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# THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

Official Publication

of

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

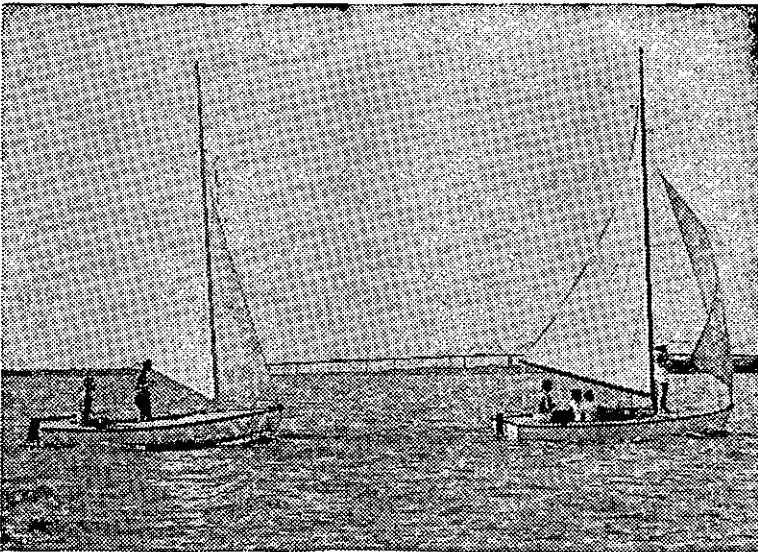
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Vol. XXX

NOVEMBER, 1954

No. 4

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Sailing along on the breeze-ruffled waters of Kentucky Lake provides a thrill for many persons who visit the lake, located in the western portion of the state. Eggnor's Ferry Bridge is seen in the background. Kentucky Lake, Kentucky Dam Village and Cherokee State Park are in the vicinity.

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

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**SOME CHANGES IN BIRD POPULATIONS OF KENTUCKY LAKE**

By Eugene Cypert, Paris, Tennessee

Kentucky Lake, the lowermost and largest of the T. V. A. system, extends southward 184 miles from the dam at Gilbertsville, Kentucky. The surface area is approximately 156,000 acres, and there is a 2,200 mile shore line. Before the construction of the dam, the surface area of the Tennessee River for this distance was only a small part of what the lake is at present. It was to be expected that such a change in the area of the water and the amount of the shoreline would result in changes in the populations of water and shore birds.

Prior to the formation of the lake, visits by waterfowl were only occasional and of short duration. There was no regular wintering population. In the winter of 1944-45, the year the lake was filled, there was a very large influx of ducks, principally Mallards, Black Ducks, Pintails, and Ring-necks. There was an estimated peak population of 250,000 and this number was maintained for the greater part of the winter.

Hunters and nature lovers jumped to the conclusion that such numbers of ducks would be the usual thing during the winter. In the winter of 1945-46 the peak duck population was only about 12,000, and the wintering population was nil.

The following year there was a marked improvement. The duck population reached a peak of 30,000, and during most of the winter the lake was host to some 20,000. In 1947-1948 there was a further increase. Approximately 80,000 ducks spent most of the winter. Since then, the lake has been host each winter to populations ranging from 75,000 to 250,000 ducks. For each of the past four years the usual wintering population, with some variation, has been about 100,000.

There are some plausible reasons for the great influx of ducks in the first year of the formation of the lake, for the abrupt drop in the following year, and for the rise in the population thereafter. The first year there was an abundance of weed seed available as food for ducks following the flooding of thousands of acres of fields and cleared land. The great flights of ducks which ordinarily passed nearly unnoticed stopped and stayed. A year later the ducks had no such feast in Kentucky Lake. The weed seeds had disappeared, and there was no new aquatic growth.

The water schedule of Kentucky Lake is such that strictly aquatic duck food plants, such as pond weeds, water shield, musk grass, and naiad, cannot thrive. Usually the water level is raised to lake full level (359 feet above sea level) about May 1 and held there until about July 1. Then it is drawn down gradually the remainder of the summer until the level is about 354 or 355 feet. It is held at this low level all winter or until there is a threat of a major flood on the lower Ohio or Mississippi Rivers. As the flats emerge during the summer drawdown, there is a growth of vegetation, some of which is desirable as a duck food. Wild millet, smartweed, and sedges, along with less desirable plants, occupy this zone. The difficulty is that, unless the flats are reflooded, such food is left stranded during the fall and winter and is not accessible to the ducks.

