

THE BULLETIN

Iowa Ornithologists Union

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1930

VOLUME 7. NUMBER 7

THE CORY'S BITTERN AND THE SENNETT'S NIGHTHAWK

In my many years of field trips, both at home and in other parts of the country, until this summer I had never seen a Cory's bittern. In fact, so rare is it that I had forgotten that there was a bittern other than the great bittern and the least bittern.

On August 11, Mrs. W. J. Armour and I had gone out to find water birds on Mud Lake, South Dakota, a narrow bit of water which is almost a swamp at any time and this year, because of the dry weather, has less water than usual. This bit of water seems to be an arm of McCook Lake which is only a few miles from the Iowa Line.

The day was cloudy with occasional drops of rain and was warm. As we stood on the bridge which crosses the water we saw below us, at the edge of the rushes which cover the banks on both sides, a little green heron standing at the edge of the water watching for food. Up the bank a few feet was another and a few feet further another till we counted five. With the aid of our glasses we discovered several more farther up the bank and we saw also two great bitterns and some blue herons. Later we saw many blue herons on the other side of the bridge, at least twenty, and two more great bitterns. It was on the left side of the lake as we faced north that we made our first discoveries but looking over at the right only a few feet away were the least bitterns, two, a male and a female, and just in at the edge of the rushes we saw two more which from their general appearance and manner we decided were young bitterns. While watching this little family group, the female captured a young frog and going into the rushes was followed by the young. As if to share in the find, a strange bird flew down in the rushes where the bitterns had disappeared. We saw it light but for a minute could not see it, then it turned and came out into the open for a minute only. We knew it for a bittern for it was the same size and shape as the least bittern but so differently colored. It was Mrs. Armour who exclaimed that it was a Cory's bittern for she had seen a picture of one. We turned to our Bird Guide and found a very good picture of the bird we had seen, for by this time it had gone back into the rushes. Hoping to see it again we went back of the rushes and found it standing on an almost completely submerged fender of an automobile, in a very good light, and only about six feet from us as we stood above it.

We watched it for as long as we cared to and left it standing there. We saw it from all angles and I can not see how it could be considered a color phase of the least bittern as some writers have suggested, for the markings or lack of markings and the coloring are so different. Being of the same size and found with the least bittern may have led to the suggestion.

The bird we saw had a black crown, the black extending well down on the head; the back was of the same color and also the primary wing feathers. This black was rather a greenish black. The neck and shoulders were a dark chestnut as were also the secondary wing feathers and the sides of the breast and the lower underparts. The throat

Continued on page 36

SEPTEMBER AT MCGREGOR

I have been down at Des Moines, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and Waterloo during the past two weeks, and this morning for the first time in several weeks was out on the river for a few hours. Our lovely hills and green islands are such a relief after a dreary drought of the rest of the state.

The color changes are not going to be so sudden nor so brilliant this year, but more delicate, like spring in reverse. The bluffs facing the river are gradually taking on softer hues, paler green verging on yellow, delicate rose, and orange. The maples and oaks do not flame so brightly as usual. On some dry inland slopes the oak have ripened brown without reddening. Since the recent rain many pastures and woodland glades have turned green again.

As we float along, the loon's gangling flight crosses our course and a great grey gull hitches along on his parallel bars of the air. We miss the fluid flight of the swallows, gone south weeks ago.

Two red tailed hawks soar in slow circles above the trees, and a Cooper's hawk darts behind a small island. At Yellow River a pair of eagles search the high bluffs for unwary rodents. Only the frivolous laggard gold finch seems not to know autumn is here, but drapes his scoloped flight from bluff to island as he has all summer.

The wood duck is back on the main channel. He has learned that lawless guns, which drive him from pond, slough, and marsh, back in the bottoms, won't bother him on the big river.

Wood duck nest on the wooded islands along the river and are more plentiful this year than they have been for many, many years. They may be seen in flocks of from two or three pair to several hundred by anyone who takes a boat out into the ponds and lakes along the Mississippi. Other duck are very few because of the low water and unfavorable nesting conditions. The Mississippi has been the lowest this summer since 1864, and many ponds and sloughs have dried up that never have before.

During the first few days of the duck season, the local United States game warden arrested something like 50 gunners with wood duck in their possession. The resultant fine of \$50 a bird has already greatly discouraged hunters. The small proportion of other native ducks compared to the protected wood duck makes hunting unattractive to the law abiding hunter. It is only fair to say that most of the hunters taken with wood duck in their possession, had shot them through ignorance. Heretofore the proportion of wood duck has been negligible and the large mallard was taken as a matter of course.

Pot hunters from a foreign settlement in Wisconsin had, however, weeks before the season opened, cleaned a considerable area south toward the Wisconsin river, of practically all local nesting duck, including the wood duck. Some hunters profess to believe that it is dangerous for a warden to venture alone into some of these districts!! Two young campers in a canoe fell into conversation with a hunter who had 32 wood duck in his boat. He boasted that he himself was in no danger of arrest, as the warden

Continued on page 37

THE BULLETIN

OF THE
IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION
ORGANIZED 1923

Published Quarterly
Subscription Price 50 Cents Per Year

DR. F. L. R. ROBERTS, *Editor*
419½ S. GOVERNOR IOWA CITY, IOWA

EDITORIAL NOTES AND COMMENTS

¶ The Field Check Lists that the Union published last fall are still available. The price is very low, less than a third of the price charged for some similar ones. The cards are the smallest and handiest I have ever seen. It will add a great deal of interest to your field trips if you use these cards to keep records.

