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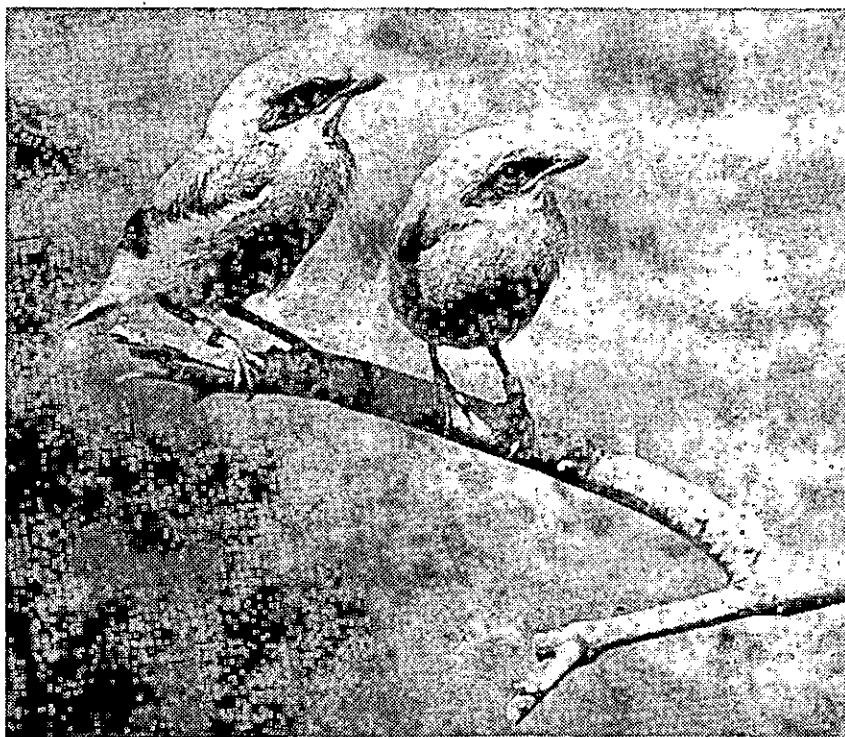
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# The Kentucky Warbler

Vol. XXXIII

AUGUST, 1957

No. 3



Two Young Loggerhead Shrikes, Photograph by Mabel Slack

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

### OUR 1957 FALL MEETING

Our Fall Meeting will be held the weekend of October 11-13, 1957, at beautiful Cumberland Falls State Park. We have not been to this area since 1953; and all of us remember the large attendance and the good time we had. Won't you plan now to spend part of your vacation in the Cumberland National Forest and enjoy the opportunity it affords to observe the fall migrants in eastern Kentucky, as well as renewing acquaintances with fellow ornithologists? Program plans at the present writing (July 15) are not complete, but we assure you it will be well worth your time to spend this period with K. O. S. members. We have had word from some members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society that they are looking forward to the meeting. Full particulars will be mailed well in advance. **REMEMBER THE DATE** and join us there won't you?

—Anne L. Stamm, President K. O. S.

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### NATIONAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE

The National Science Institute conducted an eight-weeks summer course at Murray State College this year. Among our K. O. S. people there was Mabel Slack, science teacher at Atherton, Louisville. On July 10 and 11 the Institute visited Mammoth Cave National Park for underground and above-ground explorations. On the evening of July 10 our editor gave his lecture on "Ecological Changes in Mammoth Cave National Park, 1938-1957."

## A BLACKBIRD ROOST IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

By Anne L. Stamm and Harvey B. Lovell

The winter of 1956-57 was unusually mild, and large numbers of blackbirds wintered in northern Kentucky. On December 5, the senior author noticed 3 to 4 thousand Purple Grackles feeding in a swampy area on Newberg Road, and on December 12, she estimated 10,000 blackbirds in the Jeffersontown area. Frank Krull, who lives in a rural area about six miles southeast of Louisville, also recorded thousands of blackbirds during the month of December. On the Christmas bird count made on December 23, numerous flocks of blackbirds were reported, the most ever recorded on a winter count in this area. It was not until February 23, 1957, that the roost was discovered in a grove of scrub pine trees by the senior author and Frederick W. Stamm, although the people living in the valley where this phenomenon occurred were, of course, aware of the presence of the roost.

The roost proper was located in a grove of scrub pines ten miles southeast of Louisville in the vicinity of Farmer's Lane. The site is not quite one-tenth of a mile from heavily traveled Bardstown Road. The roost covered an area approximately 400 yards on the south, 217 yards on the west, 352 yards on the east, and 350 yards on the north. The roost is in a valley with gentle hills all around it. On two sides of the area numerous families live within a short distance of the roost.

On March 5, Lovell accompanied the Stammers to the area. Many thousands of birds had already reached the outer areas, and several groves of trees near the roost were being used as rallying centers before the birds entered the roost proper. Several of these groves were in the yards of home owners in the neighborhood. It was noted that the earlier flocks were largely Red-wings, with numerous Cowbirds and Grackles sprinkled through the flocks. Then as daylight waned, several flocks of Starlings flew directly to the roost. The largest groups came at 5:00 P. M., and by 5:30 nearly all the birds had entered the roost proper.

On March 8, we visited the area earlier in the afternoon. We went to the south side and observed the birds as they began to arrive. Some flew to the open meadows and fed in the fields for awhile, and others flew to the leafless deciduous trees, completely covering the branches. By actual count some trees held as many as 500 birds. As it grew darker, the birds in the fields began to move to the roost, and as they flew up from the ground, they formed a huge cloud resembling a tornado funnel, and the beating of their wings created a sound like the surf pounding on the shore.

