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MARCH, 1918
Vol. XXXI, No. 12.

THE OTTAWA NATURALIST

Published by The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

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ISSUED JUNE 21st, 1918.

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THE OTTAWA NATURALIST

Vol. XXXI.

MARCH, 1918.

No. 12.

THE BIRDS OF EDMONTON.

BY J. DEWEY SOPER, PRESTON, ONT.

(Continued from page 134).

BREWER BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*).—Fairly common summer resident. Nest and eggs complete are found usually by May 10.

BRONZED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*).—A number breed around Edmonton. Arrives April 25. This form is sub-specifically referable to *Q. q. aeneus*.

EVENING GROSBEAK (*Hesperiphona vespertina*).—I saw these birds during the spring only of 1913. The first flock of seven were seen on the morning of April 17. Further numbers were observed at various times until May 10, when they then disappeared.

PINE GROSBEAK (*Pinicola enucleator*).—Usually a common winter visitor; sub-specifically *leucura* on geographical probability.

PURPLE FINCH (*Carpodacus purpureus*).—This beautiful singer is first heard about May 15, when it may be seen singing from the topmost crest of a tall spruce or to launch on fluttering wings to deliver its melody high in the air. It nests at Edmonton.

AMERICAN CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra minor*).—Recorded by Mr. Atkinson, in 1906, at Edmonton.

REDPOLL (*Acanthis linaria*).—Usually very common during the winter, much more so during the first two weeks in April, after which they disappear.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Astragalinus tristis*).—This handsome bird is tolerably common during the summer but does not arrive until about June 1.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*).—Mr. Spreadborough found them at Edmonton in 1897.

SNOWFLAKE (*Passerina nivalis*).—Numerous throughout the winter.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR (*Calcarius lapponicus*).—Mr. Spreadborough found them abundant as a migrant from April 28 to May 5, 1897.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*).—Mr. Atkinson records this species at Edmonton in 1906.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*).—Not common. Arrives about May 10. Presumably the sub-specific form *confinis*.

SAVANNA SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*).—Abundant. Arrives about May 1. Referable to sub-specific form *alaudinus*.

BAIRD SPARROW (*Centronyx bairdii*).—Mr. Atkinson recorded it as numerous in grass marshes in the year 1906.

LECONTE SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*).—A single sparrow which I refer to this species was observed on May 11, 1913, frequenting a tract of low scrub willows. Mr. Spreadborough took a male on May 26, 1897.

NELSON SPARROW (*Ammodramus nelsoni*).—Mr. Spreadborough first saw this species late in May, 1897. It was uncommon, and breeding in wet ground.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*).—A number of migrants are annually observed from about May 10 to 20. The sub-species *gambeli* no doubt occurs regularly with the typical form as Mr. Taverner informs me there is a specimen in the Victoria Museum taken at Edmonton in 1897.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*).—Fairly common summer resident. First observed about May 12.

TREE SPARROW (*Spizella monticola*).—Very abundant during the forepart of April, 1912, and in full song. They remain in flocks and are shy and restless. To my knowledge they do not breed but go further north. Appears again about September 28. This form is referable by geography to the western variety *ochracea*.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella socialis*).—Common summer resident.

CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*).—A very common sparrow at Edmonton. First seen about May 16, three days later they are abundant. Nest completed and eggs laid by June 15.

SLATE-COLOURED JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*).—Common summer resident. Breeds in the river valleys and ravines. Most abundant during the early part of April and early October.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*).—Common summer resident. First observed from April 12 to 20. Nest and clutch of eggs completed by May 25. Mr. Taverner informs me that he determines specimens from Edmonton as *juddi*.

LINCOLN SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*).—The only personal record I have of this species is a single bird observed on May 1, 1912, and a pair the following June 21. Mr. Spreadborough found it abundant at Edmonton in May, 1897.

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*).—An abundant breeding species. Arrives early in May.

FOX SPARROW (*Passerella iliaca*).—This wonderful singer is one of the earliest sparrows, appearing about April 14. By May 5, the nest is completed and full set of eggs laid.

