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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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OUR COVER

Our thanks go to Ray Harm, our gifted staff artist, for this painting of Cardinals.

AVIAN SPECIES ATTRACTED TO AND UTILIZING THE MINOR E. CLARK FISH HATCHERY

FRED M. BUSROE

ABSTRACT — A study was conducted at Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan County, Kentucky to investigate the avian species attracted to and utilizing the habitat created by the development of the hatchery. The study was conducted from September 1982 to December 1983. A total of 162 species was recorded. The habitat created by the construction of Clark Hatchery has increased the occurrence of waterfowl and shorebird species in this area of Kentucky.

INTRODUCTION — “Eastern Kentucky has been ignored to a considerable degree and knowledge regarding its fauna is limited” (Barbour 1951). Pierre Allaire (1974) found this statement applicable in 1974. This comment is still true (Stamm 1981, per. commun.; Shadowen 1982). Mengel’s publication (1965), Monroe’s summary (1969) and Barbour’s, et al. finding guide (1972) contain helpful information about Kentucky’s avifauna. However, a number of major environmental changes have occurred in eastern Kentucky since 1950 and information regarding the avifauna needs to be updated. The impoundment of large lakes, surface mine reclamation efforts (Allaire 1974, 1978, 1981) and the employment of different agriculture and forestry techniques (McComb and Moriarty 1981) have altered eastern Kentucky’s habitats and avian populations. One such alteration of habitat in eastern Kentucky is the Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery.

Similar in some aspects to the transient lakes which have long been recognized as unique birding areas near Bowling Green (Wilson 1951, 1968; Shadowen 1972), the ponds at Clark Hatchery serve as temporary stopping points for migrating birds. The purpose of this study was to observe and report on avian species attracted to and utilizing the habitat created by the development of the Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery.

STUDY AREA — Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery is located eight miles (12.8 km) southwest of Morehead, Rowan County, Kentucky. The study area is on the western edge of the Cumberland Plateau. The hatchery is in the Cumberland Upland avifaunal region of Kentucky (Mengel 1965), which comprises most of the Cumberland Plateau. This region is marked by the richest forest avifauna in Kentucky, both in total number of species and numbers of individuals of common species (Mengel 1965). The study area is sufficiently close to the Limestone Plateau avifaunal region for it to be ecotonal in the nature of its avifauna.

Clark Hatchery is one of the largest state-owned warm-water hatcheries in the United States. Construction was completed in 1972. The average elevation of the study area is approximately 680 feet (207 m) mean sea level. The hatchery covers 300 acres (121.4 ha) and contains 111 rearing and brood ponds. It has 122.5 acres (49.6 ha) of water that includes eighty-two 1.0 acre (0.4 ha) ponds, twenty-five 0.1 acre (0.04 ha) ponds and 38 acres (15.37 ha) of water in four large brood ponds, one of which is an oxbow lake. The remaining 189 acres (76.5 ha) consists of roadways, mixed forest stands, planted fields (corn), grassy-marsh areas and an office-residential area. Clark Hatchery is located 275 yards (250 m) west of Cave Run Lake and is bounded on the southern and western sides by the Licking River.

The hatchery is a state designated wildlife sanctuary and thus access by humans is restricted. This feature, along with the habitat created by the ponds, marsh areas, fields and the close proximity to Cave Run Lake and the Licking River serve as a special attraction to birds.

METHODS — Methods involving the use of transect routes to identify birds from visual and audible cues employed in this study were modified from the methods of Emlen (1971, 1977). The transect route width varied with the season (Robbins 1972) and the habitat (Reynolds et al. 1980). The transect route was chosen to achieve maximum coverage of the different habitats of the study area.

The survey route was covered in a motor vehicle with periodic stops made to observe and record species and numbers of birds seen. On eighteen visits it was necessary to cover the interior of the oxbow lake on foot because road conditions were poor as a result of the weather.

The study area was visited a total of 66 times from 8 September 1982 to 2 December 1983. Sixty-one surveys were made between 7:00 a.m. and noon and five surveys were conducted between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Visual observations were made using binoculars (8.5 x 44) and a spotting scope (15x - 60x). The species and the number of individuals identified visually or audibly on each trip were recorded on a transect route map.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION — A total of 162 species was encountered during the study. The maximum number of species observed on a single survey was 66 species on 17 May 1983 and the greatest number of individuals was 1376 observed on 19 October 1983. The data concerning the aquatic species from the study are presented in Table 1. Species are named and listed in accordance with their order in the new A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (A.O.U. 1983).

Sixteen species recorded on a single occasion and represented by sightings of only one bird are not included in Table 1. These species are: Horned Grebe, Great Egret, Wood Stork, Redhead, Common Merganser, Ruddy Turnstone, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope and Forster's Tern. Woodland species are not included either.

