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The Kentucky Warbler

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Vol. XXXV

AUGUST, 1959

No. 3



Plate 25 of Alexander Wilson's AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY
Upper left figure—Tennessee Warbler; large central figure—Mississippi Kite;
center right—Prairie Warbler; bottom—Kentucker Warbler.

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NEWS AND VIEWS

THE KENTUCKY WARBLER AS SEEN BY ALEXANDER WILSON

In 1925, when our magazine was begun as a four-page quarterly, your editor named it in honor of the one bird that bears the name of our state, the Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*). This beautiful bird was discovered and named by Alexander Wilson in Kentucky on his famous western journey of 1810. Since he mentions (See below) that it arrives in Kentucky about the middle of April, he must have shot his first specimen not far south of Lexington, for he says in his letter to Alexander Lawson from Nashville on April 28, 1810, that he left Lexington on April 14. Because the original edition of Wilson's AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY is now very rare and even the numerous later editions are hard to find except in old-book sales, it might be well to include here Wilson's own account of the Kentucky Warbler just as it appeared in Volume III of his monumental work.

"KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Sylvia formosa*).

"This new and beautiful species inhabits the country whose name it bears. It is also found generally in all the intermediate tracts between Nashville and New Orleans, and below that as far as the Balize, or mouths of the Mississippi, where I heard it several times, twittering among the high rank grass and low bushes of those solitary and desolate looking morasses. In Kentucky and Tennessee it is

(Continued On Page 55)

NOTES ON THE WESTERN MEADOWLARK IN THE SOUTHEAST
By Burt L. Monroe, Jr.

Since the year 1955 the Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) has exhibited a most remarkable expansion of its winter range. According to the A. O. U. Check-List, Fifth Edition, the eastern race of this species (*S. n. neglecta*) winters "... south to ... southern Texas (Brownsville, Cove), Louisiana, and Mississippi." It further mentions it as "Casual in Kentucky (Louisville, Bowling Green)." There is no mention of its occurrence in Alabama or Florida (p. 524, 1957).

Commencing with the winter of 1955-1956 this species put in its appearance (or at least was discovered) in considerable numbers in Alabama and western Florida, and, in smaller numbers, in central Tennessee and Kentucky.

A summary of known records of the species for these four states, prior to 1955, is as follows: **Kentucky**:—known from a specimen taken by Robert M. Mengel, six miles south of Louisville, Jefferson County, on December 31, 1946 (in lit.); specimen taken on May 4, 1949, at Chaney Farm, south of Bowling Green, by Robert M. Mengel (in lit.); and a singing bird at Madisonville, Hopkins County, in March and April, 1954, by James Hancock (*Kentucky Warbler*, 30:47-48, 1954). **Tennessee**:—recorded only from Shelby County, extreme southwestern Tennessee, in the Memphis area, where the species is regular in winter and has since been shown to be resident (Coffey, in lit., and in Newman, *Audubon Field Notes*, 10:390, 1956). **Alabama**:—known from a single record of a singing bird at Fort Morgan, Baldwin County, on March 19, 1949, reported by Henry Stevenson (*Auk*, 68:396, 1950). **Florida**:—totally unknown.

From December, 1955, to the date of this writing, February, 1959, the Western Meadowlark has been shown to be a regular winter resident in these four states, and even common in parts of Alabama and western Florida. A summary of records since 1955 follows:

Kentucky:—a group of three birds one mile north of Anchorage, Jefferson County, from December 22 through December 25, 1956, by Burt L. Monroe, Sr., and the writer, from which group the second state specimen was secured on December 25, now deposited in the University of Louisville collection; on February 14, 1957, one was observed on the Chaney Farm south of Bowling Green, at close range, for fifteen minutes as it fed and sang on the ground in freshly plowed land (*Kentucky Warbler*, 33:58); a single bird noted by the Monroes on December 20 and 21, 1958, near Brownsboro, Oldham County.

Tennessee:—exclusive of Shelby County, recorded from Ashport and Fort Pillow, Lauderdale County, on February 2, 1957, by Mr. and Mrs. Ben B. Coffey, Jr.; near Somerville and LaGrange, Fayette County, March 10, 1957, by Coffey and Alice Smith; and at Pulaski, Giles County, March 4, 1957, by the writer (in Newman, *Audubon Field Notes* 11:272, 1957).

Alabama:—numerous records for Limestone, Jackson, Perry, Baldwin, and Mobile counties, with extreme dates of November 1 and March 23, including three specimens: Marion, Perry County, February 16, 1957, by Thomas A. Imhof and Lois McCollough, deposited in the University of Alabama collection; near Hartselle, Morgan County, March 4, 1957, by the writer, deposited in the same collection (Imhof, *Auk*, 75:356, 1958); and Dauphin Island, November 1, 1953, deposited in the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology.

