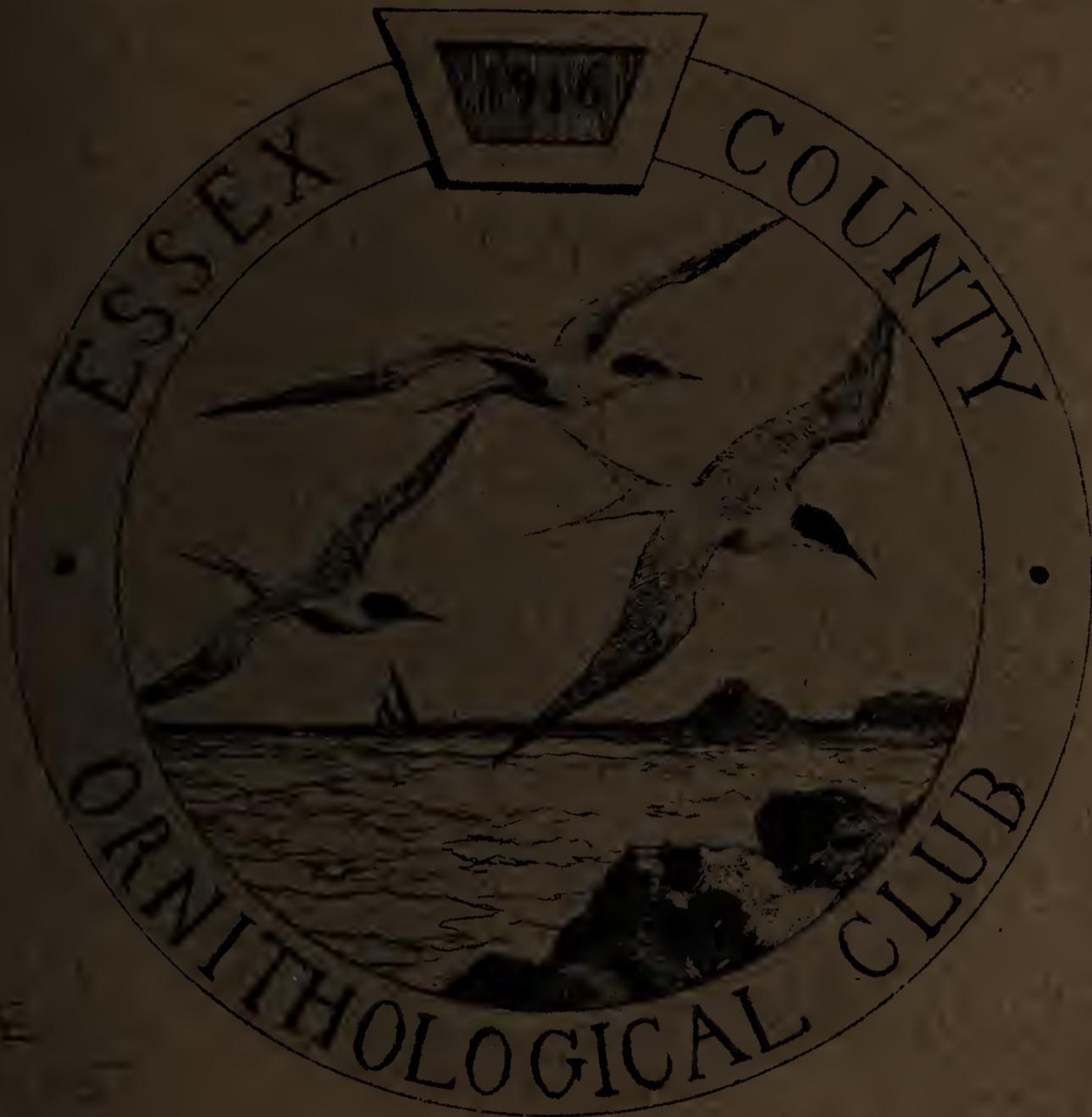


BULLETIN

OF THE



DECEMBER, 1920

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	Page 3	ON THE NESTING, SONG AND PLAY OF THE TREE SWALLOW AND BARN SWALLOW	Page 31
TRIP TO THE MERRIMACK RIVER BIRD TRIP <i>Ralph Lawson</i>	Page 6	<i>Charles Wendell Townsend, M.D.</i>	
NOTES ON THE LINCOLN SPARROW <i>Edward Howe Forbush</i>	Page 11	WHITE GULLS AT SWAMPSCOTT <i>Arthur P. Stubbs</i>	Page 37
AT A FOOD-SHED <i>Albert P. Morse</i>	Page 12	TOLD AROUND THE BIG TABLE	Page 39
VARIATION IN THE SONG OF THE WHIP-POOR-WILL <i>Rodman A. Nichols</i>	Page 15	CALENDAR OF THE ESSEX COUNTY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB OF MASSACHUSETTS—1919-1920	Page 49
NOTES ON THE IPSWICH SPARROW <i>Charles Johnson Maynard</i>	Page 19	LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX COUNTY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB OF MASSACHUSETTS	Page 52
IMAGINATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF BIRDS' NESTS	Page 23	IN MEMORIAM	Page 54
NOTES ON BIRDS' NESTS—1920 <i>Walter E. Bates</i>	Page 26		

BULLETIN
OF THE
Essex County Ornithological Club
OF
Massachusetts



DECEMBER, 1920

FIFTY CENTS

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ESSEX COUNTY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB
OF MASSACHUSETTS
Salem, - Massachusetts

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BULLETIN
OF THE
ESSEX COUNTY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB
OF MASSACHUSETTS
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Issued Annually in December

Edited by ARTHUR P. STUBBS

ALBERT B. FOWLER
WALTER G. FANNING

RALPH LAWSON
RODMAN A. NICHOLS

DECEMBER, 1920

SALEM, MASS.

VOLUME II, NO. 1

FOREWORD

The Club has experienced a year of healthy growth in membership, in Club spirit and in breadth of ornithological knowledge. More attention than in previous years has been given by members to preserving and passing in to the Secretary their individual field records. He reports the record files to be in fine condition and of pleasing volume. Weather conditions and seasonal movements of birds have on the whole been unfavorable for field work but a desire to make good has in many instances stimulated to harder work, with valuable records as a result. The conditions under which the 1920 Ipswich River Bird Trip was made gave the Club a hard task but the enthusiasm of the party enabled it to eclipse all previous records.

Beside the Ipswich River Trip, four field meetings were held only one of which had favorable weather.

As will be seen from the Calendar, the Club has had its usual good fortune in securing interesting speakers on ornithological subjects.

The Club Scrap Book, under the careful handling of its originator, William P. Hubon, is taking shape. A large amount of material is being sorted into groups, the intent of the Club being to have several volumes, each to contain a separate class of bird lore.

In submitting the Bulletin for 1920, the Editor feels that the variety of subjects treated and the general excellence of the contributions make further comment unnecessary.

ARTHUR P. STUBBS





APPROACH TO "THE PINES"

IPSWICH RIVER BIRD TRIP

RALPH LAWSON

The 14th annual Ipswich River Bird Trip was made on May 22nd and 23rd, 1920 and a total of 99 species was recorded between 2:00 P. M. on Saturday and 6:00 P. M. on Sunday.

Owing to a heavy northeast rain storm on Saturday, the night was spent at Mr. Hubon's camp which has always been generously held in readiness for just such an emergency. The heavy rain ceased about 6:00 on Saturday afternoon and Sunday was cloudy and cool with a northeast wind and occasionally a driving mist. In view of the conditions it will therefore be seen that the list, which is a record for the fourteen trips, is most remarkable.

As an innovation this year it was decided to start from the Middleton Paper Mills early Saturday morning, this party to arrive at Howe Station in time to join the main party at 2:00 P. M. The morning party started from Town House Square, Salem, on schedule but owing to the heavy rain it was deemed advisable to remain in the vicinity of Spofford's Boat Houses, at Howe Station, from which point several short observing expeditions were made. Shortly after the arrival of the main party at Howe Station, about 2:00 P. M., the mile or so of river between Spofford's Boat Houses and Mr. Hubon's camp was covered in canoes, and Saturday afternoon was spent in and about the camp, with many exploring expeditions covering a radius of perhaps a mile or so. Saturday evening was enjoyably spent around the great stone fireplace of the camp where experiences were swapped and many songs and impromptu entertainments rendered.

The camp was astir at daylight and the surrounding country well explored before breakfast after which canoes were entered and the paddle down stream begun.

A few members of the party went direct from Mr. Hubon's camp to Ipswich Beach by motor but the larger part spent

most of Sunday slowly drifting down to Ipswich, stopping here and there along the route where a favorable opportunity offered.

It is the writer's opinion that the large number of species checked is due to the careful covering of the River Valley, which perhaps was more thoroughly done than in previous years, as birds in song were few, the majority having sought shelter from the cold driving storm and waiting to be hunted out rather than proclaiming their presence.



UNDER "THE PINES"

A few of the river party reached Ipswich in time to make a hurried trip on foot to Clark's Pond and return, to these members and to the few who journeyed by motor to Ipswich Beach, are due the Plover and other shore-bird records.

