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Kentucky Warbler

*"To sift the
sparkling from the
dull and the true*

*from the false is
the aim of
every Ornithologist."*

Volume XV

SUMMER, 1939

No. 3

OBSERVATIONS OF WATER BIRDS AT THE FALLS OF THE OHIO

By BURT L. MONROE and ROBERT M. MENGEL

An examination of previous published literature pertaining to the birds of Kentucky discloses a noticeable lack of specimens in the authorization of species attributed to the state. Moreover, the very paucity of the records themselves indicates the lack of knowledge of the birds, particularly aquatic varieties, occurring in Kentucky. Thus a summary of the water and wading birds recorded in recent years in the area about Louisville and adjacent to the famous Falls of the Ohio River should contribute to our ornithological knowledge of this region.

Since the time when Audubon's tales of bird life around the mystic and little-known Falls intrigued bird students by reference to Snowy Owls fishing at the pot-holes in the ice and the nesting of Swallow-tailed Kites and Ospreys, there has been little persistent study in this area. In 1930 the authors began a cursory study of the present-day bird life here, and in the past four years have made an exact study, verifying all records with specimens where possible.

The area included in the work extends along the Ohio River from a point on the western edge of the city of Louisville, in Jefferson County, to a point in Oldham County approximately fourteen miles upstream. This area includes, in order of succession from west to east, the following excellent waterbird territories: Sand Island, with its gravel bars; the "pool" between the old dyke and the Falls; the Falls proper; the harbor at Louisville where the only inland Coast Guard Station is located; Towhead Island with thick masses of Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*); Caperton's Swamp; Six Mile Island with its Black-crowned Night Heron rookery; Goose Island, and finally Twelve Mile Island, surrounded by wide expanses of river, the last perhaps the most attractive place for ducks for many miles upstream or down.

The Falls of the Ohio, where most of the work on the shore-birds was accomplished, is unquestionably one of the most alluring places for migrating water birds in this section of the United States. During the days of Audubon and Wilson, the Falls consisted of a series of cascades creating a natural fall in the river of twenty-six feet to the mile. Many sand and gravel bars protruded below and above the drop but these have been considerably altered by the building of dams and a canal. The first canal, built by a private company in 1830, fifteen years or so after Audubon's work, was the first

alteration to be made in the river's flow. The United States Government gained control of the canal shortly after the year 1842 and since that time has enlarged it three times, the last time in 1921. The first dam, built of timber, was erected in 1879 and was removed in 1912. The first concrete dam was built between the years 1909 and 1911 and was removed in 1928. The present dam, an "L"-shaped obstruction which gives the Falls their present form, was completed and filled with water in October, 1927.

The total length of the present dam is 8626 feet, blocking off the flow of the river for about a quarter of a mile extending from the Indiana shore and holding it to a parallel channel for approximately three-quarters of a mile downstream. This dam controls the stage of the river for the navigation of boats and furnishes power for the hydro-plant at the west end. It has obliterated all of the bars above Louisville. The short arm of the "L" is a fixed concrete wall over which a small amount of water falls, making a channel winding down near the Indiana shore. The long arm consists of a series of steel wickets, which, when lowered or raised by the government tug-boat, control the pool stage of the river. Water splashing over these wickets when they are closed spreads over a large area of pot holes in the rocks and supplies much food for the migrating hordes of shorebirds stopping here on the fall migration flight. Beyond the water-covered area are large expanses of bare rock and sand dunes, providing varied habitat for many species. At the lower end of the dam, a small sand island has formed. There a thick grove of willow trees furnishes roosting places for many herons and flocks of small passerine birds.

Although only distant a few blocks from downtown Louisville, the Falls proper is suggestive of another world. From the top of the dam, one is afforded a double view. Behind are the tall buildings of the city, their shadows falling across the water's edge; before and below spreads a panorama of many acres of low-lying rock, riddled and seamed with sluices, pools and pot holes, glaring brilliantly in the sunlight. One need only descend the fourteen-foot iron ladder of the dam abutment to enter a bird haven of rare possibilities.