Florida:—numerous records for Santa Rosa and Escambia counties, extreme western Florida, with extreme dates of October 26 and April 1, totalling more than 125 individuals identified during this period; specimens taken, the only ones from Florida, eleven miles south of Bagdad, Santa Rosa County, December 31, 1955, deposited in the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology (Monroe, *Florida Naturalist*, 29:65-66, 1956); at Pace, Santa Rosa County, January 21, 1956, by the writer, deposited in the University of Louisville collection; six miles south of Jay, Santa Rosa County, November 30, 1957, by Francis M. Weston and the writer, deposited in the Florida State University collection (Weston and Monroe, in Newman, *Audubon Field Notes*, 12:286, 1958); and twelve miles north of Pace, Santa Rosa County, January 31, 1959, by Weston and the writer, deposited in the University of Louisville collection. In addition, there is a sight record for Cocoa, Brevard County, in eastern Florida, on December 29, 1958; by Richard Kuerzi and Fred Hebard (Cocoa, Florida, Christmas Bird Count, *Audubon Field Notes*, 13:149, 1959).

Although these records show that this species has suddenly become regular and common far east of its known winter range, I do not believe that this is due entirely to a recent influx of the species, even though it is known to be extending its breeding range to the eastward. The basic problem with winter records has been in establishing reliable identification of it at a time when it rarely sings. Identification of most individuals, if well seen, can be established in winter, without the use of song, as will be seen in the following discussion.

NOTES AND PLUMAGES

In order to understand the differences in winter between the Western Meadowlark and the Eastern Meadowlark (*S. magna*), it is first necessary to know what takes place during the molts of the two species, particularly the prebasic (post-nuptial, and presumably also the post-juvenile) molt.

In summer, both meadowlarks are superficially very similar, both being bright yellow below with a well-defined black pectoral band, and brownish above, the Western somewhat more grayish. However, in this plumage the birds are frequently in song, and further may be identified by the extent of yellow in the malar region, that of the Western covering most of the malar region, while the Eastern possesses primarily white feathers in the malar region (See fig. 1). In

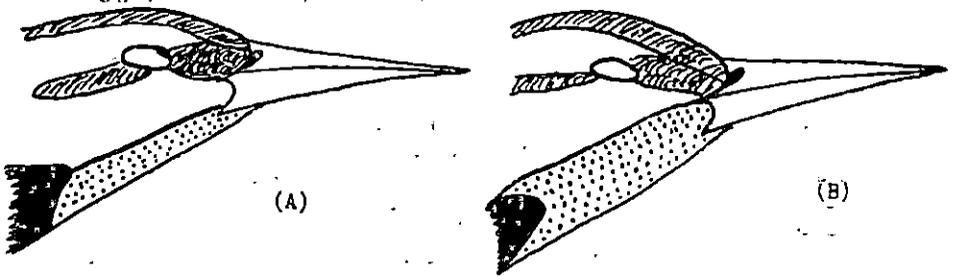
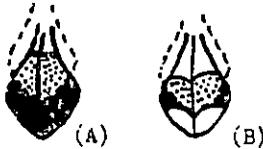


Figure 1—Head profile (diagrammatic), showing extent of yellow (stippled area) in the malar region.



(A) Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*).
(B) Western Meadowlark (*S. neglecta*).

Figure 2—Contour feather from black pectoral band, showing amount of exposed black; broken line indicates position of overlapping feather; stippled area shows region of concealed black.

(A) Eastern Meadowlark (*S. m. magna*), December 25, 1956, Anchorage, Kentucky.

(B) Western Meadowlark (*S. n. neglecta*), December 25, 1956, Anchorage, Kentucky.

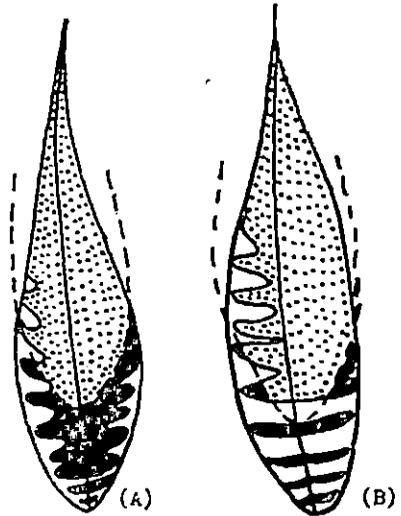


Figure 4—Inner secondary (tertiary), showing barring effect of exposed portion; broken line indicates position of overlapping feather; stippled area shows region of concealed black.