A total of 36 species are known to nest within the hatchery. Nests were located for each of the nesting species. An additional 16 species are suspected of nesting within or at least nearby the study area. Juvenile birds or adults carrying food were used as evidence for the suspected breeding species. Data for breeding status of the aquatic species are also presented in Table 1.

The Kentucky Ornithological Society lists 17 orders of birds on its Check-list of Kentucky Birds. Sixteen of these orders were observed at Clark Hatchery. The only order not observed was the order Pelecaniformes. A representative of this order, the Double-crested Cormorant, has been observed several times on Cave Run Lake.

Fourteen species were observed that Mengel lists as unrecorded on the Cumberland Plateau (Mengel 1965). These unrecorded species are: Horned Grebe, Wood Stork, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Canvasback, Redhead, Oldsquaw, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Wilson's Phalarope and Least Tern. All of the preceding species are waterfowl or shorebirds that use the hatchery during migration. Mengel (1965) indicated that there were very few Cumberland Plateau records for the following species: Semipalmated Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Tree Swal-

TABLE 1—Aquatic avian species observed at Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery between September 1982 and December 1983.

Species	Season Sighted	Total No. Sightings	Total No. Individuals	Average per Sighting	Breeding Status	
					known	suspected
COMMON LOON	F	4	4	1.0		
PIED-BILLED GREBE	Sp, F	33	100	3.0		
AMERICAN BITTERN	F	3	3	1.0		
GREAT BLUE HERON	Y	59	339	5.7		
LITTLE BLUE HERON	F	7	15	2.1		
CATTLE EGRET	Sp, F	5	6	1.2		
GREEN-BACKED HERON	Su	28	553	19.8		x
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON	F	7	9	1.3		
CANADA GOOSE	Sp, F, W	8	45	5.6		
WOOD DUCK	Sp, Su, F	31	153	4.9	x	
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	F	3	3	1.0		
BLACK DUCK	Sp, F, W	5	16	3.2		
MALLARD	Y	42	194	4.6	x	
BLUE-WINGED TEAL	Sp, F	25	241	9.6		
NORTHERN SHOVELER	Sp, F	5	17	3.4		
GADWALL	W	1	3	3.0		
CANVASBACK	Sp	3	6	2.0		
RING-NECKED DUCK	Sp, F	16	61	3.8		
GREATER SCAUP	Sp	1	4	4.0		
LESSER SCAUP	Sp, F, W	18	21	1.2		
OLDSQUAW	W	10	14	1.4		
COMMON GOLDENEYE	Sp	2	6	3.0		
BUFFLEHEAD	Sp, F, W	23	131	5.7		
HOODED Merganser	Sp, F, W	23	203	8.8		
RED-BREASTED Merganser	Sp	2	4	2.0		
RUDDY DUCK	Sp, F	2	3	1.5		
OSPREY	Sp, Su, F	29	30	1.0		
BALD EAGLE	Sp, F, W	7	11	1.5		
AMERICAN COOT	Sp, F, W	22	187	8.5		
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	F	1	2	2.0		
LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER	F	4	4	1.0		
SEMPALMATED PLOVER	F	7	24	3.4		
KILLDEER	Y	63	2094	33.2	x	
GREATER YELLOWLEGS	Sp, F	9	29	3.2		
LESSER YELLOWLEGS	Sp, F	18	88	4.9		
SOLITARY SANDPIPER	Sp	3	7	2.3		
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	Sp, F	21	77	3.7		
SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER	F	17	247	14.5		
WESTERN SANDPIPER	F	2	11	5.5		
LEAST SANDPIPER	F	31	239	7.7		
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER	F	1	2	2.0		
PECTORAL SANDPIPER	F	28	213	7.6		
DUNLIN	F	15	105	7.1		
STILT SANDPIPER	F	3	7	2.3		
COMMON SNIFE	F	3	13	4.3		
BONAPARTE'S GULL	Sp, F	3	6	2.0		
RING-BILLED GULL	Sp, F	20	145	7.3		
HERRING GULL	Sp	1	3	3.0		
COMMON TERN	F	4	4	1.0		
LEAST TERN	F	2	7	3.5		
BELTED KINGFISHER	Y	62	217	3.5	x	

Sp—Spring F—Fall Y—Permanent Resident Su—Summer W—Winter

low and Marsh Wren. All of these species were observed during the study period. A Northern Pintail was observed at the hatchery prior to the study period and two additional species, American Wigeon and Brewer's Blackbird, have been recorded since the study was concluded in December 1983. A comparison of these records with the occurrence records for Kentucky developed by Monroe (1969) indicated that my observations were within the range of dates previously recorded.