¶ J. H. Holck of Peterson, Iowa, put up a new martin house this spring and had the pleasure of having it occupied this summer.

¶ The Rev. E. R. Strand has been transferred from the Methodist Episcopal Church at Lenox, Iowa, to that at Faragut, Iowa.

¶ From now on, I will have in each edition of the Bulletin a few short biographies of Iowa ornithologists. It seems particularly appropriate in this edition to introduce Fred Pierce of Wintrop. I have hoped, ever since I began college work, to get someone to help with the BULLETIN. Pres. Walter Bennett suggested that I ask Fred and I was certainly well pleased when he accepted the invitation. He will conduct a department, "The Bird's-eye View," and will assist in a number of other ways. He will have complete charge of the advertising. When one considers our small circulation, it is apparent that this is no small job. Many quarterly magazines have full-time paid advertising managers.

Mr. Pierce is 28 years old and was born at Winthrop, where he now lives. He operates a poultry and dairy farm. Most of his life has been spent on the farm and it was as a farm boy that he became interested in birds. Seton's "Two Little Savages" was a potent factor in arousing this interest. This fact was particularly interesting to the Editor, for it was this same book, first read in childhood, that was the original incentive to him to become a "naturalist". Mr. Pierce is a graduate of the Waterloo Business College.

Mrs. Pierce was a farm girl and, like her husband, is a bird enthusiast. They have one child, Paul Audubon Pierce.

Mr. Pierce has a fine library of bird books which was enriched by nearly a hundred volumes willed to him by Maria R. Audubon, grand-daughter of John James Audubon. He has 223 birds on his life list, nearly all of which are Iowa records. His Buchanan County list includes 201 species. He has had published more than thirty bird articles in the last ten years. His "Birds of Buchanan County, Iowa," which he considers to be his best paper, is on the waiting list of the Wilson Bulletin. This paper records 216 species.

¶ We are sorry to learn that Miss F. May Tuttle of Osage has been in poor health since the 29th of May.

¶ Wier R. Mills asks if others have seen the screech owl bathe. Two years ago this summer, one frequently came to our bird bath at dusk and enjoyed a thorough bath undisturbed.

¶ Mrs. Georgia S. Hill of Muscatine asks about the abundance of Cedar Waxwings this fall. We saw many of them on the campus at Ames and along Lake Superior in northern Minnesota.

¶ Perhaps Miss Althea Sherman of National (via McGregor) is better known among the ornithologists of the United States than any other Iowan. She was born Oct. 10, 1853. Her sustained study of birds began only 30 years ago. Painting of birds began in 1902, when a storm threw some young brown thrashers from their nest prematurely. The discovery that young birds about to leave the nest were excellent models for posing led to exhaustive studies of nest life and habits of birds.

Prominence has been given to the study of the home life of hole-nesting birds, much of which has been viewed at no greater distance than sixteen to eighteen inches from the eye. The species thus studied have been the screech owl, sparrow hawk, northern flicker, chimney swift, and western house wren. To these may be added studies of the nidification of several species occupying open nests such as the phoebe, barn swallow, catbird and robin, along with several other species studied at a little greater distance from the eyes. These studies have not been of an ephemeral nor superficial character, but have been maintained through a long series of years: the flicker for twenty-eight summers, the chimney swift for thirteen seasons, experiments in feeding hummingbirds during nine seasons. Likewise a similar close study of two species of bats during sixteen summers has been made; the part that covered fourteen seasons was published in the *Journal of Mammalogy*.

The number of bird species identified on her home acres is 166; the latest addition to the list was a long-eared owl on September 30, 1930. A rock wren sixteen years ago and a northern pileated woodpecker a year ago were among the most unexpected visitors. Her life list of birds seen has never been compiled. It would include many species seen on the Pacific Coast from the southern boundary of California to Alaska, and those seen in twenty countries of the Old World. She recommends that those seeking a long list of birds visit India for a great abundance of land birds, and the Farne, the Orkney, and the Shetland Islands for a multitude of water birds.

It is safe to say that Miss Sherman has published more articles on birds than any other Iowan. She was responsible for first calling to the attention of the bird world the true nature of the house wren. At 77, she is still active and her writings and conversation show that her keen mind is still alert and aggressive in bird research.

¶ Walter W. Bennett of Sioux City is President of the Iowa Ornithologists Union. He earns his meal tickets as a member of the insurance firm of McManus-Bennett-Murdoch Co. Personally, I think the time he spends in the insurance work is wasted, for a man of Bennett's ability should spend his time in his chosen avocation, ornithology. However, he is very successful in his insurance work. At one time, Walter told me that the first picture he ever made of a bird was in 1908 when he took a picture of a tree sparrow on a brush pile—no one but him could find the bird in the picture. Now he has several thousand photographs of birds and a large collection of fine motion pictures. Many of his pictures were made by the Lumiere color-photography process. This is the largest collection of

bird pictures in Iowa and probably the largest in the middle west.

