

BIRD TRAILS

66

LIST THE BIRDS AS THEY ARE WINGING
IN THE AZURE HEIGHTS ABOVE⁹⁹



BIRD TRAILS

"No longer now the wing'd habitants,
That in the woods, their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather around,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Toward these dreadless partners of their play.
And science dawn though late upon the earth." Shelley

It is hoped that this poem is a true prophecy for the relationship of trailers and birds. This will depend upon three things: 1) The development of a discerning knowledge of birds. 2) The discovery of what the birds need and give it to them if they do not have it and not destroy their natural habitat. 3) The spreading abroad of this knowledge so it is universally known, and so that we may all work in unison thus one does not tear down where others build up.

It is generally conceded that birds pay their board and lodging many times by their beauty, song and interesting and beneficial habits of eating insects and weed seeds. Before condemning any wild life for its bad habits, it is well to look for good habits. Nothing adds more to the comfort of bird life than chances to drink out of shallow rough water baths, away from dangers of lurking animals. Thickets of shrubs, vines and seed annuals and perennials should be retained for sake of bird food and shelter and nesting comfort. These seeds should be sown along trail if not found there.

Because in many parks these spots of undergrowth are being cleared out and so driving many of our birds away, a list of shrubs and trees and perennials will be given here that are especially inviting to wild life of Nebraska.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. mulberry | 13. barberry |
| 2. elderberry | 14. bitter sweet |
| 3. dogwood | 15. hawthorn |
| 4. red cedar | 16. bush cranberry |
| 5. sumac | 17. wahoo |
| 6. wild grape | 18. solomon seal |
| 7. choke cherry | 19. mullein |
| 8. smilax | 20. sunflower |
| 9. virginia creeper | 21. lettuce |
| 10. mt. ash | 22. hemp |
| 11. buck thorn | 23. other weed seeds |
| 12. hackberry | |

Try this recipe for forming a successful bird club.

Warm up the bird interests by inviting the prospective members to take trips leading through a wooded bird sanctuary and conducted by a competent bird student. When this temperature has risen several degrees, add some handbooks such as Chapmans, Mathews or Wright. To give color to the club consistency, stir in two large colored charts and 60 colored cards of birds. For a permanent attractive flavor, drop in a program of regular meetings for which the members are responsible. Add regular field trips, and occasional bird party and a Bird Craft Contest. Let all simmer together then the interest will crystallize and there is your Bird Club.

DIFFERENT USAGE DETERMINE THE FORM OF BIRD BEAKS

1. Great Blue Heron



2. Whip-poor-Will



3. Finch



4. Wood-Pecker



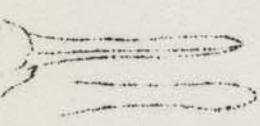
5. Cross-Bill



6. Hawk



7. Duck



8. Snipe



9. Parrot

10. Humming Bird

1. Heron - long and sharp for catching fish.
2. Whip-poor-Will - Wide mouth with stiff hairs to catch insects on the wing.
3. Finch - The short, strong beak of a seed bird.
4. Woodpecker - Chisel edged bill & barbed tongue for chipping wood & piercing insects.
5. Cross bill - A pair of pliers for opening cones to get seeds.
6. Hawk - Powerful, short & sharp for catching prey.
7. Duck - Wide beak with toothed edge.
8. Snipe - Slender and sensitive for probing for food.
9. Parrot - Hooked and toothed for climbing.
10. Humming Bird - Slender for sucking nectar from flowers.

