

THE SPRING MIGRATION OF BIRDS AT OTTAWA OF
THE YEAR 1906, COMPARED WITH THAT
OF OTHER SEASONS

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The winter of 1905-06 was in several respects a remarkable one. There was less snow and fewer days of severe cold weather than for many preceding winters. It was more open and mild, than for many past seasons. All this was somewhat changed at a time when one expects to see the end of winter come in earnest, in March. There was more snow and cold then, than apparently had been in the previous winter months combined, or as someone told the writer : Winter only commenced in March. That such unusual weather conditions would naturally tend to modify biological conditions in the plant and animal kingdoms, was to be expected. All nature-lovers, the botanists, entomologists, etc., therefore eagerly looked forward into the now sadly retarded spring, to see how this would be made manifest in their several lines of observation. In no class of biota, however, would the effect of such unusual climatic conditions be more noticeable than in the birds, as that fascinating, mysterious natural phenomenon of their migration is in many species greatly dependent on the weather. The ornithologist therefore was especially on the alert this spring to see how the coming of his feathered friends had been affected by the queer ending of the winter and beginning of the vernal season.

One somewhat unexplainable fact was noted by them already in winter. One would think, that in such a mild winter as the last was for its greater part, there would be more of our usual permanent residents amongst birds, or of the erratic Canadian winter birds seen, or at least as many, as in the more severe winters. But the reverse was true. While in the severe winter of 1903-4 pine grosbeaks were plentiful here all winter, and 1904-5 Canada jays and sharpshinned hawks, together with, as the appended list shows, occasional downy woodpeckers, pine siskins, redpolls, brown-breasted nuthatches, and the everpresent jolly little chickadee, these and similar birds were last winter conspicuous by their absence in the silent wintry woods.