



# The Raven

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DR. J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR  
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## BRIEF FIELD NOTES FROM NORTHEASTERN VIRGINIA

By

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United States Bureau of Biological Survey.

From the middle of September, 1934, until the latter part of March, 1935, the writer was temporarily assigned to the Washington office of the Bureau of Biological Survey, and advantage was taken then of week ends and infrequent holidays to acquire a knowledge of the bird life of the adjoining edge of Virginia. Lack of familiarity with this region proved somewhat of a handicap, but the open fields and woods between Alexandria and Ft. Humphreys (now Ft. Belvoir by a recent order of the War Department) appeared to offer sufficiently diverse conditions for field work of this nature, and it was in this area that the following notes were taken. They are admittedly incomplete, and concern only those species of interest as early or belated migrants, or whose status has received little consideration in recent years. However, it is felt that they are of sufficient interest to warrant publication at this time.

Ardea herodias herodias. Great Blue Heron.--This species seemingly winters about Washington in small numbers despite the most adverse weather conditions. Two birds were seen at the edge of the Potomac River near Alexandria December 21, and single birds at infrequent intervals until early March, although in late January temperatures as low as 10 degrees below zero were recorded.

Circus hudsonius. Marsh Hawk.--Noted in the open fields about Mt. Vernon throughout the winter, two or three birds being seen in the course of a morning.

Capella delicata. Wilson's Snipe.--The first record for the spring migration was that of a single bird flushed at the edge of an open and rather marshy field near Mt. Vernon on March 13.

Zenaidura macroura carolinensis. Eastern Mourning Dove.--No Mourning Doves were seen during the winter, my first record for this species in the spring being a single bird observed at the edge of a stretch of open woods near Mt. Vernon March 7.

Strix varia varia. Northern Barred Owl.--Fairly plentiful, and noted at frequent intervals throughout the winter in stretches of woods about Mt. Vernon.

Colaptes auratus luteus. Northern Flicker.--This species proved to be fairly plentiful during the winter months, small flocks being seen at frequent intervals in the scattered stretches of woods both at Mt. Vernon and at Ft. Humphreys. Poison ivy berries appeared to be a favorite source of food at this time of the year.

Sphyrapicus varius varius. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.--This species apparently winters rather sparingly, a single bird being seen December 16 at Ft. Humphreys.

Myiarchus crinitus boreus. Northern Crested Flycatcher.--My last record for this species in the fall was that of a single bird seen at Ft. Humphreys September 19.

Sayornis phoebe. Eastern Phoebe.--The first record for the spring migration was that of two birds seen at the edge of an open field near Mt. Vernon March 7.

Sitta canadensis. Red-breasted Nuthatch.--This species was observed but once, a single bird being seen September 30 in open pine woods at Ft. Humphreys.

Troglodytes aedon (subspecies?). House Wren.--A rather unexpected record was that of a bird seen December 23 in underbrush bordering Dogue Creek near Mt. Vernon. This is apparently the first record for the occurrence of a House Wren in the Washington region during the winter months.

Nannus hiemalis hiemalis. Eastern Winter Wren.--Fairly plentiful throughout the winter, and frequently seen in wooded ravines both at Mt. Vernon and Ft. Humphreys.

Thryothorus ludovicianus ludovicianus. Carolina Wren.--This species proved surprisingly scarce here for none were seen throughout the winter in the wooded ravines on the Ft. Humphreys reservation, and but a single bird in the stretches of woods at Mt. Vernon. The past winter, that of 1933-34, was said to have been unusually severe, with deep snows that persisted for long intervals, and it would appear quite possible that this was responsible for the disappearance of the Carolina Wrens from this spot. It would be of interest to know whether this was merely local, or whether it applied to the adjoining edge of Maryland as well.

Turdus migratorius migratorius. Northern Robin.--Robins were found to winter rather sparingly for only at infrequent intervals were single birds seen. Specimens taken were clearly referable to this northern race. The first record for the spring migration was that of a flock of



12 birds seen February 10 in woods near Mt. Vernon. A male taken then likewise proved to be the northern form and not, as suspected, the bird that breeds here.

Hylocichla guttata faxoni. Eastern Hermit Thrush.--The extreme hardness of this species was somewhat of a revelation to me for it apparently was unaffected by the severest weather. On January 27, there was a foot of snow on the ground, and the temperature during the night had dropped to 10 degrees below zero. Conditions could not have been more unfavorable, yet despite this fact, six Hermit Thrushes were seen during the morning in wooded ravines at Ft. Humphreys apparently unconcerned by their surroundings. A male taken then was surprisingly fat, and in very good condition.

Sialia sialis sialis. Eastern Bluebird.--Bluebirds were found to winter in small numbers about Mt. Vernon, and were seen at frequent intervals throughout the winter. Four birds, three males and a female, observed February 1 after ten days of relatively deep snow and low temperatures, were feeding on the berries of a red cedar standing at the edge of an open field. The first migrants appeared February 8, and within a week small flocks were of common occurrence.

Corthylio calendula calendula. Eastern Ruby-crowned Kinglet.--This species apparently winters sparingly here, a single bird being seen December 21 feeding in underbrush at the edge of a short stretch of woods near Mt. Vernon.

Anthus spinoletta rubescens. American Pipit.--The first record for the spring migration was that of two birds seen February 13 near Mt. Vernon flying by overhead.

Lanius ludovicianus migrans. Migrant Shrike.--Single birds seen near Alexandria October 31, November 24, December 19, and January 13, were evidence that this northern race is to some extent at least resident here.

Vireo griseus noveboracensis. Northern White-eyed Vireo.--My last record in the fall was that of a single bird seen September 23 feeding in willows bordering the Potomac River near Ft. Humphreys.

Vireo solitarius solitarius. Blue-headed Vireo.--First noted in the fall, September 30, in woods on the Ft. Humphrey reservation.

Vireo olivaceus. Red-eyed Vireo.--My last record in the fall was that of a single bird seen October 14 in woods bordering the Potomac River near Ft. Humphreys.

Vireo philadelphicus. Philadelphia Vireo.--Single birds were seen September 16 and September 19 feeding in willows bordering the Potomac River at Ft. Humphreys.

Vermivora chrysoptera. Golden-winged Warbler.--A male seen September 16 in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation constitutes the latest

record, by two days, for the occurrence of this species here.

Compsothlypis americana pusilla. Northern Parula Warbler.--An exceptionally late record for the fall migration was that of a male seen October 21 in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation. It was collected, and found to be clearly referable to this northern race.

Dendroica coronata. Myrtle Warbler.--Small flocks of Myrtle Warblers were seen at frequent intervals throughout the winter both at Mt. Vernon and at Ft. Humphreys, and were seemingly unaffected by the deep snows and low temperatures in late January and early February.

Dendroica dominica dominica. Yellow-throated Warbler.--A rather late record for the fall migration was that of a single bird seen September 19 feeding with other warblers in woods bordering the Potomac River on the Ft. Humphreys reservation. The average date of departure, as found in Miss May T. Cooke's "Birds of the Washington, D. C. Region," is September 4, with September 11, 1927, as the extreme date for the occurrence of this species here in the fall.

Dendroica striata. Black-poll Warbler.--My last record in the fall was that of a single bird seen October 21 feeding with Titmice in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation.

Dendroica pinus pinus. Northern Pine Warbler.--Pine Warblers were first seen in the spring on March 21 when they were found to be already fairly plentiful in stretches of pine woods at Mt. Vernon.

Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea. Yellow Palm Warbler.--My last record in the fall was that of a single bird seen November 4 on the Ft. Humphreys reservation, feeding with Chipping Sparrows at the edge of an open field.

Seiurus noveboracensis (subspecies?). Water-Thrush.--Seen for the last time in the fall on September 19, a single bird being found feeding in swampy woods bordering the Potomac River near Mt. Vernon.

Wilsonia citrina. Hooded Warbler.--A male seen September 16 feeding with other warblers in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation was the last individual of this species noted in the fall.

Setophaga ruticilla. American Redstart.--Seen for the last time in the fall on September 30, a single bird being found feeding with other warblers in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation.

Sturnella magna magna. Eastern Meadowlark.--This species proved to be fairly plentiful throughout the winter, small flocks being seen in the open fields about Alexandria and at Mt. Vernon.

Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus. Eastern Red-wing.--This species wintered rather sparingly, and was only seen at infrequent intervals. On January 1, six birds were found feeding in an open field at Mt. Vernon. The first record for the spring migration was that of a flock of 12 birds, both males and females, seen in the top of a tree in marshy woods near Mt. Vernon on February 17.



Icterus galbula. Baltimore Oriole.--My last record in the fall was that of a female seen September 16 in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation.

Quiscalus quiscula (subspecies?). Grackle.--The first record for the spring migration was that of two birds seen flying by overhead at Mt. Vernon February 24.

Pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus. Towhee.--Towhees were fairly plentiful through the latter part of October, although none were seen after the first of November. The first record for the spring migration was that of a male seen March 13 at Mt. Vernon, feeding with a flock of Juncos at the edge of a thicket in an open field.

Passerculus sandwichensis savannah. Eastern Savannah Sparrow.--Where conditions are suitable, this species seemingly lingers, in small numbers at least, throughout the winter. Six birds were seen December 21 in an open field near Mt. Vernon, and were found at this same spot on subsequent visits in January and early February. The first definite record for the spring migration was that of 20 birds, possibly more, flushed, well scattered, in a large open field at Mt. Vernon on March 13.

Spizella pusilla pusilla. Eastern Field Sparrow.--Although supposedly uncommon during the winter months, this species proved to be fairly plentiful at this season of the year both on the Ft. Humphreys reservation and about Mt. Vernon. Almost invariably the scattered small flocks that were seen were with Tree Sparrows.

Zonotrichia albicollis. White-throated Sparrow.--First noted in the fall on September 30, a single bird being seen feeding in a thicket in woods on the Ft. Humphreys reservation. Within two weeks small flocks were of common occurrence, and there was but a slight decrease in the numbers seen throughout the winter months.

Passerella iliaca iliaca. Eastern Fox Sparrow.--None were noted during the winter, and not until March 7 did the first migrants appear. That day, however, several flocks were seen in the stretches of woods about Mt. Vernon, one containing approximately 30 birds. Males were frequently heard singing throughout the morning.

Melospiza georgiana. Swamp Sparrow.--At only one spot was the Swamp Sparrow found during the winter months, three birds being seen January 1 in a stretch of reeds and cat-tails fringing a stream near Mt. Vernon.

Melospiza melodia melodia. Eastern Song Sparrow.--Although scattered birds were seen throughout the winter there was a perceptible increase in the number of Song Sparrows found at Mt. Vernon on February 24, small flocks being noted that day in thickets and underbrush bordering the open fields. Seemingly this is one of the earliest migrants to appear in the spring.

## A NEW BIRD FOR THE VIRGINIA LIST

In the September-October issue of THE RAVEN it was stated that a report would be made later as to the sub-specific identification of specimens of the Song Sparrow taken by Drs. Wetmore and Murray in Southwest Virginia. Three skins were obtained near Pulaski and one near Marion on September 26, 1935. The state of the molt seemed to indicate that they were breeding birds and not migrants. Dr. Wetmore took these skins to Washington for critical examination. As reported on page 23 of the January, 1936, issue of THE AUK, these specimens turned out to be Melospiza melodia beata, the Mississippi Song Sparrow. They thus constitute a first record for Virginia for this form, and probably mean also an addition to the list of known breeding forms.

It will be of interest if students living within the Mississippi drainage system in Virginia will collect specimens during June next summer and send them to Dr. Wetmore for comparison, in order that it may be definitely established as to whether the breeding form of Southwest Virginia is melodia or beata.

In a similar connection a female Robin collected at Lexington, Va., on December 23, 1935, has been identified at the National Museum as the Eastern Robin, Turdus m. migratorius. This is only what was to be expected; but it had not previously been confirmed by specimens that this is the winter form in the Valley. Summer specimens have been identified as the Southern Robin, T. m. achrusterus. Apparently achrusterus is the breeding form throughout the State. A specimen taken at 3800 feet at Mountain Lake on June 24, 1935, turned out to be achrusterus. It is not impossible that the Eastern Robin may be found breeding at high points in Highland County or on mountains like White Top. We need summer specimens from these places, and it is to be hoped that some wandering V.S.O. member will get them.

---J. J. Murray.

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## DR. ARTHUR ALLEN TO VISIT VIRGINIA

Dr. Arthur A. Allen of Cornell University is bringing his sound-motion pictures of birds to Randolph-Macon Woman's College on Friday, February 7th. This is the film that aroused so much enthusiasm when it was shown last fall before the meetings of the American Ornithologist's Union and the National Association of Audubon Societies. Dr. Allen is one of the outstanding lecturers on ornithology in America. It will be worth going far to hear him and to see and hear his Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and other rare birds in action. We are told that the hour for the lecture is 8:30 P.M. but would recommend getting there earlier. There seems some doubt as to the hall in which the film will be shown, but it will probably be the Smith Memorial Building on the campus. It was hoped that the lecture might also be given at Lexington, but that has not been possible.

(NOTE: It is now definitely known that the place of the lecture will be the Smith Memorial Building on the Randolph-Macon campus.)



## THE ANNUAL MEETING

Final plans have been made for the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology at Lynchburg on February 21 and 22. The Virginian Hotel will be headquarters for the meeting. Registration will begin at noon on Friday. The first session of the program will begin at 2:30 P.M.; the Annual Dinner at 6:30; and the evening session at 8:00. Saturday will be devoted to the Field Trip. The Virginian Hotel will offer rates of \$1.75 for single room without bath; \$2.50 and up for single room with bath; and \$2.00 per person for room with twin beds and bath. The price for the banquet will be \$1.00 per plate.

It is hoped that many of the members will prepare papers for the program. Those who plan to present a paper are urgently requested to send the title or titles, with an estimate of the time needed, to Dr. J. J. Murray, Lexington, Virginia, as soon as possible after receiving this notice. If the author cannot be present the paper may be sent to Dr. Murray that it may be read by someone else.

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Mr. George C. Mason, curator of the Mariners' Museum at Newport News reports as follows about his work: "Just a note in haste for THE RAVEN in regard to some of my recent lecture activities. I am fortunate in having the use of the Mariners' Museum's fine lantern, portable screen and set of 60 brilliant Audubon Societies' slides of birds of this region (although I am no longer actively connected with the Museum), and have given talks on our native birds before the Girls' Circle, Hampton Presbyterian Church, on October 8th, the Northampton Garden Club, Eastville, Va., on October 23rd, and the Hampton Rotary Club on December 3rd. A similar talk is scheduled for January 6th before the Norfolk Garden Club. I have also given several talks on our native wild flowers, of which I have just sent a note to Professor Freer for CLAYTONIA."

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## CHARLOTTESVILLE NOTES

On October 10, 11, 12, and 13 a Blue Jay migration took place through Charlottesville, using the same route each day. My time was limited so that I could watch the migration only for an hour and a half each day, during which time between 150 and 250 passed over. Records as to the exact number were lost except on October 13 when 224 came over. They flew rather high in straggling flocks and did not pay any attention to the local Blue Jays.

Of the 92 species of birds noted here from Sept. 18 to Dec. 11, the following are of special interest. Last dates: Woodcock 10/10; Night-hawk 9/21; Bobolink 9/28; Vesper Sparrow 11/3; Grasshopper Sparrow 10/20; \*Henslow Sparrow 10/28 (1); Swamp Sparrow 11/3; \*Dickcissel 10/6 (1); Pine Warbler 10/10; Northern Water Thrush 10/20.

First dates for winter residents: \*Ruddy Duck 11/3, (2); Marsh Hawk 11/3; Osprey 10/22; \*White-crowned Sparrow 10/3, (2); Red-breasted Nuthatch 9/29.

Mr. Duff, carekeeper of the Birdwood Reservoir, reports that there was a flock of 8 or 9 small white herons and 2 large white herons that were twice as big as the others on the reservoir during the last part of July. After he shot one of the Little Blue Herons they all left. The two large birds were undoubtedly Egrets which had not before been recorded for this region. The Ruddy Duck, Dickcissel, White-crowned Sparrow, and Henslow Sparrow marked above with the asterisk are also first records for the Charlottesville list.

On January 12 as I was walking in the University woods I heard a clanging noise overhead and a shadow passed me. As I looked up a Turkey Vulture passed over with a tobacco can hung about its neck. The can evidently had a rock in it. The bird flew about me for a few minutes and did not seem the least affected by the can which whirled around four or five inches below its neck.

---John B. Calhoun,  
University of Virginia.

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#### THE CHRISTMAS CENSUS IN VIRGINIA

Norfolk Co., Va., Dec. 26. Deep snow on ground. Temperature seven degrees; cold north wind. Because of the severity of the weather, and the fact that December 26th was the only day on which I could take the Christmas census, I planned a party for the birds, keeping them supplied with small grain. I watched them from my window at various intervals during the day; therefore it is impossible to give an estimate of the number. Within a few moments I counted twelve Fox Sparrows, four White-throated Sparrows, five Slate-colored Juncos, two Cardinals, and three Towhees. Several hundred Blackbirds and about fifteen Crows remained apart in a nearby peanut field. A few of the Blackbirds ventured to approach the feeding station.

In this section the Fox Sparrows seem to keep in the background until after a snow storm. Then they are more abundant than other birds, but disappear with the snow. Most of our feathered friends remain silent while feeding, but the Fox Sparrows with their sweet sharp notes bring music and cheer with them, which adds greatly to the colorful scene.

---Marion Charlton,  
Route 1, Portsmouth.

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Amelia, Va., December 24th, 9:15 A.M. to 1:20 P.M., clear, no wind; Temperature at start 33, at return 44; observer alone. Down Amelia Branch, across to, and along Nobb's Creek and return, about 8 miles on foot. Turkey Vulture, 6; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Bob-White, 17 (two coveys); Killdeer, 6; Mourning Dove, 20; Screech Owl, 1; Flicker, 2; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Phoebe, 3; Horned Lark, 2 (flying over); Blue Jay, 12; Crow, 28; Carolina Chickadee, 7; Tufted Titmouse, 5; White-breasted



Nuthatch, 2; Winter Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 2; Mockingbird, 7; Hermit Thrush, 6; Bluebird, 1; Starling, 115 (migratory flocks); House Sparrow, 34; Cardinal, 13; Purple Finch, 4; Goldfinch, 12; Junco, 46; White-throated Sparrow, 34; Song Sparrow, 13. 32 species, about 413 individuals.  
---John B. Lewis.

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Naruna, Va., Dec. 25; 9:30 A.M. to 12; 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. Sun shining at beginning, cloudy by noon. Slight wind. Snow that fell on Dec. 22 several inches deep in some places. Temp. 18° at start, 24° at return. On our farm one mile east of Naruna and along Whipping Creek four miles west of Naruna. By automobile 10 miles, by foot 2 miles. Turkey Vulture, 6; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Bob-white, 9; Mourning Dove, 25; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Crow, 3; Carolina Chickadee, 3; Tufted Titmouse, 10; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Winter Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 5; Mockingbird, 4; Bluebird, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 2; Meadowlark, 6; Cardinal, 25; Goldfinch, 1; Towhee, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 200; Field Sparrow, 25; White-throated Sparrow, 6; Fox Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 10. Total, 24 species, 349 individuals.

Dec. 19, 2 Killdeers; Dec. 21, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1 Hermit Thrush; Dec. 22, Marsh Hawk, Flicker; Dec. 23, 2 Purple Finches, Bewick's Wren, 2 Prairie Horned Larks. On one morning I saw 26 Cardinals at one time in the orchard back of the house.  
---Bertha Daniel.

