Descriptive Catalogue

of the

BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS.

By E. A. Samuels.

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BOSTON:
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BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS.

[Note. The following Catalogue has been prepared in compliance with numerous and repeated requests. It includes, so far as the observations of the author, and many other students in this department have extended, a list of all the species that have been obtained in the State, together with brief descriptive notes concerning their habits, &c.

The classification and nomenclature are those adopted by the Smithsonian Institution. It is, probably, the best existing arrangement, and is rapidly superseding all others with American Ornithologists.]

Turkey Buzzard, Cathartes aura. Illig. Rare. 2 specimens shot in 1863.

Duck Hawk, Great-footed Hawk, Falco anatum. Bonap. Rare. Winter.
Pigeon Hawk, Bullet Hawk, Hypothriochrome columbarius. Gr. Common.
Resident. Breeds. Nests in trees; eggs 4 or 5; laid in May.

Jer Falcon, Falco islandicus. Sabine. Rare. Winter visitor.

Sparrow Hawk, Tinnunculus sparverius. Vieillot. Common or not rare. Resident. Breeds; nests in trees; eggs 3 or 4; laid in May.

Gos Hawk, Astur atricapillus. Bonap. Common. Resident. Probably breeds, as specimens are often seen in summer.

Breeds; nests in high forks of trees; eggs 3 or 4; laid in May.

Breeds; nests in trees, usually; eggs 4 or 5; laid in May.

Red-tailed Hawk, Buteo borealis. Vieill. Common. Resident. Breeds; nests in deep woods, in high forks of trees; eggs 3 or 4; laid in May.

Breeds; nest in trees; eggs 3 or 4; laid in May.

A pair bred in Newton in 1863; nest in high fork; eggs 2.

Rough-legged Hawk, Architeuthis lagopus. Gray. Rare. No instance on record of breeding here.

Black Hawk, Architeuthis sanctijohannis. Gray. Rare visitor in winter.

Breeds; nests in marshes, on the ground; eggs 4 to 6; laid early in May.

Golden Eagle, Aquila canadensis. Cassin. Rare. Not known to breed.


Fish Hawk, Osprey, Pandion carolinensis. Bon. Not rare. Summer visitor. Occasionally breeds; nests in forks of trees; eggs laid in April or May.

Breeds; nests in hollows of trees, and in high forks of pines; eggs 2 to 4, laid in March.

LONG-EARED OWL, *Otus wilsonianus*. Lesson. Not rare. Resident. Breeds; nests in hollow trees and high pines; eggs 2 to 4, laid in March or April.


YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO, *Coccygus americanus*. Bonap. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in shrubs and bushes; eggs 4 or 5; laid in May.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, *Coccygus erythrophthalmus*. Bonap. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in bushes and low trees; eggs 4 or 5; laid in May.


Downy Woodpecker, *Picus pubescens*. Linn. Common. Resident. Breeds; nests in excavations in trees; eggs 4 to 6; laid in last week in April or first of May.


Chimney Swallow, Chaetura pelasgia. Steph. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in chimneys and hollow trees; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Whip-poor-will, Antrostomus vociferus. Bonap. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; eggs 2 in number; laid on the ground in May or June.

Night Hawk, Chordeiles popetue. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; eggs 2; laid on the bare ground or rock in May.

Belted Kingfisher, Ceryle aleyon. Boie. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in excavations in sand-banks; eggs 4 to 6; laid in April or May.

King Bird, Tyrannus carolinensis. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in trees, usually in orchards; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Great-crested Flycatcher, Myiarchus crinitus. Cab. Not common. Summer visitor. Breeds occasionally; nests in holes in trees and fences; eggs 4; laid in May or June.

Pewee, Phoebe Bird, Sayornis fuscus. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds, often twice; nests beneath bridges, and in caves and sheds; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May and July.


Wood Pewee, Contopus virens. Cab. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in trees in deep woods; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May or June.

Traill’s Flycatcher, Empidonax traillii. Baird. Not common. Summer visitor. Breeds occasionally; nests in trees like E. minimus; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May or June.

Least Flycatcher, Empidonax minimus. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds, often twice; nests in trees, often in orchards; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May and July.


Wood Thrush, Song Thrush, Turdus mystelius. Gm. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in low trees and shrubs in deep woods; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Hermit Thrush, Turdus pallasi. Cab. Common in spring and fall; occasionally seen in summer, and has been known to breed; nests near or on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Wilson’s Thrush, Tawny Thrush, Turdus fusciscens. Stephens. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in bushes, thickets of briers, and often on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Olive-backed Thrush, Turdus swainsonii. Cab. Often seen in spring and fall. Not known to breed in this State.

