

of our commonest birds. Every one knows in general what birds eat during the winter, but few can tell you whether the Junco takes any insects on the warmer days of January or not, or just what the Chickadee is eating when he hangs head downward from a lichen-grayed branch. We need more observers who go out with the spirit of the writer of 'The Brown Thrush in Eastern Massachusetts.'



## SUMMER BIRDS OF NORTHERN ELK COUNTY, PA.

BY WILLIAM L. BAILY.

PUBLISHED lists of the summer birds of Elk, McKean, and Potter Counties, Pa., are so limited<sup>1</sup>, it is hoped that the following report may be of some aid for comparison in our recent efforts to establish more accurately the breeding ranges of the birds of Pennsylvania, which must be based principally upon a series of careful lists and notes taken during the breeding season in localities scattered all over the State.

Few of us seem to have had the opportunity of visiting, for any length of time, these counties, and although two weeks was the limit of my stay, from the 18th of June to the 2d of July, 1894, I was enabled, on account of fair weather, to give almost my entire time to field work, so that my list ought to be fairly representative. John Reese was with me on most of my trips and proved a most useful guide and companion.

The table-land which spreads over a large portion of north-western Pennsylvania, and especially that of McKean, Elk, and Potter Counties, is on an average almost as high as the crests of the mountains running diagonally across the State, the great topographical difference being that the table-land, which is separated from the mountains principally by the west branch of the

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<sup>1</sup>"List of Birds observed near Bradford [McKean Co., Pa.]" by James A. Teulon, Quarterly Journal Boston Zoölogical Soc., 1883, p. 47.

Susquehanna, is generally flat, depressed by streams winding through it, not as a rule over 600 feet deep, while in the Appalachian system the valleys are rolling and the mountains rise in peaks and ridges high above them. Hence we find the fields, pastures, and orchards occupying the lowlands in the mountainous district, while in the northwestern part of the State they are on the high ground almost on a level with the ridges of the Appalachian Mountains. Such a marked difference in the contour of the two localities in question is sufficient for considerable faunal variation.

As to temperature, the severe weather continues so late in the spring that frost occurs sometimes well into May, and in 1894, on the first of June, the apple crop was so nipped that it was rendered practically useless. This condition is unfavorable to the advancement of many of the southern birds, which, however, venture far up into the mountains.

On the northern border of Elk County, about 2,200 feet above sea level, one of the highest points of the table-lands west of the Alleghanies, yet among fields, orchards, and pasture-land, is the enviable home of Captain A. G. Clay, from early May to the end of November, and in his hunting years, not many snows ago, his fires were kept burning far into the winter months as well. In this very vicinity the Wild Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) bred for the last time in any great numbers, and only a scattered few, to the Captain's knowledge, have been observed during the past thirteen years.

Twenty years ago the hunting in Elk County was worth speaking of, but railroads for the purpose of developing the oil, coal, and lumber are multiplying every year and the great hemlocks are fast disappearing, though not materially on the Captain's land of several square miles.

Within one hundred yards of his house is a pond not 200 feet long, the only one in the locality, and during migrations nearly every eastern species of Duck that flies overland, besides a variety of Gulls, Herons, Rail and Snipe, drop to rest and feed on this pond. The Captain gave me a list of 74, mainly game birds, most of which he has taken on or near this pond.

'Upland,' the name of Captain Clay's property, adjoins the McKean County line within half a mile of his house, and only a

few hundred feet beyond is Williamsville, about 550 feet lower in altitude and at the junction of Five and Seven Mile Runs, tributaries of the east branch of the Clarion River. I covered most of the high ground for a mile or two around the house, and made numerous trips on Five and Seven Mile Runs, on the east branch of the Clarion into McKean County, up Straight Creek four miles to the southeast, and on Rocky Run, a feeder of the west branch of the Clarion, five miles to the southwest, not far from Wilcox. At least two-thirds of the high ground was cleared and largely cultivated, just the place for Larks, Savanna, and Grass Finches. The Catbird, Indigo Bunting, Chewink, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and their friends occupy the brush and raspberry patches on the edge of the woods; and the Kingbirds, Goldfinches, and Cedarbirds abound in the apple orchards, which are adjuncts of every farm.

