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Kentucky Warbler

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



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

Vol. XXII

SPRING 1946

No. 2

A WINTER ROOST

By Harvey B. Lovell and C. M. Kirkpatrick

Several pieces of evidence contributed to our discovery of a large winter bird roost within the Fort Knox Reservation. While taking a Christmas bird count at Otter Creek National Recreational Area on December 30, 1945, the senior author observed in the late afternoon numerous flocks of Robins flying southwestward in the direction of Fort Knox. About the same time the junior author noted a large number of Robins (a thousand or more) flying southwestward over the dormitories at the Fort. Finally Eugene Stuart, secretary of the Louisville Automobile Club, reported to us that he had seen a strange cloud south of the Fort which he had at first thought to be either a storm or a military contrivance but which turned out upon closer inspection to be a vast flock of birds.

With the above information to guide us we (with S. Charles Thacher) decided on January 6, 1946, to search the area for a possible roost. We first drove up and down the main highway from Fort Knox to Elizabethtown from 2 to 3 P. M. without observing any unusual bird movements, and we inquired in vain concerning a bird roost of all the filling station operators along the way. At 3 P. M. we took a much-used tank road within Fort Knox west from the main highway along the upper reaches of Otter Creek. As the sun neared the horizon at 3:45, we were about to return discouraged when we began to notice small flocks of Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) flying eastward. As we hastened to our car, the first flock of Starlings, about 10,000, appeared moving rapidly above the road in front of us. This flock flew to a temporary roost in some tall oaks on a hill top, where it was soon joined by several larger flocks of Starlings, (*Sternus vulgaris*), some of which moved on to another oak grove on the next ridge. Meanwhile Robins continued to arrive in larger and larger numbers, stopping to perch in convenient trees. Then, suddenly, the whole western sky from horizon to horizon was filled with a vast horde of Starlings: the main flock had arrived. Their beating wings sounded like surf upon the shore, but they were otherwise silent in flight. Whether the flock contained 50,000 Starlings or ten times that number we could only surmise. The flock twisted and turned in a coordinated manner, so that whatever maneuver was attempted, the flock remained well bound together. However, the flock sometimes split in two and sometimes seemed to form a funnel-shaped mass re-

sembling a tornado. Many of the birds now left the oaks and entered a grove of low cedars, which proved to be the real site of the roost.

We stationed ourselves along the road (4:30 P. M.) and attempted to count the Robins crossing per second along a stretch of one-quarter mile. During the height of the flight there were from 25 to 50 crossing per second. The Starlings had all moved from the oaks to the cedars by 4:45 P. M., but the Robins continued to arrive in the fading light until 5:05 P. M., by which time it was quite dark. The Robins had been coming in from the north for an hour and twenty minutes. If their average rate was ten per second, that would mean 60,000 arrived from that direction alone.

We then crossed the muddy field and approached the outlying cedars of the roost. Small flocks of Robins flew out of these smaller trees into the larger ones deeper in the grove. The Starlings roosted in the larger trees near the center of the roost. Most of the birds were perched from six to eighteen feet up. They were all quite wary, and as we progressed through the roost, hundreds of birds would flap noisily out of the trees nearest to us.

The area was surveyed in the daytime on January 10th by Kirkpatrick, who also collected samples of material beneath the trees. The roost was located in a grove of red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) on a north slope in a shallow valley through which ran a small stream. The area of the roost was approximately three acres, but the main roost as shown by the accumulation of droppings on the ground covered only about one-tenth of this. Scattered cedars were not used to any great extent, but those growing in clumps and offering more shelter were favored.

Beneath the trees most used, the ground was covered to a depth of one inch or more with manure, fine twigs which had apparently been broken off by the weight of the birds, and cedar scales. Great quantities of hard seeds, which had passed through the digestive tract of the birds, were present, which had been washed clean by the rains. Easily identified were large numbers of seeds (or stones) of the flowering: dogwood (*Cornus florida*), hackberry (*Celtis*), sumac (*Rhus spp.*), and several other kinds not readily identified.

