

THE BULLETIN

Iowa Ornithologists Union

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NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION — IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

PROGRAM

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF N O U

EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING OF I O U

Omaha, Nebraska, May 16, 1930

A. M.

- 9:00 Open remarks. Rev. Lawrence Plank, Omaha, Nebr. (10 min.)
9:10 Birds Seen on a Summer's Trip Through Europe. Mrs. Mary L. Bailey, Sioux City, Ia. (20 min.)
9:30 Some Observations on Florida Bird Life. Mrs. George L. Day, Superior, Nebr. (15 min.)
9:45 Red Letter Days. Mr. J. Wilbur Dole, Fairfield, Iowa, (15 min.)
10:00 Bird Songs In Musical Notation. Mrs. Lily R. Button, Fremont, Nebr. (20 min.)
10:20 Birds in Poetry. Mrs. A. J. Palas, Des Moines, Iowa (15 min.)
10:35 Water Fowl at Carter Lake, near Omaha. Mr. Robert Overing, Omaha, Nebr. (15 min.)
10:50 When Tragedy Stalks in Birdland. Mr. W. M. Rosen, Ogden, Ia. (illustrated with lantern slides) (20 min.)
11:30 Conservation of Wild Flowers. Mr. Victor Overman, Omaha, Nebr. (illustrated with lantern slides) (50 min.)
12:00 Noon

P. M.

- 1:00 Business Sessions of both unions in separate convention (2 hours.)
3:00 A Successful Failure. Mr. W. W. Bennett, Sioux City, Iowa, (25 min.)
3:25 Instinct and Reason in Birds. Rev. J. M. Bates, Red Cloud, Nebr. (15 min.)
3:40 Protective Coloration Among Birds. Dr. F. L. R. Roberts, Ames, Iowa (illustrated with lantern slides) (15 min.)
3:55 Mr. F. J. Keller's Bird Banding Work at Antioch, Nebr. Mrs. A. H. Jones, Hastings, Nebr. (10 min.)
4:05 Address by Dr. W. B. Bell, Assistant Biologist, Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. of Agri. (45 min.)
4:50 Announcements (10 min.)
5:00 Joint Annual Dinner. Castle Hotel Dining Room.
7:30 Brief Message from the Retiring Presidents: Miss Mary St. Martin for N. O. U. Mr. W. W. Bennett, for I. O. U.
8:00 Symposium on Conversation of Nebraska Birds. (Ballroom, Castle Hotel)
Natural Advantages of Nebraska as a Site for Birds. Dr. R. H. Wolcott, Lincoln (20 min.)
Nebraska's Bird Life as Found by the Early Naturalists. Mrs. Addison E. Sheldon, Lincoln (10 min.)
The Mourning Dove Situation in Nebraska. Mrs. Florence Steunenber, Omaha, (10 min.)
Can the Prairie Chickadee be saved? Mr. A. M. Brooking, Hastings (10 min.)
Proper Conservation of our Birds of Prey. Prof. M. H. Swenk, Lincoln (10 min.)
Eastern Nebraska Forests as Bird Sanctuaries. Mr. Towl, Vice-President, Fontenelle Forest Ass'n., Omaha (10 min.)
9:10 Announcements concerning Field Day on Saturday, May 17th.
9:20 Adjournment.

BABY OWLS

Two young Owls were found on the ground one morning, evidently blown down from a nest in a near-by tree the night before.

They were little fellows covered with down, and had big mouths that constantly reminded me that they were hungry.

They would not drink from a pan or cup, and if the meat they were fed was somewhat dry and did not have blood in it, it was necessary to give them water with a medicine dropper. When they were feeling alright, they would open their mouths, close their eyes, and act as if they enjoyed having the water poured down their throats. They would usually take a great deal.

There was something attractive about this medicine dropper to them. One evening after feeding them I forgot to remove it from the cage, and in the morning when I went to feed them I found that it was gone. One owl was all crouched up in one corner and would not eat, which was quite unusual. In a moment or two he moved out and straightened up, stretched his neck, opened his mouth, and disgorged my medicine dropper,

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THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGICAL ASS'N.

