

5-1974

Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 50, no. 2)

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The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

Vol. 50

MAY, 1974

No. 2



KILLDEER AT ITS NEST

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THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1923 by B. C. Bacon, L. Otley Pindar, and Gordon Wilson

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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

Organ of the *Kentucky Ornithological Society*. Published quarterly in February, May, August, and November. The *KENTUCKY WARBLER* is sent to all members not in arrears for dues. Membership dues are: Active or Regular, \$3.00; Contributing, \$5.00; Student, \$2.00; Life, \$50.00; Family, \$1.00 in addition to Regular, Contributing, or Life Membership dues. All articles and communications should be addressed to the editor. Subscriptions, memberships, and requests for back issues should be sent to the treasurer.

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Bowling Green 42101

Editorial Advisory Board

Anne L. (Mrs. F. W.) Stamm

Leonard C. Brecher

OUR COVER

The photograph of the Killdeer and its clutch, produced by Karl Maslowski, is being used in this issue to emphasize participation in the Nest-record Card Program.

ALBERT F. GANIER

1883-1973



In the death of Albert F. Ganier on December 20, 1973, the Kentucky Ornithological Society lost a valued Honorary Member and a steadfast friend. As the "godfather" of the Society—so designated by Dr. Gordon Wilson, one of the founders, because it was through Mr. Ganier's urging that the K.O.S. came into being—he demonstrated his abiding interest in the organization throughout its first fifty years of activity, attending most of its meetings, frequently as the main speaker. With modesty and gentle demeanor, he was always ready to share the fruits of his years of study and observation so that merely to be in his presence was a rewarding experience.

Mr. Ganier was born at Vicksburg, Mississippi on September 9, 1883. After graduating from Purdue University in 1908 with a degree in Civil Engineering, he joined the engineering department of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, moving to Nashville, Tennessee, where he lived for the remainder of his life. In 1915 he was a co-founder of the Engineers Association of Nashville and was elected its president in 1924. In addition to his professional duties he was eminently successful as long-time Chairman of the City Planning and Zoning Committee in promoting valuable civic improvements.

Having been interested in conservation and wildlife since boyhood, particularly in bird study, Mr. Ganier, with four others, founded the Tennessee Ornithological Society in 1915. He served several times over the decades as its president and was the editor of its journal, "*The Migrant*," for two different periods. In addition he was continuously the Society's curator from its beginning, constantly augmenting his teaching-research-reference collection of Tennessee birds began in 1914. Known as the "dean of Tennessee ornithologists," he remained the Society's principal driving force in influencing conservation of birds and their habitat.

Mr. Ganier served both as secretary and as president of the Wilson Ornithological Society and was later elected to Honorary Membership. In 1934 he became an Elected Member of the American Ornithologists' Union. After joining the Tennessee Academy of Science, he later inaugurated, while president, its quarterly publication, "Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science." Mr. Ganier made many expeditions for bird study, chiefly in his vacation periods, exploring all sections of his state. During the years 1936 through 1940 he organized a week's "camp-out" in June for concentrated study, each in a different area in Tennessee; several K.O.S. members had the good fortune to be among the twelve to sixteen persons in attendance. Based on his continued studies, he published numerous articles in scientific journals and a number of monographs of lasting value.

Although known for his ornithological work, Mr. Ganier's interest and efforts extended into other fields as well. Active in a group which worked diligently over a long period to convert the Great Smoky Mountains area into a national park, he also helped raise the necessary funds. He assisted in selecting suitable sites for a chain of state parks purchased by the federal government and developed by the WPA. After his retirement from the railroad in 1948, Mr. Ganier devoted his entire time to public service and conservation. A co-founder of the Nashville Children's Museum in 1946, he was a member of its board of directors for the next ten years. He raised funds and personally supervised the work of restoring several fine stone arch bridges in Tennessee. He became a member of the Tennessee Historical Society in 1952 and later served as its president. As a member of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities he was made in 1955, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Belle Meade, a twenty-five acre remnant of a nineteenth century plantation. Here he directed extensive restoration of the mansion and other central buildings and planted the grounds as an arboretum. He worked tirelessly for the authentic location of the northern section of the Natchez Trace Parkway, just as he always advocated and worked for free-flowing natural streams. In 1966, for his contributions to the many-faceted field of conservation, Mr. Ganier was presented the Governor's Award of Tennessee Conservationist of the Year on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation and the Sears Roebuck Foundation.

