



## **Sidney Stansell's Lost List: The Birds of Alberta, as of 1923**

John Acorn, Fauve Blanchard, and Melanie Mullin

It has been 100 years now since Sidney Stansell left Alberta, and he did so with unfinished business. Stansell was trying to publish his annotated list of Alberta birds, and he was having some difficulties.

Sidney Smith Stout Stansell was born on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1877, in Illinois, and in 1906 he moved to the Stony Plain area, west of Edmonton. He was a schoolteacher, and an amateur

ornithologist. Stansell's published contributions to the study of Alberta birds have been summarized (Holroyd and Palaschuck 1996), and we know that Stansell published in *Bird Lore* magazine, *The Oologist*, *The Ottawa Field Naturalist*, and *The Auk*. He was the founder of the admittedly short-lived local section of the Audubon Society in Alberta, he participated in many Christmas Bird Counts in the Edmonton area, and he conducted the first two Edmonton Christmas Bird Counts. As well, he was engaged by the provincial Department of Agriculture to study the question of whether Sharp-tailed Grouse were harmful to crops (they were not). He lived in or near Carvel, Highland Park, Manly, and Provost.

But why are we telling you this?

On September 4, 2009, John Acorn received an email from Tim Manolis, a naturalist, artist, and author living in California. Manolis had received a box of notes on Alberta birdlife from a friend, Truman Holtzclaw. In the box was, "not really a book, per se, but a loose-leaf collection of notes, manuscripts and scrap clippings," written or assembled by Stansell. Holtzclaw had obtained this collection from Stansell's widow many years before, in Bakersfield, California. Manolis believed this document would have more meaning back in Alberta, and thus passed it along to Acorn, who donated it to the Bruce Peel Special Collections and Archives, at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. We have been told that the conservator "gasped" on first seeing it.

The materials consist of three documents. The first is a bound, onionskin scrapbook, with typewritten and hand-written notes glued onto it, along with clippings from at least one other book, the classic *Birdcraft: A Field Book of Two Hundred Song, Game, and Water Birds*, by Mabel Osgood Wright (who was also a contributing editor for *Bird Lore*). After page 205, the scrapbook ends in a few blank pages. A significant number of additional pages have been cut or torn out past that. Upside-down on the inside back cover (the book is symmetrical, so the back cover might have been the original front cover) there is a handwritten mailing address: "The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited Publishers/St. Martin's House/Bond St. Toronto" plus, "From S. S. Stansell/Spruce Grove/Alta." We do not believe the scrapbook as it now stands was ever sent for publication, but it seems likely that whatever was torn out of the scrapbook may well have been. The bird species in this document follow the order in the 2nd edition of Elliot Coues' 1884 *Key to the North American Birds*, and we therefore conclude that the scrapbook is the oldest of the three documents.

The second document, which appears to have been written in 1922, is a manuscript in the literal sense; i.e., a hand-written, cursive document. It lists all of the species of Alberta birds for which Stansell felt he had legitimate records, in the taxonomic order of the second edition of the American Ornithologists' Union checklist (from 1895, even though the third edition came out in 1910). It consists of 62 numbered pages, but between pages XVIII and XXV (i.e., between Black-bellied Plover and Bald Eagle) the sheets are missing. Fortunately, the missing species are listed in third document, a 14-page typescript consisting of a partial list of Alberta birds, in the same order, ending with Golden Eagle. It mentions observations from 1923, and it clearly represents a reworking of the earlier manuscript.

As well, there is a five-page hypothetical list, cautiously based on John and James Macoun's (1909) *Catalogue of Canadian Birds*, and a one-page list of records that were, "kindly furnished to me by Mr. William Wolfe [an Edmonton taxidermist] on his own and Prof. William Rowan's authority and were largely observed and collected at Buffalo Lake and Beaver Hills Lakes Alberta." There is also a single non-numbered page that discusses three species of ducks (the "three-duck page" in the text that follows).

Once they were safely in Edmonton, the materials were examined first by two undergraduate students: Fauve Blanchard and Melanie Mullin. Fauve was the first to summarize their contents. Melanie, who referred to them as "breathtakingly antique," also managed to locate a photograph of Stansell, in a yearbook from the Taft Union High School in California, where Stansell later taught. The photo is small and lacks much detail, but it gives us our only glimpse of Stansell's appearance: scholarly, formal, and well groomed, with rounded features and rounded glasses. Graduate student and artist Sydney Mohr used the photo as the basis for her recent portrait of Stansell, framed by some of the birds that feature prominently in the notes that follow.

For a naturalist today, it is difficult to imagine how someone like Stansell would have pursued birds, more than a century ago. In short, he used all of the techniques available to him at the time. Like most naturalists then, he did collect bird specimens, and it appears that he sent at least some of these to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where the curators were happy to identify them. At that time, by the way, both subspecies and species were given English names, whereas now we use such names only for species. This will become apparent in Stansell's list. Stansell probably collected bird eggs as well, since this was a popular activity, but

he didn't mention either specimen or egg collecting very prominently in his writings, so we doubt that this was a major pastime for him. He also used binoculars, and he clearly enjoyed watching living birds. "Prism binoculars" were quite new at the time, providing 6-8X magnification-- a step up from the typical 2-4X "Galilean" design. As well, Stansell took photographs of birds, using a large format film camera, placed close to a nest or feeding location, using a long string to activate the shutter release. With these techniques, Stansell functioned more-or-less alone for most of his 17 years in Alberta.

Two versions of Stansell's early observations in Alberta were published in 1909. He wrote one for *The Auk*, and an editor, Rev. G. Eifrig, compiled the other on Stansell's behalf, for *The Ottawa Naturalist*. An Ontario ornithologist, W. E. Saunders, distrusted some of Stansell's records, and published criticisms in both journals. However, as Holroyd and Palaschuk wrote in 1996, "Stansell replied very effectively in *The Auk*." They add, "One can only wonder at the effect that such a criticism might have had on Mr. Stansell's enthusiasm for publishing." For better or worse, we now know the answer, thanks to the newly uncovered documents.

It is now apparent that Stansell submitted a manuscript, "The Birds of Alberta," to *The Canadian Field Naturalist* in 1922, as documented in correspondence from the archives of the Canadian Museum of Nature. Not just any manuscript-- the exact manuscript to which we now have access. Blue editors' pencil marks appear throughout the document, presumably the work of Percy A. Taverner, the ornithology editor for *The Canadian Field Naturalist* at the time. We found no inconsistencies between this manuscript and the correspondence between the two ornithologists.

Taverner rejected Stansell's manuscript in a letter dated Dec. 26, 1922. Taverner was employed at the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa (now, the Canadian Museum of Nature) and he was the preeminent Canadian ornithologist of his day. Like Saunders, he was doubtful of many of Stansell's records, and he also complained that the manuscript had an Edmonton area bias (admittedly, it did), and that it failed to cite all of the other sources available at the time. He summed up his rejection with, "The only way [your records] can be verified is by the collection and study of specimens. I am sure Prof. Rowan will assist you in every way possible, and I will be most willing to do all I can in the way of identification of material, advice or constructive criticism that is in my power."

Stansell responded firmly and intelligently to some of the criticism, skipped over the rest, and summed up his take on Taverner with the following: "So you see how the matter runs. You have no record of certain species and I have.... I hope you will take this letter in its proper light and in the way I intend it. I am simply taking my own part re. matters where I am right and if I do not take my own part, pray who will?"

Taverner's letters gave the impression that he was willing to help Stansell improve as a scientist, and perhaps he was. A recent biography of Ontario ornithologist Louise de Kiriline Lawrence (Simonds 2022) portrays Taverner as a generous and patient mentor for de Kiriline Lawrence during her early development as a scientist, some two decades after Taverner's rejection of Stansell. All three of these early birders were self-taught, mind you, so the difference between the "great man" and his disciples was not based on education, it was based on Taverner's paid position at the museum.

Tellingly, however, Taverner was much more candid in his opinions about Stansell in a letter to William Rowan, dated Dec. 28, 1922. Rowan was the first professional zoologist and ornithologist in Alberta, arriving at the University of Alberta in 1920. Taverner wrote, "Have just got a long manuscript of Birds of Alta. from S. S. S. Stansell. He published an Edmonton (Stony Plain) list in the Auk and in the Naturalist some years ago. He got badly roasted over it by Saunders. Some of the criticisms were quite right too. This is no better and is full of a lot of wild things. Gather he is an egg man. Why is it these oologists never seem to learn anything. There are a lot more like them."

Then, in the same letter, Taverner adds, "Hope you are gathering information for an Alberta list. It is greatly needed and such a list would do you more good in reputation than anything else."

If this is how Taverner viewed an Alberta bird list-- as a project worth saving for the young professor-- no wonder he rejected Stansell's attempt! Rowan, however, ignored Taverner's advice and instead pursued experimental studies of bird migration. The next published list that was in any way comparable to Stansell's was Frank Farley's *Birds of the Battle River Region of Central Alberta* (Farley 1932), and an "Alberta list" had to wait for Salt and Wilk (1958).

Meanwhile, having neither the time nor the patience for a long apprenticeship with Taverner or Rowan, Stansell began revising his list as a typescript (the one we now have), and moved to Provost, and then California, where he continued teaching, and completed a Masters

degree at Stanford University (on the subject of elementary education in Alberta). My favourite quote from the thesis is, "There is no higher calling, none more exalted, than the proper teaching of children." Having secured an agent as a public speaker, Stansell then gave more than 400 talks about bird life in the far-off land of Alberta, Canada, illustrated by "lantern slides" (an early precursor to 35mm slides) made from his own photographs. He was deeply devoted to public education and bird appreciation, and it is clear that his difficulties with Saunders and Taverner did not diminish his enthusiasm for nature, nor his commitment to the birds. In a 1929 article in the Stanford Daily, he was quoted as follows: "We have no right whatever to destroy bird-life which, as a whole, is one of nature's greatest benefits to man. Only in a few specific instances can birds detrimental to nature be found."

Now that a century has passed, we can safely say that Stansell's list was indeed trustworthy, he was an excellent ornithologist, and that the list should have been published. Taverner's belief that Stansell was a mere "egg man" was entirely without support. Even when Stansell published in *The Oologist* (the word oologist means one who studies eggs) he wrote about bird observations, not egg collecting.