The list is as follows:

HERRING GULL

BLACK DUCK

BLUE-WINGED TEAL

WOOD DUCK

AMERICAN BITTERN

GREAT BLUE HERON

GREEN HERON

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

VIRGINIA RAIL	MEADOWLARK
WILSON'S SNIPE	BALTIMORE ORIOLE
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER	BRONZED GRACKLE
LEAST SANDPIPER	PURPLE FINCH
RED-BACKED SANDPIPER	ENGLISH SPARROW
SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER	AMERICAN GOLDFINCH
SANDERLING	PINE SISKIN
GREATER YELLOW-LEGS	VESPER SPARROW
SOLITARY SANDPIPER	SAVANNAH SPARROW
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	WHITE-THROATED SPARROW
SEMIPALMATED PLOVER	CHIPPING SPARROW
PIPING PLOVER	FIELD SPARROW
RUFFED GROUSE	SONG SPARROW
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	SWAMP SPARROW
MOURNING DOVE	TOWHEE
MARSH HAWK	ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	SCARLET TANAGER
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK	CLIFF SWALLOW
SPARROW HAWK	BARN SWALLOW
OSPREY	TREE SWALLOW
BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO	BANK SWALLOW
BELTED KINGFISHER	CEDAR WAXWING
HAIRY WOODPECKER	RED-EYED VIREO
DOWNY WOODPECKER	YELLOW-THROATED VIREO
NORTHERN FLICKER	BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER
WHIP-POOR-WILL	GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER
CHIMNEY SWIFT	NASHVILLE WARBLER
RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD	NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER
KINGBIRD	CAPE MAY WARBLER
PHOEBE	YELLOW WARBLER
LEAST FLYCATCHER	BLACK-THROATED BLUE
PRAIRIE HORNED LARK	WARBLER
BLUE JAY	MYRTLE WARBLER
AMERICAN CROW	MAGNOLIA WARBLER
STARLING	CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER
BOBOLINK	BAY-BREADED WARBLER
COWBIRD	BLACK-POLL WARBLER
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER
	BLACK-THROATED GREEN
	WARBLER

OVEN-BIRD
WATER THRUSH
MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT
WILSON'S WARBLER
CANADA WARBLER
AMERICAN REDSTART
CATBIRD
BROWN THRASHER

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH
CHICKADEE
WOOD THRUSH
VEERY
HERMIT THRUSH
ROBIN
BLUEBIRD

Looking back over the records of the previous thirteen years we find three new species to add to the grand total. These are the Red-backed Sandpiper, Sanderling and Piping Plover. None of the common species which have been recorded on the thirteen previous trips were missing from the 1920 record. The absence of Bitterns and Wrens was marked, but possibly was due to the very high water in the river which covered the marshes to a considerable depth. The remarkably large list of Warblers, some twenty species, is worthy of mention.

The following Club members and guests were present:

WILLARD B. PORTER
ARTHUR PORTER
F. H. ALLEN
GEO. E. BENSON
CHARLES E. CHASE
VERNON CHASE
CAMPBELL BOSSON
R. A. NICHOLS
R. LAWSON
A. W. TAYLOR
WILLIS H. ROPES
C. E. MOULTON
KEBLE PERINE
HASKELL CURRY
CHARLES TOWNSEND
GEO. C. DONALDSON

LIEUT. PARKER
W. E. BATES
R. W. MEANS
A. P. STUBBS
W. D. MOON
GEO. R. FELT
WM. P. HUBON
DR. W. G. FANNING
A. B. FOWLER
GEO. N. PROCTOR
W. W. LORD
J. A. LORD
EARL SMITH
W. F. EATON
ROGER BRULEY

It is perhaps not unimportant to state that the Spring of 1920 was very backward and that the foliage on May 22nd seemed to be fully ten days to two weeks later than normal. This general condition caused a rather irregular period of migration, and generally speaking, a numerical scarcity of all species.

A rather belated attempt was made to organize observing parties to cover other sections of Essex County, but aside from the Haverhill region, which was covered by B. S. Griffin, no other lists were turned in. Two species were checked by Mr. Griffin and not recorded on the Ipswich River Trip, the Indigo Bunting and the Warbling Vireo. It is hoped that during the next and succeeding years an increasingly larger part of the County will be covered.



NOTES ON THE LINCOLN'S SPARROW

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

I notice that in your 1919 Bulletin the Club reported a single Lincoln's Sparrow. I believe from the date that it was one that I saw, but on that date two of us saw at least three, and heard one or two more. Probably there were half a dozen about that thicket. One of them was so confiding that it remained singing within a few feet of us. The others seemed a little shyer but at least three of them were singing. It is the only occasion on which I have ever seen more than one at a time anywhere, except once, September 8, 1888, at Comox, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, where there was a loose scattered flock feeding in an open field. Their habits, notes and general appearance at that time seemed to differ much from those of our eastern bird, and a specimen taken then was used by Brewster as the type of *Melospiza lincolni striata* Forbush's Sparrow. For the distinction conferred upon me I felt duly grateful and at the time fully believed that I had discovered a new bird. Since then grave doubts have assailed me, as other of my supposed discoveries have been relegated to the scrap heap. This may be as good a geographical race as some now recognized, but probably the future will see this sub-species and many others eliminated from the list of North American birds. In my opinion it would be about as well to eliminate all geographical races as to carry the craze for discovering and naming them so far as in some instances it has gone already.

AT A FOOD-SHELF

ALBERT P. MORSE

My dining-room windows look out upon a narrow grassy lawn shaded by pear trees, beyond which are patches of raspberry and blackberry bushes, an asparagus bed, a grapery, and still farther an old apple orchard and an open grassy field. Elm, maple, chestnut (in a losing battle with the blight) ash, and spruce trees shade the nearby houses and the streets, and shelter for birds from wintry winds is provided by a plenty of evergreens: arbor vitæ, hemlock hedges and trees, and a dense growth of young, weevil-checked white pines. The back garden is weedy in the fall — whose is not — and here the migrating sparrows gather and spend several days in congenial surroundings.

In December 1918, at the request of the more stay-at-home members of the household, who wished a nearer view of the birds, I placed on a level with the window sill a food-shelf extemporized from an old box cover about eighteen by twenty-four inches in size, with a wind-break and a spruce bough at the end. The shelf was stocked with seeds — millet, hemp, sunflower; and suet and boiled bones with shreds of tissue still adhering were placed in the nearer trees. The table was set, the guests invited; would they come?

We had not long to wait. Wandering Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches and a Downy Woodpecker soon welcomed the additional source of supply and different fare. Various members of the sparrow tribe visiting the garden weeds added the window-shelf to their ports of call. It seemed to be especially attractive to a flock of Juncos varying in number from fifteen to fifty, which appeared periodically, remaining in the vicinity for several days at a time and made daily or semi-daily circuits of the garden, nearby thickets, orchards and woodland edges. When snow fell the flock

often remained for hours about the house and garden, and the seeds disappeared rapidly.

The position of the shelf favored observations. I was soon informed that there was much difference in the plumage of individual Juncos: — Was there more than one kind about? At length, while at home on a Sunday morning, I was called to look at a bird that was “different.” And sure enough, though I had been very skeptical, it was! Its sides were unmistakably pinkish brown; the blackish slate color on the breast extended farther downward, terminating in a full curve instead of more or less transversely as usual in our common species; and the head and neck were of a blacker hue; though this was not appreciable save under exceptionally favorable circumstances.

After watching it for several days, and becoming convinced of its distinctness from our Eastern species, I visited the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge and examined a series of typical specimens of Western forms of Juncos selected by Mr. Outram Bangs, but was still unable to decide with certainty which one it represented. Mr. Bangs advised taking it, in order to make sure of its identity and establish the record, saying also that there was but one chance in a thousand of it ever getting back to its mates. This was accordingly done (January 28, 1919). The specimen was identified by Mr. Bangs as a typical male of Coues' Junco, *Junco oregonus couesi* (Dwight), from the far West, and was presented to the Boston Society of Natural History where it is now in the mounted collection of New England birds.

This was the only specimen seen which could be positively identified out-of-hand as of extra-limital origin, though hopes were raised now and then by brown tinted female or immature birds. During the winter of 1919–1920 a sharp watch was kept but without further reward in this particular. Juncos were fewer in number and though numerous at times were quite overshadowed in interest by the visits of a dozen or more Purple Finches and a flock of about twenty Evening Grosbeaks whose size and beauty made amends for their voracious appetites and pugnacious ways. Arriving at dawn and making several visits in the course of the day, hungrily

cracking the sunflower seeds and casting aside the hulls until the shelf and ground were thickly strewn with them (they ate ten pounds in the course of the winter), these other visitors from the far West were the features of the past season. A Song Sparrow came daily for at least three weeks in mid-winter and a one-legged Chickadee, with "never-say-die" air made a place for himself. In all, fifteen species of birds, visited the shelf during the two winters.



VARIATIONS IN THE SONG OF THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

RODMAN A. NICHOLS

In the available writings on the avifauna of Essex County, the Whip-poor-will is described as a "Common Summer Resident".¹ Its habitat is considered to be dense woods and thickets bordered by open fields and swamps; the woods as a place of residence, the fields and swamps as hunting grounds for the birds' usual food of flying insects.

There are probably scores of localities in the county which correspond more or less closely with the accepted idea of suitable Whip-poor-will country but it is my experience that the bird is not, by any means, to be found in all of them. In other words I find the bird distinctly local in its distribution,—regularly a summer resident in certain places, practically never present in others which appear to me to offer exactly the same advantages as to food supply, seclusion, terrain and arboreal features.

I have lived the past three summers in the midst of a thirty acre piece of white pine somewhat undergrown with beech, hickory and various species of oak. Located in the town of Boxford, and bordered on the south by the Ipswich River, this piece of land is part of a tract which extends north without definite break for miles. It is of course dotted with the typical farms of the county, and crossed by the usual country roads. In its entirety, it is ideal ground for the Whip-poor-will.

Around my camp the bird is truly common, because I regularly hear, not only one, but as many as five singing birds every favorable night during the season. Neighbors within a short distance, whose homes are in exactly the same sort of country, say they have never heard the bird in their vicinity.

¹ CHARLES WENDELL TOWNSEND: "*The Birds of Essex County, Massachusetts*" p. 227 - 1905.

ALBERT P. MORSE: "*Pocket List of Birds of Eastern Massachusetts*" p. 52 - 1912.

