

NOTES FROM LA ANNA, PIKE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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LaAnna lies in the extreme western edge of Pike County, one of the rugged mountainous counties that form the northeastern corner of Pennsylvania. Conditions here are typical of those found much farther north, radically different from the lower half of this part of the state, and abrupt enough to be decidedly interesting. This range of mountains is known as the Poconos, and in spots is rather well known as the breeding ground of more northern species rarely found elsewhere in the state, and even here far from plentiful. Among these are the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, the Purple Finch, the Nashville Warbler, and the Golden-crowned Kinglet, which find the tamarack swamps and sphagnum bogs well suited to their needs during the summer months. Much has been published from time to time concerning the general topography of this region so little detail is necessary here. The ridges are steep and heavily wooded, and well up from the valleys, on level and often extensive plateaus, are found the numerous swamps and sphagnum bogs which characterize this section of the state. The valleys about LaAnna are narrow, but open to some extent, with scattered farms along the roads that follow the numerous streams. Hardwoods and conifers are found in equal abundance here, in mixture or, to some extent, and under certain conditions, in relatively pure stands. Of the hardwoods, the sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) is possibly the commonest and most characteristic although the yellow birch (*Betula lutea*), beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and various oaks form a fair proportion of the timber. The conifers are represented by the white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) in the valleys, and on the higher ridges and plateaus the red spruce (*Picea rubra*) and tamarack or larch (*Larix laricina*). The last occurs most commonly in the fairly open sphagnum bogs, is the only tree found there, and gives such spots a truly boreal aspect.

It was in 1917, during the latter half of May and the first part of June, that I had the opportunity to study the bird life about LaAnna. As far as the rarer species were concerned I was not very successful but in one respect the data recorded during those few weeks proved rather interesting. At intervals a spring will be very backward, with conditions such that both migrants and breeding birds will be materially affected and dependent entirely on the weather. Such was the case that year. Practically all of May was unseasonably cold with almost incessant rainfall. This resulted in the spring migration being delayed, and unusually prolonged, while the breeding birds were un-

able to nest until a time when they normally would be feeding well grown young. I thought I had made allowance for this unfavorable weather by delaying my trip for several weeks, but when I reached LaAnna on May 23, I found I was still too early for the bulk of the breeding birds. It was a week or more before many had begun to nest, and the middle of June before the height of the breeding season was reached. I was forced to leave the evening of June 14, so these notes cover just three weeks spent in the field there; but while they are incomplete in so far as the breeding birds are concerned the evident effect of the cold, rainy weather is of sufficient interest, I believe, to justify their publication. I have also included a few migration records concerning those species which were decidedly influenced by adverse weather conditions.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER. *Helodromas solitarius solitarius*. A single bird was seen June 4, feeding at the marshy edge of a small stream in an open field. It was probably a late migrant, although this species is said to breed here sparingly.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK. *Accipiter velox*. A nest found May 27 held five slightly incubated eggs, and was twenty-five feet from the ground near the top of a red spruce at the side of a road through a stretch of thick woods. It was well built of small sticks and twigs, and lined with a few small pieces of bark.

COOPER'S HAWK. *Accipiter cooperi*. A nest found June 6, held two newly hatched young and two pipped eggs and was forty feet from the ground in a crotch of a large hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*) at the edge of a short stretch of woods at the top of a ridge. It was large and substantially built of sticks and twigs, and well lined with flakes of bark.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK. *Buteo lineatus lineatus*. Fairly plentiful. One nest was found May 26, which held three downy young possibly a week old. It was thirty-five feet from the ground in a large yellow birch deep in the woods, and seemingly was merely an old Crow's nest to which nothing had been added but a fresh spray of hemlock. The hindquarters of a large frog lay at the edge of the nest.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK. *Buteo platypterus*. I found this species an uncommon summer resident here. Two were seen May 26, circling together high overhead.

BELTED KINGFISHER. *Ceryle alcyon alcyon*. This species was by no means plentiful here, but this was possibly due largely to the character of the country which offered few suitable nesting sites. One

nest with six fresh eggs was found on June 4, in the top of a small quarry close to a stream. The hole was but a short distance down from the surface of the ground, and the nest cavity was fully five feet from the entrance.

