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The Kentucky Warbler

Volume III.

Bowling Green, Ky., April, 1927.

Number 2

Our April Meeting—The regular spring meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society will be held in the Auditorium of Watterson Hotel, Louisville, Friday afternoon, April 22, 2 o'clock. The chief feature of the program will be a profusely illustrated lecture entitled "Some Problems of Migration and Adaptation" by L. Y. Lancaster of the Western Teachers College, Bowling Green. Mr. Lancaster has for many years been an active student of birds and other phases of wild life in Kentucky. He is very enthusiastic about the out-of-doors, being an oarsman, hunter, ornithologist, and hiker. We are sure to have a great program. Be sure to come and bring your friends to hear this great address. This session is also the time for the election of officers for the next year. We want to make plans for our fall meeting at Murray next October. On account of the crowded program of the K. E. A. it has been decided not to have any evening program, as has been our custom in past years.

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Mr. Hibbs Honored—The Southern Agriculturist for July 15, 1926, contained a full-page article on our excellent member, Mr. G. D. Hibbs, Cox's Creek, Nelson County, entitled "This Farmer Builds Homes for the Birds" and written by the editor, our good friend Mr. James Speed. A view of Mr. Hibbs' house and five other pictures showing his feeding devices and bird boxes illustrate the article. Mr. Hibbs is shown holding some of his bird boxes. The large farm which this fine Kentucky gentleman and lover of the out-of-doors runs is a treasure-house of birds, as the readers of this little leaflet all know. The little article below illustrates how delightful this farm is when a bird-lover has it in keeping.

* * * *

Here are some things out of the ordinary that I observed at Cox's Creek, Nelson County, in 1926:

The Marsh Hawk was found nesting this season in a low plot of ground. It has been in this section of the country for six or seven seasons. The Great Horned Owl was seen on August 15. The Barn Owl was also observed. The Fox Sparrow stayed with me from April 10 to April 15. I had the pleasure of hearing him in full song. I have never heard a bird sing to equal him. About the last of April the Hermit Thrush built for the first time. While plowing on April 14 I saw the Vesper, Lincoln, and Lark Sparrows at the same time. On April 20 the Yellow-throated Vireo was seen for the first time. The White-eyed Vireo nested on my farm. The Woodcock stayed on an adjoining farm from June 7 to June 25. A dry spell caused him to move to another locality. The Kingfisher came by and perched

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upon the chimney of my house for three mornings in succession. The Carolina Wren built in the tobacco barn and then in the tenant house. The Sparrow Hawk built in a Flicker box; a Mourning Dove built in a last year's Robin nest. Three times I had four species of birds to use the cast-off skin of a snake as building material. Two species invariably use it, while others occasionally use it. A Purple Finch was seen on Sept. 10. I think he drifted in with a wandering flock of Goldfinches. Being favorably located on a small stream, which runs directly north and south, I observed in my yard and orchard between six and nine o'clock in the morning fourteen species of Warblers one day in the spring migration.

—G. D. Hibbs, Cox's Creek.

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Miss Yunker's Work Praised—The April number of *American Childhood*, published in New York City by Miss Carolyn S. Bailey, the great authority on the education of children, will contain an extended interview with Miss Emilie Yunker, our vice-president, entitled "Where Children and Birds Tend Gardens Together." We are always glad when one of our members gets deserved recognition for meritorious work.

* * * *

Another Census—The following census came too late for the January Warbler:

Jan. 1, 1927—Berea—Meadows, swamps, along streams, and over mountains; cold, snowy day; 9:30 a. m. to 12:30 p. m. Bluebird, 30; Carolina Wren, 1; Crow, 1; Flicker, 7; Blue Jay, 2; Carolina Chickadee 12; Cardinal, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Towhee, 2; Goldfinch, 10; Slate-colored Junco, 6; Meadowlark, 18; Mockingbird, 1; Wilson Snipe, 1; Bronzed Grackle, 1; Turkey Vulture, 1. Total, 16 species, 101 individuals. A catbird has been wintering in the thicket near us. It was seen twice in December. On December 30 I saw a Winter Wren. The Song Sparrow is seen here at all times during the summer; it must nest here.—Edwin Huffman.

* * * *

Mounted Specimens—Professor L. Y. Lancaster, of the Science Department of Western Teachers College, Bowling Green, has started an excellent collection of mounted specimens of birds and mammals. Ever once in a while some one finds a dead bird or kills one that is injurious and sends the skin to this collection. The taxidermist is W. M. Ayres, a student of Mr. Lancaster's. The cases of specimens are attracting a great deal of attention. If you find a rare bird dead or injured, communicate with Mr. Lancaster.

* * * *

Izaak Walton Leagues—Numbers of Izaak Walton Leagues are being organized in the state now. At the annual session at Lexington, January 26, there were 24 leagues in the state, most of them in central Kentucky. The work of the leagues is thoroughly in line with all the best interests of the conservation of wild life. Several of the K. O. S. officers and members are also active members of the Izaak Walton League of America. Wherever you are, give it your unqualified support, for we are all working for the same great cause, some of us in a specific sphere, others in a more general one. We bird lovers will always find many of our best friends among sportsmen and conservationists.

