

W H A T S H A L L W E C A L L I T ?

We have a few, but want suggestions for a name from everyone.

Number 2.

Webster Groves, Mo.

December 1, 1929.

NATURE FOR THE MONTH.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS.

NATURE'S CHRISTMAS.

Nature plans for Christmas 'ere the summer months have flown and beneath the summer glory runs the "Merry Christmas!" tone. She hangs the scarlet berries on the twining Bittersweet, and paints the Ilex berries when the farmer sows his wheat. She strews Viburnum berries with a knowing, generous hand, and lays the thickest mosses where the tallest live oaks stand. She loads the Staghorn Sumac while in a lavish mood, and sprinkles Coral Berries wherever man has stood. She paints the fruit of roses from her brightest box of red, till they resemble blood-drops a wounded fox has shed. Does Nature stop at colors? "Oh, no!" I hear you say, for tho it sometimes seems so, Dame Nature's work's not play. She gave us the persimmon, the hickory nut, the haw, and reminded all the wood-folk that their need should be their law. Of all the things that folks can have when Christmas time comes 'round, the best, I think, are those with which the Christmas woods abound. Mimosa.

CHRISTMAS POSSIBILITIES.

Eleven species of birds is the largest number we have ever recorded on our window trays at 118 Waverly Pl., Webster Groves, IN ONE DAY in winter during the eleven years we have lived here. It is impossible to record the number of individuals. The following are the most likely to be observed close to our homes during December, January and February:-

- Hairy Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Tufted Titmouse
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Carolina Chickadee
- Blue Jay
- Cardinal Grosbeak
- English Sparrow
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Junco, Slate-colored
- Carolina Wren

Now, during the early part of December, is the best time of the whole year for any one who has never studied birds, to begin to observe and learn them, because the few species we have with us at this particular time may well be learned during the cold weather by feeding and watching them, and then need not be confused with the migrants which will come with a rush with the spring, the earliest arriving the latter part of February. (Continued on other side)

OBSERVATIONS MADE AT RANKEN.

In a spring about one-eighth mile west of the cabin there is a species of Physa, a snail, the largest of which is less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in length. In the spring by the cabin, these snails are about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long. This seems strange to me as the conditions seem to be the same in both places. I do not think there is any difference in the chemistry of the water.

About one mile up the Antire valley from the cabin, is a small spring-fed pool that has been dry during the summer. The fall rains have filled it up and it is now inhabited by Ostrocoods and young Conchostracea, (primitive bivalve Crustacea).

A small pond away up in the hills is full of Bull-frogs.

Leslie Hubricht.

ASTRONOMY GROUP OBSERVES JUPITER.

At the meeting of the Astronomy Group of November 15, the members studied Jupiter thru a three-inch telescope. Early in the evening Jupiter was graced by his four largest satellites; Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto, which were arranged as in Fig. 1. Later, they were arranged as in Fig. 2, Io having moved to a position in front of the planet and becoming quite invisible. Some of the observers were able to make out, faintly, Jupiter's bright equatorial belt with two dark belts on either side, as in Fig. 3.



MORE OBSERVATIONS AT RANKEN.

Observations at Ranken, Mo., November 3, 1929 at 3:30 P.M. One large flock of Robins going west. Cedar Waxwings were plentiful at Price Hollow. A great number of Phasmidae (Walking Sticks) were found on Angel Trail leading to Holy Rock. Hickory trees were preferred; Mrs. Lange counted 24 pairs on one tree. Many of these insects had the abdomen partly eaten away, but were still alive. This is probably due to parasitism. One peculiar habit of the Phasmidae is that the females lay their eggs late in the fall, simply dropping them to the ground. These eggs are large, lay on the ground all winter and the young hatch in the spring.

R. C. Lange.

Pierre A. Vogel.

WHAT SHALL WE CALL IT?

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CONCERNING OUR PAPER

A series of "notes" by the winners of the Insect Collection Contest will begin in the January number and we are hopeful that all of them will write for us.

At the suggestion of one of our readers, we have eliminated the unsightly lines from our paper and have left more space between the articles, which will make reading much easier. We welcome helpful suggestions, always.

NATURE FOR THE MONTH.

CHRISTMAS POSSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

There is always the possibility of observing the European Tree Sparrow (Passer montanus) during the winter and the date of such observance should always be recorded since this species is only to be found in this country in the neighborhood of St. Louis. There is also the possibility of seeing in our locality in December a few White-throated sparrows, or a stray or belated Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Mockingbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Myrtle Warbler, Flicker or Redhead.

Mrs. A. F. Satterthwait.

A WINTER SHELTER HOUSE FOR BIRDS.

And why not a tenement house, rent free, for the birds? A few boards, a saw, a hammer, some nails and a little spare time is all that is needed. Most girls and any boy who has gone to manual training school can make one; the men can try to, and the ladies can risk a hammered thumb for the good cause.

Make a tight draft proof box 8 or 10 inches square, 2 or 3 feet high, with an overhanging top to shed water, and an entrance at the bottom, about 3 inches in diameter and perches inside arranged so that none is directly over a lower one. Set it out of reach of the hungry night prowling CATS, about 10 feet high, with a southern exposure preferred and it will make an ideal Christmas present for friend bird.

Farmer's Bulletin No. 1456, of U. S. Department of Agriculture, called "Homes for Birds," having detailed plans for shelter houses and nest boxes, can be had, for only five cents, from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. Sterling P. Jones.

TO OWNERS OF FIELD GLASSES

Most of those who have field glasses use them for bird study and occasionally for other purposes in the woods or open field. Sometimes they are surprised to learn that field glasses may be used even more effectively in a study of the stars. Practically every type of celestial body can be seen clearly and to real advantage thru these low-power instruments. If you are not using your field glass in an occasional glance at the stars, you are not getting the full benefit of your instrument. This month and on into the spring there will be a large number of interesting objects to be seen to advantage thru a field glass. If you are interested in seeing these objects, ask about them at the next Astronomy meeting. The Astronomy Group.

THIRD INSECT COLLECTION CONTEST

When we consider that the purpose of the Third Insect Collection Contest which came to a close November first, is to direct the collecting instinct of the junior members of the Nature Study Society into a useful channel; that of collecting and carefully and correctly studying, mounting, labeling and preserving insect collections; we must consider the results highly satisfactory. One of the encouraging features is that the contestants all took part in previous contests, showing that they are really interested in entomology. Another encouraging feature is that the contestants have profited from previous experience of loss of points in scoring on features that might seem trivial to an ordinary observer, but in the light of entomological experience are very important. They have learned that tight boxes, careful mounting and complete data on each specimen are necessary to give value to a collection. The scores ranged higher than in previous years.

The science of entomology is becoming more and more important from an economic standpoint. It will take many well trained entomologists to dominate the insect world. If the Webster Groves Nature Study Society can turn into this field one or two gifted minds it will have accomplished a great work. We have prospects for more contestants for the coming year and hope for still better results.

A. E. Mueller.