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AGENCIES THROUGHOUT CANADA

THE OTTAWA NATURALIST

Vol. XXVI.

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No. 8

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

BY W. J. BROWN, WESTMOUNT, QUE.

In June, 1911, we experienced a stormy passage over night from North Sydney to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland, a heavy gale and sea tossing the Reid-Newfoundland Steamer "Invermore" around in such a manner as to make sleep impossible. In May, 1912, we had a most delightful trip, covering the distance of 102 miles in about six or seven hours. The Reid-Newfoundland Company have now a daily service between North Sydney and Port aux Basques. The new "Bruce" and "Invermore," although practically ocean liners in miniature, are trim, snug and comfortable, and afford excellent accommodation in every respect. At seven o'clock in the morning we were "locked up" in mist and fog, but the rasping foghorn, a mile away, gave indications of close proximity to the barren ranges of Newfoundland. Even a keen and enthusiastic ornithologist cannot look at Port aux Basques for the first time and smile, especially if it is raining and a heavy fog prevails. The "Port" presents one of the dreariest and most forlorn of pictures as a gate of entry into probably the finest paradise for birds and game in America. First impressions, however, are soon forgotten, as the scene ashore is one of great activity and the express train is waiting nearby to carry man and baggage into a magnificent camping ground among the mountains and waterways in the interior. The traveller soon finds himself passing along the banks of beautiful streams and is tempted to jump off to visit a pool, wherein, no doubt, lurk many large trout. But, this is no fishing excursion and the many songs and notes of the northern breeding sparrows and warblers soon divert attention. The train makes considerable noise en route, especially when going around curves, but above all this a continuous bird chorus can be heard outside the car windows.

There are some charming towns and villages along the Bay of Islands and here we noted many different species of birds nesting en masse in stunted spruce woods. A small area of

evergreen fenced in is called a "garden" by the Newfoundlander, and in such localities Fox and White-throated Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Robins, Black-poll and Magnolia Warblers, Purple Finches, Thrushes and Alder Flycatchers were nesting commonly. A few hundred yards beyond, Pine Grosebeaks, Water Thrushes, Winter Wrens, Redpolls, Black-throated-green Warblers and Chickadees were breeding and several pairs of Wilson's Snipe had their nests in bogs not more than 200 yards away from dwellings. Generally speaking, birds raise their young where food is most abundant, and this, no doubt, accounts, to a great extent, for the confluence of different species within the zone of civilization during the breeding season. Further inland, the country is less settled and bird life is not so congested. Up on the "barrens" one is forcibly struck by the comparative absence of birds, Gulls, Yellowlegs, and Least Sandpipers being in the majority.

The following is a list of the birds observed:—

- LOON.** On May 28th, a female specimen was shot by a section-man. The oviduct contained two eggs. The bird is common.
- BLACK GUILLEMOT.** Saw several flying a hundred yards off shore at St. George's Bay.
- GLAUCOUS GULL.** A few miles inland from St. George's Bay six or seven pairs of these birds were breeding on small islands in a lake. On June 3rd, the nests, which were placed on large boulders near the water, contained two or three badly incubated eggs.
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.** One pair had their nest in the same locality as the small colony of Glaucous Gulls referred to above. On June 3rd, the three eggs were ready to hatch.
- HERRING GULL.** Common. Their breeding grounds were not visited, but large numbers were observed feeding in St. George's Bay.
- COMMON TERN.** Hundreds noted in St. George's Bay the first week in June.
- BLACK DUCK.** On June 3rd, a nest containing ten incubated eggs was found on a small island in a lake a few miles inland from the sea.
- BITTERN.** Eight specimens were noted. Probably fairly common.
- WILSON'S SNIBE.** Abundant. A pair, or more, were found nesting in all the bogs we visited. Many nests with eggs were found the early part of June. The nests were merely depressions in moss lined with a few feathers and tops of grasses. While searching for nests of this species I came

upon an incubating female, the brown colour of the bird being easily distinguishable from the green moss upon which she was sitting. The bird allowed me to stroke her back without being the least disturbed and had to be lifted off the nest in order that a snapshot could be taken of the eggs. She at once turned a couple of somersaults and feigned a broken wing and remained in the immediate vicinity.

