

Summer 1943

## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 19, no. 3)

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# . . . The . . .

## Kentucky Warbler

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

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

Vol. XIX

SUMMER, 1943

No. 3

### NOTES ON THE WILD TURKEY IN WESTERN KENTUCKY

By GERALD F. BAKER, Refuge Manager, Woodlands

The 50,000 acre Kentucky Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge is located between the Cumberland and the Tennessee Rivers, in Trigg and Lyon Counties. This refuge is stocked with, and is managed for, all native species of wildlife. One of the most interesting and important forms of wildlife on the refuge is the Wild Turkey. This refuge is one of the few remaining areas in the South Central States on which the native wild turkey has been able to survive. In 1939 the turkey population was estimated at 500. Observations in the winter and early spring of 1943 indicate a population of around 1500.

The Eastern Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) is the largest of the wild gallinaceous birds, ranging in weight from fifteen to twenty-five pounds. Typical characteristics, as observed in the Woodlands, are the following: color—bronze; head—naked, of variegated colors; carriage—upright; body—fusiform; rump and tail feathers—with dark brown tips; build—light, with long, slim legs. Domestic turkeys were found by Cortez in Mexico in the sixteenth century, taken to Europe, and introduced into this country by early settlers. The tail feathers of the domestic turkey are tipped with white.

Observations at this refuge indicate that some of the environmental conditions necessary for the wild turkey are as follows: predominant woodland habitat, interspersed with small openings; an open-type forest with a predominance of oaks; isolation; an ample water supply, well distributed over the turkey range; and a natural balance of other forms of wildlife on the range.

Here are some of the natural foods used by wild turkeys:

#### SPRING PERIOD, March 1 to June 1, approximately.

	Scientific Name	Parts Used
Oaks	<i>Quercus</i> spp.	Acorns, leaves, catkins
Black Gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Seeds
Sweet Gum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Seeds
Dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Fruits
Sumacs	<i>Rhus</i> spp.	Seeds
Sedge family	<i>Carex</i> spp.	Seeds, flowers, stems
Native grasses		Seeds, flowers, leaves
Greenbriers	<i>Smilax</i> spp.	Leaves, seeds, stems

Also insects, spiders, crawfish and ticks.

## SUMMER MONTHS, June 1 to October 1.

Approximately six species of		
native lespedeza	Lespedeza spp.	Leaves, flowers, fruits
Croton	Croton monanthogynus	Fruits
Huckleberry or Dry-land		
Blueberry	Vaccinium spp.	Fruits
Flowering Spurge	Euphorbia corollata	Flowers, leaves, fruits
Smartweed	Polygonum spp.	Fruits
Native clovers	Desmodium spp.	Fruits
Insects		

## FALL AND WINTER MONTHS, October 1 to March 1.

Oaks	Quercus spp.	Acorns
(Pin oak, blackjack oak, post oak, cherrybark oak, and other small acorn oaks preferred).		
Wild rose	Rosa sp.	Fruits
Native clovers	Desmodium spp.	Fruits
Native and introduced lespedeza (approximately ten species)		Fruits
Hackberry	Celtis spp.	Fruits
Dogwood	Cornus florida	Fruits
Black Gum	Nyssa spp.	Fruits
Grape (wild)	Vitis spp.	Fruits
Green grasses, various species		Leaves
Insects		

The turkey foods listed are a small percentage of the foods, plants, and trees utilized by turkeys on this area. The wild turkey is adaptive and utilizes substitutes when preferred foods are not available. The above listed foods, with others, are considered necessary for a successful turkey range. It appears evident that, with the exception of the summer months, around fifty per cent of the turkey's food is secured from the oaks. Around sixty-six per cent of the trees on the Kentucky Woodlands are of the sixteen different kinds of oaks found on the area. It is doubtful that the wild turkey can survive without a plentiful supply of acorn-bearing oaks.

The mating season begins in the early part of April. The large winter flocks break up. Local residents believe that each gobbler occupies a certain area, fighting off any gobbler who tries to enter. Soon after daybreak the gobbler's calls are heard. On April 11, 1943, the writer heard fourteen different gobblers calling from a one-half mile radius of one point on the refuge. There are few locations on the refuge where the gobblers cannot be heard during this season. Each gobbler attempts to attract as many females to his territory as possible. Observations this spring indicate an average harem of two or three hens per gobbler. There is some doubt as to the amount of gobbling done by the year-old Toms, or young gobblers. The gobbling continues into the middle of May. While one fertilization is sufficient for a clutch of eggs, mating continues throughout the laying season, usually from April 15 to May 15, approximately.

In the meantime the hen has prepared a nest at some secluded

spot; the edges of fields, a small natural clearing near brush, and usually well concealed. The nest is merely a depression in the forest litter. A hen will lay from four to fifteen eggs. The turkey egg requires twenty-eight days to hatch. At the beginning of incubation, the hen may desert the nest if there is any nearby disturbance.

