

IN MEMORIAM: FREDERIC HEDGE KENNARD  
1865-1937

BY ARTHUR CLEVELAND BENT

ON February 24, 1937, there passed on to the Happy Hunting Grounds one of the finest sportsmen that ever lived, Frederic Hedge Kennard, who, but for his innate modesty, would have been even more widely known than he was, as a prominent ornithologist, conservationist and naturalist. He shunned publicity and sought no popular acclaim, but, of the quiet, effective work that he did behind the scenes, and of the personal and financial backing that he gave to the many good causes in which he was interested, the half will never be known except to a few close friends.

He was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on November 19, 1865, the younger son of Martin Parry Kennard and Caroline Augusta Smith Kennard, both of Boston. He had only one brother, seventeen years his senior. His early education was at Stone's School in Boston, whence he entered Harvard College and graduated in 1888. He did graduate work for a time at the Bussey Institution and the Lawrence Scientific School, and entered the employ of Frederick Law Olmstead, the noted landscape architect, in Boston. Being dissatisfied with the income he was receiving from this office, he went into the employ of the General Electric Company for a while, and spent the winter of 1901-02 in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, experimenting with an electric coal-cutter, which did not prove to be a success. In 1906, he decided to take up landscape architecture on his own account and opened an office in Boston; later on, he also opened an office in Philadelphia. He was very successful in this and built up a large clientele; but he retired in 1915, having been laid up for some time with arthritis of the spine. During the practice of this profession, many of his clients, knowing his interest in birds, sought his advice as to what trees and shrubs to plant in order to attract birds. In response to this demand, he published in 'Bird-Lore' for 1912 a long list of trees, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants, native to New England, bearing fruit or seeds attractive to birds, also an illustrated description of a rustic food house.

Later on, he published in "The National Geographic Magazine," March, 1914, a thirty-page article on encouraging birds around the home; this was profusely illustrated with excellent reproductions of photographs of his home grounds and other places, showing the best methods of attracting and feeding birds.

Before he retired from landscape architecture, he had become interested in developing a chemical compound for various uses in the arts and in manufacturing. He spent many years in experimenting with it and invested

much capital in it before it was perfected, but it proved to be a very profitable investment after he had organized a company to promote, manufacture and distribute the product. He received handsome dividends from it during his later years.

In 1896, he married Sarah Harrison Eisenbrey, of a well-known Philadelphia family. She and their five children are still living; there is one daughter, Dr. Margaret A. Kennard, and there are four sons, Frederic H. Kennard, Jr., Dr. Harrison E. Kennard, Robert M. P. Kennard, and Dr. John H. Kennard. There are also two grandchildren. After their marriage, the Kennards lived in Brookline for a while, until they bought a large tract of land in Newton Centre and built a most attractive home on Dudley Road, into which they moved in March, 1907. Here Kennard's ability and experience as a landscape architect were used to good advantage in planning and laying out the surroundings of a country-gentleman's home, with spacious lawns, extensive gardens, woodland paths, a pond and a small stream. Much of it is heavily wooded, and a great variety of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants have been planted, making it most attractive to birds, as well as to his many friends who have enjoyed rambling through his beautiful and interesting grounds.

Fred Kennard's interest in birds began in boyhood; his oldest friends cannot remember a time when he was not interested in them. Like most of the good ornithologists of his generation, he began by collecting birds' eggs, a hobby that has started many a great ornithologist on the road to more serious scientific study of birds. His egg collecting, like everything else he did, was well done and as near perfection as possible. He was exceedingly careful in the identification of his eggs and would not have an egg in his collection about the identification of which there was the slightest doubt. I well remember how, while I was collecting terns' eggs with him on Muskeget Island, where both Common and Roseate Terns were nesting, he insisted on snaring, with horsehair snares, the parent bird on each nest before he would take the eggs. He was skillful and scrupulously neat in preparing his eggs and would not tolerate an imperfect specimen. Accurate and full data were written for each set. At an early age, he began collecting and mounting birds; at this he was equally skillful and particular; his large collection of mounted birds, which he bequeathed to Brown and Nichols School, is as nearly perfect as he could make it. He demanded the same degree of perfection in his large collection of bird skins, which he formed later in life and which is now in the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge. His collection of eggs was donated, some years ago, to the Boston Society of Natural History, where he was made Curator of Birds. During his earlier and more active years, he had collected and mounted an interesting series of groups of hawks, owls and other birds for this museum,

showing the nests, eggs and parent birds in their natural surroundings. The immense amount of labor involved in securing the nests of the larger hawks and owls, with the sections of the trees in which they were built, can be appreciated only by those who have tried it; this work well illustrates his tireless energy and his resourcefulness.

