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Birds

# THE ORIOLE



VOL. III

JUNE, 1915

Official Organ of the  
**SOMERSET HILLS BIRD CLUB**  
BERNARDSVILLE, N. J.



# THE ORIOLE



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VOL. III

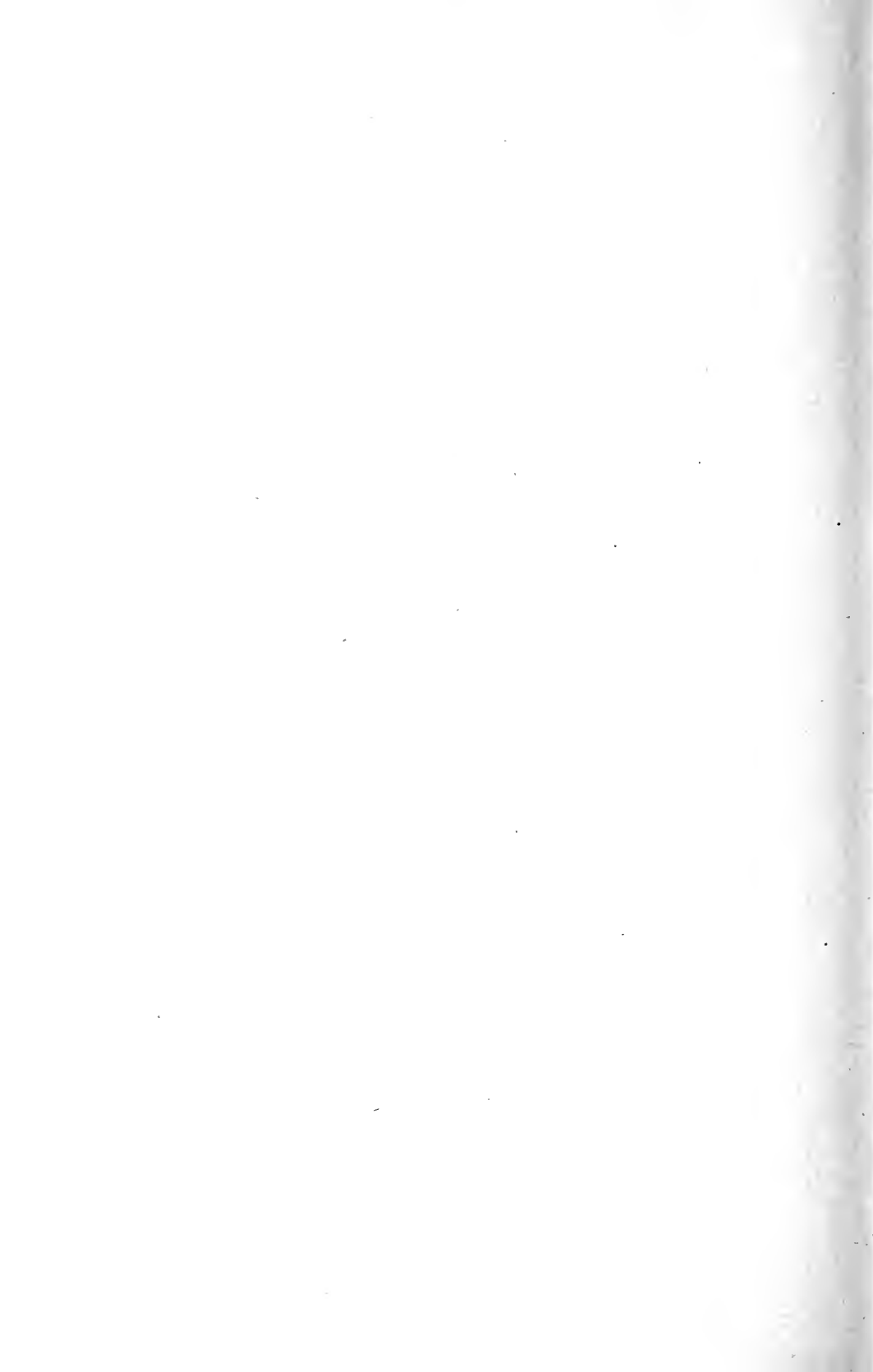
JUNE, 1915

NO. 1

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# **Announcement**

## **A DECORATION DAY BIRD CENSUS.**

We have for a long time favored the idea of a spring or summer bird census, which should be conducted along the lines of Bird-Lore's Christmas Census and our interest in the subject has been renewed by the plan set forth in the editorial of the March issue of "The Wilson Bulletin." We are sure all ornithologists would be grateful to them for conducting such a census, which we assume they would make country-wide. However in the meantime we propose to inaugurate a Decoration Day Bird Census, to be secured as near the 30th of May as is possible and to limit it to Northern New Jersey or possibly neighboring parts of adjoining states. That is, what we are after is a series of lists, representing as nearly as is possible the true condition of North Jersey bird life at the time the census is taken.

Our reason for taking Decoration Day is that it seems to us a better date than either of those suggested in the "Wilson Bulletin," viz. April 1st and May 15th. If two censuses were to be compiled undoubtedly one of these dates would be ideal. Personally we should prefer the former. However, we believe that a census made near Decoration Day will give not only a complete list of the summer visitants, but also will give any late records of transients, which will be of more value than to have recorded those transients at the height of migration, that is, at a time

when they would be normally expected to be present, rather than at a time when their presence would be unusual and therefore their occurrence noteworthy.

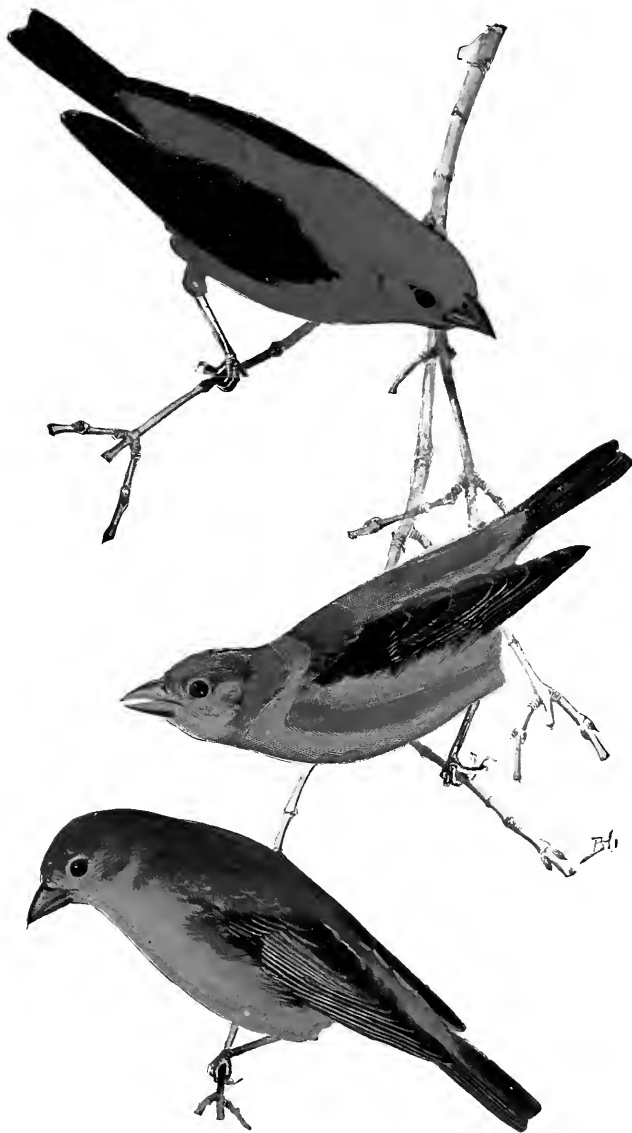
We ask the aid of all ornithologists in making this undertaking a success. Our list of required data is as follows: locality, date, temperature at noon, direction and force of wind, time of day when list is made; after which should follow *in the order of the American Ornithologists' Union's Check List* a list of the species observed with the number and sex. The total number of species and individuals should be written at the end.

