

## A SKETCH OF THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB\*

BY THOMAS L. HANKINSON

For the advancement of a science like ornithology, it is desirable that all phases of the subject be studied at all times. Taxonomy is necessary to give clearness of reference in dealing with species, and this is necessary for all bird students, whether they be morphologists, embryologists, ecologists, economic ornithologists or simply field observers. Morphology is fundamental to the other subjects. Taxonomy leads naturally to ecology; and each is fundamental to the other, and both are necessary for the understanding of economic ornithology. All of the phases of bird study are closely related to each other, and lines of demarcation are not easily found.

Ornithology has had a very symmetrical growth, which has not been the case with all the other natural sciences. Ichthyology, at least in America, has been quite one-sided in its development. Its technical literature is just beginning to include details of the ways of living fishes, and fish ecology is in its infancy. The literature of American birds on the other hand, is filled with facts concerning the lives of birds from studies of their food, nesting, migrations, songs, and activities generally. All the progress has been rapid, and I think I can safely say that no one large class of animals, certainly of vertebrates, is as well understood as the class of birds.

This remarkable and well-proportioned advancement is due to the large number of bird students and their diversity of interests and to the fact that they have been willing to make concerted efforts in their studies by forming such organizations as the American Ornithologists Union, The Cooper Ornithological Club, and the Wilson Ornithological Club. While it has been the aim of all these organizations to advance ornithology with interest shown in all phases of the subject, there has been some tendency to specialize. The Wilson Club has especially encouraged outdoor ornithology; and it seems to me that this leaning has been a very fortunate one, since the members of the Club have been largely from the central part of the United States, the region where there has been such a remarkable development of agriculture, resulting in the drainage of many swamps, the breaking of virgin prairies, and elimination of vast areas of

\*Address of the President at the Fortieth Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists Union held at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois, October 24-26, 1922.

woodland and natural conditions generally. There have been, on account of the changes in bird environment, many changes in the bird population. Species have become readjusted to new environments in some cases; some have increased and some have decreased in numbers, and a few have seemingly disappeared, altogether. Data on the bird life during these changes and on the primitive homes of birds in the region is of much value to ornithology, and many of these data have been gathered by the Wilson Club members and permanently recorded in the pages of their Bulletin.

It is outdoor ornithology that attracts the amateur; and professionals come from amateurs. It is important, then, to aid the amateur, and this has been a function of the Wilson Ornithological Club. It has encouraged amateurs to become associate members and to subscribe to the Bulletin and to use its pages for publication of their important observations. With a careful and discriminating editor like Dr. Lynds Jones, there has been little chance of unscientific material getting published; and as far as I can judge no such material has yet crept into the pages of the Wilson Bulletin. Advice as to proper methods of bird study, very useful to beginners, has been given by the Bulletin, especially through editorials. Amateurs need to have their attention called to the value of intensive bird studies to prevent many of them going on thinking that they are exhausting the possibilities of field work when they are naming and listing the species they see on long hikes. They have had good examples of thorough studies of comparatively small subjects through such papers, published in the Bulletin, as, *The Monograph of the Flicker*; *The Broad-winged Hawk*, *The Oberlin Grackle Roost*, and *The Nest Life of the Catbird*. Biography of great naturalists is always stimulating to young naturalists, and the account of the life of Alexander Wilson that ran through several numbers of the Bulletin certainly must have contributed to the enthusiasm of beginners. Amateurs as well as professionals, therefore, have found membership in the Wilson Club of value to them in their work.

The Wilson Ornithological Club has been remarkably successful in obtaining the united efforts of field ornithologists in making special studies, such as distribution through the census method, and migration, through records of occurrences and through the relatively new method of bird banding. At present the Bulletin has a Bird Banding Department, and seven pages in

fine print are given to the subject of bird banding in the June 1922 number of the Wilson Bulletin.

Wholesale bird and egg collecting has not been encouraged by the Wilson Club, and the Club has not interfered with those who have found it necessary to kill some birds for really scientific use. The Audubon Societies have always had a good support from the Club and have found it willing to coöperate with it in all good methods of reducing unnecessary bird destruction. As long ago as 1898, Dr. R. M. Strong in his President's address before the Club said: "I wish to encourage to the fullest extent the active coöperation of the members in the various movements toward the protection of birds, which are now on foot. We can do much by our example and influence . . . The whole chapter should constitute itself a committee on bird protection". Later in 1903, an editorial states: "We do not pose as a society of bird protectors, but we expect to exert all our influence toward a sane policy of protection everywhere and at all times."

We are not an organization of "bird lovers", and do not publish a magazine of popular ornithology, although most of the members are interested in the kind of ornithology that is most popular, that is outdoor bird study. The Wilson Ornithological Club is one of real students of birds and stands for scientific ornithology pure and simple. Again quoting from our editor: "While we stand for field study, because we believe that here we can do the most good to the cause, we still hold ourselves plastic enough to enter any field of study and investigation which may promise large results in the increase of knowledge."

In endeavoring to accomplish its ends, the Wilson Club has had a hard struggle. Several times through lack of funds its future has been exceedingly uncertain, and twice it was decided to suspend publication of the Bulletin, but it was proved worthy to live, each time, by forthcoming of aid largely unsolicited from those who seemed to feel the Bulletin essential to ornithology. The rugged road of progress has been followed partly through choice, for it has been the policy of the Wilson Ornithological Club to give members maximum returns in publication for the dues they pay, and practically all the money of the treasury goes to the Bulletin. A reserve fund has not been ventured. The editor has not only given a good part of his energies to the Wilson Bulletin for more than twenty-five years, but he has personally aided in financing it at critical times. Allow me to assure this gathering that any irregularities in the history of

the Wilson Bulletin have not been due to any noticeable ebb and flow of enthusiasm in the Club.

It now appears evident that the critical times for the Wilson Club are all in the past and that it is now recognized by the best ornithologists as a strong factor in the advancement of the scientific study of birds. A piece of evidence of its good standing is the present meeting in Chicago with other important associations including the American Ornithologists Union.

As an officer of the Wilson Ornithological Club, may I close this address with its hearty welcome to the American Ornithologists Union and with the assurance of the pleasure that all the members feel from the Club's being one of your hosts here at Chicago.

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LIST OF WARBLERS OF CLARENDON COUNTY,  
SOUTH CAROLINA

BY E. VON S. DINGLE

So far as I know, twenty-two species of Warblers occur here (Clarendon County, Central South Carolina), and of these, ten have been found to breed. The list is as follows:

1. BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*).

Transient visitant; the earliest records for its arrival are March 29, 1920, and March 20, 1921. It remains until in May, the latest being May 12, 1908. On the return migration (fall), the earliest is July 2, 1909, and the latest record is October 23, 1909.

2. PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*).

Common summer resident; breeds commonly. It arrives about the middle of April and I have never seen it after August 19. On June 7, 1919, a nest was found containing five young, nearly ready to leave. The nest, made of cypress leaves, was built in the natural hollow of a small tree, and was eight feet up. On June 19, 1919, a nest containing three eggs was found; the female was incubating. It was one and a half feet up.

3. SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Helinaia swainsoni*).

Very local summer resident; it is found in heavily timbered swamps where the cane grows in abundance. A nest and three eggs were found on June 10, 1921; the bird was incubating and would not leave until I touched her.