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## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 43, no. 2)

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# The Kentucky Warbler

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*Fish Crows—Plate CXLVI of John James Audubon's BIRDS OF AMERICA.*

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## THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

### OUR COVER

The Audubon painting reproduced on the cover of this issue features a distinctive tree familiar to most outdoor Kentuckians—the honey locust—and, occupying its branches, a much less distinctive bird thus far seen by few persons in Kentucky—the Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*).

In his paper appearing in this issue Kenneth P. Able reports the collection of the first Kentucky specimen of this bird in Fulton County,  
 (Continued on Page 40)

## SOME RECENT OBSERVATIONS FROM WESTERN KENTUCKY

KENNETH P. ABLE

During the past year I have made several trips to various areas in western Kentucky to observe the bird life. The distinctiveness of this area ornithologically has been made abundantly clear by Mengel (1965) and Croft and Rowe (1966). The purpose of the trips herein described was to observe the characteristic avifauna of this region and, if possible, to collect specimens of birds for which no Kentucky specimen previously existed. The observations reported here were made on four separate trips: June 6-8, 1966, Calloway and Fulton Counties (Able and Dr. Burt L. Monroe, Jr.); September 14-16, 1966, Fulton County; December 17-21, 1966, Land Between the Lakes; and January 31-February 3, 1967, Land Between the Lakes.

### Fulton and Calloway Counties, June 6-8, 1966

Dr. Burt Monroe, Jr. and I made brief stops in Calloway County on both June 6 and 8 and spent the remainder of June 6 and 7 in Fulton County. Observations in Fulton County were confined for the most part to the area immediately adjacent to the Mississippi River south and west of Hickman.

**Hérons.** The large wading birds make up a very characteristic part of the bird life of the alluvial floodplain of this part of the state. In Fulton County moderate numbers of Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), about 15 Common Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*), four Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*) (all in white aspect) and many Yellow-crowned Night Herons (*Nyctanassa violacea*) were seen in the vicinity of Little Cranetown, south of Bondurant. In sloughs of standing water in cotton fields near the levee south of Hickman, two adult Little Blue Herons were seen along with a single Snowy Egret (*Leucophoyx thula*). A single bird of the latter species was also observed by Croft and Rowe (1966) in early summer, both possibly from heronries near Reelfoot Lake, where the species is known to breed (Ganier, 1951). The Yellow-crowned Night Heron was the most abundant heron along the river, apparently nesting as isolated pairs in the woods between the levee and the river.

**Ducks.** A female Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cuculatus*), with four young, was observed in a shallow open slough along the levee south of Hickman, near the Tennessee state line on June 6.

**Hawks.** One of the primary purposes of this trip was to observe the Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) which have recently reappeared in western Kentucky and other areas in the central Mississippi Valley (see Croft and Rowe, 1966). Thirteen individuals of this species were seen south of Hickman on June 6; most were feeding along the levee and as many as four birds were seen in one group. The feeding behavior of the birds was highly stereotyped. Apparently utilizing updrafts created by the levee or the edge of the woods immediately on the river side of

it, the kites soared over the levee and frequently stooped over the top and sides of it. None were ever seen to capture anything, but grasshoppers were abundant. Kites were also seen feeding over cotton and wheat fields just inland from the levee. On the evening of June 6 a single bird was seen about two and one-half miles southeast of Hickman, the furthest inland from the river the species was observed. On June 7 only four kites were seen in the same area where 13 had been seen on the day before. The first individuals were seen around 10:00 a.m. but none were observed feeding along the levee in the pattern of the previous day. Perhaps this was due to a wind shift from southwest to east. Skies were clear on both days.

A single Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), described as "rare and local in the Purchase" (Mengel, 1965) and then occurring mostly in the central and eastern oak uplands, was seen in the floodplain area south of Hickman.

On July 7 an adult Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was seen flying east at high altitude from the Mississippi River, about three miles north of the Tennessee state line.

**Terns.** Two Least Terns (*Sterna albifrons*) were seen flying over the Mississippi River between Islands Number 6 and 8. They were largely confined to large sandy shores on the Missouri side of the river. Sand flats of the type used as nesting sites by this species are very limited on the Kentucky side of the river in this area of the county.

