

Winter 1945

## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 21, no. 1)

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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."

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Vol. XXI

WINTER, 1945

No. 1

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## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMMATURE BLACK-POLL AND BAY-BREADED WARBLERS

By James B. Young, Louisville

The ease with which some field observers identify Black-poll (*Dendroica striata*) and Bay-breasted (*Dendroica castanea*) Warblers in fall plumage has been a constant source of wonder to me. In this I am not alone. Roberts (1936:237) says that Black-poll young of the year so closely resemble the young of the Bay-breasted Warbler that they cannot be distinguished with certainty in the field. In his KEY TO WARBLERS (1936:676) he attempts to describe the difference and then adds, "Sometimes even these differences fail."

When I started banding in the fall of 1936 and began taking immature Bay-breasted Warblers in my water-drip traps, I realized that I would need something in addition to mere written description if I wished to identify with absolute certainty any bird that I might take. So I purchased, under Federal Permit, a series of fall warbler skins. Included in this group were three immature Bay-breasted and three immature Black-poll skins, all so nearly alike that the only difference I could detect was in the color of the underparts. No buff or brownish stain appeared on the flanks of the three Bay-breasted skins. Instead, the entire underparts, including the tail-coverts, were a buffy color; the underparts of the Black-polls were of a greenish-yellow cast and the under tail-coverts were white. In addition to these skins, I had fortified myself with an article by Burleigh (1934:146) in which he states, ". . . there is a remarkable similarity in the plumage of the two at this time of year (fall), but with good binoculars they can be readily recognized. The average Bay-breasted Warbler then seen reveals its identity by the trace of chestnut on its flanks, and by its buff rather than yellow underparts. The buff under tail-coverts, in contrast to the white of the Black-poll Warbler, likewise aid in separating these two species, but unfortunately there is more or less variation in this respect. The best field mark to bear in mind, however, is without doubt the color of the legs. In the Bay-breasted Warbler they are dark brown, in some cases almost black, while in the Black-poll they are light colored, almost yellowish."

Dr. Alexander Wetmore, in correspondence, had indicated the same general distinction regarding the color of the legs and has added that this characteristic is lost in the drying of skins and that it should be applied only to the living bird.

Thus armed, I felt sure that I could identify any Bay-breasted or Black-poll Warbler that I might catch.

No difficulty was encountered until the fall of 1944, when I took a bird that completely baffled me. I placed the bird in a small gathering cage and took it inside. I brought out my study skins and attempted to identify it. I found no trace of buff on the underparts; the cast was yellowish-green. The under tail-coverts were white, yet two or three small feathers were distinctly yellow. The legs were lead-colored and the soles of the feet were yellow. Thus I had a bird which possessed the identification points of both species, for lead-colored tarsi certainly could not be classed "light-colored, almost yellowish," nor could the under tail-covert with three yellow feathers be called white. In addition to these factors, which seemed to indicate a Bay-breasted Warbler, there was the further fact that the conclusion reached in Burleigh's article (1934:142) was that the Black-poll Warbler, common in northward migration in this area, had a tendency to head for the coast from its breeding grounds in its southward migration and was, therefore, somewhat of a straggler here.

Some time after I released the bird, I re-examined my skins and found, to my amazement, that the white under tail-coverts of one of my Black-poll skins had several small yellow feathers exactly as I had found them on the living specimen.

Fortunately, I was able to take these skins to Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne, at the University of Michigan Museum, for a complete check. In my presence a comparable series of immature birds of each species was taken from the Museum collection, and my skins were then fitted into each group. They were found to be properly identified, and as Dr. Van Tyne worked, I recorded some of his observations. With his permission, I quote them here:

1. The underparts of the Black-poll have a yellowish cast. The underparts of the Bay-breasted are brownish in color.
2. There is a more definite streaking on the breast and flanks of the Black-poll.
3. The under tail-coverts of the Bay-breasted are always buffy rather than white, whereas those of the Black-poll are normally white, but may have a little tipping of the yellow that appears on the belly.
4. In general, there is a rather whitish throat in comparison with the buffy breast of the Bay-breasted. In the Black-poll the throat and breast are usually of the same color.
5. In regard to the back, there is none of the extreme streaking on the back of the Bay-breasted as appears on the back of the Black-poll, although there may be some definite streaking on the back of the Bay-breasted.
6. More work should be done on the color of the legs and feet.

Ridgway says that the two species "may be at once distinguished by the color of the feet, the Black-poll having pale yellowish brown feet and the Bay-breasted feet are dusky." Yet there are two skins in the University of Michigan Museum collection taken by Dr. George M. Sutton which show no such clear-cut distinction. Skin No. 106518 of a Bay-breasted Warbler, taken September 7, 1940, bears the notation "Feet brownish horn color." The Black-poll skin, No. 106570, taken September 5, 1940, says "Tarsus brown, toes yellowish."

To further complicate matters, there is one skin of an adult male

in the Museum collection of a hybrid between the two species, and as Mr. Joseph J. Hickey, who was working in the same room, remarked, "If the birds themselves refuse to recognize the difference, not too much should be expected of the ornithologist."