Evidence of mortality to the birds in the roost was rare, even though the area was thoroughly searched. Three piles of old, wet feathers on the ground indicated only that a death had taken place, with no further deductions possible. Scavengers may consume carcasses of birds which fall at night, if any do so. Two cases of predation on Starlings were found, which were not more than twenty-four hours old. Beak marks on the plucked feather shafts indicated the work of either an owl or a hawk. Two Cooper's Hawks were noted in the vicinity, but were not observed to attack the returning birds.

In a few places some small mammal had collected considerable piles of the dogwood pits, perhaps a pint in each case, and had gnawed a neat hole in one end to get at the kernel. Thus the fleshy parts of the fruits of *Cornus* supply first food for birds and later the seeds supply food for rodents, an interesting example of the inter-relationship of all forms of wild life.

The return of the birds to the roost was again observed. The first Starling flock was recorded from the west at 3:30 P. M. Grackles and Cowbirds were also noted among the birds. At 4:25 only a sprinkling of birds had entered the main roost, although as many as 100,000

had arrived in the vicinity. The sun was shining low in the west, and a number of Robins were singing. Cowbirds arrived in loose flocks with none of the flock unity in maneuvering displayed by the Starlings. The Robins were even less integrated, flying in flocks of from ten to one hundred and single birds having a tendency to stop on trees along the route. Grackles came in loose flocks or even individually.

The senior author visited the roost again on February 23 in company with Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Thacher, Evelyn Schneider, and Esther Mason. We arrived at 5:00 P. M. and at first saw almost no birds. Then a few scattered flocks drifted by. Nearly all the Robins had left, but the number of Starlings seemed about the same as before. Redwings were added to the list resorting to the roost. It had been a warm day, and most of the birds did not arrive until it was so dark that specific identification was very difficult. At 6:00 P. M. it had become nearly dark as we entered the edge of the grove. Several large flocks (unidentified) flew in from lower down in the valley with a peculiar whistling sound to their wings. The lower branches of the cedars were badly denuded, and the birds were perching higher than on our former visit.

A final visit was made on the afternoon of March 24th by both of us. The roost was deserted and had apparently been so at least since before the last rains. The cedars were denuded of green scales to heights of ten or fifteen feet and in some cases were almost entirely bare. Many assorted seeds were conspicuous on the ground, as were the abdomens of some hard bodied beetles and the shells of some snails both of which appeared to have been included in the diets of the inhabitants of the roost.

Winter roosts in northern Kentucky do not appear to be common. Beckham (1885) described a great roost in Fredericksburg, nine miles from Bardstown, where as many as 8000 Robins were killed in a single night and sold for food at ten cents per dozen. John B. Loefer and John A. Patten (1941) have described a blackbird roost containing a preponderance of Starlings along the Kentucky river, fifteen miles southeast of Lexington. In March, 1941, the roost contained Grackles and Cowbirds in addition to Starlings.

McAtee (1926) has published a map showing the distribution of blackbird roosts in eastern United States which shows two roosts in Central Kentucky, eight in Ohio, eight in Indiana, seven in Illinois, and only one in Tennessee.

Most Kentuckians are familiar with the winter Starling roost in the business section along Fourth Street in Louisville (Lovell, 1941). Only Starlings roost in the city (along with a few English Sparrows and pigeons), but temporary roosts including blackbirds occur in oaks along Eastern Parkway near Preston Street every fall.

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- Lovell, Harvey B. 1941. A Successful Method of Preventing Starling Roosts. *Wilson Bul.*, Vol. 55, pp 237-238.
- McAtee, W. L. 1926. Blackbird Roosts. *Auk*, Vol. 43, pp 373-4.