One of the most peculiar observations of the trip was that of an adult Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) flying west over the levee and then over the Mississippi River, about two miles north of the Tennessee state line. The bird was flying fairly high and was not seen subsequently. The only summer records of this species since it was recorded breeding in northern Kentucky by Audubon were made at McElroy Lake in Warren County by Wilson in 1927 and again in 1935 (Mengel, 1965).

**Woodpeckers.** The area along the levee from Hickman to the Tennessee state line was characterized by an abundance of Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). As many as 50 could be counted easily on fence posts along the 10 or so miles of the road along the levee. This abundance was local and similar numbers were not seen in other areas of the county.

**Crows.** Since the inclusion of the Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*) on the Hypothetical List in *The Birds of Kentucky* (Mengel, 1965), the range extension of this species in the Mississippi Valley has been documented by Easterla (1965) in Missouri and Croft and Rowe (1965) in Kentucky. On June 6 and 7, six to eight individuals were seen and heard along the levee south of Hickman. The Fish Crows were seen singly and in groups of up to three individuals and were observed in the immediate company of Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). The Fish Crows were most often seen flying inland from the river to presumed feeding areas, although some were seen feeding on the levee and in adjacent plowed fields. One pair (?) was consistently seen carrying food into a certain spot in the cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) stand between the levee and the Mississippi River, just north of the Tennessee state line. No nest could be found, however.

An adult male with only slightly enlarged testes was collected along the levee about one-half mile north of the Tennessee state line on June 7. This is the first specimen for the state (University of Louisville 1733). (This and other new state specimens are to be described elsewhere by Monroe, Jr. and Able.)

**Orioles.** Both the Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) and the Baltimore Oriole (*I. galbula*) were observed commonly in Fulton County, but the distribution of the two was by no means uniform. The Orchard Oriole could be considered common to very common throughout the county. The Baltimore Oriole, on the other hand, was found commonly in the cottonwood floodplain woods between the levee and the Mississippi River south of Hickman. It was rare elsewhere. The Orchard Oriole was also common along the levee but was more often seen in the scattered low vegetation than in the woods. Mengel (1965) considered the Baltimore Oriole "local and rare to uncommon" throughout the state.

**Fringillids.** A territorial pair of Blue Grosbeaks (*Guiraca caerulea*) was located three miles northeast of Kirksey, Calloway County on June 6. The birds were seen in two adjacent wooded areas, one of dense second growth consisting mostly of White Oak (*Quercus alba*) and hickory (*Carya* sp.) and the other a mature oak-hickory woods. The male was observed singing from trees in both wooded areas and from a utility wire along the road over a wheat field. The soil in this area is very sandy.

On the evening of June 7 both male and female were again seen at the same spot and on June 8 an attempt was made to collect the male. Although only a few identifiable feathers were retrieved, they constitute the first specimen record (U. L. 1734) for Kentucky. Almost simultaneously the first known nest of the species in the state was being observed in Taylor County (Dubke, 1966), though it may be noted that in 1964 a pair was observed feeding two fledglings at Bowling Green (Lancaster and Wilson, 1964).

The Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) was found to be one of the commonest birds in Fulton and adjacent counties. Upon hearing the birds I immediately noticed that they sang a song which was noticeably different from that of populations in northern Kentucky and Indiana, for example. The accented "sis-sis-sis" notes, so characteristic of the end of the song of the species, were run together in these birds into a short, rapid trill. This had the effect of shortening the length of the song and made it seem more hurriedly delivered than in birds I was accustomed to hearing.

#### Fulton County, September 14-16, 1966

A review of *The Birds of Kentucky* reveals that, except for the frequently questionable (Mengel, 1966) observations of Pindar, there has been very little work done in Fulton County during the fall migration season. It was with this in mind that I went to the area on these dates.

Since this was during the migration season the developments of the weather are of considerable importance to the observations made. When I arrived in Fulton County on September 14 it was clear and warm with

generally southerly winds. During the evening of September 14 the leading edge of a cold front reached the area and a brief but hard shower occurred about 7:00 p.m. (EST). With the passage of the front there was an abrupt change in wind direction to northwest (30 mph) and a considerable drop in temperature. During the day of September 15 the wind shifted to north and by September 16 it was from the northeast.