J. D. K.

## HOME LIFE OF THE SCARLET TANAGER.

Among the heavily wooded hills of Northern Passaic County, New Jersey, wherein mankind seldom ventures, save it be a woodcutter or a lover of the outdoor life, there are many gulleys and ravines which are the favorite haunts of this beautifully adorned bird which, I am grieved to say, is so often the target for the unsophisticated youth and even the more mature, but unenlightened man, its plumage serving as a flaming mark for the fieldpieces of these amateur sportsmen.

But among these valleys and miniature gulches where the oaks and conifers abound, it is rare, indeed, when the ornithologist or naturalist cannot find these beautiful creatures unmolested and living in their usual quiet and unassuming way, building their homes



SCARLET TANAGER

1. ADULT MALE.    2. ADULT MALE, CHANGING TO WINTER PLUMAGE.    3. ADULT FEMALE

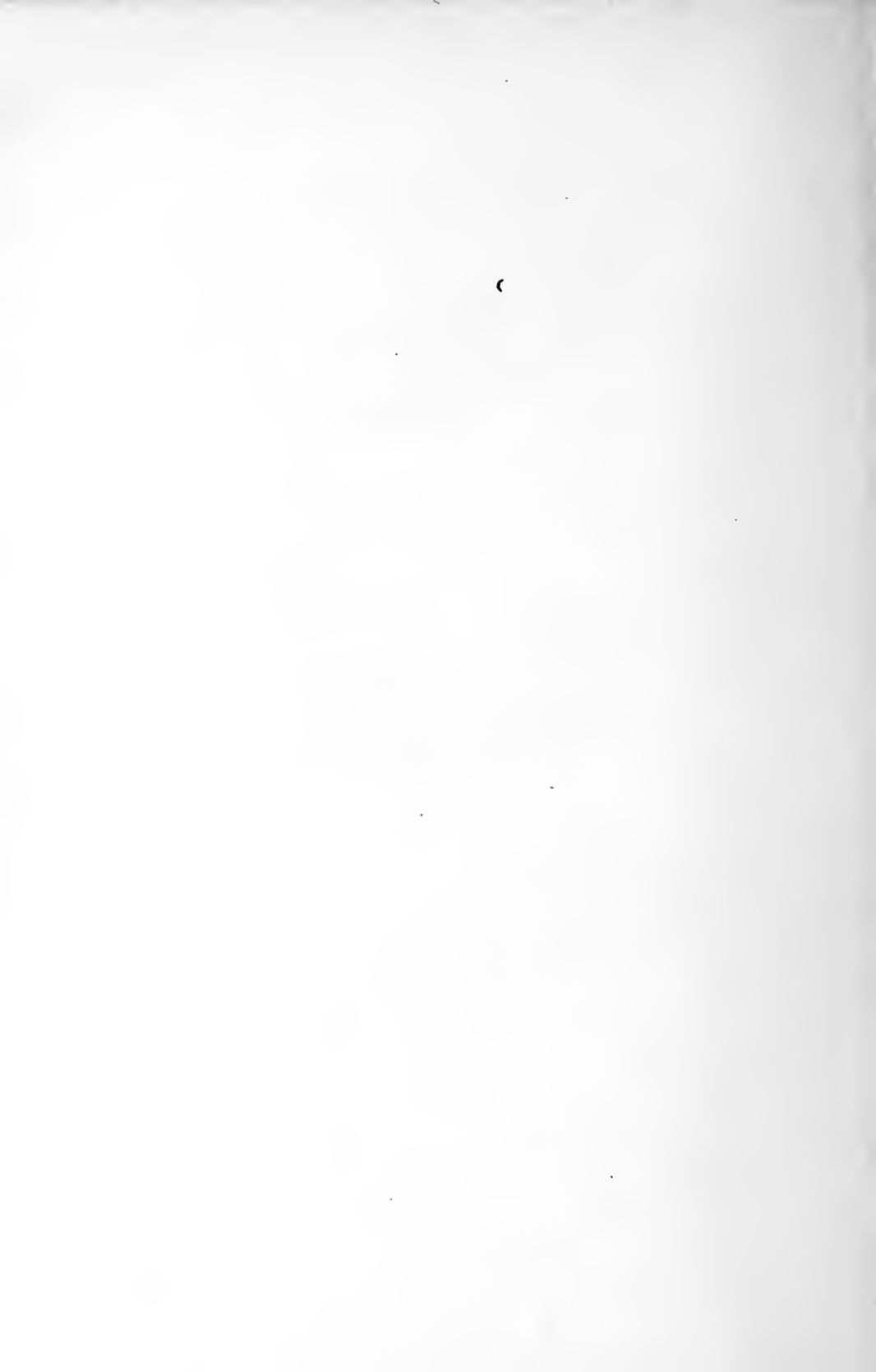
Order—PASSERES

Family—TANAGRIDÆ

Genus—PIRANGA

Species—ERYTHROMELAS

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and rearing their offspring as they did when only the American Indian was the species of mankind which they must fear.

Here also I have spent unnumbered days and even weeks observing these and the numerous other feathered sylvan residents and visitors during each summer for the past decade and have located during this period over two hundred homes of this rather tropical-like bird.

During the past season (1914) it was my good fortune to find three homes on the horizontal branches of the oak within a radius of two hundred feet in a small valley on the western slope of Federal Hill near the Village of Bloomingdale.

The males of this species appeared first in this section this year on May 10th, which is about three full days behind their usual arrival date. Each succeeding day thereafter brought its quota of new arrivals from the sunny South until on May 30th they had become quite common and the males were singing on most every side among the hills.

The females appeared about May 25th and by the 8th of June the pairs had mated and were all busy looking for homesites. The three nests about which this sketch is built were constructed between June 9th and 15th and on June 22nd all contained four eggs each and the process of incubation commenced. The eggs of all the nests were uniform in size and averaged .94 x .66 and were greenish blue irregularly specked with brown and indistinct and translucent patches of pearly grey. The process of incubation was in each case performed by the females wholly, the males al-

ways remaining about fifty to one hundred feet away in the treetops singing and feeding among the leafy retreats of the surrounding deciduous and coniferous growths. At the end of thirteen days the young of one nest had broken through the shells and the fourteenth day the other two broods came to light.

At this point, however, their similar and rather systematic lives ended and dissimilarity prevailed. For convenience, I shall term these broods as Number One, Number Two and Number Three.

Brood Number One was the first to emerge from the shells on July 5th and both parents commenced with equal ardor to search for food for the youngsters and continued to do so during the time they were in the nest, which covered a period of fifteen days. After leaving the nest the male disappeared from the vicinity and the young were seen daily with the adult female until August 1st when they all disappeared.

In the case of Brood Number Two the young birds emerged from the shells on the 6th and both parents brought food to them for two days. At this time the male discontinued his efforts and only visited the nest at intervals of perhaps thirty minutes bringing no food, and finally on the fifth day of the fledglings lives hied himself off to a neighboring valley and did not again visit the vicinity in so far as my observations could discern. The female of this brood after her mate had gone off to his retreat had a very hard and arduous task before her and she finally succeeded in raising three of the young, the fourth being a weakling and could not cope with the struggles of its kin when the female visited the nest with food and on the tenth day

I noticed the female push its poor emaciated remains out of the nest to the ground below. The other three, however, grew with unusual rapidity and on the 25th of the month were somewhat larger than the young of Broods Number One and Number Three, both of which were about uniform in growth, although there was a difference of a day between the last two. Brood Number Two disappeared about the same time as Number One.