I have obtained the following notes from a letter from Mr. Carl Fritz Henning, Custodian of the Ledges State Park, and from copies of the magazines mentioned, which Mr. Henning kindly loaned to me.

In October 1894, the first issue of the "Iowa Ornithologist" appeared. It was a magazine of 26 pages and was the official organ of the "Iowa Ornithological Association" (not to be confused with the Iowa Ornithologists Union which was organized in 1923). The editor of the magazine was David L. Savage of Salem, Iowa. In an editorial he says, "This is the only magazine devoted to Ornithology and Oology in the Mississippi Valley". A list of 26 members is included, only one of whom, Chas. R. Keyes, is a member of the present Union. Dr. Keyes was later the second president of the Association.

The name of Carl Fritz Henning appears in the second issue and from that time on he was very active, contributing more articles than any other writer and conducting various departments. He was at one time Associate Editor.

The Association held its "First Annual Congress" at
(Continued on Page 31)

THE BULLETIN

OF THE
IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
ORGANIZED 1923

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DR. F. L. R. ROBERTS, Editor
2811 West Street AMES, IOWA

¶ The members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union should take a definite stand on the hawk and owl question. These beautiful and useful birds are rapidly nearing extinction. One or two of the species are decidedly harmful, a couple more are doubtfully so, but most species are known to be extremely useful. We should discourage the extermination of even the most harmful species. We know that they have existed for ages and have been much more numerous in the past than they are now and have never been a serious menace to other birds. We delight to see them. It is a red-letter day for us when we have them on our lists. But our children will look back at this generation with regret as we look back at the generation that exterminated the Passenger Pigeon and decimated a number of other useful species.

Hunters and ammunition makers have banded together to exterminate any species which can in any way be considered harmful to their special interests.

Suppose some hawks do kill a few chickens? The farmer does not benefit himself by indiscriminate killing. His loss from the increase in rodents caused by killing useful species is much greater than would be the loss of a few chickens. Besides, we know that predacious birds keep down sickness among birds by killing sick or unfit birds which fall an easier prey than do well and vigorous ones. We believe that the balance of nature is being seriously disturbed by this war on hawks and owls.

The ammunition makers and hunters associations are urging that the harmful species be killed.

Do you suppose that these hunters know which ones are harmful, and recognize them in the field, and only shoot those kinds? They certainly do not. They blaze away at every hawk they see and are content to call them all "chicken hawks," or "hen hawks".

It is high time that conservationists and bird lovers had something to say about killing wild birds. All of the laws that we have are "game" laws. They are avowedly for the purpose of protecting game and game only. We do not influence legislation directly, we do not even try to mold public opinion. In fact, many of us do not even have an opinion of our own based upon anything but prejudice.

The I. O. U. should adopt a militant slogan which should express the idea that the birds do not belong to the hunter alone. We should flood the periodicals of Iowa with protests against the continued ruthless slaughter of our hawks. We should speak a good word for them when ever possible. And in order to do these things we must have accurate information based on the work of competent scientists.

What are we going to do about it?

As suggested in the last Bulletin, why not read, "Hawks and Owls from the Standpoint of the Farmer," which may be procured free of charge from the government printing office.

This will probably be the last Bulletin issued by the present editor, as I do not expect to be in Iowa next year.

¶ A check list of Iowa birds, compiled by W. M. Rosen of Ogden and checked by several observers from various parts of the state, is enclosed. Additional copies may be procured from the I. O. U. through the editor or secretary. Use one on each field trip. They will add interest to your trips and constitute a valuable record. The prices cover only cost of printing and postage and are as follows, postage prepaid: 10 for 25c; 25 for 50c; 100 for \$1.75. Let me know at once how many you want so I will know how many to have printed. If enough are ordered to justify us in having 2,000 printed, the price will be reduced about one third.

