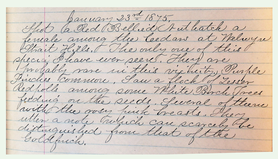
A Year of Birding with Charles H. Neff

CONNECTICUT 1874-1875

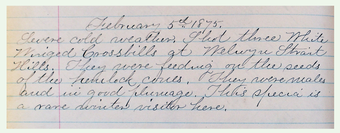
Charles H. Neff, who was born on December 26th, 1846 and died in September of 1911, was an American naturalist who collected an array of biological specimens that he donated to Wesleyan. He loved to observe nature and was particularly interested in birds, keeping a detailed field notebook of bird sightings with entries spanning from 1874 to 1910. He also shot and prepared stuffed and mounted bird specimens, and kept records of his collection in a memorandum book. Excerpts from both of these books, which are now located in Wesleyan's archives, are displayed here alongside birds from Neff's collection. Neff's writings from November of 1874 to October of 1875 (when he was 28 years old) are accompanied by birds that he saw or could have seen in the area, and even birds he shot on that day and then preserved.

JANUARY



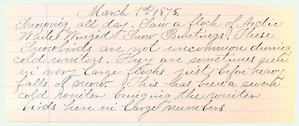
Red-breasted Nuthatch (Red-bellied Nuthatch)
Sitta canadensis Linnaeus, 1766
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

FEBRUARY



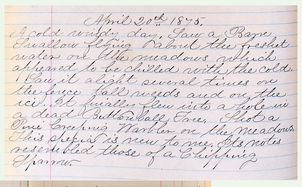
White-throated Sparrow
Zonotrichia albicollis (J.F.Gmelin, 1789)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

MARCH



White-winged Crossbill
Loxia leucoptera J.F.Gmelin, 1789
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

APRIL



Snow Bunting
Plectrophenax nivalis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

Pine Warbler
Setophaga pinus (Linnaeus, 1766)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

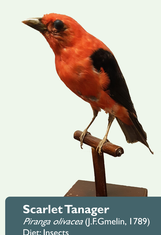
MAY

Purple Martin
Progne subis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

Gray Catbird
Dumetella carolinensis (Linnaeus, 1766)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

Eastern Towhee (Chewink)
Pipilo erythrophthalmus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Omnivore
Status: Least Concern

House Wren
Troglodytes aedon Vieillot, 1809
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

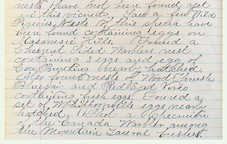


Scarlet Tanager
Piranga olivacea (J.F.Gmelin, 1789)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

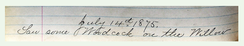
LEFT: Reverend Thomas Hooker and Company Journeying through the Wilderness in 1636 from Plymouth to Hartford (Frederic Edwin Church, 1847)

BELOW: West Rock, New Haven (Frederic Edwin Church, 1849)

JUNE



JULY



Brown-headed Cowbird (Cow Bunting)
Molothrus ater (Boddaert, 1783)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

AUGUST

Barn Swallow
Hirundo rustica Linnaeus, 1758
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

Yellow-breasted Chat
Icteria virens (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

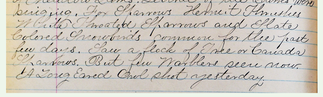
SEPTEMBER

Parula Warbler
Setophaga americana (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

American Pipit
Anthus rubescens (Tunstall, 1771)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

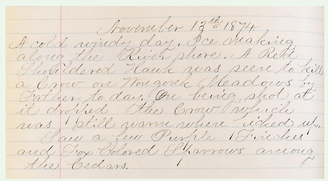
Red-winged Blackbird
Agelaius phoeniceus (Linnaeus, 1766)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

OCTOBER



ABOVE: Field notebook page from the end of 1889, with a doodle by Neff on the endpage

NOVEMBER



Red-shouldered Hawk
Buteo lineatus (Gmelin, 1788)
Diet: Mammals
Status: Least Concern

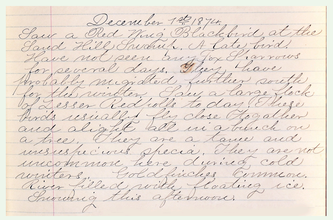
Fox Sparrow
Passerella iliaca (Merrem, 1786)
Diet: Insects
Status: Least Concern

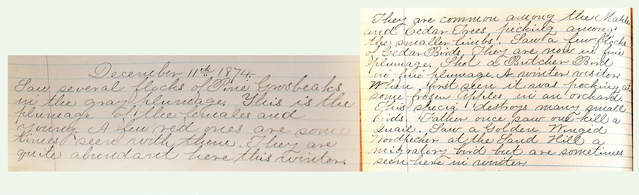
Rusty Blackbird
Euphagus carolinus (Statius Muller, 1776)
Diet: Insects
Status: Vulnerable

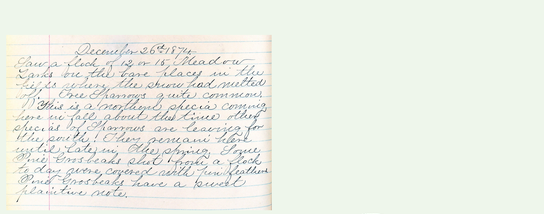
Dark-eyed Junco
Junco hyemalis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

American Goldfinch
Spinus tristis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

DECEMBER







Cedar Waxwing (Cedar Bird)
Bombycilla cedrorum Vieillot, 1808
Diet: Fruit
Status: Least Concern

Northern Shrike (Butcherbird)
Lanius borealis Vieillot, 1808
Diet: Birds
Status: Least Concern

Pine Grosbeak
Pinicola enucleator (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

Pine Grosbeak
Pinicola enucleator (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Seeds
Status: Least Concern

Eastern Meadowlark
Sturnella magna (Linnaeus, 1758)
Diet: Insects
Status: Near Threatened