

the activity and enterprise of gall insects and depend like the cuckoo among birds upon others to provide suitable conditions for their young or even go farther and actually prey upon the true gall producers. The former is carried to a very high degree of perfection in the case of the gall wasps, since the gall "cuckoos", if we might coin a word, resemble the rightful owners of the gall so closely that it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other. Apparently the same thing exists, though to a more limited extent, among some of the gall midges and there are cases where it appears quite probable that a plant deformity of a given character may be produced by more than one gall midge, each performing its fair share of labour in the development of a common shelter. The enemies of the gall insects, generally termed parasites, are occasionally so numerous that comparatively few of the gall producers attain maturity. They are natural checks and when it comes to discussing the ethics of life, it is a little difficult to draw any satisfactory line

between the gall insects, real parasites upon plants, the associates or cuckoo-like species which subsist at the expense of these plant parasites or the parasites of the gall insects, since they are all engaged in wresting life from other forms of life.

The above gives a little idea of the extraordinary interest attaching to insect galls and gall insects. There are in America, something like 1,400 different species and a considerable number await discovery in practically all parts of the country. Man has an innate love for nature and anything which will bring the individual into closer touch with the verities of life is a distinct gain for the human race. The hunting of animals, the study of birds, the collection of plants, are all manifestations of our love of nature. These are excellent recreations and comparatively well known. Insect galls and gall insects offer a large, accessible and relatively unknown field for the student of natural history, which can be entered to advantage by a very large proportion of amateur and professional naturalists.

BOOK NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

INTERESTING SEASONAL DATA.—In the *Migrational Bulletin* issued by E. H. Forbush, Ornithologist to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, No. XI, dated Nov. 15, occurs the following:

"The autumn has been remarkable. Although there were many rains in September, most of the storms were warm and the season has been so mild and open that not only have fall flowers escaped the frost, but spring flowers and fruits have developed. Wild strawberries, raspberries and blackberries were ripening late in October. Many lawns, mowing fields and pastures still retain their green verdure. From the Berkshire hills to the Atlantic coast the trailing arbutus bloomed late in October, and the common dandelion blossomed again in many localities, besides the fall species, and in some cases it seeded for the second time this year. Both spring and fall dandelions were blooming the first week in November. Willow catkins are now (Nov. 15) open in eastern Massachusetts, and a few flowers still bloom in some gardens.

The effect produced upon the birds by such spring-like weather was what might have been expected. Not only did many of them sing in the usual subdued autumn tones, but some apparently gave their full spring songs. Even the flight songs of several species have been reported, and the singing of robins, song sparrows and some other species continued well into November. The mild weather seemed to delay the departure of some individuals of several species, and to bring about dilatory movements of the waterfowl."

Though the above writer may be mistaken in ascribing this late floral and fruiting activity to unseasonably mild weather, the facts of the case are interesting, especially the ornithological ones and it would be well for us to see just how widely these conditions and phenomena extended during the past autumn.

Late fall blooming of spring plants is not a very uncommon occurrence,* almost every season a few violets can be found here and there in the woods. Bloom on such plants occurs only immediately after awakening from a period of dormant quiescence such as is effected normally by the cold winter season, but a prolonged drought in summer will produce a similar effect and it can be artificially produced by florists by the use of narcotics, anesthetics or other more simple means of inducing unseasonable rest which will be followed by the production of bloom. Without doubt, the unusual amount of fall blossoming here reported was induced by a previous dry spell followed by wet that deceived the roots into the belief that a new spring had come. It will probably be found that in every such case it is the future that has been drawn upon, that next spring's flowers have been expended and the coming season will be one without floration and sterile for the misguided individuals that bloomed at the wrong time.

*See Cephas Guillet, On Autumn-flowering of Various Wild Plants in 1900; *Ottawa Naturalist*, XV, August, 1901, pp. 123-126, in which a number of such cases are noted, though ascribed as above to unusually mild weather.

The singing of the birds is not to be explained by any such previous dry season though it may have been influenced by the unusual supply of spring food. It is now pretty well known that food has a considerable influence upon the seasonal activities of birds and under abnormal conditions enough sexually exciting food might have been produced to induce a limited effect in this direction.

