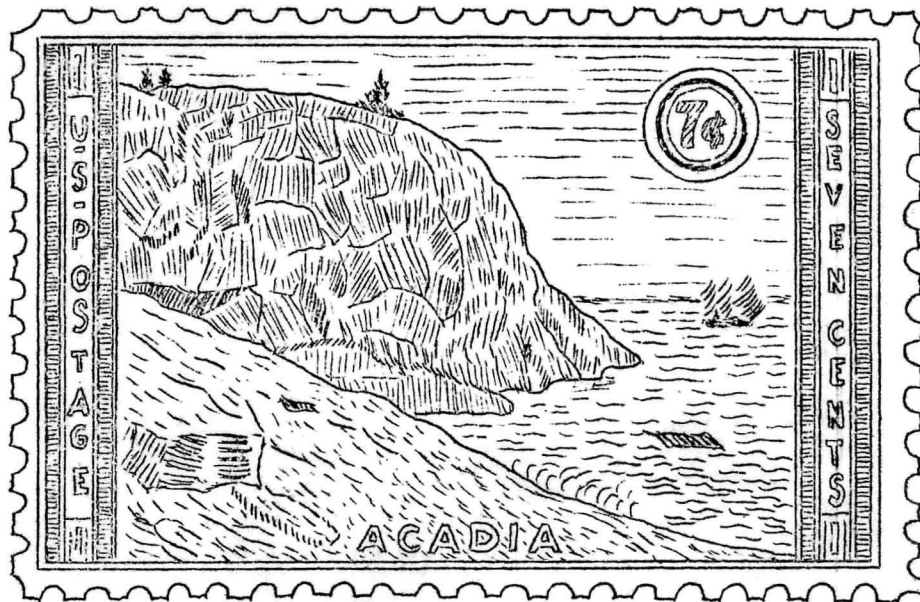


NATURE NOTES

from
ACADIA

VOL. 3-NO. 5
SEPTEMBER-
OCTOBER,
1934



ACADIA NATIONAL PARK STAMP ISSUED OCTOBER 2, 1934.
GREAT HEAD, THE HIGHEST HEADLAND ON THE ATLANTIC
COAST IN THE UNITED STATES.

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

BAR HARBOR, MAINE

Department of the Interior

National Park Service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
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NATURE NOTES FROM ACADIA

Volume 3

September-October, 1934

Number 5

This bulletin is issued bimonthly by the Park Naturalist of Acadia National Park. Its purpose is to make those who are interested in Acadia better acquainted with its plant and animal life and with its geologic story. Publications wishing to use these notes should give credit to the writer and to "Nature Notes from Acadia."

George B. Dorr, Superintendent
A. H. Lynam, Asst. to Supt. B. L. Hadley, Asst. Supt.
Arthur Stupka, Park Naturalist, Editor
Illustrations by Margaret Stupka

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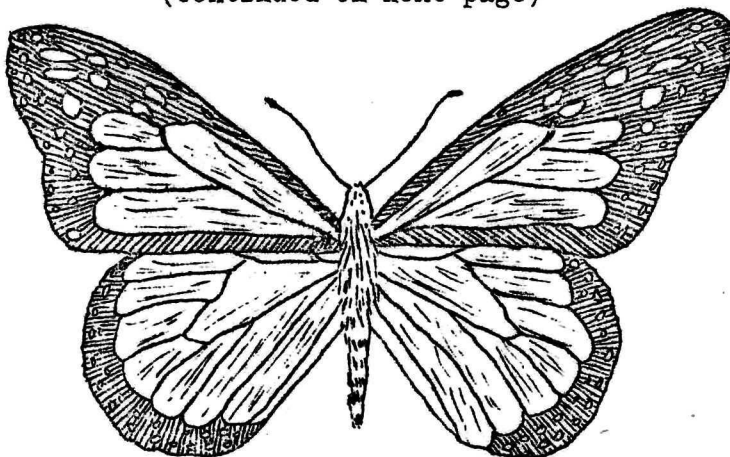
THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY IN ACADIA

A monarch among its kind, the Monarch Butterfly has quickened the hearts of innumerable nature lovers. Perhaps its majestic flight and bearing gave rise to its name; but the possession of scent pouches or scent glands, which are supposed to protect it from its enemies, and its migratory habit are responsible for most of the interest in it. For both are unusual characteristics among our butterflies. Its extraordinary migrations have been the subject of many printed pages.

