

FURTHER RECORDS OF THE BIRDS OF THE BOSTON  
PUBLIC GARDEN FROM THE NOTES OF  
HORACE W. WRIGHT.

BY GORDON B. WELLMAN.

IN May, 1909, Horace Winslow Wright published his "Birds of the Boston Public Garden"<sup>1</sup> which covered continuous observations from May 1900 to the close of 1908. After the publication of this book he continued to visit the Garden and record the birds until his death on June 3, 1920. In 1925, Morris Brounstein published "The Birds of the Boston Public Garden, 1921-1924."<sup>2</sup> The following article supplies some of the data and a list of the added species found in Mr. Wright's records from 1908 to 1920, which together with his published book and Mr. Brounstein's published notes completes twenty-five years of observations in the Boston Public Garden.

During the eleven and a half years after 1908 that Mr. Wright continued his walks in the Garden there are increased records for all but ten of the one hundred and twenty species recorded in his book. The species not seen again were Golden-eye Duck, Woodcock, Saw-whet Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Palm Warbler, European Goldfinch, Java Sparrow and European Blackbird. Only one of these is reported by Brounstein, a Woodcock, seen by Higbee, March 28, 1924, outside the Garden proper in the Granary Burying-Ground.

For all the other species seen before 1908 there are later observations, often copious notes and extended information in the unpublished record books. The following additional records are of particular interest.

**Larus argentatus.** HERRING GULL.—A summer record, four birds were seen by G. M. Allen, on June 20, 1914, "at about six P.M. over the Basin and at a good height. Shortly they swung off toward Beacon Hill."

**Coccyzus erythrophthalmus.** BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO.—A pair

<sup>1</sup> Birds of the Boston Public Garden, A Study in Migration. By Horace Winslow Wright. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston 1909.

<sup>2</sup> The Birds of the Boston Public Garden. 1921-1924. By Morris Brounstein. H. W. Bailey Press. South Braintree, Mass. 1925.

found nesting in the Garden by E. E. Caduc, June 28, 1909, in a snowball bush near Arlington Street. Four young were successfully reared.

**Lanivireo flavifrons.** YELLOW-THROATED VIREO.—Nest found by E. E. Caduc, June, 1909. The male was present and singing from May 28 to June 24. The nest was built fifty feet from the ground in an elm at the corner of the Common at Beacon and Charles Streets.

**Oporornis agilis.** CONNECTICUT WARBLER.—Three added records on September 21, 1910, seen by W. M. Tyler, "in the same bed of roses" as observed in 1908, on October 20, 1914 and October 29, 1916.

**Icteria virens virens.** YELLOW-BREADED CHAT.—A second record on May 15, 1916. This bird was found dead on May 19, "probably killed by a Grackle." The mounted specimen was given to the Brookline Bird Club.

**Nannus hiemalis hiemalis.** WINTER WREN.—Three added records, one seen October 12, 1911, one April 10, 1915, seen by Miss Simpson and one October 23, 1917. The previous record was in the Granary Burying-Ground, seen by Frances H. Allen, April 25 and 26, 1898.

**Polioptila caerulea caerulea.** BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER.—A second record on May 18, 1920,<sup>1</sup> "a beautifully marked bird with clear white breast, blue-gray back and large display of white in the tail."

**Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni.** OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH.—Autumn records were made in 1909, 1911, 1913, 1914 and 1917. The dates run from September 24 to October 17.

**Hylocichla guttata pallasi.** HERMIT THRUSH.—Many records show the abundance of this species, such as October 9 to November 7, 1909, "about twenty-five birds"; on April 7, 1911, twelve individuals and about forty birds for that year; October 17, 1912, seventeen birds on one day.

The following is an annotated list of the twenty-seven species added during the years 1909 to June, 1920. The notes are all copied from Mr. Wright's journals.

**Gavia immer.** LOON.—May 14, 1914, two seen in flight by Wyman Richardson.

**Larus marinus.** GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.—January 7, 1916, one seen circling overhead with about twenty-five Herring Gulls, distinctly identified.

**Mergus americanus.** MERGANSER.—March 10, 1912. three flew over the Garden southward.

**Anas platyrhynchos.** MALLARD.—A pair from the Fens, probably, lived in the Garden in 1910; nine ducklings were hatched, five were raised; the Duck left the nest with her brood on May 12. A second brood was hatched later in the season and raised eight young. Both nestings were on the island.

**Anas rubripes tristis.** BLACK DUCK.<sup>2</sup>—May 22, 1910, a pair flew in and alighted on the pond among a family of Mallards and remained

<sup>1</sup> The Auk, XXXVII, 1920, p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> The Auk, XXXVI, 1919, pp. 355-367.

fifteen or twenty minutes. A pair nested on the island April 18, 1911; the female was on the nest about two weeks when she deserted. In 1914, there was an unsuccessful attempt to nest; 1915, ten young were raised; 1916, five young; 1917, eight young; 1918, unsuccessful; 1919, the nest was broken up; 1920, June 2, a Black Duck was seen on the island at 7:40 A.M., apparently settling on a nest. (Mr. Wright's record is broken at this point. He died the next day, suddenly, at his summer home in Jefferson, N. H.)

**Botaurus lentiginosus.** BITTERN<sup>1</sup>.—March 25, 1917, there was the unusual occurrence of a Bittern perching in a tree, where it remained all day.

**Ardea herodias herodias.** GREAT BLUE HERON.—October 6, 1911, one was seen flying south-west; March 31, 1913, four were seen flying south-east; May 4, 1913, one was seen flying over the Charles River Basin.

**Butorides virescens virescens.** GREEN HERON.—May 16, 1918, one perched in an elm tree beside the pond and took several flights about and called several times.