SOCIABLE RUFFED GROUSE EATS BANEERRY FRUITS

By O. A. Stevens, North Dakota Agricultural College

During the summer of 1943 Professor A. E. Minard, Dean of the School of Applied Arts and Sciences, North Dakota Agricultural College, began telling me of the unusual habits of a Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) at his cottage on Big Pine Lake, near Perham, Minnesota. The bird, he said, seemed to desire human company, was repeatedly about his cottage, and often would peck at a person's heels, fly upon his shoulders, on a table or other object near by.

The matter was new to me, but on looking up literature I found the account of Mr. C. D. Howe (1904) of similar behavior of a grouse. This interested Professor Minard very much because of the similarity of the two instances. The bird continued under observation during the summer. A grouse, presumably the same bird, had been noted at two neighboring places, during the three previous years. It was not fed or otherwise encouraged, for it was somewhat of a nuisance through its persistence.

In late June, 1944, the bird was again about the place. In early July it was at the master's elbow while he was cutting some grass and weeds around the cottage. Hearing a fluttering behind him, he looked around and saw the bird dead. It showed no signs of material injury and was brought in for examination at the Department of Veterinary Science. It was a male bird in good flesh. The intestines showed distinct inflammation; otherwise no abnormality was observed. The crop contained 43 fruits of red baneberry (*Actaea rubra*), mostly matured, and the gizzard a number of seeds of the same plant. Since these have been reported poisonous, it was thought that they might have been the cause of the death of the grouse. About 100 fruits were secured and fed to a three-months-old chicken without effect. The plant is not among those quoted by Bent (p. 152, 1932) in food eaten by the grouse. Mr. A. C. Martin of the Fish and Wild Life Service wrote (letter dated August 15, 1944) that their files contained only one record of baneberry fruits eaten by Ruffed Grouse, in which case 86 fruits identified as *Actaea alba* were found in a bird shot in Ontario.

The incident was somewhat disturbing to me because I had been growing the plant for years as an ornamental. The foliage and bright red berries are attractive. The fruits are occasionally pulled off by children, but it seemed unlikely that they would be eaten, yet cases of poisoning of children by them have been reported.

LITERATURE CITED.

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 Howe, C. D. 1904. *Bird-Lore*, 6: 81-85.

SOME EPISODES IN THE LIVES OF ROBINS

By J. W. Clotfelter, Paris

Robins are certainly one of the most common of our native birds of town and farm. They have prospered in close proximity to man under conditions which have frightened away less hardy and adaptable species, and rare is the yard which does not have at least one

nesting pair. A Robin can raise its young often in extremely open situations in the face of the depredations of hordes of house cats. It feeds on the lawn and in the garden, trustingly following the mower or the plow. During the last few years I have had an opportunity to witness several episodes in the lives of Robins which have given me a little insight into the ways of these birds.

Episode 1. In the very early season of 1941, a pair of Robins nested in a tree in my back yard at Paris, Kentucky, the nest being about twenty-two feet from the ground. Incubation having been successful, they set about feeding the young. Several days later I found the female dead at the bird bath. I naturally wondered whether the male would be able to raise the two nestlings. Not the least disturbed, he took over the double duty all by himself. On Sunday morning, a few days later, that Robin had his offspring out in the shrubbery, and I was almost late getting into church, watching his solicitude for their welfare. Here, then, is one brood successfully reared under difficulties.

Episode 2. I spent two weeks at Berea, Kentucky, in August, 1942. A pair of Robins were nesting in a small tree at the edge of the pavement in front of Boone Tavern. One afternoon a very threatening storm cloud arose. Heavy gusts of wind and sheets of rain caused the top of the small tree to twist in every direction. It did not seem possible that the nest could have survived, and I felt sure that I should find young Robins scattered all over the pavement. But, in a lull, I discovered that the nest was still there in the fork of that tree, about sixteen feet above the pavement. From a vacant room on the second floor of the tavern, I was able to look down on the nest, and the brooding Robin. The wild swaying of the branches turned the nest with its living cargo in every conceivable position; and at times it seemed that both the bird and the contents would be hurled to their destruction. But not so; she rode out the entire period of the storm, about an hour and a half and held the nestlings warm and dry. Equally important, she kept the inside of the nest dry and prevented the mud from dissolving. When calm was restored, the male appeared for his turn at brooding. The female climbed out, gave herself a good shake, and flew away, as he took over. Another brood survived a dangerous ordeal.

