

# Toronto Field Naturalists' Club

169

## FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday, February 1, 1960, at 8.15 p.m.  
at the  
ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

SPEAKER: Mr. Edgar T. Jones, naturalist and photographer, of Edmonton, Alberta.

SUBJECT: "ALBERTA OUTDOORS" - a film lecture in two parts. "Winter Wildlife" is a trip into the winter scenery of sunny Alberta to see such sights as the lynx, moose, elk, and, with the advance of spring, the spectacular snow goose migration. "Wonders of the Woodlands" takes us into the remote parts of Alberta and shows such highlights as the nesting of the great gray owl and an intimate view of the sharp-tailed grouse on their dancing grounds.

OUTING: Saturday, February 27, at 9.30 a.m. Glendon Hall - Birds. Meet at the entrance gates, 1275 Bayview Ave. Take Davisville bus to Sunnybrook Hospital, then walk north on Bayview. Or take Lawrence East bus to the corner of Bayview and St. Leonard's Ave., right at the Glendon Hall gates. Leader - Mr. John Dex.

BOTANY GROUP: Thursday, February 18, at 8.00 p.m. sharp. Meet in the library, Eglinton Public School, Mt. Pleasant and Eglinton. Speaker: Mr. Ken Armson, Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto. Subject: "Stabilization of sand dunes with particular reference to the sand banks of Prince Edward County."

Sec. - Miss Florence Preston, HU 3-9530.

JUNIOR CLUB: The Junior Field Naturalists' Club will meet at 10.00 a.m. in the Museum Theatre, on Saturday, February 6. Sorry, no more new members will be enrolled this season!

Director - Mr. Don Burton, RU 2-2155.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS: This year's lecture series is proving to be an especially fine one. If you were unable to enrol for the complete series, single tickets will be available at Eaton Auditorium 10 days before each of the final lectures - "The Right to Live" by Chester P. Lyons, Tues. & Wed., March 29th and 30th, and "Designs for Survival" by William Anderson, Wed. & Thurs., April 27th and 28th. Price \$1.25 per ticket.

F.O.N. NEWS: Annual Meeting of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists will be held at Richmond Hill on Saturday, February 20. The highlight of the program will be an address by Mr. Sigurd F. Olson, author of such outstanding books as The Singing Wilderness and Listening Point. Further details available by telephoning the F.O.N. - HI 7-7421. -Young Naturalists. This F.O.N. program now sends a monthly paper, bulletins and other materials to thousands of young people for only \$1.00 a year. More members are needed. May we suggest you enroll a young friend or two, and for teachers, Cub and Brownie leaders, etc., this is a real opportunity. More information from the F.O.N. - HI 7-7421.

President - Mr. A. A. Outram

Secretary - Mrs. H. Robson,  
49 Craighurst Ave.,  
HU 1-0260

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Number 169

January 1960.

With the Christmas census over, the 1959 birding records brought to a close and the days edging toward spring, we would like to take you on a springtime jaunt since nothing spells the end of winter so emphatically for birdwatchers as the "spring trip" in May. For Greer Roberts, John Nettleton, Barney Barnett and myself, the 1959 trip began early the afternoon of May 5th, the time being set by the date of my last oral exam, which was over at noon. We made as far as Albany by 10.00 and put up there for the night.

The next morning we got a good start, being saluted as we parted by a wood thrush singing in the bush outside the motel; by noon we were at Manahawkin, New Jersey, where we got a lunch made up, and went on to Barnegat Light to eat on the beach. Waves crashing on the breakwall, roseate and least terns crying overhead, and the smell of the sea took us quite into another world. We were away from routine, and with the birds. A little patch of woods behind the lighthouse gave us views of several migrant warblers and other birds, staying for the day and getting the best meal they could. The stunted growth here made seeing easy since all the birds were brought to eye level or below. The birds seen, beginning with two prairie warblers and ending with two scarlet tanagers, launched us well on our hunt.