I have never found Whip-poor-wills in the country south of my camp although I have frequently left the birds near camp in full song and made definite effort to locate others to the south. Westerly (up river) the bird occurs regularly, but easterly (down river) there is a barren spot before coming to the great Wenham Swamp where the bird is common.

That this spotty distribution of the Whip-poor-will is not confined to my immediate neighborhood is quite evident from my personal observations in other localities, and the experience of various observant friends scattered throughout the county. Wherever we hear the Whip-poor-will we probably shall find heavy woods bordered by fields and open land where insects abound, but we shall not necessarily find the bird in every such locality.

In considering the occurrence, or rather the non-occurrence, of summer residents at any point, it is usually apparent that one, or more, of the conditions necessary to the health and comfort of the bird in question, is lacking. In the case of the Whip-poor-will, there is no such apparent lack. In some species the hunting and feeding area occupied by a breeding pair of birds is large, and aggressively protected by the occupants, but the number of Whip-poor-wills around my camp, and the very large group which hunts over the Wenham Swamp without apparent strife, removes this possible explanation of the intermittent occurrence. It is hoped that further study will shed some light on this matter, but at present I can only conclude that certain parts of the county endowed with many advantages, still lack some feature apparent to the bird, but not to the observer.

The birds which have been my neighbors, and provided so much entertainment the past three summers, have as much individuality of song and habit as my human friends. Their voices are immediately recognizable, and their singing posts as much a matter of routine, as the daily life of the average person.

Writers, in discussing the song of the Whip-poor-will, usually call attention to a *Chuck* or *Cluck* only to be heard within a short distance of the singer. Frank M. Chapman writes, "If one is quite near the singer, a preliminary *chuck* may be

heard before each call.”¹ Dr. C. W. Townsend writes “The song when heard near at hand is very sweet and clear, each song being preceded by a faint, short *chuck*. When disturbed the bird gives a series of enquiring *chucks*.”²

My own experience shows a somewhat wider variation in the use of the *chuck*, than is indicated by the brief notes of these authorities. One bird I am very familiar with, explodes the *chuck* out of the stillness with such emphasis, and at such an interval before his song, that my family and I have time to come to attention and exchange glances of expectancy before the song rings out. This bird uses the *chuck* before a group of five or six phrases with almost invariable regularity, and frequently *chucks* without singing at all. He also *chucks* when disturbed, as described by Dr. Townsend, but I have noticed a difference in emphasis and character, between this *chuck* and the one used with the song. I am certain I have heard this bird, each of the past three years.

Another bird, noticable for the extreme speed with which he delivers his song, seldom *chucks* at the start of his performance. Starting slowly, and slightly increasing the speed, he calls about ten times, unbroken by *chucks*, then breaks with one or two *chucks* and resumes the song at almost unbelievable speed. The phrases run together, in such a way as to give the impression of one continuous sound. This bird's average song is about seventy-five repetitions of “whip-poor-will”; once I counted eighty-nine.

A third individual has a clearly defined fourth syllable in his call and is as easily recognizable as a person who stutters. A fourth bird, which I had not heard previous to June of this year, gives a most slovenly song. He slurs his phrases until the result is only to be described as “whip-oor-eel.”

It has always seemed to me that while an attempt to describe the song of a bird in written words may be satisfactory to the writer, it is usually quite the contrary to others who try to reconcile the description with the actual song. This is brought:

¹ F. M. CHAPMAN: “*Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America*” p. 238-1901.

² CHARLES WENDELL TOWNSEND: “*The Birds of Essex County Massachusetts*” p. 227 - 1905.

home to me, more and more, as I improve my acquaintance with the Whip-poor-will. To me, the song usually sounds like whip-poo-weel instead of the common description "whip-poor-will."

All the birds of my acquaintance vary their song greatly at times. I have frequently heard the first syllable repeated to produce "whip-whip-poor-will." I have also heard the song terminated after the first syllable and occasionally after the second syllable. Sometimes the continuity of the song is broken by pauses of varying length.

These variations are no more unusual than the differences in the songs of individuals of other species, but the loudness and clearness of the Whip-poor-will's song, and the absolute definiteness of identification, possibly obscure the interesting variety of song and habit to be noted on close acquaintance.

Although the birds with which I am familiar usually sing from a straight limb of a tree, or from the ground, I find that the extreme end of a peaked roof has considerable appeal. A flat piazza rail, or fair sized post, is also frequently used. I have never heard the bird sing in flight, but on two occasions I have heard the *chuck* delivered with distinctness by a flying bird.

An acquaintance who hired a camp in my neighborhood, and occupied it the past summer, says that the "yelling" of the Whip-poor-wills makes the place so unlivable that he will not return next year, but to me the bird is a source of continuous interest and pleasure, his friendship a thing to be carefully cultivated. Quiet and unobtrusive during the day, he is most active in the dusk of evening. He hunts for his living with the zest of a falcon, but is never too busy to stop at his various stations, and fill the air with his clear and enthusiastic song.

The night of September nineteenth brought the first frost of the season and also my last record for the year. A single bird, close at hand, called twice but in the frosty air the song had a steely cold character quite different from the softer note of spring and summer.

NOTES ON THE IPSWICH SPARROW

(*Passerculus princeps* Mayn)

CHARLES JOHNSON MAYNARD

In response to an invitation of the editors of the Bulletin of the Essex County Ornithological Club to give an account of my experiences with the Ipswich Sparrow, I have written the following notes:

On December 4, 1868, I was walking over the Ipswich sand-dunes in search of birds. At that date this section was even more desolate than it is at the present time for the depressions among the sand-hills, now largely covered with low bushes and other trees, were without vegetation of any kind. I had been looking especially for Lapland Longspurs, but my search was unsuccessful, and as it was getting near sundown I was making my way back to the Woodbury house (which stood near the southwest corner of the sandy area) where I had been staying for a few days. I had come to some low dunes near the Essex River, where beach-grass was growing in abundance, when a sparrow started out of it quite near me. It darted rapidly away, but alighted in the grass a few rods from where I stood. Somewhat surprised to see a sparrow at this late date, so far north and in such a bleak place, I approached the grass patch in which it was hiding. After some trouble I again started it. It rose wildly as before, but this time, being ready, I took a snap shot and secured it.

As soon as I saw that I had a species that was new to me I instantly went in search of more. After a time I succeeded in starting another, but this one rose too far for a successful shot and I did not get it. It continued to fly until I lost sight of it in the distance.

Although I was fairly familiar with our native sparrows at that time, I was, of course, unable to identify my new capture. When I took it to Cambridge and showed it to Mr. J. A. Allen, then in charge of the birds of the Museum of

Comparative Zoology, and he also failed to place it, I became convinced that I had a new species. By his advice, I forbore to describe it as such, until I had sent it to Prof. S. F. Baird, at Washington. Rather to my disappointment he returned it with a letter saying that he had concluded that it was undoubtedly Baird's Sparrow, (*Emberiza bairdis* Audubon.) The Smithsonian Institute possessed the only specimen of this (then very rare) bird in existence. This was one of the original lot collected by Audubon on the banks of the Yellowstone River, July 26, 1843, and by him given to Prof. Baird.

Although I was at heart scarcely satisfied with this decision, I could do no better than defer to the opinion of so eminent an ornithologist, and so printed an account of its capture, calling it Baird's Sparrow, in the first edition of my *Naturalist's Guide*, published in 1870, p. 113. It is, however, rather significant that I should have given the following opinion as a conclusion to that article. "I think it more probable that the birds which occur at Ipswich are winter visitors from the north, than that they are stragglers from so great a distance as Nebraska" p. 117.

Although I, and others, searched the Ipswich dunes diligently during the next two years for more examples of this bird, I did not find another until October 14, 1871, when I took one more, and another the next day, October 15. Both of these were females.

These specimens confirmed my belief that I had obtained a new species, and I sent them to Prof. Baird, begging him to compare them with his sparrow. This he did and wrote that he thought I was right in my opinion that the birds were new, but added that he would like to have me come to Washington and make the comparison myself. This I did in returning from a trip to Florida the following spring. As a result I described the species as *Passerculus princeps* in *The American Naturalist* of October 1872, p. 637.

Sometime in 1873 Mr. Harold Herrick sent to me for identification two Ipswich Sparrows, which had been collected on Long Island, New York. Then a few other specimens continued to be taken at Ipswich, but it was not until April 4, 1874, that I saw the bird in full spring dress. Then I shot a

fine male which was perched in a tree about a mile from the beach. This bird is the one figured on plate XXV of the second edition of my *Birds of Eastern North America*, 1896. The type, a male in autumnal plumage, is now in the New England collection of the Boston Society of Natural History.

From 1871 on, the Ipswich Sparrow occurred in ever increasing numbers, reaching its maximum abundance in the eighties. After this it appears to have become less numerous.

My earliest record for the occurrence of the Ipswich Sparrow in fall is October 12, 1912, when I saw two on Plum Island. The latest in spring is May 11, 1918, when I found a male in full spring dress, also on Plum Island. Since all notes of the observations of this species in Ipswich and elsewhere that have been made by myself and members of my classes in Ipswich and elsewhere for the last twelve years, have been published in *Records of Walks and Talks with Nature*, I will not repeat them here. One record, however, which does not appear in that publication, I will give:— On November 19, 1900, I shot a female Ipswich Sparrow that came in from sea in company with a Snow Bunting and alighted on the beach at New River Inlet, North Carolina. This specimen is in the collection of Mr. John E. Thayer. Another rather remarkable observation is, where two were noted on Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 4, 1909, by myself and members of my class.

