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The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

Vol. XXXVI

MAY, 1960

No. 2



A portion of Kingfisher Lake No. 2, showing characteristic habitat that surrounds the lakes. Photo, by A. L. Powell, was made from the road that divides the two Kingfisher Lakes.

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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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NEWS AND VIEWS

LOSSES OF BIRDS IN 1959-60 WINTER

The cold, snowy weather in March, 1960, especially, may have taken a heavy toll of bird life. If you have any evidence of this, will you please forward the information, to the editors? Bluebirds and Carolina Wrens are early nesters, and we should like to know how they managed during the severe weather. What about the March-nesting Killdeers? If you have any information on the Bobwhite or any of the other birds in your area that were found dead because of the lack of available food, we should also like to know.

* * * *

A NEW CHAPTER OF K. O. S.

Preliminary steps have been taken to organize a chapter of the K. O. S. at Murray. On April 10, 1960, a group of nine prospective members held a field trip at Paris Landing State Park, just over the Kentucky-Tennessee state line, with an attractive list of 36 species of birds recorded and 468 individuals. On April 30, 1960, a meeting is to be held for the purpose of taking further steps toward completing an organization.

SOME BIRDS OF THE OWENSBORO LAKES

By A. L. Powell

For the past ten years most of my ornithological studies have been made on the three state-owned lakes that are located ten miles northeast of Owensboro, near Yelvington: Carpenter's, Kingfisher No. 1, and Kingfisher No. 2. Two private lakes of about six acres each are included in the "chain," as they practically join the north end of Carpenter's Lake.

Carpenter's Lake has 78 acres of water, with numerous inlets and bays and a large peninsula. Kingfisher No. 1 has a long and interesting history that goes back to the turn of the century. This lake and No. 2 are almost as large as Carpenter's and lie right across the road from it. The habitat surrounding these lakes is quite varied, as there are fields, cultivated and overgrown, deciduous woods, and a fairly large cattail marsh at one end of Carpenter's. Running along beside Kingfisher No. 2 and a part of Carpenter's Pup Creek meanders. In fact the spillway from Carpenter's cascades down a man-made pile of boulders into this stream. The creek bottom has many sycamores, willows, beech, and other forest trees. The term "habitat" includes many things; so we must consider that there are many vacation cottages and permanent homes, not only around the lakes but close by. The writer's home, "Milbert Gardens," is an example. A number of these homes have extensive plantings of evergreens and berry-producing shrubs and trees. Many of the families love birds and try to attract them with feeding stations, bird boxes, and plantings. Such efforts will naturally affect such species as bluebirds, wrens, robins, martins, and other species that like to live near man. The Fish and Wildlife Department have also put up a number of boxes for Wood Ducks.

Since I have covered every nook and cranny of this area, I have often thought of the extent of the influence of a lake, a river, a mountain, a marsh, or any other habitat on the overall wildlife pattern. Just how far is such an influence felt? We know that it is extremely foolish to draw a line and say that all on this side belongs to the sphere of the lakes and across the line some other area is to be credited with its effect. My impression is that an area like the one under study certainly affects bird life for two or three miles in all directions. I am thus convinced that the Fish and Wildlife Department is to be commended for obtaining lakes and ponds for the public and also encouraging farmers in the pond programs. The Soil Conservation Service is also interested in more ponds for fish and wildlife.

Many thousands of people visit these lakes during a year, especially in summer, because of the excellent fishing. Mr. Clint Bowers, fisheries biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service, has written me of the 17 species of fish to be found in the lakes, but I will mention only the large-mouthed bass, the bluegill, and the white crappie. Numerous species of mammals also are to be found in and around the lakes: weasel, mink, opossum, red and gray foxes, gray and fox squirrels, and a number of field rodents. The rabbits are fairly abundant, and on our own place we have a large white oak that is the den tree for raccoons. Muskrats are to be seen in abundance and are often quite tame. At one of the private lakes a muskrat came out of the water, waddled toward my son and me, and actually walked over my son's feet. All of these things—animals, trees, flowers, fish, frogs,

water, and everything that man has done—have a direct relation to the bird life.

Though my wife and I have made many investigations for a decade, we feel that we are still just beginning. Several species that we should have seen have not yet been found. We especially regret our inability to find the nests of certain species. We have set down our own identifications and somewhat discounted local records. One man told us how fish hawks were destroying so many fish; we later found that the bird in question was a Great Blue Heron. In a later article we plan to tell of other species besides the ones recorded in this study.

