

FIELD NOTES

OBSERVATIONS ON SOME OF THE JUNE BIRDS IN THE VICINITY OF CINCINNATI, OHIO.

During the first two weeks of June, 1916, spent at Cincinnati, I made eleven trips into the surrounding districts, identifying over sixty species of land birds. Six of the trips were made to Ault Park, a bird paradise, where over fifty species other than the Mockingbird were found.

Excellent chances were afforded to study the Summer Tanager and the Mockingbird, unfamiliar birds to the writer. About a dozen of each species were found and many were observed at close range. The two birds, especially the Mockingbird, are rather scarce around Cincinnati, except in certain neighborhoods pointed out by a local bird authority. The status of the Mockingbird in the vicinity is interesting. The Queen City bird-lovers say that this wonderful songster is extending its range northward, which movement is largely controlled by the food supply and not by climatic conditions. This was verified by inquiries in the field. One farmer, a resident along Muddy Creek, told me that about five years previously the first Mockingbirds appeared in his neighborhood, and since then they have gradually increased in numbers. While talking to him a gray bird with a long tail flew from a cherry tree, displaying the tell-tale white wing-bars and tail feathers four broad streaks of white, making a conspicuous field mark in flight. At a long distance the birds resembling the Mockingbird are the Blue Jay and the Mourning Dove, which may be differentiated by studying the three species together. At ordinary range the Mockingbird is unmistakable.

The Summer Tanagers were very tame along Hillside Avenue below Sedamsville, where most of the Mockingbirds and Tanagers were found. One female Summer Tanager, perching on a weed stalk in the full sunlight, was approached within six feet, where the light orange-yellow hue of the bird seemed almost perfect. The somber greenish-yellow shade of the Scarlet Tanager cannot compare with this color. Only three Scarlet Tanagers were seen: a single male was a pleasant incident of an all-day trip along Muddy Creek and a pair were noted near Ault Park. One never tires admiring the beautiful tanagers: the matchless and gorgeous rose-red of the Summer Tanager and the flaming scarlet of the Scarlet Tanager that seems ready to burn up his coal-black wings and tail, the most vivid contrast in the bird-world. I always think of these two shades of red as the piranga reds.

Numbers of Cliff Swallows, an uncommon species to the writer, were flying with Bank Swallows, Purple Martins, etc., near the rocky cliffs facing Muddy Creek. This was my best opportunity to watch this swallow, which is rather rare in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The Grasshopper Sparrow was evident as a breeder in a field one-half mile north of Madisonville. In Ault Park I was surprised by running across a Louisiana Water-Thrush feeding its young. The Whip-poor-will, a rare bird around Cincinnati, is apparently breeding near Cove Creek.

In the cemetery near Fort Thomas, Kentucky, Orchard Orioles seemed to be everywhere, and for the first time I learned their sweet song, which I consider after the Bobolink's, the most liquid of our bird songs, and like that song a bubbling out of joyful notes. Around Cincinnati the Orchard Orioles outnumber the Baltimore Orioles about six to one, while in Western Pennsylvania ten Baltimore Orioles are usually seen to every Orchard Oriole. In the vicinity of Fort Thomas Yellow-breasted Chats were very numerous, although they were not uncommon anywhere.

One of the region's characteristic birds, the Bewick Wren, was not seen, although a lookout was kept for him, as I have never identified this bird. The Yellow-throat was observed but once, while the Redstart was not placed.

As I wandered through the woods many of the common familiar birds of Western Pennsylvania were absent. One of our rich songsters, the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, heads the list. With a northerner it will take a lot of Mockingbirds to make up for the loss of the "potato-bug" bird. The tinkling Bobolink's melody was lamentably missing because no June day bird trip is complete without hearing "Robert-of-Lincoln's" tambourine-like flight song.

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FIELD NOTES FROM THE CHICAGO AREA FOR 1916.

The year opened auspiciously. A week of unusually mild weather in February brought, on the 22d of that month, the first Bluebirds, a Killdeer and a few Song Sparrows, although the last species seems some years to winter in small numbers as near as LaGrange, just 5-6 miles southwest of River Forest. On the same day 10-15 Ring-necked Pheasants were seen.

The most interesting parts of the Chicago area are no doubt the sand dunes, on the south shore of Lake Michigan. Here, 30-40 miles from Chicago, may yet be seen several pairs of Great Horned Owls and Ruffed Grouse. During the winter of 1915-16, as again in the present, large flocks of Redpolls and Evening Grosbeaks are