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## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 63, no. 4)

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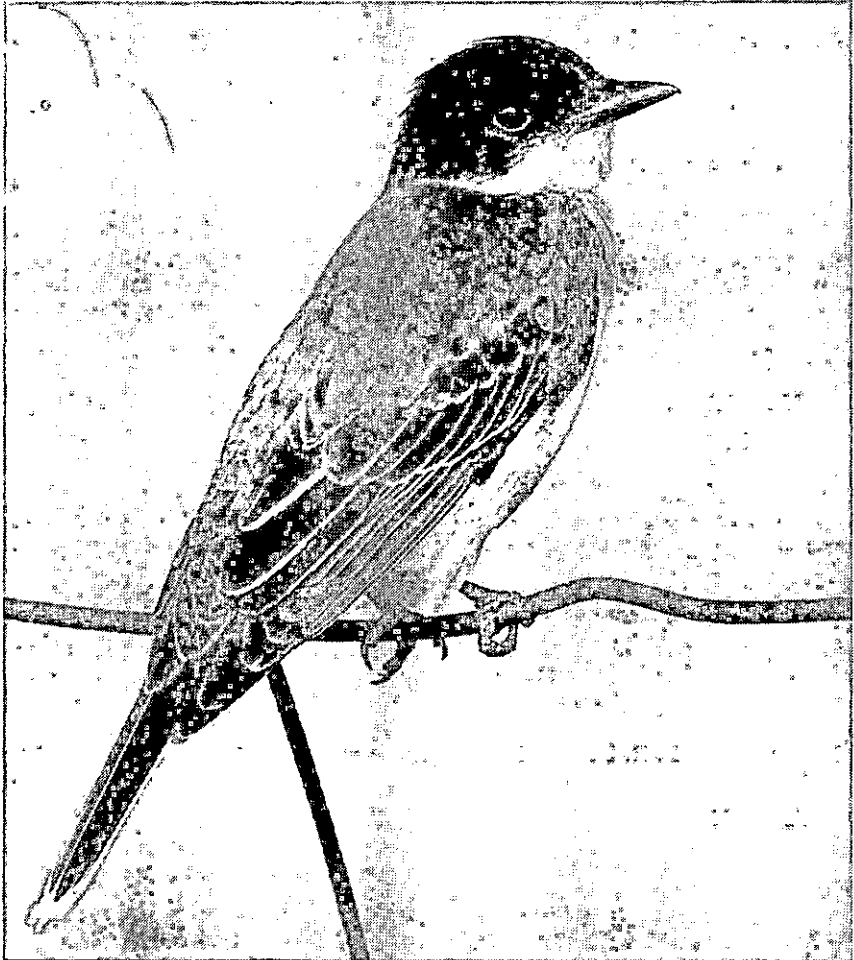
# The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

VOL. 63

NOVEMBER, 1987

NO. 4



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## THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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### THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

Organ of the *Kentucky Ornithological Society*, published quarterly in February, May, August and November. The *KENTUCKY WARBLER* is sent to all members not in arrears for dues. Membership dues are: Active or Regular, \$5.00; Contributing, \$10.00; Student, \$3.00; Life, \$75.00; Family \$1.00 in addition to Regular, Contributing, or Life Membership dues; Corporate. All articles and communications should be addressed to the editor. Subscriptions, memberships and requests for back issues should be sent to the treasurer.

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#### THE COVER

We thank Philippe Roca for our cover photograph of the Eastern Kingbird taken in Lexington in June (300mm Nikon, F8, 125/5.6).

## THE NESTING SEASON, SUMMER 1987

ANNE L. STAMM

The months of June and July were unusually warm and humid. June averaged 2½ degrees warmer than normal. Severe thunder storms hit Louisville on June 12, July 5, 6 and 11, uprooting large trees in the parks and some residential areas. The July 11 storm brought heavy rains and caused flooding in Jeffersontown and other central Kentucky areas. The storm toppled trees in southern Harrison County and brought hail to Meade and Breckinridge counties.

Ground and tree-nesting species suffered losses from the storms. A large Purple Martin box, containing young birds, in Seneca Park, crashed to the ground when the wind split the large pole which supported the box. A young Barn Owl was found on the ground after a large tree containing its nest was uprooted by the storm, and there were doubtless many other birds left homeless, but not reported. The young owl was taken to the Louisville zoo.

