

J. Southgate Y. Hoyt

New York State ornithology suffered a great loss in the death of Dr. J. Southgate Y. Hoyt on June 1, 1951, in Memorial Hospital, New York City. Dr. Hoyt was perhaps best known among professional ornithologists for his studies on the life history of the Pileated Woodpecker. His pet Pileated Woodpecker, "Phloeo", lived $9\frac{1}{2}$ years, and was the only such bird ever successfully raised in captivity. A note on longevity in this species in the current issue of "Bird-banding", written during Dr. Hoyt's last illness, represents the last of a number of ornithological papers, both in technical and popular journals.

Dr. Hoyt, 38, had been on the staff of the Laboratory of Ornithology, Department of Conservation, Cornell University. During the summers he was Director of Natural History at the Cold Spring Harbor Biological Laboratory, Long Island. He held the B. S. degree from Washington and Lee University, and the M. S. and Ph. D. from Cornell. He served for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years in the Medical Department of the U. S. Army, and was a member of over a dozen societies in the field of natural history, including the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs.

Within New York, Dr. Hoyt was widely known for his radio talks and extension lectures on bird life. He had built up a large collection of still and motion pictures, and his home in Etna is a veritable museum of natural history, constantly visited by local children. Many young people received their first knowledge of nature, and developed an enthusiasm for nature study through contact with the Hoyts. Dr. Hoyt was Scoutmaster of the local Boy Scout troop.

Dr. Hoyt's natural history interests were many and varied, and his was a contagious enthusiasm. His home, his laboratory and his fine library were always at the disposal of interested friends of any age. His activities continued almost unabated until the very last period of a long and painful illness, and his cheerfulness and courage were an inspiration to his many friends.

Dr. Hoyt is survived by his wife, Sarah Foresman Hoyt, and by two brothers. Mrs. Hoyt is planning to continue as much as possible of her husband's work; adding to his photographic collection, lecturing, and completing his unfinished writings.

WHEATEAR ON WESTERN LONG ISLAND

JOHN J. ELLIOTT

Allan D. Cruickshank in "Birds Around New York City", 1942, mentions the Greenland Wheatear, *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*, as an accidental visitor from the far north with Griscom listing three specimens taken on Long Island, the last near Jamaica in 1885. Two recent records are listed: one at Montauk, December 27, 1936 (L. Breslau) and another at Moriches Inlet, June 3, 1941 (R. Wilcox). These appear to be all the reports for the New York City region.

On a sloping hill of dirt, rocks and some newly seeded and maturing grass plots in the Glen Oaks Village development, near Little Neck, twelve-year-old William Schoeffel, accompanied by his father George Schoeffel,

sighted a Wheatear on the morning of September 9th. During the day the bird would perch for some time on a large rock offering good chances for observation. On the same day, the Schoeffels, who are members of the Queens County Bird Club, notified five top rank birders of the club who came over and verified the identification.

The bird was seen until early evening of that day, on September 13, by this writer, and by various individuals, including the Schoeffels who live nearby, through September 15.

During its stay the Wheatear's habits were studied and it appeared to be entirely silent, and no phonetics of any kind were heard. According to the Schoeffels it remained rather solitary and when two Prairie Horned Larks alighted briefly on the hillside, it joined them for a few minutes and then flew off by itself. Late in the day observations indicated that the bird spent the night on the ground in the matured grasses and weeds at the foot of the hill.

The Wheatear resembled a Robin while on the ground, travelling a few steps, stopping, and then advancing again. Very often it flew up on rocks, logs or other projections and at times onto the roofs of houses. On one occasion it alighted on the eaves and hopped rapidly up to the ridge of the roof where its Blue-bird-like shape stood out in profile against the sky. Standing rather upright, it occasionally flirted and spread its tail and from its prominent perch was seen to fly out after passing insects, somewhat similar to the actions of the Cedar Waxwing.

Its preference for bare surfaces and barren surroundings was quite evident and its food was largely gleaned from these open surroundings. The Schoeffels and other members of the Queens County Bird Club found its food to consist largely of grasshoppers and it was described as quite active in capturing these. It would catch one and throw it on the ground. Sometimes the grasshopper would fly away, but if stunned, or injured otherwise, it would be eaten. After chasing a grasshopper it would fly back to a rock or log and await another. The bird was not opposed to a windfall so to speak, for when William Schoeffel laid a small handful of dead grasshoppers on a rock frequented by it (bait which he had acquired for fishing) it ate them all.

CONSERVATION NEWS AND NOTES

WALTER ELWOOD, *Chairman, Conservation Committee*

We can have conservation troubles — believe it or not — even without a session of the legislature.

The word which finally leaked out about the State Thruway's bright plans to go crashing for three miles through the heart of the Montezuma Federal Wildlife Refuge, through pond and marsh, certainly gave us a smack right between the eyes. Murder, we said.

Far be it from us to accuse the State Thruway Authority of publicity-seeking on this little arrangement between itself and Washington. And far be it from us to claim we understand the attitude of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in consenting to such a lamentable intrusion into a territory it is supposed to safeguard. Maybe we should have learned by this time not to expect much sympathy from Secretary of the Interior Chapman, the