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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

Official Publication

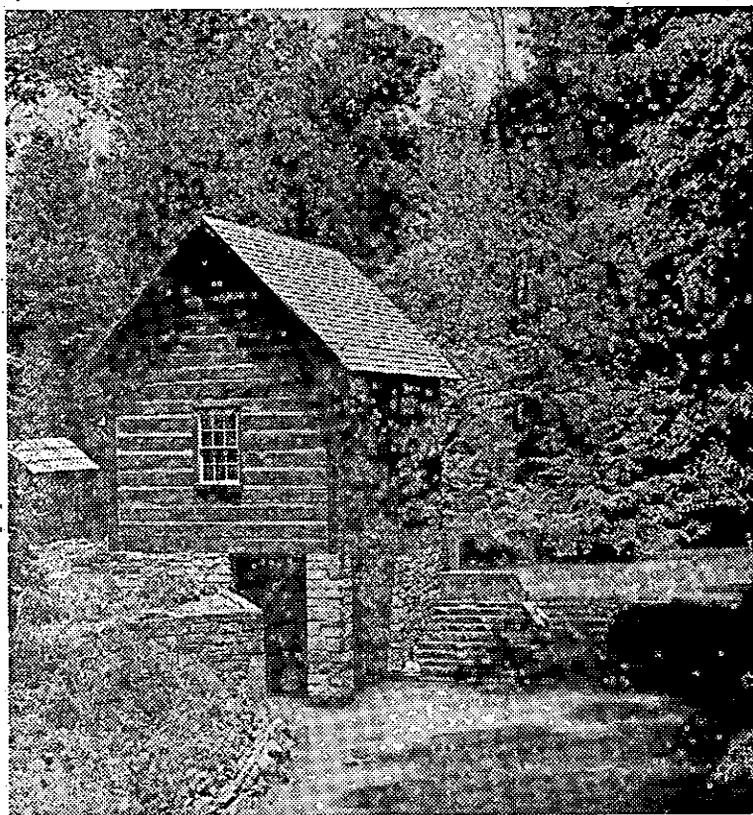
of

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXX

FEBRUARY, 1954

No. 1



THE OLD MILL, LEVI JACKSON STATE PARK

Near London, Kentucky

(Cut used with the compliments of IN KENTUCKY MAGAZINE and Mack Sisk,
Editor.)

THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

Vol. XXX

FEBRUARY, 1954

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THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

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THE BREEDING BIRDS OF HOPKINS COUNTY

By James W. Hancock, Madisonville

Hopkins County occupies 546 square miles of hills, rivers, and creek bottoms, lying on the dissected plateau of the Western Coalfield, between Tradewater and Pond Rivers. It is separated from McLean and Muhlenberg Counties on the east by Pond River and from Christian County by the Tradewater River. In elevation it varies from 350 feet on the Tradewater to 720 feet or more in the rocky Sisk Ridge section. It is relatively densely populated for western Kentucky counties, having a population of 50,000.

The county appears to have three types of land: ridge or hill land; bottom, or black, flat land; and rolling land based on reddish-yellow clay formations.

Coal-mining is, definitely, the backbone of Hopkins County, which is almost in the center of the coal-producing area. In 1952 the county ranked first in the state in coal mined. In addition to about twenty underground mines, there is also much mining done by the open pit, or strip, method; at present there are about eleven strip mines in operation. Although dating back, on a small scale, to World War I, this type of mining became more extensive during World War II. During the period 1917-'52 there were 6,474 acres stripped within the county. Huge earth-moving machines, some of them capable of scooping up 50 yards at a time, were moved into the area and were used to dig away the overburden, which covers the veins of coal near the surface. This stripping method is much faster and more complete than the conventional shaft or slope mining, but, unfortunately, unsightly "spoil banks" are left behind, and streams are polluted with copperas waste, which, particularly when the streams overflow, kills timber and other vegetation, thus frequently damaging or even utterly destroying the habitats of birds and other wild life. Not only do the upland-dwelling species of birds decrease through the ripping apart of wooded hillsides, but those species in the lowlands suffer through the destruction of their habitat by the pollution brought on by improper drainage. In several instances good farm land has been stripped, or damaged by the resultant pollution.

There is an organization of coal operators, begun in 1948, known as the Kentucky Reclamation Association, which is of some value, it must be admitted. According to data furnished by the association, considerable planting of the spoil banks, in proper season, has been carried out. There are still many spoil banks that have not been planted. The following trees have been used: black locust, shortleaf, loblolly, white, and Virginia pine; red and white oak; red gum; black walnut; sycamore; tulip tree; white and green ash; and catalpa. Also 18,500 multiflora roses and 15,000 crowns of Kudzu vine, a legume, have been planted. Furthermore, the association has recently made experimental plantings, for wild life, of the following: bicolor lespedeza, 52,750; false indigo, 1,500; Russian mulberry, 2,000; Siberian pea tree, 1,000. Despite the length of the 1953 drought, there has been a 65% rate of survival on the last-mentioned plantings. It will be interesting, in years to come, where the various plantings are successfully established, to see what effect they have upon the occurrence and breeding of birds and other wild life.

The major farm cash crop of the county is tobacco; registered cattle raising is on the increase; there are a number of dairy farms, too.

In regard to conservation within the county, there is also a bright side. Already there are 2,000 acres in five wildlife refuges. Brasher C. Bacon was instrumental in the establishment of about 75% of these. Among others, these include the Spring Lake Wildlife Refuge, where Bacon's Museum of Oology is located; and, in another refuge, Madisonville's beautiful 450-acre city park. Also plans are well advanced for the establishment of a new refuge at the 400-acre city-owned lake recently constructed at Madisonville, and, in fact, the city and various local organizations have already approved it as a refuge.