Episode 3. In the spring of 1944, I hung a wren house on the front corner of my garage, up near the eaves. Soon thereafter, I noticed a pile of grass and miscellaneous materials on top of it. This seemed a strange way for a wren to behave, but it was not until a couple of days later that I discovered a Robin was very busy in that bunch of grass, fashioning a nest. The Robins raised two broods during that season on top of my wren box. They returned in 1945 and repeated the performance by again turning out two more sets of youngsters. In an endeavor to salvage the wren house for wrens, I moved it over to the upper side of the other corner. In its place, I put a Robin shelf and set the old Robin nest on the shelf. I went up to my home about an hour ago (March 27), and there were the Robins repairing that old nest on the new shelf. A Robin can always find a nesting site.

Episode 4. While our furnace at the Presbyterian Church at Paris is operating all the time in bad weather, we have a gas grate in the office to serve in better weather. Yesterday (March 26) I heard a bird fluttering behind the grate. Since the fire had been on

for a long while and since the fluttering ceased almost immediately, I felt sure that the bird (which I assumed was a Chimney Swift) was dead.

I lighted my grate early this morning. Very soon thereafter, the fluttering behind the grate began. I at once turned off the gas, got some tools, and took the grate apart. Out came a female Robin. She had been subjected to a great deal of heat, and her breast was badly scorched. I let her fly about the office until I was sure that her tail and wing feathers were in shape; then I threw open the window. When she discovered the open window, she hopped to the sill and sat there a moment. Then uttering one beautiful call from her parched throat, she flew back to her natural abode.

And so I come to the end of my episodes with Robins, every one a success story. And I no longer marvel that a species so faithful, so brave, so intelligent, and so hardy should continue to thrive and prosper in spite of the changes wrought by civilization.

FIELD NOTES

THE GREAT BLUE HERON IN WINTER

While walking near Otter Creek in the Fort Knox Reservation in Hardin County on January 6, 1946, with Harvey Lovell and S. Charles Thacher, we saw a large bird flying over. Its long neck and long legs were clearly seen as it flew rather close above our heads, indicating that it was a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). It had evidently been feeding in or near the creek. Monroe and Mengel state that this bird has been recorded in the Louisville area in every month except December, January, and February (Ky. Warbler, 15, 1939). However, an examination of the Christmas Census records for Kentucky during the last ten years reveals 11 occurrences in late December as follows: Paducah, 1936; Anchorage, 1939, 1940; Bowling Green, 1941, 1942, 1943; Marion, 1942, 1944, 1945; and, Louisville, 1944. The present record appears to be the first one for January in northern Kentucky.—C. M. KIRKPATRICK, Fort Knox.

WOOD THRUSH PARASITIZED BY COWBIRD

On May 26, 1945, on a field trip with the Beckham Bird Club near Caperton's Swamp in Indian Hills, east of Louisville, we discovered a Wood Thrush (*Hylotichia mustelina*) on a nest in a high bush near the abandoned car tracks. Upon examining the nest we saw that it contained only one blue egg of her own and four white spotted eggs of the Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). Believing this to be too much of a burden for the thrush, we removed the Cowbird's eggs. We regret that we did not have an opportunity to return later to find out whether the Wood Thrush deserted her nest. We have been unable to find anyone who has ever seen as many as four Cowbird's eggs in a Wood Thrush's nest before.

MRS. S. CHARLES THACHER, Louisville.