As can be seen, there is still room for more definite data. Of course, the average specimen represents little difficulty. If the bird is a Bay-breasted, there will be a visible amount of the buff-colored flanks. If a Black-poll, the yellowish color and heavy streaking of the breast, together with the white under tail-coverts, are diagnostic.

It is the border-line cases that cause so much trouble, and banders, in particular, can furnish valuable data on the color of the legs and feet of easily identifiable specimens that will be of great value. At the present time I am not so sure that leg and foot color are valid distinctions, and it has been shown here that the under tail-coverts of the Black-poll may be tipped with yellow. Therefore, in the case of my own banded bird, I am relying on the general cast of the underparts as a determinative factor. In this case it was yellowish-green, and I am reporting the banding of an immature Black-poll, which, so far as I know, is one of the few records for this region in the fall.

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#### WINTER SYMPHONY

What was that aria of soft and jingling

Notes where foxtail grass and noxious weeds

Looked dead and dried, but set my nerves to tingling

With joy, and sent me crashing through the reeds?

Was it a muted symphony I heard?

Could frosted crystals turn to music, tinkling

Like cymbals and harmonies in the third?

What started every blade of grass to twinkling?

On stalks of weeds protruding from the snow

Flocks of Tree Sparrows—who could estimate

Their numbers in the winter afterglow?—

Devoured weed seeds and twittered while they ate:

Dried amaranth turned to a paradise

Of crystal tumblers tinkling with cracked ice!

—SUE WYATT SEMPLE, Providence.



DR. T. ATCHISON FRAZER BECOMES A LIFE MEMBER OF K. O. S.

Our "grand old man," as some of our younger members call him, Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, of Marion, has become one of our first six life members. No more enthusiastic or persistent bird student has ever lived in Kentucky. In a very busy life as a physician he has kept up his ornithological observations throughout the years in a way that would challenge most of the youngsters of our society. He has worked over and over again the fascinating territory in which he has lived for nearly three quarters of a century, Hopkins and Crittenden Counties. From the earliest days of our society he has been one of our most dependable members and has served in nearly every official capacity. He was our president from 1929 to 1933. Few other outdoor people can approach him in his ability to imitate animals and birds. More than his knowledge of the out-of-doors is his feeling for nature, his nature philosophy. His faith in the aims and purposes of the K. O. S. has been shown in a handsome way by his becoming a life member; may all of us be worthy of this faith.

### JUNIOR ACADEMY BIRD COUNTS

Several Junior Academy bird counts came in, but since none of them were taken on a single day, as were the other censuses, they could not be printed in the tabulated lists. They show excellent interest and enthusiasm on the part of the young people who took them. Be sure to take a single day next year and try to find all the birds possible. And also be sure to send in your reports early, by or before January 10.

Frank Quigley, Maysville, found 27 species and 328 individuals on two days of counting. Bill Long, Harrodsburg, found 12 species and 531 individuals, on three days during the holidays. Four members of the Cane Run, Jefferson County, group—Eugene Swope, Monte Briston, Christine Powell, and Donald Spears—identified positively 7 species, partially identified 4 others, and found 565 individuals, using four days for their count. Millie Cornelison and Walter Gibson Norris, from Waco High School, Madison County, on two days positively identified 7 species, partially identified 7 others, and found 269 individuals.

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### ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWS

The final lecture in the Audubon Wildlife Screen Tours was given at Louisville Male High School at 8:00 P. M., February 3, 1945. Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, one of the most active bird students in America, gave many films made in his 20,000-mile journeys over numerous parts of the New World. The January lecturer was Mr.



ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR.

Alexander Sprunt, who discussed "Wonders of the Southern Wilderness." Over six hundred people attended his lecture. His pictures featured the larger birds of the Audubon Sanctuaries in the South.

We now have six Life Members: Mr. Ralph Ellis, Jr., 2420 Ridge Road, Berkeley, California; Dr. Harvey B. Lovell, 3011 Meade Avenue, Louisville; Miss Evelyn J. Schneider, 2207 Alta Avenue, Louisville;

Mrs. S. Charles Thacher, 2918 Brownsboro Road, Louisville; Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, Marion, and Major Victor K. Dodge, 137 Bell Court, West, Lexington. This is the biggest piece of news our society has had to offer for years and years. It is the plan to publish a picture and a sketch of each of these excellent people. *Incidentally, how about adding your name to the list?*

The North Carolina State Museum has recently issued an attractive and valuable booklet called POISONOUS SNAKES OF THE EASTERN UNITED STATES, WITH FIRST AID GUIDE. It is the work of Messrs. Davis and Brimley and is profusely illustrated with pictures in color and in black and white. The chapter on first aid is scientific and thoroughly up-to-date. The bulletin sells for ten cents, the money going to the North Carolina Bird Club. Write North Carolina Bird Club Book Fund, Box 2281, Raleigh, North Carolina.

In the AUK, LXI (1944), 648-650, appeared "Breeding Records of the Prairie Horned Lark in Kentucky," by Dr. Harvey B. Lovell, our retiring president. It describes the nest found and studied by Dr. Lovell on the Seneca Park Golf Links and mentions one found by Burt L. Monroe and another by Tommy Smith, both in Jefferson County. Dr. Lovell is eager to know of other nesting records of the species and suggests that all of us try to find a nest this year in late March or early April. He thinks the nests can be found quite easily, since the birds are so noisy at that time and leave their nests frequently. Who will be the first to accept Dr. Lovell's challenge?