(A) Eastern Meadowlark [same specimen as in figure 2A].

(B) Western Meadowlark [same specimen as in figure 2B].

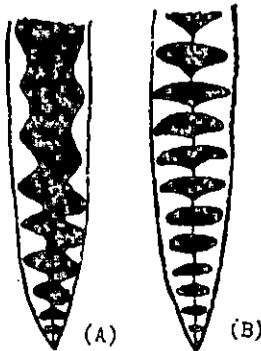


Figure 3—Central rectrix (exposed), distal two-thirds, dorsal aspect.

(A) Eastern Meadowlark [same specimen as in figure 2A].

(B) Western Meadowlark [same specimen as in figure 2B].

addition, the barring of the rectrices and secondaries, discussed in a later paragraph, is also evident.

However, the results of the prebasic molt in the fall in the two species are quite different. The Eastern Meadowlark displays a basic (winter or non-nuptial) plumage very similar to the alternate (summer or nuptial) plumage. The only evident difference is in the breast feathers, which occasionally have the extreme tips with pale coloration, this effect normally visible only in the hand, and usually does not destroy the effect in the field of a bright yellow breast with a well-defined black pectoral band. On the other hand, the Western displays a basic plumage which is quite variable, and on the whole much different from that of the alternate plumage. The contour feathers of the underparts (both black and yellow) are tipped with buffy, usually at least the outer third of each feather (See fig. 2). Since the outer third of each feather is all that is visible in the field, due to overlap of the adjacent feathers, the overall effect is one of a very pale or washed-out bird. In fact, I have collected winter specimens (especially the Florida bird of December, 1955) in which the black band and yellow underparts were virtually invisible in the field, due to the buffy feather tips. However, this is not a positive field character. There is much variability in the Western, depending on wear of the feathers, some being fairly bright below, and an occasional Eastern will have enough light tipping to show against the black breast band, but the character is very helpful in the field and is positive when coupled with other plumage factors, mentioned below.

It can also be seen from the above that the extent of yellow in the malar region will become almost useless as a field character in the winter, due to this obscuration of the yellow by buffy feather tips. It may be used for specimens in the hand, however, by examining the feather bases, which are yellow in the Western and mostly white in the Eastern.

As spring approaches, the Western Meadowlark gradually attains the bright yellow underparts of the alternate plumage, due to the wearing of the buffy tips. By March 15, most Westerns are similar to this plumage. It is not known whether the breeding (alternate) plumage is acquired entirely by feather wear, or there is a complete pre-alternate (prenuptial) molt.

FIELD IDENTIFICATION

In connection with the above plumage differences (the relative paleness of the Western being the first effect one gets when viewing the bird in the field), there is one positive field character, which takes some practice to ascertain, but which is evident in any bird when viewed from the side or from behind. The innermost secondaries (tertiaries) and the rectrices, in the Western, are conspicuously barred with black, these bars distinct and separate, not united along the feather shaft. In the secondaries this barring may occasionally be

united near the base, but in the rectrices I have found it to be distinct throughout the length of the feather. In the tail only the middle rectrix is exposed (from above) and is the only one which can be satisfactorily used. However, the distal third of each tertiary is exposed, and is a most satisfactory character (See figs. 3 and 4). With a little practice this barring effect becomes most evident.

Occasionally in the Eastern there will be a separation of the distal two or possibly three bars in the secondaries (See fig. 4), but the barring effect is lost due to extensive union of more proximal bars along the shaft. The barring on the rectrices, however, is very constant throughout the feather, at most only the most distad bar in the Eastern being separate (See fig. 3).

Another plumage factor, evident in birds in all plumages, which lends to the overall relative paleness of the Western, is the coloration

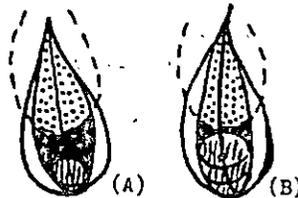


Figure 5—Contour feather from the back, showing amount of black exposed; broken line indicates position of overlapping feather; stippled area shows region of concealed black.

(A) Eastern Meadowlark [same specimen as in figure 2A].

(B) Western Meadowlark [same specimen as in figure 2B].