The junior author entered the roost and fired four times into the flocks to sample the roost. Sixteen birds were obtained as follows: 3 Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolinus*), 3 Red-wings (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), 6 Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), 1 Cowbird (*Molothus ater*), and 3 Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). That evening we estimated that at least 500,000 birds were using the roost. As we walked through the center of the roost after dark, thousands of birds noisily shifted from tree to tree over our heads. By flashing a powerful flashlight ahead of us, we were able to accelerate this shifting and to reduce the amount of excrement that fell on us. We were unable to get close enough to catch any of the birds by hand, as has been described for other roosts.

The roost consisted of about 90% blackbirds and about 10% Starlings, with only a few Robins observed. Red-wings made up the

largest group, nearly 60%, with Rusty Blackbirds, Cowbirds, Grackles, and Starlings following in that order.

During our observations several behavior patterns were observed. First, each evening the birds flew towards the roost along definite routes in a well-established pattern. Small flocks kept joining together until the main flocks attained great size as they finally entered the roost. Second, the birds had four main flight lines: one from the northwest, one from the northeast, one from the southeast, and one from the west. It was also noticed that minor flight lines converged with larger ones as the flocks neared the final roosting area. Third, the birds had pre-roosting areas in various groups of deciduous trees surrounding the roost. These they used for as long as forty-five minutes, not leaving them until it was almost dark. Fourth, Red-wings were the first to arrive, often accompanied by a few Rusty Blackbirds, and the last to arrive were the Starlings. Fifth, by following some of the flocks it was learned that some of the larger mixed flocks flew as far away as 20 to 25 miles to feed.

On March 12, a day visit was made to study the roosting area. As one walked into the roost, the smell of ammonia was almost overpowering. One could easily tell where the greatest concentration occurred by the depth of the bird dung that covered the ground, which in some places exceeded two inches, and by the extent of the white ornamentation covering the trees. The heaviest concentration was in this central area, where the trees, shrubs, and vines were thickest, and here considerable undigested corn was found among the droppings. Numerous dead birds were scattered about, usually in an advanced state of disintegration. A surprising number still showed the red shoulder epaulet of the male Red-wing.

Other visits were made on March 21, 27, 28, 30, and April 6. On March 21, we estimated about 312,000 birds; on March 27, about 200,000; on March 30 the number had declined to 150,000; and on April 6 only 75,000 birds returned to the roost. On the last date there was no pre-roosting in fringe areas. An early-morning visit was made, and it was noted that the birds departed in the same manner, many using the roosts in the fringe areas, breaking up into smaller and smaller groups before they finally dispersed.

This is apparently the first year this grove has been used as a roost. Local residents, one of whom had lived in the area for 47 years, told us that he had never witnessed "anything like it" before. The site is evidently an old pasture which has been allowed to grow up, and the vegetation has just reached the proper size to attract winter roosting birds. Apparently the area was used in early winter by wintering blackbirds but was not particularly noticed by the local residents until the spring hordes of migrants built up the population. Mr. Horack, whose yard meets the entrance of the roost, said he had not thought much about the birds until the latter part of February, when they happened to land in his yard, blackening it with their great numbers. Bird droppings covered the roofs, and if the gutters were not turned off, the water in the cisterns, which are much used in the area was ruined. Clothes hung out-of-doors could not be left until late afternoon without being completely spattered, and cars not kept in garages were coated with whitewash. Some of the residents, in attempting to dissipate the roost, shot into the flocks and killed a considerable number. Other residents, objecting to the slaughter, called a conservation officer, who stopped the shooting, since most of the species are on the protected list. Only the Starlings are not protected, and it was impossible to distinguish these in the gathering dusk.

Winter blackbird roosts in northern Kentucky are not common. Beckham (1885) reported a roost nine miles from Bardstown, which was composed chiefly of Robins, thousands of which were killed for food. McAtee (1926) published a map showing blackbird roosts in the Eastern United States, which showed two roosts in Kentucky, but he did not tell exactly where they were located or where he got the information. John Loefer and John Patten in 1941 described a blackbird roost along the Kentucky River fifteen miles from Lexington, containing mostly Grackles, Cowbirds, and Starlings. In 1946, Lovell and Kirkpatrick described a winter roost at Fort Knox, containing mostly Robins and Starlings, with some Grackles and Cowbirds. Here in Louisville we are familiar with Starling roosts in the center of the city, where the birds roost on cornices or ledges on hotels, stores, and the Federal Building. In the fall Starlings often roost in the suburbs in trees, especially oak trees which hold their leaves.

It will be interesting to see if the present roosting site on Bardstown Road is used again next winter, since it seems to have a variety of desirable features.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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- Loefer, John B., and John A. Patten, 1941. Starlings at a Blackbird Roost. *Auk*, 58: 584-586.
- Lovell, Harvey B., and C. M. Kirkpatrick, 1946. A Winter Roost. *Ky. Warbler*, 22: 17-19.
- McAtee, W. L., 1926. Blackbird Roosts. *Auk*, 43: 373-374.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### BIG SPRING LISTS

**MADISONVILLE** (Clear Creek, Richland Pond, four lakes at Madisonville, and the Brown and Frostburg Roads: open fields, 30%; deciduous woodlands and thickets, 50%; lake shores, 20%.)—May 5; 5:00-11:00 A. M.; 12:00-8:00 P. M. Fairly strong wind, NW; temp. 41-65. Total hours, 14; total miles, 69 (6 on foot, 63 by car). Total, 90 species, about 2505 individuals. The starred forms were found near the time of the count. The wind, apparently, prevented my finding several more species, to equal some of my previous counts. The 24 Black-bellied Plovers, recorded after the count, were in a partially flooded field by the side of the Brown Road.—James W. Hancock.

