

THE DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
September 1949

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your officers and board welcome you back to your Society's activities. We sincerely hope each of you had a healthful and pleasant summer. Many of you must have had unusual and interesting experiences in the field. Would you not share them with us in one of our informal meetings at WWJ Auditorium this fall and winter?

A busy and interesting 49-50 season is in the offing. From now until Oct. 15 arrangements and details for the National Audubon Convention will be the number one concern of many committees already functioning. Tom Hadley and his program committee are doing a terrific job in arranging settings and times for the many activities during the four days. More of you will be called upon to help in various ways, especially in the loan of your time and car for certain occasions.

May I make an appeal at this time in behalf of your secretary. Would you mind mailing in your memberships, educational or national or both, as early as possible? With convention correspondence and details increasing daily she could be "swamped" if too many memberships come in at the last minute. It would be appreciated ever so much if you would send yours in now!

A Natural History Museum for Detroit is beginning to look like a reality. Our city has evidenced some interest recently and we will give them every incentive and inspiration necessary to go through with this project. It will take time, but it looks promising.

We would like to have each and every one of you participate in all the national convention activities. Out of necessity, however, certain of the activities will be for national members only as in several instances space and seating requirements can be determined only by registration of National members. Please join National so that you can be with us at all of the activities. Of course you will get the Audubon magazine and National needs your help in carrying out its nation-wide work in wildlife protection through education and legislation.

Looking forward to sharing with you a grand fall and winter schedule with the birds.

Edwin G. Boyes, President

EGRETS INVADE MICHIGAN FROM THE SOUTH

By Ralph A. O'Reilly, Jr.

Every year Michigan experiences an "invasion" of beautiful white herons that wander northward after their nesting season in the deep South. Most of these striking birds are American Egrets, and within the last several years they have appeared in greatly increased numbers.

At the turn of the century Egrets had been reduced almost to the point of extinction by ruthless plume hunters supplying the lucrative millinery trade. Before and during the nesting season the herons develop beautiful and delicate plumes or "aigrettes" on their backs, and it was for these that they were slaughtered by the thousands on their breeding grounds in Florida and the Gulf Coast. It was due to the militant campaign of the National Audubon Society and certain far-sighted individuals that the commerce in wild bird plumage was outlawed and the Egrets permitted to begin their slow come-back from the brink of extermination.

After 40 years Egrets are once more abundant throughout the South and are extending their breeding range northward in the eastern states. Recently, for the first time within recorded history, a small colony has become established in northern Ohio, near Toledo.

Three species of these white herons are known to reach this region. The American Egret is the most numerous and as many as a dozen can be found now in the large marshes near Detroit. This is the largest white heron and is nearly the size of the common Great Blue Heron. A smaller and much less common species is the Little Blue Heron. The immature birds are pure white, and these are the only Little Blues that come this far north. They are perhaps two thirds the size of American Egrets, and

since the two species are occasionally seen together in the same marsh, the Little Blue Herons are often mistaken for "baby egrets".

The third species of this distinguished trio is the very rare Snowy Egret. The Snowy resembles the immature Little Blue Heron very closely, and the color of the feed is the best way to separate them. Both birds have dark legs and the Little Blue has dark feet as well. But when the Snowy Egret raises his feet from the water, they are brilliant yellow. It might be described as the white heron with the golden slippers.

Egrets begin to appear in Michigan at the end of July, and are most common during August and September. They may turn up unexpectedly at any marsh or lake that is attractive to other kinds of herons. There are certain places that seem to be favored. One can find egrets almost any day at such areas as the St. Clair Flats, Point Mouillee marsh at Rockwood, Erie Marsh just north of Toledo, Pontiac Lake, Pointe Pelee marsh near Leamington, Ontario and at the marshes north and south of Amherstberg, Ontario.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOC. CONVENTION, Detroit, Oct. 15--18, 1949

Since the schedule of events for the four days of the convention is too lengthy and since you will be receiving a copy a week or so prior to the occasion, we will mention only the highlights in this issue of the Newsletter.

Saturday morning, Oct. 15 will be taken up with registrations in Rackham Memorial Auditorium, a welcoming address by President Edwin G. Boyes and Eugene Van Antwerp, Mayor of Detroit followed by a lecture by Roger Tory Peterson and Dr. George Miksch Sutton and the viewing of exhibitions of original paintings of "birds of Mexico" by Dr. Sutton and birds of the Carolinas and Newfoundland by Mr. Peterson at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Following lunch there will be a tour to the Audubon Nature Cabin at the Zoo and then to the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills. Walter Nickell will lead a bird hike in the Cranbrook area and will conduct a tour through the Institute. Dinner will be followed by a Nature Camp reunion, entertainment and a program in the auditorium of the Institute of Science. At two o'clock that same afternoon at Rackham there will be a junior program with a free lecture free for all children of school age.