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*). We usually find one or two each year. One bird was brought from another part of Daviess County; I released it in one of the lakes.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*). Fairly common and can be seen the year around, though I have never found a nest.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*). I see one to three each year. It probably breeds in some obscure part of the creek bottom. The presence of so many people at the lakes keeps this species on the go.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*). A common summer resident. I have found a number of nests, but none were occupied.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). I have found two birds roosting and one or two flying over.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*). A number of these birds visit the lakes each year to rest or feed. In 1954 a lone goose stayed the entire winter. I saw a flock of twenty or more about to land, but they saw me and veered off.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*). For the past three years I have been disappointed in the waterfowl count, and the Mallards have been scarce. I have seen them only in small flocks; the larger flocks prefer the Ohio River.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)... Recorded only twice. One year a sizable flock stood on the edge of the ice and allowed us to study them for a long time.

AMERICAN WIDGEON (*Mareca americana*). Five males and six females on March 24, 1951. On the private lake across the road from our house we observed one on June 19, 1958, a very unusual record on, as it should have been in its nesting grounds; far to the north, at that time; the bird took flight and flew easily to Carpenter's Lake and beyond; so it was not injured.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas carolinensis*). Very few of this species have been recorded, which seems strange to me.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*). Several sizable flocks can be counted on for each year, but in the past few years they have not been as common as previously.

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*). Fairly common and breed here. I have found some of their nesting holes and have seen broods on opposite sides of the lakes at the same time.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*). Usually present in one of the lakes, alone or in small flocks; one of my favorite ducks.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*). The most abundant of all the ducks that visit the lakes.

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*). I used to find them quite abundant, but for the last three or four years they have been scarce. They usually are associated with Redheads.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*). Not too common, but sizable flocks can be found every year.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-EYE (*Bucephala clangula*). Several seen each year. I saw nine of these ducks at one time at close range, a thrilling experience.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*). Only rarely seen.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). Even rarer than the Bufflehead.

HOODED MERGANSER (*Lophodytes cucullatus*). Only two or three records.

COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*). This species, like the other mergansers, is only an occasional visitor.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*). One record, but I feel that it is more common than that would indicate.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*). Occasionally seen flying over.

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*). Occasionally seen flying over. No doubt both species of vultures would nest near the lakes if there were suitable hollow logs, but I have never found a nest.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*). I see these birds occasionally but would consider them rare. I have never found a nest of this species, at the lakes or elsewhere in Daviess County.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*). I consider this bird rare at the lakes, but it should be seen more often, as the habitat and food supply are adequate.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*). This is one of my favorite birds. It is numerous enough that I can count on two or more for each hike.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*). Only recently, March 20, 1960, my wife discovered new material being piled on an old nest of sticks that has been in the fork of a tree for several years. The female is now on the nest (April 6, 1960).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*). I have seen this hawk much less frequently than the two other buteos. The last time I saw one it was being worried in flight by a Kingbird.

MARSH HAWK (*Circus cyaneus*). I have seen this hawk more often in the vicinity of the private lakes than at Carpenter's proper. Where the cattail marsh has a telephone wire stretching across one end, I watched this hawk perch, with great difficulty, on the wire.

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*). Although I have not found the nest of this species, I am sure that it is a breeding bird in this area, as I have seen it during the summer months. March and April always bring a number of these birds to the lakes.

SPARROW HAWK (*Falco sparverius*). One of the most abundant hawks, particularly in the farm lands near the lakes. The competition for nesting sites with the Starlings does not seem to have hurt this species.

BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*). When we first moved out to Milbert's Gardens, we had a pair of Bobwhites that would feed in our yard, but we haven't seen one here for years. In the area we have found several coveys and an occasional bird or two. The reasons for the scarcity of this species are, apparently: 1. the burning off of lands by the farmers, and 2. the large number of dogs that run loose.

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans*). Near the cattail marsh, at the northern end of Carpenter's Lake, I saw six King Rails cross a little road in single file. As this was early summer, I assumed that they had been raised there. A systematic search, often on hands and knees, of nearly all the marsh failed to reveal any sign of a nest. These birds are so secretive that I cannot say for certain how common or uncommon they may be.

