

THE DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

December, 1947

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Audubonites:-

It is a sincere pleasure as your new President to greet you on this, the eighth year of our Society.

May I again thank all of you for your confidence in me, and the privilege of leading your Society for the next year in its great program of Conservation.

This is indeed a challenge. The men who have served as your leaders in the past aided by an ever fine and able board of directors, have done a great job. This is evidenced in the size and reputation of your Society today. The largest local Audubon group in the country, it is even more famous for it's many abilities to do so many things in so big a way.

These expressions of praise from all over the country are the rewards for a lot of hard and earnest work by a lot of real and enthusiastic people with a great ideal in the "spreading of the Gospel" of conservation and preservation of Nature's creatures and the world they live in. Keep up the good work.

With a greater New Year to look forward to, let us feel happy for the accomplishments of the past.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each and all of you.

Edwin G. Boyes, President

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SOME GOALS FOR WINTER CENSUS-TAKERS

by George J. Wallace

Winter censusing of birds, popularized years ago by the Christmas counts of the National Audubon Society, is apparently here to stay. Thousands of observers forsake warm hearthsides in some of the year's most inclement weather just to count birds. The two-fold goal of the original plan was to provide wholesome recreation while achieving some worthwhile scientific results. There now seems little doubt about the accomplishments of the former, but the exact contributions to ornithological science are sometimes a little uncertain.

What are some of the worthwhile goals for census-takers in Michigan and what improvements in methods of observation can be recommended?

One of the original aims of the Christmas census was to provide reliable data on year-to-year fluctuations. If ten chickadees are counted on one year's trip are the subsequent counts comparable year after year or highly variable? In spite of years of Christmas censuses there is little reliable data on this score, because the censuses are not uniform in time afield, area of coverage, and number of observers, so that actually our knowledge of fluctuations among winter resident birds has not been greatly advanced.

Better data is being secured in connection with invasions of northern visitors, and this past winter is no exception. Redpolls have flooded southern Michigan this year, after an almost complete absence during the past two winters. Pine Grosbeaks and some Siskins have apparently accompanied the Redpolls, but Evening Grosbeaks, at the present incomplete tallies, appear not to have measured up to last year's spectacular flights. The 1945-46 Snowy Owl invasion and its "echo" flight this winter will long be remembered.

Records of wayfarers that linger on the northern fringes of their winter range, especially in mild seasons, are a welcome addition to winter lists, and add to our knowledge of the status of these species in Michigan. A certain number of robins, sapsuckers, flickers, even myrtle warblers, catbirds, and mockingbirds are apt to turn up in winter counts.

The presence or absence of waterfowl species is largely a matter of the availability of unfrozen water, as are relatively open hunting grounds an important criterion for wintering hawks, though winters that are rough enough to force red-tails and red-shouldered hawks south may bring more northern goshawks and rough-legs.

These are only a few of the many ways in which winter observations of birds can be useful in an ornithological way, while at the same time they afford interest and pleasure to the contributor.

WILL THE OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK GET THE AXE?

The members of the Detroit Audubon Society are being asked to protest to Congress the elimination of 320,000 acres from the Olympic National Park. Briefly, lumber interests are asking for the scaling of the park boundaries for the purpose of releasing timber in the park to the jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service for commercial cutting. Fear is being expressed that should these lumber interests be successful at Olympic, other state parks may be attacked. To quote from the pamphlet "We must decide whether the parks are to remain in their present size and form, and for the purpose for which they were established, or whether they are to be dominated by special interests, to be whittled down in large or small chunks as a sacrifice to the short-sighted demands for immediate profits." If you are interested in saving the parks, it is urgently recommended that you write your protests to the Honorable Richard J. Welch, Ch, the House Committee on Public Lands, Washington, D. C. and to your Congressmen and Senators.

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Interest in the Christmas bird count is increasing greatly. While several years ago it was difficult to get anyone out in the field, this year more than 15 have registered as leaders. Well over 100 are expected to turn out for the count.

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Five hundred and fifty members attended the exhibition of Dr. George M. Sutton's paintings of Mexican birds and the tea given at the Detroit Institute of Arts following Dr. Sutton's lecture, Dec. 13. The exhibition will remain until Jan. 5, so those of you who did not attend, do so before that date. The paintings are beautiful and expertly staged. You will indeed be proud to be sponsors.

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The annual meeting of the Michigan Audubon Society will be held Saturday, Jan. 17 at the Cranbrook Institute of Science. Walter Nickell will act as general chairman. Ed Boyes will demonstrate the tape recorder for recording bird songs and play his recording of the Kirtland Warbler, and Tom and Arlene Hadley will show their film "Happy Valley" with sound effects on the tape recorder.

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The Detroit Audubon Society will again sponsor the Audubon Nature Cabin at the Detroit Zoological Park next summer. Wilbur Bull is chairman of the committee who will assemble and maintain the exhibits. The help of a great many members will be needed throughout the summer to man the cabin. If you can help out, won't you call the secretar

The Committee for Relief of European Ornithologists is asking the Detroit Audubon Society for help for almost 1000 destitute people, adults and children. Clothing is desperately needed. If you have some you can spare, send a card to Mrs. F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr., Edwin S. George Reserve, Pinckney, Michigan and let her know what size clothing and shoes you have and she will give you the name of a family to whom the articles should be sent. Food is even more important. "CARE" food packages are excellent and convenient, or if you wish to make cash donations send to Harold Wing, 7165 M 106, Jackson, Mich.

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Some excellent books for your Nature library: "Canadian Spring" by Florence Page Jaques; "Footnotes on Nature" by John Kieran; "Wings in the Wilderness" by Allan D. Cruickshank; "Driftwood Valley" by Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher.

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Hazel and Clarence Messner suggest that you "Join the Michigan Audubon Society". For just \$2 you receive, 1. The quarterly magazine the Jack Pine Warbler. 2. You may participate in week-end campouts. 3. You help support two bird sanctuaries. 4. You help furnish free literature to juniors and their leaders. Remit to Michigan Audubon Society, 54 Emmett St. Battle Creek, Mich.