To the very end of his life he continued to work, always without ostentation, for the betterment of our environment and the benefit of his fellow man. Amazingly keen of mind and surprisingly sturdy of body, he brought to fruition accomplishments far beyond the scope of most individuals. Mr. Ganier took part in all the activities of the Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting of the K.O.S., just short of his ninetieth birthday. In his remarks at the dinner, upon receiving a plaque of appreciation from the Society, he ex-

pressed with his customary vigor his pride in our accomplishments and with kindly encouragement urged that through our efforts others, too, be led to a fuller enjoyment of their surroundings. The K.O.S. has been fortunate indeed in having had for a half century the deep interest, wise counsel, and genuine friendship of this gentle, dedicated, and loyal benefactor. — EVELYN J. SCHNEIDER, 2525 Broadmeade Rd., Louisville 40205.

KOS NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM

This is the Society's tenth year of cooperation with Cornell University in its North American Nest-record Card Program. The primary aim of the program, outlined by Cornell, is to accumulate a large amount of data on the breeding biology of birds of the entire North American continent. This data then is available to researchers interested in avian biology, such as clutch size, fledgling period, nesting success, etc. This year the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is making a special appeal for nesting records of raptors and colonial nesting birds. Precise data is needed on nest contents on given dates. However, we are still interested in collecting nesting data on all species of birds in Kentucky, even our most common ones. The accumulation of data on all species, common or rare, can be of extreme value to those wishing to carry out projects on the breeding biology of Kentucky birds. Also, we are interested in Kentucky being well represented in the program. KOS needs the cooperation of all competent field observers. Copies of all original cards are made before mailing them to Cornell and are retained by the Society. Let's make this a banner year comparable to 1968 when we collected information on 1,175 nests! Nest-cards are available from the address listed below (Regional Center).

Special thanks are due the members who have been so helpful as regional chairmen during these past years: James W. Hancock, Madisonville; Howard Jones, Frankfort; and the late Dr. Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green. Gratitude is also owed Albert Powell, Owensboro; Dr. Herbert E. Shadowen, Bowling Green, Dr. Clell Peterson, Murray, and Professor A. L. Whitt, Jr., Richmond, for assistance in dispensing and receiving cards.

— ANNE L. STAMM, 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville, Kentucky 40222.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SPRING MEETING

April 19-21, 1974

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its fifty-first Spring Meeting, April 19-21, 1974 at Bowling Green, Kentucky, with headquarters at the Holiday Inn Midtown on U.S. 31W Bypass.

The first session, Friday evening, opened with a welcome from the president, Dr. Burt L. Monroe, Jr. at the Science Building on the Western

Kentucky University campus. Dr. Monroe then turned the meeting over to vice-president Prof. A. L. Whitt who was in charge of the program.

Prof. Whitt showed a film on Kirtland's Warbler, entitled *The Bird of Fire*. This beautiful rare species is found only in the Jack pines of Wisconsin and the Bahamas. The film brought out the specific conditions for nesting, the necessity of burning over areas of pines and the role played by the cowbirds in the life of this endangered species.

Mrs. F. W. Stamm gave a detailed report on her three-year study of the migration of the Broad-winged Hawks in Eastern Kentucky. This study is being made to determine the possible flight lines over the Cumberland ridges and the Log County Mountain. This particular area is apparently a definite migratory route for the hawks. Mrs. Stamm called attention to the part weather conditions play in the number of hawks and the pattern of flight.

Dr. Monroe reported on the Annual Summer Bird Count returns from thirty-five participants. He pointed out the steady state of our common birds with the Grackle being the most abundant, number-wise, and the Indigo Bunting holding first place as the most frequently heard bird at the 1,750 stops.

Mrs. Stamm asked the members to turn in last year's Nesting-record cards and urged all to participate this year in collecting nesting information to be forwarded to the Ornithological Laboratory at Cornell University which sponsors the recordings.

Dr. Herbert E. Shadowen announced two field trips Saturday to Chaney and McElroy Lakes:—

7:00 a.m. trip led by Dr. Burt Monroe, Jr.

8:00 a.m. trip with Dr. Shadowen as the leader.

He also gave directions to the Lone Oak Restaurant on the Old Scottsville Road where the dinner meeting would be held at 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

An ideal "bird-watching" day, warm and sunny, dawned Saturday. The birds cooperated—rafts of water fowl were observed on Chaney Lake, the mud flats at McElroy Lake kept the KOS members busy checking off the long list of shore birds, while the trees fringing the lakes called attention to the warblers.