**Hérons.** Most of the herons which are so conspicuous in the area during summer were gone on these dates. Only two Great Blue Herons, two Common Egrets, two Green Herons, and one immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron were seen from among the species observed in June.

On September 14 a flock of 43 Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) was found in a pasture near Lake No. 9, about three miles west of Miller. The egrets associated with a herd of cattle and three horses in this weedy pasture which contained a small pond. The birds fed among the cattle, running about erratically catching insects stirred up by the movement of the cattle. On two occasions egrets were seen standing on the backs of the cattle. By September 16 the flock had increased in size to 54 birds.

On September 15 two specimens (U.L. 1794, 1795) were collected from this flock, the first taken in the state. Both were in molt, particularly about the neck and head. One was an adult male, the other of undetermined sex.

On several occasions the entire flock flushed and flew out of sight to the northeast. They were never seen anywhere else in the county.

Prior to this record there are three published sight records of single birds in the state: Bowling Green, November 9, 1960 (Wilson, 1960); Ary, Perry County, April 28, 1965 (Marvel, 1965); and near Carrollton, April 25, 1966 (Ruthven, 1966). Ganier (1964) called the species a presumed breeder at Reelfoot Lake.

**Hawks.** As would be expected, no Mississippi Kites were seen although a careful watch was kept for them.

In the middle of the day on September 16 a flock of 37 Broad-winged Hawks, closely accompanied by three Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) and three Sparrow Hawks (*Falco sparverius*), was seen flying from northeast to southwest (roughly paralleling the river) about 4 miles southwest of Miller. There was a moderate northeast wind (10-15 m.p.h.) at the time and clear skies. Further watch failed to reveal any more migrating hawks.

**Shorebirds.** A considerable migration of shorebirds took place during the three days of my visit to Fulton County. On the morning of September 15, following passage of the aforementioned cold front with its probably grounding winds, a flock of 52 Lesser Yellowlegs (*Totanus flavipes*), accompanied by one Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) (seen and heard) and three Stilt Sandpipers (*Micropalama himantopus*), was seen in a shallow pond along the levee about three miles south of Hickman. They had gone by evening of the same day. This appears to be the first record of the latter species in Fulton County.

During the three-day period there was a large flock of "peeps" and six Semipalmated Plovers (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) on a mud flat on the Mississippi River. The size of this flock varied, probably showing a net decrease during the three days. On September 14 the flock con-

sisted of about 110 birds; of these, about 100 were *Ereunetes*. Careful examination of the flock showed that half or more were Western Sandpipers (*E. maurii*) on the basis of both visible characters and call notes. The instability of the mud made the collection of any of these birds impossible. This appears to be the first record of the Western Sandpiper in the county. The remainder of the flock was made up of Semipalmated (*E. pusillus*) and Least Sandpipers (*Erolia minutilla*).

**Terns.** Two Least Terns were seen over the Mississippi River south of Hickman. According to Mengel (1965) this would be the latest record of the species in known breeding areas (recorded in Jefferson County, away from any breeding areas, as late as October 10).

**Swallows.** The dominant feature of the bird life in Fulton County on this trip was the vast concentration of swallows in the western portion of the county. The first concentrations were noted about 10 miles east of Hickman, where flocks of 100-500 mixed Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) and Rough-winged Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) with a few Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) were seen sitting on telephone wires. Maximum concentration occurred along the levee, where there were at least 1,300 swallows. I estimated the following species numbers: Tree, 800; Rough-winged, 500; Bank, 15; Barn (*Hirundo rustica*), 10; and Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), 3. After cold front passage this number dwindled to about 200 birds.

**Crows.** At least four Fish Crows were seen during the trip. Two were recorded on a sand bar just south of Island No. 8 on September 16, one of which flew into woods bordering the river and called persistently. The sympatric nature of the two crow species was pointed up when at least one Fish Crow, and probably more, was found with a flock of 20-30 Common Crows feeding in a plowed field beside the levee. The relationship of the two species in this area merits further study.