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Lynchburg, Va. (Edgewood Farm, Tomahawk Swamp, Timber Lake, Riverside Park.) Dec. 24; 8:15 A.M. to 12:45 P.M., and 3:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Partly cloudy; 1½ in. snow; fairly strong west wind; temp. 34° at start, 33° at finish. 32 miles by auto, 4½ on foot. Turkey Vulture, 13; Black Vulture, 9; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Bob-white, 1; Killdeer, 1; Mourning Dove, 8; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Blue Jay, 6; Crow, 26; Carolina Chickadee, 3; Tufted Titmouse, 17; White-breasted Nuthatch, 9; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Winter Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 6; Mockingbird, 4; Hermit Thrush, 4; Bluebird, 3; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 13; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 6; Starling, 60; English Sparrow, 11; Meadowlark, 2; Cardinal, 31; Purple Finch, 10; Goldfinch, 10; Towhee, 1; Junco, 224; Tree Sparrow, 14; Field Sparrow, 2; White-throated Sparrow, 6; Song Sparrow, 11. Total, 35 species, 533 individuals. Herring Gull, 1; Dec. 23.  
---Ruskin S. Freer.

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Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 24; 8:25 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.; partly cloudy, light north wind, snow flurry during A.M.; temp. 28° at start, 30° at close; one-half inch snow covering ground, ice over pools and ponds. Waterman's wood to Tide spring, diameter of 12 miles; farmland, pine-cedar, and oak-cedar woodlots, one with small, shallow stream; 20 miles by auto, 8 miles on foot. Three observers working together. Turkey

Vulture, 63; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 5; Bob-white, 1; Flicker, 1; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 9; Prairie Horned Lark, 4; Crow, 646 (est.); Carolina Chickadee, 10; Tufted Titmouse, 7; White-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Winter Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 2; Mockingbird, 5; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 5; Starling, 165 (est.); English Sparrow, 43; Meadowlark, 22; Cardinal, 27; Goldfinch, 16; Junco, 144 (est.); Tree Sparrow, 24; White-throated Sparrow, 8. Total, 26 species, 1216 individuals.

---Howard Showalter,  
Sidney Schaefer,  
D. Ralph Hostetter.

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Lexington, Va., Dec. 23; 8 A.M. to 1 P.M., 2 to 4:15 P.M. Snowing gently all day; ground frozen; streams mostly frozen (Big Spring Pond open); light wind, northeast in morning, southwest in afternoon; temp. 13° at start, 27° at return. Twenty miles by auto, 6 miles on foot. Big Spring Pond, open fields, oak and thick cedar woods. Observers together. Black Duck, 1; Gadwall, 1; Green-winged Teal, 2 (pair); Turkey Vulture, 8; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 3; Killdeer, 1; Mourning Dove, 3; Belted Kingfisher, 3; Flicker, 4; Pileated Woodpecker, 4; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 10; Phoebe, 3; Prairie Horned Lark, 1; Blue Jay, 3; Raven, 1; Crow, 72; Carolina Chickadee, 17; Tufted Titmouse, 14; White-breasted Nuthatch, 7; Carolina Wren, 8; Mockingbird, 13; Robin, 1; Hermit Thrush, 6; Bluebird, 40; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 5; Cedar Waxwing, 41; Migrant Shrike, 1; Starling, 685; Myrtle Warbler, 24; House Sparrow, 45; Meadowlark, 2; Cardinal, 44; Purple Finch, 4; Goldfinch, 2; Junco, 72; Tree Sparrow, 38; White-crowned Sparrow, 3; White-throated Sparrow, 19; Song Sparrow, 16. Total, 42 species, 1232 individuals. The Gadwall, a female, was studied at close range, at rest and in flight, and the white and black speculum noted. The Raven, fairly common here, was seen and heard.

---J. J. Murray,  
R. P. Carroll,  
Southgate Hoyt,  
Carlisle Fix.

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Roanoke, Va., December 22; 10 A.M. to 4:45 P.M. Snow falling entire day, following warm, clear day; weather conditions, therefore, very unfavorable. Ground bare at start, 3 inches snow at 5 P.M. No wind. Temp. 15° at start, 20° at close; 38 miles by auto, 6 miles on foot. Observers together. Red-head Duck, 1; (Red-tail?) Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Bob-white, 9; Killdeer, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Phoebe, 1; Crow, 10; Chickadee, 2; Tufted Titmouse, 1; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Mockingbird, 2; Hermit Thrush, 1; Bluebird, 1; Starlings; Cardinal, 75; Towhee, 1; Junco, 75; Tree Sparrow, 10; Song Sparrow. Total, 20 species, about 200 individuals.

---H. T. Thompson,  
A. O. English,  
Mrs. H. B. Wharton,  
M. G. Lewis,  
S. R. McLain.



Blacksburg, Va. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute grounds and to Price's Fork).--Dec. 23; 7 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Cloudy--snowed practically all day; about 1½ in. of snow at start and 2 in. at finish; no wind; temp. 12° at start, 26° at finish. Nine miles on foot, 12 miles by automobile within area six miles in diameter. Observers together most of the time. Turkey Vulture, 9; Black Vulture, 6; Cooper's Hawk, 1 (feeding on a Mourning Dove); Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 4; Bob-white, 83 (8 coveys); Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Killdeer, 1; Wilson's Snipe, 10; Mourning Dove, 123; Flicker, 5; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 27; Prairie Horned Lark, 275 (two flocks); Crow, 400; Chickadee, 5; Tufted Titmouse, 31; White-breasted Nuthatch, 18; Winter Wren, 2; Mockingbird, 2; Bluebird, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Migrant Shrike, 3; Starling, 2000; English Sparrow, 145; Meadowlark, 28; Cardinal, 51; Goldfinch, 45; Junco, 127 (8 flocks); Tree Sparrow, 215 (3 flocks; White-crowned Sparrow, 50; Song Sparrow, 13. Total, 35 species, about 3,691 individuals. About 1500 Starlings, several Vultures, and a number of Crows and English Sparrows were seen feeding on garbage with the hogs at the college pig sty. They fed among the hogs apparently without fear, crowding about almost beneath them. The hogs were being utilized by the Starlings as foot warmers. Several of the larger hogs carried from 25 to 30 of the birds on their broad backs and tolerated them without apparent attention.

---J. P. Newman,  
W. W. Bailey,  
C. O. Handley, Jr.  
C. O. Handley, Sr.



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## SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE V. S. O.

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology was convened and welcomed by President C. O. Handley at the Virginian Hotel, Lynchburg, at 2:30 p. m. on February 21, 1936. Dr. J. J. Murray, chairman of the Program Committee was asked to preside during the presentation of papers which started promptly. In giving Virginia Bird Notes from John W. Daniel, Jr., Dr. Murray exhibited Mr. Daniel's copy of the second edition of the A. O. U. Check-List in the margins of which were records of Virginia birds, a few of which had not been published. Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Bird Study by John B. Lewis showed how large a part resourcefulness and patience played in bird study with very limited library facilities and also showed why Mr. Lewis is on familiar terms with so many birds. In his Method for Presenting Data on Bird Distribution, Prof. Freer had tried the plotting of data from Bird-Lore's Christmas censuses. Prof. Handley reported that Henslow's Sparrow had been recorded from Rockingham, Albemarle and Amelia Counties, from the Coastal regions, from Ashland and Petersburg and asked that each one watch for this bird in other localities.

After announcements about the Field trip and the Dinner the program was continued by Dr. Wetmore in Notes on Virginia Song Sparrows. There seem to be four subspecies of Song Sparrows in Ohio and eastward. They are the Eastern; the Mississippi Valley, found west of the Alleghanies and near Pulaski; the Coastal, which seems to follow salt water and a subspecies found far to the north. In discussing The Waterfowl Situation, Dr. Oberholser showed slides of individual birds in their native habitats in many parts of the U. S. and also a few slides in which countless numbers of birds were discernible. These latter slides, however, represented conditions of some years ago. In all localities now the same conditions are found, namely, a great decrease in numbers. In the case of the Canvasback, for example, the decrease is to about one-fifth of its former numbers. The marked and welcome response of the Wood Duck to the closed season is good evidence of what protection can do and of how the number of waterfowl might be increased.

In speaking about Some Virginia Ornithologists, Dr. Murray first named Mark Catesby, an Englishman, who visited this continent about two centuries ago and wrote Natural History of the Carolinas, an outstanding



book which was published in three languages. John W. Daniel, Jr., whose notes were mentioned in an earlier paper, was a resident of the city where we were meeting. Wm. Palmer, also an Englishman, added to the knowledge of the birds of this State. The other three, Percy Evans Freke, who wrote Birds of Amelia County, Va.; H. B. Bailey, one of the founders of the A. O. U. and Col. Wirt Robinson, who lived near Wingina on the James, continued their bird studies until five to ten years ago.

President Handley appointed the following committees: Auditing, T. L. Engleby and M. G. Lewis; Resolutions, J. B. Lewis, James Eike, Ralph Brown; Nominations, Mrs. F. W. Shaw, D. Ralph Hostotter, Mrs. J. B. Jurgens.

The afternoon program was closed with two reels of motion pictures taken and presented by Leonard K. Boyer of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. The reels showed Winter Birds about a Feeding Station at Uniontown, Pa. and Summer Birds at Sodus Bay, N. Y.

Twenty four members and friends attended the Annual Dinner at 6:30 p. m., at the close of which the business meeting was held. The minutes of the Fifth Annual Meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was read, accepted and has been placed on file. It shows receipts since April 27, 1935 of \$35.00 for dues for 1935 and of \$44.00 for dues for 1936. Sale of back files of THE RAVEN and earlier dues brought the total receipts to \$131.50. Expenses for the 1935 Meeting and publishing THE RAVEN were \$80.84, leaving a balance of \$50.46. The Secretary's report was read. This included the names of new and reinstated members. Since the names of members for 1935, with the exception of Sallie R. McLain, Roanoke, have already been published in THE RAVEN, only those for 1936 are here listed. For reinstatement; Mrs. Grace Taylor Wiltshire, Lynchburg; Emily W. Dinwiddie, Topeka, Kansas. New members; Leonard K. Boyer, Lynchburg; Martha Clark, Sweet Brier; Helen H. Schultz, Fredericksburg. Nominations from the floor were Julie Beecher, Roanoke; Sara Snook, Richmond; Maj. Robt. Carroll, Lexington for reinstatement. All were elected or reinstated.

Prof. Freer spoke briefly of Mary Louise Percy, a V. S. O. member who passed away a few months ago. Mr. J. B. Lewis, chairman reported for his committee the following resolutions:

First: To thank the officers of the society for their untiring devotion to their duties throughout the year, and in preparing for this meeting. (Prof. Ruskin S. Freer, who was responsible for the local arrangements has placed us under special obligations.)

Second: To thank the speakers from outside the State for the splendid instruction and entertainment they have given us.

Third: To thank the Virginian Hotel and the people of Lynchburg for their cordial hospitality, and the Lynchburg newspapers for their cooperation.

Mrs. F. W. Shaw in reporting for the nominating committee presented the present officers for re-election. Dr. Murray called for the vote which was in the affirmative.

After a few minutes of informal visiting the group moved to a nearby room for the evening program which consisted of moving pictures of birds: Flyways of Migratory Waterfowl presented by Prof. Handley, and The Birds of Cobb's Island by Mr. Walsh of the National Association of Audubon Societies. Neither set of pictures was completed because of difficulties with the projection apparatus. Despite this handicap Mr. Walsh gave a very interesting talk, illustrated with lantern slides, about the topography and birds of Cobb's Island.

The Executive Committee Meetings at noon and after the evening program dealt with details in regard to RAVEN exchanges; to re-mimeographing some of the earlier numbers of THE RAVEN and to expenses for the Annual Meeting. It was decided that membership in the Society may begin either in January or July and that new members joining after July 1 will receive THE RAVEN from that date. Richmond was named as the next meeting place with February 19 and 20 as tentative dates and with J. B. Lewis responsible for making arrangements for that meeting. The taking of the postponed membership in National Association of Audubon Societies was authorized.

Through the activity of Mrs. Leonard K. Boyer, forty seven - probably all - of those attending the afternoon and evening sessions registered. Besides the copy of the second edition of the A. O. U. Checklist which had belonged to John W. Daniel, Jr., Dr. Murray presented an exhibit of books on Virginia Ornithology.

Shortly after eight o'clock on Saturday morning, twenty seven of the members and their friends started on the field trip to Timber Lake. It was cold and cloudy at the start but as we walked around the lake the sun came out and changed the temperature of what proved to be the last day of continued cold. The birds seen were: Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Bob-White, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Robin, Hermit Thrush, Bluebird, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Migrant Shrike, Starling, English Sparrow, Cardinal, Goldfinch, Junco, Field Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

---Florence S. Hague, Secretary,  
Sweet Briar, Va.

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#### Fifty Years of Bird Study.

My interest in birds and other wildlife began at a very early age. My father was a close observer of nature and took delight in calling my attention to the birds and other wild things as I followed him about the Kentucky farm that was our home. He had no books on birds, but had given names of his own to many of them, most of which were based on



some prominent characteristic of the species; for instance, "sassy tomtit" for the Tufted Titmouse.

About 1883 or 1884 my first bird migration records were kept and reported to Dr. Whately of Columbus, Ohio, who was collecting data for the then newly organized American Ornithologists Union for the Ohio Valley section. This, I believe, was the first cooperative effort at collecting data on bird migration.

Immediately following this the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy was organized as a branch of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and Dr. C. Hart Merriam, of Locust Grove, N. Y., was placed in charge. This organization was the forerunner of the present Biological Survey. It immediately took over the migration work that had been started by the A. O. U., and my second year's migration records were sent to Dr. Merriam. I still have a letter from Dr. Merriam dated Sept. 16, 1886.

In the autumn of 1887 I began collecting small mammals for Dr. Merriam and out of money received for them I bought a copy of David Starr Jordan's Manual of the Vertebrate Animals of the Northern U. S., edition of 1888. For many years this book was my ornithological library. By the use of a small muzzle-loading shot gun and the very brief and technical descriptions contained in this manual I managed to identify about 140 species of birds. At that time the beautifully illustrated bird books and the field glasses of today were unknown, and the only way to identify species was to collect them. Only those who have traveled the same road can fully realize the thrills that came to me in those days from the finding and identification of birds new to me. The fact that they were common species made very little difference. They were new discoveries to me, just the same.

Here are some of the high spots in my early experience. November 15, 1886, an American Rough-Legged Hawk was collected and identified. The skin was "stuffed", and when I say stuffed I mean just that, as I had no training in taxidermy. In all the years since then I have seen hardly more than three or four of these fine hawks. February 24, 1887, I collected a Herring Gull, a very rare bird in that plateau section, where there were few bodies of water large enough to make a good "swimming hole". This gull was found in a semi-exhausted condition in an "old field" at some distance from home. I went to the nearest house and borrowed an old time Kentucky squirrel rifle that was longer than I, and collected my gull. This too was stuffed and kept for many years. March 21, 1887, a Barred Owl's nest was found in a hollow of a large oak not far from my home. I am sorry to say that the eggs and both the birds were collected and proudly added to my "museum". The stomachs of these owls were sent to Dr. A. K. Fisher, who about that time was beginning work on his monumental report on the "Hawks and Owls of the U. S. in their Relation to Agriculture."

My only noteworthy experience with an accidental visitor occurred in the winter of 1907-08, while living in Norfolk County, Virginia. This was the collection of a Green-Tailed Towhee, Oberholseri chlorura.

Credit for finding this stranger from west of the Rocky Mountains belongs to my son, M. G. Lewis, then a lad in his early teens. He was out walking, that snowy Sunday afternoon, when he saw the bird with a flock of White-Throated Sparrows. Not knowing what it was, he returned to the house and reported it to me. Going back with him I at once realized that it was a stranger and collected it. As it was not listed in Jordan's Manual I could not identify it, and sent it to Prof. G. C. Embury, who was then at Ashland, Va. He traced it to the Green-tailed Towhee, but to make sure, sent it to the Biological Survey where his identification was upheld. The occurrence was reported to THE AUK.

In April, 1932, a pair of nesting shrikes were collected at Amelia, Va., and the skins sent to Dr. Harry C. Oberholser of the Biological Survey. He pronounced them the true southern Loggerhead Shrike, Lanius ludovicianus ludovicianus, thus establishing the fact that the breeding shrikes of our section are of that southern subspecies and not the Migrant Shrike.

All through the years the greatest pleasure the birds have given me has come from their beauty of form, color and voice -- from the very important part they play in Nature's great symphony; from the sunset song of the Wood Thrush in the dusky shade of deep woods; the flute notes of the distant Whip-poor-will as he vocalizes the summer moonlight; the carol of the Robin and Cardinal on a spring morning.

To go back to the old Kentucky home, one of my sweetest recollections is that of the song of Bachman's Sparrow, which was not uncommon in that section. The song is always sweet and tender, especially just after sunset, when they sing more than at other times. They reach their highest peak of perfection, however, when a summer thunder storm drenches the late afternoon and clears away as darkness falls. Then Bachman's Sparrow makes up for lost time by singing on into the night with a fervor that he does not reach at any other time. While clouds overhead are breaking to let the stars look through and thunder still rumbles in the distance, out from bush-grown old fields rings the serenely cheerful three-part song, over and over again, always similar yet always slightly different, until at last he sings himself to sleep.

---John B. Lewis,  
Amelia, Va.

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#### Virginia Bird Notes from John W. Daniel, Jr.

In my library there is a battered copy of the Second (1895) Edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' which is of some interest to Virginia bird students. It came to me through the kindness of Edward A. Prohle. The title page has on it the name of John W. Daniel, Jr., the son of the famous Virginia Senator, and a keen amateur ornithologist of Lynchburg and Washington in the late 1890's and early 1900's. It was used by Daniel at the time when he was studying the bird life of the Lynchburg region and when he was about Washington, going on field trips with William Palmer and others of the workers in the U. S. National Museum



and Biological Survey. Along the margins are many notes in Daniel's handwriting, which provide Virginia records of some interest. The following quotations from his notes give the records which are of most interest:

- Black Tern. "Lynchburg, Va., summer '96."  
Black Rail. "Near Suffolk, Va." (No date given).  
Ground Dove. "At Lynchburg, Va. See Auk." (The reference is to Percy W. Shufeldt's record in 'The Auk', XVIII, 1901, 2, p. 192).  
American Goshawk. "Saw specimen in Colburn's (or Coeburn's) shop from Va."  
Short-eared Owl. "Took a specimen in Fauquier Co., Va., in 90".  
Snowy Owl. "Mr. Charles O'Hara saw one near Peakville (?)".  
Red-bellied Woodpecker. "Have taken this at Lynchburg, Va. Fairly abundant summer resident of Dismal Swamp."  
Vesper Sparrow. "Breeds."  
Ipswich Sparrow. "Occurs on coast of Virginia."  
Bachman's Sparrow. "See my accounts in Auk, and Wilson Bulletins." The reference is to his collecting a pair with nest and eggs on Blackwater Creek, Lynchburg, in 1897, a first record for the State and the farthest north breeding record at that time.  
Dickcissel. "Formerly abundant in Va. Now rare or entirely absent."  
Tree Swallow. "Breeds on Smith's Island, Va."  
Rough-winged Swallow. "Breeds at Lynchburg, Va."  
Loggerhead Shrike. "Breeds." He apparently has no evidence for this statement; but he evidently means this sub-species, as he knows of the newly-described Migrant Shrike.  
Golden-winged Warbler. "Taken by Dr. Hasbrouck near Wash."  
Grinnell's Water-thrush. "Hasbrouck - near Washington."  
Louisiana Water-thrush. "Fairly abundant summer resident in the Dismal Swamp."  
Hooded Warbler. "Common in Dismal Swamp Region, also in Hanover County. Favors eastern part of state."  
Carolina Wren. "Breeds, Lynchburg, Va."  
Bewick's Wren. "Breeds, Lynchburg."  
Brown-headed Nuthatch. "Breeds. Smith's Island."

---J. J. Murray,  
Lexington, Va.