The species observed at Clark Hatchery are similar to those recorded at the transient lakes near Bowling Green (Wilson 1951, 1968; Shadowen 1972). Clark Hatchery may soon serve as an attraction equal to the transient lakes.

Current management practices of draining the ponds in the fall enhances the attractiveness for shorebirds. The oxbow and small ponds that remain filled throughout the year attract waterfowl. During the winter months the Bald Eagle is often seen on snags over the Licking River that forms the southern boundary of the hatchery. This area of the river receives tailwaters of Cave Run Lake and remains ice free during severe weather, whereas Cave Run Lake often freezes. The planted fields and tree stands provide an excellent source of food and shelter for the passerines.

The initial conclusion that can be formed is that since construction of Clark Hatchery and Cave Run Lake the occurrence of waterfowl and shorebirds in this area of Kentucky has increased in both the number of species and the number of individual birds. The hatchery serves as a special attraction for migrating birds.

The results of this study should serve as a starting point for continued observation and documentation of the changing avian populations of the Cave Run area and eastern Kentucky. It will be necessary to continue the study for several years to fully document the transitional period.

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THE WINTER SEASON, 1984-85

ANNE L. STAMM

Warm weather for the fall period continued into early winter with temperatures ranging from 61 to 69 degrees for the highs on eight days and 73 degrees on two days during December. January, on the other hand, was cold and snow fell in many parts of the state on January 5 with six inches at Paducah, eight inches at Mayfield, and two to three inches at Madisonville, Henderson and Louisville. Temperatures dropped to 16 to 20 degrees below zero on January 19-21. Heavy snow fell in much of the state, particularly in central and eastern Kentucky on February 12. High winds caused drifts of four to five feet in the areas of Versailles, Lexington and Mt. Sterling. Large ice flows were common on the Ohio River and Barren River Lake was frozen during the severest period.

Tree and shrub damage was extensive, but there were few reports of bird mortality. Since the snow was on the ground for a long period of time, birds had a difficult time finding natural foods and feeding stations were hosts to such species as Bobwhite, Tree and Fox Sparrows and Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds. Few northern finches had arrived by late December. A few Pine Siskins began showing up at feeders in mid-January when temperatures dropped below zero.

The unusually warm weather in December apparently caused many species to remain beyond their normal departure dates. Unusual birds also added to the interest of the winter season. The list included a Laughing Gull at Barkley Dam; Glaucous Gulls at Falls of the Ohio, Barkley and Kentucky Dams; Thayers Gulls from the same areas; a Great Black-backed Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake at Kentucky Dam and Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Louisville and in Lexington.

Loons through Herons — There were few reports of Common Loons in December, but an interesting record was that of 90 birds on the Lexington Reservoir on December 19 (BA); a few lingered into January, six at Cave

Run Lake, January 4 (FB); two near Green River, Taylor County, January 13 (JEl). Seventy-nine Pied-billed Grebes at Lake Pewee on December 10 was the largest number reported (JH); singles were still present at Louisville and Lexington on January 15 and 19, respectively (LR, and BA). The only mid-winter record of Horned Grebes was a single bird at Louisville on February 15 (LR). Probably late transients were three Double-crested Cormorants at the Falls of the Ohio in early December where one remained until mid-December (BPB); also a single bird was present at Lake Barkley, February 17 (BPB *et al.*). There was an unusually large number of Great Blue Herons present during December. The species appeared on 12 CBCs, with highs of 29 birds at Lexington and Glasgow, 28 at the Land Between the Lakes, 23 at Ballard County and 21 on the Louisville CBCs. They survived the sub-zero weather in the Inner Blue Grass Region and remained throughout the period at the Lexington Reservoir, lowest numbers there on January 19 and February 17 (BA). A single Great Egret was reported on the Lexington CBC, December 19 (BA). A few Cattle Egrets were late stragglers: one near Richmond on December 8 (*vide* GR) and two on a Murray farm (J. Erwin *vide* CP).

