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January 19, 1917.
THE BIRDS

OF

Brookline, Massachusetts

By

REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR.

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BROOKLINE:
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1900
The Birds of Brookline.

By Reginald Heber Howe, Jr.

Since the publication of the list of the Birds of Brookline, prepared by me, appeared in three parts in The Chronicle, January, 1897, and reprinted in Mr. Charles K. Bolton's "Brookline—the History of a Favored Town," May, 1897, I have gathered together a considerable amount of new data from various sources, among the most important, from Mr. Gordon Plummer's collection of birds, of which the work of instalment in the Brookline High School fell to me. The lists published heretofore were only barely annotated; in the present one it will be my purpose to annotate much more fully wherever it is possible. Besides the annotations, the dates of arrival and departure of resident species, and the periods the migrants are with us will be given.

1. Podilymbus podiceps (Linn.). Pied-billed Grebe. Formerly probably not uncommon, when Muddy creek and our ponds were in wilder surroundings. Mr. W. A. Eldridge took a bird on Muddy creek (now Parkway) in 1883. This is the last record for the species in the town.

2. Allealle (Linn.). Dovekie. Mr. Moses Williams writes me that one was found lying dead in one of the roads in Brookline about 1859 or 1860; he thinks it must have been blown in by a gale.

3. Larus argentatus (Brunn.). Herring Gull. Occasionally seen during the winter months flying over, either going to or coming from the Charles river.

4. Querquedula discors (Linn.). Blue-winged Teal. Undoubtedly formerly not uncommon. Mr. F. H. Allen saw a single bird on Weld pond on October 26, 1884.

[The American Golden-eye (Clangula e. americana), during the winter months is not uncommonly seen on Jamaica pond (Roxbury) just over the Brookline line. Four were seen there on Nov. 20th, 1899, by Mr. H. B. Bigelow. Of course they are always common in winter on the Charles river.]
5. *Æx sponsa* (Linn.). Wood Duck. Formerly a rare summer resident. Mr. N. A. Francis tells me that this species many years ago bred near Lost pond.

6. *Branta canadensis* (Linn.). Canada Goose. A not uncommon migrant. A few birds not infrequently on migrations drop into the Chestnut Hill Reservoir (Newton, Brighton) to rest, but I have never heard of them being seen in recent years in any of our Brookline ponds. March, April.

7. *Botaurus lentiginosus* (Montag.). American Bittern. An uncommon migrant, formerly much more common before the Muddy creek was improved.

8. *Ardetta exilis* (Gmel.). Least Bittern. Formerly a summer resident, having been driven from its breeding ground, Leverett pond, by civilization.

9. *Ardea herodias* (Linn.). Great Blue Heron. A not uncommon migrant, especially to the Putterham meadows. A single bird spent the week previous to December 15, 1888, at Hall's pond, Longwood. April 3 to June 26, September 9 to October 10.

10. *Butorides virescens* (Linn.). Green Heron. A summer resident, known at least to breed just outside town limits. A bird remained at Hall's pond, Longwood, from June 1 to 19, 1897.

11. *Nycticorax nycticorax* naevius (Bodd.). Black-crowned Night Heron. A permanent resident, wintering not at all uncommonly.

12. *Rallus virginianus* (Linn.). Virginia Rail. Formerly a summer resident, but like the Least Bittern (*Ardetta exilis*) now deprived of its old breeding place, Leverett pond.

13. *Porzana carolina* (Linn.). Sora. Formerly a common summer resident with the preceding species now only found as an uncommon migrant.

14. *Fulica americana* (Gmel.). American Coot. Formerly undoubtedly not an uncommon migrant. Of late years unrecorded. Mr. George R. Wales shot a single bird on Muddy creek about 1883.

15. *Philohela minor* (Gmel.). American Woodcock. A not uncommon migrant, and rare summer resident. March 22 to —.
16. Gallinago delicata (Ord.). Wilson’s Snipe. An uncommon migrant. Just over the town line, however, to the marsh in the Parkway south of Brookline avenue this species is not an uncommon and regular migrant. April (?) to —, September (?) to October 28.

In the same locality above spoken of, in the Parkway south of Brookline avenue, the Pectoral Sandpiper (Tringa maculata) is not an uncommon fall migrant, the Greater Yellow-legs (Totanus melanoleucus) has been observed by Mr. H. V. Greenough in October, 1899, and the Golden Plover (Charadrius dominicus) by Mr. N. A. Francis on September 10 (?), 1899.