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#### Roanoke County Bird Study Group.

Early in December a group of people interested in bird study in Roanoke and vicinity were called together by T. L. Engleby, A. O. English, and M. G. Lewis, for the purpose of discussing plans for a local Bird Study Club. Dr. Murray and Mr. Handley were both present at the meeting and outlined plans and possibilities for such an organization. Mr. Handley showed lantern-slides of a number of the more common birds of the section.

It was the unanimous opinion of those present that such an organization was needed. M. G. Lewis, was elected Chairman, T. L. Engleby, Vice-Chairman, and Miss Sallie McLain, Secretary. A Christmas bird census was taken by the group on December 22nd.

No February meeting was held.

At the March meeting plans for field meetings and trips were discussed, and a very instructive talk was given by A. O. English on methods of keeping records. There are sixteen members in the club.

---M. G. Lewis,  
Salem, Va.

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#### THE HAWK BOUNTY BILL.

As had been feared, a bill to pay a bounty on hawks was introduced in the House of Delegates at the recent meeting of the General Assembly. The bill made no distinction between beneficial and harmful species but offered a bounty on all hawks. Later a provision for a bounty on crows was also inserted into the Bill. Strange to say, owls were not mentioned. The power of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries was thrown against the Bill. Messrs. Handley and Murray appeared at the hearing and spoke against the Bill. Fortunately the Committee on Appropriations, to which the Bill was committed were not favorably disposed to it and refused to report it out. Later, in one of the dangerous jokes made by the recent Assembly, the House discharged the Committee, brought the Bill on the floor and then killed it by a 77 to 12 vote. We are safe for another two years from a Bounty Bill; and apparently the sentiment in the Assembly against such a bounty is growing.

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#### A SUGGESTION FOR INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP

A number of the members of the Virginia Society of Ornithology own stereopticon slides and projection equipment, or have access to them. These members give frequent talks on birds, in their own communities. Such talks doubtless do much good, but in some cases they become burdensome, making refusals necessary. Most of us have doubtless come in contact with all in our own communities who might be interested in the work of the Society. The suggestion has been made that more fruitful results in the way of new friends for the Society, might result from our taking the initiative in giving illustrated talks on birds, frankly stressing the work of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, in towns and cities of the State where we now have no members. Most of the Executive Committee journeyed to Roanoke this winter, and assisted Mr. M. G. Lewis in the organization of a local group. Several talks were given and Mr. Handley showed a group of slides on Hawks and Owls, and gave a very interesting talk. This is an example of what might be done with similar good results in several other large cities of the State.

Such a program to be most effective doubtless needs some direction and organization, which might necessitate delaying action until the next annual meeting. In the meantime those who are interested might write the President, Prof. Chas. O. Handley, Blacksburg, offering their services or suggestions. Where a choice is necessary between the two



alternatives, it seems that more real good might be done the cause of bird study in Virginia by reducing the numbers of talks we give in our own communities, and saving our time and energy for this "missionary" endeavor in the cities where we have no members. Contacts for such meetings could be arranged. And remember, it seems that if we should bring the membership up to the 100 mark, we might print the RAVEN, instead of mimeographing it.

---R. S. Freer,  
Lynchburg, Va.

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#### KODAK PICTURES OF FIELD TRIP

The pictures taken on the field trip at the Lynchburg meeting turned out fairly well. Members wishing prints may order from Ruskin S. Freer, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Va. Please order by numbers given below, sending stamps for payment, preferably. Promptness in sending orders will be appreciated, as no prints will be made until it seems that all orders are in. Price, 6¢ each.

- No. 1--Ralph M. Brown and Lester L. Walsh.
- No. 2--J. J. Murray and Alexander Wetmore.
- No. 3--H. C. Oberholser and J. B. Lewis.
- No. 4--Group: Burgess, Jurgen, Brown, Walsh, J. B. Lewis.
- No. 5--Group: Sprunt, Hague, Engleby, Wetmore, McClain, Wharton, Murray, Shaw, Snook, Beecher, Eike, Hostetter.
- No. 6--Group: Beyer, Oberholser, Hague, Snook, Handley, Freer.
- No. 7--Timber Lake, with Brown, Walsh and the collie in the background.
- No. 8--The collie, "Towser", and the Lake. (Towser narrowly escaped drowning on February 27, when he attempted to cross the Lake on soft ice. His owners almost sank in a leaky boat, trying to rescue him.)

It was suggested on this field trip that the Society should develop an album of pictures taken at the annual meetings. If those having prints to contribute will send them to Mr. Freer, we will promise a collection for display at the next meeting.

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#### FIELD NOTES

LYNCHBURG -- Marsh Hawk. The members of the V. S. O. who were on the field trip at the Lynchburg meeting will be interested in knowing that I was in error in saying that the Marsh Hawk seen on the trip made the first record for Timber Lake for this time of year. I found one there February 17, 1935.

Saw-whet Owl. On February 23, 1936, the day after the annual V. S. O. field trip, I found that a Saw-whet Owl had been killed somewhere in this vicinity about two years ago, and mounted by Mr. Lawrence McWane of this city. The man who shot the owl is not now in this city, and fuller data

will be given later when I can hear from him. Our consolidated List (Raven, Feb. 1931) gives only one county for it, Montgomery, where Dr. Smyth considered it accidental. Dr. Rives, in his "Catalogue of the Birds of the Virginias", states that "Two have been taken on Cobb's Island within the last few years. A resident on the mainland." His monograph appeared in 1890. The last A. O. U. Check-List includes Virginia in the winter range of this species.

Great Horned Owl. On February 23, 1936, I obtained two additional records for the Great Horned Owl for this area. Mr. Lawrence McWane, local taxidermist, says that one was shot in Amherst County in December, 1935, and brought to him for mounting. On the morning of February 23, 1936, C. F. Eggors, an employee of the Timber Lake Corporation, shot a Great Horned Owl in the extensive oak woods that lies just to the west of the lake. He said that there were three or four other birds in the same vicinity where he shot this bird, and that remains of quail were found close to the bird's roost. Mr. Beyer and I plan to locate the roost at once.

Pine Warbler. First date, February 2. Earliest arrival in ten years. Seen again, February 9.

---Ruskin S. Freer.

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NARUNA -- A Marsh Hawk has been wintering here. On January 19 two male Marsh Hawks were seen flying about over a marshy field. Heretofore I have listed this bird only as a migrant.

---Bertha Daniel.

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HARRISONBURG -- On February 2, a male Golden Eagle was shot on top of Shenandoah Mountain, near Cow Knob, on the West Virginia side of the state line. The eagle had carried off some of the farmer's poultry, so he baited the bird and shot it from his barn. It had a wing spread of 6 ft. 4 in., and a length of 38 in. from tip of beak to tip of tail.

---D. Ralph Hostetter.

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ROANOKE -- On January 11th, on an old garden site, I trapped eight White-crowned Sparrows, both adult and immature birds in first winter plumage. Since I have trapped this species regularly and yesterday noted two on my window feeding shelf.

February 22. Saw a lone Herring Gull, over the Roanoke River within the city limits. 23rd. Hollins Pond. 1 pair Old Squaw Ducks, 1 male and 3 females Golden-eye Ducks, 1 pair Mallard Ducks. Carvin's Cove. March 1st. 7 Scaup Ducks and a Woodcock.

---A. O. English.





# *The Raven*

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## MARCH BIRDS OF THE EASTERN SHORE

Alexander Wetmore  
Smithsonian Institution

During various journeys to the level expanse of the Eastern Shore of Maryland I have studied on the road maps the lower end of the long peninsula that extends southward into Virginia. But not until the end of March this year did circumstances allow an examination of the bird-life of this interesting area. The populous breeding colonies of terns and other water birds on the coastal islands have been visited by many ornithologists, but my own intention was to make a general survey of the area with particular reference to the smaller birds of the land.

On the morning of March 24 I crossed the ferry from Annapolis to Matapeske to travel rapidly south to the Virginia line. Here the season was appreciably farther advanced than at Washington. Daffodils blossomed about little houses beside the roads, red maples were in bloom, and everywhere farmers were at work in their fields.

Near the bay on the mainland opposite Chincoteague a flock of Boat-tailed Grackles fed in a freshly plowed field, the large males strutting and pointing their bills skyward in amusing display in anticipation of the nesting season. The tide was low and the flats of Chincoteague Bay were dotted with men, women and children absorbed in digging for clams. At intervals Herring Gulls joined in the search, pulling the mollusks out of the mud and then flying aloft to drop them on some point or bar strewn with oyster shells. Sometimes the clam was broken at the first attempt, but occasionally a gull tried over and over again, rising higher and higher until finally the shell was cracked and the meat available.

Through the entire area small birds were relatively few in number. Even the Song Sparrow, then in full migration near Washington, was scarce. Chipping Sparrows were scattered along the roads, with an occasional Field Sparrow, and a few Savannah Sparrows were found. Robins, evidently the southern form, were established in the little villages, where they were to nest, while scattered flocks through the country were composed of migrants of the typical race on their way north. At one camp where I spent a night the Robin was the first songster in the chilly dawn,

followed a little later by a Mourning Dove. Not until the sun had risen to touch the trees did the Pine Warbler, commonly distributed through the pine woods, begin its song.

The great Dahl Swamp between Onancock and Harborton, with its stretches of pines and hardwoods, and its openings grown with a variety of sedges, was intriguing, but here again birds were limited to Cardinals, Downy Woodpeckers, Chickadees, Flickers and similar common species. In work in the Maryland section of the peninsula at this same season I have found a similar condition and attribute it to the topography of the area. Since the land connection is at the north and the southern point is separated by a wide expanse of water from the southern area of Virginia with the width of Chesapeake Bay to the west, the natural tendency would be for advancing waves of migrants among small birds to be diverted inland and to the west, and comparatively few would cross directly over. Later in the spring the condition might change but at this relatively early period the migration was decidedly limited.

One striking feature in the bird life was the great abundance of Turkey Vultures, which were three or four times as numerous as elsewhere in Virginia. Little groups of them were constantly in sight, and I thought that they must resort to hollow logs and honeysuckle tangles to nest as here there are no rock ledges. I watched carefully for Black Vultures without success.

March 26 was stormy, with a high wind and occasional dashes of cold rain. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls flew inland to feed in plowed fields with Crows and Red-winged Blackbirds. Near Seaview toward the southern end of the peninsula I noted one Shrike. Flocks of Purple Grackles were widely distributed, but the Boat-tailed Grackles seem closely restricted at this season to near the coast as I saw them only near Chincoteague and Quinby. The widespread distribution of the Starling about houses and through scattered trees elsewhere must not be overlooked.

By noon it was blowing heavily and in a walk of several miles from Nottingham Beach to Cape Charles point I found only a few scattered Flickers, Cardinals, Robins, Crows and Hermit Thrushes in the woods, while Loons, Gulls and American Mergansers were scattered over the waters of the bay. A Downy Woodpecker that I collected here is of the northern race *medianus*. Among the bay-berries of the low land on the point one Atlantic Song Sparrow was the only bird encountered. Later in the spring birds should be more common in this area, and in fall migration the southern end of this long peninsula should be especially favorable for observation as migrants would naturally follow the coast line and should concentrate at the southern tip as they do under similar circumstances at Cape May. Fisherman's Island off the southern tip might be an interesting point at that season.

That night I crossed on the ferry to Old Point Comfort and I awakened next morning in Hilton Village to a world crowded with birds. The contrast in abundance of bird life between the two areas was really remarkable.



## SOME VIRGINIA ORNITHOLOGISTS

## 1. Mark Catesby. 1679 (1680) - 1749

J. J. Murray  
Lexington

"A Brief History of Virginia Ornithology" was published in the March, 1933, issue of THE RAVEN. While that paper necessarily had some biographical material, it dealt mainly with the literature of Virginia ornithology. It is probable that the members of the V. S. O. would also be interested in a historical sketch dealing with the lives of some of the men who have worked in our State. We have had among our workers one man, Mark Catesby, whose work is of primary importance in American ornithology and a succession of men of ability and distinction. In this and succeeding issues we shall present in chronological order brief sketches of eight men whose lives were identified with Virginia ornithology and who are either no longer living or have retired from active work. Three of these are native Virginians; two came from other states to live in Virginia; while three of them were natives of Great Britain who worked for a time in Virginia.

On March 24, 1929, a tablet to the memory of Mark Catesby was unveiled in Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, Virginia. The tablet was the gift of Mr. T. Catesby Jones of New York City, a descendant of Mark Catesby's sister, Elizabeth Cocke. On the tablet is the following inscription: "Mark Catesby, F. R. S. Born in Sudbury, England, Died December 23, 1749. An English naturalist resident in Virginia 1712-17, and in Carolina, Georgia, and the Bahamas, 1722-1726. Author of 'The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands,' 1731-1748, being the first scientific description of wild life in America. The first naturalist to describe most of our common birds, to introduce to cultivation the catalpa tree and other useful plants and to observe the effect of altitude upon geographical distribution. A pioneer in American science whose energy and enthusiasm preserved for posterity the fruits of his labor."

Apparently it is not quite certain as to whether Catesby was born at Sudbury, although that seems most likely. He was born either in 1679 or early in 1680, more probably the former year. This uncertainty in regard to the place and date of his birth extends also to other facts of his life. There is uncertainty as to the date of his leaving Virginia. We know that he had a wife and two children but we do not know their names or anything of their later history. He came of the family of Catesbys of Northamptonshire. His father was John Catesby, more than once Mayor of Sudbury; his mother was Elizabeth Jekyll, grand-daughter of Sir Thomas Jekyll, Master of the Rolls. Catesby died at his house in Old Street, London, December 23, 1749. In that year the 'Gentleman's Magazine' announced the death of "Mr. Mark Catesby, F. R. S., aged 70, author of the Natural History of Carolina, a large and curious work, which is the chief support of his widow and two children."

In 1712 at the age of 33 Catesby came to Virginia to visit his

sister Elizabeth who had married Dr. William Cocke. Dr. Cocke, also a native of Sudbury, was one of the leading physicians of the colony, a member of the Council and Secretary of State for the Colony. A large part of Catesby's time while in Virginia was spent with the Woodfords in Caroline County, Mrs. Woodford being a daughter of Dr. Cocke and Catesby's niece. As Dr. Witmer Stone remarked, Catesby was "primarily a botanist and dabbled in ornithology." The strange new plants and animals of Virginia stirred his enthusiasm and prompted him to make collections. He stayed in Virginia until 1719 (or until 1717, according to the Bruton Parish tablet), then returning to England with his collections. In England these collections of plants (principally) and birds aroused so much interest on the part of Sir Hans Sloane, President of the Royal Society, Dr. Richard Meade, Dr. William Sherrard, a botanist, and others that he was persuaded to return to America for further collecting. This time he landed at Charleston, S.C., in May, 1722. Three years were spent in the southern states and a year in the Bahamas before he returned to England in 1726. There he settled at Hoxton to write his great work, "The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands." He was artist as well as scientist and prepared a series of paintings for his work. When he found the expense of publishing these paintings greater than he could afford he learned etching and made the plates himself. The work was issued in two folio volumes, Vol. I in 1731, Vol. II in 1743. It contains over two hundred colored plates, the first plates being tinted under his own direction. The text was in both English and French. A Second Edition, a revision by M. Edwards with an appendix, was issued in 1748; a German Edition at Nuremburg in 1756; and an edition with a Linnaean index in 1771. Catesby became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1733. In 1747 he read a paper on "Migration of Birds" before the Royal Society which was published in the "Philosophical Transactions" of that year and which refuted the theory of hibernation under water. A posthumous work, "Hortus Britanno-Americanus, or a Curious Collection of Trees and Shrubs," with plates, was published in 1763-1767.

Virginia is not named in the title of Catesby's book and the bulk of his American work was done from Charleston south, yet it was Virginia that first inspired his work and that provided him with his first materials. Only four of his types are definitely from Virginia, yet the substance of his book directly or indirectly applies to the State. Catesby first named and described most of our common southern birds. Dr. Witmer Stone speaks of him as "The writer whose classic work..... forms the basis of the ornithology not only of the Southern States, but of the whole of North America." Catesby used a long and cumbersome nomenclature. For example, to the Mockingbird, or as he calls it, the Mock-bird, he gives the amazing name, Turdus minor cinereo-albus non maculatus, which means 'the small whitish-ashy colored and not spotted thrush.' Such a title is a description rather than a name. With the perfection by Linnaeus of the binomial system of nomenclature these names had to be changed, and although Linnaeus depended for his North American material almost entirely upon Catesby's work it has fallen out, as Dr. Stone observes, that "in our present nomenclature we have nothing to preserve the work of this worthy man."



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## A WOODCOCK'S NEST

On March 20 the nest of a Woodcock was found here in the edge of a woods near a swampy thicket by some neighbors who were cutting wood. This was near Naruna, Campbell County, Virginia. The nest was made on some leaves under a small bush and contained four buffy eggs mottled with brown spots. The adult bird was sitting on the nest.

On April 4 I visited the nest to see if the birds had hatched. The adult birds had forsaken the nest but some shells of the eggs were still in the nest. Crows or some other thieves had devoured the greater portions of the eggs. The "peep" notes of the Woodcock were heard at night from a swamp near my home on March 6, 23, 28, 31.--Bertha Daniel.

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BREEDING OF THE  
MALLARD IN VIRGINIA

Mr. Paul Hodge, Federal game warden, photographer and caretaker of the Roach's Run Wildfowl Sanctuary has reported to me two things which may be of interest to the readers of THE RAVEN. The Sanctuary is just across the Potomac from Washington, beside the railroad tracks. A number of Mallard Ducks breed there, and this year two pairs nested in Wood Duck boxes. One nest had 14 eggs last week, and the other "about nine or ten". One nest is about six feet from the ground, the other about the same I believe. Mr. Hodge says the boxes are of hollow logs, the diameter of the cavity about nine inches, the diameter of the entrance about four inches. He has fourteen pairs of wing-tipped Wood Ducks at the Sanctuary now. He is wondering how the young Mallards will get down from the nests.

Mr. Hodge also told me that Dr. Paul Bartsch of the Smithsonian Institution found the nest and eggs of the Prairie Horned Lark near the Washington-Hoover Airport, Wednesday, April 8. This is only a short distance from the Sanctuary.--James Eike, Woodbridge, Va.

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A VIRGINIA RECORD  
OF CRYPTOGLAUX ACADICA ACADICA

In THE RAVEN, February-March, 1936, p. 8, there is a note on the Saw-whet Owl (Cryptoglaux a. acadica) for Virginia. I have in my collection a female, which I picked up in the back yard of my old home within the city limits of Newport News, Va., on November 2, 1916. As I remember, this was recorded soon afterwards in one of the ornithological magazines, but as I see no reference to it in THE RAVEN, I offer the data again.--Harold H. Bailey, Miami, Fla.

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PINTAIL'S AGE RECORD  
BROKEN BY FISH HAWK.

An old-age record for banded wild birds in this country set by a Pintail Duck, which lived thirteen years, has been broken by an Osprey, or Fish Hawk. Records of the Bureau of Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture show the Hawk--banded when a fledgling--lived 21 years.

It was banded in June 1914 on Gardiner's Island near the eastern end of Long Island by H. H. Cleaves, Staten Island, N. Y., and found dead there last summer. It probably returned and nested annually in the vicinity of the island. Another Fish Hawk banded by Cleaves at the same place four days earlier might have lived just as long, but it was killed in 1930 at West Durham, N. C.

The Pintail Duck which set the previous record for longevity was killed in October, 1926, near Brawley in the Imperial Valley of California. It was at least a year old when banded in the marshes that are now the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah.

"Reports of banded ducks living more than four or five years and banded hawks living more than two or three years are unusual", says F. C. Lincoln. "Many of these do well to live a year, because of hunters."--From Press Service, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

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KODAK PICTURES OF FIELD TRIP

Any who desire to order pictures of the 1936 Field Trip may still obtain them. Please see announcement in last issue.