Waterfowl—An immature Tundra Swan was seen at Three Springs, Warren County, January 19, but was gone the following day (WM and H. Shadowen); two were sighted on the Ballard Waterfowl Management Area (hereafter BWMA) on January 17 (TY). Snow Geese numbered 4000 at BWMA in early December, but on January 7 the population had built up to 8000 birds. The census there at the end of February numbered 2000 birds (TY). Northward moving Snow Geese included ten or eleven in a cornfield at Three Lick Branch, Rowan County on February 22. They were with a flock of Canada Geese (FB). The latter species was reported at 11 locations. Largest concentrations were in western Kentucky with 22,000 at BWMA at the end of December, but on January 7 some 35,000 birds were there. The waterfowl season closed on January 22 with 75,000 Canada Geese at BWMA, but the population peaked at 130,000 on February 11. (TY). At the end of the reporting season (February 28) the majority had moved northward as only 5000 remained (TY). Canada Geese peaked at 1500 at Danville (FL) and at Green River State Park with 500 birds (JEl). The duck population throughout the winter was rather low in the Louisville area and at BWMA it "was far below the past few years" (TY). Surveys at BWMA showed only 6500 at the beginning of December, but the flock built up to 20,000 by January 7 and only 1000 there on January 22 (TY). Spring migrant Green-winged Teal began arriving in mid-February at Lexington (BA) and at Danville (FL). The largest Black Duck concentration at Louisville was 250 to 300 at the lake in Cave Hill Cemetery, February 16 (S, FS). The Mallard high count at Louisville was 1100 on February 9 at Mayfair Basins (JC). A few Pintails and Gadwalls remained throughout the winter at Danville (FL) and the latter species at Lexington (BA). American Wigeon began appearing at Danville on February 9 (FL) and at Lexington on February 16 (BA). Canvasbacks were reported in low numbers. A flock of 56 Redheads was seen at Warsaw, February 24 (LR) and a flock of 1000 at Lake Barkley on February 27 (V. Anderson, J. Sole, BPB). A flock of 66 Greater Scaup at Towhead Island on February 23 was extraordinary (LR). Three Surf Scoters were near McAlpine Dam on December 20 (BPB, J. Lewis) and a single White-winged Scoter at Smithland Dam on December 1 (m.ob.) and 30 (LR). Common Goldeneyes were reported from five locations (m.ob.): Danville,

Lexington, Louisville, Madisonville and Kentucky-Barkley Lakes area, with the largest concentration of 550 on the west side of Kentucky Lake in mid-February (BPB). Interesting were the 28 Hooded Mergansers on the Lexington Reservoir on January 16 (BA). There were 117 Common Mergansers on the Land Between the Lakes CBC December 14 (CP) and 600 at Silo Overlook, February 10 (BPB, R. Cassell). A total of 226 Red-breasted Mergansers in two flocks was recorded at Lexington, December 19 (BA) and 120 on the Ohio River near Shippingport Island on December 20 (LR, BPB). Ruddy Ducks were present throughout December at Lake Pewee with a high of 33 on December 10 and 31 present on January 14 (JH).

Diurnal Raptors — Black and Turkey Vultures were present in large numbers in the vicinity of Kentucky River Bluffs (MF), also Turkey Vultures were more common than usual in January and early February at Danville (FL). The January Bald Eagle survey totaled 143 which was below that of the 1984 survey (JD, S). Bald Eagle sightings in February included 13 from Uniontown to Golconda (M. Morton), 25 at Land Between the Lakes (Ed Ray), eight at Green River (JEL), two south of West Point (*vide* DS), one at Cave Run Lake and three at Clark Fish Hatchery (FB). Single Northern Harriers were reported in Breckenridge, Daviess, Jefferson and Trimble Counties; also reported at nine locations on the CBCs. Sharp-shinned Hawks, other than those on the CBCs, included singles in Shelby County on December 16 and February 9 (WB), at Wax on January 6 (KC), a few in the Inner Blue Grass area during the period (MF) and one captured a male Northern Cardinal at Prospect, December 5 (FK). Cooper's Hawks were reported in yards, or near feeders, at three locations during December: Louisville, Prospect and Shelbyville; five were recorded on the eagle survey in January; February sightings included two in Grayson County (KC), one in Jefferson County (KC) and one in Shelby County (WB). An immature Goshawk was reported near Taylorsville Lake on December 1 (WB). Red-shouldered Hawks continued to be in low numbers. Red-tailed Hawks appeared to be "noticeably down" this year in the Danville area (FL); the CBCs showed some decrease over last year, too. On the eagle survey a total of 57 Red-tailed Hawks was seen; fourteen were at Central Kentucky Wildlife Management Area (hereafter CKWMA) for about a week after the mid-February heavy snow (GR). A Golden Eagle was reported at Land Between the Lakes on the eagle survey in January (*vide* JD) and an immature was sighted at BWMA on January 23 and February 14 (T. Siemsen *et al.* *vide* BPB). Small numbers of Rough-legged Hawks were present during December and February; very few at Danville (FL). There were mixed reports on the American Kestrel; declines noted again at Frankfort (H. Jones), but numbers were good at Owensboro (RI) and the total number reported on the eagle survey showed 23 more than on last year's survey.

