

8-1977

Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 53, no. 3)

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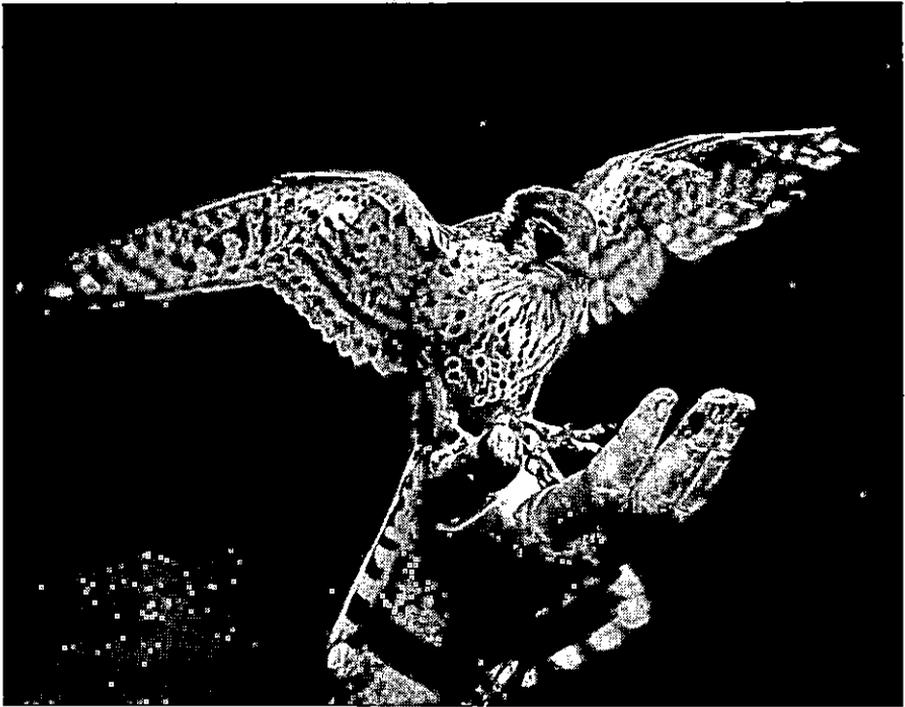
The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

VOL. 53

AUGUST, 1977

NO. 3



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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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OUR COVER

The photograph of the American Kestrel was taken just as the young bird landed for a morsal of meat. The photographer was Malcolm Guy Briggs of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Western Kentucky University in July, 1977. The stray bird was successfully reared and released.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE 1977 ONE-DAY BALD EAGLE COUNT

ANNE L. STAMM

February 5, 1977 was the date of the Kentucky Ornithological Society's annual One-Day Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Count. Fifty-two members and guests participated in the state-wide count conducted in cooperation with the Mississippi Valley Winter Bald Eagle Survey.

The sky was clear for the most part and visibility was fairly good, although snow showers were reported in two areas. The wind was north to northwest and varied from two to 15 m.p.h. Temperatures ranged from eight to 30 degrees. However, census takers found roads icy, some inaccessible, others closed, with moderate to heavy snow cover. Ponds, lakes, and rivers were frozen. These conditions stemmed from the frigid Arctic air that dipped farther south than usual in mid-January and remained through early February. The three weeks prior to the count temperatures dropped to 10 and 20 degrees below zero, with a chill factor, on some days, of 30 to 40 degrees below zero. In some sections of the state it was the coldest January in over 100 years and the snowiest since 1918. These sub-freezing conditions caused some Bald Eagles to depart in search of open water and food.

Participants checked Kentucky's major bodies of water by boat, car and on foot. This year, for the first time, a section of the Mississippi River was covered by plane from Reelfoot Lake to Bardwell, Kentucky, on February 6, by Betty and Kenneth Leggett. They reported Reelfoot Lake frozen and observed no eagles. On the previous day, Dr. Clell Peterson, Mike Miller, Larry Taylor, and Tom Garrity covered the Barlow bottoms from Oscar south to Hickman and saw two mature and three immature Bald Eagles. Four of these eagles were seen north of Bardwell and one south of Hickman. Interestingly enough neither the Leggett party nor the Peterson party saw any eagles between Bardwell and Hickman. An unusual find of the Peterson party was the sighting of an immature Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) soaring over the Mississippi at S. French Point below Hickman.

