

BIRDS AND MAN

(By Farley Mowat)

There are about thirteen thousand known species of birds in the world and their total numbers run into untold billions. Each bird manages to exist by a specialized form of life, adapting itself to climatic conditions, food supplies and other external phenomena. A bird lives fast. By that I mean the body temperature, body heat and way of life are extraordinarily speeded up. In flight a bird uses tremendous quantities of energy and as a result of its rapid metabolism it must consume relatively enormous quantities of food. Obviously with birds as common as they are they must exert a very important influence on man, through agriculture particularly. The vast number of insect eating birds for instance are estimated to save the United States about \$700,000,000 annually, the seed eating birds destroy uncountable tons of weed seeds each year. And at the same time certain hawks are preying on poultry, game and fur-bearing animals, blackbirds and robins are causing heavy damage to fruit growers in the southern States.

The job of weighing the value of birds is an immense one. A job that depends on so many factors as to become almost impossible. Yet due to the efforts of ornithologists, the Royal Victoria Museum and the U.S. Biological Survey in particular, summaries of bird importance are now available. By the new method of stomach analysis the actual feeding habits of birds in various localities at different seasons can at last be determined accurately, and the scale of bird values drawn up in understandable form.

The important thing for the farmer is to be able to grasp the relation of birds as a whole, to his welfare, and not the unusual actions of a few birds such as the odd hawk who takes a chicken. He should be able to weigh the consequences of killing the hawk and decide definitely whether he gains or loses by his action. To take an example, suppose a red-tailed hawk kills a hen during the winter when food is scarce and the farmer who owned the chicken promptly shoots all the hawks in his property. During the period of one year it has been determined by examining the stomachs of over 700 red-tailed hawks that one of these birds would destroy upwards to 1460 mice, each mouse having a potential appetite of 2 lbs. of grain, taken in the stook, or by killing green crops. This places the poss-

ible value of the hawk at nearly 3000 pounds of grain. Naturally this figure is not to be taken as meaning that every hawk on your property will save you 3000 pounds of grain, but it does mean that the hawk, killed because it destroyed one or more chickens, had a potential value of over a ton of valuable crops. This value is not obvious, the farmer would not notice one way or the other the hawk's absence, but he does notice the action of the hawk against his poultry and deals with it without paying the slightest bit of attention to the other side of the story. It is this state of affairs, notice of the obvious and ignorance of the hidden conditions, that leads to disaster, a disaster such as occurred in Scotland in 1888-92, when parts of Roxboroughshire, Selkirk, Peebles, Lanark and Dumfries were overrun with a plague of field mice that destroyed practically every living thing. To ascertain the cause of the outbreak and to find a remedy a Royal Commission was appointed and their findings were briefly this:

1. That the effect of the outbreak was to destroy all crops.
2. That the cause of the increase was due to the almost complete destruction of all hawks and owls in the counties by over zealous game wardens and land owners.

Comment on this incident is not needed. However those complacent people who say to themselves that it couldn't happen here would do well to consider that even a slight decrease in the number of hawks means a corresponding increase in destructive rodents and loss of grain.

This mention of the red-tailed hawk is of course very limited to the action of one species. Hawks and Owls taken as a whole have certain harmful tendencies. Of the eleven hawks and five owls that are found commonly in Ontario, two hawks and one owl are definitely detrimental and could be reduced in numbers with no loss to agriculture. However even these hawks have a place in the balance of nature and should they be destroyed we would suffer indirectly.

In dealing specifically with hawks and owls I have merely used them as an illustration of the unseen value or harm carried on by all birds. Because of popular interest in the birds of prey they make a good example but it should be remembered that all birds fill a place that is just as essential, and should be understood just as completely.

For the information of people interested in the economics of hawks and owls particularly I have listed the species of hawks and owls that may be encountered and the principle food items of each. If hawks are bothersome to one individual farmer he should take pains to identify the hawk before killing it. Under no conditions should the big, round winged, soaring hawks ever be killed, they are the world's best mousers.

Sharp-shinned Hawk and Coopers Hawks—Both rather small hawks, commonly called 'Blue Darters' feeding largely on small birds, insects and mice. These two hawks are of the same family and are not beneficial.

Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk. These are the butes or soaring hawks and feed largely or completely on small mammals such as mice, insects and reptiles.

Sparrow Hawk, Pigeon Hawk, Duck Hawk. The sparrow hawk is almost completely an insect eater while the other two of this family, the falcons, eat an almost neutral diet consisting of birds and mice.

Marsh Hawk. A resident of the swamps living largely on meadow mice.

Screech Owl. Mice and insects predominate in this small owl's food. Great Horned Owl. Rabbits, mice, poultry, game and larger game make this owl a potential danger if it gets the habit of chicken eating.

Barred Owl. An owl with no 'ear feathers' living largely on small rodents.

Long and Short-eared Owls. Two of the country's most potent mousers. The Short-eared hunts by day and the Long-eared by night. Their diets are almost completely composed of mice.

In a later article I shall attempt to deal with the economic relations of other birds such as crows, starlings and sparrows etc. But in this article I hope I have opened up a line of thought to farmers and poultrymen who are interested in their own welfare.

Local Notes: John Curzon reports Bohemian Waxwings; Harris Horn reports a flock of spring crows on Feb. 14; From Windsor comes a report that spring migration has already started.

Social and Personal

Everyone invited to the Red Cross Leap Year Dance Friday night.

Miss Elinor Archibald of Toronto visited her cousin, Miss Evelyn G. Follett, this week.

Rev. W. Spurgeon Butt of Tottenham was a visitor in Town Wednesday and visited at the United Church Parsonage.

Mrs. A. L. Phipps is representing Richmond Hill Horticultural Society at the Ontario Convention in Toronto today.

Richmond Lodge A.F. & A.M. annual "At Home" will be held next Wednesday evening. Guests will be received by Mr. Carl Swanson, Ruling Master, and Mrs. Swanson.

Richmond Hill Agricultural Society annual banquet is being held tonight. Prominent members of the Eglinton Hunt Club will be among the guests.

The regular meeting of St. Mary's W.A. will be held at the home of Mrs. R. S. Mason, Yonge Street, on Tuesday next, March 5th at 2.45 p.m. Members are asked to kindly bring in their February contributions to the Cent-a-Meal Fund.

Mrs. Jerry Smith, who is in the General Hospital, Toronto, following a fall on Friday of last week when she had the misfortune to break a bone in her elbow, is progressing favorably. Her many friends in the district wish her a speedy recovery.

Mr. Richard Edmunds, director of the Richmond Hill Glee Club reports an encouraging response to his invitation to all interested in forming a Literary and Dramatic branch of the organization. Anyone interested in promoting such an activity are asked to get in touch with Mr. Edmunds at once.

Mrs. Joseph Graham, Arnold St., celebrated her eighty-seventh birthday on Sunday, February 25th. She received many friends throughout the day and was the recipient of flowers, gifts and cards. Mrs. Graham is enjoying excellent health. The Liberal joins with her many friends in extending congratulations and best wishes.

RICHMOND HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. J. D. Cunningham, B.D., Minister
 Sunday, March 3rd
 11 a.m.—"Five Swords".
 2.30 p.m.—Sunday School.
 7 p.m.—"Saving Lost Ideals".

Every man who goes on praying and loving is putting something into the current that will yet change the stream of history.

RETURN RAIL BARGAIN FARES

March 1st — To Timmins, Noranda, Kapuskasing and other points in the same district.
 March 1-2 — To Capreol, Foleyet, Hornepayne, Geraldton and other points in the same district.
 March 1-2-3 — To Trenton, Belleville, Smith's Falls.
 Particulars from C.N.R. Ticket agents.

The foreman of a gang of railway men had more than his share of Irish wit.

One day he was walking along his section of the line when he found one of his men fast asleep in the shade of a hedge. Eyeing the man with a smile, he said:

"Slape on, ye idle spalpeen, slape on. So long as ye slape ye've got a job, but when ye wake up ye're out of work."