After a rather careful study of this interesting sparrow for over fifty years, it is quite natural that I should have come to some conclusions regarding it. These conclusions are briefly stated below:

It appears to me that all the known facts regarding the Ipswich Sparrow indicate that it is comparatively a recently evolved species. At a time in the not distant past some hardy Savanna Sparrows found their way to Sable Island, which we now know, through the efforts of Dr. Jonathan Dwight and others, is in all probability the sole breeding ground of the Ipswich Sparrow. These hardy Savannas, finding a suitable home on this island, not only for summer, but also for winter, remained there. Here on this wind swept tract of sand, the law of the survival of the fittest pro-

duced an even stronger, larger race than the hardy individuals from which it originated, and, as we find in many species of birds, became protectively colored.

At first, as above stated, these Sable Island Sparrows, excepting as mere stragglers, never left their island home. But, at length came a time, possibly after a season of unusual productiveness among them, or possibly when the beach grass produced a more meager crop than the normal, that the food supply was not sufficient to adequately meet the wants of all of the Sparrows.

Then the old migrating habit, dormant perhaps, for centuries, but never lost, asserted itself and some of the birds left the island in search of food. How long this migrating habit had been established before I got the type of the Ipswich Sparrow is, of course, difficult to determine, but I believe from a careful study of the progressive appearance of the species along one coast, not long. In short, I feel that those Ipswich Sparrows which I got in 1868 and 1871 were among the earlier immigrants.

In closing I want to suggest that it would be exceedingly interesting and instructive if a good observer could be established on Sable Island to note whether the food supply varied, and if it did, what effect this variation had upon the number of Ipswich Sparrows which remained there over winter. If such variations occurred they could be compared with the fluctuations of the numbers of these Sparrows which came to us in winter and some valuable results obtained.



IMITATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF BIRDS' NESTS

EDWARD S. MORSE

The theory of natural selection was thought out independently by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. Darwin gives full credit to Wallace for his various contributions to the subject. Wallace as graciously admits that long before he had conceived the idea Darwin had been at work and was the man best fitted for the great task he had undertaken and accomplished. Wallace's essays were published in various English magazines and reviews. These were afterwards brought together and embodied in book form in 1870, entitled "On Natural Selection." The book has long been out of print but may be found in the larger public libraries. It should be read by every student of natural history. Among these interesting essays of Mr. Wallace is one entitled "The Philosophy of Birds' Nests," first published in the *Intellectual Observer*, July, 1867. He says, "Birds, we are told, build their nests by instinct, while man constructs his dwelling by the exercise of reason. Birds never change, but continue to build forever on the self-same plan; man alters and improves his houses continually. . . . As a rule, he neither alters nor improves, any more than the birds do." He goes on to say that the tents of the Arabs are the same as they were three thousand years ago, mud villages of Egypt, unaltered since the days of the Pharoahs, palm-leaf huts of the Malay Archipelago and South America remain the same from century to century, the Irish turf cabin and Highland stone sheltie persist unchanged. Man builds his shelter of material which comes conveniently to hand; mud, snow, palm-leaf, bamboo, fragments of rock, according to the habitat of the people. If they migrate they carry with them the style of architecture of their race. "When once a particular mode of building has been adopted, and has become confirmed by habit and by hereditary custom, it will be long retained, even when its

utility has been lost through changed conditions, or through migration into a very different region." If accustomed to build on high posts to avoid poisonous snakes and other adverse features they migrate to a country where these precautions are unnecessary they continue to build their huts on tall posts. No one imputes this stationary condition of domestic architecture among these savage tribes to instinct, but to simple imitation from one generation to another, and the absence of any sufficiently powerful stimulus to change or improvement. He says it is difficult to conceive an Arabian infant transferred to the Scottish Highlands or to Patagonia building, when grown up, a tent of skins. He undoubtedly would follow the custom of his foster parents. "These general characteristics of the abode of savage man will be found to be exactly paralleled by the nests of birds." These feathered creatures construct their nests out of material nearest at hand.

If one regards the bird's implements with which he works, namely, the bill and feet, he will find the nests more or less perfect according to the perfection of the tools involved in the task. Pigeons with weak bill and feet build a rude nest of twigs and sticks; the wren with slender beak and long legs forms a well-woven nest. Wallace cites many species of birds to sustain his theory. The nighthawk and whip-poorwill having the most imperfect tools of all, feet that will not support them except on a flat surface and a bill broad, short and weak, lay their eggs on the bare ground. Wallace also refers to parrots, sandpipers, gulls and other birds to further sustain his contention. Birds brought up in confinement acquire the song of birds associated with them and sing by imitation, as they build their nests by imitation.

One of our members, in an interesting communication on birds' nests suggests that the members make a collection of the photographs of various birds' nests with an effort to get the pictures of every species. To collect the nests would finally result in a bulky mass difficult to handle, but photographs could be kept in folios. The Peabody Museum would gladly care for a collection of this nature. An extensive collection of this kind would be a sound contribution to a knowledge of our birds. It would be important to science

to study the variation of nests of the same species of birds. A pair of robins will build a nest loosely put together in an exposed situation, such a nest would be blown to pieces by the first high wind and the eggs broken or the young destroyed by some predatory cat and thus the offspring perish, while another pair with a solidly constructed nest carefully concealed, would survive these adverse conditions and the young would live to perpetuate by the law of inheritance the superior qualities of their parents. A good illustration of the doctrine of natural selection.



NOTES ON BIRD NESTS—1920

WALTER E. BATES

WOOD DUCK

This nest was in a dead apple tree beside the Ipswich River in West Peabody; I located it June 13th by seeing the duck fly from a hollow limb about eight feet from the ground. I am unable to furnish data concerning the nest proper, as the cavity in the tree extended to the ground and there was no opening other than the entrance hole, which was at the end of a broken limb, nearly two feet long.

I again visited the locality on June 19th and after lingering for some time in the vicinity of the tree saw a duck fly over, circle across the river and alight in a tree about fifty feet from the nest. I watched the bird with my glass at about two hundred yards distance. Its breast was noticeably reddish, indicating the male duck. After looking about for a minute or two it flew directly into the opening of the hollow limb. Going immediately to the nest tree I was unable to drive the duck out even after considerable effort. I have not seen either of the birds since, although I have visited the locality several times.

A pair of Tree Swallows raised a brood in a hollow branch higher up in the same tree.

PHOEBE

Nc. 1. In Salem under a culvert of B. & M. R. R.: April 19, Birds building; April 26, Nest complete containing one egg; May 3, Bird setting on five eggs; May 17, Four young, one egg unhatched; June 8, Nest empty; June 9, Bird carrying material as if to reline the nest; June 14, Three eggs in nest; June 26, Nest had disappeared, but a new nest containing one egg was nearby; July 1, New nest contained four eggs; July 5, Same

conditions; July 22, Nest contained four pin-feathered young; July 30, Young almost ready to fly; August 6, Nest empty.

It would appear that between June 14th and 26th the first nest fell into the brook as it was attached to an almost smooth stonewall about three inches from the roof of the culvert and it would not be strange if the constant jar of the heavy trains passing over every few minutes had loosened it. The second nest was about ten inches lower down and supported by a stone projecting about two inches from the wall, and seemed much more secure.

No. 2. In a shed in West Peabody near Suntaug: May 28, Contained four downy young; July 12, Contained second brood of good size.

No. 3. In an abandoned hen-coop in West Peabody near Ipswich River: May 28, Contained four eggs; June 13, Contained large young birds; June 19, Contained birds almost ready to fly; June 23, Nest empty; June 27, The same bird evidently started (with two chunks of mud on the center of a piece of rake handle three or four feet long, nailed across the rafters of the hen-coop) to build a new nest; July 4, Nest had been completed and contained four eggs; July 9-16-18, Nest contained four eggs; July 25, Two eggs had hatched; July 29, Four young birds had their heads over edge of nest; Aug. 7, Young flew from nest.

No. 4. On "Phoebe Rock", Fay Estate: May 30, Nest contained four eggs; June 3, Two eggs had hatched. (Editor's Note: This Phoebe was successful in bringing off her first brood and laid a second clutch of two eggs which were noted on July 1, infested by bird lice. Between July 1st and 5th the nest and eggs were stolen.)

No. 5. Nest under culvert of R. R. in West Peabody near Ipswich River. Much quieter location than similar nest in Salem — fewer trains passing: June 13, Contained four young, partly feathered; June 19, Contained four young, most grown; June 23, Nest empty; July 4, Contained four eggs second set; July 18, Contained two downy young; July 25, Contained four large young with pinfeathers; July 29, Contained four large young most grown; Aug. 6, Nest empty.

No. 6. Nest found on floor timbers under barn, Danvers Street, Salem: June 8, Contained downy young; July 5, Contained four eggs second set; July 14, Contained four eggs second set; July 22, Contained four downy young; July 30, Contained four young half grown; Aug. 6, Nest empty.

CROW

No. 1. Salem Pastures thirty feet up in Red Cedar: April 19, Contained one egg — Collected 1; April 26, Contained five eggs — Collected 2; April 30, Contained three eggs — Collected 3.

No. 2. June 11th, Salem Pastures; location similar to No. 1, Contained young birds: June 14, Climbed to nest — when young birds flew out. Caught two.

No. 3. June 15th, Lynn Woods; Noted nest on lower branch of tall pine up about thirty feet. On the ground under the nest were two dead young crows.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

May 23, Nest in tuft of grass on shore of Ipswich River; contained four eggs.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE

No. 1. Near "Dishful Pond", May 28th, on low branch of Norway spruce, — bird seemed to be lining nest.

No. 2. West Peabody, beside Ipswich River, May 28th, on hanging limb of elm about 30 feet up, — bird working on nest.

No. 3. West Peabody, May 31st. Bird in nest in young apple tree, about fifteen feet up. July 20th, saw young Orioles about and collected empty nest.

TOWHEE

In Salem on ground, June 9th; contained three eggs.

