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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
tells of:

BIRD MIGRATION AND THE WEATHER

Bird migrations in the spring show dependence not only upon the general character of the season but also upon the particular wind and temperature conditions at the time of flight. The time of starting and rate of progress for each species necessarily depends on the food habits of the species. Thus, ducks move northward when the opening of lakes and streams allows them access to their food. Twenty-three miles daily is an average rate of progress for many species in the United States, though some late season migrants may average even 130 miles a day.

Progress northward at particular times may be hastened or much delayed by the wind direction at the time of flight. An extensive study of bird migration records has been made by Prof. Frank Smith of the University of Illinois. It was desired to determine what types of weather conditions favored northward migration. For this purpose, the dates of the first appearance of the various species were considered. In reviewing the records, it was at once noticed that the birds came in waves, a large number of different species appearing first on the same day. Indeed, half of all the arrivals of 30 days might be recorded on two days. An examination of the weather maps for the days with the most arrivals showed, in a great majority of cases, a low pressure area approaching, giving southerly winds and rising temperature during the preceding night, when each large wave of migration occurred.

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