Brood Number Three emerged from the shells late during the day on the 6th and for two days were only fed by the female, the male remaining in the close vicinity but never approaching the nest closer than five or six feet. However, at the beginning of the third day the male began bringing food to the youngsters and continued to do so for five days thereafter. At this time, for some inconceivable reason, he took a great dislike to his mate and their offspring and began administering vicious pecks and jabs with his beak at her and the young. She quickly took on a defensive mood and after several hours of conflict drove him off and kept him away, as whenever he would return she would pounce upon him and he was glad to get away from her sallies. The young of this brood progressed with equal regularity with Number One and about August 1st moved from the vicinity of the nest about two hundred feet down the valley and here were seen with the mother bird until the 15th when they also disappeared.

Bands of the American Bird Banding Association were placed on all of these birds, including the females, which also had red, white and green cords tied

about the bands in order to distinguish them later on during the season. The bands were placed on the females at night by flashing a strong light on them quickly and while this light was on one could handle them although they offered considerable resistance. When placed back on the nest they remained there while the light was still on them, but as soon as this light disappeared they flew off in fright. The light apparently had rather a hypnotic influence over them for the time being. I have tried throwing this light on several other species (Robin, Wood Thrush and Chipping Sparrow), but in each case, the birds quickly took to the wing. I could not accomplish my purpose and place the bands.

January 1, 1915.

LOUIS S. KOHLER.

## **EXPERIENCES WITH THE GREAT HORNED OWL IN SOMERSET HILLS**

*By Wm. S. Post*

As someone has said, there is a fascination to the young in things that are big. The Great Horned Owl is big, the tree in which it builds is big, the nest is big and the eggs are big. For this reason and circumstances attending, my first experience with this species was vividly impressed upon my memory.

Many years ago when I was a mere boy I was informed one day that a large Owl had attacked and killed a full grown turkey on the old Allen Farm situated just north from Roundtop, that Mr. Allen had

knocked him over with a stone and captured him alive, and that I could have the bird if I would call for him.

When I arrived on my pony Mr. Allen handed him to me taking him from a box in which he had been lying, his legs tied together. Brought thus suddenly to the full glare of the sun he began to fight for his liberty flapping his great wings and snapping his bill much to the discomfort of the pony, who thereupon began to buck as only a pony can. I had learned that the easiest way to retain my seat on such occasions was to sieze the pony's mane with the right hand and this I instinctively did, thus furnishing the Owl with an opportunity he was not slow to take advantage of. He drove his talons into the pony's neck and my ride home was at record speed.

My brothers and I kept the bird in captivity and perfect health for over a year, feeding him some small birds and mice but mostly raw meat.

It was many years before I again learned of the presence of this species on Mine Mount, when I was told of some large full grown Owls sitting in an open nest in early April in the woods not far from where Mr. Hardenburgh's house now stands, but I did not until two years later see anything of this pair of birds.

The following year however, I found the nest of another pair; my first nest of the species.

The woods now belonging to Mr. Ladd just opposite Mr. Blair's entrance was then composed of the largest timber in the country, and I there found on

March 31st, a large new nest that I supposed belonged to a Red Tailed Hawk. It was situated far out on a limb on the downhill side of a tree. Rapping on the tree sharply I was surprised and delighted to see a great Owl flap slowly and silently away. The storm which has since been known as the great blizzard of '88 had occurred two weeks previous and I was still suffering from a slight rheumatic attack brought on by exposure, and I therefore procured the services of another man to do the climbing. He, though quite able to climb any tree, refused when he reached the limb, to risk his life so far above the ground, as the tree was situated on the steep side hill, and it and the limb in which the nest was built inclined to the downhill side. I was therefore myself forced to put on the irons and make the ascent, and I will always remember working myself along this horizontal limb 100 or more feet above the ground with the tree swaying from side to side in the raw March wind. Nothing but anticipation of the novel experience of looking into a Great Horned Owl's nest could have driven me on.

I was well rewarded, for in the nest were two young owls only two weeks old. On the platform which formed the rim of the nest, and which if I remember correctly was about a foot wide all the way around and which seemed to be the "store-room" of the Owls were ranged around three rabbits and a woodcock; the rabbits were cut neatly in half and the woodcock's head had been eaten off. On the ground below the tree was a dead young Owl which evidently had perished during the blizzard, as the growth of the other two in the meantime showed.

My second nest belonged to the pair of which I had been told. These birds after building a new nest in the same place as before had been forced to leave it and locate on the other edge of the woods just below where Mr. Turnbull's pond now is. On March 6th, 1889, my brother and I found this nest and as we approached we saw an Owl accompanied by a noisy flock of crows, fly away from near it.

The tree was large but low and the sitting bird raised its head with horns erect, but no amount of hammering on the tree would make her fly. It was an easy climb and I nearly touched her with my hand before she moved.

The nest contained one egg and one young just hatched, and on the rim was a mouse and a Fox Sparrow each without its head. After my descent we hid some distance away and watched the cautious return of the bird. She made two stops before daring to fly to the nest, and at each pause was kept busy ducking her head to dodge the swooping crows but seemed otherwise to pay no attention to them.

One of these birds was shot by a farmer the following Winter, and although the lonely mate remained around all that year, it was not until '91 that it obtained a partner and again began housekeeping, this time in a tree not twenty yards from the site of the other nest. It was also an easy tree to climb and on February 14th I took a set of two beautiful eggs.

I returned six weeks later to find the female sitting close and a young bird in the nest, and two rabbits on the edge neatly divided as were the others. While busy making notes and measurements of this nest a

shadow caused me to look up suddenly and I saw the Owl coming at me in full flight and distant only a few feet. I could only dodge my head for both arms were engaged in holding on to the limbs which composed the crotch in which the nest was placed. The bird passed by striking me on the hat with his bill or talons and flew right on, fortunately not turning to make another attack. I did not however wait for one and lost no time in descending.

These nests and several others with young or eggs found in the Great Swamp below Basking Ridge cause me to believe that the first ten days in February is the usual time for laying the eggs and that the full set is three, though often two.

The Great Horned Owl is generally considered a rare bird in the Eastern States, and Somerset Hills has been in the past unusually favored as a locality for studying the species. Perhaps the opportunity is not entirely past, for only last year I heard the deep toned hooting of one of them toward early morning in midsummer. Although this species like all Owls is nocturnal it must not be supposed it cannot see by day, for on the contrary it is one of our wildest birds, who, seeing a man approaching, flies off from a greater distance than any of our hawks, and with the exception of those of which I have told I have not been close to any of them except only when I have flushed a female from her nest by rapping on the tree.

They make their homes in woods of large timber, and during the day sit quietly close to the trunk of a large tree or perhaps in some cedar, but will not allow a man to approach; when forced to move they



are generally seen accompanied by a flock of teasing crows. It is usual to hear the "hoot" of the Owls just before dusk, indicating that they are then becoming active. At a distance this sounds like a deep toned distant locomotive or fog-horn, but nearby as I have heard it, within 40 or 50 yards, it is a distinct trill.

The nest measures about two or three feet in height or depth, three feet across, and is made entirely of sticks in any sort of crotch—sometimes a much smaller one than a large hawk would select. It is always where it commands a good outlook; either the tree is one of the tallest in the woods and the crotch very high, or as is more common the situation is on a ridge or steep side hill on the edge of the woods. The cavity is about 18 inches in diameter and 7 inches deep and is lined with strips and pieces of bark, some feathers or even chestnut burrs, prickly side up!