It is believed that the destruction and desertion of nests is a major limiting factor of turkey population on this refuge. At few other times in the life cycle is the turkey more at the mercy of various predators. Opossums, skunks, crows, and snakes are potential nest robbers. Turkeys are adapted to cope with natural enemies. Man and the domestic predators are possibly responsible for the greater portion of nesting failures. Stray dogs and cattle cause nest destructions. Hogs will destroy nests. If the first nest is a failure before hatching, either through desertion or destruction, the hen may attempt another nest at a different location. Young broods have been observed in July, probably due to second nesting. The earliest young brood observed was May 17, 1942. Rains and heavy showers may cause losses of poults up to two weeks of age.

During the summer months the young poults stay with the hen. Unsuccessful hens may join the flock. In 1942 the average number of young per hen was seven. The gobblers usually band in small groups and are not observed with the hens. In 1941 a turkey hen was observed fighting a hawk in protection of the poults.

In the latter part of October the turkeys consolidate in larger flocks. In 1942 and 1943 the average flock was around 20; the largest flock observed was 110.

Studies on this refuge indicate that the turkey, during the late fall and winter, has an average range of from ten to fifteen miles per day. These birds are very alert, and the adult birds, at this time, are not in serious danger from natural predators.

A flock of turkeys, as observed from blinds on this refuge, does not eat all of the available acorns at any one place before moving on. Flocks may have the same general route each day for weeks and possibly longer.

The foregoing material is presented as a general sketch of wild turkey habits on this refuge. It is my impression that the wild turkeys on the Kentucky Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge and vicinity are the only ones left in Kentucky. Prior to 1925 there had been little detailed study and research regarding the wild turkey. There is yet much to be learned.

The following publications are suggested for more detailed information on the wild turkey: 1. Henry G. Good and Lloyd G. Webb, "Spring and Winter Foods of the Wild Turkey in Alabama," ALABAMA GAME AND FISH NEWS, September, 1940; 2. H. L. Blakey, "The Wild Turkey on the Missouri Ozark Range," WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT LEAFLET BS-77, Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Department of the Interior; 3. THE WILD TURKEY IN VIRGINIA, published by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Acknowledgement is made to these publications for data incorporated in this paper.

## RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

By SUE WYATT SEMPLE, Providence

O brilliant jewel, with whirring wings—  
 Of you I can write a number of things:  
 But first, are you bird or butterfly?  
 You are so tiny! Do tell me why?  
 O little gem, with your long bill thrust  
 Into sweetest depths, as though you must  
 Buzz and examine each blossomed bower—  
 You remain suspended before each flower.

Your nest resembles a little tuft  
 Of mosses which you have slightly roughed  
 Up, interwoven with cobwebs and plant  
 Fibers, and adorned with lichens, I grant  
 Your temper, your angry twitters and squeaks  
 Are amusing—surprising me, who sneaks  
 Too near your moss-covered home on a bough;  
 You dash at me, the intruder—when wow!

Like a bullet, I fear you will pierce my heart!  
 You have frightened me so I think I'll depart.

\* \* \* \* \*

NESTING HAWKS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, AND  
ADJACENT TERRITORY

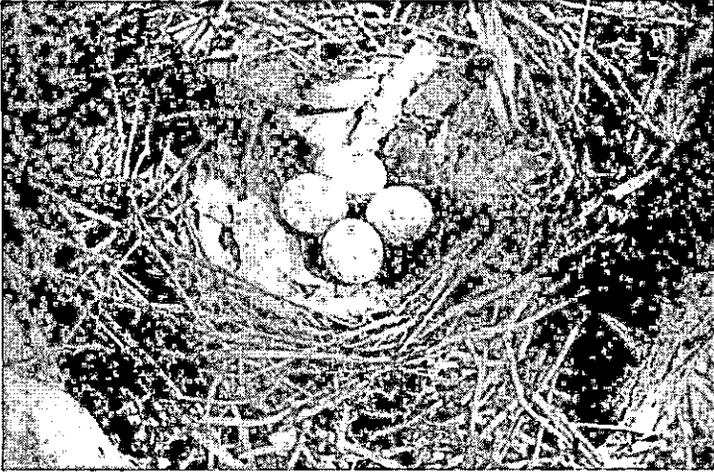
By THOMAS P. SMITH, Anchorage,

During the last three nesting seasons while accompanied at various times by Burt L. Monroe, James B. Young, Robert E. Mengel, Ed Kohlhepp, and Burt Monroe, Jr., I have climbed to the nests of many Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus lineatus*) and several Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperi*). During these times we have banded twelve nestlings of the former and ten of the latter. This record may seem insignificant, but it represents many enjoyable hours in the field which have led us either to disappointment or to happy satisfaction. I have climbed to many nests to find suitable young for banding but instead have found only destruction caused by various "hawk hazards."

Although we have located numerous Sharrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius sparverius*) nests, we have not made any attempts at banding the young. We have collected eggs of the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis borealis*) in Oldham County and of the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platyterus*) in Bullitt County. I feel sure that the Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*) also nests in Bullitt County, partly because that county's rugged forests make up a typical breeding habitat for the energetic little fellow.