Bennett says that, evolutionally speaking, he has been interested in birds since the world was formed and expects to continue to be interested until it comes to an end. As his interest began before birds appeared on the earth, it seems probable that they were evolved for his special benefit.

Mr. Bennett was born in Iowa and has lived in Sioux City since 1899. He graduated from the Sioux City high school and from Grinnell College, where he received a bachelor of science degree. He is Curator of the Sioux City Academy of Science, Fellow of the Iowa Academy of Science, past president of the Sioux City Bird Club, and is now president of the Iowa Ornithologists Union.

It is a wonderful treat to hear Walter and see his pictures. He speaks on "Iowa Birds," "Island Bird Life," and several other subjects and is available for lectures at any time. Iowa bird lovers would do themselves and their communities a favor if they would make arrangements to have these lectures presented. Bennett's newest and best lecture is called "Siyo." It includes bird life of the sandhill region of Nebraska, where our fast disappearing game birds are making their last stand. Particularly does it include a complete story of the spring life of the prairie chicken. It is the first movie ever taken of the booming and dancing of prairie chickens. It also shows the dancing of the prairie sharp tailed grouse. Among the pictures of rare and disappearing birds is a strip on the long billed curlew. The lecturer also shows a number of natural color photography slides. He will spend the last two weeks of October lecturing in the east. The first talk of this series will be given in Illinois, the last in Massachusetts. He will give his talk at the meeting of the American Ornithologists Union in Salem, Mass., on Oct. 21.

¶ A brown thrasher banded by Mrs. Roberts and me at Spirit Lake on June 8, 1928, was recently killed at Cedar Rapids by an auto. It was no doubt headed for Iowa City to pay us a visit.

¶ A bronzed grackle we banded at Spirit Lake on April 10, 1929, was killed by a cat at Spirit Lake on June 12, 1930.

¶ On June 30, 1930, a grackle we had banded at Spirit Lake on June 25, 1929, was caught at Jackson, Minn.

¶ Bands of the type mentioned in the clipping Superintendent Cosner sent in are put on tame pigeons by pigeon racing and breeding associations. During the time Mrs. Roberts and I were actively banding birds at Spirit Lake, bands of this type were reported to us several times. I was never able to get any definite information as to who banded these birds. I hope I may be able to give some addresses of these associations in the next issue of the Bulletin.

¶ Dr. T. C. Stephens and William Youngworth were in the Black Hills this fall. They reported several interesting species such as the white-winged junco, white-throated swift, and poorwill.

¶ A. C. Bent, in his "Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds," says, "I have been much interested in what Oscar E. Baynard has told me about the Cory least bittern. He has had considerable field experience with it, has found several nests and is firmly convinced that it is a distinct species. He says that these dark colored birds never mate with ordinary least bitterns, but always with birds of their own kind, breeding true to color. He says that the downy young are coal black, 'as black as young rails,' . . . that he has never seen any buff colored young

in the nest with the black ones." Forbush, however, considers the Cory's least bittern an example of dichromatism. Other writers consider it an example of melanism or erythrism. In view of the fact that Mrs. Bailey reports specimens from two districts more than a hundred miles apart, it behooves the rest of us to keep a watchful eye for them. Anderson, Schants, and Roberts do not mention them as belonging to the avifauna of Iowa, Illinois, or Minnesota, respectively, but Barrows records them from both Wisconsin and Michigan.

¶ After talking it over with instructors in the English department of Iowa State College, the editor has decided to discontinue capitalizing the common or English names of birds. In technical journals it is proper to capitalize them or not, as the writer desires, and one method is used as much as the other. In popular articles they are seldom so treated. Authors who do use capitals do not always follow the same rules. Some would use a capital for the word "oriole" if used with another word to show which oriole is meant and not use it when orioles in general were referred to. Some would write "Black throated Blue Warbler" while some would capitalize every word not preceded by a hyphen. It seems to be the tendency of the time to simplify whenever justified and so we are dropping the capital except in the title of an article.

¶ I was delighted to add a new bird, the pipit, to my life list last fall. We saw them walking over the rocks on the shore of Lake Superior near Grand Marais, Minn. Neither Mrs. Roberts nor I had ever recorded them before though they visit Iowa during migrations.

¶ On Sept. 1 we were in the Cherokee Heights tourist park overlooking St. Paul. Large flocks of swallows circled high over the Mississippi River, catching insects as they flew. In general they made spirals, taking advantage of up-currents of air, but they progressed quite rapidly to the south. Their migrating tactics reminded me of those of the red-tailed and marsh hawks. We watched them for an hour or more, during which time the air was full of them.

¶ The Assistant Editor suggests that the members be allowed to send in exchange notices of books or other equipment they have for sale or exchange. This seems a good idea. A nominal charge of 1c per word will be made.

¶ Mrs. Roberts is research assistant in child welfare here at the university and I am a student. We will probably be here at least two years.

¶ The cat is generally conceded to be one of the worst enemies of the birds. The pet house cat is bad enough, but the half starved strays are infinitely worse, as they must rely for food on their own resources. The problem was discussed at the I. O. U. convention at the Ledges in 1928. The concensus of opinion seemed to be that a tax on cats would protect the pets whose owners place some value on them and would help to rid the country of stray cats. The following is taken from an old letter from Dr. T. C. Stephens:

"Some years ago when I looked up what I could find in the laws relating to cats, I found the following in the Iowa Code of 1897, Title V., Chapter II, section 889, page 361:

'The council of any city or town shall have power to levy and collect a tax on dogs and other domestic animals not included in the list of taxable property for state and county purposes.'