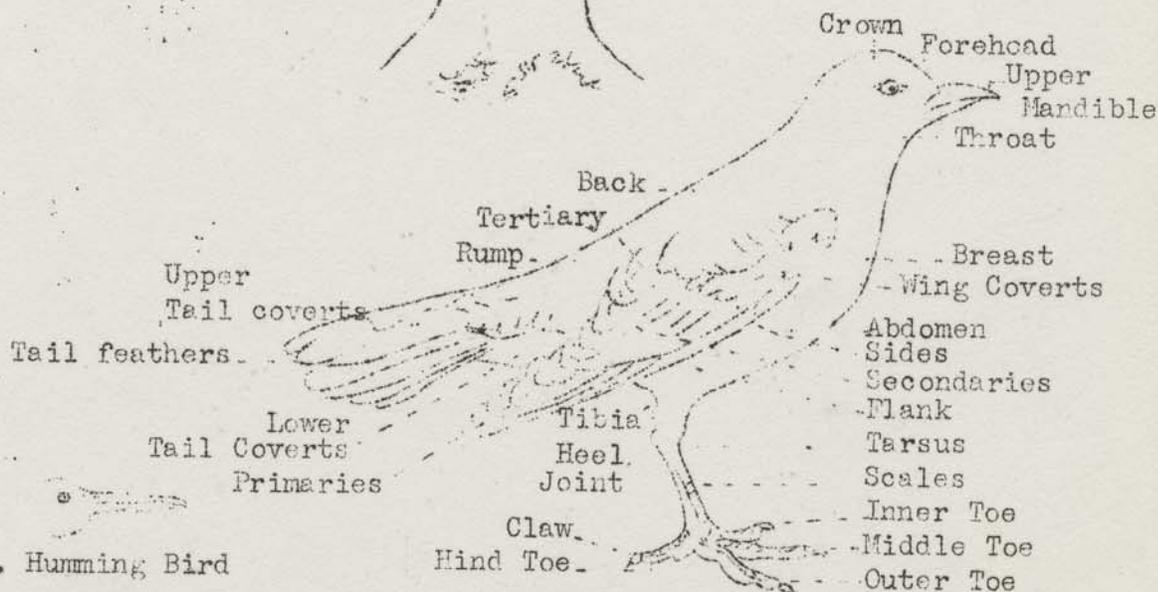


Fig. XXIX

Parts of Body of a Bird

Signs for Bird Trail

Figure 29 is a suggested sign for the bulletin board.

1. What bird grows his own snow shoes in the winter and removes them in the summer time?
2. What is there on the ground under an owl's nest that discloses this bird's diet?
3. Add a wild bird to the circle of your friends. Listen and imitate. Kiss the back of your hand to arouse curiosity. Keep it up and you will succeed. Watch its diet. Try feeding from your hand.
4. Owls have good ears, hawks have sharp eyes. How far can hawks see? (2000 feet.) Which fly quietly and low and which high? What bird focuses its eyes as we do? The lens of feathers around owls' eyes help their hearing.
5. Insects and rodents are man's worst enemies. Sparrow hawk's diet is 70% grasshoppers. Chicken hawk's diet is 50% rodents.
6. The flicker woodpecker ate 3,000 cinch bugs in one hour. Therefore birds are the best control for insects and rodents.
7. What and where are the call feathers of robins, juncos, flickers as they fly?
8. Watch the use and shape of feet, bill, tongue and tail of woodpeckers. What other bird has a sharp tail? (Swift.)
9. Watch bird mannerisms such as
 - a. Weaving flight of nighthawk.
 - b. Darting flight of swifts.
 - c. Humming birds fly backward. Wings beat 100 to 150 times per second.
 - d. Woodpeckers have undulating flight.
 - e. Herons fly with neck doubled.
 - f. Cranes fly with neck extended.
 - g. Geese formation -)
 - h. Duck formation -)