SORA (*Porzana carolina*). This bird is usually found wading in the area mentioned above. I think it nests here, but no nests have yet been found.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula chloropus*). I see this bird every spring in migration and believe that it nests here.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*). Though I have seen this bird at all seasons and have sometimes seen individuals acting as if I were close to a nest, I have not yet found a nest. The bird is common.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*). This bird, which always typifies shore birds to me, nests here, no doubt, but I have not as yet found a nest in the vicinity of the lakes, though I have found several in other places in the county.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK (*Philohela minor*). I have often listened for its characteristic mating song but have not succeeded. I flush two or three a year and on occasion have seen it fly across my place to the wet bottoms behind the house.

COMMON SNIPE (*Capella gallinago*). Two or three records on Carpenter's Lake proper. One dead bird, apparently struck by a car, was found on the shore. Numerous records of the species on the private lakes, as the habitat there is more suitable. Not common, however, anywhere.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularia*). It can be seen in season along the shores of the lakes and also in Pup Creek bottoms.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*). Recorded every spring and fall but never in great numbers. The lakes do not have enough mud flats to attract many shore birds.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Totanus melanoleucus*). Three or four are seen in migration each year.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Totanus flavipes*). Rather rare. Oc-

asionally I see this one and the Greater together, always an interesting event.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*). Once in a while, in a strong wind from the Ohio River, a few of these birds will "blow in" for a while. Never common.

A NEST OF THE GREAT HORNED OWL

By Harvey B. Lovell

Although the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) occurs in the forested areas and breeds in much of Kentucky, very little is in the literature about nesting sites and food habits of the species. Therefore, the following should be of some significance to record.

On March 8, 1959, I took Dr. Vero Wynne-Edwards, a visiting professor from Scotland, who at the time was occupying the Tom Wallace Chair of Conservation at the University of Louisville, to visit the Bernheim Forest Reservation. The forest is located in Bullitt and Nelson Counties, four and a half miles south of Shepherdsville on Ky. 245. The area covers some 10,000 acres, is typical Kentucky knobland, and has been very briefly described previously (See 'A Visit to the Bernheim Reservation,' by Mrs. F. W. Stamm, *Kentucky Warbler*, XX (1944): 11-12). As we walked from the forest edge out into the clearing at the upper end of Lake Nevin, we flushed an owl from a large 40-foot sugar maple stub; the large bird, with a wing-spread of almost five feet, flew silently through the air, and Wynne-Edwards identified it as a Great Horned Owl. We looked beneath the stub and found some owl pellets, and we believed the tree contained a nest.

On March 23 the area was again visited. On looking through a 20X telescope we saw the head and one eye of a young owl in the depression on the top of the stub. I told Richard B. Henley, park naturalist, to investigate the nest if possible. Two days later he climbed the tree and wrote that he found two young birds "completely covered with down, with only the first beginnings of feathers." He found "quite a bit of rabbit fur at the bottom of the nest."

The nest tree was located at the edge of a wooded area on a sloping hillside overlooking a very narrow portion of the lake; directly behind was a thick stand of cedars; in the foreground Virginia pines grew here and there. Mr. Henley suggested that the tree may have been hit by lightning, for the main trunk stood about 40 feet high and had a jagged, broken top. The tree was not dead; four large branches stemmed from the trunk and were in blossom. Another large sugar maple tree almost as tall and with the main trunk also broken off at the top stood about 300 feet away; it may have been used as a roost, for on two occasions pellets consisting chiefly of rabbit fur were found beneath it. These trees were fairly well out in the open.

On April 5, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick W. Stamm went with me to photograph the nest and perhaps band the young. We found two fluffy young owls sitting in the depression of the trunk looking down from the sharply-pointed 40-foot stub. As we watched, they lowered their heads as if to hide from view. Mr. Henley was not present, and without a ladder it was impossible to reach the nest; a shower

prevented us from taking pictures. We searched the area, but the adult birds could not be found.

Two days later, April 7, we returned, and Henley provided a long ladder and brought the owls down for banding. Mrs. Stamm placed band numbers 498-34401 and 498-34402 on the stout legs of the birds; and they were put back into the nest. Their legs were feathered all the way to the claws, and the feet and "ankles" were very large. As I climbed up the long ladder to put one of the young back and look at the nest site, a very strong offensive odor of decayed animal matter came from the "cavity."

The nest was large, flat, and without twigs; it contained a large pellet, the head of an adult male Mallard, and numerous bones scattered about. Several pellets found at the base of the tree were examined and contained the skulls of mice.