\* \* \* \* \*

**HENDERSON** (Henderson County).—May 5; 6:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M. Clear; temp. 37-63; barometer 30.2, steady; wind N, 5-8 m. p. h. Twenty observers of our group. We had a real help from the Audubon Society of Decatur, Illinois, forty of whom were in the cabins and nearby motels. We served as guides for several parties of them in the park on the count date. Total, 132 species.—W. P. Rhoads, compiler.

\* \* \* \* \*

**BOWLING GREEN** (McElroy-Chaney Lakes, Ford Spring area).—May 10-11; at lakes on first afternoon, 3:30 to 6:00 P. M.; at Ford's

Spring on second afternoon, 5:30-dark. Partly cloudy; just after a light rain on May 10. Both lakes falling fast; only mud puddles at McElroy's. At McElroy's I found a female Wood Duck and 7 downy young in one of the remaining pools. At Ford's Spring I recorded the Alder Flycatcher described elsewhere in this issue. Fatigue prevented my getting out for a longer time. Total for two afternoons, 97.—Gordon Wilson.

\* \* \* \*

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK (Beaver Pond, Doyle Valley, Trails, Ugly Creek).—May 5; 7:00 A. M. to 8:00 P. M. The Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks were unusually abundant; at least fifteen of the two. Nests were found of the following species: Mourning Dove, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, Redstart, and Chipping Sparrow. Miring up in the sand at Ugly Creek had some compensations, for we added several new species to our list and were serenaded by a great Whip-poor-will concert before the rangers pulled us out of the sand. Also seven deer were sighted during the day. Total, 93 species.—Alice Furber, Jim Haynes, Cleo Hogan, Jr., Lillian Simmons, Dr. Russell Starr (compiler), Mrs. Russell Starr.

\* \* \* \*

LOUISVILLE (Louisville and its environs, including the Ohio River, woodlands, meadow lands, and Capenton's Swamp).—May 5; 5:00 A. M. to 8:30 P. M. Total, 131 species.—Leonard C. Brecher, Helen Browning, Floyd S. Carpenter, Helen Cole, Marie Cole, James Craddock, Joe Croft, Amy Deane, David Hadden, Frank Krull, Harvey B. Lovell, Mrs. John McChord, Burt L. Monroe, Sr. (compiler), Louis Pieper, Marie Pieper, Bernice Shannon, Francis Shannon, Mabel Slack, Roderic Sommers, Anne Stamm, Haven Wiley, Audrey Wright.

\* \* \* \*

DANVILLE (BOYLE COUNTY).—May 11; 11:00 A. M. to 8:30 P. M. Warm, almost no wind. We took a count on May 4, which netted us only 78 species because of the cold, windy weather, though we stayed out from 6:30 A. M. to 8:30 P. M. The starred species refer to ones recorded May 4 but not on May 11. Both counts have some strange blank spots, such as no Kinglets. The year has been a most unusual one in our area, with many of these oddities of birds' being absent. Total for May 11, 93 species; total for both counts, 107.—F. W. Loetscher, Scott Glore, Jr.

\* \* \* \*

KLEBER SONGBIRD SANCTUARY (Owen County)—May 11-12. Clear and warm on May 12. More warblers were seen on the second day. Of the 80 species listed only four were found outside the sanctuary, and they were in adjacent areas and are marked with an asterisk.—F. W. and Anne L. Stamm.

\* \* \* \*

PIGEON ROOST (At the head of Pigeon Roost Fork of Wolf Creek, 10,000 acres of uninhabited timberland).—May 4 and 5. Total species, 81. (See elsewhere in this issue a more detailed account of this escape into the wilds of the mountains.)—Rufus Reed, John Cheek, Walter Forson, Okie S. Green (compiler), Robert Chapman.

## BIG SPRING LISTS

M—Madisonville, H—Henderson, B—Bowling Green, MC—Mammoth Cave,

L—Louisville, D—Danville, K—Kleber, P—Pigeon Roost.

