

## ALL DAY WITH THE BIRDS.

Ever since the writer and Mr. W. L. Dawson secured the horizon of 102 species of birds for Lorain County, on May 17, 1898, the ornithological possibilities of a day during the height of the spring migration have been constantly kept in view. Accordingly, the migrations of the present spring were carefully watched for the desired day. May 8 was finally decided upon not because it promised the largest horizon, for we could not foresee the weather and other conditions a week in advance, but because that was the day on which our work could be best arranged for the necessary absence from town, and because the migrations were manifestly a week in advance of last year.

The day dawned wet and lowering after a night of showers which again made the use of wheels impossible. In defiance of the dismal prospect we were in the field at 3:30 A. M., just as the earliest birds awakened, and had recorded forty-five species before the rain again began—about 4:15. During the hour and a half shower nothing new was seen, so we came home, recording fourteen more species on the way. Mr. Dawson's other duties made it impossible for him to continue the day's work further, so the writer was forced to brave the elements alone, with many a word of encouragement for the day's work, "Because a rainy day record can never equal that which still stands." The prospect was certainly dismal.

A half hour at breakfast—my good wife had the luncheon ready—gave a good preparation for the tramp across fields and thru woods before finally taking to the "electrics." This short tramp of three miles all still within the distinctively Oberlin region, swelled the list to eighty-one in spite of another shower of *wet* rain, which added to the discomfort of wet garments, a dripping cap and wet field glasses. But the work had to be pushed into other fields furnishing another fauna.

The hour spent on the cars in getting to Lorain and the lake shore resulted in nothing in the way of further records, but was practically that time lost—cut out of the best part of the day. Wheeling weather would have made this loss of time unnecessary.

Arriving at the lake shore at 11 o'clock, under a threatening sky, the prophecy of my busy companion seemed certain to be fulfilled. But there was no turning back now. There were no shore birds on the beach, nor any birds but swallows skimming the lake's smooth surface. A few swallows were eagerly feeding in a small swamp at Lorain, which proved to be the only Tree and Rough-winged Swallows of the day's record.



So much was encouraging. A walk of three miles along the beach resulted in four records—American Herring and Bonaparte's Gulls, Common Tern and Sharp-shinned Hawk. The hawk was wiping himself after a bath, preparatory to a trip across the lake, and did not notice that I was within a hundred feet of him. When I made a sudden movement to attract his attention he began his journey without waiting for breakfast.

The half hour spent at a 12:30 luncheon was the first half hour of sunshine of the day, and called forth a burst of song from several species until then unrecorded, causing several others to feed in the tree-tops just over the brow of the bluff on which I sat. The list had now passed the ninety mark, and I confess to a feeling of considerable nervousness when the possibilities of not recording the remaining few necessary to break the last year's record presented themselves. But the walk of two miles to Oak Point, the place of swamps with their fringe of bushes, the place of great expectations which had never before been disappointed, swelled the list to ninety-seven with only six more to break the record, and the swamp not touched yet. But "there's mony a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip!"

The tedious swamp beating began at once but apparently with poor success. The mud was almost ooze and the vegetation so rank that it seemed an almost hopeless task for one person to do any successful work. But it had to be done. After an hour of this wading and floundering a short period of rest followed by another hour of the same sort of work, then a half hour of tree-top gazing in one of the coziest little nooks that ever delighted an ornithologist's heart, where the warblers were swarming among the topmost branches. What a boon the eight power Bausch & Lomb Zeiss proved among these tall, slender trees! I lay at full length upon the wet ground while the glasses bro't the tree-tops almost within reach of my hand. There was no need of moving, for the birds trooped by just fast enough for a careful survey of each one. The half hour of this restful work was a good preparation for a little final wading in the marshes, then two old orchards were ransacked for any overlooked warblers, and the day's work was done. The five mile walk back to the electric lines in the gloaming added nothing to the day's record. Before starting homeward stock was taken of the species recorded, for before entering the marshes I had exacted from myself a solemn promise that I would not count the species recorded nor keep the number in mind lest the real purpose of the work should be lost in the desire simply to make the list larger than last year. The note book showed 112 species



to the day's credit, eleven of them being new for the year. Of this 112, twenty-one were warblers and fifteen of them were singing—the songs of four of them being heard for the first time in the writer's experience.

