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NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF ALGER COUNTY,
MICHIGAN

BY NORMAN A. WOOD

One of the most interesting regions in Michigan to the naturalist is the Upper Peninsula. Since 1903 the Museum of Zoology has been investigating the animals and plants of this region and much of the work accomplished has been made possible by the Hon. George Shiras 3rd, who has a keen interest in the study of the fauna of the state and has contributed toward the expenses of several of the expeditions. In 1916, Mr. Shiras, in addition to other aid, placed his delightful summer home in Alger County, Peter White Camp, at the disposal of the Museum and the work was conducted in its vicinity. One paper¹ upon the results of this expedition has appeared and several more are in preparation.

The camp is situated in the northwest corner of Alger County, about four miles south of Deerton on the Whitefish River. The region studied lies largely to the south of Onota and Deerton and is a roughly triangular area about ten miles

¹ Wood, Norman A. Notes on the Mammals of Alger County, Michigan. Occ. Pap., Museum of Zoology, Univ. of Mich., No. 36.

on a side, bounded in a general way by Silver Lake, Howe's Lake, Deerton and Deer Lake. It is underlaid with sandstone, which, though never far from the surface, only outcrops along the lakes and rivers. The Whitefish River forms the main drainage system for the region.

In general the country is flat without notable relief. Four lakes were studied in detail. Whitefish Lake, which occupies a deep gorge through which runs the Whitefish River, has been made famous by Mr. Shiras' flash light pictures of animals. Howe's Lake is a rather large, shallow body of water with a muddy bottom and soft and marshy shores. It was a favorite resort for loons, black ducks and mergansers. Silver Lake is much smaller than the preceding and the shores are heavily forested. Barn swallows, house wrens, bronzed grackles and red-winged blackbirds were found breeding there. Cranberry Lake is little more than a small pond in a spruce-cedar-tamarack swamp a mile northeast of Peter White Camp. Here the Lincoln's sparrow was heard singing in July, and white-throated sparrows were abundant. A fifth and larger lake, Deer Lake, is situated near Deerton. Its shores are largely rocky except for a sandy area on the east. As few birds were noted at Deer Lake, it is of little importance in this report.

The whole region is covered with a heavy hardwood forest composed chiefly of hard maple, yellow birch and beech, with local mixtures of hemlock. White pine is scattered throughout the forest but never occurs in pure stands. Basswood and ironwood are usually present, while in the swamps spruce, balsam and arbor-vitae abound. Along the rivers the flats are covered with white elm and black ash; of the former a few immense trees occur in the hardwood forest about Silver Lake.

At the west end of Howe's Lake is a large tamarack swamp, while a smaller one lies at the end of Cranberry Lake.

Clearings occur along the railroad right of way. These have been repeatedly burned over, and farms have been started near the small stations of Onota, Deerton and Rock River. One extensive clearing designated as Schaffer's clearing, a rather recently made one extending from Onota almost to Whitefish Lake, formed an important habitat for birds that nest or feed in the open. It is thickly covered with grass, which attracts such birds as the meadow lark, vesper sparrow and blue bird.

As would be expected of a region so diverse as to offer conditions from cultivated farm lands to original forest, the bird life was interesting and abundant both in numbers of species and individuals. Inasmuch as the period of observation extended from May 24 to July 27 both migrants and breeding birds are recorded in the following list.

LIST OF SPECIES.

1. *Gavia immer* (Brünn.). Loon.—First recorded on May 27 on Howe's Lake. One adult was noted almost daily on Whitefish Lake, where it was joined on July 23 by a young bird.

2. *Larus argentatus* Pontopp. Herring Gull.—The herring gull is probably only a straggler from Lake Superior in this region as it was only occasionally observed. It was first recorded on May 25.

3. *Sterna hirundo* Linn. Common Tern.—This tern has been observed during the spring migration. (Shiras.)

4. *Mergus americanus* Cass. Merganser.—This species is not uncommon during the spring and fall migrations. (Shiras.)

5. *Lophodytes cuculatus* (Linn.). Hooded Merganser.—On May 25 an adult female and on June 15 eight young of this species were observed on Whitefish Lake.

6. *Anas platyrhynchos* Linn. Mallard.—On July 21 a pair of adult mallards appeared on Silver Lake. They were more common during migration.

7. *Anas rubripes* Brewst. Black Duck.—This species occasionally breeds in the region. A pair of adults was seen on Whitefish Lake on May 25, and on June 3 ten young were swimming about in the river.

