

was attracted by some object fluttering in the air over the middle of the street. A casual glance towards it to assure myself whether it was a *Cecropia* or a *Luna* moth became an interested gaze when I discovered that it was neither but a House Sparrow, busily chasing a large Mayfly (*Ephemeridae*) which it eventually captured. It then flew back to the front of the theatre and after resting a few seconds on the arch over the doorway it flew underneath to its nest in the scrollwork over the ticket-box where its noisy reception indicated the presence of a nearly full grown brood of young. To assure myself that the occurrence was not accidental and the result of the bird having been disturbed I watched its operations for some time and was amused to see the facility with which it picked off the moths and May-flies as they appeared either in proximity to the lights on either side of the facade over the arch or within the radius of the lights below it. As the nearest grass-plots are fully two blocks from the nest and the streets offer but few opportunities to obtain food, the presence of the insects at the lights must indeed be providential, though it would be a far fetched theory to assume that the building of the nest in that particular situation was influenced thereby.

I have not previously seen Sparrows feed under these conditions though I have many times observed Pigeons in Chicago flying and feeding in front of moving picture houses on State street and Michigan Avenue.—J. R. MALLOCH, *U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey.*

Occurrence of the Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) at Dyke, Virginia.—Dyke receives its name from the narrow embankment that extends out for hundreds of yards into the Potomac River. It has a very narrow path down its entire middle, and this, for the most part, supports, upon either side, various trees and shrubs—with an undergrowth of sedge and plants found in such situations. This is one of my favorite places for collecting, and while there on the 15th of July, 1922, with Marten Benson Rowe of Washington, I undertook to "squeak up" the birds in the neighborhood. Among the species that were deceived by the call were two Prothonotary Warblers—both males—and in unusually fine plumage—considering the time of year. They afforded me a shot when they were close together on the same twig, but proved to be a little too far off for a .22 cartridge loaded with No. 13 shot. A few down feathers floated by, but that was all, and the birds made off into the thick undergrowth of the marsh close at hand. Forty years and more ago I collected this warbler in the swampy bayous around New Orleans.—R. W. SHUFELDT, *Washington, D. C.*

The Cerulean Warbler at Washington, D. C.—On May 20, 1922, while with a party of the District of Columbia Audubon Society near Chevy Chase Lake, Maryland, about a mile and a half beyond the District limits, my attention was called to a bluish bird playing hide and seek in the leaves about twenty feet from the ground. Automatically raising my

glass (6x) and expecting to identify a Black-throated Blue Warbler, I noticed black streaks on the back, contrasting sharply with the bright blue. A second and better look confirmed my first suspicion that it was indeed the rare Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*). The entire party of seven persons had the bird under observation for six or eight minutes as it flitted lazily from one to another of the lower branches, several times pausing for some seconds on a bare twig. The shining quality of the blue on the head with the black markings on head and back, the white wing-bars, and the dark collar against the white underparts were all commented upon. While I did not particularly notice that the tail was carried high, as noted by Mr. Brewster, the white markings were conspicuous, reminding me of those in the tail of the White-breasted Nuthatch.

This unusual find led me to investigate the exact status of the species in this vicinity, to learn more of its dozen or so occurrences than the mere dates as recorded in the card files of the Biological Survey. Consultation of the catalog of the U. S. National Museum to see who had collected their specimens, revealed the sad fact that in the old catalog by species, from which our cards were copied, *Dendroica caerulescens* of the original catalog had been transcribed as *D. cerulea*, the former name not appearing in the 1859 'Catalogue of North America Birds,' used as a guide at the time the copy was made. One of the specimens was found and it proved to be *D. caerulescens*. This eliminates the records for October, 1859, and May, 1861, given in 'Birds of the Washington Region,' (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., XXXIV, 1921, p. 12). Since the publication of that list, Dr. C. W. Richmond's notes on the birds of this region have become available. Consultation of these and a reexamination of my father's notebooks gives full authority for all the records. The eleven definite records for this species about Washington are:

May, 1877, one seen at Arlington, Va., by P. L. Jouy.