None were seen in 1931 when the writer came to Acadia National Park. Local observers stated that the Monarch had been very rarely found here due to the absence of its food plant. In 1932 one or two individuals were seen. In 1933 a number of specimens were seen or captured. Now in 1934 it has increased until six to eight may be seen at a time feeding in a patch of thistles or goldenrods.

The life history of the Monarch Butterfly is most interesting. It feeds on milkweeds in the larval state. The butterflies which migrate northward in the spring of the year place their ovate tapering eggs on the milkweed leaves. The caterpillars are yellow and green with narrow transverse bands of black. They have long fleshy black processes arising from near each end. To many people they are unusually interesting and attractive, but some people who have not watched their interesting transformations think they are repulsive worms. When fully grown the caterpillar spins a pad of silk from which the chrysalid will hang. The caterpillar skin splits open and is pushed off. A lovely pea-green chrysalid with golden spots remains. In this vault-like structure great changes take place; soon the shroud splits open and a monarch comes forth to spread pinions which will bear it for hundreds or even thousands of miles. Lack of milkweed plants prevents its breeding in this locality. We see it slowly drifting from flower to flower sucking the nectar in preparation for its long journey.

(continued on next page)



MONARCH BUTTERFLY X1
(FROM MOUNTED SPECIMEN)

The Monarch feeds on the nectar of thistles, goldenrods, and many other flowers. As fall approaches it begins drifting southward. From the many patches of milkweed in Canada and the Northern States little groups are formed, and later as the migration becomes more marked large flocks collect. These roost in a body on one or more trees, and they have been known to cover the leafless trees as thickly as the recently fallen leaves did. The individuals seen in Acadia have drifted here from the mainland to the northward. After feeding for a time they will move on to join the swelling flock which are moving southward. Due to the conformation of land and water, lines of migration converge in places and great numbers of individuals pass through some sections such as the north shore of Long Island and the coast of New Jersey. The acrid or nauseating qualities of their scent pouches are believed to protect them from birds and other predators. In the spring battered Monarchs move northward out of the Gulf States. They may be the ones which went south in the fall or they may be their offspring - no one knows. Searching for milkweed plants on which to lay their eggs they fly northward. At this season the direction of their movement carries them inland and they are rarely seen in Acadia; however a few were seen last spring. The reason for the great increase in the number of Monarchs coming to this region is probably that the species has greatly increased of recent years. Its kind is at flood tide. May its numbers long swell like the breakers which roll up on Acadia's granite shores.

- Dr. A. E. Brower
Asst. State Entomologist
Maine Forest Service

A Word Further Concerning the Monarch. - In an article entitled, "Our Butterflies Invade England," which appeared in The New York Times for September 30, 1934, mention was made of the Monarch and a few other American butterflies which had been observed in England. In this article the entomological expert of The Times of London, writing of the Monarch, remarks as follows:

"It is a commonplace of American natural history that this insect, habitually and in great numbers, makes migrations of hundreds of miles over the land. The ocean is another matter, and it was at one time supposed that the very occasional specimens noticed here must have been carried most of the way by ships.

"Now, however, it is no longer doubted that his own motive power conveys the Monarch to our shores - across 1,500 miles of watery waste! The question may be held to have been settled by the experiences of 1933."

-A. S.