One reason for the summer drawdown is mosquito control. But this drawdown does not eliminate all mosquito breeding habitat on the lake. There are certain flat land areas at several points which would not drain readily. Such areas have been diked off by T. V. A., and water is kept pumped off during the late spring and summer. These are called "dewatering areas." There are eight of them on Kentucky Lake. One of them embraces the West Sandy arm of the lake near Springville, Tennessee, and covers approximately 2,700 acres; another, near Big Sandy, Tennessee, is about 650 acres; one across the lake from Johnsonville, Tennessee, is about 3,000 acres; another, in lower Duck River bottom, is about 3,000 acres; and four smaller areas of from 150 to 250 acres each are up the lake, near Perryville, Tennessee.

After the mosquito season the dewatering areas are allowed to refill. It is only in these areas that there are usually any accessible natural duck foods. Here on the lower, wetter ground there is commonly a growth of smartweed, wild millet, sedges, and bur marigold. Only a small part of the some 10,000 acres included in the dewatering areas, probably less than 1,000 acres, actually produces waterfowl food. The rest of the dewatering area land is either crop land, timber land, or brush land. Hence, out of this vast 156,000 acre lake, only a small part serves as a source of natural foods for ducks. It is easy to understand why so few ducks used the lake the second year after it was flooded.

Why, then, the increase in duck populations the following years? Why did the populations jump to 30,000 in 1946-47 and continue to gain until a wintering population of 100,000 was reached?

Apparently this was due, in a great measure, to work done by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the Tennessee Fish and Game Commission under their Federal Aid programs and to the work of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Kentucky Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge and the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge. It was in the summer of 1946 that these agencies began their waterfowl management work on the lake. Since the Kentucky Lake water schedule was not favorable to natural duck food plants, the only answer was to produce duck food by raising field crops and by tilling the soil to induce the growth of desirable vegetation.

In 1946, the Kentucky Woodlands and Tennessee refuges had approximately 2,400 acres under cultivation near the lake shoreline. Most of this was farmed by neighboring farmers, who left from one third to one fourth of their crops unharvested for waterfowl as payment for the rent of the land. That year the state of Kentucky put under cultivation approximately 50 acres and the state of Tennessee about 300 acres, all of which was left unharvested for waterfowl.

These operations have been expanded since the first year. At present more than 7,400 acres of public land on Kentucky Lake is in cultivation under the federal and state waterfowl management programs. Of this, about 2,500 acres are cultivated entirely for the production of waterfowl food, and about 4,900 acres are cultivated by share-cropping farmers.

The principal crops are corn, soy beans, milo-maize, buckwheat, and millet, and such winter green food as small grains and rye grass. In the dewatering areas, it is possible to flood some of these crops to make them more readily available, but flooding is not necessary. It has been found that ducks will feed on most of these crops on the upland. On the refuges the corn is dragged down. The other crops, except millet, will be taken just as they are. The millet must be flooded before it will be taken readily. The small grain and rye grass are planted more for the benefit of Canada Geese than for ducks, but ducks frequently graze on these crops also.

Ducks, common as residents or visitors on Kentucky Lake, are the Mallard, Black Duck, Pintail, Ring-neck, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Baldpate, Gadwall, Wood Duck, Shoveller, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, and Common Merganser. Less common visitors are the Bufflehead, Canvas-back, Redhead, Golden-eye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck. The Old Squaw, White-winged Scoter, and Greater Scaup have been seen occasionally.

Unlike the duck populations, the population of Canada Geese has had a steady increase. In 1946-47, there were only about 770 Canada Geese, and most of these stayed only a short time. The following year there was a regular wintering population of about 1,000 geese. In 1953-54 approximately 11,000 geese spent most of the winter on and in the vicinity of the lake.

The Blue Goose and the Snow Goose are common migrants and accidental winter residents. The Atlantic Brant has been observed on one occasion in the Duck River area.

Unfortunately, Crows and blackbirds have become serious competitors with the waterfowl for the unharvested crops. There are no estimates of the number of Crows spending the winter along Kentucky Lake, but there are certainly thousands of them. Tremendous flocks of Red-wings, Grackles, Cowbirds, and Starlings are also present during this period.

With the increase in waterfowl, eagles have become an interesting addition to the avifauna of the lake. Bald Eagles are common during the waterfowl season. For the past two years, at least, the Golden Eagle has been a winter resident. This species has been observed in Duck River bottom and at Kentucky Woodlands Refuge.

