

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Wheatears in the Mackenzie Mountains, District of Mackenzie, N.W.T.—Towards the end of July, 1944, I had the opportunity of travelling on the Canol Road from Norman Wells into the little-known Mackenzie Mountains, remaining two nights at the pump station at Mile 111, situated in the valley of Bolstead Creek. On July 25 I climbed to the highest summit within reach, lying about 8 miles northwest of the camp, and estimated it to be about 7000 ft. in elevation (roughly $64^{\circ} 20' N$, $128^{\circ} 20' W$). This summit I indicated in pencil on the relevant aerial photograph in Ottawa in 1946, and it may in due course be designated on the topographic sheets. Reference to the botanical collections made there, together with a small-scale map, may be found in Porsild's paper "The alpine flora of the east slope of Mackenzie Mountains, N.W.T." (*Nat. Mus. Canada*, Bull. 101, Ottawa, 1945).

As I came off the main ridge, covered with exfoliated stone blocks at 6000-6500 feet, I had a very good view of a Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) in juvenile plumage, and could hear the familiar 'chack, chack' of one or more others, unseen on the very rough ground. I noted the white rump, with the central shaft of black showing as a narrow wedge forward from the tail. The wheatear has been well known to me since childhood, being an abundant bird in the Yorkshire dales where I lived, and I had more recently seen it in the eastern Arctic. July 25 is rather too early for migrants, and there would of course be little likelihood at any time of migrants in this locality.

This extends the known range considerably to the southeast. Previous records known from northwest Canada, all in the Yukon Territory, appear to be as follows:

- Aug. 18, 1901, Fortymile (J. Grinnell 1909, *Condor*, 11: 207).
- Aug. 1, 1904, High ridge above Coal Creek, near Fortymile (W. H. Osgood 1909, *N. Amer. Fauna* No. 30, U.S. Dept. Agric., Wash.: 65).
- June 24, 1906, King Point, Mackenzie Bay (H. T. L. Schaanning 1933, *Medd. Zool. Mus., Oslo*, No. 33: 144).
- July 31, 1908, Herschel Island (R. M. Anderson 1913, in Stefansson's "My life with the Eskimo": 456-494).

July 15, 1943, Teepee Lake, south of Alaska highway near International Boundary (C. H. D. Clarke, unpublished, "Biological Reconnaissance of the Alaska Military Highway", etc., Ottawa: 15).

I am very grateful to Mr. W. Earl Godfrey for bringing these to my attention. The position of the present observation is 350 miles or more east or southeast of any of the places listed above. It may be noted with interest that the gap between western and eastern records of wheatears is not much more than 1000 miles (cf. J. C. Ross's record made on May 2-3, 1830, at Boothia Felix, in *App. to Ross's 2nd Voyage*, p. xxvi, Lond. 1835).

Two Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) and a Grey-crowned Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte t. tephrocotis*) were seen slightly higher on the main ridge. Though these are not unexpected, they are perhaps worth recording from a region about which so little is known. The Rosy Finch is reported to extend as far east as the Franklin mountains, east of the Mackenzie (M. Y. Williams, *Can. Fld.-Nat.*, 1933, p. 30).—V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS, Aberdeen, Scotland.

New Sight Records of Three Species at Pimisi Bay, Ontario.—On May 25, 1950, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus a. americanus* (Linnaeus), was seen perched in the top of a large-toothed aspen that was not yet in full leaf. I first noticed the bird because of its peculiar song, "tock-tock-tock", given at even intervals, unlike that of the Black-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (Wilson), which is fairly common in the district. As the bird turned about on its lofty perch in the bright sunlight, all its distinctive field-marks came into plain view. The bird remained in the vicinity until June 10, during which time it was seen twice again under excellent conditions.

On September 13, 1951, a Virginia Rail, *Rallus l. limicola* Vieillot, emerged from the reeds at Pimisi Bay onto a flat rock, not more than 8 or 10 feet from where I stood. Identification was based mainly on my experience of having seen the species in the field on two previous occasions at Buffalo and Toronto Islands, and I later re-checked it with skins at the Redpath Museum, Montreal.