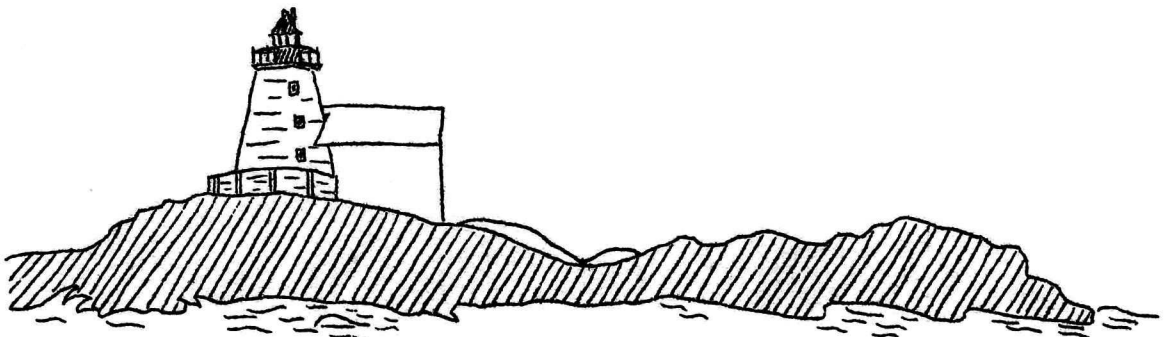
BIRDS FROM THE LIGHTHOUSES

An early, though temporary, invasion of winter, bringing our first snow on October 12 and blanketing northern Maine with a foot of snow, precipitated a heavy flight of migrants. A large flock of crows was observed in Bar Harbor on October 13 while armies of feathered folk passed over Acadia National Park on the nights of the 13th and 14th. On the 15th an abnormally large number of hermit thrushes were noticed in our woodlands.

On the nights of October 13, 14, and 15 Mr. George W. York, Lighthouse Keeper at Mount Desert Rock, a beacon situated about 17 miles south of Mount Desert Island, picked up a total of 39 dead birds. These he kindly mailed to me. Mr. York informed me that these birds met death on nights which were overcast, with some rain falling, and the wind NE and NW. Mount Desert, the outermost light along the Maine Coast, is a flashing white beacon visible from the water for 14 miles. The 39 birds which I received from Mr. York were as follows:

- 5 Savannah Sparrows
- 2 Song Sparrows
- 2 Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrows
- 1 White-throated Sparrow
- 4 Juncos
- 4 Red-eyed Vireos
- 4 Golden-crowned Kinglets
- 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets
- 4 Myrtle Warblers
- 2 Yellow Palm Warblers
- 1 Pine Warbler
- 1 Maryland Yellowthroat
- 3 Olive-backed Thrushes
- 2 Hermit Thrushes
- 1 Red Phalarope
- 1 Meadowlark

On the nights of October 12 and 15 Mr. W. W. Wells, Lighthouse Keeper at Saddleback Ledge, a beacon situated about 25 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island, picked up a total of 14 dead birds which he kindly mailed to



SADDEBACK LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE

me. According to Mr. Wells the night of October 12, when seven of the birds met their death, was cloudy with some rain - the wind from the east. The fixed white light on Saddleback Ledge is visible from the water for about 18 miles. The 14 birds which I received were as follows:

- 4 Red-eyed Vireos
- 3 Maryland Yellowthroats
- 2 Olive-backed Thrushes
- 1 Hermit Thrush
- 2 Savannah Sparrows
- 1 White-throated Sparrow
- 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet

On the overcast night of October 15 a lone Swamp Sparrow met death at White Head Lighthouse - a beacon located about 40 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island. Mr. A. J. Beal, Lighthouse Keeper, found the bird at the foot of the tower and sent it to me. The fixed white light on White Head is visible from the water for about 14 miles.

Mr. R. W. Powers, Lighthouse Keeper at Matinicus Rock, a beacon about 20 miles to the southeast of White Head Lighthouse, sent me five birds which were killed at his station on the nights of October 15 and 16. These were as follows:

- 1 Swamp Sparrow
- 1 Savannah Sparrow
- 1 Red-eyed Vireo
- 1 Leach's Petrel
- 1 Blackpoll Warbler

Mr. Powers writes me that a strong northwest wind was blowing at the time the birds struck. The flashing white light at Matinicus is visible from the water for 15 miles.

Highway Gleanings - For the past few years I have been patrolling the motor roads in Acadia National Park - an assignment which enables me to make frequent observation of the wild life in this region. This past summer I have seen more White-tailed Deer than in any previous summer. On the nights of September 24 and 26 an albino deer was sighted near the Jordan Pond House.

For the first time in many years Raccoon have been seen, although infrequently. On October 12, Ranger McQuinn and I sighted a Red Fox in the vicinity of Bubble Pond.

- Ranger Louis R. Fowler

HIBERNATION OF THE JUMPING MOUSE

In a survey of the native mammals of Acadia National Park made several years ago, Vernon Bailey was unable to find the Jumping Mouse and therefore suggested that the mouse in that region might begin its period of hibernation before August 19. In view of the findings of the past summer, it appears that this date is considerably earlier than the normal beginning of hibernation for the animal.

