

Next to taking collecting trips ourselves, we all doubtless enjoy reading of the projected trips and work of others. We give herewith a brief summary of the plans of several of our most active members and would be pleased to hear from the others from time to time.

next thing is to become familiar with the life of the bird by personal acquaintance. Clearly the only way to do this is to get among the birds where they live. They soon become fellow beings to us, in their daily life showing most of the human characteristics. Few of us can hope ever to know the individual birds apart, but all of us can enter, in greater or less measure, into acquaintance with many individuals about us while they are rearing their young.

There is no better way to become familiar with the birds than to pursue a course of study that will keep the birds before us every day, if possible several times a week at least. This sort of study need not be one which necessarily consumes much time, but may be planned to occupy all or but part of one's daily leisure or time for recreation. But this leisure time, if it is to count for much, must be definitely planned. Something will be accomplished if we aim at the most general and cursory notice of what birds are seen, but with a definite plan in mind the result will be far greater and with the greater expenditure of energy. One good definite plan may be the making of a census for some limited area. Few of us are so closely hedged about that there is not some small area which can be compassed successfully with but little effort. Let me make a few suggestions about census taking.

In the first place, a carefully made census of a known area, however small, for a definite limited time when there will be no change in the bird population, will furnish a fairly exact basis for comparison in the years to come when we need to know whether or not the birds are decreasing and at what rate. It will also furnish a basis for estimating the whole bird population for a large number of similar areas. In the second place, it will furnish the basis for determining what changes, if any, may be brought about in the habits of birds due to environment where the conditions are constantly changing. In the third place it will furnish us with a definite purpose for our work, and so give to the work a greater interest, and in this way keep us alive to many other things than the census which are sure to pass in review before us. They are surprises for the most advanced ornithologist when he least expects them. In the

fourth place, when many persons have completed a census in many different places and under many different conditions, we shall have an excellent basis for determining the bird population for large regions of country, if not finally for the whole country. And this determination, which has never yet been attempted even approximately for even a single species, will tell us, broadly, what may be the fluctuations in the bird population as the years pass. With all this will naturally go the determination of the causes of decrease, where there may be any, and the best methods of encouraging an increase where it may be advisable.

I have several times before urged the need for such work now before primitive conditions have wholly, passed away, before the advance of the irresistible tide of human changes, and I wish to urge again, with all the earnestness at command, entering upon this line of work at once. None of us are so hedged about by other duties but a little time can be devoted to census taking for some small area, and now, while so many of the birds are occupied with family cares, and are consequently 'at home', is the time to begin the work. Let the first attempt be in your own door-yard, if you prefer, only let it begin. You will be ready for a larger field when you have finished that, and you will then be better able to plan what you have to do. Let your work include only those birds which have a nest in the chosen area, counting two for each nest, of course. If a pair of birds probably have a nest in the area, but you are unable to find it, these may be counted also.

You may be in search of an area larger than the door yard. If so, the more representative one you can select the better. The ideal area would be one which included a little of every sort of country in the region. Let me caution you not to be too ambitious in the selection of an area. Let it be small enough so there will be no possible question of your covering it in a reasonable time before it becomes an irksome task. You must not let your recreation become a wearing burden.

Again let me caution you to be careful what birds you record in this census. Not every bird that sings on your chosen plot can be considered a resident of it, but a little attention will

tell you what birds should be counted as residents. You want no 'Floaters' in your count, for they belong somewhere else and would then be counted twice. If young birds of the year are counted they should be designated as young.

There is no need to complete the census in a single day, nor in a week, if care be taken to avoid duplicating records. A little practice will enable you to carry on the work at odd times successfully. You need only to keep a careful record of all work.

When your work is completed, if you will send it, with a specific description of the area chosen, with your name and address, to the address below, it will be incorporated in a general report of work done in many different places with the deductions that may be possible.

LYNDS JONES, *Oberlin, Ohio.*

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TAKING OF A BIRD CENSUS.

In the above communication, Professor Jones impresses upon our minds the importance of general utility of any well taken bird census; he also offers many valuable suggestions as to the mode of procedure, and a few words of caution; valuable to any one who may decide to take up this novel and all-absorbing branch of field work.

The writer has been engaged in the enumeration of the avian population of a stated district for several years past. The outline of the work he has blocked out, may prove of interest to many, as it fills out in a measure the details omitted by Professor Jones. A correspondent has remarked that it necessitates scarcely less than a biological survey of the section studied, but it is not intended to be strictly so, only the most numerous and familiar plant and animal life having an important bearing upon the presence, absence, increase or decrease of our birds need be taken into consideration.

1st. Map out a tract of land one square mile (640 acres) most readily accessible and if possible containing a fair proportion



Jones, Lynds. 1901. "A Suggestion for Work." *The Wilson bulletin* 13(4), 49–52.

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