Two Young Great Horned Owls
Bernheim Forest, April, 1959

Photograph by R. B. Henley

As the birds were banded, I took movies of this process, and during this time the owls snapped their bills loudly and fought us, but not viciously. In view of the notorious ferociousness of Horned Owls we were cautious and apprehensive as we ascended the ladder to replace the birds. For example, friends in a northern state had been attacked when inspecting nests of this species, and wounds were inflicted on their backs, even though they had worn heavy leather jackets. We were surprised that neither adult bird was seen. Perhaps the large number (5) of persons present discouraged the adults from attacking us. Mrs. Stamm recalled a previous occasion when, in Iroquois Park,

Joseph Croft found a young of this species out of the nest and they had seen an adult bird watching from a nearby tree.

The nest site appeared to be well chosen, for it provided the adult birds an open place to hunt for field mice and rabbits; water for drinking, bathing; and a place to catch an unwary fish, as well as water birds.

The area was revisited this spring (1960), but the place was unoccupied. Perhaps the birds moved to a more remote area in the reservation.

FIELD NOTES

Black Snake Visits Nest of Pileated Woodpecker.—The article "Pileated Woodpecker Attacks Pilot Black Snake at Tree Cavity," by Val Nolan, Jr. (WILSON BULLETIN, December, 1959) caused me to look at my records made on May 30, 1957. Three days prior to that date young Pileated Woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*) were heard calling in the woods near our residence on Indian Hills Trail. The nest was located at 2:30 P. M. on May 30, by the presence of a young bird in an opening, which was in a 40-foot stub of a dead, practically barkless, hackberry tree, three feet in diameter. It was 30 feet from the ground; ten inches above it was a similarly-shaped old hole. At the very moment that the nest cavity was discovered, a 3-foot black snake (species unknown) started crawling up the tree and, despite efforts to deter it, reached the hole and entered quickly. After forty minutes, during which there was no sign of the snake, a young bird appeared in the opening, hesitated a few seconds, and flew off. Ten minutes later the snake stuck out its head, just as the adult male arrived on the scene. He immediately went to the nesting-hole, entered it halfway, and began jabbing furiously inside. On resuming observations at 4:00 P. M., I found that the adult male was at the hole jabbing inside and chipping the lower rim as though trying to enlarge it. Then as he moved around the tree and rapped, perhaps hoping to make a new opening, a second young bird appeared at the entrance and flew off. Then the adult female came into view but took no part in the operation. At 4:30 P. M. the male desisted in his efforts and left the immediate area, followed shortly by the female. Soon after their departure the head and a few inches of the snake's body were visible in the hole.

Observations were again interrupted for an hour. At 5:30 P. M. a third young bird was seen at the opening. It called, apparently wanted to leave, but instead backed down into the cavity. This action was occasionally repeated for forty-five minutes, while the adult female remained quietly nearby, not attempting to feed the young bird or enter the nest. The snake was not visible during the time. It is unknown whether the third nestling left after 6:30 that evening. The nest appeared deserted at 7:00 the following morning. There was considerable calling of young birds until dark. It is not known whether the snake ever left the nest cavity. It apparently was unable to inflict injury. In this instance, it is assumed attempted predation was unsuccessful because of the maturity of the young. At least the young appeared to be fully matured and ready to leave. Other departure

dates in the area are as follows: May 31, 1954; May 30, 1956; and June 7, 1959.—CATHERINE HOPE NOLAND, Louisville.
(Ed. Note: The article referred to describes an apparently fatal attack by a male Pileated Woodpecker on a large black snake which had entered a cavity used by a pair of birds near Bloomington, Indiana.)

* * * *

Nests of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron near Lexington.—As far as I know, there is only one published record of a nest of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) for the Lexington area (*Ky. Warbler*, XXXII:62). In view of this, I would like to submit the following nesting notes.

On May 4, 1958, while on one of the scheduled Sunday-afternoon walks of the Kentucky Audubon Society, we discovered three nests of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron on the C. V. Whitney Farm, about five miles from Lexington. The nests, two of which were occupied at the time, were about 40 or 45 feet from the ground in large sycamores along a branch of North Elkhorn River. (The Elkhorn is referred to as a "river" because of its being so designated by early historians.) Loosely constructed of sticks, with a small depression for the eggs, the nests followed no particular pattern.

On May 9, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Reece, Jr., reported that they saw another nest under construction. On May 10, the site was again visited with Al. Mayfield and Dr. William T. Maxon, and all nests seemed to be occupied. On a return visit on June 7, with Mayfield and Reece, we again saw the nests and the young birds in them.