On August 22 of the past summer, three days after the date given by Bailey as the probable beginning of hibernation, a specimen of the Hudson Bay Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius*) was trapped. Subsequently, during the month that followed, a number of other individuals were secured, the last one being taken on September 23. As trapping activities were discontinued at that time, it was impossible to determine how much longer hibernation of the species was delayed beyond that date. It seems probable, however, that the normal period of activity for this mouse in the region of Mt. Desert Island extends almost to the first of October.

Seton* found that throughout most of Canada the Jumping Mouse begins hibernation early in September, but in the vicinity of Toronto it is delayed until near the end of the month. After citing some records, he says, "We may consider it settled, then, that in southern Canada the Jumping-mouse goes into its winter quarters late in September when the nights become too cool for pleasant rambling." It is evident from this statement that the date of the beginning of hibernation of the Jumping Mouse in southern Canada coincides approximately with that indicated above for the beginning of hibernation in the vicinity of Mt. Desert Island.

-Dr. M. Lelyn Branin, Ranger-Naturalist
Asst. Professor of Biology
John Carroll University

Editor's Note: Dr. Branin left Acadia in late September to take up his teaching duties at John Carroll University. Trapping for the smaller mammals was resumed early in October and was continued throughout the month - altogether more than 160 specimens being taken. The fact that no Jumping Mice were trapped at that time may be significant and tends to support Dr. Branin's conclusion regarding the approximate date when the species goes into hibernation in this region.

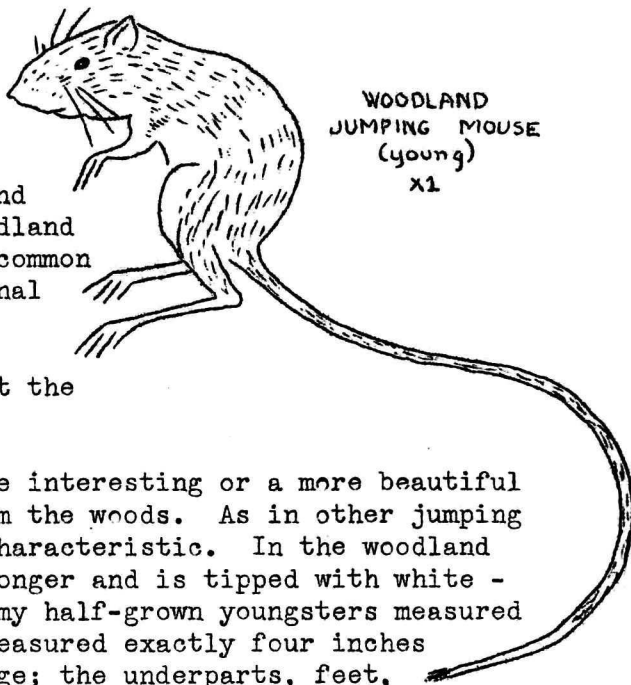
Recently, through the courtesy of Dr. Manton Copeland, it has been my privilege to examine the fine collection of study skins of mammals at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. Here I was interested to find six specimens of *Zapus hudsonius* which were taken in Maine at a later date in the season than the last specimen which Dr. Branin trapped. Five of the six came from Manchester, Maine, 80 miles due west of Bar Harbor; these were taken as follows: Sept. 26, 1912 (Dr. Manton Copeland); Sept. 30, 1916 (E. C. and A. S. Pope); Oct. 3, 1912 (Dr. M. Copeland); Oct. 13, 1916, and Oct. 19, 1915 (both, E. C. and A. S. Pope). On Oct. 7, 1916, one was taken by P. H. Cobb at Brunswick, Maine, 90 miles southwest of Bar Harbor.

-A. S.

*Seton, E. T. "Life-histories of Northern Animals." 1909.

WOODLAND JUMPING MICE

On September 7, Mr. Vernon Lunt, C. C. C. supervisor, working in the dense woodland about one-half mile south of the Tarn, came upon a globular nest made of leaves and dry grasses which was placed low in a brush pile. Upon investigating he found within this structure an adult and nine Woodland Jumping Mice (*Napaeozapus insignis*) - an uncommon species of small mammal in the Acadia National Park region. Mr. Lunt captured six of the youngsters, permitting the adult and three young to make good their escape, and brought the prize to my headquarters.