HAIRY WOODPECKER. *Dryobates villosus villosus*. Fairly plentiful. A nest found May 27, with small young, was eighty feet from the ground in a dead limb in the top of a large sugar maple at the edge of a stretch of woods.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER. *Sphyrapicus varius varius*. Only one pair of these birds was found about LaAnna, in a stretch of woods bordering a dense rhododendron swamp at the top of a ridge. The nest, found June 11, held on that date four fresh eggs, and was fifty feet from the ground in the trunk of a large dead sugar maple. The female was incubating and sat very close, ignoring blows on the foot of the tree, and did not flush until the nest was almost reached.

NORTHERN PILEATED WOODPECKER. *Phloeotomus pileatus abieticola*. This species is said to be fairly plentiful here. Two were seen May 28, and an occasional bird at intervals thereafter.

NORTHERN FLICKER. *Colaptes auratus luteus*. A plentiful summer resident. The first nest, found June 9, held nine fresh eggs, and was fully seventy feet from the ground in the dead top of a large sugar maple deep in the woods.

NIGHTHAWK. *Chordeiles virginianus virginianus*. One bird was seen May 29, feeding overhead, my first, and an unusually late, record for the spring migration.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. *Archilochus colubris*. This species proved to be unusually plentiful. Five nests were found between the 5th and the 14th of June, one on the 5th with one fresh egg, one on the 7th with two fresh eggs, one on the 10th with two fresh eggs, and two on the 14th apparently about built but still empty. Two were in hemlocks, two in yellow birches, and one in a beech. They varied in height from ten to thirty feet, and were in each case at the outer end of drooping limbs.

KINGBIRD. *Tyrannus tyrannus*. A plentiful summer resident. Few attempted to breed before the middle of June, and but one nest was found. This on June 13, held three fresh eggs, and was thirty feet from the ground in a horizontal crotch at the outer end of a limb of a large butternut tree at the side of a road. It was substantially built of wool, weed stems, and grasses, lined with fine grasses and a little horse hair.

PHOEBE. *Sayornis phoebe*. A plentiful summer resident. Like so many of the birds here they nested late, for of the six nests found the earliest held, on the 27th of May, five fresh eggs. This nest was on a window frame on the outside of a house and was accidentally destroyed, but the birds immediately began to build again on a ledge above a pillar of the porch of this same house, and on the 9th of June, just thirteen days later, were incubating a full set of four eggs.

WOOD PEWEE. *Myiochanes virens*. This species was seen for the first time on May 31, an unusually late date for arrival in the spring. Within a few days, however, it was quite plentiful.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER. *Empidonax flaviventris*. One bird was seen May 31, feeding at the edge of a rhododendron thicket deep in the woods. It is said to breed here sparingly but I lacked the time later to search for a nest.

LEAST FLYCATCHER. *Empidonax minimus*. A very plentiful summer resident. The first nest, found June 11, held on that date four fresh eggs, and was twenty feet from the ground in an apple tree at the side of a road. Three other nests were found two days later, on the 13th, one with four fresh eggs, thirty feet from the ground in a large yellow birch, the second with three slightly incubated eggs, twenty feet from the ground in the top of an apple tree, and the third with three fresh eggs, twenty feet from the ground in a crotch of one of the limbs of a totally dead sugar maple sapling at the edge of a field. The nests were all compactly built of gray plant fibres and grasses, well cupped and lined with fine grasses and dandelion down.

STARLING. *Sturnus vulgaris*. Two birds were seen May 25, about an orchard, but as yet this species is seemingly rather scarce here in the mountains.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE. *Icterus galbula*. This species proved to be a quite plentiful summer resident here, nesting invariably in the sugar maples that bordered the road in front of the houses. Three nests were found, in each case in the extreme tops of the trees, and varying in height from twenty to thirty-five feet from the ground. The first held, on June 9, four slightly incubated eggs, the second, found June 12, held five fresh eggs, and the third held, on June 14, four fresh eggs.