8. *Mareca americana* (Gmel.). Baldpate.—A spring and fall migrant. (Shiras.)

9. *Nettion carolinense* (Gmel.). Green-winged Teal.—A migrant. (Shiras.)

10. *Querquedula discors* (Linn.). Blue-winged Teal.—Like the preceding species this teal has been reported only during the migration seasons. (Shiras.)

11. *Dafila acuta* (Linn.). Pintail.—A rare migrant. (Shiras.)

12. *Aix sponsa* (Linn.). Wood Duck.—This species has been observed to nest occasionally in the region. (Shiras.)

13. *Marila americana* (Eyton). Redhead.—A rare migrant. (Shiras.)

14. *Marila valisineria* (Wilson). Canvas-back.—Occasionally observed during migration. Mr. Shiras shot a female during the fall of 1915.

15. *Marila marila* (Linn.). Scaup Duck.—Fairly abundant during migration. (Shiras.)

16. *Marila affinis* (Eyton). Lesser Scaup Duck.—More common than the preceding species. (Shiras.)

17. *Clangula clangula americana* Bonap. Golden-eye.—A spring and fall migrant. (Shiras.)

18. *Charitonetta albeola* (Linn.). Buffle-head.—Common during migration. (Shiras.)

19. *Erismatura jamaicensis* (Gmel.). Ruddy Duck.—A rare migrant. Mr. Shiras shot a female in the fall of 1915.

20. *Branta canadensis canadensis* (Linn.). Canada Goose.—Common during migration. (Shiras.) In the spring of 1916 Mr. Anderson saw a big flock light on the marsh along the river.

21. *Botaurus lentiginosus* (Montagu). Bittern.—This species is occasionally seen at the edge of Whitefish Lake and a nest with young was found near Rumley in July, 1916.

22. *Ardea herodias herodias* Linn. Great Blue Heron.—A pair of adults was seen daily about the river and lake in 1916.

23. *Rallus virginianus* Linn. Virginia Rail.—Mr. Shiras has a few records for this species.

24. *Porzana carolina* (Linn.). Sora.—Common during the fall migration. (Shiras.)

25. *Gallinula galeata* (Licht.). Florida Gallinule.—Rare. (Shiras.)

26. *Fulica americana* Gmel. American Coot.—Only observed during migration. (Shiras.)

27. *Philohela minor* (Gmel.). Woodcock.—Noted occasionally along the river.

28. *Gallinago delicata* (Ord.). Wilson's Snipe.—A common migrant. (Shiras.)

29. *Pisobia minutilla* (Vieill.). Least Sandpiper.—A rare fall migrant. (Shiras.)

30. *Totanus melanoleucus* (Gmel.). Greater Yellow-legs.—Specimens of this species were taken in the big marsh north of Peter White Camp by Mr. Anderson in the spring of 1916.

31. *Totanus flavipes* (Gmel.). Yellow-legs.—This is a more common migrant than the preceding species. (Shiras.)

32. *Helodromas solitarius solitarius* (Wilson). Solitary Sandpiper.—First observed on May 25. Adults with young of the year were on Whitefish Lake on July 11. Although the species has never been known to nest in Michigan, this record seems to indicate such a possibility. At least a journey of a hundred miles seems a difficult flight for such young birds.

33. *Actitis macularia* (Linn.). Spotted Sandpiper.—A pair of these sandpipers evidently nested in the region as they were seen daily. An adult with three newly hatched young was observed at Onota on June 25.

34. *Oxyechus vociferus* (Linn.). Killdeer.—An adult and three young were recorded at Onota on June 25 and another pair on June 26 at the big marsh north of Peter White Camp.

35. *Canachites canadensis canace* (Linn.). Canada Spruce Grouse.—Rarely observed. (Shiras.)

36. *Bonasa umbellus togata* (Linn.). Canada Ruffed Grouse.—Two broods of young were recorded on July 14 but the species was not common. This may have been due to the scarcity of food in the region.

37. *Accipiter velox* (Wilson). Sharp-shinned Hawk.—Evidently rare as it was observed but twice during the summer of 1916.

38. *Accipiter cooperi* (Bonap.). Cooper's Hawk.—A rare resident. Recorded on May 31, June 9 and June 22.

39. *Buteo borealis borealis* (Gmel.). Red-tailed Hawk.—Observed on July 13 and 14 at the south end of Whitefish Lake and on July 21 at Silver Lake.

40. *Astur atricapillus atricapillus* (Wilson). Goshawk.—Common during spring and fall migrations. (Shiras.) Recorded on May 28 near Peter White Camp.