That migrations should be disorganized by an unseasonable mild spell is to be expected. Some birds are greatly influenced by weather conditions, usually early spring and late fall migrants, whilst others coming and going long before actual need of migration is evident to us, migrate irrespective of early or late seasons and can be expected to appear and disappear with almost calendar-like regularity year after year.

P. A. T.

In THE CANADIAN BOY, Vol 1, Sept. 1918, p. 127, appears "The Naturalist's Nest," conducted by R. W. Tufts, Wolfville, N.S.

An albino robin is reported and described; then follows a discussion on the various eastern species of hawks in which the sheep are weeded from the goats in a manner that is satisfactory to the naturalist and interesting and instructive to the Boys (Scouts) in whose interest the periodical is published. The only point of criticism the reviewer feels like mentioning is evidently an accidental omission. It says of the Cooper's Hawk that it "is much like the Goshawk in appearance and general habits" without calling attention to the fact that the similarity of appearances only holds through the juvenility of the species, that in the adult plumage the two are as different in color as they are in size.

It is the firm opinion of the writer that the most practical method of educating the public in the economic and other value of birds, especially those against which there is a strong popular prejudice, is by appealing to the young and growing mind. It is most difficult to redirect established currents of thought, but the boy becomes a man within a few years and early impressions influence the whole after life. Such departments as this in juvenile literature are to be encouraged in every way. The history of great movements in modern times seems to indicate that it is only after several generations that fundamental changes in established thought and ideals can take place. The first generation view a radically new thought with suspicion, the second to whom it is not new endures and succeeding ones embrace it on its merits. Let us by all means get after the children at once.

P. A. T.

In the *Auk* for October, 1918, are several papers of interest to Canadian ornithologists.

NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS (pp. 463-467) is the title of a paper by H. C. Oberholser in which is discussed several subspecies of Canadian occurrence.

The Northwestern Belted Kingfisher, *Streptoceryle alcyon caurina* Grinnell (questioned by Taverner), is regarded as a valid race. The American Barn Owl is relegated to subspecific status with the European form, under the name *Tyto alba pratincola* (Bonaparte). Hellmayr's proposal to include the American Brown Creeper as a form of *Certhia brachydactyla* Brehm is rejected. The Alaska Myrtle Warbler, *Dendroica coronata hooveri* McGregor, is accepted as a recognizable subspecies. Brook's proposal of the Hoary Redpoll, *Acanthis hornemanni exilpes*, as a subspecies of the Common Redpoll, *A. linaria* instead of *A. hornemanni*, is rejected.

THE SUBSPECIES OF *LARUS HYPERBOREUS* Gunnerus by H. C. Oberholser (pp. 467-474). This paper investigates the hitherto rejected Point Barrow Gull, *Larus barrovianus* Ridgway, and decides that it is a recognizable race of the Glaucous Gull, *L. hyperboreus*, differing particularly in being smaller than the Atlantic form. He gives diagnosis, measurements and distribution, extending the latter as far east on the Arctic coast as Franklin Bay.

In the department of Recent Literature, W. S(tone) (pp. 486-489) reviews Dr. Dwight's Review of the Juncos at considerable length. Further on under Correspondence, Jos. Grinnell (pp. 505-507) has more to say on the same subject and it may be well here to mention that the paper is also reviewed in the *Condor*, July, 1918 (pp. 142-143), by H. S. Swarth. Further remarks occur on the same paper elsewhere in these pages.

Soper's Birds of Edmonton, OTTAWA NATURALIST, February and March, 1918, is mentioned in review (p. 489).

The Possible Avian Distribution of Hog Cholera, *Journ. Agr. Research*, Vol. 13, 1918 (pp. 125-129), is summarized (pp. 495-496) and the resulting conclusion cited that pigeons and other birds of similar habits are probably never concerned in the spread of the disease.

In the department of General Notes, Cause of "Fishy" Flavour of the Flesh of Wild Ducks", W. L. McAtee (pp. 474-476). The decision is reached that the "fishy" flavour should probably be ascribed to the physiological condition of individuals rather than to the use of fish as food and it is asserted that many noted fish-eating species may be unexpectedly palatable.



Taverner, P. A. 1919. "Interesting Seasond Data, by E. Forbush [Review]." *The Ottawa naturalist* 32(7), 131-132.

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