



100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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In 1905, there were over 100 General Notes published in *The Auk*, 70 of which dealt in some manner with new distributional information. Of these reports, 15 were about birds in Massachusetts, 10 were about Michigan, 5 each were about Maine and Colorado, 4 were about Ontario, and 3 each were about Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and British Columbia. In total, reports came from 20 states and 2 provinces. Two reports (*Auk* 22:81–82; 22:82) concerned the occurrence of Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) in Yuma County, Colorado, in summer and fall of 1904, and two reports (*Auk* 22:77; 22:319) were about Little Blue Herons (*Egretta caerulea*) in Massachusetts in 1904: a dark-phase bird on Martha's Vineyard in April and a light-phase female in southeastern Massachusetts (Sandwich) in early August. One report (*Auk* 22:85) referred to a specimen of Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*) collected in northern Florida in spring of 1904. The author stated that the bird was with others of the same species, but only one was collected because he only realized he had shot a Bachman's Warbler after retrieving the specimen. Another report (*Auk* 22:314) was of a female Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) collected in spring migration in 1904 near Richmond, Indiana.

In a note entitled "Do migrants fast?" (*Auk* 22:320–321), W. L. McAtee presented the common notion of the time that birds migrate on empty stomachs and, indeed, he stated that he had examined the stomachs of more than a hundred migrants and they were all essentially empty. However, when a large number of migrants hit the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., on the night of 6–7 May 1905 and McAtee was able to examine them, he discovered, for an unknown number of "mostly warblers," that the stomachs were indeed empty, but the intestines were full of food material, leading him to conclude that migrants do not fast prior to migration.

In a note entitled "A Killdeer's mishap" (*Auk* 22:209–210), H. H. Kopman related finding a

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) prostrate on the ground on a golf course at Audubon Park in New Orleans, Louisiana. Upon closer examination, he determined the bird's foot had been dragged down a hole and that a creature was holding the bird down and appeared to be eating the toes of the bird. He was able to free the bird, clean the wounds, and release it the following day. Kopman speculated that the creature in question was a large crayfish, but he was baffled as to how a crayfish could catch a Killdeer.

As mentioned in previous columns, the question of animal intelligence was still being hotly debated. In a note (*Auk* 22:89–90) about a captive female Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Chreswell J. Hunt related her ability to manipulate a perch rod in her cage to gain a better view out a window. Although he acknowledged that she may have learned this by accident, nonetheless he believed that she acted like she was doing it on purpose. In another observation, he placed a male Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) in the cage with the female. He fed the cardinal sunflower seeds, which the female could not open. Apparently, she quickly "learned" to steal the sunflower seeds from the cardinal, after the male had cracked the seed but before he could eat the kernel. Hunt concluded, "In obtaining these ends the blackbird seemed to show some instinctive or mental faculty which, if not identical, is apparently very similar to the reasoning powers of man."

Given recent events in eastern Arkansas, it might be important to remember this report (*Auk* 22:414) by Arthur T. Wayne:

A Rare Plumage of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*)

A superb specimen of this magnificent woodpecker, which I obtained on February 19, 1894, in Jefferson County, Florida, has the ends of all the longer primaries (except the 3[r]d and 4th) pure white. This specimen is an adult male in very

high nuptial plumage, and is No. 3002 of my register. An adult female, which also was taken in Jefferson County, closely resembles the above male in the peculiar pattern of the primaries.

From a series of many specimens that I

collected in different parts of Florida in the years 1892, 1893, and 1894, the two birds above described are the only ones, as far as I can recall, that were marked peculiarly as regards the longer primaries.

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