WINTER NOTES FROM BERNHEIM RESERVATION

On February 26 I spent from 9:30 A. M. to 2:00 P. M. in the Bernheim Reservation in Bullitt County. As usual the area around

the three artificial lakes prove to be a favorite wintering ground for birds. The large number of red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) aids in attracting birds. A large flock of over a hundred Cedar Waxwings were feeding on the berries of the red cedar, as were numerous Myrtle Warblers. A flock of fifteen to twenty Purple Finches, many of them males in full plumage, were feeding on the buds of several trees. A familiar song was identified as that of the Bewick's Wren, and a pair were discovered near the barn. This is a very early date for Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) in this vicinity, although it winters regularly in the southern part of Kentucky (Lovell and Clay, *Kentucky Warbler*, Vol. 18, 1942). A single female Golden-eye was the only water bird on the lakes.

On the way back two birds were discovered on the ground in a pasture across from the reservation. They ran rather than hopped, wagged their tails continually, and displayed white tail feathers in flight. They were Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*), erratic transients in this area and not before reported in February.

—HARVEY LOVELL, Louisville.

EARLY NESTING OF THE MOURNING DOVE

While working in my yard on March 1, 1946, I heard a Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) fly from a nest in an apple tree. I had been working for some time in the yard without frightening the bird, and it was not until I hit the tree with the branches of a bush I was moving that she flushed. The nest, which was about ten feet up in the tree, contained two eggs. The nest must have been built in February and one or probably both eggs laid during the last few days of February. Gordon Wilson also noted a dove incubating eggs on the campus at Western State Teachers' College on March 4. This makes the Dove have a nesting season of over seven months in Kentucky, from March 1st to early October, the longest of any species in this region.

—L. Y. LANCASTER, Western State Teachers' College, Bowling Green.

CHIMNEY SWIFTS GATHERING NESTING MATERIAL

On the late afternoon of June 20, 1945, I was sitting in my back yard after supper when I noticed several Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) swoop down among the smaller twigs of an American elm that had died the preceding summer during the drought. By carefully watching I discovered that each time one would fly by, he would momentarily lose his momentum of flight and would break off a small twig and fly away with it. This continued as long as daylight lasted and was renewed every day for nearly a month, until all the topmost limbs were denuded of small twigs.

—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.

GOSHAWK VISITS LOUISVILLE

It was my good fortune to see a Goshawk (*Astur atricapillus*) on December 19, 1943. Although this find was reported in the Christmas bird count for 1943 in both the *Kentucky Warbler* and *Audubon Magazine*, because of its rarity in this state, I have been urged to describe the circumstances more fully. This hawk was seen in the section west of the bridge (near the dam) in Seneca Park. This area is wooded and interspersed with underbrush and tall dry grass. My

husband and I saw this hawk on three different occasions. First it was seen while flying before us. Our second study was while the hawk "watched" from a near by tree to which the bird had flown, and our third and final view, when it flew to another tree along the road leading to Big Rock, where we observed it at not more than forty feet distance. The latter afforded us an excellent opportunity to watch and study all its markings. The whitish-grey breast, the bluish back, darker crown, with a white band above the eye passing across the nape all were clearly visible. The hawk did not seem to object to our presence as we watched it over a long period of time. I understand many are shy, but others coming from places where they rarely see a human being are quite tame.

I have found few records of the Goshawk's appearance in Kentucky, and none of these from Louisville. Audubon states "when residing in Kentucky I shot a great number of these hawks, particularly one cold winter near Henderson, when I killed a dozen or more on the ice in Canoe Creek." Pindar mentions an occasional stray in winter in Fulton County (Auk, Vol. 6. 1889), and Blincoe (Wilson Bulletin, Vol. 32, 1920) reports shooting one in 1917 in Nelson County. Gordon Wilson in his Birds of Bowling Green, Kentucky (Auk, Vol. 39, 1922) reports, "one seen at close range on Normal Heights, February 2, 1918. Apparently brought here by the rigorous winter".