The writer's own conservation efforts have been limited mainly to setting plantations of loblolly and shortleaf pine and to the planting of other wild life plants, such as lespedeza bicolor and multiflora rose.

Only a small number of persons have taken an active interest in birds in Hopkins County. The pioneer of these seems to have been Brasher C. Bacon, a postal employee, now retired, who has studied birds here from about 1905 to the present, but in recent years, because of ill health, he has done largely bird-banding and conservation work.

James G. Suthard, a chemist, became interested in birds about 1910, but he says, he kept "no accurate breeding records until 1922." From 1922-'25 he did considerable collecting in company with Bacon.

The writer took up bird study in the late summer of 1931. During the period 1937-'44, he carried on little ornithological activity, his fieldwork, for the most part, being resumed in 1945 and continuing to the present time.

Mrs. Sue Wyatt Semple and Mrs. Mabel Holt, although living at Providence, in Webster County, have done some field-work in recent years in western Hopkins County. Dr. T. Atchison Frazer was reared in the county and has lived for many years at Marion, Crittenden County, doing an occasional bit of observation in the county. Other than occasional visitors from outside the county, Miss Thelma Gentry and Mr. Jewell Thompson have done a little bird study here.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation, in particular, to the following persons, who have assisted in the preparation of this paper: Mr. James G. Suthard, now of Long Beach, California; Mrs. Sue Wyatt Semple, Providence; Mr. Brasher C. Bacon, Madisonville; Mr. John H. Gray, Hopkins County Farm Bureau, Madisonville; Mr. James H. Moore, Earlington, director of the Kentucky Reclamation Association; and former Senator Fred Beshear, Dawson Springs. Mr. Suthard and Mrs. Semple very kindly furnished data from their unpublished notes; Messrs. Bacon, Gray, Moore, and Beshear were very cooperative in supplying information for the introduction.

There is no doubt, in the writer's mind, that many species of birds have decreased within the county during the past twenty years. Many species of warblers, even including the already rare Hooded and Worm-eating, have suffered from the inroads of strip-mining and pollution on their woodland habitats. We might add to this the vireos, the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, the Scarlet Tanager, the Wood Thrush, and other such woodland-dwellers.

Saw-milling, which is hardly so destructive as mining, brings changes. The cutting out of the tall, straight trees and thinning of the understory soon causes a decrease or disappearance of most woodland birds, whereupon the Blue-winged Warbler either comes in or increases, and the Chipping Sparrow appears. The latter sings from the few trees that remain about the sheds while the sawmill is in operation, but after human activity is over and a dense understory sets in, the "Chippy" disappears, Saw-milling, doubtless, brought in a

Golden-winged Warbler that was seen on June 10 and 12, 1946 (Hancock, 1947), a singing male that seemed to show territorial inclinations.

The Red-headed Woodpecker has suffered from the invasion of the Starling and has become increasingly rare. Of course, there may be other reasons for its becoming less common. The Flicker, on the contrary, has held its own rather well, judging by the winter counts. Not much favorable can be said about the increase of birds, except possibly the Starling, but probably many birds of farmland and open-country habitat have, everything being considered, held their own rather well. Also, north Hopkins County is mainly of low, level farmland and creek and river bottoms, with little or no mining; hence it is doubtful whether the changes have been so abrupt in that region.

By way of explanation, when not otherwise accredited, breeding records were made by the writer. Those here given are not intended as conclusive, even for the species on which the most data have been available, but rather as a basis upon which further observations can be built.

Strip-mining, saw-milling, housing projects, the invasion of the Starling and the English Sparrow, cleanly-cultivated farms, etc., have doubtless taken their toll of the county's native birds. Yet, among others, the loud, clear song of the Swainson's Warbler, one of the rarest warblers in the United States, still rings out along some of our streams; the Great Blue Heron appears over the swamp land; and, as the evening shadows deepen, the Chuck-will's-widow calls from our oak groves.

(To be continued.)

* * * * *

MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT, 1953-'54

For our Mid-winter Bird Count 110 species were reported on the actual counts and three more for the period. Twenty-three species were reported from only one place, thirteen from only two places. Some of the oddities for the census, which are commented on later in this report, were the following: Woodlands: Snow Goose, Golden Eagle, Eastern Turkey; Henderson: Common Loon, Shoveller, Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owl, Harris's Sparrow; Owensboro: Ring-necked Pheasant, Short-eared Owl; Bowling Green: Wilson's Snipe, Water Pipit; Mammoth Cave: Blue Goose; Otter Creek: Horned Grebe, Bald Eagle; Louisville: Double-crested Cormorant, Black-crowned Night Heron, Redhead, Old-squaw, Ruddy Duck, Glaucous Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Vesper Sparrow, Oregon Junco; Ashland: Black-capped Chickadee (to be expected in that area of the state). The Brown Thrasher appeared at Woodlands, Henderson, and Louisville. In spite of the very severe drought of the summer and fall of 1953, there is no appreciable variation in ordinary species from the usual records of our censuses. The Pine Siskin, which moved into our state in large numbers last year, does not appear on any list, though a single bird of this species was seen at Mammoth Cave National Park on October 31, 1953. The great concentration of waterfowl on the Ohio River and in Woodlands is to be expected because of the absence of ponds and overflow water elsewhere. The editor takes this opportunity to thank all the people who participated in the counts; please stand by for the one next year and help make this annual event a great one for our society.