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Birds and the Out-of-doors—Many of our members have wanted to know what the daily column of the editor in his home town paper, bearing the title given above, is like. We are giving below a typical day's brief essay:

Birds Along the Open Highway

The amateur in ornithology often makes the mistake of supposing that one must go to the deep woods to find birds. A few days ago a prominent man in our city said he had not seen a Snowbird (Junco) since he was a boy, when in reality there are hundreds each winter within two blocks of where he lives. He probably imagined that he would have to go back as far from the city as his boyhood home before he could again see in such numbers the dainty little Junco. People often tell me that they do not question my word, but they do not see Bluebirds often. Any day the whole year through one can see Bluebirds along the pike to Lost River, and that without ever leaving that pike itself. If you have learned to drive your car and look for birds at the same time, you can still see Bluebirds and dozens of other birds, for that matter. Years ago I learned that the bushes, and fences, and telephone wires, and dooryards along the highways are the very places to see most of the species of the birds that are found here. Mrs. Margaret Nice, of the University of Oklahoma, has made dozens of roadside censuses to prove how valuable a mere highway may be in the study of birds. I distinctly recall that of the 40 species on our Christmas census for 1926, 32 were seen from the road. Of the remaining eight species nearly all are to be seen almost any day in winter from the Nashville Pike alone. Another very excellent stretch of highway for birds is the Glen Lilly Pike. Still another is the Barren River Pike. But the Nashville Pike has always yielded the highest number of species, both summer and winter. I know of no finer place anywhere in my territory of observation, for five miles in any direction, that is more illustrative of the value of the open road to the bird student.

* * * *

Some Adaptations—From a column run by Professor L. Y. Lancaster in the school paper of the Western Teachers College the following interesting facts are taken:

Kingfishers are adapted to their environment in both color and anatomy. They are sky-colored underneath, so as to be less conspicuous to the fishes, and dark above, to be seen less easily by their enemies. Since they nest in burrows, their legs must be short, and in order to dig these burrows, they have the middle and outer toes joined for half their length. The whole foot resembles a spade.

The Woodpeckers are especially adapted to their type of life. Two toes in front and two behind, with pointed stiff tail feathers as braces, enable them to sit easily on the side of a tree. They are well-fixed with tools for getting food, a chisel-like beak and a long, barbed tongue that can be thrust into holes.

The plumage of Owls is such that it causes no noise during flight, their hooked beak serves as well as a meat cutter, their large eyes admit the maximum of light, and the feet, with their powerful muscular connections, enable them to hold firmly their prey.

There is no bird better fitted for his work than the Heron. His legs and neck are long, his colors underneath make him appear as part of the grass to the fishes, his beak is especially fitted to grasping and holding slippery fish, and his eyes are placed so that he can look upward, forward, backward, and at his feet all at the same time.

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The last adaptation named is particularly useful, since he can see fish at his feet without moving his body.

The members of the Goatsucker family—Nighthawks, Whippoorwills, and Chuck-will's-widows—carry insect nets with them. Since their food is composed largely of flying insects, their mouths are particularly wide and have a row of bristles around them. They fly with mouth wide open, catching up whatever they touch.

The Loon out of water is as helpless as a motor boat would be in similar circumstances. His well balanced body has a pair of propeller-legs fastened near the rear of the body, where they are valuable for swift swimming and diving. His bill is so made that he can bite a fish in two with little effort.

* * * *

Federal Bird Refuges—There are now in the United States 33 Federal bird refuges frequented by wild ducks, comprising about 3,433,000 acres. On these refuges shooting is prohibited. Ten of these have been established since 1913. There are also 73 state refuges, comprising more than 3,837,000 acres, 15 of these established since 1913. Canada has also done much to establish areas for the protection of wild game. These special refuges are not to keep ducks from being killed by sportsmen but to insure a place of safety, where ducks can breed or rest or feed. Some of these reservations are wholly in the South, where the ducks winter; several, however, are in the breeding areas of the various species. The whole problem resolves itself into this: Are we willing to let our game birds be rendered extinct by such methods of hunting as forever eliminated the Passenger Pigeon? Since these areas were established, even though the number of hunters has increased enormously, the game birds, ducks especially, have become so numerous as to startle even the old hunters. Even though the bag limit for the whole country is now approximately 15 a day, our own being 25, there are more ducks to be seen than before 1913 and much later. The bag limit is still too high here, I believe, unless we wish to endanger our game. It is feared by observers in our own state that not enough breeding stock will be left to meet the newer demand of hunters. Duck shooting is great sport for those who like it; it would be shortsighted to leave no hunting for our children. Federal and state authorities are studying the problem and now hope to get such laws passed and enforced as will give each one a fair chance to maintain the present numbers, bring in a bagful, and yet leave some to carry on the race.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April, 1923

President ----- Professor Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green

Vice-President ----- Miss Emilie Yunker, Louisville

Secretary-Treasurer .. Mrs. Charles McBride, 1106 S. Fourth St.,
Louisville

Meets annually in the spring at Louisville, during the week of The Kentucky Educational Association; in the fall at some Kentucky college.

Dues for K. O. S. membership: local or state members, 50c annually; affiliate, \$2.00.

Address Warbler correspondence to the President.