"I thought that this clause would empower a city to put on cats by ordinance, a cat being a domestic animal not otherwise taxed by state or county."

¶ It is interesting to go out these nights and observe the fall migration of birds. If the moon is full, one can focus his field glasses on it and watch. Often birds will be seen to pass in front of the moon every few minutes, usually too high up to identify them. It is often possible, also, to hear them if the night is very quiet. Longfellow, in his "Birds of Passage," wrote:

*"But the night is fair,
And everywhere
A warm, soft, vapor fills the air,
And distant sounds seem near;*

*"And above, in the light
Of the starlit night,
Swift birds of passage wing their flight
Through the dewy atmosphere.*

*"I hear the beat
Of their pinions fleet,
As from the land of snow and sleet
They seek a southern lea.*

*"I hear the cry
Of their voices high
Falling dreamily through the sky,
But their forms I cannot see."*

¶ A grebe when held in the hand can work its feet so fast they look like a haze, as do the wings of a humming-bird.

¶ The screech owl is an interesting example of dichromatism. Some of these birds are brownish red and some are gray. A single brood usually contains some of each color and either color may be of either sex.

¶ Sometime soon I hope to make a brief of all of the editions of the BULLETIN that were mimeographed. This will be published as part of the BULLETIN so that those who care to may have it in uniform size to bind with the present copies of the BULLETIN. At some future time, the Union will have for sale bound copies of complete sets of the BULLETIN in its present form, as I am saving copies for this purpose.

¶ For years ospreys have been nesting on a pole in a farm yard in Rhode Island. They would probably nest on the shores of our lakes if unmolested. Think how much that would add to the lakes scenically. Thousands of people yearly are delighted with the "eagles," as they call the ospreys, of Yellowstone Canyon.

¶ Ruskin says: "The more I think of it, I find this conclusion more impressed upon me, that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion,—all in one."

¶ Warblers are considered to be of tropical origin for they are brilliant, thinly clothed, delicately organized, incapable of withstanding cold, and insectivorous. Their true home is not where they nest but where they spend three fourths of their time,—in the tropics.

Walter L. Burk, an enthusiastic bird student of Vinton, reports seeing a Mockingbird near his home this year and says that it was also seen on two other occasions by Vinton people. Mr. Burk has a list of 154 species for his county most of which were seen near Vinton.

THE CORY'S BITTERN AND THE SENNETT'S NIGHTHAWK

Continued from page 33

and breast were somewhat lighter, shading from a pale chestnut down to the very dark underneath. There were *no stripes on breast or sides, or sides of the head*, such as are found on the least bittern. The feet and legs were greenish yellow.

At Spirit Lake, at Crandalls, on August 23, I saw another of the same except that the throat and breast were generally darker but shading down to still darker on the lower half of the underparts. This also was absolutely without stripes and was found as before, with the least bittern, and here, too, was a green heron only a few feet away showing the great difference in size, although there is perhaps a little similarity of coloring.

Another bird which I consider unusual for this part of the country, is the Sennett's nighthawk. Although it is not often found here it is the common nighthawk of the plains, from the Dakotas and western Nebraska to the Rocky Mountains.

It was on the tenth of September that I saw it, my attention being called to it by a telephone call telling me that there was an unusual bird sitting on the railing of a small balcony of a residence only a few blocks away. On investigating I found it to be a Sennett's nighthawk, with which I had become familiar when on a western trip a few years ago.

It was of such a pale gray that it might almost have been called white, with numerous black markings on the back, head, and upper half of the wings. The primaries of the wings were a dark gray, shading darker toward the tips but crossed with a seemingly square patch of white. The white bar underneath the wing was like that of the common nighthawk. The breast, as far as I could see, was of the same general color as the back, but the marks were considerably fewer and not so heavy. There was *no brown* on the feathers. There is a specimen in Dr. Stephens collection at Morningside College which was taken in this vicinity.

MARY L. BAILEY, Sioux City.

My contribution to this issue of the IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS BULLETIN is to say something in defense of the much despised blue jay. Very few people seem to appreciate that the jay does really have a song which is quite unequalled by other members of the bird family; I have talked with many bird lovers who profess to know much about birds and their songs, and they have said that they were not aware that the blue jay had any other call than the despised one which sounds so much like that of the crow.

The jays around my home often sing early in the spring and I have heard them as early as February.

Once this past summer it was my privilege to spend the night at the home of a brother in Nashua, Iowa. I was awakened early in the morning by a jay sitting just outside my window on the roof singing the song I so love to hear. I knew then I was not mistaken about the bird's ability to sing if he so desired.

EDITH B. TROUTNER, Des Moines.

A prothonotary warbler came to my bird pool twice Sept. 8, my second record in 22 years. The other time it came to a bird pool in our home in the next block.

F. MAY TUTTLE, Osage.

Until this morning I thought I had something for the BULLETIN but on referring to Forbush's Birds of Massachusetts, Vol. II, I find that he had observed the same thing which I had so I have decided there is "nothing new under the sun." Nevertheless, it gave me quite a thrill.

