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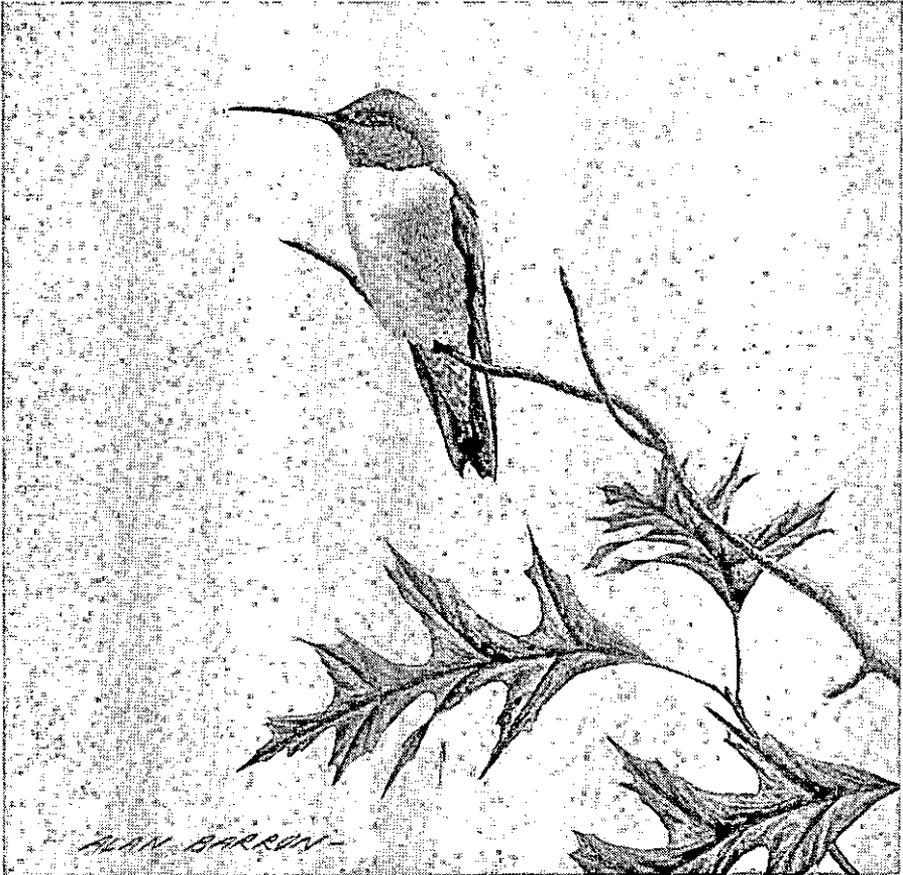
The Kentucky Warbler

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IN THIS ISSUE

THE TWO-VOICE PHENOMENON IN VESPER SPARROWS, Gary Ritchison	27
THE WINTER SEASON OF 1979-1980, Anne L. Stamm	30
K.O.S. SPRING MEETING, APRIL 25-27	35
PERIODICAL REVIEW: BIRD WATCHER'S DIGEST (edited by Mary B. Bowers and Pat Murphy) (Reviewed by H. E. Shadowen)	36
FIELD NOTES	37
NEWS AND VIEWS	40

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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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OUR COVER

The reproduction of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird was taken from an original water color painted by Alan Barron, K.O.S. member from Louisville.

THE TWO-VOICE PHENOMENON IN VESPER SPARROWS

GARY RITCHISON

The vocalizations of certain birds contain two separate, non-harmonically-related tones. Since these tones are uttered simultaneously, it is likely that at least two independent sound sources are operating simultaneously in the vocal tract of these birds. The first suggestion that birds might control two independent acoustical sources was made by Potter, Kopp, and Green (1947:411). Referring to the song of a Brown Thrasher, they stated that "... in ... three ... notes will be found a 'double tone' sound in which two tones without harmonic relation are evident. . ." Subsequently, investigators have found two voices in other species (Borror and Reese, 1956; Thorpe, 1961; Greenwalt, 1968; Stein, 1968; Nottebohm, 1971; Miller, 1977). Upon examination of spectrograms of songs of a Gouldian Finch and a Wood Thrush, Thorpe (1961) suggested the possibility of three and perhaps four independent acoustical sources.

The "voice-box" of birds is not the larynx, as in mammals, but the syrinx, which is located at the lower end of the trachea where the two bronchi join. Air columns are set in vibration when forced through certain vibratile membranes in the syrinx. Anatomical evidence suggests that the syringes of many species have up to four membranes (two on each side of the syrinx) that could be involved in sound production. (Figure 1). The best evidence for two independent acoustical sources in birds comes from Nottebohm (1971). He sectioned either the left or right root of the hypoglossus nerve, which innervates the muscles controlling the membranes on each side of the syrinx, and found that Chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) no longer produced one of two non-harmonically-related tones in their song, depending on which root was sectioned.