KENTUCKY WOODLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, Golden Pond. Jan. 1; 6:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. A 7½-mile radius centering at the junction of highway 58 and the ridgeroad and extending northward to Kentucky Dam, southward to the Rock Castle Road and Sugar Creek, westward to the center of Kentucky Lake, and eastward to Cumberland River. Clear; Temp. 25 to 62; wind W to SW, 3-7 m. p. h.; ground thawing. Seven observers in four parties. Total party hours, 29 (25 on foot, 4 by car); total party miles, 98 (16 by foot, 82 by car). [Total, 70 species, 24,889 individuals. [Probably our most interesting observation was the Golden Eagle. There are several Golden Eagles at the Duck River Refuge, just a few miles up the lake. Mr. Cunningham, who found this species at Woodlands, is familiar with the prominent markings of this species: white tails with the wide dark terminal band and the white spots at the base of the primaries.—EVELYN B A R B I G, F R E D C U N N I N G H A M, EUGENE C Y P E R T (compiler), MARY LOU C Y P E R T, ROY G R I S S E L L, CHARLES M C P H E R S O N, and LAUREN P U T N A M.

MARION.—Dec. 27. Around Marion and in Ohio River bottoms. Wind strong; clear; temp. 30. Total, 45 species, 1768 individuals.—D R . T . A T C H I S O N F R A Z E R and C H A S T A I N F R A Z E R.

MADISONVILLE.—Jan. 4; 7:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. W. W. Hancock Farm, Brown and Frostburg Roads, and six lakes at Madisonville; open fields 20%, deciduous woodlands and thickets 50%, lake shore 30%. Heavy frost; wind SE, 8-12 m. p. h.; temp. 25 to 51. Total hours, 10; total miles, 34 (8 on foot, 26 by car). Total, 42 species, approx. 1220 individuals. Other species recorded during the week: Mallard, Pintail, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Purple Finch. Some 50 ducks on Madisonville's new 400-acre lake were too far away for identification; they were probably Mallards or Black Ducks.—JAMES W. HANCOCK.

HENDERSON.—Dec. 26. Area covered was a 7½-mile radius from Audubon Memorial State Park. King Benson, Fred Katterjohn, and W. P. Rhoads worked the park for their part of the count. The prolonged drought had continued; there was no water in the small streams or ponds in the area; the lakes in the park were frozen over from the cold weather earlier in the week. We came upon a sugar maple that had been tapped in several places by a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Chickadees, Titmice, and Nuthatches, with a number of Downy Woodpeckers, were taking advantage of the Sapsucker's work and were drinking the sap ravenously.—WALTER ALVES, KING BENSON, MRS. LORA CLARK, LESLIE CRAIGHEAD, JIMMIE ESCHÉ, NELLIE FARLEY, JIMMY FRIELED, FRED KATTERJOHN, AMELIA KLUTEY, CATHERINE REUTER, W. P. RHOADS (compiler), FRANK SAUERHEBER, VIRGINIA SMITH, ROBERT C. SOAPER, MR. AND MRS. GEORGE STANLEY, MRS. NAT STANLEY, SR., MR. AND MRS. NAT STANLEY, JR., EDNA VOGEL, and HELEN WATSON.

OWENSBORO. No. 1.—Dec. 26; 6:30 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. Sixty-four miles by car, 8 miles on foot. The Mongolian Ring-neck Pheasant was found in the back yard of Mrs. Nellie Thornsbury, on York Avenue, at the edge of Owensboro. The back of her property ad-

joins the back acres of a farm. A drainage ditch divides the property. The fence row brush is where we watched the bird for a long time. A week previous to the census Mrs. Thornsbury had called me to her house and shown me a hen pheasant with its tail missing. The bird we saw on the census was in full plumage; there are certainly two birds in that area. I tried to find whether anyone in that section was raising pheasants but found no one. Clint Bowers, fish and wild-life biologist, told me that several hundred of these birds had been released earlier in the season many miles from where these birds were found. The first bird flew when I came close, but the second one only ran. A walk across the Owensboro-Daviess County Airport disclosed the five Short-eared Owls. We had a wonderful chance to study these birds at close range for a long time. The identification was easy because of the excellent light and because of our nearness. One of the boys at the airport said that he had seen a Snowy Owl earlier in the week. The albino Blue Jay reported in the WARBLER by Jack Keeley is still here, as we both saw the bird at the same place where it was reported by Keeley (at the Nance Farm on the Carpenter Lake Road). Our counting tour took us along the Ohio River; through woods and fields; along roadsides; and around the lake. Temp. 40; clear; windy. Total, 39 species, 4033 individuals.—A. L. POWELL, JR., (compiler) and JOE FORD.

OWENSBORO No. 2.—Jan. 1; 9:30 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. About 40 miles by car, 6 miles on foot. Clear; windy. General area somewhat similar to that covered on December 26. Total, 32 species, 2497 individuals. For two counts: total, 47 species, 6540 individuals.—A. L. POWELL, JR. (compiler), MRS. A. L. POWELL, JR., JOE FORD.

BOWLING GREEN.—Dec. 26; 6:45 A. M. to 4:30 P. M. Bay's Fork and Alvaton areas, Three Springs, Lost River, down Drake's Creek from Cemetery Pike to Barren River and down river to Bowling Green. Clear; wind west, 7-12 m. p. h.; ponds and still places of streams frozen over; ground bare. Temp. 28 to 38. Three observers in two parties. Party miles, 40 (20 on foot, 20 by car); party hours, 27 (20 on foot, 7 by car). Seen on December 19: Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Red-headed Woodpecker, Water Pipit; December 24: Screech Owl. The numbers for the Red-bellied Woodpecker, the Red-winged Blackbird, and the Goldfinch are the highest for the thirty-six years that counts have been made here. Total, 54 species, 4668 individuals.—L. Y. LANCASTER, CHARLES L. TAYLOR, AND GORDON WILSON (compiler).