\*—Recorded NEAR Count Period

- Common Loon—M\*, D\*  
 P-b. Grebe—M, H, MC, D  
 D-c. Cormorant—H, L  
 G. B. Heron—H, B, L  
 Am. Egret—H, B, L  
 L. B. Heron—H, MC  
 Green Heron—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 B-c. N. Heron—M, L  
 Y-c. N. Heron—B\*, L  
 Am. Bittern—M  
 Mallard—H, B, L, D\*  
 Black Duck—H, B  
 Gadwall—D  
 Am. Widgeon—H, L, D  
 Pintail—D  
 G-w. Teal—B  
 B-w. Teal—M, H, B, L, D  
 Shoveller—H  
 Wood Duck—H, B, L  
 Redhead—D  
 Ring-n. Duck—B\*  
 L. Scaup Duck—M, H, D\*  
 H. Merganser—L  
 T. Vulture—H, MC, L, D, K, P  
 B. Vulture—H, MC, L  
 Sh-sh. Hawk—H  
 Cooper's Hawk—H, L, K, P  
 Red-t. Hawk—H, MC, L, P  
 Red-sh. Hawk—M\*, H, MC, L, K  
 B-w. Hawk—MC, P  
 Osprey—M, H  
 Sp. Hawk—M, B, MC, L, D  
 R. Grouse—P  
 Bob-White—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Vir. Rail—H  
 Coot—M, H, B, L, D  
 Sem. Plover—H, B, L  
 Killdeer—M, H, B, L, D, K  
 Bl-b. Plover—M\*, B  
 W. Snipe—H, B, L  
 Sp. Sandpiper—M, H, B, L, D, K\*  
 Sol. Sandpiper—H, B, L, D  
 Gr. Yellow-legs—H, B, L  
 L. Yellow-legs—H, B, L, D\*, K\*  
 Pec. Sandpiper—B, L  
 L. Sandpiper—H, B, L  
 Stilt Sandpiper—B\*  
 Sem. Sandpiper—B\*  
 Herring Gull—L  
 R-b. Gull—M, B\*, L  
 Bon. Gull—B\*, L  
 Forster's Tern—L  
 Black Tern—B\*, L  
 M. Dove—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 Y-b. Cuckoo—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Bl-billed Cuckoo—MC, D  
 Screech Owl—M\*, D, P  
 Horned Owl—H, L  
 Barred Owl—H, B, L, P  
 Chuck-w-Widow—M, B, L, K\*  
 Whip-poor-will—B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Nighthawk—M, H, B, L, D, K  
 Chimney Swift—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 R-t. Hummingbird—M\*, H, B\*, MC, L, D\*, K, P  
 B. Kingfisher—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Y-s. Flicker—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Pil. Woodpecker—M, H, MC, L, D, P  
 Red-b. Woodpecker—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 Red-h. Woodpecker—B, L, P  
 Y-b. Sapsucker—H, MC, L  
 H. Woodpecker—M, H, B, MC, D, K  
 D. Woodpecker—M, H, MC, L, D, K, P  
 E. Kingbird—M, H, B, L, D, K, P  
 Cr. Flycatcher—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 Phoebe—M, H, B\*, MC, L, D, K  
 Ac. Flycatcher—M\*, H, B, MC, D, K, P  
 Alder Flycatcher—H, B  
 L. Flycatcher—H, D, P  
 Wood Pewee—M, H, B, L, K, P  
 O-s. Flycatcher—H  
 Horned Lark—M, H, B, L, D  
 Tr. Swallow—B, P  
 Bank Swallow—B, L, D\*  
 R-w. Swallow—M\*, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Barn Swallow—M, H, B, L, D, K, P  
 Cliff Swallow—B\*, L, D  
 Pur. Martin—M, H, B, L, D, K, P  
 Blue Jay—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P



- Crow—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Car. Chickadee—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 T. Titmouse—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 W-b. Nuthatch—M\*, H, MC, L, D, P  
 B. Creeper—MC, P  
 House Wren—M\*, H, B, L, D, K  
 B. Wren—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 C. Wren—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 S-b. M. Wren—MO  
 Mockingbird—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Catbird—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Br. Thrasher—M, H, B, MC, L, D, P  
 Robin—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 W. Thrush—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Her. Thrush—H, L  
 O-b. Thrush—M, H, B, L, D, K  
 G-c. Thrush—M\*, H, B\*, MC, L  
 Veery—H, B\*, D  
 Bluebird—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 B-g. Gnatcatcher—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 G-c. Kinglet—H  
 R-c. Kinglet—M, L, K  
 Am. Pipit—B  
 C. Waxwing—M, H, MC, L, D  
 L. Shrike—H, MC, L  
 Starling—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 W-e. Vireo—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Y-t. Vireo—M, B, MC, L, D  
 B-h. Vireo—B\*  
 R-e. Vireo—M, H, B\*, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Phil. Vireo—H  
 War. Vireo—M, H, B, L, D, P  
 B. and W. Warbler—M, H, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Pro. Warbler—M, H, B\*, MC, L, D  
 W-e. Warbler—H, MC, P  
 G-w. Warbler—H, B\*, MC, P  
 B-w. Warbler—H, MC, L, K, P  
 Brewster's Warbler—P  
 Tenn. Warbler—M, H, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Nashville Warbler—M, H, MC, L, K  
 Par. Warbler—MC, L, P  
 Yel. Warbler—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Mag. Warbler—M\*, H, MC, L, D, P  
 Cape M. Warbler—H, B\*, L, D\*  
 B-t. B. Warbler—H  
 Myr. Warbler—M, H, B, MC, L, D\*, P  
 B-t. G. Warbler—M, MC, L, K  
 Cer. Warbler—M, H, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Bl'bur. Warbler—MC, D, K  
 Y-t. Warbler—M, H, MC, L, D  
 Ch.-s. Warbler—M\*, H, B\*, K  
 Bay-b. Warbler—H, D, K  
 Bl-poll Warbler—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 Prairie Warbler—M, B, MC, D, K, P  
 Palm Warbler—M, H, B, L, D\*  
 Oven-bird—M, H, MC, D\*  
 N. Wat-thrush—H, L  
 La. Wat-thrush—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Ky. Warbler—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Yel-throat—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Y-b. Chat—M, H, B\*, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Hooded Warbler—M, H, MC, L, P  
 Wilson's Warbler—B\*  
 Canada Warbler—MC, L, D, P  
 Redstart—M, H, MC, D\*, P  
 Eng. Sparrow—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Bob-o-link—B\*, L  
 Meadowlark—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Red-wing—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 O. Oriole—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K  
 B. Oriole—M, H, B\*, L, P  
 Rusty B'bird—P  
 P. Grackle—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Cowbird—M, H, B\*, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Sc. Tanager—M, H, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Sum. Tanager—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Cardinal—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 R-b. Grosbeak—M, B\*, MC, L, D  
 Ind. Bunting—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Dickcissel—H, B, L, D  
 Goldfinch—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 E. Towhee—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Sav. Sparrow—B\*, L, D\*  
 Grass. Sparrow—H, B, MC, L, D, K\*  
 P-w. Sparrow—B, K  
 S-c. Junco—H  
 Tree Sparrow—P  
 Chip. Sparrow—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Field Sparrow—M, H, B, MC, L, D, K, P  
 Wh-cr. Sparrow—M\*, H, B\*, MC, L, D\*, K, P  
 Wh-th. Sparrow—M, H, B, MC, L, D  
 Swamp Sparrow—M, H, L  
 Song Sparrow—M\*, H, L, D, K, P