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK (*Habia ludoviciana*).—Common summer resident, arriving about April 22.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*).—Reported as common in Edmonton by Mr. Spreadborough in 1897. Arrived May 13, common by May 21.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo erythrogaster*).—Tolerably common summer resident.

TREE SWALLOW (*Iridoprocne bicolor*).—Common summer resident. First observed about May 12.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*).—A number nest annually in the Saskatchewan river banks.

CEDAR WAXWING (*Ampelis cedrorum*).—Very irregular. Observed several pairs on June 15, 1913.

WHITE-RUMPED SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*).—Occasionally observed during November and December, 1912. The birds of this region are referable to *excubitorides*. Mr. Spreadborough collected a female of this variety at Edmonton on May 21, 1897.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireosylva olivacea*).—Common summer resident. First observed about May 20. Found on June 23, 1913, a nest containing three eggs in a small poplar. The nest was about fifteen feet from the ground.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireosylva philadelphica*).—Mr. Spreadborough found numbers breeding at Edmonton in May, 1897.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireosylva gilva*).—Noted at Edmonton by Mr. Atkinson, in 1906.

SOLITARY OR BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Lanivireo solitarius*).—Not common. Breeds no doubt as I have seen them in July.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*).—Rather rare. Remains in the timber near the river.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Helminthophila celata*).—Three males were collected by Mr. Spreadborough on May 5, 7, and 19, respectively, at Edmonton, 1897. These specimens were examined by Mr. Oberholser, two of them determined by him as belonging to the sub-species *orestera* and one to *celata*. (P. A. Taverner).

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Helminthophila peregrina*).—A male specimen was collected by Mr. Spreadborough on May 22, 1897. He believes they breed at Edmonton.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Dendroica aestiva*).—Common summer resident. Arrives about May 15.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Dendroica maculosa*).—Mr. Spreadborough obtained two males on May 22 and 25, respectively, at Edmonton, 1897.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Dendroica virens*).—Tolerably common and breeding in the spruce woods that flank the rivers. First observed about May 16.

OVEN BIRD (*Seiurus aurocapillus*).—Breeds at Edmonton along the timbered river banks. Arrives about May 15, common by the 24th.

GRINNELL WATER-THRUSH (*Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis*). This sub-species was noted as far west as Edmonton, in 1906, by Mr. Atkinson.

MOURNING WARBLER (*Oporornis philaedelpia*).—Mr. Spreadborough collected a male specimen on June 4, 1897.

MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*).—Common summer resident. Arrives about May 24. The form inhabiting this region probably referable to the Northern Yellow-Throat *G. t. brachidactyla*.

WILSON WARBLER (*Wilsonia pusilla*).—Mr. Spreadborough first observed this species at Edmonton on May 29, 1897. A few pairs remained to breed.

CANADIAN WARBLER (*Wilsonia canadensis*).—Mr. Spreadborough did not observe this species anywhere west of Manitoba, except at Edmonton, where he took a male specimen on May 29, 1897.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*).—Tolerably common. Arrives the latter end of May. Mr. Spreadborough found them nesting in willow thickets along the streams.

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus pensilvanicus*).—Mr. Spreadborough found this species common at Edmonton from April 27 to May 10, 1897.

CATBIRD (*Galeoscoptes carolinensis*).—Common summer resident. Returns about May 24.

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*).—Common summer resident. Arrives about May 11. The form at Edmonton is referable to the sub-specific one *T. a. parkmanii*.

MARSH WREN (*Telmatodytes palustris*).—A very common summer resident about the sloughs. The nest is completed and the eggs laid by June 5. They have a peculiar habit of building several dummy nests in addition to the genuine one. I once found seven perfectly finished nests within a radius of twenty-five yards. Only one contained eggs, and only one pair of wrens frequented that vicinity. The sub-specific form at Edmonton is placed under *I. p. iliacus*.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*).—Mr. Atkinson records the species as far west as Edmonton in 1906, the reference being referred to *S. c. nelsoni*.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*).—Mr. Spreadborough found the species tolerably common at Edmonton in the spruce woods, June 12, 1897.

