

LIBRARY
OF THE
MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE WILSON BULLETIN

NO. 68.

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOL. XXI

SEPTEMBER, 1909.

NO. 3

OLD SERIES VOL. XXI. NEW SERIES VOL. XVI.

THE BIRDS OF CEDAR POINT AND VICINITY.

BY LYND S. JONES.

29. *Marila americana*.—Redhead.

This is not now one of the more common of the ducks, although it may still be properly designated common. There have been regular visitations of small groups, composed of males and females, the latter usually predominating, to the Oberlin Water Works reservoir since its establishment. In the marshes it is usually found in the companies of Baldpates, where it can be readily distinguished by its color pattern. During the period of my studies at Cedar Point I have never seen any large companies of this species. The groups are more often composed of less than twenty individuals than more. The earliest migration date is March 4, 1904, and the latest spring record is April 23; the median spring arrival is March 12, and the usual time of departure is near the middle of April. My only fall record is October 21, 1907, when two were seen.

30. *Marila vallisneria*.—Canvas-back.

My records indicate irregular occurrence, but there are doubtless some individuals among the host of ducks in the marshes each migration season. Judging wholly from my own records I would call this duck uncommon and irregular. From April 13 to 20, 1903, there were four males and one female on the Oberlin Water Works reservoir, and on November 19 and 21 of the same year one visited the same place. Migrations seem to take place at the same time as the Redhead, and the birds seen have usually been members of the company of Baldpates, Redheads, etc. Fishermen and hunters state that this is a fast disappearing species at the marshes.

31. *Marila marila*.—Greater Scaup Duck.

Tolerably common during the earlier part of the migrations in spring, and latter part in fall. The spring migrations occur dur-

ing the second week of March, individuals lingering until the third week of April. I have one record for May 15, 1899. The birds return during the middle of October and linger until winter weather begins, which was December 29, 1902. There have been numerous visitations to the Oberlin Water Works reservoir during the vernal migrations. Groups are more often seen on the open waters of the lake than is the case with the next species, but numbers also feed in the more open areas of the marshes.

32. *Marila affinis*.—Lesser Scaup Duck.

Everything considered this is the most abundant of the ducks. It literally swarms in the marshes during late March and the most of April, where feeding companies cover large areas of the open waters of the marshes. On Mondays, close days, they feed and play and court on a certain large open area near the mouth of Black Channel, apparently possessed of a feeling of security. On open days they are flying wildly about, many seeking refuge on the open lake beyond row-boat range (shooting from power boats is unlawful). Median dates of arrival in spring are March 23, and the bulk do not return before the last of October. Most of the birds have left by the first of May, but I found a flock of upwards of 100 as late as May 22, 1909. A few pairs breed within reach of small bodies of water near Oberlin, and I have some evidence for believing that a few pairs breed in the vicinity of Cedar Point proper. There are always some few wounded individuals about the bay and marshes all summer, but these are not breeding birds. From about the first of May until the third week of May it is a common thing to find numbers of this duck washed up on the bay side of the sand spit dead or dying. Careful examination of the cadavers in a number of instances has failed to reveal any wound or other physical defect. It is possible that death has been caused by lead poisoning, as reported for similar cases elsewhere.

Female Scaup Ducks may be readily identified by the area of white at the base of the bill.

33. *Marila collaris*.—Ring-necked Duck.

The markings of this duck are not sufficiently distinctive at a distance to make identification certain. On April 9, 1900, and April 5 to 12, 1904, one individual visited the Oberlin Water Works reservoir. My other records are May 25, 1903, one at Elyria, on the Black river, March 26, 1904, at Oak Point, March 25, 1907, two at Cedar Point, April 24, 1909, two on a small cemetery pond in Oberlin. I have relied on specimens in hand or at close range for all of these records. It seems probable that the species is more numerous in individuals than these records would indicate.

34. *Clangula clangula americana*.—Golden-eye.

Out of twelve records for this species seven are for the Oberlin Water Works reservoir. There are only three Cedar Point records. No migration dates can be assigned from the records, but there are indications that the spring migration covers the last half of March and most of April, and that the birds return during the last half of November. January 20, 1908, three were recorded at Cedar Point. Hunters mention Golden-eyes or "Whistlers" as occasional ducks in the marshes.