After a lunch at Holiday Inn, many members took a leisurely walk along the banks of the Barren River as an additional field trip of choice.

About 80 members thoroughly enjoyed the old-fashioned family-style dinner with a sumptuous menu served at the Lone Oak Restaurant.

After the dinner, Dr. Monroe announced that the 1974 Fall Meeting would be held at Cumberland Falls, October 4-6, with emphasis on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

He urged each member to send a card to Governor Ford opposing the construction of the Red River Dam. As an organization, the K.O.S. had previously sent a letter of protest, but individual letters were also encouraged.

Dr. Monroe mentioned the Eagle Valley Environmentalist organization (EVE), a group of conservationists similar to the Nature Conservancy whose purpose is to buy property in the Mississippi Valley for breeding territory for eagles. Any member wishing to contribute to the project was asked to contact Dr. Monroe for more information.

Dr. Monroe informed the K.O.S. of the loss of two outstanding members since the last meeting — the death, on December 19 at Nashville, Tennessee of Miss Amelia Laskey, a life member, and the following day, December 20, of Mr. Albert F. Ganier, who had urged Dr. Gordon Wilson to form the Kentucky Ornithological Society in 1923.

The check of the bird list of the day totaled 116 species. The dinner meeting adjourned at 8:15. On leaving the restaurant the K.O.S. members were serenaded by Whip-poor-wills, thus making the total bird count for the perfect day, 117.

On Sunday, April 21, the members traveled to the farm of Dr. and Mrs. Russell Starr near Glasgow for additional field trips in beautiful wooded areas and fields and the usual warm hospitality of the host family. Five additional species were added to the previous day's list for a total of 122 species.

Respectfully submitted,
Sister Casimir Czurlies
Recording Secretary

ATTENDANCE AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1974

ANCHORAGE: Dr. Burt L. Monroe, Jr.

BOWLING GREEN: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Guthrie, Ed Hartowicz, Mrs. Jerome Ramsey, Dr. and Mrs. Herb Shadowen, Mrs. W. G. Thomas, Chester West.

BROOKS: Amy Deane.

GLASGOW: Dr. and Mrs. Mike Barr, Mrs. George Ellis, Jr., Mrs. James Gillenwater, Dr. and Mrs. Russell Starr

JACKSON: Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Allaire

LEXINGTON: Deborah Breen, Harold Frazier, Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Uterhart.

LOUISVILLE: Amelia Alford, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brecher, Mrs. M. L. Daubard, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Ellison, Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Jackson, Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth McConnell, Mrs. J. V. Muntan, Mr. and Mrs. James Pasikowski, Lawrence Smith, Dr. and Mrs. F. W. Stamm, Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Susie.

MACEO: Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Powell.

MADISONVILLE: Thelma Gentry, Mr. and Mrs. N. M. Travis, Irene Wells.

MURRAY: C. W. Kemper.

PROSPECT: Mrs. O. F. Hook.

OWENSBORO: Mrs. Ted Bowne, Sister Casimir Czurles, Mary Lydia Greenwell, Mr. and Mrs. Ramon Iles, Wynema Sims, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Wilson.

RICHMOND: Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Whitt.

BOONEVILLE, INDIANA: Donald Andrews, Jonathon Gray, Willard Gray.

TENNYSON, INDIANA: Kim Neese.

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN: Mr. and Mrs. John A. Cheek, II.

FIELD NOTES

MUTE SWANS SEEN IN OHIO RIVER NEAR PADUCAH

On February 6, 1974, we were called at our home in Paducah by Mr. Bill Watson, of Brookport, Ill., to report that 3 swans were visible from the Irvin S. Cobb Bridge. Mrs. Woolfenden and I found the swans feeding in flooded winter rye about a quarter of a mile south of the bridge on the Kentucky side and well up in the submerged fields, at least 3/8ths of a mile from the river bank. The general posture of the birds with the S-bend in the neck and the highly held primaries over the back strongly suggested Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*).

The following day Mrs. Woolfenden was able to work her way through a muddy rye field to within about 100 feet of the swans. At this distance, with 7-power binoculars, she could confirm the identification of 3 Mute Swans. The S-curved neck and distinctively raised primaries of two of the birds were striking at short range, but above all the bill — more yellow than orange, however — was marked by the characteristic black knob of the Mute Swan. Mrs. Woolfenden threw bread crumbs towards the birds, but they did not come to take the bread until after she had left the area. At no time were the birds seen in flight.

