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The Kentucky Warbler

Volume XII.

FALL 1936

No. 3

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

With this issue of the Kentucky Warbler, we end the twelfth volume. Through a series of circumstances over which we had no control, the previous issue was limited to four pages and one issue was omitted. The Kentucky Warbler has been published for over ten years and we are very anxious to have it continue for many more. We are asking your assistance. Pay your dues now for the coming year of 1937; get more members; contribute material to the bulletin; help in an active way.

The Warbler will still be issued quarterly but will not be called the January, April, July and October numbers as heretofore. It will be called after the seasons—Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. Its publication dates will be regular—its pages will be chock full of articles pertinent to the season—we hope it will be considerably enlarged. But we can't do it by ourselves.

This is an announcement and not to be considered as an apology. We do not grieve over the past but we go forward in the future just as we are making the best of the present. Each of you is an editor and publisher of this bulletin. Each of you has a duty to perform. Keep the Secretary-Treasurer busy ringing up new members and keep the Editor of the paper flooded with "Warbler" copy. You can if you will. Let's go.

FALL MEETING

The annual fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was held at Franklin, Ky., on October 17 and 18. On Saturday afternoon all those who had arrived enjoyed a field trip under the leadership of Burt Monroe and Dr. Frazer. A good list of birds was compiled, new members became acquainted with old ones, and a spirit of good fellowship was quickly established.

At 6:30 an informal dinner at the Franklin Hotel, with twenty-six present, marked the first scheduled meeting. A welcome by the president, Mr. Bacon, and a few remarks by Dr. Wilson were followed by interesting experiences of the year in bird study by each member present.

Members then adjourned to the auditorium of the graded school where

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the chief session was held at 8:30 with Mr. Bacon presiding. Mr. Burt Monroe, in "Little Brown Birds and Wild Canaries," spoke of the many species of birds to be observed in Kentucky; Dr. Gordon Wilson, who chose as his subject, "Why Ornithology," gave an interesting history of bird study; Dr. T. Atchison Frazer made a plea for saner conservation measures, mentioning in particular the lack of cooperation between the U. S. Biological Survey and the Public Health Service.

The report of the nominating committee, consisting of Ed Ray, chairman, Col. Lucien Beckner, Dr. L. Y. Lancaster, was given, voted upon, and unanimously accepted. The officers elected were: President, Mr. Brasher C. Bacon; Vice President, Dr. Gordon Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss Evelyn J. Schneider; Editor of the KENTUCKY WARBLER and Curator, Mr. Burt Monroe.

It was decided to accept the invitation of President William J. Hutchins of Berea College to hold the fall meeting at Berea in 1937.

Early on Sunday morning the entire group drove to Red River, twelve miles south of Franklin, just across the Kentucky-Tennessee border, to join the members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society in their annual fall field trip. Guided by the cleverly prepared blue prints distributed the day before by Mr. Gainer, members of the party were able to note points of interest along the way and to find easily the spot chosen as headquarters. After the arrival of the Tennessee members the entire assembly, about ninety-five in number, gathered for general instructions. Five groups, under competent leaders, started out each in a different territory. At one o'clock all parties returned to the delightful lunch prepared by T. O. S. members and their wives. Lunch was followed by several short talks and announcements, the showing of a set of first edition prints of Alexander Wilson's copper plate etchings by Mr. A. C. Webb, and the compilation of the composite list of birds. Those who wished then attended a short service at which Dr. Gordon Wilson taught the lesson. The remainder of the afternoon was spent in visiting the old inn and the cave near by famous in the days of Alexander Wilson.

It was with sincere regret that the Kentucky group found it necessary to depart for home. The privilege of having enjoyed a field day with the Tennessee group, of having met with their gracious welcome and hospitality, of having had the opportunity to observe a large, well-organized group at work, was a source of inspiration and joy. Bidding goodbye to our own members from various parts of the state after two days of delightful association was done regretfully. It is hoped that the fall meetings may grow in attendance in order that increasing numbers of our members may enjoy these pleasant companionships and to renew their inspiration and enthusiasm in bird study.

"BORDERLINES"

By Burt L. Monroe

From the joint meeting of the K. O. S. and the T. O. S. near the border-line between the two states comes the suggestion for this title. These "borderlines" are merely a few frank remarks from Franklin and nearby points along Red River.

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North—East—South—West. Rice of Cynthiana; Olsen of Pippapass; Fleetwood of Paducah; Beckner of Louisville; Lancaster of Bowling Green; Frazer of Marion; Bacon of Madisonville; Gainer of Nashville; Davis of Murfreesboro; Hay of Knoxville; Ray of Louisville. An All-American Football eleven? No, indeed. Just another "githerin" of the "birdologists from these here parts." From all points of the compass they came—the annual fall migration of the two organizations. Was you dere, Charlie?