17. Tringa minitilla (Vieill.). Least Sandpiper. A not uncommon migrant. Three birds were taken at Weld pond, May 8, 1890, by Mr. A. L. Reagh. They have also been observed at Hall’s pond, and on the Brookline avenue marsh. —— to October 13.

18. Totanus flavipes (Gmel.). Yellow-legs. One bird was taken in August, 1888, at Weld pond by Mr. A. L. Reagh.

19. Actitis macularia (Linn.). Spotted Sandpiper. A not uncommon migrant; breeding, Mr. A. L. Reagh records, near Weld pond in 1888. April 27 to October 3.

There was a Long-billed Curlew (Numenius longirostris) taken by Mr. Arthur Smith on the Chestnut Hill Reservoir (Newton, Brighton) just beyond town borders many years ago.


21. Egialitis semipalmata (Bonap.). Semipalmed Plover. There is a specimen in the Plummer Collection, now in the Brookline High School Building, taken in Brookline, August 5, 1880.

22. Colinus virginianus (Linn.). Bob-white. A permanent resident. During the last five years, however, much decreased in numbers.


24. Ectopistes migratorius (Linn.). Passenger Pigeon. Formerly reported as a rare migrant.

25. Circus hudsonius (Linn.). Marsh Hawk. A not uncommon migrant and rare summer resident, now only found breeding in the wilder upper portions of the town. April 26 to October 31.

27. Accipiter cooperii (Bonap.). Cooper's Hawk. A common summer resident and migrant, and rare winter visitant. February 2 to —.

28. Buteo lineatus (Gmel.). Red-shouldered Hawk. A common permanent resident. A careful article on our Brookline Red-shouldered Hawks by Mr. F. H. Kennard, with map, will be found in the Auk, Vol. XI, No. 4, p. 197, 1894; also see Auk, Vol. XI, No. 4, p. 271, 1894.

29. Buteo latissimus (Wils.). Broad-winged Hawk. Mr. F. H. Kennard states that this species is a rare migrant in Brookline. Mr. N. A. Francis writes that they are not uncommon.

30. Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis (Gmel.). American Rough-legged Hawk. Mr. N. A. Francis writes that they are not rare as a spring migrant. A single bird was seen by Mr. A. L. Reagh on January 16, 1897, only a few hundred yards over the town line in West Roxbury. The bird undoubtedly entered Brookline.

31. Hallaetetus leucocephalus (Linn.). Bald Eagle. A very rare visitant. It has been taken on Single Tree Hill, and elsewhere in the town.


35. Asio wilsonianus (Less.). American Long-eared Owl. A rare local resident just outside town boundaries. It has, however, been observed within the town. A Short-eared Owl (Asio accipitrinus) was seen by Mr. H. V. Greenough in the Brookline avenue marsh just over the boundary.

36. Syrphium nebulosum (Forst.). Barred-Owl. Formerly not an uncommon permanent resident. Now only perhaps as a winter visitant.

38. **Megascops asio** (Linn.). Screech Owl. A common permanent resident, commonly met with in the thickly settled portions of the town.

39. **Bubo virginianus** (Gmel.). Great Horned Owl. Formerly a rare summer resident. Now seen, Mr. N. A. Francis writes, not uncommonly in winter. Years ago, Mr. N. A. Francis tells me, it bred in the Putterham woods. A pair bred near Lost pond in 1893, and birds were also seen in March, 1898.

40. **Nyctea nyctea** (Linn.). Snowy Owl. An accidental visitant. Mr. F. H. Kennard states that they have been reported from upper Brookline. Three were seen or taken in Longwood, November 15 and 16, 1882, and reported by Mr. F. Lewis in Forest and Stream, Vol. 19, No. 21, p. 409.

41. **Coccyzus americanus** (Linn.), Yellow-billed Cuckoo. A common summer resident. May 7 to —.

42. **Coccyzus erythropthalmus** (Wils.). Black-billed Cuckoo. A common summer resident. May 11 to —.

43. **Ceryle alcyon** (Linn.). Belted Kingfisher. A permanent resident. Rare in the winter, but wintering regularly. Common as a migrant, and not rare as a summer resident. April 7 to October.


45. **Dryobates pubesces medius** (Swains.). Northern Downy Woodpecker. A common permanent resident.