Naturally, the fish-eating birds have found Kentucky Lake to their liking. There is now a large rookery in the Duck River area where more than a thousand nests of Great Blue Herons, Common Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, and Anhingas may be seen. The Great Blue Herons and the Egrets, formerly common, have become quite numerous. The Cormorant was only an occasional visitor to the Tennessee River but is now a common permanent resident. The swampy areas of Duck River bottom are the only places on the lake that are suitable habitat for the Anhinga; so Kentucky Lake's population of this interesting bird must necessarily be restricted to that area.

The Pied-billed Grebe is now a common winter resident and an uncommon nester. The Horned Grebe is an uncommon winter resident, and Holboell's Grebe has been reported. The White Pelican is an occasional visitor.

With exposure of thousands of acres of mud flats along the shoreline in the late summer, it was expected that Kentucky Lake would be a tremendous attraction to migrating shore birds. This expectation has not been fulfilled. There have been few visiting shore birds. However, there has been an interesting variety of them. The Killdeer is, of course, a common permanent resident. Common migrants include the Semipalmated Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Woodcock, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. The Avocet, the Upland Plover, the Dowitcher, the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and the Golden Plover have been observed.

The Coot is now a common, and sometimes an abundant, winter visitor. The King Rail is an uncommon summer resident, and the Sora and Virginia Rail are common migrants. The Florida Gallinule has been seen.

The Ring-billed Gull has become abundant as a winter resident, and the Herring Gull is common at that time. Bonaparte's Gull is an uncommon migrant. The Black Tern and the Least Tern are common migrants.

Kentucky Lake can hardly be called an ornithologist's paradise, but it has brought to the lower Tennessee Valley impressive numbers of waterfowl and an interesting variety of other water and shore birds. Visiting ornithologists may expect to see the largest concentrations of waterfowl in midwinter and the greatest variety of ducks and other water birds in April. Late August is the best time for seeing shore birds.

\* \* \* \* \*

### WOODCOCK STUDIES

By Dan M. Russell, Study Leader, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

(Note by the Editor: Here is a summary of a nineteen-page report by Mr. Russell, a complete copy of which can be obtained from the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Mr. Russell asked me to condense and summarize his article, data for which he has been carefully gathering from our members and from hunters, biologists, and other interested people. You will especially like the fourteen pages of tables with which he has illustrated the article. It is a real regret that we do not have space for the whole article.)

A. Introduction.—The Woodcock Study was initiated on July 1, 1953, for the primary purpose of determining when and where Woodcock were present in Kentucky, the relative abundance in various seasons, and the types of habitat most often utilized. The two jobs listed in the work plans for this study were: spring and fall migration censuses and reproduction studies. Provisions were also made for recording all incidental observations, such as mortality, feeding, movements, etc. Data were obtained by accepted census methods as described in literature and by intensive field work in areas believed to contain suitable cover. Further information and past records were obtained by a questionnaire poll of the members of the Kentucky Ornithological Society and other individuals who were known to keep such records. The reports received were dated as early as 1893 and on up to the present. Mr. Brashear C. Bacon, of

Madisonville, reported some fifty sight records of Woodcock flushes, nests, and broods in Hopkins County between 1906 and 1953. It appears that Woodcock are more generally distributed throughout the state than may have been previously supposed. While the information presented in this report is not considered conclusive, because of the short period of study, there has been some pertinent information obtained on the Woodcock in Kentucky. In accordance with a Departmental policy to reduce investigational activities, the Woodcock Segment of the general work plan has been discontinued. However, provisions have been made to tabulate any random or voluntary information that may be received from biologists and others.

**B. Area Worked On.**—The scope of the study was statewide, with emphasis on selected areas containing suitable habitat in each of the twelve Pittman-Robinson Districts.

**C. Methods of Obtaining Data.**—

1. **Census:** Selected suitable cover types were censused repeatedly during the periods October 15 through December 15 and February 15 through April 15. During the former period, areas were revisited regardless of whether sight or sign was noted. During the former period, different areas were covered each time unless a Woodcock was flushed or sign noted, and repeat visits were made until the area was obviously abandoned by Woodcock. The reason for the change to the latter method was to omit blank areas as much as possible and to obtain some information on the length of time a particular covert might be used. Singing Ground counts were conducted approximately every ten days from February 1 through April 15. Standard data report cards were provided to record all random observations.

