

GENERAL NOTES

BREWSTER'S WARBLER BREEDING IN YATES COUNTY, NEW YORK

Potter Swamp, in west-central New York, occupies a long narrow, roughly north-south valley between Canandaigua and Cayuga Lakes. In effect, it represents an extinct member of the Finger Lakes group. Much of the best habitat for the more truly marsh-loving birds is being destroyed at the present time by extensive drainage operations. However, the area continues to support a rich population of nesting birds, the proportion of species encountered changing gradually, as in other drained areas, with the change in environment.

On June 22 and 23, 1948, Stephen W. Eaton and I were collecting in the higher portion of the Potter Swamp area. On the afternoon of June 22, I collected a female Brewster's Warbler (*Vermivora "leucobronchialis"*) and her mate, a typical male Golden-winged Warbler (*V. chrysoptera*). The call-notes of the two birds were identical; the male was not singing. The female bird conforms well with Ridgway's description (U.S.N.M. Bull. 50, part II, 1902; p. 454). Since a well-developed brood-patch was present, Eaton returned the next morning to the spot at which the adult birds had been collected, and succeeded in finding their five young. These birds had apparently just left the nest, and Dr. Arthur A. Allen estimated their age at about ten days.

Assuming that the Brewster's Warbler parent was an F_1 hybrid between *V. chrysoptera* and *V. pinus*, and that the male parent was a homozygous Golden-winged Warbler, the expected Mendelian ratio in the offspring would be 50% Brewster's and 50% Golden-winged Warblers. While it is, of course, impossible to state into which plumage each of our five juvenal birds would have molted, there is a definite color difference. Three of these young birds (two females and one male) have much grayer underparts than do the other two (one female and one male). The three grayish birds are quite uniform as are the two yellowish ones.

Through the courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, I have been able to compare our specimens with five juvenal *V. pinus* and one *V. chrysoptera* of the same age as our specimens. None of our specimens is like any of these. The one *V. chrysoptera* examined is much darker, both above and below, than any of our specimens. Our two yellowish birds approach the lightest examples of *V. pinus*, but are substantially less intensely colored. Our three grayish birds are much paler and grayer than any of the *V. pinus* or *V. chrysoptera*. It might be of interest to record the colors of these five specimens. There is little, if any, difference in the color of the upper parts among the five. All have the back approximately Citrine Drab (color names from Ridgway, Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, 1912), brightening to Yellowish Citrine on the crown. The wing-bars of all five are Citron Yellow. The three grayer birds have Grayish Olive breasts, shading to Deep Olive Buff on the belly. The two yellower specimens, on the other hand, have the breasts Light Yellowish Olive, shading to Amber Yellow on the belly.

Both the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers have been increasing in New York during the past two decades. The Golden-wing, the commoner of the two over most of the state, is appearing for the first time as a breeding species in southwestern New York, and is spreading out on the periphery of its formerly rather discontinuous range in the central portion of the state. The Blue-winged Warbler must be considered rare throughout most of New York except for the lower Hudson Valley region, Long Island, and the Buffalo region. It has been recorded sporadically over much of central and western New York. Until 1946 there was but one sight record of this species in the Cayuga Lake basin; there have been three since. It would seem logical for an occasional Brewster's Warbler to appear in central New

York, since a stray Blue-wing which lingered on into the breeding season would not be likely to find a mate of its own species, but plenty of available Golden-wings.

In spite of this probability, the Brewster's Warbler has apparently never before been collected in New York away from the southeastern corner. A search through the files of *The Prothonotary* reveals a number of sight records for the Buffalo area, including two nesting records near Versailles. This is not unexpected, as both of the parent species breed in this vicinity. Other than in this western New York area, and in the Hudson valley—Long Island region, there are but a few sight records for Brewster's Warbler; at Rochester, Canandaigua and Corning. None is a breeding record, and no specimen was taken. Our Potter Swamp specimens, therefore, represent the first breeding record of Brewster's Warbler, authenticated by specimens, in New York outside of the southeasternmost counties.

The skins of the two parents and their five offspring have been deposited in the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Memorial Collection at Cornell University. I am indebted to Edgar M. Reilly, Jr., who checked for me the distribution files of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.—Kenneth C. Parkes, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

RUFFED GROUSE EATS SNAKE

In the Porcupine Mountains, Ontonagon County, Michigan on September 16, 1947, I flushed two Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) from the ground into tall hemlocks. One shortly fell fluttering to the ground. The second bird then flew down and joined it. On my closer approach, both birds again flushed. A medium-sized snake, probably 1.5–2 feet long, dangled limply from the mouth of one bird. It appeared that the snake had been partly swallowed, but about a foot of its length was left protruding from the bird's beak. The grouse seemed abnormally weak but its peculiar flight and fall may have been due to awkwardness caused by its unusual prey.

The birds could not be located again and the snake was unidentified. Scott (Auk 64: 140, 1947) has recorded finding a small Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*) in the crop of a Ruffed Grouse in Wisconsin, but this must be a very unusual food item nevertheless.—George A. Petrides, Ohio Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Ohio State University, Columbus 10, Ohio.