Following Pettingill's indications in his Guide to Bird Finding we stopped at one place on the bay side of the island about a mile and a half south of Barnegat Light, and walked out into the eel-grass meadows. At least Greer and I did. A line of shorebirds along a drainage ditch lured us out farther and farther until we found a spot to cross the ditch and get into the salt meadow. Quickly we then encountered one sharp-tailed sparrow after another as they shot out of the eel-grass a few feet before we reached them. One bird, evidently feeling itself well-hidden, gave us a perfect chance of observation as it picked its way along the edge of a tidal channel. We had turned back and were attempting to regain the road by a different route when we were forced to go

all the way back to our original crossing of the ditch because of an unsuspected channel. What a good thing that proved! For shortly after the turn I became aware of something running in the short grass. As I called to Greer this creature--a bird as it now appeared--came to a spot where the grass thinned. It ran right across this, and then, as we stepped up our pace and pressed closer behind, the little bird jumped into the air, fluttered a few feet barely above the grass and dipped out of sight. Could we raise it again? I'll say not, even though we tramped, ran through, and scoured the surroundings. Still, we had seen the bird we had come to this marsh especially for; we had seen a black rail! No larger than a house sparrow, with longer legs than a sparrow, its running habit, fluttering flight, reluctance to stay in sight, were all the manners of a rail. The sparrows we were putting up all around shot out and flew some distance. This bird barely remained in the air a second and its flight was quite different. It jumped or leaped up rather than shooting up, flew weakly, obviously preferring to run. I had seen a black rail once before, Greer never. The chances of getting one into view even for so brief a glimpse as this are so slight that we felt our brief look to be a great triumph. Too bad our companions had felt it necessary to stay behind.

During the afternoon we made our way to Tuckerton and out along the marsh road which wanders across the salt meadows and tidal channels to the Coast Guard Station at the mouth of Great Bay. Birds grew more and more numerous the farther we went--shore birds, herons and egrets, and waterfowl--until at the end of the road we found ourselves in the company of 700 brant, half on the beach, half just off shore, the nearest birds being less than a hundred yards away. Given a feeling of security by protection in this area all during the winter months these birds showed scarcely any fear of men. One part of the flock swam out a little then returned when we showed no hostile activity. Now we could watch them feeding, pulling up bits of seaweed, washing and preening, sleeping with heads tucked under wing, all at a range where binoculars and balscope were hardly necessary. They made little noise, though occasionally one would offer a low barking or grunting sound, and this would be echoed in the flock. When a few birds shifted their position, flying along before us, the beautiful white and black pattern in the tails was most noticeable and attractive. None of us had ever been on such close terms with a group of brant. It was really one of the most gratifying experiences of the trip.

That night we spent at Smithville near the entrance to the Brigantine refuge. Next day we went straight to the refuge, our visit here commencing with a royal welcome by a blue-winged warbler right at the first wood. We tracked it down by the song so that everyone could get a good look. Land birds were in good song all along the road. We added several to our growing list of spring arrivals. But it was the dikes and the marshes we were mainly interested in here so we drove on until, having registered at the refuge headquarters and picked up maps of the dikes, we rolled down the hill onto the marsh.

In contrast to last year, when we could only go part of the way out on the dikes, we were now able to traverse their whole length save for one spot on the dike at the east end of the first pond where a break was being repaired. Also, except for road machinery up to that point, and one other carful of birders--(two elderly ladies in an expensive black limousine being chauffeured around!) we were all along--the area was for the time our private

preserve. The dikes run out for two miles across the marsh, with connecting dikes at the first mile and at the end. It is possible to enter from the headquarters and return by way of a back road off the northern dike, thereby providing two blocks of marsh, each a mile square, to cover.

Cover it we did with great care, and we were hours in doing so for you could scarcely proceed a few feet without seeing more birds and something new. Glossy ibis, eleven of them, were continually flying back and forth beside us, or stopping to feed. Once again we were deeply impressed by the coppery red beauty of these sickle-billed birds as they stand in the sun, and by their approachability. Of course, in this protected area few birds, even the migrants, showed alarm. If we went along slowly and quietly, virtually every bird we saw stayed nearby, feeding or carrying on without regard. Thus, the most favorable conditions imaginable for observing exist here. Little wonder it took us hours to make the round. From ibis to sandpipers, dozens and scores, to cormorants massed on a muddy islet--among them a "common" or "European"--to red-throated loons, to a crowd of great blue herons and curlew gliding down to drink from fresh water, we went. An hour was gone.