2. **Survey Questionnaire.**—A questionnaire form was mailed with a return envelope to all members on the roster of the Kentucky Ornithological Society. Of 236 forms mailed, 32 (13.6%) were returned.

3. **Interview.**—Contacts were made with sportsmen, conservation officers, and other outdoor people to obtain information on preferred cover types, population, and movements.

**D. Fall Census.**—During the fall census of suitable cover types there were 147 trips made, covering 1,181 acres. A total of 8 Woodcock were flushed, one for every 37.3 man-hours afield. Six of the 8 birds were seen in October. The average for October was a bird for every 5.3 trips or one bird for 8.3 man-hours.

**E. Spring Census.**—Six birds were flushed in 54 trips; an average of a bird for 13.5 man-hours afield.

**F. Random Observations.**—A total of 32 random observations, involving 72 Woodcock, were reported by biologists prior to and during the course of this study. There were 16 records of 48 birds that were observed prior to 1953 and 16 records of 24 birds received during the study period. Most observations were of single birds. A group of 6 Woodcock were flushed in Trigg County in March, 1954. An estimated 14 Woodcock were flushed from small open fields, predominantly broomsedge and surrounded by mixed hardwoods, in Calloway County on November 21, 1952. One of these birds was collected by Biologist Odin.



### G. Reproduction Studies.—

1. Singing Ground Counts.—During February, March, and April, 110 trips were made over singing ground routes, and 45 Woodcock were heard. All the birds were heard during February and March. One route of seven stations was established in Mammoth Cave National Park, and records were as follows: during the first trip, on February 24, three Woodcock were heard at one station; during the second trip, on March 2, seven were heard; on March 12, eleven were heard; on March 17, three were heard; on March 27, only one was heard. An attempt to observe this bird closely by moving toward the singing ground while the Woodcock was in the air caused him to leave the singing ground and go to another small, cleared area a short distance away. The bird was heard "peenting" on this cleared area; but when he came down from his flight, he landed on the original ground, where two observers were hidden. The bird seemed to sense that something was wrong, and after "peenting" twice, he flew directly away from the area. During trips on April 2 and 17, no birds were heard. During February and March there was a rather large concentration of Woodcock in this particular area of Mammoth Cave National Park. Woodcock, other than those counted on singing ground routes, were heard and known to be in this area. It is probable that this was a migrating group with the exception of the one bird that remained through March 30. The statewide average for February was one Woodcock for 29.7 stops. For March, the statewide average was one bird for 11.3 stops.

2. Courtship Flights, Nests, and Broods.—A total of 18 nests and broods were reported. The nests were located in March and April; the broods were all located in April. In the combined reports received, the courtship flights were first noticed on February 3 in Casey and McCreary Counties. The latest in the spring was recorded on April 22, in Edmonson County. There was one report received of a Woodcock in flight and song heard on November 2, by Dr. Gordon Wilson, of Warren County. There were 9 nests with eggs reported. Eight were described. Dates of nesting ranged from March 20 to April 21. Since there were so few, a brief description of each is given below:

Nest. Brushy broomsedge field, Marshall County.

Nest—4 eggs, 4-18-1911. In leaves near edge of pond near stream, Hopkins County.

Nest—4 eggs, 3-20-1914. In leaves at edge of meadow near stream, Hopkins County.

Nest—4 eggs, 3-22-1936. In walnut grove, Hopkins County.

Nest—4 eggs, 4-21-1951. In dense weeds and brush near river, Edmonson County.

Nest—5 eggs, 4-00-1950. Sedge grass near path in woods near lake, Henderson County.

Nest—4 eggs, 4-00-1952. In heavy weeds, uncultivated land near creek, Caldwell County.

Nest—4 eggs, 3-18-1954. In woodlot in oak-hickory grove, Todd County.

A total of four broods were described as follows:

Adult and 4 young, April 6. Along stream in grove in upland cemetery.

Adult and 3 young, April 18. Along stream in honeysuckle.

Adult and young, April 30. Woods, predominantly catalpa.

Adult and 2 young, April 10. In Shortleaf-Virginia pine, with opening of blackberry.

The broods were all located in the month of April.

H. **Habitat.**—Much emphasis is placed on habitat in most of the Woodcock literature. It was found to be difficult to classify habitat in detail because of so much overlapping. For example, **Timber** may be upland or lowland; **Stream** may be in timber or pasture, etc. In determining preferred cover types, **Timber** (to include forests and farm woodlots) was by far the most often mentioned. It may be seen that the less cover on the land, the fewer Woodcock were seen.