PINE SISKIN. *Spinus pinus*. Four birds, late migrants, were seen May 30, feeding at the edge of a field on dandelion seeds.

CHIPPING SPARROW. *Spizella passerina passerina*. A plentiful summer resident. The first nest, found June 2, held four fresh eggs and was six feet from the ground in a small hemlock. Another nest,

found June 7 with four fresh eggs, was in as unusual a situation as I have ever found a nest of this species. A handful of hay had been pushed through a crack in the floor of a barn and hung from the roof of the overshoot, and in the middle of this the nest was built. It was otherwise characteristic of this species, being compactly built of weed stems and grasses, lined with horse hair. Of the four other nests found, one was in a red spruce, one in a hemlock, one in an apple tree and one in a sugar maple, varying in height from three to fifteen feet from the ground. Three held four eggs each, and one three.

SONG SPARROW. *Melospiza melodia melodia.* Plentiful, and seen largely in the more open country. A nest found on June 8, held five fresh eggs, and was five feet from the ground in a small bushy red spruce in an open field. Another found the same day interested me very much because it was in a spot so unlike any in which I had ever found these birds breeding, being sunken in the sphagnum moss at the foot of a small cranberry bush in a tamarack swamp deep in the woods. The bird was flushed from the five fresh eggs it held so there was no question as to its identification. It was built of dead leaves and fine grasses, lined chiefly at the bottom with fine black rootlets, the absence of any horse hair in the lining showing clearly its distance from civilization.

INDIGO BUNTING. *Passerina cyanea.* This species was not recorded here until May 27, an unusually late date for arrival in the spring.

SCARLET TANAGER. *Piranga erythromelas.* One bird, a male, was seen May 23, and it was not until almost a week later that this species was at all plentiful. This was by far the latest that I have ever recorded it for the first time for the spring migration.

CLIFF SWALLOW. *Petrochelidon lunifrons lunifrons.* A small colony of these birds was found nesting under the eaves of a barn, fifteen nests being counted there on June 13. On that date two held four fresh eggs each, three three eggs each, five two eggs each, one one egg, and four were but half built. All were built close together, and were on the side facing a road.

BARN SWALLOW. *Hirundo erythrogastra.* A plentiful summer resident. A nest found June 12, held five fresh eggs, and was plastered against a beam in the roof of a barn. It was unusually well lined with large chicken feathers, a precaution probably against further cold weather.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO. *Lanivireo solitarius solitarius.* This species was one of the most plentiful and characteristic breeding birds here.

It was not until June 12 that the first nests were found, two on that date holding four fresh eggs each. One was ten feet from the ground, and the other seven, and both were in hemlocks deep in the woods. The former was unusually well built of grasses and shreds of soft inner bark, lined with fine hemlock twigs, and well covered on the outside with fragments of an old hornet's nest. A third nest found on the following day, the 13th, was fully built but as yet empty, and was eight feet from the ground at the outer end of a limb of a large rhododendron overhanging an old road through the woods.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER. *Mniotilta varia*. Plentiful, and well scattered through the woods. One nest, found on June 9, held five fresh eggs. It was sunken in the ground well in under an old decayed stump in a ravine, and was built of dead leaves and rhododendron berry stems, lined with fine black rootlets and a few white hairs.

NASHVILLE WARBLER. *Vermivora ruficapilla ruficapilla*. One bird was seen May 30, feeding and singing at the edge of a tamarack swamp. It very probably nested there, as the deep sphagnum moss that carpeted the ground made an ideal spot for this species to breed.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER. *Dendroica caerulescens caerulescens*. This was unquestionably the most abundant breeding bird about LaAnna. A decided preference was shown for the rhododendron thickets scattered through the woods, but as this was the prevailing underbrush it increased rather than limited the distribution of these birds. Delayed by the cold, rainy weather, they all nested at practically the same time, and between June 10 and 13, eleven nests were found that held fresh eggs. Six of these held full sets of four fresh eggs each, while five were, on the 13th, still incomplete, two holding three eggs each and three two eggs each. Five were in small rhododendrons, two in low viburnums (*Viburnum acerfolium*), and four in small hemlocks, in each case well concealed by the surrounding underbrush. They varied in height from six inches to two and a half feet from the ground, the average nest being a foot or less from the ground. All were alike in construction, being well built of pieces of rotten wood and shreds of soft inner bark, deeply cupped and lined with fine black rootlets.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER. *Dendroica magnolia*. A plentiful summer resident. Three nests were found, two on June 12, and one on the 13th, each with four fresh eggs. All were in rather open woods, one ten feet from the ground at the outer end of a limb of a hemlock sapling; another seven feet from the ground in the top of a small hemlock,