Turkeys through Shorebirds — Winter Wild Turkey reports included 17 along Green River near Mammoth Cave on December 16 (M. Gillenwater *vide* WM), 16 in Ballard County, February 14 (B. Anderson *vide* BPB) and 10 in Trigg County on December 1 (BPB *et al.*). Four Northern Bobwhite came to a Louisville feeder during the snowy weather in February (KC). The species showed some decrease on the CBCs over 1984, but was thought to have survived the winter fairly well at Owensboro (RI). A covey of eight was flushed at Shippingport Island on December 16 (FS,

S) where it had not been found on previous CBCs. The American Coot wintered at the Lexington Reservoir and 57 noted there on January 16 (BA) and at Lake Pewee a high count of 597 was recorded on December 31 and 96 still there on January 14 and 10 on February 27 (JH). Good flocks of Sandhill Cranes flew over Louisville on their southward migration on December 3 — 200 observed by F. W. Stamm and 225 and 150 by Doxie Noonan; two were late stragglers over Doe Valley, Meade County on January 5 (BPB). A few shorebirds lingered beyond normal departure dates: a Greater Yellowlegs, a Least Sandpiper and four Dunlin at Land Between the Lakes, December 1 (DN); three Dunlin still present at Jonathan Creek on December 14 (*vide* CP). The "peenting" notes and courtship flights of six American Woodcock in Ballard County on December 29 were unusually early with this performance (BPB, KC); more normal courtship flights included one at the outskirts of Murray, February 18 (CP), five at Big Pond Sanctuary, Grayson County (KC), two in Oldham County (JC) and one in Kenton County (EG) all on February 25.

Gulls — Two Laughing Gulls at Barkley Dam on December 30 were unexpected (BPB, DN, LR). Bonaparte's Gulls were scarce in the fall, but fair numbers were present on January 4 in many areas: 56 at Falls of the Ohio (LR), flocks of 140 and 165 along the Ohio River at Louisville (J. Lewis, BPB), three at the Game Farm Lake in Frankfort and probably a new record for the area (WB) and 35 or more at the Lexington Reservoir (BA). Winter resident Gulls were late in arriving, at least in numbers. Ring-billed Gulls were widespread: about 1000 at Kentucky - Barkley Dams on December 1 (DN) and an estimated several thousand at the tri-dam area the latter part of December (BPB); some 4000 at Green River Lake on January 13 (JEL); about 80 at the Falls of the Ohio on February 7 (DN, LR); smaller numbers elsewhere. An estimated 5000 Herring Gulls were present in mid-February at the Kentucky - Barkley and Smithland Dams (BPB) where only 500 had been present at Kentucky and Barkley Dam on December 1 (DN); a high of 75 at Falls of the Ohio in early February (BPB) and one to two at Lexington Reservoir in December (BA, MF). A single Thayer's Gull was seen and documented at Barkley Lake, December 28 (DN) and again on December 30 with other observers; nine including two adults, five first-year, one second-year and a third-year bird at Kentucky - Barkley Dams on February 10 and an adult and a couple of first-year birds on February 17 and one at Falls of the Ohio on January 21 (BPB - *et al.* - no details). A few Glaucous Gulls showed up: one at Falls of the Ohio, February 7 (documented - LR, DN); one each at Barkley and Kentucky Dams in mid-January (M. Bierly); one at Kentucky Dam, February 16 (M. Miller, CP); four at Kentucky Dam and one at Barkley, February 10 (BPB, R. Cassell) and at least three at the former location on February 17 (CP, BPB). A single Great Black-backed Gull was seen at Kentucky Dam on February 10 and 17 (Photo — BPB, R. Cassell *et al.*) and a Black-legged Kittiwake there on December 1-2 was unexpected (BPB).

Owls through Phoebes — Twenty-six Screech Owls were recorded on the Lexington CBCs and seven were on the Otter Creek CBC, making highs for both counts. Seven Short-eared Owls were reported from four locations: one near Finchville (WB), one at Wise Landing (JY) two in Mercer County (BPB) and three in Fayette County (BA). Red-headed Woodpeckers were present in greater numbers than usual and appeared on all

but four of the 22 CBCs, with a high of 357 on the Ballard County CBC. An Eastern Phoebe on February 23 at Indian Fort Mountain near Berea was probably an early migrant (GR).

Horned Larks through Kinglets — Horned Larks were scarce in the Louisville area in December, but numbers increased by mid-January when 225 were seen on Surrey Hill Farm (BPB); 200 to 300 were also seen in farming areas outside Owensboro (RI). No American Crow roosts were reported, but flocks of 200 were seen at Covington (EG) and 500-1000 on the outskirts of Louisville (DN); and they were scarce again at Danville (FL). Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce. Carolina Wrens were in fair numbers in late December all across the state, but in some areas numbers dwindled after the severe weather of January and mid-February. A Marsh Wren was seen on the Ballard CBC on December 29 (KC — documented). Golden-crowned Kinglets were present in good numbers at Lexington in December, but few after the severe weather in mid-February (MF). Ruby-crowned Kinglets were scarce this season; one fed at a Prospect feeder during the cold weather of January 10, 18 and 20 (FK).