During his boyhood and college days, Fred Kennard did most of his bird work near his home in Brookline, in company with other kindred spirits among his boy friends, collecting eggs and learning to mount the birds he collected; I have heard him tell many interesting tales of amusing episodes, narrow escapes from trouble and ludicrous boyish pranks, as we swapped yarns on "what devils we used to be." As a result of his local work on the Red-shouldered Hawk, he published, in 'The Auk' for 1894, two interesting papers, on the history of four pairs of these hawks in Brookline, and on the development of the young, showing his ability for careful and accurate observation.

While still in college, he joined the Nuttall Ornithological Club which gave so many of us young men the inspiration and leadership of the older ornithologists, to whom we looked up for advice and suggestions. In 1892, he joined the American Ornithologists' Union and was elected a Member in 1912.

His father-in-law owned a camp at Forked Lake, Hamilton County, New York, where Fred spent a few weeks almost every summer, from 1892 to 1903. While there he made some observations on the nesting habits of the Red Crossbill and other birds, on which he published two papers in 'The Auk' for 1895.

He belonged to the Duck Lake Club, and afterwards maintained a private camp of his own in that section of Maine; he visited one of these camps, either in the spring or summer, almost every year from 1916 to 1934, when his camp was burned to the ground with the loss of much valuable fishing tackle. Though he spent much of his time at trout-fishing, of which he was very fond, he found plenty of time to devote to birds. He was much interested here in the nesting habits of the Rusty Blackbird, on which he published a paper in 'The Auk' for 1920.

After he had become well established in business for himself, he was able to take longer trips, farther away from home. He made three trips to Florida. His first visit was in 1911, from January 27 to March 7, when he made his headquarters at Sebastian. From there he visited Pelican Island, where he estimated that there were five thousand pairs nesting. From Malabar, with Henry ("Gator") Redding as guide, he travelled the sixteen miles across the prairie to Indian Field, on the marshes of the upper St. John's River, with an ox team, then by boat through the marshes, and on foot to Jane Green Swamp. He camped here for a week and spent much of

his time hunting turkeys, which his notes indicate were very common here; they saw large numbers of them, and shot nine, from which he secured some fine specimens.

He made his second trip to Florida in 1914. The main object of this trip was to hunt for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the Big Cypress. For this he made elaborate preparations; he had Tom Hand for a guide, who was supposed to know where to find the woodpeckers, and travelled through the big swamp extensively in a 'prairie schooner,' drawn by two yokes of oxen, with a man named Peter for a driver and camp man. Although they explored the swamp for a month, from February 14 to March 13, they saw only one female Ivory-billed Woodpecker, apparently not mated, which Kennard collected. Two more weeks were spent, the same season, exploring the Okaloacoochee Slough with the same outfit; this he describes as "a waterway extending from a few miles south of Fort Thompson, on the Caloosahatchee River, in a southerly direction into the Big Cypress, and from thence to the Gulf."

In both of these regions, they found turkeys and deer rather plentiful, and collected a number of interesting birds. This season's field work is fully described in two papers in 'The Auk' for 1915, 'On the Trail of the Ivory-bill,' and 'The Okaloacoochee Slough.'

In 1921, he spent most of the month of February, with Major Allan Brooks and Dr. L. C. Sanford, at Jupiter, Florida, making several short trips out from there. He was called home unexpectedly by the death of his brother.

Accompanied by his son, Harrison, Kennard enjoyed an extended trip by sea to the Canal Zone, Santa Marta, Colombia, and Jamaica, from the last of January to early in April, 1918. Twelve days were spent in the Canal Zone, about two weeks in Colombia, and twenty-four days in Jamaica. At all of these places, they were pleasantly entertained and travelled about extensively by train, boat and automobile, under the guidance of local residents who knew where to take them. Consequently they learned much about the regions, their products, their fauna and their flora. Kennard's elaborate journal is full of descriptions and sketches of the numerous new birds that he saw, with notes on their habits. He became so much interested in tropical birds, most of which were entirely new to him, that he returned to Panama in February, 1926, with J. D. Smith as taxidermist, to make a collection of birds for the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Nearly two months were spent in the Almirante Bay region, resulting in a large collection of birds, which were identified with the help of James L. Peters at the museum. The report on the collection was published by Kennard and Peters in the 'Proceedings' of the Boston Society of Natural History (vol. 38, pp. 443-465, 1928).