The purpose of this article is to present in orderly form what is known of the water birds occurring in this area. This, it is hoped, will provide a sound basis for further investigation. No effort has been made to define the precise status of many species in their appearance here. The very nature of the river renders spring observations in the Falls area generally difficult or impossible. High water conceals the Falls until mid-summer at least, and also provides numerous other suitable places in the region, tending to scatter the transient birds over a much wider terrain. It will be noted accordingly that the greater part of the shorebird observations are made in late summer and early fall.

No attempt has been made to include birds appearing here but recorded by sight alone excepting such birds as the Wood Ibis, White Pelican and Snowy Egret, which can hardly be mistaken by the observing ornithologist, or those birds which have been seen under repeated and extremely favorable circumstances. Species which are difficult to identify under normal conditions and where no specimens were taken have been purposely excluded.

Moreover no effort has been made to include other than water-birds although it would be well to mention briefly a few of the "land birds" which are attracted to this area. Enormous mixed flocks of

swallows and blackbirds course the river and gather at the Falls during late summer and early fall. The Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus*) has been noted riding the ice floes of the river in February and perched in the large sycamores in November and March. One single Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) has appeared each winter since 1934 and forages from its favorite lookout on Goose Island. A lone Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*) was recorded November 6, 1937. Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*) gather in flocks of four or five at a time during April and September, and American Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta rubescens*) feed among the rocks and sand dunes of the Falls in September.

(Continued in Fall Issue of The Warbler)

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**ABSTRACT OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY TOM WALLACE,
EDITOR OF THE LOUISVILLE TIMES, K. O. S.,
SPRING, 1939**

To study birds through books, to poke about field and woodland and along lakes and watercourses, to look at them without bestirring ourselves to protect them from extermination is, it seems to me, somewhat anaemic. We should look to their perpetuation. We should be alive to the fact that they are menaced by the public's apathy, by the fact that they have few friends in legislative bodies.

Plentiful bird life is a symptom, charmingly visible, of nature in balance. We cannot have all of the birds, all of the varieties of birds, we should have unless we protect forests; but we cannot have economic welfare, lastingly, without protecting forests; for without forests to protect streams, to keep springs flowing, as well as to provide material for making almost countless varieties of necessities of our modern life, the land would become barren, would not support for any great length of time, human life.

Ornithologists should be supporters of a whole group of projects which are referred to under the general term "conservation." They should do more than give their approval to state and national forests; to game sanctuaries; to legislation to remove pollution from streams, lakes, estuaries, even the sea, which at many points along our coasts is used for recreation; to creation of state and national parks, which are automatically refuges for every sort of wild life. They should maintain contact with legislatures and insist upon good laws being made and enforced. They should aid in educating various classes which are lamentably ill-informed, although some of them regard themselves as first-class conservationists. One of these classes, fortunately by no means so benighted as it was not long ago, but not so well-informed as, for its own interest, it should be, is made up of sportsmen. Only the most advanced sportsmen know enough about predation to reach intelligent decisions as to what species of birds or animals should be rated harmful and destroyed as vermin. Many sportsmen still imagine, in the profundity of their ignorance, that all hawks and owls are "varmints" of the air and should be destroyed, although informed people have known for generations that this is not true. Many farmers are quite as much in error. Many a farmer will devote valuable time to snooping about with a shotgun trying to kill a bird he calls a chicken hawk, a bird that rarely kills poultry, not because it would not, like you or me, like chicken, but because it was created for and is better fitted for other hunting.

Pennsylvania is the most advanced game and fish restoration state, yet, under a law promoted by its misguided sportsmen, it paid out \$287,000 in bounties for hawks and owls before it learned the folly of that procedure. And before the Pennsylvania bounty law was passed, the Federal Department of Agriculture, and all well-informed students of bird life, knew that it was unwise to inaugurate hawk and owl slaughter to protect game and most unwise from the point of view of agriculture to permit it.