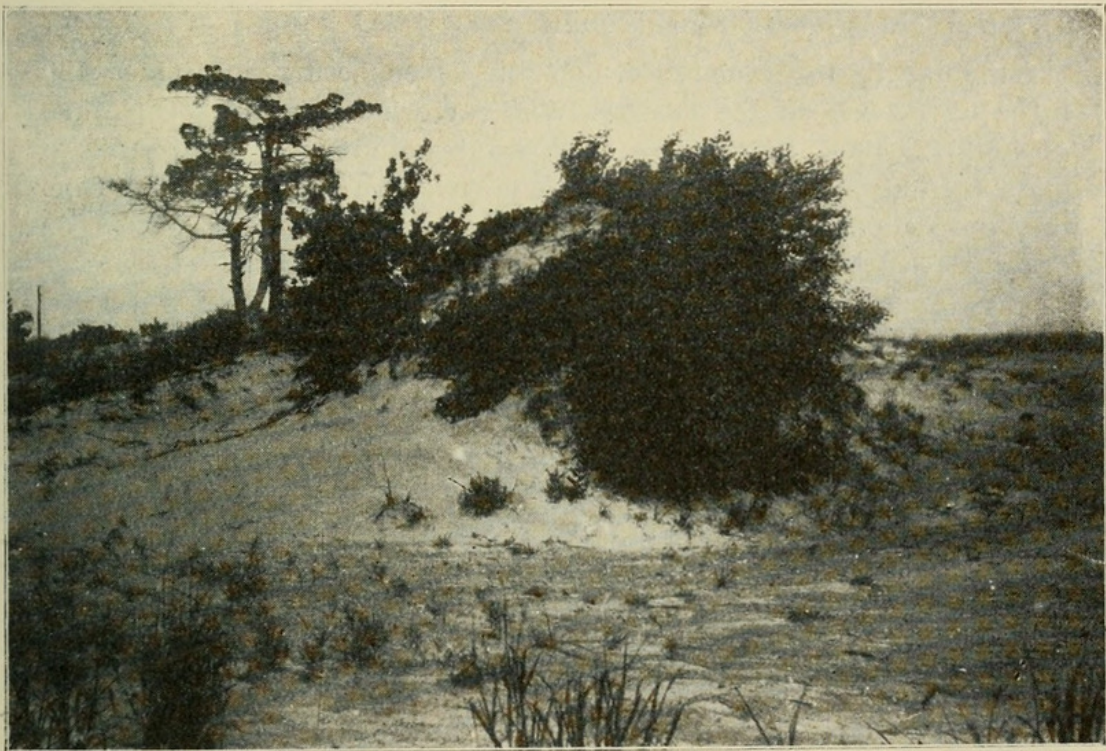


Fig. 7.—A dune controlled by the *Prunus virginiana* Consociates of the *Prunus-Rhus* Dune Thicket Formation. Note the secondary species. This dune appears in the distance in the left third of Fig. 2 (first paper). It was in the vicinity of this dune that the nest of Piping Plover was found, in the midst of a broad, flat sand waste.

35. *Clangula islandica*.—Barrow's Golden-eye.

There is the skin of a female in the Oberlin College collection which was captured on April 5, 1892, at Lorain, by Mr. Harry Warden. Its presence in the Cedar Point marshes has been strongly suspected, but no specimens have been actually secured.

36. *Charitonetta albeola*.—Buffle-head.

A common migrant, but far less so than formerly. The decrease has been marked since 1904. Until 1904 it was the most regular of the ducks in its visitations to the Oberlin Water Works reservoir, companies of from three to more than twenty remaining there

for several days without showing concern about people all around the embankment. Such companies were always mixed males and females. Early in the season the males usually predominated, but late in April or early in May the females predominated. I have never found them numerous at Cedar Point. On two occasions there was an occasional Buffle-head among the Lesser Scaups washed up on the bay side of the sand spit. Three were seen on every visit to Cedar Point the winter of 1907-8. These ducks are not much hunted and are therefore not at all wary, permitting a close approach.

37. *Harelda hyemalis*.—Old-squaw.

Irregular in its occurrence. Of the seven occurrences since 1896 three have been on the Oberlin Water Works reservoir. On March 11 and 12, 1903, there were two females and one male there, the male in high color. One was shot on a small pond north of Oberlin on April 22, 1907; also a male in high color. The only Cedar Point record is of two birds on November 12, 1906. There were reports of numbers during the winter off Lorain, 1901-2, but my only record for that winter was one at Oak Point, December 23. Lorain fishermen tell tales of these birds being caught in gill nets at a depth of many fathoms. Four specimens in the Oberlin College collection have the remark written on the labels, "Caught in gill net off Lorain."

38. *Oidemia deglandi*.—White-winged Scoter.

The only actual capture of this species at Cedar Point must be accredited to Messrs. F. M. Root and N. Metcalf, May 10, 1908. They report having seen a number of others in the company from which this one was taken. I have been reasonably certain of the presence of this species at Cedar Point and Oak Point, but absence of specimens prevented entering it as certain.

Other records for the eastern parts of the lake shore in the region covered by these studies are: April 27 and May 3, 1892, by H. Warden, Lorain; December 4, 1903, a flock of fourteen at Oak Point, November 19, 1906, a flock of six east of Huron.

39. *Erismatura jamaicensis*.—Ruddy Duck.

Of regular occurrence as a migrant, but clearly decreasing in numbers. Of regular occurrence on the Oberlin Water Works reservoir from 1898 until 1904, since which none have been seen there. The first birds reached the reservoir about April 13, usually remaining a full month. They returned about the middle of October and remained two to four weeks. This duck reaches the marshes near the last of March, leaving May 13, 1907. Like the Buffle-head, early companies contain more males than females, but with late companies the reverse is true. I have seen more Rud-

dys near the shore in the lake than on the marsh side. This is one of the unwary ducks, permitting a near approach, and usually preferring to dive rather than to take wing when too closely pressed.