On June 12, Maxon, Mayfield, and I visited a fifth nest about three fourths of a mile from those on the above-mentioned farm. This nest was approximately 45 feet from the ground and located in a walnut tree on the lawn of Mrs. Preston Johnson. One of the young birds was in the nest, another was standing on the nest, and two more were standing on a limb about three feet from the nest. The two adults were just below and near. This is the same farm where a nest was found in 1956 (See reference above).

On September 25, 1958, I observed two immature birds on the shore of Lake Ellerslie on the Richmond Road, near Lexington. On September 28 one adult was at the same lake.

On May 10, 1959, I saw one adult bird on a small creek on the Burns Farm on the Athens-Walnut Hill Road but did not locate a nest. I was accompanied on this date by Mrs. G. L. Burns, Barbara Burns, and Mr. and Mrs. Reece. In the afternoon the bird club visited the C. V. Whitney Farm again, and the story was about the same as the year before.

On May 17, 1959, another nest was located high in a sycamore tree on South Elkhorn River, Fayette County, near the Bar-Y Camp. One adult bird was standing beside the nest. On May 23, 1959, I visited the Bar-Y Camp again but found no new nests.—CONLEY WEBSTER, Lexington.

* * * *

Four Sight Records of Scoters at Louisville.—During the fall of 1959 scoters were observed along the Ohio River at Louisville on four dates. Two species were positively identified.

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*).—A single Surf Scoter

was identified on November 7, 1959, on the Ohio River at the mouth of Beargrass Creek near downtown Louisville. The author watched this bird from about 100 yards for several minutes with a 20X telescope. The scoter was in either juvenile or female plumage, with two distinct white patches on the sides of the head. One of the most remarkable aspects of the bird was the bill, which was noted at the time as being swollen peculiarly near the base. The uniformly dark wings were seen clearly when the scoter flew.

The Surf Scoter did not associate with the large rafts of diving ducks that were resting on the water in the middle of the river, but remained alone relatively close to shore. Several minutes after a barge coming up the river had forced these large flocks to take off, the scoter, staying close to the water, flew alone out toward the middle and down the river.

COMMON SCOTER (*Oldemia nigra*).—On November 15 Mr. Roderic Sommers identified a single Common Scoter in female or juvenile plumage near the Indiana side of the river opposite Towhead Island.

In addition, unidentified scoters were seen on two dates. The writer saw briefly a scoter with dark wings flying past Cox's Park, four and a half miles from downtown Louisville, on October 24. Three unidentified scoters were seen by Mr. Sommers in the Harbor underneath the railroad bridge on November 1.

Two previous Kentucky records for each of the two identified species have been published. Wilson (*Ky. Warbler*, XVI (1940):18) observed four Surf Scoters in Warren County on March 2, 1934, with a flock of White-winged Scoters (*Melanitta deglandi*). A female Surf Scoter shot on the Ohio River near Brandenburg, Meade County, on October 16, 1949, was reported by Monroe and Mengel (*AUK*, LX (1943):282). Two Common Scoters in female plumage were killed in Carroll County on November 9, 1938 (Monroe and Mengel, *Ibid.*; *Ky. Warbler*, XV (1939):41). A more recent record of the latter species has been published by Sommers (*Ky. Warbler*, XXXIII (1957):56-57) of two juvenile scoters seen on February 17, 1957.

The 1959 records appear to represent the third published occurrences of both the Surf and the Common Scoter in Kentucky.—HAVEN WILEY, Louisville.

(Ed. Note: A record of a White-winged Scoter seen on February 23, 1960, in the Louisville area by Leonard C. Brecher has been received).

* * * *

Another Record of the Oregon Junco.—At the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Monroe, Sr., I am adding the following observation of an Oregon Junco (*Junco oreganus*) to the previous records of this species at Louisville. On the afternoon of April 13, 1958, I noticed a very brown-looking junco fly into my yard and begin feeding. I went outside with my binoculars and observed the bird for several minutes at a distance of about 25 feet, in bright light. The back and sides of the junco were a rich brown, the head a dark slate color; and there was a sharp line of demarcation between the hood and the sides, very unlike the mixture of brown and gray sometimes seen in the Slate-colored Junco (*J. hyemalis*). After about 20 minutes the bird flew off, and I did not see it again.—JOSEPH CROFT, Louisville.

