

From the University Museum, University of Michigan

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE AU SABLE VALLEY,
MICHIGAN

BY

NORMAN A. WOOD AND EARL H. FROTHINGHAM

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VALLEY, MICHIGAN.

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THE recent discovery of the breeding of Kirtland's Warbler in the valley of the Au Sable River, Mich., has given that region a peculiar interest from an ornithological standpoint. The fact that this bird has remained so long unknown indicates that the bird life of the vicinity has been very little studied, and observations upon it should be of value.

These observations were made during two trips undertaken by Mr. T. G. Gale and the writer as follows. On June 13, 1963, we drove from West Branch, Ogemaw Co., Mich., to the Au Sable River, and stopped at the home of James Parmalee, three miles north of the village of Luzerne in Oscoda County. Exclusive of the river valleys, the country traversed is typical of this region. It consists of wide sand and gravel plains varied by morainal ridges and marshy depressions, and extensively dotted with burnt stumps and logs, which identify it as "old pine lands." Large areas are almost without ground cover; in others jack and Norway pines occur in scattered clusters interspersed with scrub scarlet oak and aspen, while the ground is hidden by thick growths of sweet fern, blackberry, and huckleberry bushes. The barrenness of the soil is attested by numbers of deserted farms.

At the river valley we found four general types of vegetation, each apparently dependent upon drainage and the elevation of the site above the river. The lowest of these occurs on limited areas of bottom land, and is largely composed of elms and ashes, with a thick undergrowth of berry bushes and seedling hardwoods. Among the birds noticed in this vegetation were Chestnut-sided and Black and White Warblers, Cedar Waxwings, Wood Pewees, Great Crested Flycatchers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Song Sparrows.

About ten or fifteen feet above the level of the river is a relatively dry terrace on which scrub oak and sweet fern grow in abundance.

To Miss Dorothy Blanchard -
Compliments of
Earl H. Frothingham
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