Greenwalt (1968) provided spectrographic evidence for the two-voice phenomenon in individual birds but made no mention of the frequency of occurrence within a species. The present report describes the incidence of this phenomenon among adult male Vesper Sparrows in southern Minnesota.

To examine the individual and populational variation in their songs, Vesper Sparrows were recorded in several locations in Le Sueur, Blue Earth, and Waseca Counties during the summer of 1976. Incidental to other aims, the two-voice phenomenon was noted in the songs of several individuals (Figure 2). Recordings were made with a Nagra IV tape recorder, using an Electro-voice 643A microphone mounted on an 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch parabolic reflector. Sound spectrograms were made using a Kay Electric Sonagraph (Model 6061B).

The song of the Vesper Sparrow consists of 1 to 4 relatively long, steady or slightly down-slurred notes, followed by 2 to 7 groups of more rapidly uttered notes (Figure 2). The introductory pattern in these songs is quite stable; however, the remainder of the song may be quite variable. Each sparrow possesses a repertoire of notes and these notes are arranged in a variety of sequences within that bird's songs. Examination of these repertoires revealed that 11 of the 20 sparrows recorded in this study possessed at least one two-voice note (Table 1). This distribution of two-

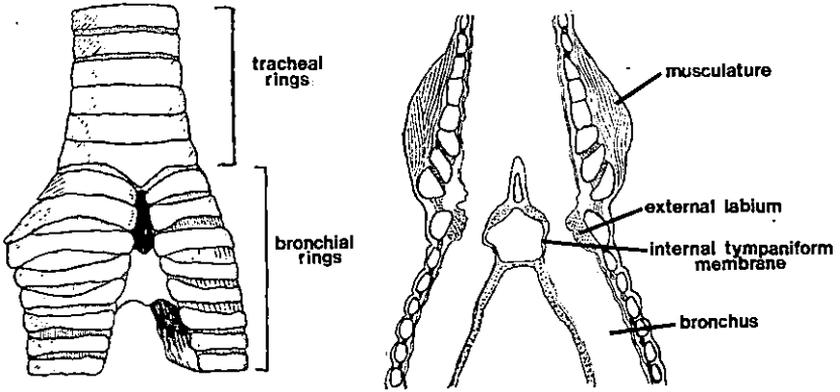


Figure 1. At left is an external view of the syrinx of the magpie (*Pica pica*). At right, a section through the syrinx of the European blackbird showing the four membranes (2 external labia and 2 internal tympaniform membranes) that could be involved in sound production (After Hacker, 1900).

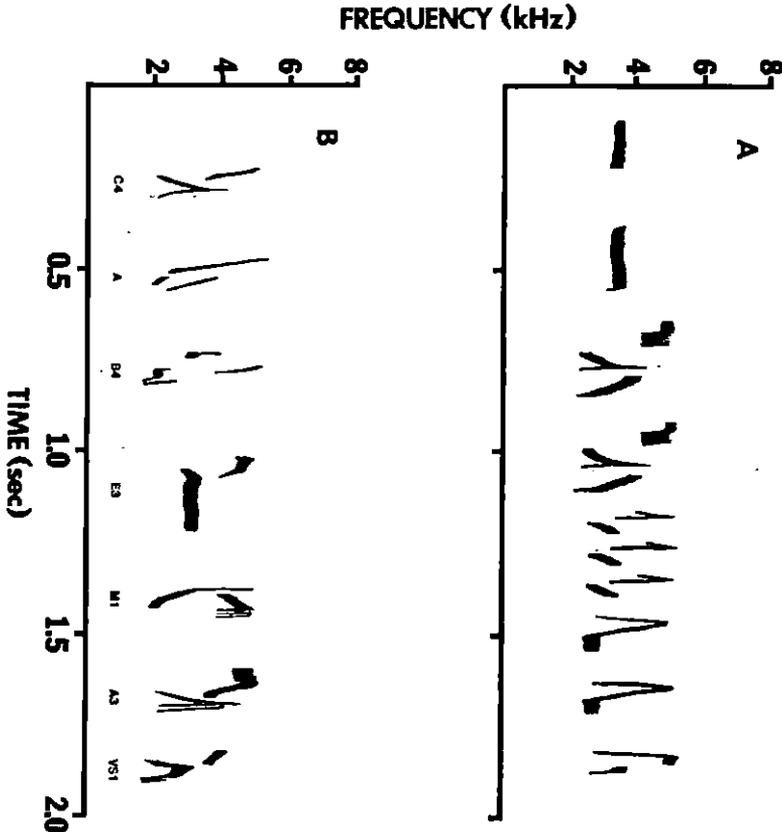


Figure 2. A, a typical Vesper sparrow song. B, examples of two-voice notes produced by Vesper sparrows.

voices among the birds in the present sample suggests this phenomenon to be a general feature among Vesper Sparrows.

