

Robert L. Coffin Ornithological Journal

1912-1924

1 volume (0.1 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 593 bd

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Robert L. Coffin (1889-1976) began a long association with the Massachusetts Agricultural College when he arrived on campus in 1912 to begin work as an assistant photographer for the East Experiment Station. His skill as a technical photographer and his artistic eye, however, soon made him a valuable commodity on campus and within a few years of his arrival, Coffin had branched out to work for a wide range of departments across campus and, in the late 1920s, for the US Department of Agriculture in Pennsylvania and New Jersey as well. An avid birder and naturalist, Coffin was particularly known for his nature photography, using a battery of different cameras to capture everything from scenic vistas to photomicrographs. Although he established a commercial photographic studio in Amherst in 1931, Coffin continued to accept a wide range of assignments at UMass, earning recognition as the unofficial campus photographer. He remained active almost to the time of his death in 1976 at the age of 86.

Containing the meticulously detailed records of an avid birder, the Coffin journal contains records of sightings, daily logs, and first and last occurrences of birds observed in the years 1912 and 1917-1922. The records in the journal reflect Coffin's many birding trips in western Massachusetts, mostly in the Connecticut River Valley, however the journal also contains records from the Swift River Valley, the Harvard Forest, the Boston area, and the Connecticut coast. In a few cases, Coffin recorded the numbers of birds observed.

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Background on Robert L. Coffin

Robert L. Coffin (1889-1976) began a long association with the Massachusetts Agricultural College when he arrived on campus in 1912 to begin work as an assistant photographer for the East Experiment Station. His skill as a technical photographer and his artistic eye, however, soon made him a valuable commodity on campus and within a few years of his arrival, Coffin had branched out to work for a wide range of departments across campus and, in the late 1920s, for the US Department of Agriculture in Pennsylvania and New Jersey as well. An avid birder and naturalist, Coffin was particularly known for his nature photography, using a battery of different cameras to capture everything from scenic vistas to photomicrographs.

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Scope of collection

Containing the meticulously detailed records of an avid birder, the Coffin journal contains records of sightings, daily logs, and first and last occurrences of birds observed in the years 1912 and 1917-1922, with partial summary data for 1923 and 1924. The records in the journal reflect Coffin's many birding trips in western Massachusetts, mostly in the Connecticut River Valley, however the journal also contains records from the Swift River Valley, the Harvard Forest, the Boston area, and the Connecticut coast. In a few cases, Coffin recorded the numbers of birds observed.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Esther C. Martin and Stewart T. Coffin, January 2009.

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, 2009.

Related Material

The Arthur C. Bent Collection (MS 413) also includes detailed records of an avid birder from the early 20th century.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Robert L. Coffin Ornithological Journal (MS 593 bd). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Amherst (Mass.)

Bird watching--Massachusetts.

Birds--Massachusetts.

University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Contributors

Coffin, Robert L. [main entry]

Coffin, Robert L.

Genres and formats

Diaries--Massachusetts.

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