## BIRDS RECORDED AT OUR SPRING OUTING AT BOWLING GREEN

April 13-14, 1957

Since the other Big Spring Lists are from early May, the editor felt that it would hardly be fair to include this list, made two weeks earlier, in the regular tabulation. Some of our members, also, wanted a complete list of our finds at our K. O. S. spring outing. The water species were counted, the others merely listed by species; starred forms were added on the second day, at Dr. Lancaster's cabins. Horned Grebe, 3; Pied-billed Grebe, 10-12; Great Blue Heron, 1; Green Heron, 3; Black-crowned Night Heron, 3; American Bittern, 1; Mallard, 6-8; Black Duck, 20-30; Gadwall, 4; Baldpate, 30-40; Green-winged Teal, 20-30; Blue-winged Teal, 75-100; Shoveller, 20-30; Ring-necked Duck, 20-30; Greater Scaup Duck, 2; Lesser Scaup Duck, 20; Buffle-head, 6; Ruddy Duck, 6; American Merganser, 1; Red-breasted Merganser, 1; Turkey Vulture; Black Vulture\*; Cooper's Hawk; Red-tailed Hawk; Red-shouldered Hawk; Broad-winged Hawk\*; Marsh Hawk; Osprey; Duck Hawk; Sparrow Hawk; Sora, 2; Coot, 75-100; Killdeer, 8-12; Wilson's Snipe, 6-8; Upland Plover, 7; Solitary Sandpiper, 4; Greater Yellow-legs, 8-10; Lesser Yellow-legs, 12-15; Pectoral Sandpiper, 1; Barred Owl\*, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Phoebe, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Bewick's Wren, Carolina Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Short-billed Marsh Wren, Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Hermit Thrush, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet\*, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Yellow-throated Vireo, Myrtle Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Palm Warbler, Oven-bird, Louisiana Water-thrush, Yellow-throat\*, English Sparrow, Meadowlark, Red-wing, Rusty Blackbird, Purple Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Cardinal, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Pine-woods Sparrow\*, Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow. Total for the two days, 109 species. Approximately 70 members of the K. O. S. participated in these field trips.

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### WING HAVEN

By Kay Altsheler

Our home, at 2326 Dundee Road, Louisville 5, has been christened Wing Haven. In planning and planting Wing Haven we considered the four basic needs of all birds: water, food, cover, and nesting sites. All birds want fresh, shallow, dripping water. We keep our bird bath dripping fresh water at all times, winter and summer. Trees, shrubs, ground covers, and flowers were selected to provide two or three of the above requirements. If not too unattractive, we allow flowers and shrubbery to go to seed to help feed our birds. We also tolerate some weeds, such as Pokeweed, because the birds like them. Many birds appreciate the thickets we are developing along the road and around the work area. We use only mild controls on many harmful insects, because we know that some birds require them for food. We have

owned Wing Haven a little more than two years. The rock wall was not built until early last spring. Most of the planting was done after its completion. As we add to our planting and it matures, we are sure that our bird population will continue to increase. We have already recorded the following birds at Wing Haven (the starred species were seen flying overhead): Great Blue Heron\*, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk\*, Sparrow Hawk, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo, Sreech Owl, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift\*, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Crested Flycatcher, Phoebe, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Blue Jay, Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood Thrush, Olive-backed Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Veery, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-poll Warbler, Oven-bird, Louisiana Water-thrush, Kentucky Warbler, Yellow-throat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Hooded Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Redstart, English Sparrow, Meadowlark, Red-wing, Baltimore Oriole, Rusty Blackbird, Purple Grackle, Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Summer Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Slate-colored Junco, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

#### PLANTING FOR BIRDS

With the exception of large trees, most of the planting of Wing Haven has been done within the past two years. In the interest of brevity only common names of families are given. TREES: apple, apricot, beech, birch, cedar, cherry, crabapple, dogwood, elm, hackberry, hemlock, holly, locust, maple, mulberry, oak, osage orange, pear, pine, plum, sycamore, walnut. SHRUBS: abelia, American olive, barberry, buckthorn, bush honeysuckle (4 species), butterfly bush, chokecherry, cotoneaster (2 species), deutzia, dogwood (2 species), elderberry, euonymus (4 species), forsythia, holly (5 species), Japanese quince, jet bead, juniper—spreading (5 species), multiflora rose, nandina, privet (2 species), spice bush, spirea (3 species), stranvesia, viburnum (7 species). GROUND COVERS AND VINES. (There are many wild flowers whose seeds the birds enjoy and whose foliage serves as cover throughout the summer): ajuga, apple mint, bittersweet, clematis, coral bell, day lilies, English thyme, euonymus (3 species), ferns, forget-me-not, ginger, honeysuckle, hosta, ivy, jasmine, morning glory, myrtle, pachysandra, phlox (3 species), ranunculus, sedum (5 species), strawberry begonia. FERNS (The following ferns have been purchased. There are some which have been brought in from the woods and have not yet been identified): ebony spleenwort, walking fern, toothed woodfern, purple cliff brake, common polypody, Christmas fern, narrow-leaved spleenwort, maidenhair fern, lady fern, bladder fern, hay-scented fern, goldie's shield fern,

sensitive fern, cinnamon fern, royal fern, interrupted fern, ostrich fern, and bracken fern.

(Editor's note: On June 4 the garden at Wing Haven was shown on the Wellesley College Annual Garden Tour as a "bird-lover's garden." This article by Mrs. Altsheler represents some of the papers given to each visitor at that time.)