TREE SWALLOW

Nest in hollow limb of dead apple-tree, West Peabody, May 28th. Nest contained two eggs. June 19-23-27, Four young in nest; July 2, Nest empty.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER

No. 1. May 19, Building under log beside Spring Pond; May 30, Nest contained three eggs; June 3-11 Nest contained five eggs; June 26, Nest empty.

No. 2. May 27, Building between large stone and a stump on Fay Estate. Nest nicely roofed over with dead leaves June 3-11, Four eggs in nest; June 26, Nest empty.

YELLOW WARBLER

No. 1. June 8, In Viburnum bush about five feet up, nest contained five eggs; June 14, Nest contained three downy young and two eggs: June 26, Nest empty.

No. 2. June 8, In Barberry bush about six feet up. Nest contained four eggs. June 26, Nest empty.

MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT

May 27, Building in brushy top of fallen Pitch Pine on edge of a swamp in Fay Estate: June 3, Nest contained three eggs; June 11, Nest contained five eggs; June 26, The nest had been abandoned: a heedless cow had stepped on the branch and overturned the nest. The great wallowing footprints in the black mud plainly told the story.

AMERICAN REDSTART

No. 1. May 30, Building in White Birch sapling about eight feet up beside Spring Pond; June 11, Nest contained four eggs; June 26, Nest contained four well-feathered young.

No. 2. June 9, Nest in small Sugar Maple, about eight feet up; contained four eggs; June 26, Nest empty.

CATBIRD

No. 1. June 8, Five feet up in Alder, Salem. Nest with four eggs; June 14, Nest empty — Robbed by crows (?).

No. 2. June 8, Four feet up in Barberry bush, Salem. Nest with four eggs.

No. 3. June 9, Four feet up in Barberry bush, Salem. Nest with four eggs; June 26, Three young birds left the nest at my approach.

No. 4. June 26, Eight feet up in Viburnum. Nest with two eggs; July 1, Nest empty. Robbed?

BLUEBIRD

No. 1. May 28, Fifteen feet up in dead stump on bank of Ipswich River. Birds feeding young.

No. 2. June 9, Twenty feet up in dead stump, Salem.

No. 3. July 13, Nest in Flicker hole in telegraph pole beside B. & M. R. R., Salem. Up about 11 feet. Birds feeding young just hatched; Aug. 6, Young growing fast. Saw old birds feeding them. One carried a large caterpillar.



ON THE NESTING, SONG AND PLAY OF THE TREE SWALLOW AND BARN SWALLOW

CHARLES WENDELL TOWNSEND M. D.

Both the Tree Swallow and Barn Swallow have modified their nesting habits since the arrival of the white man in America. The Tree Swallow formerly built its nest in trees hollowed by decay or in woodpeckers' nesting holes. This habit is still continued wherever suitable holes are to be found, even in such a thickly populated region as Essex County, but the majority of the nests that come to our attention are built in boxes or houses of various designs that are erected for their especial convenience.

On my twelve acre farm at Ipswich I have had fifteen pairs building in boxes in one season. One of these boxes which has been occupied each year for over twenty years violates most of the rules laid down in modern books for the building of bird houses. It is advised, and with good reason, that paint should not be used, that the opening should be no larger than the bird's body, that it should be circular, several inches above the bottom of the box and that the nesting material be removed at the end of every season. Now this favored house of mine is painted red with black windows and green blinds, has a large rectangular opening on a level with the floor, and, being on the top of a pole, is never cleaned out. This only goes to show that the Tree Swallow is an adaptive bird. My experience demonstrates that square wooden boxes are just as popular as the most carefully made and expensive von Berlepsch boxes, which may be heresy.

The Barn Swallow formerly built its mud and straw nests in rocky caves. Swallow Cave at Nahant is an instance, but as far as I know no Barn Swallow has been found within fifty years building in a natural cave in Essex County. It nests in

artificial caves made by the white man, in out-buildings and, above all, in barns.

What is more charming than an ancient barn filled with the sweet scent of hay and the song of the Barn Swallows! The doors stand open, the windows have many gaps in their frames. Through these inviting openings the swallows are constantly gliding. I have known many such barns but of one that I know intimately at Ipswich I would speak here. Not only did Barn Swallows nest in large numbers in its cavernous interior but a large colony of Eave Swallows built their retort-shaped nests under its liberal eaves. I once counted on the beams and rafters of this barn fifty-five Barn Swallows' nests. These are made of globules of grey mud brought by the birds in their bills, firmly plastered together and mixed with straw. They are lined with hay and feathers. In late June and in July one may lie in the fragrant hay and listen to a concert of great beauty and watch a scene constantly changing and full of interest. The old birds are ever flying in and out, skimming close to the floor or just missing the top of the door or window frame, skillfully dodging any human being that may be standing in the doorway and never pausing for an instant in the swiftness of their flight. They cling to the old beams or to the edge of the nest where they are opposed by a row of four or five pinkish yellow mouths which form conspicuous targets for the discharge of mouthfuls of insects. All the young twitter excitedly, but all those which are unfed as well as the lucky one or two that are fed, quickly subside as soon as the parent goes and the yellow commissures of their mouths alone are seen in the twilight of the rafters. Sometimes both parents arrive with food at the nest at the same time and the consequent excitement is doubled.

The song of the Barn Swallow is rarely mentioned in the books. One reads of their twittering calls from the air or the barn roof. To my mind the Barn Swallow is one of our most delightful singers. His song is always full of charm, soft and lovely, devoid of all roughness. Besides delivering an individual song, he delights in singing in chorus. It is a sweet and cheerful song full of little trills and joyful bubbles of music, at times clear and sparkling, at times oozing and rubbery. Like the

music of a brook it flows on indefinitely. At times the old barn is permeated with its melody. Swallows on every rafter and in every cranny and coursing through the air seem filled with the most intense joy of the music. Then all is silent except for the twittering of the young; anon the song bursts forth again and swells into a loud chorus and dwindles into a soft low air as if a master leader were swinging his baton.

Not only do the swallows sing thus in the barns, but as they course the fields or skim the ponds, and perhaps best of all when a group of them welcome the morning sun from a roof-side. Our Barn Swallow is an accomplished singer, and, as a proof that he delights in his own song, he does not limit it to the courtship season but continues it through the arduous time of the rearing of the young and even after the young have left the nest and are abroad. From the first day of their arrival in late April till the end of August and even into September this charming bird sings. Very few birds have such a long and continuous song season.

The Tree Swallow is far inferior in voice to his cousin the Barn Swallow. In fact, it is the common belief that he has no song and there would be full excuse for the belief. Such, however, is not the fact. He is our earliest bird to regularly welcome the dawn by song, even anticipating the Robin. The Tree Swallows' song, for such it must be called, is a rather monotonous and rather labored repetition of rolling or warbling notes. Every third or fourth is sharper and shorter, and at times the notes may possibly be called melodious. Its association however, makes it a pleasing song especially when the notes shower down from a multitude of throats in the dim light of dawn.

This last season a pair of Tree Swallows reared a brood of young in a nesting box on the outside of a porch on my Ipswich house and a pair of Barn Swallows nested and successfully reared five young on top of a pillar under the same porch so that I was able to observe and compare the habits of these two species. I have no intention of giving statistics as to the number of times the young were fed per hour, or to calculate the number of insects devoured, — in fact I made no notes of these important but rather dull facts, — but I would call

attention to two very fundamental differences in the nesting habits of two such similar birds.

When the broods were young, the parents of both species diligently removed the white sacs of dejecta and dropped them at a distance as is the common habit of passerine birds. This habit was continued during the entire residence of the young Tree Swallows in their nest, but only while the Barn Swallows were small. When the latter had attained nearly adult stature and for several days before they flew, they discharged their dejecta over the edge of the nest, whitening the piazza floor below, but leaving the nest unsoiled. In both cases the nest sanitation was perfect.

The second difference in habit between the two species is of considerable interest. The Tree Swallow brood once launched into the world was lost. As far as I know it did not again occupy its birthplace that season. Not so the Barn Swallow. For several days before they left the nest the five young birds seemed fully grown and fully feathered. The chief difference between them and their parents was the fact that they lacked the long outer feathers of the tail. The five heads and necks with their neat brown throat bibs presented a charming appearance, extending in a row over the edge of the nest. Their shining black eyes looked at me unafraid. When a parent appeared, all their yellow mouths flew open in eager expectancy and all twittered beseechingly. Usually only one, sometimes two, were rewarded by a mouthful of insect food. A day arrived when the parents flew under the porch back and forth close to the nest as if to entice the young birds, but not feeding them. Several of their friends joined with them, for at times there were four or even five birds flying before the gallery of young.

The next day there were only three birds in the nest after the early morning, but the two wanderers returned at sunset. On the following day all five flew off at eight in the morning. At times they rested in trees and were fed by the parents, sometimes they were fed in mid-air, but doubtless they did some insect catching on their own hook. At six o'clock they were all back in the nest and being fed by the parents. For four more days this was repeated. The young left in the morn-

ing but returned to the nest at night, generally going and coming together. On the fifth night only two returned and after that they occupied the nest no more. I imagined I saw the family party several times, however, as a group of six or seven barn swallows flew past, and occasionally they would fly around under the porch, the adults pouring forth their souls in song. This use of the nest by the young as a sleeping place is interesting. Most birds when they fly the nest do not return.

