

most interested, who have ever seen a flock of migrants in their northward or southward flight is remarkably small. With the exception of some of the larger waterfowl and hawks, nearly all birds of passage pursue their journey at night, and generally at a great height in the air. From observations made a few years ago at an astronomical observatory near New York, upon migrants seen with a telescope passing across the face of the moon, it was calculated that these birds were flying at a height of from 1 to 4 miles above the earth. The theory now pretty generally accepted by those who have made these movements a study, is that the birds are guided in their course by rivers and the sea coast, the line of water being easily traceable by moonlight or starlight on a clear night, even at these great altitudes. When the weather is dull or stormy, however, and especially when a haze hangs low down, obscuring the landmarks, the travellers are forced to fly low. At these times, although it is not often possible to see them, their rallying calls may frequently be heard with great distinctness.

One of the best points about Ottawa for such observations is the Maria Street bridge over the Rideau Canal. The Gatineau River to the northward with the first stretch of the Rideau on this side, form an almost due north-and-south line for about 250 miles, and no doubt compose one link in the chain of landmarks followed by the birds in passing between the Hudson Bay region and the Atlantic coast of the Southern States. On almost any dull night during the season of migration—April and May for the northward movement and September and October for the southward—at an hour when the noises of the streets have somewhat quieted, the cries of the passing birds can be clearly heard. Very often too, the direction of the flight of certain individuals or small groups may be traced with reasonable certainty, showing the course at the former season to be “down” the canal, i.e. north-westerly at this point, and in the autumn months in the contrary direction. The identification of species in the darkness is a more difficult matter. The rallying cries of most birds differ considerably from the songs and calls which we know so well in the daylight. Still there are a few species whose voices are familiar enough to be recognized at any time. The cry of the Greater Yellow-leg Plover (*T. melanoleucus*) is at once striking and easy to imitate, as every sportsman knows. One night last fall this