

8-1978

Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 54, no. 3)

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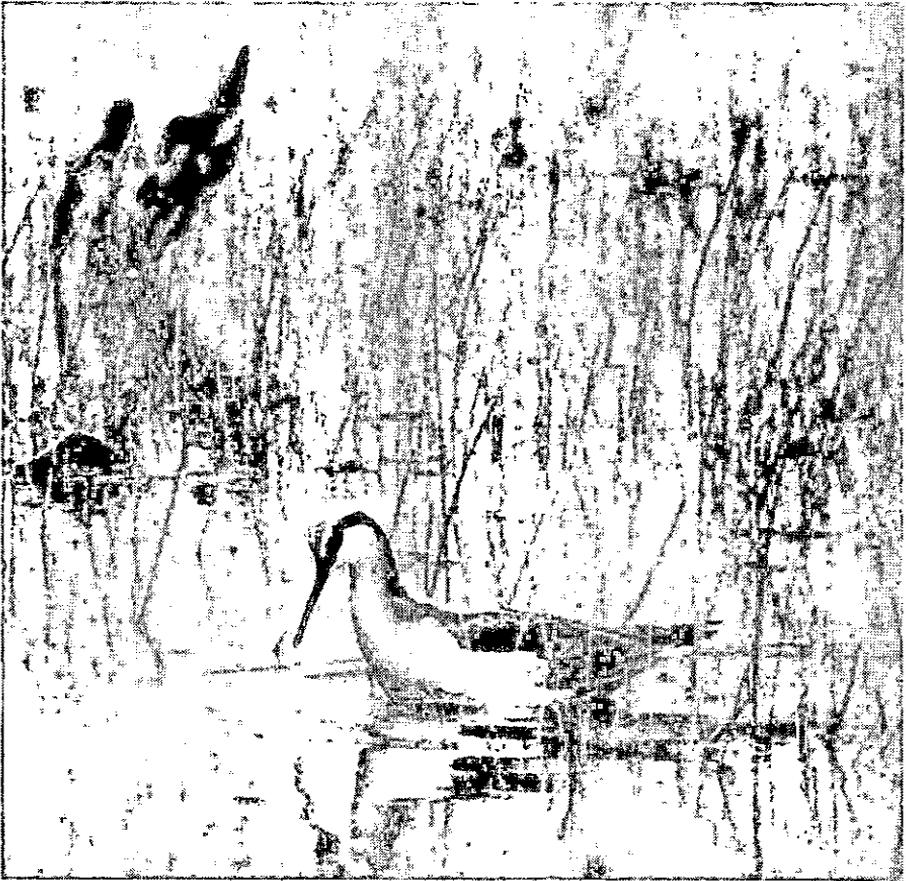
The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

VOL. 54

AUGUST, 1978

No. 3



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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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OUR COVER

Our thanks to Dr. Herbert L. Clay, Jr. whose photograph of the Northern Phalarope was taken in Louisville in May, 1978.

A SYNOPSIS OF FEDERAL BLACKBIRD RESEARCH IN KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE

ALLEN R. STICKLEY, JR.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established a research station at Bowling Green, Kentucky, in June 1977 as part of an expanding program to study problems caused by roosting blackbirds and starlings.

The station's objective is to conduct research identifying the nature and magnitude of a multiplicity of economic, health, safety, and nuisance problems caused by these birds; and develop effective, safe, and feasible methods of alleviating these problems. Although many aspects are inter-related, most of our research efforts can be categorized into: (1) problem definition, (2) control-oriented ecological studies, and (3) development of control methods for various problem situations. Problem definition and ecological studies are essential for establishing parameters and strategies such as: economic justification for control, priorities, and cost-benefit ratios; identifying the problem species and potential nontarget and environmental hazards; how damage occurs, suggesting which control techniques have reasonable probabilities for success and how to apply them. The Kentucky station is one of five Denver Wildlife Research Center projects, working together, to solve bird-man conflicts.

In October 1977, we sponsored meetings in Kentucky and Tennessee inviting all interested groups and agencies such as the National Audubon Society and State Agricultural Departments to discuss blackbird research results and needs. There were, of course, differences in points of view expressed, but the different interests willingly talked to each other. We plan to make these meetings annual events to discuss research progress and receive input from the groups and agencies interested in blackbird research.

An abbreviated blackbird-starling winter roost survey was completed in Kentucky and Tennessee last winter. Thirteen major roosts containing 5.5 million birds were located in Kentucky, compared with 14 roosts and 20.8 million the year before. Twenty major roosts comprising 32.6 million birds were identified in Tennessee, compared with 40 roosts and 45.7 million birds the previous year. The substantial decrease in Kentucky birds last winter was probably due to abnormally heavy snow cover and cold temperatures forcing birds farther south. The long periods of snow cover in both Kentucky and Tennessee also caused wide fluctuations of bird numbers. At least four roosts changed from several million birds in December to less than half a million during January and February. Four or five new roosts formed in January and February in southern Tennessee, one of these harboring about 6 million birds.

During the past winter, Kentucky attempted one PA-14 roost spray operation late in the season at Munfordville; however, the treatment was not effective. The Russellville roost was to have been sprayed in January,

but the roost was not sprayed due to a sharp decrease in bird numbers. Kentucky attempted no other spray operations because there were not enough birds and appropriate roosts.

