

NATURE NOTES.

The Bulletin of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society.

Number 4.

Webster Groves, Mo.

February, 1930.

ON THE JOYS OF FEEDING BIRDS

January 9, 1930.

On account of the ice my feeding tray for birds has been very popular today. I stood hours watching them. Breakfast was late - there was no orange juice, and everything else has been neglected. The birds seem not to notice anyone just inside the window. Sparrows, of course, are most in evidence, and they are differently marked - a number have black cheeks with a white band around the neck and their heads are rufus. (Mrs. Fitz-Gerald has since found out that these birds are the European Tree Sparrow.)

The Juncos are very smart. Occasionally, when the sparrows get too numerous, a Junco will say, "Squeek, squeek," and all fly but themselves and the big Cardinal who sits quietly and cheers. I believe the Juncos mean to frighten the sparrows away.

When the feeding tray becomes empty (all this winter) the male Cardinal comes to the window nearest which I am sitting and looks forlornly at me. I run right down. Several times during the snow he comes to the open window to awaken me in the morning.

- Mary E. Fitz-Gerald.

UNUSUAL OBSERVATIONS.

On the evening of December 29, 1929, several members of the society were lucky enough to get a glimpse of that interesting and elusive little planet Mercury. It appeared as a first magnitude star within three or four degrees of the western horizon and in the orange glow from the sun which had set shortly before.

On the same evening the Zodiacal Light showed itself quite as bright as the milky way. It has a somewhat conical shape, the base being near the horizon in the after-glow of the setting sun and the apex, on this particular occasion, was roughly sixty degrees higher in the sky. The axis of the figure always lies along the ecliptic or path of the planets. This phenomenon is caused by small particles of cosmic or planetary dust that pervades the region of the solar system, reflecting the light of the sun to us.

The writer photographed two adjacent regions of the sky, including Taurus and parts of several other constellations. The Pleiades are represented on one film by fifteen stars, (only six to eight

(Continued, column 2.)

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

The annual Christmas bird census of the St. Louis Bird Club was taken as usual, in the St. Charles, Mo. region, including the territory on both sides of the Missouri River and the Creve Coeur Lake district. Observers, 7 in two parties; Mr. Richard Pough and Dr. R. J. Terry working in the St. Charles country and Messrs. L. M. Dougan, L. Hubricht, W. Palmer, J. Steyermark and myself working from the end of the Creve Coeur car line to the Missouri River and along it to St. Charles. Both parties on foot and in the field about eight hours.

Temperature ranged from 16 degrees at start to 20 degrees at finish. Morning very foggy, clearing towards ten oclock. All vegetation covered to a depth of three fourths of an inch with a feathery white frost.

The birds seen were;

Bobwhite (1 covey)	12
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Sparrow Hawk	3
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Downy Woodpecker	37
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4
Flicker	18
Prairie Horned Lark (1 flock)	60
Crow	187
Red-winged Blackbird*	15
Goldfinch	4
House Sparrow	165
European Tree Sparrow	1
White-throated Sparrow	2
Tree Sparrow	122
Slate-colored Junco	247
Song Sparrow	10
Fox Sparrow	7
Cardinal	70
Myrtle Warbler	15
Carolina Wren	13
Brown Creeper	13
White-breasted Nuthatch	8
Tufted Titmouse	25
Carolina Chickadee	35
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7
Bluebird	1

Species 27

Individuals 1072

Note.- * All closely observed were females. - Ralph Swain.

UNUSUAL OBSERVATIONS.

of these are visible to the unaided eye), and the Hyades group by no less than twenty stars on both films. Several pairs of stars very difficult to separate with the naked eye, appear distinctly separated on the film. Jupiter is on both pictures, as it happens to be in Taurus at this time. One of the photographs shows 132 stars; the other one shows 95 others.

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COLLECTING BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

On the eleventh of August, 1929 Dad and I were down in Des Loge to visit some relatives. In the morning we tramped in a field nearby, hunting for butterflies. We succeeded in catching a few. When the day was over we had around eighty butterflies, two hawk moths one underwing and several other moths. Altogether we collected about thirty different species, with a few perfect specimens. It took me a number of days to mount them. This caused us to make some more mounting boards, but on the whole I had a pretty good time.

- Billy Brandhorst.

NOTE.- The writer of the above paragraph was a prize winner in the Insect Collection Contest last year. This completes the contributions from the boys; and in the next issue we will hear from the girls.

SHATTERED IDEALS

After having long fostered the beautiful belief that the same pairs of faithful birds return year after year to the same nesting places near our homes happily mated for life, the Inland Bird Banding Association at its recent convention here, shatters the picture. First, the good reputation of the wrens is spoiled by the cold evidence of numbered bands placed on each bird in over 200 nests during a period of ten years which, not only shows that but one of the pair returns, but that after each brood is able to shift alone, the parents part as strangers. Next, with the aid of a family trap in which the entire robin family is captured, banded and released, they found the robins like that too.

Now, even if this is perfectly legal according to the Laws of Wild Bird Life, why don't these bird banders, if they must pry into the private lives of our favorite birds, keep the results of their detective work to themselves? And that's not all. Two of our own members have purchased these so called family traps, giving as an excuse that it is for the cause of scientific research.

These meddling bird-banders have no poetic imagination. Poof!! We still pin our faith on the blue birds.

NAMED AT LAST!

After carefully considering the suggestions and opinions of many of our readers we finally have decided upon "NATURE NOTES" as the most descriptive name for our paper. We wish it also to be noted that "NATURE NOTES" is the Bulletin of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. We are indebted to Mrs. C. A. Fitz-Gerald for the name "NATURE NOTES" and wish to thank her for it.