41. *Buteo lineatus lineatus* (Gmel.). Red-shouldered Hawk.—Observed but once, on May 24, near Peter White Camp.

42. *Buteo platypterus* (Vieill.). Broad-winged Hawk.—The most common nesting hawk in the region. Observed daily during June and July.

43. *Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus* (Linn.). Bald Eagle.—Rare. An immature specimen was taken on Whitefish Lake in 1905.

44. *Falco sparverius sparverius* Linn. Sparrow Hawk.—A rare resident. First observed on July 9 in a clearing near Deerton.

45. *Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis* (Linn.). Osprey.—First noted on June 8 on Whitefish Lake.

46. *Strix varia varia* Barton. Barred Owl.—Observed on July 17 and occasionally heard calling at night.

47. *Bubo virginianus pallescens* Stone. Western Horned Owl.—This species was not observed but the call was heard frequently and specimens have been trapped in fall and winter by the caretaker at Peter White Camp.

48. *Nyctea nyctea* (Linn.). Snowy Owl.—A fall and winter resident. (Shiras.)

49. *Coccyzus americanus americanus* (Linn.). Yellow-billed Cuckoo.—Occasionally seen. (Shiras.)

50. *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (Wilson). Black-billed Cuckoo.—Rare. First noted on June 24 in the hardwoods south of Peter White Camp.

51. *Ceryle alcyon* (Linn.). Belted Kingfisher.—Not common. A pair nested in a low gravel pit at the edge of the Whitefish River.

52. *Dryobates villosus villosus* (Linn.). Hairy Woodpecker.—First recorded on June 8. Only occasionally observed.

53. *Dryobates pubescens medianus* (Swains.). Downy Woodpecker.—More common than the preceding species but rarer than one would expect in a region of hardwoods.

54. *Sphyrapicus varius varius* (Linn.). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.—A common breeder in the hardwood forests, where numbers were seen daily. Many of the trees, especially hemlocks and mountain ash, were thickly perforated with their work: some were completely girdled. During July the young ones seemed to live entirely on the dying trees.

55. *Phæotomus pileatus abieticola* (Bangs). Northern Pileated Woodpecker.—This species was rare and its work was seldom seen. On May 25 an adult male was observed on a dead spruce near Whitefish Lake.

56. *Colaptes auratus luteus* Bangs. Northern Flicker.—Rare. Recorded on June 5 at the edge of Whitefish Lake and on July 22 at a clearing near Peter White Camp.

57. *Chordeils virginianus virginianus* (Gmel.). Night-hawk.—This species nested in the clearings near Deerton and was occasionally seen flying over Whitefish Lake at twilight.

58. *Chætura pelagica* (Linn.). Chimney Swift.—Two pair of chimney swifts nested about the buildings at Peter White Camp and in July eight young appeared with the adults.

59. *Archilochus colubris* (Linn.). Ruby-throated Hummingbird.—A common resident. A pair nested near Peter White Camp and were around all summer.

60. *Tyrannus tyrannus* (Linn.). Kingbird.—Not common. A pair nested at the north end of Whitefish Lake, and the species was recorded on June 29 at Silver Lake and on July 27 at Deerton.

61. *Sayornis phæbe* (Latham). Phoebe.—A common resident which nested under all the bridges in the region.

62. *Nuttallornis borealis* (Swains.). Olive-sided Flycatcher.—Observed on May 24 at the edge of Whitefish Lake and occasionally after that.

63. *Myiochanes virens* (Linn.). Wood Pewee.—Occasionally observed in the hardwoods.

64. *Empidonax trailli alnorum* Brews. Alder Flycatcher.—Not rare among the alders along the river and the north end of Whitefish Lake.

65. *Empidonax minimus* (W. M. & F. S. Baird). Least Flycatcher.—The most common flycatcher. Observed daily in the woods about Peter White Camp.

66. *Cyanocitta cristata cristata* (Linn.). Blue Jay.—Several pair of this species nested in the woods about Peter White Camp, where they visited the food boxes daily.

67. *Corvus corax principalis* Ridgw. Northern Raven.—A flock of seven ravens, five of which were young, were observed on May 27 in the hardwoods near Peter White Camp. They were seen frequently during the summer soaring and sailing in circles like hawks.

68. *Corvus brachyrhynchos brachyrhynchos* Brehm. Crow.—A pair of crows, the only ones observed in the region, nested in a pine near Peter White Camp and were frequently seen chasing the ravens away from the vicinity of their nests. The young left the nest on June 11.