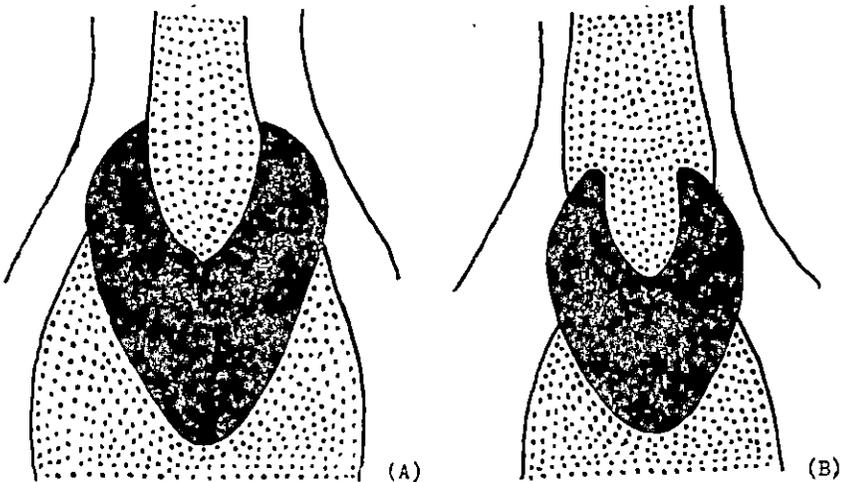


Figure 6—Throat and breast region (diagrammatic), ventral aspect, showing extent of yellow coloration (stippled area).

(A) Eastern Meadowlark.

(B) Western Meadowlark.

of the contour feathers of the back. In both species the lateral edges of the back feathers are pale buffy, while the area along the shaft is black basally and brownish distally. In the Western, this distal coloration is grayish-brown, and covers about the distal half of the shaft area, while in the Eastern the distal coloration is reddish-brown, and covers only about the distal third, therefore exposing more black area (See fig. 5). This darker brown, together with more exposed black area, lends to a much darker overall coloration of the upperparts in the Eastern than in the Western.

One other factor, quite variable in the Western and of little value in the field, is the extent laterally of the yellow of the underparts (See fig. 6). This factor is primarily of interest in comparing the two species in the hand. In winter birds, this extent of yellow must be determined by examining the feather bases, as mentioned earlier.

CALL NOTES

To the field observer in winter, the call notes are of far greater importance than the song. I have found that each species gives two different calls, one of which is common to them both and one which is peculiar to each.

The note most frequently given by the Eastern Meadowlark is the staccato series of notes with which every eastern field student is familiar. This note I have never heard uttered by the Western in winter. Less frequently the Eastern will produce a "peent" call note, similar in quality to the call of the Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), but much softer in volume. This latter call note is also the one most frequently heard from the Western. This may produce uncertainty in the field, but it is helpful to the extent that the Eastern, when making the nighthawk notes, will usually sound off with an occasional staccato series.

This brings us to the distinctive Western Meadowlark call note, which is heard much less frequently than the nighthawk sound. This distinctive note is very similar to that of a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), a soft "chuck" note. This, to my knowledge, is never produced by the Eastern.

In connection with song, it might be well to mention that the Eastern frequently sings throughout the winter, whereas the Western only rarely does so. There have been several reports of winter singing of the Western, but in my personal experience with more than 200 individuals observed, I have heard only one sing, and that so softly as to be audible only a few feet away.

HABITS

There are several characteristics of winter meadowlarks that will be helpful in identification. It is virtually impossible to carefully study every meadowlark seen in the field, so these characteristics often help in indicating which individual birds to observe closely.

Whenever both species occur locally in large numbers, the flocks of each species tend to remain homogeneous; that is, all Westerns together and separate from the Easterns. If only a few individuals of one species is involved, however, they will often mix with the other. I have never found more than three individuals of either species mixed with large flocks of the other. And I have observed as many as 40 Westerns in one flock, and 25 Easterns in another, within several hundred yards of each other, with no sign whatever of association of the two species.

A most helpful characteristic of the Western is its relative tameness. In many cases I have been able to drive a car alongside a group of Westerns without flushing them, whereas the Easterns are normally very wary and will not permit close approach. Of course, this is subject to much individual variation, but has occurred enough times to warrant its inclusion as a characteristic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Francis M. Weston, Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Robert M. Mengel, and Thomas A. Irnhof for their comments and assistance in assembling the records and material included in this article.

SUMMARY

Since 1955 the known winter range of the Western Meadowlark has been extended eastward throughout central Kentucky, central Tennessee, all of Alabama, and extreme northwestern Florida, with occasional stragglers farther east.

Field and specimen identification of winter birds may be satisfactorily made from plumage characteristics, without use of song.

The call notes of each species have been recorded and are often helpful in identification.

Field identification may be further aided by certain characteristic habits of each species, including tendency of flocks of either species to remain homogeneous.

—Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University.

* * * * *

BIG SPRING LISTS

Here are our 1959 Big Spring Lists, excellent ones but not from enough places in the state. The editor wishes that those of you who participate in all-day or weekend field trips along about May 1 would make it a rule to send in your lists, so that your area may be represented.

