

MARYLAND BIRDS.

BY REV. J. H. LANGILLE.

Having spent the entire spring and the summer thus far, in riding over Montgomery county, Maryland,—the county just north of the District of Columbia,—I have had an admirable opportunity for the study of the common land birds of this locality. Then, too, as my work is in connection with the public schools, in which there are not a few who are now working up to the delights of ornithology, I get many valuable notes beyond my own observations.

To begin with the thrushes, the Wood Thrush, the only thrush residing here excepting the Robin and Bluebird, is everywhere abundant. The magnificent white-oak forests of our county, with their mixture of great tulip trees and undergrowth of dogwood, not to speak of the many springs and running streams in these parts, afford an agreeable habitat for this arboreal species. Reaching us in the last days of April, it immediately greets us with its suggestive and flute-like melody, everywhere awakening the sweetest woodland echoes, which melody continues to the end of July. It is known here by the people as the “wood robin.”

When we came here, seventeen years ago, the Robin was being slaughtered in the spring and fall migrations for food. Of course this was very bad economy, when ten cents' worth of beef would make as much in the pot as a whole dozen of these useful birds; but little was thought and less known of the birds here in those days. Then but few Robins remained here to breed, and those appeared so scared that one seldom heard the sweet and cheerful warble of that species, so characteristic of our more northern climes. Four years ago last winter we succeeded in getting a law passed protecting the Robin throughout the year, and every sum-

mer since that they have been staying in increasing numbers, until this summer they are really abundant—so readily do birds respond to measures of protection.

With the Robin we naturally associate the Catbird, the Brown Thrasher, and the Mockingbird, the two former very abundant here and the latter not at all uncommon. On the Chesapeake Bay it is numerous the year round. Many absurd notions exist in the common mind here concerning the Catbird. It is universally charged with pulling up corn, though stomach examinations as well as the form of the bill show but slight evidence in this direction. The children say it calls snakes; and one lad in school went so far as to say, that the last eggs laid by that bird all hatch out snakes. Of course the poor bird is stoned and shot and its nest is broken up by all those under the influence of these mistaken notions.

Naturally enough, too, one associates with the Wood Thrush the Oven-bird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*), which abounds here throughout the forest. Up to the time of the appearance of "Wake Robin" by John Burroughs, the familiar woodland chant of this species was supposed to be its only song. He calling attention to its pleasing crepuscular flight song, we watched many weary hours in our ornithological studies in Western New York, in order to verify for ourselves this new bird note; but excepting one midnight performance, beginning in the ordinary chant and ending in a beautiful warble, we utterly failed of success. On coming to Maryland, we experienced a new era in this respect. In clearing up the land and planting our new fruit garden of some eighteen acres, we found the tall forests around us occupied in every direction by this species; and this flight song was one of the commonest occurrences. Indeed we have heard it at about all hours of the night, and not infrequently during any hour of a cloudy day. The performance is most common, however, between sunset and dark. Then the bird soars high above the tree-tops, and hovering at about the same point for a few seconds, utters a sweet, flow-

ing warble not unlike that of the Goldfinch and Indigo Bunting and almost as sprightly as that of the House Wren, after which it drops down into the tree-tops almost as if shot, and remains silent till soaring again. Indeed its chant is seldom heard at this time of day. Of course its oven-shaped nest is common in our forests up to the very borders, and all too commonly the sitting bird becomes the prey of some prowling cat.

Unless the eye and ear are well trained to the birds, one might very easily confound the above species with the Indigo Bunting, the song flight of which is quite common to these parts and decidedly similar. It is not so much in the forest, however, more out from the forest in the open field, or from the top of some solitary tree of the meadow or pasture, and the song is not so loud. The Indigo Bunting, as well as the Goldfinch, is quite common here, the latter being resident in flocks during winter.

Meadowlarks are common here throughout the year. Bobolinks pass through in considerable numbers, but do not remain. The Orchard Oriole is abundant, but the Baltimore Oriole can hardly be called common in the nesting period. I have never found the Cowbird's egg in the nests of the smaller birds. The Red-winged Blackbird is common to swampy places, but not really numerous, and the Purple Grackle seems confined to certain places where the Lombardy poplar or dense evergreens darken the yard. Blue Jays are common, and, as we are in the regular Crow belt, they breed here, the American as well as the Fish Crow, and congregate in vast numbers in winter. From October till April, Juncos are here in vast flocks, with a liberal accompaniment of Tree Sparrows and an occasional White-throated Sparrow, the latter favoring us with its song during the balmy days of autumn and in early spring.

The Cardinal is common throughout the year, as also is the Bluebird. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is rare in the migration, and I have found one pair of the Blue Grosbeak here late in June. The Phoebe and the Wood Pewee

are common, as also is the Crested Flycatcher, and the Kingbird is abundant. The warblers common to our line are in full force during the migrations, but the Maryland Yellow-throat and the Prairie Warbler are the only summer residents which we have met, except the Black and White Warbler. The Carolina Chickadee is common, as also is the Tufted Titmouse, both of which are resident throughout the year. The Song and Vesper Sparrows are common, the former throughout the year and the latter from late in March till October, while the Field and Grasshopper Sparrows spend the summer in great numbers.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER (*Dendroica kirtlandi*) AGAIN
IN OHIO.

BY LYNDS JONES.

Just at the close of a canoeing trip of a week down the Muskingum and Ohio rivers from Zanesville to Ironton, Rev. W. L. Dawson and the writer chanced upon two real live specimens of this rarest of the warblers, one of them in song. The place is opposite Ashland, Ky., about half a mile back from the Ohio River, along one of the roads leading up a rather narrow run, then dry. The time was about 10 o'clock A.M., August 28. The first bird seen was under close scrutiny of two 8-power Bausch & Lomb Stereo-Binoculars for fully twenty minutes, in low willow and locust trees bordering the road. The precipitous hillsides afforded an opportunity for close study of the bird from above, besides the closer views from the road below. The second bird was discovered by the first near the ground, when the two proceeded to play tag in true bird fashion. Both birds came within thirty feet of us while feeding, and afforded the