40. *Chen hyperborea*.—Lesser Snow Goose.

A flock of over sixty was seen at close range on October 29, and another of thirty-eight on November 12, 1906. The first flock was flying inland from off the lake, about a mile west of Huron; the

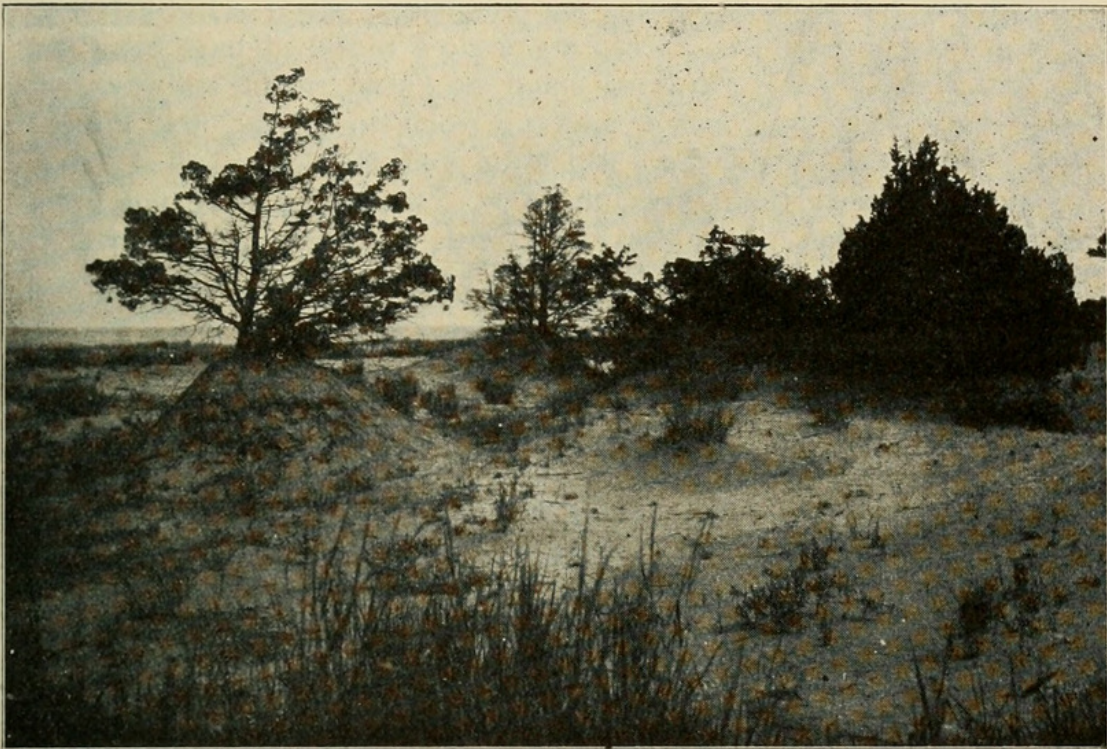


Fig. 8.—Juniper-capped dunes north of the Lake Laboratory. The blowout has *Panicum*, *Andropogon*, *Artemisia*, *Salix interior*. Spotted Sandpipers nest in grass bunches in situations like this. Here also are found the Field Sparrows nesting, while many other species of song birds feed and sing all about and over it.

second flock was flying out over the lake half a mile west of Rye Beach. Of course absolute identification was impossible, but the probabilities all favor the supposition that these birds belonged to this species.

41. *Chen caerulescens*.—Blue Goose.

The first to be recorded from this region were captured on the Oberlin Water Works reservoir October 28, 1896. The only other records seem to be a flock of thirty, October 20, and a flock of eighteen, November 12, 1906, west of Huron. There can be little doubt that both this and the last species is of more common occurrence than these records indicate. Gunners bunch all geese to-

gether, so their statements are of no value. More systematic studies in this region would probably result in many more records of these species.

42. *Branta canadensis*.—Canada Goose.

A fairly regular migrant, but hardly common. Flocks ranging up to sixty individuals still are seen occasionally in both migrations. The birds are usually either flying over at considerable height, or are well out on the lake; occasionally one is fortunate enough to find a flock resting on the beach, when with extreme care it may be possible to creep up to close range. I have crept up to within twenty-five yards of small flocks so resting—always on close days. The first spring migrants come in on the first migration wave, with Robins and Bluebirds and Meadowlarks. I have seldom seen more than three flocks in a season, so have not been able to determine the approximate date of departure northward. Fall migrations occur with the first touch of winter.

43. *Olor columbianus*.—Whistling Swan.