A * after a reference indicates that the species was recorded near but not on the count; a - after MC denotes a species that was found on the count days but not actually inside the Mammoth Cave National Park. M—Madisonville; H—Henderson; B1—Bowling Green on K.O.S. Field Days; B2 Bowling Green on regular May count; MC—Mammoth Cave National Park; L—Louisville.

MADISONVILLE (W. W. Hancock Farm, Clear Creek, seven lakes at Madisonville and Earlington, Brown and Frostburg Roads, and a small marsh).—May 4; 4:00 A. M. to 7:00 P. M. Partly cloudy; very little wind. Temp. 66 to 81. About 6 miles on foot, 64 by car; 15 hours in field. Observer alone. The Swainson's Warbler was found near Clear Creek on May 8. Total, 112 species.—JAMES W. HANCOCK.

HENDERSON (Henderson County).—May 3; daybreak to 4:00 P. M. Clear; Temp. 70 to 92. 16 observers in 10 parties. We were fortunate again this year in having some excellent outside assistance: James Huffman, president of the Los Angeles, California, Audubon Society; Robert Crofts, director of field trips, Toledo, Ohio, Naturalists Society; and Al Huffman, Evansville, Indiana. We still miss the help of R. C. (Cotton) Soaper, who, with the help of a few others, always added many water and shore birds. The weather had been so dry prior to the count that none of us have been successful in finding shore birds this year; on the last Sunday in April, at Mrs. Nat Stanley's, we found only four species and did very little better on our May 3 count. There was some doubt in our minds about the Wilson's Warbler and the Henslow's Sparrow; hence they are not included in the totals. Total, 114 species.—W. P. RHOADS, Compiler.

BOWLING GREEN (Chaney Farm, Municipal Park, Grider's Limestone Lake, McFarland's Beach, Mouth of Gasper area).—April 18-19; all day on April, 18, until 2:00 P. M. on April 19. Rain, threatening, warm. Some 60 K. O. S. members and guests were on one or more of the outings. Total, 100 species, 6 near count, 106.—GORDON WILSON, Compiler.

BOWLING GREEN 2 (Chaney Swamp, Grider's Lake, Drake's Creek).—April 25-26; 8 hours in the field on April 25; 4 hours on April 26. Clear; temp. 60-75. Total, 97 species. Starred forms were found only at Mammoth Cave National Park in afternoon of April 25.—GORDON WILSON.

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK (Most of the park area covered, with Pace and Gipson going by motor boat from Houchins Ferry to Kyrock and back).—May 1-3; 6:00 P. M. on May 1 to 2:00 P. M. on May 3; camps at Houchins Ferry and Campground. Hot, sultry; temp. 60 to 90. The Swainson's Warbler was found on Mill Branch, not far from the one recorded on June 21, 1958. Total, 114 species.—GORDON WILSON (Compiler), DR. RUSSELL STARR, DR. GEORGE MCKINLEY, JIM HAYNES, MILLARD GIPSON, DR. ROBERT PACE.

LOUISVILLE (Louisville and its environs, including the Ohio, woodlands, meadows, and Caperton's Swamp).—May 3; 6:00 A. M. to 8:30 P. M. Total, 135 species.—Members of the Beckham Bird Club, Burt L. Monroe, Sr. (Compiler).