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## REVIEW

Murray, J. J. The Land Birds of Rockbridge County, Virginia.  
The Oölogist, LIII:3. pp. 26-35. March, 1936.

This issue of The Oölogist is devoted to an annotated list of 162 species and subspecies. The paper begins with a brief account of the ecological characteristics of Rockbridge County, and proceeds with the list, giving nesting and migration data, and notes on the status of each bird in the county. This paper adds another to the growing list of excellent contributions Dr. Murray is making to Virginia ornithology. His work on the birds of Rockbridge County constitutes the outstanding study of county avifaunas in this state, from the standpoint of the number of birds found, and his study has extended over only about ten years' time in this county. A previous paper, "Water Birds of a Virginia Mountain County", appearing in The Wilson Bulletin, XLVII, No. 1, March, 1935, with the present paper, presents the complete results of his work in annotated form.--Ruskin S. Freer.

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## FIELD NOTES

Lynchburg. Early migration dates: Vesper Sparrow, Mar. 14; Wood Duck, Mar. 23.

Saw-whet Owl. The occurrence of this bird in the State, reported in the last issue, has been further verified by the man who shot it, Mr. K. E. Spencer, formerly of Lynchburg, now in Washington, D.C. Mr. Spencer writes that he shot the bird near Cumberland Court House, Buckingham County, about Nov. 27, 1933.

White-crowned Sparrow. A single bird in immature plumage, first found by Mr. William Hill, has been seen here several times this winter. This is my second record for this species here.--Ruskin S. Freer.

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Naruna. The past winter has been spent on a farm along a creek called Whipping Creek, four miles west of Naruna. This farm is about half-way between Naruna and Staunton River.

This section's flora consists of much willow oak, winged elm, sweet gum, red bud, trumpet vine and the coral honeysuckle. There are many swampy thickets here that afford splendid bird habitats.

Beyond the orchard, back of the house, there's a small brook and a sunny, wooded hillside. From here the Fox Sparrow and Hermit Thrush came for crumbs in the back yard. A flock of Meadowlarks fed in the front yard all winter.

Of much interest was the finding of a flock of thirteen Pipits on Feb. 28, and fifteen on March 12. This is a new species for my list. A Vesper Sparrow was found with a flock of Juncos Feb. 29. Another early date for migrants was the arrival of the Brown Thrasher on March 16.--Bertha Daniel.

Amelia. About 11 A. M., April 28, while in a belt of woods back of my home, I heard and saw a Blue-winged Warbler, Vermivora pinus. His very characteristic spring song first caught my attention, and I had no difficulty in locating him, well up in the trees.

I was quite familiar with this species at my old home in south central Kentucky, where they were fairly common summer residents at that time, and the song alone would make me fully satisfied as to the identity of the singer.--J. B. Lewis.

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Blacksburg. January 27, Purple Finch(150). February 24, Red-winged Blackbird; Cowbird. February 27, Ring-necked Duck(3); Pintail. February 29, Purple Grackle. March 1, Robins singing. March 8, Strouple's Creek below Price's Mt.: Pipit(100), Kingfisher(first); College Lake: Ring-necked Duck(3). March 7, Prairie Horned Lark(pair). March 8, Phoebe, Wilson's Snipe(12), Pileated Woodpecker. March 15, near Yellow Sulphur Springs, Cowbird(6), Field Sparrow, Wilson's Snipe. March 16, Purple Finch. March 18, Fox Sparrow. March 19, Louisiana Water-thrush (4, first). March 19, Lesser Yellow Legs(reflecting pool). March 21, Lesser Scaup. March 23, Golden-eye. March 23, Chipping Sparrow. March 24, Vesper Sparrow; Robins building. March 26, Mourning Dove building. March 29, Migrant Shrike, Bewick Wren. March 30, Ring-necked Duck(1 male, 6 females), Golden-eye(1 male, 1 female).--Ralph M. Brown.

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Lexington. The most interesting event of the season at Lexington was the collecting of a male European Teal (Nettion crecca) on February 1, as reported in the April issue of The Auk. The bird had been present at Big Spring Pond since Christmas in company with a female Green-winged Teal but no attention had been paid to it until this date, when I happened to take a closer look at it and saw that it was the rare European form. This is the fourth record for the South and the first for Virginia, the specimen included by Rives having really been taken outside our territory. Another item of interest is the presence of a Canada Goose at Big Spring. This bird came down on March 23, joined a flock of domestic geese, and is still here late in April. It is quite tame, occasionally coming into the farmyard to feed with the other geese. Ducks have not been nearly so common this spring as last year. Scaups particularly have been noticeably scarce. I have not seen over two or three at a time where there were scores last year. Black Ducks have been very scarce; and Mallards practically absent. Only two species, Baldpates and Shovellers, have been rather more common than usual, from six to eight of the former and from one to six of the latter being present from March 20 to April 8. A Bonaparte's Gull was seen on the river on March 31, and fourteen Ring-billed Gulls at Cameron's Pond on April 6. The late spring has retarded the migration of most species, but the following species arrived earlier than they have ever been noted previously: Osprey(April 6), Crested Flycatcher(April 23), Brown Thrasher(March 30), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher(April 6), Prairie Warbler(April 23). This combination of facts makes one realize that the immediate weather conditions at any locality have very little to do with the time of the arrival of species at that locality.--J. J. Murray.



Charlottesville Banding Notes. From November 11, 1935, to April 30, 1936, I have banded 443 birds of 25 species. From those banded last fall I have had four returns. A White-throated Sparrow banded November 11 returned April 23; another banded December 4 returned April 14; a White-crowned Sparrow, the only one captured, banded November 24, returned April 14; a Titmouse banded November 19 returned April 4. Beginning with January 22 Purple Finches started arriving on the University of Virginia grounds. By the middle of February the flock numbered at least 150, although I never counted over 125 at one time. The flock remained on the University grounds in undiminished numbers until the middle of March when they began leaving, but still on April 29 I heard at least 30 singing. Those singing were in both the pink and the brown plumage. At this last date there were probably more than I heard because since the trees have begun to come out the Finches have spread over Charlottesville, feeding on buds. Of this flock I banded 104. Eight others met their death by bumping against the top of the drop trap before I could get them out. The skull of a mature Purple Finch is no thicker than that of a month old English Sparrow. Fifty one of the Finches repeated, some a number of times.

Two White-breasted Nuthatches were banded in November. They remained for two months and then left. During the first week of March two returned, but I do not know whether they are the same two because I have not been able to capture them. On March 30 they began building a nest in a hollow tree in the back yard. Although the nest was finished in a few days no eggs were laid until April 13; seven eggs were laid. During the nest building, which was carried on by only one of the birds, the pair was noisy, but as soon as incubation began the pair was rarely seen and more rarely heard. The eggs hatched early on the morning of April 30.

Three birds caught had deformed bills. A male Purple Finch had its lower mandible elongated and widened. A Starling had its bill at least a quarter of an inch longer than usual. A Mourning Dove had its upper mandible bent to the left. The usual color of the iris of the adult Purple Grackle is bright yellow, however two females handled still retained the gray-brown iris of the immature bird. One of these birds was brooding.

Besides those species already mentioned the following were banded: Screech Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Chimney Swift, Song Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Blue Jay, Cardinal, Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Junco, Brown Thrasher and Robin.--John B. Calhoun.

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Lynchburg. Apparent late migration of Kingfishers and a sudden noticeable increase of Goldfinches in summer plumage are happenings of considerable interest for the first week in May.

On the morning of May 2 at 5:30 o'clock a single Kingfisher was seen flying in the general direction of north at considerable altitude. In a few minutes three more followed flying in the same direction. About 6:00 o'clock five more were seen, all flying in the same general direction and at about the same altitude, and in a few minutes later another single individual passed over. The last to be seen passed over about 7 o'clock. There were six of these. Sixteen were counted in all.

A noticeable increase in Goldfinches in summer plumage raised the question in the writer's mind as to whether this might not also be a migration of southern birds. For several weeks along the latter part of April there appeared to be the usual number of these birds, then flocks of Goldfinches, predominantly male, appeared about the 28th of April and continued to increase in numbers for the first few days in May. This increase was noticed by several persons.

Information as to similar occurrences of this kind would be greatly appreciated, or an explanation of these happenings would be all the more appreciated.--Lawrence C. Givens, Lynchburg College.





# The Raven

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DR. J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR  
LEXINGTON, VA.

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## MAY BIRDS OF APPLE ORCHARD MOUNTAIN

Ruskin S. Freer  
Lynchburg, Va.

Apple Orchard Mountain, about twenty-five miles to the west of Lynchburg in the Blue Ridge, is the highest of eleven peaks in our area which are of 4000 feet or over in altitude. The elevation of Apple Orchard is 4224 feet. Its eastern slopes lie in Bedford County, the western in Botetourt.

On May 16, 1936, Reverend James Sprunt of Lynchburg, a brother of Alexander Sprunt, Jr., and I, started out early for a day with the birds on Apple Orchard. Little heed was paid to the ordinary run of birds seen along the way. We were after bigger game, those less familiar birds of the upper half of the mountain. However we paid some attention to the birds of Locke's Mountain en route, and of the lower slopes of Apple Orchard. On Locke's Mountain in the morning we heard the songs of the Redstart, Black and White and Prairie Warblers. On the return trip in the evening we heard the song of the Cerulean Warbler on Locke's Mountain, and stopping to look for it, had a good view of the bird. Around the foot of Apple Orchard on the Botetourt County side we also found more of these warblers of the lower altitudes, including the Redstart, Black and White, Hooded and Parula. We heard the song of the Black-throated Green Warbler at this point in the evening.

It is always rather surprising to find how many birds of the Piedmont, in the Carolinian life-zone, are found around the buildings and cleared grounds of Camp Kewansee on Apple Orchard. Indigo Buntings and Yellow-breasted Chats are abundant. Chipping and Field Sparrows are there too, with House and Bewick's Wrens. This picture is confused somewhat, however, by the presence of numerous birds of the Alleghanian life-zone. Carolina Juncos are abundant around the camp buildings. On the hillside just above the camp, in scrubby second-growth, there are numerous Chestnut-sided Warblers. In the hemlocks below the camp we heard the song of the Mountain Vireo, and suddenly, surprisingly, a pair of Pine Siskins flew over, uttering just two or three tell-tale flight notes. They disappeared in a tall hemlock, and though we tried for some time to see them, were unable to locate them again. I was somewhat loathe to include them on our list without better sight identi-

fication, but their flight and flight-notes were unmistakable, late in the season though it was. These birds are abundant in the Blue Ridge during the winter months, every trip revealing large flocks on ridges where birch is found.

We made two trips from the camp during the day. The forenoon was spent along a trail leading around Rich Mountain to Black Rock, and in the afternoon we climbed to the tower on top of Apple Orchard. As we dipped into the woods in the morning we immediately left behind the numerous Chats and Indigo Buntings, although a Bunting was found later in the low gap between Rich Mountain and Black Rock, where there was an old clearing. In place of these birds the very characteristic trail-side birds of the upper altitudes became abundant,--Cairn's and Canada Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers and Veeries. Here, one whose ears are accustomed to the bird chorus of the Piedmont realizes that he is in a different world. Occasionally one hears familiar songs, such as those of the Red-eyed Vireo, the Wood Thrush or the Black and White Warbler, but the most of the bird chorus at an altitude of 3500 feet is new. Repeated association with it, however, brings familiarity, and the composite whole brings pleasant memories of other summer days along the upper trails.

There were some exceptions to the generalized picture which has been given of the birds of this region. At Black Rock we heard the raucous calls of the Crested Flycatcher. We saw one Blackburnian Warbler, found by Reverend Sprunt. This little jewel is always a happy discovery. Chimney Swifts were frequently flying over. And once through an opening in the trees we caught sight of a hawk, probably Cooper's, soaring and circling high over Hale's Fork, the valley between Rich and Big Onion Mountains. From Black Rock we heard the unmistakable characteristic tattoo of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker somewhere down the mountain.

On the trip to the top of Apple Orchard in the afternoon I found the nests of the Junco and the Veery. The Junco's nest was very attractively located as usual in a recess among rocks under overhanging moss. It was lined with fine grasses instead of the usual stalks of moss sporophytes, and contained four pale green, brown-spotted eggs. It was located appropriately in a colony of Yellow Clintonia (Clintonia borealis) a northern plant extending southward along the mountains. The nest of the Veery was in the midst of the canes of the Red-berried Elder (Sambucus racemosa), another northern plant. The nest was just off the ground. It was lined with fine shreds of inner bark, and was constructed largely of this material and leaves. There were four blue eggs in the nest, two of which appeared to have splotches of white on them.

Apple Orchard Mountain is a very attractive and fruitful region for naturalists, and several have come there for study and collecting. Its altitude and its rich soil, supporting an almost untouched mesophytic vegetation, account mainly for its variety and abundance of plant and animal life. Geologically it is an outcrop of intrusive hypersthene granodiorite, an igneous rock rich in feldspar and consequently potash, accounting for the fertility of the soil. Dr. William A. Murrill, formerly of the New York Botanical Garden, has done much collecting on Apple Orchard, and has published a couple of papers on his work there.



Austin H. Clark of the U. S. National Museum, spent two weeks there two or three years ago, collecting butterflies, and has published a paper on this work. Dr. Alexander Wetmore, also of the National Museum, was a recent visitor. The writer and some of his students have been collecting plants there for several years. Camp Kewanzee, located on the mountain, is a convenient base of operations, and furnishes accommodations to visiting naturalists. It can now be reached by car over a new road constructed by CCC labor from Natural Bridge Station.

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### JUNE BIRDS OF WHITE TOP

White Top is one of the famous spots of southwest Virginia. Rising to an altitude of 5520 feet it tops everything in the State except its two hundred foot higher twin peak, Mt. Rogers. It is said that on a clear day one can look from the summit of White Top into five states. At any rate the rugged mountain ranges of North Carolina and Tennessee are spread in a magnificent panorama not far away, while near at hand its own wide reaches of grass-land and its dark forests of conifers make a charming landscape.

Last September Dr. Alexander Wetmore and the writer spent several days on White Top. An article, "Autumn Days on White Top", published in the September-October, 1935, issue of THE RAVEN, mentioned the birds seen at that time and gave a brief description of the mountain. We planned then to return during the breeding season, and this plan was carried out when we camped there on the first five days of June, 1936. The mountain was even more attractive in early summer than in autumn, for now the trees had their fresh growth and the birds were singing. The Canadian character of the mountain top is shown by the fact that the oak-leaves had only reached what the mountaineers call the "squirrel-ear" stage. The "purple" rhododendron had not begun to bloom high up, while the flame azalea was still in full bloom at 4500 feet and barely beginning to bloom near the top. We saw the Crataegus bushes whiten while we were there.

Except for the Juncos and Robins, which are abundant, birds seem never to be very common on the highest parts of the mountain. We were much disappointed at the absence of several of the Canadian species which we had expected to find. No Kinglets, Creepers nor Winter Wrens were found, although Dr. Rives had found them in 1888. We are hoping to find them on Mt. Rogers at some later trip. I thought I caught a glimpse of a Sapsucker in flight but could not be sure. The list of the birds seen follows:

1. Turkey Vulture. Common.
2. Ruffed Grouse. One heard, June 3; another, June 4.
3. Bob-white. A few at Miller's and in the open woods above. (Miller's is the extensive clearing on the south side of the mountain, at 4800-5000 feet, where the old hotel stood a generation ago.)
4. Barred Owl. Heard every night; and one, being chased by Crows, seen on the 3rd.

5. Swift. Common on top. Nests in chimney of pavilion. Also common at the Elk Garden, the big clearing and sheep ranch on the ridge connecting White Top and Mt. Rogers, at 4500 feet.
6. Hummingbird. One, 3d, at 5000 ft.; one, 4th, at 4500 ft.
7. Flicker. One, 2d, at 5000 ft.; common at Elk Garden.
8. Downy Woodpecker. One near top.
9. Sparrow Hawk. One at Elk Garden.
10. Wood Pewee. Seen near top.
11. Blue Jay. Common on top and at Elk Garden.
12. Raven. One, 1st, at top; three, 4th, at Elk Garden; one, 5th, at top.
13. Crow. Common.
14. Tufted Titmouse. Seen at camp, at 5000 feet.
15. White-breasted Nuthatch. One, 2d, at camp.
16. Red-breasted Nuthatch. Common in the spruce near the top.
17. House wren. One heard, 4th, at Elk Garden.
18. Bewick's Wren. One collected, 4th, Elk Garden.
19. Catbird. One, 2d, on top; two, 3d, at 5000 ft.; common at 4500 ft.
20. Robin. Abundant on top and at all open places. Nests with eggs.
21. Veery. Common everywhere above 4500 feet. A nest at 4800 ft., four eggs, with incubation advanced.
22. Bluebird. One, 3d, at top.
23. Cedar Waxwing. Two, 3d, at top, flying over.
24. Starling. Fairly common at Elk Garden; at least one immature bird.
25. Mountain Vireo. Common everywhere.
26. Red-eyed Vireo. Common everywhere. Nest at 4800 feet, three eggs.
27. Parula Warbler. Two, 2d, at 5300 feet.
28. Cairn's Warbler. Common up to 4800 ft.; none seen or heard higher, possibly because there is little rhododendron near the top.
29. Black-throated Green Warbler. Common in the spruce at 5200-5500 ft. (at least 7 singing males); one, 4th, in deciduous growth at 4600 ft.
30. Chestnut-sided Warbler. Common up to 4800 feet.
31. Ovenbird. Common up to 5200 ft.
32. Canada Warbler. Common to the top.
33. Meadowlark. A few at Elk Garden.
34. Scarlet Tanager. Common to 5000 ft.; none near the top.
35. Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Fairly common to 5000 ft.
36. Goldfinch. Two, 2d, at top; common at Elk Garden.
37. Red-eyed Towhee. Fairly common everywhere.
38. Vesper Sparrow. Two or three pairs near top; common at Elk Garden.
39. Field Sparrow. Pair carrying food at Miller's; common at Elk Garden.
40. Carolina Junco. Abundant everywhere. Nests with young of various ages, and empty nests from which young had flown. A young bird on the wing was collected at Elk Garden. Apparently no second sets of eggs yet laid.
41. Song Sparrow. Abundant in the wet meadows at Elk Garden.

--J. J. Murray.



## SOME VIRGINIA ORNITHOLOGISTS

## 2. Percy Evans Freke. 1844 - 1931.

J. J. Murray  
Lexington, Virginia.

Percy Evans Freke was born in Dublin, Ireland, July 12, 1884; and died at Folkestone, Kent, England, March 20, 1931, at the age of almost eighty-seven years. At twenty-one years of age he enlisted in the British Army, serving during most of the next seven years in the 44th Essex Regiment, the 18th Royal Irish Regiment, and the Royal Queens County Rifles (Militia). In 1872 he came to America, and from 1872 to 1879 operated a tobacco plantation in Amelia County, Virginia. Returning to Ireland he held for several years a position on the Irish Land Commission. In 1889 he moved to Folkestone, where he remained until his death. All his life he was interested in birds, although he did no active work in ornithology during his later years. He had some interest in mammals, as he contributed a note to the "Zoologist" on one of the British bats in 1882. After moving to England his chief interest was in entomology. A letter to the writer from his son, Raymond F. Freke, who now lives at Folkestone, states that he built up a fine collection of butterflies and moths, which is still in existence. At this time he contributed some short articles on entomology to "The Entomologist". He joined the British Ornithologist's Union in 1881, resigning in 1921 after forty years' membership; and was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1883.