Bettie Sumara covered the "Bend of the River" area in extreme western Kentucky working along KY 94, 1282, 311 and along the levee. She reported that Reelfoot Lake had been frozen solid for the past three weeks and the Mississippi River was the only open water. She sighted an immature Bald Eagle flying north toward Baptist Missionary Church and then upward on a thermal until out of sight. The location here is one-half mile east of #9 Lake between KY 94 and the levee.

Although 16 observers worked in seven parties at Land between the Lakes, only 13 Bald Eagles were sighted. Apparently the Bald Eagles had moved farther south to open water since the count was far below that of previous years. Two weeks later, after the severe cold weather had sub-

sided, the eagle population increased by more than 100% (LBL Bald Eagle Weekend). However, three immature Golden Eagles were reported there and added interest to the count: one at Fulton Bay (Ray Nall party); one at Kuttawa Landing (Ricky Lowe and Janet Caldemeyer); and one at Duncan Bay (John Mechler and Paul Sturm).

At the Ballard Waterfowl Management Area, James Moynahan reported a total of 13 Bald Eagles (8 adults and 5 immature) and *six* Golden Eagles. It is quite possible that the high population of geese there provided ample food supply for the eagles. Both the Bald Eagle and the Golden Eagle were more numerous than on any previous count.

Chastain and James Frazer usually find at least six or seven Bald Eagles at Dam #50, but this year they reported the river frozen and no eagles in the area.

Lawrence Smith and his party found the Ohio River frozen "from shore to shore" south of Derby, Indiana. They saw no eagles.

The road to Rock Haven was closed because of icy conditions and this prevented coverage on the Ohio River south of the mouth of Otter Creek, a usual wintering area for Bald Eagles. Also, Doe Lake was frozen from shore to shore. Some sections of the Ohio River south of Doe Lake to Battletown were frozen, although a few areas were open and free of ice. The Ohio River at West Point was open, and the Stamm party spotted two mature Bald Eagles perched along the bank of the river. Emma and Donald Summerfield checked the area on the following day and found two immature birds there. The eagles remained in the area for several weeks.

Father Terence Rhoades checked along the Ohio River from Louisville to Westport, Kentucky from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and found no eagles.

Lee McNeely and his party checked the Ohio from Petersburg to Big Bone and found the river "mostly frozen." Also, Wayne Mason's party covered Barren River Reservoir which was completely frozen. Visibility was poor due to the swirling snow from the strong winds. Professor A. L. Whitt, Jr. planned to cover Laurel Lake but due to snow and ice was unable to reach the area.

Virginia and Wendell Kingsolver checked Cave Run Lake and found it frozen. However, four days previous to the count, a biologist from the Fish and Wildlife Service saw an adult Bald Eagle on the "free running river just below the dam." Dennis Coskren and Mel Hankla covered Wolf Creek Dam and, as usual, found both mature and immature Bald Eagles.

The total number of Bald Eagles for the count was 41 (19 adults and 22 immatures). Also, 10 Golden Eagles were tabulated — a record high for the counts. Although the Bald Eagle count is lower than in some previous years, it is fairly good considering the severe winter. Below is the list of areas covered and the number of eagles sighted.

LOCATION	ADULTS	IMMATURES	TOTALS
Bend of the River Area	0	1	1
Reelfoot Lake (Kentucky-Tennessee line) to Bardwell along Mississippi	0	0	0
Oscar south to Hickman	2	3	5
Ballard Waterfowl Management Area on the Ohio River	8	5	13
Land Between the Lakes	4	9	13
Dam # 50 — near Marion	0	0	0
West Point to Battletown on the Ohio River	3	2*	5
Along Ohio River to see Kentucky side (Leavenworth, Indiana to Rome)	0	0	0
Along the Ohio River from Louisville to Westport, Kentucky	0	0	0
Barren River Reservoir	0	0	0
Ohio River From Petersburg to Big Bone near Cincinnati, Ohio	0	0	0
Cave Run Lake — eastern Kentucky	0	0	0
Cumberland River — Wolf Creek Dam	2	2	4
Kentucky, 1977 totals	19	22	41

* Observed on February 6 and subsequent dates.