Some interesting breeding records included a nest of the Chuck-will's widow and a nest of Barn Owls at Burlington. A nest of the Screech Owl was found at Central Kentucky Wildlife Management Area. Bank Swallows nested successfully at Boone, Livingston, Hickman and Lyon counties and a new colony of Cliff Swallows was found at Markland Dam.

*Abbreviations* — BWMA=Ballard Waterfowl Management Area; CKWMA=Central Kentucky Wildlife Management Area; PWMA=Peal Wildlife Management Area; Reelfoot NWR=Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge.

*Loons through Herons* — Common Loons are extremely rare in summer, but one in breeding plumage was seen at Kentucky Lake on July 1 (BPB). Three Double-crested Cormorants were present at the Mayfair Basins, Louisville, June 14 (BPB). Great Blue Herons were fairly common in Ballard County during June and were observed flying to and from Axe Lake, presumably feeding young, but numbers declined after July 1 (CP). Twenty-five were sighted at Lake #9 on July 10, but only 13 there on July 16 and two or three on July 25 (CP). Great Blue Herons were also present at Petersburg, Boone County, during June and July, with a high of eight on July 28 (LMc); and single birds on three occasions at Madisonville (JH). There were 27 to 30 Great Egrets at Lake #9, Fulton County on July 10 and 16 and none were there on July 25 (CP); one also at Burlington, Boone County on July 10 (LMc). At least one nest of the Great Egret was found at Axe Lake in mid-June (Wm. Hendricks *vide* BPB). Snowy Egrets were seen at Lake Mitchell from June 30 to July 31, with a high count of eight birds on July 7 (CP). An adult Little Blue Heron was seen at the Black-crowned Night Heronry on Shippingport Island in mid-June, but no nest was found (BPB); an immature noted at the Falls of the Ohio on July 30 (LR); four adults and four immatures at PWMA and BWMA on June 30, but a high of 44 (9 ad., 35 im.) at Lake #9 on July 25 (CP); also eight in Carlisle County and 19 at BWMA on July 31 and 22 of the 27 birds were immatures (CP). Cattle Egrets were numerous in western Kentucky where 23, mostly juveniles, were found north of Cunningham, Carlisle County on July 31; 89 perched in trees in Ballard County, 37 southeast of Oscar and one at PWMA (CP). Also, several dozen at Swan Lake and a few nests found on Shippingport Island (BPB). Few observers mentioned the Green-backed Heron, but one was reported at Tom Wallace Lake from June 1-

July 15 (DS). A total of 200 Black-crowned Night Herons was counted on June 10 at the Falls of the Ohio (LR) and the colony at Shippingport appeared to be "thriving" (BPB), but the wind storms in July may have destroyed some late nests. An adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron was observed at the Falls of the Ohio in early June (DN) and six adults there in early July, a few immatures showed up in mid-July (BPB); and an adult also present on a number of occasions during July at Lentz's Pond (BPB).

*Waterfowl* — There were few records of nesting ducks: a female Wood Duck with nine young at Petersburg, May 31 (LMc); and a female with seven young at a small lake in Ten Broeck, Louisville in mid-June (S,FS) were the only ones reported.

*Diurnal Raptors* — A vulture roost with an estimated 68 to 80 birds, with one third Black Vultures and two thirds Turkey Vultures, was seen on Reelfoot NWR, in the vicinity of Bondurant, July 10 (CP). Single Mississippi Kites were observed on several occasions at BWMA (CP). Eight were soaring over the northern section of Fulton County on July 10, twelve in the air at one time in the lower section of Fulton County on July 21 and five there July 31 (CP); and a few in late June along the Mississippi River in Carlisle and Hickman counties (BPB). A single Osprey was reported below Smithland Dam on July 1 (BPB). An adult Bald Eagle was seen in Hopkins County on June 26, 27 and July 3 (B. West *vide* JH) and one possibly the same bird, a few miles north of the previous location on July 15 (Kitty Hancock *vide* JH). An interesting record was that of two Northern Harriers flying low over the West Kentucky Wildlife Management Area, McCracken County on July 8 (Marc Evans *vide* BPB). A Sharp-shinned Hawk was observed in Shelby County on July 7 (WB) and another at CKWMA on July 29 (GR). Single Cooper's Hawks were present at the following locations: Floyd's Fork, Jefferson County, July 8 (WB), CKWMA on June 30 (GR), Barren River State Park, July 3 (MS), and at Petersburg on July 18 (LMc). A nest of the Broad-winged Hawk with four young at Boone County Cliffs Nature Preserve on July 4 was noteworthy (LMc). A few nests of the Red-tailed Hawk were reported: bird incubating at Taylorsport, Boone County on March 1 (LMc); and a nest in the Danville area on March 29 (FL). Two nests of the American Kestrel were found at CKWMA: One nest fledged three young and the other was destroyed by predators (GR).

