

MUNUSKONG STATE PARK

BY DR. K. CHRISTOFFERSON

The Munuskong State Park in Michigan was formerly a private club of eight members; namely, James R. Hayes, Oliver Nelson Gardner, Fred Postal, George Stroh, George Osius, John Dodge, Horace Dodge, and A. A. Schantz. All of these men have now passed away, excepting Mr. Osius and Mr. Schantz. Mr. Osius, representing the heirs of the former owners, sold the property to the Dodge Bros., Inc., who, in turn, deeded it to the State of Michigan without cost, and as a memorial to John and Horace Dodge.

Because of the care and protection of the trees and game on this club property during the past twenty-five years the State of Michigan is now in possession of a wonderful wild life sanctuary. It is a place where the people may camp, or where a cottage may be rented for a limited time. Trails are being opened, affording a wonderful opportunity for the study of birds and wild game. There are also many kinds of wild flowers for those who are botanically inclined.

The Park includes about 2433 acres bordering the innermost part of Munuskong Bay, and including a part of the St. Mary's River, in Chippewa County. It has about five miles of shore-line on the bay, much of which is provided with areas of tall rushes, affording good shelter for ducks and geese. In fact, it has been the Mecca for sportsmen for the last fifty years, and the home of the Red-man from time immemorial.

The Big and Little Munuskong Rivers run through it also, adding to its picturesqueness. The land is well wooded with such trees as the canoe birch, balm of gilead, white and black spruces, quaking aspen, balsam fir, arbor vitae, basswood, yellow birch, hard maple, white and black oaks, alders, willows, choke and pin cherries, june berries, mountain ash, with a few red oaks and mossy-cup burr oaks. Besides these there are a few white pines, which remain here as a relic of Michigan's former glory. None of these trees have been disturbed for the last forty years.

The State Department of Conservation has set aside about 600 acres of the marsh area as a wild fowl refuge. Corn is being fed daily, wild rice, wild celery, and other duck foods will be planted. On the land and wooded areas no hunting or trapping is permitted at any time. In this connection I might say that the sportsmen, recognizing the future benefit from such restrictions, are lending their support and encouragement; very little violation is taking place.

Deer are here in large numbers and may be seen frequently. Bear, moose, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, woodchucks, skunks, beaver, mink, weasels, porcupines, red and flying squirrels, and rabbits are among the mammals which inhabit the park area. This park is one of the few areas where the Ruffed Grouse is left. A July census revealed sixty of these birds; but I know that a Great Horned Owl later got one of them, and four have since been shot, while two are in captivity. Jacksnipes breed, and may be put up throughout the summer. The Black Duck finds it a splendid breeding area, and I am not sure about other ducks. A pair of Wood Ducks were seen on July 14, 15, August 18, and September 10 of this year. A lone Pintail was reported on August 18.

The most common small bird is the Oven-bird, and it is easy to check as many as sixty on a short walk. Song Sparrows and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are next in abundance. We have seen and heard a few Evening Grosbeaks in

July, August, and October. The first Pine Grosbeak called this morning, and two Canada Jays were seen in the early part of the week. These were the first Canada Jays I have seen in four years. The Canada Jays and the Ravens are very scarce because of the poisoned bait set out by the trappers. This practice should be stopped, as the Ruffed Grouse, Evening Grosbeaks, Bluejays, chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers are also known to eat animal matter. Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks, and Titlarks are now down from the north, and no doubt the Pine Siskins and Redpolls are also.

During the past season, beginning May 17, we have carried on trapping and banding work. To date our total is 278, of thirty-five species. The largest number of one species was 168 Song Sparrows. I anticipate a wonderful season next year, for we will be prepared to operate throughout the migration period.

PICKFORD, MICHIGAN.

MARAUDING CROWS AND MAGPIES.—I regret to report that the rookery of Black-crowned Night Herons, at this point, was destroyed by Crows this season. This rookery is situated in a bluff of small aspen and willows bordering a running creek and was first observed by me in 1922 when it contained fourteen nests.

On June 11, this season, I visited the rookery for banding, but, on account of the very late spring, I found only sixteen birds large enough, although 129 nests contained small young and hatching eggs. On returning June 20, I found the nests deserted and the partly eaten young, and broken eggs, scattered on the ground and the Crows in multitudes. I returned the following day with a .22 rifle equipped with a silencer and succeeded in killing sixty-three of the black pirates, which was a little satisfaction at least. The old herons had moved about a mile up the creek and, apparently, established themselves in a large bog and, I think by their actions had rebuilt on the ground, although I am not certain of this as it was impossible to reach the part of the marsh they were in. Crows also destroyed a large colony of Common Terns that had established themselves on an island. On June 20 there were a great many nests containing eggs but, on returning on June 28, I found Crows in possession and only a very few eggs and young.