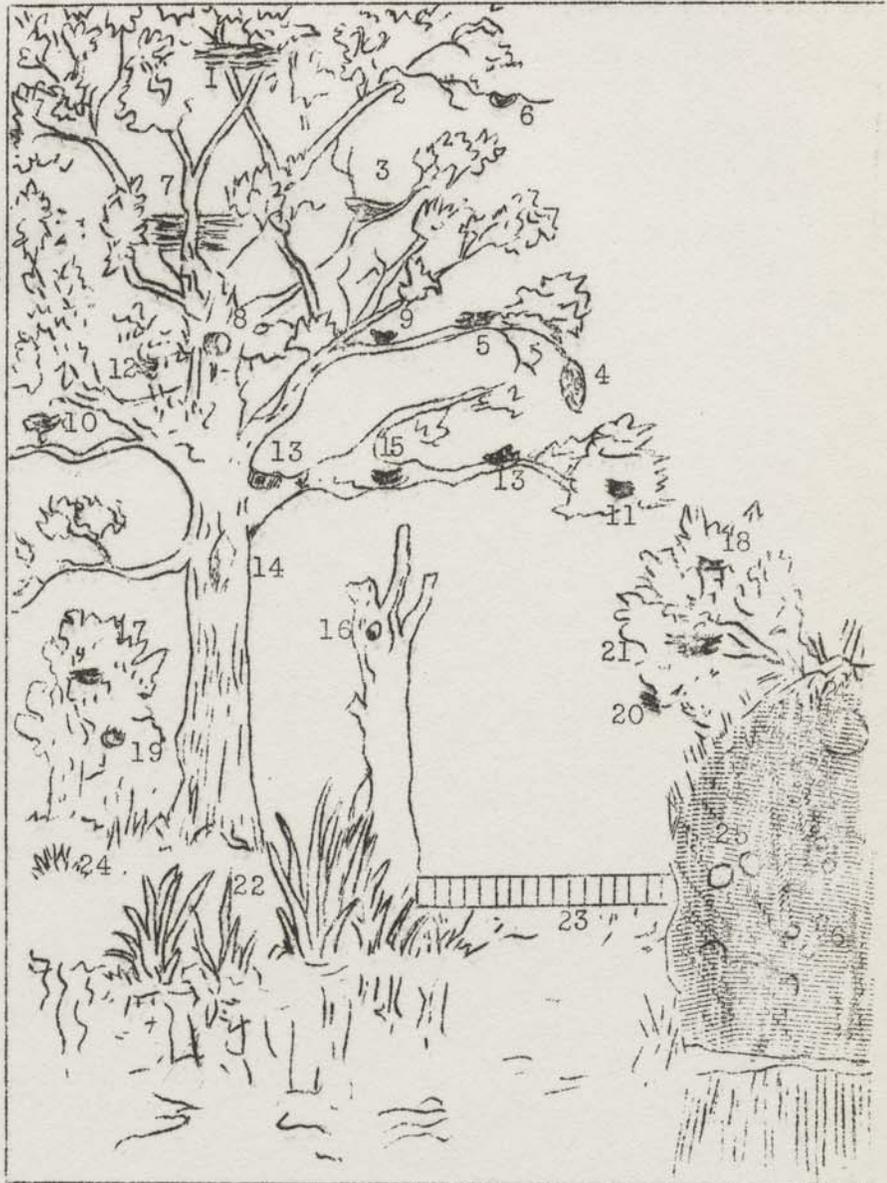
) Compare
10. What is the urge that directs flocks of young birds by night and day and through fog to their winter home?
11. A robin hatched in captivity, never having seen a nest nor heard a robin's song will, if freed, build a typical robin's nest and sing his "cheer-up" song. In birds we call this instinct but with us we call it a glorious intelligence.
12. In migration, night fliers are land fliers and day fliers are water fliers. The tiny humming bird flies across the Gulf of Mexico to reach its goblet of nectar in the trumpet flower.
13. Try describing bird calls as: The blackbird's call is the marshes rusty wheelbarrow; the grackles give forth creaks; the jay gives his yaw; the catbird is a ventriloquist; the crane trumpets; doves coo; owls hoot; woodpeckers and grouse drum.
14. Which comes back for the summer first, male or female bird?