69. *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* (Linn.). Bobolink.—Rare. Last observed in 1913. (Shiras.)

70. *Molothrus ater ater* (Bodd.). Cowbird.—The species was recorded on May 31, June 19, and July 19, from the vicinity of Peter White Camp.

71. *Agelaius phœniceus phœniceus* (Linn.). Red-winged Blackbird.—Observed on May 25 at Whitefish Lake, on June 7 at Silver Lake, and on June 2 among the tag alders along the river.

72. *Sturnella magna magna* (Linn.). Meadowlark.—Rare in the vicinity of Peter White Camp although they are common a few miles east. Recorded on June 25 near Rock River and on July 14 just east of Whitefish Lake.

73. *Icterus galbula* (Linn.). Baltimore Oriole.—Rare. A single specimen was noted at the edge of the river near Whitefish Lake.²

74. *Quiscalus quiscula æneus* Ridgw. Bronzed Grackle.—On June 7 a pair and young of the year were seen at Whitefish Lake and in July the species was occasionally observed around Peter White Camp, but it was not common.

75. *Carpodacus purpureus purpureus* (Gmel.). Purple Finch.—Frequently seen in the clearing at Peter White Camp and in the hardwoods.

76. *Acanthis linaria linaria* (Linn.). Redpoll.—Common during the migrations. (Shiras.).

77. *Astragalinus tristis tristis* (Linn.). Goldfinch.—This species came to feed daily on the dandelion seeds in the clearing about Peter White Camp. It was also observed on June 7 at Whitefish Lake and at Deerton and Onota in July.

78. *Spinus pinus* (Wilson). Pine Siskin.—Noted on May 27 at the river's edge.

79. *Poœcetes gramineus gramineus* (Gmel.). Vesper Sparrow.—Rare. They were observed near Peter White Camp on May 31 and July 14 and at Onota on July 9.

² Barrows (Michigan Bird Life) gives Van's Harbor, Delta County, which is fifty miles southwest of Peter White Camp, as the northernmost record for the state.

80. *Zonotrichia albicollis* (Gmel.). White-throated Sparrow.—Occasionally seen in the hardwood forest about Peter White Camp. Much more common in the burnings and clearings near Deerton and Onota.

81. *Spizella passerina passerina* (Bechstein). Chipping Sparrow.—This species nested commonly in the shrubs and visited the food boxes regularly for seeds.

82. *Spizella pusilla pusilla* (Wilson). Field Sparrow.—A rare resident. It was seen but twice, on June 25 and July 14, in meadows.

83. *Junco hyemalis hyemalis* (Linn.). Slate-colored Junco.—This species was abundant around the clearings and burnings. A pair nested near Peter White Camp and visited the food boxes daily.

84. *Melospiza melodia melodia* (Wilson). Song Sparrow.—A common resident. Seen frequently along the edges of the rivers and streams, where they fed close to the water's edge.

85. *Melospiza lincolni lincolni* (Aud.). Lincoln's Sparrow.—Rare. A single specimen was heard singing in a small bog at Cranberry Lake, July 24. This was a male with enlarged testes, indicating that it might have been nesting in the region. So far as the writer has been able to determine, this is the first summer record for this sparrow in Michigan.

86. *Melospiza georgiana* (Lath.). Swamp Sparrow.—Observed on May 25. Probably a migrant as no more were noted.

87. *Passer domesticus domesticus* (Linn.). English Sparrow.—Not recorded from Peter White Camp but common at Deerton and Onota.

88. *Zamelodia ludoviciana* (Linn.). Rose-breasted Grosbeak.—Observed occasionally during June and July. A pair were often to be seen feeding in a potato patch near camp.

89. *Passerina cyanea* (Linn.). Indigo Bunting.—Mr. Shiras has records for this species near Peter White Camp.

90. *Piranga erythromelas* Vieill. Scarlet Tanager.—Probably only a migrant inasmuch as only one was seen, May 29.

91. *Petrochelidon lunifrons lunifrons* (Say). Cliff Swallow.—Recorded only on July 14, when three were feeding over Whitefish Lake.

92. *Hirundo erythrogastra* Bodd. Barn Swallow.—On June 7 a pair of barn swallows were building a nest in a boat house at Silver Lake, on June 25 a nest with four young was found in an old shed at Onota, and in July several were observed feeding over Whitefish Lake.