Several interesting and odd things have happened to me while in the field. To tell you of one instance, I shall explain how we operate. I usually climb the tree, taking along a ball of heavy cord. When I reach the nest, I drop the cord and hoist up a dilapidated knapsack. Into this go the reluctant nestlings. They are then lowered over the side to Burt for banding and photographing. On one occasion I had just lowered a nestful of half-grown Red-shouldered Hawks and was standing very quietly by the nest and

not more than six inches from it when the old hawk glided in with a mouthful of grasshoppers. She (sex assumed) lit right beside my foot and for a few seconds seemed too startled to move. The only logical explanation for this is that she approached from such an angle that the foliage obscured her view. The above event was very unusual because this *Buteo* has very keen eyes, and when a person is near its nest, it will shy away and not come back as long as the intruder stays.



NEST OF COOPER'S HAWK

In hickory tree, thirty-five feet from ground. Eggs laid on chips of hard outer hickory bark.

In only one case has a Red-shouldered Hawk ever attacked me. The first few times I climbed to a particular nest, the hawk did not attack, but finally I was hit on the top of the head with both talons. From then on I wore a hat and kept my eyes open. I found that a quick movement of the arm would divert the hawk enough to miss me by at least a foot. All of the other species would fly calmly out of sight and wait for me to leave. Frank and John Craighead mention in their book *HAWKS IN THE HAND* that they can account for only one belligerent Red-shouldered Hawk in their entire itinerary. The Cooper's Hawk, which is usually the more aggressive, utters a high-pitched "Ki-Ki-Ki-Ki!" as it attacks in defense of its nest, while the Red-shouldered is silent.

I have observed a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks working on their nest as early as February 15, when the weather was exceptionally warm. This same pair has nested for the past five years in either of two large sycamores, one about a quarter of a mile from the other. They have reconditioned their nest four times with sprigs of hemlock and sticks. The change in the nest is very noticeable from the ground in that it is built about six inches above the old nest, which has been flattened by the young of the previous year. When the nest had been rebuilt for the fourth consecutive year, I climbed up to look for the eggs. The hawk must have remembered

me from the year before, because she immediately began a new nest up the creek and was incubating thirteen days later. I am quite certain this is the same female because she was the previously discussed bird that attacked me, and she continued to do so in defense of her new abode.

Although ten nests in this region have been found in beech trees and two in sycamores, I do not believe this proves that the Red-shouldered Hawk prefers beech trees. The reason for my belief is the fact that these two varieties of trees practically constitute the group of suitable large trees in this vicinity. Bent records in his bulletin LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS OF MEXICO that out of 218 nests he has observed in Massachusetts 50 were in chestnuts, 50 in red oaks, 57 in white pines, 19 in white oaks, 15 in swamp white oaks, 13 in scarlet oaks, 9 in maples, 1 in an ash, and only 4 in beeches. Of the trees in this group the chestnut is totally absent, and the white pine, the oaks, and the ashes are not of sufficient number to provide suitable nesting sites.

The nest is more readily placed in a crotch of the main trunk by both the Cooper's and the Red-shouldered Hawks, but on three occasions I have noted it placed in the fork of a branch and once on a horizontal limb next to the trunk. Three of these exceptions were Red-shouldered Hawks' nests, one of which was fifteen feet from the trunk and situated at a spot where the branch divided into three limbs, each not more than three inches in diameter. On climbing out to the nest, I found my weight made the branch sag about a foot. The nest of the Cooper's Hawk previously mentioned was also about fifteen feet from the trunk but built on a slightly larger branch. This nest and one of the Buteo's precarious structures had each been blown out by the next year.

I have never found green, deciduous leaves in a nest, but this condition has been reported as not uncommon in Michigan. I recorded the contents of one nest, which included mistletoe, dry grass, roots of small weeds, hemlock, dry iris leaves, small twigs, dry leaves, sycamore balls, and many tufts of white down from the breast of the adult. This bird was incubating three eggs. The eggs I have found vary from white heavily blotched with warm sepia to almost immaculate pin-point-size specks of brown clustered around the small and large ends. I have known two different birds to incubate one egg and raise one young bird. Possibly squirrels or crows destroyed the other eggs.

The most dangerous enemies of the Red-shouldered Hawk is the farmer, who is unwilling to learn about his feathered helpers. Another enemy is the Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos brachyrhynchos*), which I have known at one time to break open two eggs of a clutch and leave one unbroken. There is no doubt about this depredation, because I could see the large hole in the top side of the egg and the smaller hole in the bottom made by the tip of the Crow's bill. Still another territorial rival is the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus virginianus*). I located a nest of the previous hawk with one egg on April 17, 1941. I returned to the nest on May 10 to find the nest bare except for rabbit droppings and fur, which I believe is enough evidence to convict a Great Horned Owl of taking over the nest and area. The owl probably chased the hawk from the territory and left the eggs exposed to the crows. A friend who lived nearby told me later that he had heard *Bubo* calling in January, 1941, for the first time in that particular area.

Bent writes that on climbing to a Cooper's Hawk's nest with the nestlings approaching the end of their fifth week, he scared the last remaining hawklet out of the nest in an attempt to photograph it. With similar aims in mind I clambered to within twenty feet of a nest of five when all five simultaneously leaped out, seemingly unafraid, and fluttered clumsily to the lower branches of nearby trees. These birds were twenty-seven days old and about three-fourths grown. They still had down on their heads and bodies and had not yet shed the casing around their primaries and tail feathers.