CHICKADEE (*Penthestes atricapillus*).—Common permanent resident. Former records have been placed under *P. a. septentrionalis*.

HUDSONIAN CHICKADEE (*Penthestes hudsonicus*).—Mr. Spreadborough took a single male specimen on May 7, 1897, which was referred to *P. h. columbianus*. During my entire time at Edmonton I never once saw this species. I found them as common as the black-capped form near the mountains to the west on the G.T.P. Ry. in 1913.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*).—Tolerably common in the spruce woods. Arrives in early May. The song of this species is surprisingly loud and sweet, considering the diminutive proportions of the bird. I think they breed.

WILSON THRUSH (*Hylocichla fuscescens*).—Very common summer resident. Arrives about May 15. Nest and full set of eggs complete by June 8. Young born by June 15. Mr. Taverner informs me that Edmonton specimens submitted to Mr. H. C. Oberholser were referred by him to *salicicola*.

OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH (*Hylocichla ustulata swainsonii*).—Mr. Spreadborough found this species common at Edmonton after May 8, and nests and eggs were taken. Specimens from there, Mr. Taverner informs me, were submitted to Mr. Oberholser for examination and were given the above sub-specific name.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Hylocichla guttata*).—A migrant during May. Specimens from Edmonton were examined by Mr. Oberholser and referred to *H. g. pallasii*.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Planesticus migratorius*).—Common summer resident. Arrives about April 10.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia arctica*).—Rare at Edmonton. Only once observed, when three individuals in company were frequenting a meadow on September 15, 1902.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON EXCURSIONS.

- June 1—Botany; east side of Fairy Lake; meeting-place, the end of the electric car line on the Chelsea road, at 3 p.m.
- June 8—General; Black Rapids by steamer Wanekewan; see schedule for the season.
- June 15—The Experimental Farm; a selected topic in practical horticulture; meeting-place, The Farm, at 3 p.m.
- June 22—Botany; the Beaver Meadow, leading to Fairy Lake, Hull; meeting-place, the end of the city street car line, opposite Eddy Company's office, Hull, at 3 p.m.

OBITUARY.

WILLIAM HAGUE HARRINGTON.

In the death of William Hague Harrington, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club lost one of its oldest members. Mr. Harrington was not only a distinguished entomologist, but he was also a capable botanist, as well as the possessor of a fund of knowledge on natural history generally.

In 1879, Mr. Harrington, with several other naturalists founded the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club and was chosen as a member of the Committee. In 1880 he was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Club. In the following year he was re-elected to the same position and in 1882 the position being divided he was elected Secretary, which office he continued to hold until March, 1885. In that month he was honoured by being elected President of the Club.

At a council meeting of the Club held on March 15 it was resolved as follows:

"The Council of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club has learned with deep regret of the death on Wednesday, March 13, of Mr. William Hague Harrington, F.R.S.C. Mr. Harrington was known and highly respected by entomologists, botanists and other scientific men not only in Canada but throughout the United States as well. His studies, particularly on certain families of insects had given him a wide reputation, and in his death the science of entomology particularly has lost a devoted worker. As a former Secretary and Past President of the Club he was held in high regard by our members."

Mr. Harrington was born at Sydney, Cape Breton, N.S., on April 19, 1852; he was thus almost 66 years old when he died. In 1870, he came to Ottawa and entered the Post Office Department. Here his ability was soon recognized and from one promotion to another he was in 1908 appointed Superintendent of the Savings Bank Branch, an important position in the above department. In June, 1916, after 45 years of public service he was granted superannuation and being thus relieved of official duties he looked forward to being able to devote himself more fully to entomological studies. Unfortunately, however, this was not to be. More recently, particularly during the past two years a continued anaemic condition gradually undermined his system. Last November his condition became decidedly more serious and he was compelled to take to his bed. About that time too, he had a slight paralytic stroke. During the past winter, paralysis increased gradually and this with profound anaemia finally caused death.

A more extended notice will appear in the June, 1918, issue of *The Canadian Entomologist*.