MAMMOTH CAVE.—Jan. 1; 6:45 A. M. to 4:00 P. M. Central area, First Creek, Turnhole Bend, Silent Grove, Katy Pace Valley, Sloan's Crossing, Joppa, Union City, Park City Entrance. Clear; temp. 28-50; wind west, 1-7 m. p. h.; river and lake frozen over; ground bare. Five observers in three parties. Total party hours, 40 (35 on foot, 5 by car); total party miles, 50 (20 on foot, 30 by car). The Blue Goose is a new record for the park at any season; the Bewick's Wren is a new winter record. The following species were found in larger numbers than on any of the previous mid-winter counts: Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Savannah Sparrow. Total, 41

MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT 1953-'54	Ky. Woodlands	Marion	Madisonville	Henderson	Owensboro (1)	Owensboro (2)	Bowling Green	Mam. Ca. N. P.	Otter Creek	Louisville	Ashland
	No. of observers	7	2	1	21	2	3	3	5	2	35
No. of species	70	45	42	80	39	32	54	41	45	86	39
Common Loon				2							
Horned Grebe									1	1	
Pied-billed Grebe				1						2	
D-cr. Cormorant										1	
Gr. Blue Heron	2	2		2			1			1	
Bl-cr. Night Heron										28	
Canada Goose	2069		8	638	300	x				11	
Snow Goose	1										
Blue Goose		17						24*			
Mallard	13M	650	*	104M	2500		48			86	2
Black Duck	5000	32	1	5000				15	10	158	
Gadwall	50				4						
Am. Widgeon	16									1	
Pintail	2		*	10						7	
Gr.-W. Teal	5			2						1	
Bl.-W. Teal	25										1
Shoveller				1							
Wood Duck	15			10							
Redhead										2	
Ring-necked Duck	29		10		6					x	
Canvas-back				20	3					11	
L. Scaup Duck	32			25		4			25	202	
Am. Golden-eye	10			4						14	
Buffle-head	56			6						6	
Old-squaw										x	
Ruddy Duck										3	
Hooded Merganser	300									4	
Am. Merganser	15									1	
Turkey Vulture		3		4			2	3			
Black Vulture							6	6		19	
Sh.-shinned Hawk		1		1						1	
Cooper's Hawk				6			1		1	2	1
Red-tailed Hawk	4	2	*	1	2	x	2	5*	2	9	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	4		2	5	1	1	3		1	8	1
Rough-legged Hawk				1			2	1		1	
Golden Eagle	4*										
Bald Eagle	6								1		
Marsh Hawk		3		4	4		1		1	7	
Peregrine Falcon				1							
Sparrow Hawk	3	5	1	21	17	11	2	x	1	62	4
Bob-white	10	27		71	1		2	15	37	75	10
Ring-necked Pheasant					1*						
Eastern Turkey	1										
American Coot		7		1	1				2	10	
Killdeer	3		12	9			x			53	2
Wilson's Snipe							x				
Glaucous Gull										1*	
Herring Gull	20	11		109	200					34	
Ring-billed Gull	3000				600					80	
Bonaparte's Gull										1	
Rock Dove	2										
Mourning Dove	5	31	5	987	59	35	87		1	81	
Barn Owl				1							
Screech Owl		1		3		x				3	
Horned Owl	1	2		8						3	

