

the region, but I saw and heard a male at Crellin, June 29, and one at Accident, July 8, 1920.

Melospiza georgiana. SWAMP SPARROW.—In a large bog between Negro and Meadow Mountains, near Accident, I found a breeding colony of Swamp Sparrows and heard their song from a small swamp near Oakland, on June 28 of this year. This extends the breeding range somewhat from that given in the 'Check-List,' where western Maryland is not included.—G. EFRIG, *River Forest (Oak Park P. O.), Ill.*

Rare and Unusual Birds in the Chicago Area During the Spring of 1920.—The spring of 1920 has been unusual to say the least. Many common birds were unaccountably rare, and many very rare ones were observed. The severe winter and heavy snowfall in Canada drove many birds such as the American Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*), Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrula*), Redpoll (*Acanthis linaria*), etc., down from the north. These have been recorded by Mr. Coale and myself. Early in March we had some fine weather, and, as a consequence, a large migration of about sixty varieties of birds literally poured in from the twentieth to the thirtieth of March. Now, however, the weather took a sudden turn and we had snow-storms every few days. This of course retarded the migration dreadfully. Since the twentieth of April, however, the weather has been nice, and the migration more or less regular. A list of the rare and unusual birds which I have observed this spring follows:

Aristonetta valisineria. CANVASBACK.—On April 10, I saw one male of this species on Wolf Lake, about twenty miles south of Chicago. On April 24, I saw a flock of six birds of both sexes at the same place, and was informed by a farmer that he had seen the same flock there for two weeks. This formerly common bird is rapidly becoming rarer in our area.

Grus canadensis. SANDHILL CRANE.—On April 22, while looking for birds on the Wooded Island, Jackson Park, Chicago, I saw a large bird about fifty feet above my head, attempting to fly west against a very strong wind. I immediately looked at the bird through my glasses and was able to study it for the space of twenty minutes. It continued to struggle against the wind, but to no avail, and at last was blown out of sight to the south. The bird came within thirty feet of me at one time, and of course its identity was unmistakable. It flew with legs and neck outstretched, I was even able to discern the red on the head, and the brownish on the wings. This bird is an exceedingly rare and irregular migrant. Some weeks after seeing the bird, I met a gentleman who had observed and identified the bird on the same day.

Macroramphus griseus scolopaceus. LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER.—On May 14 I observed several birds of this species flying with a large flock of Yellowlegs (*Totanus flavipes*), at Hyde Lake. I shot into the flock and secured a fine adult female Dowitcher, which proved to belong to the

subspecies *scolopaceus*. Both Dowitchers are rather rare migrants here, but I think the Long-billed is the commoner bird. The bird mentioned above is now in my collection.

Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus. YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD.—On April 24, I saw a flock of about fifty birds of this species in the rushes in Hyde Lake. More arrived later and to a large extent supplanted the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). These birds were at one time very abundant in the marshes and sloughes south of Chicago, but since the advent of the large factories and chemical plants, many of their best nesting grounds have been destroyed. At the present rate, the birds will be very rare in a few years.

Spizella pallida. CLAY-COLORED SPARROW.—On May 8, several friends and I noticed a small sparrow unlike anything else we had ever seen, at Wolf Lake. The bird was very tame, and allowed us to study it at very close range. Unfortunately I had no gun, but the brown on the sides of the head and the markings in general were so well defined and distinctive as to leave no room for doubt as to the bird's identity. This bird is an accidental straggler from the west, and has been taken in the Dunes by Mr. Stoddard.

Spiza americana. DICKCISSEL.—This bird breeds locally west of Chicago, but I have included it in this list because of the peculiar circumstances under which I saw it. On May 10, I was walking along Lake Park Ave., on my way to Jackson Park, at about five o'clock in the morning, when I noticed a flock of English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) across the street, and although one of the birds impressed me as very light, I paid no heed and went on. Hardly had I gone twenty yards when the birds flew across the street and two of them lit on a small tree. Now to my great surprise, one commenced to sing. I immediately retraced my steps and saw that the bird which was singing was a male Dickcissel. It seems strange to meet this bird of the fields and meadows in the heart of the city.

Dendroica discolor. PRAIRIE WARBLER.—On May 6, I saw one male of this species. The Prairie Warbler is always regarded as a rare migrant, but I have seen several in the Park.—NATHAN F. LEOPOLD, JR., 4754 Greenwood Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Items Relative to Some Costa Rican Birds. **Catharista urubu braziliensis.**—Apropos the articles in recent numbers of 'The Auk,' bearing on the subject of the power of the various senses of the Black Vulture. I may be allowed to record an incident, concerning the Central American form of the species, that came under observation of the writer and his wife, while located near Juan Viñas, Costa Rica, in April, 1920. We occupied a house, which was of considerable pretensions, and in good repair but had not been occupied, other than temporarily, for several years. Soon after settling there, we noted a particular Vulture, that came almost daily to the garden, surrounding the house, where it was usually to be seen perched on a fence