—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

EARLY RECORDS FOR THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

While spending the week end at Otter Creek Recreational Demonstration Area, we were surprised to hear the call of the Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*) on the night of March 29, 1945. Gordon Wilson reported that many migrants were ahead of schedule last year at Bowling Green and he adds that the Whip-poor-will was no exception, being found there on March 23, 1945. This year the season is unusually early, and we heard this bird calling on the evening of April 5th. Lovell reports that his earliest record for Louisville is April 14, 1945, and Monroe has a record of April 12 from near Anchorage. There appear to be few published records on the time of the arrival of the Whip-poor-will. However, Alexander Wilson (1812) says "In the State of Kentucky, I first heard this bird on the Fourteenth of April, near the town of Danville", and Gordon Wilson (Auk, 1922, Vol. 39) gives the arrival date as April 5th for Bowling Green.

—AMY DEANE and HELEN PEIL, Louisville.

ANOTHER FEBRUARY RECORD FOR THE BROWN THRASHER

On February 26th a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) appeared at my feeding station at Sleppy Hollow. It returned frequently on February 27th and 28th and was seen on the later date by several observers. Harvey Lovell (Ky. Warbler, Vol. 15. 1939) has reported a Brown Thrasher at Louisville on Feb. 5th, 1939, and mentions several late December records in various parts of Eastern and Southern Kentucky. There have been two additional reports of the Brown Thrasher on Christmas counts since then: Bowling Green, 1940, and Providence, 1945. There still appear to be no published records for the Thrasher in January, although Figgins (1945 Birds of Kentucky) states that Thrashers wintered at Lexington in 1942-43, but does not mention any exact dates.

—WALTER SHACKLETON, Prospect.

NEWS AND VIEWS

TO THE BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Sue Wyatt-Semple

A flash of fire, a feathered meteor
 Of brilliant orange-red and glossy black
 Floats through the air, a living metaphor,
 Nor does he any 'burning' beauty lack!
 When orchards are in blossom he arrives
 And seems to search for human company;
 The oriole cheers little children's lives,
 And youngsters welcome his society.
 He moves about among the tops of trees;
 No foliage is dense enough to hide
 Him, swaying to and fro with every breeze
 And warbling medleys to his royal bride.
 A graceful hanging nest swung from an elm
 Comprises Lady Baltimore's bird-realm.

ARTICLES ON KENTUCKY BIRDS APPEARING IN OTHER JOURNALS

Monroe, Burt L. Discussion of the Status of the Purple Grackle in Kentucky. *Junior Science Bulletin*, Vol. II, March, 1946. He points out that the apparent records for the Purple Grackle in Kentucky are probably all referable to the Bronzed Grackle. No authentic specimen of the Purple Grackle from Kentucky can be found.

Lovell, Harvey B. Bird-Banding Projects of the Kentucky Ornithological Society. *Kentucky School Journal*, Vol. 24, Jan., 1946, pp. 21-24. A description of results obtained through bird-banding and a plea to students and teachers to watch for banded birds and to turn in any bands to the Fish and Wild Life Service in Washington.

Wallace, Earl. "The Noiseless Beat of a Thousand Feathered Wings." *Happy Hunting Ground*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Feb., 1946. A description of the Wild Goose with comments upon its unusual intelligence and craftiness.

Wilson, Gordon. *Birds of the Mammoth Cave National Park of Kentucky*. Bowling Green, Kentucky, March 1, 1946, 24 pages, 9 illustrations. Fifty cents. (Reviewed by Evelyn Schneider, Louisville).

Probably no other ornithologist knows Mammoth Cave National Park as Gordon Wilson does; his many years of camping and hiking there have taken him to every part of the area many times. Most visitors no doubt think of the underground caverns as the only attraction, but those of us who have attended K. O. S. meetings there with Dr. Wilson are aware of the extent of the 52,000 acres with its varieties of terrain and bird life.

