

10-1929

Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 5, no. 4)

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Recommended Citation

Kentucky Library Research Collections, "Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 5, no. 4)" (1929). *Kentucky Warbler*. Paper 25.
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/ky_warbler/25

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The Kentucky Warbler

Volume V.

Bowling Green, Ky., October, 1929

Number 4

Looking Backwards—Since The Kentucky Ornithological Society recently passed its sixth birthday, it might be well for the members to glance at its history. It was organized in April, 1923, at Louisville by Dr. L. Otley Findar, Versailles; Mr. B. C. Bacon, Madisonville; and Professor Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green. The purpose of the society is three-fold: 1. To form a common meeting ground for various local organizations for the study of birds; 2. To help foster a love and knowledge of bird life; 3. To cooperate with state and national organizations in sane methods of protection and study of birds. The first regular meeting of the society was held at Louisville in April, 1924; since then spring meetings at Louisville have been held regularly. In the fall of 1925 the society adopted the custom of holding meetings in the fall in various parts of the state. In 1925 the society met at Bowling Green, in 1926 at Henderson, in 1927 at Murray, and in 1928 at Hodgenville. The 1929 meeting will be held at Elkton, in the Community House, Friday afternoon and evening, October 25 and 26. These fall sessions are designed to reach all parts of the state in our campaign for a better attitude toward birds and wild life. In addition to the public programs, various members have addressed the public schools in and near the place of meeting. One year we reached in this manner 3,500 school children in a single day.

From an humble beginning with three members, the K. O. S. has grown to have more than a hundred members, including the foremost ornithologists of the state and many amateur bird students. Memberships are of two kinds: adult, 50c a year; and child, 25c a year. The chief activity of the society, aside from the annual spring and fall meetings, is the publication, quarterly, of this little leaflet. The *Kentucky Warbler*, named for the only bird that bears the name of our state. Alexander Wilson discovered this species in 1810 near Lexington, while he was making his famous journey from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. This little leaflet is designed as a repository for field notes, items of interest about our members, and general plans for the work of the society. This leaflet started with the April, 1925, issue and is mailed free to all members.

One of the activities of the K. O. S., borrowed from the National Audubon Societies, is an annual Christmas bird census, taken in all parts of the state by our members and published in the January issue of *The Kentucky Warbler*. Every year the interest in the cen-

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sus is increasing, and the lists are becoming more and more representative.

From the time of its organization The Kentucky Ornithological Society has been affiliated with the great national Wilson Ornithological Club, named for Alexander Wilson and made up of the leading ornithologists of all parts of America, especially the Middle West and South.

The officers and members are eager to make the K. O. S. function better and better as it increases in size and importance. We are anxious to enroll in our society all professional and amateur students of birds and all people interested in the preservation of our wild life.

* * * *

Our Fall Meeting—Though it is impossible to give at this time a complete program of our meeting to be held at Elkton, October 5 and 26, here are some of the things to look forward to:

1. **Cavity-Nesting Birds**—Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, Marion.
2. **Birds and Folk-Lore**—Miss Inez Faith Humphrey, English Department, Teachers College, Morehead.
3. **The Todd County Cliffs**—Mr. Edward M. Ray, Principal of Frances High School, Fredonia.
4. **Birds as Good Citizens (Illustrated)**—Miss Emilie Yunker, Head of Nature-Garden Department, Louisville Public Schools.
5. **Changing Bird Life in Kentucky**—Professor Gordon Wilson, English Department, Teachers College, Bowling Green.
6. **The Economic Value of Birds (Illustrated)**—Miss Mary May Wyman, Health Department, Louisville Public Schools.

There will be other features, to be announced at the meeting.

The meeting will be divided into three parts:

1. General session, Friday afternoon, October 25: 3:00 o'clock, Community House.
2. General session, Friday evening, October 25, 8:00 o'clock, Community House.
3. Outing, Saturday morning, October 26, to the Cliffs of northern Todd County, with a short stop at the Blue and Gray State Park. (Full announcements about the time of starting, the lunch, and the time to return to Elkton will be made at the evening meeting.)