LEAST SANDPIPER. On June 18th, two nests were located near water, the eggs in each set numbering four. These were simply laid on grassy mounds in a large bog.

YELLOWLEGS. Common on the "barrens" and nesting in fair numbers.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER. Many nests located on the beach near Bay of Islands. A common summer resident.

PIGEON HAWK. Breeding in suitable localities and apparently the common hawk of the Island. The writer located a nest of this species on the ground in spruce woods on June 6th. The set of five eggs was laid underneath a stump, strips of bark and a few feathers forming the lining. A week later another nest was discovered some twenty feet up in a pine tree.

OSPREY. Two miles from St. George's Bay two nests were found. These were placed on the top of evergreen trees on the side of a mountain and within a few yards of a lake. On June 3rd, one nest contained three eggs far advanced in incubation and the other had two fresh eggs. June 10th, another nest was located in a big pine tree, it contained three newly hatched young.

BELTED KINGFISHER. Common.

NORTHERN FLICKER. One of the commonest Woodpeckers on the Island.

ALDER FLYCATCHER. Abundant. On June 28th, a nest with three fresh eggs was found in a low shrub.

LABRADOR JAY. Many birds seen in all localities we visited.

CROW. Only a few seen along the Humber River.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD. Saw a great many in spruce swamps during the first week in June, but no nests were found.

PINE GROSBEAK. This species is apparently a common breeder. It was noted at several points, especially along the Humber. By June 10th, the young had left one nest and two others were ready for eggs. On June 14th, one of the latter contained three fresh eggs. The nests were all placed at various heights in spruce trees and were built externally of twigs and lined with some kinds of bleached grasses, the whole being very shallow and frail.

PURPLE FINCH. Heard singing from the tops of evergreens in different places.

REDPOLL. Saw several flocks roaming about the country near Bay of Islands.

SAVANNA SPARROW. A common summer resident. On June 19th, a nest with eggs was found in the ground.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. One of the characteristic birds of the region and nesting commonly.

CHIPPING SPARROW. Common.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW. A common summer resident. The bird seems to prefer swampy localities where low growth is abundant. On June 8th, a nest containing four badly incubated eggs was found in the ground in a large tamarack bog. The nest, which was composed of dead grasses, was well concealed amongst withered weeds and rank growth. The bird is elusive and shy and also difficult to approach. It was only after an hour's watching that we were able to get a glimpse of her on the nest.

SONG SPARROW. Rare. A nest with four eggs was found on June 3rd in the ground. One individual was heard singing lustily from the top of an alder bush on the same date.

SWAMP SPARROW. Common summer resident. Six or seven birds were heard singing in chorus in a large swamp on June 3rd. A nest was found on June 5th, which contained three fresh eggs.

FOX SPARROW. Abundant. This is one of the earliest breeders in Newfoundland. On May 14th, when the snow was lying deep in the spruce woods, two nests were located, each containing three fresh eggs. On May 16th, 19th, 22nd and 24th, nests were found with full sets. All of these were placed from four to eight feet up in spruce trees. The birds frequently build much higher up. On June 10th, I located a nest, which had three large young, about twenty feet up in an evergreen. Various nesting sites are chosen. On June 8th, a nest of five young was found three feet up from the ground and placed between the trunk and loose bark of a large pine tree. Others were situated in the roots of upturned stumps. This year no nests were found on the ground. The nests were all built of twigs, moss, rootlets, etc., with a lining of plant stems, grasses and hair. Many young birds were observed skulking in the underbrush during the first week in June. The Fox Sparrow is a wonderful scratcher and quite frequently the birds were seen working industriously in scrubby potato patches.