¶ Mrs. F. L. Battell of Ames handed me an interesting record of her banding for seven years. Space will not permit me to publish it complete. She has banded 41 species including Florida Gallinule, Screech Owl, Crested Flycatcher, Grasshopper Sparrow, Gambel's Sparrow, Claycolored Sparrow, Lincoln Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Towhee, Indigo Bunting. She has banded altogether 448 individuals and had 79 repeats and returns.

¶ New members since last Bulletin are John R. Watt, Ames; Mrs. C. E. Lowry, Storm Lake.

¶ A Bronzed Grackle I banded at Spirit Lake, July 28, 1927, was shot recently at Booneville, Ark.

¶ A Duck Hawk was observed at Long Pond, near Perry by a group of ornithologists from Sioux City, Ames Ogden and Des Moines.

¶ The International Harvester Company, Chicago, has a set of stereoptican bird slides which they loan free.

How about that Brown Thrasher, Des Moines?

In the last number of the Bulletin, Mrs. M. L. Bailey concludes her splendid article on The Census with that question, so please allow me to tell about "That Brown Thrasher."

On November 16, 1929, Mrs. J. E. Stewart, president of the Des Moines Audubon Society noticed a mature Brown Thrasher hovering among the trees in her lower garden, eating the corn thrown out for the quail.

The bird was seen every day thereafter for weeks and weeks.

When one heavy snow came, Mrs. Stewart shoveled a path between a pine tree and a clump of willows about 5 feet away, clearing the ground partly under both pine and willows. The bird ran back and forth along this path and spent whole days there and in an angle under the willows, eating cracked corn, and scratching away on the ground and under the leaves.

It stayed around from Nov. 16th till the weather got so lovely during the third week in February. It was not seen for a week but came back when it got cold again, about a week later.

—Tom R. Wendelburg, Des Moines.

In the last Bulletin I noticed that Mr. O. R. Clark of Cedar Falls would like to know of records of the southern Mockingbird in this part of the state. A few days prior to April 29, 1925, Charles J. Spiker saw one in Graceland Cemetery. On the 29th, I saw one in some trees just back of our lot. I observed it for some time with a glass. I saw it only once.

In the fall it is my custom to go to the woods and cut branches from the dogwood, bearing fruit, and planting them in the garden. Robins, Bluebirds, and Flickers are especially fond of the berries. On October 3rd, 1926,

in the early afternoon, a Mockingbird came and fed on the berries. It flew away a short distance, then came back and fed some more. A Sister-in-law who had spent some months in Florida the previous winter identified it immediately as a Mockingbird, as did I.

I believe there is an earlier record by Dr. Guy C. Rich, who now resides in California.

Last fall there was an unusual movement of birds. Myrtle Warblers and Fox Sparrows were here in greater numbers than I have ever seen. We rarely see Red-breasted Nuthatches here, but last October we saw them on almost every trip afield during the month. The first date I have for them was Oct. 9th.

A family of 7 or 8 Bluebirds have wintered in Riverside Park. On Dec. 15 I saw 15 Robins in the Park, but none during January or February.

On Jan. 22 I observed a flock of six Redpolls feeding in my back garden. They came each day for a time. They had headquarters in Grandview Park where I saw a flock of about 25 on several occasions.

On February 21, on a field trip to Logan Park Cemetery and Plum Creek, I saw seven Prairie Horned Larks and two female Cowbirds, and on the 23rd I saw the first Harris Sparrows. These are the earliest dates I have had for these birds.

Mrs. Marie Dales, Sioux City.

It was something of a surprise to me to know that Mrs. Buzby of Boone considered the Canadian Warbler rare in her vicinity. I have recorded this bird every year but seven out of the past twenty and I am confidently looking for this lovely little visitor again this year.

—F. May Tuttle, Osage.

In the autumn of 1923 Mr. John B. Hodges came to the Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, Iowa, to the position of taxidermist. He was to arrange and enlarge the museum, which had developed to good proportions under Professors Arey, Walters, and Newton.

