

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.

PIE-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*

minor) in Buchanan County, Iowa. In a period of seven years of bird work in my locality I had never seen the Red Crossbill. On April 4 I saw a lone bird of this species in a tamarack grove near my home, and April 6 I found a flock of twenty to twenty-five of them there. This grove, which is just back of our farm buildings, contains two acres or more of tamarack and second-growth willows. There is about an equal amount of the two varieties, which were planted a half century ago. The tamaracks are of great height, most of them stretching upward for seventy-five feet or more. Their limbs are well covered with cones and there is a dense and decaying carpet of fallen needles on the ground.

The flock of Crossbills remained in this grove for a considerable length of time. I would find them there at nearly any hour of the day and I was able to make close studies of them. The greater part of the time the birds fed on the ground, hopping about and picking here and there among the needles for bits of food and occasionally grasping a fallen cone to tear at it with their strong bills. Often a group would gather in the lower branches of the trees and either rest quietly or arrange their plumage. As a rule, though, these were active and not found at rest. I was greatly surprised at their tameness. So intent were they in their work on the ground that I could approach within a yard's distance; in fact, they seemed to regard me as a necessary part of the landscape. The late Professor Walter Bradford Barrows* spoke of catching this species with butterfly nets.

This could have easily been done in my case. To me, they appeared to be rather stupid birds. It was exceedingly difficult to catch a bird with its beak closed long enough to note that the points crossed. They were feeding nearly all of the time and the motion of their bills was very rapid. A wide crack between the mandibles was usually apparent, however.

On the ground, at close range, the Crossbill looks about the size of the English Sparrow, though it is more plump and heavy looking. Its stocky build is especially noticeable in flight, and it beats its wings very rapidly. While the Crossbills seemed to keep up a rather low twittering when feeding on the ground, their most conspicuous notes were those given when they were in flight. These were sharp, fast, full of tone and, to me, strongly suggestive of the rapid twittering of the flying Chimney Swift. The number of males and females was evidently about equal. There was considerable variation in the color of both sexes, perhaps a little more noticeable in the males. The latter were in various shades of red, rusty red, and brown; some individuals were bright, others were dull, but all birds looked brighter when flying. One or two males had a faint series of greenish blotches on the back, suggesting immature plumage. The Crossbills were seen at the grove at late as April 22, and perhaps remained even longer. They became more shy as time went on and their number became smaller.

The Crossbill was also reported at Independence, Iowa. The county paper of April 12, published in that city, contained a rather lengthy ac-

*Michigan Bird Life (1912), p. 470.

count of the occurrence there of the bird. The item states that the birds were seen on various lawns and in parks about the city and manifested very little fear. At one home the birds hopped about near some men who were working on the lawn.

The abnormal weather conditions which prevailed through the month of March in this part of the country undoubtedly affected bird migration to a great extent. There were a large number of snows, some reaching the proportions of blizzards, as well as much bitterly cold weather (on the morning of March 19 the mercury stood at fifteen degrees below zero!). In addition to the Crossbills, the Redpoll (*Acanthis linaria linaria*) was seen here, its appearance being doubtless due to the upset weather program. I first saw it March 17, in the above described grove, where it fed on the cones. This species was represented by a flock which numbered about ten, at the time of its largest number. The Redpoll was seen in the grove on numerous occasions until April 10, which was my last record for it.

Our migration of Ducks and Geese at Winthrop was to all appearances much larger than usual. In several years past the numbers of both groups have been small, far too small, and it is indeed gratifying to note an increase, which is doubtless a direct result of Federal protection. The Ducks passed through in good numbers. Many of them stayed for a day or two on Buffalo Creek at a time when it was in the annual spring freshet. Their quacking and splashing was a common sound whenever one went near certain portions of the water-covered pastures along the creek. My own records for the 1923 spring Geese, though meager and scattered, are nevertheless encouraging, in view of the very small numbers of Geese that have been seen in spring migration in the last few years. I have records for about ten flocks, seen on eight dates (Jan. 4 to Apr. 20), and which represent some 425 birds in all.

On April 20 I saw my first Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus ludovicianus*), which, according to Anderson's *Birds of Iowa* (1907, p. 368), is very rare and local in Iowa. The bird I saw was scurrying about in a brush heap near my home. Its extra large size and rusty brown plumage at once distinguished it as a species other than our common House Wren. The white eye line was conspicuous, while the absence of white tail feather tips eliminated the possibility of its being a Bewick's Wren. Its notes were much different from the House Wren's. I saw the bird plainly and in good light.

FRED J. PIERCE.

Winthrop, Iowa, April, 1923.

SOME MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON BIRDS

BY L. OTLEY PINDAR

A friend of mine who owns a country place in Franklin County, Kentucky, three or four miles from Frankfort and not far from the Woodford County line, and who for some time has been raising a good many pigeons, tells me that his flock has been completely broken up by the depredations of Screech Owls, which kill and eat or carry off the squabs about as fast as they are hatched. They have so terrorized the adult