

BREEDING-BIRD CENSUS ON THE HAVERFORD COLLEGE CAMPUS IN 1929

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The observations reported in this article were made by student members of the Haverford College Nature Club¹ during the spring of 1929. The bird records of this Club have reposed unnoticed in some dead files until recently; the publication of certain portions of them seems timely in view of the spreading interest in bird population studies.

The census area was the Haverford College campus, 226 acres in extent, lying on the Montgomery-Delaware County line, 9 miles north-west of central Philadelphia. About half of the area is devoted to buildings, lawns and athletic fields; the other half, known as the "farm" consists of grain fields and pasture land, casually worked. Five small hardwood groves from one to four acres in extent are present on the former portion; a sixth, containing young coniferous plantings and covering about eleven acres, lies on the south edge of the "farm" area. A small creek follows the west border and another crosses the campus near the east side. This latter is dammed to form a shallow, one acre "skating" pond. The acreage may be roughly classified as follows: lawns and buildings, 55; open lawns and athletic fields, 40; woodland, 25; cultivated land, 90; idle land, 15; water, 1.

Observations were made daily between April 1, and June 1, and with considerable frequency before and after these dates. An average of better than one hour in the field per day was maintained. One hundred and eighty-one nests were found during this period and a nest-history record kept for each. Nest observations were supplemented with notes on resident pairs suspected of nesting. The census figures thus obtained are believed to be reasonably accurate.

Two-hundred and twenty-four pairs of birds of 28 native species are believed to have nested on the area in the Spring of 1929. The English Sparrow was present but, unfortunately, not censused. Single pairs of three other species were resident and suspected of nesting, bringing the probable total of species up to 32, and the population total up to 227 pairs (English Sparrows excluded) or 454 birds, 2.0 birds per acre. (This figure is probably slightly high since an established singing male was frequently interpreted as indicating a nesting pair.) Of the 181 nests actually found, 165 were thought to represent first broods. It was estimated that approximately 244 nests were constructed on the area during the observation period.

A central 36 acre portion of the campus surrounding the main college buildings held 99 nesting pairs of 20 species, a population density of 5.5 birds per acre.

The population and nest totals for each species are recorded in the accompanying table; the three species of uncertain status are marked with an asterisk.

¹ The following members of the Club contributed bird census notes: Wallis H. Ayres, Richard C. Baker, William F. Brinton, Joseph M. Cadbury, John T. Emlen, Jr., Benjamin C. Hiatt, Harry G. M. Jopson, Evarts G. Loomis, Albert K. Smiley, Jr., and Daniel Smiley, Jr.

| | Total 226 Acres | | Central 36 Acres | |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| | No. of Nests | No. of Adults | No. of Nests | No. of Adults |
| 1. Killdeer (<i>Oxyechus vociferus</i>)..... | 4 | 4 | — | — |
| 2. Mourning Dove (<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>)..... | 6 | 8 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Screech Owl (<i>Otus asio</i>)..... | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 4. Chimney Swift (<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)..... | 4 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| 5. Downy Woodpecker (<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>)..... | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| 6. Flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)..... | 13 | 20 | 5 | 10 |
| 7. Kingbird (<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>)..... | 2 | 4 | — | — |
| 8. Crested Flycatcher (<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>)..... | 2 | 4 | — | — |
| 9. Phoebe (<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| 10. Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo erythrogaster</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| 11. American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)..... | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 12. Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)..... | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| *13. White-breasted Nuthatch (<i>sitta carolinensis</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 14. House Wren (<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>)..... | 5 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| 15. Carolina Wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| 16. Catbird (<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>)..... | 11 | 22 | 4 | 8 |
| 17. Brown Thrasher (<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>)..... | 4 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| 18. Robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)..... | 91 | 170 | 40 | 72 |
| 19. Wood Thrush (<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>)..... | 14 | 28 | 5 | 10 |
| 20. Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)..... | 26 | 50 | 21 | 40 |
| 21. Red-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)..... | 4 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| *22. Ovenbird (<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 23. Kentucky Warbler (<i>Oporornis formosus</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| 24. English Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)..... | no counts | no counts | no counts | no counts |
| 25. Meadowlark (<i>Sturnella magna</i>)..... | 5 | 10 | — | — |
| 26. Redwing (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)..... | 8 | 14 | — | — |
| 27. Baltimore Oriole (<i>Icterus galbula</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| *28. Scarlet Tanager (<i>Piranga erythromelas</i>)..... | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 29. Cardinal (<i>Richmondia cardinalis</i>)..... | 6 | 12 | 2 | 4 |
| 30. Indigo Bunting (<i>Passerina cyanea</i>)..... | 2 | 4 | — | — |
| 31. Chipping Sparrow (<i>Spizella passerina</i>)..... | 5 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| 32. Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)..... | 15 | 26 | 1 | 2 |
| Total..... | 244 | 454 | 99 | 186 |