As coordinator of these counts in Kentucky, I wish to thank all participants and especially the personnel from the Fish and Wildlife Service and T.V.A. Whether or not eagles were sighted, each observer's contribution is significant. Observers were: Betty Abbott, Alida Akers, Martha Bryant, Janet Caldemeyer, John Charron, Marcus E. Cope, Dennis Coskren, Ed Ditterline, Gladys Ditterline, Diane and Jackie Elmore, Walter Ellison, Ronnie Fox, C. L. Frazer, James A. Frazer, Tom Garrity, Mel Hankla, Kathy Howard, George Johnson, Virginia and Wendell Kingsolver, Wayne Larson, Betty and Kenneth Leggett, Ricky Lowe, Lee K. McNeely, Wayne Mason, John Mechler, Michael Miller, J. O. Moynahan, Ray Nall, Eric Neff, Clell Peterson, Lawrence Philpot, Lene Rauth, Ed Ray, Father Terence Rhoades, Mrs. C. A. Robertson, Robert Smith, Lawrence Smith, Jody Stallings, Mel Stampe, Anne L. Stamm, Frederick W. Stamm, Paul Sturm, Betty Sumara, Larry Taylor, Robert Taylor, Emma and Donald Summerfield, Pam Wright.

1977 SPRING BIRD COUNTS

Three spring bird counts were reported this year. These counts sometimes result in exciting discoveries and serve as an excellent source of training in bird identification. The Mammoth Cave National Park count during the spring meeting of the K.O.S. was reported in the May issue of *The Kentucky Warbler*.

HENDERSON AREA — (Christmas Count area). May 1. Total 114 species, 1,735 individuals. King Benson, Ron Dodson (compiler), Bob DiOrio, Kendall Gentry, Bertha Hartung, James Lodato, Joyce Owens, Nancy Richardson, Virginia Smith, M. G. Stanley, Caroline Summers, Ike Utley, Edna Vogel, Richard Whom. The leafing of trees was ahead of schedule this year which made warbler identification difficult. The Cattle Egret was observed along the banks of Hardy Slough in the Slough Wildlife Area. Twenty species of warblers and five species of shorebirds were reported.

LOUISVILLE — (Christmas Count area plus Bernheim Forest, Bullitt County). May 8; 2:00 a.m. to 8:15 p.m. Partly cloudy; 58° to 80°. Total 151 species, 9,189 individuals. Virginia Calvert, Kathryn Clay, Diane Elmore, Jackie Elmore, Violet Jackson, Wilbur Jackson, Burt Monroe Jr. (compiler), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Lene Rauth, Father Terence Rhoades, Judy Robertson, Mable Slack, Larry Smith, Anne Stamm, Frederick Stamm (Beckham Bird Club). The Alder Flycatcher was identified by call. Two Dunlin in spring plumage were seen at a farm pond. Thirty-one species of warblers and 11 species of shorebirds were reported.

BURLINGTON — (Christmas Count area). May 7; 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., rainy in a.m., clearing in p.m., 63° to 75°. Total 65 species, 482 individuals. Mike Andrews, Lee K. McNeely (compiler), Lynda McNeely, Marian Ruschman, Hazel Ulrey, Robert Wahl. During the afternoon three shorebirds were observed skimming low over Camp Ernst Lake near Burlington and landed on the opposite shore. The two larger birds were identified as Greater Yellowlegs, and the third bird was a Dunlin. Ten species of warblers and four species of shorebirds were reported.

FIELD NOTES

A CROW ROOST IN LEXINGTON

In February 1977 I located a large roost of crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) in Lexington in a partially wooded area about 50 acres in size between Delmont Drive and Old Frankfort Pike, and made an attempt to determine the total number of birds occupying the roost. The number is estimated at 30,000.