I. **Relative Abundance and General Distribution.**—One reason why more Woodcock might be reported in March and November is that these are the months when fishermen and hunters take to the areas of suitable Woodcock habitat. The information on hand shows that there are two periods when Woodcock are most abundant. It is also interesting to note that through random and intensive efforts, the biologists were able to locate in one year approximately the same number of Woodcock that were in all the records obtained from Kentucky Ornithological Society members and interested parties. While this in no way minimizes the importance of the results of the questionnaire, one thing is clearly shown: while the Woodcock are assumed to be scarce and seldom seen by most people, they can be found in Kentucky if searched for in suitable habitat. Woodcock were seen and / or heard in 39 of the 120 counties of the state. This was from a total of 180 observations involving 298 Woodcock, 12 broods, and 9 nests. There were 51 counties worked intensively by biologists, and Woodcock were found in 25 of the 51 counties. Thus it may be supposed that Woodcock are generally distributed throughout the state.

J. **Mortality.**—In 24 reports involving 25 birds it was found that the greatest mortality was due to hunters. Periods of greatest loss were during the fall and spring. These reports, too, may be correlated with the increase of hunters and fishermen in the field at those times.

## FIELD NOTES

### ANOTHER SHRIKE'S NEST

At the suggestion of Harvey B. Lovell I am recording a nest of the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) to add to those which he listed in a previous issue of the *Kentucky Warbler*.

The nest, containing young, was found in a hackberry tree along Springdale road on June 5, 1949, by Mabel Slack and me. The area is typical open country with meadows on either side of the road. The

nest was a bulky structure, well built with thick twigs on the exterior. It was about twelve feet from the ground in an upright fork, midway between the trunk and the outer branches and on the half of the tree which faced the meadow. We could not determine the number of young, as we could not reach the nest.

Both parent birds maintained their "watch" from the telephone wires and at some distance from the nest-tree. The shrikes had a pattern of flying from the wire to specific spots in the meadow and, without hesitancy, picking up their prey, which in most cases appeared to be a grasshopper; then fly back to the wire and wait for some time before flying across the road to feed the young.

Other species we found nesting in the same area were as follows: Field Sparrow, Yellow-throat, Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel, Indigo Bunting, and a pair of Brown Thrashers.—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Horned Lark's Nest at Paducah.**—On March 15, 1954, I found on the Paducah Airport the nest of the Horned Lark. It contained three young; though I am not a good judge of the age of nestlings, I thought them to be three or four days old.—Mrs. E. M. West, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Sparrow Hawk's Hovering.**—Recently I observed a Sparrow Hawk hovering in mid-air, darting to the ground, and picking up a field mouse. This occurred five consecutive times. Each time the bird flew to a nearby stump to devour the mouse.—Mrs. Nat Stanley, Sr., Reed.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Twin Phoebe Nests.**—On April 27, 1954, I heard a Phoebe calling near the entrance to Tall Trees in Otter Creek Park. I checked the covered porch on the dining room where Phoebes had nested in previous years. As I did so, a Phoebe flushed from a nest. When I looked up, there were two nests within an inch of each other. I found a single, cold, white egg in the left nest, but the right nest contained four warm eggs. Evidently the Phoebe had become confused and laid one of her eggs in the wrong nest. Both nests seemed to be in excellent shape, but it is possible that only one was the new nest, the other an old one that had been reworked to some extent.—Harvey B. Lovell, Louisville.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Young of Spotted Sandpiper in Franklin County.**—Late in the afternoon of June 18, 1954, Miss Jane Ann Wallace and I discovered two downy young of the Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). A single adult sandpiper was feeding along the shallow, mud-bottomed edge of a man-made lake at the State Game Farm, near Frankfort. Occasionally the bird would run up into the low weeds, which were about five feet from the edge of the water. As it ran through the weeds, it would give its shrill peep call and teeter in the manner of this species. Finally, on one of the trips into the weeds, one of the young birds came out of hiding. Quickly I approached the spot where the adult and young were. The adult ran off a few feet and took wing, while the young one ran a short distance and hid in the weeds. Even though I knew the approximate location where the bird