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### A BIRDING TRIP TO PIGEON ROOST

By Okie S. Green

Snow was on the ground, the Christmas season was just over, the long pull until spring was just ahead. Migration season seemed a long way off. Reading and study occupied most of my spare time. In the midst of this came a letter from my good friend, birdman and poet Rufus Reed, of Lovely, Martin County, Kentucky. The "Riley of the Foothills," always the eager and jubilant naturalist, no matter what the weather, wrote about a wonderful region in his native county, at the head of Pigeon Roost Fork of Wolf Creek, 10,000 acres of uninhabited timber land, which he desired "us boys" from Ashland to visit with him and John Cheek, of Pikeville, another K. O. S. member, in the spring, saying it was "a birders' paradise, etc., etc." After discussion with Walter Forson and Henry Hughes, we accepted and set a tentative date early in May to visit and study the area Rufus had spoken of.

During the ensuing months we studied maps of the territory and found that Pigeon Roost Fork of Wolf Creek, with its tributaries, covered a large area in Martin County and that it drained rather steep mountain land. If there are those who are further interested, the Varney Quadrangle Sheet available from the A. & I. D. Board at Frankfort, at 25c a copy, will give a complete description of the whole area. We found that the area involved is some fifteen miles from Inez, county seat of Martin County, and closely adjoins Pike County. The elevation above sea level ranges upward from 800 feet, more or less, to approximately 1500 feet. This much we were able to deduce from a map inspection.

After further correspondence with Rufus, 8:30 A. M. on May 4, 1957, found our party at his home, in Lovely, Kentucky, ready for a two-day trip into the region. We planned to camp overnight at the mouth of Crooked Gourdneck, a branch of Hobbs Fork of Pigeon Roost, a place Rufus told us was completely wild and remote and offered good, safe water. It would be necessary to back-pack in, as there were no roads, only foot trails, and they mostly in the creek; therefore, we were prepared. Our party consisted of Rufus M. Reed, Lovely; John A. Cheek, Pikeville; Walter Forson, Ashland; Okie S. Green, Ashland; and Robert Chapman, a nature enthusiast of Lovely.

Loading into Rufus's pick-up truck, camping gear, binoculars, and all, we soon had driven as far as possible. "Saddling up," we took off into what proved to be one of the most interesting wilderness areas we had ever visited in twenty-five years of outdoor activity all over North America. Streams as clear as crystal, cold as ice, and absolutely pure and unpolluted were everywhere. Wooded hills reaching to an azure sky, needle-carpeted vales, a mixture of conifers and hard and soft woods, carpets of wildflowers, among which flame azaleas stood in myriads of locations, mountain meadows, rushing waterfalls, no human inhabitants, and birds, 81 species identified! (See "Big Spring Lists" in this issue.)

A few comments on our finds would not be out of place. Ruffed Grouse were heard drumming high in the mountains near Gourdneck; this sounded like distant thunder. Reed called the Whip-poor-will a bird of mystery; one approached our camp early Saturday night and sat on a branch in full view fifteen yards away. The cluck in the call was very audible. Another came within ten feet of Forson, as he lay in his sleeping bag, and picked up bread crumbs from the ground. We discovered the nest of a Belted Kingfisher in the creek bank of Hobbs Fork. The Acadian and Least Flycatchers were very numerous; these two species taxed our collective resources to identify. We found a nest of a Carolina Chickadee five feet from the ground in an old white oak snag. The Golden-winged Warbler was seen with the Blue-winged and was very common. The highlight of our trip, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, was the finding of a Brewster's Warbler. This rare hybrid was observed for some ten minutes at a range of 150 feet, with 7x and 8x glasses. All identifying marks were very carefully noted. It was feeding in two or three large trees in bright sunlight. Many Blue-wings and Golden-wings were around, fitting the "overlapping range" account in the bird books. The streams were almost lined with Louisiana Water-thrushes; we found a nest in the bank of a creek, four feet above the water, 20 feet from the Chickadee nest mentioned earlier. All of us agreed that the Kentucky Warbler was the most abundant bird in the area; many were seen and heard; they were nesting everywhere. We found a nest of the Scarlet Tanager in ironweed overhanging Hobbs Fork, about eight feet above water. Reed nominates the male of this species as the most beautiful bird in the woods. The Tree Sparrow, quite late in its stay as a winter resident, was seen by Reed and Forson on Hobbs Creek. These comments are merely a brief account of our two-day trip into one of the wildest places in Kentucky.

## FIELD NOTES

### A LATE WINTER RECORD OF AMERICAN SCOTERS ON THE OHIO RIVER AT LOUISVILLE

On February 17, 1957, during the course of a morning birding trip, I made a short stop along the Ohio River near the foot of 8th Street. This particular vantage point had proved to be my most productive spot for observing wintering ducks in the Louisville area. Although I could find no more than six species of ducks on this particular morning, the 11:00 A. M. sun provided excellent light for identifying individual birds in the raft of ducks at midstream. My first impression at noting two smaller birds in a group of about 100 Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*) proved to be correct; within 5 minutes they had flown from the water, circled toward the Louisville side of the river at the Portland Canal, and worked their way upstream to land directly in front of me. There was no doubt in my mind now that the birds in my 20x telescope, and only 200 feet away, were American Scoters (*Oidemia nigra*). The birds were both young males, which I was able to study for a full 10 minutes. Several competent observers were notified that same day of the record, but repeated checks on succeeding days proved futile; as far as I know, young Haven Wiley was the only other person to observe these birds; he had identified them as scoters from some distance only one hour before my arrival. I was aware of the fact that any of the scoters are comparatively rare

in this vicinity, but it amazed me to find out one well-established record of this species in Kentucky. Jacob P. Doughty of Louisville collected two female birds on the Ohio River, on November 9, 1938, near Carrollton, Kentucky. (AUK, LX, 282, Monroe and Mengel).