I asked Dr. Stephens and Walter Bennett if they had ever seen screech owls take a bath and they both replied in the negative. I saw this very thing on two different days last July and both times in broad daylight. When our lily pool was constructed I purposely left portion of it very shallow to accommodate certain plants I wanted to grow. Our dining room windows look out upon the pool so it is easy to observe bird and animal visitors that come to drink. This season a pair of screech owls, one the gray phase and the other red, nested in our yard. One morning just as we were leaving the breakfast table I happened to look out at the pool and to my amazement saw a screech owl (gray phase) standing in the shallow part of the pool. Almost instantly it began to splash the water and it took a good bath just as any other bird might. A few days later at noon I saw this repeated but this time the other bird (red phase) was the one which bathed. Forbush says "for this little bird delights in a daily or nightly bath," but though screech owls have nested in our yard several times I never before saw them bathe and till that July day did not know that they did so. Have you ever observed this?

I am happy to report that Bob White's cheery whistle has again been heard in this part of the state. I am sure from my own observation and reports from farmer friends that Bob White is coming into his own again and if rascally hunters can be kept in check we will soon have many of these fine birds in this vicinity.

WIER R. MILLS, Pierson.

The annual dinner of the Sioux City Bird Club was held Tuesday, Sept. 23, at the Y. W. C. A. in that city. This function is always the first of the year and is well and enthusiastically attended.

Annual dinners of the Sioux City Bird Club have been held for 18 years, for that is the age of the organization. It is one of the very oldest bird clubs in the middle west and has included in its membership some of the best ornithologists, such as Ira Gabrielson, now in the U. S. Biological Survey, Dr. T. C. Stephens, editor of the WILSON BULLETIN, and others.

The affair this year was in charge of the following committee: Mrs. F. W. Marshall, Mrs. H. A. Johns, Mrs. T. C. Stephens, Mrs. T. M. Murdoch, Mrs. E. R. King, and Mrs. Jennie Jones. Mrs. E. A. Fields, president of the club, presided as toastmaster and entertainment was provided by T. M. Murdoch and a vocal trio consisting of Prof. R. O. Malcomson, tenor; E. A. Fields, baritone; and Prof. H. C. Cobb, bass. The meeting ended with an illustrated talk by Walter W. Bennett on the subject, "Birds of the Lake Itasca, Minn., Region."

WALTER W. BENNETT, Sioux City.

While at Heron Lake, Minnesota, on June 28, 1930, Walter W. Bennett and the writer saw large flocks of bronzed grackles flying in from the surrounding country and going to roost for the night in the dense reed beds around the lake. The greater part were young birds, although many adults were also present. This is the earliest that the writer has ever found grackles flocking and wonders if other Iowa observers have noticed similar early gatherings of this species.

WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City.

On September 1 of this year, when driving on the new pavement a little west of Fontanelle, in Adair county, I noted a flock of small brown birds moving about close together in about the middle of the bare highway. Taking it for granted that it was a flock of English sparrows quite capable of taking care of themselves, I kept straight on at a speed of about thirty-five miles an hour. On coming close the brown birds proved to be a family of Bob Whites, two adults and about a dozen rather small young. They flushed as I passed and I hope and believe that all escaped. But this was my first experience with a family of Bob Whites loitering on territory so sterile and dangerous. During the summer I found the species rather common in all parts of southern Iowa.

CHARLES R. KEYES, Mt. Vernon.

We are very glad to recommend to our members Mr. J. Alden Loring, who has a large and complete line of bird glasses. We have dealt with Mr. Loring and have found him prompt, reliable, and his glasses exactly as represented. Mr. Loring especially recommends his Mirakel glass to all nature students and offers to send it on approval to I. O. U. members. He has an attractive trade-in offer on this glass.

SEPTEMBER AT MCGREGOR

Continued from page 33

"knew better than to come into those waters, but would content himself with picking up city hicks down at the Mud Hen."

If this is true, one warden would seem to be inadequate to enforce protection in the network of channels, ponds, lakes and islands that constitute this section of the Winnesaukee refuge.

As we leave the boat and walk up a deep ravine, a woodcock takes his whistling flight riverward. Where a few weeks ago sight-seers feet polished the rocks, a pheasant starts. The long summer drought doubtless brought him down from the fields to the river.

Woodcocks are not numerous even in this protected area. They are occasionally found in pairs, usually where shore and deep ravine are adjacent. Their haunts are inaccessible except by boat and one should not expect to find them in a casual afternoon's trip. The experienced ornithologist would undoubtedly find them for they are here.

They are of course mercilessly hunted by the type of pot hunter we have in this region, where it is possible for a squatter to build a shack of drift wood and live from clamming, fishing, tripping, hunting, and likely as not a bit of bootlegging. These people, during a long spring and summer's constant coursing of woods and island, river bottom, slough, pond and lake, "spot" the home territory of many nesting birds, keep the knowledge to themselves, and then in the fall, serve these protected birds "on toast with the good gravy oozing through."

It is this class of person and some others of a higher standing in their communities, who hunt duck eggs in the early summer (mallard suffer most) take the eggs for hatching under hens and domestic ducks and rent the ducklings in the fall for decoys, sell them to unsuccessful hunters or use them on their own tables. The practice is a considerable element in slowing up the increase in waterfowl, which is supposed to result from legal protection.