In "Sand Dunes and Salt Marshes" I described in some detail the roosting and migration habits of our swallows. Here I will say something of their play. Swallows are social birds; not only does each associate with its own species, but all four species, the Barn, Tree, Eave, and Bank Swallows are often found in the same assembly gathered together for roosting, migrating, feeding or play. Their enjoyment in their perfect mastery of the air is very evident. They fly not only for the purpose of getting food but for the pleasure of flying, chasing each other back and forth, skimming trees and buildings and even human beings by hairs' breadths. One of the best places to watch this social sport of flying is at a pond. By far the majority of the birds with us are Tree Swallows but a moderate number of Barn Swallows and a few Eave and Bank Swallows may be seen. One September day at sunset a flock of many hundreds if not thousands of these birds were alighted on the bushes, fence rails and wires near the waters of Sagamore Pond. They arose with the roar of many wings, and, turning first their dark then their white surfaces to the observer, swirled about in irregular groups. Then they all flew close to the water, and every now and then hurled themselves at it so that the quiet surface of the pond was pitted with splashes as from a bombardment. Their heads, backs and wings were soused in the water, which they shook off in showers as they arose. At times they would dip lightly several times in succession. At last they all arose high in the air and turned in the direction of their night roost, but the temptation to stay up a little longer and renew their play and the fun of the bath was too great and they returned and again bombarded the water. Finally when the whole sky was suffused with an orange glow, deepening to crimson, they tore themselves away from their sport, rose to

a great height and in open ranks made off directly for their roost in the dunes.

On a dull May day with an easterly gale bringing in sea mist, Sagamore Pond was covered with swallows — all four species, Tree, Barn, Eave and Bank in order of abundance. As one stood on the shore and looked out on the bewildering throng one could recognize the calls of all the species. They were all flying within a foot of the water into the teeth of the gale, occasionally setting their wings and soaring and occasionally dipping in the water below. Arrived at the easterly shore of the pond, they ascended a few yards, turned and glided down wind with great rapidity only to turn again and begin their slow progress back. It reminded one of a lot of children sliding down hill and laboriously dragging their sleds back again.

On a June morning I came upon a flock of fifty Barn Swallows sitting on a wire fence, each singing his song of gladness. In an instant all were fluttering head to the wind over the buttercups and daisies; then all alighted in the grass and dabbled at insects. The morning was so cold that the insects were not on the wing, but quiet and dormant.

On another cold morning in September I came to a meadow white with Queen Anne's lace and spotted with fluttering, twittering Tree Swallows, a half thousand of them at a moderate estimate. They were sailing down to leeward and slowly flying back through the grass picking up insects as they went. Occasionally they became entangled in the grass and flowers and struggled to extricate themselves. A gentle snap, snap of their bills could be heard as they flew within a few feet or even inches of me.

Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows are both very fearless of man or perhaps one should say trustful and confiding. On a rainy or cold day when insects are sluggish, if one walks through a meadow these delightful birds will circle close by to seize the insects put up from the grass.

It is probable that both the spirit of play and the pursuit of insects are combined in these displays of swallow activity, but at times it seems as if play were the over-ruling factor.

THE WHITE GULLS AT SWAMPSCOTT

ARTHUR P. STUBBS

The sweep of the shore of Nahant Bay from Dread Ledge, Swampscott, to East Point, Nahant, is broken into a succession of sandy beaches, separated by projecting points of ledge and loose rocks. Of these beaches I wish to speak of three, Nahant, King's and Fisherman's. The last, being sheltered from the wind and waves, is used as a landing place by the local fishermen, who during the colder months throw their fish trimmings upon the sand to be eaten by gulls, or washed away by the tide. This abundance of food and a long period of protection have made the visiting gulls, which at times number several hundreds, very tame and easy to approach. The same birds on the nearby King's Beach are a little more wild but when they reach Nahant Beach, still farther away, they have recovered their natural wildness and near approach is impossible. Among this company of birds, made up almost entirely of Herring Gulls, with now and then a Greater Black-back, in the winter of 1906 we began to notice several gulls of soiled white plumage having no black on their primaries. The study of the gull pack in succeeding years revealed variations in the size and plumage of these white gulls and also showed us birds with gull-blue mantles but lacking the black tipped primaries of the Herring Gull. In all we found five types of gulls differing from the various plumages of the Herring and Black-back. Number 1 was about the size of the Herring Gull, its plumage an even dirty white with a slight reddish wash upon the back and wings; the bill, feet and eyes were dull black. Number 2 same size, but nearly pure white; feet and legs flesh color, bill yellow and eyes yellowish or not noticeable for color. In good lights a slightly darker mantle showed on back and wings. Number 3 larger than a Herring Gull, dull ivory white in color, bill with black tip, feet dark. Number 4, same size as No. 3, pure white or nearly so, bill yellow, feet flesh color. Number 5, the color

and size of a mature Herring Gull, but lacking the black markings on the primaries.

After study of bird manuals and museum specimens and correspondence with several authorities on gull lore, we felt justified in naming our birds; Nos. 1 and 2 as immature Iceland Gulls of possibly the first and second years, respectively; Nos. 3 and 4 Glaucous Gulls of different stages of development, while No. 5, which for some time we hoped to identify as a Kumlien Gull, we finally felt compelled to class as a mature Iceland, as we could not find any gray on the primaries.

These studies were in company with Geo. M. Bubier, since deceased, and covered the years from 1906 to 1920, inclusive. Only on one or two years of that time were the strange gulls absent from the pack. Most of them were seen on Fishermen's and King's Beaches, while a very few records were made at Nahant Beach.



TOLD AROUND THE BIG TABLE

THE EVENING SONG OF THE WOODCOCK

I have heard the Vesper song of the Woodcock many times but never to better advantage than on the evening of April 10, 1896. A nature loving friend and I left our homes in Lynn just before sunset on that date for a tryst with the Woodcock in the old Salem pastures.

As we crossed Floating Bridge the Robins and Song Sparrows were singing good night to the sun and the Peepers and Leopard Frogs were tuning up for their nightly chorus. The sun had set by the time we reached the first bars, leaving the west all aglow with rosy light. Turning in on the left, at the bars just beyond Long Swamp, we followed a winding path down through the hollow and up over the hill to the middle wall that cuts the big pastures in two. The color in the west had now faded to a dull gray and the song of birds had given place wholly to the music of the frogs.

We crossed the swamp, in whose quiet pools we had watched the Fairy Shrimp and the Caddis Worms many times in the past, and paused a moment to listen to the frogs when we heard the harsh nasal "peent" of the Woodcock on the knoll we had just left. Recrossing the swamp we were treated, for a half hour or more, to an exhibition that must have delighted any bird lover. Many times we heard the song directly overhead. Several times the bird alighted, very near us, not more than twenty or thirty feet away. When on the ground he seemed to move around very deliberately giving utterance now and then to his harsh cry. Usually he would give this fifteen or twenty times before rising but not always. Two or three times we saw him as he arose from the ground, going up at quite a sharp angle until he reached a considerable height when he would fly around in a wide circle passing over our heads twice before dropping. We

could hear the whistle which I presume was made by his wings from the moment he left the ground until he alighted again, but we never heard his real song until the second time he passed over us and just before he was about to come down. He came down very quickly, almost a drop at first and then a slide at a sharp angle. His song is a sweet whistle suggesting to me the tones boys sometimes get on the penny trombone whistles.

C. E. CHASE.

A VIRGINIA RAIL AT SALEM, MASS., JANUARY 1920

On January 3rd I was visiting a trap set for mink in a spring which runs out through some alders. On reaching the spot I was startled by a bird flying from my feet only to alight about fifteen feet away. Imagine my surprise when I saw it was a Virginia Rail which showed no evidence of being crippled.

The spring only afforded a stream of some thirty feet of open water running through black ooze and from there on it was frozen up. I watched the Rail search for food for a few minutes and then left it. The Rail was not to be found January 8th. January 13th I set a steel trap in some muskrat workings. January 15th I did not see the Rail but on January 17th I discovered that the bird had returned and been so unfortunate as to spring the trap, but some creature had made a meal of him so that all that was left were some feathers on the water and one leg in the trap-jaws, these I carried home as evidence, fully realizing their importance.

G. M. TEEL.

NOTES ON NESTING AND OTHER HABITS OF THE RUBY- THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

I have been interested in Ruby-throats since boyhood, and during that time have located thirty or more of their nests. While the Ruby-throat appears in our region early in May —

my earliest record is May 9 — I have failed to find a nest containing eggs before May 30th. I have found several on that date which would therefore seem an average nesting time. I have also found nests with eggs at much later dates; on one July 4th I found two such nests. My latest date for nest and eggs is August 10th; this, it is fair to presume, was a second setting. All nests, with the exception of one, contained but two eggs; this exception held two eggs and a young bird. I have watched the birds collecting fern down for nest material and have seen the male and female together at work on the nest. Hummingbirds occupy quite a variety of trees and shrubs as nesting sites and these sites range in height from six to thirty feet from the ground. I have found nests in Pitch Pine, Red Maple, Ash, Hornbeam, Red Cedar, Birch, Willow, Apple and White Azalea. On the afternoon of June 23, 1920, on Flagstaff Hill, Fay Estate, Lynn, I watched a male Ruby-throat for several minutes. He would alight in the dead top of a Hornbeam and rest for a full minute, then would fly in the direction of some Red-flowered Honeysuckle, which was then in full bloom; in almost exactly another minute, timed by the watch, he would be back at his station in the Hornbeam for another sixty second rest. This alternation he kept up as long as I remained in the neighborhood. The afternoon sun, shining over my shoulder upon the bird, made his gorget burn like a coal of fire. It is interesting to note that this particular dead topped tree has been a favorite perch for the Hummingbirds for several years.

C. E. MOULTON.

ICELAND GULLS AT SWAMPSCOTT IN MID-APRIL

Prompted by many pleasant and tender memories of an old friend and field companion, I here present the last field record of our former fellow member, George M. Bubier, now passed on.

On Saturday, April 17, 1920, he saw one or more Iceland Gulls at King's Beach, Swampscott, and as we had often

studied this species in company, invited me to meet him there on Sunday morning. Meeting as agreed, we found the gulls had gone but found them a little later at Fisherman's Beach nearby.