MID-WINTER BIRD
COUNT 1953-'54

	Ky. Woodlands	Marion	Madisonville	Henderson	Owensboro (1)	Owensboro (2)	Bowling Green	Mam. Ca. N. P.	Otter Creek	Louisville	Ashland
Barred Owl	3		*	3		2					1
Short-eared Owl					5*						1
Belted Kingfisher	1		*	7	1		1	2			18
Yellow-shafted Flicker	10	4	16	28	9	15	11	13	6		65
Pileated Woodpecker	2	2	2	3	8		10	6	2		4
Red-bellied Woodpecker	18	2	11	14		12	28*	17*	5		45
Red-headed Woodpecker	7		2	1			x				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4	1		4		1		3	2		4
Hairy Woodpecker	1	2	3	8	1	4	3	5*	3		16
Downy Woodpecker	19	14	8	47	5	6	22	6	4		85
Eastern Phoebe	1						1				
Horned Lark	6	30	3	130	5	15	126			156	
Blue Jay	140	15	30	61	18*	20	62	42*	20	63	9
Crow	32	39	6	35M	100	850	1240	22	67	874	600
Black-capped Chickadee											14
Carolina Chickadee	38	19	16	77	25	70	55	67*	31	137	6
Tufted Titmouse	33	7	14	39	8	50	51	48*	12	178	40
White-br. Nuthatch	16	2	5	4				14*	5	30	8
Red-br. Nuthatch				2				5*			2
Brown Creeper	2		1	3			4	3	1	15	2
Winter Wren	1			3			8	1	1	2	1
Bewick's Wren		6	2	2				1*		3	
Carolina Wren	6	6	15	18		7	25	4	5	58	25
Mockingbird	5	6	7	21	6	8	5	2	5	54	
Brown Thrasher	1			1							1
Robin	19	16	280	35	1	42	5	73	7	11	
Hermit Thrush				2			1	3	1	1	
Bluebird	7	8	14	44	13	12	19	31	28	58	20
Golden-cr. Kinglet	1		*	6			5	15	3	28	20
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	1			5						1	6
Water Pipit							x				
Cedar Waxwing		4		22		17	15	5	4	5	
Migrant Shrike			1	1			2			6	
Starling	20	240	80	2371	135	600	1750		66	3853	500
Myrtle Warbler	8		7	3			4	12	16	12	12
English Sparrow	53	20	141	1946	100	550	48	2	16	372	100
Eastern Meadowlark	4	1	22	608	22	41	67			101	
Red-wing	1	14		2		4	28*			22	
Rusty Blackbird			155				125			7	
Bronzed Grackle				1000			4			2	
Brown-h. Cowbird	15	400		3						1	
Cardinal	131	29	59	117	36	23	138	35	37	349	75
Purple Finch	5		*				13	31	35	2	
Goldfinch	76	11	49	26	9	13	206*	26	9	74	50
Eastern Towhee	35	3	31	17	7	6	17		29	4	20
Savannah Sparrow								5*			
Vesper Sparrow										1*	
Slate-col. Junco	451	57	126	106	15	60	175	114	106	340	100
Oregon Junco										1*	
Amer. Tree Sparrow	1	5	9	3		5	54		4	157	5
Chipping Sparrow				24							
Field Sparrow	3	2	29	27	4	3	9		17	65	25
Harris's Sparrow				3							
White-cr. Sparrow			4	26	44	2	22			36	
White-thr. Sparrow	19		11	11			83	12	1	76	20
Fox Sparrow			2	2			5				1
Swamp Sparrow			3	5			13		8	14	
Song Sparrow	3	11	17	27	75	8	50	13	5	136	35

species, 757 individuals. Also 20 unidentified ducks.—FRANK EWING, MYRON HAYS, L. Y. LANCASTER, C. T. REID, and GORDON WILSON (compiler).

OTTER CREEK PARK.—Dec. 31; 10:00 A. M., to 4:45 P. M. Ohio River, Otter Creek, the park area, and adjacent meadows. Clear, sunny; some ice on creeks; wind, 3-5 m. p. h. Two observers in one party. Total hours, 6¾; total miles, 15 (6 on foot, 9 by car). In addition to the ducks listed by name, we saw about forty others that could not be identified with certainty with our 7x50 glasses, because they were too far away. Mr. Johnson, the area manager, had a covey of 17 Bobwhites feeding in his yard; they are included in the total. On December 30 Floyd Carpenter visited the area and saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Total species, 45; total individuals, 619.—ANNE L. AND FREDERICK W. STAMM, Louisville.

LOUISVILLE.—Dec. 27; 5:00 A. M. to 4:30 P. M. Ohio River from Louisville to Twelve-mile Island and inland about twelve miles to Anchorage, Prospect, and Valley. Clear to partly cloudy; temp. 41 to 48; wind south to southwest, 0-8 m. p. h.; creeks and ponds frozen over, river open. Thirty-five observers in 12 parties. Total party hours, 79 (45 on foot, 28 by car, 6 by boat); total party miles, 127 (37 on foot, 86 by car, 4 by boat). Total species, 86; total individuals, 8551 plus. The Rough-legged Hawk was found by the Stammers. The Glaucous Gull, an adult, was found in the company of Herring Gulls both the day before the census and the day of the census at the Falls of the Ohio by the Monroes. The Vesper Sparrow was found at the same locality separately by the Monroes and Smith. A well-marked Oregon Junco is wintering at Sleepy Hollow, reported by Shackleton. Also seen during the week of the count: Ring-necked Duck and Old-Squaw.—MR. AND MRS. Y. A. ALTSHELER, GEORGE BABCOCK, MR. AND MRS. LEONARD C. BRECHER, CARL C. CORNETT, JOSEPH CROFT, JACOB P. DOUGHTY, THOMAS FULLER, PAXTON GIBBS, FRANK H. KRULL, FRANK X. KRULL, HARVEY B. LOVELL, JOHN H. LOVELL, ESTHER E. MASON, MRS. JOHN H. McCHORD, BURT L. MONROE, JR., BURT L. MONROE, SR., MRS. H. V. NOLAND, LOUIS H. PIEPER, MARIE E. PIEPER, WILLIAM PIKE, EVELYN J. SCHNEIDER, WALTER H. SHACKLETON, MR. AND MRS. FRANCIS P. SHANNON, CLIFF SIPE, MR. AND MRS. FREDERICK W. STAMM, THOMAS P. SMITH, ROBERT H. STEILBERG, MR. AND MRS. CHARLES STRULL, S. CHARLES THACHER, VIRGINIA WINDSTANDLEY, AUDREY A. WRIGHT (Members of the Beckham Bird Club).

ASHLAND.—Jan. 2; 7:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. Ohio River east to Dam 29, southwest to Naples, Ky., northeast to southeast limits of Ashland, east to Cannonsburg—Boyd and Greenup Counties. Clear; temp. 30 to 50; wind variable, 5-15 m. p. h., half the time; no wind rest of day; all fresh water frozen and thawing except Ohio River. Five observers in two parties. Total party hours, 50 (45 on foot, 5 by car); total party miles, 131 (37 on foot, 94 by car). Total species, 39; total individuals, 1729. The late summer and fall of 1953 were

extremely dry; the prolonged drought, the worst in recent years, brought a great outbreak of forest fires, which burned over hundreds of acres, destroying cover and food supplies. Many highly favored feeding areas have been completely destroyed.—WALTER W. FORSON (compiler), GARY GRAF, OKIE S. GREEN, HENRY J. HUGHES, JR., MELVIN KUNKLE.