The collecting and mounting of additional specimens were Mr. Hodges duties and identification fell largely to the other author of this article. While engaged in this work the authors made many observations and collections which were of no unusual interest. A few, however, were of such significance that the observers thought others might be interested in their findings. Because one of the authors is now at the Iowa State College, Ames, and Mr. Hodges will be at St. Paul Institute after May 1, 1930, they thought it advisable to record their bird notes of greater interest from the vicinity of Cedar Falls, at this time.

The observations and collections of 1923-24 showed Hermit Thrushes to be seen frequently and easily taken. Several Double-Crested Cormorants were brought in during the autumn of 1923 by citizens who had found them dead near the Cedar River.

Island Park, a city park along the Cedar River, was a favorite place for early morning observations and collections in April and May, 1924 and 1925. The numerous hawthorn trees of this park were visited in May by many wood warblers. The following species were seen: Black and White, Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Nashville, Orange-crowned, Northern Parula, Yellow, Myrtle, Blackburnian, Black-poll, and Black-throated Green. Of these only the Golden-winged and Northern Parula were taken for museum specimens as the others were represented in the museum. The warblers seemed most numerous at times when the leaves had just come out and the aphids

were abundant on the new growth of the hawthorns. A male Prothonotary Warbler was taken at Dead Man's Island, northwest of Cedar Falls, May 10, 1924.

From a flock of swallows roosting on a guard wire beneath the concrete bridge leading to Island Park, specimens of three species, Rough-winged, Tree, and Cliff, were taken, May 12, 1924. These specimens were good additions to the museum. Bank and Barn swallows were seen in the same flock.

Early in the morning, May 6, 1924, at Island Park, the authors heard a "cuk" and "wick-up" strange to the park. Both guessed the call to have come from a Pileated Woodpecker. After a short period of looking and stealthy moving a Pileated Woodpecker was sighted at the side of a tree stump. Because this was in the tourist camp part of the park, shooting, and hence collecting of the bird, was not advisable. The authors contented themselves with long looks and let the Pileated Woodpecker go on his way.

A Clay-colored Sparrow was taken May 10, 1924. This species was seldom seen at Cedar Falls.—George O. Hendrickson, Ames, and John B. Hodges, Cedar Falls.

BABY OWLS

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which had been in his stomach all night and would not digest. After relieving his stomach he was soon ready to eat.

These owls were animals who had to be fed very delicately. Owls feed mainly on freshly caught mice, birds and other rodents, whose blood takes the place of water. If they are not given water they might be made very sick by being fed meat which has not enough blood in it.

One night the door to their cage was left open and in the morning they were gone. After searching, I followed the screamings of the other small birds and followed them until I found one owl in a tree and the other in a bush.

If one of these owls were placed where it might be seen by the smaller birds, there would soon be a great variety of birds in the trees and on the telephone wires, all screeching and dashing down at the owls. At one time I saw 13 different kinds of birds. They were mostly Swallows, Robins, Sparrows, Blue-Jays, Goldfinches, Cat-birds, and Wrens. Once or twice a Robin was so bold as to come down and knock off my hand when I held him up.

A short time later one Owl died, choked on something that he could not spit out, and I liberated the other. I see him often near the house yet.

Warren Butler, Sioux City

THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGICAL ASS'N.

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Iowa City on August 22 and 23, 1895. Nine members were present.

A sentence in an article of number three is interesting as it shows how methods of ornithologists have changed. "To the enthusiastic Naturalist every blade of grass, every green leaf and bud tell of the approach of the collecting season, of happy hours with our friends the birds".

The Cliff Swallow is noted from Sioux City as being "fully as numerous as the Barn Swallow".

Some unusual finds noted in the magazine were, Mockingbird, Saw-whet Owl, Clark's Nutcracker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-shafted Flicker, Swallow-tail Kite.