My records are confined to the years 1899, when one was brought to the Oberlin College museum on April 3; 1904, March 14, when one paid a short visit to the Oberlin Water Works reservoir, March 21, nine were seen flying over Elyria, March 23, when eleven were seen at Oak Point; 1906, November 12, six, and November 19, thirty-five, at Cedar Point; 1907, March 18, a considerable flock flying south across the west end of Cedar Point; 1908, March 18, a flock at Cedar Point; 1909, March 22, one at Cedar Point. During the week ending on April 3, 1899, a great fall of heavy snow caught the swans in their migrations, and great numbers of them were forced to seek refuge on the ground. Many reports reached the museum that birds had been shot and were being held subject to orders. The only one actually brought in proved to be a fine specimen of a Whistling Swan, all others were declined because the holders were too avaricious. These birds usually fly so high while inland that they are not noticed. On the two rare occasions when flocks were sighted resting on the beach, after the manner of the Geese, I was able to stalk them to within about seventy-five yards. Their bearing on these occasions called out the involuntary exclamation "Kingly birds."

44. *Olor buccinator*.—Trumpeter Swan.

The only capture of this species within the area treated was by Mr. L. M. McCormick on April 20, 1891, at Lorain. It is said that the Trumpeter remains well out in the lake, during the migrations, and is therefore seldom seen. Judging from the records it is of rare occurrence.

45. *Botaurus lentiginosus*.—Bittern.

A common breeder in the marshes. The first arrive near the first of April, more often after than before, and most have gone south by the middle of October (21st, last, 1907). I have never been fortunate enough to find a nest, but if one can judge of the nesting place by the presence of the birds, it is among the rankest vegetation where human progress is made next to impossible by the depth of the muck and the denseness of the brakes and cattails. During the courting season the air is often palpitant with the peculiar mate call. Occasionally one may see three birds rise suddenly from the vegetation in swift chasing flight, and suddenly disappear again into the vegetation. During the migrations individuals are frequently found in any wet place, even in the deep gorges. In early fall they wander into the streams well toward their sources, and fish for frogs in the open borders of the stream. It is on such occasions that they can be studied to advantage, for they are not able to hide themselves in the vegetation.

46. *Ixobrychus exilis*.—Least Bittern.

Tolerably common in the marshes all summer. My records indicate that the migrations occur about the first of May. On April 25, 1904, one remained perched in a tree on the Oberlin College campus all day, appearing to be exhausted from a long flight. This earlier date may indicate that the actual first wave of migrants passes just before the greatest wave of migration, which usually sweeps through this region during the first week in May. I have never been able to find this bird after the breeding season. While one may always be certain of finding a considerable number of this Bittern in the marshes in summer, it is nowhere as numerous as I have always found it at the Licking Reservoir, near the center of the state. Its nest is skillfully placed among the rushes and reeds about four feet from the surface of the water, with no runway leading down. The birds fly easily and are able to reach the nest without danger of knocking it out.

47. *Ardea herodias*.—Great Blue Heron.

Regular, but hardly common, from about March 20 to October 20. Most records are of single birds seen flying, but occasionally two are seen together, and in the fall it is not unusual to see a company of a dozen or fewer birds on the beach or about the fish pounds. There must be a small nesting place somewhere near Cedar Point, but it has never been discovered to my knowledge. I have never seen a nest of this species in the area under consideration. During August these birds frequent the river gorges, where they are pretty certain to meet death at the hands of some "man with a gun."

48. *Herodias egretta*.—American Egret.

There is a specimen in the collection of Mr. R. E. Jump, of Oberlin, which was captured by Mr. Jump prior to 1885, in the vicinity of Oberlin, and a specimen in the collection of Mr. A. Hengartner, of Lorain, taken near Lorain in 1897, by Mr. Hengartner. These were undoubtedly wanderers far out of the ordinary range of the species.

49. *Butorides virescens*.—Green Heron.

A tolerably common breeding bird over the whole region. The first migrants reach us near the 25th of April, and the most have left the region by the first of October. The latest record is November 13, 1897, when one tarried in the vicinity of the Oberlin Water Works reservoir all the autumn. Prior to 1900 it was not unusual to find groups of a half dozen nests in the button bush thickets at Oak Point and elsewhere, but of late years nests are more often found singly in such situations or in orchards. They sometimes resort to thickets of slender second growth along the borders of streams. These herons eat great numbers of grasshoppers, as examination of stomachs proves.

50. *Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*.—Black-crowned Night Heron.

The only specimen taken in the region is now in the collection of Mr. R. E. Jump, of Oberlin. I have searched for the bird in vain, but am not yet convinced that it is as rare as the lack of success would indicate.

51. *Rallus elegans*.—King Rail.

On three visits to a lagoon on Middle Bass island the King Rails have been the most conspicuous birds there. All of these visits were a month after the breeding season, so it is likely that a good many young birds were among the lot. In the Sandusky marshes the birds are less easily found, and seem to be less numerous. During the migrations single individuals may be found practically anywhere out of the woods. I have met them along roadsides, in barn yards, about small field ponds, in the marshes, and along the sand spit. Away from the wet places the single birds are usually no more wary than a hen, but in the marshes they get out of sight quickly, or even fly away from one. The spring migration seems to take place during the first week of May. In 1906 I found two individuals at the sand spit on October 15, and one on the 22d. Whether or not this is unusually late I am unable to say, since these are my only fall records.