The functional significance of uttering two tones simultaneously remains obscure; however, such singing behavior could have several functions. For example, investigators have suggested that in some species the utilization of distinctive notes may be important in individual recognition (Tretzel, 1965; Bremond, 1968; Emlen, 1972). One may speculate that uttering two tones simultaneously enhances the ability of a bird to produce such distinctive notes. Thus, the two-voice notes in the songs of Vesper Sparrows may assist in individual recognition. The occurrence of two-voice notes might also convey information about the motivational state of the singer. Experimental evidence has revealed that the number of notes contained in a song provides information about a bird's aggressive motivation (Brooks and Falls, 1975). The number of tones contained in a note might provide similar information. Finally, Marler (1956) noted in Chaffinches that females responded more strongly to songs with certain notes. Two-voice notes may perform a similar function, i.e., they may increase the attractiveness of the male song to females.

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Table I. The incidence of two-voice notes in the repertoires of male Vesper Sparrows.

Bird	Notes in repertoire	Number of two-voice notes
A	18	2
B	6	1
C	7	0
D	16	0
E	13	0
F	10	0
G	9	0
M1	17	2
M3	8	1
M4	9	0
M5	8	1
A3	12	1
B3	12	0
C3	8	0
E3	24	2
A4	8	1
B4	9	1
C4	5	1
VS1	12	2

THE WINTER SEASON OF 1979-1980

ANNE L. STAMM

The 1979-80 Winter Season was rather dull and for the most part lacked excitement. The scarcity of northern finches was disappointing to many observers and made for a quiet season. Evening Grosbeaks were unusually scarce. Many species were found in low numbers, particularly the ducks, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Ruby-crowned Kinglets; others, such as Red-headed Woodpeckers, Robins and Cedar Waxwings, wintered in fairly large numbers. Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Juncos were reported in fewer numbers than expected.

The 22 Mid-Winter Bird Counts (*Ky. Warbler*, 56:3-13, 1980) indicated that a number of species remained later than normal and this was probably due to the mild December. Among the more uncommon species recorded on the counts were the Whistling Swan, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Northern (Baltimore) Oriole and House Finch.

Both December and January were mild and the temperature was above normal. The coldest period was from January 28 through February 5, when the temperatures ranged from two to 29 degrees and the ground was

covered with snow. The heaviest snowfall was recorded during late January, with a total of 10.17 inches for the month.

During the period of heavy snow-cover a few Cooper's Hawks were observed near feeding stations: at Falls of Rough (KC); Maceo (AP); Louisville (ALS), and a Sharp-shinned Hawk at Danville (FL).

Loons through Grebes. — A few Common Loons lingered into December and one remained as late as January 18 at Somerset (JEL). Horned Grebe were scarce; highest count reported was 16 at Louisville, December 19 (LR). As usual, Madisonville had the greatest number of Pied-billed Grebe (JH). There were only three reports of the Double-crested Cormorant: one at Shippingport Island, December 8 (DS, ALS, m.o.b.); two at Waitsboro Recreational Area, Somerset, December 16 (JEL); and two at Louisville, December 19-30 (LR). Great Blue Heron were reported in fair numbers all across the state, with one as far north as Burlington, December 29 (LMc).

Swans, Geese and Ducks. — Two Mute Swans were reported in southwest Jefferson County, February 1 (DS). Due to the mild winter in the northern states, the goose population was below normal throughout most of Kentucky. However, about 500 Canada Geese wintered in the Danville area (FL) and 50 were observed above the dam at Lake Cumberland, January 6 (DC). Maximum monthly counts for the species at Ballard Waterfowl Management Refuge (hereafter B.W.M.R.) were as follows: December 28, 12,000; January 29, 40,000; and February 12, 125,000. These figures are below those of recent years, according to Gordon Hughes, wildlife biologist at the refuge, but the build-up at the latter date resulted when food became scarce farther north, particularly at Horseshoe Lake, Illinois. Northward flights of Canada Geese began February 22 to 25 over Kentucky Lake, with the greatest number — 5,000 — on February 23 (JEr). The peak population of Snow Geese at B.W.M.R. in late December and early January was 8,000 (GH); an adult in the blue phase was seen on several occasions with Canada Geese at Danville (FL). It was a poor season for ducks throughout the state. The duck population at B.W.M.R. was 15,000 and was down more than 50% over previous years (GH). The 53 Gadwall at Danville were of interest as numbers are usually low in winter (FL). Canvasback were in small numbers and recorded only on four CBC's, with the highest count of 52 at Madisonville (JH). Only one report of the Greater Scaup was received: three males at Louisville, December 12 and February 23 (LR). The 42 Common Goldeneye on the north shore of Shippingport Island, February 14, were of interest since the species is usually recorded in small numbers (LR). An interesting record was the sighting of 18 Hooded Mergansers at Somerset, January 9 (JEL).