In the introduction of the pamphlet are given brief descriptions of various areas of the park with comments on the kinds of birds to be found there. The reader will be eager to follow Wet Buffalo Creek, see the towering sandstone cliffs along First Creek with their

heavily wooded hills, visit the beaver dam at Sloan's Crossing, or explore the Big Woods at the northeastern end of the park. A map on the inside of the front cover prepared by Dr. Wilson locates these points of interest.

Under the heading "Some Distinctive Birds" the author discusses briefly the more characteristic species. The numbers of species to be found at different seasons of the year set a goal for the experienced bird student. The changes in the bird life in the park within the period of his study and the probable changes within the next decade are outlined. The "Index" to the birds of the park list species in alphabetical order under the divisions: Permanent Residents, Summer Residents, Winter Residents, and Transients.

The larger portion of the booklet is devoted to a checklist, in which the 163 species are arranged in A. O. U. order. The common name is followed by the scientific name and a short statement indicating seasonal abundance. Since no description of the bird nor of its habits is given, it will be necessary for the student to use a good field guide in connection with the list. A "Supplementary List" of 77 species found in the surrounding country, chiefly at Bowling Green, is appended because these species probably migrate across the park and may eventually be added to the park list. Eight photographs of birds or their nests enhance the makeup of the pamphlet. A brief bibliography is appended.

This booklet may be purchased through the K. O. S. secretary. Every active bird student will want to own a copy.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

The Audubon Screen Tour Lectures closed in Louisville with lectures by Karl Maslowski on February 21 and Burt Harwell on March 21. "Our Heritage in the Rockies," by Maslowski, featured big game in Yellowstone, including moose, elk, antelope, and beavers. This beautiful film was widely acclaimed as one of the best integrated wild-life films yet presented here. Harwell is one of the best entertainers on the Audubon circuit. His imitations of bird songs, from the guttural squawk of the heron to the extremely high-whistled "phoebe-note" of the Black-capped Chickadee, were accompanied by corresponding notes on the piano.

LEONARD BRECHER, OUR SEVENTH LIFE MEMBER

Leonard Brecher is one of the most active of the Louisville group of Ornithologists. A graduate of the University of Louisville with an M. A. in Chemistry, Leonard has been engaged in business with his father making mantels. His interest in birds and natural history dates back to his grade school days. He can always be counted upon to work up a talk for the Beckham Club or for papers in the Warbler. His recent article "The Relation of Vegetational Life-forms to the Distribution of Breeding birds" was reviewed by the Fish and Wild Life Service with the result that requests for copies of it poured in from all over the country. Leonard has been chairman of the committee in charge of the Audubon Screen Tours for the last two years, vice-president of the Beckham Bird Club, and Field Notes Editor of the Warbler.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Since we did not get to have a spring program, I hope as many of you as possible can come to Mammoth Cave National Park on the weekend of May 31, June 2nd to help in a nesting-bird study in the park. At that time the warblers are just about at their best, and we should find nests or young of all the sixteen species nesting there.

Be sure to send the president a copy of your Big Spring List, so that our next issue can carry the tabulations, just as the summer issue did last year. We should make this an annual affair; many state organizations conduct just such an annual spring census.

Be thinking about a suitable place for our fall meeting. It will be held in the eastern part of the state this year. We shall decide on a place early enough for the summer issue to carry the news to all our members, so they can begin making plans for being on hand.

It was fortunate that the ornithologists came down to see my Woodburn lakes on March 9-10, for the water did not last well this year. The McElroy Lake was dry on April 27 except for a few puddles, whereas in 1945 the last day of my season out there was May 31. The total number of water species seen in 1946 at the two lakes has been small in comparison with almost any other year of my study there.

This issue will reach you in the last days of the spring migration period. I hope that you have been highly successful in finding all your old friends and in adding one or two new ones. Nothing thrills a bird student quite like a new species now and then.

BECKHAM BIRD CLUB NOTES

By Virginia Winstandley, Secretary, Louisville

The varied activities carried on during the year by the Beckham Bird Club were highlighted by unusually good programs, by the series of field trips and by the Audubon Screen Tour lectures.