The period of incubation is about one month. It is quite wonderful how the eggs can be incubated in such a situation during our most severe winter month—for even if the upper part of the egg is kept warm, the bottom must be much exposed to the cold. The albumen of the egg is, however, very thick, in fact it could hardly be called a liquid, and perhaps it requires only a low temperature to hatch. Of four nests of eggs which have hatched I have not known an egg to fail and the old bird when driven from the nest is in no hurry to return even in the coldest weather.

The three pairs of birds that I studied were each finally driven from its chosen woods by the steam saw mill and thus ended my experiences with the Great Horned Owl near Bernardsville.

# WINTER AVIFUNA OF AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

*By John Dryden Kuser*

I have visited Aiken, South Carolina for five winters and I am going to attempt to give a review of my observations on its bird life. The time that I was there each year is as follows: 1910, Feb. 19 to March 18; 1912, Feb. 8 to April 11; 1913, January 22 to March 31st; 1914, January 14 to April 10th and from December 29th, 1914 to April 15, 1915.

Aiken is situated in the pine-barrens of southwestern South Carolina. Its altitude is six hundred feet, its latitude 33-5' and its longitude 81-7'. The soil is composed of clay and sand which vary greatly both in color and in composition. The flora consists to a large extent of various species of Pine; principally the Long needled Pine (*Pinus Palustris*). Jessamine, Violets, Redbud, Dogwood and Shad-bush are among the common flowers and shrubs which are in bloom by the first of April and *Arbutus* can be found blooming in late February. However the bloom of all of these varies greatly each year, according to the advance of spring. For instance in the mild winter and early spring of 1913 all of these species were to be observed in full bloom exceedingly early—the *Arbutus* in January—and even in 1912 the Jessamine was in flower on the twenty-second of March. But on the other hand March of 1915 saw little indeed of the spring advance of these species. Other species of flora which were observed frequently were: American Crab (*Malus angustifolia*), Carolina Vetch (*Vicia*

caroliniana), American Mistletoe (*Phoradendron flavescens*), abundant, Wild toad-flax (*Linaria canadensis*), Carolina Dwarf Dandelion (*Krigia virginica*), and china berry trees were numerous.

Of the mammals noted through my extremely casual observations the following were the only ones: Gray Squirrel, Rabbit, Opposum, and Bat, but many others are frequent including Fox and Raccoon. Bats were common. I observed one flying about in bright sunlight at ten o'clock on the morning of April first, which, I believe, is rather unusual. Several Common Swifts (*Sceoporus andulatus*) were seen in 1913 and 1914, and a Green Lizard or American Chameleon (*Anolis carolinensis*) was observed April 11, 1915.

Following I will take up certain facts noted concerning some of the birds which I observed at Aiken.

**KILLDEER.** During 1910 and 1912 I observed these birds only rarely and then only feeding in meadows singly or in pairs, but in the past three years I have been better rewarded in my searches. On March 7, 1913 a large migration of these birds occurred. Large numbers of the birds swept over the fields and meadows, circling overhead throughout the day and also frequently during the night. For nearly a week this unusual migration continued, the last birds of the species being observed on the 12th. During 1915 Killdeers were frequent throughout the period of my visit. Their calls during the night, given while they were flying from place to place, became a customary sound. This nocturnal calling of this species I had never before noted.

**MOURNING DOVE.** These birds would undoubtedly become abundant were it not for the "dove drives" indulged in around Aiken, during the winter and the legal killing in August. The birds are not only being kept from increasing but are on the decrease and I fear greatly for their preservation. Great numbers of them are annually killed and as I have said, the present status of the species' abundance does not allow it.

**TURKEY AND BLACK VULTURES.** These distinctively southern birds are abundant in Aiken. To one who is familiar with the birds the two species may be readily distinguished from one another in life, but to one unacquainted with them their similarity is often puzzling. Some of the marks which I have found most useful in field distinction are: the fact that the flight of the Turkey is far slower than that of the Black; the tail of the latter is shorter; and that during flight the Turkey rarely flaps its wings and then only a single lazy flap, whereas the Black flaps often and five or six times in rapid succession.

**RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.** This bird is almost exclusively confined to the village of Aiken, only occasional individuals being observed in the country thereabout. They nest mostly in the telegraph poles, though they frequently choose Oak trees. Every street in the town has two or three pairs of this species and I have counted fifteen of these birds in a walk of ten minutes. One of their habits is to fly out from a pole, catch an

insect and immediately return in true Flycatcher style. In 1912 these birds were rare or absent around Aiken until February 10th, for which I can give no explanation, for during other years they were abundant throughout the whole season. The Redheaded Woodpeckers are exceedingly tame. The only note heard was a harsh chatter given while climbing a pole or while on the wing.

**FLICKER.** Flickers, unlike their relations, the Redheads, were exceedingly wary and only occasionally were the birds seen and then usually only singly or in pairs. However, their long "kuk-ku" note, which is usually composed of seven of these double syllables frequently told of their presence and once a flock of ten birds was recorded, undoubtedly composed chiefly of transients.

**PHOEBE.** The latest spring date on which I recorded this species at Aiken was the thirtieth of March, when two were observed. The call note of this species of Flycatcher is given either while perching or just after or before. I have never heard it uttered in the middle of the flight.

**BLUE JAY.** Varied as I know the notes of the Jay to be, I am sure that he is also a mimicker, for I have heard him imitate very closely the notes of both of the Yellow-throated Vireo and of the Brown-Headed Nuthatch. Another note given by this Jay was in sound between the ringing of an electric buzz and the chirping of a cricket. These birds are always common, always noisy and in all kinds of places. I associate them more than any other bird with Aiken.

**SOUTHERN MEADOWLARK.** Large flocks of this species are to be found throughout the winter and early spring feeding on any large field around Aiken. In 1915 the first bird heard singing was on January 23rd.

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.** This species is abundant throughout the winter and is still frequent on the tenth of April. Its period of song commences late in March and continues until its departure. After a snow storm I placed some rice outside which was eagerly eaten not only by individuals of this species, but also by the Chipping and Song Sparrows, the Pine Warblers, Juncos and Cardinals.

**CHIPPING SPARROW.** These birds do not begin singing until about the twentieth of March, but after that date they sing with vivacity. Enormous flocks of this species frequent the roadsides and fields during migration.

**JUNCO.** This species is abundant in winter. After March tenth the number of birds gradually decreases until April first, which is my latest record. The Junco flocks with Chipping, White-throat and Vesper Sparrow. Their flight is slightly undulating and they hop when on the ground.

**SONG SPARROW.** When feeding on the rice which I had placed outside for them, this bird drove away all intruders including the Cardinal, English and White-throated Sparrows. I also found them eating Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

berries and the buds of the Camelia (Camelia Japonica). The range of the individuals was restricted and they were found singly or in pairs. They were exceedingly wary. At night they roosted alone in low bushes.

**CARDINAL.** Although the male and female both fed on my rice, yet they never did so together. The female was observed giving the song of the species. The "chip" call note is given either while perched or on the wing.

**PINE WARBLER.** The first dates on which I heard these birds in song were: February 19, 1912; January 22, 1913; January 27, 1914; and January 31, 1915. During 1915 it was not until February 14 that the song of the Pine Warbler became a common sound, even though the first bird had been heard over two weeks earlier. Besides their song they have a sharp "chip" and a note similar to that of the Myrtle and the Yellow Palm. A great part of the time the Pine Warblers are on the ground, but they are also found from low bushes to the tops of the highest trees. They are very tame and can easily be approached to within a couple of feet. There are two distinct songs, one being far less sweet and more broken. Furthermore, the latter is not a steady rise. The amount of streaking on the underparts of this species varies greatly, some being not at all streaked, as far as I could see, while others were as heavily streaked on the breast as the Ovenbird. The female was seen carrying nesting materials on March 20th.