Among the raft of gulls pushing in to feast on the fish trimmings thrown upon the sand by the fishermen, we were able to pick out two Icelanders. They were in nearly pure white plumage with slightly darker mantles which showed only in the right light. Their yellow bills and flesh color feet indicated birds of at least the second year.

A. P. STUBBS.

BLUEBIRDS AND TREE SWALLOWS NESTING IN THE SAME STUMP

Early in May two or three years ago, it was my good fortune to witness a sight which I will long remember. The day was sunny and warm and I had just started on a canoe trip from Howe Station towards Ipswich when an old dead willow stump, which hung out over the water, attracted my attention. Near the top, were two holes about a foot apart, and in and out of these four birds were constantly passing. As we drew near I saw that the upper hole was proving of great interest to a pair of Tree Swallows, while the lower evidently contained young Bluebirds, which were being fed by their parents. Both the Swallows and Bluebirds were in particularly brilliant plumage, and as all four became exceedingly active on our near approach, the colors which fairly flashed and glowed in that morning's sunlight will long reflect their image on my memory. Several times shortly after I found the Bluebirds and Tree Swallows "apparently enjoying each others society, in their "double decker," but never again did they dazzle me quite as effectively as on my first visit. It may have been a case of "First impressions, etc." but I am inclined to think that conditions were never again so ideal.

RALPH LAWSON.

A MOCKING BIRD AT FAY'S

In these days, when it is not uncommon to hear of the Mocking Bird as a winter visitant or even an all the year resident of Massachusetts, an old record of the bird may be interesting.

In the winter of 1893 I was studying skinning and mounting birds under the direction of the veteran taxidermist, Mr. N. S. Vickary. On April 4 I was out with a friend watching the birds and incidentally looking for material to practise on. In a tall evergreen hedge not far from where the Fay mansion stood we saw two grayish birds which we took to be Butcher Birds. I shot one and though both of us remarked on the character of the bill and the general build of the bird neither of us discovered our error until Mr. Vickary told us it was a Mocking Bird. I was pleased, naturally, when I found out what it was but I should never have shot it had I known beforehand. It turned out to be a male in good plumage and not daring to trust my own workmanship on so valuable a specimen I got Mr. Vickary to mount it for me. I finally gave it to the Peabody Museum at Salem where it may still be seen among the Essex County birds.

We never saw the other bird again nor heard of it being seen. A copy of the "Ornithologist and Oologist" that came out about that time stated that a Mocking Bird had been shot in Massachusetts on Feb. 4 of the same year.

C. E. CHASE.

PURPLE MARTINS IN SALEM PASTURES

Purple Martins having become so rare in Essex County, I am pleased to be able to put on record a visit they paid us this year.

While Mr. W. E. Bates and myself were watching a mixed company of Swallows hawking for insects over the little pond of the N. E. Livestock Co. in Salem pastures, on the afternoon of April 25, 1920, we noted one larger and darker than the rest. Carefully following it with our glasses, often at close range, we were able to fully identify it as a Purple Martin.

Soon we were able to pick out another and had the two in sight at once several times. While there is a possibility of more having been present, we can vouch for only two.

A. P. STUBBS.

THRUSHES SINGING IN A SALEM GARDEN

On April 22, 1920, I awakened about 5.00 A. M. and for a moment thought that I must be in the North Woods as I was greeted by the songs of two Hermit Thrushes, one almost by my open window and the other much farther away, but yet quite distinct. Hastily dressing I hurried down stairs and at breakfast time entered the following notes in my records:

“The Hermits which have been in full song since 5.00 A. M. arrived yesterday according to F. B. L. (my son). As I write at my desk a bird is singing in the lilac bush, not ten feet from me, and the windows are all open. Think there are at least a half dozen birds in song.”

Since 1915 I have regularly seen Hermit Thrushes in the garden of my home on Washington Square, always between April 20th and May 3d. An additional pleasure came on May 1, 1915, when my notes read as follows:

“Hermit singing in the garden about 5.30 A. M., also a full chorus of White Throats.”

I have never heard these migrant Thrushes sing at evening and think possibly that the noises of the city may disturb them. My first city record of Olive-backed Thrushes is as follows:

“May 26, 1920 Olive-back singing in garden about 6.00 A. M. (daylight saving time).”

There were at least two of these Thrushes about and E. L. (my wife) said she heard a Thrush singing at intervals through the day and again on the 27th. I have never found any of the other Thrushes in this garden.

RALPH LAWSON.

YOUNG SHELDRAKES ON THE MARGAREE RIVER

One of the common sights to be enjoyed when fishing on northern rivers in summer is that of broods of young Sheldrake which go splashing off at the approach of the fisherman. They are so shy that in all the many times I have seen them I have never, until the past summer, been able to get a near view of the young birds.

On the Margaree River in Cape Breton we saw them every day, generally nine or ten in a brood with the mother, but in two cases there were over twenty, though only one old bird accompanied them. One day while trout fishing I came to a broad reach where the stream was shoal and in the middle a great spruce tree had grounded in the spring floods, head down stream, with the broad mass of roots making a wall, around which the current had washed a deep hole. I had always found a good trout ready to rise here on other days, so I waded carefully and got a good fish at the first cast. Then I hooked and lost another and began to cast lower along the trunk of the tree, being now within twenty feet of the root.

Something moved and I made out a mass of young ducks clustered on the trunk just out of water, and apparently paying no attention to me. Taking a step ahead I saw the mother bird nearer me, squatting crossways on the trunk with her neck stretched straight out, and with all her feathers compressed so that she appeared hardly more than half her real size. No crest could be seen and she looked as wooden as the dead branches about her. I kept on casting and waded as close as the depth of water would allow, and could almost have touched her with the tip of my rod, but she never moved.

I expected every minute to see the whole flock burst into flight like a covey of quail, but except for the frozen attitude of the old bird, it was as if I had not been there. Meantime the young birds pecked at flies and moved about, one slipping into the water and climbing out over its neighbors so that the whole bunch had to readjust itself. I stayed within fifteen feet of them for ten minutes and then slowly waded down stream without disturbing them.

This is the only time I have ever seen young Sheldrake that were not apparently wildly excited at the sight of a man, but it seems that the sense of fear must be communicated to them by the old bird. I had no doubt seen this same brood several times before, but always flapping off down stream, a hundred yards away.

In the Margaree valley Ravens were common everywhere and Snipe drummed every morning and evening over the boggy ground just behind where we lived. Golden Eagles were seen twice and the Bald Eagle once. The tameness of the Crows was remarkable. They would hardly fly from the roadside fence as we passed.

F. W. BENSON.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS IN LYNN AT NESTING TIME

While there are several records of White-throats wintering in Lynn, nesting time records seem more rare. On July 9th, 1917, W. E. Bates and I were looking over the brush land of the Indian Hill Rifle Range, Lynn, when we were surprised to hear a White-throated Sparrow sing out very loudly and clearly from a branch over our heads. We, of course, took a good look at the singer and jotted down our good fortune in our note books.

Crossing the valley we tramped over more brush land at a somewhat higher elevation than the Rifle Range, where we saw and heard several more White-throats. Visiting the latter locality on July 16th I found the White-throats still present and in song. While no nests were found on either of these trips the lateness of the date and the number of birds evidently present seemed to indicate that White-throated Sparrows probably bred in Lynn that year.

A. P. STUBBS.

BIRD NOTES ON PLUM ISLAND — 1920

I made several trips to Plum Island this season, beginning April 17th and continuing at short intervals until about the first of October. The following are a few extracts from my notes on these visits:

April 17th I heard and saw a pair of Piping Plover on the beach near Sandy Point.

April 24th and 25th when the E. C. O. C. visited my camp at the Island we found five Piping Plover, one of which had the black band entirely encircling the breast, as in the once accepted but now discarded sub-species, the Belted Piping Plover. Piping Plover were still present on the Island on July 20th, but at my next visit, July 27th, had gone. This species breeds commonly in this region and I several times this season saw young birds with the adults, but found no nests.

While on a fishing trip, off to sea from Plum Island, on May 28th, I saw my first Terns for 1920. There were both Wilson and Roseate and with them were Herring, Bonaparte and Laughing Gulls, all feeding upon the sand eels, driven to the surface by schools of pollock and codfish. The Terns were being pestered by their enemies, the Jaegers. This flocking of the gull tribe over a feeding ground is looked for by fishermen as a sign of good fishing for cod and pollock awaiting them.

July 19th, Terns were present in great numbers and I saw one Black Tern. From then until my last trip Gulls and Terns were present or absent as their food fish swung in or off shore.

August 1st. There was a flight of shore birds, including Dowitchers, Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Lesser Yellow-legs and Semi-palmated Plover.

September 4th, I found Red-backed Sandpipers, Greater Yellow-legs, Black-bellied Plover and Ruddy Turnstones.

September 6th, I saw ten Hudsonian Curlew and one Long-billed Curlew. I have heard more reports from gunners at the Island of the last named species being seen and shot this year than ever before.

I collected an albino Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Its eyes were pink, legs pinkish and plumage white with light brown spots on back and wings.

August 8th there were two American Egrets on the marsh back of my camp.

August 26th, a flight of Great Blue Herons passed south, going in flocks of twenty or more all day.

September 4th I saw Grebes, Cormorants and White-winged Scoters.

J. W. GOODRIDGE.

CONCERNING A 1919 RECORD

In the December 1919 number of the *E. C. O. C. Bulletin*, under the "Told Around the Big Table" notes, I gave a somewhat detailed description of an observation of the Connecticut Warbler made on the Club's Ipswich River trip of 1919 and accepted, vouched for and published by the Club in the list for that year.

In the *Auk* for April 1920, Mr. Witmer Stone calls attention to the excessive rarity of this species in the East, in spring, and intimates that the record might be unreliable.

