

GENERAL NOTES

NOTES ON SOME OHIO BIRDS.

(Read before the Wilson Ornith. Club meeting, Dec. 29, 1915.)

From my notebooks I want to give the following records, which may prove interesting to Ornithologists, not only to those residing in Ohio, but also to others living in the Middle West.

Hesperiphona vespertina (Evening Grosbeak). This bird was observed on March 7th and March the 10th, 1912. It was seen at the same place where a few years previous I noticed the Bohemian Waxwing. Records for this species are scarce as far as Ohio is concerned, as it seems to come to the state about once in twenty years, and although in 1912 it was seen at various places in the state, New Bremen adds a new station for Ohio.

Nuttallornis borealis (Olive-sided Flycatcher). A similar observation as that recorded in the Oölogist for December, 1914, was experienced by the writer on October 11th, 1911, about five miles west of New Bremen. In the dry tops of two large trees about 17 meters apart from another, there were two specimens of this species. While the one sat perfectly motionless preening its feathers occasionally, the other one began to fly upward in very short spirals and then to descend in a number of jerky drops with quickly expanded and closed wings. After doing this a number of times it finally flew so high that it disappeared from sight altogether and it did not return at all.

Archibuteo l. sancti-johannis (Rough-legged Hawk). This Hawk was observed on February 18th, 1914. It seems to come to Ohio only in years with a very heavy snowfall.

Helmintheros vermivorus (Worm-eating Warbler). On May 16th, 1914, I saw a specimen of this species about a block away from my house. It was under observation for half an hour and sang briskly during all this time. This is the first record for Western Ohio.

Circus hudsonius (Marsh Hawk). For the first time I am able to record the breeding of this hawk in this region. A nest with five young and one egg was run over by a mowing machine in a clover field on June 16th, 1914, near the St. Mary's Reservoir. The young were cut to pieces and the egg crushed, but there was enough there to identify it after my return from Wyoming, June 23.

Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis (Osprey). On June 6th, 1913, I saw a fine specimen of this species catching a fish at the Grand or St. Mary's Reservoir and flying to a large tree on the east side of the reservoir I saw the nest there too, but it was too dangerous for me to climb up to it and as I saw the nest contained young it was useless anyhow. This is the first time to my knowledge that

the Osprey has ever bred here, while on the south side of the reservoir a pair of Bald Eagles has its nest most every year.

Somewhat peculiar conditions exist in this region anyhow. Thus the Chat (*Icteria virens*), the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), and the Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*) are very rare as breeders and not common as migrants in the Grand Reservoir region, while at the Loramie Reservoir, 13 miles from the Grand in a southeasterly direction, the Catbird is fairly common. In the year 1915, in the spring, there was almost no water in the reservoirs and consequently not a Least Bittern, King Rail or Marsh Wren nested there, the only nest of the King Rail being found almost at the edge of town near the canal. It contained eleven eggs. In the fall the water was higher than for years and the shorebirds found no mudflats and sandbanks to rest and to feed on, most of the species recorded being found in wet or marshy fields scattered all over the territory.

Larus delawarensis (Ring-billed Gull). A solitary individual of this species was seen at the Grand Reservoir on May 11th, 1915. It is rarely seen in Ohio.

Creciscus jamaicensis (Black Rail). On June 23, 1915, at the Grand Reservoir, near the outlet of the Chickasaw creek, at the same place where a Mr. McGill of St. Mary's claimed to have seen this species a few years ago, I kicked an individual of this species out of the dense grass. I tried to follow it and caught two more glimpses of it, but it was too quick to place a shot and crept through the grass with the agility of a mouse. I have followed the various species of Sparrows through the grass and cloverfields many a time, but I believe this rail has them all beaten. While it is true that I was not able to shoot a specimen there is no doubt in my mind that I had the Black Rail before me. As it is, however, I give the record for what it is worth and hope to be able in the future to secure a specimen.

Coturnicops noveboracensis (Yellow Rail). While at the Grand Reservoir on September 1st, 1915, two farmer boys at my stopping-place asked me: "What kind of a bird looks like a female Bobolink and has longer legs? While turning over some newly mown clover yesterday we would chase out some of these birds from under the clover heaps. They did not care to fly, but would run under the next heap." They claimed they had seen at least 6-8 of them. The weather had been raw and chilly for three days. I immediately went down to the field and turned over, with their help, every heap of clover, but not a bird was seen. But I finally was lucky enough to find a few feathers, a piece of the bill and piece of a leg of an unfortunate one who had fallen a victim to some hawk. I took them along home and could identify the re-

mains there as those of the Yellow Rail. The weather had evidently sent them forth on their migration.

Dolichonyx oryzivorus (Bobolink). On June 23, 1915, at the same place as recorded under the Yellow Rail, one of the boys asked me whether the Bobolink always nested down in the clover. I said no, they often nest in clumps of ragweeds such as this one. With these words I poked the barrel of my gun through the wire fence into a clump of ragweeds, when up went a bird. It seemed too little for a Bobolink, so I quickly collected the only male that was hovering around, with one barrel and the female with the other one. Both specimens are small birds, as the following measurements show: ♂, length 158mm, bill 11mm, wing 94mm, tarsus 22mm, tail 61mm; ♀, length 147mm, bill 11mm, wing 85mm, tarsus 21mm, tail 57mm. The nest was abnormal. Mr. Gerald Alan Abbott, the well known Oölogist, says it reminds him of the nest of the Lazuli Bunting and that he has seen one nest of the Dickcissel similar to it. The eggs are still more abnormal. At a first glance it looks as if you had four rather large Field Sparrow eggs before you and it is only after a close examination that you begin to see that there is still some of the characteristic Bobolink coloration to be found. Professor Lynds Jones says they are all four runs. When blown the eggs showed a little blood, thus proving that these eggs were fertile. The measurement is 18.5x13.5; 17.5x13; 17x13.5; 17.5x14.

It is to me the most perfect and interesting case of abnormality of individual aberration. However, the members of the Wilson Club may think differently and have here at this, their third annual meeting, a splendid opportunity to distinguish themselves by creating a new sub-species. (The birds, nest and eggs were placed on exhibition for the members of the club and they all agreed that it was one of the most peculiar things they had ever seen, and Dr. Swope of Cincinnati, President of The Ohio Audubon Societies, stated that the killing of the birds, the taking of nest and eggs was certainly most justifiable under the circumstances.)

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NOTES ON THE BARN SWALLOW.

DURING the spring and summer of 1915, three pairs of Barn Swallows nested in the farm buildings of our home, and all three pairs failed to raise any young.

The first pair that arrived occupied an old nest in a cow stable on May 23. This pair was driven away by House Wrens which, on June 25, occupied the swallow's nest, and afterwards raised a brood of young. Another pair patched up an old nest in a scale