Thrushes and Warblers — Eastern Bluebirds were in normal numbers in Rowan County (FB) and above normal numbers in much of the state in late December. Two dead bluebirds were found in a nest box in Grayson County in mid-February; so, time will tell what mortality took place during the sub-zero weather. Among the thrushes the Mountain Bluebird had to be the rarity! A single bird was found on the December 22 Otter Creek Park CBC (BPB, R. Cassell, D. Ebell) and later observed by many. Two Mountain Bluebirds (male and female) were seen on December 26 (KC, FS, S) — both birds observed at the same time. The male was last seen on January 13 (BPB). American Robins were present in good numbers all across the state, much above last year's population. Several Brown Thrashers were found at feeding stations during January and February. A flock of 35 Water Pipits was seen in the Danville area during the third week of December and one bird flying over Barkley Dam, February 17 were the only ones reported. Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers were practically absent in the Owensboro area (RI), none listed on the Madisonville, Sorgho, Yelvington and Marion CBCs, but fair numbers at Otter Creek Park area, Mammoth Cave National Park and Bernheim Forest.

Sparrows, Blackbirds and Finches — Many Observers commented on Tree Sparrows coming to feeding stations during the snowy weather of January and February; a small flock of 35 remained from early January to late February at CKWMA (GR). The only Savannah Sparrow reported after December was a single bird at CKWMA on January 6 (GR). Three late-lingering Grasshopper Sparrows were found on the Otter Creek Park CBC (BPB *et al.*) and at least one still there the following day (BPB, JEL). Fox Sparrows were common at feeders during January and February at Madisonville (JH), Bedford (JY), Big Pond Sanctuary (KC), Louisville (KC, S, FS), Valley Station (DS), Prospect (FK), Danville (FL), Eubank (JEL), Lexington (BA) and various feeders at Morehead (FB). White-crowned Sparrows were low in numbers at Owensboro and Louisville (RI and S). The only Lapland Longspurs reported were from the Louisville area: two to three in January (BPB) and one at the Standiford Field airport area in February (KC). Large flocks of Blackbirds were seen in the Louisville area: thousands at Lentz's Pond (BBC), 5000-6000 in

the writer's yard on December 8—mostly Common Grackles. A large blackbird roost was discovered in the St. Matthews area and in January it was estimated to contain 200,000-500,000 birds (BM). Several Yellow-headed Blackbirds (both male and female) were seen at feeders during January and February and apparently were associated with this roost. The birds visited the feeders of Jane Bell and Dr. William Peak and an immature was seen on the Palmer-Ball farm. Also, a female was seen on the south end of Lexington in late February by Dr. A. Uterhart (*vide* MF). Purple Finches were scarce in the early part of the period, but numbers increased slightly after the middle of January and in February. The largest concentration of House Finches occurred at Eubank with a high of 175+ (JEL). Pine Siskins were scarce in most areas and some observers reported none. During mid-February American Goldfinches were unusually common at sunflower and thistle feeders with counts of 20-30 at Fern Creek and Louisville (S), 44 at Madisonville (JH), 50 at Valley Station (DS), 50 plus at Danville (FL), and 150 at Falls of Rough (KC), but seldom observed in the field. Evening Grosbeaks were practically non-existent in the state: one at Shelbyville on February 18 (WB); one bird at a feeder in Morehead, February 12 (FB) and a few in the Inner Blue Grass area (no date given—MF).

Correction—Because of an observers error in reporting, the date of the Black Tern at Oldham County Park in the August 1984 issue of *The Kentucky Warbler*, page 44 was incorrect. The correct date is May 7.

Contributors—Brad Andres (BA), John Callahan (JC), Jane and Pat Bell (JB), (PB), W. H. Brown (WB), Jim Durell (JD), Jackie Elmore, Sr. (JEL), M. B. Flynn (MF), Ed Groneman (EG), James W. Hancock (JH), Ramon Iles (RI), Wilbur Jackson (WJ), Frank X. Krull (FK), Fred Loetscher (FL), Wayne Mason (WM), Doxie Noonan (DN), Burt L. Monroe, Jr. (BM), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), William Peak (WP), Clell Peterson (CP), Lene Rauth (LR), Gary Richison (GR), Russell Starr (RS), Anne L. Stamm (S), F. W. Stamm (FS), Margaret Sullivan (MS), John Young (JY), and Tom Young (TY).