BIG SPRING LISTS

- Common Loon—M
 Pied-billed Grebe—B1, B2
 Double-cr. Cormorant—L
 Great Blue Heron—M*, H
 Common Egret—H, L
 Little Blue Heron—L
 Green Heron—M, H, B1, B2, L
 B-cr. Night Heron—H, L
 Y-cr. Night Heron—L
 American Bittern—M
 Mallard—H, B1, MC, L
 Blue-winged Teal—B1, B2, MC-, L
 Wood Duck—H, MC, L
 Redhead—B1
 Canvasback—M
 Greater Scaup—B1*, B2
 Lesser Scaup—M, H, B1, B2, L
 Ruddy Duck—B1
 Hooded Merganser—L
 Turkey Vulture—M*, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Black Vulture—B1, MC, L
 Sharp-shinned Hawk—B1
 Cooper's Hawk—H, L*
 Red-tailed Hawk—MC, L*
 Red-shouldered Hawk—M, H, B1, L
 Broad-winged Hawk—MC, L
 Pigeon Hawk—L
 Sparrow Hawk—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Bobwhite—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Sora—H, B1, B2, L
 American Coot—M, H, B1, B2, L
 Semipalmated Plover—H, B2
 Killdeer—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 American Woodcock—M, B1, MC
 Common Snipe—B1, MC-, L
 Spotted Sandpiper—B1, B2, MC, L
 Solitary S'dpiper—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Greater Yellowlegs—H, B1*, B2, MC-, L
 Lesser Yellowlegs—B1, B2, L
 Pectoral Sandpiper—B1, B2, L
 Herring Gull—H, L
 Ring-billed Gull—L
 Forster's Tern—L
 Caspian Tern—L
 Black Tern—M
 Mourning Dove—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo—M, H, MC, L
 Black-billed Cuckoo—L*
 Screech Owl—L
 Great Horned Owl—H, B1
 Barred Owl—H, B1, MC, L
 Chuck-will's-widow—M, L
 Whip-poor-will—M, H, B1*, MC, L
 Com. Nighthawk—M, H, B1*, B2, MC-, L
 Chimney Swift—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Ruby-th. H'bird—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Belted Kingfisher—H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Y-shafted Flicker—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Pil. Woodpecker—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Red-bel. W'pecker—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Red-headed W'pecker—M, H, MC-, L
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker—B1, L
 Hairy Woodpecker—M, H, B1, MC, L
 Downey W'pecker—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Eastern Kingbird—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Great Cr. Flycatcher—M, H, B2, MC, L
 Eastern Phoebe—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher—MC
 Acadian Flycatcher—M, H, MC, L
 Traill's Flycatcher—H, MC
 Least Flycatcher—M, H, L*
 Eastern Wood Pewee—M, H, MC, L
 Horned Lark—M, H, B1, B2, L
 Tree Swallow—B1
 Bank Swallow—MC-, L
 Rough-w. Swallow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Barn Swallow—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Purple Martin—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Blue Jay—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Common Crow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Car. Chickadee—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Tufted Titmouse—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Wh-breasted Nuthatch—M, H, B1, MC, L
 Brown Creeper—B1
 House Wren—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Bewick's Wren—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Carolina Wren—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Mockingbird—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L

- Catbird—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Brown Thrasher—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Robin—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Wood Thrush—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Hermit Thrush—H, MC, L
 Swainson's Thrush—M, H, B1, MC, L
 Gray-ch. Thrush—M, H, B2, MC, L
 Veery—M*, H, B2, MC, L
 Eastern Bluebird—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Bl-gr. Gnatcatcher—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Ruby-cr. Kinglet—M*, H, MC, L
 Cedar Waxwing—M, H, B1, L
 Log. Shrike—M*, H, B1, L
 Starling—M, H, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Wh-eyed Vireo—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Y-th. Vireo—M*, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Solitary Vireo—B2, L*
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 Phila. Vireo—H, MC, L
 Warbling Vireo—M, H, B2, L
 B'n W Warbler—M*, H, B1, B2*, MC, L
 Prothon. Warbler—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Swainson's Warbler—M*, MC
 Worm-eating Warbler—M*, B1, MC, L
 Gol-winged Warbler—M*, MC, L
 Blue-winged Warbler—M*, H, B2, MC, L
 Tenn. Warbler—M, H, MC, L
 Nash. Warbler—M*, MC, L
 Parula Warbler—H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Yellow Warbler—M, B1, B2, MC, L
 Magnolia Warbler—M, H, MC, L
 Cape May Warbler—M*, H, MC, L
 Myrtle Warbler—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Bl-th. Green Warbler—M, H, B2, MC, L
 Cerulean Warbler—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Blackburnian Warbler—B1, L
 Yel-thr. Warbler—M, H, B1, B2*, MC, L
 Ch-sided Warbler—M*, H, B2, MC, L
 Bay-br. Warbler—M*, H, L*
 Blackpoll Warbler—M, H, B2, MC-, L
 Pine Warbler—B1, MC
 Prairie Warbler—M, B1, B2, MC, L
 Palm Warbler—M, H, B2, MC*, L
 Ovenbird—M, H, B2*, MC, L
 N. Water Thrush—M, B1, B2, MC, L
 La. Water Thrush—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Kentucky Warbler—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Yellowthroat—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Yel-br. Chat—M, H, B2, MC, L
 Hooded Warbler—B2*, MC, L*
 Wilson's Warbler—M*, H-
 Canada Warbler—MC, L
 Redstart—M, H, B2, MC, L
 House Sparrow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Bobolink—L
 East. Meadowlark—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Western Meadowlark—H
 Redwinged Bl'bird—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Orchard Oriole—M, H, B1*, B2, MC, L
 Baltimore Oriole—H, MC, L
 Rusty Blackbird—B1
 Common Grackle—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Br-headed Cowbird—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Scarlet Tanager—M, H, B1, MC, L
 Summer Tanager—M, H, B1*, B2, MC, L
 Cardinal—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Rose-br. Grosbeak—M, MC, L
 Indigo Bunting—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Dickcissel—M, B2, MC-, L
 Purple Finch—B1, B2
 Am. Goldfinch—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Ruf-sid. Towhee—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Savannah Sparrow—B1, B2, L
 Grass. Sparrow—B1, B2, MC-, L
 Henslow's Sparrow—H-
 Vesper Sparrow—B2, L
 Bachman's Sparrow—B1, L
 Sl-colored Junco—B1*, L*
 Chipping Sparrow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Field Sparrow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Wh-cr. Sparrow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Wh-th. Sparrow—M, H, B1, B2, MC, L
 Fox Sparrow—H
 Lincoln's Sparrow—L
 Swamp Sparrow—M, B1, B2, MC-, L
 Song Sparrow—M, H, B1, L

