

## **BIRD LIFE**

by Oscar Baynard

Every Christmas day, thousands of bird students and bird lovers, go forth into the woods, fields, marshes, beaches, etc., and see how many different kinds of birds they can identify between sunrise and sunset. These trips cover from small areas observed to many hundreds of miles in trips and any time a list of over 60 species is found it is considered an outstanding list.

In Highlands Hammock State Park, an area of 1280 acres or two square miles, a list of 84 species were identified Christmas day. Of course, this is a bird sanctuary and a rigid supervision has been in force for several years. This, with a great variety of cover, various kinds of natural feed and safe hiding places from their natural enemies, makes it an ideal place for birds to spend the winter. No great flocks of birds are seen here usually, but to one who will carefully scout about in various trails, the birds can be seen.

On this Christmas day list, is a pair of Ivory Billed Woodpeckers, one of the birds that is almost extinct. This record is the eighth for the year of this bird and the second time a pair has been seen, so it is hoped that this rare bird will use the park for a nesting site this year, and if so will be a great attraction to the bird lovers of the whole country.

Of this list of eighty four, 60 are birds that are known to nest in or in the vicinity of the park. The other 20 are winter tourist birds.

During the past year, a careful survey has been made and a list of 167 species of birds has been found in Highlands Hammock State Park and, of this list, 106 are known to nest in or close to the park.

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The observations of Mr. Baynard, although made almost 30 years ago, are practically accurate today, with some slight variations. The Ivory Billed Woodpeckers have not been reported in recent years but another rare bird, the swallow tail kite has taken up residence here and at this time, the locations of two nests are known.

Mr. Baynard was a recognized authority on bird life, so his remarks may be accepted in establishing the fact that the student may find a profusion of bird life in this sanctuary. Of special interest to bird lovers, are the rookeries of water fowl on the park property.