—9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Spring Meeting — April 19-21, 1985

The 62nd annual spring meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was held at Mammoth Cave National Park on April 19-21, 1985.

The Friday evening session was called to order by the president, Blaine Ferrell. He introduced vice-president Fred Busroe, who then presented the speakers for the evening. Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. presented an interesting slide program on the Kentucky Nongame Wildlife Natural Areas Fund and its many uses in the state. Sherri Evans provided an update on the progress of the Kentucky Breeding Bird Atlas project. This was followed by an open discussion of Kentucky's early nesting species and nesting behavior led by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

Field trips and leaders for Saturday morning were announced. The meeting was followed by a social hour.

Saturday morning field trips left the park lodge at 8:00 a.m. Wayne Mason led one trip to the River Styx area, and Blaine Ferrell led another group to Turnhole Bend, Houchen's Ferry, and First Creek Lake. The weather was sunny and unseasonably warm, with a good representation of summer resident birds present. An afternoon program was available for members with slides and tapes of various warblers.

The Board of Directors met at 4:00 p.m. at the Park Community Center.

The evening meeting began in the Park Community Center at 7:30 p.m. Blaine Ferrell presented recommendations from the Board of Directors to raise the dues for contributing members to \$10.00; and to create a new corporate membership category. Both recommendations would be voted on at the fall meeting. The possibility of increasing membership through the Kentucky Breeding Bird Atlas was briefly discussed.

It was announced that the 1986 spring meeting would be held April 26-28 at either Otter Creek Park or the Falls of the Rough, and the 1986 fall meeting would be at either Kenlake State Park or Kentucky Dam Village State Park, with the date to be confirmed later.

Herb Shadowen, Jim Williams, and Ed Wilson were presented and accepted as the Nominating Committee for the coming year.

Plans for Sunday morning field trips were announced.

The evening was highlighted by an outstanding presentation by Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver on the natural history of Australia. Using film and slides, they provided an excellent account of the birds and other wildlife seen during their recent trip to this fascinating continent.

Blaine Ferrell led in compiling the day's bird list, with a total of 96 species seen on Saturday. Additional birds seen Sunday brought the week-end total to 100 species.

Total registrations for the spring meeting were 60.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee McNeely
Recording Secretary

BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1985

Bird species observed in or within a five-mile radius of Mammoth Cave National Park: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Wood Duck, Mallard, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, immature Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling,

White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler. Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Northern Oriole, Purple Finch, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow; total species = 100. A Summer Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird were observed outside the count area but during the weekend.

ATTENDANCE AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1985

BOWLING GREEN: Blaine and Priscilla Ferrell, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Guthrie, Jeff Jones, Mike and Diane Jones, William B. and Ruth Mathes, Wayne Mason, Herbert E. and Jackie Shadowen.

BUCKHORN: Mrs. Eileen Sandlin.

BURLINGTON: Lee McNeely, Tom Stephens.

CARLISLE: Wendell and Virginia Kingsolver.

COVINGTON: William Jacovy, Brenda Ross.

EUBANK: Jackie, Diane and Bradford Elmore.

FALLS OF THE ROUGH: Joyce Potter.

FRANKFORT: Marc and Sherri Evans, Howard P. Jones.

GLASGOW: Mr. and Mrs. Howard M. Jones, Russell Starr.

HAZARD: Dennis and Pauline Sandlin, Donnie Spencer, Benjamin Spencer.

CLARKSON: Ruth Keller.

LEITCHFIELD: Alita Wilson, Mandy Wilson.

LEXINGTON: Mike and Jean Flynn, Jim and Gerry Williams.

LOUISVILLE: Jane and Patricia Bell, Austin and Mary Frances Bloch, Robert Brown, Richard Cassell, Judi Jones, Doxie Noonan, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Robert and Martha Pike, Frederick W. and Anne L. Stamm.

MOREHEAD: Fred Busroe.

MUNDFORDVILLE: Steve Kistler.

MURRAY: Clell Peterson.

OWENSBORO: Mary Lydia Greenwell, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Wilson, William T. Perkins.

STANLEY: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson.

FIELD NOTE

FIRST RECORD OF THE CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*) IN KENTUCKY

Over the past ten years, the California Gull (*Larus californicus*) has become a quite rare, but regular vagrant to the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River and the Gulf coast. Most records have been in fall and winter.

Throughout the past couple of years I have watched persistently for a California Gull in the large numbers of gulls that congregate in the vicinity of Kentucky and Barkley Dams, Marshall-Livingston-Lyon counties. On March 31, 1984 I was fortunate enough to finally discover a California Gull at Kentucky Dam as it perched on the lock structure on the east side of Kentucky Lake, just above the dam.