**Other Migrants.** Moderate numbers of passerine and other small bird migrants were present on all days but were more abundant on September 15, a day after the passage of the cold front. The greatest number of such migrants was found in the Bayou du Chien area north of Hickman. For the record, the species observed were: *Empidonax* sp., 10; Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), 5; Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*), 1; Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), 1; Tennessee Warbler (*V. peregrina*), 1; Parula Warbler (*Parula americana*), 5 (perhaps part of the breeding population); Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*), 3; Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*), 1; Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*), 1; American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), 5; Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), 2; and Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*), many.

#### Land Between the Lakes, December 17-21, 1966

For many years part of the area between the Cumberland River and Kentucky Lake formed the Kentucky Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge. In 1963 the area was turned over to the Tennessee Valley Authority and additional land was acquired to form an extensive woodland recreation area between Kentucky Lake and the newly impounded Lake

Barkley. Earlier developments in preparation for the flooding of the Cumberland River valley have been reported by Peterson (1964). Most of the area cleared in preparation for flooding is now under water and old landmarks such as Empire and Honker Lakes no longer exist as such, being parts of Lake Barkley.

The observations reported here were carried out on the Barkley Lake side of the area, north of Kentucky Highway 68 and east of Highway 453. This is the major area under intensive study by the Biology Department of the University of Louisville (see Robinson, 1965).

**Waterfowl.** The major flooding of Barkley Lake took place in the fall and winter of 1965. Observations which I made over several days in December 1965 revealed large numbers of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) and a variety of ducks in the area of Empire Lake. At the time of my 1966 visit no such concentration was found on the body of Barkley Lake itself. The only major concentration of waterfowl during this winter was on Hematite Lake. I estimated that there were about 5,000 Canada Geese on this lake, along with large numbers of dabbling and a few diving ducks. A possible explanation for the decrease in wintering waterfowl from 1965 to 1966, I think, might have to do with the food supply in the new lake. In 1965 there should have been abundant food due to the submerging of the terrestrial annual vegetation that had grown up in the area where forest was cleared in preparation for impoundment. By 1966 these terrestrial plants would have been killed and a normal aquatic flora would not have had time to develop in the new lake. Thus there could have been a paucity of food in Barkley Lake for the birds.

The Green-winged Teal (*Anas carolinensis*) was the most abundant dabbling duck at Hematite Lake. I estimated that there were 200 individuals of this species. However, no Green-winged Teal were reported for this same area on the mid-winter bird count, December 27, 1966 (Mid-winter Bird Count, 1966-1967).

**Eagles.** Peterson, in two recent papers (1964, 1965) has discussed the changes taking place in the Land Between the Lakes on the wintering population of eagles in the area. He noted that there has been some shift in the dispersal patterns of the birds since the beginning of construction projects in the area and also the decline of Hematite Lake as a major concentration and roosting area.

On this trip I observed a total of eight Bald Eagles (all immature) and two adult Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*). No concentrations of Bald Eagles were noted. The locations at which the Bald Eagles were seen are as follows: Hematite Lake, 1; near the new dam at Honker Lake, 2; north of Conservation Education Center, 3; mouth of Fulton Creek, 1; and near the mouth of Craven's Creek, 1. One of the adult Golden Eagles was seen at Hematite Lake and the other was seen on two days at Ferguson Spring.

**Turkey.** Eight Turkeys were seen on December 18 along Mulberry Flat Road by Robert H. Quaife of the Biology Department of the University of Louisville.

**Woodpeckers.** One of the most conspicuous features of the area on these dates was the abundance of Red-headed Woodpeckers. The woods (mostly oak and hickory) were literally overrun with the birds. I esti-

mated that at least 125 individuals were seen during the three days. Acorns were abundant.

#### Land Between the Lakes, January 31-February 3, 1967

The area covered was the same as previously indicated.

**Waterfowl.** The waterfowl situation remained much the same except that numbers of Canada Geese at Hematite Lake had declined to about 1750.