Gray-cheeked Thrush, Turdus aliciae. Baird. Probably occurs, but have not seen it.

Robin, Turdus migratorius. Linn. Common. Summer visitor. Resident in mild winters. Breeds, often twice; nests in trees; eggs 4 to 5; laid in April or May, and July.


Maryland Yellow-throat, *Geothlypis trichas*. Cab. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 6; laid in May.


Yellow-breasted Chat, *Icteria viridis*. Bonap. Rare. Summer visitor. Breeds occasionally; nests in low bushes, near the ground; eggs 4; laid in June.


Golden-crowned Thrush, *Seiurus aurocapillus*. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 6; laid in May or June.

Water Thrush, *Seiurus noveboracensis*. Nutt. Not common. Spring and fall visitor. Probably breeds, as birds are often seen in summer.

Black-throated Green Warbler, *Dendroica virens*. Baird. Common in spring. Breeds occasionally; nests in pines; eggs 4; laid in May or June.


Pine-creeping Warbler, *Dendroica pinus*. Baird. Common in the migrations. Breeds occasionally; nests in pines; eggs 3 to 4; laid in May or June.

Chestnut-sided Warbler, *Dendroica pensylvanica*. Baird. Common in spring and fall. Breeds; nests in bushes; eggs 3 to 4; laid in May or June.


Yellow Warbler, *Dendroica aestiva*. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in bushes and low shrubs; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May or June.


Cape May Warbler, *Dendroica tigrina*. Baird. Rare. Not known to breed, but probably does, rarely.


Canada Flycatcher, *Myiodyctes canadensis*. Aud. Common in the migrations. Breeds rarely; nests on the ground or in low bushes; eggs 3 to 4; laid in May.

Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla*. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in trees, on low limbs; eggs 4; laid in May or June.

Scarlet Tanager, *Pyranga rubra*. Vieill. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in trees, usually oaks, in deep woods; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May or June.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo horreorum*. Barton. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in eaves of buildings, and in barns and sheds; eggs 4 or 5; laid in May, and often July.


BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS.


RED-EYED FLYCATCHER, or VIREO, *Vireo olivaceus*. Vieill. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in low trees; eggs 4; laid in May or June.

WARBLING FLYCATCHER, *Vireo gilvus*. Bonap. Not common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in high poplar trees; eggs 4; laid in last of May or first of June.


MOCKING BIRD, *Mimus polyglottus*. Boie. Rare. Summer visitor; occasionally breeds; nests in bushes; eggs 4 to 5; laid in June.


BROWN THRUSH, *Harpornychus rufus*. Cab. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds, often twice; nests in bushes and small trees; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May and July.

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN, *Cistothorus palustris*. Cab. Not common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in tall grass in marshes; eggs 6 to 8; laid in May or June.

SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN, *Cistothorus stellaris*. Cab. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in grass in marshes; eggs 6 to 8; laid in May or June.


WINTER WREN, *Troglydotes hýémális*. Vieill. Rare. Occasionally seen in fall, winter, and spring.

AMERICAN CREEPER, *Certhia americana*. Bonap. Common in spring and fall. Possibly breeds; nests in holes in trees, &c.; eggs 6 to 8; laid in May.


RED-BELLIED NUTHATCH, *Sitta canadensis*. Linn. Common in spring, summer, and fall; less common in winter. Breeds; not acquainted with nest.
Black-cap Titmouse, Chickadee, Parus atricapillus. Linn. Common. Resident. Breeds; nests in holes in trees, &c.; eggs 5 to 8, and even 10; laid in April or May.


Purple Finch, Carpodacus purpureus. Gray. Common. Resident in mild winters. Breeds; nests in pines and cedars, usually; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May or June.

Yellow Bird, Goldfinch, Chrysomirris tristis. Bonap. Common summer visitor. Resident in mild winters. Breeds; nests in trees; eggs 4 to 5; laid in June or July.

Pine Finch, Chrysomirris-pinus. Bonap. Not rare in winter. Has been known to breed; nests in pines; eggs 4 to 5; laid in April or May.

Red Crossbill, Curvirostra americana. Wils. Not rare in winter. Has been known to breed; nests in Pines; eggs 4 to 5; laid in February.*


Savannah Sparrow, Passerculus savanna. Bonap. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds twice; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May and July.

