

full adult plumage but the sex was not determined. The accompanying bird was similar in size to the bird collected but had typical grey juvenal plumage.

The following measurements were taken from the skin: culmen 39 mm., total length 572 mm., wingspan 1376 mm., and tarsus 69 mm. The mounted bird is in my collection at Campbell, Missouri.

In searching the literature for reports of Ross Geese in the Mississippi Valley the following were found. Texas: one killed and two others sighted in Wharton County, winter 1954 (Miller, 1954. *Condor*, 56:132); one was taken in Jefferson County, December, 1953, and another killed on Lissie Prairie near Eagle Lake, January 3, 1954 (Buller, 1955. *Auk*, 72:298). Louisiana: one taken on Little Vermilion Bay, February 23, 1910 (McAtee, 1910. *Auk*, 27:338); one taken in Cameron Parish, 1916 (Arthur, 1931. *Birds of La.*, Dept. of Conservation Bulletin No. 20, p. 126). Kansas: one seen in Wyandotte County, November 22, 1951 (Tordoff, 1956. Checklist of Birds of Kansas, Univ. of Kansas Publications—Museum of Nat. History, 8(5):314). Missouri: Mike Milonski, manager of the Busch Wildlife Area, Weldon Springs, Missouri, remembers one taken by his brother while hunting on the Mississippi River near St. Louis about ten years ago.—GLEN SMART, *Missouri Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Columbia, Missouri, July 14, 1959.*

Comment on the flight distance of the Great Blue Heron.—Orr and Sudia (1960. *Wilson Bull.*, 72:198), measured the flight distance of Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) at Lake Itasca, Minnesota. They report considerable variation of this flushing distance among what are assumed to be different individuals. Variation was not so great between successive flushes of the same individual.

Probably these authors are not aware of the fact that many herons in Itasca Park have become quite tame. The park is a sanctuary, and firearms have been prohibited, except during deer seasons, for many years. Very little molesting of wild animals occurs here. As a result, some herons have found that human occupants of boats are not to be feared but are in fact to be welcomed because dead yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) found around fishing boats represent an easily obtained food supply. In the past 15 years I have always found at Lake Itasca several herons which have adopted the habit of alighting on shore near fishing boats or circling near to look for perch. Sometimes two or three will keep watch at the same time. We always keep some perch in the boat to throw out for them. Typically, the heron flies out to the dead fish, settles down in the water, leisurely picks up and swallows the fish, then struggles into flight and goes back to shore to watch again from a vantage point on a tree, stub, log in the water, or just the ground. Sometimes the fish is carried to the shore before being swallowed, and then it is usually washed down with a few sips of water. One heron may accept several perch in succession. If the fish is not thrown far enough away from the boat, it may be ignored or the heron may fly out and shy away more than once before returning to shore. Presumably not all the herons present on the lake have learned this method of obtaining food.

As Orr and Sudia state, marked individuals should be used in determining flight distance. In addition, such work should be carried on where unusual tameness is not a factor.—WM. H. LONGLEY, *Kasson, Minnesota, July 14, 1960.*

Additional notes on the singing height of Ovenbirds.—Stenger and Falls (1959. *Wilson Bull.*, 71:125–140) recently presented data on utilized territory of the Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) of Algonquin Park, Ontario, in a variety of habitats. These data include measurements of the stratum (height) from which nine males sang (singing

height or song perch). A study now in progress at the William Hutcheson Memorial Forest, a mature oak forest on the Piedmont of New Jersey, offers some additional data for comparison. Forty-eight censuses to date, 30 during June and July of 1958, 10 in June, 1959, and others in April and May, 1959, have included observations of the singing height of at least 30 territorial males each year in the 63 acres of the forest. Stenger and Falls report that their birds sang from the lower branches of the canopy of each forest studied, which would be at heights of somewhat less than 45, 50, 55, or 85 feet according to the type of forest (Stenger and Falls, *op. cit.*, Table 1), and they observed that the height of song perches was proportional to the height of the canopy. At Hutcheson Forest, where the canopy is from 50 to 95 feet high, only 3 per cent of the singing males utilized sub-canopy perches. The majority, 71 per cent, of song perches were in the understory which is primarily of dogwood, 10 to 35 feet high. A few records (16%) show singing birds utilizing shrub or herbaceous perches. Evidently in this old oak forest, canopy height is not as important as it is in the aspen, conifer-birch, or maple-beech of Algonquin Park. Stenger and Falls indicate that in effect the Ovenbirds sang just below the densest layer of the forest canopy. Some interpretation is necessary here for Table 1 of Stenger and Falls (*ibid.*) indicates the "lower canopy" in the maple forest is the densest (85 per cent coverage at 35 feet, median values) rather than the "upper canopy," and this would then place Ovenbird singing height at near 35 feet rather than just under 85 feet, the former figure then being close to that observed at Hutcheson Forest. At any rate, singing height, or song perches at Hutcheson Forest is not as clearly related to density as in the Ontario forests, for both the dogwood understory and the oak canopy are essentially continuous, except in the area of windthrows, yet the birds utilize the lower continuous understory rather than the dense oak canopy. Territorial size does not seem to be related to height of song perches as the former is less variable than the latter, a fact in agreement with the findings of Stenger and Falls. Perhaps neither density or height of vegetation per se is a significant variable in determining singing height, though some factor operating as a consequence of density, for example, the extent of territory visible to the bird, may be involved. Certainly more data are needed on height of activity of this and other woodland species.—JEFF SWINEBROAD, *Department of Biological Sciences, Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, July 7, 1959.*

Courting dance of the Whip-poor-will.—One dark night I was listening to a Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*). He was very close but I could not see him. Suddenly his song stopped and a buzzing sound took its place, much as if a mechanical toy were running down. I could not imagine any bird making such a sound. I heard no more song and feared some animal had caught the bird.

Then came the summer of 1947, when a Whip-poor-will sang every night from my porch roof, his song often punctuated by the buzzing. On June 14, I stationed myself at a window opening onto the roof. It did not seem quite as dark as usual, or perhaps he sang a little earlier. There he was, almost on a level with me and not more than three feet away. I could see him very clearly, and watched his every move.

His actions as he sang reminded me of an opera singer. He turned to the left, sang *whip-poor-will*, faced the front, repeated it, and then sang it again facing right. He did this for several minutes, turning after each *whip-poor-will*. Suddenly his song stopped. He spread his wings and tail, and thrust his head forward and down. Seeming to use his head as a pivot, he turned around and around, all the time making the mechanical buzzing sound with which I had become familiar. In the increasing darkness I could not see another bird, but I feel there must have been a female nearby watching, and that