

# THE WILSON BULLETIN

A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Study of Birds.  
Official Organ of the Wilson Ornithological Club.

Edited by **LYNDS JONES.**

PUBLISHED BY THE CLUB, AT OBERLIN, OHIO.

Price in the United States, Canada and Mexico, one dollar a year, 30 cents a number, post-paid. Price in all countries in the International Postal Union, \$1.25 a year, 40 cents a number. Subscriptions may be sent to Lynds Jones, Oberlin, Ohio, or to Mr. Frank L. Burns, Berwyn, Penn.

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## EDITORIAL.

It has been necessary to defer the third installment of the paper on the Falcones, and also to defer to the June number the index to the last volume. The editor greatly regrets this necessity.

Readers will be interested to know that the September number will contain the paper read at the last A. O. U. meeting, entitled, "At the Sign of the Northern Flicker," which Dr. Merriam spoke of as one of the most notable papers on life histories which has appeared. It will supplement the important work of our President, "A Monograph of the Flicker."

This is the time to begin to plan for a systematic study of the migrations and whatever influences them. Plan for certain whole days in the field, not to break the record but to learn more about the bird movements in your region. If you are so fortunate as to be associated with other bird students in your immediate region, form some sort of plan whereby each one may keep careful watch of a given region, each day if possible, and compare notes frequently. By such means it is possible to discover "fly lines," or routes which are preferred by certain species or by all species.

Make daily records so that definite information can be had of fluctuations and their possible causes. Having a definite point in view in bird observation does not make it less interesting but more so.

The readers will notice some changes in the make up of THE BULLETIN, beginning with this twenty-second volume. One of the things which we as students of birds need is closer touch with what each is doing. Therefore a department devoted to mention of what members and readers and students of birds generally are doing, have done, or are purposing doing has been opened, and will be contributed to by as many persons as it is possible to secure notices from. The editor cannot be expected to cover this whole field. It is also intended to renew the department of reviews of literature, and to bring in as associates in this department men and women whose work lies within the region covered by any local list or catalogue which may be published, and get those more familiar with any subject connected with bird study to review papers or books dealing with some special subject. Every reader is urged to send reviews of printed articles, pamphlets, and books whose contents cover the region in which his work is done, or subjects in which he is specially interested. By this means a great saving of time and expense could be effected to nearly every reader by acquainting him with the contents of such publications in a brief review. Otherwise it becomes necessary to purchase and read everything which appears relating to birds in general in order to get the little needed which relates to his special field.

Everybody knows that we need a great many more facts before we can learn why certain birds move southward in some winters and not in others, and why certain species suddenly appear in great numbers where they are almost or wholly unknown at other times. It does not seem to us impossible to gain possession of such facts if our plan of coöperation can be worked out in any fulness. Mr. P. A. Taverner, 55 Elmhurst Avenue, Highland Park, Mich., has expressed a willingness to undertake an investigation of the causes which produced the southward migrations of usually more northern birds the past winter. The editor bespeaks for him the interest and coöperation of everybody in getting at the facts. Send to him all the data you have gathered during the winter relating to all the birds which you have recorded, as well as mention of the absence of any species which you usually find, also stating what you can about the food supply in the way of seeds, nuts, berries, fruit, mice and other small mammals, giving also the condition of the weather. Your effort will be more than repaid by the value which the final report will bring to you.

One side of bird study has been far too generally neglected, a side which is second to none in importance for an understanding of bird life. That is the ecological side. Most local lists are so general in their statements regarding the occurrence of the individual species in the region under discussion that one gains very little information concerning them other than their relative abundance in the whole region. As an instance of what is meant, this is said of the Red-tailed Hawk in a recent local list of more than usual pretensions. "Common resident species." No other comment is given. One might readily infer that the region was wholly wooded and that the bird was evenly distributed over it. We happen to know that the topographical conditions are extremely variable, with scattered woods, in only a few of which this hawk would be likely to breed. Another short sentence would give information of value. We urge upon those who are contemplating compiling local lists to study the habits of the birds with a view of saying something unusual about them—unusual, viewed from the standpoint of the average present day list. It is not enough to say that a species is found—what is its place in the economy of the region. This does not require unusual ability and command of language; it only requires attention. If there has been a change in the topography of the region, resulting in a change or shifting of the life of the region, the facts should be stated. It is only by such means that we can learn what changes and influences are working upon our bird life and also upon human interests.

[From Forest and Stream, January 22, 1910.]

TO SAVE THE PASSENGER PIGEON.—It is gratifying to know that a last effort is being made to find and save from final extinction existing individuals of the Passenger Pigeon. The history of this effort is explained in the letter from Dr. C. F. Hodge, printed elsewhere in this issue of Forest and Stream.