**Eagles.** A total of 22 Bald Eagles and two Golden Eagles were seen. On this trip a large concentration of Bald Eagles (19 im., one partially white head but dark tail) was found at the mouth of Fulton Creek. Most of the birds were sitting in trees along the shore but two or three were sitting or feeding on exposed mud bars. Two immature birds were seen near the dam, at Honker Lake, as before. An adult bird flushed from a tree on the road to Woodson Chapel about one-half mile from its intersection with Kentucky State Highway 453 (5D1 on TVA maps). An immature Golden Eagle was observed hunting over the marsh at the west end of Hematite Lake. An adult of this species was seen at Ferguson Spring (possibly the same bird seen before), by John G. Morris and others from the Biology Department of the University of Louisville.

**Woodpeckers.** Red-headed Woodpeckers were perhaps slightly less numerous than on the previous trip.

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### SPRING MEETING—APRIL 14-16, 1967

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its 1967 Spring Meeting at Bowling Green, Kentucky on April 14-15, with headquarters at the Lost River Motel, and at Glasgow, Kentucky on April 16.

The first session, on Friday evening at Western Kentucky State University's Science Building, was opened by Dr. Herbert E. Shadowen, President. After the president welcomed members and guests, he outlined the field trips for the week-end. Since the McElroy Lake was completely dry and the Chaney Lake almost gone, it was decided to visit Chaney Lake until nearly noon, then go to Dr. Lancaster's cabin for a picnic lunch and birding.

Dr. Shadowen then outlined the wilderness proposal for Mammoth Cave National Park as prepared by the National Speleological Society and backed by The Wilderness Society and the National Parks Association. After general discussion, during which Mr. Leonard Brecher and Mr. W. G. Duncan spoke in favor of the proposal as prepared by the above organizations and Dr. F. W. Stamm and Dr. Gordon Wilson questioned the wisdom of setting aside such a large percentage of the park area as wilderness, Mr. Brecher proposed that Dr. Gordon Wilson draw up a proposal for the Society's consideration to be presented to the Saturday evening meeting. The president asked Mr. Brecher to assist Dr. Wilson in drawing up the proposal.

The program consisted of informal accounts of recent birding activities and observations by various members, and the showing of slides, taken by Willard Gray, at the Ballard County Wildlife Refuge, and by Mrs. F. W. Stamm at several locations.

On Saturday morning, the main body of observers went to Chaney Lake, with a few going by McElroy Lake. As only a small amount of water remained at Chaney, there were few ducks but a considerable number of shore birds, chiefly yellowlegs. The group then went to Dr. Lancaster's place at the Mouth of Gasper River and covered the area in several parties..

The dinner meeting was held at Western Hills Restaurant, with 60 members and guests present. Dr. Wilson made the compilation of the bird list for the day, for a total of 90 species.

Mrs. Stamm reminded members that material is always needed for the **Warbler**, and urged those who have studies in progress to keep this in mind. She also noted that the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology is continuing its nesting study and that a letter of thanks had been received "for the continued cooperation of the Kentucky Ornithological Society," in this project. K.O.S. members who wish to participate should obtain cards from the Kentucky regional directors (James W. Hancock, Madisonville; Mrs. F. W. Stamm, Louisville; Dr. Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green; Howard P. Jones, Frankfort). Partici-

pants are requested to make special efforts to locate and report nests of Mourning Doves. Completed cards are to be returned to the regional directors.

Dr. Burt L. Monroe, Jr. explained the breeding bird survey in which a number of K.O.S. members participated last summer. Of the 46 survey routes planned for Kentucky, 37 were taken last summer; and it is hoped that all the routes will be covered this summer and more next summer. Two persons are required for each route, one a qualified observer who can recognize almost all breeding birds by sight and sound, and someone else to drive and record. Each route begins at a specified location and continues 25 miles in a specified direction, as nearly as roads allow, with three-minute stops being made each one-half mile.

These survey routes are taken in collaboration with the Cooperative Breeding Bird Survey of Eastern North America, as outlined and promoted by the Migratory Bird Population Station, Laurel, Maryland. This is an agency within the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Dr. Monroe, Jr. is coordinator for the Kentucky counts.

Dr. Monroe also invited anyone interested in an almost-certain sight of the Fish Crow and Mississippi Kite to join him for a field trip leaving from the Wagon Wheel Restaurant at Kentucky 94 By-Pass and No. 1099 at Hickman, Fulton County, Kentucky, on Saturday, June 3, at 1:00 p.m. (CDT).