As usual Robins were quite numerous here this year, but Bronzed Grackles and Mourning Doves were scarce, especially doves which are decreasing year by year at this point.

Black-billed Cuckoos appeared here in 1924 following an infestation of American tent caterpillars, but this season the caterpillars had passed on, also the cuckoos.

Crows and Magpies are a great menace to the bird life at this point, and, while we wage a continual warfare against them, they are increasing year by year; and, unless we can devise some way of depleting their numbers, our grouse will be practically exterminated in a short time. Ducks appear to fare a little better than the grouse but the proportion of nests destroyed is about five to one not molested.—GEORGE LANG, *Indian Head, Saskatchewan*.

MOURNING DOVE FACTS.—A Mourning Dove's nest was discovered on March 31, 1927, with two eggs at that early date. The brooding period seemed to be exceedingly long, but the two young birds finally survived all dangers, and were banded on April 26, 1927. This is by forty to fifty days the earliest nest of the species that I have ever recorded here.

Another interesting record is, I banded a nestling Mourning Dove at an early date, so early that I knew the bird was too young to fly off the nest, although its leg was large enough to hold the band. Three days later I passed and did not see the nestling. Search revealed it on the ground, still warm, but half devoured by a large tortoise. Examination of the tortoise revealed that it was one upon which I had carved my name a few days more than ten years before.—JOHNSON A. NEFF, *Marionville, Missouri.*

HARRIS'S SPARROW.—I seem to be specializing in Harris's Sparrows, banding forty-four last fall, seventy-five in the spring and 165 this fall. They are self-assertive and I think inclined to monopolize the traps keeping away the smaller species.—O. A. STEVENS, *Fargo, N. D.*

TRAPPING EXPERIENCES WITH ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAKS.—During the first summer in which I occupied my house in Lake Forest, in 1915, several birds flew in through the open door of a glass-enclosed side porch. I was always successful in rescuing them, apparently unharmed, though occasionally they were stunned for several minutes. Having read of the banding of birds, I secured some bands from The American Bird Banding Association in 1917; and on May 24, 1919, I banded a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (No. 49510) which had flown into the porch. He was again taken in the porch on May 2, 1920, at which time I photographed him in my son's hands. A banded male grosbeak was seen in the yard many times during the summers of 1921 and 1922, and I felt quite certain it was No. 49510. On May 4, 1923, I caught him in a sparrow trap. The summers of 1924 and 1925 were like those of 1921 and 1922, but I did not take him in those summers and could prove nothing. After a few years of using a sparrow trap I added a home-made drop trap which could be pulled by a string from my window. In three weeks I banded thirteen males and eight females, all of which were re-taken frequently during the summer in either the same trap or the nearby sparrow trap; and one male was re-taken in 1924. In the latter year six were banded, all of whom were frequent repeats; and while conditions changed in no way, I did not trap another grosbeak until May, 1927. I am not only at a loss to understand their absence in the last few years, but I also cannot account for their abundance in 1923. At that time I had caught as many as twelve at one pull of the trap.

That I was unable to trap any birds between 1924 and 1927 does not mean that they left the neighborhood; for they still fed (much to her disgust) on the gooseberries of my neighbor across the street, were frequently at another neighbor's food shelf a block away, and were frequently seen in my yard, where each year I found at least one nest. The probable reason for their absence was the cleaning up of my next-door neighbors' property in such a way as to rob them of much of the desired shrubbery and bushes to which they could flee.—GEORGE ROBERTS, *Lake Forest, Illinois.*

SOME BANDING RESULTS IN MINNESOTA.—My trapping station is situated on a rear lot about fifty feet square, in the center of a residence district in south-east Minneapolis. I am about a half mile from the Mississippi River, the streets are well planted with trees, but there are no trees on my lot. The lot is well planted, especially around the borders, with shrubbery.

I have a bird bath on the ground into which water is kept trickling at all times during the summer months. This is the great attractive feature for birds.

I maintain a feeding station, keeping seeds on the ground about the traps, also raisins, peanuts, and bread crumbs most of the time. I have a weather-vane food shelter stocked with food at all times. Suet is kept out during the colder months.

Before establishing the bird bath and feeding station about the only birds ever seen on the lot were Robins and English Sparrows. Now I have a great variety of bird-visitors, some remaining all summer, others stopping off for several days during the migrating season.

I have an "Ever-set" trap to keep down the number of English Sparrows and it serves the purpose wonderfully well. In this trap I have taken perhaps half a dozen other birds during the season. All others banded have been taken in a drop trap of hardware cloth about 24x30 inches suspended by the middle so that all sides are open. This is operated by a pull-string. The trap is kept well baited at all times so that it requires but little time morning, noon, or night when I arrive, to capture the birds that have been feeding there for several hours unmolested.