Along the next dike, clapper rails were running and fighting, jabbering like a Midway show, every yard of the way. Once we were halted when I saw a dusky little sparrow dart from shelter to shelter below us on the left side of the dike. When we got out to investigate there all at once was not one but two--probably a pair--of seaside sparrows, perched on tufts of grass looking up at us. Though a few feet away, we focussed our binoculars on the two--and what a surprise we got. Birds that usually seem merely darkish and nondescript became vivid with color--a dusky slate blue glowing in the sun, while on the heads were two brilliant yellow gleams, like headlights beaming out of the dusk. A remarkable revelation this of colorful beauty in a bird seldom seen so well, and as startling to me as the day on Holland Marsh when I first discovered the intimate loveliness of Leconte's sparrow. We all were struck by this sight, one of the finest we were to have.

We passed coots and ducks, saw nesting Canada geese and mute swans, and another hour was gone. Lunch time now and we ate on the dike with brant geese flying along the bay edge and black-bellied plover feeding near our feet.

In the following hour we watched a dramatic battle between two male shovellers over a coy female in which the victor finally ousted his rival--the latter flew a long way off then, and the pair disappeared demurely into the reeds. Gadwalls flew up from the midst of a crowd of black ducks; a Louisiana heron twice brought us to a halt; and then a milling mob of sandpipers, hundreds and hundreds of peeps, mostly leasts, blocked our passage entirely. The whole dike was swarming with them, so that we had to go forward most cautiously for fear of crushing the birds. They went up before us in clouds, only to come down again immediately or to stream behind and resettle on the dike. Curious as to the reason for their massed presence I got out and studied the surface of the dike where I found that vast numbers of tiny black insects were marching across the ground. It was these that the peeps were eagerly seeking. Later we discovered another section where laughing and herring gulls were massed in the same way and for the same reason. What a sensation, to be slowed to a crawl in an automobile because of crowds of sandpipers and gulls on the road!

Before we reached the inner end of this dike, we had not only met these road foragers but also had waited--as last year--for a fine line of dignified Canada geese to cross over from salt marsh to the fresh water pond; had paused alongside a delicately glossy little blue heron, and had counted three dozen and more egrets blooming on the dun brown marsh.

The dike tour was over. We had seen so much we could hardly take it all in. We all agreed that Brigantine refuge is one of the most superb places for birdwatchers we have ever known. Here anyone, almost, no matter what his physical condition, can do the tour since it is only necessary to be driven around and to look. Now we understood the two old ladies who never got out of their chauffeured car. The birds are all around you, many of them within a few feet or yards, often below you since you are up on the dike. This is a perfect birders' place, for handicapped and fit alike.

From Brigantine we drove directly to Cape May Court House. We hurried through supper in order to get out to Stone Harbor in time to walk down the beach before dark. Because of our desire to reach the beach in good time we made but a passing homage at the heronry, though even this showed us a pair of glossy ibis amongst the egrets and night herons. The beach all along was dotted with groups of sanderlings; as we advanced we were treated to a walker's version of the motorized progress we had made on Chincoteague beach last spring. Instead of bursting into flight as we approached, the lines of sanderlings bustled ahead, looking for all the world like files of pedestrians converging on subway entrances at rush hour. In this way the hustlers would keep in front of us for long stretches. Finally they would decide that they had had enough, and would take off, circling around to resume their feeding well behind us. The closer we got to the point, the more mixed the sandpiper flock became until we had turnstones and knots, semipalmated plovers and sandpipers, casting wary eyes in our direction and joining the refugee ranks behind. Overhead roseate terns cried their cheery-cheery notes, long tails streaming behind them; least terns squeaked in dainty battle. At last, up came the heavy forces, as a line of five black skimmers reconnoitering the beach line waves seemed to take hostile notice of our invasion. Retreating momentarily over the dunes they returned immediately, with fifty or sixty of their kind that dipped and screamed above our heads in most violent protest. Moments later they were followed by common terns, five thousand strong, and then by herring gulls, equally numerous. The whole place was a turmoil, a wild melee of screaming, diving, angry birds. We had invaded their privacy, we had raised them from their chosen night roost. We had disturbed them and alarmed them. Would we get out--get out--get out. This was clearly the tenor of their earsplitting remarks. Finally we took the hint--the skimmer battalion returned to skimming, the terns and gulls to another far portion of the beach, and the tide was rising. We had two miles or more to go, and we had seen our sight. Satisfied, we trudged back more slowly than we had come, listening to piping plovers whistling in the dusk, to the waves, gentle this evening, tumbling on the sand, and watching warily each longer thrust of the marching water across the beach. Dark it was before we reached the car, and the lights of Stone Harbor were starring the land.