DRUSILLA E. FLAGG, McGregor.

THE BIRD'S-EYE-VIEW

By the Assistant Editor

FRED J. PIERCE

Winthrop, Iowa

October days! Warm, mellow, Indian summer days and clear, frosty nights. A blue haze extends entirely around the horizon. The sugar maples are dressed in golden leaves, the scarlet oaks in flaming red, and the other woodland trees in varying shades of yellow and brown. Neat rows of new corn-shocks line the farmers' fields, while pumpkins dot the ground around them. The hedges and thickets are full of migrating sparrows, all enjoying the fall holidays to the fullest extent. The air is calm, yet it has an exhilarating quality unlike that of any other season. From the joyful calls of migrating black-birds to the plaintive farewell of the bluebird, this bird music is ever a challenge and an invitation. October days are the days for hiking. Let's go before it's too late!

The Iowa bird student has only to drive across the state of South Dakota, a distance of less than 400 miles, to reach the northeastern outpost of the Rocky Mountains—the historic Black Hills. In these Black Hills of southwestern South Dakota the person who has previously studied only eastern birds finds that the Rocky Mountain avifauna offers an entirely new and delightful course in ornithology. On a brief trip to this region in early September the writer found much of interest and added a number of new birds to his list.

Before we entered the Black Hills our road lay through the picturesque "Band Lands." There we found a very pale variety of Horned Lark in large numbers. Upon looking up the ranges of this variable species, we found that the Saskatchewan horned lark is the bird ascribed to this region. The large and handsome magpie was a welcome sight, but it was seen but twice, and only one bird on each occasion. It was first seen near Sundance, Wyo., then again at Hot Springs, S. Dak.

On the bluffs high above the old frontier town of Deadwood, redbreasted nuthatches were especially common and very vociferous. These birds, as well as pine siskins and crossbills, which we know chiefly as winter visitants in Iowa, were quite common in the Black Hills. Among the pine and spruce-covered hills of Custer State Park, where we spent two days, we found Rocky Mountain jays, which are the Canada jays of the West, red-shafted flickers, western tanagers, Audubon's warblers, and one Arctic three-toed woodpecker. Three water ouzels, or dippers, were seen along Grace Coolidge Creek, a turbulent little stream that follows a crooked course among the rocks in Custer Park (the name of the creek is reminiscent of 1927 when the "Summer White House" was in the park). We had not expected to find the dipper here and we much enjoyed watching this stubby, dark-colored little bird that searched for its food in the cold waters of the stream. One morning while on a tramp up a wooded gorge, a magnificent elk crashed away through the trees at our approach, and at about the same time a gray ruffed grouse was seen cautiously stealing out of sight in the undergrowth less than a rod away.

In the hills above the city of Hot Springs a half dozen pinon jays worked about on the ground near our cabin door. A little later a flock containing over a hundred was seen. From their clamor it was assumed that they must be starting on a foraging expedition, the success of which was already assured. People there call them "blue crows."

At Hot Springs we also saw white-winged juncos and a violet-green swallow. The western forms of many of our eastern birds are to be found in the Black Hills, although in the field there is no appreciable difference in either plumage or habits.

Our sojourn in this scenic region was much too brief, but it gave us many pleasurable experiences and suggested to us the wealth of bird life that would doubtless be revealed by more lengthy search.

Our desire is to make this new department a useful one. Suggestions are always welcome. When you acquire a new book or bulletin that you think others would like to know about, please write me.

The Spring and Summer, 1930, numbers of "Bird Notes and News" (issued quarterly by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) have been received. The magazine is an interesting one and gives the American reader an insight into the work and pleasures of the British bird student. The titles of some of the longer articles are: "An Appeal for Birds of Prey," "The Oil Menace," "The Great Spotted Woodpecker," "Romney Marsh Bird Sanctuary," and "Birds in our Sydney Gardens." The annual subscription price is 4s; address the Royal Society at 82 Victoria St., London, S. W. 1, England.

This summer the new book, "Bird Study in Florida," by R. J. Longstreet, has been added to our library. It is published by the Halifax River Bird Club, Daytona Beach. It is a very well printed little volume, and will no doubt prove a boon to Florida bird students. The preface explains that "this volume is planned for the use of beginners in bird study in Florida" and "aims to fill the gap that exists between a general handbook and a merely annotated state list." The fifteen halftone plates from photographs are particularly clear and well chosen.

The State Board of Conservation (Des Moines) has issued four very attractive and informative booklets on our Iowa State Parks. They treat, respectively, "The Ledges," Eldora Pine Creek Park, Dolliver Memorial Park, and Pilot Knob Park. They contain articles on birds, wild flowers, trees, etc., and are well illustrated. A portrait of Custodian Carl Fritz Henning, who is well known to most of us, forms the frontispiece to the "Ledges" booklet.

One day in September, 1929, I saw a one-legged solitary sandpiper along the shores of Buffalo Creek near my home. My attention was at once called to the bird's peculiar method of locomotion—a rapid jumping motion made necessary by the lack of one leg. It got along quite well and teetered considerably, apparently able to follow the custom of its race quite as well on one leg as two. It flew naturally and appeared to be otherwise sound.

