

## NATURE NOW

# Birds Head South To Greener Fields

Now in mid-December, most of our migrant birds have gone, leaving the woods and fields empty of much of their life and color. Since adequate food supply is a primary factor in determining the number of life forms in any natural habitat, we must accept winter's dictates and follow our feathered friends in imagination as they wing their way to some distant shore or enchanted isle.

Bird-watchers among the ancients believed that an autumn gathering of swallows ended in their diving into the mud of a marsh, there to sleep out the winter. But the great Aristotle early recorded migration dates, speculating the while on the "when" and "how" of phenomenon, some details of which are still puzzling modern ornithologists.

Today the bird-bander is yielding much accurate information about the migratory habits of birds. Because of their skill in flight, birds are the most mobile of all animals. A general pattern of storing up energy in layers of fat just under the skin enables them to undertake flights of unbelievable length at speeds ranging from a robin's modest 30-40 miles per hour to the record of our western black swift, which can hurtle through the air at a speed of more than 100 miles per hour.

ONE OF the most famous of our feathered travelers is the Atlantic golden plover. In August and September his kind leave their nesting sites in Northern Canada, flying eastward to Newfoundland and Labrador. Here they feast on crowberries, storing up energy for the non-stop flight which takes them across the Atlantic and on into Brazil. In the spring they return by way of the Mississippi valley, a route whose major axis may be 5,000 miles long.

The arctic tern, a summer neighbor of the plover, is an even more famous traveler. His migration flight extends half-way round the world to the land near the South Pole. This is a circuitous round trip of some 25,000 miles.

One of the most beloved birds of our childhood was the bobolink, which nests in the meadow grasses across the Northern United States and well up into Canada. During September the flocks begin a leisurely journey southward, stopping to feed in the rice fields of our southern lawlands. Rested and fattened, they then follow their ancestral flyways to Jamaica and on to winter quarters across Central South America.

OUR WARBLERS are our most highly migratory group. Tiny birds which live almost entirely on insects, they find abundant food in their winter homes which range across the tropics from Mexico through Central America and on to South America.

William Beebe in "High Jungle," his account of a two-year collecting trip in the high Sierras west of Caracas, describes among other things his observations of migrating birds. Here in Porto Chuelo flyway, a narrow nick in the great mountain range, he counted on a single night 70 species of migrants, including tanagers, swallows, thrushes and warblers.

On the evening of April 21 he

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**Medical Mirror**

WHAT DOCTORS SAY ABOUT

- Whiskey Nausea
- Odorous Shoes
- Bedwetting

Q. "Can doctors do anything for whiskey nose?"—R. J.  
A. Yes, the condition can be greatly improved by proper treatment. The term "Whiskey nose" is misleading because many sufferers are strict abstainers from alcoholic drinks. Mild cases can sometimes be helped by skin planning. Plastic surgery with removal of excess tissue is required if the nose is markedly deformed.

Q. What can be done to prevent or remove perspiration odor in shoes?  
A. There is no really satisfactory method of deodorizing leather once unpleasant odor has developed. However, unpleasant odor can usually be prevented by daily foot care. The feet should be thoroughly washed and dried. Use of a foot deodorant also helps.

Q. "Please discuss bedwetting."—A grandmother.  
A. Bladder control requires voluntary and involuntary actions. When the bladder reaches a certain fullness the retaining muscular valve automatically relaxes the bladder contracts, and emptying takes place. This is the process in babies and young children. Complete control is gained as the child grows and develops. As a Swedish physician said, night bladder control is not so much a training process as it is a maturing process. Children don't deliberately wet the bed. They need medical attention, not punishment. Try to convince the youngster that the doctor can help. Under no circumstances should a big fuss be made over bedwetting.

Answers do not necessarily reflect the opinion of all doctors. The diagnosis and treatment of disease is the function of the patient's personal physician. Questions directed to Dr. J. D. Ralston, Science Editors, P.O. Box 396, Madison Square Station, N. Y. 10, N. Y. will be incorporated in these columns when possible.

**MILLS PHARMACY**

1740 West Maple Ave. Phone: Midwest 4-5060

records his exciting observations of clouds of male blackpolls beating their wings against the lighted windows of his laboratory. He is moved not only by their beauty, but by the avian energy and sure confidence of these small creatures as they fly out into the rain and darkness. This encounter was only

an interruption in a 5,000 mile journey from Brazil to Florida and on to their breeding grounds, which reach from the Catskills to Newfoundland and Southern Alaska.

SOME OF our common seed and grain eating birds, such as the quail, goldfinch, mourning dove and many species of sparrows, travel only as far into our more southern states as is necessary to find the food they relish. Bird surveys show that many

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