The "Iowa Ornithologist" was continued through volume four, number three, when it was replaced by "The

Western Ornithologist", and even more pretentious magazine. This was discontinued after only two editions had appeared. The editor, a Mr. Tryon, then enlisted in the army and Glen M. Hawthorn of Cedar Rapids took over the magazine. He changed the name to "The Bittern". This magazine was soon discontinued. I was unable to find when and for what reason the Iowa Ornithological Association ceased to be.

HALCYON DAYS

There is an interesting myth concerning the Kingfisher. Modern ornithologists designate by the name Halcyon a small genus of omnivorous Kingfishers, including the Scared Kingfisher of Australia and our Belted Kingfisher, but to the ancients it meant a mythical bird.

Halcyone was the daughter of the mythical Aeolus. She married a mortal king, Ceyx, and together they happily ruled over Thessaly for many years. A time came, however, when Ceyx was obliged to make a long journey. Halcyone pleaded to be allowed to accompany him but he considered the rigors of a sea voyage to be too severe for her. She remained at home, praying constantly for his safety.

The Sea Gods, for another purpose, raised a fearful storm which destroyed the king's ship and all on board. Hera, in compassion, sent Halcyone a dream telling her of the mishap and guiding her to the place where the body of the king lay. Then the Queen of Heaven turned them both into Kingfishers and left them again united. Each year these birds built their nest on the waves and while Halcyone brooded it, no storms or winds disturbed the sea. This was said to occur at the time of the winter solstice, tho it is questionable if birds are nesting at that time even along the Mediterranean.

Because of the myth, calm mild days are said to be halcyon days and the word halcyon, has come to mean happy, quiet, restful. Ruskin translated what Socrates said of the Halcyon as follows:

Chaerophon—And indeed is that the halcyon's cry? I never heard it yet; and in truth it is very pitiful. How large is the bird, Socrates?

Socrates—Not great, but it has received great honor from the Gods, because of its lovingness; for while it makes its nest all the world has the happy days which we call Halcyonidae, excelling all others in their calmness, tho in the midst of storm.

We being altogether mortal and mean, and neither able to see clearly great things or small, and for the most part being unable to help ourselves even in calamities, what can we have to say about the powers of the immortals, either over halcyons or nightingales? But the fame of fable, such as our fathers gave it to us, this to my children, O thou bird of sorrow, I will deliver concerning thy hymns; and I myself will sing often of this religious and human love of thine, and of the honors thou hast for it among the Gods.

Chaerophon—It is rightly due indeed, O Socrates, for there is twofold comfort in this, both for men and women, in their relations with each other.

Socrates—Shall we not then salute the halcyon, and so go back to the city by the sands, for it is time?

"The minute Tom began to talk about birds I judged he was a goner, because Jim knowed more about birds than both of us put together. You see, he had killed hundreds and hundreds of them, and that's the way to find out about birds. That's the way people does that writes books about birds, and love them so that they'll

go hungry and tired and take any amount of trouble to find a new bird to kill it. Their name is ornithologers, and I could have been an ornithologer myself, because I always loved birds and creatures; and I started out to learn how to be one, and I see a bird setting on a limb of a high tree, singing with its head tilted back and its mouth open, and before I thought I fired, and his song stopped and he fell straight down from the limb, all limp like a rag, and I run and picked him up and he was dead, and his body was warm in my hand, and his head rolled about this way and that, like his neck was broke, and there was a little white skin over his eyes, and one little drip of blood on the side of his head; and, laws! I couldn't see nothing more for the tears; and I hain't never murdered no creature since that warn't doing me no harm, and I ain't going to."—Mark Twain in "Tom Sawyer Abroad."

WANTED—Tenants for the new Martin Apartment House, just erected near the Greene St. entrance to Herman Park. Sixteen spacious apartments, six each on the first and second floors and four on the third floor. All equally attractive, airy and flooded with sunshine. Wide verandas and beautiful architecture a great attraction. First come, first served. Just thrown open for occupancy.

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The above ad, clipped from the Boone News-Republican, brought many applicants. Some winged their way while others came in cars.—Bertha Buzby, Boone.

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