

# MACALESTER COLLEGE

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■ DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

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Subject: The PONDS at ORDWAY: I.) The PERMANENT POND.

There are three ponds at Ordway and one of them is a permanent pond. It is not large - 600 ft. in length and almost 300 ft. at its widest point near the northerly end; its depth by late summer is only 3 or 4 inches and that is clogged with Duck-weed and other plants. Perhaps it would be better to say that the "permanent pond" is only temporarily permanent since it is obviously changing into a "temporary pond" as a result of its own vital processes - known to biologists as "eutrophication".

Eutrophication is the result of the growth of vegetation which ultimately chokes and fills the pond with its own products. This process is accelerated by the presence (or addition) of plant nutrients, one source being runoff water from agricultural fields and lawns wherefrom it has dissolved fertilizers and other nutrients. These nutrients cause a more profuse growth of aquatic plants and the subsequent choking of the body of water with vegetative debris.

This season the permanent pond (charted on some of the older maps as Pratt Lake) was the home of a nesting Mallard and a Wood Duck, who brought off their clutches of seven and five ducklings, respectively, and taught them their lessons in the shallow waters and tall grasses of the little community. Nesting on the pond shores were a Sora Rail and 3 or 4 Red-winged Blackbirds, whose activities in occupying and protecting a nesting territory are one of the most interesting of ethological experiences. The pond also supported two muskrat lodges through the past winter.

Nestled in a small glacial cup surrounded by oak, birch and aspen the pond is quaint but it also furnishes habitat for a variety of creatures - amphibians, birds, insects and the muskrats; at evening it is a favorite summertime water-hole for deer.

Maybe in twenty or thirty years the permanent pond won't be "permanent" anymore but it certainly has seen and nurtured a lot of life.



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