- WHITE-BELLIED SWALLOW. A large wave appeared at Stephen-ville on June 3rd. The next day they disappeared altogether.
- BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER. A few specimens seen in damp evergreen woods.
- YELLOW WARBLER. Fairly common. A few nests were located the latter half of June.
- MYRTLE WARBLER. Only two birds noted.
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER. On June 8th, a nest was located two feet up in a small spruce. The bird had not started to lay. Fairly common.
- BLACK-POLL WARBLER. This bird's weak song was heard all along the Humber River in June.
- BLACK-THROATED-GREEN WARBLER. One nest found on June 13th contained four fresh eggs. It was placed eight feet up in a pine tree.
- OVEN-BIRD. Heard singing in many localities in mixed woods.
- WATER THRUSH. Abundant. A nest was found under a bank along the Humber River. On June 12th it contained four fresh eggs.
- MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT. Common.
- CANADIAN WARBLER. A moderate summer resident.
- AMERICAN REDSTART. Saw several males near Bay of Islands.
- AMERICAN PIPIT. On June 19th, a nest with three fresh eggs was found on the side of a moss-covered rock. The nest was built of dead grasses only.
- WINTER WREN. Heard everywhere in spruce woods.
- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH. Common.
- RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. Abundant. During the second week in June several nests were found in small spruce trees, eight or nine eggs being the complement in each case.
- VEERY. A few individuals noted.
- OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH. Very common. Many nests found middle of June on stumps and in spruce trees, three and four eggs forming the set.
- HERMIT THRUSH. Heard everywhere during the daytime and night.
- ROBIN. Common.

DEPLETION OF BIRD LIFE IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

While the water-fowl are being needlessly slaughtered and exterminated on the sea coast, the birds in the interior are meeting with the same fate. Near two section-houses up on the "barrens" Ptarmigan feathers and skins were scattered about along the railway for some 200 yards. A few casual remarks elicited the fact that one party had shot over 100

"Partridges" during April and May. A glance up the road-bed certainly did not contradict this assertion. The flesh of the loon, as a rule, is not palatable, and why this species should also be glaringly shot when opportunity offers is questionable. A great number of Gulls have deserted their breeding grounds on the coast and are now endeavouring to raise their young in secluded localities inland. Year by year, however, the indiscriminate destruction of birds still goes on, and if drastic steps are not soon taken in the direction of protecting them, certain species will be wiped out altogether. Every lake has its quota of rafts, which are used in the springtime for robbing the Gulls.

LIST OF TRILOBITES FOUND AT OTTAWA AND
IMMEDIATE VICINITY.

REVISED TO DATE BY J. E. NARRAWAY.

- Eoharpes dentoni* Billings, Trenton, very rare, E.
 " *ottawaensis* Billings, Trenton, very rare, E.
Triarthrus spinosus Billings, Utica, abundant, A.
 " *becki* Green, Utica, common, A.
 " *glaber* Billings, Utica, rare, E.
Bathyrus acutus Raymond, Pamela, rather common, F.
 " *superbus* Raymond, Pamela, rather common, B.
 " *extans* (Hall), Lowville, common, C.
 " *spiniger* (Hall), Lowville and Black River, common,
 rarely in Black River, D.
 " *ingalli* Raymond, Trenton, rare, D.
Cyphaspis trentonensis Weller, Black River, very rare, D.
Basilicus barrandi (Hall), Black River, rare, E.
Ogygites canadensis (Chapman), Utica, abundant, B.
Onchometopus simplex Raymond and Narraway, Pamela, rather
 common, C.
Isotelus arenicola Raymond, Chazy, rare, C.
 " *gigas* Dekay, Lowville to Trenton, rather common, B.
 " *latus* Raymond, Trenton, common, B.
 " *maximus* Locke, Lorraine, rather common, C.
 " *iowensis* Owen, Lowville and Black River, rare, C.
Isoteloides homalnotoides (Walcott), Black River, rare, D.
Iliaenus angusticollis Billings, Black River, rather common, C.
 " *conradi* Billings, Black River, common, B.
 " *latiaxiatus* Raymond and Narraway, Black River,
 rather rare, E.
 " *americanus* Billings, Trenton, rare, B.