During his residence in Virginia Freke was much interested in American birds. The results of his studies in Amelia were preserved in a paper, "On Birds Observed in Amelia County, Virginia", which was read before the Royal Dublin Society on February 21, 1881, and published in Vol. III, Part III, "Scientific Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society". This paper consisted of a list of 112 species noted during his six years of study in Amelia. Its interest lies principally in the fact that it was one of the earliest modern local Virginia lists. The most interesting note in the paper is in regard to the Ruffed Grouse, of which he says that while it is not common in the low country a few pairs nest in the thick pine woods. A few errors occur. He apparently confuses all the thrushes with the Hermit Thrush, which he lists as a resident; and also makes the mistake of listing the Myrtle Warbler as a summer resident. A review and abstract of this paper may be found in Bull. Nuttall Orn. Club, 1882, 1, 48.

Under the influence of his American sojourn Freke published several other papers concerned with American ornithology: "Comparative Catalogue of Birds Found in Europe and North America", 1880 (reviewed in Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, 1880, 3, 173-174); "North American Birds Crossing the Atlantic", 1881; "On European Birds Observed in North America", 1881 (reviewed in Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, 1883, 2, 115). The last is of special importance.

## Bibliography:

Obituary, by Dr. T. S. Palmer, Auk, LI, 1934, Oct., pp. 562-563.

Reviews in B. N. O. C. noted above.

Mss. - Letters to the writer from the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, Bournemouth, England; and Mr. Raymond F. Freke, Folkestone, England.

## BIRD STUDY GROUPS

I was much interested in the note that appeared in the February-March issue of THE RAVEN concerning the organization of the Roanoke County Bird Study group. Much good can be accomplished through such study groups, and interest and enthusiasm may be stimulated to the extent that it will become permanent and bear fruit in membership in the V.S.O.

It may be of interest to the readers of THE RAVEN to know that such a group has been in existence at Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Va., since 1931. The disadvantage of such a bird study group at a school is that it exists for only nine months of the year. After June the members are scattered over a number of states. Their interest and work in behalf of the birds may continue, but it can do very little to increase the membership of our State organization.

This group is officially known as the Avian Society, and has for its society emblem a Cardinal sitting on a twig of Holly. The instructor in biology is sponsor of the society. A constitution was drawn up and adopted by the members of the first society in 1931. There is a membership fee of 50¢ per year; the money is used to purchase binoculars (which are rented to the members), pictures, slides, books, and food (for winter feeding). Each fall at the opening of school the society is reorganized with the election of new officers. Membership is limited to High School seniors and Junior College students.

Among the activities of the society are weekly (Saturday) field trips, if weather is favorable, and monthly meetings. At these meetings a program is rendered consisting of music and a discussion of some phase of bird life. For instance, in the minutes of the society meetings appears a program dated November 12, entitled "The Flying Squadron". Besides music, the following topics were discussed: "Bag, baggage and fuel"; "The pilot's schedule"; "Beacon lights"; "Non-stop flights"; "Crashes and tragedies". Obviously, the program was one on migration. The topic discussions average six to eight minutes. Other programs given were on Economic Importance of Birds, Adaptation of Birds, Winter Activities, and Bird Song. At least one illustrated lecture is given during the year, and occasionally the monthly program is partially illustrated. Taking the Christmas Bird Census is an annual feature sponsored by the society.

The membership for the present year is forty. Frequent letters from former members of the Avian Society give evidence that the effort is worthwhile, and in such organized groups lie great possibilities for arousing permanent interest in bird life, habits, protection and conservation. Public school teachers have a challenging opportunity to do some real constructive teaching.

--D. Ralph Hostetter

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## ANOTHER BOUNTY RACKET

Bird students, who know well enough the abuses inevitably connected with bounty laws, were amused at a special dispatch to The News (Lynchburg) from Halifax, Virginia, June 17, 1936, headed, "Janitor's Hawkbill



Racket Nets \$300". The dispatch went in part as follows:

"According to Halifax officers, Robert Barksdale, Negro, court-house janitor for many years, appropriated to himself and his syndicate a large pile of hawks' bills which he was supposed to have destroyed after redemption.

"The police charged that Barksdale distributed the bills to members of his company, who took them to the board of supervisors for a second redemption. As the bounty was collected, the members were paid off. Officials estimated the racket cost the county approximately three hundred dollars."

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#### FIELD NOTES

Amelia. The note in the April issue of THE RAVEN, by Lawrence C. Givens, on an unusual number of Goldfinches in summer plumage having been seen at Lynchburg in late April and early May prompts me to write the following. On May 5th, Mrs. Lewis and I drove from Amelia to Lawrenceville, the county seat of Brunswick County, leaving home at 8:30 A.M. On the way, after crossing the north line of Brunswick County we saw two large flocks of Goldfinches along the roadside, a large majority of which were males in summer plumage. About 2 P.M., while inside the corporate limits of Lawrenceville, we saw another flock, also consisting largely of males in summer plumage. I have not noticed such flocks in Amelia County at any time this spring. A pair of Rough-winged Swallows have been seen several times in the last ten days, near their nesting site of 1933 and 1934. We hope they will nest there again this summer.--John B. Lewis.

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#### NOTES FROM THE LYNCHBURG REGION

Early Migration Dates. Louisiana Water-thrush, Mar. 30, by William R. Hill; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, April 21, by Freer; Canada Warbler, May 3, by Leonard K. Beyer.

The Mourning Warbler. The most important event of the spring here was the addition of the Mourning Warbler (Oporornis philadelphia) to my Lynchburg list. It had been some time since the last addition of a new species. The bird appeared in trees about the yard on the morning of May 17. I was indoors at the time but recognized an unusual song. On going outdoors I recognized the song as that of the Mourning Warbler, but was unable to see the bird. I have been very familiar with this bird near Johnstown, Pa., where it nests rather commonly. Peterson describes its song as "tiddle tiddle, turtle turtle", the last two notes being lower in pitch than the first. In the afternoon the bird returned several times to a low mulberry tree on an adjoining lot and repeated its song and I was able to get a sight identification with glasses. It returned again the morning of the next day, May 18. From sources available to the writer there seem to be few Virginia records for the Mourning Warbler. Dr. Rives gives two certain Virginia records and Dr. Murray has found it twice near Lexington. The Consolidated List published in THE RAVEN, February, 1931, does not include it. This species brings the Lynchburg list to a total of 194 species.

The Double-crested Cormorant. On May 1 a Cormorant, doubtless Phalacrocorax a. auritus, was seen on a partially submerged stump in the James River at Snowden, Amherst County. We had no glasses at the time but the bird was unmistakably a Cormorant. This is an unusually late date for this bird to be so far inland, especially as there had been no storms to bring it in for the preceding few days. The bird is an uncommon visitor here at any time.

Herring Gull. This bird was also seen at Snowden, May 16, resting on a large rock in the middle of the river. This also is an unusually late date for this bird to be lingering so far inland.

Cowbird's Egg in Ovenbird's Nest. This discovery, on May 9, by Rev. James Sprunt and myself, was my first local breeding record for the Cowbird, which is very scarce here in the summer. There were five eggs of the Ovenbird in the nest.

Unusual Blue Jay Flights. On May 8, eight birds were seen flying over in a flock, and on the following day eighteen birds in a single flock, both times in Campbell County. It seemed too late for migration and too early for the flocking of young or families. Reports on similar observations or explanations of these would be gratefully received.

Migration of Red-headed Woodpeckers. The fall migration of this bird was commented on in THE RAVEN, Sept.-Oct., 1935, p. 8. Mrs. G. W. Jeffers of Farmville reported a similar observation in the November-December issue, and remarked on the coincidence of this unusual migration and a shortage of acorns last fall. The birds migrated here also the winter of 1929-'30, returning on April 26. This year they returned on April 25.

Unusual Abundance of Purple Finches. For a period of a week or ten days around April 17-26, these birds were abundant all over the city apparently. I have not observed them in town in any numbers before. Several people reported similar observations to me. At one place the Finches were feeding with Goldfinches on fruits of elm trees.

Veery. My first positive record for the immediate vicinity of Lynchburg was made on May 19, when a bird was heard singing on the Lynchburg College campus. It is doubtless more common than my lack of records might indicate, as my field work is always much curtailed during May. This bird is an abundant summer resident in the Blue Ridge of my area.

Bald Eagle. An immature bird was shot at the Mosby Farm about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles down the James River from Six Mile Bridge, which is about six miles from Lynchburg down the river. The bird was brought to Dr. Leroy E. Bowen, a veterinary surgeon in Lynchburg, for treatment for a broken wing. I saw and identified the bird at Dr. Bowen's home. It is his intention to care for the bird until it recovers and then turn it loose. (Sequel: the bird recovered, was liberated but refused to leave the locality, and on the morning of June 13 was shot while raiding the chicken yard of a neighbor of Dr. Bowen. The body was given to me and is being mounted.)

June Notes. June 17, a pair of Broad-winged Hawks circling over Tye River valley in the Blue Ridge, Nelson County; three nests of the Cedar Waxwing, all within 100 yards of each other, were found by Mr. Archer Summerson of Lynchburg and reported to me. I visited the nests and identified the sitting birds; June 21, Black-throated Green Warbler singing at Homesite Area, Rocky Row Run, Amherst County, altitude 1200 feet; Cerulean Warbler, heard singing on Locke's Mountain, Bedford County,



where it was first seen and heard May 3, and again on May 16. This doubtless indicates nesting; June 25, a pair of Ravens sighted flying from Apple Orchard to Rich Mountain, Botetourt County, and nest of Carolina Junco, containing two half-grown young, found on grounds of Camp Kewansee, Apple Orchard Mt., Bedford County; June 28, colony of four or five pairs of Barn Swallows and one young seen in meadow, upper end of South Fork of Tye River near Montebello, Nelson County, altitude 2500 feet. The Barn Swallow is not known to nest near here otherwise, excepting Valley of Virginia and northern Piedmont near Culpeper.

--Ruskin S. Freer

Naruna. April 7, nest of Woodcock at foot of bluff along Whipping Creek. The nest had two eggs in it and was about a mile from the nest found on March 20. May 22, nest of Prairie Warbler in cedar tree, eight feet from ground. Adult bird on nest. May 23, adult bird sitting on twig over nest at twilight. May 28, young birds in nest; gone from nest June 1. May 22, Cardinal's nest with young birds. May 26, visited nest of Black Vulture in a corner of an old log cabin in woods between Whipping Creek and Naruna. The cabin had been torn down; only a corner of the cabin remained which was covered with honeysuckle. The Vulture was sitting on two eggs. June 2, young Turkey Vulture about size of Bantam hen in an old log tobacco barn in the woods near the Black Vulture's nest. A teacher from Brookneal High School and one from Naruna High School were members of the hiking party. The eggs of the Black Vulture had not hatched on June 2.--Bertha Daniel.

Harrisonburg. On April 18 a hawk was flushed from her nest on a rocky ledge on top of Massanutten Mountain directly east of Harrisonburg. The boy, not knowing the species of hawk, thought he would make a contribution to the laboratory by bringing the eggs with him. The eggs, four in number, were already pecked, and the young could be heard "peeping". When the eggs were given to me the chicks were dead. I immediately injected them with formalin and sent one of the eggs to Dr. Wetmore of the U. S. National Museum for identification. His letter under date of May 4 reads as follows: "The egg received with your letter of April 30 is that of a Duck Hawk(Falco peregrinus anatum). The record is of interest in view of the relatively few breeding records for this bird in the east. There are said to be a number of pairs in the Blue Ridge, and this hawk has nested within a few miles of Washington, D.C., though it has been disturbed recently to a point where I have not seen them."

On May 9 a female Ruffed Grouse was flushed from her nest near the summer cottages at Sparkling Springs about seven miles northwest of Harrisonburg. The nest, containing eleven eggs, was located at the base of a White Pine tree, and was rather exposed. She was seen on the nest later in the evening by the aid of a strong flashlight.--D. Ralph Hostetter.

Blacksburg. First dates of arrival and number seen: 2/20, Robin, flock of 30 or 40; 2/25, Cowbird, 12; 2/27, Purple Grackle, 1; 2/28, Fox Spar-

row, 1; 2/29, Marsh Hawk, 1; 3/1, Field Sparrow, 1; Towhee, 1 male; 3/13, (beginning of migration--a few spent the winter) White-crowned Sparrow, 9; 3/18, Lesser Scaup, a pair; 3/19, Savannah Sparrow, 2; 3/22, Rusty Blackbird, 3; 3/25, Bronzed Grackle, 1 trapped and banded by C. O. Handley, Jr.; 3/30, Bewick's Wren, 7; 4/2, Brown Creeper (Brown); 4/3, Blue-winged Teal, 6; 4/4, Hooded Merganser, 2 females; Osprey, 1; Black and White Warbler (Brown); Vesper Sparrow, 3; 4/5, Baldpate, 1 female; Great Blue Heron, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Lincoln Sparrow (Brown); Whip-poor-will (Brown); 4/6, Brown Thrasher, 1; 4/7, Shoveller, 1 male; 4/8, American Merganser (Brown); Little Blue Heron (Brown); Pied-billed Grebe (Brown); 4/9, Red-breasted Merganser, 1 male (first time listed); 4/11, Myrtle Warbler, 1 male (Brown); Bank Swallow (Brown); 4/11, Upland Plover, 7 (C. O. Handley, Jr.); 4/12, Spotted Sandpiper, 1; Barn Swallow, 1; 4/14, Chimney Swift, 4; Tree Swallow, 3; House Wren, (Brown); 4/15, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 1; Yellow Warbler (Brown); 4/16, Greater Yellow Legs, 1 (Brown); 4/17, Bonaparte Gull, 5 (Brown); 4/18, Ring-billed Gull, 3 (C. O. Handley, Jr.); 4/19, Black-throated Green Warbler, 1 male (Brown); Ovenbird (Brown); 4/22, Baltimore Oriole (Brown); 4/24, Solitary Sandpiper (Brown); 4/25, Cape May Warbler, a pair (Brown); 4/28, Yellow-breasted Chat, 1; Crested Flycatcher, 1; Grasshopper Sparrow, 1; Scarlet Tanager, 1 male; Yellow-throated Vireo, 1; 4/30, Kingbird, 2; Red-eyed Vireo (Brown); Wood Pewee (Brown); Catbird (Brown); 5/1, Chestnut-sided Warbler, 1; Red-headed Woodpecker (became common overnight--a few spent the winter); Carolina Wren, 2; Cliff Swallow, 2; Black-billed Cuckoo, 1; Indigo Bunting, (Brown); Wood Thrush (Brown); Parula Warbler (Brown); Hooded Warbler (Brown); Bobolink (Brown); Least Flycatcher (Brown); 5/3, Swamp Sparrow, 1; Magnolia Warbler, 2; Black-poll Warbler (Brown); Black-throated Blue Warbler (var. ?) (Brown); Red-breasted Nuthatch (Brown); 5/6, Redstart, 1 (Brown); Hummingbird, (Brown); Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 1; 5/9, Canada Warbler, 1; 5/10, Blue Grosbeak (Brown); Blackburnian Warbler (Brown); Orchard Oriole (Brown); 5/11, Warbling Vireo (Brown); 5/12, Wilson Warbler, 1 male (C. O. Handley, Jr.); 5/13, Bay-breasted Warbler, also seen on 5/18 (Brown); Olive-backed Thrush (Brown); 5/16, Cedar Waxwing, flock of 12 or more; Green Heron, 2; Acadian Flycatcher (Brown); and Maryland Yellowthroat, a pair.

A few last records are: 5/1, Purple Finch (Brown); 5/8, White-crowned Sparrow; 5/10, White-throated Sparrow, 2; 5/10, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1; and 5/16 Hairy Woodpecker (Brown).

A Bobwhite was heard to give the mating call "Bobwhite" for the first time on April 2.

Of the above records, those credited only to Mr. Ralph Brown and a few of those credited only to my son are so designated. To the activity of my son, who has become a proficient observer, is due the credit for a number of the other observations.

Other first records made by Mr Brown in Pulaski County on April 26 are as follows: Read Creek, Kingbird, Redstart, and Parula Warbler; Purgatory Creek, Green Heron and Red-breasted Nuthatch; and Pulaski Reservoir, Wood Thrush.

Mr. Brown remarks that this has been the poorest spring for migrant warblers during the 11 years that he has been at Blacksburg.

--C. O. Handley



Alleghany County and Charlottesville. Nesting Notes: On May 3 as I was walking along a low hill in the Douthat State Park a Pine Warbler flew to the ground near my feet while making a complaint. From its actions I presumed that there must be a nest near by. In a few minutes I located the nest in a pine tree near the end of a horizontal branch nine feet from the ground. It contained three or four newly-hatched young. While at Blandy Farm on May 17 I examined a large alfalfa field for Grasshopper Sparrows. Ten different birds which I presume were males were seen singing. The first of these was in a sparse growth of grass which was caused by a limestone outcropping. Within a few feet of where this bird was singing a nest was found which contained five eggs which were well incubated. On April 12 near Charlottesville I collected a male Shrike at a place where I had previously seen one during the winter. To make sure of my identification of this bird I sent the skin to Dr. Harry C. Oberholser. This was his answer: "It proves as you suspected to be a Loggerhead Shrike, and a most interesting record for the interior of Virginia, extending the range of this form a considerable distance northward". It is possible that this was a nesting bird.--John B. Calhoun.



# The Raven

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DR. J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR  
LEXINGTON, VA.

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## GLIMPSES OF MID-WESTERN BIRD LIFE

Florence Hague  
Sweet Briar, Va.

Birds received as much of my attention as driving would permit during an automobile trip directly west into eastern Kansas and then into Oklahoma. Most of the birds recognized were the familiar ones of Virginia but they varied in numbers. Beyond the Alleghany Mountains the Meadow-larks and Mourning Doves were more abundant and the Mockingbirds were seen only occasionally. Dickcissels appeared somewhere west of the mountains and became most numerous in Missouri and Kansas. As the roadside trees and shrubs decreased toward central Oklahoma the energetic but rather monotonous calls of this species were no longer heard.

About Kingfisher, Okla., the Mourning Doves, Lark Sparrows, Orioles and Flycatchers were the most abundant species. Possibly the prairie conditions of extensive fields--cultivated or in grass--with the trees practically confined to the towns, country homes or roadsides, made the Orioles and Flycatchers seem more abundant than they were. Both Orchard and Baltimore Orioles were present and about 25 miles southwest I was surprised to find that the orange and black oriole feeding its young was a Bullock's Oriole, the western representative of the Baltimore. Again it was of special interest to find both the Eastern and Western or Arkansas Kingbird breeding in Kingfisher. The most striking bird was the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, a light gray bird, 12-15 inches in length with a black and white tail about six inches long which, when spread, looks like the blades of a pair of scissors. On June 24 three young birds, with tails about an inch long but no sign of forking, were seen in a roadside tree apparently getting their first flying lessons. I missed our friendly Chipping Sparrows and found the Lark Sparrows shy but quite numerous in the grassy fields where they nest. It was only as I was leaving the State and well to the east that I caught a glimpse of a Road-runner disappearing into the grass at the edge of the road.

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## THE MAINE COAST

Vacation days from May 22 to June 15, 1936, were spent in studying nesting seabirds on the Maine and New Brunswick coast islands. I could not get out to Matinicus Rock (off Rockland, Maine) to see the Puffins, although I tried hard enough to do so, in a motorized fishing boat. Stormy weather held me back on two occasions. But I did live on Kent's Island (off Grand Manan Island), with fifteen thousand Herring Gulls, one thousand Leach's Petrels and two hundred Eider Ducks for three days. I found a dozen Eider Ducks' nests in about an hour one afternoon. The Herring Gulls' nests were everywhere along the shore, and Leach's Petrel nested in the banks. Ten miles out in the ocean from Kent's Island, on Yellow Murre Ledge, the Razor-billed Auks were nesting, and I paid a short visit to them. I also saw plenty of Double-crested Cormorants and Ospreys nesting, and observed some fifty Black Guillemots and three or four American Phalaropes. Tree Swallows were nesting in boxes on Kent's Island, and Savannah Sparrows were as abundant as Song Sparrows around here. I spent a day in Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island and lined up quite a lot of land birds.--Ralph M. Brown.