Sunday, Oct. 16, a sunrise bird hike to Pointe Pelee, Canada with well known Canadian leaders, Wm. Gunn, J. L. Baillie of Toronto and Keith Reynolds of London; Allen Cruickshank, Roger Tory Peterson and Alexander Sprunt, Jr. for National Audubon and Dr. George Sutton, George Wallace and Robert Whiting for Michigan Audubon. An Audubon Breakfast at Aviation Inn, Pte. Pelee will actually be a sumptuous brunch. Harrison Lewis, chief of the Canadian Division of Minerals and Resources will give a welcoming address. A visit to the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary at Kingsville, Ont. follows. In the evening, John H. Storer will lecture at the Art Institute Auditorium and show his new picture "Living Forests".

Monday will be devoted to convention business with a round table discussion on outdoor education in the afternoon and a wildlife motion picture by Edward M. Brigham, Jr. in the evening.

Tuesday will be a continuation of convention business and in the evening the annual banquet at which P. J. Hoffmaster, Director of the Michigan Dept. of Conservation will speak on "Conservation Education" and Ben East will show one of his excellent wildlife motion pictures.

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GENERAL NATURE STUDY COURSE GIVEN BY WALTER NICKELL

The Detroit Audubon Society is again sponsoring a general Nature Study course given by Walter Nickell of the Cranbrook Inst. of Science. The first meeting for the purpose of registration was held at the Y.W.C.A. Sept. 8. All succeeding classes

of the eight week course will be in the out of doors. The schedule includes trips to some interesting areas. The first trip on Sunday, Sept. 11 will be to Chandler's Teepee Camp north of Pontiac for the study of wildflowers, trees, birds and geology. Sunday, Sept. 18 the class will go to Pte. Pelee for the hawk migration; Sept. 24, Saturday to the Cranbrook area to collect birds nests, fungi and insects. Oct. 16 the group will go to Arkona and Kettle Point to collect fossils; Oct. 22 a trip through Wildwood Farms in northern Oakland County; Oct. 30 a mineral collecting trip to Clay Center, Ohio and November 5 a trip to the Cranbrook Inst. Banding traps.

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BIRD SURVEY WORK ADVANCING

The committee working on the records for the Bird Survey of the Detroit Region with Ralph A. O'Reilly, Jr. as chairman, has met every Wednesday night since May. The sizeable job of transcribing and summarizing records to bring the project up to date has progressed very well. The 1947 Survey will be printed in late September and the 1948 Survey probably will be issued in November. With the wonderful work the committee is devoting to this job, the Survey will become current with the fifth year report, the 1949 survey, which should be available in January, 1950.

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For your information, should you wish to contact them, the following are the chairmen of the various committees working on the National Audubon Convention: Mabel Clare Ladd, Social committee, Madison 2500; Gladys Russell, Hostess committee, Lincoln 1-5359; Ann Vanderheide, History committee, Southfield 3714; Hessel Tenhave, Transportation committee, Lincoln 2-6916; Homer Roberts, Exhibition committee, Ke. 1-9363; Ed. Eichstedt, Equipment committee, Va. 2-8334; Clarence Messner, Hike committee, Tu. 2-2348; Millie Reynolds, Junior Audubon committee, Tr. 3-0976. Tom Hadley, is general chairman for the convention and messages for him will be taken at University 4-9243. Mail should be addressed to him at 306 S. Saginaw St., Holly, Michigan.

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Wilbur Bull, Director of the Audubon Nature Cabin at the Zoo asked that we remind you to visit the cabin if you have not already done so. Wilbur reports that the public has been most enthusiastic.

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At long last the Detroit Audubon Society has succeeded in getting a telephone. The number is University 4-9243 and the address of the Society is 19164 Pennington Drive, Detroit 21. Please put this information where it will be handy.

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Farley Tubbs is the new Director of Education for the Michigan Department of Conservation. We hope to have him at one of the Rackham lectures sometime very soon to meet all of you.

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The National Audubon Society convention has nosed out the annual fall campout which is usually held at the Conservation Training School, Higgins Lake in October.

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The nominating committee for the November election of officers and board of directors includes Arlene Hadley, Arthur Singleton and Merl Russell with Arlene as chairman.

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New bird songs recorded by Ed Boyes this year include the Dickcissel, Clay-colored sparrow, scream of the Red-tailed hawk at 1000 feet, Upland plover and the Black-throated Green Warbler. You will hear them at one of the WWJ meetings.