- Bumastus milleri* (Billings), Lowville and Black River, rather common, A.
 " *indeterminatus* (Walcott), Black River, rather rare, E.
 " *billingsi* Raymond and Narraway, Trenton, rather rare, C.
- Thaleops ovata* Conrad, Black River, common, C.
Calymene senaria Conrad, Trenton, abundant, A.
Cybele ella Narraway and Raymond, Black River, very rare, C.
Ceraurus pleurexanthemus Green, Black River to Utica, common, B.
 " *dentatus* Barton and Raymond, Trenton, rare, D.
 " *bispinosus* Barton and Raymond, Black River, very rare, E.
- Dalmanites achates* Billings, Trenton, rather common, C.
 " *bebryx* Billings, Trenton, rather rare, C.
- Pterygometopus callicephalus* (Hall), Black River and Trenton, common, C.
Amphilichas trentonensis (Conrad), Trenton, very rare, F.
 " *cucullus* (Meek and Worthen), Trenton, very rare, E.
- Arges wesenbergensis paulianus* Clarke, Trenton, rather rare, E.
Encrinurus vigilans Hall, Trenton, very rare, C.
Bronteus lunatus Billings, Trenton, rather rare, B.
Odontopleura trentonensis (Hall), Trenton, rather rare, C.
Proetus parviusculus Hall, Trenton, rather rare, D.
- A. Entire specimens common.
 B. " " sometimes, but usually fragmentary.
 C. " " very rarely, but usually fragmentary.
 D. No " " always fragmentary.
 E. " " generally cephalo or cranidia.
 F. " " " pygidia.

SUMMARY.

In all 43 specimens of 22 genera distributed as follows:

In Chazy formation	1 species	1 genus
" Pamela formation	3 "	2 genera
" Lowville formation	5 "	4 "
" Black River formation	16 "	10 "
" Trenton formation	19 "	15 "
" Utica formation	5 "	3 "
" Lorraine formation	1 "	1 genus

Entire shields have been found of 26 species; 17 species are still known only from fragments.

The compiler has endeavoured to eliminate all doubtfully or incorrectly identified species, and to bring the nomenclature up to date, thus establishing a list which may be relied on as a

basis, but which it is hoped will be added to by future collectors. It is morally certain that several other species occur in the district, as fragments have been found which undoubtedly belong to species not here enumerated, but which do not afford sufficient data for positive identification. For example, fragments have been collected of the genera *Remopleurides*, *Cybele*, *Dalmanites*, *Pterygometopus* and *Illiaenus* which cannot at present be definitely referred to any of our previously known species.

HARRIS' SPARROW IN ONTARIO.

BY W. E. SAUNDERS, LONDON, ONT.

This sparrow is absolutely unknown to almost all Ontarians, unless they have met it in the west. Because it belongs to the genus *Zonotrichia* one is inclined to feel that it should have white around the head, but it reverses this common character of the white-throat and the white-crown, and has, in full plumage, a large black patch on the throat, and some black on the top of the head. The remainder of the colouring is of the same general type as that of the eastern birds, but it is larger, measuring seven inches in length.

The only published record of this bird for Ontario occurs on page 7 of the "Mammals of Ontario," by Dr. Gerritt Miller, where he casually mentions the presence of *Zonotrichia querula* at Nipigon in September, 1896.

Another record south of Ontario is the mention of a specimen taken, and four or five others seen, near Columbus, Ohio, on April 28th, 1889, which occurs in the 5th edition of Davies' "Nests and Eggs," page 377.

In the west, we find it occurring more frequently, and Prof. Barrows writes me that the first Michigan specimen was taken at Palmer, Marquette Co., on Sept. 30th, 1894; the second at Battle Creek, Oct. 12th, 1894; the third at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., on Feb. 22nd, 1900.