* * *

Quite a bird list was turned in when the chief compiler, Dr. George Mayfield of Vanderbilt University, called off the list. The catbird, which was reported, was accepted with some hesitation but the "chief" would not "stay put" for Colonel Beckner's Yellow-breasted Chat. Woe is me! You'll have to collect the next one, Colonel.

* * *

Perhaps the greatest tribute that can be paid to an author of a book is being bestowed daily on Roger Tory Peterson, writer and artist of "Field Guide to the Birds." George Foster, one of the keenest young bird students in the entire country, is the person paying the tribute. Have you seen his "Guide?" If not, you have a treat in store. Without being sacrilegious, we can refer to Peterson's book as his "Bible." It is weather-beaten, waterlogged, frayed, stained, swollen, sun-burned and what have you. From carelessness? I should say not. From constant and intelligent use. George knows it frontwards, backwards, upside-down, and inside-out. Ask him anything about it and you'll get the right answer. And that goes for the author also; go ahead, ask him.

* * *

We don't want to say too much about one person but we'll predict that the name of George Foster, of Knoxville, Tenn., will become prominent in the bird annals of the United States. He's got what it takes. Keep going, George, and we'll all help you all we can.

* * *

It was good, indeed, to see Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, of Marion, Ky., at the Fall Meeting. We certainly missed him at Louisville in the Spring but he seems to have thrown off the illness which prevented him from attending the only meeting of the K. O. S. he has missed in many a year. A meeting without him is like a Kentucky Indian battle without Daniel Boone.

* * *

Did you get the creeps when you looked into the cave in back of the historic Check Tavern at Red River where the tavern-keeper was supposed to have thrown the bodies of his murdered victims in the old days long, long ago? We did just a little but we didn't see the bones of the victims. The only bones we saw were in the good-looking smoked hams (not Bacon) which were hanging in the smokehouse nearby.

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Seriously speaking, however, doesn't it add a great zest to this study of birds when you visit such a historic spot as Cheek Tavern, prominent in the life of Alexander Wilson? We added a lot to our knowledge when we visit such places to carry on our work.

* * *

The pictures drawn by Alexander Wilson and exhibited by Mr. A. C. Webb, their owner, were beautiful. It was a real treat, indeed to get to see them and we want to extend our thanks to him for bringing them to the field day trip. And incidently, let us extend our compliments to his daughter on the very excellent free-hand sketch of the bridge where we gathered for the day. She's a genius.

* * *

When the word was given to "go out and get the birds," our own Gordon Wilson emulated that well-known book—in less time than it takes to tell, he was "Gone With The Wind." And does he find the birds? His list usually answers for itself.

* * *

The dinner meeting at the Franklin Hotel on Saturday night was certainly a huge success. That idea, carried out magnificently by President Brasher Bacon, of having each one present tell of his or her bird experiences during the past few months was an innovation which will become a regular part of future programs. It's good stuff.

* * *

Overhead at the luncheon on Sunday: First Birdologist: "See Mrs. Lasky and Mrs. Hobson over there? I'll bet ten thousand dollars to a thin dime and give you the dime back if you lose that they're talking bird-banding." Second B: "I'll say you won't, you big chiseler!"

* * *

That big, fallen tree was certainly an ideal, impromptu cafeteria, wasn't it? However, it might not have been impromptu. It looked a little as if it had a slight touch of Ganier about it. That man certainly thinks of everything.

* * *

Professor George Davis, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., awards the hiking palm to our own Amy Dean. We start out and then there's another case of "Gone With The Wind." And again the cry, "Where's Amy?"

* * *

Brasher C. Bacon, our regular president, is like an old fire-horse. Each year, the pressure of other duties forces him to announce his forthcoming resignation but when the bell clangs at the Fall Meeting, he merely mechanically runs out and gets under the harness. We're always glad because we need him.

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Good secretaries are always the backbone of an organization. The K. O. S. has been blessed with them. To retiring secretary, Mabel Slack, our thanks for the proficient manner in which you handled the affairs of the organization in the past few years; to incoming secretary, Evelyn Schneider, our congratulations on your election. We just know you'll do a good job.

* * *

H. A. Olsen, of Pippapass, Ky., will become an associate editor of the "Warbler," bringing us the first real news we've had from the Eastern Part of the State since our organization. His paper, the "Snowy Egret," published quarterly, is a masterpiece of ingenuity and a veritable goldmine of information and we hope he will lend his services to us in making the "Warbler" just as much of a success as it has been for years.

* * *

A "Warbler" without Gordon Wilson just doesn't seem to be a "Warbler." But he was forced to relinquish it—just for a year—to carry on his many other varied pursuits. We hope he'll contribute to it freely and then take it back next year when we march on Berea.