Tennessee, however, was a different story. Seven spray operations by the Tennessee Agricultural Department, of which three were judged successful (number of birds reduced 80 percent or more), resulted in a reduction of at least 7 million birds (about the same number as last year). We use the term "reduction" because no kill surveys were made after treatment, only counts of birds leaving the next morning or coming back to the roost the following evening. Therefore, the percents of birds killed or dispersed are unknown. Overall, since PA-14 has been used in Kentucky and Tennessee, 11 of 25 treatments have been successful. Kentucky has recently announced switching from the use of PA-14 to use of Starlicide baiting at feedlots. The State believes that more birds are killed using the Starlicide method. We believe this is advisable because starlings are the major problem species, at least as far as agricultural problems are concerned, and the technique is more selective for controlling them. PA-14 operations usually kill a higher proportion of blackbirds as starlings often move to sheltered manmade structures when weather conditions are proper for PA-14 spraying and starlings become more resistant to PA-14 stressing.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is currently testing a replacement for PA-14 that is not dependent on specific weather criteria. A preliminary field test of the experimental contact toxicant "CAT" is scheduled for next winter. Registration of such a material by the Environmental Protection Agency, even if it is effective and meets environmental standards, will require a minimum of 5 years of testing. The widespread use of such a chemical could, of course, have considerable effects on the environment, and these effects must be determined before it is registered.

Studies to determine the minimum amount of manpower needed to frighten birds from roosts have been conducted at Munfordville, Kentucky, and Bartlett, Tennessee. Five persons fired large numbers of shellcrackers and bird bombs toward birds each night as the birds came into the roosts. We attached radio transmitters to a number of birds at both roosts to determine movement patterns. After eight nights of scaring activities at Munfordville, we succeeded in moving the roosting population only a short distance from the original roosting site because of the extensive roosting habitat surrounding the roost. However, the isolated (in terms of habitat) roost at Bartlett was dispersed after eight nights of scaring activities. At Munfordville, birds made daily flights to feeding areas up to 20 miles from the roost, and one bird was located 35 miles from the roost. At Bartlett, after being dispersed, radio-instrumented birds scattered out and roosted at several locations up to 29 miles from the roost. In general, we feel that roost dispersal is usually the best method to handle so-called "nuisance" roosts in urban or suburban situations.

Blackbird damage to mature corn in the early dent stage in Kentucky and Tennessee was found, on the whole, to be a minor problem. In Kentucky, 0.48% of the surface area of 26,800 corn ears sampled was destroyed by blackbirds. In Tennessee, 0.39% of the surface of 17,000 ears examined was destroyed by blackbirds. The greatest percent damage for any one field was 4.7%. At \$1.90 per bushel, Kentucky's blackbird loss amounted

to slightly over \$1.2 million or almost 0.5 bushel per acre. Tennessee's loss amounted to nearly \$800,000 or 0.3 bushel per acre. Except in occasional areas of greater damage, control with available techniques would not be economically justifiable. We are now beginning an intensive survey in Kentucky of the corn-sprout pulling problem by blackbirds. We plan to survey 260 fields in 36 counties this spring to estimate the magnitude of this problem.

We also have contracts with the Kentucky State Mycology Center and the University of Louisville to study histoplasmosis. Dr. Ernest Chick of the Mycology Center is determining the incidence of human infection and degree of severity of histoplasmosis in relation to distance from blackbird roosts. They have identified 52 roost sites and are currently studying the human populations around three. Work was hampered by the inclement weather this winter, but results to date indicate that disturbing the soil in infected bird roosts can create epidemics of histoplasmosis, and that even undisturbed infected bird roosts may cause an increase in the infection rate if they are visited by segments of the human population. The University of Louisville study, under the leadership of Dr. Burt Monroe, is conducting studies on the ecological requirements (such as soil types) for the growth of the fungus. This summer they will conduct experiments at roosts with various soil disturbance factors to determine if airborne spores can be found.

For years the Fish and Wildlife Service has reported that blackbirds and starlings have not been increasing in numbers, but recently an analysis of the Breeding Bird Survey data from 1966 to 1976 shows that continental populations of cowbirds, grackles, and starlings have been increasing with Red-winged blackbirds staying at about the same levels. Significant fluctuations have occurred on geographical and state bases. This gives us a number of questions to ponder; for example, what effect is this increase having on the numbers and diversity of other avifauna?

In addition to the above-mentioned corn sprout study and histoplasmosis contracts, we will let a contract to determine if blackbirds and starlings are implicated in the transmission of a serious disease of small pigs entitled "TGE" (transmissible gastroenteritis). We will continue studies begun on ground-baiting starlings at roost staging areas using Starlicide and surveying Tennessee and Kentucky for bird damage at feedlots. We also plan to place radio transmitters on birds in roosts to be sprayed with PA-14 to determine more about how the birds are affected by the spraying and obtain more movement data on blackbirds and starlings. The brevity of this note precludes mentioning all of the interrelated research conducted by our other projects applicable to developing knowledge needed to solve bird-man conflicts in a safe and effective manner. — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 334 E. 15th St., Bowling Green 42101.

THE SPRING SEASON OF 1978

ANNE L. STAMM

The severe winter in Kentucky was followed by a late spring. March temperatures and precipitation averaged below normal. The melting snow north of Kentucky caused the Ohio River at Louisville to be high, and backwater stood in the adjacent fields. April was unusually dry and averaged below normal, but the month was warm and averaged 2.1 degrees above normal. Then came May with rainfall above normal and cool temperatures which averaged below normal.

The unusual weather was difficult to correlate with migration patterns. In spite of the cold month of March, with a low of 2 degrees above zero on March 5, some species arrived earlier than usual: Chimney Swift at Louisville; Solitary Vireo at Louisville and Pine Mountain; Blue-winged, Orange-crowned, and Northern Parula Warblers at Louisville; Scarlet Tanager at Kentucky Lake, and Indigo Bunting at Louisville, for example. Other species of birds were unusually late, such as Green Heron and Northern (Baltimore) Oriole.

Waterfowl migration was generally good throughout the state, but somewhat later than normal. Shorebird migration was also late, but above average at Louisville.

The effects of the winter invasion of northern finches were evident in the reports. Redpolls were still appearing at feeders in March. Pine Siskins lingered in numbers throughout the month of May and White-winged Crossbills showed up in mid-March.