Programs for the regular monthly meetings included talks by members returned from the armed services. At the October meeting Sergeant C. J. Kirkpatrick of the Department of Forestry, Purdue University, and stationed at Fort Knox, Ky., reported on his detailed study, "Some Foods of Young Blue Herons." Mr. Robert Mengel, who had spent nine months in Sharjah, Arabia, described at the February meeting some of the fifty-five species of birds found there and discussed the importance of the desert as a barrier to the equatorial and Neo-arctic forms of animal life found south and north of Arabia, respectively. As a part of the January program Mr. Walter Shackleton read a letter sent him by Tommy Smith, who wrote from Europe in December describing his experiences with falcons and other birds in Holland. Plans are being made to have other returned veterans speak on future programs.

A guest speaker on Dec. 11th was Mr. Clif Sipe, Area Wildlife Supervisor, who talked on the problems of wildlife protection. At other meetings informative discussions were presented by Mr. Floyd Carpenter, Mr. Leonard Brecher, and Mrs. F. W. Stamm on hawks, ducks, and warblers, respectively.

The series of field trips conducted throughout the year have been attended by an unusually large number of new and regular members. With the resumption of the use of cars, it has been possible to visit areas farther away from the city, and therefore to have more variety in the type of territory covered.

In addition to cooperating in the Audubon Screen Tour project, the Club was one of the sponsors of the Natural History Institute, a series of three programs held at Cherokee Park, and of the Ky.

Natural History Conference at South Park in the Fall. Members were well represented at the dinner given on December 18th in Louisville by the Ky. Society for Natural History, with Dr. Gordon Wilson as the speaker.

The year will end with the usual Cuckoo Party on June 11th in the Lodge on Iroquois Park Hill. This is the meeting when formality is forgotten, and everyone has fun. Should out-of-town K. O. S. members be in Louisville on that date, the Beckham Bird Club will be delighted to have them join the party.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

John B. Lewis writes from Seward Forest, Triplett, Virginia, "I always enjoy reading the Kentucky Warbler, both for the information on birds that it contains and also from the fact that the early part of my life was spent in Eubank, Pulaski County.

"In the last issue I read the account of the Upland Plover at Bowling Green. It may be of interest that I saw one of these birds near Eubank between 1883 and 1885. There was only one bird, and it was in a little-used country road. Long life and good luck to the Kentucky Warbler."

Robert Troupe, stationed at Fort Knox, writes of some interesting observations which he made along Salt River. "I saw a rather interesting thing about 7:45 P. M. Night hawks were flying over the valley, and once in a while they would power dive about 150 feet at a sharp angle. About the time they would pull out of it, you could hear a fairly loud hissing sound of the wind whistling through their wings. One could hear this plainly even one-fourth to one-half mile away. I had read of this but never heard it before."

ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWS.

Dr. Gordon Meade, Chairman of the Committee on Affiliated Societies, urges members of the K. O. S. to make more use of the Wilson Ornithological Club's library. The large collection of books and journals are now housed in the library at the University of Michigan. Any member of the W. O. C. or an affiliated society may borrow these free of charge, and the library will pay the cost of postage one way, the borrower being asked merely to prepay return postage. A list of these books appeared in the Wilson Bulletin recently. Orders should be sent to Frank R. Harrell, Museum Libraries, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

John R. Patten is back from the service and is studying again at the University of Kentucky. He had just completed his Master's Thesis on *The Birds of the Berea Region* when the war came. This thesis is one of the best studies ever made on Kentucky birds and has already been quoted several times. His address is Box 2126, University Station.

Lt. William Randall of 4240 Washington St., Roslindale, Mass., was commander of a tank battalion during the last two months of the drive into Germany and had many narrow escapes, including three tanks destroyed under him. He attended many activities of the Beckham Club while stationed at Fort Knox and has recently stopped off at Louisville for several days on his way to a separation center. He plans to go into wildlife work as a profession.