

The Iowa Ornithologists Union

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To the Members of the I.O.U.-

Dear Friends:

The beginning "climax week" in the fall bird movement arrived in Iowa, the latter part of last week. These first few days, mainly since Thursday, Sept 29th, have kept the field students on their toes constantly, in order to "catch" everything. The peak is by no means coming to a close at present, however, as the recent warm weather has held things up to a great extent. But - with rain and cooler weather, as has been the case during the last week, the bubble is sure to break most everywhere and should bring many unusual records from all sections. It is the hope of everyone that the society may issue a "Warbler" bulletin on Nov. 10th, containing observation records for this fall from all over the state. Please do not wait for us to write for your records, but send them to the secretary by November 5th so that the Warbler Sheet will reach everyone on time. Give the names of the warblers observed and, to some extent, the number seen. For instance: Mr. A. T. Watson and Mr. Nelson of Des Moines have observed the following warblers during the last two days: 1. Black and White(common) (2) Nashville-common- (3) Tennessee (4)Magnolia (5) Black Throated Green(6) Oven Bird-common- (7)American Redstart (8)Myrtle Warbler(9)Palm Warbler(10) Canadian Warbler(11)Connecticut Warbler-several- Please, let's have them.

The nest and young of the Blue Winged Warbler were found and photographed by Sec. Nelson, at the Boy Scout Camp, near the Ledges on June 20th. Needless to say the adult birds were elusive, and altho the approximate(within 12 ft) location of the nest was known, it could not be located until - while hunting for it - stumbled on the exact spot just in time to snap several shots of the young birds before they "hopped off", within thirty minutes after the discovery. The adult birds are most persistent about remaining with the young birds during the presence of intruders so that along with the young ones, the trim, buzzing mature songsters were included in several of the pictures. After searching the entire field for two days - and combing the entire area without success, we - including a group of thirty scouts from the camp, found the nest of a Bobolink with eggs and young. Altho 4 pairs of the adult birds were nesting in the field, only one nest was found, and that with the most careful searching. Good pictures of the young, nest and eggs were obtained, but in extreme contrast with the Blue winged warbler mentioned before; these adult birds were never to be found near the nest, attempting to protect the young during the picture-taking process; altho the old birds knew we were at the nest, they remained always at a distance of at least 40 feet, with their mouths filled with worms and insects for the nestlings.

The School of Wild Life Protection held at McGregor, August 7 to 18 inclusive. Dr. George Bennett, founder of the school, was present throughout. Dr. G. F. Kay served as Dean. Dr. H. C. Oberholser of the U.S. Biological Survey, assisted greatly in the management of the school. He gave several interesting talks - one being "The Lure of the Waterfowl". Dr. L. H. Pammel, of Ames, spoke on Plant Life. Dr. Bohumil Shimek spoke of Mother Earth, topography being his general theme. Prof. Paddick, of Ames, spoke on Butterflies and Bees. Prof. I. T. Bode, of Ames, treated Forestry subjects, and gave a splendid talk on Nut Trees of Iowa. Dr. A. A. Thomas, of Iowa City, spoke on The History of The Earth. Dr. Gilmore spoke of The Museum of the American Indian, in New York City and Dr. C. R. Keyes, of Mount Vernon made the lure of the American more stirring and led those who wished to go, to nearby Indian mounds. Mr. O. M. Schantz of Chicago, had charge of the bird work. He gave a number of highly illustrated lectures. All this instruction led hikers to study their respective problems and hobbies in nearby fields and hills.

Excursions were made to Painted Rocks, Pike's Peak, Yellow River, Ice Cave, Clam Beds, Lotus Fields, Winneshiek Bottoms to Lansing where the Great Blue Herons are especially numerous. One whole day was spent at Back-bone Park in Delaware County, said to be not only the first but the most comprehensive and beautiful of all state parks. Over 200 attended the school, 20 of whom were from Des Moines.

Mrs. Gertrude Mansfield Cole, of Clinton - Author of the "10 Yr. Bird Calendar" published and dedicated to the Boy Scouts of Clinton, has taken membership in the State Society for 1928. This book is carefully compiled and contains all possible occurrences for Iowa, arranged in the North American check list form. Walter Rosen has used the book for 10 years for field records and is starting a new one in 1928 for the ensuing sessions. Many others have voiced the merit of Mrs. Cole's calendar. It sells for only 50c and every Bird student in the State should possess one. Address: Mrs. Gertrude Mansfield Cole - 2114 North 2nd, Clinton, Iowa.

We have all read about the dances of some of the water and shore birds and when first reading that the Killdeer at times performed a dance, I was much interested for here was a bird so common that a person should be privileged to see its dance. This treat came to Mrs. Palas and me, last June.

On June 23rd, we were on the road about ten miles southeast of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin; when crossing a small bridge, we heard the familiar song or call of the Killdeer. At a distance of about fifty yards from us were five birds hopping, bobbing, running and calling. Four of them were usually in a line side by side, but all were in motion. They hopped and ran out of line but would soon be back in formation. Repeatedly a bird would turn one fourth the way round, face the side of his neighbor and then jump over the neighbor's back again assuming his position in the line, facing the same direction as the others. While they seemed quite unconcerned about us, they were facing us all the time when in line. This was also about the direction of the sun. The fifth member was also hopping, bobbing, running and calling, always quite apart from the formation of the quartette. We were unable to determine whether he was a necessary adjunct to the whole performance or whether he was a non-conformist. The dance was held on a sand-bar along a small clear-water creek. We watched them for about ten minutes and left feeling that we had been favored with a real treat.

(A. J. Palas.)

By Kenneth R. Nelson, Sec.