was hidden, it took a good bit of searching to find it; for when in concealment, the young sandpiper would allow itself to be picked up rather than run to a new hiding place. Withdrawing to a discreet distance, we again watched the adult sandpiper enter the weeds and call to the young. This time two tiny mites of gray and black fuzz came out of hiding and joined their parent. The interest of our discovery was dulled, but only slightly, by our inability to locate the nest. Perhaps this will be possible if the Spotted Sandpiper returns to the Game Farm lake to raise its brood.—Thomas L. Despard, Frankfort.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Another Woodcock Nest at Mammoth Cave National Park.**—On July 24, 1954, Hugh Smith, one of the ferrymen at Houchins Ferry, in Mammoth Cave National Park, showed me the spot where a Woodcock nest was built this year and three young brought off. It was on the north side of Green River at the ferry, not far behind the tower that supports the cable used when the water is high. It was downstream from the road, just as was one on the opposite bank that I saw on April 21, 1951.—Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green.

**The Best Time to Observe Cerulean Warblers.**—During the early spring it is sometimes difficult to see the Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) at close range. Because this species frequents the highest treetops, it is more often heard than seen. Yet there is a time when it comes to the ground or flits about on low bushes, and that is during the nest-building period, or at the time of the young in the nest. I have seen the female come to the ground within a few feet of me to gather minute nesting material, and on one occasion (May 17, 1952) the bird returned six times to the same spot, all within a short period of time. My presence did not deter her from gathering the silk-like threads of the spider web which she so desired for her nest, which was placed about 45 feet up in a walnut tree, near the extremity of a horizontal limb. On four subsequent trips there were no indications that the male assisted with the incubation of the eggs; he was always to be found in the nearby trees, singing incessantly. At one time he was seen chasing a Blue-headed Vireo. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, a Wood Thrush, and a Carolina Chickadee nested in the same area, Sleepy Hollow, and a Summer Tanager's nest was saddled on an elm tree not more than 150 feet away; yet no conflict was noted. Of course, all these species nested at a lower level. On May 31, 1953, I was with a group at Sleepy Hollow when a Cerulean Warbler came down to some honeysuckle vines by the roadside. The bird was directly in front of the group and remained there long enough for all of us to see her diminutive size and delicate color markings. On June 30, 1946, I was in the Caperton Swamp area with Lieutenant Kitchen of Oklahoma, who was at that time stationed at Fort Knox. We saw a male Cerulean with food in its bill, sitting on a low limb directly overhead. This gave us an excellent opportunity to watch the bird. Two of the four nests which I have observed in the last few years were in walnut trees, one in a basswood, and the other in an oak. All the nests were found in different localities, but all were near streams and where trees were deciduous. The height varied from 35 to about 60 feet above the ground, and all were well out toward the end of the branches and away from the trunk. In this locality it seems that May 17-27 is the best time to observe the nest-building of this species; there is also the chance that one may have the rare opportunity to see the bird at close range.—Anne L. Stamm, Louisville

### LATE SEASON OR SECOND SEASON?

A juvenile Goldfinch was found out of its nest and still being fed by its parents on October 12, 1954, near Berea by Bob Eplee, a member of the Berea College Outing Club. This find seems unusual, since the breeding period is often during July. Moreover, Palmer (FIELD-BOOK OF NATURAL HISTORY) reports that the Goldfinch has only one brood a year. However, this breeding coincided with a prolonged summer, the first killing frost not having occurred by the time I am setting this down (October 22). During August and September, there was apparently sufficient rain, which in conjunction with the late warm temperatures, provided the right conditions for a second set of blooms to develop on several of the local plants, including the Redbud and Japonica. Also, Morning Glories were blooming on October 15. But what stimulus made the Goldfinch breed in late September? The bird found was definitely immature. Its wing and tail feathers were only about half as long as in a mature bird. The bird's skin was prepared by Hugh Bailey (president of the Outing Club), and it was found that the pin feathers were very poorly attached, making the skin unsuitable for our permanent collection. The bird had only its left wing and lacked a completed outer toe on its right foot and the middle toe on its left foot. Each of these toe structures were mere vestiges. The humerus was found on the right wing, but internal examination showed a bit of blood clot at the base of the bone. There seemed to be no external signs of injury on this wing area or on the toes. It cannot be decided definitely whether the three modified parts were the result of malformation during embryological development from hereditary or other causes or whether the nestling had been attacked by a predator while very young. The combination of unusual circumstances has indeed been very interesting.—FRANK B. GAILEY, Biology Department, Berea College.