THREE RIVERS, MICH.—Dec. 27. Clear in morning, partly cloudy in afternoon; wind SW, light; temp. 26 to 40. Most of ground covered thinly with snow; ponds and some of lakes and streams frozen over. Observer alone on foot, covering 7½ miles of city, marshes, edge of woods, and open territory. Mallard, 57; Am. Golden-eye, 9; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Bob-white, 10 (1 covey); Rock Dove, 26; Mourning Dove, 3; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 6; Prairie Horned Lark, 1; Blue Jay, 19; Crow, 6; Black-capped Chickadee, 7; Tufted Titmouse, 6; White-breasted Nuthatch, 8; Brown Creeper, 2; Robin, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Starling, 21; English Sparrow, 206; Cardinal, 8; Purple Finch, 3; Goldfinch, 133; Slate-colored Junco, 7; Tree Sparrow, 88; Song Sparrow, 3; Total, 29 species, 639 individuals. Other species seen in census period: Canada Goose, Meadowlark, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting.—OSCAR MCKINLEY BRYENS.

FIELD NOTES

KING RAIL NESTING IN FULTON COUNTY

The King Rail is known to nest in Kentucky, but in view of the paucity of records, it is felt advisable to record the following observations. On June 14, 1953, while driving along a graveled road about one mile east of Miller, Fulton County, I observed a pair of King Rails, accompanied by at least five downy young, wade from the edge of a roadside pond and enter a large grassy field. The male was collected and is now in the collections of the Zoology Department of the University of Kentucky. A few hundred yards closer to Miller I observed another adult with at least two chicks.—ROGER W. BARBOUR, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

WEASEL PREYS ON TITMOUSE

One morning in early June, 1953, I found a young decapitated Tufted Titmouse lying on a walk between the house and an ivy-covered stone wall. The body of the bird was still warm; the head was neatly severed but was not found. I laid the body back on the walk and wondered what the predator could be. Then I saw an approaching weasel suddenly turn and dart away. As it did so, there was a movement in the ivy. Out slipped a second weasel, which with lightning speed snatched up the headless Titmouse and was off with its prey. We have not seen weasels before in this wooded area.—CATHERINE HOPE NOLAND, Indian Hills Trail, Louisville.

CROW PREYS ON ROBIN NESTLING

Although we speak of Crows as destroyers of the young of birds, we seldom see them in the act. It is because of this that I should like to describe what happened in our yard in May, 1950. About 5:30

in the morning we were awakened by the loud distress calls of the Robins. Hurrying to the window, we were surprised to see a Crow sitting on the edge of a Robin's nest eating the young, which had been hatched four days earlier. We were unable to get the Crow to leave, despite our protests, though the nest was only twenty feet from the house, on a maple tree, and directly in front of us. It was not until we rushed downstairs and out of doors that the Crow flew away, and then only after it had taken a nestling in its bill. The female Robin remained in the tree for some time and, just before she flew back to the nest, uttered a few shrill notes, peered into the nest, and flew away. There was no further activity at the nest.—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

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A MISSISSIPPI KITE AT LOUISVILLE

One of the more unusual birds observed while we were on our annual spring field day of the Beckham Bird Club, May 3, 1953, was the Mississippi Kite. It was first seen soaring over Cherokee Park when attention was called to a Red-shouldered Hawk circling overhead. The Kite was at a much greater altitude, but its greyish-white head was noticed immediately. The pale markings or stripe on the rear edge of the wings was readily seen and also the perfectly narrow and rather long black tail. The contrast between the graceful falcon-shaped bird of prey and the chunky buteo provided an interesting study. Catherine Hope Noland, Mabel Slack, and Polly McChord were also in the group and watched the Kite until it disappeared from sight.—ANNE L. STAMM and HELEN MOORE COLE, Louisville.

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BLUEBIRD BOXES AT DUNCAN MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The Duncan Memorial Chapel, at Floyd'sburg, Kentucky, is surrounded by a very old and beautiful cemetery. We had two Bluebird boxes there last year and have been given permission by the superintendent to place additional ones there for 1954. There are several tall and stately cedar trees in the cemetery, each of them an invitation to a Bluebird house to be placed on the trunk about five feet above the ground, but never among branches, which are here twenty-five feet above the ground. We have now placed 1000 boxes and estimate that 1000 more have been placed as a direct result of this pleasurable hobby of ours. Specifications and descriptions will gladly be sent to any interested person, without cost.—W. G. DUNCAN, 315 Jarvis Lane, Louisville.