52. *Rallus virginianus*.—Virginia Rail.

Common in the marshes from the middle of April until the first of October, and not infrequently found in any wet place. A pair raised a brood of eleven in a small swamp made by removing earth

for filling, less than ten rods from the Oberlin Water Works reservoir, in the summer of 1907. The nearest occupied dwelling-house was about twenty rods away. Men with teams were removing earth from a bank about three rods from the nest every day. I have found this rail in all of the marshy stream mouths, where the nest is placed upon a grass tussock, always at least six inches above the water. The peculiar calls of these birds are one of the features of the marshes in summer. In my experience this rail flushes more readily than the Sora, and is inclined to fly farther. Judging from the number of birds actually seen, it is the more common. My earliest date for a nest with eggs is May 8, 1903.

53. *Porzana carolina*.—Sora; Carolina Rail.

Common in the marshes from the first week in April until the last week of October, and often met with in small marshy or wet fields. It is pretty closely associated with the last species during the breeding season. I have a suspicion that it is our most common rail, but its reluctance to rise above the vegetation, and its adeptness at dodging and hiding have made actual sight records fewer than of the preceding species. I have never found specimens of the Virginia Rail which had been killed by striking wires or other obstructions, but there are a number of such instances of this species being killed in this manner, and that in both seasons of migration. The calls of the Sora are often given in a sort of concert. Perhaps it would be a more accurate description to say that the call of one bird is followed by a wave of calls over the marsh.

Rail shooting does not seem to be much practiced hereabouts. Perhaps the extreme difficulty of getting about in the marshes may prove a serious hindrance to hunters.

54. *Porzana noveboracensis*.—Yellow Rail.

The only record known to me is that of a live bird brought in from the marshes and confined in a cage for some days, in the Oberlin College Museum. It finally escaped—with its skin! I am unable to give even the approximate date of this record. There is probably little doubt that it is more or less regular at least in the migrations.

55. *Ionornis martinica*.—Purple Gallinule.

“Professor E. L. Moseley reports a specimen captured at Sandusky bay, April 28, 1896; Dr. Carl Tuttle, one which had flown against the telegraph wires and was killed, ‘along the lake shore,’ September 2, 1894 (Auk XII, 191).” Jones, Birds of Ohio, 61.

56. *Gallinula galeata*.—Florida Gallinule.

The parts of the marsh that are covered by vegetation are full of them during the summer. My records indicate that they ar-

rive during the last week of April. I have no fall records. The nests are built up from the water, usually heaps of vegetation, which are always dry on top, with a made runway from the nest into the water, up which the birds climb in going from the water upon the nest. The places where I have found nests the most numerous were near the borders of open water where the vegetation is dense. The birds seem to require effective cover, but sufficient space between the stalks for easy progress swimming or wading. If one approaches the nest the bird slides off and almost immediately begins a protesting cackle, circling about among the reeds just out of sight. At least one pair has appropriated Biemiller's Cove for a nesting place, and the whole family may be seen there busily at work picking up a living. It is a common sight, in season, to see Gallinules lined up along the border of Black Channel, industriously feeding just at the edge of the channel. Many times I have counted upwards of fifty at the west entrance to this channel. One can penetrate the marsh practically nowhere without calling forth loud protestations from these birds.

57. *Fulica americana*.—Coot.

Abundant in the marshes during both migrations, but breeding only sparingly. It is a frequent April visitor at the Oberlin Water Works reservoir. Coots arrive in the marshes as soon as the ice disappears, which was March 9, 1908, but not until March 25, 1907, and become common in a few days. They remain extremely common until well toward the middle of May (May 20, 1907), then decrease to a few breeding pairs. They return to common about the middle of September, and remain very numerous until the first touch of winter—near the middle of November. My latest record is November 26, 1906. The Coots are much more open water frequenters than the Gallinules, and fly rather more readily when startled. They feed more in the open water near the borders of the marsh, or along the borders of any open water area. They are seldom seen feeding singly in the marshes during the migration movements, but gather into companies, sometimes numbering over a hundred individuals. Their hen-like movement of the head and neck when they are swimming makes it easy to distinguish them from the ducks when both occur in the same company. They do not seem to fraternize with the ducks to any extent.

58. *Steganopus tricolor*.—Wilson's Phalarope.

There are two records, both in the vicinity of Oberlin. On May 10, 1899, there was one at the Oberlin Water Works reservoir, and on the 14th of the same year one at a small field pond just outside the village limits. I feel certain that the species is one which regularly visits the area, but has escaped notice.

59. *Philohela minor*.—Woodcock.

