

100 Years Ago in The Auk
An Untrustworthy Observer
(AUK 15, No. 2, 1898)

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':

"Dear Sirs: Those members of the A.O.U. who were present at the meeting last November will doubtless recall a paper read by Mr. Edwin Irvine Haines entitled 'The Summer Birds of the Catskill Mountains with remarks upon the Faunae of the Region.' The paper indicated a 'chumminess' on the part of the birds that enabled the writer to fairly rain down records of species that ordinarily, during the summer season, are satisfied to keep out of the Catskills. Several sets of eggs of the Solitary Sandpiper (*Totanus solitarius*), Canada Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*), and Ipswich Sparrow (*Ammodramus princeps*) had been obtained, while such species as the Hudsonian Chickadee (*Parus hudsonicus*), and White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) had been found hobnobbing with the equally abundant Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) and Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*). A tray of skins, chiefly without labels and in winter plumage, was exhibited in support of the many extraordinary discoveries of which the above are samples. On asking Mr. Haines for the loan of his birds, he informed me that a portion of them had been sent to Dr. Merriam in Washington, but the following were submitted to me, viz.: White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), Golden-crowned Kinglet (*R. satrapa*), Hermit Thrush (*Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii*), Gray-cheeked Thrush (*T. aliciae*), Bicknell's Thrush (*T. a. bicknelli*), Olive-backed Thrush (*Turdus ustulatus swainsonii*), Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*), and Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*). Mr. Haines assured me the Thrushes had all been obtained between the middle of June and the middle of July; the other birds (the Kinglets represented by no less than seven specimens) bore labels indicating capture in the Catskills on various dates between June 10 and June 19, 1897. Suffice it to say, not one of these birds was in breeding plumage! This statement will, I think, be borne out by Messrs. J. A. Allen and D. G. Elliot, who also examined them.

"Now the point of all this is that Mr. Haines's ornithological statements are not in accordance with facts, and as he has figured in print a number of times during the past year of two, it is but natural to view all of his work with suspicion. One article 'The Kinglets and their Distribution' (*The Osprey*, 1, Feb. 1897, pp. 73-75), asserts that he has found both species breeding in the Catskills. As a matter of fact his "June" birds are *not* breeding birds. It is not likely now that his additions to the Catskill fauna will ever be published, nor will the breeding of Brünnich's

Murre (*Uria lomvia*) at New Rochelle, N.Y., as announced on a program of the Linnaen Society of New York, become a record, but it is time to put a check to such perverted ambitions, and while I am quite unbiased by any personal animus, I feel that my fellow members of the A.O.U. should be warned against a person who has shown himself to be so eminently undeserving of credence."

Yours very truly,

JONATHAN DWIGHT, JR.
New York, N.Y.
Feb. 21, 1898

Editors' Note: Under the heading *100 Years Ago in The Auk*, the above letter was reprinted in *The Auk* 115 (2):554, 1998. *The Auk* is the journal of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). *The Auk* is one of the most respected ornithological journals in the world. To find out more about the American Ornithologists' Union and to research back issues of *The Auk*, see www.aou.org/

Ontario Shorebird Conservation Plan

The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) has issued the *Ontario Shorebird Conservation Plan*. The 48 page plan includes 27 maps and 14 photographs. Of 40 species of shorebirds that breed routinely in Canada, 22 regularly breed in Ontario, including significant proportions of the populations of seven species. Key staging sites used by migrating shorebirds, such as Presqu'île, are identified. The plan outlines the steps needed to conserve shorebirds and their habitats in Ontario. Partners with CWS in the plan are MNR, OFO, BSC, DUC, and Gateways Centre.

Ross, K., K. Abraham, R. Clay, B. Collins, J. Iron, R. James, D. McLachlin, and R. Weeber. 2003. *Ontario Shorebird Conservation Plan*. Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada. Cat No. 0-662-33933-9. ISBN CW66-222/2003E.

Free hard copies of the shorebird plan are available in person or by e-mail, phone and fax from: Canadian Wildlife Service, 4905 Dufferin Street, Downsview ON M3H 5T4. Email: Wildlife.Ontario@ec.gc.ca Phone: 416-739-5830 or Fax: 416-739-5845
www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/plans/shorebirdplan-e.html