A few unusual species were reported: a Raven at Pine Mountain; a Laughing Gull at Prospect, a suburb of Louisville; an Alder Flycatcher at Otter Creek Park; a "Lawrence's" hybrid at Louisville; a Black-headed Grosbeak in Jeffersontown and a Clay-colored Sparrow at Lexington.

Grebes through Herons. — A Red-necked Grebe (Holboell's) was reported, at Danville, March 16 and was the first local record (FL). An Eared Grebe, another rarity, was seen on Kentucky Lake, March 26 (JEr). The only Double-crested Cormorants reported were from Louisville: one on April 17, at Ohio River basin, also small numbers there later (JEl); maximum number of 10 on April 23 (LR fide JEl). Green Heron arrived later than usual: first reported on April 17 at Land Between the Lakes area (JEr) and on April 29 at Pine Mountain (SM); none in Louisville area through April 30. Only a few Cattle Egrets reported: one at Louisville, April 14-15 (BPB); eight south of Murray, April 23 (JEr), and one at Kennedy Park, Louisville, May 9 (BPB). A single Great Egret at Kentucky Lake, April 14 (JEr) and at Mammoth Cave National Park (hereafter, MCNP), April 22 (KOS) were the only ones reported. Black-crowned Night Heron arrived later than normal and only 10 were reported on the Beckham Bird Club Spring Count, May 7; 40 birds were observed at the Falls of the Ohio, May 31 (ALS, FWS). Few reports on the Yellow-crowned Night Heron were received: two pair were nesting in the Danville area on April 22 (FL); five recorded at Land Between the Lakes, April 21 (JEr); and two recorded on the BBC Count, May 7.

Geese and Ducks. — Some 15,000 winter resident and migrating Canada Geese left Ballard Waterfowl Management Area (hereafter, BWMA) on March 24 and 25 (Mr. & Mrs. JM); one to two pair were thought to be nesting at Land Between the Lakes, April 21 (JEr). A small subspecies of the Canada Goose, possibly *hutchinsii* (Richardson), was observed on the lake in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, March 5 (JEl & LaS and later by others). The wintering flock of Snow Geese left BWMA about March 1 (JM). Duck migration was good. During mid-March an estimated 2200 or more ducks were seen on inundated fields along the Ohio River between Louisville and Prospect. The flocks contained our greatest number of species for the entire winter and spring season—and included the Greater Scaup (m. o. b.). Also, at Danville, where the opportunity for seeing waterfowl is limited, “the feature of the spring was the variety of anatids—16 species March 16, plus two more on March 17” (FL). Fairly good numbers of Mallards remained through May in the Louisville area. The northward flight of Redheads was considered good at the following locations, where numbers are usually small: Hickman Sewage Plant, northeast Jessamine County, 37 on March 12 (DC); Lexington Reservoir #4, 54 birds on March 12 (DC); Danville, 31 on March 16 (FL). A flock of 19 male Red-breasted Mergansers at Danville was considered noteworthy there March 16 (FL).

Vultures through Falcons. — A total of 11 Turkey Vultures was seen at Rock Haven, along the bluff of the Ohio River on May 11 (ALS et al). Few observers mentioned hawks in their reports. However, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a very rare resident, was observed March 26 at Kentucky Lake area (JEr) and at MCNP, April 22 (KOS). The Cooper’s Hawk was recorded at MCNP on April 22 (KOS) and two were at Otter Creek Park, May 11 (ALS, WE, FWS, WJ, EN). Red-shouldered Hawks continue to be scarce, although singles or pairs are sighted but seldom reported. However, five were noted at Pine Mountain on March 13 (SM). Also, the species was observed at MCNP, April 22-23 (KOS) and one at Otter Creek Park, May 11 (WJ, EN, WE, ALS). No flocks of Broad-winged Hawks were reported but singles and pairs were reported at various locations from Kentucky Lake to Pine Mountain. Four Rough-legged Hawks were still present at Master Station Park, Lexington, March 5 (DC). A Bald Eagle was seen east of Owensboro about March 1. The bird remained in the area for three to four days and fed on carrion which had been killed on the highway (RI). Single Ospreys were reported on April 18 and 21 near Kentucky Lake (JEr) and at Falls of the Rough, May 2 (KWC). The number of American Kestrel at Louisville was considered stable (ALS).

Bobwhite through Coots. — Bobwhite seemed less common than normal at Danville (FL); first spring song heard in western Kentucky on April 5 (JEr); few heard or seen in Louisville area but four were flushed at Otter Creek Park, May 11 (ALS). A flock of 21 Sandhill Cranes was observed flying over Bullitt County, March 13 (GC) and eight in a field at Prospect, Oldham County, was an unexpected find on March 14 (FK, JK, MK). The flock of 900 (estimated) American Coots at Lake Pewee, Madisonville, March 31 was of special interest (JH).

Shorebirds. — Shorebird migration in the Louisville area was very good; no early dates were recorded, but the variety of species was without

precedent; 18 species were reported on the Beckham Bird Club Spring Count, May 7 (m. o.b.). American Golden Plovers (no number given) were reported at Louisville, April 18 (BPB). The Common Snipe was considered "less common this spring than normal" at Danville (FL) and at Louisville (ALS); fairly late stragglers were the nine birds in the Louisville area, May 7 (BBC). Reports of the Upland Sandpiper were of special interest: first sighted in Oldham County, April 17 (LaS); four in same area April 18-29 (BPB); five on an Oldham County farm, April 23 (fide MC), and one May 7 (BBC). Three Willets arrived April 17 at the Falls of the Ohio (DE, JEL) and other sightings there (number not given) April 30-May 7 (BPB); ten birds were on the Louisville Spring Count, May 7 (BBC). Dunlin were reported along the Ohio River at Louisville, April 18 and May 9-10 (no number given, BPB); four in south central Jefferson County, May 7 (DP). One to two Stilt Sandpipers were along the Ohio at Louisville, April 14 (BPB); one in spring plumage at Kennedy Park, Louisville on May 10 established a late local date (BS, FPS). Wilson Phalaropes, rare transients in spring, were reported from four areas: one at Kennedy Park, Prospect, May 6 (EN) and two there (male and female), May 8-10 (BS, FPS); two at Morton's Salt Co., along the Ohio River, Louisville, May 7 (VC, DM); one in Woodford County, northeast Versailles, May 7 (DC, RM); and one in Jessamine County, west of Hickman Sewage Lagoon, May 28 (BMA et al).

