

WATERFOWL INVESTIGATIONS AT HURON MOUNTAIN CLUB \*  
July 9 through July 18, 1960

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Of a special interest on this trip was the presence or absence of the Ring-necked Duck, a species known in recent years to nest widely in the Upper Peninsula at the leatherleaf bog-bordered ponds. Also, it was a matter of interest to see whether or not the Red-breasted Mergansers were occurring on the inland lakes near the Superior shore. It was expected that the usual nesting ducks might be found in moderate numbers.

Habitats present within the Club and on properties immediately adjacent were: (A) Open shores. These were well represented by the sandy and rocky shore lines of Lake Superior and of the Huron Islands. Also, Howe Lake and others of the fishing lakes have much of the firm shore-line with relatively little cover or emergent weed beds. (B) Marshes. These were found at the shore of Conway Lake and in the lower reaches of the Salmon Trout River and were well represented at Cranberry Pond. At these locations not only was emergent cover available to ducks in the marshes but there also were the seeds of smartweeds and duck potato in profusion. Most of the ducks were observed in these habitats. (C) Bog-bordered Ponds. These were found opposite Ives Mountain and at Florence Pond and several other unnamed bog ponds in the vicinity. Not a single Ring-necked Duck was noticed on any of these ponds although in 1959, Dr. Etter reported seeing a single bird. This was a disappointment, for it had been hoped that this species might be nesting in fair numbers in this part of the state.

\* (As visiting zoologist, guest of the Club.)

July is a brood season and the time when local drakes have moved often many miles to other waters. The only concentration of drakes of which we were aware--and it can scarcely be called that--are the two adult and one immature baldpate found feeding at Conway Lake. Single mallards and blacks were flushed from Cranberry Pond but no gatherings were encountered. The excellent marshes along the Salmon Trout--where previous flooding killed trees and where now grass marsh is abundant--did not yield duck observations but certainly has a tremendous area for broods to hide and escape observation by boatmen. I do not feel that our field work in these habitats gives a true index of waterfowl populations.

All three species of Merganser were represented here. Several *"big merganser"* broods were seen on Pine Lake and Howe Lake--the downy young evidently from late nestings because they were still very small. The adult birds would hide on the shore until hikers or boats came close when the old bird and her fleet of young would skitter out into the open water by way of escape. Two drake American Mergansers were seen by Dr. Etter on the Huron Islands; but no drakes were observed on the island waters.

The Red-breasted Merganser was seen only on the trip to Huron Islands where several were seen on July 14. The Hooded Merganser was seen only at Cranberry Pond. On July 16, a single bird was noticed in flight and again on the 17th, two singles were seen.

The Black Duck was seen very seldom but reported by the patrolman and by various Club members. Evidently it was seen most frequently on the upper stretches of the streams. On July 14 we saw a single adult at Huron Island and on July 16 an adult female at Cranberry Pond.

Owing to the ability of this bird to escape attention and to sneak away from boaters, we feel that undoubtedly more were present than were reported or seen.

Mallards were seen on several dates but chiefly at Cranberry Pond--an adult drake on July 16 and 17 and on July 16 two Class II young with one adult female. The <sup>re</sup> baldpate was <sup>seen</sup> at Conway Lake on July 9, two adults and one first-year ~~female~~ drake

The only Wood Ducks seen were three evidently adult drakes in eclipse and also flightless. These were flushed at the shore of the Beaver Pond on Fisher Creek. Also, a Hen Wood Duck called when she was flushed from the marsh at Cranberry Pond on July 17 and another, ~~one~~ jumped out of the same marsh, may have been a "repeat" bird.

Other water birds in evidence at the Club were the Great Blue Heron which was seen occasionally about all of the fishing waters and the Common Loon which was seen at Howe Lake and on Lake Superior where one adult and two young were seen swimming by one morning.

At the bog ponds, one might expect Pied-billed Grebes but the only records for the week were one adult which acted as if she were near young, at least very excited, at Cranberry Pond on July 17. Their calls were heard from this marsh on several mornings.

Two nests of the Double-crested Cormorant were found on the Huron Islands, one with two eggs the other with three, evidently fresh nests, for green foliage was present in the nest having three eggs. A Sora Rail was heard on July 15 and 16 at Cranberry Pond and a solitary Sandpiper was seen at the Pine River, also, on July 16.

Herring Gulls were frequently seen flying or resting on the waters at the Club and an estimated 5,000 of them were seen at the Gull Islands

nesting area of the Huron Island group.

Land birds of interest were the Bald Eagle, one adult seen at the mouth of the Salmon Trout and two adults seen at Huron Point on July 14. The Ruffed Grouse was seen at least three times with broods of youngsters from two to three weeks old and on July 16, one brood of only about one week of age was seen near the Club entrance.

*Nuts D. Pirnie*