

For many years the Geological Survey of Canada has devoted what attention its limited staff could spare from its numerous other activities towards gathering Dominion ornithological data and there have been a few private investigators that have been observing and noting with commendable industry. With the broadening out of the work of the Geological Survey and its Museum, great impetus should be given to bird work in Canada. Museums are also being started or rejuvenated in the various provinces and the time seems ripe for a general waking of interests in zoological subjects. To call attention to our shortcomings in data and workers it seems advisable to outline a few fruitful fields of endeavour that can be worked by various individuals whose tastes incline in that direction.

Ornithology can be approached and studied from various sides and by individuals of many different tastes and inclinations. For the general nature lover, interested in birds from a poetic or aesthetic standpoint, the study of life-histories offers a most attractive field. Careful watching and observing of feathered friends in their secluded haunts, bloodlessly stalking them with camera and note or sketch-book and divining the hidden secrets of their lives is a pleasure that can be indulged in by all and enjoyed by many. The most common bird of our vicinity is an object worthy of the most careful and painstaking attention. The Wren building in the improvised nesting box in the garden, the Song sparrow of the near-by thicket are both awaiting a careful record of the story of their daily lives. The amount of original, valuable and interesting information, that can be gathered from such homelike sources is almost infinite and unexpected surprises will almost daily repay the close observer. To those whose time and opportunities are limited such birds about home are fruitful. By those with more leisure, greater ambition or ampler opportunities work farther afield may be pursued and species less commonplace can be studied. In fact there is work in this line for everybody of widely divergent taste and situation and even city parks and backyard gardens will amply repay attention.

As a suggestion for investigation, the following outline of problems to be solved may be followed. It is merely suggestive and can be enlarged indefinitely.

Is the species a resident or a migrant?

When does it arrive and leave?

What are the determining influences upon its migrations,—food supply, weather, or does physiological development produce a periodical desire to migrate?