* * *

First it was "Splashes From Reelfoot;" then it was "Echoes From Mammoth Cave," setting forth the "Crossing of the Green" on the ferry ala George Washington and the huddle around the home of the trapdoor spider, which did not get to press, and now, "Borderlines." Just a little fun; not much scientific value; perhaps mediocre reading; perhaps a bore, but boy, oh boy, what a space filler for an editor without abundant material. It's just up to you to remedy the situation.

* * * * *

BEGINNINGS IN BIRD BANDING

By DOROTHY MADDEN HOBSON

Since February of this year when my banding permits were received, 314 birds, representing 35 species, have been banded with the help of Mrs. Marshall Mellor, Miss Mabel Slack and Burt Monroe of Louisville, and my sister, Miss Martha Jean Madden, of Bloomingdale, Indiana. The number of individuals of each species of birds banded during the year is as follows: Sparrow Hawk, 1; Mourning Dove, 6; Screech Owl, 2; Barred Owl, 1; Flicker, 8; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Crested Flycatcher, 9; Phoebe, 2; Barn Swallow, 9; Blue Jay, 18; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Tufted Titmouse, 7; House Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 2; Mockingbird, 7; Catbird, 12; Brown Thrasher, 28; Robin, 19; Wood Thrush, 1; Bluebird, 1; Starling, 28; Black and White Warbler, 1; Ovenbird, 1; Maryland Yellow-throat, 1; Meadowlark, 1; Red-winged Blackbird, 4; Bronzed Grackle, 48; Cardinal, 24; Vesper Sparrow, 2; Slate-col-

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ored Junco, 1; Chipping Sparrow, 5; Field Sparrow, 2; White-throated Sparrow, 27; Song Sparrow, 1.

Of the above, the following were banded at "Springdale," my home in Indiana, where I spent most of the month of May: Mourning Dove, 4; Screech Owl, 2; Flicker, 8; Crested Flycatcher, 4; Phoebe, 8; Barn Swallow, 9; Blue Jay, 4; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Tufted Titmouse, 2; House Wren, 1; Catbird, 1; Robin, 10; Bluebird, 1; Red-winged Blackbird, 4; Bronzed Grackle, 5; Cardinal, 1; Chipping Sparrow, 3. The remainder were caught in Kentucky.

Perhaps the most interesting bird that was caught at my traps was the Ovenbird banded Oct. 27, a late date for this species in Kentucky. I had first noticed this bird in my yard on Oct. 9 and again a week later on Oct. 16. Since this date it was seen almost daily feeding around the traps until Nov. 7. Perhaps the explanation for the delay in migration was due to the fact that its right eye had been injured and had not yet healed. On Nov. 6, it repeated in the Potter four-cell trap and I noticed that, although the eye was gone, the injury had healed; the next day the bird disappeared. On Nov. 4, when the ground was covered with six inches of snow, it was an unusual sight to see this bird, which resembles a diminutive chicken, walking daintily around in the snow eating the fine grain and bits of suet I kept out for it, when its kind is supposed to be spending the winter in southern Louisiana, Florida and South Carolina, through the Bahamas and West Indies, Central America to Panama and Columbia. One day while telling a neighbor about the Ovenbird, I was amused when her little daughter, Mary Ann, asked, "Mother, what does a **Stovebird** look like?"

The Barred Owl which Burt Monroe brought to me was an interesting bird to band. Incidentally, there were only 6 other birds of this species banded in the United States according to the yearly report of the Biological Survey. After taking some 13 or 14 exposures of him in his natural surroundings, he was released at the spot where he was first found.

One day last May while I was at my home in Indiana, the telephone rang and the excited voice of my little 12-year-old sister, who is an ardent bird student, came over the wire, "Hurry, Dot, as fast as you can, to the north road! there are four little Screech Owls to band." While on the way to visit a neighbor girl she had found them. Stopping only long enough to pick up my banding case and kodak, I drove to the north boundary of our farm. There in a tree being guarded by my sister and her friend were four Screech Owls. I caught the two on the lower branches without difficulty and put them in the car to band later, but when I reached for the remaining two, which apparently were the parent birds, they flew into a hole in a tree a few yards away. An interesting thing to me was the perfect example of dichromatism "the occurrence in a species of two color phases irrespective of age, sex or season." In this case, the pigment in the feathers of both adults was red while that of the

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young was gray. After banding the birds, I took several photographs of them as they, too, posed beautifully and were splendid photographic subjects. Unfortunately, I used that roll of films in doing my first film developing as a part of my course of bird photography at Cornell University last summer. At that time I did not know what damage finger nails can do to films. I do now. The one who was at my side instructing me in the art of development, exclaimed while holding the negatives to the light, "What a shame I didn't caution you about your nails! The photographs, otherwise would have been splendid."