46. **Sphyrapicus varius** (Linn.). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. A common migrant. Mr. F. H. Kennard reported in The Auk, Vol. XXI, No. 3, p. 301, the capture of an immature male in the town on February 6, 1895. April 16 to May 6, September 25 to October 24.

47. **Melanerpes erythrocephalus** (Linn.). An irregular visitant. Mr. N. A. Francis writes that they used to breed in a swamp near Francis street. During the winter of 1881-2 they appeared in numbers in the town as they did throughout this region. (See “Birds in the Bush,” Bradford Torrey, p. 205, also article by same author, Atlantic Monthly, Vol.55, No. 21, p. 409).

48. **Colaptes auratus** (Linn.), Flicker. A permanent resident. Not uncommon in the winter, abundant in the summer.

50. Chordeiles virginianus (Gmel.). Night Hawk. A common migrant. Does not breed to my knowledge. Mr. N. A. Francis writes that it breeds in Newton. May 21 to October 3.

51. Chætura pelagica (Linn.). Chimney Swift. A common summer resident. April 26 to October 2.

52. Trochilus colubris (Linn.). Ruby-throated Humming bird. A common summer resident. May 15 to September 16.

53. Tyrannus tyrannus (Linn.). Kingbird. An abundant summer resident. May 4 to —.

54. Myiarchus crinitus (Linn.). Crested Flycatcher. A common summer resident. May 9 to October 15.


56. Nuttallornis borealis (Swain.). Olive-sided Flycatcher. One record of a bird probably taken in Brookline by J. J. Audubon, from whose interesting account I quote verbatim. “On the 8th of August, 1832, while walking out from Boston towards the country-seat of the Honourable Thomas H. Perkins, along with my friend Nuttall, we were suddenly saluted with the note of this bird. As I had never seen it, I leaped over the fence beside us, and cautiously approached the tree in which a male was perched and singing. Desiring my friend to go in search of a gun, I watched the motions of the devoted bird. He returned with a large musket, a cow’s horn filled with powder, and a handful of shot nearly as large as peas; but, just as I commenced charging this curious piece, I discovered that it was flintless! We were nearly a mile distant from Mr. Perkins’ house, but as we were resolved to have the bird, we proceeded to it with all despatch, procured a gun, and returned to the tree, found the Flycatcher, examined its flight and manners for awhile, and at length shot it. As the representative of a species, I made a drawing of this individual, which you will find copied in the plate indicated above.” (From “The Birds of America,” Vol. I, p. 213, plate 58.)

57. Horizopus virens (Linn.). Wood Pewee. A common summer resident. May 18 to —.
58. Empidonax minimus (Baird.). Least Flycatcher. An abundant summer resident. April 26 to —.


60. Corvus americanus (Aud.). American Crow. An abundant permanent resident.

61. Dolichonyx oryzivorus (Linn.). A common summer resident. May 5 to —.

62. Molothrus ater (Bodd.). Cowbird. A common summer resident. March 14 to September 15.

63. Agelaeus phœnicicus (Linn.). Red-winged Blackbird. A common summer resident. March 6 to —.

64. Sturuaella magna (Linn.). Meadow Lark. A not uncommon summer resident. March 8 to November 26.


68. Pinicola enucleator canadensis (Cab.). Canadian Pine Grosbeak. A common irregular winter visitant. During the 1892-3 migration they were very abundant in all parts of the town; since then, however, they have visited us but twice, and in small numbers.

69. Carpodacus purpureus (Gmel.). Purple Finch. A permanent resident, rare in winter, common in summer, and abundant on migrations. February 24 to October 21.

70. Passer domesticus (Linn.). House or English Sparrow. An abundant permanent resident.

71. Loxia curvirostra minor (Brehm.). American Crossbill. A common migrant, and occurring irregularly at all seasons.

72. Loxia leucoptera (Gmel.). White-winged Crossbill. An irregular winter visitant. During this winter, 1899-00, as over all New England, the species has been very abundant. The birds were first reported in the town this winter, November 20, and were still here though in but small numbers on April 1.

74. Acanthis linaria rostrata (Coues.). Greater Redpoll. Mr. H. V. Greenough took a single male on February 24, 1900, on Chestnut Hill.

75. Astragalinus tristis (Linn.). American Goldfinch. An abundant permanent resident.


77. Carduelis carduelis (Linn.). European Goldfinch. I observed a male in May, 1892, in Longwood. The bird may have been an escaped cage bird, or one of the goldfinches or their offspring that were imported to this country. (See Auk, Vol. XII, No. 2, p. 182).