The president recognized several members: Mr. A. L. Powell, who has been the force behind the organization of the Owensboro Bird Club of about 35 members, eight of whom were at the meeting; Mr. Newton Belt, who brought a number of new water-colors to the meeting and who presented to the K.O.S. a water color of avocets, painted from the photograph taken by Dr. Stamm which appeared on the cover of the November 1965 *Warbler*; and Mr. Albert F. Ganier, who showed the replica of the Bald Eagle presented him in token of the Tennessee Governor's Award for the work done by Mr. Ganier in conservation and in preservation of historic sites for the past fifty years.

The following proposal concerning the setting aside of wilderness areas in Mammoth Cave National Park, prepared by Dr. Gordon Wilson and Mr. Leonard Brecher, was then read at the meeting:

"The Kentucky Ornithological Society heartily approves of the wilderness idea for national parks and would like to see one or more wilderness areas designated for the Mammoth Cave National Park.

"We especially recommend for this wilderness the area bounded on the north by the park boundaries, on the east by the New Ferry-Stockholm Road, on the south by the Green River, and on the west by the Houchins Ferry-Ollie Road.

"We are sure that some other areas are worthy of further study for inclusion as wilderness areas and would like to see both surface and underground wilderness plans carried out where feasible.

"The Kentucky Ornithological Society  
Committee:  
Gordon Wilson  
Leonard C. Brecher

"Bowling Green, Kentucky, April 15, 1967."

A motion by Dr. Stamm to approve the recommendation was seconded and carried with no dissenting votes. Dr. Wilson offered to serve as liaison man between the K.O.S. and the National Park Service in this matter.

The program for the evening consisted of slides, shown by Dr. Shadowen of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Florida, the largest cypress forest left in America. The Sanctuary, although consisting of 6,000 acres, is imperiled by the changing water tables of land around it, and the National Audubon Society is attempting to raise two-thirds of the \$696,000 necessary to purchase protective acreage to match a one-third grant from the Ford Foundation. Dr. Shadowen also showed slides of Murphey's Pond, the southwestern Kentucky cypress swamp recently acquired by the Kentucky chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and noted the similarities in the two areas.

Mrs. Stamm told the group of an exhibition planned by "Locust Grove" for this summer. John James Audubon was a visitor to this last home of George Rogers Clark, and the K.O.S. has been invited to assist in sponsoring an Audubon exhibit, to include Audubon paintings, early editions of his books, etc. Members who have items which they would be willing to lend for the fully protected exhibit should get in touch with Dr. Shadowen or Mrs. Stamm.

The group went on Sunday morning to "Brigadoon," the farm south of Glasgow owned by Dr. and Mrs. Russell Starr. Several groups covered the heavily wooded area, where wild flowers grow in profusion. The meeting ended with a picnic lunch at the farmhouse, with a total bird count for the meeting of 107 species.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marquita P. Gillenwater  
Recording Secretary

\* \* \* \*

## FIELD NOTES

### AUTUMN MIGRATION NOTES FROM BALLARD COUNTY

Dam #53, in Ballard County, is the last dam on the Ohio River before it merges with the Mississippi. At this point the Kentucky side includes the floodplain, while the Illinois side consists of ridges; thus the locks are on the Illinois side. The Kentucky side, to which I had easy access, has exposed flat both above and below the dam. The upper level has a large mud flat, approximately one-mile in length, which varies with the water level.

The area below the dam is composed primarily of sand but contains a pond which is close to the river bank. Below the dam and near the river are flats composed of mud. These flats have natural depressions of moderate size, and after the heavy rains the past summer they held water for two or three weeks. There is a natural tendency, both above and below the dam, for depressions and ridges to form running parallel to the dam from the river to the bank. This is a result of wave action and the constant raising and lowering of the water level to maintain the channel. The water-filled depressions created ideal conditions for migrating shorebirds and herons. The following table shows the birds observed on my seven visits between August 22 and September 24, 1966.