His southwestern trip, with his son Robert, began in January, 1922, with a sea voyage to Galveston, Texas, where the immense flocks of Snow and Blue Geese aroused his interest. He spent four days collecting around Corpus Christi with John Priour and then went to Brownsville, where he hunted with R. D. Camp and with the veteran hunter of chachalacas, E. W. Farmer, for nearly two weeks. Mrs. Kennard and their son John joined the party at San Antonio, whence they journeyed to southern Arizona, making headquarters at Tucson and at Oracle, near the north end of the Santa Catalina Mountains. From here they worked the surrounding country for over two months, and visited the Baboquivari Mountains with Professor C. T. Vorhies. On May 1, they left for Los Angeles, spent a week in southern California, and then started east, stopping off for two days at the Grand Canyon, and for a week in the Panhandle, to study and collect the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

The following summer, 1923, he was one of a party of well-known ornithologists invited by Copley Amory, Jr., to visit his camp at Matamek, Quebec, to study the bird life along the north shore of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, in which Mr. Amory was very much interested.

For the purpose of gathering material for his projected great work on the geese of the genus *Chen*, Kennard made four important trips in four different directions. To study the behavior of the Snow and Blue Geese on their wintering grounds and to obtain a series of specimens, he and I planned an expedition to the great wildfowl resorts on the coast of Louisiana in 1916. F. S. Hersey went as my representative, and together they spent over a month in this interesting region, as guests of the Delta Duck Club, E. A. McIlhenny and other local ornithologists and conservationists. They visited all the principal wildfowl resorts and reservations and collected a fine series of geese and other birds. At the Delta Duck Club, Kennard says, they saw more ducks in two hours than he had seen elsewhere in all his life; the records of the Club showed that for the past four years an average of over 11,000 ducks had been killed there each year. As to the Blue Geese, he says that the noise made by a rising flock can be compared only to that of an express train running through a covered bridge at full speed.

In order to study the concentration of Greater Snow Geese in their fall migration on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, he spent nearly two weeks, in September, 1923, at La Bature Island and at Cap Tourmont, as the guest of various gentlemen interested in the clubs at these points. Here he learned much of their habits by personal observation and by conversations with others, and obtained much data on migration from the club records.

Having heard of the success of F. E. Blaauw in breeding Snow, Ross's

and Blue Geese in captivity, and wishing to learn something about the downy young and immature plumages of these birds, he sailed for Europe in January, 1927, and visited Mr. Blaauw at his home in Holland. The results were not wholly satisfactory, as many of Mr. Blaauw's birds were hybrids, but he did get some information on plumages and colors of the soft parts.

Under the guidance of James Moffitt, he learned something about the winter habits of Snow, Ross's and other geese in their famous resorts in the Sacramento Valley, California, in 1929. He hunted there in various fields for about two weeks in November and December, had some experience in shooting geese and collected some good specimens of those he wanted. Before leaving for home, he stopped off for a couple of days in the Yosemite Valley.

On all of his trips Kennard kept very full records in his journals of everything he did, everywhere he went, all the men he met, the birds he saw each day, with notes on habits, sketches and color charts, all of which were carefully typewritten on his return home. These are not only interesting reading, but are valuable for reference, as guides to future field work.

His published articles, many of which are referred to above, were numerous. I find thirty-nine titles in 'The Auk' listed under his name; many of these were short notes on the occurrence of unusual birds. Among the longer papers, not already mentioned above, were an account of the breeding of the Brown Creeper in eastern Massachusetts (1905), a discussion of the ferruginous stains on the heads of wildfowl (1918), and an interesting paper on the treatment of moulds and bacteria on birds' eggs (1921). A few short articles were published in other magazines. His outstanding publication on systematic ornithology was on the specific status of the Greater Snow Goose, a paper which appeared in the 'Proceedings' of the New England Zoological Club (vol. 9, p. 85-93, 1927). He claimed the recognition of this goose as a distinct species, and proposed to name it *Chen atlantica*; although it still stands as a subspecies on our Check-list, the name, *atlantica*, is recognized as the proper designation for it. Partly as a result of his visit to Jamaica in 1918, he became interested in compiling, in collaboration with Outram Bangs, a list of the birds of that island, which was published in 'The Handbook of Jamaica, for 1920'; in this he modestly gives most of the credit to Bangs.