During the four years since I started banding I have banded about 625 birds. During the present year (1927) I have banded to date 177 birds, as follows:

Blue Jay 5, White-throated Sparrow 85, Chipping Sparrow 5, Slate-colored Junco 46, Song Sparrow 1, Lincoln's Sparrow 2, Swamp Sparrow 1, Fox Sparrow 1, Towhee 1, Catbird 1, Brown Thrasher 4, House Wren 4, White-breasted Nuthatch 2, Willow Thrush 1, Gray-checked Thrush 1, and Robin 17.

I have had fifteen returns this year, which is a goodly number when we consider that I have been banding only about 150 birds each year. The returns are as follows:

April 18. Robin 374320; banded May 27, 1925.
 April 21. Chipping Sparrow 48474; banded May 9, 1926.
 April 24. Robin 267187; banded May 8, 1925.
 April 29. Robin 267181; banded April 29, 1925.
 April 30. Robin 246225; banded April 13, 1926.
 May 3. Robin 246224; banded April 12, 1926.
 May 4. Robin 246227; banded April 29, 1926.
 May 7. Chipping Sparrow A 48921; banded May 10, 1926.
 May 7. Robin 246228; banded May 7, 1926.
 May 11. Chipping Sparrow 86638; banded Sept. 15, 1924.
 May 17. Chipping Sparrow 79728; banded May 8, 1925.
 May 17. Robin 267190; banded May 17, 1925.
 May 27. Robin 267182; banded April 29, 1925.
 Oct. 2. Robin 374317; banded June 21 1925.
 Oct. 9. Blue Jay 261099; banded January 5, 1924.

Blue Jay 261099 is one of the interesting returns. Banded on January 5, 1924, he returned May 18, 1924, October 24, 1924, September 23, 1925, June 15, 1926, and October 9, 1927. It would seem quite evident that he remains here the entire year.—N. L. HUFF, *Minneapolis Minnesota*.

HOW DID THE BIRD FIND ITS WAY BACK?—A pair of Phoebes, nesting on the cross bracing of the ceiling of the garage, just over the entrance where the cars passed in and out every few minutes, hatched a Cowbird. This youngster quickly tired of the insect diet given by his foster parents, and shortly after leaving his nest, began feeding on the seeds in the traps, becoming finally a nuisance, since he entered them several times daily.

After several days of this we took him "for a ride," well covered to prevent him from seeing the surroundings, and liberated him about a mile from home. But the next morning we found him again feeding contentedly in one of the traps. We again took him for another ride of two miles, with the same result. Only after taking him out in the country for several miles, and liberating him near a flock of his own kind, did we succeed in getting rid of him. How did this recently born bird, reared by alien parents, never before off the home lot, find his way back home so quickly, all by himself, and with no guides?—
EDWARD A. EVERETT, *Waseca, Minnesota.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE NASHVILLE MEETING

The fourteenth annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club will be held at Nashville, Tennessee, on December 30-31, in conjunction with the meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science which will be in session throughout the same week. This will be the seventh meeting to be held with the American Association. The following announcements will give most of the information which may be desired by those who may be planning to attend. A meeting has just been held at Cleveland, Ohio, which was arranged during the interval between this one and the last issue of the BULLETIN. We expect to present complete accounts of both meetings in the next issue.

FROM THE NASHVILLE LOCAL COMMITTEE

The coming meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club at Nashville Tennessee, is being looked forward to with keen anticipation. The dates decided upon are December 30-31, with a field day on January 1. The American Association will hold its annual convocation at Nashville during the seven days following Christmas, and its programs, together with those of the thirty or more associated scientific organizations, provide a feast of entertainment and culture not otherwise to be had. The foremost scientific men of the country will be present at these meetings, many of them to participate in the programs. It will be a rare opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. These features, with the reduced railroad rates, should encourage every member of the Wilson Club to plan to attend the Nashville meeting.

The Tennessee Ornithological Society is again to be our host. Although the interval since the last Nashville meeting has not been great, the T. O. S. is pledged to outdo its previous efforts, and is confidently expecting that the W. O. C. members will do their part by lending their attendance. The program, tentatively, is as follows: On Friday, the 30th, the morning session will be divided between business and the reading of papers. The Friday afternoon and Saturday morning sessions will be devoted to papers, and the Saturday afternoon program will be followed by a short business session to conclude all business. On Friday evening the annual dinner will be served at the Hotel Hermitage, and the local Committee has prepared a spicy program for this occasion. Early Saturday morning a before-breakfast-trip, for those who wish, will be made to beautiful Radnor Lake, a thirty-five acre gem set among the knobs high above Nashville. Here several hundred ducks spend the winter along with other water birds.