Protection of birds, through legislation, has been the inspiring enterprise of sundry prominent Americans who have realized that missionary work on a large scale is necessary to prevent really disastrous occurrences. Read **ADVENTURES IN BIRD PROTECTION**, by Thomas Gilbert Pearson, president emeritus of the National Association of Audubon Societies, if you would have a picture of what was done, what had to be done, to put an end to a vast trade in plumage of ornamental birds; birds killed by hundreds of thousands, transported by the shipload, to make ornaments for women's hats. But if you would learn about predation, about the mistakes of those who selectively destroy—and I think the National Association of Audubon Societies has made some mistakes along that line in the fairly recent past, although upon the whole its work has been marvelously good—study the books of Dr. Aldo Leopold, of the University of Wisconsin.

In the past fox hunters have striven to prevent reckless destruction of foxes, quail hunters believing that all foxes should die, scientists knowing that foxes destroy species which are more destructive of quail than foxes are. Mistakenly bird protectors have striven to exterminate raccoons, overlooking the fact that for uncounted centuries there were many raccoons, and many birds where raccoons ranged.

In Germany, less than a generation ago, woodpeckers became rare because the thorough German forest planters and timber harvesters kept the forest so pruned of dead wood that the woodpeckers had no place in which to live and produce their young. Finally it became necessary to make artificial woodpecker holes and hang them in the woods, because the woodpecker is a valuable protector of trees against harmful parasites. Yet many ill-informed Americans suppose that because woodpeckers peck on wood, they harm trees. They are one of the many varieties of forest police, varying in size from the Pileated, almost as large as a Crow, to the tiny Downy. Other species of birds are still smaller, creeping about the bark and leaves.

In Germany there are farms devoted to hatching and rearing hawks and owls, to be liberated in behalf of agriculture: birds to police the fields and woodlands against predators which men hardly ever see and do not recognize as destroyers of grass or grain or bird life when they see them.

There are sportsmen, and farmers, who believe crows should be exterminated by every sort of murderous mechanical means, or by poisoning; but scientists, not opposing sensible control measures where crows become destructive, know that these birds do some harm and some good and should not be destroyed utterly. Within a decade I heard a Kentucky game and fish bureau officer recommend killing Kingfishers because they eat fish, a foolish project, of course. In Florida, as Dr. Pearson's book tells you, professional fishermen

clubbed thousands of baby pelicans to death on the nest, believing them destroyers of fish on a large scale, but ornithologists discovered that they live mainly on a species of fish men find inedible. Farmers, in nine cases out of ten, still regard the skunk as a "varmint" that kills fowls. Scientists know that the skunk, although sometimes it kills a young chicken or perhaps steals an egg, is highly useful as a destroyer of grubs that in turn destroy trees; and trees provide, among other things, homes for the birds that you like to study. A den of skunks has lived under my chicken house all winter and is welcome to remain there. I personally feed the chickens when I am at home. I have not yet found any effect of the skunk den except that there are no mice in the laying-mash container. Not many farmers or sportsmen know that a Monkey-faced Owl is worth eight cats as a mouser and kills birds only very rarely.

The Audubon law, protecting non-game birds, including all but two varieties of hawks and all but one variety of owls, is on Kentucky's statute books but is poorly enforced. You should insist that the Game and Fish Department enforce it. Eagles are protected by law and should be protected by the law's enforcement.

Conservation of wild life depends upon education, which is not nearly so widespread as it should be. Help to spread it. Above all things keep an eye on your state's law-makers and law-enforcers: upon the law-makers during sessions of the General Assembly and upon law-enforcers all the time.