**MYRTLE WARBLER.** The haunts of the Myrtle Warbler were chiefly on or near the ground. They fed upon some grapes which I placed outside after a storm, eating either the pulp or the skin, but leaving the seeds. A few of these Warblers were observed during the winter, but not until spring did they become noticeable for their abundance.

**FLORIDA YELLOW-THROAT.** The first date on which I recorded this bird in song was on March 16. Each swamp has its pair of these birds and before they commence singing their calls may at any time be heard.

**BEWICK'S WREN.** The notes of this species are numerous and are as follows:

A scolding similar to that of an English Sparrow, but harsher.

A "chip" like a Song Sparrow's note.

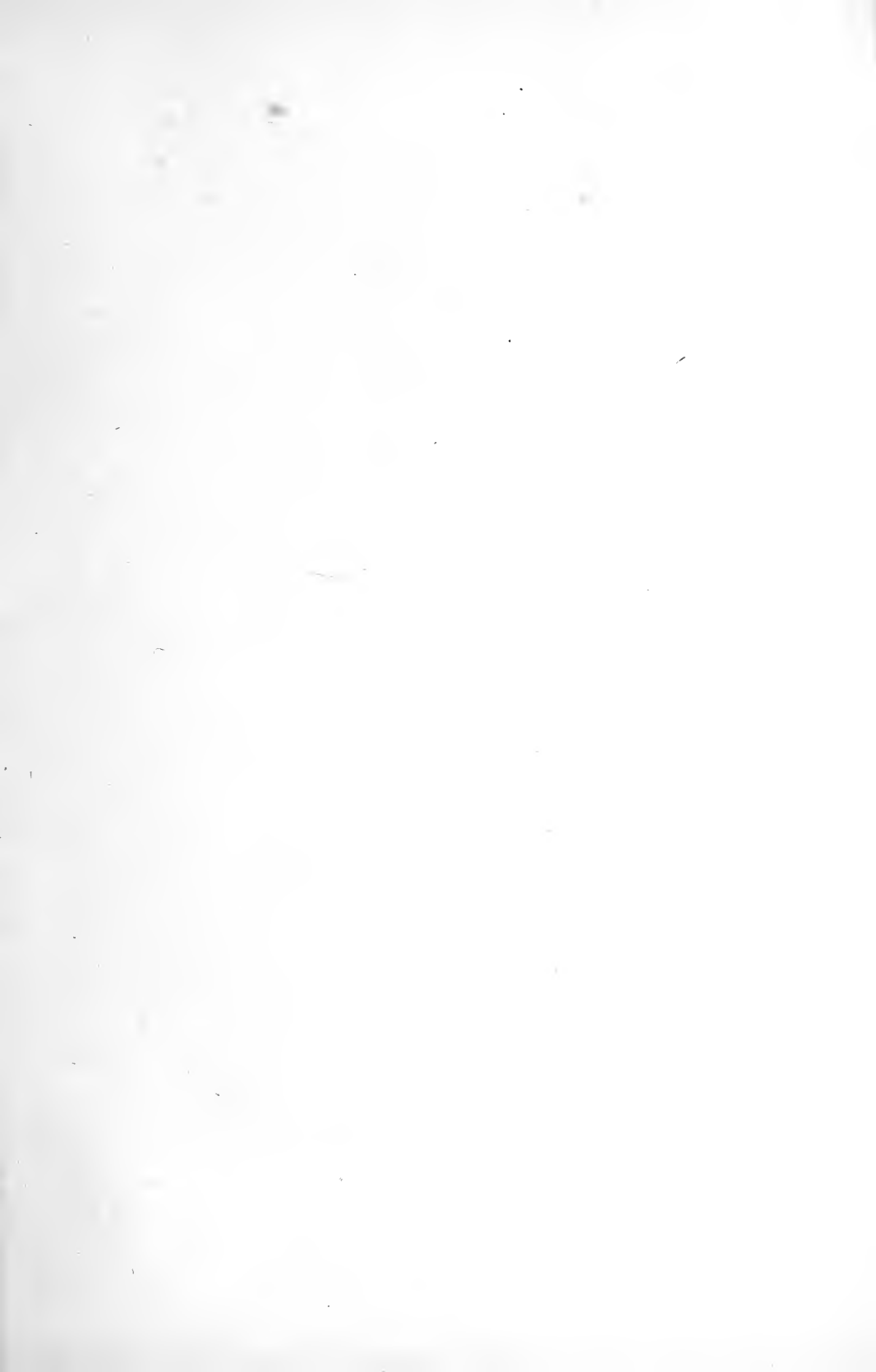
A low bubbling given while in flight (probably part of song).

A sharp click.

A rattle similar to that of a locust when heard nearby.

**CAROLINA WREN.** The Carolina Wren's notes consist of a "tu-wheedle" repeated four or five times and a short, bubbling, closely connected trill consisting of four or five notes. The intervals between song in uninterrupted periods of singing was, for the first, in seconds: greatest 7, average 6, least 5; of the second, greatest 5, average 4,







MOCKINGBIRD

Order—PASSERES  
Genus—MIMUS

Family—MIMIDÆ  
Species—POLYGLOTTOS

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least 2 and the periods for the songs themselves were for the first 3-4 and regularly 2 for the second.

**MOCKINGBIRD.** The chief haunt of the Mockingbird at Aiken was the Spanish Bayonet on one of the spikes of which they would quietly sit or from which they would hurl forth their medley for hours at a time. I have only heard them singing on moonlight nights with which feat they have heretofore been accredited but I have heard a bird sing for over half an hour between twelve and one o'clock at night on a night of early April when there was no moonlight at all. The Mockingbird's flight is slow, swift and straight, but with few wing-flaps, giving the effect of gliding rather than propelling. Among the birds which the Mockingbird mimicks I have personally recorded the following: Titmouse, Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Wood Thrush, Phoebe, and Blue Jay. In 1915 the first notes of the Mockingbird were heard on January 4th, but a full song was not noted until the 16th of the month.

**BROWN THRASHER.** I have also heard the Thrasher imitate the notes of the Wood Thrush, but the imitation was softer than the original. In cold weather Thrashers sing from the tops of trees, whereas during hot days they sing from low bushes. They were first heard during 1912 on March 17 and during 1913, March 1. They were seen carrying nesting materials on March 30.

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH.** This bird was observed feeding on the seeds in the cones of the Long-needed Pine (*Pinus palustris*).

**BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH.** These birds were always observed in pairs, never alone or never more than two together. They are exceedingly tame and will allow one to approach close before they take to their rapid flight. It is an interesting fact to note that at the edge of the village where the holes of the Red-Headed



Destruction to a Telegraph Pole caused by  
Brown-headed Nuthatches

Woodpeckers in the telegraph poles cease those of this Nuthatch begin. They bore holes in the poles from a very small size, to ones two inches in depth, and an inch in diameter. Some poles are almost ruined by their work as may be seen by the photo-

graph. Their note is a squeaky and nasal "twee-twee-nee." It is often given while in flight.

**CAROLINA CHICKADEE.** The notes of the Carolina Chickadee are similar to those of the Chickadee, but the "Chick-a-dee-dee" note is higher pitched. In the whistle of the Carolina, two, three, five or six notes are given, whereas wherever I have heard the Chickadee I have heard but two. The calls of the Carolina are a sharp "chip" which is a flight note and a "tee-tee-tee" uttered very fast and closely connected and followed by a buzzing "che-che-che." In 1915 the first date on which it was heard was January 29th.

**TUFTED TITMOUSE.** The calls of the Titmouse are a "peto - peto - peto - peto," with the accent either on the "pe" or on the "to," though the former is the most frequent; a "peto-etu-etu-etu-etu-etu-" given rapidly with the accent on the "pe" and on the "e;" a chattering call given while perching and with the neck outstretched, and a "chick-a-dee-dee" note similar to that of the Chickadee, but less distinct.

