

SNOW BUNTING. *Plectrophanax nivalis*

F132806, banded at Jamestown, N. Dak., December 29, 1933, by Chas. E. Boardman, was probably found dead in June, 1935 at Hebron, Labrador.
 34-97142, banded at McMillan, Mich., January 15, 1936, by O. M. Bryens, was retrapped and released February 26, 1938 at same place.
 36-19361, banded at McMillan, Mich., February 22, 1936, by O. M. Bryens, was found dead November 3, 1937 at Fort Coulonge, Que.

—U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.

THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS

By MARGARET MORSE NICE

It was a jolly party of eleven ornithologists that sailed for France from Baltimore on the *Newport News* under the leadership of Mr. Albert Brand. On Monday, the ninth of May, we arrived at the historic and beautiful city of Rouen just in time for the opening of the Ninth International Ornithological Congress by its President, Professor Allesandro Ghigi of Bologna. Some two hundred and sixty members were gathered there, England leading with sixty representatives and Germany and America tying for second place with twenty-four each. Every one received an enameled badge showing a pink Flamingo against a blue sky, and also a *Numéro Spécial* of *L'Oiseau et la Revue Française d'Ornithologie* containing articles on the collections in the museums we were to visit and on the birds at Clères, in Normandy, Paris and the Camargue. It was a happy occasion for meeting old friends and making new ones.

Jackdaws (*Coleus monedula*) shouted from the clock-tower of the railroad station and Black Redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis*) gave their plain little songs from the house tops. This species is extending its range northward, finding cottages in villages or apartment houses in cities equally acceptable as substitutes for the mountain cliffs that were its original habitat. In the little park on the Rue Jeanne d'Arc where six years previously I had met my first Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), a Chaffinch was again singing. A swan, guarded by her mate, was sitting on a nestful of eggs, and a sign warned us: "*Le coup d'ailes des cygnes est brutal.*" In the Jardin des Plantes a pair of Moor-Hens (*Gallinula chloropus*) were nest-building in a pool about fifty feet in diameter; Madame sat on a wee island in the center while Monsieur paddled busily about, picking up great water-lily leaves and bringing them to her.

The division of the papers into four sections—Taxonomy and Zoo-Geography, Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, and Applied Ornithology,—made it impossible for any one person to hear all the interesting lectures. A number dealt with the experimental study of migration: Count Wodzicki, who has worked with Storks (*Ciconia*

ciconia) in Poland on the sense of orientation, two papers on homing experiments—Dr. Rüppell with Hooded Crows (*Corvus cornix*), Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*) and Black-headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*), and Dr. Drost with the Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), while Dr. Stadie reported on experiments on the physiology of migration. Dr. Lawrence E. Hicks' "Population Study of the European Starling in America" aroused considerable interest. Two other papers based on banding were not read due to the absence of the authors, but will appear in the Proceedings—Prince Chigi's study of the migration of the European Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) and Dr. Warga's "Permanent Mating in the Great Tit (*Parus major*) and Redstart (*Phænicurus phænicurus*)."

Two mornings were spent at the Cinema Normandie. Here we saw Dr. A. A. Allen's sound film of disappearing American birds, Marquis Yamashina's movies of Japanese birds, the most unusual of which were Cormorants trained to catch fish for their masters, Dr. Stolpe's pictures of the flight of Hummingbirds, Captain Knight's of the Crowned Eagle and Secretary-bird, Dr. Lorenz' illuminating exposition of the behavior of the Greylag Goose, and Horst Siewert's pictures "Through the year with the Moose" and the extraordinary "Courtship of the Great Bustard."

The program was so full that it was difficult to get sufficient time to visit the sights of the wonderful old city—the splendid Palais de Justice, the Cathedral, and beautiful St. Etienne, and the various monuments connected with Jeanne d'Arc. One morning we went to the Natural History Museum, founded in 1828, and saw, besides mounted birds from over the world, a local collection and various habitat scenes, mostly of French birds. There was a reception at the Town Hall, a garden party celebrating the centenary of the Jardin des Plantes, and a grand banquet at the "Cirque" (*Salle des Fêtes du Cirque*) decorated with immense banners with insignia of Rouen and other cities of Normandy; here we were told to wear "evening dress and medals." On all these festive occasions we listened to many long speeches, all delivered in French.

One afternoon we traveled out in buses to Clères, the Zoological Park of M. Jean Delacour, the efficient and charming Secretary of the Congress. The Chateau is a stately structure, some of it dating from the first half of the 13th century. M. Delacour in an article on "The Ornithological Collections of Clères"* tells us, "Jeanne d'Arc, when taken to Rouen, stopped there a night, and two kings, Charles IX and Henry IV were also guests of the Chateau." On the spacious grounds antelopes and wallabys dashed about, while capibaris—large South American rodents, were more dignified. Two gibbons leaped about in the trees on an island in the duck pond, wonderfully skilful in jumping from place to place. The number of birds was bewildering; many kinds of Cranes, Egrets, Scarlet Ibises,

* L'oiseaux et la Revue française d'Ornithologie, 8:219-227. 1938.