As a reward for our banding efforts we have been notified concerning the securing of one of our banded Buteos in southern Indiana. Even if we had received no returns, we should certainly have been justified in that we enjoyed unique thrills and learned many interesting facts.

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### BIRDS AT WINTER FEEDING STATIONS

By TODD MILES, Maysville High School

(Prize-winning essay in the Kentucky Ornithological Society's contest open to the Junior Academy of Science)

Last October I constructed a number of feeding stations, ranging in size from feeding tables to simple, one-piece affairs. Being unaware of the feeders and finding adequate natural food elsewhere, the birds came infrequently at first.

Snow on three successive week ends (December 5-6; 12-13; and 19-20) brought heavy patronage from a variety of birds. When the weather was clear, certain birds would visit the feeders with more or less regularity, but with the coming of snow the birds began to appear in considerable numbers, for snow meant that food would be scarce elsewhere.

The Tufted Titmouse, bold always, and pugnacious often, habitually announced himself when he came to the window shelf. The Titmice showed a marked preference for the suet and sunflower seed, though they did eat some corn. Well able to take care of themselves, the Titmice said "Please" to no one and sometimes chased other birds, including a woodpecker, from the feeder. For some reason, the Titmouse lowers his tuft with every bite.

Perhaps the most regular callers were the Chickadees, which usually announced their coming with a characteristic call, very similar to that of their relatives, the Titmice. These birds often chase each other away and have friendly but heated disputes among themselves. However, one of them sitting on the window shelf became quite angry. To show his displeasure, he spread his tail, raised the feathers of his black cap, filled himself with air, and made a sort of hissing sound; the effect was surprisingly impressive for such a small bird. At other times a Chickadee would come to the edge of the shelf to wait his turn; and when the bird at the suet holder had left, he made one hop to the center of the board, where he pecked away vigorously. When he had a large flake of suet, he generally flew away to eat it. The Chickadees also ate some corn.

During the late fall White-throated Sparrows were numerous near my orchard feeders, but with the coming of cold weather many of them left. A few of them, however, stayed on even during the snows and came up to the house, where they ate cracked corn and millet. They have a pretty song but sing only rarely in cold weather.

A pair of Song Sparrows stayed in the barberry bushes behind the house for several weeks in December. The older one became

rather possessive and seemed to regard the two feeding places near the door as their exclusive property. When a bird came to one, the Song Sparrow would make it leave first one and then the other feeder. The Song Sparrow ate cracked corn, sometimes scratching in the grass for food that had fallen there, and defended itself ably in all encounters.

English Sparrows also found their way to my feeders, but, fortunately, they came only when snow was on the ground. Whenever I have seen them in the presence of other birds, they have played the parts of rogues and villains. The English Sparrow is aggressive and drives other birds away with a persistency and cunning I have seen in no other bird. If the occupant of the feeder is large, the English Sparrows come in a few at a time. The bird often makes them leave at first, but they come back in ever-increasing numbers until he is forced to abandon the feeder to the aggressor. Sometimes other birds will eat peaceably with English Sparrows if there are only a few of them and there is plenty of room; nevertheless the reverse has been far more common in my experience. In view of these observations, I felt constrained to destroy as many English Sparrows as possible. Hunted, they became wary and would come to the feeders very rarely when other birds were not there. They seemed to sense that the presence of other birds gave them a measure of protection.

The Juncos, of course, were abundant. They came to all feeders, where they ate millet and cracked corn. Though deprived of one leg through some accident, one of the Juncos that stayed here balanced himself on his one leg and fared very well. Juncos have a rather pretty song, but I heard it only once this winter.

The Cardinals were here in numbers, there often being over a dozen in the vicinity of the house on cold days. Some of these birds, in winter plumage but beautiful still, stay all year and take food we put out, in amounts inversely proportional to natural food available. Like many birds, they frequently and gratefully take what is given them when they must do so, but they generally take to the woods on fair days. The Cardinal's favorite food is corn; and, like the Titmouse, he lowers his crest with every grain he pecks, raising it again when he raises his head.

A pair of Towhees stayed with me rather late this year and frequently ate at the outer feeding stations or scratched in the leaves near by. However, they seemed more shy than in the spring and would not come near the house until the heavy snowfall of December covered available food elsewhere. Then they came up on the porch and ate corn and sometimes monopolized the feeder. Later in the day I also saw a female on the porch.

The Carolina Wrens were common in the vicinity of the feeders and occasionally came to the house to feed. Often in the woods and a few times at the feeder the Wrens have given as cheerful a song as on any spring morning. When approached too closely, this bird simply enters undergrowth, a brush pile, or hedge, where it is safe from most enemies.

One morning a Crow, of all things, alighted on the window feeder and proceeded to enjoy breakfast. Upon being invited to leave, he persisted with temerity and lack of caution unusual in this bird. He finally left, however, and has been the last of his kind to visit us.