Mr. Howard Rollin, Weldona, Colorado, whose paintings of birds were recently exhibited at Louisville and Nashville, has presented to the K. O. S. a beautiful painting of a pair of Cardinals. This talented young cowboy-painter formerly worked with the late Mr. J. D. Figgins. The painting will be framed and kept at the University of Louisville Library, where is located all the other property of our society's library.

The Beckham Bird Club celebrated its tenth anniversary on January 9, 1945. A series of poems, composed by Esther Mason, were used as clues to personalities in the club. Mrs. S. Charles Thacher won first prize by identifying fourteen out of fifteen. Mr. Thacher won the prize on a bird count of Black and White Warbler and Bluebird cards distributed over the room. The third contest, the identification of 60 colored bird cards, was a tie between Floyd S. Carpenter and Esther Mason, each with a perfect score. A birthday cake and other refreshments completed the very delightful evening.

How well our members read the WARBLER! That is all that saves the editor from great embarrassment after his slip in the item about the mysterious warbler from Glasgow. It was the Orange-crowned, but the item in being copied for the printer was changed, and the very necessary name was left out. Thanks for the many letters and cards that have come, asking what the strange bird was or whether I was running a guessing contest in disguise.

Our current exchanges are as follows: AUDUBON MAGAZINE, National Audubon Society; INDIANA AUDUBON SOCIETY YEARBOOK; JACK PINE WARBLER, Michigan Audubon Society; THE MIGRANT, Tennessee Ornithological Society; WILSON BULLETIN, Wilson Ornithological Club; CANADIAN NATURE; RUFFED GROUSE, Audubon Society of Western

Pennsylvania; PASSENGER PIGEON, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology; NEBRASKA BIRD REVIEW, Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. All these magazines are kept as a part of our K. O. S. Library.

Congratulations to our sister organization, the Tennessee Ornithological Society, many of whose members are also active in the Kentucky Ornithological Society, on being in, the "big news." Man has not bitten dog, but the Chimney Swift has been found in winter! Late last year the Department of State passed on to the Fish and Wildlife Service at Washington the news that the American Embassy at Lima, Peru, had received thirteen bands from Chimney Swifts, killed in December, 1943, on the Yanayaco River. Five of these birds bore bands placed on them by Ben B. Coffey, Jr., of Memphis; two had been banded by John B. Calhoun and one by Mrs. Amelia R. Laskey, both of Nashville. Another bore the band from the station of Raymond J. Fleetwood, of Macon, Georgia, formerly of Paducah, Kentucky, and an officer of the K. O. S. The September, 1944, issue of THE MIGRANT was devoted almost entirely to the great news, with articles reviewing the find and telling of the banding operations of Tennessee banders, as well as many interesting facts about the bird and its habits.

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### DO YOU KNOW ME?

(Several popular radio programs conduct guessing games, supplying certain clues, gradually going from the harder ones to the easier. Some of our members have suggested a similar game for our magazine. Here is the first one to appear, submitted by Mrs. Sue Wyatt Semple, of Providence. Send us some more of these guessing games, all you members of the K. O. S.)

First clue—I don't even claim to be a handsome creature, nor do I pretend to be a great singer. As a fisher-policeman I patrol the lakes and streams. Stupid, people call me a rattle-headed gossip because I chatter to myself up and down my beat. WHO AM I?

Second clue—I was once classed with the cuckoos, but I am no softie. My eyes are sharp, my bill is long, but my tail is short and square, with broken bars of white. My body is chunky, fully a foot long, with blue-gray upper parts; and my wings are strong. WHO AM I?

Third clue—Like an Indian chief's feathered head-dress, my crested top gives me distinction, as does the heavy bluish band across my white breast. My oily plumage is waterproof; I wear a suit of downy underclothing. In mythology I am known as Halcyon and reputedly build my nest on the water at the winter solstice. WHO AM I?

Fourth clue—I dig a long way into the bank of a river and arrange an apartment, perhaps ten or fifteen feet from the main entrance. At the end of the hallway I make a spacious nursery and carpet the floor with fish bones. WHO AM I?

Fifth clue—Since I am known as the lone fisherman, I choose my mate early in the spring. While my "queen" broods, I bring her the best of my catch. Happy the day when I give a rattling call, and my eight hungry youngsters rush forward to the mouth of the tunnel. I warn them to beware of rats, minks, and water snakes. WHO AM I?