Vultures, Hawks and Eagles. — A total of 244 Turkey Vultures was seen going to a roost in south-central Casey County, January 1 (JEL); and 125 were seen about 11 miles northeast of Hopkinsville, January 13 (PH). Red-tailed Hawks were widely distributed all across the state, but Red-shouldered Hawks continued to be in low numbers. Small numbers of Rough-legged Hawks wintered in Kentucky, with the majority in the Danville area (FL); both the light and dark phase birds were reported. Bald Eagles had arrived at many of the lakes during the fall season.

During January when the Kentucky Ornithological Society, the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers counted eagles, a population of 78 was recorded (JDu, ALS, m.o.b.), with the surprising number of 16 on the Kentucky side of Dale Hollow Lake (JD, FH fide JDu). Also, 10 Golden Eagles were spotted on January 4: nine at Ballard Waterfowl Refuge (JM); and one at Land Between the Lakes (RL). Marsh Hawks were sparsely distributed; singles were noted at several locations. The American Kestrel was well distributed throughout the state, with the exception of the mountain section (Appalachian Region); 13 were counted in Boone and Gallatin Counties, January 13 (LMc); and 13 in the Leitchfield and Rough River State Park area, January 6 (KC); smaller numbers recorded elsewhere.

Gallinaceous species through Gulls. — Although Bobwhite were up slightly from last year, they had not recovered from the winter of 1977-78. It was of interest that two American Coot were still present at Jenkins Reservoir, Letcher County, January 27 (RP). Killdeer were up somewhat from last year. American Woodcock were late in arriving; courtship flights first observed in northern Kentucky on February 22 and 23 (EG); one at Fern Creek, February 28 (JHe) and "peenting" there on March 6 (DPS, LS); and two at Somerset, February 28 (JEl). Common Snipe were recorded during December from eight locations, and one bird remained as late as December 29 at Burlington in northern Kentucky (LMc). Gulls were scarce throughout much of the state. The high water covered the normal resting places for gulls at the Falls of the Ohio. Only 10 Herring Gulls were reported on the 22 CBC's, with eight at Land Between the Lakes (CP) and two at Louisville (BM); two at Wolf Creek Dam, December 1, were of special interest (DP, JEl). The report of several hundred Ring-billed Gulls below Wolf Creek Dam on December 1 was noteworthy (DP, JEl); the maximum number at Danville was seven (FL). The Four Bonaparte's at Danville, December 15, established the first fall record for that area (FL); others of interest included one at Wolf Creek Dam December 1 (DP, JEl) and seven there on January 6 (DC).

Doves, Owls and Woodpeckers. — Mourning Doves were fairly well distributed and up slightly from last year, with the exception of Danville where numbers were "poor" (FL). The only Snowy Owl reported this winter was one at Shelbyville on December 15 and 16 (WB). As a rule the Short-eared Owl is irregular and uncommon, but this winter it was recorded in higher numbers than normal at Lexington: twenty-three birds on February 17, 13 on the following day (RM); and eight there on February 22 (DC). During the month of December, the Belted Kingfisher was recorded in greater numbers than the past two years. Pileated Woodpeckers remained stable. Red-headed Woodpeckers were up from last year and were found in 12 localities, but were totally absent in others, such as Danville (FL) and northern Kentucky (EG). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were scarce throughout the state.

Flycatchers through Wrens. — An empidonax remained as late as December 9 in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville (LR). Horned Larks were scarce and low in numbers all across the state and entirely absent in some areas. Although no American Crow roosts were reported, the species was well represented all across the state and on all 22 CBC's, with the greatest

number, 5533, at Danville (FL); a few visited feeding stations at Fort Wright (EG) and at Louisville (FS) in late January. Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce throughout the state, but a few wintered at Brigadoon Farm, Glasgow (RS) and were reported from six areas during December. It is unusual to have House Wrens during the winter months, but two were reported: one at Bernheim Forest, December 23 (CBC) and one at Louisville, February 5 (BPB). Winter Wrens were scarce throughout the state and were decidedly down from three years ago; in the Louisville area it was about normal (ALS); and one spent the entire winter in a yard on Watterson Trail, Fern Creek (JHe). As usual, Bewick's Wrens remained scarce; one to two were reported at Nicholasville, Jessamine County (DC); and at Rough River (KC); also one at Hopkinsville (PH) and two at Frankfort (CBC). Carolina Wrens were up slightly from last year but still much below the winter of 1976-77.