Our morning's round of the marshes--across to Stone Harbor again and down to Wildwood--showed us that the seemingly empty salt grass meadows were crowded with birds as soon as we stopped to look carefully through binoculars

and balscope. Dowitchers and black-bellies, curlew and clappers, herons, egrets, brant--all were here--and many more. Our halts were frequent and profitable between Cape May Court House, Wildwood and Rio Grande. We did note, however, that the building along the causeway to Stone Harbor is severely restricting the number of places where observation over the marshes is possible.

The next point of interest for us were the jetties off Cape May proper. We had planned to go to the long east jetty but gave it up when we saw people on it. Instead we turned to the smaller jetties near the center of the town. At the second of these from the east we found what we were looking for, a flock of purple sandpipers. Three or four feeding along the beach first drew our attention. Then we saw that others were dotted all along the rocks. A few were feeding midst the exposed seaweed; most were asleep. How many were present was impossible to tell easily since moving birds kept popping up out of crannies and disappearing into them. More "pebbles" than we first supposed turned out to be sleeping birds. Sanderlings were mixed in with the purples. We got closer and closer. Our balscope was mounted at 100 yards--100 feet--50 feet--25 feet. We could see not only the orange-colored legs, the purplish-grey bibs, but also the looks in the eyes. We were 15 feet--10 feet--and less. Some birds moved, flew a little away, others stayed. Finally we were close enough to the nearest ones so that if we fell forward we would have landed on them. Still it was impossible to tell the number so I decided to walk the length of the jetty to see what went up. This I did slowly, not desiring to startle sleeping birds too violently. Step by step I proceeded, and with each step a "pebble" or two became a winged bird. Little flocks formed--five here, six there--dashing to the side, taking flight, lining up on an old green-coated log on the beach, running into crevices or over the front of the jetty, leaving for the next jetty. I was walking in the midst of purple sandpipers. No less than sixty arose before me, possibly more, but even at the last it was hard to know how many had darted into holes and were just awaiting my retreat. We all agreed that sixty was a reasonable estimate though the number may well have been higher than that. It was certainly no less.

To add to our enjoyable meeting with the purple sandpipers along came a school of eight porpoises. Travelling in a line a few yards off the jetty, they passed like a parade of acrobats. Arching and diving, the smooth black backs fin-topped, the blunt-nosed faces and blowing spume were a dramatic reminder that this water was indeed the ocean, and these creatures denizens of the deep.

Lunch we ate sitting on the sand with our backs against the rocks of another jetty. Migrating hummingbirds zipped over us whilst swallows coursed above the waves. Land birds were taking over, it seemed, for a while. Then we were back with the sea when Greer discovered a white-winged scoter dressing its plumage on the beach out towards the end of a breakwall. Cautiously we negotiated beach and wall until we were close enough to have a fine view of the hump-faced, white-winged seagoing scoter. Here, however, was a bird that put no faith in men for as soon as we were visible it decided that the beach was no place for it, and in waddling haste made for the water where, once launched, it swam rapidly out to sea. Far beyond we could see the many freighters making their way up Delaware Bay, and we wondered if possibly the

scoter had not been a victim of oiling--a fate only too likely in this heavy-travelled waterway--and so had come to shore to try to remedy matters. If so, we hope we did not stop it before it had succeeded. For us this was another good sight--but we realize that sometimes it is possible to get such close observation only when birds are injured or sick. This we trust was not the case with the scoter.

Certainly it was not so with the smartly dressed ruddy duck we saw on the pond in the sanctuary at West Cape May. We had come here to look for warblers. There weren't any. We had halted to look at coots and mallards. Suddenly up came a red and blue creation, so strikingly colored it seemed unbelievable, a china duck set out amongst the dowdy blacks and mallards and coots. But there it was, full of life, bobbing and diving, and making up to a sober little mate. No china duck this, whatever the appearances. Nonetheless that bill of intense forget-me-not blue was still hardly credible; and combined with the burnished metallic red back and white-faced head, it made a bird that seemed somehow to have swum out of the pages of the New Yorker, or straight off Birks' specialty counter. So fascinating a sight was this we had a hard time dragging ourselves away.

