

REPORT OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL BRANCH, 1902.

(Presented and read March 17th, 1903.)

The following report is submitted by the Ornithological Branch.

We regret to state that there are so few systematic observers of birds and their habits that it is difficult to make a very voluminous report of the work which has been actually done during the past year. No species of birds new to the district were discovered, but the number found here is so limited that after more than twenty years' observations it is not to be wondered at that it is only rarely that a new bird is seen.

Notes of the arrivals of birds were again made by some of the members but these were not printed in THE NATURALIST this year. We hope, however, to soon publish a list giving the average dates of arrival of the different birds for the past five years. Thinking it might prove of interest to the Club we have looked up the dates of arrival for the past seven years of those two first harbingers of spring, the robin and the song sparrow.

Robin : 1897, March 22 ; 1898, March 15 ; 1899, April 6 ; 1900, April 2 ; 1901, March 24 ; 1902, March 15 ; 1903, March 9.

Song Sparrow : 1897, March 18 ; 1898, March 11 ; 1899, April 6th ; 1900, April 1 ; 1901, March 24 ; 1902, March 15 ; 1903, March 13.

The dates of arrival of the prairie horned lark may also be interesting.

Prairie Horned Lark : 1897, February 22 ; 1898, February 18 ; 1899, March 15 ; 1900, February 14 ; 1901, March 1 ; 1902, February 27 ; 1903, February 15.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF MATHERIA, FROM THE TRENTON LIMESTONE AT OTTAWA.

By J. F. WHITEAVES.

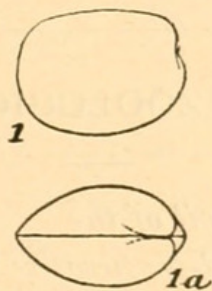
The genus *Matheria* was described by E. Billings in 1858, in the third volume of the Canadian Naturalist and Geologist. It was based upon a single species, the *M. tener* of Billings, a small lamellibranchiate or pelecypodous bivalve, from the Trenton limestone at Lake St. John, P.Q. *Matheria* appears to be most

nearly related to *Cyrtodonta* and *Vanuxemia*, and is now included in the family Cyrtodontidae, Ulrich, of the order Prionodesmacea, Dall. The types of *M. tener*, which were collected by Mr. J. Richardson and Dr. R. Bell in 1857, at Blue Point, on Lake St. John, are still in the Museum of the Geological Survey.

A second species of this genus, from the Trenton shales of Minnesota, was described by Mr. Ulrich in 1892, under the name *M. rugosa*, in the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota. And, in his Report on the Lower Silurian Lamellibranchiata of Minnesota, published in 1897, in volume three, part two, of the Final Report on the Geology of Minnesota, Mr. Ulrich expresses the opinion that the *Modiolopsis recta* of Hall, from the Niagara limestone of Wisconsin and Illinois, is also a *Matheria*.

In the Museum of the Geological Survey there are a few specimens of a fourth and previously undescribed as well as unfigured species of this genus, from the Trenton limestone of Ottawa, collected many years ago by E. Billings and labelled by him with the manuscript name *Matheria brevis*. This species may now be defined and characterized as follows.

MATHERIA BREVIS.



Matheria brevis.—Fig. 1. Side view of the most perfect specimen collected, in outline, and showing the marginal contour of the right valve.

Fig. 1a. The same specimen, as seen from above, to show the amount of convexity of the closed valves.

Both of these figures are of the natural size.

Shell small, inflated and regularly convex, but not quite as wide as high, suboval or oblong subquadrate, about one-third longer than high and very inequilateral. Anterior side very short,

narrow and consisting of a small rounded lobe below the beaks, on each side ; posterior side longer, and a little wider in the direction of its height ; posterior end vertically subtruncate at its mid-height, rounding abruptly into the cardinal margin above and into the ventral margin below. Ventral margin gently convex but curving upward more abruptly and rapidly at the posterior than at the anterior end ; superior border almost straight and nearly horizontal ; umbones depressed, anterior, very nearly but not quite terminal ; beaks incurved.

Surface markings not at all well preserved in either of the specimens collected, but apparently consisting of fine concentric lines of growth. Hinge dentition and muscular impressions unknown.

Approximate dimensions of the specimen figured : maximum length, fifteen millimetres ; greatest height, eleven mm. ; maximum width, or thickness through the closed valves, nearly nine mm.

Trenton limestone, Ottawa, E. Billings : four nearly perfect but badly preserved specimens.

M. brevis can be distinguished at a glance from *M. tener*, *M. rugosa* and *M. recta*, by its comparatively short, tumid and regularly convex valves.

Ottawa, April 16th, 1903.

REPORT OF THE ZOOLOGICAL BRANCH, 1902.

*To the President and Council of the
Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.*

In submitting the usual report referring to the zoological work of the Club during the past year, it must be admitted that no very new or striking facts are available such as would give special interest or value to this annual record. Many years ago the leaders of the Zoological section pointed out that original observations on our native mammals are becoming more difficult, as the city continues to expand and the surrounding country becomes more thickly occupied, and they specified the moles, the shrews, and the smaller rodents as likely to afford the main field



Whiteaves, Joseph Frederick. 1903. "Description of a new species of Matheria, from the Trenton Limestone at Ottawa." *The Ottawa naturalist* 17(2), 32–34.

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