Mimids and thrushes. — The low number of Mockingbirds in Boone (LMc) and Kenton (EG) Counties was noticeable; numbers throughout the state were much below the winter of 1976-77. A few Brown Thrashers wintered successfully, especially in the Louisville area: one observed frequently at a feeding station from January 4 through February 25 (HF); and another came to a window sill for food on February 26 (MS). The species was seen in northern Kentucky on December 1 and 28 (EG). Unusually large numbers of American Robins were found throughout the winter months, with the exception of northern Kentucky, particularly at Burlington (LMc). The Eastern Bluebird was up slightly in most areas.

Kinglets through Blackbirds. — Golden-crowned Kinglets continued to be scarce as they have for the past three years. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were also in low numbers and a few were seen at suet feeders at the following locations: Danville (FL); Louisville (KC); and at Fern Creek from February 7 to March 1 (JHe, DPS, LSA). Cedar Waxwings were fairly common; migrants showed up in yards in early February and were seen feeding on holly berries (WJ, JEL, ALS, RB), but the big push from the south came on February 25 when 4,000 were seen at Murray (JEr). It was encouraging that the number of Loggerhead Shrikes exceeded those of recent years. Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers were present in fair numbers, but not up to the figures of last winter; one reported drinking sap from a characteristic pit made by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (LSA). A first-year male American Redstart at Somerset, January 1, was exceptional (JEL, DE). Eastern Meadowlarks were much above last year. A few Northern (Baltimore) Orioles were late stragglers and singles were found at three locations: Somerset, December 16 (JEL); Danville, December 26 (FL) and at Elizabethtown, at a feeding station — no date (Mrs. WG *vide* EGr). Two blackbird roosts were reported: one with an estimated 3,000,000 birds, at Somerset, comprised mainly of Common Grackles and Starlings, with only a small percentage of Red-winged Blackbirds, Rusty Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds (JEL); the other at Bowling Green consisted of one-half million birds (HS). The ground beneath the latter roost was bulldozed in February and the birds scattered to trees throughout the city where huge numbers were seen morning and night (HS, WM). During the period of heavy snow, February 5-6, Rusty Blackbirds, in numbers as high as 50, visited feeding stations in the Louisville area (FS, ALS).

Fringillids. — Evening Grosbeaks were practically absent, with only small numbers reported: one at Central Wildlife Refuge, Danville on December 15 (JS *fide* FL); two at a feeder in Valley Station in early December (WE); a few at a feeder in Glasgow — no date — (RS); 12 at St. Matthews on December 21 (AB); and four in Jenkins on February 12 (EJ *fide* RP). This was not a good year for Purple Finches and numbers were low throughout the state, but in central Kentucky numbers began to build up in late January and early February. The species was particularly scarce in northern Kentucky (LMc, EG) and in Letcher County (RP). Pine Siskins were just about non-existent. House Finches were the big news this year; a small group of five male and four female was discovered in Somerset on December 16 and was observed throughout the period (JEl); as many as 33 fed at a feeding station from early January to March at Sandy Hook (WG); 17 were reported on the CBC at Jackson (PA); and the small group at Lexington left the area at the end of January (DC). Neither species of crossbill was reported this winter. Only two reports of Savannah Sparrows were received: four birds at Glasgow, December 30 (CBC) and one bird at Louisville, February 3 (BPB). Tree Sparrows were scarce — often absent in some sections. The Harris' Sparrow, a rare transient, was reported at a feeder in Louisville, February 3 and 19 (MB). White-crowned Sparrows were down slightly from previous years in the Louisville area (ALS). During the month of February single Fox Sparrows were noted at feeding stations: at Falls of Rough (KC); Valley Station (DS); Louisville (FS, ALS); Fern Creek (LS, CM); and at Somerset (JEl). Neither the Lapland Longspur nor the Snow Bunting was recorded this winter.

CORRECTION. — Note that the Western Sandpipers and Sanderlings for June 24, 1979 (*Ky. Warbler* 55:56, 1979) should read July 24.