May 5, 1888, one taken on Rock Creek, D. C., by E. M. Hasbrouck.

May 11, 1890, one taken on "Va. side of the Potomac" by E. M. Hasbrouck.

May 12, 1899, one taken on Eastern Branch [D. C. ?], by P. Bartsch.

May 29, 1902, one taken at Plummer Island, Md., by W. R. Maxon. One heard in the same tree on May 22, was perhaps the same individual.

May 9, 1904, one seen at Marshall Hall, Md., by W. W. Cooke.

May 15, 1904, one seen at Cabin John, Md., by W. W. Cooke (not A. K. Fisher as previously recorded).

May 3, 1907, one seen at Fort Washington, Md., by W. W. Cooke.

May 11, 1907, one seen at Difficult Run, Va., by W. W. Cooke.

May 13, 1909, one seen by R. W. Shufeldt.

May 20, 1922, one seen at Chevy Chase Lake, Md., by M. T. Cooke.

It is reported to have been seen once in fall, but I have been unable to find any definite record.

There are three records of the breeding of this species in Baltimore County, Maryland (The Auk, X, 1893, p. 372; XVIII, 1901, pp. 137-142),

about 20 miles beyond the limits of our territory, and it therefore seems probable that this bird occurs here oftener than the records indicate. Several writers refer to its fondness for the topmost branches of high trees. By the first week of May, in this latitude, the trees are usually nearly in full leaf, and the identification of a warbler in the tops is very difficult. In this connection, it is interesting to note that in 1904 and 1907 late frosts and continued cold greatly retarded the development of the foliage, and in each of these years, the Cerulean Warbler was twice noted in this vicinity.—M. T. COOKE, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D C.*

Defense Note of the Chickadee.—The article on this subject, by Mr. A. W. Schorger, in the July 'Auk' was of interest to me because of having had a similar experience the same spring. My nest was in a low decayed stub, the cavity leading straight down from the top. The locality a swampy woods; the ground at foot of stub being exceedingly spongy and full of water.

I had tapped on the nest site with no results, so thought I would look into the entrance. Bending over I peered in with one eye and was greeted with a sort of gasping hiss not unlike the noise made when the last of the water disappears from a wash bowl. I really thought that standing near the stub had forced water up into it, and that when I moved back a little to bend over it had sucked out again. So I tried treading around the stub and stepping back, but heard no noise. Again putting my eye to the hole I got hissed, and at last determined it was a parent Chickadee. After several experiments I could see part of the operation, the bird rising up a little in the cavity suddenly, and opening its mouth wide to make the noise. Withdrawing some distance the male bird finally alit on top of the stub, and though making no call audible to me the female almost instantly popped out of the entrance and he took her place. The hissing noise, together with the bird's open mouth dimly seen down in the cavity certainly would make the uninitiated think of snakes.—E. A. DOOLITTLE, *Painesville, Ohio.*

Peculiar Note of Carolina Chickadee.—Having read with interest Mr. A. W. Schorger's article in the last number of 'The Auk' entitled, "Defense note of Chickadee (*Penthestes atricapillus atricapillus*)," I might set forth a similar experience that I had with a Carolina Chickadee (*Penthestes carolinensis carolinensis*).

On March 15, 1920, a Chickadee with a bill-full of feathers was seen in my yard; it soon went into a hole in a dead peach stub about seven feet up. On April 1, two eggs, covered with down, were found in the cavity; six eggs were laid in all.

Late in the afternoon of March 28, I tapped on the tree; one of the birds was inside and gave a peculiar note, not a hiss such as Mr. Schorger heard, but more like a little sneeze. This was repeated every time I tapped. Several times the bird tapped on the inside of the cavity. Finally it put its head out of the hole and calmly looked at me as I stood about three