**HERMIT THRUSH.** I observed the Hermit Thrush feeding on the berries of a cultivated Asiatic variety of Privet (*Ligustrum* sp.?).

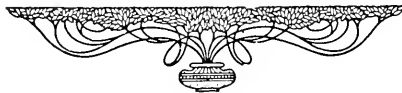
**BLUEBIRD.** The Bluebird also ate these berries. During 1912 it was common in February, but rare in March and April. In 1915, it was most frequent in early April.

**BROWN CREEPER.** The favorite haunt of the Creeper was Pine saplings on the trunks of which they would travel up and down in search for food. The picture was taken while one



Brown Creeper

was engaged in this pursuit. It observed a Creeper going down a tree trunk for several inches, head foremost. This, I think, is most unusual. The Creepers were very tame. When feeding on the trunks of trees they were often observed to lift the tail.



## DATA OF SPRING MIGRATIONS

SPECIES	1912 First Seen	No.	1913 First Seen	No.	1914 First Seen	No.	1915 First Seen	No.
Pintail .....	.....	...	Mar. 27	1	.....	...	.....	...
Solitary Sand- piper.....	April 11	1	Mar. 30	1	.....	...	.....	...
Wilson's Snipe.....	.....	...	Mar. 31	1	.....	...	.....	...
Chimney Swift..	April 5	6	.....	...	April 7	2	April 6	1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	April 6	1	.....	...	April 5	1	.....	...
Purple Martin..	April 5	2	Mar. 29	15	Mar. 31	12	Mar. 22	3
Barn Swallow ..	.....	...	.....	...	.....	...	April 11	1
White-eyed Vireo .....	April 2	2	Mar. 16	1	Mar. 29	4	April 11	4
Yellow-throated Vireo .....	April 11	...	.....	...	.....	...	.....	...
Red-eyed Vireo .....	.....	...	Mar. 31	1	.....	...	April 12	1
Black and White Warbler .....	Mar. 30	1	Mar. 14	1	Mar. 27	1	April 1	1
Yellow-throated Warbler .....	.....	...	Mar. 15	1	.....	...	.....	...
Palm Warbler ..	April 3	3	.....	...	.....	...	.....	...
Yellow Palm Warbler .....	.....	...	Mar. 26	2	.....	...	.....	...
Prairie Warbler	April 5	2	Mar. 29	2	Mar. 27	1	April 14	1
Hooded Warbler.....	April 5	1	.....	...	.....	...	April 11	1
Parula or North- ern Parula Warbler .....	April 11	1	Mar. 28	1	.....	...	.....	...
Prothonotary Warbler .....	.....	...	.....	...	.....	...	April 11	1
Water-thrush...	.....	...	.....	...	Mar. 29	2	.....	...
Louis. Water- thrush .....	April 10	1	Mar. 28	1	.....	...	.....	...
Wood Thrush ..	.....	...	.....	...	April 7	1	Mar. 14	1
Blue Gray Gnatcatcher...	Mar. 31	1	Mar. 16	1	Mar. 29	2	April 1	2

Following is the complete list of the birds I have observed together with the status of their abundance or rarity during each year. Dr. Merriam has very kindly allowed me to reprint his list of birds observed at Aiken, S. C., in 1873 in conjunction with my lists. The scale of abundance for my lists is as follows:—Abundant, Common, Frequent, Uncommon Occasional, Rare.

S P E C I E S	Dr. Merriam 1873	J. D. Kuser 1910	J. D. Kuser 1912	J. D. Kuser 1913	J. D. Kuser 1914	J. D. Kuser 1915
Pintail .....	.....	.....	.....	one .....	.....	.....
Green Heron* .....	not common .....	.....	.....	two* .....	.....	.....
Woodcock .....	rare .....	.....	.....	one .....	.....	.....
Wilson's Snipe .....	.....	.....	.....	two .....	.....	.....
Solitary Sandpiper .....	not common .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Spotted Sandpiper .....	not common .....	rare .....	rare .....	uncommon .....	uncommon .....	uncommon .....
Killdeer .....	abundant .....	rare .....	rare .....	rare .....	uncommon .....	uncommon .....
Bob-white .....	common .....	frequent .....	frequent .....	frequent .....	frequent .....	frequent .....
Mourning Dove .....	not common .....	abundant .....	abundant .....	abundant .....	abundant .....	abundant .....
Black Vulture .....	common .....	abundant .....	abundant .....	common .....	abundant .....	abundant .....
Turkey Vulture .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Red-shouldered Hawk .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	rare .....	.....
Duck Hawk .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Pigeon Hawk .....	rare .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Sparrow Hawk .....	not common .....	occasional .....	occasional .....	occasional .....	uncommon .....	frequent .....
Florida Screech Owl .....	.....	.....	.....	one .....	one .....	.....
Belted Kingfisher .....	rare .....	rare .....	rare .....	occasional .....	.....	rare .....
Southern Hairy Woodpecker .....	rare .....	.....	.....	uncommon .....	uncommon .....	occasional .....
Southern Downy Woodpecker .....	.....	rare .....	rare .....	uncommon .....	frequent .....	occasional .....
Red-cockaded Woodpecker .....	rare .....	.....	rare .....	.....	one .....	one .....

\*May have been a Little Blue Heron.



S P E C I E S		Dr. Merriam 1873	J. D. Kuser 1910	J. D. Kuser 1912	J. D. Kuser 1913	J. D. Kuser 1914	J. D. Kuser 1915
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	common	rare	rare	occasional	occasional	occasional	occasional
Red-headed Woodpecker	not common	abundant	abundant	abundant	abundant	abundant	abundant
Red-bellied Woodpecker	common	occasional	occasional	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent
Southern Flicker	common	occasional	occasional	one	one	one	one
Whip-poor-will	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Chimney Swift	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Kingbird	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Phoebe	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Blue Jay	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Crow	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Fish Crow	not common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Red-winged Blackbird	not common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Southern Meadowlark	not common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Purple or Bronzed Grackle	not common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Goldfinch	not common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Pine Siskin	very abundant	one	one	one	one	one	one
English Sparrow	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Vesper Sparrow	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Grasshopper Sparrow	abundant	one	one	one	one	one	one
White-throated Sparrow	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Chipping Sparrow	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Field Sparrow	common	one	one	one	one	one	one
Slate-colored Junco	common	one	one	one	one	one	one

SPECIES	Dr. Merriam 1873	J. D. Kuser 1910	J. D. Kuser 1912	J. D. Kuser 1913	J. D. Kuser 1914	J. D. Kuser 1915
Bachman's Sparrow.....	common.....	occasional.....	uncommon.....	one.....	common.....	common.....
Song Sparrow.....	rather common.....	occasional.....	rare.....	frequent.....	common.....	common.....
Swamp Sparrow.....	common.....	frequent.....	frequent.....	frequent.....	frequent.....	uncommon.....
Fox Sparrow.....	common.....	common.....	common.....	common.....	common.....	abundant.....
Towhee.....	common.....	one colony.....	one colony.....	one colony.....	one colony.....	occasional.....
Cardinal.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	one.....
Purple Martin.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Barn Swallow.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Tree Swallow.....	.....	.....	rare.....	rare.....	.....	.....
Rough-winged Swallow.....	common.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Cedar Waxwing.....	.....	.....	.....	occasional.....	uncommon.....	occasional.....
Loggerhead Shrike.....	rare.....	rare.....	rare.....	occasional.....	uncommon.....	uncommon.....
Red-eyed Vireo.....	.....	.....	.....	one.....	.....	one.....
Yellow-throated Vireo.....	.....	.....	two.....	.....	.....	.....
Blue-headed Vireo.....	rare.....	.....	.....	occasional.....	one.....	one.....
White-eyed Vireo.....	very common.....	.....	frequent.....	common.....	common.....	common.....
Black and White Warbler.....	common.....	.....	frequent.....	frequent.....	common.....	occasional.....
Prothonotary Warbler.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	one.....
Orange-crowned Warbler.....	.....	.....	two.....	one.....	.....	.....
Northern Parula or Parula Warbler.....	.....	.....	two.....	two.....	.....	.....
Myrtle Warbler.....	very common.....	frequent.....	frequent.....	uncommon.....	frequent.....	frequent.....
Yellow-throated Warbler.....	rare.....	abundant.....	abundant.....	rare.....	abundant.....	abundant.....
Pine Warbler.....	common.....	abundant.....	abundant.....	abundant.....	abundant.....	abundant.....
Palm Warbler.....	.....	.....	rare.....	.....	.....	.....

