact that the instant the bird rose, the one thing, after its smallness, that impressed itself upon my mind, was the somewhat light appearance of its hind parts, both upper and under, caused by the white spotting and barring, important identification marks, which at the moment were not fully realized, it being a very long time since I had seen a mounted example of the bird. Its flight of twenty yards to the cat-tail bed was low and direct and not more than three feet above the ground. I had ample time to note the plumage through my field glasses, and I am prepared to say with almost the same equal confidence, as I did when giving the sight record of the Short-billed Marsh Wren in May, 1917, that so far as human judgment is free from errors, and can be relied upon, I neither confused the present bird with the young of the Virginia, or any other rail.

171. **Accipiter cooperi** (Bonaparte). COOPER'S HAWK.—Not common transient. On September 1, 1919, a bird of this species was shot by Mr. Albert Hodges on his farm, about a mile and a half to the south of the village, whilst in the act of killing a young fowl. It was shown to me in the flesh on the same day, and proved to be a young male weighing ten ounces. I was able to identify another on September 15, 1919, coming upon it unexpectedly, and thereby getting a good view of it. As far as my experience goes, it appears to be somewhat uncommon here.

172. **Corvus corax principalis** (Ridgway). NORTHERN RAVEN.—Probably now a rare or accidental straggler, but once occurring more generally. In 'The Canadian Naturalist,' 1840, Gosse (who, it will be remembered, once resided near Hatley) speaks of the Raven on page 167 as follows: "The Raven (*Corvus corax*) occasionally sails over our heads, as he appears to visit nearly every country; but he is not a common sojourner with us; or if he is, he must be generally mistaken for the crow, the chief difference being his superior size." In view of the above facts, I think the Raven is fairly entitled to a place in my list, as no doubt before Gosse's time, when the country was in its wild and primitive state, the Raven may even have bred here. Personally, I cannot speak with any degree of certainty of ever having seen one, although on one or two occasions, certain single crows have appeared to look larger than usual, but this may have been merely light and shade playing a deceptive part.

The only real test I suppose in such cases, would be the seeing of the supposed larger crow, in company with a few real crows, when its greater size, if it was a Raven, would be apparent.

173. **Melospiza lincolni lincolni** (Audubon). LINCOLN'S SPARROW.—Rare fall transient; September 25 to October 15. This sparrow was first seen on September 25, 1918, but through an oversight was omitted to be recorded in my notes for that year. I have not yet come across it in the spring, and only a very few examples have been seen or taken in the fall so far. It is very secretive, and never more than two have been found together, frequenting the hedges and bushes bordering roadsides and fields.

174. **Vermivora celata celata** (Say). ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER. Very rare transient; September 29 and 30, 1919. It was on the first of the above dates, whilst on my way to some favorite hunting grounds, that my attention was attracted to what, at first sight, appeared to be a somewhat large and dull-colored Nashville Warbler, and I might have let it go at that had not my late constant study of warblers in the field told me that here was something new. On collecting it, judge of my surprise and pleasure to find that not only had I secured the rarest of eastern warblers, the Orange-crowned, but had also created a fall record for the bird, in the Province of Quebec. The only other existing records are one by the late E. Wintle, of a bird taken at Montreal on May 31, 1890, and one by C. E. Dionne, of a bird seen near Quebec on May 13, 1890. In Knight's 'Birds of Maine,' published in 1908, the Orange-crowned Warbler is only included in the hypothetical list, with the inference that there is no authentic instance of its occurrence in the State. In Allen's 'Birds of New Hampshire,' published in 1903, one spring record is given, that of a single bird taken May 16, 1876, by Dr. W. H. Fox at Hollis. There is no autumn record. Miss Alice W. Wilcox, formerly director of the Fairbanks Museum of Natural Science at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, stated in 1916 that so far as she knew, no record of the Orange-crowned Warbler had been made in that State. The above references will, I think, give some idea of the rareness of the bird in these parts, and my good fortune in securing this example, which I sent in the flesh to the Victoria Memorial Museum at Ottawa. On the following day I again visited the vicinity, and my attention was attracted to another individual. This one was flitting about in some small birch trees, on the outskirts of a large wood, in company with two Philadelphia Vireos and a mixed flock of warblers, amongst which was a Blackburnian, two Bay-breasted, two Northern Parulas, and one Nashville, besides many other commoner ones. I had many opportunities of watching this bird, (for I did not molest it), both during the morning and afternoon, and of hearing its sharp metallic chip. In habits it reminded me more of a Nashville than anything else, hopping and flitting about, whilst incessantly

gleaning small insects, and ever and anon giving vent to its sharp chip. I never saw it frequent a coniferous tree, its favorite hunting area being a batch of small birch trees, in several of which it would spend long intervals at a time, going very carefully over them in its incessant search, I presume, for the small aphides that infest these trees. I might here mention that the bird obtained the day previous was shot from a sapling aspen, so that it looks as if small deciduous trees, and no doubt shrubby, are preferred to coniferous or the taller deciduous trees.

175. *Hylocichla aliciae aliciae* (Baird). GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH.—Rare transient; September 24, 1919. For some years I have waited in vain for a fitting opportunity of recording this thrush, for although I think I have seen it on two or three occasions, the view has never been sufficiently long or convincing enough to warrant its inclusion in my list. However, on the above date I came unawares upon a thrush standing in a very erect posture, on the bough of a small birch tree, and the light being good I was able to see distinctly that there was no perceptible buffy tinge on either the eye ring or cheeks, the breast being only slightly tinged with this color. In addition to this, the bird certainly struck me at once as being somewhat larger than any thrush I had come across before, and for these reasons I have no hesitation in now including it in my list of Hatley birds, especially, as very soon afterwards, I was able to compare it with an Olive-backed Thrush, which was also in the immediate neighborhood.

Hatley, Que.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (*BOMBYCILLA GARRULA*) IN NEW ENGLAND.

BY HORACE W. WRIGHT.

ON February 12, 1919, in a walk around Chestnut Hill reservoir, Boston, I came upon a flock of about thirty Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) in a plot of berry-bearing shrubs situated near the reservoir basin. The Cedarbirds were flying back and forth from one shrub to another for the berries and were giving their characteristic sibilant notes. But I heard another call than theirs, and yet saw no other bird than waxwings. The call consisted of several *chips* given in close repetition, not as separate calls, but forming one call, slightly rolled together like a short trill and constituting a chatter, repeated after an interval. Soon the bird from which these calls came, presented itself fully to view upon a branch of a low tree standing among the shrubs