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## SOME VIRGINIA ORNITHOLOGISTS

3. Harry Balch Bailey. 1853 - 1928.

J. J. Murray  
Lexington, Virginia.

In the very first issue of the 'Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club', which was the predecessor of 'The Auk', there was a leading article on the coastal birds of Virginia. It was entitled, "Notes on Birds Found Breeding on Cobb's Island, Va., Between May 25th and May 29th, 1875", and was written by Harry Balch Bailey. Mr. Bailey gathered the data for this paper while he and his bride, Lillie Adams Taylor, of Brookline, Massachusetts, were spending their honeymoon on Cobb's Island. Fourteen years later he came to Virginia to live.

Harry Balch Bailey was born in Boston on February 27, 1853; and died of double pneumonia in Buxton Hospital, Newport News, Virginia, on February 10, 1928, just a few days short of seventy-five years of age. After graduating from high school in Boston he went first into the wholesale dry goods business. In 1872 he became connected with a Boston shipping firm. It was about this time that he became interested in ornithology. William Brewster, Ruthven Deane, Henry Purdie and other enthusiastic young bird students were his fellow-workers. From the first he was interested in collecting eggs. He had a share in the organization of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, and was one of its earliest treasurers. The 'Bulletin' of this Club was the first real ornithological journal to be published in America. In 1875 Bailey moved to New York City to become a partner in a shipping firm. Here he took part in the founding of the Linnaean Society. In 1881 he made one of his most important contributions to science by publishing an index and summary of the notes on birds in the

first twelve volumes of 'Forest and Stream'. He was one of the twenty-three ornithologists who founded the American Ornithologists' Union in 1883. Finding it necessary to resign from the A.O.U. in 1891, he was elected a Corresponding Fellow in 1926. In 1889 Bailey moved to Newport News, Virginia, to take charge of a branch of the New York firm. Before moving he sold his collection of eggs to the American Museum of Natural History. At the time it was one of the finest private collections in the country, containing nearly all the known North American species, many of them in extensive series. He was one of the first to arrange the eggs of the warblers and other small species in the nests. On coming to Virginia he transferred his interest to entomology, building up a fine collection only to have it destroyed in storage. After this loss most of his attention was given to helping his son, Harold H. Bailey, build up his library and collections of birds and mammals. He became particularly interested in the fauna of the Alleghanies, doing much field work in the western parts of Virginia and the Carolinas. He also made several trips to Florida. In 1919 he became a charter member of the American Mammalogists' Society. Thus he was a founder or charter member of four of the major natural history societies of the country.

As a citizen of Newport News Bailey was active in community enterprises. His last piece of public service was to lead in the movement for the establishment of the Newport News Public Library and then to serve as its first acting librarian.

In addition to the article on Cobb's Island, Bailey published a paper in 'The Auk' in 1912, "Notes on Birds Breeding in the Mountains of Virginia".

#### Bibliography:

Papers referred to above: B.N.O.C., I, 1, 24-28; and Auk, XXIX, 1, 79-84. See also Auk, II, 3, 318-319. Obituary, by Alexander Wetmore, Auk, XLV, 2, 264-265. In Memoriam - Harry Balch Bailey, by A. K. Fisher, Auk, XLVI, 2, 155-160, with portrait.

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#### CHIMNEY SWIFT RECOVERIES

Notice has just been received from the Biological Survey of the recovery of two Chimney Swifts banded by H. L. Stoddard and myself in southern Georgia. The first of these birds, No. 102943, banded on September 28, 1928, was found wounded recently; is being cared for and will be released, at Sebring, Florida, by John Henry Bell, CCC Co. 453, Sebring, Fla. The second bird, No. A-105859, banded on October 11, 1928, was found dead on May 16, 1936, at Kenbridge, Virginia, by Laurence H. Hawthorne, Kenbridge, Va.

Both of these birds were marked eight years ago this fall and constitute longevity records for birds banded by me. Of the some 14,000 Chimney Swifts which I helped band, a majority of them in southern Georgia between 1924 and 1928, inclusive, at least a half dozen have been recovered in Virginia. It will be recalled that while I was living at



Ashland a few years ago that I had the unusual experience of recovering two of the Swifts which a friend and I had previously banded at Thomasville, Georgia, approximately 600 miles away.

Any live, banded bird that might be caught should be released as soon as the band number has been recorded. It is needless to say that the band number should be read with the utmost care. Banded birds should be reported either to the State Game Commission or to the Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.--C. O. Handley, Blacksburg, Va.

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#### THE NEXT ISSUE.

There are very few local Virginia notes in this issue of THE RAVEN. Since the publication of such notes is the primary aim of our bulletin, the editor has held the copy for this issue as long as possible, but few of our members have sent in copy.

The date of publication of the next issue will depend upon the material that is received. The editor would like to fill the next issue with nesting notes from the past summer and would like to send it out shortly after October 1st. Members are requested to send in breeding data or detailed studies of nests before October 1st.

Later material and records of the autumn migration should be sent to the editor by November 15th for the final issue of the year.

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#### THE V.S.O. KODAK ALBUM

Mrs. C. L. Burgess of Lynchburg is the first contributor to the proposed album of pictures of V.S.O. field trips, sending in six views taken on the 1935 trip at Roanoke. Other contributions are desired.  
--Ruskin S. Freer, Lynchburg.

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#### FIELD NOTES.

Lexington. The American Egret has been fairly common in mid-summer, having been seen on the following dates: 6/22; 6/30(3); 7/1(3); 7/2; and 7/6. The Little Blue Heron has been less common than usual, having been seen (in white phase) on 7/1(2) and 7/6(2). On 7/6 a female Blue-winged Teal was seen at Cameron's Pond. It was, of course, a bird that had been crippled although it could then fly very well. The shore-bird migration was very small this spring, only the Lesser Yellowlegs (during April) and the Solitary Sandpiper (in late April and through May) being at all common. Two Greater Yellowlegs were seen on 5/14. On a trip to the top of Bluff Mountain on 5/18 a Red-tailed Hawk, a Duck Hawk and two Ravens were seen, and a Barred Owl was heard calling at midday. The

look-out man at the fire tower told us that the owl's call was a positive sign of rain, and, sure enough, before we got down the mountain we were drenched. Later the same afternoon we saw a Lincoln's Sparrow on the Amherst-Rockbridge line at a gap near Bluff Mountain. A Northern Waterthrush was seen on 5/19, and a pair of Blue Grosbeaks by a good observer on 5/21, the latter being very rare here.--J. J. Murray.

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Blacksburg. June 21, Scarlet Tanager(5), Hooded Warbler(2 m.), Little Blue Heron(blue phase). June 27, Little Blue Heron(white phase)(3), on reflecting pool, center of campus, (3) on college lake. June 28, Little Blue Heron(white phase) on trees, in central part of campus, Scarlet Tanager(1), Hooded Warbler(2), Cairn's Warbler(m.(1)). July 25, Louisiana Heron, Pied-billed Grebe(2), Pectoral Sandpiper. July 27, Nighthawk(first), Killdeers flocking. The Louisiana Heron was first seen on July 24 by C. O. Handley, who also saw three American Egrets on the same date.  
--R. M. Brown.





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## A KINGFISHER'S NEST

By John B. Lewis  
Amelia, Virginia

Not far away, hidden in woods and bordered with willows and cat-tails, is an old ice pond. Flowing from it a little stream crosses under a highway and winds through thickets and under belts of trees that separate cultivated fields to a large tract of pasture land. Part of its journey through this pasture is between vertical banks of sandy clay about seven feet high. South of the lower end of the pasture and also hidden in woods is another tiny lake known as Wingo pond.

Late in the afternoon of May 1st, while walking through this pasture, I noticed two holes in the bank south of the stream. They were about 20 feet apart and as many inches below the top of the bank. One of these holes extended into the bank only seventeen inches, while the other was of undetermined depth. The flattened bottom of the deeper hole was covered with loose sand in which were two parallel grooves about an inch apart. Alternated in the grooves were tracks made by the feet of the occupants, which, I was quite sure, were Kingfishers. In order to make sure that the hole was then occupied I smoothed out the grooves to a distance of a foot from the entrance.

Returning the afternoon of May 3rd, I found that the grooves had re-appeared. Also a Kingfisher circled over the location, chattering loudly, but did not stop. Two more visits were made to the hole during May but no Kingfishers were seen, though the grooves in the sand were always re-opened after having been smoothed out.

At sunset, May 31, the place was visited and a Kingfisher was found sitting on a dead willow that stands about twenty-five feet from the nest hole. I watched it with glasses from the border of the woods about 200 yards distant. It went to the hole twice in about ten minutes and then left in the direction of the old ice pond. These birds were always very shy and suspicious, never allowing a close approach.

The nest was visited on June 18, but no Kingfishers were seen. When a sunset call was made, June 21, a Kingfisher was on the dead willow but left as soon as I came in sight. At 4:50 P.M., June 23, a Kingfisher was on the dead willow but flew to the woods as soon as he saw me. I hid in a wild rose thicket seventy yards from the nest.

The bird came back to the willow at 5:11; and with the glasses I could see that he had a small fish in his bill. Soon he flew to a tree about eighty yards north of the nest, then to the woods, then back to the dead willow, and finally, at 5:35, entered the hole and re-appeared in a few seconds without the fish, leaving at once in the direction of the Wingo pond. He chattered at frequent intervals with no apparent inconvenience from the fish held in his bill. As it had started raining heavily I started home. When about 250 yards from the nest the other bird (almost certainly the female) came from the direction of the old ice pond, circling to avoid passing near me, and lit on the dead willow. With the glasses I noted that she also carried a small fish. After ten minutes she entered the hole. Reappearing without the fish, she again perched on the dead willow.

On June 29th at 6:15 P.M. I partially concealed myself behind a stump on the bank sixty-five yards from the nest. Soon a Kingfisher lit on the dead willow but remained only a few seconds, then flew to a tree about eighty yards from the nest on the opposite side. I moved farther away, but so did the bird. I then hid in some little pines about 160 yards from the nest. In a few minutes the bird came and entered the hole, remained twenty seconds, and left toward the Wingo pond. This bird carried what was probably a small frog. On July 3rd the nest was deserted. The time from the discovery of the nest to the last date on which it was known to be occupied was fifty-nine days. Measurement showed that the hole extended into the bank a distance of five feet, nine inches.

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#### A CATBIRD'S RESOURCEFULNESS

By Elizabeth M. Shaw  
Richmond, Virginia

On one of the very warm days about the middle of last July, I visited the family of Mr. Robert A. Gary at their country home at the corner of Bon Air and Cherokee Roads in Chesterfield County. While there I was shown a nest with a parent Catbird and three lively young birds in a shrub just below a living room window. This window had a south and west exposure and the rather meager foliage of the shrub gave insufficient protection from the blazing July sun.

Mr. Gary said that on June thirtieth, when the temperature reached 104 degrees F., concerned for the comfort of the young Catbirds, he went to the window to see how they were faring. He found them with gaping bills, heads hanging limply over the side of the nest. While wondering how he could help them, the parent bird left the nest and flew to the bird bath, about thirty yards away. There she wet herself thoroughly and returned to the nest. With her bill she pushed the heads of the young birds back into the nest, then stood over them, gently waving her wet wings. This procedure was repeated at frequent intervals during the day, being alternated with feedings by the other parent. So far as was observed, the young were never left alone. The cooling process was continued through July 10, when the temperature reached 105 degrees F. This was observed by both Mr. Gary and Mrs.



Gary, but no record was kept of the number of times it was done each day, and they are uncertain whether it continued after July 10. The temperatures on the dates given were recorded in Mr. Gary's diary. All three young birds thrived and left the nest. The date of leaving was not recorded. Mr. Gary thinks it was the female bird which did the cooling and the male which did the feeding.

Neither Mr. Gary nor any member of his family is an active bird student, but all take a kindly and sympathetic interest in the birds nesting on their place and are familiar with the common residents.

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#### SOME VIRGINIA ORNITHOLOGISTS

4. William Palmer. 1856 - 1921

J. J. Murray  
Lexington, Virginia

The subject of this sketch was not born in Virginia nor did he ever live within the State, yet we are justified in including him in our list of prominent Virginia ornithologists because of the fact that during his mature years both his collecting and his literary activities centered in Virginia. William Palmer was born in London, August 1, 1856. He died in New York City, April 8, 1921, while on a business trip for the National Museum. His father, Joseph Palmer, brought him to America when he was twelve years of age and they settled in New York, where the elder Palmer had secured work as a taxidermist and modeller. He did not wish to take up his father's profession, and after attending high school in New York, entered on the study of medicine. Lack of funds, however, forced him to abandon his purpose. Joseph Palmer, having come to the United States National Museum in 1873, secured an appointment there for his son in 1874. In this work William Palmer spent the rest of his life, later becoming Chief Taxidermist at the Museum. He became a thoroughly-equipped naturalist with a special interest in birds, ferns and vertebrate fossils. He became an authority on the ferns of the District of Columbia and Virginia. In 1888 he became an Associate of the A. O. U., and in 1898 was elected Fellow. He was sent on many Museum expeditions: to the Gulf of St. Lawrence (1887), where on Funk Island the expedition secured remains of the Great Auk; to Cuba (1900 and 1917); to the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea (1890); and to Java (1909-1910). His most important paper was a report on the "Avifauna of the Pribilof Islands," in which he reported the addition of twenty-three species to the list of the birds of the island and described a new sub-species of the Ruddy Turnstone. Palmer became an expert taxidermist and modeller. He was given the distinction of making up the skin of the last Passenger Pigeon when it died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914. This was done at the home of Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, who made studies of the fresh anatomy while Palmer worked on the skin.

In spite of his opportunititties for work in strange places and on foreign birds it is safe to say that William Palmer's chief interest during most of his life was in the birds of Virginia. He took every opportunity to make collecting trips into Virginia and had one of the best personal collections of local birds made around Washington. Of this collection of some 2,000 skins about 500 were left to the University of Virginia and are now on display there in sealed glass cases. The rest he left to the National Museum. Fascinated as he always was by the study of molt and feather development, his collection was rich in material illustrating the stages of molt. He knew the territory between Washington and Richmond intimately and did regular field work in this region. It was Palmer who discovered in the collection of a young boy, P. Henry Aylett, of Aylett's, King William County, the only Virginia specimen of the Bachman's Warbler, a young male taken in 1892. A paper on the summer birds of Hanover and King William Counties, which had been left by Palmer in incompleated form, was published in THE RAVEN for February-March, 1935. Other trips were made into the Dismal Swamp and to the coastal islands. Palmer collected the only Virginia specimen of the hybrid Brewster's Warbler. He also added to the Virginia list the Wood Ibis, Ruff, Prairie Marsh Wren, Kirtland's Warbler, Western Palm Warbler, Grinnell's Water-thrush and the Florida (now Athens) Yellow-throat. Of the sixty papers on plants and animals that he contributed to various journals some twenty dealt with Virginia birds. He published two technical papers bearing on Virginia: "Our Small Eastern Shrikes" (Auk, XV, 1898, 3, 244-258); in which the Migrant Shrike is first described and its range plotted; and "Ecology of the Maryland Yellow-throat and Its Relatives" (Auk, XVII, 1900, 3, 216-242).

#### Bibliography:

Obituary, by T. S. Palmer, Auk, XXXVIII, 1921, 3, 493-494.

In Memoriam: William Palmer, by C. W. Richmond, Auk, XXXIX, 3, 305-321, with portrait and bibliography.

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It is planned to get out the next issue of THE RAVEN, the last for 1936, about December 1st. Most of it will be devoted to migration data of the more uncommon birds. Any notes of interesting events in the bird world are desired. Material should be in the Editor's hands by November 25th.

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#### A NEW RACE OF THE SONG SPARROW

In a recent paper, "A New Race of the Song Sparrow" (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 95, No. 17, September 26, 1936), Dr. Alexander Wetmore describes a race of the Song Sparrow, Melospiza melodia euphonia, which is of special interest to Virginia bird students. The type is an adult male, collected in the Cranberry Glades, Pocahontas Co., West Va., June 8, 1936. In general the range of this



race is the Appalachian mountain region. Dr. Wetmore also refers birds from the neighboring lowland areas of Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, hitherto known as the Mississippi Song Sparrow, M. m. beata, to this race for the present, although they may later turn out to be distinctive. Consequently, since euphonia for the present at least replaces beata, Dr. Wetmore's description does not increase the total number of forms of the Song Sparrow. For the same reason it does not increase the number of birds on the Virginia list as it is a new name for the bird reported by Dr. Wetmore and myself in 'The Auk' for January, 1936, page 93. It does, however, definitely show that this form is the breeding bird of western Virginia.

This new race, to quote Dr. Wetmore's paper, is "similar to Melospiza melodia melodia (Wilson) but distinctly darker above, being grayer, with the dark markings generally more distinct; sides of head grayer, less buffy or brown; tail averaging darker." On its range in Virginia he says: "The mountain bird extends into Virginia at Pulaski and is the form of White Top Mountain, where with Dr. J. J. Murray I found it in Elk Garden at an elevation of 4,000 feet at the head of Big Helton Creek. Specimens secured by Dr. Murray and me near Sturgills, Jefferson and Warrensville, N. C., and Independence, Va., are also this form. Birds from Shawsville and Christiansburg, Va., are intermediate toward melodia, as is one from Lexington, Va., and another from Lost River near McCauley, W. Va., but are best identified from the few skins at hand as euphonia."--J. J. Murray.

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#### A VIRGINIA RECORD FOR THE WATER-TURKEY

Mr. James Eike, of Woodbridge, Virginia, has furnished me with information about a new record for Virginia which is interesting, not to say startling. A female Water-Turkey (Anhinga anhinga) spent about a week, from about August 1st to 8th, at the Roach's Run Sanctuary, in Virginia, at the south end of the Highway Bridge, just across the Potomac from Washington. Mr. Paul Hodge, Federal Game Warden and Caretaker at the sanctuary, reported the bird to Mr. Eike who identified it from the description as an Anhinga. Mr. Eike was never able to see the bird himself, but it was later observed by many visitors, including Dr. Paul Bartsch of the U. S. National Museum. Dr. Alexander Wetmore writes me that the record is definite. He adds that he checked up at the Nations Zoological Park to make sure that there had been no escapes there from a recent importation of this bird in captivity from Florida. The bird is said to have been very shy.

Dr. Wetmore had previously told me that in early August, 1935, Mr. Herbert Barber, entomologist of the U. S. National Museum, had a clear view of a bird which he felt sure was an Anhinga, flying near the southern end of Lake Drummond in the Dismal Swamp. Mr. Barber has done field work in Florida and is familiar with this bird, but being very cautious as to sight records had not recorded his observation. So far as I know these are the only records for the bird in Virginia. It is not at all

strange that it should occasionally occur in the Dismal Swamp region, but it is amazing that it should turn up near Washington.--J. J. Murray.

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#### ROACH'S RUN SANCTUARY

(In addition to the information about the Water-Turkey the following notes from the Roach's Run Sanctuary, a refuge on the Virginia side of the Potomac opposite Washington, have come in a letter from Mr. James Eike dated August 17, 1936).

"At his last census a few weeks ago Mr. Hodge had 100 Lesser Scaups and 19 Ring-necks in addition to his Wood Ducks, Mallards and Black Ducks. The latter three species nested and raised about 200 young ducks and have been nesting on the second brood for some time. The Ring-necks spend most of their time on the logs anchored in the water when they are not feeding. The Scaups float idly about in the water for most of the day, except on hot days, when they go under cover. These birds are not pinioned, but elected to stay on, liking the location and food evidently.

"Kingbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, Maryland Yellow-throats, Yellow Warblers and many more of our summer residents nest there. On a path about fifty feet from the house there is a false nest of the Long-billed Marsh Wren and about eight feet away the real nest, hung about three feet from the ground. The false nest was about eight feet, or a little more, above the ground. The wren may be heard singing at all times.

"American Egrets, Great Blue Herons and Little Blue Herons appear at the sanctuary often, but are more numerous at Four Mile Run, where there is more shallow water. According to the newspaper accounts the Egrets are more numerous than at any time in forty years. They make a beautiful sight on trees all about the water, as well as in it. I saw them for the first time this season on July 7, ten birds at Four Mile Run."--James Eike.

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#### THE ROANOKE BIRD CLUB

The first meeting of the Roanoke Bird Club held indoors since spring, took place at the Y. W. C. A. September 21. The chief purpose of the meeting was comparison of notes and discussion of observations made during the summer season. Ten members were present. A. O. English gave an interesting account of observations made in bird banding this season.

W. B. Newman, Roanoke taxidermist, exhibited a partial albino crow which attracted much attention. The bird was taken in Bedford County in August and is apparently of this season's breeding. The entire plumage as well as the feet, legs and beak are light brown in color, shading into a light shade approaching cream on the neck, breast and underneath. Partial albinism solid in color is comparatively rare, the majority of specimens being variegated in color.



M. G. Lewis called attention to the need for keeping in close touch with developments in the transfer of ownership of the Roanoke water-works property which includes Carvin's Cove lake. The area of over a thousand acres is admirably situated for a wildlife preserve. It is a favorite feeding place for large numbers of waterfowl during migration. It is hoped that as soon as ownership is settled, it can be placed under state or federal supervision and given adequate protection.

The next meeting will be held at Roanoke College October 28th at which time Dr. Ellison A. Smythe will speak on his observations of the birds of Roanoke County.

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#### MIGRATING NIGHTHAWKS

On the afternoon of August 30 three of us were birding about ten miles northwest of Sweet Briar College. The trip had not produced anything exciting until, near six o'clock, as we came out of the woods two or three Nighthawks appeared. More kept coming until we estimated the number at 25, some of which were circling about over the narrow meadow. Soon we noticed them swooping over a hill which lay a little ahead of us. When on the hillside we seemed to be the center of a wide, irregular circle of birds. There were always some so close that the white showed distinctly as the tail was opened or some one dodged as a bird seemed to be aiming for her head. As we lingered on the hillside and watched and then saw more Nighthawks on the other side of the hill, the estimate of 25 was increased to at least 100. Only a few of the birds showed the distinct white throat patch and a few were seen to be much paler. According to Ridgway both of these conditions are characteristic of immature birds. As we came toward Sweet Briar we met 20 to 30 more in small groups but going in the direction of the large flock in which we had just been. In that locality smaller flocks had been seen on the two previous days. On August 31 only two Nighthawks were noted but on September 1, 2 and 3 their number was as great or greater than on August 30.--Florence Hague.

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#### NARUNA RECORDS

On July 22 I found a pair of Goldfinches building a nest on a horizontal limb of a pine tree about 30 feet from the ground. The pine was near a small stream. The nest seemed to be completed on the 26th. An adult bird was seen feeding young in nest on August 17th. Marsh Hawk seen on August 15, 27 and 31.--Bertha Daniel.

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## A FEW NESTING RECORDS IN ROANOKE COUNTY

Warbling Vireo. A pair of these birds raised two broods this season, locating their nest in one of the big sycamores back of the Glenmary Apartment house in Salem. Each morning from about May first to the last of June I awoke to the pleasing song. The nest was located well out near the end of a branch not far below the top of the tree, about thirty feet from the ground. After a few weeks' intermission the bird commenced singing again regularly, about July 12th, and was heard every morning and usually at almost any hour of the day on through August. He still sings nearly every morning (September 8).

Brown Thrasher. Two records of interest are nests on Poor Mountain. May 28, nest in small brush pile eighteen inches from the ground in a clearing ten feet from the road, containing four young nearly fledged. Elevation 3,200 feet. June 24, nest in small scrubby hemlock six feet in height on bank of Little Laurel Creek, Poor Mountain, in open woods. Nest about four feet from the ground, containing four eggs. Elevation 3,700 feet.

Wood Thrush. Nest twelve feet from the ground on branch of a dogwood on Little Laurel Creek in deep woods. Three eggs June 24th. Elevation 3,700 feet.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak. A pair were seen on June 14th and again on June 28th, three miles north of Glenvar near the foot of Fort Lewis Mountain. Although the nest was not found there would seem no question as to their nesting.

---M. G. Lewis,  
Salem, Virginia.

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## ROANOKE RECORDS

May 31st - Wood Pewee, nest with three eggs; Orchard Oriole, nest with four eggs; Screech Owl, one young bird observed outside of nest after parent bird had been shot by some boys; Red-eyed Vireo, nest with four eggs; Field Sparrow, three nests, one with four eggs, one with three young birds and one egg, another nest not finished; Towhee, nest finished with no eggs; Yellow-breasted Chat, nest with four young birds.

June 7th - Bobwhite, nest with twelve eggs; Baltimore Oriole, observed feeding young; Cardinal, nest with one egg; Grasshopper Sparrow, nest with four eggs; Screech Owls, male red, female gray, observed with immature birds; Catbird, nest with four young birds; Yellow Warbler, this year's nest, deserted.

June 14th - Maryland Yellowthroat, observed feeding immature birds; Brown Thrasher, nest with three eggs.

---F. B. Sellers,  
C. A. Brubeck,  
Roanoke, Virginia.



## LEXINGTON NESTING NOTES

Eastern Green Heron. Two nests found after the birds had left, one 40 feet up in a locust near a pond; the other six feet up in a willow thicket standing in the water of another pond. Mourning Dove. Bird flushed from two eggs, September 4. Kingbird. Nest partially finished, May 16; half-grown young in another nest, July 1. Barn Swallow. Second brood nests with eggs, June 28. (For years we have had a colony of Purple Martins in the boxing of several store buildings in the center of town. This year no Martins came to the nesting place.) Ohio House Wren. First eggs on May 25. Bewick's Wren. May 24, seven eggs, second attempt, the first nest having been broken up; June 15, young just out of another nest; June 28, five young just ready to leave another nest.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. May 29, two nests being built, one 40 feet up in a black gum, the other 30 feet up in an ash. Yellow Warbler. May 19, four eggs. Indigo Bunting. May 25, one egg, nest five feet up in a crotch in an oak bush in the woods. At this locality several pairs nest in such locations rather than in briars. Goldfinch. September 4, four small young in nest in apple tree. Vesper Sparrow. May 14, four eggs, nest on ground in clump of clover in a field. May 20, eggs had hatched, probably the day previous. When the bird was flushed, she fluttered away on the ground, feigning injury.

---J. J. Murray.



# *The Raven*

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY  
PUBLISHED AT LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

DR. J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR  
LEXINGTON, VA.

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## SOME NOTES ON THE SUMMER BIRDS OF CAMP LEE, VIRGINIA

By A. L. Nelson and Ray Greenfield

During June and July, 1936, the writers were engaged in investigating the food habits of gray foxes at Camp Lee, Va., and special studies were made to determine the destruction of bobwhite nests in that fox-inhabited territory. In the course of the work opportunity was afforded to keep records of the birds that occurred on the area during those months, especially of species that inhabit the open fields where our activity was largely concentrated. In searching for quail nests, naturally the nests of many other birds were encountered, and a fairly good cross-section of the breeding bird population of the open fields was obtained. Our studies extended only slightly to wooded areas; therefore there was little opportunity to observe woodland species. What notes are available on those forms are too incomplete to present.

### CAMP LEE AREA

The Camp Lee territory embraces approximately 7,000 acres of land situated about one mile south of Petersburg. Approximately 4,000 acres consist of woodland and the remainder of more or less open, brushy fields. The wooded portion comprises primarily second-growth pines, although there are some rather extensive hardwood areas. Several small streams, fed by springs, flow through narrow valleys, which are covered, for the most part, with deciduous trees. The open territory is largely grown up to broomsedge either of pure stand or mixed with various other grasses, vines and shrubs. Clumps of sumac, wild plum and blackberry are scattered over most of the open areas, which are quite generally broken up into small fields by thickets of shrubby vegetation and tree growth. The soil is very porous and of light, sandy clay composition. Thus even heavy rainfalls disappear rapidly. The bird life of the fields because of environmental differences, contrasted markedly with that of the wooded stream valleys. Birds typical of the moist woodlands were seldom seen outside the bounds of their favorite haunts and when we entered such an area from one of the dry, sandy fields, we noticed a completely changed bird fauna. The vireos, flycatchers, and woodpeckers, for instance, were never seen in the open fields.



For the past six years, a unit of some 3,000 acres at Camp Lee has been developed as a quail preserve by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, of Virginia. To supplement the natural food supplies of this section, each spring a network of feed strips is prepared and planted to several varieties of beans and peas. Patches of buckwheat and millet are also grown, and a considerable acreage is devoted each year to wheat and corn. Nesting environment for quail is maintained by periodic brush cutting and some light burning. As a result of these efforts to improve conditions for quail, it is obvious that the environment for small birds has been made more favorable. Small fruits and valuable seed-producing, herbaceous plants of many kinds are abundant on the area, and these with ideal nesting sites in brushy thickets and grassy areas make conditions generally good for field- and brush-inhabiting birds of all kinds.

The quail development work at Camp Lee has been under the supervision of C. O. Handley, formerly of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the writers are indebted to him for the many courtesies extended throughout the period of their stay at Camp Lee. It is at his suggestion that these notes are presented. We wish also to acknowledge with appreciation the help rendered by Gordon R. Davis, caretaker at the refuge, and W. W. Bailey, a graduate student engaged in wildlife investigation at Camp Lee. Mr. Bailey contributed a number of nest records for use in this paper.

1. Cathartes aura septentrionalis. Turkey Vulture. A common species, which could be seen every day flying over the fields in search of food. One nest was found in the deep woods, by W. W. Bailey, on May 6, 1936, at which time there were two eggs in it. It was in the hollow base of a large sweetgum tree. Early in June the foliage was very dense and little direct light reached the forest floor. We made two visits to the nest, the first on June 15, and the second on June 29. Each time we approached the nest, the young birds retreated to the hollow and uttered hissing sounds as long as we remained near them. They invariably disgorged their food when handled. Material disgorged by one of the birds on June 29, 1936, contained the remains of one corn snake (Elaphe guttata) and one white-footed mouse (Peromyscus leucopus) in addition to a considerable number of Sarcophagid larvae. On that date, the black primary feathers of the birds were conspicuous, although the white downy body feathers still persisted.

2. Coragyps atratus atratus. Black Vulture. About as common as the Turkey Vulture. The birds were seen regularly circling the fields, and on one occasion eight were seen at one time. Very probably nests in the wooded tracts of the area.

3. Accipiter cooperi. Cooper's Hawk. Only two seen, and both were observed darting over fields adjacent to the woodland. Probably a breeding bird, but no nests were found.

4. Buteo borealis borealis. Red-tailed Hawk. Uncommon. Only two of these birds were seen and both were perched on vantage points overlooking open fields. Mr. Handley reported that a pair nested regularly up to this year in the large tract of woods bordering Baileys Creek, the

principal stream running through Camp Lee.

5. Falco sparverius sparverius. Eastern Sparrow Hawk. Moderately common species. Several individuals were seen at various times during our stay. Undoubtedly a breeding bird.

6. Colinus virginianus virginianus. Eastern Bobwhite. Abundant. In 1935, 36 nests were found, and in 1936, 42 were located. As previously stated, the area has been developed primarily for increased production of this species and as a result ideal conditions for these birds prevailed in most of the open areas.

7. Meleagris gallopavo silvestris. Eastern Wild Turkey. Signs of this species were noted in several places. Fresh droppings and tracks were observed in one of the wheat fields, on June 25. C. O. Handley reports that several flocks are known to feed in and around the Camp Lee area. The Appomattox River valley is probably the chief reservoir for the birds of the region, although some are no doubt reared in the nearby wooded sections. According to Handley the deciduous swamp along the south side of Camp Lee is a favorite retreat of one or more flocks of wild turkeys each winter. In the summer of 1935 the junior author found shell fragments of a turkey egg in one of the old sand pits, and W. W. Bailey reported finding in June 1936 a partly eaten turkey egg, left apparently by a crow.

8. Oxyechus vociferus vociferus. Killdeer. Several pairs noted. One nest containing four eggs was found by W. W. Bailey, on June 4, 1936, on the cleared site of one of the old war-time buildings. It was in the midst of a quantity of old broken concrete slabs. Adults with young were observed on two occasions. When these broods were encountered, the parent bird put on a most interesting act, feigning injury. The display was repeated over and over again and lasted as long as the observer remained, which in each instance was for several minutes.

9. Zenaidura macroura carolinensis. Eastern Mourning Dove. A common nesting species. Several birds were seen each day. Ten nests were found, five of which were on the ground. Three of the ground nests were destroyed; in each case the adult, while incubating, had been killed by a predator.

10. Antrostomus vociferus vociferus. Eastern Whip-poor-will. From the calls heard it can be safely assumed that this bird is a common breeding species. In June 1935 many individuals were seen at dusk around the house of the refuge keeper.

11. Chordeiles minor minor. Eastern Nighthawk. Occurs on the area but is not common. One nest was found on June 15.

12. Chaetura pelagica. Chimney Swift. A common breeding bird at Camp Lee. Many nests were seen, and all were in old manholes from which the lids had been removed. These structures were a part of a drainage system during the World War when Camp Lee was an important army post and are among the few remnants that remain of what was once a virtual city.



They were twenty to twenty-five or more feet in depth and as a rule projected about two feet out of the ground. Water was draining through most of them and as a result, the atmosphere within was quite damp. The nests were usually ten to fifteen feet from the top. When flushed from the nest a brooding bird would seem to flop off. The process appeared to involve no fluttering of the wings; merely a single loud flap was heard, followed by a complete silence. Half-grown birds produced, more or less in unison, loud, chattering, insect-like notes when the nest site was approached.

13. Archilocus colubris. Ruby-throated Hummingbird. A common species in the fields. Many birds were seen visiting the flowers of the trumpet creeper and hovering over mimosa trees. Both of these plant species are abundantly represented in the old fields.

14. Tyrannus tyrannus. Eastern Kingbird. Birds of this species were seen daily perched on telephone wires, dead weed stalks, and the like. A common breeding bird. One nest containing three eggs was found on June 6 about 15 feet above the ground in an elm near the roadside. Several breeding pairs were noted, although time did not permit searching for nests.

15. Frognre subis subis. Purple Martin. A pair of these birds was frequently seen perched on a martin house, which had been erected during the past spring. Apparently the birds did not remain to nest, however, and late in June they disappeared. English Sparrows took possession thereafter.

16. Cyanocitta cristata cristata. Northern Blue Jay. A few were seen, but it is considered an uncommon summer bird in the fields at Camp Lee.

17. Corvus brachyrhynchos brachyrhynchos. Eastern Crow. Despite the efforts that are made to keep this species in check, it is still fairly common on the area. Several old nests were found in the wooded tracts adjacent to the fields. Although the crows nest and roost in the wooded areas, they feed largely in the fields. They had learned to avoid man and departed hurriedly for the nearest thicket or patch of woods when approached within a few hundred feet.

18. Troglodytes aedon aedon. Eastern House Wren. A common breeding bird. One nest containing eggs was observed, on June 6, in a gourd that had been hung up for that purpose. Another containing eggs was seen on June 7 in the well-house.

19. Mimus polyglottos polyglottos. Eastern Mockingbird. Frequently encountered in the more brushy fields.

20. Dumetella carolinensis. Catbird. Fairly common in and around the plum thickets and roadside hedges. A few were seen every day. The abundance of small fruits makes food conditions ideal for these birds.

21. Toxostoma rufum. Brown Thrasher. A few were seen in practically every field on the area. Considered to be a common nesting species.

22. Sialia sialis sialis. Eastern Bluebird. A common species,

Most abundant along the roadsides and adjacent to the main Norfolk highway where they could be seen regularly perched on the telephone wires. A nest containing eggs was found by W. W. Bailey on May, 1, 1936.

23. Lanius ludovicianus. Shrike. Only one noted during the course of our stay. Probably breeds, but no active nests were found. Mr. Bailey noted a pair building a nest in March 1936, but before any eggs were deposited the birds left the area and were not seen there again.

24. Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris. Starling. Fairly common along the Norfolk highway where ~~the~~ nests were found in early May by Mr. Bailey in cavities of telephone poles. During the latter part of June few of the birds remained. They band together early and it is probable that they had joined some neighboring flock.

25. Dendroica discolor discolor. Prairie Warbler. The distinctive notes of this bird were often heard, most frequently along the edges of the pine woods or in tree thickets scattered through the fields. There is little doubt that this species breeds at Camp Lee.

26. Geothlypis trichas trichas. Maryland Yellow-throat. One of the more abundant of the field birds encountered. Many individuals were noted each day. One young bird just learning to fly was picked up on June 13. On June 20, a nest containing four eggs was observed in a blackberry thicket. The female bird was flushed from the nest. Four days later three of the eggs were missing, apparently taken by some predator, and the remaining one was pipped and ready to hatch. The parent birds had remained with the nest despite this loss.

27. Icteria virens virens. Yellow-breasted Chat. Several pairs of birds were noted. Their calls could be heard regularly. On June 19 a nest was found in an open cavity of a dead tree trunk, about 10 feet above the ground. It was completely exposed. Three young, about 1/3 grown, were in the nest. The parent birds protested vigorously when the young were examined.

28. Passer domesticus domesticus. English Sparrow. Several were present in the vicinity of the refuge headquarters. Not noted elsewhere.

29. Sturnella magna magna. Eastern Meadowlark. Present in good numbers. Nesting conditions were ideal for them in the grassy fields, and an abundance of food was available. Four nests containing eggs or young were found on the following dates: June 8, 12, 17, and 30. All these nests were well concealed and were much better constructed than those of the quail. It was interesting to note that when the young outgrew their nest, they bedded down just outside of the nest entrance.

30. Icterus spurius. Orchard Oriole. Several pairs of these birds were seen. One nest was observed June 16, and another on July 3. Several families of birds were noted during latter part of July.

31. Richmondia cardinalis cardinalis. Eastern Cardinal. Few individuals of this species were seen in the fields. They were noted more



commonly, however, in the stream valleys, where conditions were apparently more to their liking.

32. Guiraca caerulea caerulea. Eastern Blue Grosbeak. An uncommon breeding bird at Camp Lee. A single nest containing four eggs was noted on June 13 about 3 feet above the ground in a small cedar. It was constructed of grass and contained a considerable quantity of tissue paper. Five days after its discovery the nest was destroyed. All the eggs were gone, apparently having been taken by a snake or some avian predator. The birds were not to be seen anywhere on that day, although several days later a pair was observed about half a mile from the original nest site.

33. Passerina cyanea. Indigo Bunting. A fairly common species. The song of the male was heard frequently from the shrubby thickets. No nests were found, but the bird quite obviously was a nesting species.

34. Spinus tristis tristis. Eastern Goldfinch. Present in good numbers.

35. Pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus. Red-eyed Towhee. A common species in the more scrubby fields and in the open wooded areas.

36. Ammodramus saviarum australis. Eastern Grasshopper Sparrow. One of the more common breeding sparrows at Camp Lee. These birds were found resting in the same fields with the Henslow's Sparrow and their calls were often heard simultaneously with those of the latter species. One individual, apparently killed by an automobile, was picked up on July 18.

37. Passerherbulus henslowi susurrans. Eastern Henslow's Sparrow. This species was one of the most abundant of the sparrows at Camp Lee. Its characteristic, cricket-like call could be heard at almost any hour of the day. A few pairs were noted in practically every one of the many fields that were visited. Six nests were noted while searching for quail nests. They were all on the ground and most of them were at the base of a clump of broomsedge.