Most of the streams rising on high ground descend gradually into sheltered wooded ravines, Straight Creek being especially darkened by tall hemlocks, beech and maples, making it one of the coldest and most beautiful streams in the neighborhood. Here the Winter Wren, Solitary Vireo, Blackburnian and Canada Warblers, Water Thrush, Hermit Thrush and other typical Canadian species were most numerous.

But one swamp was met with, at about 2,000 feet; there the Red-wings, Woodcocks, and Song Sparrows revelled, and where it extended into the woods, Warblers and Woodpeckers were common. Here also were found the Saw-whet Owls. There seems to have been quite a migration between July 25 and 27, a Field Plover, Summer Yellow-legs, and a Green Heron being taken by John Reese between these dates. A Spotted Sandpiper and a few Woodcocks were the only breeding water birds that came under our notice.

With regard to the trees, the hemlocks in their primæval state are still plentiful, and, when they are in great numbers, harbor many a cool spot, almost entirely excluding the sun, and must afford considerable encouragement to the Canadian element. Sugar maples, black and white birch are very common; there are only a few white pines here and there, but beeches are abundant, serving in days gone by as the principal food of the Wild Pigeon, the young being fed almost entirely on the curd of the beech-nut.

The avifauna of Elk and McKean Counties seems to have a decided touch of the Canadian element, judging not simply from the occurrence of certain northern types, but on account of the number of the birds of each species, the first eight of the following list being abundant; *Junco hyemalis*, *Dendroica caerulescens*, *Dendroica maculosa*, *Dendroica blackburnia*, *Seiurus noveboracensis*, *Troglodytes hiemalis*, *Turdus aonalaschkæ pallasii*, *Sylvania canadensis*, *Vireo solitarius*, *Certhia familiaris americana*.

All but the first and last of the following ten were, I think, generally more common than they are in the Alleghanies: *Nyctale acadica*, *Sphyrapicus varius*, *Empidonax minimus*, *Carpodacus purpureus*, *Ammodramus sandwichensis savanna*, *Habia ludoviciana*, *Dendroica pensylvanica*, *Dendroica virens*, *Parus atricapillus*, *Turdus fuscescens*.

Another feature in support of my remark, was the apparent absence of all of the typical Carolinian, and more southern species, many of which are occasional or common in the Alleghanies, such as Dove, Quail, Acadian Flycatcher, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Cardinal, Louisiana Water-Thrush, Chat, Black-capped Titmouse, Brown Thrasher, Carolina Wren and others.

I should not omit to note as an additional Canadian element the common occurrence of *Limenitis arthemis*, a butterfly more common in the Adirondacks of New York.

As the title of this paper indicates, I shall only include in the appended list the birds which came under my personal observation unless especially noted otherwise. Following is the complete list:

(One *Ardea virescens*, the Green Heron, was taken July 25 by John Reese and may have been migrating. There were very few suitable places for Herons.)

1. *Philohela minor*. WOODCOCK.—Several in an open grass swamp close to the road; were said to have been plentiful several years ago.

2. *Actitis macularia*. SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—One on July 8 taken by John Reese on Seven Mile Run; identified.

3. *Bonasa umbellus*. RUFFED GROUSE.—One cock, and June 30, a hen with her brood were seen. Grouse are getting fewer every year.

(Wild Turkeys, I was informed, had not been seen since 1891, when one or two were taken in the fall. Quail have been taken but are very rare. The Wild Pigeon has not been seen since 1882, except one or two

at a time. Elk, McKean, Forrest, and Potter Counties are noted for their beech trees and no doubt there was no place in Pennsylvania where the Wild Pigeon bred in greater numbers.)