When we did, an interval of empty hot afternoon fields helped to quieten our enthusiasm before our next encounter with a noteworthy bird. It was bobwhite calling in the slumberous warmth that brought us to a stop. We were listening to them when Greer called us to look at a white "salt block" in the field. The salt block was in amongst some cows, and when we put our glasses on it the blockishness ceased--for here was the cattle egret we had come over these back roads to see. Orange-naped, plumed and graceful, it was as lovely a bird as any of its kind we had ever seen before. But it was quiet, taking a siesta, whilst birdwatchers persisted in touring the roads and peering into the secrets of white blocks. Later, after an adventure with a white-eyed vireo that masqueraded as an Acadian flycatcher, we saw four more cattle egrets. These birds were on the same farm where we saw two, two years ago. They were active, following cows, one each to a cow, so closely that time and again an egret had to step quickly aside in order to escape the swish of the cow's tail, or to avoid being stepped on. The cattle showed no resentment of the birds, indeed seemed oblivious to them. The egrets, manifestly, were garnering a rich harvest, for each time a cow moved its attendant gobbled some insect(?) that had been disturbed. Five cattle egrets, bobwhite sounding all around, and white-eyed vireos fooling the birders--quite a southern aspect Cape May was putting on today.

For all that we had no luck in seeking a hooded warbler in the Audubon woods, though we squeaked two pairs of tufted titmice into a state of apoplectic excitement. Neither, after supper, in a wide tour of the wood did we discover a chuck-will's-widow though whip-poor-wills were as common as nighthawks in summer Toronto. No, Cape May is not the south, but it is right on the verge.

The 9th we spent in travelling, leaving Cape May Court House after breakfast and going until suppertime when we were in the outskirts of Pittsburgh. We spent the night in a motel at Monrovia.

Using Pettingill again as our guide we started on Sunday morning exploring the valley of Deer Creek near Harmarville only to find that in the several years since the publication of Pettingill's Guide, building development had wiped out the favored woods. This was disappointing but not too much so since we had but to turn up the valley a little farther and find wooded side ravines easily available. At the first of these we stopped and walked in.

This vale was alive with song, and with birds darting amongst tree tops and undergrowth, by far the most intense activity amongst land birds of any place on our trip so far. Warblers, tanagers, vireos were everywhere. A cerulean led us quite a chase until we ferreted it out in the top of a high leafy tree. Fortunately we were well up an overlooking bank so we had not, as one usually does, to crane our necks unduly. Tennessees were the commonest among the warblers, their sharp, three-part songs coming from every quarter of the wood. In the dry blackberry tangles of the top fields chats jabbered noisily; on one occasion a gaudy jabberer sat right over my head and expressed his opinion of me in no uncertain terms. This was natural enough, and quite in character. The bizarre entered the picture, or so it seemed to us, when we saw a spirited encounter between a scarlet tanager and a tufted titmouse, and a second squabble between an Acadian flycatcher and a wood thrush. The tanager was the victor in the first case, driving the titmouse out of the tree in which it was feeding, a victory to be anticipated in view of the comparative size of the two birds. But in the other battle it was the diminutive flycatcher that ousted the much larger thrush. Was this because the thrush came too near a nest, and so the littler bird was imbued with unusual courage, like a small dog defending its own lawn against a larger intruder? Whatever the explanation, the tiny winner came and sneezed his triumph right in our faces as we stood on the path--or were we too being intimidated? Pi-choo, Pi-choo, we were told--and we too moved on, leaving Empidonax virescens sole possessor of the field,

Whilst the others were ranging off on their own I climbed up a tangly slope in pursuit of a loud song that turned out, as I had hoped, to be delivered by a magnificent hooded warbler. I could still hear it as I stood on the roadside, waiting for the others to return, and imitating a tufted titmouse with enough success to make that inquisitive bird race back and forth across the road repeatedly in search of a supposed rival. I really felt guilty after awhile, the poor bird was getting so terribly worked up, but it was an uncommon pleasure to have a titmouse dancing attendance, one we can hardly hope for at Toronto, and I was loath to stop. The return of my friends settled the matter for me.