## 1966 AUTUMN SEASON AT DAM 53, BALLARD COUNTY

Species	Aug. 22	Aug. 26	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sept. 3	Sept. 19	Sept. 24
Great Blue Heron .....	2	2	2		1	3	1
Green Heron .....			2	4			
Little Blue Heron .....	16	25	9	23	9		
Common Egret .....	2				2		
Osprey .....						1	
Semipalmated Plover .....	6	3	6	5	4		
Killdeer .....	2	16	6	9	3	4	14
Spotted Sandpiper .....	16	4	3	6	5		
Solitary Sandpiper .....	2						
Greater Yellowlegs .....				1			
Lesser Yellowlegs .....	4						
Pectoral Sandpiper .....	7	2	12	12	3		
Least Sandpiper .....	8	4	4	21	7		
Dowitcher sp. ....	2						
Stilt Sandpiper .....	8						
Semipalmated Sandpiper .....		6	2				
Sanderling .....	2	1					
Caspian Tern .....						1	
Black Tern .....	16					5	
Belted Kingfisher .....					1		

All Little Blue Herons were in immature plumage, with the exception of two adult birds on August 26, and one each on August 30 and September 3.

—WILLARD N. GRAY, LaCenter.

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## SOME NOTES FROM THE BARREN RIVER RESERVOIR

Since the recent building of the Barren River Reservoir a number of interesting species of birds have visited the area. During the 1966 fall season I recorded the following birds which may be worthy of mention.

On September 22, Faye Starr and I saw three Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) circling over the Skeggs Creek area, at the rear of our farm. On the same day we also saw two Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). An American Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*), in company with a flock of Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), was feeding on the mud flats on September 25; Dr. George McKinley and I studied the bird for a long time. No fall dates are given for this species in the *Birds of South-Central Kentucky*, by Gordon Wilson (assisted by Lancaster and Starr); so this seems to be the first fall record for this area. Two flocks of Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Ereunetes pusillus*) were also seen.

On November 3, the day after our 15-inch snowfall, I counted 49 Water Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*) as they were flying to the bare areas along the water-front at the Barren River park site. On November 6, with the snow thawing, I drove to the Beaver Creek Ramp on the lake and saw about 15 pipits; they were hopping along the barren lake-front;

interspersed among them were five or six Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*).

A beautiful uninjured Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) was brought to our house on the evening of October 21, 1966, by James Hiser, Center, Metcalfe County, Kentucky. He had caught the rail quite easily, while mowing Sudax, a hybrid grain, in a semi-swampy area. Mr. Hiser says that he finds two or three of these birds each fall in this field.—RUSSEL STARR, Glasgow.

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### EAGLE ATTACKS GOOSE

On November 7, 1966, Tom Morgan, also of Bowling Green, and I were watching a flock of some 300-400 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in the flats near the Education Center in the Land Between the Lakes. Suddenly the entire flock rose and started flying toward the lake. A very large hawk dived into the very middle of the flock and knocked a goose down, breaking its wing. The hawk followed the goose to the grounds and tried again and again to seize it; the goose fought it off until the two birds had reached the edge of the water. The goose quickly swam to join its companions, and the hawk flew away.

Since we were within a few yards of the struggle, it was easy to see that the attacking hawk was very large, the largest one we had ever seen, and that it had feathers down to its toes. Since neither of us is trained in bird-watching, we went at once to the Education Center and reported our find to the attendant, who brought out several books for us to see pictures of hawks. It was easy to locate our bird, for the colored picture of a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) agreed in every detail with the hawk we had watched in its struggle with the goose. When I got back to Bowling Green, I called Dr. Gordon Wilson, who urged me to send this report to *The Kentucky Warbler*.—TROYCE MASSEY, Bowling Green.

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### BARRED OWL AT FEEDING STATION

Mr. A. L. Powell, Maceo, has a window feeding-shelf that is usually covered with various seeds, peanut butter, and a mixture of cooking fat and meal. The shelf is usually attended by one or more birds throughout the day. On December 27, 1966, at 6:30 in the morning, I watched a Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) at this shelf, eating a mixture of the grease and meal. I thought this a very unusual type of food for a predator which normally feeds on rodents, small mammals, and birds. However, it is quite possible the owl was unsuccessful in attempting to capture one of the bird at the feeder and found the grease and meal, quite by accident, palatable to its taste. After reading in several books, I could not find another instance of a Barred Owl eating this type of food.—GEORGE WILLIAM RAY, Maceo.