Our article is not, however, an attempt to glorify an "old white guy" from the distant past, or to diminish the reputation of another. It is more about bringing Stansell's bird observations to light, since they are important to our understanding of natural history and ecology, from a poorly documented period in Alberta's ornithological history. Taverner's primary concern was to prevent errors entering the scientific literature; a laudable and still typical role for reviewers and editors. Stansell's concern was to get his novel observations into print. He was, however, an amateur with limited means, and as such his primary weakness was lack of access to the ornithological literature. Amateurs today face a similar constraint, even with access to the internet. The unfortunate consequence was that the two men did not work together to improve the manuscript for publication.

We have therefore taken on the editorial role that Taverner shunned, making a few minor corrections to the spelling and grammar of the manuscript and preparing it for public view. Stansell often neglected punctuation, for example. His few misspellings of scientific names have been corrected (they are unequivocal), but we have left his place names as is, to avoid our own misinterpretations. Phonetic alternative spellings such as "thruout" and "altho" were also left as

is. We have also added species to the list from other contemporary sources, especially an Edmonton-based list that J. Dewey Soper published in 1918, based on observations from 1912-14 (in 1918, Soper was living in Preston, Ontario, but he later returned to Alberta and went on to author *The Mammals of Alberta*). We have also interpreted the end quotes following each average date of arrival as meaning "th", "st", or "rd" (for example, he would write: Average date of arrival April 10", meaning April 10th). As well, when the English name for a bird species has changed to the point where today's reader might not recognize it, the current species name is added alongside the former scientific name. And yes, we are aware that many of these English names, and in particular the eponymous names, will soon change.

While reading the list, which we hope you will enjoy, keep in mind that the early 1900s was a dynamic period in Alberta's biotic history. The bison had disappeared only a few decades before, and the automobile was replacing the horse. The First World War was a major disruption, but in general European settlers were engaged in rapid agricultural expansion during Stansell's time in Alberta. Grasshopper "plagues" were a huge issue for crop farmers, and grasshopper control consisted of spreading arsenic-laced bait over every crop field in the province. For a fascinating summary of this story, we recommend Paul Riegert's *From Arsenic to DDT* (Riegert 1980). Both the arsenic and its effect on grasshopper numbers must have influenced the birds, but this subject has so far received little to no scientific attention. For grasshopper-related reasons, or others, many birds were rapidly changing in both abundance and geographic range. Take special note of the species in Stansell's list that appear to have declined or retreated from central Alberta in the decades after the manuscript was written. These included what we now consider grassland species such as Upland Sandpiper, Loggerhead Shrike, and Western Meadowlark, as well as boreal species such as Bohemian Waxwings and Fox Sparrow (both as nesting birds). As well, there were other species that showed substantial increases shortly after 1922, including Semipalmated Plover, Greater White-fronted Goose, Black-billed Magpie, and both nuthatches. All of this is biogeographically puzzling, and solving these puzzles will hopefully become more likely with the publication of Stansell's list.

If there is any general take-home message from these notes, it is that the avifauna of Alberta was by no means a stable entity a century ago. Had Stansell's list been published at the time, his notes may well have changed conservation priorities for the century that followed, at least for some species. It is important to keep in mind, however, that changes in the distribution

and abundance of birds were nowhere near as interesting to ornithologists in Stansell's day. For example, in his *Birds of Western Canada* Taverner seems to imply that bird ranges were both adequately known and stable. "For definite ranges," he wrote, "the reader is referred to the 'Catalogue of Canadian Birds.'" It would take many decades before "monitoring" and "statusing" became familiar conservation activities. Authors a century ago seem to have understood that some species benefit from "cultivation" and "civilization," others do not, and that overhunting and disturbance of nests can be harmful. Beyond these causes, however, few other explanations for changes in the avifauna were apparent to the birders of the early 1900s.

Changes to the bird fauna since Stansell's day are not, however, the only reason to value his checklist. We hope you will also enjoy his stories, observations, and perspectives on the birds, and his adventures with them. As you will realize, he writes as if he was a loner, and although he mentions reports that he received from others, he never once mentions being in the field with another birder, or any of the members of his family. Like the famous account, *The Peregrine* (Baker 1967), Stansell's list is about a single person and their birds; nothing more and nothing less. In that sense, it is indeed a somewhat poignant portrait of Sidney Stansell himself.

Here, then, is Stansell's reconstructed list, in the taxonomic order of the day, with the former families separated. It is based on the typescript, up until that document ends, then the manuscript, plus the 1909 paper in *The Auk*, plus Soper's paper in 1918. In the main body of the typescript and manuscript, Stansell cautiously declines to list various species that are mentioned in his earlier lists, or in Macoun and Macoun (1909). We have reinstated most of these species, rather than retaining them in a hypothetical list, on the basis of our current understanding. Unfortunately, Stansell did not complete the task of adding average dates of spring arrival for all migratory species, so we have omitted many instances of "Average date of arrival" where no date was added. For those who would like to see the entire original document we are told that all of the Stansell materials on which this article is based will soon be digitized, and available online through the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library. Recently, we were able to view it by appointment.

Finally, we note that in the manuscript, most species are preceded by either a C. or a P.. Stansell does not indicate what this means, but we have interpreted C. as short for "catalogue" since these species appear in the Macoun and Macoun (1909) catalogue of Canadian birds. "P.", then, might mean "personal records," or some other indication that the species was not, to



Stansell's knowledge, previously known from Alberta. Since Stansell opted to omit these abbreviations in the typescript, they are omitted here as well.

Text in regular font is from the manuscript, or the typescript. Text in bold has been added by us, generally for species whose abundance or distribution changed significantly since Stansell's day. A few interpolations in the text, by us, have been placed in square brackets.

Birds of Alberta by Sidney S. S. Stansell

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In my "Birds of Central Alberta" Auk Vol CCVI (26) 1909 I listed one hundred fifty seven varieties which I had come in contact with.

Since then I have found several species new, both to me and this section of the country and am listing them with a large hypothetical list which I am sure is absolutely reliable.

My time is taken up so much with making a living for myself and family that I am unable to get out just whenever I feel like it, to the detriment of my own list. This list is largely supplemented with observations of other ornithologists.

I am giving my readers the benefit of my migration list by giving average dates of arrival only. This list has been faithfully kept for the past sixteen years and refers to arrivals in the Edmonton district only.

Grebes:

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). These birds are met in the larger lakes where they breed in numbers ranging from single pairs to colonies of several hundred, usually in the company of other grebes and loons.

**Salt and Wilk (1958) write, "Of all species of grebes the western grebe has suffered most from the advance of civilization in Alberta; most of the large lakes formerly frequented by nesting colonies are now popular vacation resorts, and unlike the red-necked grebe, the western grebe appears to be unable to adjust itself to the disturbance of the reveller and his motor boat."**

Holboell's Grebe (Red-necked Grebe, *Colymbus holboelli*). I consider this species to be the most

common grebe in the territory under review. Both floating and stationary nests have been observed: eggs usually from four to seven. Average date of arrival April 28th.

Horned Grebe (*Colymbus auritus*). Quite common in smaller lakes and often seen in larger lakes in company with *californicus*. Nests of the usual material.

Eared Grebe (*Colymbus nigricollis californicus*). Quite common in smaller lakes and sloughs and often seen in company with *auritus*. Average date of arrival April 28th.

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*). In some localities I found this grebe quite rare but in others it appears to be fairly common but by all means the rarest of all the grebes. Average date of arrival April 28th.

#### Loons:

Loon (Common Loon, *Gavia immer*). This species is very numerous but not so much so as ten years ago when every small lake had one or two pairs nesting along its border. In many localities where ten years ago loons and grebes were nesting in abundance the hum of the mowing machine is now heard and these birds are seeking nesting grounds further north. Average date of arrival May 5th.

**Salt and Wilk (1958) write, "Although the common loon has retreated before the advance of civilization there are still many accessible lakes where its weird laughing cry may be heard in the quiet of the evening."**

Black-Throated Loon (Arctic Loon, *Gavia arctica*). Only one specimen seen and that was brought in to the taxidermist by a hunter.

**We now know these birds as Pacific Loons (*Gavia pacifica*) and they were considered a subspecies of Arctic Loon (*G. a. pacifica*) until 1985.**

#### Gulls and Terns:

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). Fairly common, breeding along the shores, and on island in the larger lakes. Nests either constructed of weeds thrown upon the shore by waves or a depression in the sand either of which may or may not be lined partly with feathers. Average date of arrival April 30th.

**Salt and Wilk (1958) note that, "no nests have been found south of Lake Athabasca."**

**Note below that Stansell was concerned that he and others might have mistaken California Gulls for this species.**

California Gull (*Larus californicus*). A very common gull, and nesting on North Island in Beaver Hill's Lake. I am of the opinion that many references to *argentatus* belong here. Many downy young coots and ducks have been observed near nests of this species and of *argentatus* with their heads missing and on one occasion a quarter grown young of this species was observed to disgorge a downy young coot that had its head snipped off in all probability by the parent. This proves conclusively that these two gulls feed their young to a certain extent on the downy young of other species. May 26th to 28th many nests containing from one to five eggs were observed, one nest contained one normal egg and a very small runt. The young simply "run the streets" for I have seen a single young take food from three or four adults within less than a minute. Average date of arrival April 30th.

**Soper (1918) and Farley (1932) also expressed the view that these gulls were often misidentified as Herring Gulls.**

Ringed-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*). These birds nest in colonies on North Island in Beaver Hill's Lake and in many other large lakes in the territory under consideration. Eggs were found from May 24th and many downy young seen June 9th. Average date of arrival May 1.

Franklin's Gull (*Larus franklini*). Observed in great numbers at Lake St. Anne, Lake Wabamun and Beaver Hill's Lake and found nesting in the latter place in company with *philadelphia*. Average date of arrival May 20th.

Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*). Observed in great numbers at Lake St. Anne and Beaver Hill's Lake and nesting at the latter place in company with *franklini*. Average date of arrival April 30th.

**Taverner doubted that they bred in central Alberta, but Farley (1932) also considered these birds to be, "an abundant migrant, rarely nesting in the [Battle River] region."**

Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*). Not as common as *hirundo* but few nests being located. Average date of arrival May 19th.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Very numerous at Beaver Hill's Lake where many nests were observed the first of June. Observed also at Lake St. Anne and Wabamun Lake, but no

nests were located at the latter two points. Average date of arrival May 19.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*). This tern was observed a few times during migration, with an average date of May 19th.