Our other objective near Pittsburgh was the Todd Sanctuary, which again we found by following Pettingill's directions, approximately twenty-five miles from the city in the hills to the north. When we first walked into the woods here we could see that it was a wonderful stand of mature trees in a secluded valley but it appeared birdless. Barely a sound reached our ears, nor did we see a bird. We pushed on to give the place a better try, and as we breasted a new rise in the path two birds burst into song--one a hooded warbler, the other a Kentucky! Both sang and sang, delighting and baffling us at the same time, for though we found the former without trouble the latter we never did track down. In the hunt we arrived at a spot where a large old log house came into view, and several people nearby. We felt we had better make our-

selves known. When we did we discovered that this was a club center, and that these were members of the local Audubon Society holding a field day. Others appeared soon, and we quickly became associated with a party doing the trails.

What a lovely preserve for a nature club to possess. The valley turned into almost a gorge, the trail mounting a steep slope to a Lookout Point which let us peer down into the valley's sunlit depths where trilliums in thousands lay like snow upon the ground. In the midst of this we really got a look at a Kentucky warbler that sat singing and preening on a bare twig for ten full minutes. Four Kentuckies and seven hoodeds sang for us along the path. Louisiana waterthrushes did battle for territory along the stream. No wonder the local birders and naturalists find this vale a mecca. It came into their possession because a philanthropic industrialist in Pittsburgh was persuaded to purchase the property and present it to the club. With the house where members can come and stay overnight this sanctuary of 115 acres (with a great deal of equally good surrounding country) must prove a great drawing card to membership in the club, and a builder of group morale. We came away strongly and favorably impressed both by the place and by the friendliness of the people we met there.

The rest of the afternoon we devoted to driving north to Presqu'ile Park, near Erie, arriving there between four and five. We had planned to stay overnight nearby and go into the park the next day, but as we were early enough we made a preliminary tour as soon as we arrived. Now I had the greatest difficulty talking one of my companions into staying at all, for all we found was an endless stream of Sunday afternoon traffic grinding out and back to Erie. When we did make a couple of exploratory sorties into the woods there were almost no migrants, virtually no birds. Our decision was, however, to stay over and try in the morning again.

We did, and what a dramatic change there was! During the night rain occurred, culminating in heavy thunder showers toward four o'clock. When we arrived on the point about nine--we hadn't hurried, after the previous day's blank and the threatening weather--the woods, the bushes, the ground, were simply hopping with birds. Warblers, vireos, tanagers, thrushes, flycatchers, sparrows--they were all there. The showers had literally rained down birds. Such a wave as I have seldom seen was deluging the point. We had scarcely to walk at all; step into the woods anywhere and watch them flow by, that is all that was necessary. In less than two hours we had seen twenty-one species of warblers. A hooded and a cerulean were in the binocular field at one time. A golden-winged sang and fed at shoulder-level for a quarter of an hour, using two quite distinct songs alternately, the regular three or four-part offering, and a prolonged buzzy trill that ended in a louder, broader development--an opening out of the trill--rather like the blue-winged quality. We were glad to see the golden-winged making the sound for it was quite deceiving until fitted to its maker. Over our heads first an orchard oriole, then a summer tanager, a particularly brilliant female, passed by. Warblers darted all around. White-throats, a late delegation, worked through the undergrowth. When we drove on to the Lily Pond, nine sparrows came into view, white-crowns on the grass by the water, and with them was a strongly-marked clay-colored. We took a good while to get out along the point today in contrast to yesterday's unsatisfactory round. What had happened was that a wave of migrants had been grounded in the

early morning by the showers, and we were enjoying the benefit.