At London, I have met this bird but once, and the occurrence stands as the only positive occurrence in eastern Ontario. On March 18th, 1907, while walking in from the country about 8 a.m., I heard what seemed to be a single long-drawn note of the white-throated sparrow, high pitched as usual, and as the date was very early for this bird, I stopped to investigate. Among a company of juncos and song sparrows, in a garden, was one large dull-coloured sparrow which I suspected of being the author of the note, and which I took at once to be a Harris. A request to the lady of the house brought forth a point blank

refusal to allow me to shoot anything, as there was "nothing but robins here." Promising not to shoot, I went out to look, and by "looking" at sufficiently close range, and from the right direction, I scared the bird across the road; and having profited by experience, I proceeded to shoot it first, and ask permission afterwards. It proved to be a male in immature plumage, spotted irregularly on the upper breast, the spots giving a hint of the black colouration which was to come. The specimen is now number 1797 in my collection.

This short fragment of a song brought back to my memory a peculiar song, consisting of a single whistled note pitched at the usual range of the white-throat, which I heard as my train stopped at a station near Wabigoon, north-west of Lake Superior, on June 30th, 1906. I had ascribed this song to the white-throat, but, from its resemblance to the call of the captured Harris, I feel sure that there is a chance of its author being of the latter species.

One would infer from Dr. Miller's reference that the Harris was not uncommon at Nepigon, and if it turns out that it breeds regularly north of Lake Superior, a southward migration through lower Ontario should be noted with moderate frequency.

Two of the dates quoted above are rather interesting, Feb. 22nd, 1900, at the Sault, and March 18th, 1907, at London. Both of them are much in advance of the white-throats' migration, and yet it appears that the date of the migration of Harris' sparrow in the west is rather late, apparently between that of the white-throat and the white-crown.

It should also be mentioned that Mr. I. Hughes Samuel saw a bird which he took to be a male of this species near Toronto during the spring migration, about the year 1898, but as no record had ever been published of the capture of this bird in Lower Ontario, the occurrence was never published.

Apparently this bird should be looked for in early flocks of sparrows in February and March, and at that time all attempts at a song resembling that of a white-throat should be carefully investigated.

THE CANADIAN RUFFED GROUSE.

The Canadian Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus togata*), popularly known as the "partridge," is one of our most widely-distributed game birds, being found wherever there are woods, from New Brunswick to British Columbia, and as far north as Hudson's Bay. It is a handsome grayish bird of markedly

gallinaceous appearance, some seventeen inches long and of stout build. The extraordinary "drumming" noise made by the male bird to call the female is familiar to everyone who frequents the woods in the spring. To produce this remarkable sound the bird stands on some slight elevation, such as a log or a stone, and strikes the air strongly with his outstretched wings. The first four or five strokes, occurring at intervals of about half a second, sound like blows on a rather dull bass drum, but they rapidly get faster and faster until the sound becomes continuous like the roll of a snare drum. The whole performance lasts, perhaps, ten seconds, and is repeated every few minutes for some time.

In the northern part of its range this bird has another peculiar habit, that of tunnelling into a snowdrift for protection against the intense cold. In order to begin its tunnel it sometimes walks around, deliberately burrowing here and there into the snow with its head until it finds a suitable place, but its general procedure is to dive from an elevated branch or directly off the wing into the drift, the momentum of its plunge being sufficient to drive it some little way into the soft snow, and thus enable it to start its tunnels conveniently. Then, at a depth of three or four inches under the surface, it scratches out a horizontal or slightly descending passage about two feet long, the end of which it enlarges into a roughly spherical chamber eight or ten inches in diameter, the removed snow completely blocking up the entrance tunnel. Here the bird, apparently preferring hunger to cold, may spend several days if the weather is severe. Except for one mark where the tunnel begins, the surface of the snow is quite undisturbed, and no one would ever suspect that a live warm bird was concealed in the drift. To leave its burrow, the bird simply bursts out through the overlying layer of snow, springing into immediate flight.

One day last January, when the thermometer stood 10° below zero F., I stopped a moment while snowshoeing through the woods to examine a curious isolated mark on the snow. At that instant a "partridge" burst out just at the toes of my snowshoes, and with a great whirr of wings disappeared among the spruces. The mark I had noticed was the entrance to the tunnel, and from its appearance the bird had evidently been three or four days in its burrow, and would doubtless have remained there longer if my approach had not frightened it out. Dry, soft snow is, of course, an excellent non-conductor of heat, and even in the very coldest weather, the ruffed grouse is no doubt quite comfortable in its immaculate chamber.—CHARLES MACNAMARA, in *Knowledge*, Aug., 1912.