During the past two years, I have seen birds which I believed to be Connecticut Warblers, *Oporornis agilis* (Wilson), without being able to identify them positively. Mr. W. E. Godfrey, to whom I wrote for advice, then kindly sent me some skins from the collections of the National Museum of Canada for study. It is on the basis of this study that I identified a bird seen on September 20, 1951, as a Connecticut Warbler. Among a large number of passing warblers, this bird projected itself upon my attention by its very conspicuous eye-ring, its notably larger size as compared to a Black-throated Blue Warbler, *Dendroica c. caerulescens* (Gmelin), that was feeding nearby, its pale yellow underparts with the undertail coverts reaching slightly beyond the half of the tail. The dull shade and rather indefinite outline of the "hood", as well as the pinkish white patch under the chin, suggested that this bird was an adult female or an immature.

N. R. Brown, listing the birds of the Petawawa Military Reserve and surrounding district, Renfrew County, (1947, Can. Field-Naturalist, Vol. 61, pp. 47-55), about 80 miles SE of Pimisi Bay, included one August record of the Virginia Rail and three May and June records of the Connecticut Warbler. But none of the three species in question have previously been listed among the birds of the vicinity of Lake Nipissing, Ontario, by W. E. Ricker and C. H. D. Clarke, (1939, Contributions of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, No. 16), or in the later revision of that list, Birds of the Vicinity of North Bay, Ontario, (including Pimisi Bay), (1947, Can. Field-Naturalist, Vol. 61, pp. 23-38) by Doris Huestis Speirs and J. Murray Speirs.—LOUISE DE KIRILINE LAWRENCE, *Rutherglen, Ontario*.

Arkansas Kingbird in Westmorland Co., New Brunswick. — On October 24, 1951 I observed an Arkansas kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) in open farmland between the village of Midgic and Jollicur Lakes, about five miles north-east of Sackville, N.B. When first seen, the bird was sitting on a fence wire near the road. I was able to drive to within twenty or thirty yards of it and clearly saw the outer white tail feathers, yellowish underparts and grayish head and neck with the slightly darker band across the eyes. An unsuccessful attempt was made to collect this bird. — G. F. BOYER, *Canadian Wildlife Service, R.R. No. 1, Sackville, N.B.*

Dickcissel in Newfoundland. — While at Terra Nova on November 3, 1951, I flushed a Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) from a small grassy field. During the next half-hour it was approached to within twenty feet on several occasions and leisurely studied with eight-power prismatic binoculars. There was only a faint suggestion of black on the throat, but other characteristics, such as the pure yellow breast, grey cheeks and yellow eyebrow-lines, convinced me that it was an adult male.

About an hour after the above observation, I found, in the immediate vicinity, the remnants of a female (possibly an immature) which had apparently been run over by the railway train during the previous night. Its wings are now being retained by the National Museum at Ottawa, where its identity has been confirmed by Mr. W. Earl Godfrey. This species has not previously been reported from Newfoundland. — LESLIE M. TUCK, *Canadian Wildlife Service, St. John's, Newfoundland*.

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys pugetensis*) and Bantam Hen.—Mr. William Gardiner, of Crescent, B.C., had a broody bantam hen. One day it disappeared and was discovered later roosting as it was thought in a patch of raspberry canes. When Mr. Gardiner returned at night he took a flashlight and went down the garden to get the hen. He found it sitting on the nest of a White-crowned Sparrow which contained four eggs. Strange to relate, the White-crowned Sparrow was sitting on the back of the hen. Mr. Gardiner picked up the sparrow, removed the hen, and replaced the bird on her eggs. Next day the bantam escaped from a coop and was again found on the nest with the sparrow perched on its back. This happened several times until finally the sparrow deserted her nest in despair. Unfortunately a camera was not available.

When I saw the nest a few days later (July 15, 1951) there were only two eggs left as the weight of the hen had broken the other two. The nest was situated about four feet from the ground and the tops of the raspberries were beaten down making a platform so that the hen could sit comfortably on the nest.

When we consider the size of the eggs it is strange that a bantam should have felt the urge to brood them.—MARTIN W. HOLDOM, *Crescent, B.C.*



Lawrence, Louise de Kiriline. 1952. "New sight records of three species at Pimisi Bay, Ontario." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 66(2), 67–68.

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