ANSWER: The Belted Kingfisher

1945 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	Providence	Marion	Uniontown	Bowling Green	Louisville	Otter Creek	Lexington
1. Double-crested Cormorant.....	..*	1	....	..*	1	....	....
2. Great Blue Heron.....	..*	2	....	..*	1	....	....
3. Canada Goose.....	....	38	....	....	....	....	....
4. Mallard.....	....	4000	8600	214	....	....	....
5. Black Duck.....	....	750	320	* ..*	20	....	....
6. Blue-winged Teal.....	....	....	....	* ..*	....	....	....
7. Canvas-back.....	....	14	....	....	....	....	....
8. Greater Scaup Duck ?.....	....	150	....	....	....	....	....
9. Lesser Scaup Duck.....	....	150	8	....	6	....	....
10. American Golden-eye.....	....	....	7	....	....	....	....
11. Hooded Merganser.....	....	2	....	....	....	....	....
12. Red-breasted Merganser.....	....	....	....	....	....	....	3
13. Turkey Vulture.....	6	....	....	....	....	....	....
14. Black Vulture.....	....	2	....	....	....	....	....
15. Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	....	....	....	* ..*	....	....	....
16. Cooper's Hawk.....	....	1	1	....	* ..*	....	1
17. Red-tailed Hawk.....	1	1	....	....	* ..*	1	2
18. Red-shouldered Hawk.....	2	1	4	1	1	....	....
19. Rough-legged Hawk.....	....	....	3	....	....	....	....
20. Golden Eagle.....	....	....	....	* ..*	....	....	....
21. Bald Eagle.....	....	....	....	....	....	1	....
22. Marsh Hawk.....	....	2	3	* ..*	2	....	....
23. Sparrow Hawk.....	3	15	6	5	6	....	5
24. Bob-white.....	2	12	12	1	10	....	....
25. Killdeer.....	....	2	....	....	2	....	....
26. Wilson's Snipe.....	....	7	....	....	....	....	....
27. Herring Gull.....	....	1000	1	....	53	....	....
28. Ring-billed Gull.....	....	....	....	....	6	....	....
29. Rock Dove.....	6	50	....	10	25	....	....
30. Mourning Dove.....	* ..*	14	5	160	10	....	....
31. Screech Owl.....	....	1	....	....	....	....	....
32. Great Horned Owl.....	....	....	....	....	....	....	1
33. Bared Owl.....	....	1	1	1	1	....	....
34. Belted Kingfisher.....	....	2	1	* ..*	2	....	....
35. Flicker.....	3	33	7	36	3	6	....
36. Pileated Woodpecker.....	....	3	4	11	....	1	....
37. Red-bellied Woodpecker.....	....	12	15	15	3	3	....
38. Red-headed Woodpecker.....	7	2	....	1	1	....	....
39. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	* ..*	....	....	1	....	3	....
40. Hairy Woodpecker.....	2	8	4	9	1	....	....
41. Downy Woodpecker.....	7	75	24	31	16	6	....
42. Phoebe.....	....	....	....	* ..*	....	....	....
43. Horned Lark.....	....	31	211	184	49	....	11
44. Blue Jay.....	25	41	15	48	41	11	2
45. Crow.....	3	500	600	5000	96	60	1000
46. Carolina Chickadee.....	15	260	78	78	7	45	3
47. Tufted Titmouse.....	7	250	10	62	50	40	2

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1945 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	Providence	Marion	Uniontown	Bowling Green	Louisville	Otter Creek	Lexington
48. White-breasted Nuthatch.....	---	---	7	2	2	5	---
49. Brown Creeper.....	---	---	2	4	1	---	---
50. Winter Wren.....	1	---	---	*	---	---	---
51. Bewick's Wren.....	1	1	---	*	---	---	2
52. Carolina Wren.....	3	15	3	36	6	5	---
53. Mockingbird.....	9	15	8	16	18	3	6
54. Robin.....	---	1	---	3	---	2	---
55. Hermit Thrush.....	---	---	---	8	---	---	---
56. Bluebird.....	7	26	15	28	11	25	---
57. Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	---	---	13	5	2	6	---
58. Cedar Waxwing.....	---	---	---	15	---	---	---
59. Migrant Shrike.....	---	2	---	---	1	---	1
60. Starling.....	76	400	105	280	6000	1	35
61. Myrtle Warbler.....	---	---	6	11	---	12	---
62. English Sparrow.....	215	150	66	65	200	5	---
63. Meadowlark.....	12	27	10	13	---	---	23
64. Rusty Blackbird.....	---	---	---	1	---	---	---
65. Bronzed Grackle.....	---	---	---	1	---	---	---
66. Cowbird.....	---	32	---	---	---	---	---
67. Cardinal.....	23	90	80	116	265	71	6
68. Purple Finch.....	---	---	---	1	---	10	---
69. Goldfinch.....	16	18	9	60	10	25	---
70. Towhee.....	3	60	4	43	40	15	---
71. Savannah Sparrow.....	---	---	---	5	---	---	4
72. Vesper Sparrow.....	25	---	---	---	---	---	---
73. Slate-colored Junco.....	150	125	30	190	320	110	14
74. Tree Sparrow.....	55	14	48	7	28	36	---
75. Chipping Sparrow.....	---	---	---	---	3	---	---
76. Field Sparrow.....	10	20	---	35	10	4	---
77. White-crowned Sparrow.....	23	3	26	109	4	---	---
78. White-throated Sparrow.....	3	8	6	89	3	15	---
79. Fox Sparrow.....	---	2	---	*	2	25	---
80. Lincoln Sparrow.....	---	---	---	---	---	---	4
81. Swamp Sparrow.....	---	6	---	4	---	---	---
82. Song Sparrow.....	5	25	20	28	34	8	---

(The asterisk (\*) means that the species was seen within a few days of the count but not on the count itself.)

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PROVIDENCE (one mile west of Providence, one-half mile south, and two miles east). Dec. 24. Six hours in the field on foot. The Vesper Sparrows were feeding on an old gullied hillside with Slate-colored Juncos. Total, 32 species, 726 individuals.