My personal knowledge of the three species of scoters stems from experiences with them in 20 winters of birding along the New England Coast.

—RODERICK W. SOMMERS, Louisville.

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### A SIGHT RECORD OF A HARRIS'S SPARROW AT JEFFERSONTOWN

On Sunday, December 9, 1956, about 2:30 P. M., I started for a short hike and walked back through the nursery that adjoins the back of our home, which is located in eastern Jefferson County, about 10 miles from downtown Louisville. It was a chilly afternoon, with an overcast sky, and the temperature about 40 degrees. The ground was very soft from a recent thaw and a few days of rain. While walking the first one hundred yards or more, I observed a great number of White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) and Slate colored Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), which were feeding everywhere along the ground. While scanning the ground with my binoculars watching this activity, I came upon a Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*), not more than 60 feet in front of me, just out from a very large yew. This shrub is part of a natural fence row and separates the nursery from a corn field. The bird continued to feed for about five minutes in the spot first seen, paying no attention to my presence. Then, while I was trying to advance slowly toward the bird, it flew to the top of a multiflora rose bush. It then flew down to the corn field side of the fence row and fed just out from it, picking up corn from the field. Every time it was approached too closely, it would fly into the top of the fence row. After watching it for possibly twenty minutes, I lost it in the dense center of the natural fence.

The bird, very unusual for Louisville was in immature plumage but was readily recognizable as a Harris's Sparrow. A very conspicuous white throat, pink bill, and prominent black markings, roughly "T" shaped, on the chest, identified it immediately. It was not the least bit timid and would not fly until you came almost upon it.

The following Sunday, December 16, the same area was covered from 1:30-4:40 P. M., and it was not until 4:30, on my way back to the house that the bird was seen. It had been flushed with 10 to 12 White-crowned Sparrows from a yew. As I moved away from this tree a short distance, the birds immediately returned to it. The Harris's Sparrow sat a few moments at the very top before it went to the inside for its night's roost. It was again easily identifiable.

On the Christmas bird count, December 23, I saw the Harris's Sparrow along with White-crowned Sparrows again about 4:00 P. M., near the yew that seemed to be serving as its roost. This yew was about 150 feet from the one under which it was first observed. This was the last time the bird was seen, although this same area was covered weekly all during January and February.

—FRANK X. KRULL, Jeffersontown.

### WINTERING BROWN THRASHERS

On November 22, 1956, while on a short field trip in the area around our home, I saw a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) in a fence row of multiflora rose. This fence row divides a nursery from a large corn field and is located in eastern Jefferson County. On weekend field trips thereafter I seldom failed to see the Brown Thrasher; and on December 16 and 23 I saw, at one time, three thrashers along this same fence row. Although from November 22 until the last weekend in February they usually were found near this particular spot, I also saw them many times in areas at least a quarter of a mile away. During January and most of February they came frequently in the morning to our back porch and ate the toasted bread which we put out for them. During most of this time at least one of these thrashers roosted in a large dense yew, just off the back porch. Often returning from the field in late afternoon, I would see one and sometimes two going to roost in a large spruce tree in the nursery, about 300 feet from the back of the house.

Along about the first of March I began to miss the thrashers, and although several trips were made in the area, I could not find them in the places they had frequented during the winter.

I have worked the area adjoining my home very often during the past three winters; but the past one is the first, I am sure, that provided winter sanctuary for not one but at least three of these birds.

—FRANK X. KRULL, Jeffersontown.

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### TWO NEW MIGRANTS AT BOWLING GREEN

The spring migration of 1957 brought two new records for me. I am sure that one of them has often been in my territory before, but I was not skilled enough in its strange notes to be aware that I was hearing it. The other one was not strictly new but merely new for me in the field. On February 14 on the Chaney Farm, near the large stock barn, I heard a note that I learned to know quite well in 1952, when I camped for two weeks across the plains and mountains to the mouth of the Columbia River, the call of the Western Meadowlark. I soon located the bird as it fed in an old corn field and watched it for fifteen minutes. Though I returned to the same place on six or eight other trips, I was never able to flush it or hear it. This is the species that is a second record for this area but the first for me: Robert Mengel collected a single specimen of this bird on the same farm on May 4, 1949. The other find was the recognition of the fitz-bew call note of the Alder Flycatcher. On May 11, 1957, at Ford's Spring, a wooded, damp area in Warren County, I finally isolated the note and had the good fortune to have an Acadian Flycatcher calling at the same time. I suspect that I have often heard this note before but have mistaken it for a modified Acadian or Least Flycatcher note.

—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.

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### SONG SPARROWS USE NEST OF PREVIOUS SEASON

In 1957 a pair of Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*) successfully reared a brood of three young in a nest that had been used by Song Sparrows in 1956. This nest was located in an arbor vitae, at a point 54 inches from the ground. However, the arbor vitae is located alongside the front entrance of my home, so that the nest was just 30 inches

above the top step. It was a well-concealed nest. After the young had left in 1956, I removed one egg that had not hatched, but otherwise left the nest undisturbed. It seemed in good shape this spring. I first noticed that the nest was being refurbished on April 9, 1957, when I saw a strip of bark sticking out from the shrub. It was several days before I knew that Song Sparrows were preparing to use this nest again. Two eggs had been laid by April 12th, when we left the city for a vacation trip. Three young were raised. They left the nest on Sunday, May 5th, before seven o'clock in the morning.

None of the Song Sparrows in the 1956 nesting had been banded, so that there was no way to determine whether there was a relationship between the Sparrows of the 1956 nesting and those of the 1957 nesting.