Comparing the list of species with that of last year it is found that eight species on last year's list were not seen, while eighteen not seen last year are on this year's list. Of the eight not seen five were certainly in the county and probably all were. There can be little doubt that these eight, with several others as well, would have been found had it not been necessary to cut the day short on account of the heavy roads. The return home across country instead of the return to the electric lines must certainly have resulted in more records. But there are other years coming!

That the list of species recorded this year is so much larger than last while the weather was so unfavorable and but one person was at work the larger part of the time, is probably due to three causes: First, the migrations were far more crowded than last year, due to the late continuation of wintry weather and the three weeks of summer temperature which followed; Second, to greater activity in the field for weeks previous to the day appointed, during which the localities where the more uncommon breeding species might be surely found were carefully noted; and Third, to the eight power Bausch & Lomb Zeiss field glasses. Their contribution to the day's record could not be easily over estimated. They are invaluable where quick, precise, all-distance work must be done. They save many steps and no end of exasperation.

This list illustrates what may be in store for him who may be so fortunately situated that not one but every spring day may be wholly given to study of the birds. He might then hope to compare one day with another, determining the fluctuations which undoubtedly occur in the whole bird movement as well as the fluctuations of the individual species. Such work is greatly needed today. In the list which follows C following the name of a species indicates that it was common on that day.

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|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. American Herring Gull. | 10. Greater Yellow-legs.  |
| 2. Bonaparte's Gull.      | 11. Solitary Sandpiper.   |
| 3. Common Tern. C.        | 12. Bartramian Sandpiper. |
| 4. Greater Scaup Duck.    | 13. Spotted Sandpiper. C. |
| 5. Great Blue Heron.      | 14. Killdeer. C.          |
| 6. Green Heron.           | 15. Bob-white.            |
| 7. Virginia Rail.         | 16. Mourning Dove. C.     |
| 8. Sora.                  | 17. Sharp-shinned Hawk.   |
| 9. American Coot.         | 18. Cooper's Hawk.        |