A year later, lacking but two weeks, a similar crippled solitary sandpiper was seen on Buffalo Creek not far from the place where the other was seen. While my memory is not clear in regard to the length of the first bird's stub leg, I think the second sandpiper's member was longer. Just the foot seemed to be missing; at the severed end there was a noticeable bunch, either swollen from a fresh injury or healed in that way. The crippled leg was held out straight behind the body much of the time and no attempt was made to use it for support; it seemed more hindrance than help to the bird. Could a bird thus crippled survive the long migration journey to South America

and return the next year? What peculiar accident had befallen this bird that ordinarily feeds in shallow water? These are matters for conjecture.

E. D. Nauman has a very readable article called "The Glare of the Headlight" in the October issue of *Bird-Love*. In it he discusses the proximity of certain birds' nests to railway tracks and speculates upon the reasons for the selection of such nesting sites.

Sets of Eaton's "Birds of New York," in two volumes, are still available, a fact that should interest Iowa bird students who do not have this valuable work in their bird libraries. The first volume was published in 1910, and the second in 1914. Although the first edition has been out of print for several years, the reprint is very good, and while the supply lasts a very worthwhile opportunity is offered those who do not own the set. The series of 106 colored plates by Fuertes, which was issued in portfolio form for a number of years, forms the principal illustrative feature of the text, though there are numerous photographs and maps. The books are for sale by the New York State Dept. of Education, State Museum, Albany, N. Y., price \$6.00 a set, postage extra. The books weigh 15 pounds and postage to Iowa is 93c. The State Museum also has a companion set on the Wild Flowers of New York in uniform binding.

OUR NOTE BOOK

While in the field, Doctor and I carry copies of Reed's "Bird Guides." Into these we write identification notes. Some of these are original notes and others have been copied from various sources. I believe that the readers of the Bulletin will find some of the notes of interest. They are not meant for complete information on identification, but as odd bits of information that seem important to us. As land birds are of most general interest, I am starting with them. More of these notes will appear in future issues of the Bulletin.

Whole flocks of Carolina paroquets were formerly seen in Iowa.

Contrary to the usual order among birds, the female belted kingfisher is more brilliantly marked than the male. She has chestnut colored sides and breast band which her spouse lacks.

Arkansas kingbirds are extending their range eastward across the state.

The tail of the crested flycatcher is very brown.

Phoebes are yellowish below in fall plumage.

The olive-side flycatcher says, "Come right HERE."

The tufts of yellow feathers on the flanks show plainly only in flight.

Listen for the evening song of the wood peewee.

Male horned larks have black foreheads. The black is somewhat obscured in winter. Females occasionally have a small spot of black on the forehead.

Kubichek and others have reported the starling in Iowa. It is extending its range westward.

While banding several hundred nestling red-wing blackbirds and cowbirds, we have observed that the mouths of nestling cowbirds are rimmed with white and those of the young red-wings with yellow. This helps to distinguish them before the feathers appear. The skin of the red-wings is much yellower than that of the cowbirds.

Anderson says that a sub-species, the thick billed red-wing blackbird, may be common during migration.

The meadowlark may easily be distinguished from the western meadowlark by its song.

The yellow eye distinguishes the rusty blackbird from all other blackbirds except the grackle. The rusty is about the size of the red-wing. Its tail is much shorter than the grackle's and slightly rounded while the tail of the grackle, when not in flight, is very rounded. In flight, the tail of the rusty will not be confused with the longer, boat-shaped tail of the flying grackle. Rusties are seen in Iowa from about March 15 to April 30 and from Sept. 15 to early December.

The pine finches are thickly streaked on the underparts and do not have a black throat. The yellow base of the tail feathers show mainly during flight.

Webster's dictionary calls the snowflake the "pied finch."

The flight of the lapland longspur is undulating, unlike that of the horned lark. In winter the bright plumage is partly concealed as the feathers are gray tipped.

We recorded large flocks of Smith longspur from northwestern Iowa in the winter of 1923. They are partial to wet meadows.

The legs and feet of the Savannah Sparrow, are pale pink. Its spots are less prominent than those of the song sparrow. Its song is "tsip, tsip, tsip, tsee, tseeee ee," the last part a little lower in pitch. It is very plain, almost in one tone, and differs from the chippie's mainly in rhythm and tempo. It has yellow over its eye, and there is a white streak thru the center of the crown, giving the head a striped appearance.

MARY PRICE ROBERTS, Iowa City.

In studying the statistics of our mailing list for the *Wilson Bulletin* I find the following partial facts concerning the distribution of our present membership. The present paid up membership of the Wilson Ornithological Club is 820, with 80 subscribers in addition. Over 200 of these have been added during the present year. The states leading in our membership are as follows, the first figure indicating members, the second figure indicating subscribers.

Ohio	80	4	84
Iowa	73	4	77
including			
Sioux City	19	1	20
Des Moines	15	0	15
Illinois	69	4	73
Michigan	48	4	52
California	42	7	49
New York	39	3	42
Pennsylvania	32	4	36
Tennessee	31	1	32

I would like to see Des Moines step ahead of Sioux City, and give us something to work for.

T. C. STEPHENS, Sioux City.

What have the BULLETIN readers observed this year about the cedar waxwing? We usually have a flock of them during cherry time but this year none came.

Does the mourning dove never bathe? It seems impossible that such a neat, natty little body should not be a bather but I have never yet seen one in our bird baths. Many come daily, walk around the edge of the concrete tub and drink plentifully but never go into the water. I have never read anything on the subject but have wondered if they are dust bathers.