Catbirds Wintering in Eastern Kentucky.—I have had two reports from reliable observers in eastern Kentucky that they have seen the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) spending the winter here. One of these reports came from my son, Harold F. Reed, who observed a Catbird in a tree near Elkhorn City, Pike County, on February 3. Another observer, Germer Evans, told me that a Catbird had been spending the winter in a deeply sheltered ravine at his home at Lovely, Martin County.—RUFUS M. REED, Lovely.

* * * *

An Upland Plover in July.—We have few summer records of the Upland Plover (*Bartramia longicauda*); therefore I would like to report a sight record of an individual bird sitting on a fence post along the roadside on July 9, 1959, near Shepherdsville, Kentucky. This is about thirty miles south of Louisville. The bird may have been one of a breeding pair in that area, or it may have been an early migrant. So far as I know, we have only one breeding record in the state, a nest with four eggs, in Boone County, on June 4, 1950 (*Ky. Warbler*, XXVI (1950):49). Emerson Kemsies told me, in conversation, that a few breed regularly at Oxford, Ohio, airport, which is located thirty miles north and west of Cincinnati. He said that they breed there along with Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) and Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). It was not possible at the time to search the Kentucky area for a nest.—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

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Rough-legged Hawk at Louisville.—Although Louisville, Kentucky, lies well within the accepted winter range of the Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), few actual observations have been reported. The following notes may therefore be of interest.

On December 29, 1958, I was walking through Cherokee Park with a classmate, casually watching birds, when a large hawk appeared overhead, only about ten yards above the ground. Apparently we startled the bird, for when it was almost directly above us, it turned and flew back in the direction from which it had come. Using my binoculars, I had time to note the bird's very white underparts, as well as the white at the base of the tail. My friend saw these marks also, commenting especially on the rather wide, sharply defined black band at the end of the tail. He remarked that the tail gave the appearance of having been "dipped in ink." This type of tail pattern, of course, is typical of the light-phase Rough-leg; however, I was puzzled at the bird's very pale-colored belly. On checking in Peterson's FIELD GUIDE, I found that this variable species is sometimes so marked.

I was able to verify the identification a few days later, on January 3, 1959, while driving on Chenoweth Lane in St. Matthews, about two miles from the spot of the first observation. At that time I saw what was evidently the same hawk, flying along the road, just above the level of the housetops. I was traveling slowly enough to observe the tail pattern and the pale belly; I was also able to see clearly the black "wrist marks" so characteristic of the Rough-legged's light phase. Occasional visits to the Cherokee Park area during the remainder of the winter failed to produce any further sightings of this hawk.

My only previous observation of this species at Louisville was on December 27, 1953, when I was with a Christmas Count party that

found a black-phase Rough-leg at the edge of Cherokee Park (Ky. Warbler, XXX (1954):10).—JOSEPH CROFT, Louisville.

September Nesting Record of the Black-crowned Night Heron.—On September 26, 1959, my wife, Anne L. Stamm, and I were at the Falls of the Ohio to observe shorebirds, but very few were seen. I was especially interested in photographing egrets; one flew from the dike to a group of willow trees at the lower end of the Falls. As I crossed over to the wooded area and trudded through the shrubbery and mass of tangled vines, my attention was diverted to a nest of the black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) containing a seemingly fully-feathered young bird. This aroused my curiosity, and upon further investigation I found two more occupied nests. I called my wife; we searched the immediate area and found three additional nests, each containing young birds. As we approached the trees on which the nests were located, some of the young herons climbed out and perched on near-by branches.

All six nests were in willow trees and placed near the main trunk. They were 12 to 15 feet from the ground. They were bulky and made chiefly of rather heavy twigs and sticks approximately one quarter of an inch in diameter, and scantily lined with finer twigs. Three nests were within a radius of 20 to 25 feet. The other three were 60 to 80 feet east of the above nests, and relatively close together. Willow trees are the dominant species here, although there are some poplars. Smith (Ky. Warbler, XXVI (1950):6-9) described the area more fully when he visited the rookery in 1949.

Twelve young were observed; all were feathered and were perhaps a month old. The young heron in the sixth nest fell from the tree, and although unable to fly, ran for a short distance and hid in the heavy undergrowth; in trying to capture it, my wife encountered swarms of mosquitoes and insects as she made her way through the briars and undergrowth; droppings were heavy in certain areas, presumably from the adult birds.