Perhaps the most interesting birds to come to the window feeder were the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. Downys had been coming

for over a week when at last a big Hairy Woodpecker alighted on the shelf near a Downy. These two birds, alike in so many ways, presented a marked contrast in size. Except for this characteristic, a Hairy appears to be merely a larger duplicate of his cousin. On coming to the window shelf, both birds hung vertically from the edge to survey the scene before starting to eat. These birds do not stand on their feet when eating from the horizontal shelf but rather rest on their legs—not their feet—and help support themselves with the tail. The birds' mode of life has caused an inability to stand and necessitates this sprawling attitude on flat surfaces. Both birds eat suet exclusively; I have never seen one touch grain. Sometimes a certain Downy gets too much suet on the outside of his bill and comes to the window sill, on which he carefully wipes off the excess suet. The woodpeckers generally announce themselves with a characteristic call.

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### ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWS

Mrs. Charles McBride, who was the secretary of our society from the spring of 1925 to the fall of 1929, died in Louisville on March 16, 1943, at the age of eighty-five. In the early days of the K. O. S. Mrs. McBride took a very active interest in our fall trips and often went with us on our hikes. She had something of the rugged health that characterized the late Miss Emilie Yunker and was noted for her extensive travels in all parts of the world.

Our president, Dr. Lovell, and his family spent their June vacation in the Otter Creek Reservation.

The Beckham Bird Club's new officers are as follows: President, Esther Mason; Vice-President, Leonard Brecher; Secretary-Treasurer, Henrietta Link.

Mabel Slack had charge of the annual Cuckoo Party at Iroquois Lodge on June 2. This event always is a great time for fun for the Beckham Bird Club.

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### MIGRATION WEEK END AT MAMMOTH CAVE

Since we did not have our annual spring meeting of the K. O. S., we decided to visit the Mammoth Cave National Park for a week end at the height of the migration season. In spite of the very late spring, we could not have picked a better time than April 30-May 2, when we camped at Sloan's Crossing, at the Park City side of the park, and at the cave itself. By working every available daylight hour, we recorded 104 species, to set a new record for a week-end trip for Wilson in this area. Within the park itself we found 96 species, another lifetime record for Wilson. Other high points were the finding by Lovell, of three nests of the Cerulean Warbler, the photographing of the beaver pond and house at Sloan's Crossing, and the adding to Lovell's list of the Blue-winged Warbler and the Bachman's Sparrow, both by song and sight. Wilson made one new record for the area, the House Wren, though it had been recorded there by Claude W. Hibbard in 1935.

Here is our list: Green Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Osprey, Sparrow Hawk, Bob-white, Solitary Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Whip-poor-will, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Hummingbird, Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Kingbird,

Crested Flycatcher, Phoebe, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, 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, Olive-backed Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Sycamore Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-poll Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Water-thrush, Kentucky Warbler, Maryland Yellow-throat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Hooded Warbler, Redstart, English Sparrow, Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Summer Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Goldfinch, Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow. Species recorded outside the park itself: Marsh Hawk (a very late record), Killdeer, Hairy Woodpecker, Bobolink (not seen in the park since meadows disappeared), Bronzed Grackle, Dicksissel, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bachman's Sparrow.

—HARVEY LOVELL AND GORDON WILSON.

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#### FIFTH ANNUAL FIELD DAY OF BECKHAM CLUB

By ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville

Cape May Warblers, Black-billed Cuckoos, a Philadelphia Vireo, and a Bachman Sparrow were some of the rarest of the many species of birds sighted by the sixteen members of the Beckham Bird Club, who participated in the fifth annual Spring Field Day on May 16, 1943, at Schwarz Woods.

Because of gas rationing it was decided not to go to the Otter Creek Reservation, as had been the custom during the past few years. Schwarz Woods was chosen because it was not only easily accessible but presented a variety of habitats. This area, consisting of approximately seventy-five acres of woodlands, brush, and open fields, beautified by a winding creek with huge sycamores and willows bordering its banks, is located on the old Brownsboro Road about eight miles from Louisville.

Upon arriving, the party first encountered Rough-winged Swallows flying low over the creek. Field Sparrows and Indigo Buntings announced their presence as they vied with each other for honors. A medley of musical and unmusical notes of the Chat were heard, while Goldfinches made merry in the adjoining treetops. This was just the beginning!

The party divided into two groups, each covering a different territory. One group before entering the woodlands discovered a Nighthawk resting in its usual position on a bough only fifteen feet above. Having worked on the "night shift," it defied the group and would not be moved, slumbering on peacefully.

The wooded area fairly echoed with notes of the Red-eyed Vireo. Now and again a plaintive melody of the Wood Pewee blended perfectly with the woodland surroundings. Warblers were evident

on every side, teasing the observers with their varied songs. Cerulean, Sycamore, and Louisiana Water-thrushes were easily identified, while the rarer Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Canada were more difficult to recognize from song.

A pair of Black-billed Cuckoos delighted the group as they sat silently in full view. On the outskirts of the woods a Bachman Sparrow trilled its song, and many members observed it for the first time.

Food calls of young Red-bellied Woodpeckers attracted attention to a nest in a large beech tree where both parents were feeding young. A female Summer Tanager was seen carrying nesting material to her nest high up in a tree. In the thickets below a Cardinal's nest was found with two eggs, one a Cowbird's. A House Wren called a fence post home, where she protected carefully four tiny eggs. A Mourning Dove was flushed from her nest, while a Hummingbird hovered above a patch of lyre-leafed sage.

All day long from 9:30 to 5:00 the members filed through this area, stopping only long enough to enjoy a picnic lunch.