The four persons who saw the bird, bearing in mind the importance of the observation and entirely convinced of the accuracy of their identification, take no issue with Mr. Stone for questioning the record. They do, however, believe that a statement made thirteen years ago has little value as a basis for criticism. Mr. Brewster's book, "Birds of the Cambridge Region" was published in 1906. In 1905, Dr. Charles W. Townsend in his "Birds of Essex County" listed 321 birds. He has now published a "Supplement" to this book and records 335 birds. Dr. Townsend has added 16 species and dropped two since 1905. These figures, relating exclusively to Essex County, show the futility of bringing forward any authority after a lapse of thirteen years, to question the authenticity of an identification.

A. B. FOWLER.

CALENDAR OF THE ESSEX COUNTY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB OF MASSACHUSETTS 1919 - 1920

REGULAR MEETINGS

September 8, 1919. A regular meeting was scheduled for this evening but owing to an unusually severe rain storm only 6 members appeared at the Museum. No formal meeting was held but Mr. Nichols read a paper written by Dr. Charles W. Townsend entitled, "The Position of Birds' Feet in Flight."*

October 13, 1919. Prof. E. S. Morse in the Chair. 15 members present. Communication: "The Identification of Hawks in the Field", a paper prepared and read by Dr. Charles W. Townsend.

November 10, 1919. President in the Chair. 16 members present. Communication: "Thirteen Ipswich River Bird Trips", a paper prepared and read by the Secretary.

December 8, 1919. President in the Chair. 29 members present. This meeting should have been the annual meeting but owing to lack of nominations the election of officers was postponed until the following meeting. Communication: "Work of the Massachusetts Fish and Game Commission", an illustrated talk given by Chairman W. C. Adams of the Commission.

January 12, 1920. Vice-President in the Chair. 25 members present. Officers for 1920 were elected and reports of the Secretary and Treasurer read and approved. Communication: "The Ipswich River from Howe Station to the Sea," an informal illustrated talk by Mr. C. A. Spofford.

* *Auk* Vol. XXVI No. 2, 1909.

February 9, 1920. President in the Chair. 20 members present. Evening devoted to a memorial of the late William S. Hunt, conducted by Messrs. Bushby, Chase, Mackintosh and Ropes.

March 8, 1920. President in the Chair. 19 members present. Communication: "Birds of the Gaspé Region", an informal illustrated talk by Dr. Charles W. Townsend.

March 22, 1920. Vice-President in the Chair. 20 members present. Evening devoted to field notes.

April 12, 1920. President in the Chair. 22 members present. Communication: "The Art of Taxidermy", an informal talk and practical illustration given by Mr. J. W. Goodridge.

April 26, 1920. President in the Chair. 21 members present. Evening devoted to field notes.

May 10, 1920. Vice-President in the Chair. 22 members present. Communication: "Bird Sanctuaries", an informal illustrated talk by Mr. Winthrop Packard.

May 24, 1920. Vice-President in the Chair. 16 members present. Evening devoted to a general discussion of the 14th annual Ipswich River Bird Trip held May 22nd and May 23rd. List of species observed on the trip carefully revised.

June 14, 1920. President in the Chair. 17 members present. Communication: "The Circumnavigation of Martha's Vineyard", an informal illustrated talk by Dr. Charles W. Townsend.

FIELD MEETINGS

Sept. 13-14, 1919. Visit to R. A. Nichols' camp; 24 members present; 38 species of birds recorded. Weather fine.

March 14, 1920. Field meeting on Marsh and Fay Estates, Salem and Lynn. Cold and windy with bad walking through deep snow. 10 members, 1 non-member present; 11 species of birds recorded.

April 24-25, 1920. Plum Island Trip. 11 members, 3 non-members present; 27 species of birds recorded. Weather cold and windy.

May 8-9, 1920. Trip to Martha's Vineyard. 6 members present, 29 species of birds recorded. Rain.

May 22-23, 1920. Ipswich River Trip. May 22nd, rain; May 23rd, clouds. 22 members, 10 non-members present. 99 species of birds recorded.



LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX COUNTY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB OF MASSACHUSETTS

ACTIVE MEMBERS

FRED ASHWORTH, 15 Larcom Avenue,	Beverly, Mass.
WALTER E. BATES, 279 Essex Street,	Lynn, Mass.
ARTHUR W. BECKFORD, 10 Park Street,	Danvers, Mass.
FRANK W. BENSON, 46 Washington Square,	Salem, Mass.
GEORGE E. BENSON, 46 Washington Square,	Salem, Mass.
CAMPBELL BOSSON, 19 Brewster Street,	Cambridge, Mass.
EVERETT B. BROWN, 266 South Common Street,	Lynn, Mass.
FRANK A. BROWN, 13 Atlantic Avenue,	Beverly, Mass.
ROGER S. BRULEY, 64 Centre Street,	Danvers, Mass.
FRED W. BUSHBY, 17 Washington Street	Peabody, Mass.
CHARLES E. CHASE, 31 Euclid Avenue,	Lynn, Mass.
WILLARD C. COUSINS, 10 Richardson Hall,	Hanover, N. H.
MILTON L. CUSHING, 146 Mt. Vernon Street	Boston, Mass.
MAJ. GEORGE C. DONALDSON, 8 Washington St.,	Ayer, Mass.
DR. WALTER G. FANNING, 2 Hunt Street,	Danvers, Mass.
GEORGE R. FELT, 71 Main Street,	Peabody, Mass.
HUGH R. FLETCHER, 32 Jackson Street,	Lynn, Mass.
ALBERT B. FOWLER, 111 Locust Street,	Danvers, Mass.
MORRIS GIFFORD, 21 Washington Square,	Salem, Mass.
LORING B. GOODALE, 1 Pope's Lane,	Danvers, Mass.
J. W. GOODRIDGE, Walnut Street,	So. Hamilton, Mass.
B. S. GRIFFIN, 22 Currier Avenue,	Haverhill, Mass.
WILLIAM P. HUBON, 25 Flint Street,	Salem, Mass.
PHOCION INGRAHAM, 235 Lowell Street,	Peabody, Mass.
GARDNER M. JONES, c/o Salem Public Library,	Salem, Mass.
MARK E. KELLEY, 30 Beckett Street,	Peabody, Mass.
RALPH LAWSON, 88 Washington Square,	Salem, Mass.
DAVID M. LITTLE, 27 Chestnut Street,	Salem, Mass.
PHILIP LITTLE, 10 Chestnut Street,	Salem, Mass.
ANDERSON J. LORD, 13 Ash Street,	Danvers, Mass.

RICHARDS B. MACKINTOSH, 5 Howard Ave., Peabody, Mass.
 VICTOR H. MCGUFFIN, 18 Averill Street, East Lynn, Mass.
 ROBERT W. MEANS, 40 Haskell Street, Beverly Farms, Mass.
 WILBUR D. MOON 46 Maple Street, Lynn, Mass.
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 ALVA MORRISON, 35 Congress Street, Boston, Mass.
 ALBERT P. MORSE, 10 Upland Road, Wellesley, Mass.
 PROF. EDWARD S. MORSE, 12 Linden Street, Salem, Mass.
 FRANK E. MORSE, Steinert Hall, Boston, Mass.
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 DR. JOHN C. PHILLIPS, "Windyknob," Wenham, Mass.
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 WILLIS H. ROPES, 252 Locust Street, Danvers, Mass.
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 CHARLES A. SPOFFORD, Danvers, Mass.
 ARTHUR P. STUBBS, 53 Webster Street, Lynn, Mass.
 ARTHUR W. TAYLOR, 24½ Briggs Street, Salem, Mass.
 GEORGE M. TEEL, 50 Pickering Street, Danvers, Mass.
 DR. HENRY TOLMAN, JR., 135 Federal Street, Salem, Mass.
 WILLIAM R. M. TORTAT, 5 Perkins Street, Peabody, Mass.
 DR. CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, 98 Pinckney St., Boston, Mass.
 ROBERT WALCOTT, 152 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass.
 FRANK H. WILSON, Danvers, Mass.

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

EMERSON C. BROWN, 1829 Green Street, Philadelphia, Penn.
 SHEPARD G. EMILIO, Salt Lake City, Utah.
 FREDERIC P. SPALDING, 1016 Middlesex Street, Lowell, Mass.

In Memoriam

WILLIAM SIMPSON HUNT

Born May 24, 1842.

Died January 9, 1920.

Mr. Hunt was born in Guysboro, N. S., but came to this country with his parents in early childhood. He resided all the remainder of his life in Lynn, Mass. He took out naturalization papers and became an American citizen soon after reaching manhood. He was for fifty years a well known figure on the White Mountain trails and a life-member of the Appalachian Mountain Club. All his life a keen student of Nature Mr. Hunt possessed a fund of interesting lore of bird and beast. His knowledge of New England flora was great, and well-known botanists sought and obtained his assistance in making a list of the Alpine flowers found on Mt. Washington. He was instrumental also in arranging a list of the wild flowers, trees and shrubs of Lynn Woods. Not the least of his gifts, perhaps, was the ability to awaken young minds to a realization of the beauty and wonders of Nature. He left no published writings.

GEORGE MUDGE BUBIER

Born July 17, 1875.

Died April 20, 1920.

A life-long resident of Lynn, Massachusetts, charter member and councillor of E. C. O. C. He was an earnest student of ornithology from boyhood and left extended and valuable notes on bird life of Essex County. These notes are illustrated with many life-like and telling sketches, as Mr. Bubier possessed no mean skill with his pencil. His friends treasure many humorous sketches and cards touching on experiences in the field shared by him. His only published works are several lists and notes on bird life in the Annual Reports of the Lynn Park Commission. He had gathered a very creditable collection of mounted New England birds.

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