SUMMER BIRDS AT MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

In early June, 1942, Dr. Russell Starr, then a medical student at the University of Louisville, and I camped for six days, June 9-14, in the Mammoth Cave National Park for the express purpose of finding as many nesting species of birds as possible. (See "Summer Birds in Mammoth Cave National Park," KENTUCKY WARBLER, 18:58-59). In 1952 we decided to make the same trip again, to see what changes had occurred in ten years. We were joined for a day by Mrs. Mary Clyde Nuckols and Miss Alice Furber of Glasgow and for three days by Dr. L. Y. Lancaster of Bowling Green. We covered, from May 31 to June 3, practically the same areas, from First Creek Lake on the far western end, to Sloan's Crossing, Hickory Cabin, the Central area,

and the Three Springs Pumphouse. In 1942 there were still a good many cultivated fields in the park, and thousands of acres had been retired from cultivation only recently. We found in 1942 a total of 81 species within the park area and 6 others just outside, some of them in fields that had not then been acquired by the park but that are now a part of it. In 1952, with all our help and zeal, we found only 71 species, three of them not recorded in 1942: the very erratic Cedar Waxwing, the Sharp-shinned Hawk, and the Belted Kingfisher. The eleven species found in 1942 but not in 1952: Black Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Horned Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Kingbird, Barn Swallow, Bewick's Wren, Mockingbird, Starling, Baltimore Oriole, Bronzed Grackle, and Goldfinch. A careful checking of my records for the years 1942-'52 shows that these species are often absent from summer lists in the park, and some of them rarely appear at any season. The following species showed a decrease in numbers: Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Flicker, Purple Martin, Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, Bluebird, White-eyed Vireo, Louisiana Water-thrush, Yellow-throat, Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, and Orchard Oriole. Some of this group were only locally abundant on this count, for on earlier and later counts in 1952 they seemed normal and equal to their 1942 numbers, such as the Flicker, the Carolina Chickadee, the White-eyed Vireo, the Yellow-throat, and the Louisiana Water-thrush. The Carolina Wren is far below its former numbers in all southern Kentucky areas, seemingly as a result of the severe winter of 1950-'51. The other species besides the ones I have named have remained as they were except the Whip-poor-will, the Red-bellied Woodpecker, the Worm-eating Warbler, and the Cerulean Warbler, all of which have increased noticeably. We also found that the Oven-bird and the Hooded Warbler are extending their range as the old fields grow up. The disappointing features of our 1952 count are the passing of many species that formerly were regularly found and the obvious decrease in the number of farm, orchard, and garden birds. A further check in 1962 would be desirable to see what further changes have occurred as the forests approach more nearly the condition of the land before it was cleared.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.

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LARGE MIGRATION OF HORNED GREBE ON THE OHIO RIVER

On November 29, 1953, Mrs. H. V. Noland and I found four flocks of Horned Grebe (*Colymbus auritus*) on the Ohio River between Indian Hills Trail and Glenview. At least 50 were in each flock. We also saw several small groups of six or more swimming close to the Kentucky shore. All the birds were in winter plumage. It was an interesting sight to see such a large concentration, going down stream. Seldom do we see more than a few at one time. Dr. Harvey B. Lovell and Don Summerfield were at the harbor on the same day and saw 16 of the species. The area was visited a week later, but no grebes were to be seen.—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

NOTES FROM MARION

The season of 1953 was the poorest for nests that I have ever seen. On June 13 we had a very severe rainstorm that destroyed most nests in trees or on the ground. Another severe storm on June 20 completed the destruction. I saw only one young Robin and one young Cardinal in the entire season. The Doves are late nesters and

did fairly well. I am happy to report that the Black-billed Cuckoo nested in Marion in the summer of 1953. I caught one of the young after it left the nest and made certain of the identification.—DR. T. ATCHISON FRAZER, Marion.

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BLUE GROSBEAK AT PRINCETON

The most interesting find I had in 1953 was the Blue Grosbeak. Two came to my back yard. I studied them closely, on April 3, for twenty minutes. They are new for my life list.—DR. CYNTHIA C. COUNCE, Princeton.

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NOTES FROM PARIS

It has been said that the Bewick's Wren does not inhabit these parts. That cannot be said again, truthfully; I recently found this species at the edge of Paris. I have not seen the Pine Siskin this season. The long drought has affected nearly all of our bird life here, as many streams are dry and even the larger ones are very low. Even the Robins seem to have left us in late October, though they sometimes remain, quite obviously, through the winter.—REVEREND J. W. CLOTFELTER, Paris.

NEWS AND VIEWS

BECKHAM BIRD CLUB NOTES

The following notes about the activities of the Beckham Bird Club (Louisville chapter of the K. O. S.) for the past two years may be of interest to other state members.

Though many interesting projects were undertaken during this period, perhaps the one that seemed the most significant was the leasing of two pieces of property, contiguous to what is known as Caperton's Swamp Area, as a wildlife sanctuary. Signs were purchased and erected, posting the area as a wildlife sanctuary, and an effort is to be made to keep poachers from destroying the wildlife and to preserve it in its present state.

Members again cooperated in setting up a station recording nocturnal migrations across the moon, in both the summer and fall months. This was done in cooperation with Mr. Robert Newman, Louisiana State University and was directed by Charles Strull.

The club registered as an education and scientific organization with the United States Treasury Department and, therefore, received tax exemption.

Again, the club has, as it has for the past nine years, cooperated with the Kentucky Society of Natural History in presenting the Audubon Screen Tours. These are given free to the Louisville public in the interest of conservation education. The club also participated in the twelfth and thirteenth Kentucky Natural History and Wildlife Conferences.

A series of field trips was undertaken which covered various types of habitats and included Cherokee, Seneca, and Iroquois Parks; Caperton's Swamp; Municipal Harbor; as well as a longer trip to the flooded corn fields near Bowling Green and to other points of ornithological interest. Special studies were planned with emphasis on the water birds on the Falls of the Ohio and the nesting birds at

Sleepy Hollow. A few identification trips were planned primarily for those not too familiar with noticeable field marks of birds. Helen Browning and Mabel Slack were co-chairmen of the field trips and were assisted by Harvey B. Lovell and Don Summerfield.