4. *Accipiter cooperi*. COOPER'S HAWK.— Only one was seen.
5. *Buteo borealis*. RED-TAILED HAWK.— Several; one nest in a large black birch about 70 feet from the ground.
6. *Falco sparverius*. SPARROW HAWK.— One seen June 19.
7. *Syrnium nebulosum*. BARRED OWL.— One taken July 9 by John Reese; specimen identified.
8. *Nyctala acadica*. SAW-WHET OWL.— There are very few breeding records in Pennsylvania of this bird. Two were taken, both in the young 'Kirtland' plumage, one June 28, roosting about 18 inches above the ground in a small hemlock in a rather open swamp. The other was taken a week or so later in the same locality.
9. *Bubo virginianus*. GREAT HORNED OWL.— Five, in a secluded spot on Straight Creek, young and old together.
10. *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO.— One only seen, close to the road on the edge of the hemlocks.
11. *Ceryle alcyon*. KINGFISHER.— One on the Clarion, and several on Straight Creek.
12. *Dryobates villosus*. HAIRY WOODPECKER.— Common; especially in the tall open wood where the hemlocks had been cut off. There is plenty of food and shelter for the Woodpeckers in the abundance of dead stumps, both standing and lying on the ground.
13. *Dryobates pubescens*. DOWNY WOODPECKER.— Common.
14. *Sphyrapicus varius*. YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER.— Fairly common; several were taken, generally in open woods among the fallen logs, and close to the streams.
15. *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*. RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.— Several seen in same woods with the Yellow-bellied on the Clarion, and in one or two other places.
16. *Colaptes auratus*. FLICKER.— Common.
17. *Chætura pelagica*. CHIMNEY SWIFT.— Common; said to build in barns on rafters, and roost in trees in this locality during migration.
18. *Trochilus colubris*. RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD.— Common around houses and in the deep woods (reported to have been seen, fifty at a time, when the orchards are in bloom).
19. *Tyrannus tyrannus*. KINGBIRD.— Common as I ever saw it anywhere, in the orchards and along the roads.
20. *Sayornis phæbe*. PHÆBE.— Common; especially around the house.
21. *Contopus virens*. WOOD PEWEE.— Common in open woods stripped of the hemlocks.
22. *Empidonax minimus*. LEAST FLYCATCHER.— Very common among birch, maple, and beech. Three nests were found, varying considerably in their construction and position, and a female was so tame

that I stood talking within eighteen inches of the bird on the nest for fully five minutes.

23. *Otocoris alpestris praticola*.—PRAIRIE HORNED LARK.—A very common, almost abundant breeder. Seen along roads and fences and ploughed fields.

24. *Cyanocitta cristata*. BLUE JAY.—Common; principally on the edges of the woods or in open timber.

25. *Corvus americanus*. CROW.—Only a few pairs were seen, partly, perhaps, on account of the scarcity of grain.

(*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*, the Bobolink, was seen by John Reese July 17, and one or two were taken a few days later, probably migrating.)

26. *Agelaius phœniceus*. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD.—Common; several were found near the pond breeding.

27. *Sturnella magna*. MEADOWLARK.—Noticeably less numerous than in the east.

28. *Quiscalus quiscula æneus*. BRONZED GRACKLE.—Common, but not in large numbers; several nests in tall pines in front of Captain's house; flocking about June 30.

29. *Carpodacus purpureus*. PURPLE FINCH.—Several males, singing in low maples, especially on edge of woods, and one, showing anxious discontent, caused me to waste considerable time vainly looking for his nest.

30. *Spinus tristis*. GOLDFINCH.—Common; several nests found, in all cases close to civilization.

31. *Pooecetes gramineus*. GRASS FINCH.—Abundant; found at least six nests in open, dry fields.

32. *Ammodramus sandwichensis savanna*. SAVANNA SPARROW.—Abundant in the fields near barns. I hunted many times in vain for their nests.