I arrived at the dam approximately 1:30 CST and was looking through the hundred or more Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) that were perched on the railing along the lock when my attention was drawn to a dark-mantled gull that was noticeably larger than the nearby Ring-bills. Closer inspection through my spotting scope revealed that the bird had a bill pattern suggestive of California Gull and yellowish-green legs, slightly dulled by a grayish wash.

I moved slightly to get a better angle and could clearly see that the irides of the eyes were dark; I could not say whether brownish, blackish, or other due to the distance, but definitely dark. The color of the orbital ring could not be discerned. After becoming convinced of the bird's identity, I called Dr. Clell Peterson in nearby Murray who immediately departed for the dam. In the meantime I further studied the gull and photographed it from as close as approximately 100 feet. Close scrutiny of the wing-tip pattern revealed that the white of the two outermost primaries was very extensive, yet another character that further reinforced the identification.

The bird's bill was not especially heavy, but was obviously larger than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls'. The bill pattern consisted of a blackish ring around the sub-terminal areas of both the upper and lower mandibles (suggestive of an adult Ring-billed Gull) but was slightly more distal towards the bill tip. The black bar on the lower mandible was adjoined proximally by an obvious red spot at the gonysal angle. The rest of the bill was yellowish.

The mantle color was a medium gray, somewhat darker than the light gray of adult Herring (*L. argentatus*) and Ring-billed Gulls, and was dark enough to be immediately noticeable. The underparts were entirely white, however, the inner pair of rectrices had dark smudges, somewhat more basal than the normal subterminal dark band of subadult gulls. The upper wing coverts were entirely gray and a little worn, but were devoid of any trace of blackish markings.

The age of the bird was somewhat unclear. The extensive black on the upper mandible was indicative of both subadult and winter-plumaged adult birds, however, the lack of brownish mottling on the head and breast would suggest the bird was in summer plumage. The lack of any blackish markings on the upper wing coverts would indicate that the bird was an adult, however, the curious tail markings suggested a subadult age. Wing tip pattern is variable in the California Gull, and the observed pattern could not be assigned an age for certain, although it was certainly typical of adult birds.

A supplementary field mark of which I was unaware until noted by *American Birds* regional editor, Bruce Peterjohn, was the short posture of the California Gull. Although the California Gull appeared to be of much greater bulk than the nearby Ring-bills, because of its proportionately shorter legs, it did not stand much taller than them. In flight, the bird was obviously larger than Ring-billed Gulls which it occasionally chased.

However, when a first-winter Herring Gull briefly chased the California Gull, the Herring was noticeably larger than it.

By the time Dr. Peterson arrived, the bird had flown out onto Kentucky Lake 150 yards or more from the lock. While the intermediate size between Herring and Ring-billed gulls and the darker mantle color were obvious, we could no longer discern the other diagnostic field marks.

The day was cloudy with light breezes, both aspects which allowed for excellent study of the gulls. Had there been bright sun, the gulls would have been silhouettes against a glare from the lake. All together, the gull was observed for about two hours before it flew a considerable distance out onto Kentucky Lake and was lost from view. Although several persons searched diligently for this bird over the next couple of days, it could not be relocated and probably moved on with the departing Ring-bills.

This sighting represents the first record of the California Gull in Kentucky. While small numbers of California Gulls appear to wander regularly with the many Ring-billed Gulls in their southeastward fall movement from the Canadian Provinces to their wintering grounds in the eastern U.S., it is unknown exactly where these birds winter. With the tremendous numbers of Ring-billed Gulls that winter on the large impoundments of western Kentucky, it is not inconceivable that one or a few California Gulls may remain there with them.—BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, Kentucky 40222.

Editor's note: Another, or possibly the same bird, was seen above Kentucky Dam on May 16, 1984 by Anne L. Stamm, Donald Summerfield and F. W. Stamm (*Ky. Warbler*, 60:43, 1984).

NEWS AND VIEWS

TAGGED TERNS

The Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Region, is continuing its program of color-marking Common Terns at two colonies in the lower Great Lakes to determine their post-breeding dispersal, migration routes and winter range.

In 1981 adults were marked with orange wing-tags and chicks with pink tags. Tags were put on both wings of all birds. All tags had combinations of letters and numbers. In addition, all birds received a metal legband on one leg and a plastic legband (yellow with a black horizontal stripe) on the other leg.

When you observe a tagged tern would you please report the date, location, color of the tag, and if possible, the number/letter combination to: BANDING OFFICE, CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE, HEAD-QUARTERS, OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, K1A 0E7. All reports will be acknowledged.

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