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FIELD DAY AT OTTER CREEK

By Beckham Bird Club

On Sunday, May 14, 1939, the Beckham Bird Club, Louisville Chapter of the Kentucky Ornithological Society, held its annual Spring Field Day at the Otter Creek Reservation in Meade County. This area, consisting of 2500 acres, in a rugged, primitive setting, was acquired by the Federal Government for recreational purposes and is being developed by the National Park Service. Camping facilities in a safe, sanitary, and healthful camping atmosphere have been provided, and a portion of the area is devoted to general pick-nicking; all the remainder is being reserved for reforestation and a wild life refuge.

The reservation is in a cavernous neighborhood where there are comparatively few surface streams; drainage is chiefly through sinkholes and caves. Otter Creek, however, deeply entrenched, flows through the area and empties into the Ohio River a little upstream. The high cliffs that border the river afford many picturesque scenes, and a walk along the railroad at the foot of the cliffs is no less interesting. A number of caves, several so large that one can walk upright in them for some distance, with streams emerging from them, afford enjoyable side trips. The upland country contains both bare fields and second-growth timber.

The Club had engaged one of the camping units for Saturday and Sunday, and five enterprising members spent Saturday night there. On Sunday, after the arrival of twenty-two members and friends, three observation parties were formed, each covering a different territory. The groups met at headquarters in the afternoon and reported their results. After eliminating possible duplications, the total list for the day contained 86 species and 624 individuals.

As far as we know, this is the first time that the birds of the area have been systematically recorded. Undoubtedly some areas were overlooked that would have yielded additional species. Notably absent from the list are shore birds and marsh birds. The area has no permanent marshy or swampy land, however, and no lake. Much of the land, too, has only recently been taken out of cultivation, and when some of this acquires a wilderness status, additional species will appear.

We were fortunate in having a perfect day, and every one enjoyed the trip in this new territory. We hope, of course, to check our results at some comparable period in the future. Here is the list of our birds: Green Heron, 1; Turkey Vulture, 5; Black Vulture, 5; Bobwhite, 5; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Killdeer, 1; Mourning Dove, 8; Black-billed Cuckoo, 1; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 4; Whip-poor-will, 3; Nighthawk, 3; Chimney Swift, 36; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 6; Flicker, 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Red-headed Woodpecker, 3; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Kingbird, 4; Crested Flycatcher, 8; Phoebe, 16; Wood Pewee, 10; Acadian Flycatcher, 6; Rough-winged Swallow, 14; Barn Swallow, 3; Purple Martin, 7; Blue Jay, 7; Crow, 19; Carolina Chickadee, 9; Tufted Titmouse, 14; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; House Wren, 1; Bewick's Wren, 3; Carolina Wren, 15; Mockingbird, 2; Catbird, 11; Brown Thrasher, 4; Robin, 8; Wood Thrush, 7; Olive-backed Thrush, 9; Gray-cheeked Thrush, 4; Veery, 1; Bluebird, 3; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 14; Starling, 12; White-eyed Vireo, 17; Yellow-throated Vireo, 4; Red-eyed Vireo, 17; Tennessee Warbler, 1; Yellow Warbler, 6; Magnolia Warbler, 3; Cape May Warbler, 1; Myrtle Warbler, 3; Black-throated Green Warbler, 5; Blackburnian Warbler, 2; Sycamore Warbler, 5; Chestnut-sided Warbler, 3; Bay-breasted Warbler, 1; Blackpoll Warbler, 5; Pine Warbler, 2; Prairie Warbler, 9; Ovenbird, 4; Louisiana Water-thrush, 4; Kentucky Warbler, 5; Maryland Yellowthroat, 10; Yellow-breasted Chat, 20; Wilson's Warbler, 1; Canada Warbler, 1; English Sparrow, 4; Meadowlark, 10; Red-winged Blackbird, 10; Orchard Oriole, 1; Baltimore Oriole, 4; Bronzed Grackle, 8; Cowbird, 10; Scarlet Tanager, 6; Summer Tanager, 10; Cardinal, 21; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 1; Indigo Bunting, 30; Goldfinch, 30; Towhee, 15; Chipping Sparrow, 9; Field Sparrow, 12; Song Sparrow, 4. Total, 86 species, 624 individuals.