We have seen this species enclosed and in the feral state in New Jersey and are confident that the three birds we saw were wild. To our knowledge there are no penned Mute Swans within 25 miles of Paducah.

Esther and Lester Woolfenden, Paducah

(Note: A pair of Mute Swans with clipped pinions are presently at Hematite Lake in the LBL, but Mr. Sturm of the LBL says that all swans penned and/or raised there are accounted for. Reports of swans seen but not identified occasionally are reported from the Ballard County Wildlife Management Area. Clell T. Peterson)

SIGHTING OF HARRIS' SPARROW

On December 28, 1973, while on the Sorgho Christmas bird count and accompanied by my wife and Mrs. L. E. Wilson, a Harris' Sparrow was observed. It was seen in the brush alongside a gravel road when we stopped to look at a group of sparrows. The group consisted of House Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, and the Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*). The large pink bill was immediately noticeable; the crown was dark; the rest of the head was buffy brown with a lighter streak over the eye extending to the back of the head; the throat was white with spots and blotches on the breast and with faint streaking on the side; two wing bars were evident. The bird stayed in view for several minutes, allowing time for checking of bird guides and confirmation of identification by all present.

This is the third reported sighting of the Harris' Sparrow in Daviess County. Mr. A. L. Powell has reported two previous sightings in the eastern part of the county in prior years; this sighting was in the western end of the county. — RAMON ILES, 22-23 St. James Court, Owensboro.

A FLOCK OF RED CROSSBILLS INVADE NORTHEAST JEFFERSON COUNTY

On November 1, 1973, after returning from Westport High School, I noticed some reddish-colored birds in the pine trees (*Pinus strobus*) along our driveway in northeast Jefferson County. I hurried to check the birds with my binoculars and found them to be Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*). I called Mrs. Frederick W. Stamm, who lives just two miles away, and she came over immediately. We watched the birds through binoculars and a 20x balscope. Both sexes were present but the majority were male birds. The crossed mandibles were apparent. We counted 35 to 40 birds as they flew from a locust tree to the top branches of a sycamore. The birds preened their feathers for about fifteen minutes and then flew out of sight. Apparently the birds remained in the neighborhood because approximately 50 were seen on the following day. On November 8, 25 birds were in our pine trees; five were seen on the following day and only three were noted on November 11. On the latter date a male Red Crossbill was found dead on a neighbor's driveway. It was thought that the bird had flown against a window pane and dropped to the nearby driveway. It was still warm and in good condition and was forwarded to Dr. Allen Phillips to determine its race. It will be of interest to know the subspecies of this rare winter visitant since the only Kentucky specimens are the eight which were collected in Nelson County in 1883 (Birds of Kentucky, 1965:475). — BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., Old Westport Road, Louisville 40222.

(Editor's note: Other sightings of the Red Crossbill have been reported this winter, including a flock of approximately 30 in November, 1973 at Bowling Green by Dr. L. Y. Lancaster.)

A FLOCK OF SNOW BUNTINGS AT LOUISVILLE

On December 23, 1973, Joseph Croft, Anne L. Stamm (Mrs. F. W.) and I searched for Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) and Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*) in the corn fields at Surrey Hills farm in eastern Jefferson County. We found large flocks of Horned Larks but no Lapland Longspurs.

On January 12, 1974, I walked to the same field looking for Horned Larks and much to my surprise saw a flock of 30 or more Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). On the following day, January 13, my mother, Mrs. Brainard Palmer-Ball, Mrs. Stamm and I checked the field again and after some searching found a few Lapland Longspurs feeding with the larks. Upon further investigation we found the flock of Snow Buntings in another field; they were not associating with other species. As I approached them they flew about, circled overhead, and then in a restless manner headed northward. They flew higher and higher and suddenly disappeared from view. Patches of snow and ice were on the ground on both days, January 12 and 13. The temperature on the former date ranged from 16 to 21 degrees and on the latter 17 to 33 degrees, with strong winds from the northeast on both days. Mrs. Stamm informed me that this is the largest number of Snow Buntings ever recorded in the Louisville area. — BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., Old Westport Road, Louisville 40222.

SHORT-EARED OWLS IN NICHOLAS COUNTY

Several observers have reported Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) wintering in Nicholas County. On February 5, 1974 a landowner informed me that he had seen six birds frequently feeding early and late in the day. One bird was shot by a hunter. We were fortunate enough to see these birds at close range. One owl neatly plucked a mouse from the pasture and promptly ate it as we watched from a distance of 50 yards. I am afraid the birds are too tame for their own safety. They were last seen by the landowner on March 10, 1974. They were observed by Given Harper, Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver, and Dr. and Mrs. Jack T. Morford. — DR. JACK T. MORFORD, Carlisle 40311.