and the third three feet from the ground in a rhododendron. They were alike in construction, being compactly built of fine hemlock twigs lined with fine black rootlets.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER. *Dendroica castanea*. One bird was seen for the first time on May 24, and for the following ten days small flocks were of common occurrence. Because of the weather they were almost invariably found feeding on the ground, at the side of the road, or at the edge of plowed fields, and they appeared decidedly out of place there. On June 7 the last bird was seen, a rather late date for this species here during the spring migration.

BLACK-POLL WARBLER. *Dendroica striata*. Common during the latter part of May, and seen as late as the 5th of June.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER. *Dendroica fusca*. Fairly plentiful. On June 13 a bird was trailed to a nest that was fully fifty feet from the ground at the outer end of a limb of a large white pine at the edge of a stretch of woods.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER. *Dendroica virens*. A fairly plentiful summer resident. A nest found June 13 held two fresh eggs and was forty feet from the ground in a large yellow birch, in a crotch formed by several small limbs with the main trunk.

OVEN-BIRD. *Seiurus aurocapillus*. A plentiful summer resident. One nest found June 7 held four slightly incubated eggs, and was at the side of a road through a stretch of woods, sunken in the ground and well concealed in the dead leaves.

NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH. *Seiurus noveboracensis noveboracensis*. This was another breeding bird very characteristic of this part of the state. No where else have I found them as plentiful as they are about LaAnna, for one or more pairs nested in all the numerous swamps scattered through the woods. These swamps with their tangled rhododendron thickets, pools of stagnant water, and uprooted trees, attracted few other birds but this species was never lacking. Walking was so difficult here, however, that although a bird might be singing close by it was often hard to catch even a glimpse of it. For this reason also, and because the area to be searched was frequently so large, finding the nest was a matter requiring considerable patience and perseverance, and quite frequently the attempt ended in failure. The birds breed earlier than the rest of the warblers, and even with conditions as unfavorable as they were slightly incubated eggs were found the first week in June. The first nest was found June 1 and held on that date five slightly incubated eggs. It was embedded in the up-

turned roots of a small tree, six inches above the water of a small pool deep in a swamp, and was well built of green sphagnum moss, lined with fine red rootlets. Two other nests were found on June 3, one with three slightly incubated eggs and the other with four, and both in situations similar to this. They differed slightly in construction, however, for while as before they were lined with fine red rootlets, they were more substantially built of dead leaves, grasses and green sphagnum moss.

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH. *Seiurus motacilla*. This species was as plentiful as the last, but unlike it shunned the swamps and was found about the swift running streams in the ravines. A nest was found June 9 that held four fresh eggs, and was three feet from the ground embedded in the upturned roots of a large tree at the edge of a stream. It was a large mass of dead leaves, deeply cupped and lined with fine grasses and a little horse hair.

MOURNING WARBLER. *Oporornis philadelphia*. One bird was seen June 9, feeding and singing at the edge of an overgrown clearing in the woods where a pair of these birds are said to nest each year.

MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT. *Geothlypis trichas trichas*. This was a plentiful summer resident, but it was barely nesting before I was forced to leave and my breeding data are rather meager. One nest was found on June 14 with one fresh egg. It was a foot and a half from the ground in a blackberry bush in a briar thicket at the side of a road, and was bulkily built of weed stems and grasses, lined with horse hair.

WILSON'S WARBLER. *Wilsonia pusilla pusilla*. My first record for the spring migration for this species was May 25, two birds, both males, being seen feeding in underbrush.