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### HOUSE WREN NESTING IN MADISONVILLE

In a conversation with Fire Chief Basil Toombs on June 17, 1954, I learned that a small gray-brown bird was nesting in a gourd bird house erected in an iron pipe, in the yard of his neighbor, Otto Fulkerson, on south Church Street. In company with Chief Toombs I visited the nesting site and found the birds feeding their young on this date. The birds were identified as House Wrens, a species not heretofore recorded as nesting in or around Madisonville. On June 23, 1954, Frank Collins, biologist for the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and the writer visited the nesting site and watched the birds for more than an hour. Again they were definitely identified as House Wrens. Photographs of the nest were taken. This is the first nesting record of this species for the writer in more than 45 years of observation. It has been recorded as nesting in Bowling Green by Dr. Gordon Wilson in recent years. It has nested in Jefferson County for many years, being one of the most common to be recorded there. This species is gradually extending its range westward over Kentucky and should soon appear in many other places.—B. C. BACON, Madisonville.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

Three excellent Christmas Bird Censuses were sent in for publication in the *Junior Science Bulletin*, the publication of the Kentucky Junior Academy of Science, which is affiliated with the Kentucky Ornithological Society. These censuses were from Kingston High School, Madison County; Valley High School, Jefferson County; and Taylor County High School, at Campbellsville.

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The Tennessee Ornithological Society held its annual spring meeting at Standing Stone State Park on May 8-9, 1954. Our Dr. Harvey Lovell was the guest speaker, his subject being "The Habitat Niche of Nesting Birds."

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The Henderson Audubon Society presented an attractive program for 1953-54. Screen-tour lectures were given by Allan D. Cruikshank, Walter H. Shackleton, and Richard Bird. Three great spring outings were staged, culminating in the Big Spring List on May 2. Miss Virginia Smith is the president of the society; there are 250 members listed in the booklet announcing the year's activities.

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### DR. FRAZER STILL ACTIVE

The *COURIER-JOURNAL* for July 5 carried an item about our Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, who long ago came to be known as the "grand old man of the K. O. S." The item was a summary of a longer one in the *VANDERBILT ALUMNUS* in which Dr. Frazer said that he felt that it is a foolish thing to quit working after a lifetime of hard work. "If a man quits work when he is still able, he generally dies pretty soon. I think he should die, and get out of the way. I am past eighty-four years old and still working every day. I do not believe in retirement and think that most men who retire are too lazy to work." Certainly Dr. Frazer lives up to what he has said, for he has never let a few years or even some times of poor health keep him from his daily practice and his equally ardent observation of birds.

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The following Kentuckians attended the meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club, June 11-14, at Cape May, New Jersey: Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brecher, Harvey B. Lovell, Mr. and Mrs. Burt L. Monroe, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Frederick W. Stamm, and Donald Summerfield. While interesting field trips were planned to observe breeding colonies of the Eastern Willet, the Black Skimmer, the Least Tern, the Common Tern, and others, the species that attracted the most attention was the Cattle Egret. At the business session Burt L. Monroe, Sr., was elected president.

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At the recent annual meeting of the Beckham Bird Club Harvey B. Lovell was elected president.

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Miss Mabel Slack took a sabbatical leave this past year and had an interesting time traveling and studying. Last summer she attended the Marine Biological Station at Pacific Grove, California. She remained in California until early May, when she went to Mexico.

Later she took some work at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory Colorado. She is now back at her regular position in Atherton High School, Louisville.

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#### A CORRECTION

Miss Esther Mason, who turned over to the editor the minutes of our 1953 fall meeting at Cumberland Falls, has called attention to an omission in the minutes, for which she and the WARBLER are sorry. There should have been a statement that the books of the treasurer, Mrs. Charles S. Thacher, were audited by a committee headed by Mr. W. P. Rhoads and were commended for their accuracy and care. Also the committee praised Mrs. Thacher for her years of distinctive service as an officer of the K. O. S.

