



The Bulletin of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society

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April 1931.

A PIONEER FISH-FANCIER

About twenty years ago few species of tropical fishes were known in this part of the country; and we are to-day familiar with habits of many then undiscovered. Then as to-day, the little creatures were received direct from German aquarists to whom they were transported from their tropical homes to be studied and experimented with. These German naturalists parted with few species they could not themselves breed. I know of none bred in this country for the first time. Consequently such species as the beautiful Scatophagus Argus never raised in captivity, are very rare. Some species have never reached our shores alive.

About this time while the interest was still in its infancy, a Mr. Armstrong formerly of Webster Groves, Missouri, made several trips a year to New York and other Eastern cities. He was intensely interested in these fishes, but only as a fancier. Each time he returned he brought back new species.

Mr. Frank Guttweiler formerly of St. Louis a friend of Mr. Armstrong, was the first each time to learn of his arrival and share with him the new-comers. Guttweiler was an excellent naturalist, a good scientist in the rough and conducted many original and successful experiments with these fishes.

When the first Pterophyllum Scalare arrived in this country he purchased a pair from a dealer in Philadelphia for fifty dollars. The fish were cared for by a colored porter on the train who delivered them to Guttweiler at the station. That night the temperature dropped suddenly and Guttweiler took the fish to bed with him placing aquarium and all under covers and blankets.

The magnificent little fish now known as Aphosemion Australe, but at that time called Hoplochilus Cameronensis, of which a beautiful color-print appears in this month's issue of the National Geographic was most puzzling to breeders. It spawned readily but as readily devoured its eggs. Removal of the eggs immediately after spawning was tried; - but they failed to hatch. Guttweiler got to work and discovered that the minute opening in the egg through which it is fertilized closed rapidly after fertilization and that when completely closed the egg could be removed from the tank with safety. He timed the interval between fertilization and the closing of this opening, and found that after that period he had time to remove many eggs before parent fish could eat them. The fish lays but a few eggs at a time and eats these within a minute or so after they are laid, if spawning in an aquarium.

No doubt less tedious methods are now employed in spawning this fish. New species are still arriving and much is yet to be learned of many long kept in aquaria. In fact, - nothing is known of the spawning habits of many we now have.

Pierre A. Vogol

OBSERVING THE ZODIACAL LIGHT

In "Zodiacal Light Notes" by W. E. Glanville, which appeared in the February number of "Popular Astronomy" are recorded observations on the Zodiacal Light by Stuart O'Byrne and other members of the Webster Nature Study Society. The following is quoted from this article:

"Thanks to Mr. O'Byrne's interest it is hoped that the members of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society will make Zodiacal Light observations a regular feature of their program". How about it, Astronomy Group?

TROPICAL FISH

A most enjoyable three hours were spent by a number of our members in the green-houses on the Beldt Fish Farm, and we learned much of interest about the tropical fish and water plants seen in the many glass and concrete aquariums, containing Betta Cambodia, was covered with the yellow flowers and dark green leaves of the water poppy; these fish are native of Southern Asia, build a nest of tiny air bubbles and the male cares for the eggs. We were told that the black Mollenesia, a viviparous fish native in Florida, was born black, then turned white later became spotted and was a jet black when fully developed; the Melanotaenia Nigrans was an egg laying fish native in Australia; the Hemichromia moved their young from place to place; the Mouthbreeder cared for its young in the mouth of the mother; the Cichlasoma, both male and female, fan the eggs until hatched; the Fundulus gularis attach the eggs to plants, and that all fish grow as long as they live, but may grow smaller if not properly cared for. If any of you want to know more and more about tropical fish, just visit this fish farm.

Anne A. Jones

MICE AS PETS.

During the last year I have been raising native wild mice. At present I have about fifty Deer Mice and six Voles. Altho they have very interesting habits they do not make good pets. The Deer Mice either leave you alone

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NATURE NOTES

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MICE AS PETS - Cont.

or become too familiar, insisting on climbing all over you and getting down inside of your clothes. The Voles do not like to be handled, are content to remain in their cage and if removed will return to it immediately

Leslie Hubricht.