CONTRIBUTORS. — Pierre Allaire (PA), Alan Barron (AB), Robert Brown (RB), Mary Frances Bloch (MB), W. H. Brown (WB), Kathryn Clay (KC), Dennis Coskren (DC), Jack Donaldson (JD), James Durell (JDu), Walter Ellison (WE), Jackie Elmore (JEl), Diane Elmore (DE), Joe T. Erwin (JEr), Helen Fisher (HF), Mrs. W. Games (Mrs. WG), Edgerton Graham (EGr), William Greene (WG), Ed Groneman (EG), James Hancock (JH), Janice Heckman (JHe), Frank Huff (FH), Gordon Hughes (GH), Phillip Hyatt (PH), Wilbur Jackson (WJ), Elizabeth Jordan (EJ), Frederick Loetscher (FL), Richard Lowe (RL), Lee McNeely (LMc), William Mathes (WB), Burt L. Monroe, Jr. (BM), Robert Morris (RM), Caroline Musgrove (CM), Jimmy Myatt (JM), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), Donald Parker (DP), Richard Peake (RP), Clell Peterson (CP), A. L. Powell (AP), Lene Rauth (LR), Linda Salmon (LSa), Herbert Shadowen (HS), John Stamper (JS), Anne L. Stamm (ALS), Frederick Stamm (FS), Donald Summerfield (DS), Donna Penny Sumpter (DPS), Margaret Sullivan (MS); other abbreviations: Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), and Many observers (m.ob.). — 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING MEETING

April 25, 26, 27, 1980

The fifty-seventh Annual Spring Meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was held April 25-27, 1980 at Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The general sessions at 7:30 on Friday and Saturday evening were held at Western Kentucky University. President Ramon Iles welcomed the members and guests. Vice-president Pierre Allaire introduced the program participants. Thomas Padgett gave a progress report on research activities concerning photoperiodism in starlings. Dr. Gary Ritchison discussed female songs of the Black-headed Grosbeak. Mrs. Anne Stamm reported on a study made by the late Walter Ellison of reproduction and growth in the Turkey Vulture, illustrated by several excellent photographs. Following the Friday evening program announcements were made concerning the Saturday field trips.

Conditions were very poor on Saturday morning for birding. However, the sporadic rain and low temperatures dissipated somewhat, and field trips to the transient lakes and surrounding area resulted in a list of 108 species for the day.

The Board of Directors met at 4:00 p.m. and discussed several items of business, particularly the financial state of the organization.

On Saturday evening 32 members and guests watched and listened to a fascinating illustrated discussion of the birds of Galapagos Islands, presented by Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver. Present day conditions and the need for conservation were stressed. Following the program a list of the birds seen during the day was compiled, and announcements were made concerning the Sunday field trips. During the short business meeting President Iles reported that a recommendation will be made to the membership at the fall meeting that the annual dues be increased to cover increased expenses. He also announced that the 1980 Fall meeting will be held at Natural Bridge State Park September 26-28; the Spring meeting is scheduled for Barren River State Park April 24-26.

On Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m. a steady rain greeted those participating in the field trip to Dr. Russell Starr's farm in Barren County. However, the weather cleared during the morning, and a total of 60 species was recorded during the day.

Respectfully submitted,
H. E. Shadowen
Acting Recording Secretary

BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1980

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Mallard, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, American Kestrel, Bobwhite, American Coot, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Spotted Sandpiper,

Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Acadian Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, Wood Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Solitary Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Hooded Warbler, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, Northern Oriole, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Summer Tanager, Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, American Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, total 113 species.

ATTENDANCE AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1980

BOWLING GREEN: Dr. and Mrs. Charles S. Guthrie, Dr. Blaine Ferrell, Mike Jones, Mr. and Mrs. William B. Mathes, Dr. H. E. Shadowen.
 CARLISLE: Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver.
 GILBERTSVILLE: Mr. E. G. Conrad.
 JACKSON: Dr. and Mrs. Pierre Allaire.
 LOUISVILLE: Brian Anderson, Alan Barron, Bob Brown, John Krull, Dr. Burt L. Monroe, Jr., Mrs. Eugene Short, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Stamm, Alan Temple.
 OWENSBORO: Mary Lydia Greenwell, Mr. and Mrs. Ramon Iles, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Wilson.
 RICHMOND: Dr. Gary Ritchison.
 DYERSBURG, TENNESSEE: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Leggett.

PERIODICAL REVIEW

BIRD WATCHER'S DIGEST, edited by Mary B. Bowers and Pat Murphy. William H. and Elsa E. Thompson, Publishers, Pardson Corporation, P. O. Box 110, Marietta, Ohio 45750. Bimonthly. \$1.50 per copy; \$7.50 per year.

Bird Watcher's Digest is a family enterprise designed for those interested in birds and bird watching. The bimonthly publication is 96 pages in length, 5" by 8" in size, and is a compilation of printed articles selected from newspapers and magazines in North America plus some manuscripts

submitted for consideration. In a brochure it is described as follows: "It offers both the veteran and the amateur birder features on individual species; practical advice on where to go to see birds; information on rare sightings; personal accounts of birding experiences; updates on endangered and threatened species; profiles of outstanding bird watchers; humorous essays, cartoons, and anecdotes." For example, in the September/October 1979 issue there were articles concerning the last Heath Hen on earth, two Mississippi Kites sighted in New York, How to choose and use binoculars, Stalking the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, the Cornell Laboratory sanctuary, and Thomas Bewick. In the November/December 1979 issue some of the subjects were Henslow, Bobwhite ground feeder, The Kingfisher, Feeding wild birds, and Birding in China and India. Our local club made use of an article entitled Make a Christmas Tree for the Birds and decorated a tree for a nursing home.