Regular, and common in suitable localities. Its arrival from the south is a good deal dependent upon the weather. If there is little snow during March the birds may be expected by the middle of that month (March 10, 1902), but if there is pretty continuous snow they wait until near the first of April. My latest fall record is October 9, 1897, but it is more than likely that this is too early for the bulk of the fall migrations. I have found them at various places along the sand spit, and feel confident that several pairs breed in the denser shrubbery east of the Lake Laboratory, as well as west of the pleasure resort grounds. The presence of these birds is best noted during the mating season, when their twilight courting antics and notes may be seen and heard in almost any piece of woods of more than a few acres extent. Many of the larger swampy woods are being cleared away and the breeding places correspondingly restricted, but the birds cling tenaciously to the remnants that are left, or even nest in the brushy borders along fences if the humidity conditions remain congenial. There seems to be relatively little hunting of these birds in this region, so that there is reason for hoping that their extermination will be postponed for long. It is worth any one's while to go into the haunts of this bird during the courting season for the purpose of noting the courting methods. The male birds seem to be almost fearless at such times. Near at hand one will hear, with startling distinctness, "bzzzz-z-z-st, bzzzz-z-z-st, bzzzz-z-z-st, bzzzz-z-z-st," sometimes repeated many times before the bird mounts diagonally upward through the opening among the trees with short, whistling wing beats, launches out over the woods high up, in mazy circlings, upward until nearly lost to sight, and far away from the starting point, then the flight ceases with the peculiar whistling noises, and the bird floats downward by a crooked path, the while calling in coaxing tones "p chuck tuck cuck oo, p chuck tuck cuck oo, p chuck tuck cuck oo," uttered more slowly at first, regularly increasing in rapidity until the notes are almost a continuous weeding call as the bird descends into the woods, cease entirely just as he regains his perch. Almost immediately he again begins his call "bzzzz-z-z-st," and the whole performance is repeated. In the chasing flight, which is certain to follow this demonstration of affection, the birds are completely lost in the business (?) of the moment, and all but dash into the observer if he happens to be in their line of flight.

60. *Gallinago delicata*.—Wilson's Snipe.

Tolerably common during the migrations. It usually arrives during the last week in March, depending somewhat upon the weather, and departs northward near the 10th of May. I have not found many at Cedar Point in the marshes, probably because it has not

been practicable to beat about there for them, but at Oak Point, where the marshes grade into mud and grass flats I have always found considerable numbers at the proper seasons. It is also not uncommon in the meadows in which water stands in spring. The old dead-furrows which contain water are pretty certain to have their quota of from one to many Snipes during April. Fifteen years ago there was considerable snipe hunting, but I have seen very little of it recently. In the fall the birds return late in September and remain about a month. At this season one must look for them in marshy ground, where the food is abundant. It has never been my fortune to see and hear the courting antics of this bird.

61. *Tringa canutus*.—Knot.

I have not met this bird, but Mr. L. M. McCormick, who spent a number of years at Oberlin prior to 1892, states in his manuscript list that it is a rare migrant on the lake shore only. In view of its regular occurrence at Point Pelee one might reasonably expect to find it somewhere along the route of migration.

62. *Pisobia maculata*.—Pectoral Sandpiper.

The most numerous of our sandpipers prior to 1898, but since then it has been scarce. I believe that one of the causes for its diminution has been the draining and undertiling of the meadows and boggy pot holes in which it found good feeding places, because the places where I now find it are meadows made temporarily wet by newly constructed railroad embankments or other obstruction. I have never seen single individuals while the birds are here, but always flocks. The first appear during the first ten days of April (earliest April 3, 1909), and the last have gone north by the middle of May. The only fall record I have is for the sewer settling beds, September 20 and 25, 1907, a flock of twelve birds.

63. *Pisobia bairdii*.—Baird's Sandpiper.

I have only two actual records for the region. Mr. L. M. McCormick makes the statement, backed up by three specimens in the Oberlin College collection, that it was common on August 30, 1890, at Oak Point. I found one at the Oberlin Water Works reservoir on April 28, 1909. I feel confident that this sandpiper is fairly regular in its migrations across this region, but it has somehow escaped being seen.

64. *Pisobia minutilla*.—Least Sandpiper.

This sandpiper makes its appearance pretty regularly during the second week in May, and is therefore among the latest migrants. It rarely remains more than five days. I have no positive fall records. While here it is more often found on the mud flats or in shallow field ponds feeding industriously, but flocks may occasionally

be found ranging along the lake beach. A low conversational twitter usually accompanies the feeding movements. The birds are not at all wary, so that one may approach almost near enough to note the absence of the web, which certainly distinguishes this from the Semipalmated.

65. *Pelidna alpina sakhalina*.—Red-backed Sandpiper.

I have only four positive records for this sandpiper, as follows: May 8, 1905, and May 17, 1909, two birds each time, on the Cedar Point sand spit; October 6, 1890, at Oak Point, and October 27, 1906, five birds near Huron. I find an additional record by Mr. L. M. McCormick for May 21, 1891. There is every reason for believing that this sandpiper has been regularly overlooked, and that it occurs in each migration in fair numbers. Each of my records are for the lake beach.

Moseley reports it at Sandusky, October 23, 1904.

66. *Ereunetes pusillus*.—Semipalmated Sandpiper.