*Shorebirds* — A Piping Plover at the Falls of the Ohio on July 20 tied our early state date and an American Avocet was early at the same location on July 14 (BPB). Other species of shorebirds arrived a bit later than usual. Two Greater Yellowlegs returned to the vicinity of Bondurant and one at Lake #9, Fulton County on July 25 (CP) and next recorded at the Falls of the Ohio on July 31 (LR). A Lesser Yellowleg made its appearance at Lake #9 on July 16 (CP) and at the Falls of the Ohio on July 18 (BPB). A few Spotted Sandpipers were noted at the Falls of the Ohio, but periods of high water may have made it impossible for them to nest successfully (BPB). There were at least 100 Semipalmated Sandpipers and a single Sanderling at Lake #9 on July 25 (CP). A Western Sandpiper was noted at the Falls of the Ohio on July 20-22 (BPB) and Least Sandpipers were first observed at Lake #9 on July 10 (CP). Pectoral Sandpipers were first reported at Lake #9 on July 16 (CP) and at the Falls of the Ohio on July 19 (BPB). Two Stilt Sandpipers were

present at Bondurant on July 25 and some 350 shorebirds of various species at Lake #9 (CP). A Short-billed Dowitcher was observed at Lake #9 on July 10 and a Long-billed Dowitcher, in breeding plumage, on July 25 (all details noted — CP).

*Gulls and Terns* — A few Laughing Gulls were again reported: one at the Falls of the Ohio on June 10 (LR), one there June 14 (BPB) and one at Lake Barkley on July 1 (W. Haag, BPB). A sub-adult Franklin's Gull was noted at Louisville on July 18-22 (BPB) and on July 31 (LR, S, FS). Five Ring-billed Gulls lingered at the Falls of the Ohio during June and July (BPB), with a high of 10 present on June 10 (LR). A second-year Herring Gull remained in the vicinity of the Falls of the Ohio during June and up to late July (BPB) and an adult noted above Paducah on the Ohio River on July 1 (W. Haag, BPB). One to two Caspian Terns were seen on the Mississippi River in Carlisle and Hickman counties on June 29-30 and on the Ohio River above Paducah on July 1 (BPB, W. Haag). A Common Tern was seen on the Mississippi River downstream from Wickliffe on June 29 and a Forster's Tern above Barkley Dam on July 1 (BPB, W. Haag); and another Forster's still present on June 10 at the Falls of the Ohio (LR). Least Terns appeared to have had a good nesting year. They were numerous at two large nesting colonies in Carlisle and Hickman counties and in small numbers on the Ohio River between Paducah and Smithland Dam (BPB); also a few at Lake #9 and 21 at BWMA (including the Mississippi at Lock and Dam #53 (CP)).

*Cuckoos through Owls* — Although the Yellow-billed Cuckoo was common at CKWMA, no nests were found (GR). There were three nesting records of the rare to uncommon Barn Owl this summer: July 16, four young in a nest, near Burlington (LMc); early July, downy young on the ground after a large tree was uprooted by a storm in southwest Louisville, one bird captured and taken to the Zoo (PM); and nesting observed again at Stanley (TS). Four young nestling Screech Owls were banded at CKWMA, May 11 (GR). A Great Horned Owl was observed on its nest in the Danville area on April 8 (FL).

*Chuck-will's-widow through Phoebes* — A Chuck-will's-widow was still heard singing on July 31 at Madisonville (B. West *vide* JH); a nest with two eggs was found at Richardsville, Warren County, June 6 (BF, J. Jones). There were two active nests of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird in the same tree during June at Long Ridge, Owen County (Pat Brumbaek, *vide* BPB); only four birds in a yard during June and July, near Madisonville, as compared to 10 last year (B. West *vide* JH). A nest of the Acadian Flycatcher, with young, was found at the Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve, July 4 (LMc). Eastern Phoebe nests were found at several Boone County locations; one in Carrolton, Carroll County on May 31 contained six eggs (LMc).