Grass Finch, Poecetes gramineus. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds twice; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May and July.

Yellow-winged Sparrow, Coturniculus passerinus. Bonap. Not common. Breeds occasionally; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Henslow’s Bunting, Coturniculus henslowi. Bonap. Very rare. Has been known to breed near Lynn, Mass.

Sharp-tailed Finch, Ammodromus caudacutus. Sw. Not rare in summer. Breeds; nests in grass on or near the ground.

Sea-side Finch, Ammodromus maritimus. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in grass; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

White-crowned Sparrow, Zonotrichia leucophrys. Sw. Not common in spring and fall.


Snow-Bird, Junco hyemalis. Sclat. Common in winter. Occasionally breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in June.

Tree Sparrow, Spizella monticola. Baird. Common in spring and fall. Occasionally breeds; nests in trees; eggs 3 to 4; laid in May or June.

Field Sparrow, Spizella pusilla. Bonap. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds twice; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in April, or May and July.

* Nuttall.

Song Sparrow, Melospiza melodia. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in April and July.

Swamp Sparrow, Melospiza palustris. Baird. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground, in swamps; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Fox-colored Sparrow, Passerella iliaca. Sw. Common in spring and fall.


Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Guira aruviaca. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in low trees and shrubs, in or near swamps; eggs 4; laid in May or June.


Ground Robin, Towhee Bunting, Pipilo erythrophthalinus. Vieill. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in low bushes and on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Bobolink, Reed Bird, Dolichonyx oryzivorus. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 6; laid in June.


Red-winged Blackbird, Agelaius phoeniceus. Vieill. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in bushes and tall grass, in meadows and swamps; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Meadow Lark, Sturnella magna. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May or June.


Boat-tailed Grackle, Quiscalus major. Vieill. Rare. Summer visitor. Nests in tall grass and reeds; eggs 5; laid in May or June.

Crow Blackbird, Quiscalus versicolor. Vieill. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in trees; eggs 4 to 6; laid in May.


Blue Jay, Cyanura cristata. Sw. Common. Resident. Breeds; nests in trees; eggs 4 to 5; laid in May.

Wild Pigeon, Ectopistes migratorius. Sw. Common. Summer visitor. Occasionally breeds; nests in trees; eggs 2; laid in April or May.


QUAIL, Virginian Partridge, *Oryx virginianus*, Bonap. Common. Resident. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 6 to 12; laid in May.


LEAST BITTERN, *Ardetta exilis*. Gray. Not very common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on bushes, or near the ground; eggs 3 to 4; laid in May.

BITTERN, Stake Driver, *Botaurus lentiginosus*. Steph. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in bushes; eggs 3 to 5; laid in April or May.

GREEN HERON, *Butorides virescens*. Bonap. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests in bushes or trees; eggs 3 or 4; laid in April or May.


KILLDEER POLOVER, *Aegialitis vociferus*. Cassin. Common in fall and spring. Occasionally breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 3 to 4; laid in April or May.


BLACK-BELLIED POLOVER, *Squatarola helvetica*. Cuv. Passes through the State in the migrations.

TURNSTONE, *Strisialis interpres*. Illig. Rare in the migrations.

NORTHERN PHALAROPE, *Phalaropus hyperboreus*. Bonap. Rare in spring and fall.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK, *Philohela minor*. Gray. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds, often twice; nests on the ground; eggs 4 to 5; laid in April, or May and July.

ENGLISH SNipe, *Gallinago wilsonii*. Bonap. Common in fall and spring. Occasionally breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4; laid in May.


KNOT, *Tringa canutus*. Linn. Rare in fall and spring.

PURPLE Sandpiper, *Tringa maritima*. Brunnich. Rare in spring and fall.

RED-BACKED SAndpiper, *Tringa alpina, var. americana*. Cas. Not common in spring and fall.


Willet, *Symphemia semipalmata*. Hartl. Common. Summer visitor. Occasionally breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4; laid in April or May.


Solitary Sandpiper, *Rhyacophilus solitarius*. Bonap. Rather common. Summer visitor. Occasionally breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4; laid in May or June.

Spotted Sandpiper, *Tringoides macularius*. Gray. Common. Summer visitor. Breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 4; laid in May or June.

Field Plover, *Actitis buxtonia*. Bonap. Common in spring and fall. Often breeds; nests on the ground; eggs 3 to 4; laid in May.


