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Birds of Grape-Vine-Point

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Introduction

The following study of the Birds of Grape-Vine Point was made as a part of a class assignment under the direction of Dr. Pettingill, from July 15 to August 10, 1939. The region was visited early on Tuesdays and Saturday mornings as well as two other short trips a week, which usually were in the evening. Not many species of birds were found but some interesting facts regarding them were found.

Grape-Vine Point is located on the south shore of Douglas Lake, Cheboygan County, Michigan. The Particular region studied (see map) lies on the east side and north end of the Point between the road and the lake. The habitat varies from about fifty to a hundred yards wide and is about ~~five~~ hundred yards long.

For convenience in recording the region was divided into seven parts of about equal area. Areas No. 1 and 7 (see map) are the beach regions. Both of these areas have part of the beach sand; part of it rocky; and part covered with a Carex association. The rocky region is at the north-east tip of the Point.

Area No. 2 is located at the west end of the habitat and has an aspen association growing on it. The Aspen are large trees and there are many shrubs and small hardwood trees growing among them. On the ice ridge at the north side of the area are found several large maple trees and many grapevines. Willows; Wild Cherry; Alder; Pteris; and Blue-berries are found among the Aspens. The land is

low and damp. Just in back of the ridge which has been formed by the ice is a narrow boggy strip of land which had a few inches of water on it during July but was dry in August.

Areas Nos. 3,4,5, and 6 are much alike in being hardwoods associations with the maples as dominate trees; all are on high land and have a steep bank to the beach, except No. 6 and part of No. 5 which slope into a lowland forest of hardwood before the beach is reached. There are a few clumps of Sumach and some Wild Cherries along the road but in general the plants of the region are not used for food but do provide a cover not only for the birds but for insects which the birds feed on

Insects

Insects were very abundant through-out the region until about August 1, especially mosquitoes; after that time they were greatly reduced in number. Since all the young birds of the region were flying by August 1, it is reasonable to think that the birds of this habitat all raise their young when the insect population is the greatest.

Climatic Conditions

The climatic conditions were about average for the region during the time of this study; except that very little rain was had. It rained only twice during July but in August there were showers on seven days. The temperature ranged from a high of 93 degrees on July 24, to a low of 47 on July 16. It was observed that on the colder mornings the birds were found in the open sunny places while during the warm part of the day they were to be found in the shade of the woods.

Feeding Areas

A number of feeding areas were observed. Over-head Purple Martins and Nighthawks regularly fed; especially in the evening. The soft lowland of area No. 6 was used by a pair of Robins and a Woodcock. Along the rocky part of areas Nos. 1 and 7 Spotted Sandpipers hunted for insects. Redstarts were often found in the Sumach patch of area No. 5 early in the morning but later in the day were more often found in near-by Maples. Red-eyed Vireos; a Wood Pewee; and a family of Black Ducks used area No. 2 as a feeding ground.

Territories

The following territories were not studied in any great detail but are based on seeing the birds in the region on several different occasions. Four Redstart territories were found. The first two were in adjacent corners, near the road, of areas Nos. 5 and 6; these territories seemed to overlap; at least both families used the same Sumach patch as a feeding area. A third was determined by seeing the male, and sometimes the female, on each trip to the central part of area No. 3. A fourth was determined by a nest placed at the west end of area No. 2 and by seeing the family of birds; however, these birds spent most of their time off of the region studied. A Wood Pewee was always found in area No. 2 but was never seen defending the territory in any way.

Bird Population

About nineteen individual birds could always be found in the habitat but occasionally this number was increased by the addition of outsiders. These birds were quite evenly distributed over the

region and for the most part were insectivorous birds. The following is a detailed list of the birds.

Common Loon

The Common Loon was seen feeding on three different occasions along the shore of area No. 6. At no time was it seen on land, nor were any tracks observed. It was generally over water which was several feet deep, a place where brush shelters ^{have} ~~has~~ been made for fish.

Common Tern

This bird was seen flying near the shore on several occasions, and observed plunging into the water in search of food.

Black Duck

One female with a brood of nine Black Ducks was seen off shore of area No. 1; twice on the shore, and twice found feeding in the boggy area of No. 2.