S P E C I E S		Dr. Merriam 1873	J. D. Kuser 1910	J. D. Kuser 1912	J. D. Kuser 1913	J. D. Kuser 1914	J. D. Kuser 1915
Yellow Palm Warbler	.....	.....	.....	occasional	rare	.....	.....
Prairie Warbler	.....	.....	.....	.....	uncommon	uncommon	one
Water Thrush	.....	.....	.....	rare	uncommon	one	.....
Louisiana Water-thrush	.....	not common	.....	rare	occasional	frequent	common
Florida Yellow-throat	.....	common	abundant	rare	abundant	abundant	frequent
Hooded Warbler	.....	common	abundant	abundant	abundant	abundant	abundant
Mockingbird	.....	rare	.....	.....	one	.....	.....
Catbird	.....	very common	frequent	common	frequent	common	frequent
Brown Thrasher	.....	not common	occasional	.....	common	common	abundant
Carolina Wren	.....	not common	occasional	rare	rare	occasional	.....
Bewick's Wren	.....	rather common	occasional	occasional	occasional	occasional	uncommon
Brown Creeper	.....	not common	occasional	uncommon	occasional	frequent	uncommon
Florida White-breasted Nuthatch	.....	.....	two	.....	occasional	occasional	uncommon
Red-breasted Nuthatch	.....	.....	frequent	frequent	occasional	frequent	frequent
Brown-headed Nuthatch	.....	rare	common	common	common	common	common
Tufted Titmouse	.....	very numerous	common	.....	common	common	common
Carolina Chickadee	.....	common	frequent	frequent	common	common	common
Golden-crowned Kinglet	.....	abundant	frequent	occasional	common	frequent	uncommon
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	.....	abundant	frequent	uncommon	common	common	common
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	.....	common	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent
Hermit Thrush	.....	abundant	rare	rare	occasional	uncommon	occasional
Wood Thrush	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	one	one
Robin	.....	common	occasional	frequent	uncommon	frequent	common
Bluebird	.....	abundant	uncommon	frequent	uncommon	uncommon	frequent

## BIRDS ANGELUS IN AIKEN

*By Celestine Eustis*

At half past five on the morning of February 1914, red Cardinal begins to chirp faintly, for the first time, as if he was not quite awake. The second time he chirps louder, he wakes up all the cocks in the neighborhood. I can hear them waking up each other in the far distance. Like in a circle, in a few moments the Cardinal pipes up again, and is answered by a Mockingbird's pretty song. The Cardinal has a hard time arousing his feathered friends. He whistles five or six times and is still only answered by the cocks. He whistled now more faintly, as if he was sleepy himself or fears he has awakened too early, mistaking the time. Another Mockingbird trills faintly! But the cocks are all wide awake by this time and they crow loud enough to wake up the dead. The Cardinal is still persistent in his angelus and now there are faint responses in different directions. Encouraged, the Cardinal asserts himself and whistles loudly—another Cardinal responds—and our friend answers louder. Now several birds join in and another pipes up sharply, as much as to say, "I am waking up too." In the distance I hear strange noises which are unknown to me. My Cardinal friend whistles incessantly, loud and louder, as much as to say, "Wake up lazy feathers." Now I hear the discordant noises of the Blue Jays calling each other from far and wide. The Cardinal goes on with its note. "Wake up! Wake up!" Another strange bird responds with a thrill which sets them all singing and the air is alive with beautiful sounds.

A FLYING BREAKFAST AT  
"MON REPOS"  
AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA.

*By Celestine Eustis*

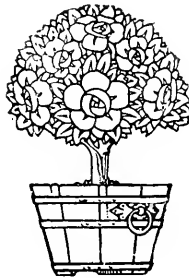
My windows giving on a roof, over a porch, for years I have fed birds of all kinds there morning and evening. I give them a mixture of cracked corn, wheat and oats, such food as one gives to young chickens. My porch overlooking the pine forests, the birds can see the food from a distance.

When we first come South in December, there are very few birds around the house, but they very soon know of the arrival of their friends. The Sparrows find us out first—then the Blue Jays; they give a loud signal calling their friends with true southern hospitality. Then I have what I call a blue breakfast; later comes the Cardinal, and that is a red breakfast. If a Mockingbird should happen to drop in, he fights them all, like the Kaiser, to get his rights. After that I have what I call a table d'hote, composed of Sparrows and strange birds passing through.

One spring morning I saw one of the prettiest sights I ever beheld. That morning while there were a great many English Sparrows for breakfast, there came a couple of Cardinals: Mr. and Mme. Cardinal. Mr. was robed in brilliant red, with a rich, red top-knot, Mme. was robed in reddish-green feathers. Monsieur Cardinal looked so pleased and so proud, he gallanted her. Madam was lame, she had but one foot and could not walk but hopped about painfully. Her

Lord and Master walked round and round her, bringing food and feeding her himself, with such delicate emprossement and all the love and care of a tender lover. He seemed so proud and happy. It was beautiful to behold. They came down for several days and disappeared.

“Mon Ropos” being surrounded by evergreen cherry trees and hollies—when the Robins migrate and are going further South, they stop here in swarms and feed on the wild cherries which intoxicate them. I have seen them drop off the trees, but they soon get over it. A busy time for the boys and their sling shots, but Uncle Sam is after them as he does not approve of robin pies.



# THE ORIOLE

Official Organ of the

## SOMERSET HILLS BIRD CLUB

BERNARDSVILLE, NEW JERSEY

Devoted to the Protection and Study of Birds

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VOLUME III

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NUMBER I

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JOHN DRYDEN KUSER, Editor

MISS MARISE BLAIR, } Associate  
MEREDITH H. PYNE, } Editors

### EDITORIAL

The Somerset Hills Bird Club has decided to make special efforts toward game preservation by the liberation of various species of native game birds in the Somerset Hills. This has always seemed to us to be the ideal method in territories where a particular species has been wiped out or where it has become so scarce that its increase of its own accord would be slow and uncertain, even were the adequate protection afforded it, which favorable circumstance, is, indeed, rarely the case. The two principal species with which we particularly wish to restock the community are Bob-Whites and Ruffed Grouse. Is there any reason why we should not have good shooting for both species in the Somerset Hills? Is not the locality good for either?

But to bring this about we need the co-operation of everyone in the community. Will not sportsmen help us in these two ways: First, by not shooting any Quail or Grouse near Bernardsville for the next few

years, but rather, if they wish to shoot these species to go elsewhere where they are more abundant; or if they want to have sport in Bernardsville to shoot a few of the Pheasants each year, which have increased rapidly during the past few years in this locality, and now allow a moderate amount of sport: Second, to give us any information concerning the procuring of Quail or Grouse, particularly the latter.

We make this appeal to all true sportsmen of the Somerset Hills. Will you help us during the next few years in our efforts to restore the native game of the community?

