

fur had sloughed off. I tentatively identified it as an opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) and removed the head for further checking.

Upon presenting the skull to the Royal Ontario Museum, Mr. S. C. Downing informed me that it definitely was an opossum skull and that my original identification had been correct.

This incident might raise the interesting question as to the possibility of an opossum, dead or alive, crossing Lake Erie from Ohio to Ontario, by land and water, aided by lake currents, through the Erie Island Archipelago. — C. HAROLD ZAVITZ, *Aylmer, Ont.*

An Indigo Bunting in Alberta.—The Indigo Bunting, *Passerina cyanea*, must be a very rare visitor to Alberta, since Taverner, in his "Birds of Canada" mentions only one record for this province and one for Saskatchewan. Professor W. Rowan informs me that he had a bird of this species obtained at Sullivan Lake, Alberta, and this record is presumably additional to that mentioned by Taverner.

In view of these facts the following recent observation of an Indigo Bunting seems worthy of being reported. On June 21, 1952, while staying at Elkwater, at the foot of the Cypress Hills in southeastern Alberta, I twice caught brief glimpses of a bird which appeared, to the naked eye, blue above and whitish below. I returned to the spot, an area of bushes and trees, with 8 x 30 binoculars and soon had another good view of the bird. It appeared to be a little larger than a Yellow Warbler, was blue all over, darker above than below, except for the wings which were a very dark brown. The bill was dark grey and was about the shape of a Song Sparrow's. The bird was clearly a male Indigo Bunting, probably not quite mature in view of the wing colour. Its call was a sharp "tsit." I looked for the bird again later the same day and the following morning, but did not see it again. It would hardly appear to be possible to confuse this species with any other, but I may add that I am quite familiar with the Mountain Bluebird and have seen the Lazuli Bunting, the only western birds which at all resemble the Indigo Bunting in the field.— E. O. HOHN, *Department of Physiology, University of Alberta.*

New Records of Millipeds from Southern Ontario.—It was recently my privilege to identify the millipeds in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology and Palaeontology. The following list, although

representing only part of that collection, is of interest because the records are new for the localities indicated. More extensive collections, made especially during the late summer and early fall months and with care to get small specimens, should yield interesting information about the northern limit of distribution of Canadian species, some of which are known as far south as Texas and Tennessee.

Cleidogona sp. Fort Severn, Ont., July 21, 1940, larvae, willow swale.

Dixidesmus branneri (Bollman 1887). Potageville, York Co., Ont., June 8, 1934.

Scytonotus granulatus (Say 1821). Peterborough, Ont.

Oriulus venustus Wood (1864). Palermo, Ont., Sept. 26, 1936; Kettleby Kabin, York Co., Ont., June 3, 1934.

Aniulus bollmani Causey 1952. Palermo, Ont., Sept. 26, 1936; Seaforth, Huron Co., Oct. 29, 1940, sugar maple woods. This species has been incorrectly referred to as *Aniulus impressus* (Say) by many writers.

Uroblaniulus immaculatus (Wood 1864). Palermo, Sept. 26, 1936; King Twopence, York Co., Ont., Sept. 20, 1941; Palermo, Ont., Sept. 26, 1936; Rattlesnake Point, Milton, Halton Co., Ont., Nov. 1, 1941; Cache Lake, Algonquin Park, Nipissing Dist., Ont., July 1935 and Aug. 8, 1936.

Uroblaniulus canadensis (Newport 1844). Turkey Point, Norfolk Co., Ont., Aug. 25, 1940; Seaforth, Huron Co., Ont., Sept. 29, 1940.

Uroblaniulus sp. Sanfield, Manitoba, July 16, 1939, larvae; Manitoulin Is., Ont., larvae.

Ptyoiulus sp. Rattlesnake Point, Milton, Halton Co., Ont., June 29, 1940.

Polyzonium bivirgatum (Wood 1864). Rattlesnake Point, Milton, Halton Co., Ont., Nov. 1, 1941; Cache Lake, Algonquin Park, Nipissing Dist., Ont., July 1935 and Aug. 8, 1936.