93. *Iridoprocne bicolor* (Vieill.). Tree Swallow.—A pair fed daily about the clearing and over the river and lake. On June 26 two nests were found in an old burning.

94. *Bombycilla garrula* (Linn.). Bohemian Waxwing.—Occasionally seen during migrations.

95. *Bombycilla cedrorum* Vieill. Cedar Waxwing.—Common. In May a flock of about twenty came daily to the apple trees at Peter White Camp.

96. *Lanius ludovicianus migrans* W. Palmer. Migrant Shrike.—Recorded as rare by Mr. Shiras.

97. *Vireosylva gilva gilva* (Vieill.). Warbling Vireo.—Occasionally seen in the hardwoods.

98. *Mniotilta varia* (Linn.). Black and White Warbler.—This species was seen occasionally from May 27 until the last of July.

99. *Vermivora peregrina* (Wilson). Tennessee Warbler.—Listed only on May 27.

100. *Dendroica aestiva aestiva* (Gmel.). Yellow Warbler.—The writer saw two yellow warblers on May 25 at the edge of Whitefish Lake. These were the only ones noted.

101. *Dendroica caerulescenes caerulescens* (Gmel.). Black-throated Blue Warbler.—Not uncommon in the heavy hardwood forests. An adult and young were seen July 11 west of Whitefish Lake.

102. *Dendroica coronata* (Linn.). Myrtle Warbler.—An adult and young were noted on July 24 near the edge of Whitefish Lake, and the species was not uncommon in the spruce-hemlock forest.

103. *Dendroica pensylvanica* (Linn.). Chestnut-sided Warbler.—Observed occasionally in May and June. On July 19 a female with young of the year was found in the second growth forest near Deerton.

104. *Dendroica castanea* (Wilson). Bay-breasted Warbler.—Not observed after May 27, when two were flushed from conifers near the river.

105. *Dendroica fusca* (Müller). Blackburnian Warbler.—Fairly common among the hemlocks. Adults and young were seen near Whitefish Lake on July 24.

106. *Dendroica virens* (Gmel.). Black-throated Green Warbler.—A common summer resident in the spruce-hemlock forest. Adults and young were recorded on July 24 near the edge of Whitefish Lake.

107. *Seiurus aurocapillus* (Linn.). Oven-bird.—Frequently observed during July and August in the heavy hardwood forest.

108. *Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis* Ridgw. Grinnell's Water-Thrush.—Abundant during June and July about the shore of the lake and river. The first young were recorded on July 25.

109. *Geothlypis trichas trichas* (Linn.). Maryland Yellowthroat.—On June 8 a few migrating yellow-throats appeared in the dense growth of tag alders near the river and lakes.

110. *Wilsonia canadensis* (Linn.). Canada Warbler.—Not a common resident. Occasionally observed during June and July at the edge of a cedar swamp.

111. *Setophaga ruticilla* (Linn.). Redstart.—Not abundant. Seen most commonly in the hardwoods.

112. *Dumetella carolinensis* (Linn.). Catbird.—A pair of catbirds nested near Peter White Camp in 1915, the only time they had been recorded by Mr. Shiras as residents. On May 26, 1916, one bird came back and fed daily on the suet in the food boxes.

113. *Troglodytes aëdon aëdon* Vieill. House Wren.—This species nested at Peter White Camp in 1915 and in 1916 at Silver Lake. It was not common.

114. *Nannus hiemalis hiemalis* (Vieill.). Winter Wren.—Rare. Recorded on June 20 at Whitefish Lake.

115. *Certhia familiaris americana* Bonap. Brown Creeper.—Observed on May 25 and occasionally after that in the forest near Whitefish Lake.

116. *Sitta carolinensis carolinensis* Lath. White-breasted Nuthatch.—Not abundant. A few visited the suet tree at Peter White Camp. But one pair was known to breed in the region in 1916.

117. *Penthestes atricapillus atricapillus* (Linn.). Chickadee.—Observed in all habitats, but most common among the tag alders on the edge of the river and lakes.

118. *Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni* (Tschudi). Olive-backed Thrush.—Abundant. Its favorite nesting places were among the rocky ravines along the shores of Whitefish Lake.

119. *Planesticus migratorius migratorius* (Linn.). Robin.
—Common everywhere except in the cedar swamps.

120. *Sialia sialis sialis* (Linn.). Bluebird.—A pair of bluebirds were recorded at Peter White Camp on May 24. The only nests were found in the clearings two miles from the camp. The species was also observed at Whitefish Lake, Onota, Deerton and Rock River.