The ladies of the Elkton Woman's Club, through their chairman, Mrs. John O. Street, have generously offered us the use of the Community House and have given us a great deal of local publicity. Several of our members who will arrive early will speak on birds and wild life before the schools of Elkton and neighboring schools. All expect this to be our best fall meeting yet held.

* * * *

Christmas Bird Census—Begin right now to plan your Christmas bird census. If you took one last year or at some other time, you will need little urging, for it is very fascinating. Stay out as long as you

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can, a whole day, if possible. Count every bird you see, and write a report to the editor of this leaflet, using this form:

"Bowling Green—Dec. 24, 6:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. (Name specific places visited, if you wish.) Fifteen miles on foot. Temperature at start 40, at return 36. Ground bare; cloudy; wind, northwest; light. Killdeer, 10; Turkey Vulture, 1; . . . Bluebird, 8. Total, 42 species, 1985 individuals.

This census should be taken on any day beginning with December 21 and ending with December 29. It is hoped that enough censuses will be taken to fill completely our Warbler for January and that these censuses will represent every part of the state. Full particulars will be given again at the Elkton meeting, in the hope that this census will be the best we have yet taken.

* * * *

Bird Life of a Transient Lake in Kentucky is the title of a nine-page article by our president in the September issue of *The Wilson Bulletin*. It deals with a depression south of Bowling Green which filled with water during the rainy winter of 1926-27. To this temporary lake came hosts of water and wading birds. Thirty-two species were seen on or near this 300-acre lake during the first six months of 1927, while the author had recorded only twenty-seven species for his entire territory for the preceding twelve years. The lake finally dried up in July, 1927, but the wild life it attracted shows what changes might occur here if there were permanent areas of water and plenty of food.

* * * *

There are so many cavity-nesting birds that one hardly knows where to begin or where to end in discussing them. Many of our birds that nest in cavities are almost as unusual as the Umkolwane or Crested Hornbill of South Africa, which prepares its nest in a hollow tree, plasters up the entrance to the cavity, and leaves the female inside to hatch the eggs. The Woodpeckers, the Crested Flycatcher, the Bank Swallow, the Owls, the Nuthatches, and the Bluebird are only a few of the numerous species that choose a natural or artificial cavity for a home. Some of these are adept at nest-building, while others are very poor architects. One of the oddities of this group is the custom of the Crested Flycatcher: it puts into its nest the cast skin of a snake or, if that is lacking, even the bright, shiny skins of onions.

—From *Cavity-Nesting Birds*, by Dr. T. Atchison Frazer.

* * * *

When we say, "A little bird told me," we are talking legend, folklore, and superstition all at once . . . Primitive men regarded birds as supernaturally wise. Even the Bible makes use of this ancient belief, for Elijah says, "A bird of the air shall tell the matter." . .

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Roman augurs practiced legalized ornithomancy. Nine-tenths of this was priestly humbug; the other one-tenth became the basis of the present popular faith in birds' ability to foretell coming weather. A few of the weather prophecies which have come to us from England probably had a grain of truth when connected with native English birds, but they have been erroneously applied to American birds that differ from their European kin.

—From *Birds and Folk-Lore*, by Inez Faith Humphrey.

* * * *

By teaching children to know and love the birds we are unconsciously leading people to protect wild life. The best way to create this love for birds is to take the children into the actual out-of-doors and let them see and hear for themselves, under the inspiration of some lover of wild life. Considering the value of birds economically, we wonder why more people have not honored the birds as have the citizens of Salt Lake City. One of the great monuments of this city was erected to the Franklin Gulls, which destroyed the grasshoppers that were about to bring starvation to the early settlers by their ravages on the grain fields. But even without anything so formal as this monument we can erect other memorials in the form of shrubbery that will attract to our yards and gardens the protectors of our flowers and vegetables. Every house needs its feeding station and its food-bearing shrubs.

—From *Birds as Good Citizens*, by Emilie Yunker

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.