*Martins through Shrikes* — The large colony of Purple Martins at Oscar, Ballard County, had decreased in size from the previous year (S, DS, FS), and young nestlings were victims of a storm, when the wind broke a pole which supported a large nesting box, in Seneca Park, Louisville (S, FS). Two pairs of Tree Swallows occupied Eastern Bluebird boxes in Shelby County on the Fred Wische Farm (*vide* BPB); no nesting observed at Long Run County Park, Jefferson County, this season (S, FS). The colony of Bank Swallows at a gravel pit in Belleview, Boone County, June 24, contained 45 burrows, with adults feeding young (LMc); two

colonies in Livingston and one in Hickman counties contained 75 to 100 burrows (BPB) and a small one with about 10 burrows was found in Lyon County (S, DS). Two new colonies of Cliff Swallows were found: one at Markland Dam, with over 40 active nests, May 23 (LMc); and a smaller one in Marshall County, May 15 (S, DS, FS). The Cliff Swallow colony at Barkley Dam had 70-75 nests (S, DS) and the two colonies in Carroll County had 42 nests in one and 27 in the other (S, FS) while the one at Gun Powder Creek, Boone County, held 25 active nests (LMc). Fish Crows were again present in Hickman, Carlisle (BPB) and Fulton counties (CP). A Carolina Wren's nest with four eggs was reported at CKWMA (GR) and another with four eggs in a hanging plant at Louisville (S) and one in a motorcycle helmet from which an undetermined number of young fledged (S, FS). A Bewick's Wren near Madisonville on July 27 was the only one reported (B. West *vide* JH). House Wrens appeared to have a good year. There was an increase in the number of Eastern Bluebirds on the Breeding Bird Survey in Shelby and Henry counties over last year — 14 birds as compared to three in 1986 (S). Three Eastern Bluebird nests in Warren County contained five eggs each and four young fledged from each nest (BF); two nests in Versailles, Woodford County, were successful (S. Hundley). There were no reports on the Loggerhead Shrike with the exception of the sighting of one in Shelby County on June 7 (WB).

*Warblers* — Pine Warblers were found on the Hancock Farm, Madisonville, during the nesting period. They ranged mainly between two plantings of large pine trees and 10 were recorded on June 25 (JH). Cerulean Warblers (3) were heard singing in Hopkins County on June 20 (JH) and one in Madison County on the same date (GR). A Common Yellowthroat nest with young was found on July 3 at CKWMA (GR).

*Tanagers through Finches* — Summer Tanagers appeared to be somewhat scarce in northern Kentucky this season (LMc); a singing male and female were observed at Bowling Green (BF). The pair of Scarlet Tanagers at Madisonville on June 2 and a male heard singing on June 15 may have been a breeding pair (JH). There were several reports of the Blue Grosbeak: numerous in southern Pulaski and northern McCreary counties (BPB); present at seven locations in Hopkins County (JH); at Bowling Green, Warren County (BF); female at feeding station at Valley Station on June 10, 11 and 12 (DS); and a male present on July 3 at Barren River Reservoir State Park, Barren County (MS). A few Savannah Sparrows were present during the period in Jefferson and Oldham counties (BPB). Several reports of the Grasshopper Sparrow were received: present at several locations in Boone, Grant and Owen counties (LMc); four singing males at CKWMA (GR); heard in Shelby County (WB) and young fledged from a nest at Bowling Green (BF). Two singing Henslow's Sparrows were heard at CKWMA and two in Oldham County (GR and BPB, respectively). The Song Sparrow in the past has been known to breed irregularly in Hopkins County, but this season the species was found at five locations, with six birds singing on June 11 (JH). A single Bobolink was heard in Shelby County on June 7 (WB). The habitat has changed at Goshen, where formerly the Bobolink nested, but none were found there this summer (HS). An interesting record was that of a male Yellow-headed Blackbird which appeared on the grounds of the Louisville Zoo on June 3 (MJ). The bird was seen on more than one occasion on June 3 and was photographed by Nancy Scheldorf of the Zoo staff. Good numbers

of Northern (Baltimore) Orioles were seen in Shelby County on June 7 (S, WB); and a nest was found in Owen County (LMc). House Finches continued to nest in various places in the state, especially at Burlington, (LMc), Madisonville (JH) and Louisville (WJ, S); observed at Cave City during the period (MS) and were scarce at Berea, where they had been common during the winter months (A and TR).