The following memorandum was read at the meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, December 9, 1909:

"Through the interest and generosity of Colonel Anthony R. Kuser, I am authorized to offer the following award:

"Three hundred dollars (\$300.00) for first information of a nesting pair of wild Passenger Pigeons (*Ectopistes migratoria*) undisturbed.

"Before this award will be paid, such information, exclusive and confidential, must be furnished as will enable a committee of expert ornithologists to visit the nest and confirm the finding. If the nest and parent birds are found undisturbed, the award will be promptly paid.

(Signed)

C. WILLIAM BEEBE,

"New York Zoological Park, New York City.

"Furthermore, Colonel Kuser withdraws his former offer of \$100 for a freshly killed Passenger Pigeon. He does this on account of

the great danger of complete extinction of the species.

"Until January 1, 1911, during Mr. Beebe's absence from America, address all correspondence on the subject to C. F. Hodge, Clark University, Worcester, Mass., who will arrange for confirming party and payment of the award, if a nesting colony is found."

This action is, in part, a result of a paper presented to the Union by Mr. Hodge on "The Present Status of the Passenger Pigeon Problem." In this paper he took the position that as long as there is life there is hope—as long as there is any possibility of stragglers of this valuable bird existing on the continent we ought to do all in our power to save them. He said that he would not kill a specimen for \$1,000 even to prove that he had seen one, and wished that every one else felt as he does. All offers for skins or dead birds ought to be withdrawn, because at the present crisis these might result in killing the last pair.

At the close of the session Colonel Kuser said to Dr. Hodge that he wished to withdraw his offer for a freshly killed passenger pigeon. Dr. Hodge said that he did not expect everyone to agree with him, but Colonel Kuser replied that he also felt that he would not have one of the birds killed for \$1,000. "Well, then," replied Dr. Hodge, "why not let your offer stand for the location of a live specimen?" Colonel Kuser said: "I would gladly give \$200 for that."

Some discussion as to how the award should be announced followed. It hardly seemed worth while to offer an award for the sight of a bird that might be lost or dead the next day. It was clear that the important thing is to arouse universal interest in the matter and to take some action which may lead to saving the species from extermination. Finally Dr. Hodge said in effect: "What we want is to locate a breeding colony. Why do you not offer the award of \$200 for an undisturbed nest? Then the birds will be there long enough to make identification absolutely sure; we shall know that they are actually breeding, and around such a find we can organize adequate protective measures." "I would give \$300 for that," exclaimed Colonel Kuser, and so the matter was left for Messrs. Beebe and Hodge to draw up the announcement.

It seems now with Colonel Kuser's generous offer for a beginning, that an adequate search of the American continent should be set on foot, and if any of the birds are found breeding we ought to quickly effect the organization of a Passenger Pigeon restoration club with membership distributed throughout the United States and Canada. This club could then take up the details of protective work. In connection with the State Game Commissions and sportsmen's clubs it could obtain adequate State legislation and warden service, so that for a term of years the birds may be permitted to

feed and breed in absolute safety and be accorded the freedom of the continent. The organization of the people of a continent around such an interest is in itself an inspiring thing.

This plan should be effective as well in discovering existing Passenger Pigeons as in protecting them when discovered.

Since the above was written, there have been other offers of rewards for undisturbed nests of Passenger Pigeons, for the matter has been received with gratifying interest—an interest which ought to grow. Let us then have more awards and without delay. There should be enough to cover the whole continent and to arouse an interest everywhere. If no nests are found it will cost no one anything; if nesting colonies are found and protected it will be worth a great deal.

Here is the list of the offers of awards up to January 19, 1910:

Col. Anthony R. Kuser, for first nest or nesting colony on North American continent, confirmed .....	\$300
Wm. B. Mershon, for first nest for Michigan.....	100
Edw. Avis, for first nest for Connecticut.....	100
Messrs. Deane and Whitman, first nest for Illinois.....	100
John E. Thayer, five awards of \$100 each for the five most likely States or Canadian provinces from which no local offers have been secured by April 15.....	500
County Awards: Allen A. Miller, for first nest found in Worcester County, Mass. ....	20

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NEW HAVEN, CONN., 10 February, 1910.