**Taverner questioned Stansell's records, writing, "we know of no way to recognize this bird in life from the Common Tern, even where it is expected to occur." This is puzzling, since the field marks we use today were clearly spelled out in Coues (1884) and in Taverner's own books as well.**

Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*). The most abundant tern to be found in the territory, arriving on an average of May 24th, and within a few days the sloughs and lakes seem to be literally alive with them. The usual number of eggs is three, but I have found four on several different occasions. The nests are usually built of material found close at hand but on one occasion I watched a bird carrying nesting material from a distance and later on checking up on her found she was carrying it a little over three miles.

#### Cormorants:

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax dilophus*). These birds are fairly common in the territory, and nest on Rocky Island in Beaver Hill's Lake. Nests were placed on and between rocks and were composed of nettle stalks of the previous year and such weeds as were at hand, and were lined partially with coarse feathers and grasses. The eggs numbered from four to six. There is also a nesting colony at Mynistic Lake where the nests are placed in trees. Several photos of young were taken at Beaver Hills Lake.

#### Pelicans:

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). This species nests in great numbers on Rocky Island in Beaver Hill's Lake, or rather were nesting there when some vandals raided their colony and gathered every available egg and roasted them. This act drove the colony to North Island a couple of miles farther to the northwest where they proceeded to scoop out hollows in the sand and deposit their eggs, which numbered two, three, or four to a setting.

**The manuscript reads, "about three hundred birds were on North Island the first of July" but this was omitted in the typescript. At Miquelon Lake, the colony was**

**likewise disturbed and reduced by people (Farley 1932).**

Ducks, Geese, and Swans:

American Merganser (Common Merganser, *Merganser americanus*). Fairly common during spring and fall migration especially in the vicinity of Lac Ste. Anne, Lake Wabamun, and Beaver Hill's Lake. They were not observed nesting. Average date of arrival April 19th.

Red-breasted Merganser (*Merganser serrator*). About as common as *americanus* being seen quite often during the spring and fall migrations. Seen quite often in the Saskatchewan River, and in the larger lakes. Average date of arrival April 20th.

Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*). Seen along the streams and usually the larger lakes during the spring and fall migration but not observed nesting. Average date of arrival April 25th.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). This "sportsmans' friend" is everywhere in evidence, nesting in nearly every slough that has a puddle of water in or near it. The eggs range from six to fourteen, and on one occasion a nest was observed which contained twenty seven eggs. I am of the opinion that two females must have deposited eggs in this nest, and altho I visited the nest several times, never saw but one bird near. Average date of arrival April 11th.

Gadwall (*Chaulelasmus streperus*). Observed quite frequently during spring and fall migration but has not been observed breeding in this locality. Average date of arrival April 30th.

**Farley (1932) writes, "About 1920 there was a perceptible decline in their numbers, and this has continued till the present time." Waterfowl populations can fluctuate quite a bit, and we have commented here on only a few especially interesting entries in Stansell's list.**

Baldpate (American Wigeon, *Mareca americana*). One of the very common ducks of the region. Many nests located; one on a dry, rocky point near Beaver Hill's Lake contained ten eggs. Average date of arrival April 30th.

Green-winged Teal (*Nettion carolinensis*). This beautiful little duck is very abundant thruout this territory where it is partial to brushy and wooded portions, building its nest near some small lake or stream. The eggs usually number from six to twelve. Average date of arrival April 20th.

Blue-winged Teal (*Querquedula discors*). Not so common as *N. carolinensis* in the wooded

portions, but more common in the prairie regions, where many nests were located, the number of eggs ranging from eight to seventeen. Average date of arrival April 21st.

Shoveller (Northern Shoveler, *Spatula clypeata*). Very common thruout the territory nesting in abundance in the prairie regions about Beaver Hill's Lake, Goose Lake, and various other localities. Eggs range from six to fifteen.

**The manuscript also states, "Average date of arrival April 23rd."**

Pintail (Northern Pintail, *Dafila acuta tzitzihoa*). This species is the most indiscrete regarding nesting, of all the ducks, at times placing its nest in open fields where there is no shelter or protection whatever, watchful crows noting where the mother bird leaves the nest immediately prey on the eggs. I am quite certain that seventy five percent of the nests I observed in 1917 were destroyed by crows. These nests ran from five to fourteen eggs. Average date of arrival April 17th.

Redhead (*Marila americana*). A very common species which nests in the localities of sloughs and lakes, and very often found in company of *M. valisineria*. Average date of arrival April 28.

Canvas-back (Canvasback, *Marila valisineria*). Not as common as *M. americanus*. Several nests located ranging from six to twelve eggs each. Average date of arrival April 23rd.

Greater Scaup (*Marila marila*). Quite common during spring and fall migration, and seen at times during the summer, but not found nesting. Average date of arrival April 23rd.

**Soper (1918) writes, "noted during the spring and fall migrations." It seems likely that these ducks were more abundant then than they are now.**

Lesser Scaup (*Marila affinis*). This species is much more common than *M. marila* and has been found nesting in the territory. Average date of arrival April 23rd.

Ring-necked Duck (*Marila collaris*). Seen during spring and fall migration but not found nesting. Average date of arrival April 23rd.

American Golden-eye (Common Goldeneye, *Glaucionetta clangula americana*). One of the most common ducks in the territory, where it nests in tree cavities, lining the nest with down from its own breast. On one occasion I took the adult from the nest and placing her in a sack carried her about three miles, then released her. I returned at once to her home and found her on the nest as before. She had beaten me back altho I was not more than fifteen minutes returning. This nest was over a mile from water. Average date of arrival

April 20th.

**Oddly, Soper (1918) writes, "Does not breed in the vicinity," and he seems to have missed evidence of breeding for many other waterfowl as well. This provides a good example of how valuable Stansell's observations would have been, had they been published at the time.**

**Barrow's Golden-eye (*Clangula islandica*)**

**Listed in Macoun and Macoun (1909) and Stansell's three-duck page.**

Buffle-head (Bufflehead, *Charitonetta albeola*). This sprightly little fellow is about as common as *A. platyrhynchos* in the wooded section but rarely found during the breeding season in the open prairies. The males of this species are very pugnacious and, when two or more pairs occupy the same lake, are often seen fighting in an attempt to drive each other from the vicinity. Their nests are found in deserted flicker holes or natural tree cavities.

Average date of arrival April 20th.

Old-Squaw (Long-tailed Duck, *Clangula hyemalis*). Met with on a few occasions during spring migration, but not found nesting. Average date of arrival April 25th.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). This species is met with along the rivers in the mountains in the western part of Alberta, and seen only when brought in by hunters. No nests have been located.

**King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*).**

**Listed in Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the three-duck page.**

**Scoter (Black Scoter, *Oidemia americana*).**

**Listed in Stansell (1909a) but not the manuscript. See under Surf Scoter.**

White-winged Scoter (*Oidemia deglandi*). One of the most common ducks in the territory, and the most persecuted as there is no closed season on this species, usually found on the larger bodies of water only. Nest with eight eggs located at Beaver Hill's Lake, observed June 26, 1922, incubation far advanced. Average date of arrival April 30th.

**Farley (1932) writes, "a common summer resident on many of the larger lakes." Salt and Wilk (1958) write, "its numbers have not changed appreciably during the past fifty years." Despite this long period of stable abundance, this species is far less common today.**

**Surf Scoter (*Oidemia perspicillata*).**

**On the three-duck page, it reads, "My list of Birds of Central Alberta, Auk Vol XXVI, records this species, which was seen at Devil's Lake thirty miles west of Edmonton. I still feel sure my observation was correct. Macoun on the authority of Spreadborough records this species at Lesser Slave Lake."**

**However, Stansell (1909a) mentions Black Scoter, not Surf Scoter, at "Little Devil's Lake," plus a Surf Scoter observation from the Sturgeon River. He may have realized this inconsistency, and questioned his own sightings, since neither species was included in the manuscript.**

Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*). This species is quite plentiful in the territory. Several nests were located with the eggs ranging from seven to fourteen in number. Average date of arrival April 30th.

Snow Goose (*Chen hyperboreus hyperboreus*). A very common spring and fall migrant. Does not breed here. Average date of arrival April 26th.

Greater Snow Goose (Snow Goose, *Chen hyperboreus nivalis*). Spring and fall migrant, not breeding here. The few dates average April 25th.

**Taverner justifiably questioned the subspecies identification here, but Stansell felt it was correct. In his *Birds of Western Canada*, however, Taverner admits that "the two [subspecies of Snow Goose] differ only in size and so slightly and with so much individual variation that some doubt has been expressed as to the validity of the subspecific difference."**

Ross Snow Goose (Ross' Goose, *Chen rossii*). Spring and fall migrant, not breeding here. Average date of arrival April 25.

**This species is listed in the manuscript, but not the typescript.**

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis canadensis*). A very common spring and fall migrant.

Observed a pair at Beaver Hill's Lake apparently breeding on June 24, 1922. Average date of arrival April 14th.

**Hutchins's Goose (Cackling Goose, *Branta canadensis hutchinsii*).**

**Taverner felt that Stansell should have encountered these smaller Cackling Geese.**

**Not mentioned by Soper (1918), but included by Farley (1932).**

**Black Brant (Brant, *Branta nigricans*).**

**Listed in *The Auk* as "seen but twice," but not included in the typescript or**



**manuscript. Perhaps Stansell questioned his own sightings.**

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). I have had only one of these birds in hand, one that a boy had captured, apparently suffering from some disease as it died in a few days.

**Not mentioned by Soper (1918), and apparently both species of swan were rare back then. However, a decade after Stansell left the province, Farley (1932) found Tundra ("Whistling") Swans to be, "A fairly regular spring and fall migrant, sometimes in great flocks."**

**Note: Stansell makes no mention of Greater White-fronted Goose, nor does Soper (1918). Farley (1932) first encountered this species in 1922. Salt and Wilk (1958) write, "Apparently white-fronted geese rarely migrated through Alberta until about thirty years ago," i.e., around 1928.**

#### Hérons, Bitterns, Etc.:

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*). Very common about wet sloughs and meadows, and the margins of both large and small lakes, where it breeds in abundance. Many nests noted, the eggs ranging from three to six, four and five being the usual number. Many photographs were taken. On one occasion, I set the camera up and when the parent came near and settled down in the swamp, I went out to where she was, picked her up, and after placing her on the nest made a photo of her and the young. Average date of arrival May 17th.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). Two large colonies of this species are located near Edmonton, one of which is at Elk Island Park and the other at Mynistik Lake. I found them quite often feeding at Beaver Hill's Lake and many of the other smaller lakes. Average date of arrival May 15th.