FIELD NOTES

NESTING MISHAP

While the University of Louisville class in Ornithology, taught by Dr. Harvey B. Lovell, was on a spring field trip in Iroquois Park, we found a dead Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), hanging on a branch of a hedge apple tree about fifteen feet from the ground. Upon closer examination we found a thin string tangled around the bird's feet and the branch. The string was found to be extremely long, the end of it high in an adjacent tree, and was obviously a discarded kite string which the unfortunate Robin had intended to use for nesting material.—James C. Garriott, Louisville.

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WOOD DUCKS NESTING ALONG DRAKE'S CREEK

Here is an observation made on a float trip down Drake's Creek, a few miles east of Bowling Green. The first leg of the trip was made at night, from nine o'clock until just after midnight, a trip of approximately three miles. We sighted in the spotlight three broods of Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*), from four to eight in each, on May 23. None of the young attempted to follow the adult in flight. One week later the trip was continued, lasting from noon until about 5:00 P. M. at the Schneider Farm. This time we observed five broods in as many miles, with the number of young varying from six to ten. Several of the young flew short distances, just above the water. A few days earlier, between the two float trips, we saw two broods from the bridge across the Cemetery Pike at the same time; the one upstream numbered nine young; the one below, eleven. These records seem to indicate a wonderful comeback of a species that only recently was placed on the no-season lists by the Department of Fish and Wildlife of Kentucky.—Robert N. Pace, Bowling Green.

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A SHEAF OF NOTES FROM BOWLING GREEN

The Scarcity of the Baltimore Oriole—In the November, 1958, issue of *THE KENTUCKY WARBLER* (XXIV;64), I listed the scarcity of the Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) as a problem to challenge investigations by our members. The sight of a male of this species on June 20, 1959, caused me to check all my records for June, July, and August. They revealed what I had expected: that the Baltimore Oriole, formerly regularly and fairly commonly seen here, is now a very rare summer resident. For the years 1918-26 there is no break in the summer records, almost fifty for these months, with 1921 the most times when the species was recorded, 11, practically every observation trip in the summer. Beginning with 1927, the records for summer have been very few, just 11 for the 33 seasons, chiefly June

records only. In the 22 seasons that I have studied birds in the Mammoth Cave National Park, 1938-1959, I have only three summer records: June 4, 1938; June 6-14, 1942; and June 1-2, 1946. The species does not appear on any list, even in spring migration, for the years 1939, 1941, 1949, 1950, 1951, and 1956 at Mammoth Cave, but it is found on every year's list at Bowling Green. It appears as early as April 15, as late as May 7, for the first migration date, with an average date of April 22 for the 43-year period at Bowling Green; the earliest departure date is July 3, the latest September 15, the average August 28. This note is designed to get you to check your own records of this species and please report to me.

A Very Late Warbler—The Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*), one of the rarest warblers in spring migration at Bowling Green, appeared first in 1959 on May 9; as it was not recorded any more for the following days, I concluded that it had gone on northward. On May 27 one began singing in the honeysuckle tangles of a lot behind my own and appeared every day through June 3, the latest date for a spring warbler migrant in my life. I saw it several times and was sure to hear it every morning and late afternoon.

A Woodcock in the City—Mrs. Charles Stovall, who lives inside the city of Bowling Green next to the Municipal Park (Covington Woods Park), called me late in May to say that a strange bird was in her back yard; she believed it was an American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*). It had been there for six or eight weeks and had often been seen in her shady, woodsy back yard. Several of the neighbors had also seen it in their yards along about the same time. She promised to call me again if it appeared after she was away on a weekend visit. The call came early on the morning of June 3. Sure enough, there it was, almost as gentle as the proverbial chicken, probing in the soft mud in some shady places under shrubs and trees. She has never seen more than one at a time. I had hoped to find a nest, for the conditions are perfect for a nest in that area. In recent years I have often heard the Woodcock calling as it flew over town at night in spring and summer.