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### A NOVEMBER PINE WARBLER

I attended the 1965 Fall Meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society at Kentucky Dam Village State Park, November 5-7, but remained there for two additional days. On November 9 as I sat on the porch adjoining my room at the Lodge, I noticed two birds flitting about in oak and pine trees. The birds were not over 75 feet from me and were about 25 feet up in the trees. A look through my binoculars revealed that one was a Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) and the other a Pine Warbler (*D. pinus*). The latter species was carefully studied; the yellow underparts, with faint dark streaks, and the white on the end of the two outer tail feathers all were noted. I was asked to submit this information to **The Kentucky Warbler**, as records of this species are few after October.—OSCAR McKINLEY BRYENS, White Pigeon, Michigan.

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### A CONCENTRATION OF CARDINALS

I have been feeding birds in my yard for the past 15 years and keep two bird baths running, with thermostat control set at 50° in the winter. I feed about 3,000 pounds of a year which consists of sunflower seed, corn, peanuts, raisins, milo, and some bread crumbs. On January 19 1967, at 6:45 a.m., I counted 85 Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) feeding in my back yard. On this day it was cloudy and there was an inch of snow on the ground. This is one of the highest counts on Cardinals I have ever had since feeding wild birds.—D. C. RILEY, Bowling Green.

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### AGE OF TWO WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS

On May 4, 1962, I banded a White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) with band number 30-142403, at my home station, in a suburb of northeastern Jefferson County, Kentucky. This bird returned to the same yard and was recaptured 12 times in subsequent years; its last appearance was on April 2, 1967, just 32 days less than five years after its first capture. At the time of banding the bird was recorded as an "adult." This would place the minimum possible age of the sparrow at six years.

Another White-crowned Sparrow banded as an "adult" on November 4, 1962, returned on April 27, 1967; its last previous appearance had been on November 10, 1964. The minimum possible age of this White-crown would also be six years or more, since the bird was in adult plumage when banded. Both birds appeared to be in excellent plumage and the bands, although worn, were still quite legible.

It is surprising that so small a bird could avoid all the hazards of its migratory flights to and from its breeding ground in the far north near the tree-limit to the precise yard in Louisville. The two White-crowned Sparrows are the oldest of those I have banded.—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

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the locale of two previous sight records. This small tidewater crow seems to be increasing its numbers and extending its range in the Mississippi Valley, and may be expected with increasing frequency by observers in the Mississippi floodplain of far western Kentucky.

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### NORTH AMERICAN NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM

KOS members, in their second year of participation and cooperation with Cornell University's North American Nest-Record Card Program, have done very well. Nearly 400 completed cards were received from our members for the 1966 season. As a result of this study, a substantial body of information is being amassed on the breeding of many Kentucky birds for which relatively few precise data were formerly available. Information on the 1966 nesting records will be published in the next issue of *The Kentucky Warbler*. Cards for the 1967 season may be obtained from any of the four regional chairmen: James W. Hancock, Route 1, Madisonville, Kentucky 42431; Howard P. Jones, Route 6, Box 119, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601; Mrs. F. W. Stamm, 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville, Kentucky 40222; Dr. Gordon Wilson, 1434 Chestnut Street, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101.

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### RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION

K.O.S. members with a concern for our birds of prey will be interested in the Raptor Research Foundation, a recently formed organization dedicated to the study and preservation of these birds. Associate membership in the Foundation is open to those making a financial contribution (no specified amount) for a particular calendar year. Subscriptions to the quarterly *Raptor Research News*, currently an informal newsletter, may be had for one dollar per year. The first number, issued this past January, is a 13-page account of organizational news, plans for the future, and projects in progress. Among the latter is a report by G. Ronald Austing, Cincinnati wildlife photographer and featured speaker at the February dinner meeting of the Beckham Bird Club, on his experiences in breeding Red-tailed Hawks and Prairie Falcons. Contributions, subscriptions, and letters of inquiry may be addressed to The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc., Centerville, South Dakota 57014.