#### Cranes:

Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*). These birds are very seldom met with these days, but were seen occasionally in migration several years ago.

**In the manuscript, the wording was, "Occasionally seen, but not as often as ten years ago, stopping only for a short time at larger lakes."**

Little Brown Crane (Sandhill Crane, *Grus canadensis*). Seen during the spring and fall

migration, and during the summer at Beaver Hill's Lake where it was probably nesting. Average date of arrival May 10th.

**Sandhill Crane (*Grus mexicana*). Taverner wondered why Stansell did not mention this species. At the time, this and the Little Brown Crane were considered separate species, with the Little Brown Crane migrating through Alberta and only the Sandhill nesting here. Thus, Stansell correctly identified the migrants but not the summer/breeding birds. Today, birders wouldn't generally bother to make the distinction.**

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots:

Carolina Rail; Sora (*Porzana carolina*). Very common, found along the margins of lakes and sloughs. Many nests located, the eggs ranging in number from eight to sixteen. Average date of arrival May 15th.

American Coot (*Fulica americana*). Found in almost every slough or lake. A large number of nests were examined, the eggs ranging in number from six to eighteen. Many downy young of this species are preyed upon by gulls. Average date of arrival April 27th.

Phalaropes:

Northern Phalarope (Red-necked Phalarope, *Lobipes lobatus*). Seen during spring and fall migration but not known to nest. Average date of arrival May 16th.

Wilson Phalarope (Wilson's Phalarope, *Steganopus tricolor*). Very numerous about wet sloughs and margins of lakes where they nest in the grass. The nest is usually depression in the ground lined with fine grasses. Eggs three to five, usually four. Average date of arrival May 17th.

Avocets and Stilts:

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*). Seen during spring and fall migration, many remaining to breed in favorable localities. Eggs averaging four.

Snipes, Sandpipers, Etc.:

C. Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*). This bird is a regular summer resident in the territory

under review, and is quite common. Its peculiar whistling love song is heard early in the spring and is continued until mid summer or beyond. I have observed probably fifty nests of this species and universally find them to consist of depressions in the ground, and either with or without a lining of grass. The eggs range from three to five with four the usual number.

**Dowitcher (Long-billed Dowitcher, *Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus*). Not mentioned in the manuscript or the hypothetical list, but a few Alberta records are listed in Macoun and Macoun (1909). By 1932, Farley called the Long-billed Dowitcher "a common migrant."**

**In *The Auk*, Stansell mentions Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) writing, "I had this species reported to me both in the spring and fall of 1908, but did not observe them myself until July 1, 1909, when I saw six or eight along the edge of a wet meadow." Since Woodcock are generally solitary we suspect that what he saw was instead a typical feeding group of six to eight dowitchers, and that he later realized this error. He did not include either Woodcock or dowitchers in the manuscript, presumably out of caution.**

**Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*). Included in the Wolfe and Rowan list.**

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*). This species comes to these parts in the spring migration in flocks of thousands. Not observed breeding.

**Farley (1932) called it a "fairly common migrant." Flocks of thousands would be very unusual today.**

**White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*). Included in the Wolfe and Rowan list.**

Baird Sandpiper (Baird's Sandpiper, *Pisobia bairdii*). Quite common during spring migration but not known to breed here.

Least Sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*). This sprightly little fellow is noted in abundance during the spring migration, but not known to breed in the territory under review.

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusillus*). Observed during spring migration. A large flock was seen at Beaver Hill's Lake on June 13, 1922, and it is quite possible they may have nested in the vicinity.

**Sanderling (*Calidris arenaria*). Included in Macoun and Macoun (1909), the hypothetical list, and the Wolfe and Rowan list.**

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*). These birds are fairly common especially about the larger lakes and sloughs where they breed. Altho no nests were located, nearly fully fledged young were observed June 18th, 1922.

**Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). Included in the Wolfe and Rowan list.**

Greater Yellow-legs (Greater Yellowlegs, *Totanus melanoleucus*). Quite common during the spring and fall migration, many remaining to breed. Downy young found June 10th, 1915.

Yellow-legs (Lesser Yellowlegs, *Totanus flavipes*). These birds are somewhat more common than the preceding, nesting in many of the numerous sloughs and even in the tamarac swamps where I found a set of four eggs, May 24th, the nest being a depression in the moss and unlined.

Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitarius*). This is the common sandpiper of the wooded portion of the territory under review. Each little lake has one or two pairs about its shores. In June 1908 I found a nest of this species containing three downy young and an addled egg. The eggs were in an old robin's nest, and was in no way repaired or lined by its present occupant. It was in a birch tree up forty feet.

Western Willet (Willet, *Symphemia semipalmatus inornatus*). Very common summer resident, usually met with in vicinity of the larger lakes and sloughs. I made photos of the birds on the nests also of the downy young, and on one occasion succeeded in picking the mother off the nest, fondling her for a few moments, and replacing her without having her take fright in any visible way.

Bartramian Sandpiper (Upland Sandpiper, *Bartramia longicauda*). A very common summer resident nesting in the upland, usually near the water. Eggs three and four, rarely five.

**Farley (1932) also found this species to be "everywhere abundant" when he arrived in Alberta in 1892, but "quite rare" forty years later.**

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites ruficollis*). In the Wolfe and Rowan list only.**

**Farley (1932) calls it "a rare migrant."**

Spotted sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). This little "Tip up" is noted along practically every stream in the territory under review, and is very often seen in the company of *T. solitarius* nesting in the uplands surrounding their feeding grounds. Nests containing from three to five eggs observed, with four being the usual number.

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius longirostris*). Met with quite frequently and found nesting in the

open prairie. The eggs average four in number, altho five have been recorded.

Plovers:

Black-bellied Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*). This plover is a fairly common spring migrant thruout the territory under review, remaining in some instances until the first week of June when it disappears.

American Golden-Plover (*Charadrius dominicus dominicus*). A very common spring migrant, leaving for the north the latter part of May or the first of June.

Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*). Very common especially in the vicinity of water, where it nests anywhere from the sandy beaches to the upland meadows. The eggs range from three to five with the usual number of four.

**Semipalmated Plover (*Aegialitis semipalmata*): Stansell did not report Semipalmated Plover, but neither did he receive records of this species from Wolfe and Rowan. Soper (1918) writes, "I have only one record, a flock seen on May 13, 1912, feeding along the margin of a pond." Farley (1932) called it "a common migrant." Kaufman (1996) writes, "Seriously depleted by unrestricted shooting in late 19th century, but has recovered well; currently widespread and common."**

Grouse, Partridge, Etc.:

Hungarian Partridge (Gray Partridge, *Perdix perdix*). Some years ago this beautiful little game bird was introduced into the southern part of Alberta where it has rapidly adapted itself to the country and to the climate, and is spreading rapidly to the delight of the Protective Association that liberated them.

**Farley (1932) reports that this species was "first liberated in Alberta in 1907 by Calgary sportsmen."**

**Richardson's Grouse (Dusky Grouse, *Dendragapus obscurus richardsoni*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Franklin Grouse (Spruce Grouse, *Canachites franklini*). A resident met with in the deep woods and toward the foothills of the mountains. At one time a flock came within a short distance of the house. No nests were located.

Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus togata*, *B. u. umbelloides*). These apparent two forms are to

my notion indistinguishable and they present a color phase similar to that of the eastern screech owls, as I have found pairs with the male quite reddish and the female a light gray, and vice versa. I have also observed a pair of either grays or reds when the young would be both red and gray, or all red or gray, or all red, or all gray. In fact, there is practically every gradation in color from the extreme red to the palest gray.

Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*). Very common thruout the northern section of the territory under review, and also met with quite often in the western part near the mountains. No nests were located.

**White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus leucurus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Prairie Chicken (Greater Prairie Chicken, *Tympanuchus americanus*). This species has gradually advanced to the north and west until it is now a common resident in the south and eastern part of Alberta, and altho the winters are very severe it seems as tho it has become adapted to the climate and here to stay. There were several hundred in the vicinity of Provost during 1922-23."

**Not in Soper's (1918) list. Views on this species have differed considerably over the years. Farley (1932) considered it a rare but resident "straggler" from Manitoba. Salt and Wilk (1958) believed that these grouse were migratory, returning to the Dakotas in winter, but Salt and Salt (1976) softened this view, calling the grouse's seasonal movements "a regular sequence that can hardly be called migration." Ross et al. (2006) argue that it was common to assume that this species had "followed the plow" all the way to Alberta, only to die back shortly thereafter. Evidence from population genetics, and calculations of unrealistic dispersal abilities, make this unlikely, and Greater Prairie Chicken were probably native to Alberta long before the arrival of the settlers.**

Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse (Sharp-tailed Grouse *Pedioecetes phasianellus campestris*). A very common resident thruout the prairie portion of the territory under review, and very frequently met with in the park lands and timbered sections. This bird seems to withstand the advent of civilization, but is very much complained about by certain farmers claiming it destroyed large quantities of wheat and other grains. I was detailed by the Department of Agriculture of the Province to investigate the matter, and found that even tho birds

inhabited wheat fields habitually, they fed largely on weed seed and insect matter. One stomach examined which was taken in a wheat field contained four thousand seeds of *Convolvulus arvensis* [Field Bindweed] and numerous Coleoptera [beetles] besides various other weed seeds and insects."

#### Pigeons:

**Stansell makes no mention of Rock Doves (*Columba livia*) since they were considered a domestic species at the time, and not included in such lists, including the AOU Checklist.**

**Likewise, he does not mention Passenger Pigeons (*Ectopistes migratorius*). "According to Mr. Pascal Dumont, pigeons were quite plentiful in Central Alberta until the year 1875, when they began to disappear" (Farley 1932).**

Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura macroura*). This species has been met with on several occasions, but I consider it very rare, altho Macoun states it is very abundant at Medicine Hat.