Gulls and Terns. — An immature Herring Gull at Danville, April 2 was the first local record (FL). Ring-billed Gulls remained rather late: six were observed at Kennedy Park, May 8 (BS, FPS). A wandering *Laughing Gull* in breeding plumage was found at Kennedy Park, May 8 and was well documented (BS, FPS). Five Bonaparte's Gulls at Danville, April 2 provided only the second local record (FL). Forster's Terns, as usual, were sighted along the Ohio River during the normal migration period, but one in Boone County, May 6 was considered worthy of mention since there are few northern Kentucky records (EL).

Cuckoos through Woodpeckers. — Yellow-billed Cuckoos seemed "above normal" at Danville (FL). The Black-billed Cuckoo was late in arriving and was first reported at Falls of Rough on May 2 (KWC); two in Cherokee Park, Louisville, May 7 (ALS, FWS); two others sighted same day in Louisville area (BBC); undoubtedly others were seen but not reported, although the species is never common. Six Short-eared Owls were still present at Lexington, March 12 (DC). The Chuck-will's-widow arrived in wooded sections of Kentucky Lake area, April 11 (JEr) and one at Pine Mountain, May 22 was noteworthy (SM). A Chimney Swift in north-east Jefferson County on March 28 was an early local record (FWS). Common (Y.-sh.) Flickers were reported in "good numbers" at Pine Mountain area (SM).

Flycatchers and Swallows. — The Eastern Kingbird "seemed less common than normal" at Danville (FL); a flock of 11 at Iroquois Park, Louisville, May 8 was apparently migrating (WJ). The Eastern Phoebe did not winter this year in the Pine Mountain area and made its first appearance there on March 16 (SM). The rare *Alder Flycatcher* was heard singing near Blue Hole, Otter Creek Park, Meade County, May 11 and

established the second record for the Louisville Region (ALS, FWS, WE, et al). There were two reports of Olive-sided Flycatchers: one at Creason Park, Louisville, May 16 and 26 (JEl) and one in Cherokee Park, May 13 (BBC). Swallow migration in the Louisville area was above average, with May 7 as the peak date, and all species recorded. The Tree Swallow was recorded at Louisville from April 11 to May 31 (ALS) and "hundreds" were seen at Kentucky Lake, April 17 (JEr); one still present at Goose Pond, May 31 (JH) and at Louisville (ALS). Swallows were extremely common within the inner Blue Grass from Lexington to Frankfort on May 7 too when "thousands" were seen, with the Barn, Bank and Rough-winged in decreasing order of abundance (DC, RM):

Bluejays through Pipits. — "Hundreds" of Blue Jays were seen migrating at Kentucky Lake on April 18 (JEr), while at Danville the species was less common than normal and "none of the usual migratory flocks in early May" were observed (FL). A *Common Raven* was seen and heard as it flew south over the valley on the north side of Pine Mountain; wedge shaped tail and all details were noted (SM). A few Red-breasted Nuthatches lingered later than usual: one at Danville, May 18 tied the late state date (FL) and one May 25 at Creason Park established a new record (JEl); oddly enough, none were seen in the Pine Mountain area the entire year (SM). The Bewick's Wren continues to be absent; none were seen since January 1 at Big Pond Sanctuary, Falls of Rough (KWC); none found at MCNP on April 22-23 field days (KOS); and none on Beckham Bird Club Spring Count, May 7 (BBC). The majority of observers reported the Carolina Wren as totally absent or only a few present. A Long-billed Marsh Wren in the Louisville area, April 30 was noteworthy (JEl). Few observers mentioned the Wood Thrush: at Danville the species was thought to be below normal in numbers and "surprisingly little singing" heard (FL); in the Louisville area, it was down 58+ % from the May 1977 figures (ALS). A Veery lingered as late as May 31 at Danville (FL). Few Eastern Bluebirds were seen or heard during the period March through May. Apparently the species suffered another setback from the severe winter. Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce; none were seen on Pine Mountain (SM). Ruby-crowned Kinglets were also scarce in most areas, but "staged a comeback" at Danville (FL); and the one at Creason Park, May 16 was a new late departure date (JEl). One hundred Water Pipits, March 12 at Elkhorn Creek area, northeast Franklin County, were rather early migrants (DC, RM).

Vireo and Warblers. — Despite the cool and late spring the Solitary Vireo arrived ahead of schedule at two locations and established a new early date: one bird at Louisville (JEl) and one at Pine Mountain (SM) on April 5. Warbler migration was fairly good, with all 37 species recorded in the Louisville area. Some warblers arrived early, others were on schedule, but numbers were low, with the exception of the Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler and the Palm Warbler. Some of the more unusual records were: the Blue-winged Warbler at Louisville, April 13 which established an early local date (JEl); the "*Lawrence's*" hybrid at Louisville, May 6 provided the second local sight record (JEl); while an Orange-crowned Warbler, April 17 (JEl) and a Northern Parula Warbler (BM) on April 16 were also early records for the Louisville area. The latter species