33. *Ammodramus savannarum passerinus*. GRASSHOPPER SPARROW.—Observed in two different fields, about two miles apart, near farm houses.

34. *Spizella socialis*. CHIPPING SPARROW.—Abundant; a number of nests found; some in orchard trees and three were found in one thorn tree with two Kingbirds' nests.

35. *Spizella pusilla*. FIELD SPARROW.—Common; several nests, generally about three feet from ground, in raspberry bushes.

36. *Junco hyemalis*. SNOWBIRD.—Very common in the open woods, but more generally on the edge of the woods. A number of nests were found, all on low road-side banks, three to five feet high, in the moss or beside a root.

37. *Melospiza fasciata*. SONG SPARROW.—Abundant; five or six nests, both on ground and in bushes.

38. *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. CHEWINK.—Common only in a few spots where several pairs seemed to associate in large open clearings covered with a tangle of underbrush and brambles.

39. *Habia ludoviciana*. ROSE-BREASTED GROSBREAK.—Rather common; several pairs seen in tree-cleared places where there were plenty of tangles and a small maple now and then to perch upon.

40. *Passerina cyanea*. INDIGO BUNTING.—Very few were noted, not more than three during the whole two weeks.

41. *Piranga erythromelas*. SCARLET TANAGER.—Several single birds and one pair in tall maple and beech grove. Not seen among the hemlocks.

42. *Chelidon erythrogastra*. BARN SWALLOW.—The only Swallow seen; common around houses, six nests under outside eaves of the Captain's house, scattered, however, and not in colonies as the Eave Swallows build. A singular fact came to note, viz.: A female was found dead on her nest resting in a most natural position and was probably frozen during the frost on the 1st of June. The skin was dry and hard.

(One *Petrochelidon lunifrons*, Cliff Swallow, was taken by John Reese August 3; specimen identified; possibly a migrant. Breeds in Columbia County.—R. Kester.)

43. *Ampelis cedrorum*. CEDAR BIRD.—Abundant; several nests all built unusually low; one, one and one-half inches in diameter, built of beard moss (*Usnea*), was five feet high in a birch.

44. *Vireo olivaceus*. RED-EYED VIREO.—Abundant; singing in the woods everywhere except in the primæval hemlock, where the woods are very quiet.

45. *Vireo solitarius*. SOLITARY VIREO.—One pair with young just out of nest, on the edge of the deep hemlock at the mouth of Straight Creek. Found abundant by Dr. Dwight on North Mountain (Auk, IX, 1892, p. 138), and I should have expected it to be more common here.

46. *Mniotilta varia*. BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.—Uncommon; only two or three were seen in second growth of hemlock, maple, etc. From several records it appears that the bird is common or abundant in the second hemlock growth of the Alleghanies (Stone, Dwight, and Todd).

47. *Compothlypis americana*. PARULA WARBLER.—One female with one young bird, seen among small trees on a stream.

48. *Dendroica æstiva*. SUMMER WARBLER.—Several seen; one pair building in the orchard. This bird does not seem to venture much into the woods.

49. *Dendroica cærulescens*. BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER.—Common in the woods where hemlock had been cut, as well as on the edges of the deep hemlock woods. It was very evident that the females were keeping close to their nests, as a great many males were seen, always singing, as if to assure their better halves that they were near at hand. The same could be said of the next four varieties, only one female being seen to ten males.

50. *Dendroica maculosa*. MAGNOLIA WARBLER.—Common; more so if anything than the preceding. One nest was found in a tiny wild

cherry, about 3 feet high, at the side of a log road in a deep wood of birch, maple, and oaks, and some second growth hemlocks. The female sat so close that I touched the tree before she flew. This little bird, as it covered an almost invisible nest of hairlike grass, was one of the prettiest pictures in my experience.

51. *Dendroica pensylvanica*. CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER.—Common; more females of this species were seen than either of the preceding two, but nearly always in overgrown, open places.