**Farley (1932) comments, "Doves appear to be more plentiful now than in former years."**

#### American Vultures:

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*). I have so far located only two breeding grounds of this species, one at Elk Island Park and the other at Mynistik Lake, and until lately have not been able to make their acquaintance so am not able to give an authentic average date of spring arrival.

#### Hawks, Eagles, Etc.:

Marsh Hawk (Northern Harrier, *Circus hudsonius*). Probably the most abundant hawk, with the exception of *F. sparverius*. This species can be seen at any time, slowly winging its way over marsh or meadow in quest of a meal.

Sharp shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*). This hawk is met with very frequently during the spring and summer thruout the range.

Cooper Hawk (Cooper's Hawk, *Accipiter cooperi*). A fairly common species, especially in the

wooded and parkland districts. Only one nest located, up about twenty five feet in a popular tree with six eggs late in June.

Goshawk (American Goshawk, *Astur atricapillus atricapillus*). Very common thruout the wooded and park regions in the territory under review. Nest located up forty feet in black poplar tree containing four eggs. These birds are the worst in the territory for destroying poultry and are very destructive with the various game birds. On one occasion one swooped down from within ten feet of me and hurried off with a young chicken.

**Western Red tailed Hawk (Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo borealis calurus*). Reported by Soper (1918), citing Taverner's opinion regarding the subspecific name choice.**

Krider Hawk (Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo borealis kriderii*). A very common summer resident, usually placing its nest in some tall tree in the park-like or open section of the country. The eggs usually run three or four.

**Taverner wondered why Stansell didn't use the name *Buteo borealis calurus* for the local Red-tails, and Stansell replied that this was a matter of "splitting hairs."**

**Stansell probably saw enough of the pale "Krider's" morph to justify using the name. Even today, the sub-specific status of *kriderii* is a source of confusion for birders and ornithologists, as is the breeding range of *calurus*. Farley (1932) also seems unsure of these names, and tentatively refers to the central Alberta birds as *B. b. borealis*.**

**Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) appears to have been included in Stansell's original manuscript, since Taverner questioned it. The hawk pages are missing from the manuscript, however, and this species is not included in the typescript, suggesting that Stansell reconsidered this record.**

Swainson Hawk (Swainson Hawk, *Buteo swainsonii*). A fairly common species of the central part of Alberta, especially in the park land districts.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*). A somewhat rare species, met with in the deeper woods, where a nest was located fifteen feet up in a white birch tree. There were four eggs, date June 15.

**Contrast this with Stansell's 1909 paper in *The Auk*, in which they were, "fairly common."**

American Rough-legged Hawk (Rough-legged Hawk, *Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*). One of the most common of the larger hawks in Alberta. No nests were located.



**In response to Taverner questioning the notion that this species breeds in Alberta, Stansell corrected Taverner with, " I did not state the Am. Rough-legged Hawk nested in this locality."**

Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk (Ferruginous Hawk, *Archibuteo ferrugineus*). Not so common as the preceding but quite often seen in the central part of the territory under review.

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). This species is a resident thruout the territory under review, but not at all common. January 21, 1912, I observed one of these species sitting on a grain stack within a few hundred feet of the Pembina River near Cosmo. It allowed me to approach to within a few yards before it took flight, and then flew only a short distance and lit in a spruce tree. This might be explained by the extremely cold weather we were experiencing at the time. The thermometer registered near fifty degrees below zero.

Alaska Bald Eagle (Bald Eagle, *Haliaetus leucocephalus alascanus*). This species although a resident is not so often met with as *A. chrysaetos* bus is seen at different times of the year along the large lakes and rivers.

**Today, Bald Eagles are almost everywhere more abundant than Golden Eagles.**

Falcons, Caracaras, Etc.:

Gray Gyrfalcon (Gyrfalcon, *Falco rusticolus*). This species is extremely rare in the territory under review having been seen only on three different occasions viz. in the winters of 1907, 1914, and 1912.

**Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909), and the hypothetical list, but not Soper's (1918) list.**

**Duck Hawk (Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum/ F. p. peregrinus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909), the hypothetical list, and the Wolfe and Rowan list, but not in Soper's (1918) list. Note that this was well before the advent of DDT, and the decline of this species in Alberta and elsewhere.**

Richardson Merlin (Merlin, *Falco columbarius columbarius*). This species is quite common thruout the portions of territory under review which are wooded or partially wooded. It frequently preys on barnyard fowls, carrying away half-fledged chickens and small ducks and turkeys. Other bird nests such as crows, magpies, and flicker cavities are appropriated as nesting sites by this species.

**Soper (1918) also reports "Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*)" citing Macoun and Macoun (1909), and commenting that, "it is not quite clear whether Spreadborough recognized both forms of Pigeon Hawk. All his specimens in the Geological Survey collection are typical richardsonii." We now call *F. c. richardsonii* the "prairie merlin" (at least informally) to distinguish it from the darker subspecies north and west of the prairies and parklands (*F. c. columbarius*). Indeed, both are found in Alberta, a fact that was clear a decade later (Farley 1932).**

American Sparrow Hawk (American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*). This small hawk usually feeds upon mice, birds, grasshoppers, dead gophers, etc., but is not at all adverse to taking young chickens when once started along the lines of chicken theiving the gun or trap is usually his fate. The most common of the *raptores* in the territory under review.

#### Ospreys:

American Osprey (Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*). This fishhawk is not to be considered a common species, but is met with quite frequently among the larger lakes. Observed nesting near Edmonton and near Jasper, in Jasper Park.

#### Horned Owls, Etc.:

American Long-eared Owl (Long-eared Owl, *Asio wilsonianus*). This species is very common thruout the territory under review and nests are observed quite frequently. In the spring of 1917 I made photographs of two young of this species that had been reared in a willow tree.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*). This species is fairly common thruout Alberta where it nests among the willow brush and not infrequently in open cultivated fields.

Great Gray Owl (*Scotiapteryx nebulosa*). This the largest representative of the owl family in America is not as common as any of the other large owls thruout the territory under review but is frequently met with especially in the winter months and not infrequently in summer. In the spring of 1906 I flushed one of these owls from among a bunch of willows, which was immediately attacked by a kingbird who rode up its back continuously pecking it for a distance of at least one hundred yards.

Richardson's Owl (Boreal Owl, *Cryptoglaux tengmalmii richardsonii*). This species is fairly

common at least thruout the wooded and park land district of the territory under review as well as in wooded bottom lands and in wooded bluffs along streams. In January 1909 on stepping out of my house a short time before daylight I was surprised to find a representative of this species sitting on the ground before the door. As the thermometer was then 50° below zero I immediately picked the bird up and took it into the house where it died shortly afterwards, apparently from cold and starvation.

**Farley (1932) calls it, "an irregular winter visitor from the near north."**

Saw-whet Owl (Northern Saw-whet Owl, *Cryptoglaux acadica*). This rare little owl is rarely met with. I took one in the winter of 1907-08 and had one brought to me in the spring of 1917 that was making its home in the haymow of a neighbor who tumbled it over with a pitchfork.

**Farley (1932) calls it, "an uncommon resident."**

Western Horned Owl (Great Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus subarcticus*). This form is a common resident thruout the wooded portions of Alberta, nesting in old hawk or crow nests and not infrequently constructing its own. On April 12, 1914, I took a set of three eggs of this species, which was up twenty five feet in a spruce tree. Nest composed of twigs and partially lined with feathers; incubation advanced. These birds do not bother poultry to any great extent here but feed principally on rabbits, grouse, and other birds, etc..

Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*). A regular and abundant winter resident thruout the northern and central part of the territory under review.

American Hawk Owl (Northern Hawk Owl, *Surnia ulula caparoch*). A very common winter resident especially in those years of severe cold and abundance of snow. Mr. Donald Wilby reported to me that he took a set of eggs of this species forty miles west of Edmonton in the spring of 1912. Nest located up forty feet in cavity of tree.

In April 1906, while travelling by steam forty miles west of Edmonton I saw a bundle of feathers in the bush near the road-side and got out to investigate. It proved to be an American Goshawk with its head completely severed from its body and its talons sunk into the heart of a Hawk Owl. Thus they had struggled until they had killed each other.

These birds have not been very plentiful the past few years.

**The Wilby egg collection was acquired by the Royal Alberta Museum in 2005, where it is under study. Unfortunately, the eggs had been separated from their data cards,**

**but the process of re-associating them is underway, aided by ledgers that cover the period up to 1911. Thus, curator Corey Scobie tells us that it is not clear whether the eggs mentioned by Stansell are still part of the collection, although the collection does include other Northern Hawk Owl eggs from Heatherdown (c. forty miles west of Edmonton, and possibly the same location mentioned by Stansell). The eggs that Wilby collected while living in Alberta will be another important source of information about the province's birdlife in the early 20th Century.**

Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea*). This form is met with only in the southern portion of Alberta where it nests in deserted badger holes.

**Not listed by Farley (1932).**

Cuckoos, Anis, Etc.:

**Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909), and the hypothetical list. In the latter, Stansell writes, "I also understand that Wolfe and Hine of Edmonton have a skin taken within the province during the summer of 1922.**

Kingfishers:

Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*). A fairly common summer resident, especially along streams and in the vicinity of lakes. Nest located in steep bank of small stream containing seven eggs. Nest lined with fish bones.

Woodpeckers:

Northern Hairy Woodpecker (Hairy Woodpecker, *Dryobates villosus leucomelas*). A fairly common species met with most frequently in park land districts; rarely seen in the deep woods.

Northern Downy Woodpecker (Downy Woodpecker, *Dryobates pubescens medianus*). A fairly common resident of the territory under review usually being partial to willow thickets and bluffs of small deciduous growth.

Arctic Three-Toed Woodpecker (Black-backed Woodpecker, *Picoides arcticus*). A fairly common winter resident a few being seen late in spring, probably breeding in deep woods.

American Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides americanus*). Met with quite frequently but not as

common as *P. arcticus*.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*). I find this bird to be a very common summer resident in Alberta, usually making its home in green poplar (*Populus tremuloides*) trees. In 1906, while cutting trees for a log house I cut one containing a nest of this species before noticing it. As the tree lodged I left it and the parent birds not only reared their brood that year but the next year as well.