The brood was hatched across the Lake at Sedge Pool but because of so much disturbance by collectors in that region they moved out about the 12th. of July and perhaps came directly to Grapevine Point. Here they, according to their tracks, spent much of their time along the sandy beach of area No. 1. Once the adult was separated from the young but the young were so well hidden on shore they could not be found.

Great Blue Heron

One Great Blue Heron was seen in the shallow water off area No. 1 early on the morning of July 29. On one other occasion tracks were seen on area No. 7. Perhaps these birds feed occasionally here early in the morning but because of the passing boats are not found here at other times.

Woodcock

A woodcock was first seen on July 29 and twice after that on area No. 6. On the occasions it was flushed it was necessary to walk within a few feet of it before it flew. Considering the difficulty of flushing the bird it is not improbable that it has been a regular resident of the region. The ground is damp and soft, a good place for it to feed, and has much ground vegetation for cover.

Spotted Sandpiper

On every trip which carried me to the beach areas Spotted Sandpipers were seen. There seemed to be about six individuals which regularly inhabited the beach areas. They were most commonly seen on the north-east part of the Point; this region is rocky and therefore many insects find shelter here. The Spotties spend much of their time looking over the rocks for insects.

No nests of these birds were found. This is perhaps due to the lateness of the survey or perhaps the birds nest farther up the beach and use the region studied only as a feeding ground.

Sharp-shinned Hawk

A nest, perhaps of the Sharp-shinned Hawk, was found in the top of a Maple tree which was covered with grapevines. The nest was about thirty feet above the ground and had three eggs in it, all of which had been punctured, perhaps by a crow. The nest had been abandoned and no adults were seen.

Kingfishers

Two Kingfishers were found to perch on limbs which over-hang

the beach on area No. 6. From their perch they would fly out and dive after which came within their range. This took place over the brush shelters which had been placed there for fish.

For some reason these birds were seen more often in the evening than at other times; however, this may be due to the fact that much of the morning work was done in the woods and not on shore.

Cuckoo

One old Cuckoo's nest was found on area No. 6 but no living birds were seen.

Nighthawks

Nighthawks were seen flying over the area in search of food most every evening but none were ever found on the ground.

Wood Pewee

One Wood Pewee was found on every trip to area No. 2. The bird usually sat on dead limbs of the Aspens about twenty feet above the ground. From these perches it would fly out, between songs, in search of insects. No nests were found in the area but perhaps the young had flown.

Cowbird

On only one occasion was an adult Cowbird seen on the babatat; though they were seen near by on several occasions. One young Cowbird was raised by a family of Redstarts. On one occasion, several days after the bird had left the nest, a young Cowbird with Redstarts was seen; this is perhaps the same one which was hatched.

Goldfinch

No Goldfinch were seen on the habitat but they were seen flying over the area on two different occasions.

Scarlet Tanager

One male Scarlet Tanager was seen in area No. 2. It stopped to feed for a few minutes and then moved on.

Purple Martin

Purple Martins regularly flew over the Point and along the shore in search of insects.

Cedar Waxwing

A family of four Cedar Waxwings were seen in area No. 6 on two occasions and in area No. 2 on one occasion. The young may have been hatched near by and they came in on the area only to feed.

Redstart

Four Redstart families were found on the habitat. One family in area No. 6; one in No. 5; one in No. 3; and one in No. 2. They have been described in the first part of the paper.

Black-capped Chickadee

During the first week of this study Chickadees were seen on area No. 3. Evidently a family but after that, except on one occasion when they were seen in area No. 2, they were always seen outside the area though near by.