On June 25, Sammy Stein called me to his home to band a young Sparrow Hawk, which he was trying to raise in a canary cage. Later in the day he brought it to me to care for until it could provide for itself. It was given the freedom of the screened-in front porch and proved to be a friendly and amusing pet. Its favorite perch was the electric fan. One evening upon coming onto the porch, I saw, to my horror, the Sparrow Hawk placidly perched on the fan which was not only turned on but was rotating as well. At first, I refused to let her ride on this perilous perch, although she did seem to enjoy either the cool breeze or the ride, or both, but later I let her have her way as she seemed to know what she was doing. She was very fastidious concerning the condition of her beak after eating the insects and bits of ground beef that were fed to her. One evening after eating, she flew onto my husband's head while he was reading, and proceeded to clean her beak on his hair; later he combed out bits of beef. The day before I left for Cornell, I released her in Cherokee Park at a place where the grasshoppers were abundant. I had previously brought live grasshoppers and other insects to her to kill and eat while she was in captivity, so that she would know how to care for herself upon being released.

The only warbler that was banded was the Black and White Warbler, banded by Miss Slack after it had flown into a room at the Atherton High School.

During the nine months of banding, there has been only one recovery reported to me by the Biological Survey. That was a Bronzed Grackle banded May 21, by Mrs. Mellor and captured by Lloyd Filmer, less than a mile from the banding station of Mrs. Mellor.

WANTED—BACK NUMBERS OF THE WARBLER

- Vol. I, 1925—all numbers.
- Vol. III, 1927—No. 2 (Apr.).
- Vol. IV, 1928—Nos. 2, 3, 4 (Apr., July, Oct.).
- Vol. V, 1929—all numbers.
- Vol. VI, 1930—Nos. 1, 2 (Jan., Apr.).
- Vol. IX, 1933—Nos. 1, 3 (Jan., July).
- Vol. X, 1934—Nos. 1, 3 (Jan., July).

Those who have any of these numbers will do a great service by sending them to the secretary. Postage will be refunded, and in case of several issues a substantial price will be paid. Please write the secretary regarding the back issues you may possess.

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FUTURE ARTICLES TO APPEAR IN THE WARBLER

Dr. Gordon Wilson, in a trip this year to the Cliffs in Todd County, Kentucky, reported birds numerous. Dr. Wilson and Dr. Lancaster, both of Bowling Green, Ky., spent their vacation at Long Lake on Lake Michigan. They reported finding seventy-five species, including the Bald Eagle and its nest. A detailed report will appear in the Warbler.

Miss Mabel Slack and Mrs. Dorothy Hobson spent six weeks this summer at Cornell University studying birds under Dr. Arthur A. Allen. We hope to have an article on this work later.

Mr. Floyd S. Carpenter, president of the C. W. Beckham Bird Club of Louisville, and Miss Evelyn Schneider, secretary of the K. O. S., spent a week studying birds at Reelfoot Lake. This trip will be written up by Mr. Carpenter and will appear in the January issue of the Warbler.

Both Miss Schneider and Mr. Carpenter and Miss Amy Dean and Miss Mabel Slack attended the first Tennessee Ornithological Society Camp on Roan Mountain in Eastern Tennessee from June 22-26. Several rare finds were made such as a flock of seven Ravens, Duck Hawk, young Canada Warbler, nests of the Carolina Junco and Veery. We also hope to have a report on this trip.

CHRISTMAS CENSUS FOR 1936

Remember, take the Christmas Census this year and send it to the Editor before January 15, 1937. Follow closely the rules as set forth in Bird Lore magazine and let's see if we can't make this a real one for the state of Kentucky. The Beckham Bird Club of Louisville, a chapter of the K. O. S. is planning an all-day outing for the purpose of taking the Census, with headquarters at the Riviera Clubhouse on the banks of the Ohio River. The usual complete census taken by Gordon Wilson and the Bowling Green crowd is also going to be made. Get your census in early.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April, 1923

President.....Mr. Brasher C. Bacon, Madisonville, Ky.
Vice-President.....Dr. Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green, Ky.
Secretary-Treasurer—Miss Evelyn Schneider, 2207 Alta Ave., Louisville, Ky.

Meets annually in Louisville during the week of the Kentucky Education Association; in the fall at some town or park in the state.

Dues: Active, \$1.00; Group (of ten or more children under sixteen years of age), 25c a person.

Address correspondence about the WARBLER to Burt L. Monroe, 207 No. Birchwood Ave., Louisville, Ky. Send dues to the Secretary-Treasurer.