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| 19. Red-shouldered Hawk.         | 59. Towhee. C.                    |
| 20. Pigeon Hawk.                 | 60. Cardinal.                     |
| 21. Sparrow Hawk. C.             | 61. Rose-breasted Grosbeak.       |
| 22. Black-billed Cuckoo. C.      | 62. Indigo Bunting. C.            |
| 23. Yellow-billed Cuckoo. C.     | 63. Scarlet Tanager. C.           |
| 24. Belted Kingfisher.           | 64. Purple Martin.                |
| 25. Hairy Woodpecker.            | 65. Barn Swallow. C.              |
| 26. Downy Woodpecker.            | 66. Cliff Swallow.                |
| 27. Red-headed Woodpecker. C.    | 67. Tree Swallow.                 |
| 28. Red-bellied Woodpecker.      | 68. Bank Swallow. C.              |
| 29. Flicker. C.                  | 69. Rough-winged Swallow.         |
| 30. Whippoorwill.                | 70. Loggerhead Shrike.            |
| 31. Chimney Swift. C.            | 71. Red-eyed Vireo. C.            |
| 32. Ruby-throated Hummingbird.   | 72. Warbling Vireo. C.            |
| 33. Kingbird. C.                 | 73. Blue-headed Vireo.            |
| 34. Crested Flycatcher. C.       | 74. Yellow-throated Vireo.        |
| 35. Phoebe.                      | 75. Black-and-white Warbler.      |
| 36. Green-crested Flycatcher. C. | 76. Blue-winged Warbler. C.       |
| 37. Alder Flycatcher.            | 77. Nashville Warbler, C.         |
| 38. Least Flycatcher. C.         | 78. Orange-crowned Warbler.       |
| 39. Prairie Horned Lark.         | 79. Tennessee Warbler. C.         |
| 40. Blue Jay. C.                 | 80. Yellow Warbler. C.            |
| 41. American Crow. C.            | 81. Black-throated Blue Warbler.  |
| 42. Bobolink. C.                 | 82. Myrtle Warbler.               |
| 43. Cowbird. C.                  | 83. Magnolia Warbler. C.          |
| 44. Red-winged Blackbird. C.     | 84. Cerulean Warbler. C.          |
| 45. Meadowlark. C.               | 85. Chestnut-sided Warbler. C.    |
| 46. Orchard Oriole. C.           | 86. Bay-breasted Warbler.         |
| 47. Baltimore Oriole. C.         | 87. Blackburnian Warbler.         |
| 48. Bronzed Grackle. C.          | 88. Black-throated Green Warbler. |
| 49. American Goldfinch C.        | 89. Ovenbird. C.                  |
| 50. Vesper Sparrow. C.           | 90. Water Thrush.                 |
| 51. Grasshopper Sparrow,         | 91. Louisiana Water Thrush.       |
| 52. White-crowned Sparrow. C.    | 92. Maryland Yellow-throat. C.    |
| 53. White-throated Sparrow. C.   | 93. Yellow-breasted Chat.         |
| 54. Chipping Sparrow. C.         | 94. Canadian Warbler.             |
| 55. Field Sparrow. C.            | 95. American Redstart. C.         |
| 56. Song Sparrow. C.             | 96. American Pipit.               |
| 57. Lincoln's Sparrow.           | 97. Catbird. C.                   |
| 58. Swamp Sparrow.               | 98. Brown Thrasher.               |



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| 99. House Wren. C                | 106. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.  |
| 100. Winter Wren.                | 107. Wood Thrush. C.         |
| 101. Long-billed Marsh Wren.     | 108. Wilson's Thrush. C.     |
| 102. White-breasted Nuthatch. C. | 109. Gray-cheeked Thrush.    |
| 103. Tufted Titmouse. C.         | 110. Olive-backed Thrush. C. |
| 104. Black-capped Chickadee.     | 111. American Robin. C.      |
| 105. Ruby-crowned Kinglet.       | 112. Bluebird.               |

LYNDS JONES, *Oberlin, Ohio.*

## GENERAL NOTES.

On March 17, I saw, much to my surprise, three White-throated Sparrows scratching in the leaves near a clump of barberry bushes under my window. I have heard them nearly every day since, today (April 1st) included. Is this not an unusually early date, especially in so backward a season? Mr. H. C. Oberholser's "Birds of Wayne County" gives the date of their spring appearance from April 10 to May 17. I have never before observed them earlier than the middle of April.

ETHEL DANE ROBERTS, *Wooster, Ohio.*

(The Lorain County records for the years 1896 to 1899 inclusive are : April 12, April 15, April 16, April 1, respectively. My earliest record for central Iowa, during six years' study, was March 25, 1890. Has any reader an earlier record for central or northern Ohio?—Ed.)

For two years I have been carefully watching the Chimney Swifts during their season of nest building, with special reference to the question how they snip off the twigs for the nest. My back yard contains several apple trees whose tops have ceased to be of use to anything but the birds, and in these dead tops the swifts seem to find abundant nest material. They come sweeping thru them frequently, sometimes stopping to snip off a twig, but oftener evidently on a reconnoitering expedition. Today I spent some time carefully noting them as they circled round and round among the tree-tops. There were four of them. After a low, and often many times repeated flight thru one particular tree-top, during which the head was rapidly turned from side to side in a keen scrutiny, the bird returned and snipped off a twig with its feet, then flew directly to the chimney, returning after a little and repeating the performance. In every instance the twig was snipped off with the



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