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MILWAIRTH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OBSERVES 179 BIRDS DURING THE YEAR

The year 1920 was one of the most successful and enjoyable yet experienced by members of the Milwairth Ornithological Club. The complete list of birds observed is published herewith, and totals 179. Several of the members individually saw over 100 species, but a list such as that may only be obtained by one who is willing to spend considerable time afield, and during April and May, to force those extra "forty winks" in the morning, rising with the break of day to spend the early hours in some favorite woods or swamp.

The good luck, it such it may be called, which followed the club during the season, was manifest quite early in the year, for on the usual New Year's Day trip from Hyde Park to the city the members noted no less than 34 species, which is about double the usual number. The success or failure in making a "big list" depends upon the winter birds. Many of these are rare and most of them irregular in their habits, some years invading the south in force and other seasons being entirely absent.

Among these might be mentioned the Crossbills, peculiar birds the mandibles of whose bills do not meet evenly, but cross as their name suggests. The projecting points, however, are of great convenience for extracting the seeds from the hemlock cones which is their principal food in winter. There are two varieties, the American or Red Crossbill and the White-Winged Crossbill. Both were seen New Year's Day (1920), the former being the last of the season, and the appearance of the latter, which is somewhat the rarer, being the last of the season. Crossbills, however, stayed around until the middle of May, being seen at different times and in a variety of places.

Another group of winter birds are the Grosbeaks. These also, the Pine Grosbeak and the Evening Grosbeak. The former visits us in small numbers almost every year, but until quite recently the latter was a decidedly rare bird, and its occurrence was considered the event of the season. The White-Winged Crossbill, however, is a great attraction to them, and in 1921 a large flock spent some time in and around the Ontario Hospital grounds, where a number of those trees are which the latter species has been seen since 1911 has each year been looked for eagerly. In 1920, they did they really come again in numbers. They were first reported on January 5th, and remained until May 21st.

Other winter birds which may be seen on the list are: Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Winter Wren, Blackbird, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike and Snowbird, but while the latter 1919-1920 was notable for the invasion of these northern birds, it was also remarkable for the number of species remaining over, whose members usually lay for winter. One of the latter, the Redpoll, in this latter list is the Redpoll, which is a very common Sparrow. Yellow-Bellied Woodpecker, Robin, White-Throated Sparrow, Red-Winged Blackbird, Black Duck, Song Sparrow, Bronzed Grackle and Kingfisher. The latter two species have never been reported from here in winter before, and are, therefore, new records. It seemed unusual to have so many staying over, as the weather was exceptionally severe, but it is impossible for mere humans to understand the ways of the birds. We can only study them and strive to learn what we can of their habits of life.

Rarer Birds. Among the rarer birds seen during the spring and summer months might be mentioned the Bald Eagle, Ring-Billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Yellow Rail, Least Bittern, Prothonotary Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow, Hobbins's Grebe, Short-Eared Owl, Turkey Buzzard, Long-Billed Marsh Wren and Black Tern, but it would hardly do to take time and space to mention more than their names.

The largest number of species seen on one day was eighty, on May 24th, and as it may be of interest to some that these have been marked with a star on the appended list.

The club appreciates very much the contributions of the daily press in publishing the list of "Bird News" and it is possible that with their kind co-operation these may be resumed as interesting incidents come to notice from time to time.

JANUARY—

1—House Sparrow.

2—Blue Jay.

3—Crow.

4—Brown Creeper.

5—Black-Capped Chickadee.

6—White-Breasted Nuthatch.

7—Red-Breasted Nuthatch.

8—American Goldfinch.

9—American Crow.

10—White-Winged Crossbill.

11—Song Sparrow.

12—White-Throated Sparrow.

13—Snowflake.

14—Purple Finch.

15—Red-Winged Blackbird.

16—Rusty Blackbird.

17—Red-Shouldered Hawk.

18—Cedar Waxwing.

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