It is not regularly found in its northward migration, probably because field work in the places where it stops to feed has been largely wanting at that particular time. My spring records are May 16, 18 and 19, 1903; May 19 and 23, 1906; and May 22, 1909. Fall records are September 8, 1904; September 23 and 25, 1907; from July 15 to the middle of August, 1908. It has always been found running along the lake beach, feeding in the wave-washed rubbish. It often accompanies other sandpipers, notably the Sanderling and Spotted. In other places I have found it with the Least, feeding on mud flats or along areas uncovered at low tide. Numbers were found at the lagoon on Middle Bass when low water exposed the mucky bottom. They are appreciably larger, and lighter colored, both above and below, than the Least Sandpiper, with which they are most readily confused. I have almost always found this species in small flocks. On the beach they may be approached to within a rod without taking wing.

67. *Calidris leucophæa*.—Sanderling.

Strangely enough, all but one of my records for the whole region are fall records; the one exception is May 19, 1903, when one was found at Oak Point. The earliest fall record is July 21, 1908, when there were six on the beach at the Lake Laboratory. They remained during the remainder of my stay (I left on July 31), and were not seen again on subsequent visits. The latest fall record is October 9, 1897. They can hardly be called common, but they are pretty regular fall visitors at the lake beach. The distinctly lighter color than any of the other shore birds with long black bill and legs, are certain field marks. They are more often seen with the Semipalmated Sandpipers than with any others, unless it be the Spotted;

but if there are several Sanderlings in the flock they fly together and away from all of the others. They are not timid, and can be approached closely.

68. *Totanus melanoleucus*.—Greater Yellow-legs.

Spring dates of arrival range from April 12, 1905, to April 30, 1906, so that it is difficult to state the probable date of arrival. I incline to think that the birds actually appear near the middle of April, being a good deal influenced by weather. They are likely to tarry until the middle of May. Fall records are too few to be reliable. The earliest date of arrival is September 4, 1899, which is probably too late, and the latest record is October 27, 1906, near Huron. This bird is a frequent visitor to the Oberlin Water Works reservoir, from where his startling "tell-tale" calls may be heard all over town in the morning. I have a number of lake beach records, but the favorite stopping places are inundated muck patches or shallow ponds at the edge of woods. The Middle Bass lagoon, at low water, is a typical feeding place. In such places they stand "knee deep" in the water, often darting hither and thither for some water inhabitant, sometimes feeding with the whole head and upper neck immersed. One could hardly call this species common at any time, but it is regular and in some numbers.

69. *Totanus flavipes*.—Yellow-legs.

This species is rather closely associated with the last, but is about a week later in spring, and I have heard it and seen it flying over the marshes on July 5, 1907, 1908. It is more numerous than the Greater, and in flocks containing both species, a frequent condition, the smaller size and weaker voice are evident. I have no beach records for this species.

70. *Helodromas solitarius*.—Solitary Sandpiper.

The earliest spring arrival was April 18, 1909, and the latest spring record May 25, 1903. The median date of arrival is April 29, and of departure May 19. The first fall record is August 22, 1896, and the latest October 7, 1907. This is our woods sandpiper, or more exactly, woods border, for at the proper season one is practically certain to find one or more of these birds at any pond in the edge or border of a woods. As the name indicates, one finds single individuals rather more often than more than one in a place, but during the migrations it is not rare to find as many as ten at a small pond. On May 14 and 16, 1904, and again on May 14, 1906, these birds were in such numbers as to be recorded as common. On these occasions several were found on every woods pond visited, and at the marshes at Oak Point, there were birds almost everywhere. Many persons seem unable to distinguish this species from the Spotted unless it is well seen and quiet. The note is similar, it

is true, but a double "peet weet"; there are white feathers in the tail, and the birds usually rise in a zig-zag flight, going much farther up than the Spotted does, and not flying low out over the water in a loop, returning to the shore.

71. *Catotrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*.—Western Willet.

It is recorded in the card catalog of Cedar Point birds by Griggs, 1900, as follows: "A few individuals." My only record is a captured bird in immature plumage, September 17, 1906, at Oak Point. The bird was a male. Since this specimen is clearly the western form I have taken it for granted that any others found in the region will prove to be the same.

72. *Bartramia longicauda*.—Bartramian Sandpiper.

Uncommon, but regular from the second week in April until the beginning of September. There are two places within a mile of Oberlin where I am sure to find it, and I have discovered a place between Oberlin and Birmingham where the birds nest regularly. A careful census of these birds would probably show that there is a pair to about every section of land which is not too largely wooded. Here they seem to breed in winter wheat fields, which lie close to permanent pastures, irrespective, as far as I can determine, as to whether the land lies high or low. In fact, there is little up-and-downness to the regions where I have found breeding birds, so that their choice must fall upon otherwise suitable nesting sites. The first evidence of the presence of these birds in spring is the flight call, given while the bird is high in air. In a few days the mating whistle is heard, and soon thereafter the birds are located. There were young birds barely able to fly on July 11, 1901.

73. *Actitis macularia*.—Spotted Sandpiper.