*Contributors* — W. H. Brown (WB), Blaine Ferrell (BF), James W. Hancock (JH), Wilbur Jackson (WJ), Marion Jones (MJ), Frederick W. Loetscher (FL), Lee McNeely (LMc), Phillip Mastrangelo (PM), Doxie Noonan (DN), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), Clell Peterson (CP), Lene Rauth (LR), Art and Tina Ricketts (A and TR), Gary Ritchison (GR), Helga Schutte (HS), Thomas Stevenson (TS), Mitchell Sturgeon (MS), Anne L. Stamm (S), F. W. Stamm (FS), and Donald Summerfield (DS).

—9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.

## REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Fiscal Year 1986-1987

### GENERAL FUND

Bank Balances, September 23, 1986 ..... \$ 1,313.60

#### Receipts

Membership Dues .....	\$2,581.50	
Interest Income:		
Endowment Funds .....	462.53	
Wilson Fund .....	155.88	
Fall Meeting .....	676.40	
Spring Meeting .....	150.00	
American Ornithological Union .....	290.00	
Sale of Warblers .....	324.92	
Sale of Check Lists, Badges .....	89.90	
Sale of Prints .....	70.00	
Gifts .....	28.00	4,829.13
		<u>\$ 6,142.73</u>

#### Disbursements

Printing Costs: The Kentucky Warbler .....	\$1,905.64	
(three issues)		
Envelopes .....	\$ 146.50	
Meetings .....	796.48	
Postage .....	351.97	
Transfer (3) Life Memberships to Endowment Fund .....	226.00	
Transfer to Wilson Fund .....	155.88	
Supplies .....	81.32	
Bank Charges .....	24.78	
Corporation Filing Fee .....	4.00	3,692.57
Bank Balance September 8, 1987 .....		<u>\$ 2,450.16</u>



**ENDOWMENT FUND**

Balance in Savings Account in Future Federal September 23, 1986 .....	\$1,664.77
<b>Certificates of Deposit</b>	
2 @ \$1,000.00 GFF .....	2,000.00
1 @ \$1,500.00 FF .....	1,500.00
1 @ \$1,000.00 FF .....	1,000.00
	<u>\$6,164.77</u>
<b>Interest Income</b>	
Certificates of Deposit .....	\$ 462.53
Savings Account .....	93.35
3 Life Memberships + \$1.00 .....	226.00
	<u>\$ 781.88</u>
	<u>\$6,164.77</u>
	<u>\$ 781.88</u>
	<u>\$6,946.65</u>
<b>Disbursements</b>	
Transfer to the General Fund .....	\$ 462.53
	<u>\$6,484.12</u>
<b>Balance in Fund, September 1, 1987</b>	
Certificates of deposit (4) .....	\$4,500.00
Balance in savings .....	\$1,984.12
	<u>\$6,484.12</u>

**GORDON WILSON FUND**

Balance in savings, September 23, 1987 .....	\$1,388.63
Certificates of deposit — 2 @ \$1,000.00 .....	\$2,000.00
	<u>\$3,388.63</u>
<b>Receipts</b>	
Interest on savings .....	\$ 78.89
Interest on certificates .....	\$ 155.88
	<u>\$ 234.77</u>
<b>Balance in fund</b>	
Certificates of deposit — 2 @ \$1,000.00 .....	\$2,000.00
Savings Account, September 1, 1987 .....	\$1,623.40
	<u>\$3,623.40</u>
<b>Assets</b>	
Cash in General Fund .....	\$2,450.16
Endowment Fund .....	\$6,484.12
Gordon Wilson Fund .....	\$3,623.40
	<u>\$12,557.68</u>

\$12,557.68

## THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### Fall Meeting — September 25-27, 1987

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its 64th annual Fall Meeting at Natural Bridge State Park on September 25-27, 1987.

The Friday evening session was held in the meeting room of Hemlock Lodge. Members and guests were welcomed by President Fred Busroe. Jim Williams reviewed the weekend schedule and introduced the evening's speakers. Dr. Wayne Davis spoke on the utilization of various types of nest boxes by Eastern Bluebirds. Dr. Gary Ritchison followed with a presentation of his study of home ranges of Eastern Screech Owls. Phillippe Roca concluded the session with photographs of nesting Killdeers during a spring snowstorm. A social hour followed the program.