Much to our regret, Kennard's great work on the geese of the genus *Chen* was left unfinished. He spent years in collecting material for it, but his desire for perfection had postponed from year to year the final digestion of the mass of accumulated data and its arrangement in a form suitable for publication. Reams of correspondence with men all over North America, but especially with those connected with various stations of the Hudson's

Bay Company, and others in the far north, had brought him a great mass of data on migrations; but such correspondence was necessarily very slow, and he was always hoping for something more to fill in gaps. From these data he had made a series of large maps, plotting the spring and fall migrations of the different species, based on hundreds of records of occurrence. The literature had been thoroughly ransacked and indexed, as well as many references to his own notes and those of others. He had invested considerable money in a series of beautiful colored drawings by Major Brooks, to illustrate the downy young and other plumages of the different species, as well as the colors of the soft parts in life. But failing health and other troubles, during the latter part of his life, sapped his energy and ambition to finish it. We have some hope that we can find someone who will take up the work and put it in shape for publication, which it richly deserves.

But Kennard's activities were not wholly confined to birds. Through his association with Ernest Harold Baynes, he became very actively interested in the preservation of the American bison. He was one of the fourteen charter members that met in New York, in December, 1905, to organize the American Bison Society. He was, during the life of the organization, a Life Member, a member of the Board of Managers, a member of the Executive Committee for a long time, and at one time its Vice-President. He was instrumental, with others, in raising a fund of over \$10,000 for the permanent establishment of bison ranges in several States and in Canada; he contributed liberally to this himself, as did his parents and his wife's family. In September, 1909, he went to Kalispell, Montana, with Dr. William T. Hornaday, to purchase the first lot of bison. The Federal Government had acquired a tract of twenty-nine square miles in the Flathead Reservation, near Ravalli, Montana, on which to establish the Montana National Bison Range. The Society having agreed to purchase the bison and deliver them on the range, Dr. Hornaday and Kennard visited the Conrad Range at Kalispell, negotiated with Mrs. Conrad for the purchase of thirty-four bison at \$275 each, and selected twelve males and twenty-two females, the pick of the herd. Mrs. Conrad also gave to the Society the finest bull and the best cow in the herd. These animals were all transferred to the range later on and formed the nucleus of a large and flourishing herd, as well as a demonstration of what could be done, and was done, to save this noble animal.

This was the beginning of a series of similar efforts to perpetuate the species, which proved eminently successful. The bison population in North America was steadily increased from a total of 1010 animals in 1903 to 16,337 in 1926. These were widely distributed throughout forty-two States and four Provinces, largely in small groups, but in many cases in herds of considerable size. The above figures include 3134 wood bison in Athabasca, but otherwise the animals are all pure-blooded American bison.

Frederic Hedge Kennard was a man of splendid character, of a strong, sturdy, New England type. Those who knew him best admired him most. Beneath a rugged, somewhat brusque exterior, glowed a kind, generous, tender heart.

Ever ready to lend a helping hand to those who needed it, he won the everlasting gratitude and affection of more friends than will ever be known, for he seldom referred to such acts of kindness, even to his most intimate friends.

The lovelier side of his nature was known to but few. To most of us, he was known as a strong, vigorous "he man," of unbounded energy, strength, endurance and perseverance; nothing daunted him in the pursuit of his objectives. Once, while suffering with a severe attack of arthritis of the spine, he was forced to wear a heavy pair of corsets, almost equivalent to a straight-jacket; but he went on a trip to Maine with me, and could not resist the temptation to take off the corsets and climb to a heron's nest, though he writhed in pain from the effort.

He was an ideal host; the latch string of his home was always out for the entertainment of visiting ornithologists, and many there were that enjoyed his genial hospitality, often for long periods. His entertaining was generous, but informal; he abhorred formal dinner parties, disliked evening clothes, and often wore his knickerbockers about the city. As a conversationalist, he was most entertaining, always the center of attraction in any group of friends, with his keen sense of humor, ready wit and fund of anecdotes. At the A. O. U. meetings, his suite of rooms was always a center for the gathering of groups of convivial souls to enjoy his hospitality.

His courage was remarkable. During the last five years of his life, he knew that he was a doomed man, but for a long time he kept the dreaded truth from his family, wishing to spare them the anxiety that he felt. An operation in 1932 and repeated X-ray treatments prolonged his life, but with much suffering, which he bore with remarkable bravery and cheerfulness, fighting the inevitable with his indomitable spirit, until the spark of life faded peacefully away in his last sleep.

*Taunton, Mass.*