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#### CYPERTS DO SUMMER WORK IN TEXAS

Eugene and Mary Lou Cypert, of the Tennessee Wildlife Refuge on Kentucky Lake, spent part of the hot summer of 1954 working in the Davy Crockett National Forest, near Crockett, Texas. Their specific problem was to determine the effects of fire on the vegetation of the forest floor. They report a new bird for their life list, the Road Runner, as well as such old acquaintances as the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

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#### OUR FALL MEETING

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its thirty-first fall meeting at Kentucky Lake State Park on October 8-10, 1954, with Kenlake Hotel as headquarters. On Friday evening our president, Dr. Roger W. Barbour, welcomed the members and guests. Mr. Robert Pierce, manager of the Kleber Sanctuary, gave an interesting history and description of the sanctuary, expressing the hope that our members can make use of this 700-acre tract in Owen County. Mr. Larry Gale, director of the Division of Game, Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, spoke on "Game Bird Research in Kentucky." He discussed the life history of the Mourning Dove, the Bob-white, and other game birds; he summarized studies in highway mortality and the annual number of birds killed by hunters. He stated that an increase of game birds in Kentucky is not now in sight. Mr. Parker Smith, principal biologist of the Tennessee Department of Fish and Game, told of the importance of waterfowl on Kentucky Lake. He showed slides of plantings of large acreages to attract waterfowl. An interesting panel discussion concluded this meeting. The members besides Messrs. Gale, Pierce, and Smith were Mr. Frank Collins, district biologist; Mr. William Gault, assistant district biologist; Mr. Eugene Cypert, wildlife management biologist; Mr. William Lee, assistant game management agent; and Mr. Robert C. Soaper, game management agent.

Saturday was given over to field trips in the Woodlands Wildlife Refuge. The following were leaders of trips: Mr. Eugene Cypert, Burt L. Monroe, Mr. A. F. Ganier, Dr. Gordon Wilson, and Dr. Roger W. Barbour. More than 70 species of birds were seen, but the highlight was a flock of some 800 Canada Geese.

At the dinner meeting on Saturday evening Mr. Robert Mengel, of the Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, gave the principal address, "Birds of Kentucky." He was introduced by Mr. Burt L. Monroe, president of the Wilson Ornithological Club, lifelong friend. Mr. Mengel spoke of his years of collecting data for his thesis, which will soon appear. He suggested that our society, though small, can do great scientific work.

**The following officers were elected for next year:**

President: Mrs. Frederick W. Stamm, Louisville;

Vice-President: Mr. Robert Pierce, Frankfort;

Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs. William B. Tabler, 6 Glenn Hill Road, Louisville;

Recording Secretary: Mrs. Ben Allen Thomas, Shelbyville;

Councillors, 1954-'56: Mr. Rodney M. Hays, Lexington; and Mr. Hunter Hancock, Murray; 1953-'55 Councillors who remain in office: Mrs. J. Kidwell Grannis, Flemingsburg; and Mr. Charles Meade, Henderson.

Approximately 75 of our members were in attendance at this fall meeting.

The spring meeting in Louisville was announced. The 1955 fall meeting is scheduled for Berea.

VESTINA BAILEY THOMAS, Recording Secretary

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**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Balance on hand, April 23, 1954.....	\$309.95
Receipts—	
Membership Dues .....	62.50
Dividend on Endowment .....	12.25
Sale of Check Lists, WARBLERS, Bibliographies, and Indexes .....	8.00
Total .....	\$392.70
Disbursements—	
To Selby Smith for Printing May and August	
Issues of WARBLER .....	\$205.09
Bank Expenses (Tax and Service) .....	.90
Expense of Spring Meeting .....	2.00
Postage and Envelopes .....	5.92
Junior Academy of Science Award .....	5.00
Filing Fee to Secretary of State, Frankfort .....	1.00
Returned Check .....	2.00
Refund on One Copy of WARBLER .....	.25
Total Disbursements .....	\$222.16

FAN B. TABLER, Secretary-Treasurer



Shelbyville, Kentucky, October 19, 1954.

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Editor of KENTUCKY WARBLER  
Western State College  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Dear Mr. Wilson:

At the business meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society, held at Kenlake Hotel on October 9, 1954, a motion was made by Mr. F. P. Shannon, duly seconded and carried, that the following change be made in the Constitution, Article V, Section A.

The Constitution reads:

**ARTICLE V. MEETINGS**

Section A. The Society shall hold one regular meeting in the spring, and one regular meeting in the fall. The spring meeting shall be held in Louisville annually in connection with the Kentucky Education Association. The fall meeting shall be the annual meeting and shall be held in some other place, alternating between localities in the eastern and the western sections of the state as far as practicable.

The proposed change:

**ARTICLE V. MEETINGS**

Section A. The Society shall hold one regular meeting in the spring and one regular meeting in the fall. The location for the spring meeting shall be selected by the Executive Board. The fall meeting shall be the annual meeting, alternating between locations in the eastern and the western sections of the state as far as practicable.

Sincerely,

VESTINA BAILEY THOMAS, Recording Secretary