—SUE WYATT SEMPLE.

MARION (from Marion to the Ohio River). Dec. 25. Eight hours in the field. Wind brisk; raining; temp. 40. Most of the list was picked up on the Ohio River by C. F. The large numbers are estimates, but are conservative. Total, 56 species, 8472 individuals.

—DR. T. ATCHISON FRAZER and CHASTAIN FRAZER.

MORGANFIELD (Morganfield to Hardin's Station to Morton's Lake to Uniontown; up the Ohio River on the Kentucky side to Slim's Island, about four miles up the river from Uniontown). Dec. 28; ten hours in the field; ground frozen and covered with a sheet of ice; light north wind; dark overcast most of day; temp. 25-28. Observers together; six miles on foot; thirty-six miles in car. The numbers of the ducks are estimates but were obtained by group counting for several hours. Total, 42 species, 10,398 individuals.

—ROBERT L. WITT, Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee, and BILLY STYLES, Morganfield.

BOWLING GREEN (Chaney, McElroy, Albert Covington Farms; along Gasper and Barren Rivers; wooded stream banks 30%, open woods 30%, pastures and cultivated fields 40%). Dec. 24. Cloudy all day, with light mist until late in afternoon, rain last hour; no wind; ground bare except for a few snowbanks; still places in streams frozen over. Five observers in two parties. Total hours, 17, on foot; total miles, 14. Total, 46 species, 7,043 individuals.

—B. C. COLE, L. Y. LANCASTER, CHARLES L. TAYLOR, J. R. WHITMER, and GORDON WILSON.

LOUISVILLE (same territory as on previous years; deciduous woodland 35%, city parks and residential areas 20%, open farm lands 30%, Ohio River 15%). Dec. 31; dawn to dusk. Dark, misty; continuous rain, visibility often very poor; temp. 36-35; wind 2 to 6 miles per hour; creeks frozen, Ohio River open. Fourteen observers in five parties. Total hours, 29 (23 on foot, 6 in car); total miles, 39 (20 on foot, 19 by car). Total, 46 species, 7,377 individuals. Esther Mason identified the Chipping and the Lincoln Sparrows. She has 7x35mm. glasses.

—LEONARD BRECHER, FLOYD CARPENTER, WARREN DENNIS, MRS. EUGENE DOELCKNER, CALDWELL DUGAN, THELMA GENTRY, HARVEY LOVELL, ESTHER MASON, LOUIS PIEPER, MARIE PIEPER, EVELYN SCHNEIDER, FRED STAMM, ANNE STAMM, S. CHARLES THACHER, MRS. S. CHARLES THACKER (Beckham Chapter, K. O. S.)

OTTER CREEK (from the office across the fields to Tall Trees, down the road to Otter Creek and the Ohio River, and then back up the cliffs to Pioningo Camp). Jan. 21. Misty early and in late afternoon; wind 2 to 6 miles per hour. Five observers mostly together. Total hours, 7, on foot; total miles, 10, on foot. The eagle was an immature Bald and was seen to rise out of some trees and gradually soar higher and higher in circles over our heads. Its tremendously long wings with the prominent primary feathers separating at the end, its dark under side, and slightly lighter head were the main characters. From what I have read since I saw it, I would

say it was a second-year bird, as it was beginning to have some light feathers on its head (H.L.). Total, 30 species, 562 individuals.

—HARVEY LOVELL, FRED STAMM, ANNE STAMM, CALDWELL DUGAN,  
ESTHER MASON.

LEXINGTON (by auto twelve miles to Elkhorn Creek; thickets and cliffs and weed fields, about 1300 acres). Dec. 24. No wind; temp. 38 to 40; ground bare except for remnants of snowdrifts. Total, 18 species, 1,121 individuals.

—CHARLES K. MORREL and VICTOR K. DODGE.

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### A BRIEF GREETING FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Because the Kentucky Education Association meetings have been cancelled for this year, we cannot have our annual spring programs. More than ever we will have to rely on THE KENTUCKY WARBLER as a means of keeping together. By all means let us hold the present membership and even grow during these troubled years. With our membership dues, interest from our small endowment, and sale of back issues we have done rather well financially. For each of you and for the society as a whole I wish a very successful and interesting 1945.

—VICTOR K. DODGE.

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### CENSUSES ELSEWHERE

We are always glad to get censuses taken by our members outside Kentucky. We are printing two studies below to show a near neighbor and one far to the north. Practically every bird on the first list might have been found at some place in Kentucky during Christmas week; those on the second list seem like distant memories to some of us who have studied birds in far-away Northern Michigan.