List of Birds seen by Mrs. Chas. Stones and S.L.O'Byrne on a jaunt through part of the Ranken Estate January 24, 1931. Trip began 11:50 A.M. and ended at 2:00 P.M. Total time, 2 hours and ten minutes.

Blue Jay	6
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2
Crow	9
Chickadee	7
Tufted Tit	7
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Junco	12
Cardinal	1
Downy Woodpecker	1
Total	46

Birds seen by Mrs. Chas. Stones at the Spring at the Nature-Study Lodge, Ranken Missouri; January 24, 1931, between 2:10 and 2:30 P.M.

Cardinal	5
Tufted Tit	2
Junco	7
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Total	15

SOME BIRD NOTES.

Just about this time two years ago I heard a joy bird sing like a mocking bird - " " however. It made a big impression and every year at the same time I hope to hear it again. This mating song, Mr. Satterthwait informed me, is a rare treat to those fortunate ones who are exposed to it. To those friends to whom I have described the song and my sensations, I have each time tacked on a little extra, -- imagination! The part I made up which suits my fancy best is, "It's a fine omen, and you can have your heart's desire if you think of it while listening to this song. - It acts like a charm."

Our feeding tray has not the visitors that came last year. We miss the pair of red birds, we miss the European Tree Sparrows, and the other Tree Sparrows and the Juncos. Is it because we have a mild winter?

Last Sunday, January 11th, we spent the morning in the new bird house. One large cage that has finches in it is very interesting. Three Zebra finches are nesting in some cocoon shells that Mr. Kennon has placed at their disposal. One little busy-body was gathering feathers with such a zeal that we had to laugh at her. Later, when many of

Continued next column

Some Bird Notes - Cont.

the lady finches get the same idea, their cage will not be so peaceful. I'm thinking.

Mary E. Fitzgerald.

SPRING'S ADVANCE GUARD

A party of three very hopeful botanists set out in a gasping old Ford which showed all the symptoms of pulmonary trouble on the morning of Jan. 25, 1931, and did what only a botanist would do -- i.e., began to look for flowers in bloom! Any sane person would have said that any self-respecting flower no matter how wild would have better sense than to even think of budding before the middle of February. Nevertheless, the Rattlebox coughed her way up a certain steep hill in the vicinity of Kimswick and three badly juggled botanists groaned out. One of the first things they did was to make a trip to the woods and there they found what was hailed as the first wild flower of the season -- an honest-to-goodness flower in bloom! It turned out to be the lowly *Capsella Bursa-Pastoris*, but what did that matter? It was in bloom, wasn't it? After lunch was dispensed with (An easy task after having associated with the Ford earlier in the day) the party, enlarged by four more hopefuls, set out in two cars for other parts. At Glen Park they paused only for a moment then drove on to more distant fields -- including Sandy Ridge where the three botanists found what they believe is a record for the vicinity. On a sandy hillside, thickly matted with *Cheilanthes lanosa* and *Cystopteris bulbifera* were found two plants of *HOUSTONIA MINIMA*, both gaily in bloom. Gray gives the blooming dates as March to May. The writer has found this species in bloom as early as February 22nd, but can locate no records which would give the plant a right to bloom as early as January 25th.

Dorothy A. Boyer.

Ferns found at Ranken, Mo by R.C.Lange

and L.Hubrecht June 1927.
Purple stemmed Cliff Brake
Bracken

- Broad Beech Fern
- Ebony Spleenwort
- Rattlesnake Fern
- Fees Lip Fern
- Walking Fern
- Engelmanns Adders Tongue (Ophiogl)
- Christmas Fern
- Bulblet Bladder Fern
- Maidenhair Fern
- Bluntlobed Woodsia
- Bladder Fern
- Sensitive Fern
- Lady Fern

Webster Groves Nature-Study Society

A BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN NATURE-STUDY SOCIETY

(Organized in 1920)

Webster Groves, Mo.

ANNUAL MEETING and ELECTION OF OFFICERS

On Friday evening April 3rd, 8 PM, at the U. S. Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place, Webster Groves, there will be an election of officers for the coming year. At this meeting the retiring officers and group chairmen will make reports of the year's work and plans for the coming year will come up for discussion.