BOOK REVIEW

BIRDS OF BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK AND VICINITY, by Roland H. Wauer. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1973; pp. xv + 223, 25 col. pls, and map. Paper, \$4.95.

A look at this book is enough to make the reader want to pack his bag and head west to see some of the 385 species recorded there. The attractive small volume is an up-to-date book about the birds of the area and where they may be seen within and near the park.

A brief ornithological history is given, and an interesting discussion of Big Bend and its complex topography with its various plant communities is briefly described. The land of contrasts is further indicated by the 17 color photographs of vegetation of the area. The inclusion of a 14½ x 13½ inch foldout map of the region is noteworthy. The book contains seven color plates by KOS member Howard Rollin, and the frontispiece — a pair of Lucifer Hummingbirds — is by Mrs. Anne Publich. Although these bird plates are attractive, one wonders why they are included in a book designed primarily for bird finding in the park. Yet, on closer observation, five of the plates show from nine to ten species on each plate associated with the five plant communities described. This enables a visitor to see at a glance the birds he may expect to find on the floodplain, shrub desert, etc.

The major portion of the book is the annotated list of 385 species. Twenty-six of these are regarded as hypothetical and included in a second list, "birds of Uncertain Occurrence." The serious bird student will be interested in the statistics and records, while the casual bird watcher will enjoy knowing where to find those special birds to add to one's life list. The arrival and departure dates of migrant species and the information on nesting activities constitutes one of the useful features of the book.

The author, Roland H. Wauer, formerly Chief Park Naturalist of the Big Bend National Park, spent six years in residence at the park. It seems to this reviewer that he has made an important contribution in this "where-to-go-and-see-what" book since such a large number of species occurs in the park. — ANNE L. STAMM, 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

NEWS AND VIEWS

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Joseph E. Croft, assistant professor of classical languages at Davidson College, North Carolina, is a recent addition to the list of Life Members of the Kentucky Ornithological Society. After earning a bachelor of arts degree at Georgetown University, Washington, D. C., and a master of arts degree at the University of Virginia, he obtained his doctorate at Princeton University. He has been interested in bird study from early youth and joined the Louisville Chapter (Beckham Bird Club) as a student member in 1955 and has served as its treasurer and president. He has written a number of valuable ornithological papers and has served the Society as an assistant editor of its journal, *The Kentucky Warbler*. We welcome Dr. Croft to our growing list of Life Members.

Mr. Conley Webster, a retired wholesale grocer residing in Lexington, became interested in birds as early as the 1920's. His first bird club affiliation was with the Liberty Bell Bird Club, whose sponsor was the *Country Gentleman* magazine of Philadelphia. Mr. Webster, a native of Oregon Bend, Woodford County, has varied interests. He is past president of the Kentucky Archaeological Society and is an avid collector, especially Kentuckiana. In 1950 he was invited by the Cuban government to represent

Kentucky and those Kentuckians who in 1850 made the first attempt to free them from Spanish rule. In 1958 he flew to Guatamala City and the Peter rain forest in search of birds, in 1958 his first trip to Africa, and in 1972 to the forgotten islands of the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles, where many rare birds — Magpie Robin, Brush Warbler, Black Paradise Flycatcher, Black Parrot — were seen. His zest for birding has added much to his life.

KOS MOURNS MRS. LASKEY'S LOSS

Mrs. F. C. (Amelia) Laskey, a K.O.S. member for more than 30 years and also a Life Member, died at her residence, 1521 Graybar Lane, Nashville, Tennessee on December 19, 1973. She had attended some of our Spring Meetings, the last being in 1971 at Mammoth Cave National Park when T.O.S. and K.O.S. held a joint meeting. Mrs. Laskey was a noted ornithologist. She was an authority on the Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, and Mourning Dove. In 1966 she was made a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union. Her original bird studies will live on because of her many contributions to ornithological literature. She was a valued friend of all who knew her.

PUBLICATION OF 1974 BIG SPRING COUNTS

Members are urged to submit at their earliest convenience, Spring Bird Counts — along with numbers of each species if available — to the editor for inclusion in the August issue of the *Kentucky Warbler*.

FALL MEETING

The Fall Meeting will be held at Cumberland Falls State Park, October 4-6, 1974. Emphasis will be placed on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Make your reservation early and plan to participate.