Nashville, Tenn.—(Overton Hills Forest, Radnor Lake, Glendale, Lealand, Hobbs to Tyne roads, Percy Warner Park, Bellemeade, Hillwood, Bosley Spring, Nine-mile Hill, and Cumberland River bottoms at the tip of Bell's Bend). Open farm lands 28%, town suburbs 5%, wooded pastures 25%, wooded hills 25%, river bank 5%, lake and shore 12% of time consumed. Dec. 24. Visibility poor; foggy in morning, drizzling rain in afternoon; little or no wind; temp. 28-47; ground bare and very wet. Birds fairly active following snow. Thirteen observers in five parties. Total party-hours, 37½, man-hours, 87½. Great Blue Heron, 2; Common Mallard, 45; Black Duck, 15; Gadwall, 5; Ring-necked Duck, 1; Lesser Scaup, 5; Baldpate, 1; Ducks unidentified, 18; Black Vulture, 35; Turkey Vulture, 1; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 14; Bob-white, 27 (at 6 places); Coot, 2; Killdeer, 23; Wilson's Snipe, 1; Mourning Dove, 16; Screech Owl, 2; Great Horned Owl, 2; Barred Owl, 4; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Flicker, 19; Pileated Woodpecker, 10; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 25; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 10; Hairy Woodpecker, 7; Downy Woodpecker, 46; Blue Jay, 22; Horned Lark, 180 (at 7 places); Crow, 53; Carolina Chickadee, 110; Tufted Titmouse, 73; White-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Brown Creeper, 5; Bewick's Wren, 4; Carolina Wren, 49; Mockingbird, 47; Robin, 5; Hermit Thrush, 4; Bluebird, 95; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 10; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1 (Forbes); Cedar Waxwing, 4; Migrant Shrike, 3;

Starling, 1690 (1500 in one flock); Myrtle Warbler, 29; English Sparrow, 130; Meadowlark, 23; Red-winged Blackbird, 1 (Simpson); Rusty Blackbird, 2 (Ganier); Cowbird, 23; Cardinal, 212; Goldfinch, 40; Red-eyed Towhee, 65; Slate-colored Junco, 190; Chipping Sparrow (Hawkins); Field Sparrow, 92; White-crowned Sparrow, 29; White-throated Sparrow, 54; Swamp Sparrow, 6; Song Sparrow, 108. Total, 63 species, approximately 3744 individuals.—(On Dec. 26, gulls came up the river, almost certainly the American Herring Gulls).

—B. H. ABERNATHY, SGT. JOHN B. FORBES, ALBERT F. GANIER (Compiler), ROBERT M. HAWKINS, ROBERT HICKERSON, AMELIA R. LASKEY, G. R. MAYFIELD, DONALD MAYNARD, J. A. ROBINS, WILLIAM SIMPSON, W. R. SPOFFORD, LUTTRELL THOMAS, and H. S. VAUGHN (Nashville Chapter, Tennessee Ornithological Society).

McMillan, Michigan.—Since my father was ill, I did not get to take an actual Christmas Bird Count this year, 1944. The month of December was somewhat stormy, with snow falling on twenty-two days and the others overcast. The temperature ranged from as low as 8 to as high as 38. McCormick Lake has been frozen over since November 25; the ground has been covered with snow since November 29 and averages fourteen inches today, December 27. Had I gone on a trip, I may have found a Ruffed Grouse or so and almost certainly the Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers. I am doubtful whether I would have found the Northern Pileated Woodpecker, as I have not observed it for more than two months. On November 1 I saw an Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, the first one of this species I have seen for over a year. It is doubtful whether it is still around here. Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees are here, as their favorite food is plentiful this year. The White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches are generally fairly common in winters when there is a good supply of beechnuts. For some reason the Red-breasted seems very scarce this winter, though there is a good crop of beechnuts. The Northern Shrike is fairly common. Since December 18 the Starlings have been absent, probably because the weather has been too cold for them. The English Sparrow remains regardless of weather. The fairly good crop of cones on birches and most evergreens attracts this winter as usually the Evening Grosbeak, the Purple Finch, the Red Crossbill, the White-winged Crossbill, the Pine Siskin, the Goldfinch, and the Redpoll. Some of these may not still be around since the severe weather has come on. Some winters I find the Lapland Longspur in my territory. I found one with a flock of Snow Buntings on December 27. Sometimes I find the Snow Bunting by the hundreds. On December 24 I found a flock of at least 400 and on December 25 I found at least 200 in a small patch of weeds about 40 rods east of my banding station.

—OSCAR MCKINLEY BRYENS, McMillan, Michigan.

## SOME SUGGESTIONS ABOUT BIRD SANCTUARIES

By KENTUCKY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Lexington

Open water, preferably a large lake or pond and a spring branch, is a great attraction. Certain seed and fruit trees add much to the availability of the location: mulberry, red choke-cherry, native wild cherry, Washington thorn, Standish honeysuckle, Tartarian honeysuckle, shining sumac, American holly, red cedar, blue juniper, white pine, Scotch pine, chinquapin oak, black haw, pin oak, black walnut, Russian olive, elm, hackberry. In addition to these, poke and elder afford much food for thrushes. Evergreens make good roosting sites. A few acres of old forest trees with dead trunks and dead branches undisturbed are highly desirable. Briar thickets and brush piles also furnish shelter. Osage orange hedges make good nesting sites and shelters. Miscellaneous thickets are needed for "Cities of Refuge." Some open or even plowed land adds much to the sanctuary.

Among the garden fruits which birds like are cherries and strawberries. They are extremely fond of sunflower seed when the stalk is left standing after it matures. They are also fond of hemp and wheat seeds and weed seeds. Probably ragweeds and the common fall aster furnish the best combination cover and feed.