Polyzonium mutabile Causey 1951. Minesing, Ont., May 19, 1934. This species is known to occur also in Illinois and Wisconsin.

—NELL B. CAUSEY,
Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The Clay-colored Sparrow in Southeastern Ontario.—On July 1, 1951, while watching a pair of Field Sparrows (*Spizella pusilla*) at their nest in an old, bushy pasture near Merrickville on the Rideau River (Lanark County), my wife drew attention to an unfamiliar song and we soon traced the source to a Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) perched in the top of a hawthorn bush about twelve feet from the ground. It continued to

sing the insect-like *bzzz-bzzz-bzzz-bzzz* peculiar to this species. Before we found that the singer was within fifty feet of us, the song suggested somewhat the disconnected singing of the cicada heard at a distance early in the season before the insect is in full voice, but of course lacked the strident quality of the cicada's drone heard near at hand.

Unlike the Field Sparrow, which had quite an extensive singing range, the Clay-colored Sparrow was heard singing only within a radius of little more than a hundred feet. Its territory appeared to lie within a radius of about 225 feet. It sang most persistently from the hawthorn where we first heard it and less frequently from perches eight to fifteen feet high in the tops of three other hawthorns. It also sang occasionally from the tips of lone spruce and cedar saplings, never more than eighteen feet in height, and sometimes close to the ground from the tops of dead mullein stalks.

We visited this area on numerous occasions from July 1-10 and were always greeted with the song of the Clay-colored when we came within range. It was not audible until we were quite close to its habitat in contrast with the songs of two other associates, the Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) and Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*) which often sang from isolated trees, such as oak and elm, scattered throughout the pasture. This sloped gradually from wooded land to more or less open fields. Prominent amongst the undergrowth were patches of raspberry and gooseberry, scrubby cedar shrubs and barberry bushes. The thin, sandy soil, with many rock outcroppings, maintained a rather sparse growth of mullein (*Verbascum*), blue-weed (*Echium vulgare*), ragwort (*Senecio pauperculus*), St. John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and several cinquefoils, especially a depauperate form of the silvery cinquefoil (*Potentilla argentea*), probably dwarfed by overgrazing. There were also many rounded mats of waxberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) both in the open pasture and encircling the hawthorns. This plant we thought might have special significance. The compactly matted growth, less than a foot high, probably provided the best nesting cover for the Clay-colored Sparrow in this dry area. Several times we saw it fly to the ground where it generally disappeared

either in grassy cover beneath the hawthorns, in raspberry tangles or in patches of waxberry. We were unable to observe its actions in the undergrowth but concluded that it was merely feeding there. A search of the cover revealed no sign of nest and although we watched the bird closely for lengthy periods it exhibited no sign of alarm nor was there any indication of the presence of a mate. It always returned to one or other of its singing perches in a very few minutes.

Singing seemed to be this Clay-colored Sparrow's principal occupation. Once it sang seventy-one times successively from its favourite hawthorn at the rate of eight to nine songs per minute. Four evenly-spaced buzzes, less commonly three, composed the usual song. Once when we startled the singer the song ended abruptly with the first note. Only one other variation was noted — a song of five notes. Occasionally the bird would alight in the thick of a bush then move up to the top to sing. Between songs it would often spread a wing, preen a moment or fidget as if about to fly, then compose itself, jerk its tail, throw up its head and sing again. On several occasions it was observed to fly to a densely foliated cedar upwards of 200 feet from the principal singing perch and give chase, almost immediately, to a Chipping Sparrow which it followed persistently from perch to perch. This appeared to be an aggressive action. It is understandable that the Clay-colored would show more antipathy towards a Chipping Sparrow than towards an Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) which sang several times from one of the singing perches of the Clay-colored Sparrow while the latter was singing unperturbed twenty feet away. Apparently Chipping Sparrows were not tolerated near its singing perches.