Here is a compilation of the birds seen in this area: Turkey Vulture, 5; Mourning Dove, 6; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 1; Black-billed Cuckoo, 2; Nighthawk, 4; Chimney Swift, 18; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 6; Belted Kingfisher, 4; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Kingbird, 5; Crested Flycatcher, 8; Phoebe, 3; Acadian Flycatcher, 4; Least Flycatcher, 1; Wood Pewee, 6; Rough-winged Swallow, 3; Blue Jay, 8; Crow, 3; Carolina Chickadee, 5; Tufted Titmouse, 5; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; House Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 5; Mockingbird, 2; Catbird, 6; Brown Thrasher, 5; Robin, 11; Wood Thrush, 3; Hermit Thrush, 1; Olive-backed Thrush, 5; Gray-cheeked Thrush, 1; Bluebird, 1; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 4; Starling, 8; White-eyed Vireo, 2; Yellow-throated Vireo, 2; Red-eyed Vireo, 17; Philadelphia Vireo, 1; Warbling Vireo, 2; Tennessee Warbler, 3 (songs); Yellow Warbler, 3; Magnolia Warbler, 1; Black-throated Green Warbler, 2; Cerulean Warbler, 3; Blackburnian Warbler, 1; Cape May Warbler, 2; Sycamore Warbler, 2; Chestnut-sided Warbler, 1; Bay-breasted Warbler, 2; Black-poll Warbler, 1; Palm Warbler, 1; Louisiana Water-thrush, 3; Kentucky Warbler, 1; Yellow-throat, 4; Yellow-breasted Chat, 8; Canada Warbler, 1; Redstart, 3; English Sparrow, 2; Meadowlark, 12; Cowbird, 9; Scarlet Tanager, 1; Summer Tanager, 4; Cardinal, 9; Indigo Bunting, 19; Goldfinch, 18; Red-eyed Towhee, 3; Grasshopper Sparrow, 1; Bachman's Sparrow, 1; Field Sparrow, 13; Song Sparrow, 2.

Below is a list of additional species seen as we came from the woods and adjacent territory to our respective homes: Green Heron, 1; Migrant Shrike, 6; Barred Owl, 1; Barn Swallow, 3; Orchard Oriole, 1; Red-winged Blackbird, 20; Bob-white, 1; Dicksissel, 2; Bronzed Grackle, 3; Killdeer, 2; Prairie Horned Lark, 7; Chipping Sparrow, 1; Red-headed Woodpecker, 2; Bewick's Wren, 1. Total number of species, 86; individuals, 370. In the afternoon only new species were added in order to avoid duplication. The morning was cloudy, the afternoon sunny; the temperature varied from 72 to 82.

**OBSERVATIONS AT A BIRD-BANDING STATION  
IN LOUISVILLE**

By HARVEY B. AND ETHEL W. LOVELL

**INTRODUCTION**—The banding of birds is not only an interesting study, but it answers quickly and accurately many questions about the lives and habits of birds which would otherwise be largely guess-work. To the question "Do the same birds come back year after year?" only opinions could be advanced except for the rare instance of a bird with some freakish markings. The number of problems to be solved is endless. Do birds migrate along the same routes each year? Do permanent residents winter where they nest? Where do the birds of any area, such as Louisville, spend the winter? How long do birds live? Are there individual differences in behavior within a species?

A recent book by Mrs. Marie A. Commons, *THE LOG OF TANAGER HILL*, describes the activities of a banding station in Minnesota, where over an eight-year period 18,024 individuals of 97 different species were banded. This interesting log is replete with valuable information upon the problems raised above and is highly recommended for the library of the ornithologist.

If a bird is retrapped within three months, such an event is termed a repeat. Repeats occur frequently with many species, birds often getting into the "trap habit;" that is, they prefer the easy food in or near the traps rather than searching for food. A bird which is taken at an interval of more than three months is called a return. Returns are reported on special cards to Washington, D. C., where all the banding data are kept on file under the direction of Frederick C. Lincoln. Birds retaken at the same place are station returns. A foreign return is one which is retaken at a different location and is usually called a recovery. Many of Mrs. Commons's birds were recovered in Texas and other Gulf states. It is important that anyone finding a dead bird with a band should report the fact to the Fish and Wild Life Service, Washington, D. C. (formerly the Biological Survey), with the date and location as well as any other information available. It is not necessary to know the name of the species, as that fact is already on file, but a good ornithologist would naturally include that information as well as the sex and the cause of death, if known.

Our home is on Meade Avenue, in Jefferson County, only half a mile from the city limits of Louisville, but it is contiguous with George Rogers Clark Park, a wild, undeveloped area, and borders on a wooded area along the West Fork of Bear Grass Creek. The following records are based on two years and five months of banding, chiefly in our back yard.

**BANDING RESULTS**—The most frequent visitors to our feeders during the winter of 1942-43 were the Carolina Chickadees. Of the three we had banded the previous winter, one returned and was trapped several times, and it was accompanied by six new ones. Although chickadees struggle fiercely and bite quite sharply while being banded, they do not seem to be frightened by the experience and keep returning to the feeding platforms, lured by the easy food supply. One in particular seemed to take all of his meals there and managed to get trapped four times in one week. The tiny birds fed one at a time, and whenever a second individual flew down to

sample the suet pies, the one there hastily departed. When four or five birds were present, this changing of places occurred so frequently that each bird got only a bite or two at a visit. However, when an additional piece of suet was placed a foot away, two chickadees would feed simultaneously.