At various points in Lexington last winter, crows could be seen flying toward the roost every evening and away from it every morning, and they followed similar routes day after day. Crows could be seen flying to the roost from the North, Northeast, East, South, West, and Northwest, but the greatest number by far was seen coming from the West and Northwest.

The number of birds flying into the roost from a particular direction was estimated by the following method: all birds flying past a particular point in one minute were counted. One-minute counts were repeated a number of times during an evening. The mean number of birds per minute was calculated and this number was multiplied by the total time that evening during which birds were seen flying into the roost. It was often impossible to count individual birds, and in such cases the numbers of birds was estimated. To avoid biasing the mean in favor of the high numbers of birds that were seen during relatively short periods, means were calculated separately for periods when fewer than 50 birds were counted per minute and periods when 50 or more were counted per minute.

On the evening of February 6, crows were observed flying in from the West to a barnyard on the northwest side of Lexington near the point where Viley Road goes under New Circle Road. Between 6:00 and 6:30 about 150 birds per minute were seen flying to this area and landing. No birds were seen flying in after 6:35, which was 30 minutes after sunset. Most of the birds landed on the ground but some perched in a large tree in the barnyard or in other trees nearby. However, the crows did not stay in this area. Groups of them left the area, flying off to the East toward the main roost near Old Frankfort Pike. By 6:45, when it was almost completely dark, nearly all the birds had gone. Stamm and Hardwick (Stamm, Anne L., and Hardwick, Gertrude L., *Ky Warbler* 34:38-39, 1958) also report an instance of large numbers of crows roosting on the ground.

On the evenings of February 14 and 16, crows were observed flying in from the South to a large area containing many tall trees on the west side of Red Mile Road. On February 16, crows flying to this area were counted. They were seen flying into this area from 5:45 to 6:35, with the greatest number arriving between 6:20 and 6:30. They did not remain in the area, but gradually moved off to the North toward the main roost.

On the evening of February 21, crows flying into the main roost from the North, Northeast, and East were counted. They were seen coming from the North or Northeast between 5:20 and 6:40, and from the East between 5:30 and 5:55. The number of birds arriving from the North or Northeast was greatest between 6:30 and 6:40, that is, between 10 and 20 minutes after sunset.

On the evening of February 22, crows flying to the main roost from the West or Northwest were counted. Birds were seen coming in from these directions between 5:15 and 7:00. Fewer than 100 birds per minute were counted coming from these directions before 6:00; the numbers gradually increased and reached a maximum between 6:30 and 6:45.

Total numbers of birds flying into the roost are summarized as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Number</i>
2-16-77	from South	3,600
2-21-77	from North or Northeast	3,300
2-21-77	from East	200
2-22-77	from West or Northwest	22,000
Total		29,100

SNOWY OWL IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

After receiving some vague information regarding the possible sighting of a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) at the General Electric Appliance Park property on Poplar Level Road in early February, I drove to the area and found the bird. It was sitting on the ground in a patch of snow near the access road. Employees told me that the bird had been in the vicinity for approximately three weeks and had been seen catching pigeons, which are abundant in the area.

I notified the Beckham Bird Club and about forty members saw the bird during its stay. It apparently remained from January 8 to February 28. Numerous pellets were found. There was heavy snow on the ground during the month of January, and the pellets included the feet of some birds smaller than pigeons.

— JUDY ROBERTSON, 3 River Hill Road, Louisville, Kentucky 40207.

Editor's note: This was another year when the Snowy Owl invaded the United States, and the editorial staff has been advised of the species being found as far south as Shreveport, Louisiana. A Snowy Owl was reported at Niagra, Kentucky on January 12, 1977 by Donald Dodson. Other recent reports for Louisville sightings were in December, 1963, and February, 1965.

REPORT OF GREAT BLUE HERON ROOKERY IN HENDERSON COUNTY

Of interest is the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) rookery in Henderson County. As of May 15, 1977 80 Great Blue Herons were counted in and around the nesting area. It appears that one nest was destroyed over the winter, but two new ones have been built this spring. Also, another rookery on the Tradewater River in Crittenden County has been discovered. Nine nests and 11 Great Blue Herons were counted.