As we remained in this wooded area, an adult heron alighted on the dam, and then it flew to a tree within 50 feet of where we stood as we photographed the young on the nest. Later another adult approached the area carrying a twig in its bill.

Apparently this is a rather late date for Black-crowned Night Herons to be in the nest.—F. W. STAMM, Louisville.

An Unusual House Sparrow Nest.—On April 26, 1960, Mrs. Edward Stout, who lives ten miles north of Bowling Green, called me to report a very unusual nest in a syringa bush (*Philadelphus coronarius*) in her yard. I drove up at once and saw a female House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) leave the area of the nest as I stopped my car in the driveway. The nest was oblong, about 20 inches in length and 8 inches in diameter, with the opening in the end next to the porch of the house, and was about 8 feet above the ground. All the outside was of grass, very fresh-looking and rounded into the shape, as we said, of a watermelon. The bird returned, shyly, a number of times, always with catkins from oak trees in her beak. She would pause behind some leaves for a long time before darting to the nest itself. Though I have often found large, bulky nests of this

species in trees and shrubs, I cannot recall having seen one so large or with a side opening before this year.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.

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A Suburban Bird Sanctuary.—At the northwest edge of Bowling Green is Grider's Limestone Lake, a deserted stone quarry that has been incorporated into a bird sanctuary, planned and operated by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Grider. Ten years ago the Griders bought the 24-acre tract, which was rather desolate after a quarter of a century of use as a stone quarry. The underground streams had posed such a problem of keeping the water out that the original owner decided to sell the quarry proper—seven and a half acres and the open fields and thickets adjoining it. The Griders, with the help of their artist daughter, designed a modern home overlooking the lake and began what seemed then like a hopeless task of bringing some order out of the chaos of the area. They have succeeded far beyond any one's expectation, and the tract is now a veritable bird sanctuary. Thousands of flowers and shrubs have been set out, unsightly heaps of stone have been leveled off or covered with sod, and a great many feeding and nesting boxes and shelves have been built. The lake and its surrounding fields have become a pleasure resort for many fishermen, for the lake—25 to 35 feet deep—is stocked with large-mouthed bass, crappie, bluegills, sunfish, and rock bass. Fed by the underground streams that caused the area to be given up as a quarry, the lake is nearly always at the same height, clear, cold, and clean.

Because there are so few ponds of a permanent nature in my area, I have come, in the last five years, to watch this lake for all sorts of waterfowl in migration. In late fall and early spring I can expect to find a few of the rarer ducks there, such as Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*), Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*), and Redhead (*Aythya americana*). Since most of my observations of these three species have had to be made at the Chaney and McElroy Lakes, when they are at their highest, it is a real treat to stand on the limestone cliffs and observe these at very close range for as long as I wish. The Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) is the one seen in the largest group at any one time—44 in a single flock. I have sighted as many as 22 Lesser Scaups (*Aythya affinis*), but these two large flocks mentioned are exceptional. Mr. Grider tells me that often large flocks come in at dusk and leave before sunrise, when visibility is very poor. The Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) comes regularly in small numbers and sometimes remains practically all winter. On several winter counts I have found one or two of this species at the lake. Without doubt many other species of ducks use the lake as a resting place, but I have records of only 2 American Widgeons (*Mareca americana*) and 1 Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*).

The most memorable finds have been of the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) in three of the five seasons I have watched the lake and the Horned Grebe (*Colymbus auritus*) in one season. The Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) appears in small numbers every year and at almost any time except mid-summer. The only Forster's Terns (*Sterna forsteri*) I have ever seen in my territory appeared for a day only on December 28, 1958, and swam within very close range for hours. Since there are no mud flats, wading and shore birds are virtually absent; only the Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) appears on my records. Mr. Grider has described the visit of gulls, probably the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), on several occasions. Though this list—14 species—is small, it has given me, especially on bleak

winter days when there was no open water on the horse ponds around here, a chance to keep an acquaintance with several water species, sometimes rare ones.

The land birds are numerous in the sanctuary. In winter this tract is one of the three or four favorite habitats of the White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) in my whole area of observation. The Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), the Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*), and the Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) are most often recorded first in spring at Grider's. The Rough-winged Swallows nest in the old cliffs there. They and the Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) are constantly skimming over the lake in search of insects. Long ago, before the stone quarry was even begun, the place was so full of song in early spring that I named it Mockingbird Field; it would still be a good name for it. In our last three spring field trips of the Kentucky Ornithological Society most of our members have visited the lake and marveled at such sights as a Common Loon at close range. Mr. and Mrs. Grider have always extended an invitation for us birders to visit the place whenever we can and stay as long as we wish.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING, APRIL, 1960

By Helen Browning

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its thirty-seventh annual spring meeting at Bowling Green, Kentucky, April 22-24, 1960, with headquarters at the Lost River Motel. This was the fifth consecutive field study in this area. Sixty persons attended part or all of the meetings.