Three Tufted Titmice had been constant visitors during the winter of 1941-42. All three got the trap habit so badly that they became almost a nuisance. They carried away so much food that they were evidently storing it somewhere. We carried one two miles away and released it, only to find the persistent bird back in a trap a week later. During the past winter we banded five more titmice, but to our surprise they were much shyer, and only two of them repeated in the traps.

The leading bird of the past winter in number of individuals trapped has been the Cardinal, with 38 new birds. Most of the Cardinals were trapped during snowy weather. On March 5, 1943, snow began to fall in the late afternoon. Within a few minutes the cherry tree by the feeding perch was adorned with a dozen of the beautiful birds. They seemed to realize that lean days were ahead and began stuffing themselves accordingly on sunflower and millet seeds. Although we had already banded 20 Cardinals during the winter, we noted that all this flock was unbanded. This we proved, as we proceeded to trap 14 new Cardinals during the next three days.

During the first two winters of Cardinal banding we did not obtain a single return. This was not due to the birds' being trapshy, since we have had a number of repeats. The data indicate that Cardinals do not remain in the same yard, but rather drift off to new locations. This is further borne out by the fact that most of our repeats were only a few days apart, often during the same snowstorm, and by the fact that we rarely saw a banded Cardinal in the yard. One banded Cardinal, more clever than his fellows, solved the intricacies of the labyrinth trap and would go in at one entrance, eat his fill, and calmly leave by the other.

As spring advanced, the Cardinal population became more fixed, and after March 10 all but two of the Cardinals seen and trapped were already banded. Evidently they had selected their nesting territory and remained true to it. Our first return was obtained on March 30, 1943, when a female banded January 5, 1942, entered a trap. A second return was also a female, banded April 15, 1941, which returned April 18, 1943, and again on May 8 and June 29. As this was the first Cardinal to enter our traps again after a two-year absence, its reappearance was especially interesting. A third return was a beautiful male banded December 9, 1942, which returned May 8 and again May 23, 1943. Another male, banded March 2, 1943, was found dead April 22, 1943.

The European Starling is second in number of individuals banded at our station, a total of 50 having been handled, including two broods of nestlings from our attic. A Starling is difficult to remove from a small trap, for he grasps the wire frame with his toes and hangs on doggedly. After he is in one's hand, he seldom bites or struggles. We have had two returns. An adult banded May 28, 1941, returned December 12, 1941, thus proving that this individual was non-migratory. The second return was one of the nestlings which had been banded on May 10, 1941 (KENTUCKY WARBLER XVIII (1942), 29-34) and was caught by hand in the garage on

December 12, 1942, a year and seven months later, evidence that it also belonged to a non-migratory variety of Starlings as recently described by W. S. Bullough (1942) for the British races of Starlings.

A flock of White-crowned Sparrows winter regularly in our vicinity and have given us the highest percentage of returns of any species. This attractive sparrow nests in the far north, in Canada from the very limit of trees southward into portions of our most northern states. Of the eight sparrows of this species banded during the winters of 1940-41 and 1941-42 we have had six returns as follows:

Number	Date Banded	Date Returned
40-152,803	April 17, 1941	April 2, 1942
40-152,804	April 17, 1941	February 22, 1942
		January 27, 1942
40-152,805	April 17, 1941	February 28, 1942
40-152,810	January 6, 1942	December 21, 1942
40-152,813	March 2, 1942	December 1, 1942

A special study is being made of the winter habits of the White-crowned Sparrow. We are taking weights, measurements, studying plumage changes, etc., the results of which will be embodied in a separate paper two or three years hence.

In spite of its reputation for pugnaciousness we have found the Blue Jay the most docile of birds. It neither struggles nor bites while being handled. Nor have we seen them molest other birds feeding in our yard. When released, one Blue Jay lay perfectly motionless on its back in our hands for two minutes while we photographed it. We have had two significant returns. One banded December 24, 1941, returned May 26, 1942; the other, banded May 26, 1942, was retaken December 9, 1942. These are especially interesting, since they show that at least some of our Blue Jay population spend the winters and summers in the same general area. In other words, they are non-migratory.

A Sparrow Hawk, a new species for our station, was obtained one cold, snowy day in December. An English Sparrow caught in one cell of a two-cell potter trap was our unwitting bait. When discovered, the Sparrow Hawk was struggling fiercely to seize the sparrow. Until we got ready to band him, he "watched us like a hawk," following our every movement with wary, beady eyes. Although he scratched and bit furiously, we banded the beautiful male with the aid of leather gloves. Sparrow Hawks make no attempt to catch sparrows ordinarily and probably do a service by killing injured or sick birds. For example, the killing of a sick bird may prevent the spreading of disease to healthy birds.

