

servations of practically every passerine bird which passes this way, on its flight to and from Mexico.

When I throw out scraps of grain, a flock of sparrows and red-winged blackbirds is right down after them; and with these birds come the migrants passing through or entering here.

Today, April 18th, there are two Louisiana tanagers fitting about the shrubbery—males, both of them.

Yesterday a pair stopped by here for about three hours.

A male redstart and a pair of yellow-breasted chats, as well as three blackburnian warblers, have been here for four days today; so it is likely they will go on late this afternoon.

The other warblers keep fairly close to the shelter of the bushes, but the redstart has found my sunny back steps his best morning hunting grounds; and the tanagers have lit several times on a fence close to the section of my porch, where they can almost touch our own birds through the screen wire.

Another valuable function of the sparrows is their police work.

When I hear them begin to chatter I know there is something about which does not belong in the yard.

It may be one of the numerous cats of the neighborhood, a rat, one of the sparrow hawks that winter here, the big red rooster that is always flying over my fence, or only just a strange person.

Shrikes or the big grackles cause no more alarm than do my own familiar few chickens, or the flocks of redwings, with an occasional cowbird and Florida or bronzed grackles with which they are used to feeding.

Sunday morning their timely warning came just in time to save a painted warbler, the only one of its kind I have ever seen this far east, from a prowling cat.

Although they protest, until definitely whipped, against having to give way to the returning martins, the sparrows soon resign themselves to other quarters than the boxes of which they take possession as soon as the martins leave.

ZOE REID.

Gulf Refinery, Port Arthur, Texas.

#### WATERFOWL NEAR MADISON, WISCONSIN

The area surrounding Madison, because of the wide areas of open water and swamp land, serves as a great feeding-ground and resting-place for migrating waterfowl. In spite of the backward season, these birds were very numerous here this spring, and they were more favorably located for observation than usual, because they were restricted to small areas of open water, and could be, therefore, closely approached. All the birds mentioned in this article, with the possible exception of the Red-breasted Merganser, were seen no farther from Madison than ten miles, while many of them were seen within the city limits. Another interesting fact is that nearly all these birds were seen in April.

AMERICAN MERGANSER—*Mergus americanus*.

I first saw these birds on March 30th, in open water on Lake Monona. This was where the Catfish River flows out, and only a small space was free of ice. Swimming in this space were about fifty birds. A few of these were seen after this date, but they were not present in the great numbers seen last year.

RED-BREADED MERGANSER—*Mergus serrator*.

On April 15th there were a pair of birds on Lake Wingra that may have been *M. serrator*. They were so far away that identification was uncertain.

On April 28th my companion and I saw one of these ducks on a pond near Prairie du Sac. The body of water was the small arm of a larger bay and had been artificially cut off from the latter by filling in the open end with gravel. This pond was surrounded on all remaining sides with woods; the body of water itself was not over one hundred square feet in area. As we approached, the bird tried to fly into the bay, and failing, dived. As we ran around the shores of the pond he was more and more disturbed and dived very often. With a final effort he managed to fly out over the bay. He was probably unable to rise over the trees, and so did not try to do so.

MALLARD—*Anas platyrhynchos*.

We saw a small flock of these on April 1st, and have seen them occasionally since. The females are often flushed from marshes or the banks of lakes and rivers. On April 22nd there was a pair well in view at Mud Lake.

BLACK DUCK—*Anas rubripes*.

One of these was seen on the ice of Lake Waubesa on April 1st.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL—*Querquedula discors*.

These little ducks were very numerous on April 22nd. In the marshes near Lake Waugesia we were able to come very near to several little groups that were swimming on the marsh pools. At Mud Lake one of these birds flew past me at a distance of only a few feet.

SHOVELLER—*Spatula clypeata*.

I saw these ducks on April 22nd near Lake Waubesa, although my friend had seen them in the same place two weeks previous. Besides those seen at some distance, four of them, three males and a female, lit in a pool not more than fifty feet from us, and remained there for nearly a minute.

PINTAIL—*Dafla acuta tzitzihoa*.

On April 15th a female was swimming on a pond near Lake Mendota. These birds were also present at Mud Lake in numbers on the 22nd of the month.

REDHEAD—*Marila americana*.

A few of these were swimming in the Catfish River between Lakes Monona and Waubesa on April 1st.

CANVASS-BACK—*Marila valisineria*.

Two pair of these were seen on University Bay on April 15th.

LESSER SCAUP DUCK—*Marila affinis*.

The commonest of all the ducks in this region. They appeared about April 1st and have been here to date. On the 22nd of April we estimated

that there were at least seven hundred of them on Catfish River and Lake Waubesa.

BUFFLE-HEAD—*Charitonetta albeola*.

A small flock of these was feeding off the south shore of Lake Wingra on April 25th. Their peculiar bobbing and diving movements were quite characteristic.

GOLDEN-EYE—*Glaucionetta clangula clangula*.

About one-half dozen were seen near the Mergansers on April 1st. One of them flew past me at a distance of a few feet. A few were seen after this, but none appeared after the 15th.

RUDDY DUCK—*Erismatura jamaicensis*.

One of these was swimming with the Scaups on April 14th in University Bay. He was very well placed for observation; all his coloration and his markings were visible.

LOON—*Gavia immer*.

First seen in University Bay on April 14th. These birds are common here and seem to stay all summer.

RED-THROATED LOON—*Gavia stellata*.

There was a pair of Red-throated Loons on University Bay on May 11th. These birds were less shy than the common species. They were so close that their markings were distinct without even a glass.

AMERICAN COOT—*Fulica americana*.

These birds are one of the commonest of waterfowl, and are plentiful throughout the spring season. They appeared this year about April 1st. On April 22nd there was a flock of about one hundred crowded into one spot on Lake Waubesa. This group, or another like it, appeared in the same place last year.

PIED-BILLED GREBE—*Podilymbus podiceps*.

We saw one on Lake Waubesa on April 22nd, and a few pairs can be seen almost any time on University Bay.

Besides the birds discussed above, mention should be made of about fifteen Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) that were seen by a companion and myself on Mud Lake, April 22d. The Cormorants have been increasing in numbers in the last few years and have been seen on Lake Monona.

C. E. ABBOTT.

Madison, Wis., May 14, 1923.

#### APRIL NOTES FROM WINTHROP, IOWA

After a bird student has studied the bird life of a certain locality more or less intensively for five or six years he has naturally become acquainted with all the birds commonly found in the region. He is then looking for the rarities and expects to identify them only after much patience in stalking and after making detailed observations to make sure he has named them correctly. His surprise is therefore great when he finds a rare species suddenly appearing in numbers in his neighborhood and so tame as to allow him to approach within spitting distance, while the bird feeds serenely on the ground.

Such was my experience with the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*