

# Dahlstrand, Nils P. (ed) / The Passenger Pigeon

Spring 1966

By the Wayside... pp 9-17

Within minutes after I got to her home the bird was in a mulberry tree and we watched it for about ten minutes at a distance of about forty feet. When first seeing it, I, too, thought of the Western Tanager. This bird had a bright orange head and breast with yellowish orange underparts and bright orange back. The wings and tail were dark, almost black. There was only a trace of wing bar, and according to Peterson's guide the back should be black and the wings should have wing bars.

This bird did not seem to me to be an immature nor did it give any hint that it might be a moulting Summer (Scarlet?) Tanager. What is it? The closest I can get to it is the Western Tanager. Just about two days ago tornado weather in the Chicago area.—Harold Koopmann, Plymouth.

**Martin Pursues Tanager.** The Summer Tanager was seen at approximately 8:00 a. m. on May 17, 1965. I was conducting an ornithology class field trip at Forest Hill Cemetery and saw the bird perched five or six feet from the ground, near the south end of the cemetery, close to the golf course. It was at a distance of 12-15 yards. The bird was an immature male, with nape and cheeks almost entirely red, but with yellowish-olive interspersed with red over the rest of the body (the typical immature male "tanager"). The wings had no trace of black on them, and were generally a gray-olive color, much the same as a female Summer Tanager's wings. Because of the light colored wings there is no doubt the bird was a Summer Tanager. I approached alone to approximately 10 yards, and the bird flew east over the ridge and was not seen again, although I returned a number of times hoping to photograph it.—Steve Martin, Madison.

**Related Report of a Large Flock of Willets in Western Wisconsin.** I thought that this item, published by Fred Leshner in Iowa Bird Life 34:72, 1964, would be of interest to you. It is complete with photography, and I'll quote in case you do not have the periodical handy: "On May 4, 1963, I observed a flock of Willets at the Genoa Fish Hatcheries near Genoa, Wisconsin . . . Not only was this the largest flock of Willets I have seen, but there was also an albino Willet in the flock." Fred is formerly from Iowa (now from Minneapolis) hence the note in their publication. The albino shows up nicely in the photo.—Janet C. Green, Duluth, Minnesota.



**Prairie Chicken vs Pheasant.** After checking some Broad-winged Hawk nesting areas near here today, (June 3, 1965), I was enroute back to Arpin with two of my helpers. I had just crossed the south boundary of the township and getting close to my Prairie Chicken booming area. I glanced over to see if they were on the booming ground, as I had observed them for 15 minutes the previous morning on the way to school. A flash of wings near the booming ground caught my immediate attention and I came to a sudden halt. I tore out the 20x scope and glassed the area. I saw three booming male Prairie Chickens. A movement in the grass about twenty feet from one of the cocks caught my attention as it appeared to be very red. It was a rooster pheasant. This is not

too unusual in the area, but it appeared to be acting strangely. It acted like a cat sneaking after a mouse. He was moving toward one of the booming cocks. When he got to within 20 feet, he charged, and chased the Prairie Chicken for about 50 yards. The chicken then flew up and returned to the dancing area and again commenced to boom. The pheasant was back in the grass. The "sneak up" activity started again. This time he centered his attention on a different cock, followed by the mad rush and run for about 20 yards.

Then a sudden surprise—the rooster started to "boom" on his own! He crowed repeatedly four times and beat his wings furiously (a normal display of crowing roosters). After his performance he stalked and made another charge, and just as suddenly he changed his mind again.

Just south of the booming ground is a small creek and the rooster headed towards it at a slow, deliberate pace. This is when I left the scene. This story sounds like an hour's observation but it actually took only nine minutes. The exact time was from 8:27 to 8:36 a. m. The sky was partly cloudy and the wind was from the WNW at 10 to 15 mph and the ground was wet. The booming ground is located approximately 300 yards west of the highway.—Don G. Follen, Sr., Arpin.

Fred Hamerstrom has this to say about the pugnacious attitude of the pheasant: "There are a number of instances (not all of them published) of cock pheasants on booming grounds of prairie chickens. Sometimes there is fighting, sometimes not. We have seen a booming ground completely cleared of its chickens by one pheasant for a morning or so, and we have instances in which there was no trouble. Ward M. Sharp ("Social and range dominance in gallinaceous birds—pheasants and prairie chickens" *J. Wildl. Mgmt.* 21(2): 1957: 242-244) concluded that this sort of competition "could eventually eliminate isolated pockets of prairie chickens."

**Artic Three-Toed Woodpecker at Oshkosh.** On January 14, 1965 at about 1:10 p. m. while working in the Wisconsin Conservation Department headquarters, Oshkosh, a conservation aid expressed the fact that a very large hairy woodpecker was just outside the window on a Norway maple. I immediately looked and realized it was an artic three-toed by its coloration.

From the activity within the bird flew across the street and landed in a very large dead American elm. Jerome Rieckhoff and myself then took a pair of binoculars across the street and positive identification was obtained. It was either a female or immature as the yellow head patch was lacking.—Douglas Morrisette, Oshkosh.