OBITUARY.

JOHN CRAIG, M. S. Agr., Late Professor of Horticulture,
Agricultural College, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

The recent death of Prof. John Craig is deeply deplored by his many friends. Those who knew him when he lived in Ottawa will remember his tall, manly figure; his rugged strength and the iron-like grip of his hand, and they can scarcely believe that with his great physique serious illness could lay hold upon him. But, he has been cut down in the prime of life. He died at Siasconset, Massachusetts, on August 10th, 1912, at the age of 48 years, after an illness of several months.

When Mr. Craig came to Ottawa in 1890 he soon joined the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, becoming a member that year, and until he left the city in the autumn of 1897 he took an active part in the Club's work. He was particularly interested in botany and was a leader in that branch. He contributed many interesting articles on botanical and horticultural subjects to THE OTTAWA NATURALIST, both while he was in Ottawa and after leaving here. He was Treasurer of the Club in 1897.

Mr. Craig was born at Lakefield, Argenteuil Co., P.Q., in 1864. His father, the late William Craig, was manager of the estate of the late Chas. Gibb, a noted horticulturist of Abbotsford, Quebec, a lover of fruits and flowers, from whom Mr. Craig received the inspiration which decided him to make horticulture his life's work. From the High School in Montreal he went to the Agricultural College at Ames, Iowa, in 1885, where he specialized in horticulture and economic botany, becoming, in 1887, Assistant to Prof. J. L. Budd, Professor of Horticulture, and, in 1888, Assistant to the Director, having charge, while he held the latter office, of the Department of Horticulture of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station. In January, 1890, he entered the service of the Dominion Government, becoming Horticulturist of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, which position he held until the autumn of 1897. The work in horticulture developed greatly under him. The use of Bordeaux Mixture in preventing the development of certain diseases of fruit was practically unknown in Canada when he began experiments and as early as 1890 we find him trying different formulæ to determine the best to use. To his energy in rapidly spreading the good news of the possible control of apple scab, is largely due the wide and early use of Bordeaux Mixture in Canada. When the San José Scale was first discovered

in Ontario in 1896 the prompt action which was taken to control it was largely due to him. In 1893, he assisted the Provincial Government in organizing the Ontario Fruit Experiment Stations.

He was one of the most enthusiastic and energetic workers in the Ottawa Horticultural Society, while in Ottawa, and was one of the few who organized the Society in 1893. He was president of that Society for 1895, 1896 and 1897, during which time it developed rapidly.

Mr. Craig resigned his position as Horticulturist of the Central Experimental Farm in 1897 and went to the United States, where he took a special course at the Agricultural College at Cornell University, obtaining the degree of Master of the Science of Agriculture there in 1899. He was appointed Professor of Horticulture and Forestry of the Iowa State Agricultural College in 1899, which he held until 1900 when he accepted the position of Professor of Extension Teaching at Cornell. He filled this office until 1903, when he became Professor of Horticulture of the Cornell Agricultural College, which post he held until his death.

Prof. Craig filled many offices in the United States and served on many important committees. He became Secretary of the American Pomological Society in 1903 and was still Secretary when he died. Notwithstanding his many other duties he edited *The National Nurseryman*, a trade paper of importance, and the organ of the American Association of Nurserymen. Prof. Craig's outstanding qualities were his strength of will, by which he overcame many obstacles, and his capacity for work, which, with his determination to succeed, led him from one important position to another.

His courtesy to those who worked with or under him was very noticeable and much appreciated. He had a keen sense of humour which in time, of difficulty, and even of sickness, did not leave him. He loved horticulture in all its branches and being intimately connected with it from his early youth he had a broad insight into, and a great knowledge of, the whole field.

He was loyal to his friends who, though scattered far throughout Canada and the United States, felt during his life that he was always true to them.

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