The common red cedar is abundant in many parts of Kentucky, and where it is found, fruiting, there will be Mockingbirds, Bluebirds, Juncos, and other birds akin to these. Cedars make desirable nesting sites for many species.

Among our native forest trees one of the best from the standpoint of the birds is the common hackberry, for the simple reason that it holds its fruit through the entire winter and sustains birds which sometimes come in too early from the South and are caught in a spring blizzard. No tree or shrub equals our native mulberry for attracting birds.

A very large number of species of birds will be attracted to a sanctuary, especially if there is a pond or lake in it. Many of the swimming birds and even more of the waders will seek out the pond or the stream. Bob-whites require dense cover for protection and weed seeds for food. Mourning Doves like orchards and evergreens. Hawks will come to old fields where meadow mice are abundant. Owls must have for habitats old barns and hollow tree trunks. Woodpeckers require old, dead limbs and trees, things that tree surgeons have slighted. Chimney Swifts prefer old chimneys that are not lined with smooth tile. Grackles are easy to satisfy, but prefer large evergreens and good bathing places. The sparrows are attracted by weeds and old sweet clover fields. Purple Martins require boxes on poles set in open places, never close to tall trees. Most of the warblers, numbering some forty species, are migratory and take what they can get in passing. Mockingbirds, Brown Thrashers, and Catbirds like an Osage orange hedge, thorns, and rose bushes. Wrens must have tiny boxes, preferably under a porch roof and in similarly sheltered places. Bluebirds like dead apple trees, decaying fence posts, and decayed tree trunks about the outer edge of thickets. Robins follow mankind and accept what is offered. When men abandon an area, to turn it back to its former wild state, such, for instance as the Mammoth Cave National Park, the Robins and Starlings also abandon it. The reason is obvious: these species feed on the fruits and insects which abound in cultivated areas.

## WARNING

It is lawful to kill game birds in season and the following six species of birds at any time in Kentucky: Crow, English Sparrow, Starling, Great Horned Owl, Cooper's Hawk, and Sharp-shinned Hawk. There is a fine of from \$15.00 to \$100.00 for killing any other birds at any time or for having them in your possession.

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## SHORT NOTES

AN UNUSUAL NESTING SITE.—In a recent issue of the KENTUCKY WARBLER (XX, 20) Dr. Harvey Lovell discussed the breeding of the Mourning Dove in Kentucky and mentioned a nest on the ledge of a rock quarry. The writer found an unusual nest location in 1941 on Pilot Rock. Since I made no notes at the time and have been unable to secure an authoritative statistical description of the place, I have been somewhat hesitant in reporting the nest. Pilot Rock is a sandstone cap on a high hill about twelve miles northeast of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on what is known as the Pilot Rock Road. This rock is estimated to cover one to one and a quarter acres at the base and to have a surface on top of a half to three quarters of an acre. It rises 140 to 160 feet above the ground. Three sides are perpendicular, or nearly so, while there is enough slope to the south to permit an agile person to climb to the top. Access to the top is through three deep crevasses appropriately filled by nature with an accumulation of dirt and leaves. My wife and I were on the top looking for a place to take some pictures of some of the surrounding country. We were near the north edge of the rock when a Mourning Dove, simulating injury, flew from a ledge on our right and fluttered to a group of dwarfed oaks near the center of the area. The bird came from the east wall of the north-south crevasse, which at that point was ten to twelve feet wide and perhaps twenty to twenty-five feet deep. The only possible nesting site was the lichen-covered ledge four or five inches wide and approximately eight feet from the top of the rock. One careful look was all that was necessary to find the single egg partly concealed by the leaves of a small plant, but there were no sticks, leaves, twigs, or other nesting material present. We commented on the possibility of the egg's rolling off the shelf if it were disturbed. The ground, from the Dove's point of view, was only twelve or fifteen feet below, but if the nest had been five feet to the north, the distance would then have been one hundred and fifty feet from the ground, straight down. Distances mentioned in this note are my own estimates from memory of the surroundings and from an examination of the picture of the nest. I hope to revisit the place and make a more detailed study of the location of the nest.

—WILLIAM M. WALKER, JR., Knoxville, Tennessee.

THE SONG OF THE TREE SPARROW.—On my Christmas Bird Count I had many thrills, but the greatest one came while I was watching a flock of Slate-colored Juncos. All of a sudden I heard soft, jingling notes that sounded for the world like a million crystal tumblers tinkling with cracked ice. In my haste to discover the source of the music, I crashed through a dump heap, where it seemed a ton of tin cans had been deposited; I also ran over the carcass of a white chicken; but nothing deterred me. And then I was repaid for my trouble. Fifty-five Tree Sparrows were feeding on the weed seeds

with a huge flock of Juncos and twittering as they ate. Before this I was always happy when I could identify *one* Tree Sparrow at a time, and all of a sudden I got to hear a Tree Sparrow symphony, free! When I came home, I could not eat or sleep until I got it out of my system—another sonnet, of course. Here it is, and I hope that all of our K. O. S. members who have never heard a Tree Sparrow flock in full song may have that very experience this winter. (See, p. 3)

—Sue Wyatt Semple, Providence.