On Friday evening K. O. S. members were invited to The Kentucky Building, Western Kentucky State College, to see the BACON-SUTHARD COLLECTION of bird nests and eggs. Mr. Gayle Carver, Curator, was most gracious and helpful to K. O. S. visitors to the museum.

Dr. Gordon Wilson led the Saturday field trip to McElroy and Chaney Lakes.

At noon Saturday members enjoyed picnic lunches at a roadside park just north of Lost River Motel.

At 4:00 P. M. Saturday afternoon an executive board meeting was held in Cottage No. 12.

The dinner meeting was held at the Helm Hotel, Bowling Green, Saturday evening at 6:45 o'clock, Mr. James Hancock, President, presiding. After the introduction of guests and officers of the Society, President Hancock asked Dr. Wilson to present the speaker of the evening, Mr. Albert F. Ganier of Nashville, Tenn. Mr. Ganier is a past president of Wilson and Tennessee Ornithological Societies and an elective member of the American Ornithological Union. His subject "Hi-Lites along a Birder's Trail." Members were highly enthusiastic and appreciative of this informative and entertaining talk.

Announcements were made that the Wilson Ornithological Society would meet at Gatlinburg, Tennessee, May 5-8, 1960, and that the

K. O. S. fall meeting would be held at Henderson, Kentucky, October 7-9, 1960, with headquarters at the Soaper Hotel. Dr. Hunter Hancock informed members that Mr. Paul Sturm, manager of Kentucky Woodlands Wildlife Refuge, had asked that K. O. S. go on record as favoring the replacement of land, inundated by the Barkley Dam, as agreed on between the U. S. Corps of Engineers and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Dr. Hancock requested that members write favoring this to Senators Cooper and Morton and Congressmen Stubblefield and Natcher. Dr. Robert Pace also asked that our group favor this agreement. The meeting adjourned.

On Sunday morning members went to the cottage of Dr. and Mrs. L. Y. Lancaster on the Gasper River. From there field trips were led by Dr. Wilson and Dr. Lancaster. At noon picnic lunches were enjoyed at the cottage. Dr. Wilson announced that a total of 107 species of birds were found during the meeting.

ATTENDANCE AT ONE OR MORE SESSIONS OR FIELD TRIPS

BOWLING GREEN: Mrs. Mildred Allen, Gayle Bowman, Mrs. Harry Bowman, Mrs. Virginia Garrett, Mrs. H. W. Gingles, Margie Helm, Dr. L. Y. Lancaster, Dr. and Mrs. Robert N. Pace, Steven Pace, Frances Richards, D. C. Riley, Emily Wilson, Mrs. Eugene Wilson, Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Wilson;

BURKESVILLE: Mrs. John W. Brake;

CLARKSON: Mrs. Walter T. Kelley;

DANVILLE (and Jackson, Tennessee): John A. Cheek;

FLOYD KNOBS, Indiana: Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Curtis Webster;
Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Wolking;

FORT KNOX: Chaplain Norman Liss;

FRANKLIN: Mary Ellen Richards;

GLASGOW: Dr. and Mrs. George McKinley;

HENDERSON: Malcolm Arnett, W. P. Rhoads;

HORSE CAVE: Rev. Sam Steward, Sonny Steward;

LEITCHFIELD: William Grant;

LOUISVILLE: Dr. and Mrs. Austin Bloch, Jim Bloch, Bill Bloch, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard C. Brecher, Helen Browning, Amy Deane, Evelyn J. Schneider, Mrs. Beatrice Short, Mabel Slack, Roderic Sommers, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Stamm, Mrs. Elsie P. Stewart, Haven Wiley;

MACEO: Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Powell, Wilton Powell;

MADISONVILLE: Mr. and Mrs. James W. Hancock, Brenda Hancock;

MURRAY: Dr. and Mrs. Hunter Hancock, Dr. Clell Peterson;

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE: A. F. Ganier;

ROCKFIELD: Mr. and Mrs. Roy Millikin;