

explore the country, ^{looking} especially for new birds and new shells. As when at Lee Field my principal mode of conveyance was my trusty bicycle. Local trips were all night at times. Though the feeling of not getting anywhere was occasionally dampening, and to avoid this I made several combined train and bicycle trips to places that had looked interesting on the map.

COMBINED
BICYCLE +
TRAIN TRIPS

One of the pleasanter local trips was ~~the trip~~ ^{one} involving the use of the various bridges - one or two at Daytona, going across from the ~~main~~ ~~land~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~long~~ ~~and~~ ~~yet~~ ~~appreciably~~ ~~wide~~ ~~sand~~ ~~spit~~ ~~that~~ ~~has~~ ~~the~~ ~~beach~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~ocean~~ ~~side~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~road~~ ~~both~~ ~~along~~ ~~there~~ ~~and~~ ~~along~~ ~~the~~ ~~river~~; one at Ormond several miles to the north and still another further up where the Halifax River is only a narrow creek flowing through salt marshes. On one such trip, I

(x)

listed about 50 species of birds including a goodly variety of ^{characteristic} ~~of the~~ of the river, beach, salt marsh, scrub, pine wood, hardwood and thicket habitats, though nothing very unusual. Interestingly enough I saw almost exactly the same number on a trip following about the same route in the middle of November of the same year, but only pine ^{about half} ~~were~~ were common to both lists. The greatest discrepancies were in the water birds and hawks. Perhaps the sight of ^{one young and} four adult bald eagles sitting on the beach near the same spot on the latter trip was the most noteworthy, though to have ten birds of birds singing ^{on the} ~~in~~ ^{day} ~~was~~ was pleasant. Each trip totaled close to 40 miles, so there was plenty of exercise involved too.

EAGLES

Ponce de Leon ^{inlet}, as mentioned before, was visited for both shells and birds. ~~Of the latter~~ ^{the} long stretch of beach ~~and~~ leading to it giving one ample opportunity to add new specimens to one's ~~list~~ collection, and list respectively. Sand ^(knobs, the nicest) paper, plover, gulls,

BIRDS

^{Swimmers,}
 terns, pelicans and even some herons
 and egret, as well as cormorants, ~~ducks~~
 etc. offshore were the birds most in
 evidence. Gannets and both kinds of
 loons I had seen in the vicinity of
 Jacksonville Beach, but never ~~was~~ as far
 down as Daytona. ~~Offshore~~ Offshore
 ducks were almost non-existent in
 Florida, though scaups were fairly
 frequent in bays and occasional
 red-headed nerganges seen ~~there~~ in
 such places. "Puddle" ducks were
 seen even less often, but only because
 of the few visits to fresh water marshes.
 One visit to Ponce de Leon Inlet
 from the south side (I had taken
 my brigade by train to New Smyrna,
^{15 or 20} ~~less of 20~~ ^{miles} south of Daytona) ^{and looked out to the bay}
 netted a new bird, the gray king-
 bird, but also an unpleasant
 tussel with ^{some} overconscientious coast-
 guardsmen, before pedaling home.

Trips further afield were
 often especially successful. One of
 the larger ~~was~~ occupied the

NEW

BIRD

AUTUMN, 1943

LONGER
TRAIN (TO
COCOA, BACK
FROM MELBOURNE)
& BICYCLE TRIP

better part of two days, involving a rather complicated tour. It was late in September 1943, and if there hadn't been a strong northeasterly wind, conditions would have been ideal.* This was to Cocoa, whence I rode across the bridge to Merritt Island and, after a side trip to the north, across the next bridge to Cocoa Beach, headed south past the naval air station, going back across the bridge to Eau Gallie, inland nearly to Lake Washington, south to the Melbourne - Krasimie road, and finally, after a look at the upper St. John's, east to Melbourne. Though longish (around 55 mi.), it took me through a great variety of country, including river bottom hardwoods, sand dunes and beach and scrub land immediately behind them, pine lands, prairie and freshwater marshes.

RAFT
TRIP

To get a better look at the marshes and having two days off I borrowed a rubber life raft and took it in a parachute bag to Melbourne, hitch-hiked to the St. John's and headed north and downstream. Progress was slower than expected, and I got only as far as Lake Washington before it became time to look around for a sleeping place. By chance I found a deserted cabin on a hummock of dry land

* FROM HERE ON COPIED IN 1991 FROM ROUGH PENCILLED ACCOUNT OF 1945

that I figured afterwards must have been the one Dr. Barbour used to visit from Eau Gallie. The next day I explored a little further around the lake, admiring the hundreds of white ibises, and then deflated the raft and packed it up in the bag again, slinging it over my shoulder for the walk out. The side road that took me to the big marsh east of Lake Washington before, attracted me again, and fortunately, because a flock of glossy ibises ^{there} performed very nicely. There were also surprising ~~the~~ numbers of blue-winged teal and black-necked stilts. It was a long walk out though, especially as I was offered no ride, and the 40 lb. bundle, not riding like a good pack, was very uncomfortable in the 10 miles of heat to Eau Gallie.

One time I went to Miami, taking the bus to Key West, foolishly never having made the trip when based at Opaalooka. I had time for a short ride around the island, but that's all.

Two trips to the west coast, one to Clearwater, the other to Sanibel, were possible on two day off periods, though there wasn't time for anything but a fairly good walk along the beach at the latter. This was, however, enough for me to get a fair representation of the shells, which littered the

KEY
WEST

WEST
COAST
OF FLA.

SHELLS

OCTOBER, 1943

NEW BIRDS,

ROWBOAT

TRIP-

SHELLS,

CLEARWATER

beach in piles the like of which I've never seen the like of anywhere else. The Coast Guard gave me a ride both ways. I was the only guest at the inn, and there was no one else walking the beach. More time was available at Clearwater, where, after seeing a couple of new birds on the beach, Snowy Plover and Cabot's Tern, I hired a boat and rowed to Catadee Island and found some really pretty good shell - paper nautilus, left-handed whells, helmeted Tur shell, olive, paper fig, fighting coral, Chinese alphabet.

I might look as if I were an awful lone wolf going on all these trips by myself, but the fact is that there were very few other hatchlings attached to N.A.S., and none of these had bicycles or were particularly interested in natural history. Charles Tenner was an exception to the last statement except that he was very happily married. Mildly interested in birds, he became very interested in shells and with the help of his car and his wife managed to build up a collection perhaps or the whole slightly superior to mine but which he mounted in old cigar boxes fixed up with cotton and glass tops. We were occasionally able to go out together, and that was always enjoyable.