## NOTES OF THE CLUB

A meeting of Trustees was called for December 24th, 1914, for the purpose of appointing a Committee for the Liberation of Game and the question of printing of stationery. Owing to the absence of a quorum no Resolutions could be enacted. However, the following were passed and were later confirmed by a vote of the Trustees.

*Resolution No. 1.* That a Committee consisting of three members be appointed for the Liberation of Game.

*Resolution No. 2.* That this Committee consist of Messrs. Kuser, Chappell and Chapin.

*Resolution No. 3.* That the Treasurer shall be instructed to pay out of the Treasury sufficient money to pay for certain stationery which it has been found necessary to order.



*Resolution No. 4.* That in the future, power be given to the Secretary of the Club and the Editor of the Oriole to order stationery necessary for the respective uses.

The vote of the Trustees was as follows:

For .....	10
Against .....	1
Not Voting .....	3

For Resolutions 1 against 2, 3 and 4, 1.

At a meeting of the Bird Box Committee held on December 23rd, 1914, the Treasurer of the Committee reported a balance of \$34.00. It was determined that the following boxes should be purchased:—12 Flicker boxes at 75c, 25 Bluebird, 25 Chickadee, 13 Wren and 12 Swallow houses at 25c. Also, that the money from the fund should be expended by the Chairman for the putting up of the boxes.

The boxes were procured and erected by Charles Meyers in March.

If any member desires to have amendments to the Constitution or By-laws proposed at the annual meeting in June, he should send them to The Somerset Hills Bird Club, Bernardsville, New Jersey, before June 5th, 1915.



**REPORT OF THE TREASURER  
S. H. B. C.**

**JANUARY 1st, TO APRIL 1st, 1915.**

**RECEIPTS**

Balance on hand January 1, 1915 .....	\$94.75
Membership dues .....	33.00
Oriole subscription .....	1.50
Copies of "The Oriole" sold .....	11.00
	<hr/>
Total receipts .....	\$140.25

**DISBURSEMENTS**

Stamps .....	\$2.46
Addressing of envelopes .....	1.00
	<hr/>
Total disbursements .....	\$3.46

**BALANCE ON HAND APRIL 1, 1915. \$136.79**

CORNELIA SAGE,  
*Treasurer, Somerset Hills Bird Club.*

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER  
BIRD BOX COMMITTEE, S. H. B. C.**

**RECEIPTS**

Bird box dues .....	\$44.00
Contribution .....	10.00

**DISBURSEMENTS**

87 bird boxes .....	\$26.43
Erecting of boxes .....	15.00
Account book .....	.40
	<hr/>
Total disbursements .....	\$41.83

**BALANCE ON HAND ..... \$12.17**

GEORGE R. MOSLE, JR.,  
*Treasurer, Bird Box Committee, S. H. B. C.*

# MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOMERSET HILLS BIRD CLUB.

## HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS

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LAROCQUE, JOSEPH, JR.	TALMAGE PRENTICE

\*Trustee 1914.

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KUSER, MISS CYNTHIA G.

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GEORGE R. MOSLE, JR., *Secretary-Treasurer*  
MEREDITH H. PYNE                      ALAN HARRIMAN  
KINGSLEY KUNHARDT

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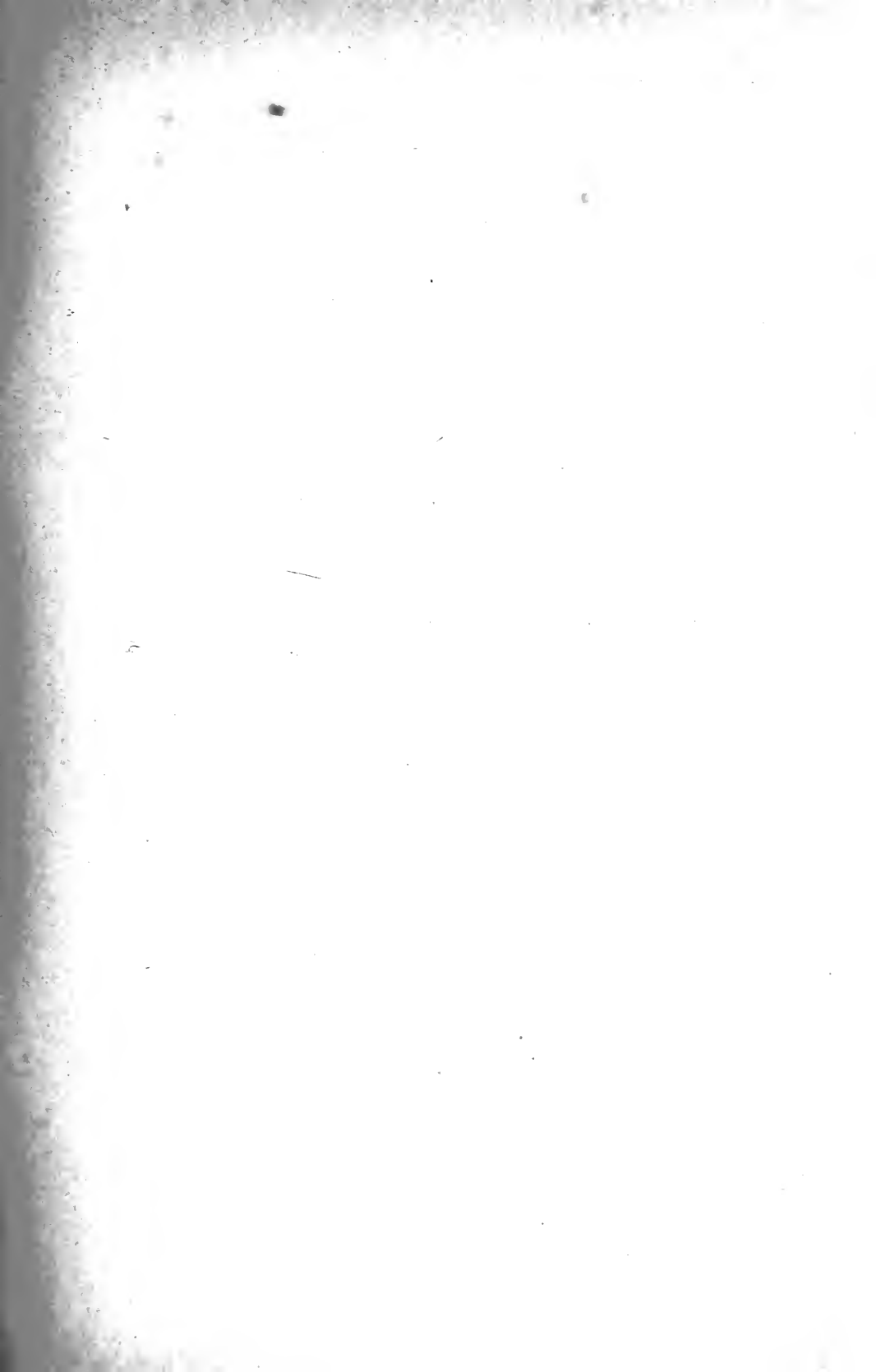
JOHN DRYDEN KUSER, *Chairman*  
WALTER F. CHAPPELL, JR.                      KINGSLEY KUNHARDT

### **LIBERATION OF GAME**

JOHN DRYDEN KUSER, *Chairman*  
WALTER F. CHAPPELL, JR.                      C. MERRILL CHAPIN, JR.

### **MEMBERSHIP IN THE CLUB**

Active Members (\$1.50 per year) .....	60
Patrons (\$25.00 paid at one time) .....	8
Life Members (\$10.00 paid at one time) .....	6
Contributors (\$5.00 or more per year) .....	9
Subscribers to "The Oriole" (\$1.50 per year) .....	52



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