Activities

1. Draw a map of the wild area and locate nests in trees or shrubs or on

KEY TO NEST CHART

- 1. Crow, Hawk, Great Horned Owl.
- 22. Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Wood Pewee.
- 3. Blue Jay
- 4. Baltimore Oriole.
- 5. Orchard Oriole.
- 6. Warbling Vireo.
- 7. Great Blue Heron, Black-Crowned Night Heron.
- 8. Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, House Wren, Chickadee Starling.
- 9. Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
- 10. Rosy-Breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Summer Tanager.
- 11. Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo.
- 12. Wood Thrush.
- 13. Robin (Close to trunk in spring among branches in summer.)
- 14. Flicker, Starling, Screech Owl, Crested Flycatcher, Wood Duck.
- 15. Mourning Dove.
- 16. Crested Flycatcher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Tree Swallow, Bluebird, Prothonotary Warbler, House Wren, English Sparrow, Starling.
- 17. Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cardinal, Shrike, Yellow-breasted Chat, Kingbird, Mockingbird.
- 18. Indigo Bunting, Yellow Warbler, Northern Yellow-throat, Redstart, American Redstart.
- 19. Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Dickcissel, Cuckoo.
- 20. Bell's Vireo.
- 21. Green Heron.
- 22. Red-winged Blackbird, Marsh Wren, Least Bittern
- 23. Phoebe (Under bridge.)



By V. S. Eifert

- 24. Bob-White, Whip-poor-will, Night Hawk, Towhee, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Junco, Horned Lark, Killdeer, Meadow Lark.
- 25. Kingfisher.
- 26. Bank Swallow.

ground. Note kind of tree they prefer. There is one record* where pine is by far the favorite.

2. Care for the nestlings if they fall out of the nest. Consult Hodge's Food Chart. Be sure to put food in birds' mouths once an hour.

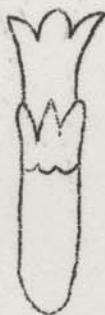
Bird Trail Activities

1. Grow gourds for bird nurseries. Even the Indians used to hang gourds to their wigwam for the martins.

2. If Mr. and Mrs. Robin are building their nests in dry weather, put a pan of mud, near them. Otherwise Mother Robin has been seen flying directly from bath into the dust. Then she picks the mud off her feet and feathers.

3. To attract vireos and orioles and catbirds, supply plenty of twine, yarn and strips of cloth. A little hair for a chipping sparrow.

4. To attract humming birds, plant the large trumpet honey suckle. If you wish to give them a more generous sip of nectar, tie small necked bottles or test tubes of sweetened water or thinned honey to the vines and trees. Tie a scalloped piece of red oil cloth to the top of tube or bottle to simulate the trumpet blossom. (See Fig. XXX)



Red Oilcloth

Green Oilcloth

Paint glass green
and fasten to a stick

Fig. XXXI

5. Build a blue bird box, a robin's and phoebe's open shelf box, a wren house, a chick-a-dee, a martin, a tree swallow, a sparrow and a finch house. The holes for entrance should be two or three inches from top of box, all for safety's sake. There does not need to be any perch. The box is best when deep and has a roof sloping from back down to the front, projecting out about three inches.

6. If one wishes to observe the private home life of the birds, an observation box can be made with one side on a hinge, so one can easily open one side. A false inner side of chicken wire will prevent birds from falling when hinged door is lowered. Rustic houses are usually more often occupied. It is best to have the bottom fastened with a hinge and lock or slipped into a groove so the house can be cleaned between the advent of each brood of birds. For size of box and entrance hole, send for Department of Agriculture Bulletin on "Bird Houses".

7. A novel martin house can be made from a flour barrel, thus:

*Hodge, "Nature Study and Life"