Our commonest shore bird. The median date of arrival for thirteen years is April 16. The earliest record is April 9, 1904. The latest fall date is October 30, 1905. Most of the birds have left by the middle of October. It is common all along the lake beach, perhaps a little more so along the sand spit than elsewhere. It is also common along all streams and about all ponds. Away from the lake it often nests in grain fields at some distance from water. It is, perhaps, gratuitous to mention the several little mannerisms which make this sandpiper easily distinguished in the field. The nervous teetering of the body is accompanied by a deep and continuous wag of the hinder part of the body; the flight low out over the water is accomplished by one strong beat of the wings succeeded by several half beats like the rolling of a drum stick. The flight is out in an arc of a circle, the arc reaching the shore at an acute angle. Of course I would not be understood as insisting that the birds always do such things, but they do frequently enough so that they become distinctive of the species.

74. *Numenius americanus*.—Long-billed Curlew.

I find this card reference: "1 specimen, July 20, '06. Rice." There is probably no doubt that the bird recorded was a curlew, but since the Ontario specimens are mostly Hudsonian, there may be a reasonable doubt as to the species.

75. *Squatarola squatarola*.—Black-bellied Plover.

The only positive records are May 16 and 18, 1908, near the Lake Laboratory on the beach. This certainly cannot prove that this species is accidental in the region. It is possible that there is no line of flight for the migrations across the region, and therefore any specimens found are wanderers from the line of flight.

76. *Charadrius dominicus*.—Golden Plover.

There are a number of scattering records for the Oberlin quadrangle, but no migration dates can be assigned. When found the birds are in open pasture fields in small flocks. There has been a marked diminution in numbers in the last twenty years.

77. *Oryechus vociferus*.—Killdeer.

A common summer resident. It belongs with the first wave of migration and leaves only with the advent of winter. In late summer it is frequently seen in flocks of from half a dozen to fifty individuals, but at other times it does not flock. It is only occasionally seen on the lake beach, but rather frequents small ponds which have a shallow border. The favorite nesting place hereabouts is a plowed field, preferably fall plowing. Nests have been found in pastures and meadows. In straightaway flight the actions of a flock somewhat resemble pigeons in flight. In fact, more than once I have had an elderly man who had been familiar with the Passenger Pigeons in their palmy days remark, upon seeing a considerable flock of these birds, "There goes a flock of Pigeons." On several occasions of peculiarly favorable conditions for migration in spring I have seen great numbers of Killdeers migrating parallel to the lake shore, and always eastward all day long. It appeared that the lake had diverted the stream of migration from the northward direction, and the birds were seeking a land passage. Many that struck out boldly for the Ontario shore soon returned and joined the eastward moving host. I have never been at the island route at the times when these birds are migrating.

78. *Aegialitis semipalmata*.—Semipalmated Plover.

All records are scattering. Three were noted May 14, thirteen May 16, and seven May 19, 1903; five May 14, 1906; two May 13, 1907; none in the spring of 1908 and 1909. One on September 4 and 11, 1897; one on September 9 and 14, 1899; two on September 8, 1904; one on July 8, and one on October 21, 1907; one on July 21, 1908. All of these are lake beach records, the July records at

the Lake Laboratory. As the records indicate, single birds are usually seen, and I am inclined to believe that they represent trailers rather than the stream of migration. They are usually associated with Spotted Sandpipers, Sanderlings, and Semipalmated Sandpipers, feeding at the waters edge, ranging up and down the beach. I believe that Pelee Island would furnish the clue to the migration route northward as well as southward of this Plover.

79. *Ægialitis meloda*.—Piping Plover.

Several pairs were found breeding near the Lake Laboratory in 1903, and their presence there on June 17, 1904, indicates that there was at least one pair breeding that year, but I have failed to find any in summer since, nor any on the islands at any time. At best the species is scarce. Records of occurrence are May 16, 1903, one at Oak Point, and perhaps six pairs near the Lake Laboratory during the breeding season; June 17, 1904, a pair near the Lake Laboratory; April 15, one, and May 13, one on the sand spit, 1907; May 18, 1908, two on the sand spit; May 17, 1909, one on the sand spit. I have heard voices that I believe to have been of this bird in early July at the Lake Laboratory, in 1907 and 1908, but it was at twilight and the birds were flying. If they were Piping Plovers they were probably the first of the returning birds from the north.

80. *Arenaria interpres*.—Ruddy Turnstone.

I have found it on the lake beach from the middle to the last of May, usually in companies of from five to thirty individuals. The only fall record is September 8, 1904, at Oak Point. Unlike most of the other Shore Birds, the Turnstones range over the whole width of the beach when feeding. They are frequently seen standing quietly on the packed sand, or even on the flat tops of the piles driven to prevent the wash of the storm waves. There is no frequenter of the beach so strikingly colored nor more interesting to watch from cover. The misnomer 'Calico-back' does these birds a rank injustice, if the mental picture which that name conjures up is like mine—any hideous blue and white pattern of cheap dressing goods. The patchy black, white, and ruddy pattern of these birds in full breeding plumage is rather a hint of wealth than of poverty.



Jones, Lynds. 1909. "The Birds of Cedar Point and Vicinity." *The Wilson bulletin* 21(3), 115–131.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/38328>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/207375>

Holding Institution

American Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.