78. Plectrophenax nivalis (Linn.). Snow Bunting. A rare winter visitant. I have only observed them in the town on Denny's Hill. Mr. N. A. Francis writes that they used to be very common on the Longwood marshes. November 23 to —.

79. Poecetes gramineus (Gmel.). Vesper Sparrow. A not uncommon summer resident, and common migrant. April 2 to September 12.


82. Zonotrichia leucophrys (Forst.). White-crowned Sparrow. There is a male in the Brookline High School collection taken in the town by Mr. Gordon Plummer on May 24, 1882.

83. Spizella monticola (Gmel.). Tree Sparrow. A common winter resident. October 16 to April 28.

84. Spizella socialis (Wils.). Chipping Sparrow. An abundant summer resident. April 10 to October 16.

85. Spizella pusilla (Wils.). Field Sparrow. A common summer resident. April 20 to October 10.

86. Junco hiemalis (Linn.). Snowbird. An abundant migrant, and common winter resident. September 24 to May 2.


91. Cardinalis cardinalis (Linn.). Cardinal. A male wintered and spent the spring and summer, a wife being provided for him, in the town during (October) 1897-98 (August 8). For an interesting account of this individual, see Bird-Lore, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 83, 1899.

92. Zamelodia ludoviciana (Linn.). Rose-breasted Grosbeak. A common summer resident. May 2 to —.


95. Passerina ciris (Linn.). Painted Bunting. One was taken on June 5, 1896, by Mr. H. V. Greenough in Longwood. This bird, however, was quite probably an escaped cage bird. (See Auk, Vol. XIII, No. 2, p. 261, 1896.)

96. Piranga erythromelas (Viell.). Scarlet Tanager. A common summer resident. May 10 to September 27.

97. Progne subis (Linn.). Purple Martin. A rare migrant. Formerly a rare summer resident. April 16 to —.

98. Petrochelidon lunifrons (Say.). Eave Swallow. A rare migrant. Formerly a common summer resident. May 22 to —.

99. Hirundo erythrogaster (Bodd.). Barn Swallow. Formerly a common summer resident, now almost rare, except as a migrant. April 19 to September 29.
100. Tachycineta bicolor (Vieill.). Tree Swallow. A common migrant, and a rare summer resident. Formerly very common. April 15 to September 29.

101. Clivicola riparia (Linn.). Formerly not an uncommon summer resident.

102. Ampelis cedrorum (Vieill.). Cedar Waxwing. A common permanent resident, though less common in midwinter. February to November.

103. Lanius borealis (Vieill.), Northern Shrike. A common winter resident. November 25 to April 6.


106. Vireo flavifrons (Vieill.). Yellow-throated Vireo. A common summer resident. May 2 to —.

107. Vireo solitarius (Wils.). Solitary Vireo. A common migrant, and uncommon summer resident. April 27 to —.

108. Vireo noveboracensis (Gmel.). White-eyed Vireo. Mr. N. A. Francis writes that it is an uncommon summer resident, and that he has found its nest.


110. Helminthophila chrysoptera (Linn.). Golden-winged Warbler. A common migrant, and uncommon summer resident. May 10 to —.

111. Helminthophila rubricapilla (Wils.). Nashville Warbler. A common migrant, and not uncommon summer resident. May 1 to —. September 23.


113. Dendroeca tigrina (Gmel.). Cape May Warbler. I secured a male on Lyman's Hill on May 9, 1897. (See Chronicle, Dec 18, 1897, p. 6.) Miss M. B. Hall also saw two males, one on May 16 and one on May 20, 1900, in Longwood.

114. Dendroeca aestiva (Gmel.). Yellow Warbler. An abundant summer resident. April 22 to —.

115. Dendroeca caeruleascens (Gmel.). Black-throated Blue Warbler. A common migrant. May 5 to —.


118. Dendroæca pennsilvanica (Linn.). Chestnut-sided Warbler. A common summer resident, an abundant migrant. May 2 to —.


120. Dendroæca striata (Forst.). Black-poll Warbler. A common spring, and abundant fall migrant. May 11 to 29. September 18 to October 23.