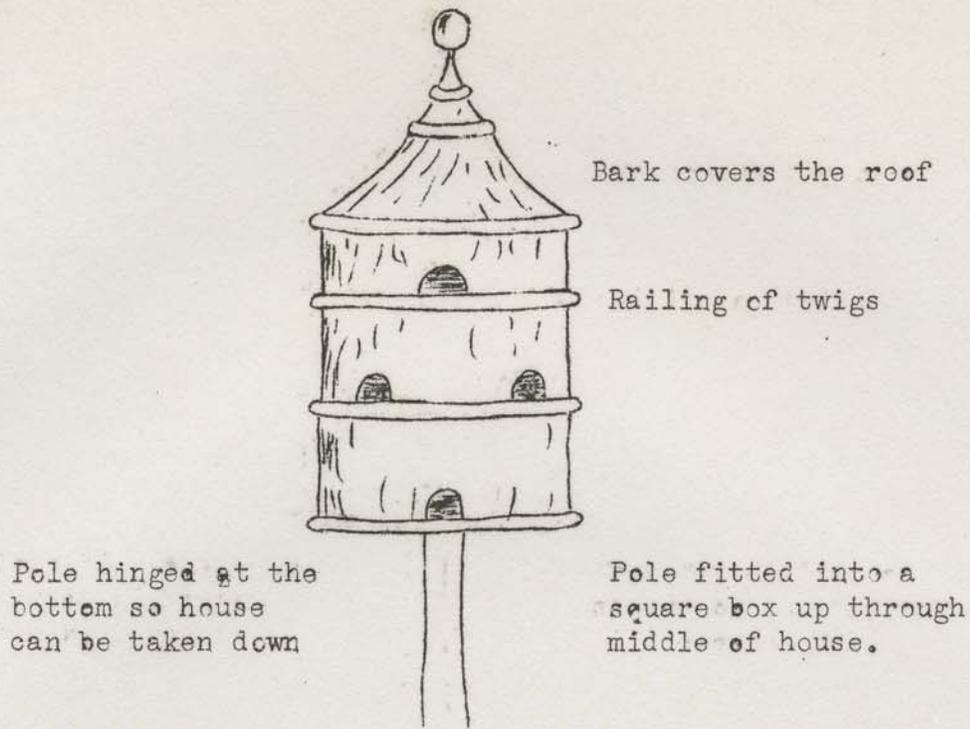


Fig. XXXII

8. It is interesting to place nest material in a conspicuous place near a nest that is being constructed.* A catbird nest at Plattsmouth, Nebraska, contains spiral trimmings of wall paper, a piece of the "funny paper" and someone's grocery bill.

9. Make feeding shelves or shelters. A cocoonut can be placed in a tree and filled with nut meats, bits of meat suet, and sunflower seeds for titmouse, chick-a-dee, nut hatches and woodpeckers.

10. A food tree. Melt suet and stir in bits of millet, hemp, meat, sunflower seeds. While mixture is hot, pour on branches to look like insects on leaves or branches.

11. Where there are flat rocks, the center can be chipped out to make a shallow rough drinking basin and bird bath, quite an ideal place in the wild.

12. "A pile of natural rock which hold pools of musical water, the whole set in a bosky dell of natural wild flowers to make the birds feel at home." Trafton's Methods of Attracting Birds.

13. A shallow floating basin with perforations at the bottom with a large wooden rim may be a safer bath.

14. Place mirror on branch over a nest at an angle so the observer can watch the activities within a nest of birdlings, while standing on the ground.

15. Make slides of birds outlined with India Ink and colored with Gypsy Glaze transparent paint. The lantern can be a Craft choeso wooden box with a slot or clamps on one end to hold the slides. A lighted flashlight (without reflector) will project the colored picture upon the screen.**

16. Make a nest collection mounting them in a tree. Make wooden or clay birds and place on their own nests for labels.

* A square meshed wire box on a platform and sheltered with a roof could be filled with nest material and hung in a tree.

** These slides can be made for any phase of nature, as animals, stars, insects, etc.

17. Make a bird calendar, a date for each return and each nesting period. Note where they wintered. Some birds have returned on the same date for three years. Use wren, robin and crow as measures for comparative bird sizes.
18. Grow gourds for bird nests.
19. What bird lines its nest with thistle-down? What bird plasters its nest with mud?
20. What birds regurgitates food for their young? (An observation study)
21. Read myths about origin of the robin's red breast** and the rosy throat of the grosbeak.
22. Give two differences between bird eggs and turtle eggs.

