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A-BIRDING AMONG THE NEW JERSEY PINES.

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It was on the morning of May thirty-first, 1905, that three of us started from Medford, N. J., with horse, wagon and camp equipage for a trip through the New Jersey pine barrens.

Medford is situated at the edge of the pine barren region. This part of the pine barrens lying in Burlington and Ocean counties is one of the wildest sections to be found in the eastern states. Cranberry raising is about the only industry and the few houses to be seen are to be found in the vicinity of the cranberry bogs, but they are indeed few and very far between. Charcoal burning was carried on in some places but this now seems to be mostly obsolete. A person lost in this section may wander about for days without meeting a trace of civilization. The roads are rarely used and are nothing more than mere sand trails through the woods. Before the advent of the seashore railroads these roads were the only means of reaching the coast and now the ruins of one time prosperous inns may be seen. In fact almost all the oysters used in Philadelphia were at one time hauled over the Chatsworth-Tuckerton road. We traveled this road for a number of miles, and when returning over it two days later our old wheel tracks were yet to be seen, nothing else having traversed it in the meantime.

From Medford our route lay nearly southeast through the wildest part of the barrens. Here are extensive forests of

pitch pines (*Pinus rigida*), interspersed here and there with cedar swamps. These swamps are an almost impenetrable tangle of white cedar, red maple, pepper bush, magnolia and holly. Here is to be found the greatest number of birds though they are never wanting among the pines, and although not plentiful as species they are numerous as individuals. The water of the streams is of a dark color, stained from the decaying vegetation.

Along the roadsides waved the feathery plumes of the turkey-beard, and the mountain and sheep laurels were rich with bloom. At the edges of the swamps grew the pitcher plant, and that other interesting insect eater, the little sun-dew, carpeted the ground in damp places.

After leaving Medford we passed through Bear swamp. Here the apologetic song of the Blue-winged Warbler greeted us and Scarlet Tanagers, Wood Thrushes, Tufted Titmice and Red-eyed Vireos were numerous. These species grew more and more scarce as we got deeper into the barrens.

In the pine woods the Pine Warbler was the most abundant species while Wood Pewees, Carolina Chickadees, Kingbirds, Crows, Turkey Vultures, Downy Woodpeckers and an occasional Flicker were to be seen. In the lower growths (mostly scrub oaks and huckle-berry bushes) Chewinks, Oven-birds and Priarie Warblers were abundant. We camped the first night at Speedwell. This oasis in the desert, consisting of a half dozen buildings (now all unoccupied) and a couple of fenced in fields, owes its origin to the existence of the iron ore which was, at one time, extracted from the nearby bog. Here we found Barn Swallows, Orchard Orioles, Indigobirds and Purple Martins. In the neighboring cedar swamp were White-eyed Vireos, Wood Thrushes, Carolina Chickadees and Maryland Yellow-throats.

From the cedars hung great festoons of the Usnea moss and here the Parula Warblers are to be found although we saw none. The Great Horned Owl also finds here a congenial home.

All evening long and in the early morning the Whip-poor-wills kept up such a din as to make sleep well nigh impossible.

and in spite of the earliness of the season the mosquitoes were rather troublesome.

On the second day we crossed what is known as the "Plains." As far as one can see is nothing but a stunted forest of miniature pitch pines and scrub oaks only three feet high. Here Brown Thrashers and Maryland Yellow-throats were abundant as also were Chewinks, Field Sparrows and Prairie Warblers. It is interesting to note that the Maryland Yellow-throat, that little bird which we always associate with the vicinity of water, should be so much at home here miles from the nearest water course. One actually wonders where these birds find enough water to drink. I had asked this question when my friend pointed to a dead leaf lying upon the ground filled with water from the last rain. Did this solve the problem?

It was on these "plains" that the Heath Hen, now extinct but for a few found upon the island of Martha's Vineyard, once abounded.

At the end of the second day we reached Staffords Forge, a little settlement some three miles north of West Creek. We had traveled twenty-two miles that day and had not seen a trace of civilization. We spent June second at Stafford's Forge. We were now within four miles of the coast marshes and here we met old friends in the Robin, Bluebird, Barn Swallow, Chimney Swift, Bob-white and Red-winged Blackbird, while Purple Martins and Whip-poor-wills were abundant.

Along the Westecunk Creek were large cranberry bogs. Here we saw several Green Herons and in the woods at the head of the bogs the Bald Eagle still nests.

The next two days were spent in the homeward journey arriving at Medford about noon of June fourth. A Ruffed Grouse being the only species seen that we had not previously listed.

We had practically crossed the state and felt well repaid for our eighty-four mile trip.



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