Northern Pileated Woodpecker (Pileated Woodpecker, *Ceophloeus pileatus abieticola*). This species is quite rare resident thruout Alberta, only a few specimens being seen, one being taken at Edmonton and in the collection of W. Rowan.

**Farley (1932) calls it, "a fairly common resident of the timbered country around Pigeon and Battle Lakes." We now think of this species as relatively common, probably because there are more old-growth poplar trees throughout much of Alberta as a consequence of fire suppression.**

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus luteus*). A common summer resident thruout the territory under review where it nests in any conceivable place that it can drill into and make a nest. These birds feed largely on ants.

**This entry refers to yellow-shafted subspecies of the Northern Flicker, since the red-shafted was considered a different species, *C. cafer*.**

Hybrid Flicker [between Red- and Yellow-shafted Flickers]. This hybrid form is often met with in central and northern Alberta and the average date of arrival is the same as *luteus*.

**Soper (1918) writes, "Mr. Taverner informs me that he found a strong infusion of *cafer* among the specimens he took at Red Deer, Alta., during the summer of 1917." Since we now consider the two flickers to be subspecies, not species, a better term for intermediates is "intergrades," not "hybrids."**

#### Goatsuckers, Etc.:

Nighthawk (Common Nighthawk, *Chordeiles virginianus henryii*). Very plentiful at Edmonton where it probably nests on the tall large gravel roofed buildings.

**This species is not at all common in Edmonton now, and COSEWIC lists it as a species of special concern.**

Swifts:

**Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*): Macoun and Macoun (1909) reads, "Two individuals seen at Edmonton, Alta., May 17, 1897 (Spreadborough)." Also in the hypothetical list. The first confirmed record of this species in Alberta came from Calgary in 2022 (Hudon et al. 2023), making this early sighting a distinct possibility.**

Hummingbirds:

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Trochilus colubris*). Met with at Pockahauntis, Jasper Park, Edmonton, and Stony Plain, Alberta, where I have reason to believe it was nesting. **Before the days of hummingbird feeders, this species was understandably less commonly seen than it is today.**

Tyrant Flycatchers:

Kingbird (Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*). A common summer resident thruout the territory under review. Not so plentiful in heavily wooded sections as in park lands and prairie districts. Nests located in dead stubs as well as dead and living trees.

**Arkansas Kingbird (Western Kingbird, *Tyrannus verticalis*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Phoebe (Eastern Phoebe, *Sayornis phoebe*). A very common summer resident thruout the territory under review, nesting under bridges along banks of streams and in outhouses. In 1915 a pair built eight nests in out buildings about my place and never deposited an egg.

Say Phoebe (Say's Phoebe, *Sayornis saya*). Frequently observed but not observed nesting.

Olive-Sided Flycatcher (*Nuttallornis borealis*). This rare summer resident is seen occasionally but not often thruout the territory under review.

Western Wood Pewee (*Myrochanes richardsonii*). A very common summer resident in the wooded and semi-wooded portion of Alberta where it is found nesting.

**Likewise, Farley (1932) calls it, "a common summer resident."**

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*). This rare flycatcher is occasionally met with. In July 1906 I took a specimen at Edmonton.

Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii alnorum*). A fairly common summer resident in the territory under review. Nets located in an alder along the Saskatchewan River.

Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*). This very abundant flycatcher is met with in the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Alberta where it nests in small trees and bushes.

**Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

**Wright's Flycatcher (Gray Flycatcher, *Empidonax wrightii*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909), and the hypothetical list, but not recognized in Alberta today and most likely an error.**

#### Larks:

Hoyt's Horned Lark (Horned Lark, *Otocoris alpestris hoytii*). Breeding thruout Alberta in suitable localities and possibly intermingling with other forms. Average date of arrival, April 29.

**Desert Horned Lark (Horned Lark, *Otocoris alpestris leucolaema*). Taverner pointed out that *O. a. hoyti* breeds on the Arctic coast, and that the breeding birds in Alberta should be called "*enthemia*, if you want to recognize that rage [fashionable belief], or *leucolaema* if not. There is a possibility of *praticola* continuing along the northern edge of the prairies." Farley (1932) writes of *O. a. leucolaema*, "This is, I believe, the common breeding horned lark of Central Alberta." Clearly, they were all somewhat humbled by this confusing array of subspecies.**

#### Crows, Jays, Magpies, Etc.:

American Magpie (Black-billed Magpie, *Pica pica hudsonia*). This is a common resident thruout the Southern part of the territory under consideration but has not been often observed in the central part until the winter of 1919 when a few were seen about 10 miles north of Edmonton. The winter of 1920 brought several more about the district and then in the fall of 1921 I observed eight in a flock near Onoway thirty five miles west of Edmonton and the present year 1921 I found them nesting on the east side of Beaver Hills Lake and had several other nests reported to me.

**In a 1932 note in *The Oologist*, A. D. Henderson wrote that magpies had been common in the Edmonton District before he arrived in 1898, but were absent from then until 1919. Soper (1918) did not mention them at all. Farley (1932) suggests that the two-**

**decade magpie hiatus was caused by the extirpation of the bison. Salt and Salt (1976), however, interpreted Farley's account as a matter of magpies having, "apparently moved north into the into the Prairie Provinces early in this century, following agricultural development of the west." Today, few people realize that the hiatus happened at all.**

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata cristata*).

**Here, the right edge of the page is tattered, so our guesses as to the missing words and letters are indicated below in square brackets.**

A very common resident [in]  
the wooded and semi-[wooded]  
portions of Alberta. These [birds]  
are very destructive to oth[er]  
birds and young. So on[ce]  
when I observed a Sparr[ow]  
Hawk slyly approach a [nest]  
of this species and carry aw[ay]  
a young bird and hea[rd]  
the parent Jays make a  
terrible disturbance abou[t the]  
matter. I decided it ma[de not]  
a great deal of differen[ce even if it sounded as if an]  
ox was getting gored.

Canada Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis canadensis*). This is the most abundant Jay in Alberta. I have located two nests of this species, both in the late winter when the temperature ranged as low as 30° F below zero. I photographed one nest with the parent bird on it, and she seemed to pay no attention to my presence, allowing me to arrange her on the nest, smooth down her feathers, remove a straw from under her wing feathers, and make a time exposure. These birds are called by some Mystery Birds on account of their sudden appearance in the deep woods a few seconds after a shot is fired, where before no living animal appeared to be within miles. The name Whisky Jack is the name derived from the Indian name meaning mystery or spirit, which sounds a great deal like We-sak-a-jack.



**Neither Stansell nor Soper (1918) report this bird from Edmonton itself, where it still does not venture, despite Stansell calling it the most abundant jay in Alberta. Stansell had a particular liking for these birds and one of his popular articles featured his photographs of "the bird that nests in the snow" (Stansell 1908).**

Northern Raven (Common Raven, *Corvus corax principalis*). This species is seen at intervals during the winter months and I noted it at Pochontas in Jasper Park in August. As this was well within the mountains in all probability it would be found breeding there.

**In Central Alberta, this species didn't become a regular member of the avifauna until the 1990s, as part of a continent wide expansion of its breeding range (Harju et al. 2021).**

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos brachnrhynchos*). One of the most common species thruout the entire territory under review, arriving in early spring and remaining until late fall.

I was very much surprised to find a flock of fifteen of this species staying thruout the cold winter of 1921-22 in the vicinity of Chipman. They made the slaughter house their headquarters and ranged westward into Elk Island Park Buffalo Reserve. I have never noted them remaining over winter in this locality before. These birds, of course, do good to a certain extent, but are very destructive to duck eggs. While walking through fields near Sedgewick, at different times, I noticed many crows sitting in tree tops watching the surroundings, and when a duck was flushed from her nest that duck's eggs were doomed to destruction, for within the hour from one to a dozen crows would be feeding from that unfortunate duck's eggs-- if there were enough to go around. On one occasion, my two boys located a blue-winged teal's nest containing twelve eggs, and knowing that I was desirous of obtaining a photograph of a full set of this species, came at once for me, a distance not to exceed a quarter of a mile, and when we returned within half an hour only a few empty egg shells were left to mark the spot of what had been a happy home a short time before.

#### Starlings:

**Note: Stansell did not report European Starlings (*Sterna vulgaris*), since they were not present in Alberta until 1934 (Salt and Wilk 1958).**

Blackbirds, Orioles, Etc.:

**Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Cowbird (Brown-headed Cowbird, *Molothrus ater ater*). This very common form is met with thruout the entire territory under consideration. I have found their eggs in nests of *D. aestiva*, *S. aurocapillus*, *S. ruticilla*, *P. gramineus*, *P. s. alaudinus*, *Z. albicollis*, *J. hyemalis*, *M. m. melodia*, *M. lincolnii*, *M. georgianus*, *H. u. swainsonii* and several others. I was very much amused in the summer of 1910 by seeing a Slate-colored Junco trying to hover a Cowbird, which was fully fledged and had left the nest.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). This form is quite common about the larger lakes where it breeds. I have found that when the other blackbirds have eggs and even young this form has not even eggs.

Thick-billed Red-wing (Red-winged Blackbird, *Agelaius phoeniceus fortis*). This abundant form is met with in nearly every slough and marsh in Alberta, and either nests in the reeds over the water or near it in bunches of grass or in bushes.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna neglecta*). Very common thruout the prairie and parkland sections of the territory under consideration and often met within the timbered sections. Nest located on hill near stream slightly arched over. Six eggs.

**In contrast, Soper (1918) writes, "Cannot be called common." Farley (1932) however, says "This popular and well known bird is much more numerous now than formerly. Whether this change of status is the result of human habitation or because of the suppression of prairie fires, it is difficult to say. We have several winter records of meadowlarks."**

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*). Very abundant in semi-wooded and wooded portions and very frequently met with in prairie districts where bluffs may be found. One nest located made completely of hair. Another observed which contained nothing but binding twine.

**Bullock Oriole (Bullock's Oriole, *Icterus bullockii*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*). A very abundant summer resident at least in the central and northern part of the territory under review. Nest observed near Onoway containing four eggs located in willow hanging over Kilini Creek

**Soper (1918) also calls this species a "very abundant breeder." In contrast, Farley (1932) calls it, "a rare summer resident, abundant as a migrant."**

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). This very common form is abundant thruout the entire territory under review. Sometimes nesting in colonies on or near the ground in brush piles, etc..