52. *Dendroica blackburniæ*. BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER.—Common; principally high up in the hemlocks near the streams; only one female noted. The males were almost invariably singing.

53. *Dendroica virens*. BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER.—Common; generally in the same environment as the last species.

54. *Seiurus aurocapillus*. OVENBIRD.—Common in the dry upper woods.

55. *Seiurus noveboracensis*. WATER-THRUSH.—Common; especially on the clear streams not poisoned by the chemical works or tanneries, where only one was observed. One nest with eggs under the root of a tree, and a number of just fledged birds were seen. This bird begins to get common just west of the Alleghanies.

56. *Geothlypis trichas*. MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT.—Common in its usual haunts.

57. *Sylvania canadensis*. CANADIAN WARBLER.—Common; singing constantly; seen less among the hemlocks than elsewhere, except on Straight Creek.

58. *Setophaga ruticilla*. REDSTART.—Only one was seen, this on the Clarion, and it was not observed in the mountains by either Messrs. Dwight, Stone, or Todd, but Warren speaks of it as being most common in the higher mountain regions, mentioning especially McKean, Potter, Sullivan, Centre, Blair, Lycoming, Crawford and Erie Counties. I found it common and several nests in very open places at Point Pelee, on the warm, flat Canadian shore of Lake Erie where the Summer Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher, and five Swallows, were abundant, a much more mild environment.

59. *Galeoscoptes carolinensis*. CATBIRD.—Very common, a number of nests being found. There happens to be a number of places on the southeastern slopes of some of the rolls, covered with raspberry bushes, well adapted for some of the more southern varieties, but few of them seem to take advantage of the fact.

60. *Troglodytes ædon*. HOUSE WREN.—Common in cleared woods as well as around houses.

61. *Troglodytes hiemalis*. WINTER WREN.—Abundant in the tall open woods as well as in the cool hemlocks near the streams; most common on Straight Creek, which is by far the coolest in the locality.

62. *Certhia familiaris americana*. BROWN CREEPER.—Not common; only about three seen, which were very hard to locate, and it may be



that we missed others, as they should be common here if anywhere. I found a nest at Eaglesmere, Sullivan County, Pa., in 1890.

63. *Sitta carolinensis*. WHITE-BELLIED NUTHATCH.—A few pairs, one near the house.

64. *Parus atricapillus*. BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE.—Abundant in all kinds of open woods and in trees along the road.

65. *Turdus mustelinus*. WOOD THRUSH.—Not seen at all the first few days where the Hermit was abundant. One was taken on Straight Creek, apparently very much out of place, where the wood was quite dense and damp. A few others were seen.

66. *Turdus fuscescens*. WILSON'S THRUSH.—Only one on the hillside above Straight Creek, acting very much as though a nest was near.

67. *Turdus aonalaschkæ pallasii*. HERMIT THRUSH.—Abundant; four or five nests, three on mossy banks at the side of the road; two I discovered from a wagon.

68. *Merula migratoria*. ROBIN.—Very common all over the open upland and near the clearings in the valleys.

69. *Sialia sialis*. BLUEBIRD.—Common around the farms.



## SUMMER BIRDS (JULY 15–AUG. 13, 1894) OF THE RHINE,<sup>1</sup>

BY RALPH HOFFMANN.

THE interest and pleasure which most naturalists experience in making field observations is often a reward for their somewhat tedious labors in other branches of the science to which they may devote their time. Especially when one is so fortunate as to carry his opera-glass into fresh woods and pastures new, the increased interest and heightened pleasure amply repay him for the discomforts of the journey. To me, in my capacity of amateur ornithologist, there has come a rather large share of these lighter labors, so that my slight connection with ornithology has proved, in a way, to be all play and no work. I hoped, therefore, when I looked forward last spring to a summer in Germany, to note down something which might be of interest to the members of the

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<sup>1</sup> Read before the Nuttall Ornith. Club, Cambridge, Mass., Dec., 1894.