**Phasianus colchicus torquatus.** RING-NECKED PHEASANT.—April 5, 1917, a male bird was seen by F. H. Bull. April 17, 1917, a female was seen by Mr. Wright crouching on Monument Hill of the Common at 7 o'clock A. M.; later, 7:20 A.M., it was seen in the Garden by Miss Simpson.

**Falco peregrinus anatum.** DUCK HAWK.—One seen by the pond in the Garden, October 19, 1910 and again October 25. It flew away each time and identification was not absolute. December, 1912, one was seen repeatedly by Chester Day about the tower of the Baptist Church, corner of Commonwealth and Clarendon Streets. Later it was shot by Dr. Coffin and it is in the collection of the Boston Society of Natural History.

**Falco columbarius columbarius.** PIGEON HAWK.—One seen clearly April 8-10, 1912, an immature bird. October 20, 1914, one was in the Garden; April 25-28 and again May 2, 1915 one was seen. The latter date it was seen perching on the weather vane of the Arlington Street Church, eating a pigeon.

**Pandion haliaetus carolinensis.** OSPREY.—May 2, 1914, two were seen in flight by Wyman Richardson.

**Asio wilsonianus.** LONG-EARED OWL.—One seen perching in the Garden at noon, April 10, 1916, by Mrs. Mary M. Kaan and Miss Hale. One seen from eleven o'clock A.M. to five P.M. on the same perch, April 23, 1918, by Miss Hale.

**Antrostomus vociferus vociferus.** WHIP-POOR-WILL.—On May 7, 1918, a female bird perched all day in a hawthorn near the Ether Monument. Seen by many observers.

**Myiarchus crinitus.** CRESTED FLYCATCHER.—One was heard calling on May 21, 1912. One was seen May 21, 1918 and two were seen May 20, 1920.

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<sup>1</sup> The Auk, XXXIV, 1917, p. 476.

***Empidonax trailli alorum.*** ALDER FLYCATCHER.—One heard to give the "pep" call on May 17, 1912 and May 26, 1914. Both records are questioned in Mr. Wright's journal.

***Sturnus vulgaris.*** STARLING.—First observed in the Garden, May 27, 1916. Nest with young in a Flicker's hole was found on the Common on that date. November 17, 1916, six were seen in the Garden. A second nesting was in 1917 and in 1918-1919 the Starlings were generally distributed through the whole Boston region.

***Sturnella magna magna.*** MEADOWLARK.—March 27, 1912, one flew in and alighted in a tree top beside the pond. It soon flew off in the direction of the Common. One was seen May 6, 1916; one May 17, 1917; one May 19, 1918 on the Common.

***Emberiza citrinella.*** YELLOW HAMMER (EUROPEAN).—On May 18, 1910, one was in the Garden, feeding in the grass near Boylston Street with several House Sparrows. On May 15, 1911, one was seen and it sang. It remained through the morning and was also identified by Miss Harriet Richards.

***Loxia curvirostra minor.*** CROSSBILL.—Three birds flew over the Garden calling, May 27, 1911. Four birds were in the Garden, May 3, 1917, and flew away northeasterly.

***Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis.*** SNOW BUNTING.—A flock of fifty passed over the Garden at two P.M., March 10, 1916. Seen by Dudley James.

***Passerherbulus nelsoni subvirgatus.*** ACADIAN SHARP-TAILED SPARROW.—One feeding along the grass border at the stone curbing of the pond, nearly abreast of the island. It was seen at thirty feet and distinctly identified. It was also identified independently by Miss Grace M. Snow.

***Passerina cyanea.*** INDIGO BUNTING.—A male bird was in the Garden, May 15, 1909. A male was seen in the Garden by Miss Hale, May 23, 1913. One was in the same tree May 12 to 19, 1915.

***Vireo griseus griseus.*** WHITE-EYED VIREO.—One was singing on May 22, 1911 and was well seen. Besides his song, he gave a variety of notes, catbird "mew" and song and Towhee's call.

***Oporornis philadelphia.*** MOURNING WARBLER.—One was in the Garden, May 28, 1916. The song was given four times.

***Wilsonia citrina.*** HOODED WARBLER.—A male in full spring plumage remained eleven days, October 2-12, 1913, during a period of stormy weather, thick fog with drizzle at times; the sun hardly appeared during this time and there was no marked change in temperature. He frequented three or four silver maples near the corner of Charles and Beacon Streets and left on the first clear night which was also a moonlight night. He was first seen by Miss Hale and then by many observers.

***Penthestes hudsonicus littoralis.*** ACADIAN CHICKADEE.—One was seen in an English hawthorn on November 2, 1913. At this time there was an incursion of this species in the vicinity and many records.<sup>1</sup> (Pre-

<sup>1</sup> The Auk, XXXI, 1914, pp. 236-242.

sumably this movement of *Penihestes hudsonicus* about Boston in 1913 was the same as in 1916 when the species was identified as *nigricans*, not *littoralis*.<sup>1</sup>)

According to Mr. Brounstein's published notes, he added nine species to the birds previously seen in the Garden. This number added to the list in Mr. Wright's book and the list above makes one hundred and fifty-six species observed in the Garden over a period of twenty-five years. May 21, 1912, seems to be a record day, perhaps the record day.<sup>2</sup> On that day Mr. Wright saw one hundred and fifty migrants of forty species in the Garden; this included one hundred and seven Warblers of eighteen species.

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<sup>1</sup> The Auk, XXXIV, 1917, pp. 160-162.

<sup>2</sup> Wright, op. cit. pp. 36-40.

*Wellesley College,  
Wellesley, Massachusetts.*