Hudsonian Godwit, *Limosa hudsonica*. Sw. Rare in fall.

Long-billed Curlew, *Numenius longirostris*. Wils. Rare in fall.


Clapper, Rail. *Rallus crepitans*. Gm. Rare summer wanderer.


Yellow Rail, *Porzana noveboracensis*. Gm. Rare. Not known to breed.

Coot, *Fulica americana*. Gmelin. Common. Summer visitor. Seldom breeds; nests in bogs and morasses; eggs 4 to 6; laid in May or June.

Snow Goose, *Anser hyperboreus*. Pallas. Rare in migrations. A specimen was shot in Boston Harbor in July, 1862.


Black Duck, *Anas obscura*. Gm. Common in fall and spring. Often seen in winter, and occasionally breeds; nests in meadows; eggs 8 to 10; laid in May.


Shoveller, *Spatula clypeata*. Boie. Rare in spring and fall.
Gadwall, *Chasaleasmus streperus*. Gray. Rare in spring and fall.


Summer Duck, Wood Duck, *Aix sponsa*. Boie. Common in spring, summer, and fall. Breeds; nests in hollow trees and stubs; eggs 8 to 10; laid in May.


Harlequin Duck, *Histrionicus torquatus*. Bonap. Rare in spring and fall.

South Southerly, Old Squaw, *Harelda glacialis*. Leach. Common in spring, fall, and often winter.


Cormorant, *Graculus dilophus*. Gray. Rare in winter on the coast.


Mother Cary's Chicken, *Thalassidroma pelagica*. Bonap. Rare off the coast.

Greater Shearwater, *Puffinus major*. Faber. Not common off the coast.

Mank’s Shearwater, *Puffinus angulorum*. Temm. Rare off the coast.

Pomarine Skua, *Stercorarius pomarinus*. Temm. Rare off the coast.

Arctic Skua, *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Temm. Rare off the coast.


Occasionally seen in spring.

Marsh Tern, *Sternula aranea*. Wils. Rare in summer.


Arctic Tern, *Sternula marcora*. Naum. Not common in spring and fall. Occasionally breeds; eggs 3; laid on the rocks in May or June.


Short-tailed Tern, *Hydrochelidon plumbea*. Wils. Rare in fall.*


Puffin, Mormon arctica. Illiger. Not common in winter.


* This number of Gulls and Terns may probably be increased. The species included are those known to occur by the author.
DIRECTIONS FOR COLLECTING.

About two-thirds of these species have been obtained through various collectors, and placed in the State Cabinet. It is very desirable that this collection should be as complete as possible; and collectors and others, who are in the way of obtaining specimens, are earnestly requested to forward such as they may have to spare, both of the birds, their nests and eggs. The following brief directions for collecting are given for the benefit of those who have had but little or no experience:

Birds should be killed with very fine shot; from Nos. 9 to 12 for birds beneath the size of a pigeon, and not coarser than No. 8 for ducks and other large birds. The advantage of using fine shot is apparent, from the fact that the wounds made by them quickly close, and bleeding ceases; besides, the plumage is not marred and the skin torn, as it is when coarser shot is used. If the bird is not shot dead, it may be easily and quickly killed by compressing the sides beneath the wings firmly between the thumb and fore-finger; this immediately produces suffocation. It will be necessary to thrust into the mouth, nostrils and vent of the bird, some cotton-wool, that the plumage may not be soiled, and, wrapping it in a paper cone, it is ready for transportation.

In collecting nests and eggs, the first important point is to perfectly identify the species. In most cases, to do this, it will be necessary to obtain the parent bird; make, on a slip of paper, a memorandum of the locality where the nest is found, and whether it is built in a tree, bush, or on the ground; the date when it was secured, and the species to which it belongs. Place this memorandum in the nest with the eggs, which may be emptied of their contents in the following simple manner: make a small puncture near the end of the egg, and another on one side,—with a needle or other sharp-pointed instrument,—and on forcing the breath into one of these holes, either through a small blow-pipe or with the mouth, the contents of the egg are easily removed. This is the simplest manner in which the operation can be done. Of course, this method is not so desirable with those persons who are familiar with the use of egg-drills and other instruments that are so necessary in making a scientific collection, but which are not always accessible to amateur collectors. With this simple preparation, the nests and eggs may be wrapped in paper and packed in a box, and forwarded; but, if they are to be sent from a distance, it is well to pack cotton-wool around the eggs in the nest, that they may not be broken in transportation.