Bronzed Grackle (Common Grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula aenus*). A very common summer resident over the entire part of Alberta. Nests observed in deciduous and coniferous trees in natural cavities on burned stubs and in deserted flicker and squirrel excavations.

Finches, Sparrows, Etc.:

Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*). A few years ago this was a fairly common form in the deep woods forty miles west of Edmonton, where it was a resident being observed quite frequently in the depths of winter. One nest located up forty feet in a white birch, constructed very similarly to the nests of *Z. ludoviciana*. The nest contained a single young male, nearly fully fledged and dead. This was in May 1911.

Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator leucura*). This somewhat erratic form is a casual visitant about the districts centering about Edmonton where it is usually found in winter to be in company with *B. garrula*. Not found nesting.

Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*). This is a very common form in the heavy woodlands west and north of Edmonton, where it breeds. This bird has a very beautiful nuptial song.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). This form is, I believe, met with in all parts of the territory under consideration.

**Not reported by Soper (1918). Farley (1932) first recorded this species in 1898, after which "the increase has been very rapid."**

Crossbill (Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra minor*). This very rare form is casually met with in the wooded and semi-wooded parts of the territory under review. No nests have been observed.

White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*). Not at all common but met with occasionally in wooded and semi-wooded portions of Alberta. Not noted nesting.

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis lephrocotis*). This is indeed a rare species, having been observed by me but one winter since 1906. The identification was absolutely

certain as the birds were perched within a few feet of me for some time.

Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemannii exilipes*). Professor W. Rowan of Edmonton showed me a skin of this form taken about Edmonton during the past year.

Redpoll (Common Redpoll, *Acanthis linaria linaria*). This and probably *A. h. exilipes* are quite common winter forms thruout the territory under review. They return north about April 15th.

Goldfinch (American Goldfinch, *Astragalinus tristis tristis*). This beautiful little sparrow is very often met with thruout the territory under review. Some years it is very abundant and other years scarcely noticeable. In the spring of 1906 there were thousands of them about Edmonton and a few years later scarcely one could be located.

Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*). I am of the opinion this species is a resident, with the possible exception of exceptionally cold winters, as I have observed it here in winter, and also have seen it collecting nesting material.

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis*). A very common winter resident arriving in the fall, usually about two or three weeks before the snow, and returning in the spring, usually about April 19th, but during the spring of 1922 they were observed as late as May 7th.

Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*). A very common spring migrant arriving here from the south on an average date of April 18th each year.

Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*). Large flocks seen during spring migration.

Chestnut-Collared Longspur (*Calcaris ornatus*). This species is a summer resident in some districts; in other simply a migrant. Found breeding near Beaver Hills Lake. Nest a depression in the ground lined with grasses, four eggs.

**Soper (1918) writes, "Mr. Atkinson records this species at Edmonton in 1906."**

**Farley (1932) reports, "several pairs regularly nest in the vicinity of Bittern Lake."**

**Salt and Wilk (1958) show none of these records on their map, and by then the species was considered restricted to the grasslands.**

McCown's Longspur (Thick-billed Longspur, *Rhynchophanes mccownii*). A common migrant thruout the territory under review, nesting in certain portions usually in prairie districts as they are not noted during the summer in the wooded section.

Western Vesper Sparrow (Vesper Sparrow, *Pooaetes gramineus confinis*). Very abundant along the roadsides and in fact observed everywhere in the territory under consideration. Nests

often found containing eggs of *M. ater*.

Western Savannah Sparrow (Savannah Sparrow, *Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*). A very abundant summer resident thruout the prairie and parkland sections of the territory under consideration. Several nests located in low and marshy ground.

**Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*). Not reported by Stansell, but Soper (1918) writes, "Mr. Atkinson recorded it as numerous in grass marshes in the year 1906."**

Le Conte's Sparrow (*Passerculus lecontei*). A fairly common summer resident along sloughs and marshy places thruout the province. No nests have been located altho I am satisfied they breed here.

Nelson Sparrow (Nelson's Sparrow, *Ammodramus nelsoni nelsoni*). A very common summer resident thruout the central and northern sections of the territory under consideration, where it breeds in marshy sloughs and meadows.

**Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammachus strigatus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*). A very common spring migrant arriving on an average of \_\_\_\_\_ and, after lingering a few days, disappear.

White-Throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*). The beautiful song of this species-- "Oh: see: me: me" is heard every where thruout the central and northern section of the territory under consideration. I am of the opinion that the 53 parallel is practically the southern breeding limit of this species, especially in the prairie portion of Alberta, but it probably nests farther south along the foothills and in the mountains. Nests located about ten inches from the ground in a bush pile, also about ten inches up in small bushes. Eggs usually four with range from three to five. The average date of arrival is May 6th, but I observed one in a flock of Western Tree Sparrows on April 3rd, 1916. The main migrating flock arrived in May 3rd, 1916.

Western Tree Sparrow (American Tree Sparrow, *Spizella manticola ochracea*). This species is an abundant spring and fall migrant thruout Alberta, arriving on an average of April 3, remaining for two or three weeks and disappearing. These birds often attain full song while here.

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina passerina*). A very common summer resident thruout the territory under review, where it nests in coniferous trees, willows, and rosebushes.

Clay-coloured Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*). The most common species met with thruout the prairie and semi-wooded portions of Alberta, where it nests on or near the ground in bushes and bunches of grass. These nests are at times lined with hair the same as the Chipping Sparrow.

Slate-colored Junco (Dark-eyed Junco, *Junco hyemalis*). This species I consider to be a spring and fall migrant up to about the 53 parallel and from there northward, especially in the wooded and semi-wooded portions a summer resident. They nest on the ground in swampy places and in highlands as well. I have found nests in old tin cans lying on the ground under roofs of root houses and under logs, and in all conceivable places. Two broods are reared. Nests usually composed of grasses and rootlets being usually lined with hair. The eggs three to five.

**Shufeldt Junco (Dark-eyed Junco, *Junco hyemalis connectens*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list. No longer recognized as a valid subspecies, but for a while this was the name applied to the breeding birds in Central Alberta, for example by William Rowan. Junco subspecies distinctions are an ongoing source of uncertainty, but the name *J. h. cismontanus* is typically used for these birds now. Stansell was probably wise to avoid putting a trinomial in his junco account.**

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia melodia*). This very common summer resident is met with thruout the territory under consideration, where it breeds abundantly along marshy sloughs and watercourses, and often in the upland. I have found as high as seven cowbird eggs n a nest of this species.

Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni lincolni*). Thruout certain sections of the wooded and semi-wooded portion of Alberta I have found this species fairly common, while in other sections they were not met with. Several nests examined: all composed of dried grasses. Eggs four or five.

Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of the range, where lakes bordered with sedge grass and reeds may be found and where grassy meadows may be met with. Nests very often quite cleverly hidden; usually constructed with grasses and lined with rootlets. Eggs from four to six.

Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca iliaca*). A very common summer resident thruout the central and northern portion of Alberta among the wooded and semi-wooded districts until about seven

years ago when it seemed to practically disappear and only an occasional one has been seen since and some years none at all. The most beautiful singer of the Sparrow family. No eggs taken.

**Near Camrose, Farley (1932) also reports breeding of this species, in 1907. He then comments, "For some unaccountable reason they have never returned to that area."**

**Fox Sparrows do not breed in this region today.**

**Arctic Towhee (Spotted Towhee, *Pipilo maculatus arcticus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Zamelodia ludoviciana*). A common summer resident thruout the wooded and park-land districts of the territory under review, where the frail nests are placed from three to fifteen feet above the ground in small trees or bushes. The male often takes his turn incubating and often feeds the female while she is on the nest.

**Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

#### Tanagers:

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*). A common summer resident thruout the wooded portions of Alberta, where it breeds. Nest located up eighteen feet on horizontal limb of white spruce tree: three eggs, incubation advanced.

#### Swallows:

Purple Martin (*Progne subis subis*). After looking over a large part of Alberta for this species year after year, I finally located a colony in the spring of 1915 about one hundred miles northwest of Edmonton in a semi-open woodland. There were ten or fifteen pairs nesting in a large dead black poplar tree which seemed to be full of deserted flicker holes. Only seen on a few different occasions.

**Farley (1932) calls it, "a fairly common summer resident," and credits bird lovers and martin houses for their increasing numbers.**

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon lunifrons lunifrons*). A very common summer resident thruout Alberta nesting either in rocky cliffs or in gables of barns and other buildings.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogastra*). A common summer resident but not so numerous as *P.*

*l. lunifrons*. Nesting in outbuildings, etc..

**By 1932, Farley writes, "The barn swallow has become quite rare in Central Alberta in the last twenty years."**

Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*). An abundant evenly distributed summer resident thruout the territory, where nesting conditions are favorable. Nesting in dead stubs, in deserted woodpecker holes, and natural cavities, either in the vicinity of water and in some cases at great distances from it.

**Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina lepida*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*). A summer resident thruout Alberta nesting in cut banks where the opportunity offers. Very numerous in certain localities. A large colony nested at Anderson's brick mill in Edmonton in the summer of 1906-1907.

**Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

#### Waxwings:

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrula*). I am of the opinion this species may be called a resident over at least the wooded and semi-wooded portions of the territory under review as I have observed it in every month of the year. Seen in large numbers in Edmonton during July and August 1918 and in numbers near Onoway during entire summer of 1907, where it probably bred. I have been informed that Ashley Hine located a nest of this species in Edmonton." **Notably absent from Soper's (1918) list.**

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*). This is a common summer resident, which nests from about the middle of June until at least August first, in the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Alberta. One nest located in willow bush but few inches above the water of small stream.

#### Shrikes:

Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis*). This species may be considered as a resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Central and Northern Alberta, where it is met with quite often in summer and very frequently in singles and twos and threes in winter.



**Taverner suspected that Stansell was mixing up the two shrike species, but Stansell replied firmly, "The Northern Shrike certainly does occur within the limits of Alberta in summer." This seems unlikely today, except in the far northeast, but given what Stansell says about Loggerhead Shrike abundance, one wonders what the shrike situation really was back then.**

White-rumped Shrike (Loggerhead Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*). This summer resident is extremely common thruout certain semi-wooded districts but seem to be rather rare in portions of the territory that are heavily wooded. From Edmonton east by motor road the distance of one hundred miles they are the common bird on fence post and telephone line. This may be magnified by the fact that the young are now (August) fully fledged and in evidence. Many nests located, the usual material for the bulky part of the structure being prairie sage with a lining of feathers.