was first sighted at Kentucky Lake on April 14 (JEr), but on April 9 at Pine Mountain (SM) which was one day later than Kentucky's earliest date. The rare Black-throated Blue Warbler was observed at a number of locations: Creason Park, May 4 and 6 (JEl); Otter Creek Park; May 11 (ALS, FWS); Danville, May 18 (FL); Black Mountain, "abundant" on May 4 (SM); and Surrey Hill farm, Louisville (no date given—BPB). The Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler, as mentioned earlier, was unusually common: 36 were recorded at Iroquois Park, Louisville in a "few hours" May 8 (WJ); 36 at George Rogers Clark Park, May 7 (BS, FPS); 200 on the BBC Spring Count, May 7 (m. o. b.); while "lots" were seen at Kentucky Lake, April 23 (JEr). Although the Black-throated Green was first observed on April 3 at Pine Mountain, a large "wave of these birds arrived (there) the night of April 7" and they were "everywhere" on April 8 (SM). The Yellow-throated Warbler usually uncommon in eastern Kentucky was very common on Pine Mountain this year (SM). Few comments were made regarding the Chestnut-sided Warbler, but it was considered "abundant" on Black Mountain on May 6 (SM). A few Mourning Warblers were recorded: two birds at Creason Park, May 19 and 23 (JEl); two (male and female) at George Rogers Clark Park, Louisville, May 19 (BS); one at Danville on May 26 (FL); and in southeast Louisville (no date given—MP); and Surrey Hill farm (no dates given—BPB).

Blackbirds and Tanagers. — A good flight of Bobolinks was recorded in the Louisville area, especially from May 6-9. Eastern Meadowlarks were scarce: few were heard or seen in fields in northeast Jefferson County, where previously scores were recorded (ALS, FWS); none were seen on three class field trips in the Bowling Green area (HS). Two Orchard Orioles appeared near Kentucky Lake on April 10 and tied our previous early state record (JEr). The Northern (Baltimore) Oriole arrived later than usual and numbers were down in the Louisville area (ALS), but at Pine Mountain numbers were up from last year (SM). The Scarlet Tanager on April 5 at Kentucky Lake was an early record (JEr).

Fringilids. — The first Kentucky spring record for a *Black-headed Grosbeak* was established on April 15 and 16 when a male was carefully observed and documented at a feeder in Jeffersontown, a suburb of Louisville (RMA, WM, fide ALS). Blue Grosbeaks were reported at three locations: Kentucky Lake, one male, April 18 (JEr); Falls of the Rough at Big Pond Sanctuary, two birds, May 2 (KWC, HC); Louisville, one singing on May 31 (ALS, FWS). An early local record was established when an Indigo Bunting was observed at a feeder on April 14 at Louisville (KWC). Evening Grosbeaks were extremely common throughout the state and departure dates ranged from May 3 to May 17: Falls of Rough on May 3 (KWC); Madisonville (JH) and Louisville (KWC) on May 8; Danville (FL) and Covington (EL) on May 10; Jeffersontown (WM) and Valley Station, May 17, where at the latter maximum numbers had been 45-50 birds. (DS). Purple Finches were fairly common during the period; migration was evident April 5 to April 17 and only small numbers remained after May 7. Although Common Redpolls were noted during the winter months, a few March records were reported: two birds (male and female) at a feeder in the Audubon Park section of Louisville, March 1-29 (DE, JEl); a single bird in the Highlands area of Louisville, March (no date given—

VS); and one at a feeder at Owensboro, March 15-16 (EI, RI). Pine Siskins were everywhere and in unusually large flocks. The birds remained later than normal and were still present at Louisville (KWC) and at Jeffersontown (RMa, WM) at the end of the reporting period, May 31. A pair was seen copulating on April 29 at the Louisville location (KWC) and one bird believed to be a female was observed fluttering its wings before another Pine Siskin and seemingly begging for food as young or mated pairs often do (RMa). This species normally breeds to the north and west of Kentucky. Although the Pine Siskin left Surrey Hill farm on May 21, a nest with one egg was collected on April 1 (BPB) and constitutes the first attempt at breeding. Large flocks of American Goldfinch were reported in much of the state, with the exception of Danville, where the species was considered to be "less common than normal" (FL). Some northward migration of the goldfinch was noted at Kentucky Lake on April 17 when "hundreds" were seen (JEr). The flock of 40 or more which fed at my feeders departed on April 9. Five White-winged Crossbills were seen at Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, March 11 and 12 (DM). A *Clay-colored Sparrow* on May 7 at Lexington was carefully identified and documented and constitutes our first Kentucky sight record (DC, RM). Only a few Field Sparrows were seen or heard at Madisonville and the "decline was obvious" (JH); the same was true in northeast Jefferson County (ALS). A Fox Sparrow was still present at Louisville on April 25 (JEl). A few Lincoln Sparrows lingered rather late in the Louisville area: one singing on May 15, and one on May 17 (BS). Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were still present at Louisville March 11 and March 8, respectively—rather late for the area (BPB).

Contributors. — (VC) Virginia Calvert; (MC) Marion Chamberlain; (KWC) Kathryn W. Clay; (HC) Herbert L. Clay, Jr.; (DC) Dennis Coskren; (GC) G. Crabtree; (WE) Walter Ellison; (DE) Diane Elmore; (JEl) Jackie Elmore; (JEr) Joe Tom Erwin; (JH) James Hancock; (KH) Katherine Hancock; (EI) Eleanor Iles; (RI) Ramon Iles; (VJ) Violet Jackson; (WJ) Wilbur Jackson; (FK) Frank Krull; (JK) John Krull; (MK) Mary Krull; (EL) Edwin Larsen; (FL) Frederick Loetscher; (RMa) Ruth Mathes; (WM) William Mathes; (BMa) Betty Maxon; (JM) James Moynahan; (BM) Burt L. Monroe, Jr.; (RM) Robert Morris; (DM) Dottie Muntan; (EN) Eric Neff; (BPB) Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.; (DP) Donald Parker; (JP) James Pasikowski; (MP) Martha Pike; (LR) Lene Rauth; (HS) Herbert Shadowen; (BS) Bernice Shannon; (FPS) Francis Shannon; (LaS) Lawrence D. Smith; (VS) Virginia Smith; (ALS) Anne L. Stamm; (FWS) Frederick W. Stamm; (DS) Donald Summerfield. Other abbreviations — (BBC) Beckham Bird Club; (KOS) Kentucky Ornithological Society; (m. o. b.) many observers. — 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

1978 SPRING BIRD COUNTS

Three spring bird counts were again reported this year. To increase the value of these counts it is recommended that the area covered be the same as that used on the Christmas bird counts and that the number of each species also be reported.