Most of the articles are two to six pages in length and deal with a variety of subjects of interest to birders. There are approximately 24 to 40 articles included in each issue, some of them accompanied by black and white photographs or line drawings. There are also a few cartoons, letters to the editor, and a few advertisements (all of an ornithological nature) such as bird books, birding equipment, food, etc. In reviewing three issues of the publication I found approximately one-fourth of the articles to be of great interest to me, one-half to be of some interest, and one-fourth to be of little or no interest. There are some publications that I have received for years without reading more than one-fourth of any issue. To me it is somewhat like receiving a copy of Reader's Digest in which all of the articles have to do with birds and birding and conservation. The articles are intended for those with an interest in ornithology, and none of them require advanced ornithological training for understanding. This publication fills a need for those interested in this approach to ornithology and hopefully will result in more bird readers becoming bird watchers. — H. E. SHADOWEN, 1927 Cedar Ridge Rd., Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101.

FIELD NOTES

SOME BIRD OBSERVATIONS IN THE LOUISVILLE AREA

Over the past few years I have made a number of interesting observations at my family's farm in northeast Jefferson County. Unless other persons are mentioned specifically, I was the only observer involved.

After seeing a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) in a hayfield in 1976 (Palmer-Ball, *Kentucky Warbler* 53:41, 1977) I searched for the species with Jackie Elmore and Donald Parker by pulling a rope through suitable habitat between two tractors on October 22, 1977. Surprisingly, we were fortunate enough to flush a single Yellow Rail several times. The following day we were joined by Diane Elmore and Dr. Burt Monroe, Jr., and all of us got at least a glimpse of this bird as it crept, mouse-like, through the grass. In addition we all saw a Henslow's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus henslowii*) and a Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*).

On January 1, 1977 I found a Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) in a large stand of White Pines (*Pinus strobus*). These trees seem to give cover and supply a food source to insectivores. All the field marks on the warbler were noted including the white eye ring, gray head, olive back, and yellow throat, breast, and undertail.

On June 23, 1978 I was working in a field of corn when I noticed a peculiarly colored (but seemingly familiar) flycatcher sitting on a barbed wire fence nearby. The reason for its familiarity to me became clear when I went closer and realized it was a Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), a species which I had seen by the hundreds just three weeks earlier in Texas! All field marks were noted including the bright yellow lower breast and belly, blackish tail with white edge to the outer feathers, gray head, and indefinite division between the whitish throat and yellow breast. The bird sat clearly in view for five minutes as I approached to within forty feet of it.

After a general abundance of Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) during the winter of 1977-78, a group of about 15 birds frequented my feeders through the early part of May 1978. On March 23, 1978 I was playing basketball in my backyard when a siskin flew to the rim of the goal and proceeded to tug at the frayed loops of the net beneath. The bird then flew to a nearby tree and then to the ground where it began to pick up dog hairs. It collected quite a billful before flying about 45 feet up in a nearby white pine. Close scrutiny of the spot in the tree with binoculars revealed a nearly completed nest in a fork of about five small branches that radiated upward from a common point. On March 25 the bird (presumed a female) was sitting on the nest and remained there most of the time for the next five days. However, from March 30 on, no activity was detected in the immediate vicinity of the nest. After repeated attempts to find the bird nearby I climbed the tree and found a single egg, white with tiny brown spots, in the nest. The nesting attempt was unsuccessful.

While roping hayfields for rails I flushed Henslow's Sparrows three times, all at times when the species is considered quite rare. Besides the previously mentioned record of October 23, 1976, Alan Barron and I flushed single birds on October 19, 1978 and November 2, 1978.

On November 14, 1978 I startled a Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) sitting in a honeysuckle tangle in a small group of trees. The bird was quite reluctant to fly out from the cover of the trees, and consequently I was able to view the bird in flight several times. Its small size, grayish (rather than brownish) plumage, and lack of white patches in the wings separated it from any other confusing species. The bird was an immature and had no white in the tail.

The winter of 1978-1979 was enlightening to me in part due to the presence of unusual numbers of Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) and Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*) in snow covered fields where cow manure and waste hay had been spread. The birds find undigested pieces of corn and other plant material in the manure and find seeds in the hay. In 1979 Snow Buntings were present from January 8 to February 20 with a peak count of about 60 birds on January 29. Lapland Longspurs were present from January 7 to February 21 with a peak of about 45 on January 29th. I noted that small flocks of Snow Buntings perched high in bare trees, soaking up the morning sun on several occasions, but the Lapland Longspur or Horned Lark seldom take advantage

of anything higher than a cornstalk from which to survey the surroundings. The buntings, upon hearing a frightening noise, would rise from the ground and perch on the nearest fence or piece of machinery. In contrast the longspurs and larks would take flight, moving some distance before landing in an open field.

