

in strategic centers in the United States and Canada are now designated as Science Service minute men in archeology and anthropology under this plan.

Two investigations under the plan have already been made. Drs. Alfred S. Romer and Wilton M. Krogman, of the University of Chicago, and Russel T. Neville, of Kewanee, Illinois, visited a cave in Leasburg, Missouri, where human remains were reported to be found and they determined that the bones were those of bears. When a report of the discovery of "prehistoric giants in West Virginia" gained wide currency, D. T. Stewart, of the U. S. National Museum, visited the site of the bone discoveries near Morgansville, West Virginia, and found that the bones were probably those of normal-sized Indians. In cooperation with Professor Ernest R. Sutton, of Salem College, he excavated further in the mounds and inspired local amateur archeologists to more effective research in a territory which is largely an archeological no-man's-land.

In addition to the news reports of the investigations which will find publication in newspapers and magazines through the usual channels of Science Service, more detailed announcements of these researches will be prepared and sent upon request to those who express an interest.

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SCIENCE SERVICE

## TWO UNUSUAL FLOCKS OF SWANS

IN recent years the appearance of the whistling swan, *Cygnus columbianus* (Ord), in large numbers is so unusual an event that the occurrence of a flock of fifty is a matter of note among ornithologists. Forbush,<sup>1</sup> in reference to this bird states, "In New England we rarely see or hear them now. Once they were abundant in migration along our coasts and many a lake. . . . Now the few that pass over or through our territory fly so high that they are rarely noticed, or they keep well out on wide water during daylight." Barrows, in his "Michigan Bird Life," says, "Single birds or small squads occasionally alight during bad weather in ponds and streams in various parts of the state," and quoting Butler,<sup>2</sup> "Formerly when these birds were more abundant they migrated in flocks of twenty or thirty, and sometimes as many as fifty high in the air." In Wisconsin, Schorger has just issued a report on the birds of Dane County. The territory covered by the report includes a number of lakes which are much frequented by waterfowl during the season of migration. The observations

recorded extend over a period of twenty years, but swans were seen in only three of these, and on only seven different occasions. The largest flock observed contained forty individuals; the others less than eight each.

All the authorities cited lay special emphasis on the rarity of the bird. The appearance this spring of a large number of swans on Lake Winnebago seems therefore to merit notice.

About the first of April swans were reported to be at the northwest extremity of the lake, near Neenah. The writer visited the locality on April 5. The birds were shy and remained well off shore, but a count was possible through glasses. The number of individuals was ascertained to be two hundred.

On the same day a larger flock was reported from a location twelve miles south near Oshkosh. On April 7, after photographing the Neenah flock, which had apparently diminished little if at all in numbers, the writer drove to the Oshkosh shore. The flock here was stretched out in a great band approximately a mile in length and more or less paralleling the shore line. So close in was this band that the red beaks of the younger birds showed prominently and even the yellow spots on the beaks of older birds could be distinctly seen through six-power glasses. The individual birds were counted and found to number one thousand and seven.

A third flock, of small size, was reported to be at the southern end of the lake but this report has not, up to date, been verified. We have, however, knowledge of approximately twelve hundred swans on the lake at one time.

Accounts obtained from residents along the lake shores varied so widely that it was out of the question to determine just when and in what numbers the birds had arrived. But it is certain that these flocks are not remaining intact in their migratory movements. The smaller group in disappearing during the night of April 8 left three of its number on the lake. The larger flock shrank to one hundred and seventeen individuals between the eighth and noon on the tenth. All afternoon, on the latter date, swans in groups of from three to seven individuals left the feeding grounds until at evening only sixty remained. Three days later these sixty stragglers were still on the lake.

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## CURIOSITIES OF SCIENTIFIC NAMES

I AM very much interested in Dr. Howard's notes, page 330 of SCIENCE for October 4, entitled "Odd Stories about Scientific Names." Some enterprising scientist could compile a book full of such stories and

<sup>1</sup> Edward Howe Forbush, "Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States," p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Amos W. Butler, "Notes on Indiana Birds," *Proc. Ind. Acad. Sci.*, 1891.