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NOTES FROM MARION

I have had some very interesting and unusual experiences in my observations this spring. About the middle of March a strange bird appeared in my garden, and for several mornings I heard him sing; but I could not see him. After several unsuccessful attempts I located him while singing. At once I recognized him as a Wren and knew that he must be the House Wren, as I already knew and have known always the other species.

About March 25 he built a nest in a gourd in my garage, and, not being satisfied with it, tore it up and built another. He seemed to like the second one very well; but he went to work in another place. Before he got very far with this third one, his mate arrived on the scene. She inspected both nests and did not seem to like either. So I put up another gourd in a small evergreen about three feet from the ground. That was on April 1. The next day I went to Bowling Green to join the party at the McElroy Place, and when

I returned Sunday evening, I found this last gourd about full of all sorts of sticks and grasses, with a lining of feathers. The very next day there was an egg in it. Seven eggs were laid, and incubation began. The male seemed to lose his zest for singing after incubation began and would sing only occasionally.

On April 25 another pair of House Wrens came into our garden and proceeded to build in a small wren house which my daughter had moved from place to place hoping it would be occupied. It is rather interesting to have two pairs of these wrens nesting in one garden when they are unusually a species nesting farther north.

Some time ago a pair of Flickers drilled a cavity in a dead poplar in our yard, laid their eggs, and seemed to be perfectly happy until a pair of Starlings decided they wanted a new home. They had a battle royal for several days, and the Starlings seemed to be the winners. They carried out the Flicker's eggs one at a time and dropped them near our fish pool and began to carry nesting material into the cavity. For a few days I thought the war was over. But the Flickers came back with a determination to use their own home, routed the Starlings, threw out their nest, and started housekeeping anew.

This morning, May 21, 1939, a friend of mine brought in a strange bird for me to identify. At a glance I saw it was a Loon. After careful study I found it was the female Red-throated Loon. I cannot account for this bird's being in this territory at this time of year unless it got lost in flight.

—DR. T. ATCHISON FRAZER.

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A NEW RECORD FOR ONE DAY

For many years I have tried to see how many species I could find in a single day in the midst of the spring migration. As long ago as 1923 I hung up a record that had remained unbroken until 1939. That record was 97 species. On April 22 of this year I determined to set a new standard, since the usual hosts of spring migrants were here, and the McElroy Lake was still yielding numerous species. Accompanied by Russell Starr, a fine bird student, I went before daybreak to Professor L. Y. Lancaster's cabin at Sally's Rock, fourteen miles northwest of town. There we struck the horde of warblers and found 70 species of birds before 8:30. Business kept me engaged until 1:30, when we went to the McElroy and Chaney Farms, south of town. There we added 40 species to our list, making a total of 110 for the day, 13 more than my previous best record for one day. This list is issued as a challenge to all of the K. O. S. people. Preserve your best record for one day and send it to me next spring for our Summer, 1940, issue. It ought to be as fascinating to do this as to make a Christmas Census, now such a live part of our K. O. S. Here are my birds: Horned Grebe, 2; Pied-billed Grebe, 25; Great Blue Heron, 1; Green Heron, 6; Black-crowned Night Heron, 4; Mallard, 10; Black Duck, 20; Baldpate, 10; Pintail, 25; Blue-winged Teal, 400; Shoveller, 200; Wood Duck, 4; Ring-necked Duck, 20; Lesser Scaup, 25; Bufflehead, 4; Ruddy Duck, 6; Turkey Vulture; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Bob-white; Coot, 3000; Semipalmated Plover, 2; Killdeer; Wilson's Snipe, 5; Spotted Sandpiper, 2; Greater Yellow-legs, 10; Lesser Yellow-legs, 30; Pectoral Sandpiper, 15; Least Sandpiper, 1; Dove; Chimney Swift; Belted Kingfisher; Flicker; Fileated Woodpecker; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Red-headed Wood-