CANADA WARBLER. *Wilsonia canadensis*. A plentiful summer resident. One nest, found on June 12, held five fresh eggs. It was on a steep bank near a small stream deep in the woods, sunken in the ground at the foot of a rhododendron bush, and was built of dead leaves and grasses, lined with fine grasses and fine black rootlets.

CATBIRD. *Dumetella carolinensis*. This species was fairly plentiful about the town and in the more open country. A nest found on June 7 held four fresh eggs, and was ten feet from the ground in a small red spruce in an open field. It was well built of twigs and strips of bark, lined with fine hemlock twigs.

HOUSE WREN. *Troglodytes aedon aedon*. This species was very plentiful. Two nests were found on June 13, and both were in un-

usually interesting and, to me, out of the ordinary situations. One that held seven fresh eggs was in a Robin's nest on a ledge above a pillar of a porch of an unoccupied house. Here the cavity had been deepened and a few twigs and feathers added but this was hardly noticeable even a short distance away. The other was not as yet fully built, and was in a Barn Swallow's nest against a beam in the roof of a barn. Here again the cavity had been deepened and a few twigs and feathers added. In both cases the nests used were new ones, and as the House Wren is often a little tyrant it is easily possible that the original owners were driven away.

WINTER WREN. *Nannus hiemalis hiemalis*. This species breeds sparingly in the more secluded ravines. A nest found on June 9 was newly built but as yet empty, and later was found to be deserted. It was in a pocket under the raised roots of a partly fallen yellow birch at the side of a small stream, and was a ball of green moss and hemlock twigs, with the entrance at the side.

BROWN CREEPER. *Certhia familiaris americana*. One bird was seen on May 28, an unusually late date, in my experience, for the spring migration.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH. *Sitta canadensis*. This species was fairly plentiful for the first few days after I reached LaAnna, and I thought that it might possibly breed, but none were seen after May 26, although even on that day several were noted.

LABRADOR CHICKADEE. *Penthestes hudsonicus nigra*. It was on June 3, as I was crossing the edge of an open tamarack swamp deep in the woods, that I heard an unmistakable nasal "chick-a-dee-dee," and a short search revealed two of these birds feeding in the lower branches of the larger trees bordering this swamp. They were not at all timid so I had little difficulty in approaching within a few feet of them, and after watching them for a short time I decided that they were evidently mated and that it might not be impossible that they would breed here. Returning two days later, on the 5th, I again found them at this same spot, but although I trailed them this time for two hours they showed no signs of nesting. They appeared to me a little sluggish for frequently one would remain on a limb for ten or fifteen minutes without moving at all. They were also far from noisy, rarely uttering their characteristic notes and frequently feeding for some time without any sound whatsoever. Perhaps if I had had more time I might actually have found them breeding here in Pennsylvania, but even so it was decidedly interesting to find them at LaAnna at this late date.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. *Regulus calendula calendula*. These birds were plentiful throughout the latter part of May, and one was seen as late as June 2, an unusually late date for the spring migration.

WOOD THRUSH. *Hylocichla mustelina*. A plentiful summer resident. The first nest, found June 1, held four fresh eggs, and was eight feet from the ground in a small hemlock at the side of a road through the woods. Two other nests were found June 10, in each four fresh eggs, one twelve feet from the ground in a beech, the other ten feet up in the top of a small hemlock.

OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH. *Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni*. One bird was seen May 23, deep in the woods, and on that same day a nest was found that was six feet from the ground in a small hemlock, and which was unquestionably of this species. It breeds very sparingly here, however.

ROBIN. *Planesticus migratorius migratorius*. Very plentiful, but seen very largely in the more open country, and especially about the houses. Ten nests were found between May 25 and June 13, in five three eggs each, and in four four, while one held, on May 31, three small young. These varied in height from three to twenty feet from the ground, and were in almost every conceivable position, one being in a shed, another on a beam in the roof of a porch, a third embedded in the top of the upturned roots of a large tree at the side of a road, and a fourth in a lilac bush close to a house. Of the six that were more prosaically built in trees, four were in hemlocks, one in a red maple, and one in a yellow birch.

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