Notice to Creditors AND OTHERS

In the Estate of Flora Isabel McLean

All persons having claims against the estate of Flora Isabel McLean, late of the Village of Richmond Hill, in the County of York, Widow, deceased, who died on or about the 13th day of November, 1939, are hereby notified to send in to the undersigned Personal Representatives of the said deceased on or before the 9th day of March, 1940, full particulars of their claims. Immediately after the said date the said Personal Representatives will distribute the assets of the said deceased having regard only to claims of which they shall then have notice to the exclusion of all others, and they will not be liable to any person of whose claim they shall not then have notice for the assets so distributed or any part thereof.

Dated at Toronto this 12th day of February, 1940.

James Duart McLean and Donald Badgerow Mulholland (Executors)

c/o Fleming, Smoke & Mulholland, 330 Bay St., Toronto, Ontario, Their solicitors herein.

Red Cross Notes

An interesting excerpt from Bulletin No. 6 issued by The Canadian Red Cross Society and received by Richmond Hill Branch on February 24 is as follows:

The National War Work Committee are most desirous that all Branches know of the gratitude and appreciation of the Committee for the magnificent quality and quantity of supplies that the Branches are pouring into the National Warehouse—both Hospital Supplies and Knitting are of the most excellent workmanship and a joy to handle.

All will be glad to know that supplies are being packed and shipped daily overseas in large quantities, and that in England a Committee has been set up to distribute these articles so that over there and on this side, the Army, Air Force and Seamen (both British and Canadian) are receiving the woollens that you have made.

During the month of February two shipments of knitted goods have been sent by the Richmond Hill Red Cross Society to the National Warehouse, consisting of ten Balacava caps, 65 pairs of socks, 26 pairs of wristlets, 16 scarfs, 9 pairs of half-mitts and 3 sweaters.

The regular monthly business meeting of the Society will be held on Wednesday afternoon, March 6th at 3 p.m.

The Richmond Hill Red Cross Society has undertaken to help with a piece of special work—the making of the linings for the metal boxes in which surgical dressings will be sterilized for overseas use. This will be done on the Friday afternoons of March by the sewing committee, which committee will be given the exclusive use of the Work Room for that purpose. On this account, all other ladies who will sew for the Red Cross are asked to be present on Wednesday afternoons only, during March.

See you at the Red Cross Dance in the High School Auditorium on Friday evening, March 1st.

Vaughan Council

The regular March meeting of the Vaughan Township Council will be held in the Township Hall, Vellore

MONDAY, MARCH 4th

11 A.M.

for the transaction of General Business

Dated at Maple this 29th day of February, 1940.

EUCHRE

Another Euchre will be held in the basement of St. Mary's R. C. Church on Tuesday evening, March 5th. Good prizes. Everybody welcome.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

(Anglican)

RICHMOND HILL

Rector: Rev. W. F. Wrxon, L.Th.

4 Markham Road

Sunday, March 3rd Lent 4

11 a.m.—Holy Communion.

3 p.m.—Sunday School.

7 p.m.—Evening Prayer and Sermon.

Subject, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Preaches, Rev. W. S. Pocknell.

The Rector will conduct the services.

Three weeks till Easter. Are we preparing for the great Festival?

RICHMOND HILL UNITED CHURCH

Rev. C. W. Follett, B.D. Pastor

Sunday March 3rd

9.45 a.m.—Sunday School. All Departments.

11 a.m.—Communion service. Sermon subject, Thomas—"The Print of the Nails". Series on "The Associates of Jesus."

7 p.m.—Vesper service. One hour. Inspiring musical features at all services led by Mr. A. Melecci, and his splendid choir. You and your family and friends will receive a cordial welcome.

"Do this in remembrance of Me."

"What's the fundamental difference between a man and a woman?"

"A man will pay \$2 for a \$1 article he wants, while a woman will pay \$1 for a \$2 article she doesn't want."

"I was just saying how forgetful husbands are . . .



THEN
 the Old Scallawag called me
LONG DISTANCE



. . . and put me to shame!" A 300-mile station-to-station call after 7 p.m. (and all day Sunday) usually costs no more than a couple of movie tickets. With rates that low, a fellow can easily keep in touch with his family when he's away from home. Why not call them up . . . tonight?



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 Telephone 177

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 —AND HOW I CAN USE THE MONEY I SAVED!



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