pecker; Southern Downy Woodpecker; Kingbird; Crested Flycatcher; Phoebe; Prairie Horned Lark; Tree Swallow; Rough-winged Swallow; Barn Swallow; Purple Martin; Blue Jay; Crow; Carolina Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; White-breasted Nuthatch; House Wren; Bewick's Wren; Carolina Wren; Mockingbird; Catbird; Brown Thrasher; Robin; Wood Thrush; Hermit Thrush; Gray-cheeked Thrush; Bluebird; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Golden-crowned Kinglet; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Migrant Shrike; Starling; White-eyed Vireo; Yellow-throated Vireo; Red-eyed Vireo; Black and White Warbler; Prothonotary Warbler; Worm-eating Warbler; Golden-winged Warbler; Tennessee Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Magnolia Warbler; Myrtle Warbler; Black-throated Green Warbler; Sycamore Warbler; Black-poll Warbler; Pine Warbler; Prairie Warbler; Palm Warbler; Yellow Palm Warbler; Louisiana Water-thrush; Maryland Yellow-throat; Wilson's Warbler; Redstart; English Sparrow; Meadowlark; Red-winged Blackbird; Bronzed Grackle; Cowbird; Scarlet Tanager; Summer Tanager; Cardinal; Indigo Bunting; Purple Finch; Goldfinch; Towhee; Savannah Sparrow; Grasshopper Sparrow; Henslow's Sparrow; Bachman's Sparrow; Slate-colored Junco; Chipping Sparrow; Field Sparrow; White-crowned Sparrow; White-throated Sparrow; Swamp Sparrow; Song Sparrow.

—GORDON WILSON.

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OUR FALL MEETING

Our fall meeting this year is to be held at Paducah, at the invitation of Paducah Junior College and several of our members in the city. The exact dates will be announced a little later. As usual, it will be in October, probably about the middle. Plan to be with us and be on the lookout for a postal card announcing the exact time.

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EARLY LIFE OF THE K. O. S.

Since a very large percentage of our membership have come into the K. O. S. within the last five or six years, it seems to the editor that it would be wise to tell again some of the early history of our organization. As early as 1919 some of us widely scattered bird students contemplated a state society, but nothing beyond a friendly exchange of letters resulted. Mr. A. F. Ganier, whom I have so often called our godfather, urged several of us to lay plans for a state group and encouraged us by telling of the beginning of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. During the winter of 1922-23 Dr. L. Otley Pindar, of Versailles, Mr. B. C. Bacon, of Madisonville, and I exchanged numerous letters and planned to meet in Louisville during the week of the K. E. A. to talk over organization plans. At the last minute Mr. Bacon found he could not get away from his work but sent suggestions in the form of a constitution, which I still have in my files. Dr. Pindar and I met in the Seelbach Hotel and worked nearly a whole afternoon on plans. Since our society had three members, we elected ourselves officers: President L. Otley Pindar; Vice-President, B. C. Bacon; Secretary-Treasurer, Gordon Wilson. The local press gave us a good notice, which at once caused several people to affiliate with us, including such stalwarts as Miss Emilie Yunker. As secretary-treasurer, I began writing to all prospective members and was able to find enough interest to schedule a rather full program for the following year, 1924.

The 1924 meeting was held on April 25, in the Leather Room of the Seelbach Hotel. The three officers were re-elected, and the following additions were made: members of the Executive Committee: Professor Frank L. Rainey, Centre College, Danville; Miss Emilie Yunker; Mr. J. B. Cox, Murray State Normal School. Mrs. Merit O'Neal, of Louisville, was chosen historian of the society. At this same meeting the new society was affiliated with the Wilson Ornithological Club, of which I was then the secretary. The society was invited to Bowling Green for a fall meeting. (Later this date was canceled, because the Wilson Ornithological Club was holding its Thanksgiving meeting in Nashville, and our members decided to attend that in as large numbers as possible. That was our first joint meeting with the Tennessee Ornithological Society, too, a type of meeting that we hope will long continue).