On May 8 I observed six Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) in an area north of Henderson called Horse Shoe Bend. All of the egrets were in breeding plumage. — RON DODSON, 2423 Anne Drive, Henderson, 42420.

CLIFF SWALLOWS NESTING ON BARREN RIVER RESERVOIR

Little has been reported on the nesting status of the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) in Kentucky. According to the state's literature the bird is listed as a rare summer resident with almost all nesting records coming from the bridges and dams of Lakes Barkley and Kentucky. Thus the discovery of a nesting colony along Barren River Reservoir is noteworthy.

Dr. Russell Starr first reported a nesting colony on the Dwight-Siddens bridge on Beaver Creek in Barren County. On June 18, 1977 George Johnson and I went to the bridge and found the nesting birds. Approxi-

mately 40 to 50 adult birds were present; some were busily darting about over the water, and many were feeding young. The 26 retort (bottle-shaped) nests were distributed on both sides of the bridge with several Barn Swallow nests, a Phoebe nest, and two Robin nests located under the bridge. On July 24, 1977 we counted 33 Cliff Swallow nests on the Finney bridge on Beaver Creek in Barren County.

The Cliff Swallow has been suspected of nesting in other parts of Kentucky, but nests were not found or not reported. Now with the finding of this colony, the breeding of the species in Barren County has been established. — WAYNE MASON, Glasgow 42141.

YELLOW RAIL SIGHTING

On the afternoon of October 22, 1976 I was using a tractor to move some lumber on my family's farm in eastern Jefferson County and decided to drive the tractor through a hayfield in an attempt to flush some interesting bird.

The field contained a mixture of fescue, orchard grass, and clover with a few clumps of Johnson grass dotting the entire area. My experiences earlier in the fall with Soras (*Porzana carolina*) had convinced me that rails were attracted to the Johnson grass in cornfields for its cover and seeds, so I crisscrossed the field, concentrating my movements through the Johnson grass clumps. After ten minutes of failing to flush any birds I was about to turn out of the field when, surprisingly, a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) flushed 25 feet in front of the tractor and veered off into an adjacent cornfield about 45 feet to my right.

There was no question of the bird's identity because of the typical rail-like flight and snow-white wing patches on the trailing half of the wings. The bird appeared to be half to two-thirds the size of a Sora in flight, and its overall coloring was a mottling of buff, black, and white. The yellowish legs trailed below the bird as it gained an altitude of about four feet before it fluttered into the cornfield. Having my 7x35 binoculars with me, I followed the rail through the glasses and noted all of these marks in addition to the short yellowish bill.

Needless to say, I have spent many unsuccessful hours since then driving through and cutting hayfields on our farm without flushing another Yellow Rail. However, while harvesting corn and cutting hay during the past few years, I have seen Virginia Rails (*Rallus limicola*) twice and have found Soras to be quite common in both habitats. I firmly believe the birds are attracted to the Johnson grass in the fields, and perhaps other birders should pay close attention to harvesting operations in similar fields in future years. — BRAINARD L. PALMER-BALL JR., 8207 Westport Rd., Louisville 40222.

(Editor's note: According to Russell Starr (*Ky. Warbler*, 43:37-38, 1967), James Hiser, Center, Metcalfe County, caught a Virginia Rail "quite easily" on his farm on October 21, 1966, while mowing a field of *Sudax*, a hybrid grain. Mr. Hiser finds two or three of these birds each fall in this field.)

**NOTES ON THE STATUS OF THE CAROLINA WREN
IN SIX EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTIES**

It is thought by some that the severe winter of 1976-77 took a great toll on the Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) in Kentucky.

Since 1966 the Breeding Bird Survey of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Research Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland has been conducted in Kentucky as well as throughout the nation. The data from these surveys give us a fair understanding of the status of the Carolina Wren as well as other species in the United States.

Since 1967 three routes of the survey have been run by the author with observations in the same marked locations. They have been done on or about the same dates each year (the last two weeks of June); each count is started exactly 30 minutes before sunrise and only made during ideal weather conditions.

