

Some Observations of the Effects of a Late Snow Storm upon Bird Life.—Northern New England was visited by a late snow storm on April 12, 1929, which deposited ten inches. Light snow fall continued for two days and temperatures remained low for a week following the storm. Until the 16th, the ground remained snow covered and it was not until the 19th that the snow wholly disappeared. The earlier migrants, such as the Northern Flicker, Phoebe, Horned Lark, Crow, Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Purple Finch, Vesper Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, Song Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Robin, and Bluebird, were present, some of them in large numbers, and many of the winter visitants were also present. The food problem became acute and every possible source was utilized. For the Phoebe, an especially difficult situation existed. Piles of compost kept alive a limited number of insects, as the heat developed from its decomposition raised the temperature close to the surface of the heaps. Phoebes were seen to perch on these and their frequent sallies showed that this opportunity was being improved. In some cases they found entrance to stables and fed upon insects there which had likewise taken refuge from the cold. One individual was seen to perch near a spider's web and fly over to remove flies or moths as fast as they became enmeshed. Other species using barns freely for food and shelter were the Slate-colored Junco and Song Sparrow. Grass seed could be secured in abundance but cats were an element of danger, probably taking heavy toll. Fox Sparrows seemed to mind weather conditions the least of any of the ground feeding species. Where thick bushes caught the snow, or on ledges where it melted as it came, they might be found industriously scratching, the males pausing now and then to fly up to a low perch in tree or shrub and give voice to clear song, perhaps the most beautiful one of the Sparrow family. Hermit Thrushes, and Robins fed on sumac berries (*Rhus typhina*), although in times of normal food supply they manifest no liking for them. Evening Grosbeaks (*Hesperiphona v. vespertina*), also appeared at this time and through the efforts of the three species, the supply of sumac berries, although plentiful, was exhausted.

Although birds were able to find food of some kind, yet there was some mortality. One of the pair of Phoebes that watched the spider's web was later found dead in an old Robin's nest under the eaves. Flickers, Robins, and Bluebirds succumbed to some extent. Robins continued their diet of earth worms by frequenting the roads where traffic kept the ground free from snow. Doubtless some fell victims to the automobile, although the condition of the highways prevented speed. Robins and Bluebirds appeared to suffer more from the cold than other species. A Bluebird was seen sitting close to a chimney, presumably for warmth. Later a dead individual was found on the ground beneath, so probably the makeshift proved ineffective.

The country is by no means destitute of these species, and undoubtedly,

only the weaker perished, but nevertheless, we shall miss our family of Phoebes this summer.—WENDELL P. SMITH, *Wells River, Vt.*

Notes from Cobb's Island, Virginia.—The results of a trip to Cobb's Island, Va., by the undersigned in company with R. O. Bender and B. C. Hiatt on June 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, 1929, seem to offer enough contrast to those of the Kuerzi brothers in 1927 (See 'Auk,' January, 1929) to make them worthy of attention.

On June 8, Hiatt and Worth discovered two Black-necked Stilts feeding daintily on a small marshy pond near the northern end of the island. They were not flushed, in hopes that they might still be there when Bender had been summoned to see them, but about an hour later a thunder-storm came up, and the birds disappeared. Nor were they to be found there during the following days, thus precluding the supposition that they were breeding birds, as had been fondly hoped. Another rather interesting record is that of a Savannah Sparrow, seen by Worth on June 11, probably a summering non-breeder or a very late migrant. Three Red-backed Sandpipers seen on June 9 by Bender and Hiatt, as well as numerous Sanderlings present during the entire visit, are not mentioned in the Kuerzi's list of shore birds, but as this visit was earlier in the season than theirs, it is not surprising that they were not seen.

A census of the other water birds of the island is interesting because of the unaccountable rarity of certain of them, and the relative abundance of others: Herring Gull, 6; Laughing Gull, 1000; Common Tern, 75; Forster's Tern, 50; Gull-billed Tern, 25; Least Tern, only 10; Roseate Tern, only 1 identified (Bender and Hiatt); Black Skimmer, 1000 (two colonies of 250 and 750); Double-crested Cormorant, 50 (mostly seen migrating north); Red-breasted Merganser, 6; Clapper Rail, 50; Dowitcher, 25; Knot, 75; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 1000; (Least Sandpiper not seen); Willet, 40; Black-bellied Plover, 30; Ruddy Turnstone, 20; Semipalmated Plover, 3; Piping Plover, 2; Wilson's Plover, 20; Oyster-catcher, 20. This includes the birds found on Cordwell's Island, as this is so close to Cobb's as to be practically continuous with it. However, Willets and Wilson's Plovers seemed to be the only breeders on Cordwell's besides a solitary pair of Oyster-catchers. All the Gulls, Skimmers, Terns, and the rest of the Oystercatchers nested on Cobb's.

Probably the most interesting, though tragic, event of the trip was the "Nor'easter" which virtually wiped out all the nests on the islands, and incidentally ruined all chances for banding and photography. On June 8, about 4:00 P. M., the thundershower which probably put the Stilts to flight changed to a heavy downpour. This in turn soon turned into a regular storm with heavy winds and a driving rain. The following day it continued incessantly. That night (June 9-10) the first tragedy occurred. A remarkably high tide, caused no doubt by the gale, swept over the beach and marshes, flooding out all the Laughing Gull and Forster's Tern colonies as well as most of the Skimmers' and Gull-billed and Common