38. Spizella passerina passerina. Eastern Chipping Sparrow. Only a few birds were observed. One nest, however, containing four eggs was seen on June 29 about 6 feet above the ground in a small cedar tree.

39. Spizella pusilla pusilla. Eastern Field Sparrow. Along with Henslow's Sparrow this species was one of the abundant breeding passerine birds at Camp Lee. During June nine nests were noted. No special effort was made to find them. The favorite nest sites seemed to be in trumpet-creeper vines and clumps of broomsedge.

40. Melospiza melodia. Song Sparrow. Uncommon. Only a few individuals were seen.

U. S. Biological Survey  
Washington, D.C.  
October 23, 1936.

## COASTAL NOTES

By Lester L. Walsh

Wreck is the next island south of Cobb, and while many field students have been visiting Cobb Island rather frequently during the past years, primarily, however, during the breeding season, nobody seems to have been interested in other islands of the chain extending along the coast of the Tri-State Peninsula. A few field notes on this region may be of interest to readers of THE RAVEN.

The Willet seems to have been increasing in encouraging numbers since the storm during August of 1933 which raised such havoc in that section and destroyed so many birds. A conservative estimate would indicate 50 pairs breeding on the five-mile stretch of Wreck Island, and while they do not seem to occur as numerously on other adjacent islands, the breeding population in the State is probably 200 pairs.

Clapper Rails, on the other hand, whose numbers were greatly depleted by the same storm, have not been so fortunate in their recovery.

Royal Terns have been seen with increasing frequency the past few years, but it was not until 1935 that an actual nest was found (Cobb Island). This year our warden reports three pairs breeding on Cobb Island. It is apparent this species is extending northward in its breeding range.

The general bird picture of Cobb and Wreck is much the same, although a greater area of exposed mud flat, caused by the erosion and retreat of the outer sand beach, and the consequent exposure of underlying layers of marsh and mud, make the latter more attractive to shore-birds. Here as late as June 5, I found flocks of Knots numbering 250 birds, as well as four belated Hudsonian Curlews.

The fall shorebird migration along these coastal islands has always held a strong fascination for me, and the absence of migration data make the field rather a pristine one for the bird man. The Western Sandpiper appears here in increasing numbers in the late fall. It is probably the commonest small sandpiper as the winter approaches, and I feel confident many late records of Semipalmated Sandpipers are misidentifications and may be attributable to the former species. Farther north, along the New Jersey coast, we find Westerns occurring in small numbers among the large fall flocks of "peep", but here it is no uncommon sight to observe flocks of a hundred or more individuals, all Westerns. Their overland eastward migration route must strike the Atlantic Coast near this area.

American Oyster-catchers assemble in flocks sometimes numbering 50 individuals as they move slowly southward to their wintering grounds. Hudsonian Curlews feed and roost on the higher marshy islands behind the barrier beaches, and it is no unusual feat to enumerate several thousand birds in a day's birding in late August or early September.

Strangely enough, frequently the commonest Heron on the marshes during the fall is the Yellow-crowned Night Heron, a comparatively rare bird throughout most of the country. A flock of eighteen, mostly immature birds, were seen back of Parramore Island on September 6, doubtless



part of the colony breeding on Mock Horn Island, just south of Oyster.

The Boat-tailed Grackle here reaches the northern fringe of its breeding range, and mixed flocks of young and adults may be seen flying about over the marsh.

It is to be regretted that observers have paid such scant attention to the winter bird life of these interesting coastal islands and intervening marshes of Virginia. While great strides have been made in recent years by members of the Virginia Society of Ornithology and others in widening our knowledge of the migration and distribution of birds in the interior of the State, the coast seems to have been signally neglected, and specific wintering shore and water bird records, in published form, are pathetically meager. It is to be hoped that a keener interest may be aroused in behalf of this comparatively little-known section of the State, and that active field work may be carried on at other than the breeding season.

National Association of Audubon  
Societies,  
1775 Broadway,  
New York.

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#### SOME VIRGINIA ORNITHOLOGISTS

5. Wirt Robinson. 1864 - 1929.

By J. J. Murray

Wirt Robinson was born on October 16, 1864, at "Fernley", his grandfather's plantation on the James River in Buckingham County, Virginia. He was the son of William Russell and Evelyn Cabell Robinson. During his youth he and his brother Cabell spent their winters at their Richmond home and their summers studying natural history at "Fernley". From his earliest days he was a keen hunter, fisherman and naturalist. From 1879 to 1882 he was a student at Richmond College, now the University of Richmond; and later studied chemistry at the Richmond Medical College. He entered West Point in 1883, graduating in 1887. During his cadetship he was "Twice rated as a distinguished cadet". His first army assignment, as Second Lieutenant, was to the 4th Artillery at Fort Adams, R. I., where he served for two years. He later served with the artillery in Georgia and Florida. In 1891 he was appointed Instructor in Modern Languages at West Point; and from 1894 to 1898 was Military Instructor at Harvard, where he did distinguished work. There followed four years at West Point as Assistant Professor of Modern Languages and two years at the School of Submarine Defense at Fort Totten, New York. In 1906 Robinson, then Captain, was appointed to the Department of Chemistry at West Point, to which work he was to give the rest of his life, first as Assistant Professor, and then (1911) as full Professor and head of the department. His specialty was the chemistry of explosives. He also published (1914) a book, "Elements of Electricity". He was retired on his sixty-fourth birthday, October 16, 1928. At that time he held the

rank of Colonel. In his Order of retirement his work was characterized as follows: "Such is briefly the brilliant record of this unusually cultivated officer and gentleman who now retires to civil life leaving behind him a noble example of 'Duty, Honor, Country', and an inspiration to the officers and enlisted men of our Army, and to the gentlemen Corps of Cadets, present and future." Col. Robinson was married first in 1890 to Alice Phinney, of Newport, R. I., who died in 1918; and then in 1920 to Nancy Hirman Henderson, of Chicago, who survives him. He had two children, Russell Robinson, of the first marriage, and Evelyn Byrd Robinson, of the second.

Col. Robinson planned after his retirement to give all his time to natural history, spending his winters in Washington and his summers at his Nelson County home, but he lived only three months, passing away in Washington on January 20, 1929. His body was taken to West Point for burial.

While the army, and particularly military instruction, was Wirt Robinson's profession, natural history was the avocation which he followed with enthusiasm and unflinching devotion. His vacations were spent in collecting trips or in the study of his collections at home. While he was a West Point cadet his father bought a place in Nelson County near Wingina, across the river from "Ferrley" but not far away. Here Col. Robinson spent his vacations when not on collecting trips. Here he and his brother Cabell had adjoining homes; and here he erected a brick building to house his collections of insects, bird and mammal skins and Indian relics. His collections were left to the United States National Museum. They were not large, his collection of birds including only 1374 skins, but they contained many rare specimens.

Col. Robinson joined the A. C. U. in 1897; and was elected a Member in 1901, the same year in which another Virginia ornithologist, Dr. William C. Rives, reached that honor. Most of his work was done outside the State, and even outside the country. He went on many collecting trips to Cuba, Jamaica, Central America, Colombia and Venezuela. As a result of a trip to the island of Curacao and to Colombia he published a book, "A Flying Trip to the Tropics" (Riverside Press, 1895, pp. 194, col. plates). In 1896, in collaboration with his close friend, Dr. C.W. Richmond, who did the technical parts, he published a paper, "An Annotated List of Birds Observed on the Island of Margarita" (Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus., XVIII, 1896, pp. 649-685). On this island off the coast of Venezuela in 1892 he collected 200 bird skins of 73 species. Ten of these Dr. Richmond described as new insular forms, and two of them he named for Robinson, a heron, Eutorides robinsoni, and a cardinal, Cardinal robinsoni. He and Richmond also published "An Annotated List of Birds Collected in the Vicinity of La Guira, Venezuela" (Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus., XXIV, No. 1247, 1901). He published about a dozen other papers on ornithology, a few of them on Virginia birds, including one on "Some Rare Virginia Birds" (The Auk, VI, 1889, 2, 194-195).

#### Bibliography:

Obituary, by Chas. W. Richmond, The Auk, XLVI, 1929, 2, pp. 282-284.

Brief mentions and reviews of his papers: The Auk, XI, 1894, 4,



328; The Auk, XII, 1895, 2, 172, review of his book, "A Flying Trip to the Tropics"; The Auk, XIII, 1896, 4, 332-333; The Auk, XIX, 1902, 1, 115.

Lexington, Va.

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#### A CORRECTION.

I am indebted to Mr. W. L. McAtee for the correction of an error in the sketch of William Palmer which appeared in the last issue of THE RAVEN. In that article it was stated that Palmer never lived in Virginia. I had gotten the impression from Dr. Richmond's memorial that Palmer lived in the city of Washington, although no statement is made in the article as to his exact residence, and had taken for granted that this covered the whole period of his connection with the National Museum. I should have been more careful in checking my statements. One who dabbles in the history of ornithology soon learns that the way of the biographer like that of the transgressor is hard.

Mr. McAtee writes me that on reading the sketch in THE RAVEN it seemed to him probable that Palmer had lived with his parents at their home in Virginia near Arlington Cemetery before his marriage in 1885. He inquired about this of Mr. J. H. Riley of the National Museum, who said that he distinctly remembered Palmer saying that he had lived in Virginia. This throws light on the fact that many of Palmer's early bird records were for Arlington Cemetery. Mr. McAtee adds the interesting observation, that the elder Palmer was "so enthusiastic a collector of antiques that he had filled a large two-story house with them and was literally crowded out into a small cabin nearby where he lived the remainder of his life. The yard of the larger establishment also was filled with old buggies and other vehicles which the elder Palmer had picked up as bargains".

J. J. Murray.

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#### A RAVEN'S NEST IN THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINS

(Having heard that Mr. G. H. Hodge, District Forester of the Virginia Forest Service had found a Raven's nest in Rockingham County some years ago, I wrote him for the details. The following is his reply. The Editor.)

My story about the Raven is very brief as I have come in contact with only a few Ravens, and have found only one nest. During the month of April, 1923, I was engaged in cruising timber for the U. S. Forest Service on Church Mountain, Rockingham County, and came upon a Raven's nest. This nest was built in the mouth of a hole in a large cliff approximately 150 feet high. The cliff stood vertically, and the nest was built about 57 feet from the ground, or one-half of the distance up the side of the rock. This nest was first noticed by the writer after a great

confusion caused by two Ravens flying very high in the air and diving down on about a 45 degree angle within a few feet of me and my party. This practice was continued as long as we stayed at the nest and each time that the Raven would dive she would continue to "kow-kow" until she would get within a few feet of us and then she would fly high and repeat the same movement and continue to "kow". The nest seemed to be built out of large sticks, much like a large hawk's nest. I was not able to climb to the nest. However, I threw a rock and hit the nest; and saw a wing of one of the young. It looked to be about half grown. I think the date was about April 15.

During the spring (March) of 1922, I was manning a Federal Government lookout tower on Hardscrabble, Augusta County, and noticed a Raven about one-half mile away standing in mid-air for several minutes. It then dived straight down to a large cleft in the rocks a distance of about four hundred feet. The Raven continued repeating this movement daily for about three weeks. Then I saw two Ravens continue working in and out of the rocks. They followed up with the young Ravens in that section. I am quite sure that the Raven that I saw standing in mid-air and diving to the cleft daily for three weeks was a male guarding the female on the nest, although I have no proof for this as I did not leave my station to investigate. This Raven while standing in mid-air and diving to the cleft would not make any noise whatever by calling as they usually do when flying from place to place.

G. H. Hodge,  
Clifton Forge, Va.

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#### ALBEMARLE COUNTY OWLS

On October 22, 1936, Mr. U. S. Hayes told me that he had seen a medium-sized owl flying over the fields hunting, near Charlottesville, Va. At the time it did not occur to me what owl this would be coming so close into the city. However, the next day a negro, who lived nearby, shot the bird which turned out to be a female Barn Owl. He gave as his justification for doing this that it was catching his chickens, but at this time of year this could not be so. An even better owl record than this turned up on November 12, 1936. Mr. Rutledge, the University of Virginia traffic director, picked up a small owl in front of the dormitories and brought it to the biological laboratory. It was a Saw-Whet Owl. Evidently it had been struck by a car for the elbow joint of one wing was out of place. I am keeping the bird in a cage in hopes that it will recover and I can release it.--John B. Calhoun.

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#### SOME UNUSUAL VIRGINIA RECORDS

J. J. Murray

Eastern Brown Pelican. Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis. Until recently, so far as I have been able to discover, the right of the Brown Pelican to a place on the Virginia list depends on the statement of Captain Crumb that one was seen near Cobb's Island in the fall of 1831. We have two recent sight records. Warren Cobb, Audubon warden, reports



to the Audubon headquarters that he saw one at Cobb's Island, September 30, 1936; and George B. Lay, of the Biological Survey, stationed at N. C. State College, Raleigh, N. C., writes me that he saw one on the wing and in a tree on June 1, 1936, near Suffolk, Virginia.

Green-winged Teal. Nettion carolinense. On December 1, 1936, I saw a male Green-winged Teal which entirely lacked the white bar in front of the bend of the wing. This was at Big Spring near Lexington, Va., where I had collected a European Teal the preceding February. This bird did not, however, have the scapular bar either.

Yellow Rail. Coturnicops noveboracensis. A Yellow Rail was brought to me which had been killed by a car on the highway near Harrisonburg, Virginia, about October 15, 1936. This bird is extremely rare in western Virginia.

Golden Plover. Pluvialis dominica dominica. Mr. Ralph M. Brown informs me that one of these birds was seen near Blacksburg, Virginia, October 1, 1936. I know of no other inland Virginia record, although it is "accidental in migration" at Washington.

Lexington, Va.

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#### AN APPEAL FOR COOPERATION IN COLLECTING LOCAL NAMES OF BIRDS

The Biological Survey has long been compiling the vernacular names of A.C.U. Check-list birds with a view to preparing a dictionary of them. These names consist of two groups: (1) Those available from the literature of ornithology, which is largely accessible in Washington; and (2) those that must be collected in the field. Only by thorough coverage of the country can the compilation of the local vernacular names attain anything like completeness, and that coverage can be achieved only through cooperation.

It is hoped that all recipients of this appeal may have some local names to contribute and that some may be in position to spend time in search of vernacular names. Accurate identification is of prime importance. In gathering local names by the method of interviewing, it is suggested that use be made of good colored pictures of the birds concerned as well as of questions regarding their identity.

The recording of the locality where a name is used is of great value in the study of the origin and migration of these terms, and record of names actually employed by the people, even for the most common as well as for the more unusual species of birds, is highly desirable as an aid in appraising usage. The information requested may be conveniently recorded under either the standard scientific or the vernacular name, or both, followed by locally used terms and designation of the place of use.

Example: Northern Flicker (Colaptes auratus luteus).  
Flying auger, Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Cooperation in improving the extent and quality of the Survey's collection of vernacular names of birds will be much appreciated. Contributions should be sent to the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for the attention of W. L. McAtee, Technical Adviser.

Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief,  
Bureau of Biological  
Survey.

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### THE 1936 CHRISTMAS CENSUS

Last year in the long list of Christmas Censuses published in Bird-Lore there were again only six from Virginia. That has been about our limit so far. It should be easily possible to double that number this year. Every V.S.C. member should take the census and send the report to Bird-Lore and to THE RAVEN. But the rules must be followed or the report will not be printed. The days on which the census may be taken are from December 21 to December 27 inclusive. Only the birds seen in one day may be included. The territory covered must come within a circle of fifteen miles in diameter. The trip should take at least six hours, and an all-day trip is preferable. The list should be typewritten and should follow the order of the A.O.U. Check-list. Only common names are to be used, and sub-specific names are not to be used. The number of birds of each species seen are to be set down. The census lists in the issue of THE RAVEN for last January may be used as a guide. The only difference between the rules for the censuses sent to Bird-Lore and to THE RAVEN is that for THE RAVEN we will accept a list made on any date between December 15 and 31. Lists for Bird-Lore should be mailed on the day after the list is made to The Editor, Bird-Lore, 1775 Broadway, New York City. Lists for THE RAVEN should be mailed to Dr. J. J. Murray, Lexington, Va., as soon as possible after January 1st. Other material for THE RAVEN should be sent at the same time.

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### FIELD NOTES

Norfolk. While walking near the ocean at Virginia Beach on Armistice Day we noticed four strange birds picking in the grass. We got quite close to them and watched them for several minutes. They were larger than a sparrow and had stripes down the back, spots on the head of a reddish-brown, and when they flew up at our approach there were large white patches in the centre of the wings making them most spectacular. Not being able to identify them I wrote to Dr. Frank M. Chapman and he said they were probably Snow Buntings which sometime wander down here during migration.--Mrs. Helen T. Thompson, "Miramar", Lochhaven, Norfolk, Va.

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Lexington. Little Blue Herons and Egrets were not so common as usual this fall. A Black Duck was seen from 8/28 to 9/11, a very unusual date for this bird. A female Blue-winged Teal at Cameron's Pond on 7/6 was prob-



ably a crippled bird. Another female was seen at Big Spring, 9/1 to 9/24, an unusual date. I ran into the greatest concentration of Wood Ducks I have ever seen in western Virginia on 9/28, when I saw between 25 and 30 in a flock on North River near Lexington. Two Hooded Mergansers at Big Spring, 11/12 to 11/30, provide my first fall record. A flight of 16 Broad-winged Hawks over Bluff Mountain, 9/21. A Solitary Sandpiper, 7/6, and two Lesser Yellowlegs, 7/23, are very early dates; and a Spotted Sandpiper, 10/10, is an extremely late date. I saw Least Sandpipers, scarce here in the fall, on 9/5 and 9/11 and 9/18. Red-headed Woodpeckers were fairly common this fall after having been scarce for several years, and are still here on 12/1. Two Bank Swallows on 9/1; a Nashville Warbler on 10/3; a Connecticut Warbler on 9/11; and a Lincoln Sparrow on 9/21 (on top of the Blue Ridge on the Rockbridge-Amherst line) and another at Cameron's Pond on 11/2, are all uncommon birds here.--J. J. Murray.

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Blacksburg. 8/2, Little Blue Heron (white); Solitary Sandpiper (4); Pied-billed Grebe. 8/14, Black Terns. 8/19, Nighthawks flocking. 8/9, Golden-winged Warbler, on Dixon's Branch, Giles Co., 3000 feet. 9/2, Least Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs. 9/10, last Solitary Sandpiper. 9/29, Pied-billed Grebe, (4). 10/4, height of the warbler migration. 10/17, Junco (first), White-throated Sparrow (first). 10/24, Lesser Scaups. 10/28, Horned Grebe, Pintail, Black Duck (4). 11/8, Prairie Horned Larks, Blue Ridge Parkway, five miles beyond Floyd.--R. M. Brown.

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Lynchburg. 10/3, Black-throated Green Warbler, Tennessee Warbler (Leonard K. Beyer); 10/12, Solitary Sandpiper; 10/17, Cape May Warbler (Beyer); 10/21, Savannah Sparrow (11), Vesper Sparrow (4), Yellow Palm Warbler (4), Swamp Sparrow (first); 10/23, Magnolia Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo; 10/30, 40-50 Chipping Sparrows along James River near Big Island, Bedford Co.; many Juncos in Blue Ridge, U. S. 501, Bedford Co. 11/6, Fox Sparrow (first Kingfisher (last). 11/8, Pine Siskins (2). 11/12, Red-breasted Mergansers (28), very rarely seen here in fall. 11/22, Robin (last) (Beyer). 11/26, female Baldpate, only fall record. We have a large Crow roost near Lynchburg every winter. This year the Crows seem unusually abundant here. Hundreds are frequently seen feeding on farm at back of College property. Red-headed Woodpeckers are staying through this winter, and are present in unusually large numbers.--Ruskin S. Freer.