HENDERSON AREA — (Christmas Count area). May 7, Total 134 species 2,713 individuals. King Benson, George Bukenhoffer, Ron Dodson (compiler), Carol Gatlin, Ted Gravvan, Diane Hagan, Doug Kebbe, Jim Lodato, Joyce Owens, Nancy Richardson, Caroline Summers. Although the weather was not ideal, the birds were out in force. It was a mixture of winter, migrant and breeding birds. Bobolinks were seen by Carol Gatlin. The Wilson's Phalarope was seen by four of the counters and remained in the area for almost a week. Doug Keebe reported 10 species of warblers in one tree during his count. The swallows were seen in the vicinity of a small lake. The four Dunlin and six Turkey were seen on the Sloughs Wildlife area. Only two Carolina Wrens and no Eastern Bluebirds were seen. Thirteen species of shorebirds and 29 species of warblers were recorded.

LOUISVILLE — (Christmas Count area). May 7. 2:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Overcast, windy, intermittent rain all day, 50° to 55°. Total 141 species, 9,565 individuals. Virginia Calvert, Kathryn Clay, Muriel Doolittle, Bess Douthitt, Diane Elmore, Jackie Elmore, Doris Garst, Violet Jackson, Wilbur Jackson, Burt Monroe, Jr. (compiler), Dottie Muntain, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Donald Parker, Jim Pasikowski, Lene Rauth, Bernice Shannon, Pat Shannon, Larry Smith, Anne Stamm, Frederick Stamm, Al Susie, Midge Susie (Beckham Bird Club). Despite the worst birding weather possible and a restriction of the spring count area to conform to the Christmas Count circle, the 1978 count yielded the highest species count ever. This was brought about by a combination of good migrant count (34 species of warblers) plus the best ever for shorebirds (18 species) and late winter residents (such as Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, and Juncos). Highlights among the shorebirds included five species that are extremely rare in the spring: Willet, White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope. Eight additional species were seen on the day of the count but not in the count circle.

BURLINGTON — ((Christmas Count area plus Greater Cincinnati Airport). May 6. 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Cloudy most of day; 39° to 68°. Total 101 species, 1,301 individuals. Gerri Kennedy, Ed Larson, Lee K. McNeely (compiler), Lynda McNeely. Cooler than usual weather contributed to make this the most successful area spring count. Many winter residents were still present, among them Purple Finches, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Tree Sparrows, Rusty Blackbirds, and a Marsh Hawk. The Longbilled Marsh Wren was seen by Ed Larson near the airport. The Forster's Tern was observed for nearly 15 minutes in the East Bend Bottoms

near Big Bone by Lee and Lynda McNeely and Ed Larson. Five species of shore birds and 19 species of warblers were observed.

The results of the Mammoth Cave National Park count, conducted by K.O.S. members at the annual spring meeting, were reported in the May issue of *The Kentucky Warbler*. — H. E. SHADOWEN

THE 1978 ONE-DAY BALD EAGLE COUNT

ANNE L. STAMM

On February 11, 1978, the Kentucky Ornithological Society marked its eighteenth consecutive year of participation in the One-Day Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Count conducted in cooperation with the Mississippi River Valley Bald Eagle Survey. Fifty-nine members and guests participated and spent 93½ party-hours in the field from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. All major bodies of waterways, where accessible, were checked from "Bend of the River" in western Kentucky to Cave Run Lake in the eastern section of the state. The participants worked by car and on foot. However, the area along the Mississippi River from Reelfoot Lake to Bardwell, Kentucky was again covered by plane furnished by Kenneth Leggett. Also, at Land Between the Lakes, for the first time, John Melcher, Supervisor, Wildlife Management, there, arranged for an aerial survey to "cover the entire LBL and most of the shores of Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley."

The day was clear to partly cloudy and visibility was generally good. Temperatures ranged from a low of 15 degrees to the high thirties. The wind was from the north, northwest and varied from 0-5 m.p.h. Deep snow covered the ground across the state. Some roads were closed or too hazardous to travel and thus prevented censusing certain sections (along the Ohio River south of Henderson, Dam #50 and the Owensboro area).

Despite the adverse ground conditions and the loss of coverage in some areas, the total number of Bald Eagles exceeded any previous count, 1961-1978. The total number of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) also

exceeded any previous count (see table). One of the interesting aspects of the count is the high number—56—of immature Bald Eagles, an indication of breeding success.

Mrs. C. K. G. Sumara and Mrs. James Weatherly reported that Bald Eagles had been seen flying to and from #8 Island in the Mississippi River since mid-November and that the location may have been a roosting site during the fall months. As a general rule eagles prefer primitive areas away from man, but according to Mrs. Sumara, the eagles were not frightened by river barges or fishermen in boats. They saw seven Bald Eagles.

Dr. Clell Peterson attributed the relative high count of 42 eagles at LBL this year to the use of the airplane. Steve Clark was the pilot of the plane and Marcus Cope the observer (LBL personnel) and they reached areas that "would have been inaccessible even under normal conditions" according to Peterson. He said the count figures "suggest that we have probably missed eagles on previous counts and tend to confirm the view of LBL personnel that the number of eagles in the area has not changed drastically in recent years but that the individuals are more widely dispersed." The count there in 1977 and 1976 showed a total of 13 and 14, respectively.