WILD FLOWERS IN NOVEMBER

April showers may be necessary to bring flowers in May, but see what October rains brought to the woods at Imperial, Mo. November 10, 1929. These wild flowers were found by Messrs. Peterson and Heinze.

Daucus carota, Queen Ann's Lace;
Oenothera biennis, Evening Primrose
Solidago canadensis, Canada Goldenrod;
Aster ericoides, Heath Aster;
A. turbinellis; Sonchus oleraceus, Common Sow-thistle; Trifolium pratense, Red Clover; Melilotus alba, White Melilot; Eupatorium serotinum; Oxalis interior, Wood Sorrel; Viola cucullata, Common Violet; Lepidium virginicum, Wild Pepper Grass
Rudbeckia fulgida, Coneflower; Erigeron annuus, Daisy Fleabane.

BANDING A BIRD

To ~~one~~ who has never before seen the process of banding a bird it is very interesting, especially when the bander desires to make measurements of the bird. After the number of the band, the species of bird, date of capture and sex have been recorded the band is affixed. The length of the tarsus, wing, beak and tail are carefully recorded as well as the total length of the bird. A determination of the color of its eyes is made, too.

The happy experience of seeing all this done was mine on December 12th, when I happened along just at the precise time that Mrs. Satterthwait was about to begin the operation on a White-breasted Nuthatch. She had quite a time trying to band and measure the little fellow; he was so frisky. It was a revelation to me when I was shown there was really some color in the bird's eyes, which seemed at first sight to be entirely black. Upon close examination under a magnifying glass they were of a color which we determined as fuscous. When the bird was released he flew to the nearest tree alighting sideways on the trunk and then disappeared to the other side.

- S. L. O'.

Webster Groves Nature-Study Society

A BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN NATURE-STUDY SOCIETY

(Organized in 1920)

Webster Groves, Mo.

GENERAL MEETING - FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7, 8 PM, at the U.S. Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place, Webster Groves. Reports of the proceedings at the Annual Convention of the American Nature-Study Society, and other meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held recently at Des Moines, Iowa; - Mr. and Mrs. Satterthwait of Webster Groves and Prof. L. M. Dougan of St. Louis.

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:: REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS ::

PHOTOGRAPHY: Monday February 3, 8 PM, at the U.S. Entomological Laboratory. "How to make Lantern Slides." Mr. Charles Trefts.

MICROSCOPY: Monday February 10, 8 PM, at the Laboratory. Another demonstration on microscope slide mounts, by Dr. Edwin C. Meiners. Bring your microscopes.

GEOLOGY: Thursday January 13, 8 PM, at the Jones residence, 690 Bonita Avenue, Webster Groves. "The Value of Missouri Rocks." Discussion led by Miss Katherine Eabenau.

ICHTHYOLOGY: Friday February 14, 8 PM, at the Laboratory. "Mollusks of Missouri." Mr. Leslie Hubricht.

ASTRONOMY: Monday February 17, 8 PM, at the Mueller residence, 12 Armin Avenue, Glendale Heights. Unfinished talks on The Earth and The Moon, and a Round Table Discussion on Comets, with everybody participating. Look up literature on comets.

ENTOMOLOGY: Friday February 21, 8 PM, at the Laboratory. A continuation of the subject of "Social Insects." Mr. Harold O'Byrne leading.

ORNITHOLOGY: Monday February 24, 8 PM, at the Pickens residence, 72 Marshall Place, Webster Groves. "The Singing Tower,"-- consisting of A Review of the Americanization of Edward Bok by Miss Helen Dykeman; Birds of the Bell Tower, by Mrs. H. C. Irish; The English Nightingale, by Mrs. William Pickens.

BOTANY: Friday February 28, 8 PM, at the Mueller residence, 12 Armin Avenue, Glendale Heights. A further discussion of "Pioneers of Plant Study" by Mrs. L. F. Pinkus.

JUNIOR MEETING. The Juniors will meet on Wednesday afternoon February 19, 3.30 o'clock with Mrs. Pickens, 72 Marshall Place, Webster Groves, - and you will have to go there to find out what is going on.

TO THE ENTRANTS FOR THE 1930 INSECT COLLECTING CONTEST
open to boys and girls of St. Louis and St. Louis County

Contestants can make arrangements with any of the following members for assistance or information:

Mr. A. F. Satterthwait, U.S. Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place: Coleoptera, Hemiptera or Life History work on the first Saturday of each month from 7 to 9 PM.

Mr. Harold O'Byrne, 501 Pacific Ave., Webster Groves; on-
Lepidoptera, Protective Resemblance or General Collections.

Mr. Stuart O'Byrne, 501 Pacific Ave., Webster Groves, on-
Lepidoptera, Homoptera, Hemiptera and Orthoptera.

Mr. R. C. Lange, 319 Westside Ave., Webster Groves, on-
Lepidoptera and Odonata.

Mr. Pierre Vogel, 319 Westside Ave., Webster Groves, on-
Odonata.

Miss Dorothy Boyer, 527 Ivanhoe Place, Webster Groves, on-
Orthoptera.

Mr. Arthur Mueller, 319 12 Armin Ave., Glendale Heights, on-
Aquatic Insects.

Dr. Edwin P. Meiners, 6600 Delmar Ave., St. Louis, on-
Lepidoptera.

Mr. L. F. Pinkus, Central High School, St. Louis, on-
General Collections and Drawings.

Prof. H. C. Irish, R.D. 6, So. Rockhill Road, Webster Groves, on-
Hymenoptera.

Mr. S. Jones, 690 Bonita Ave., Webster Groves,
Field collecting of Insect Galls.

Mr. Herman Schwarz, 720 Clark Ave., Webster Groves, has also expressed a willingness to help the work along.