A. G.

ROBERT B. WHYTE.

In the sudden passing of Mr. R. B. Whyte, on April 15, 1918, Ottawa lost one of her most useful and respected citizens. He stood for all that was highest in the life of the city and the nation. He scorned all that was mean, dishonest and low. His aspirations were of the noblest and the best in everything. What he accomplished is recorded in many ways, and not the least in the hearts of those who knew him best. The influence of the good which he did during his life will last for many a day. Old men and little children praise him. He was the greatest amateur horticulturist of his time in Canada.

True lovers of nature are born, not made. From his early youth the late R. B. Whyte was interested in wild flowers and, in fact, in all branches of natural history, and though at an early age he was obliged to spend long days in his father's business, he managed to get some time in which to study plants. His largest collection of wild flowers was made in 1875, but each year he searched the woods diligently about Ottawa for new things, and his herbarium at length contained most of the species found in the Ottawa district. When the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club was formed in 1879 he was one of the charter members and the first Secretary of the club. He was President in 1888-89, a member of the council for many years, and was always an active member of the club. He received much inspiration in those days from the late Dr. James Fletcher with whom he was closely associated.

His health began to fail about five years ago, and although he could not take as much physical exercise as in former years, his brain was just as active and his interest in everything as great up to his sudden death from over exertion in his garden. He was sixty-seven years of age when he died and his wife, two sons and five daughters are left to mourn his loss, besides a host of friends.

W. T. M.

BIRD NOTES FROM MANITOBA.

BY NORMAN CRIDDLE, TREESBANK, MAN.

THE ARKANSAS KINGBIRD.

The breeding range of the Arkansas Kingbird, *Tyrannus verticalis*, is usually given as Western United States, Southern Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. It has also been recorded as breeding at Pilot Mound, Man., by Dr. H. M. Speechly and at Treesbank, Man., by the writer. Since the above observations were made the bird has been met with in other localities, which would seem to indicate that it is not as rare in the province as was previously supposed. A pair

were found breeding among some maples near Oak Bluff, fourteen miles south-west of Winnipeg, Man., in 1917. A second couple have nested near Treesbank for some years past, and a third breeding pair were observed near Stockton. At Souris, Man., which borders the prairie country, no less than seven pairs were inhabitants of the village. Observations made around their nesting grounds indicates that the species is less pugnacious than its better known ally the Kingbird. It is also less conspicuous on account of its habit of resting more among the trees instead of on top of them. Both species breed in very similar situations and have been found inhabiting the trees at opposite ends of gardens. Naturally birds with homes so close together and natures not too amiable, are apt to resent each other's presence, hence there is a perpetual squabble which seems to be especially fostered by the Kingbird. Many combats take place in consequence, which as a rule are decided in favour of the Kingbird, unless this species attempts to invade the other's home, when the tables are turned.

The Arkansas Kingbird, like its rival, is somewhat noisy, but its notes constitute more of a continuous twitter without any of the loud harsher cries of defiance so characteristic of the Kingbird. There is every reason to suspect that a better knowledge of the species will show that it breeds in the shelter belts of many gardens within the province, as it seems to prefer the haunts of man to those strictly natural.

THE BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER IN MANITOBA.

The writer recorded this species (*Dendroica caerulescens*) from Aweme in THE OTTAWA NATURALIST some years ago, but the record was questioned in Macoun's List of Canadian Birds. This Warbler is among the easiest to identify on account of its unusual markings, which makes it difficult to confuse with any other. The observing of an old male on September 13, 1917, at close range should be sufficient to establish the bird's right to a place on our lists. Both examples were met with in the same woodlot at Aweme, Man.

NOTE.

It is perhaps characteristic of the west that the first Museum to obtain from the post-office department the right to have its bulletin mailed to soldiers by the simple means of affixing a one-cent stamp to the cover, should have been the Chicago Art Institute. The idea is an excellent one. Some of our museum bulletins are much more interesting to the average reader than others, yet there are few that would not have an interest for a soldier from the town in which it was published. It is to be hoped that the example of Chicago will soon be followed by other museums.

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