The three routes in this report are: route number 0-16 from McKee to Travelers Rest, Kentucky through parts of Jackson and Owsley counties; 0-17 from Pine Ridge to Jackson, Kentucky through Wolf and Breathitt counties; and 0-18 from Beattyville to Revenna, Kentucky through Lee and Estill counties. Each route is exactly 25 miles in length with 50 three-minute stops on each.

The number of Carolina Wrens sighted or heard by year and route for the past 11 years is as follows:

	0-16	0-17	0-18
1967	8	5	4
1968	18	11	9
1969	8	4	10
1970	11	14	13
1971	6	7	8
1972	15	13	19
1973	14	18	16
1974	23	37	19
1975	9	13	10
1976	10	18	12
1977	2	5	0

BOOK REVIEW

A GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI, Second Edition, by Olin Sewall Pettinghill, Jr. Oxford University Press, New York, 1977; pp. xxvii + 689. \$15.95.

In the preface of the first edition of this book, published in 1951, Dr. Pettinghill noted that the special types of information needed for birdwatching are precise locations of ornithological attractions and specific directions for reaching them. In both the first and second editions this information is provided to the reader in abundance for each of the 26 states east of the Mississippi River. The second edition takes into account changes that have occurred in bird distribution, changes in environment, and the development of parks, refuges, and other potential birding areas during the past 25 years. Directions for locating some birding areas have been changed due to the development of new roads, particularly interstate highways. The migration timetables should be helpful in timing journeys to coincide with vast bird movements.

The Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union has recently proposed several changes in the common names of birds, but Pettinghill prefers to employ many of the older common names as listed by the Checklist Committee of the American Birding Association (A.B.A. Checklist: Birds of Continental United States and Canada, 1975). Thus, names representing some of the geographic variations are retained. The book is also enhanced by the inclusion of 80 pen-and-ink drawings by George Miksch Sutton. The preface contains suggestions for bird finders including aids to bird identification and means of gaining additional information about birds.

No one person could possibly have knowledge of the information included in a publication of this scope and, as in the first edition, Pettinghill has utilized his knowledge along with that of many others. The section in the first edition concerned with the commonwealth of Kentucky was written by Burt L. Monroe and has been revised by his son, Dr. Burt L. Monroe, Jr. It contains a brief description of Kentucky, its physiographic regions and vegetation, and 11 birding areas. Each area is described, including the major bird attractions for the visitor, preferred time of year for birding, and concise directions for locating the area. *Kentucky Birds: A Finding Guide*, by Barbour, et al, University of Kentucky Press, 1973, contains descriptions of 46 birding localities in Kentucky along with maps and species descriptions, but includes birding areas only in Kentucky.

In any endeavor of this magnitude there will be some birding areas omitted that birders would consider the best in their regions and other areas included that in the eyes of some should not have been. Some will deplore the absence of maps, which would have been helpful but difficult and expensive to reproduce. Birders traveling to an unfamiliar region will surely have state and interstate road maps to assist them in arriving at their destinations. I would highly recommend this second edition of *A Guide to Bird Finding* to those seeking a clear, concise treatment of bird finding in the eastern United States, but those desiring a verbose, ornate, profusely illustrated publication must look elsewhere. — H. E. SHADOWEN, Biology Department, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green 42101.

NEWS AND VIEWS

THE REGIONAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

At the recent KOS Spring Meeting Andy Morton discussed the TVA's Regional Heritage Program, which gathers information on the location of critical environmental areas in the TVA power service area. The collected data is used to minimize land-use conflicts between planned projects and critical environmental areas. KOS members are urged to provide information on threatened and endangered bird species nesting localities. Kentucky counties within the TVA Power Service Area include Allen, Butler, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Cumberland, Edmonson, Fulton, Graves, Grayson, Hickman, Livingston, Logan, Lyon, McCracken, Marshall, Monroe, Simpson, Todd, Trigg, and Warren. The Kentucky Threatened and Endangered Bird Species include the Mississippi Kite, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Bachman's Warbler. Information should be sent to TVA Regional Heritage Program, Division of Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife Development, Norris, Tennessee 37828.

FALL MEETING

The Fall meeting of the KOS will be held at Rough River Dam State Resort Park September 23, 24, and 25. The address is Falls of Rough, Kentucky 40119.