**This species was similarly described as "a common summer resident" in the Battle River region (Farley 1932), and as "common" in central Alberta a few decades later (Salt and Wilk 1958).**

Vireos:

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireosylvia olivacea*). A very common summer resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Alberta. Nest located in white poplar up eight feet: three eggs.

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireosylvia philadelphica*). A fairly common summer resident in certain parts of the province, where the woods deep. Observed at Edmonton and forty miles west at Onoway.

Western Warbling Vireo (Warbling Vireo, *Vireo gilvus swainsoni*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of the central and northern part of Alberta, where it breeds. Nest located up thirty-five feet in birch tree on border of heavy wood near a running stream.

**Blue-headed Vireo (*Lanivireo solitarius solitarius*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list. Soper (1918) adds, "Breeds no doubt as I have seen them in July."**

Wood Warblers:

Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*). This rare warbler is occasionally met with in the deep woods. They are fearless little creatures and will come up to within a few feet of one, all the time appearing as tho there was no one in existence but themselves.

**Lutescent Warbler (Orange-crowned Warbler, *Vermivora celata lutescens*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of the territory under review. No nests located.

**Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909), and the hypothetical list.**

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva aestiva*). The most common and most evenly distributed species of the warbler family. Met with everywhere where suitable nesting conditions are met with. Nest in rose bushes, small poplars, and willows.

Myrtle Warbler (Yellow-rumped Warbler, *Dendroica coronata*). This is a fairly common summer resident thruout that portion of Alberta which is wooded.

**Audubon's Warbler (Yellow-rumped Warbler, *Dendroica auduboni auduboni*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909), and the hypothetical list.**

Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Alberta. It nests thruout its summer range, showing a decided preference to coniferous trees.

Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*). This very rare warbler is very seldom met with. First observed and taken near Sedgewick in a blinding snow storm on May 24th, 1918. Seen but twice since.

Black-poll Warbler (Blackpoll Warbler, *Dendroica striata*). Only fairly common thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of the territory under review during the spring migration.

**Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list. Soper (1918) writes, "Tolerably common and breeding in the spruce woods that flank the rivers. First observed about May 16."**

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*). A very abundant summer resident thruout the heavily wooded portions of Alberta and fairly common in semi-wooded districts, but not met with in prairie. Well constructed arched nests are made and as many as six eggs have been

observed.

Grinnell's Water-Thrush (Northern Waterthrush, *Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis*). This fairly common summer resident is observed thruout the heavily wooded portions of the range where they nest on or near the ground in wet marshy places, usually near a stream.

Connecticut Warbler (*Oporonis agilis*). Thruout the heavily wooded, semi-wooded and swampland section to the west of Edmonton this species may be considered to be a fairly common summer resident.

On June 2nd 1913 while out looking for my horses I heard a new strange song in a clump of woods and returned home for my gun, as I felt sure the author was a species I had not met before. On returning I found the bird in the same locality and after stalking it for some time secured it and on close examination it proved to be a male of *O. agilis*. I sent this skin to Washington for positive identification, marking the tag "*Opororomis agilis*", and a few weeks later it was returned to me marked "OK-- Oberholser." This I believe establishes a record for this species."

**Taverner questioned the idea that they were "common," and wrote to Rowan, "He [Stansell] has a record of Connecticut Warbler identified by Oberholser and probably correct. Do you know anything of it? On basis of this one specimen he calls it 'common'." Meanwhile, Stansell replied to Taverner's criticism with, "Not only did I secure a skin of the Connecticut Warbler but observed it several years in succession afterwards." By 1958, Salt and Wilk were referring to this species as a "fairly common summer resident," once again vindicating Stansell's assessments.**

**Mourning Warbler (*Oporonis philadelphia*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Macgillivray's Warbler (MacGillivray's Warbler, *Oporomis tolmiei*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Central Alberta, where it breeds in brushy places placing its nest usually a few inches above the ground.

**Taverner questioned this statement, and it does seem odd that Stansell did not mention Mourning Warblers. However, many plumages of the Mourning Warbler show partial eye rings, making them easy to confuse with MacGillivray's, even today. A breeding male Mourning would be difficult to misidentify, however, so we can only assume that Stansell never encountered a breeding male up close.**

Maryland Yellow Throat (Common Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis trichas occidentalis*). A very common summer resident usually observed thruout the semi-open portions bordering swamps, lakes, etc., where it nests.

**Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla pusilla*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

**Canadian Warbler (Canada Warbler, *Wilsonia canadensis*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Redstart (American Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded portions of Central Alberta, where it breeds. Often seen in company with *D. a. aestiva*.

#### Wagtails and Pipits:

Pipit (American Pipit, *Anthus rubescens*). A very abundant spring migrant thruout the territory under review.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spraguei*). A common summer resident thruout Alberta where it nests on the ground. Average date of arrival, April 19th.

#### Dippers:

Dipper (American Dipper, *Cinclus mexicanus unicolor*). This peculiar little species is a resident of the western part of Alberta where the small swift streams remain open thruout the year. Observed on Marsh Head Creek near Athabasca River about one hundred fifty miles north west of Edmonton during the winter of 1914-15. Also at Cadomin south of Edson in the mountain in the early winter of 1919.

#### Thrashers, Mockingbirds, Etc.:

Catbird (Gray Catbird, *Dumetella carolinensis*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the prairie and semi-wooded portions of Alberta where it builds its nest within a short distance of the ground.

**Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Wrens:

**Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Western House Wren (House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon parkmani*). An abundant summer resident thruout Alberta, nesting in any conceivable place from a woodpecker hole in post or tree, to a pocket of an old coat hung in an outhouse or porch.

**Western Winter Wren (Pacific Wren, *Nannus hiemalis pacificus*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Prairie Marsh Wren (Marsh Wren, *Telematodytes palustris iliacus*). A fairly common summer resident thruout that portion of the territory under review which is covered with marshes and lakes, where they breed in the reeds and rushes.

Creepers:

Rocky Mountain Creeper (Brown Creeper, *Certhia familiaris montana*). This rare species has been met with but twice, and only once taken, in Nov. 5, 1910. Observed near Lobstick Lake west of Edmonton on May 12, 1916.

**Lobstick Lake is now called Chip Lake, and these birds can indeed be very localized in distribution and elusive to birders.**

Nuthatches:

**White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*).**

**Not in Stansell's list, but reported by Soper (1918) as follows: "Mr. Atkinson records the species as far west as Edmonton in 1906, the reference being referred to *S. c. nelsoni*." Salt and Wilk (1958) claimed that the first "indisputable record" for Alberta came from a photograph in 1957.**

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*). A fairly common summer resident thruout the wooded portions of the territory under review. One observed at Edmonton in May of 1919 along the Saskatchewan River, excavating a home in a decayed black poplar tree.

**In 1909 in *The Auk*, Stansell said this species was "Very rare. Seen only in deep woods where I presume it nests." Soper (1918) writes, "Mr. Spreadborough found the species tolerably common at Edmonton in the spruce woods, June 12, 1897."**

**Apparently then, as now, their populations fluctuate quite a bit, but they were much**

**less abundant in general a century ago.**

Titmice:

Long-tailed Chickadee (Black-capped Chickadee, *Penthestes atricapillus septentrionalis*). This little fearless resident is met with nearly everywhere that trees are found and nests in cavities either of its own excavating or in natural cavities or deserted woodpecker holes, and at times in tin cans and bird boxes.

Hudsonian Chickadee (Boreal Chickadee, *Penthestes hudsonicus hudsonicus*). This species is not met with so commonly as *P. a. septentrionis*, but is often seen in the deep woods in winter.

Columbian Chickadee (Boreal Chickadee, *Penthestes hudsonicus columbianus*). The common form observed in Jasper Park Rocky Mtns during the fall of 1917.

Warblers, Kinglets, Gnatcatchers:

Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa satrapa*). This species is met with very frequently thruout the heavily wooded portions of northern and central Alberta, where it nests.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula calendula*). This species is somewhat more common than *R. s. satrapa*.

Thrushes, Solitaires, Stonechats, Bluebirds, Etc.:

**Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendii*). In Macoun and Macoun (1909) and the hypothetical list.**

Willow Thrush (Veery, *Hylocichla fuscescens salicicola*). A very common summer resident thruout the territory under consideration, in wooded and semi-wooded districts. Nests located on or near the ground. One nest observed on the ground containing three eggs with one egg of cowbird.

**Soper (1918) also considered this species a "very common summer resident." It is less common now.**

Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Hylocichla aliciae aliciae*). A fairly common spring migrant thruout Alberta.

Olive-backed Thrush (Swainson's Thrush, *Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni*). The most common

thrush in the wooded and semi-wooded portions of the central and northern part of the territory under consideration. A summer resident nesting in willows and small trees, placing their nests from three to thirty feet above the ground. Cowbird eggs have been observed in several nests.

Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata pallasii*). This bird is observed thruout the wooded and semi-wooded portions of Alberta during the spring migration. Not noted nesting.

Robin (American Robin, *Planesticus migratorius mirgratorius*). This, the most common and most evenly distributed species among all species in Alberta is met with thruout the province. Nesting in any place which happens to suit their fany. A pair nest each year in a certain beam in a farm tractor and no matter what happens to be on in the spring the nest is always placed in the same location.

I know of only one instance where a pair of robins use the same nest year after year. This is at a neighbor's a few miles distant, who will vouch for the fact that a certain pair of robins have used this same nest up twenty feet in a poplar tree, every year for four years. I placed my Ford car in my garage June 15, 1920, at ten thirty one evening. The garage had no doors. The next morning at 9 o'clock I found a robin's nest built on the hind radius rod and attached to a spoke of the hind wheel. By 11 am the nest was ready for the lining. Then the birds stopped work. At 11 am nest day there was one egg in the nest. The nest was composed largely of pasture sage, had the usual amount of mud in it, and lined with grasses. The nest was robbed next day by some four-footed animal, probably a weasel, and was then abandoned.

Two broods are usually reared.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*). This hardy species arrives quite early in the spring.

Twice have I recorded its first arrival on March 17th. Two broods are quite often reared. Nests have been located in trees, fence posts, etc., and even in a cavity in a cut bank.

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