Here is the list of birds banded from February 1, 1941, to June 29, 1943; Mrs. Anne Stamm aided in the banding of 68, chiefly House Wrens, Bronzed Grackles, Starlings, Catbirds, and Robins: Cardinal, 54; Starling, 50; House Wren, 26; White-crowned Sparrow, 23; Tufted Titmouse, 19; Slate-colored Junco, 17; Brown Thrasher, 14; Blue Jay, 13; Catbird, 12; Bronzed Grackle, 10; Carolina Chickadee, 9; Phoebe, 9; Mockingbird, 8; Robin, 8; Bluebird, 7; Field Sparrow, 6; Bewick's Wren, 6; Song Sparrow, 5; Towhee, 4; Yellow-throat, 4; Chipping Sparrow, 3; Carolina Wren, 3; Prairie Horned Lark, 3; Prothonotary Warbler, 3; Rough-winged Swallow, 3; Wood Thrush, 2; Black-crowned Night Heron, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Screech Owl, 1; Spar-

row Hawk, 1; Black-throated Green Warbler, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Cowbird, 1. Total, 33 species, 328 individuals. We have had 23 returns, 77 repeats, and one recovery.

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Our secretary-treasurer, Mrs. F. Everett Frei, and her husband are now employed by Republic Aviation and can be reached at 2804 Hillcrest Terrace, Evansville, Indiana.

Todd Miles, of Maysville, was the winner in our annual award to the member of the Junior Academy submitting the best article on bird observation. His essay appears in this issue.

New members are Howard Hardaway, 4625 Southern Parkway, Louisville, and Todd Miles, Maysville.

The Institute of Natural History will hold two meetings at Louisville this summer. A series of nature hikes will be conducted at Cherokee Park on August 1, and on August 8 another series will be held at Iroquois Park. Following the hikes there will be a discussion of the natural features of the areas. The K. O. S. will take part through the Beckham Chapter, of Louisville.

The Beckham Bird Club has voted to spend \$30.00 on a library of Kodachrome slides of birds and birds' nests. Kent Previette, Floyd Carpenter, and Leonard Brecher are in charge of making the set.

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#### SHORT NOTES

Beginning with this issue we are starting a SHORT NOTES department, to which we want everybody to contribute. Please send in any fact that has impressed you as interesting in your observations. If you do not have time to write up the note completely, send the facts anyway; we can do the rest. For a long time we have felt that too few of our members appear in our magazine as authors of articles. This will give a chance to many who would not care to attempt a long article. A fourth of each issue might well be taken up with such contributions.

**PARASITISM OF A LINCOLN'S SPARROW**—On Second Street near Liberty in downtown Louisville I picked up a dead Lincoln's Sparrow on May 13, 1943. As this shy sparrow is rarely seen around Louisville, I gave it to Harvey Lovell to be preserved. He reported that it was a female and that death was probably due directly or indirectly to parasitism by four large nematode worms in the body cavity. The bird was only 5.24 inches long, which is considerably shorter than the average length of 5.75 inches as given in Chapman's HANDBOOK. The buffy band across the breast was well developed, and the bird's plumage in general was in good shape.

—FLOYD CARPENTER, Louisville.

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#### NESTING OF THE CERULEAN WARBLER IN MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Three nests of the Cerulean Warbler were discovered by Gordon Wilson and me on May 1, 1943, in Mammoth Cave National Park. The cool spring had retarded the growth of the leaves, which aided

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# THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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greatly the seeing of the nests well, but apparently the late season had not retarded the activities of the birds.

NEST NO. 1. Within fifty feet of where Echo River emerges from the ground we saw a female Cerulean carry nesting material to a nearly completed nest. It was about thirty feet up in a slender elm and was perched on the center of a limb so slender that the nest projected out beyond the limb on either side. A green leaf still attached to a nearby twig had been woven into the nest. During 40 minutes the female made ten trips for more nesting material.

NEST NO. 2. Where the famous River Styx emerges from a hole in the side of the great limestone cliff which houses Mammoth Cave we saw another Cerulean go to her nest in an elm fifty feet above the river. This nest was on a slender limb where a branch was given off. By climbing up the cliff we were able to look directly across to the nest. This nest was not quite as far advanced as the first, the upper portion being still a mere shell through which light could be seen. The female was observed as she wove materials into the nest. When a Yellow-throated Vireo came too close, the Cerulean drove it out of the elm.

NEST NO. 3. Along Green River we observed the third Cerulean pulling strips of bark from a tree. Her nest was a mere framework through which we could look easily. It was located in a slender maple about thirty feet from the ground and also was placed on a limb where it forked. Later Wilson saw the bird wrapping spider webs around her bill.

DISCUSSION. These nests must have been started about April 26 or 27, which is soon after the average date of arrival for the Cerulean Warbler in Kentucky. That is much earlier than the peak migration of the warblers, which does not occur until about May 10. As Mammoth Cave National Park is about the center of the nesting range of this species, it is here that we might expect to find its typical habitat. Among the points brought out in the above observations are the slender type of tree chosen, the position of the nest on a horizontal branch, and the habitat along a stream. In all three cases nest building was apparently done exclusively by the female, although further observations would be necessary to prove this. The male's only contribution was his persistent song, as he proclaimed his territory and stimulated the nest-building activities of his more industrious mate.

—HARVEY B. LOVELL, Louisville.