Saturday morning field trips included a 6:00 A.M. walk around the lodge, and 8:00 A.M. trips along Trail No. 4 led by Wendell and Virginia Kingsolver, and around the lodge area led by Bert Powell.

At 2:00 P.M. Brad Andres presented a program on birds seen during his summer studies in northern Alaska. This was followed by a sale to members of books recently donated to the KOS.

The Board of Directors met at 4:00 P.M. in the lodge.

The evening session began with a banquet in the Activity Center. The meal was followed by a short business meeting. Dates and localities of upcoming meetings were noted as follows: Spring 1988 at Otter Creek Park on April 29-May 1 and Fall 1988 at Kentucky Dam Village State Park on September 30-October 2. The following slate of officers were elected for the coming year as presented by the Nominating Committee: President - Jim Williams, Vice President - Virginia Kingsolver, Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer - John Krull, Recording Secretary - Lee McNeely, and Councillors - Clell Peterson and Donnie Spencer.

Fred Busroe led in compiling the day's bird list, which totalled 72 species.

Wendell and Virginia Kingsolver presented the evening program, a fascinating look at the wildlife of Kenya, seen and photographed during their recent trip.

Additional birds seen on Sunday field trips brought the weekend total to 76. Total registrations for the Fall Meeting were 70.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lee McNeely  
Recording Secretary

### ATTENDANCE AT THE FALL MEETING, 1987

BEREA: Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ricketts, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Thompson  
 BOWLING GREEN: Dr. and Mrs. Blaine Ferrell, Mr. and Mrs. William  
 B. Mathes and Dr. and Mrs. Herbert E. Shadowen  
 BUCKHORN: Mrs. Eileen V. Sandlin  
 BURLINGTON: Mr. and Mrs. Lee McNeely  
 CARLISLE: Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver  
 ELIZABETHTOWN: Betty K. Boone and Joan Noel  
 FRANKFORT: Lynda Andrews, Jim Durell, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Hankla  
 and Howard P. Jones  
 GLASGOW: Mr. and Mrs. Howard M. Jones  
 HAZARD: Dennis Sandlin and Donnie Spencer  
 HODGENVILLE: Susan Cruse  
 LEXINGTON: Mr. and Mrs. Michael Flynn, Sarah McClellum, Philippe  
 Roca and Mr. and Mrs. James M. Williams  
 LOUISVILLE: Bob Brown, Richard Cassell, Diane Ebel, Mr. and Mrs.  
 John Finley, Dr. and Mrs. R. L. Hectorne, Judi Jones, Harriet Korfhage,  
 Virginia Osborne, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pike,  
 L. D. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stamm, and Julia Wooldridge  
 MACEO: Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Powell  
 MOREHEAD: Dr. Fred Busroe  
 MUNFORDVILLE: Mr. and Mrs. Cap Middleton  
 OWENSBORO: Hope Elliott, Mary Lydia Greenwell, Janet Howard and  
 Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Wilson  
 PRESTONBURG: Teresa Hernandez and Bill Rose  
 RICHMOND: Dr. Gary Ritchison  
 SANDY HOOK: Dr. and Mrs. William C. Green, Jr.  
 VALLEY STATION: Don Summerfield  
 HENRYVILLE, IND.: Yin Rei Hicks  
 COLUMBUS, OHIO: Brad Andres  
 CINCINNATI, OHIO: Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Hawkins

### BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE ANNUAL FALL MEETING, 1987

Birds observed on Saturday field trips within a 15-mile diameter circle centered at Natural Bridge State Resort Park include: Pied-billed Grebe, Green-backed Heron, Wood Duck, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, White-eyed Vireo, Solitary Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine

Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and American Goldfinch for a total of 72 species. An immature Blackpoll Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Common Grackles and House Sparrows were observed in or near the state park on Sunday which brought the weekend total to 76 species.

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## FIELD NOTES

### FIRST RECORD OF ROSS' GOOSE IN KENTUCKY

The Ross' Goose (*Chen rossii*) is an uncommon goose of the Great Plains and Pacific coast, but over the past decade it has become a fairly regular straggler into the eastern U.S. accompanying Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*) during their spring and fall migrations. Over the past few years, Ross' Geese have been observed in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee. For at least the past ten years, a wintering flock of ten thousand or more Snow Geese has been present at the Ballard County Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in extreme western Kentucky. The occurrence of Ross' Geese in this flock was suspected, but due to the difficulty in identification, wariness of the geese, and inability to survey the WMA in the winter, the presence of the species had not been confirmed.