At Ballard Waterfowl Management Area, James Moynahan reported the highest counts ever of both Bald and Golden Eagles, with 23 of the former and 10 of the latter.

Lawrence D. Smith and his party covered the Ohio River from Leavenworth, Indiana to Rome, Indiana, across from Stephenport, Kentucky and found 100% ice at the latter place. The river at Leavenworth was 50% open in the morning but 75% in the late afternoon.

Professor A. L. Whitt, Jr. and his party started out to check Laurel Lake but found some of the access roads could not be traveled even with a four-wheel-drive jeep (courtesy of Bill Berge), and as a result not all of the lake was checked. He found only three to five acres of water open, but was rewarded by seeing three mature Bald Eagles.

Dr. William C. Greene, Jr. reported that Cave Run Lake was "solid ice." However, at the Fish Hatchery, below Cave Run Dam, one adult and one immature Bald Eagle were observed.

Some observers mentioned seeing Rough-legged Hawks: four between Sandy Hook in Elliot County to Rowan County (William Greene); one east of Paducah (David Berry). Undoubtedly others were seen but not reported. An Osprey at Rock Haven along the Ohio River was unusual but carefully observed and reported by Walter Ellison and Eric Neff.

Below is the table of areas covered and the number of eagles sighted.

Bald Eagles sighted on February 11, 1978.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Adults</i>	<i>Immatures</i>	<i>Not Aged</i>	<i>Totals</i>
North of Reelfoot and southwest of Hickman	2	5	0	7
Along the Mississippi from Kentucky-Tennessee line to Bardwell	0	0	1	1
Ballard Waterfowl Management Area	13	10	0	23
Paducah east to Smithville	0	0	0	0
Land Between the Lakes	5	35	0	40
Along the Ohio River to see Kentucky side (Leavenworth, Indiana to Rome)	0	0	0	0
Rough River Dam	0	2	0	2
Nolin River	0	0	0	0
Barren River Reservoir	0	0	0	0
West Point along the Ohio River to Rock Haven and Doe Valley Lake	0	3	0	3
Along the Ohio River from Louisville to Westport, Kentucky	0	0	0	0
Ohio River from Petersburg to Big Bone near Cincinnati, Ohio	0	0	0	0
Laurel Lake	3	0	0	3
Fish Hatchery, below Cave Run Lake Dam	1	1	0	2
Kentucky, 1978 Bald Eagle totals	24	56	1	81
Lake Cumberland-Wolf Creek Dam*	1			

Golden Eagles sighted on February 11, 1978

Land Between the Lakes	1	1	0	2
Ballard Waterfowl Management Area	0	0	10	10
Kentucky, 1978 Golden Eagle totals	1	1	10	12

*Sighted on February 15—not on count day

The following members and guests participated in this great count: *Southwest of Hickman*: Mrs. C. K. G. Sumara, Mrs. James Weatherly; *Kentucky-Tennessee line to Bardwell*: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Leggett; *Ballard Waterfowl Management Area*: James Moynahan; *Paducah east to Smithville*: David Berry, Shirley Rhea; *Land Between the Lakes*: Wally Brines, John Charron, Diane Chester, Marcus Cope, Brian Doyle, Larry Doyle, Robert Duncan, Ron Fox, Ron Howard, Gary Jenkins, Joe Lenzini, Rick Lowe, Mike Magley, Mike Massey, Ray Nall, Clell Peterson, Lawrence Philpot, Ed Ray, Robert Smith, Jody Stallings, John Taylor, David Yancy; *Leavenworth to Rome, Indiana*: George Crabtree, John Embry, Katharine Fulkerson, Ken Karem, Lene Rauth, Lawrence Smith; *Rough River*: Kathryn W. Clay, Kay C. Mudd; *Nolin River*: William M. Clay; *Barren River Reservoir*: Doug Fulkerson, Marquita Gillenwater, Joe Hollander, Wayne Mason; *West Point down stream*: Walter Ellison, Sister Charles Ann De Nardi, Violet and Wilbur Jackson, Eric Neff, Martha Pike, Terence Rhoads, Anne L. Stamm, F. W. Stamm; *Louisville to Westport*: Jim Pasikowski; *Petersburg to Big Bone*: Lee K. McNeely; *Laurel Lake*: William Berge, Bert Mutersbaugh, A. L. Whitt, Jr.; *Cave Run Lake*: Lois and William C. Greene, Jr.; *Lake Cumberland*: Dennis Coskren.

The writer wishes to thank all participants in this annual count and to solicit their continued support in making this distinctive study more valuable. In some ways it has been the most satisfactory count we have ever taken and, of course, the 81 Bald Eagles sighted is, as far as I know, the highest count ever for one day in Kentucky. Thanks, all of you! — 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

FIELD NOTES

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER NEST IN BARREN COUNTY

Though the Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) is a fairly common transient across the state and a rare to fairly common summer resident in local areas, there is apparently very little data on the nesting status of the species in Kentucky. While participating in the Nest Record Survey I discovered a nest of this particular species, and it was brought to my attention that a field note would be noteworthy to ornithologists.

The nest was located in a second growth, upland field and shrub community, approximately 780 feet above sea level. The dominant plants in the area were sapling Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and various species of sumac (*Rhus sp.*), all of which were scattered about the area. The nest was cradled in low vegetation, approximately four feet above ground supported by tall grasses.

Attention was first drawn to the nest on May 18, 1977 due to the activities of the adult birds — the female doing all of the nest building and the male proclaiming territory from various perches. The nest was practically completed with the inside of the structure being lined with what appeared to be strips of grapevine bark. My next visit to the nest on May 20 revealed one egg; by the 24th of May there were four eggs, with the female so tame she almost had to be removed to count them. Unfortunately 25 days elapsed before the next visit on June 18, and the entire habitat was destroyed — bulldozers had bowled over the small forest, cleared hillsides, and graded fields to develop a subdivision. — WAYNE MASON, Glasgow 42141.