Still, it cannot be said that the next bird that sent us scurrying for a sight was either a migrant or rained down from the sky. We had arrived finally in the scrubby country near the tip of the point, to a part where birds were thinning out. There is heavy bayberry growth in this area, and a recent burn had left much of the section a barren of blackened bushes, messy to get through and apparently little appreciated by the migrating horde. Indeed, after making an incursion in this part without seeing much we were turning back when a sound, loud, familiar, yet not quite, was heard. At first hearing, I said to myself, "What's that?", and kept on walking out. The second time, still puzzled but a little more alert, I said to Greer, "What's that sound?"-- and then, all in a rush before he could answer me, it came through. The effect was electrifying. This was no less than a turkey gobbling, and on this point there are no farms--no domestic birds. It must be, it just must be, a wild turkey. With this realization we all swivelled, retraced our way through the burned bayberry bushes with as much caution and dispatch as we could. Snagged raincoats, black-smearred clothes were of no account now. We got over the sandy ridge and down into the hollow beyond. The gobbling had come from this direction. Was the bird still around? Had we sent it running for cover with our approach? I turned to look down the hollow, my eyes taking in a quarter of a circle quickly. At the end of that arc I gave a huge shout--it just burst out of me--for I found myself gazing straight at a tremendous turkey gobbler--forty feet away! He saw me looking at the same moment, and in a second he exploded like a rocket, shooting into the air with phenomenal speed, and on fiercely beating wings circled the bayberry thickets to come down in their midst a hundred yards or more behind us, almost exactly I would think at the place where we started in. Only Barney and I saw the huge cock in flight. Almost at the same time as it flew I heard gobbling over a ridge further in so while my companions tried to find the first turkey in the bayberry tangle I hurried over the second ridge to look for another. Neither they nor I succeeded; turkeys are incredibly wary, and once alerted or alarmed manage to get to and keep to cover in an astonishing fashion. On a repeat round of the hollow we found the turkey's tracks in the sand, close to the spot where I had seen it standing--huge tracks, broad, heavily-indented, seemingly thrice the size of a pheasant's spoor though I had nothing to measure with. At last, at last, after so many futile attempts in years past, I had been able to convince my birding companions that there really are wild turkeys in Pennsylvania. And this in the last mile of the State, the northern tip.

After this thrilling climax to our trip, even the sight of a golden eagle sailing over was something of an anti-climax. The markings on this bird were unmistakable. We even had it in the balscope for a while so that everyone could see, and this at quite close range. Still, we all had seen golden eagles more often in years past than wild turkeys. For the moment the eagle could only be an anti-climax. And the Henslow's sparrow we put up near the marsh, seen beautifully, was just another bird. The culmination, the real end of the trip so far as all feeling went, was the turkey. The point that had had so little the day before held a bird-world exhibition today, and chief of the show was the wild turkey gobbler. Hurrah for the turkey, one of the noblest birds of all!

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BOOK REVIEW

The Strange One. By Fred Bodsworth (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1959). Pp. 400.

Intermingled in this romantic novel are nature and love, human and creature, man and bird. Beginning off the shore of a wild Hebridean isle with a barnacle goose it ends on the banks of James Bay in a triumph of human love. Indeed, this is two love stories, skilfully interwoven, wherein the barnacle goose, blown far off its normal migratory course, finds solace in the Canadian Arctic with a Canada goose while a Scottish wanderer from the same far isle as the goose, though now a graduate student in biology at the University of Toronto, find unexpected and puzzling romance with an Indian girl in that same wilderness of the north. The human love affair turns, in fact, on the relation of each of them, the biology student and the Indian maiden, to the exotic goose, "the strange one", as they call him.

Suffering, misery and the victory of love over all come for both birds and humans in a long series of ups and downs that enable the author to portray a great deal of bird and nature lore as well as to show a touching understanding of the difficulties involved in a mixed Indian-white romance. To the naturalist the vivid descriptions of the stalking of man-tay-o, the strange one, whether at home in the Hebrides or along the marshy edges of a Canadian lake, will ring true and remind every bird watcher of experiences remarkably similar. Fred is a birder and a field naturalist, and it shows throughout the book. He knows what he is talking about, and he makes excellent use of his knowledge, being able to convey his nature lore to others and yet make it serve admirably the progress of his tale. His penetration into the very real anxieties, moods and joys of the human pair show a side of the author's experience and comprehension that is new to his readers. It is this that carries us far beyond The Last of the Curlews. That was a bird story; this is basically an adventure story and a love tale in which the birds become foil and catalyst for the humans.

For this very reason there are places where one wishes that the author had lingered longer in his analysis of the human feelings and perplexities. But if he had the sense of ongoing adventure might possibly have been lost. And perhaps the author does not consider such a pair of intellectuals to be as introspective as this reviewer thinks they might well have been.

Despite this occasional psychological baldness there is no doubt that Bodsworth has created a rattling good story, an earthy, realistic story, that may easily find its way into the best-seller list before long. It could even become a movie for it has all the essential elements: drama, suspense, fast action and the happy ending. We predict for The Strange One the success of a distinguished first novel.

Richard M. Saunders,

Editor.