On May 26, 1979 I was ecstatic upon hearing the "wee-bee-o" song of the Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*) coming from a dense stand of second growth Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and Black Willow (*Salix nigra*) along a wet weather creek. I saw the bird briefly several times as it flitted about in search of insects, and was able to identify it by sight as an Empidonax flycatcher by eye ring, wing bars, and olive back, wings, and head. The lower belly was washed with yellow. The bird sang about eight times over a period of five minutes before disappearing out of sight and hearing range to the northeast.

On August 12, 1979 Alan Barron and I saw a pair of Blue Grosbeaks (*Guiraca caerulea*) feeding in a hayfield. For the next few weeks I noted a single female of this species in the same general vicinity, and she always seemed distressed at my approach. On September 9 I found a female with two others that were quite ragged in plumage and obviously juveniles. For another two weeks I noted this group, containing up to four members (three juveniles). After that I noted one or two birds that appeared to be juveniles until October 18. The late presence of these birds so far past the breeding season extended the fall date for the state by over a month.

On October 11, 1979 I pursued a small sparrow through a grassy field for half an hour, flushing it perhaps 20 times, before identifying it as a Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*). The bird had apparently just completed the prebasic molt as all of its field marks were strikingly conspicuous including the bright yellow-orange lores, yellow bend of the wing, fresh ashy gray edgings on the back feathers, and the ashy margin to the outer tail feathers. This was the second fall record for the species in the Louisville area. — BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, Kentucky 40222.

Editorial note: This extensive field note has been published (with some deletions) with the hope that it will encourage our readers to record and report their sightings on a regular basis. However, the Editorial Board reaffirmed its position at the 1980 spring meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society that when a rare or out-of-season species is located, every effort should be made to substantiate the report either by means of photographs or by contacting others to witness the event. We hope that all members will realize that a request for additional information is not a question of integrity but an attempt to be as precise as possible.

KESTREL PREYS ON JUNCO

Although there is considerable information in the ornithological literature on the predation of birds, there is little on the actual observation of seeing the predator take its prey, or destroy the eggs or young in the nest. Therefore, the following observation may be of interest.

On January 27, 1979, the temperature hovered between 27 and 31 degrees and the ground was covered with snow. I had hung a mist net within 15 feet of the house for the capture and banding of birds. As I

watched from the living room window a Dark-eyed (slate-colored) Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) flew into the net and within seconds an American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) appeared, fluttered briefly before the net, and made a swift direct strike and grasped the junco, thereby entangling itself in the net. I rushed out to save the junco, but the bird was dead. The Kestrel, a male, was taken from the net, banded and released.

The junco wore a "bracelet" with number 1280-25278 on it and had been banded by the writer on December 29, 1976. It had been recaptured on March 2, 1977 and was not seen again until its tragic fate. The junco was in its fourth calendar year, and may have been older, but at the time of banding its exact age was not known.

Kestrel often prey on birds when food is scarce and the ground snow-covered and often at such times are attracted to winter feeding stations. During the severe winter of 1977-78, my husband, Frederick, observed a Kestrel capture a Starling and devour it. During the same week a frozen Starling was found in the yard and was placed on the woodpile. Later in the day, a Kestrel, probably the same one, was seen eating the frozen bird. — ANNE L. STAMM, 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

GOSHAWK OBSERVATION

On December 29, 1979 I observed a hawk perched in a tree in clear view about fifty feet from my kitchen window. Such a sighting was somewhat unusual in this suburban location, and noting that it was a Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) made it most unusual. The hawk sat in the tree for about thirty minutes in good light, providing ample opportunity to examine its distinctive markings. The Goshawk eventually flew from the tree and disappeared over our house; however, it immediately returned and took a House Sparrow at our bird feeder. It carried the bird first to the garden and then to a fence post in our backyard, providing excellent views of its plumage. It devoured the sparrow in about 15 minutes and then flew away upon the approach of a neighbor's dog. — Mrs. JAMES M. WILLIAMS, 480 Seeley Drive, Lexington, Kentucky 40502.

NEWS AND VIEWS

K.O.S. FALL MEETING

Please heed this early reminder to make your reservations for the fall meeting which will be held at Natural Bridge State Park September 26-28. This is one of the most popular parks in Kentucky and is noted for the fall colors and for Red River Gorge which is nearby. A program is also being planned for Saturday afternoon.

IN MEMORIAM

MR. WALTER ELLISON

DR. L. Y. LANCASTER