On December 8, 1909, there was organized in New York City the American Bird Banding Association, the object of which is "the banding of wild birds and the recording of accurate data on their movements." The formation of this society was the outgrowth of a movement which was started in 1908 by a committee of the New Haven Bird Club, having in mind the study of the movements and migrations of wild birds by means of metal bands, which should be attached to their legs. These bands bear an address and a serial number, the inscription reading "Notify the Auk, New York." When a bird is banded a record is made of the number of the band, and the species of bird on which it is used, as well as the date and the place of banding. Should this bird ever fall into anyone's hands, it is hoped that as a result of the inscription on the band, a notification of the finding will be sent to "The Auk," together with a record of the number. In this way accurate data may be obtained of the movements of *individual* birds, a thing which is not possible by the ordinary methods of studying migration. The bands are distributed to interested persons throughout the country, who use them as opportunity offers, this being principally, of course, upon young birds which have not yet left their nest.

This method of studying migration has now been employed in a number of European countries for several years, and noteworthy results have been obtained, such as the capture in South Africa of Storks which were banded in Southern Europe.

An account of the beginning of the work in this country has already been published in "The Auk" (Vol. 26, No. 2, April, 1909, pp. 137-143). Since that time the work has been much extended and during the past season most encouraging results have been obtained. (It is expected that an account of these will appear in the April "Auk" of this year.) It was a result of the extension of the work, which had assumed a national character, that a definite organization was this winter formed for carrying it on. The committee in charge has heretofore depended upon voluntary contributions to defray expenses; it is hoped that now enough interested persons will become members so that their dues of one dollar per year will supply the needed funds. We therefore make this appeal to all persons who are interested in birds, and especially in that great mystery of bird-life—migration—to aid in the solution of its problems by joining this Association. Members will receive free a copy of the annual report of the Executive Committee, and such other literature as may be issued, including a copy of the forthcoming report for the season of 1909. (Since members of the American Ornithologists' Union will get this report in the "Auk," in order that the expenses of the Association may be kept down, and the funds applied to the banding operations, separates will not be sent to such persons unless especially requested.)

For the benefit of any who may fear that the prosecution of this work may be detrimental to bird-life, it should be stated that the Association is thoroughly in sympathy with the conservative efforts of the Audubon Societies in this country. The shooting of birds for the recovery of bands is in no way a part of the scheme. It is desired to have banding done only by reliable persons, and should it be found that the banding of any species is doing harm, either from the disturbing of the nestlings, or from other causes, such work on that species will be discountenanced. As a guaranty of good faith it may be mentioned that the present membership includes not only many of the foremost members of the American Ornithologists' Union but also leaders of the Audubon movement in America.

Applications for membership and remittances of dues should be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. C. J. Pennock, Kennett Square, Pa. Persons interested in the banding and caring to assist in this part of the work, should address Dr. Leon J. Cole, Pea-

body Museum, New Haven, Conn. (After April 1, 1910: College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.)

LEON J. COLE, *President and Chairman of the Executive Committee.*

Peabody Museum, New Haven, Conn.

C. J. PENNOCK, *Secretary-Treasurer,*  
Kennett Square, Pa.

LOUIS B. BISHOP,

356 Orange Street, New Haven, Conn.

GLOVER M. ALLEN,

16 Louisburg Square, Boston, Mass.

THOS. S. ROBERTS,

1603 Fourth Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

#### FIELD NOTES.

ADDITIONAL VERNACULAR NAMES OF THE FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*).—In Barton's Fragments of Natural History of Pennsylvania, published in 1799, and now exceedingly rare, I find the following: "I am informed that this bird is known in Maryland by the name of 'Dishwasher'; also given the name of 'Flecker.'"

*Berwyn, Pa.*

FRANK L. BURNS.

HORNED LARK AND BOHEMIAN WAXWING IN MIDDLE WESTERN OHIO.—On December 28, in very cold weather, I met a flock of six Horned Larks in Shelby County, O. The birds were feeding on dung in the middle of a road and allowed close approach. This is my first record of *Otocorys alpestris* proper in this region. On January 18, in a severe windstorm, I was surprised by a flock of some twenty odd Bohemian Waxwing on the street on which I live about one hundred feet away from the house in some cedar trees and maple trees, where they, however, only rested for a few minutes. On January 22, in a howling blizzard, I saw presumably the same flock out at a cemetery, a mile from town, while I was conducting a funeral, and a neater looking flock of birds I never saw. They were absolutely unsuspecting, apparently not knowing what kind of a creature a man was.

*New Bremen, O.*

W. F. HENNINGER.

MIDDLE WESTERN OHIO NOTES.—DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT.—(*Phalacrocorax auritus*. Lesson).—An adult female taken on the Pasco Pond near Sidney, Ohio, September 28, 1909.

BLACK DUCK (*Anas rubripes*, Brewster).—An adult male, taken on the Loramie Reservoir, Shelby County, Ohio, October 12, 1909.