122. Dendroæca virens (Gmel.). Black-throated Green Warbler. An abundant summer resident. April 20 to October 2.

123. Dendroæca vigorsii (Aud.). Pine Warbler. A common migrant, and summer resident. April 16 to —.


125. Siurus aurocapillus (Linn.). Oven-bird. An abundant summer resident. May 3 to —.


128. Geothlypis trichas (Linn.). Maryland Yellow-throat. A common summer resident. May 7 to October 21.


130. Wilsonia canadensis (Linn.). Canadian Warbler. A common migrant, and rare local summer resident. May 13 to September 5.
133. Setophaga ruticilla (Linn.). American Redstart. An abundant summer resident. April (18) 25 to September 23.

134. Anthus pensylvanicus (Lath.). American Pipit. A common spring and fall migrant. — to —, October 4 to 15.

135. Galeoscoptes carolinensis (Linn.). Catbird. An abundant summer resident. May 1 to October 8.

136. Happorrhynchus rufus (Linn.). A common migrant, and summer resident. May 1 to September 29.

137. Troglydotes aëdon (Vieill.). A local summer resident. Formerly common in all sections of the town. I now know of at least a dozen pairs that breed regularly every year. May 7 to —.


139. Cistothorus palustris (Wils.). Long-billed Marsh Wren. A rare migrant. Formerly a common summer resident in the old Brookline marsh, now Leverett pond. May 13 to —.

140. Certhia familiaris americana (Bonap.). Brown Creeper. An abundant winter resident. A male was taken on May 24, 1895, near Hammond’s pond, just over into Newton. September 22 to May 12.

141. Sitta carolinensis (Lath.) White-breasted Nuthatch. A common winter resident, and rare local summer resident.

142. Sitta canadensis (Linn.). Canada Nuthatch. A common, often abundant migrant, and winter resident. September 22 to May 21.

143. Parus atricapillus (Linn.). An abundant permanent resident.

144. Regulus satrapa (Licht.). Golden-crowned Kinglet. A common winter resident. September 19 to April 21.


146. Polioptila caerulea (Linn.). Blue Gray Gnatcatcher. One was taken September 8, 1887, by Mr. A. L. Reagh.

147. Hylocichla mustelina (Gmel.). Wood Thrush. A common summer resident. May 4 to —.

149. *Hylocichla aliciae* (Baird.). Gray-cheeked Thrush. There is one, taken in October, 1876, in the New England collection of the Boston Natural History Society—E. A. and O. Bangs; also another taken by W. L. Green. A male was taken May 25, 1896, by Mr. G. C. Shattuck. One was also taken in May, 1900, by Mr. Louis Shaw.

150. *Hylocichla aliciae* bicknelli (Ridgw.). Bicknell’s Thrush. A male was taken on October 16, 1890, by Mr. G. C. Shattuck. Both this and the foregoing species are undoubtedly not very uncommon migrants, but overlooked.

151. *Hylocichla ustulatus* swainsonii (Cab.). Olive-backed Thrush. A common migrant. May 7 to 27, October 2 to 5.


**APPENDIX.**

*Empidonax flaviventris* (Baird.) Yellow-billed Flycatcher. One was observed in Longwood by Miss M. B. Hall on May 10, 1900.

*Icterus spurius* (Linn.). Orchard Oriole. Miss M. B. Hall saw a male on May 20, 1899. This is the only record for the town.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.**


Addition to the List of Brookline Birds.

BY REGINALD EBNER HOWE, JR.

In looking through The Journal of the Boston Zoological Society I find in a list of The Rarer Birds of Massachusetts, by [Dr.] A. P. Chadbourne, the following records of birds new to my recent [Chronicle, spring, 1900] list of the birds of Brookline. These birds were also recorded in the Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club as below cited.


Icteria virens: Yellow-breasted Chat. "A nest was found in Brookline, in 1852, by Mr. Theodore Lyman." (See Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, Land Birds, Vol. I, p. 731, 1874.)


I find also recorded in Minot's Revised Land Birds and Game Birds of New England a note by Mr. William Brewster recording the following:—

Thryothorus ludovicianus, Carolina Wren. One was taken by Mr. Arthur Smith on November 4, 1888. (p. 72.)

In the Collection of the Boston Society of Natural History there is also a Blue-headed Pigeon (Streptopelia cyanoptera), probably an escape cage bird, taken on October 10, 1870.

With these additional species added to the list it now numbers one hundred and sixty-three birds that have been recorded from 1839 to 1900 in the town.

Correction.

The Long-billed Curlew (Numenius longirostris) spoken of in the former list I find to be the Hudsonian Curlew (Numenius hudsonius).
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