

BLACK VULTURE (*CATHARTES ATRATA*)

IN VIRGINIA.

In the United States National Museum, there is an egg of the Black Vulture taken in Fauquier Co., Va., by my collector and sent to the Museum with a lot of *aura* eggs, but which upon first glance Major Bendire called *atrata* and labeled it as such. The collector said the bird's flight was peculiar, that he wondered at the time why it was that the vulture *sailed* so steadily and circled around so clumsily, but he did not know the Black Vulture and did not suppose it was other than *aura*. However, it turned out well. This is the first record for *Cathartes atrata* in Virginia, and I take pleasure in adding this species to the list of Virginia avifauna.

JOHN W. DANIEL, JR., Lynchburg, Va.

THE YEAR'S WORK.

Although it is an entire month before the close of the current bird-year, a brief summary of the work is made necessary by the special bulletins which will mark the new year. This early summary is made less premature by the unlikeliness of much more work during the remaining weeks. Any further records would therefore be rather accidental than as the result of a definite effort, hence the timeliness of the summary as marking the close of the year's activity.

The year has been marked by much greater activity than during any previous eleven months, with the logical result that more records stand to its credit. The year's records reach 182, against 175 during the whole of 1898, and a smaller number for any preceding year. Yet this large number does not include eleven species recorded in 1898, six of which might be expected with a considerable degree of confidence. But seventeen species not recorded in 1898 are on the list for 1899, one of them, Carolina Wren, being a new county record. Of the remaining sixteen two were recorded by Mr. W. L. Dawson before his departure. The writer's list therefore numbers 180, against 170 for 1898. Two of this number—Prairie Warbler and Wilson's Phalarope—were new to the writer, and eight—Shoveller, Black Duck, Red-breasted Merganser,

Lesser Yellow-legs, Greater Yellow-legs, American Osprey — were new to the Water Works Reservoir.

The work was confined to the six townships in which the greater part of previous work has been done, chiefly because they afford by far the most varied physical conditions, but partly because a perfect comparison with 1898 might be drawn. It is very doubtful whether other parts of the county would pay in results for the labor expended. The week spent in camp at the Chance Creek gorge illustrated what riches are in store for him who can spend the late summer weeks with the birds.

The county list now numbers 227 species, representing over twenty years of more or less active work upon the local bird fauna. During the last four years 198 species have been recorded. The number common to each of the four years is 122, and to each of the last three years 145. The experiences of the few years just past lead me to think that in this region about 130 species inhabit the county at some time during the year in sufficient numbers to make their record practically certain by one who is willing to put himself to some inconvenience to look for them. In addition to this number there are some sixty or seventy others which are not so regular or not numerous enough to be certainly counted upon during any one season. One must know their favorite resorts or the times when they are most likely to pass through the county if he expects to meet them.

He who would study the birds of his locality with the largest results must give careful heed to the weather, not merely for the day or for the week, but for the whole year. The daily weather charts are indispensable to the working field ornithologist. They enable him to predict the larger bird-movements with almost absolute accuracy, giving as they do, the sum total of the weather conditions over the entire country. And not less important, they enable him to plan his work intelligently, not merely hours, but for days ahead.

These yearly reports are printed in the Bulletin in the hope that the bird student who seems to himself to lack a field worthy of his effort and time, may come to realize that in every locality whatsoever there is room for much interesting and valuable work; that it is not needful that he should spend time and money in some apparently especially favorable place if he is to contribute something to our knowledge of birds. We need to work where we are and with what resources we have if the birds are to become wholly known.

LYNDS JONES, *Oberlin, Ohio.*