

count of the occurrence there of the bird. The item states that the birds were seen on various lawns and in parks about the city and manifested very little fear. At one home the birds hopped about near some men who were working on the lawn.

The abnormal weather conditions which prevailed through the month of March in this part of the country undoubtedly affected bird migration to a great extent. There were a large number of snows, some reaching the proportions of blizzards, as well as much bitterly cold weather (on the morning of March 19 the mercury stood at fifteen degrees below zero!). In addition to the Crossbills, the Redpoll (*Acanthis linaria linaria*) was seen here, its appearance being doubtless due to the upset weather program. I first saw it March 17, in the above described grove, where it fed on the cones. This species was represented by a flock which numbered about ten, at the time of its largest number. The Redpoll was seen in the grove on numerous occasions until April 10, which was my last record for it.

Our migration of Ducks and Geese at Winthrop was to all appearances much larger than usual. In several years past the numbers of both groups have been small, far too small, and it is indeed gratifying to note an increase, which is doubtless a direct result of Federal protection. The Ducks passed through in good numbers. Many of them stayed for a day or two on Buffalo Creek at a time when it was in the annual spring freshet. Their quacking and splashing was a common sound whenever one went near certain portions of the water-covered pastures along the creek. My own records for the 1923 spring Geese, though meager and scattered, are nevertheless encouraging, in view of the very small numbers of Geese that have been seen in spring migration in the last few years. I have records for about ten flocks, seen on eight dates (Jan. 4 to Apr. 20), and which represent some 425 birds in all.

On April 20 I saw my first Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus ludovicianus*), which, according to Anderson's *Birds of Iowa* (1907, p. 368), is very rare and local in Iowa. The bird I saw was scurrying about in a brush heap near my home. Its extra large size and rusty brown plumage at once distinguished it as a species other than our common House Wren. The white eye line was conspicuous, while the absence of white tail feather tips eliminated the possibility of its being a Bewick's Wren. Its notes were much different from the House Wren's. I saw the bird plainly and in good light.

FRED J. PIERCE.

Winthrop, Iowa, April, 1923.

#### SOME MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON BIRDS

BY L. OTLEY PINDAR

A friend of mine who owns a country place in Franklin County, Kentucky, three or four miles from Frankfort and not far from the Woodford County line, and who for some time has been raising a good many pigeons, tells me that his flock has been completely broken up by the depredations of Screech Owls, which kill and eat or carry off the squabs about as fast as they are hatched. They have so terrorized the adult

birds that they have left the cote. A neighbor of my friend has had the same experience with his pigeons. Strange to say, the owls do not seem to have attacked the young chickens and turkeys, possibly because the fowls are better protected in the poultry house, which is nearer the dwelling of my friend than is the pigeon house and is not so easily entered. My friend is not a trained ornithologist but is a close observer; and, besides, it does not take a trained ornithologist to identify a bird so well known as the Screech Owl.

On May 10, 1923, at 6:00 p. m., I saw a solitary Nighthawk, the first one I had ever seen in this part of the state during the spring migration. It is common enough during the fall. This covers observations for nearly thirty years in Franklin, Anderson and Woodford Counties, except for the time I was in the army during the World War, and up to November, 1920. I listed it as common transient in Fulton County in 1889. Later, in an unpublished note on Fulton County, 1892-1893, I listed it as a rather rare summer resident. With the exception of the record mentioned above I have failed to see it in this section in spring or summer, and the "Bull-bat" is such a noticeable bird that it would hardly be overlooked if present. From my notes I find it listed as a common transient in Harrison County in 1890 and in the spring of 1891. Later I saw another Nighthawk on July 16; two on July 31; one on August 13, 1923.

While on the subject of birds which I have not seen here I think it very unusual that I have not recorded a Slate-colored Junco here the past three winters, 1920-21, 1921-22, 1922-23. They used to be plentiful enough, but I have not seen one since leaving Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont, in November, 1920. And during these same winters I have been in Franklin, Woodford, Anderson, Fayette, Jefferson, Fulton, Hickman, McCracken, Lee, Knox, Harlan, Bell, Bourbon, Mason and Jessamine Counties, although I was in some of these only a short time. I do not say that the Junco was not to be found in any of these places, but I did not find them, and not having seen them at my own home for the preceding winters, I looked for them particularly wherever I went.