Since none of the minutes of our first program meeting were ever printed, as THE KENTUCKY WARBLER did not come into existence until January, 1925, it would be well to recall the speakers and their titles. It is doubtful whether we have had any more delightful or varied program in the whole history of the K. O. S. Mr. Carl D. Herdman, of Bowling Green, discussed "Human Characteristics of Birds, or Birds as I Know Them," an intimate picture of the birds on his five-acre bird sanctuary just outside Bowling Green. Mr. Ben J. Blincoe, of Dayton, Ohio, formerly of Bardstown, spoke on "Birds of Nelson County," a brilliant study that later appeared in AUK. Miss Emilie Yunker gave an account of how the children of Louisville make friends with the birds, particularly in Cherokee Park. Professor L. Y. Lancaster, of Western Teachers College, reported on bird-banding as he and the present editor had begun it in 1924. Mrs. Merit O'Neal, of Louisville, pleaded for a more widespread and effective bird study in the schools. Dr. L. Otley Pindar listed all the articles on Kentucky ornithology that he had been able to accumulate in his lifetime of bird study. (It is a deep regret to the editor that this paper was lost; it would be one of the most valuable things the K. O. S. could have in its archives.) The concluding talk was on methods of keeping records, by Gordon Wilson. Thus began our society, a pretty live infant, it seems to me. From time to time I may tell of other important events in the history of the K. O. S., in order that all of us may know what we are affiliated with and what its previous history has been.

RARE OR HARD-TO-FIND BIRDS ON THE LAST TEN

BOWLING GREEN CENSUSES

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Great Blue Heron						2				
Canada Goose				43			210	18		
Common Mallard					1					2
Wood Duck						2				
Lesser Scaup					1			1		
Sharp-shinned Hawk					1	2				
Red-shouldered Hawk										1
Rough legged Hawk								1		
Killdeer	3		70		7	2				1
Wilson's Snipe		1								
Screech Owl					1				1	
Great Horned Owl					1					
Barred Owl						1		1	1	
Belted Kingfisher					1				1	2
Winter Wren			1	3	3		2	1		6
Hermit Thrush			2	6	1	1		4		2
Pine Warbler	1									
Red-winged Blackbird				1	6				20	12
Cowbird			250			23				
Rusty Blackbird	90	6		6			36			
Bronzed Grackle			13	27	4	7	75		3	5
Savannah Sparrow				1	3			3		10
Fox Sparrow		1				1			6	4
Swamp Sparrow				31	3	5			10	25

This list does not include merely species that are found in small numbers; it deals with species that are difficult to find or that occur in differing numbers when found. The White-breasted Nuthatch, not in this list, is never found in larger numbers than 8, but it appears in nearly every census from 1918 to 1938. Similarly, the Marsh Hawk is normally rare but is found in about its usual numbers year after year. Some of the species in the list need explanation because of their being entirely absent from some lists but regular in others. The swamp birds—Hermit Thrush, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Winter Wren—almost regularly appear when our censuses included the Chaney Swamp, where they are found every winter in fair numbers. The Canada Goose winters here sometimes on the C. A. Smith Ponds, near the city; in other winters it is wholly absent.

This brief little article illustrates how valuable our censuses become year by year. In 1930 we felt our total of 31 species was almost a failure, but included in this census were three of our rarest winter finds: Wilson's Snipe, Rusty Blackbird, and Fox Sparrow. Every year since 1931 we have had two or three parties and have thus covered more representative territory and recorded more of the hard-to-find species. For the suggestion for this little study I am indebted, as so often, to Mr. A. F. Ganier, who might be called the godfather of our K. O. S.