Another Blue Grosbeak—Dr. Jesse Funk, a very careful observer, who lives in one of the most attractive corners of Bowling Green in what was once a part of Covington Woods, observed, on several successive days in April, 1959, a bird that fits perfectly the description of the Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea caerulea*). It was first seen on the morning of April 28. The next day it was seen at close range at morning, at noon, and again late in the afternoon. I visited the place on the afternoon of April 30, but the bird had apparently gone on its way. Dr. Funk had seen one bird of this species in the same place on April 25, 1958.

Exit Bachman's Sparrow—As a friend of the many farmers who have allowed me and encouraged me to visit their farms and watch

their birds, I would not want to question their modern farming methods, particularly the "green pastures" program. In the last six or eight years nearly every typical habitat of the Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis bachmanii*) has been destroyed; what had been washed-out old fields have been seeded with fescue, orchard grass, Ladino clover, and other pasture grasses and clovers. As a result, it is nearly impossible to see or hear this species, one of my favorite songsters, whether in our old broomsage fields or the pine forests of the Far South. For years my best observation place has been the ridge that leads from Hadley to Dr. L. Y. Lancaster's cabins at the Mouth of Gasper. It is still there in very small numbers, but every year marks a still further decline. In Mammoth Cave National Park the Water and Soil Conservation activity of the National Park Service has bulldozed ditch banks, planted *Lespedeza sericea* and other soil restorers and thus driven my bird to more distant old fields. Though there are still thousands of acres of broomsage fields in the park, very few of them contain typical gullies and scanty vegetation such as those of the places where I used to see and hear the bird. Around Bowling Green there is hardly a spot now, except for the Hadley ridge that has any typical habitats. Will the species move out or slowly adapt itself to changing farm conditions? Long study of species that are so especially adapted to a narrow habitat, plus the scholarly findings of Maurice Brooks in his study of this species, makes me fear that I have just lost my Bachman's Sparrow as a fairly common summer resident and colorful twilight singer.

—Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green.

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BLUE GROSBEAK IN MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Since the Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea caerulea*) is a very rare transient in Mammoth Cave National Park, the following sight record may be of interest. A single adult male of the species was seen on the afternoon of April 28, 1959, and was observed from about twenty feet, with no intervening vegetation. The bird was perched in a branch of a small tree at the edge of the trail paralleling Echo River, about 250 yards from the Mammoth Cave Ferry. Identification was made on the basis of the blue plumage, the two rusty-brown wing bars, and the grosbeak bill. In size it was definitely larger than the Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*), several of which were present in the area. After our short period of observation the bird flew away into the forest and disappeared; a brief search did not find it again.—George McKinley, Glasgow.

(NEWS AND VIEWS Continued From Page 42)

particularly numerous, frequenting low damp woods, and builds its nest in the middle of a thick tuft of grass, sometimes in the fork of a

low bush, and sometimes on the ground; in all which situations I have found it. The materials are loose dry grass, mixed with the light pith of weeds, and lined with hair. The female lays four, and sometimes six eggs, pure white, sprinkled with specks of reddish. I observed her sitting early in May. This species is seldom seen among the high branches; but loves to frequent low bushes and cane swamps, and is an active sprightly bird. Its notes are loud, and in threes, resembling **tweedle, tweedle, tweedle**. It appears in Kentucky from the south about the middle of April; and leaves the territory of New Orleans on the approach of cold weather; at least I was assured that it does not remain there during the winter. It appeared to me to be a restless, fighting species; almost always engaged in pursuing some of its fellows; though this might have been occasioned by its numbers, and the particular season of spring, when love and jealousy rage with violence in the breasts of the feathered tenants of the grove; who experience all the ardency of those passions no less than their lord and sovereign man."

The figure of the Kentucky Warbler on our cover appeared first in Plate 25, of Volume III, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY; it is the figure at the bottom. The central figure is of the Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), discovered on the plantation of William Dunbar, near Natchez, later in 1810. The small figure at the top is the Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*), discovered in Tennessee shortly after he entered the state, in late April, 1810. The other figure is that of the Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*), which Wilson thought he had discovered in the Barrens of Kentucky, but it had been discovered by Vieillot in 1807. Wilson died in 1813 without knowing about this previous record. The cut used on the cover was made from a photograph of the original plate in the series of volumes of AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY, which appeared from 1808 to 1814.

OUR 1959 FALL MEETING

Begin planning now to attend our annual fall meeting, to be held this year at Mammoth Cave National Park. Full details will be mailed all members in due time. The park at that season is always beautiful and alluring; of course, bird life is far below the spring migration and early summer, but we should see a great many of the all-year residents and some of the fall migrants. Many of us regard the scenery as of a very high order and know that you will enjoy a fall weekend there.