Quite recently I spent a day with Mr. Hugh Cromwell, the man whose pigeons were killed out by Screech Owls last year. While I was there he gave me some further data on the destructiveness of the Screech Owl. As Mr. Cromwell has a good many fruit trees on his place he welcomes the birds, and so protects them that his place might appropriately be called a bird sanctuary. Across the pike, and almost in front of his house, is a partially decayed tree, in which the Screech Owls made their home this year. One night the owls raided the nests of a Dove, a Robin and a Catbird and killed or carried away all the young birds in each nest. A few nights later the same tragedy happened to the nest of a Wood Thrush. A few of the Pigeons had meanwhile returned to the cote and were rearing some young. One night, when Mr. Cromwell heard a commotion at the cote he hurried out and was able to rescue a pair of squabs and also to capture the offending Owl, which he promptly killed. A night or two later a Robin's nest within twenty feet of the house was attacked and Mr. Cromwell was again able

to protect the young birds, but not to capture the marauder. If we assume that there were two young Doves and four each in the three other nests, there is a total of fourteen young birds killed in one week by a single pair of Screech Owls. If this should prove to be a common habit of the Screech Owl, the toll levied upon our common and useful insectivorous birds must be unthinkable. I want to request that observers everywhere collect data on the depredations of the Screech Owl.

In the summer of 1920, when I was on duty as a medical officer at Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont, my attention was directed to the apparent abundance of the Whip-poor-will in that region. There were almost constant calls in every direction from the earliest twilight through the night, and even until bright daylight. I thought how rarely the birds were visible, I knew, of course, the bird's shy attitude, but I thought that I ought to see it once in a while without so much care and effort to find it. At last, one evening, as I was sitting on the edge of a small, well-wooded ravine, watching some other birds, a Whip-poor-will appeared in its customary silent way not twenty feet from me. After a moment of owl-like stillness, he utter his usual note or cry. In another moment he seemingly repeated it, but I heard no sound. Instantly I concentrated my attention on this particular bird and almost immediately the same thing was repeated, but this time I heard the Whip-poor-will call far down in the ravine. The next time it was closer, the next from the bird's immediate vicinity, then down in the ravine again several times, and once back of me, between the ravine and the troop stables. The bird's mouth would open, its throat would swell, and simultaneously the "Whip-poor-will" would be heard from the different directions mentioned above. I continued to watch this strange performance until it was too dark to see the actor any longer. During this time I heard several Whip-poor-will calls from other directions and distances, but not emanating from this bird. I had known before that other birds had slight ventriloquial powers, the Mockingbird and, to a lesser degree, the Wood Thrush, but such an exhibition of ventriloquism as this I would not have thought possible. I had never suspected the Whip-poor-will of having this power at all, although it is a weird, uncanny night-rover and is and has been the basis of not a few superstitions. I visited this ravine again repeatedly at the same evening hour and also went to other localities which seemed favorable, but while on several of these occasions I saw a Whip-poor-will, I never again had the opportunity to keep one under observation more than a minute or two.

Last year, my friend, H. T. Hiatt, now of Stanford, Kentucky, a keen sportsman and a keen observer, told me of a similar incident, his observation having been made in Lincoln or Garrard County, Kentucky. He was very much surprised at the same thing's occurrence in Vermont and seemed to want to give the monopoly of this ventriloquial talent to the Kentucky Whip-poor-will.

While on the subject of the Whip-poor-will I wish to record another unique experience. In June, 1921, as I was going from Winchester to Lexington, Kentucky, in an automobile, a Whip-poor-will flew up from the side of the road a short distance ahead of us and alighted on the

same side of the road some fifty or sixty yards farther on. As we neared it, it flew again and continued to keep ahead of us by fifty to seventy-five yards for a distance equal to 450-550 yards. This action was unusual for this species, as was also the time of its appearance, ten o'clock in the morning. It was suggested by my companion that it was playing the trick so often used by other birds, to lead the trespasser from the nest. I cannot agree with this, however, as it was not the right place for a Whip-poor-will to nest; and, besides, on such a constantly traveled road a nesting bird would have become accustomed to the passage of all kinds of vehicles, especially automobiles. Fairly good-sized trees were quite close together along the pike and, in my opinion, the Whip-poor-will would have preferred their shelter to the open roadside. The puzzling question is, why did it fly at all?

The section of Versailles, Kentucky, in which I live, is fairly well wooded, fruit trees predominating, and there is also a good deal of shrubbery in some of the yards. Down the avenue a few hundred yards is an old osage hedge, which has not been trimmed for years and which is now eighteen to twenty feet high. The number of birds nesting in this section this spring and summer, 1923, is high,—I think,—much above the average for a space of this extent in this section of the state. We have the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, the Downy Woodpecker, the Flicker, the Kingbird, the Wood Pewee, the Blue Jay, the Bronzed Grackle, the Field Sparrow, the Cardinal, the Summer Tanager, the Purple Martin (about 20 pairs), the Red-eyed Vireo, the Yellow Warbler, the Mockingbird, the Catbird (several pairs), the Red-headed Woodpecker (two pairs), the Crested Flycatcher, the Brown Thrasher, the Carolina Chickadee, the Wood Thrush, and the Robin; also, perhaps half a dozen pairs of English Sparrows—not so many as one would expect. With the exception of two or three prowling cats, which I know very well I ought to shoot, there is nothing to molest these birds, and I am sure that nearly all were able to rear their broods in safety. Just about the time that all the fledglings were out of the nests and all were able to keep up with the parent birds, the entire bird population, except the English Sparrows and the Martins, disappeared for several weeks. For the past several days—this is being written August 11—they have been coming back, a Downy and a Cardinal being the first comers. I have wondered what could have been the reason for this exodus and have decided on the following: During the time that the young were being fed, the parent birds were necessarily more or less restricted to the immediate vicinity and, consequently, consumed nearly all of the food supply. When the young were able to travel they sought other places for food. When the food supply again became normal in their nesting area, they returned.