On 1 February 1986, Robinson located two adult Ross' Geese in a flock of 6,000 Snow Geese near Mermet Lake, Massac County, Illinois, located about three miles north of the Ohio River, McCracken County, Kentucky. This flock of Snow Geese was known to be roosting on the Ballard County WMA each night (Charles Wilkins pers. comm.), but access was not obtained at that time to confirm the presence of Ross' Geese in Kentucky.

Based on this observation, Palmer-Ball, Diane Ebel and Lene Rauth visited the Ballard County WMA on 30 November 1986 and succeeded in locating at least one adult Ross' Goose with a flock of several thousand Snow Geese feeding in the vicinity of Mitchell Lake. Other birds in the area included over 10,000 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), two Tundra Swans (*Olor columbianus*), three adult Greater White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*), and an immature Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*).

On 7 December 1986 Palmer-Ball and Robinson returned to the Ballard County WMA to further confirm the presence of Ross' Geese and attempt to photograph the species. The sky was overcast, but the day was fairly bright and conditions for observation were favorable. Again several thousand Snow Geese were present, but this time the flock was found in a winter wheat field on private land just north and east of the WMA. Over the course of some five hours of study, at least three adult and one immature Ross' Geese were located in the flock as the birds fed and loafed in the field. Although the geese were wary, we were successful in approaching to within approximately 250 yards of the flock, a distance from which the Ross' Geese could be viewed through a Questar telescope and easily differentiated from the many Snow Geese.

The adult birds were entirely white in body plumage with black primaries. All were obviously smaller and shorter-necked than nearby Snow Geese, usually appearing to stand about a head shorter than the Snow Geese. In addition, the smaller, stubbier bill was also very apparent. The

"grinning patch," so obvious on the bill of the Snow Geese, was not visible on the Ross' Geese. In the adult birds, the legs were pink and the bill was pink suffused with blue-gray on the basal one-third. The immature bird was distinguishable due to the presence of a grayish wash only on the crown and nape, gray legs, and more extensive gray wash on the bill. In overall color the immature Ross' Goose appeared paler than adjacent white phase immature Snow Geese; otherwise its size and proportions were similar to the adult birds. Although of very poor quality, several photographs were obtained of one of the adult birds, showing the smaller size and stubbier bill. It is hoped that future visits will yield better photographs of the Ross' Geese at the Ballard County WMA.

Although this preliminary survey has documented the occurrence of Ross' Geese in western Kentucky, it is unknown whether or not this species occurs there with regularity. It is likely that Ross' Geese do not occur elsewhere in the state except on an extremely casual basis due to the general lack of large concentrations of Snow Geese outside of Ballard County. However, it is not unlikely that a few Ross' Geese have been present each winter on the Ballard County WMA during the past decade. In order to determine the status of the Ross' Goose in the state an attempt will be made to survey the Snow Goose population at the management area over the next few years. — BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY 40222, and JOHN C. ROBINSON, P.O. Box 215, Dover, TN 37058.

#### A BROAD-WINGED HAWK'S NEST IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY

On July 4, 1987 I was fortunate to discover an active nest of the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*). The nest was located on the Boone County Cliffs Nature Preserve, a Nature Conservancy-owned area in Boone County, six miles west of Burlington. The nest was on a moderate hillside along a small spring-fed stream, approximately 40 feet high in the crotch of a Sycamore tree.

When first discovered, the nest contained three nearly grown young. The birds were fed once by an adult bird during this first observation. A subsequent visit on July 6 found only two young in the nest, with an adult again present, calling and flying over the nest site. A third visit on July 8 by Tommy Stephens found one bird still in the nest, with a second young bird on a limb near the nest.

This record is one of the few for this species nesting in the Outer Bluegrass region of the state. Nesting has likely occurred in the vicinity of the preserve for several years, as adults have often been seen during the breeding season in this area. — LEE McNEELY, P.O. Box 463, Burlington, KY 41005.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

Regular participants in the Mid-winter Bird Count should have received forms for this winter's count. If you have not received these forms or you would like to organize a count in your area for the first time, please contact the editor, Department of Biology, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green. The Mid-Winter Bird Count this year should be conducted on a date between December 17 and January 3.