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THE McELROY FARM—SEASON OF 1939

The season of 1939 on the McElroy Farm has been in many ways the most enjoyable of the numerous years that I have studied birds there. Water ran in the ditch practically all winter, but the fields were not covered until early February. My first trip to yield any water birds was made on February 11, when Mallards, Black Ducks, Pintails, Shovellers, and Hooded Mergansers were already there in numbers, although the water was not more than fifty acres in extent. From then on through March and early April the ducks were plentiful. The Pintails and Ring-necks reached their height about March 15, there being about a thousand of each species. The Lesser Scaup and Blue-winged Teal became quite common by April 1. For a single day, April 1, when the bird students were here, there were more than a hundred Red-breasted Mergansers on the lake, but by the next day all had gone but six. In general the total number of ducks has been hardly so high as in 1935 and 1937, but I have recorded 20 species during the season, the best year's record.

Other unusual numbers were the following: Coots, in mid-April, 3000; Pied-billed Grebes, 25 on April 22; Black-crowned Night Herons, 45 on April 2; Semipalmated Plovers, abundant about the middle of May; and Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, quite plentiful on May 20. In many ways the days of the field trip, April 1 and 2, were the best of the entire year, since we saw on those two days 41 species of water birds of the 54 species listed for the whole season, much the best record for the year. Several species were more abundant on these days than at any other time, and several species were recorded only then.

The year has brought some new species to my list for the farm: Cory's Least Bittern, 1, May 27; Gadwall, 1 on April 2 and again on April 7; Greater Scaup, 1 on April 1 and 2; Bonaparte's Gull, 2 recorded by Dr. L. Y. Lancaster and Dr. and Mrs. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., on April 12 while they were taking some moving pictures of the lake and its birds; Least Tern, a mated pair on April 30. The

Holboell's Grebe was recorded three times, last on May 27. I listed the Double-crested Cormorant twice and the Egret once, the latter on the Chaney Lake, a mile away. Two of the small ducks that are exceedingly rare here were observed in small numbers several times at close range: the Ruddy and the Bufflehead. In the field across the road from the house I found 4 Upland Plovers on April 1 and 7 on April 7. The Baird's Sandpiper, recorded only twice before, appeared in as large numbers as 10 on May 17. I also listed 6 Red-backed Sandpipers on May 14, the second record for this species. The Loon, listed in 1937, appears several times on my 1939 records, 4 for March 30, 2 for April 1, and 1 for April 2.

I have been unable to find any nests with eggs or young, though I found eight or ten nests of Coots that had been started and abandoned. Young Black-crowned Night Herons were listed on June 6.

The Chaney Farm, so much like the McElroy Farm in its temporary lake, has been hard of access this year, because the water has been so high. Each of the lakes covered more than 300 acres. I have been to the Chaney Farm several times but usually only supplemented the list already made at the McElroy Farm. The McElroy Lake disappeared on June 10, but the Chaney Lake remained for ten more days.

My long-delayed article on the farm, with a summary of all of my studies, has been accepted for publication by THE WILSON BULLETIN and should appear within the near future.

Here are the water birds listed for the season of 1939: Loon, Holboell's Grebe, Horned Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, Cory's Least Bittern, Canada Goose, Blue Goose, Mallard, Black Duck, Gadwall, Baldpate, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveller, Wood Duck, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, American Golden-eye, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Hooded Merganser, American Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Coot, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Upland Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Western Willet, Greater Yellow-legs, Lesser Yellow-legs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Red-backed Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Tern, and Least Tern.

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WOODCOCK NESTING NEAR GLASGOW

Russell Starr has reported to the editor that he has found a family of young Woodcocks in a swamp near Beaver Creek, two miles southwest of Glasgow.

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HOW FAR SOUTH IN KENTUCKY DOES THE SONG SPARROW NEST?

Does the Song Sparrow nest in your territory? Please report to the editor any summer records of this species. It has been found between Munfordville and Elizabethtown in summer and seems to be a regular summer resident, or all-year resident, north of Elizabethtown.