Most Chipping Sparrows observed in the district were engaged in feeding young out of the nest, but a few were incubating or had young in the nest. Three Field Sparrows' nests held respectively, three young, three eggs, and three eggs of the sparrow and one of the Cowbird. These were believed to be second nestings.

The persistent singing of this Clay-colored Sparrow in a very restricted area suggested that it was breeding there, or was it a stray looking for a mate? We visit-

ed this locality in June, 1952, hoping to learn something definite regarding its status but failed to find the bird.

Merrickville is approximately 100 miles farther east than the previous most easterly

Canadian record for this sparrow — a male taken July 10, 1930, near Golden Lake, Renfrew County, by Hoyes Lloyd (Canadian Field-Naturalist, 47:36, 1933). — LEWIS McI. TERRILL, *Montreal*.

REVIEWS

The Birds of Greenland. Text by Finn Salomonsen; illustrations by Gitz-Johansen. Part III, pp. 349-608, 16 pls. Ejnar Munksgaard, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1951.

This, the third part of *The Birds of Greenland*, fully maintains the high standard of excellence that characterized the two preceding parts of that important work. Subject treatment is similar to that of Part I, which was reviewed in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, 1951, Vol. 65, p. 124. The third part deals with the auks, guillemots, puffins, hawks, owls, Greenland Wheatear, Fieldfare, pipits, White Wagtail, redpolls, Lapland Longspur, and Northern Raven.

In addition, Part III contains (pp. 561-575) the complete list of Greenland birds, including the rarities and accidentals. This list comprises 224 species and subspecies known to occur or to have occurred in Greenland. The status of each form is given in general and for details there are one or more citations to the literature. Numerous foot-notes give taxonomic and other pertinent information. Also, there is an imposing bibliography which is intended to contain reference to all publications concerning the birds of Greenland. An index completes this handsome and scholarly work. A useful map, showing Greenland localities mentioned in the text has been prepared by the Danish Geodetic Institute and the author of *The Birds of Greenland*. It is obtainable from the publisher for ten Danish kroner and may be inserted in the work. — W. EARL GODFREY.

This Fascinating Animal World. By Alan Devoe. McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, pp. 1-303, 1951. Price, \$4.75.

Here is a book that every amateur naturalist will want to acquire for his library. Not only will it provide plenty of entertaining reading, but it will also serve as a useful reference. There are many fine natural history books that have succeeded in serving one purpose or another, but this is the first that has come to this reviewer's attention which

seems to accomplish both objectives. Perhaps this is not surprising in view of the fact that Alan Devoe is one of the foremost nature writers in the United States. He has been writing popular articles for many years and is probably better qualified than most naturalists to write a book for the general reader.

As a well-known naturalist who receives many requests for information from the reading public, Mr. Devoe could see the need for a book that contained within its covers the answers to the majority of questions the amateur is likely to ask. As he points out in his Introduction, it is often necessary to consult a whole library in order to find the answer to even the most simple question. And it sometimes happens that even the most exhaustive treatments on a given subject may fail to do so, or, if they do, they may be so technical as to be of little value to the average person. Where, for example, would one find the answers to such questions as: what do animals die of? could a fish drown? how do sea birds manage to get fresh water to drink? why don't sleeping birds fall off the perch?

The entire book is devoted to questions such as these. Each topic is discussed in a readily understandable non-technical language. There is a complete index so that it is a simple matter to turn up any topic desired. In any case, it is well for the reader to consult the index as many interesting bits of information are discussed under headings other than those in which one would expect to find them. The author digresses a good deal in his writing, a feature which gives it a conversational tone that would otherwise be lost.

The information contained in the book appears to be technically correct and there is very little that can be criticized. Naturally, many topics could have been discussed more fully, but considering that the information is intended for the amateur rather than the professional, this is understandable. The line drawings add greatly to the attractiveness of the book.—AUSTIN W. CAMERON.



Terrill, Lewis McIver. 1952. "The Clay-colored Sparrow in southeastern Ontario." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 66(5), 145–147.

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