This will be an important meeting and a full attendance is hoped for. Come - with suggestions and ideas - and help to make this a banner year for our growing organization.

OFFICERS

MISS ANNE A. JONES
Secretary-Treasurer
690 Bonita Avenue
Webster Groves, Mo.
(Webster 831-J)

PIERRE A. VOGEL
President

DR. O. W. BRANDHORST
Vice-President

MRS. CHARLES S. STONES
Vice-President

MRS. R. C. LANGE
Flower Exchange Secretary

DR. JULIUS H. GROSS
Health Secretary

MRS. WILLIAM PICKENS
Junior Secretary

MRS. A. F. SATTERTHWAIT
Nature-Melody Secretary

R. W. STOCKWELL
Camp Director

GROUP CHAIRMEN

S. A. TOWNSEND, JR.
Astronomy

MISS EDITH E. GLATFELDER
Botany

HAROLD O'BYRNE
Entomology

MISS ALICE MARTY
Geology

LESLIE HUBRICHT
Ichthyology

DR. EDWIN P. MEINERS
Microscopy

DAVID RAU
Nature Photography

WALTER PALMER
Ornithology

STUART L. O'BYRNE
Editor
NATURE NOTES

GROUP MEETINGS

Photography Group - Monday April 6th, 8 PM
Meets at the Mueller residence, 12 Armin Avenue, Glendale Heights.

Topic - micro-photography
Microscopy Group - Friday April 10th, 8 PM.

Meets at the Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place.
Topic - The microscopy of some foods. Bring microscopes.

No meeting on Monday April 13th.

Ornithology Group - Friday April 17th, 8 PM.
Meets at the Jones residence, 690 Bonita Avenue, Webster Groves.
Topic - Field observations. (Note exchange of dates with the Geology Group.)

Botany Group - Monday April 20th, 8 PM.
Meets at the Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place.
Topics - Gardens in the Spring, by Prof. H. C. Irish, and "Comparison of vegetation of limestone and sandstone bluffs in the vicinity of St. Louis." *Julian Steyermark*

Geology Group - Friday April 24th, 8 PM.
Meets at the Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place.

Astronomy Group - Saturday April 25th, 8 PM.
Meets at the Mueller residence, 12 Armin Avenue, Glendale Heights.
Topics - More about comets, by Mr. Mueller, and about Meteors by Mr. Jones. Outdoor recording of meteors if the weather is right.

Entomology Group - Monday April 27th, 8 PM.
Meets at the Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place.
Topic - Spring insects. An informal discussion, led by the chairman: all are urged to collect insects, bring them to the meeting and either tell about them or ask about them.

Junior Groups

The Juniors will have elections of their own officers, the Bristol School Group to meet at the home of Mrs. William Pickens, 72 Marshall Place, on Wednesday afternoon April 29th, after school. After election they will make Blue-prints. The Avery School Group will meet on Friday afternoon April 24th, place to be announced at school. They will also have two "Hikes" one on Saturday April 11th and the other on Saturday April 25th. Place announced at the meetings.

THE APRIL BIRD-WALKS.

The April bird-walks will be the same as last year:

Sunday morning April 5th, 5.30. Starting from Berry Road and Bonita Avenue, Webster Groves.

Sunday morning April 12th, 5.30. Starting from Elm Avenue and Frisco R.R. crossing.

Sunday morning April 19th, 5.30. Starting from Big Bend and Grant Roads, Glendale Heights.

Sunday morning April 26th, 5.30. Starting from North Rockhill Road and Lythia Avenue, North Webster, (about half way between Shady Avenue and Manchester Road.

SILVER JUBILEE INVITATION

The Academy of Science of St. Louis, celebrates its ^{diamond} Silver Jubilee on April 14th/15th. We are invited to attend the meeting that will be held at Soldan High School Auditorium in St. Louis, on the evening of Tuesday April 14th, 8 o'clock, when Prof. Aiken, assistant director of the Lick Observatory will lecture on "Recent Astronomical Progress". Developments in this field have been so rapid during the last few years that this should prove of unusual interest. Don't overlook the date - April 14th.