Excellent programs were given at the monthly meetings, which were held from September through June each year. These programs were planned by a committee, with Dr. William Clay as the chairman. The following talks were presented: Dr. Harvey B. Lovell, "The Latest Information on Bird Migration"; Dr. Gerald Cole, "Physiological Aspects of Birds and Their Relationship to Avian Ecology"; Milton Bowman, "The Mourning Dove in Kentucky"; Dr. William Clay, "Some Remarks on Bird Songs"; Virginia Windstandley, "Review of A GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING"; Dr. E. K. Hall, "Hormones in the Life of Birds"; Dr. Arch Cole, "Air Sacs of Birds"; Esther Mason, "Birds of Paradise"; a panel on warblers with the following taking part: Dr. H. B. Lovell, Burt L. Monroe, Jr., Mabel Slack, Mrs. F. W. Stamm; a panel on the nesting study at Sleepy Hollow: Walter Shackleton, Mabel Slack, and Mrs. F. W. Stamm; a panel on shore birds: Leonard Brecher, Burt L. Monroe, Sr., Donald Summerfield, Mabel Slack; Evelyn Schneider, "Birds of the Allegheny Plateau"; Dr. Gerald Cole, "Flightless Birds"; Dr. H. B. Lovell, "Habits of Cardinals as Determined through Banding"; Dr. William Clay, "Open Forum Discussion on Spring Arrivals"; Mrs. F. P. Shannon, "Life History of the Pileated Woodpecker"; Audrey Wright, "Effect of Insecticides on Bird Life". Three films were shown during the year—"Bird Migration," "Water Wilderness," and one by Dr. Clay entitled "The Scenic Smoky Mountains." Featured speakers at the dinner meetings were: Dr. Dan Webster, Hanover College, "The Distribution of Birds in Southeastern Alaska"; Dr. Ralph Edeburn, Marshall College, "Birds of the Lower Ohio Valley in West Virginia"; and a movie, "Outdoor Adventure."

A four-page brochure setting forth the aims and activities of the club was published. This was done in order to reach more people that may be interested in bird study. Evelyn Schneider and Frederick W. Stamm were in charge of this project.

An award to be given annually to the member making the most constructive contribution to Kentucky ornithology was inaugurated.

A special committee was appointed to outline a program to benefit non-game birds.

The club also went on record as being in favor of the bill to preserve the Bald Eagle in Alaska and joined the Nature Conservancy organization.

Other activities included the annual mid-winter and spring bird counts and the selling of bird houses and feeders as well as bird cards, stationery, notes with bird motifs, etc., as a means of increasing the revenue to be used for club activities. Burt L. Monroe, Sr., has been the general chairman of the bird counts.

Mrs. Mame Boulware was chairman of the membership committee, and forty-seven new members were added to the roster.

A number of our members attended the annual meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union and the Wilson Ornithological Club.

Officers for the past two years have been: President, Mrs. F. W. Stamm; Vice-President, Esther Mason; Treasurer, Mrs. H. C. Mitchell; Secretary, Mrs. F. P. Shannon, 1951-'52, Marie Pieper, 1952-'53; Directors: Leonard Brecher, Burt L. Monroe, Sr., Mabel Slack, Mrs. William Tabler, and Dr. Harvey B. Lovell.—MARIE E. PIEPER, Secretary.

THE POWELLS HONORED

The Owensboro Messenger for November carried a long illustrated article by Charlotte Baumgarten about the bird study activities of Mr. and Mrs. Albert (Bert) Powell. Much of the article is taken up with the many amusing incidents that have resulted because Bert has been mistaken for a spy, a criminal, and just about everything else except a perfectly harmless ornithologist. Bert put in a plug for bird protection while he had this good chance and challenged the people of Daviess County and Owensboro to rally to the saving of as many of the birds as possible. Birds are always news; bird watchers can be fine news also. Congratulations to Owensboro for having such avid ornithologists!

MISS TOWLES DIES

Miss Susan Starling Towles, long a member of our society and one of the most versatile people Kentucky has ever produced, died during the Christmas holidays. She was for almost a half century the librarian at the Henderson Public Library. Among her numerous interests were the Henderson County Historical Society, of which she was for several decades the leader. She was one of the earliest people to suggest the Audubon Memorial Park at Henderson and was instrumental in getting much of the material now housed in the museum at the park. She was a charter member of the Kentucky Audubon Society.

OUR SPRING MEETING

Already plans are being formed for our annual spring meeting in Louisville, April 23, 1954. Make your plans to be with us at our luncheon and afternoon sessions. Later you will receive a program and full details about the meeting. The place will be the Kentucky Hotel. There will also be the annual spring field trip on Saturday morning, April 24.

ANOTHER PAINTING FROM ROLLIN

Our artist friend from Weldona, Colorado, Howard Rollin, who has so generously contributed many paintings of birds to our society, has sent another one as a Christmas gift. It is 9½ by 12 inches and shows a pair of Kingfishers perched on a branch over a stream. In the high bank across the stream above the shrubbery is shown their nesting hole. As always in his work, Mr. Rollin has exhibited perfect coloring and lifelike qualities, along with meticulous detail.—
EVELYN J. SCHNEIDER.

EDITORIAL USED

The editorial in our November, 1953, issue, "Keeping Records," is being used by the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union by the permission of the editor of the WARBLER.

MISS SMITH IS MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

The officers of the K. O. S. have chosen, very wisely, Miss Virginia Smith as the chairman of a committee to seek new members for our society. She is to select some helpers. All of us recognize the unusual ability of our ex-president in getting interested people to join forces with us. Let us all help her out by adding a new member for each of the present members of the K. O. S. Wouldn't that be a great achievement for us?