I should like to give in detail my experience with a precocious Hummingbird, which Professor Gordon Wilson referred to in his note in the June, 1923, Bulletin. He made this observation in the same season, 1922, as the one I refer to. In front of the Kentucky Institution for the Feeble-minded, at Frankfort, where I was for some time Physician in Charge and Assistant Superintendent, are long, narrow beds of flowering plants, principally at least in 1922, scarlet sage and nasturtiums. Birds are

rigidly protected on the grounds, which are quite extensive, and among the number nesting there was a pair of Hummingbirds, which several of us had noted from time to time hovering over the flowers near the front porch. On two, perhaps three, occasions, I had seen what I supposed to be Bumblebees, near, if not actually with, the Hummers. I should never have noticed the difference if one of the nurses had not commented on the friendliness of the Hummingbirds and the Bumblebees. This set me to watching, with the result that the Bumblebees proved to be young Hummers, only about a fourth as large as the adult birds. I had these birds under observation for three weeks, during which time the young Hummers steadily increased in size until they were as large as their parents.

Now this suggests some queries: Is the Hummingbird precocial? Or relatively so? Was it arrested or, rather, delayed, growth? If so, what caused it? Was there a scarcity of food essential to the development of this species?

I should like also to add some records which strengthen those of Professor Wilson in the June Bulletin:

BUFF-BREADED SANDPIPER (*Tryngites subruficollis*)—Listed on my Fulton County, Kentucky, list (Auk, 1889) as a casual visitor during both spring and fall migrations.

"SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Helinaia swainsonii*)—I am certain that I saw one August 29, 1887, but my only shell was loaded with No. 1 buck-shot and I failed to secure it. However, I have no doubt as to its identity."—Quotation from my 1889 list in Auk.

1890—One male shot, April 28.

1892—Not noted.

1893—Very rare summer resident in the part of the county (Fulton) known as the "Scatters," an extension of Reelfoot Lake.

I have been much interested ever since the arrival of the advance guard of the Purple Martins in their efforts to establish themselves in two bird-boxes on a neighbor's place. The Martins took them first, a few pairs, then the English Sparrows moved in. In a few days the Sparrows had undisputed possession of one of the boxes and a small part of the other. Then, as more Martins arrived, they disputed the possession of the first box. For a week or ten days the contest continued, neither side gaining any decided advantage, or, even if gaining, not holding it more than forty-eight hours. Then, to my great surprise and pleasure, the Martins began to win, and now for some time have had undisputed possession of both houses.

But the championship belt, if I may use pugilistic terms, goes to a pair of Bronzed Grackles, which have nested and are rearing a brood in an orchard just across the avenue. They have completely subjugated several pairs of Robins and Catbirds in or near the same orchard, have routed the Blue Jays, and do not hesitate to attack cats and dogs, even when not in the vicinity of their nest. There is one large cur in the neighborhood that they will not allow to pass quietly up and down the avenue. I do not know why they should display such enmity toward this particular dog, as I am almost sure that he has never been nearer the

nest than the sidewalk and know that he has made no effort to disturb it.

Do you know that the Robin is fond of the young Colorado Potato Beetle? I never learned this fact until this spring, when Robins materially aided me in protecting my potatoes.

President of the Kentucky Ornithological Society,  
Versailles, Kentucky.

#### TWO UNIQUE BIRD RECORDS

I camped out on Barren River at Ewing's Ford, some eight miles from Bowling Green, Kentucky, near the end of August, 1923. One of my camping companions, Mr. N. T. Hooks, a Senior in the Kentucky Teachers' College, suggested that Screech Owls could be called up just as can Bobwhites, Wild Turkeys and Ducks. He and I developed a call very much like that of the Screech Owl by blowing on our hands. To my surprise, the Screech Owls began to respond and came up very close to us. The lady members of the party were none too well delighted at our performance, which we repeated with the same success each night we were in camp. Sometimes there were a half dozen of the little fellows at a time vying with each other in moaning. Several times they came up close to our camp, on the very bank of the river.

One day in camp Mr. Hooks left a red-lined quilt lying on the top of his tent. Though we were in a clump of trees and bushes and were, consequently, not easily seen from any angle, the Hummingbirds discovered their favorite color in the quilt and made frequent trips to see what it was. At almost any time in the day we could hear the humming of their wings and could catch sight of one or more lingering around the quilt.

Bowling Green, Ky.

GORDON WILSON.