AVOCETS IN NICHOLAS COUNTY

On May 2, 1978 at 11:00 a.m. we observed 17 American Avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*) on the point of land that is the public beach at Lake Carnico, Carlisle, Ky. (Nicholas County). The day was cool and sunny; the temperature had dipped to 32° the previous night.

About 7:45 p.m. they took flight and disappeared to the westward in a ragged line. During their stay they rested and waded lazily in shallow water near the sandy shore and permitted us to approach within 25 yards for photography without taking flight. They were accompanied on the lake this day by two Black-bellied Plovers, eight Common Terns, and three Ring-billed Gulls. This is the first sighting of the American Avocet in this area to our knowledge. — VIRGINIA and WENDELL KINGSOLVER, Carlisle.

SANDHILL CRANE OBSERVATION

On March 14, 1978 late in the evening my wife, son, and I decided to make a quick trip before dark to one of the fields of an adjoining farm. This farm is in Prospect (Oldham County), Kentucky and has a long frontage on Rose Island Road. We had visited this area just two days before; at that time the water in the fields was still frozen and we found no ducks or shore birds.

At 5:50 p.m. as we drove slowly along the road leading into the farm we were surprised to find that the large field on our right was not frozen and that there was a large number of ducks on the water. The temperature on this date was approximately 45° — the warmest for many months. We stopped the car immediately and began to scan the area with our binoculars. We immediately spotted two Great Blue Herons (*Ardeo herodias*) on the edge of the water and eight Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*). Even in the dull light of the late evening their gray plumage and the red patch on the forehead readily identified the birds. We observed the birds for some few minutes until the approach of a tractor behind us caused them to take flight. We returned to the area the following evening, but no trace of the Sandhill Cranes could be found. — FRANK, MARY, and JOHN KRULL, 7304 Shadwell Lane, Prospect, 40059.

LAWRENCE'S WARBLER IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

On the morning of May 6, 1978 at about 8:30 a.m., while birding Joe Creason Park, I heard what I thought was the song of a Blue-Winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*). Making myself as inconspicuous as possible I knelt down in a thick grove of small saplings and underbrush. As I was making a soft squeaking noise, a small yellowish bird flew in close. To my surprise a Lawrence's Warbler (*Vermivora lawrencei*) was perched within five feet of me in plain view. It was easily identified by its general yellow color, the black throat and face patch and its white wing bars. After several seconds it flew thirty feet away to a taller tree. I watched the bird for about twenty more minutes before it flew away.

About 3:00 p.m. the same day, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. and I found the same warbler again singing not far from where I had first observed it. We watched the bird for several minutes and noted a very unusual song. It was a series of buzzy notes unlike any we had heard before. Only occasionally did it sing a song much like a Blue-Winged Warbler's.

The Lawrence's Warbler is the recessive hybrid of the Blue-Winged and Golden-Winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*).

It is extremely rare and prior to this sighting, the only other known Kentucky record was one male seen April 24, 1972 in Iroquois Park, Louisville by Jackson (Monroe, Jr., K.W. 52: 58, 1976). — JACKIE B. ELMORE, SR., 1115 English Ave., Louisville, 40217.

A BLACK-HEADED GROSSBEAK AT JEFFERSONTOWN

On April 15, 1978, we noticed an unusual bird at a feeder in our back yard in suburban Jeffersontown. The bird was a male Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). It was also seen there on April 16 by Anne and Frederick W. Stamm.

The bird was first seen at 8:45 a.m. and observed intermittently until 3:00 p.m. As the bird came into view it would alight on a snowball bush, with extensive leaf cover, then cautiously make its way, in short hops, to an isolated feeder at the side of the yard. *Facing into the feeder* the bird ate sunflower seeds but fed away from other feeders which were frequented by about two dozen Evening Grosbeaks (*Hesperiphona vespertina*). The grosbeaks *ate facing outward* from the feeder. They were present from early February until May 17, but were never seen to preen. However, the Black-headed Grosbeak would eat awhile and hop to a bush and preen extensively before resuming feeding. The Black-headed Grosbeak flew to a bird bath to drink before heading away for the day. The Evening Grosbeaks were never seen near the bird bath.

Unexpected as the Black-headed Grosbeak may be, its markings were distinctive and unmistakable. It was Starling-size, with a heavy ivory bill. The lower mandible appeared somewhat lighter in color than the top, and seemed to be lighter toward the face. The middle of the belly was yellow with an orange breast; the orange extended around the neck. The head was black and the rump an orange color. The wings and tail were black, with conspicuous white patches. Fine brownish streaks were noticed on the black on its back and shoulders. When in flight, the white in the tail was visible. A noticeable cinnamon streak extended from the back of the neck toward the eye but ended well behind the eye. The feet were grayish-black. The voice was not heard. — RUTH and W. B. MATHES, 1903 Janlyn Road, Jeffersontown 40299.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Tom Smith, K.O.S. member from Jackson, has received an unusual award in a national competition conducted jointly by Scouting, U.S.A., and Ducks Unlimited, an international volunteer conservation organization.

Tom was chosen to be one of six Scouts from this country who will be sent to a Ducks Unlimited waterfowl restoration project near Calgary, Alberta, in western Canada, July 2-7. Tom will represent the Southeast Region of Scouting (12 states).

The Scouts will work with a Canadian biologist, traveling by airboat and canoe in the marshes, where they will learn some of the history of waterfowl conservation and help in banding Canadian geese.

The winners were selected on the basis of their past interest and experience in bird study and on essays which they wrote on the history of waterfowl conservation in North America.

FALL MEETING

The Fall meeting of the K.O.S. will be held at Danville September 29, 30 and October 1.