MRS. GEORGIA S. HILL, Muscatine.

At the April meeting of the Farm Bureau Women's Club in this township, I gave a talk on our Native birds. Literature on conservation and government bulletins were distributed. Education was stressed, and statistics given in a comprehensible way. This was followed by a set of slides, by the wife of our county agent. These were sent from Ames. At the May meeting a bird contest was given as part of the program.

The fifth grade teacher in our school last year conducted a bird feeding station outside the school room window. Also each pupil was requested to make a bird house.

The drouth in this immediate section has scarcely been relieved yet. All the creeks and small streams have long been dry; the effect was noticeable by the absence of the usual number of birds. Quail, meadowlark, kildeer flicker and mourning doves were in evidence as usual, and might be labeled as drouth resisting.

The light showers the past week have brought numbers of robins, bluebirds and goldfinches, that have likely stayed near the Coon River which is, at its nearest point, about two miles from our home. In normal years, our farm is a comparative paradise for birds for it had the seclusion of a good sized grove; it is along an open creek; is bordered with the usual feed supply of weed seeds, lush-grass and willows. We have a new bird shelter and feeding station ready to install before cold weather. It is of the type that revolves, so the open side is always away from the wind.

As to late nesting, I found a wren nest with young, in a catalpa tree in August; and a mourning dove brooding during the first week of Sept. this year.

MAUD L. MOSER, Dallas Center.

Considerable interest was aroused among pupils of the high school and grades recently by a wandering pigeon which came in the window of the physics laboratory room, lighting on the laboratory table. Mr. Cosner, after capturing the bird, was about to turn it loose when he discovered three bands on its legs, a celluloid band and a copper or brass band on its left leg and an aluminum band on its right leg. On the aluminum band was the inscription AB403. It would be of interest to know the location of the parties who had the bird so tagged and set it on its way. The bird's crop was entirely empty, indicating that the bird had come a long distance. After giving it food and drink it was sent on its way. If anyone can give any information concerning this, please communicate with H. L. Cosner, Supt. of Schools, Conrad, Ia.

From a Conrad newspaper.

R. T. Nelson, agent of Worth county, at Northwood, sent out a questionnaire to farmers in that county making inquiry as to the damage done by pheasants. Of the 115 replied 68 stated they considered pheasants a nuisance, 45 stated they did not, and 2 did not answer this particular question; while 79 reported damage to their corn crop and 36 replied no damage had been experienced. To the question concerning damage to crops other than corn, 86 replied no such damage had been experienced, 22 had suffered some damage, and 7 did not answer the question. The total damage done by the pheasants in the past 12 months was given at \$4,360 for the 115 farmers covered by the replies, or an average of approximately \$40 for each farm. Taking these figures as a fair estimate for the county, with approximately 1,400 farms, the total damage done in the county by pheasants would be \$56,000 for the past 12 months. The amount of damage reported

varied from \$5 to \$320. Of the replies, 62 were apparently in favor of the farmer controlling the birds on his own farm, 40 suggested a long open season, 8 favored leaving the law as it now stands, 3 favored eradicating the pheasants entirely, and two of the latter recommending the payment of a bounty on Pheasants.—*Spirit Lake Beacon*.

The Boston Bird Book Co. announces that it has purchased the ornithological library of the late Edward Howe Forbush. Here is an unusual opportunity for Iowa bird students to acquire certain out-of-print books which they may have long wanted. This firm has a large stock of both old and new bird books and bulletins which it sells at very reasonable prices.

I would like to have our members submit dates of arrival of some of our common birds, also the last record for the year. This will give us all a general idea of the movement of the birds from south to north and also from north to south. The ruby throated hummingbird would be a good one but a great many others might do as well. The kingbird, for instance, would be a good subject, also the purple martin, kildeer, scarlet tanager, indigo bunting, or even some of the migrants.

I would suggest that you select the bird or birds that we collect this data on and then we can all submit our records for the next issue.

Mrs. Rosen and I spent a couple of days in Cedar Rapids this week and had a nice visit with Prof. Kubichek of Coe College, who was former secretary of the I. O. U. It also happened that it was the regular meeting night for their local bird club and they asked me to say a few words. I told them that we were all looking forward to next May when we would meet with them in our annual meeting and field trip.

All bird lovers from the eastern part of the state should be urged to make plans right now to attend that meeting for it will be the first meeting to be held east of Ames and we should see many new faces.

W. M. ROSEN, Ogden.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Send in notes on those mentioned by Mr. Rosen.

AT LEAST \$15 FOR YOUR OLD GLASSES



8 power,
10 oz. \$35

to apply on a new \$35 improved Mikrakel 7 power, 7 ounce pocket prism binocular.

We carry everything in new and used glasses for \$5.50 upward that we can recommend. Sent on approval to members of I. O. U., postage and insurance paid.

J. ALDEN LORING
Box IOU, O-we-go, N. Y.

BOSTON BIRD BOOK CO.

Old, rare, and out-of-print Bird Books, magazines, and pamphlets. We have recently purchased the library of the late Edward H. Forbush, State ornithologist of Massachusetts.

MAIL ORDERS

162 Boylston St., Boston, Mass.