It would be difficult to imagine a more interesting or a more beautiful family group than this unusual sextette from the woods. As in other jumping mice the long tail and long hind legs are characteristic. In the woodland species, however, the tail is appreciably longer and is tipped with white - a distinguishing character. The bodies of my half-grown youngsters measured two inches in length while the tail alone measured exactly four inches in length. Their sides golden or buff orange; the underparts, feet, and tip of tail white; and the eyes black - these small rodents were as attractive as any fur-bearer I had ever seen. Unfortunately, though not unexpectedly, these youngsters did not take well to captivity and were consequently released in a few days.

-Arthur Stupka

Into the Beacon - On the morning of September 12 Mr. W. W. Wells, Lighthouse Keeper at Saddleback Ledge, found 11 dead birds at the foot of the tower. These had been killed on the previous night by striking the fixed white beacon whose rays are visible from the water for 18 miles. Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse, situated between Vinal Haven Island and Isle au Haut, at the southerly entrance to East Penobscot Bay, is approximately 25 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island, the home of Acadia National Park. Mr. Wells kindly mailed the 11 birds to me; they were as follows: 3 Red-eyed Vireos, 3 Magnolia Warblers, 3 Maryland Yellowthroats, 1 Northern Parula Warbler, 1 Flycatcher (probably the Yellow-bellied - the bird dead for several days when received).

-A. S.

Daylight Meteor - Ranger Louis R. Fowler reports seeing a meteor blazing over Cadillac Mountain at approximately 2:35 on the afternoon of September 26. Hundreds of observers reported seeing a similar phenomenon at the same time in this and other New England states.

BIRD BRIEFS

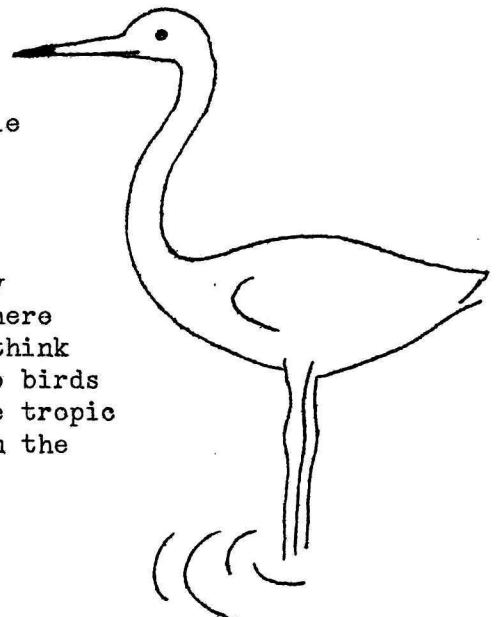
On October 9 while picking my way carefully over Dike Peak on Cadillac Mountain - a terrific wind making progress over this exposed ridge very difficult - I flushed a Horned Lark which after a short sweeping flight, soon descended to the barren wind-swept rocks nearby and permitted me to see it to good advantage. In spite of the gale the bird walked about quite unconcernedly in search of whatever food there might be. It was my first Horned Lark of the season, and to see it under the conditions which prevailed at the time made it doubly dear to me.

When, on October 14, Mrs. Franklin Anthony, bird-lover residing at Great Head, telephoned me that a Scarlet Tanager was feeding just outside her window, I hurried to the scene and was favored with a good view of the bird at very close quarters. It proved to be a male in the yellowish-green winter plumage. The Scarlet Tanager is a very uncommon bird on Mount Desert Island, and I know of no autumn record which is as late as this one.

On October 26 Ranger Louis R. Fowler and I observed the rare Hawk-Owl at an elevation of approximately 1100 feet on Cadillac Mountain. The bird, a diurnal owl whose flight resembles that of a hawk, proved to be quite approachable and was seen at close range in a low and fairly compact growth of gray birch.

A Little Blue Heron, an immature bird in the attractive pure white plumage, appeared at the Sand Beach lagoon on about September 10 and remained in the immediate vicinity for a period of three weeks. This feathered notable from the southlands, an uncommon bird in the region, had good fishing in the sheltered unfrequented cove. One day while I was watching the heron at its fishing in the shallow water, with the fog rolling in heavily from the nearby ocean, a raven's nasal "Kronk" came from somewhere in the sky overhead, and I could not help but think of the extreme climatic regions which these two birds are known to frequent - the white bird from the tropic land of palms; the black bird to be expected in the frigid northland of perpetual snow and ice.

- Arthur Stupka



LITTLE BLUE HERON