BIRDS

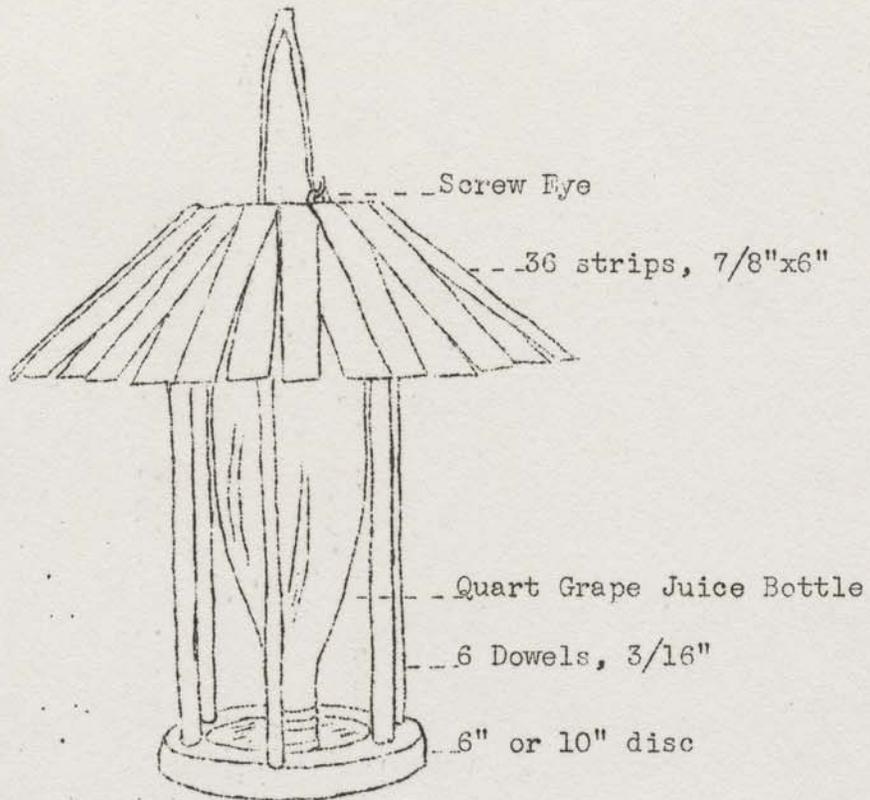
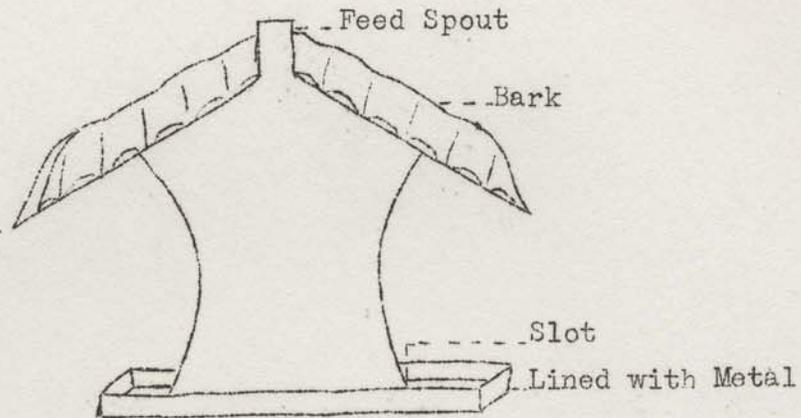
Words by C. A. Harwell
Tune of "Trees"

(This was sung at a Sunday Sunrise service in Yosemite Park.)

"I know that I have never heard
A song so lovely as a bird's
The soft low note from throat of Dove,
Singing a symphony of love;
A Meadowlark from nearest clod,
Lifting a song in praise to God.

I think the sweetest rhapsodies
Are sung by birds, just for the trees.
The Thrush sings softly to the stream,
The joy of evening in his theme;
That's why I know I've never heard
A song so lovely as a bird's.

** Story "Little Papeos'e Listens"



D.R.V.H., in Mechanics & Handicraft
Magazine

The bottom disc is hollowed with
small nib in center. The top disc
is cut out so as to let bottle in.

Fig. XXXIII