I allowed the nest to remain for a time after this second nesting to see if it might be used again this season. It had not been by the end of June, and I removed it to examine it. The very lowest portion of the nest was quite rotten and fell to pieces as I handled it. But it was still a good nest. Apparently, very little had been done to refurbish it for use this year. Strips of bark taken from the jumpers growing nearby and a piece of string I had put out this year for Robins had been woven around the outer rim. The cup was still firm and in good condition. It was oval in shape and measured roughly two and three-eighths inches by three inches and was about one and five-eighths inches deep in the center. There seemed to be two linings. First, there was a lining of short, fine but tough, sisal-like fibers, all of about the same length. Underneath this, there was a lining of fine grasses. The sisal-like fibers could have come from an old, rotting, cocoa-mat that has been at our back door for the past five years.

I have not located any report in the literature of Song Sparrows' re-using the nest of a previous season. Mrs. Nice (1943. "Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow, II." *Transactions of the Linnaean Society of New York*, 6: 210) cites three instances of Eastern Song Sparrows using the same nest twice in a season, and one instance where a pair raised four broods in one season in the same nest. She believes that in these cases the territory possessed one outstandingly attractive nesting site. A search of *The Auk* and *The Wilson Bulletin* from 1943 to date has not added any further information. The present record is probably the only one of a Song Sparrow using the nest from a previous season. I can offer no reason as to why the nest was reused, since there is plenty of similar shrubbery in the neighborhood.

—BERNICE B. SHANNON, Louisville.

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#### WOODBURN LAKES, SEASON OF 1957

Heavy rains in January brought up both the Chaney and McElroy Lakes before the end of the month. By February 2 there were 175 acres of water at the McElroy Farm, about 100 acres at the Chaney Farm. Neither lake got up to the normal high levels, though the Chaney Lake, often slightly falling in late March, rose two feet higher than it had been in March. Both lakes lasted down until after June 1.

The season was good, though not unusual. Forty-nine species of water birds placed the spring season among the good years, though somewhat below the 54 species of several seasons. February and



March were duck months, with twenty species visiting the lakes. There were only a few days when as many as 2000 ducks were to be found on the two lakes. Mallards, Pintails, Blue-winged Teal, and Ring-necks were the species most numerous. The only geese recorded were ten Blue Geese at Chaney's on March 2 only. The Pied-billed and Horned Grebes were rather obvious; at Chaney's many of the K. O. S. observers on April 13 were able to get excellent views of the Horned, a treat to several of them, since the species is not so widely known as the Pied-billed. The herons were never numerous, twelve Black-crowned Night Herons being the highest record for a species. Though Coots were on hand, as usual, not more than 500 appeared on one lake, as compared with acres of some seasons. On April 10 I found two Soras at Chaney's. One waded from one grass tuft to another and practically disappeared beneath the water, the first time I ever saw this happen. This species was seen again by most of the K. O. S. observers on April 13. The King Rail was flushed twice at the McElroy Farm on May 31. As has been true for several recent years, the shore-birds have been far below some of the years I have studied the lakes. The only one to be seen in flocks of 50 to 60 was the Pectoral. Aside from the nearly 70 people who shared the lakes with me on April 13, I have had as companions on some of my trips Dr. L. Y. Lancaster and Mr. Millard Gipson of the Western faculty and Dr. and Mrs. Russell Starr of Glasgow.

The water species recorded, with their first and last dates are the following: Horned Grebe, March 24-April 20; Pied-billed Grebe, February 14-April 25; Great Blue Heron, March 17-May 31; American Egret, May 1 to 10; Green Heron, April 13 to end of lakes; Black-crowned Night Heron, March 21-May 31; Yellow-crowned Night Heron, April 25-May 4; American Bittern, April 13 only; Blue Goose, March 2 only; Mallard, February 2-May 19; Black Duck, February 2-May 10; Gadwall, February 2-April 13; Baldpate, February 14-April 25; Pintail, February 2-April 10; Green-winged Teal, February 14-May 10; Blue-winged Teal, March 17-May 25; Shoveller, February 16-May 1; Wood Duck, April 10-May 19 (1 female and 7 downy young at McElroy's on May 10, 1 female and 3 slightly larger young at Chaney's on May 19); Redhead, March 2-April 6; Ring-necked Duck, February 2-May 31 (2 males and 1 crippled female, May 31); Canvas-back, February 22-March 13; Greater Scaup Duck, April 13 only (one at Grider's Limestone Lake as early as February 2); Lesser Scaup Duck, February 2-May 31 (1 crippled female on May 31 at Chaney's); American Golden-eye, February 22 only; Buffle-head, March 1-April 13; Ruddy Duck, April 13 only (often on Grider's Limestone Lake); Hooded Merganser, March 9-30; American Merganser, February 22-April 13; Red-breasted Merganser, March 21-April 13; King Rail, May 31 only; Sora, April 10-13; Coot, February 16-May 31; Semipalmated Plover, April 25-May 19; Black-bellied Plover, May 10 only; Wilson's Snipe, February 16-May 10; Upland Plover, April 13; Spotted Sandpiper, May 1-19; Solitary Sandpiper, March 24-May 19; Willet, March 23 only; Greater Yellow-legs, March 21-May 10; Lesser Yellow-legs, March 29-May 19; Pectoral Sandpiper, March 23-May 10; Least Sandpiper, April 6-May 19; Stilt Sandpiper, May 4 only; Semipalmated Sandpiper, May 4 only; Ring-billed Gull, May 4 only; Bonaparte's Gull, May 4 only; Black Tern, May 1-4. (For a complete list of birds recorded by the K. O. S. on April 13, see "Big Spring Lists.")