Robin

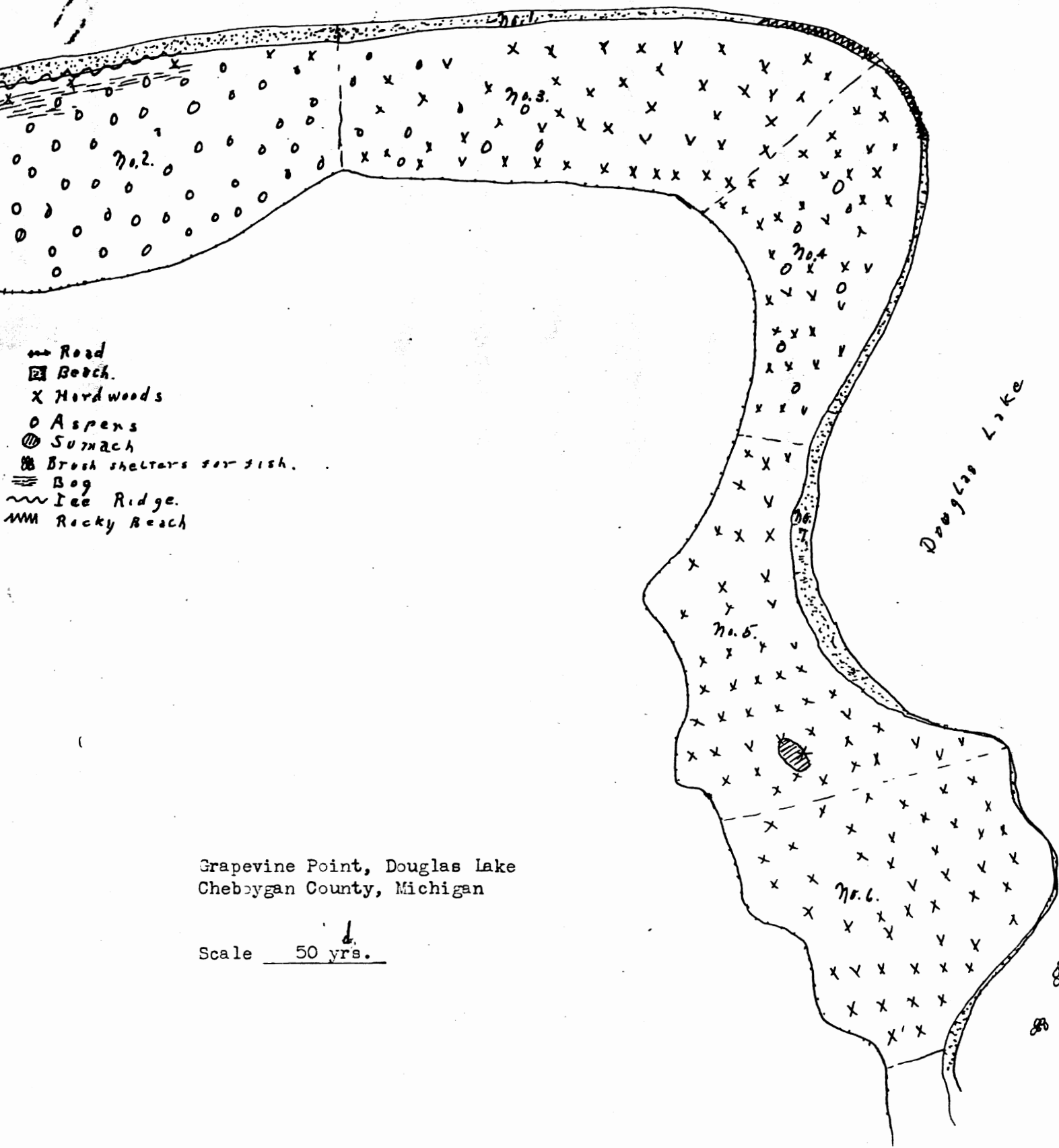
Two Robins were commonly seen in area No. 6. No nests or young were seen; therefore it is quite probable that the area was used as a feeding area as they were usually seen hunting food on the ground.

Conclusion

The Grapevine Point area is well adapted as a habitat for insectivorous birds and some shore birds but there is not much food for seed and fruit eaters.

Summary

1. This study was made at Grapevine Point from July 15 to August 10, 1939.
2. The region was divided into seven parts for convenience of recording.
3. There are four plant associations; the Carex or beach association; the Aspen association; and the upland and lowland Maple association.
4. Insects were most plentifully before August.
5. Climatic conditions have been quite normal.
6. There are about eight feeding areas on, above or off shore of the habitat.
7. The number of individual birds to be found in the area at most any time numbered about nineteen.
8. Nineteen different species of birds were known to have been on the region studied.
9. The region is well adapted to insect^{sect}ivorous birds.



Grapevine Point, Douglas Lake
 Cheboygan County, Michigan

Scale 50 yrs.