Roseate Spoonbills, and Flamingos from Europe and America wandered over the meadows and waded in the stream. A great variety of Geese, Ducks and Swans were swimming on the pond and in the brook. Many of these nest each year, while Wood and Mandarin Ducks breed in full liberty. Several Rheas were on the hillside, one of them on a nest. Near the Chateau were large cages in which many rare birds were kept, while tropical birds—Cocks of the Rock, Birds of Paradise, and Hummingbirds—were housed in a greenhouse.

After a sumptuous tea in the Chateau we sat on the lawn and were delighted by immense blue and red Macaws that flew from tree to tree. Most of M. Delacour's birds have been brought back by himself from his trips to distant corners of the world. Many young birds are raised each year. "Many species," writes M. Delacour, "of which the habits, courtship, eggs and young were unknown, have been studied here for the first time." His article is illustrated by a colored plate of the magnificent Imperial Pheasant (*Hierophasis imperialis*), the male of which is dark blue with red cheeks and legs, the female brown. This bird "was discovered in the Province of Quangtri in Annam in 1923. A single pair was captured and brought to Clères, where they bred in 1925. No other wild specimen has been found since then, but there exists in European and American museums and collections of live birds a good number of individuals that came from the original pair, the male of which still lives, is in excellent condition and breeds each year, although at least sixteen years of age."

On the long excursion into the valley of the Seine we found Jackdaws on the ruined arches of the ancient Abbey of Jumièges, and hartstongue ferns and Redbreasts (*Erithacus rubecula*) at the Abbey of Saint-Wandrille. After a delicious lunch at Caudebec-en-Caux we drove through fine forests of beech and hornbeam and Scotch pine, finally stopping at a heath. Here one of my life's ambitions was realized. Ever since reading of the Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata dartfordiensis*) in one of W. H. Hudson's books, I had longed to see the little red-breasted bird. Here in a bush of gorse was a nest with babies, and not far away were the troubled parents, their bills stuffed with insects. In an adjoining field a pair of the curious Stone Curlews (*Burhinus oedicnemus*) stealthily left their eggs. We saw our first Wheatear (*Oenanthe oe. oenanthe*) and heard our first Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*). A bit later we stopped to visit a Wood-lark's (*Lullula a. arborea*) nest with four eggs that looked like those of a Song Sparrow. And a pert little Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*) brought food to its four babies in a broken stump.

On Saturday the Congress moved to Paris and in the afternoon we went to the Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes, which had a good collection, for those times, of native and exotic birds as early as 1804, the most important of which were three Black Emus (*Dromiceus diemenianus*) brought from an island south of Australia. These birds

lived until 1822 and fourteen years later the species had become extinct. We visited the remarkable Museum of Natural History, founded by Buffon in the reign of Louis XIV, and then attended a reception in the Galerie de Botanique where type specimens of new species discovered since the last Congress were displayed, as well as an interesting exhibition of bird paintings ranging in date from 1600 to the present day.

The next morning we were taken to the Parc Zoologique du Bois-de Vincennes, one of the finest modern zoos I have seen. The animals are enclosed by moats and many had great mountains of pinkish artificial rock to climb over. Instead of conventional buildings we walked into caves. There were severe warnings against exciting the animals and against feeding certain ones, especially against offering them stones. On the other hand, it was possible to buy bread and fish for other animals. Over the pool of the walruses and sea-lions the sign read: "*Chers visiteurs, excusez-nous, nous ne mangeons pas de pain.*" (Dear visitors, excuse us, but we don't eat bread.)

There were no small birds at this zoo, but a great flying cage for Herons, Storks and Gulls, and large pools for Ducks and Waders. One of the prettiest sights was a dance of a pair of Demoiselle Cranes; they waved their wings and bowed and skipped lightly about in a way that was utterly charming.

That night we traveled to Arles where we saw old churches, the well-preserved theater where classic plays are still given, and the Roman arena in which bull fights take place. Monday afternoon we started out again in buses, stopping at Nimes to see the fine arena and to visit the Natural History Museum where we were shown mounted specimens of birds of the Camargue. Then on and on across the monotonous plain to the remarkable walled city of Aigues-Mortes from which St. Louis sailed in 1270 on the crusade from which he was never to return.

On our way back to Arles we saw birds—a great heronry in low pines of Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*)—hundreds and hundreds of them. Blue egg shells were scattered hither and yon, while as many as six nests might be in one tree. Dr. H. Noll from Switzerland climbed a tree and found eggs, small young and large young in different nests. We were shown an occasional Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*), about the size of the Egret, but buffy rather than white. Amazing Hoopoes (*Upupa epops*) frequented the vineyards and Nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) sang all along the border of the woods.

The drought of a year's standing was broken at last; at 6.30 Tuesday morning we started off in a pouring rain for our chief day in the Camargue. Fortunately it cleared after a few hours and later became so bright that some of us were sunburned.

New birds to me were the European Avocets (*Recurvirostra avocetta*), about a dozen of which were running along the shore at Romieu; they are less brightly colored than our American species.

Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) sung loudly from the reeds, but refused to let itself be seen. A charming sight was the nest of a pair of Penduline Tits (*Remiz pendulinus*) on which both birds were building; it hung from a tree, shaped something like a Baltimore Oriole's nest. Later we were shown a finished structure with its funnel-like entrance near the top; Mr. Jourdain remarked that it resembles a swarm of bees.

The chief glory of the Camargue lies in the Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber roseus*) that visit it from Egypt. It was one of the most wonderful sights of my life—two thousand of the extraordinary birds standing together in the shallow water. They are pale pink instead of the bright pink of our American birds, but when they fly they are gorgeous beyond words, because the colors inside the wings are black and deep-rose. At rest they are rather inconspicuous, but when hundreds rise together it is a marvellous spectacle.

After an ample lunch we started on a long walk to visit Stilts (*Himantopus himantopus*). A herd of black cattle lowed and bellowed as if they would like to get at the impudent ornithologists who were taking pictures of them, but *gardiens* on white ponies stood between. The chief singers were Skylarks, White-throats (*Sylvia communis*), and always the cheerful Nightingales. Flocks of Ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*) wheeled about over the shallow ponds. The Stilts were handsome birds with white bodies, black wings and red legs stretched back in flight. They called *pee-wee* as they flew about disturbed by their admirers. The walking was more than wet and streams had to be jumped, the ladies assisted by the gentlemen. Dr. Allen waded about with the water half way to his knees, and a French ornithologist exclaimed, "Ce monsieur n'a pas de bottes!" We were shown a nest of the Stilt just above water; it held four astonishingly large eggs.

Tea and cakes were served at the headquarters of the Sanctuary. Here we saw a Goldfinch (*Acanthis carduelis*) building a nest and were shown a nest of the Spectacled Warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*) with five eggs. One of the loveliest nests I have ever seen was that of the Fantailed Warbler (*Cisticola juncides*) woven of spider webs between blades of grass. It held five tiny babies, but was so fragile that the *Guardien* warned us emphatically, "*Ne la touchez pas!*"

My last day in Provence was also memorable. Five of us Americans and Dr. Erwin Stresemann hired a taxi and visited a desert and a mountain. La Crau is part of the glacial moraine of the Rhone and the most stony place I have ever seen. It is an airport and the noisy planes were a disturbing element in our ornithological searches. Its other industry is sheep raising; large flocks of brown sheep, accompanied by a few black goats, a shepherd and a dog, crop the sparse vegetation so closely that we wondered how any birds could raise families. Nevertheless La Crau is the home of innumerable larks,—our old friend the Skylark, the small Short-toed Lark (*Calendrella b. brachydactyla*) with its unpretentious song, and

the Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha c. calandra*), the largest lark in Europe. "You would have to go to Thibet to see a larger one," Dr. Stresemann told us. We saw a pair of Mediterranean Wheatears (*Oenanthe hispanica*), a Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), and a Stone Curlew, and found a nest of the Short-toed Lark with five eggs. Some of us were lucky enough to get a splendid view of an Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) in its striking buff and black plumage.

The strangest bird of all was the rare Sand Grouse (*Pterocles achata*) with short legs and long tail. Unfortunately the birds were shy and gave us only fleeting glimpses. It was a long, hot tramp back to the car, while the Larks sang and mirages lined the horizon.

We drove through a fertile valley, the hillsides covered with almond and olive trees, the gardens protected from the fierce "mistral" by fences of reeds or rows of cypresses. Flowers were abundant and brilliant—scarlet poppies, golden broom, and many lovely things whose names we did not know. To our delight we saw our first Roller (*Coracias garrulus*), a striking bird in blue and black.

Les Baux is a picturesque mountain group rising abruptly from the plain; in the Middle Ages it was strongly fortified, but now its palaces are mostly ruins, destroyed by Richelieu. Many of the rocks have been quarried into rooms, while in one spot a large number of "pigeon holes" are thought to have served as a crypt.

For lunch we climbed to some rocks in the midst of prickly gorse; from this vantage point we saw and heard Melodious Warblers (*Hippolais polyglotta*), Subalpine Warblers (*Sylvia cantilans*), Serins (*Serinus canarius serinus*), Blue Rock Thrushes (*Monticola solitarius*), Nightingales, Hobbies (*Falco subbuteo*), and many Common Swifts (*Apus apus*). A Snake Eagle (*Circaëtus gallicus*) and Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraëtus fasciatus*) soared overhead. Dr. Allen found the nest of a handsome Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*), and finally we had the pleasure of seeing two rarities—the Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*) and the Crag Martin (*Riparia rupestris*).

Reluctantly we left this fascinating place, stopping at marshes to hear the grasshopper-like song of Savvi's Warbler (*Locustella luscionoides*) and by a farm house to admire the curious Hoopoes and to look into the wool-lined nest of a Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*). There were hills here that looked like mesas in the Oklahoma Panhandle, but an old monastery furnished different local color.

Dr. Alexander Wetmore was chosen as the new President and America as the next meeting place. Four years from now a great many Americans will have the chance to participate in the Tenth International Ornithological Congress and to become friends with people of like interests from other countries.

Chicago, Illinois.