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO EATS YOUNG ROBIN.**—While I was visiting my daughter, Mrs. Carey Summers, in Virginia last summer, we became greatly interested in watching birds from their upstairs apartment. At the kitchen window was a cherry tree, in which we saw a baby bird. We did not know what kind it was until its mother came to feed it. She proved to be a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. One morning we were horrified to see the parent bird take a nude baby Robin from a nest in a near-by apple tree and feed it to her own baby. Many people to whom I have told this story have laughed at me, but I found in *LIFE HISTORIES OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CUCKOOS* (1895) this statement by Major Bendire: "I am aware that this species has been accused of destroying the eggs and even the young of smaller birds."

—Mrs. S. CHARLES THACHER, Louisville.

**RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS STAGE A COMEBACK.**—Bird students in various parts of the country have reported in recent years that the Red-headed Woodpecker is far less numerous than formerly, especially in winter. Since the fall of 1944 I have had many opportunities to observe that the Red-head is decidedly increasing in the area where I hunt or spend my leisure time. Around my cabins, at the mouth of Gasper River, I have found many of these birds in beech woods, even in the midst of the severest winter weather. Also in Metcalfe County, where I have hunted, they are also in numbers quite up to those of twenty-five years ago. In nearly every instance I have found the birds in beech woods.

—L. Y. LANCASTER, Bowling Green.

**HOW TO CATCH A GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET.**—My grand-daughter had an unusual experience with a bird on March 31, 1943. The six-year-old child walked into her home carrying a Golden-crowned Kinglet, which she said she had picked out of a bush. The bird hopped to her shoulder in a possessive manner as if to imply that he had adopted the girl. It was a perfectly marked male and seemed to be in good health and otherwise normal. Later it was placed in a box and brought to Dr. Harvey Lovell. When the box was opened, the beautiful bird flew unconcernedly around the room. It investigated both the furniture and the people present with equal interest. It alighted on our shoulders and walked up and down our arms, entirely without fear. We were able to reach down and pick it up at any time. It then remained contented in our hands until something in the room stimulated its attention. When presented with a pan of water, it flew immediately to the edge of the pan and drank. It then jumped in and took a bath and spent considerable time smoothing its feathers. It also ate some millet seeds. After banding it with No. 42-14,859, we again placed it unprotesting in its box, and I brought it home. The next day it was firmly deposited out of doors in my yard and apparently continued northward on its spring migration.

—Mrs. ALICE MOORE, Louisville.

**SOME 1944 RECORDS**—On the night of May 17, 1944, I heard the Chuck-will's-widow, at Boston, Kentucky, sometimes two at a time. But at no time did I hear the Whip-poor-will. This record of the species beyond Muldraugh's Hill is one of the very few, according to Miss Evelyn Schneider's recent study, "The Summer Range of the Chuck-will's-widow in Kentucky," KENTUCKY WARBLER, XX (1944), 13-19.

While I was spending nine days at Sulphur Well, Metcalfe County, August 19-27, I saw and heard almost every day and several times in a day the Baltimore Oriole. Some of the places where I recorded it were so far apart that there must have been several individuals. Its notes were as rich as they are in early spring. For some strange reason I see fewer and fewer Baltimore Orioles each year in my regular territory.

On July 29, 1944, as I was rowing one of Dr. Lancaster's boats at the Mouth of Gasper River, I flushed two white herons. I pursued them for a mile or more and finally got within a few yards of them, close enough to see their markings, especially their yellow feet. Though I have seen many Snowy Egrets in Florida, these were the first for my regular area of study.

You will recall the interesting articles in the Autumn, 1943, WARBLER by Ranger Binnewies about the nesting of a Prothonotary Warbler on the ferry-boat at Mammoth Cave. Mr. Bennewies told me in the late summer of 1944 that a Prothonotary had nested that season in an old iron pipe on a barge in Green River opposite the Old Ferry.

At the Chaney Marsh on November 12, 1944, I saw several Crows practicing dive-bombing at a Red-tailed Hawk, which sat unperturbed on its perch until I approached quite near. Many times the Crows were a dozen yards from the hawk but pretended that they were attacking him, I suppose.

How late do Mourning Doves nest? Dr. Lovell has asked that question and given several answers from his and others' experiences. On September 18, 1944, I found on the campus at Western three doves so small that two of them could fly only with difficulty, the other being unable to fly at all.

In May, 1944, I added to my list several places in the state where the Song Sparrow was to be found in nesting time. On May 10 it was plentiful at Shepherdsville along Salt River. On the same day and the day before I recorded it several times around Elizabethtown. On May 18 I saw it and heard its song several times at Boston, Nelson County. The next day I went to Campbellsville, where it was common along the little stream that runs through the town. On May 19 and 20 I found it at three places in Cumberland County: Marrowbone, Waterview, and Mud Camp. Mr. W. M. Walker, Jr., reported some years ago finding it at Waterview. On May 26 I found it common singing by the roadsides in Oldham and Carroll counties. I am still living in hopes of finding it near Bowling Green in summer; my nearest record is just north of Munfordville.

Besides finding the House Wren in my regular territory in the 1944 spring migration I also added the following places to my records: Beaver Creek, near Glasgow, April 29; near Salt River at Shepherdsville, May 10; inside the city of Campbellsville, May 19; Warsaw, Gallatin County, May 27.

GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.