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## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 64, no. 2)

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# The Kentucky Warbler

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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.

Editor .....	B. R. Ferrell, Biology Department, Western Kentucky Univ. Bowling Green 42101
Assistant Editor .....	Herbert E. Shadowen, Bowling Green

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Anne L. (Mrs. F. W.) Stamm	Burt L. Monroe, Jr.
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#### THE COVER

We thank Philippe Roca for our cover photograph of the Great Blue Heron (300 mm Nikon, F3, 400 Tmax film)

## THE WINTER SEASON, 1987-88

This was a rather mild winter, particularly in December. There was little snowfall with the exception of light snow on January 7-8, with heavier amounts on February 11-12 in most of the state. A number of counties in central Kentucky closed schools on February 12 due to the icy conditions beneath the snow. This change in the weather pattern brought a few Snow Buntings and numerous Horned Larks to the Louisville area. The rainfall in most of the state was about average.

The season seemed uneventful to many observers, especially those who watch feeders. The mild winter kept some birds farther north and therefore numbers were reduced. Two observers felt that "field and roadside birds" seemed scarcer than ever." On the other hand, the season was highlighted by the sighting of Ross' Geese, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Iceland Gull, Oldsquaw, Snowy Owl and *Selasphorus* hummingbird. What a treat for those persons lucky enough to see those rarities! A few species lingered beyond their normal departure dates.

*Abbreviations* — BWMA = Ballard Waterfowl Management Area, Ballard County; CBC = Christmas Bird Count; K&B Dams = Kentucky and Barkley Dams; CKWMA = Central Kentucky Wildlife Management Area; LP = Lake Pewee; Reelfoot NWR = Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge.

*Loons through Herons* — Three Common Loons remained until January 10 at Green River Lake, Taylor County (JEl). There were 30-50 Pied-billed Grebes at LP on December 26 (BPB). A Horned Grebe was still present at Green River Lake on January 10 (JEl). Spring migrants reappeared in late February with two at Cave Run Lake (FB), one at Newburgh Dam, Henderson County (BPB), and three at Owsley Fork Lake, Jackson County (AR, TR). The fall migration of Double-crested Cormorants continued through December. A single bird noted in Trigg County, December 9 (CP), seven on the shore of Shippingport Island, Jefferson County, December 11 (LR) and an immature in the Danville area January 30, the first winter record there (FL). Great Blue Herons were numerous and widespread. Concentrations included 60 at Mayfair Basins, Louisville, January 23 (FK), 40 at Lake Barkley, February 26 (CP), 17 along the Ohio River in Gallatin County, December 19 (LMc), 16 at Silo Overlook on Lake Barkley, February 20 (BPB), and an average of 19 birds per trip (nine trips) to Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan County (FB). A Great Egret lingered at Clark Hatchery and was present on December 18 (FB), December 30 (BA) and January 8 (FB).

*Waterfowl* — A Mute Swan was seen at Grassy Pond, Henderson County, February 27 (BPB, LR, D. Ebel). Snow Geese peaked at 12,000 at BWMA with some 9,000 still present in February (CW); and one in Fulton County with a large flock of Canada Geese on February 17 (CP). Two Ross' Geese were discovered at a large pond in Danville on February 14 by William Kemper and observed the following day by Frederick Loetscher. They mingled with a large flock of Canada Geese. The geese, according to the owner of the pond, had been there two to three weeks earlier. They left the area on March 2 (FL). This is only the second known record for the species in Kentucky. Two Ross' Geese were also found at BWMA on February 21 (BPB, D. Parker), where the birds had first been discovered in November 1986. Canada Geese were more widespread and more numerous than last winter. The total count at BWMA in January was 41,000 and 58,750 in February (CW). The latter high count was probably due to the

influx of birds from farther south moving northward. A large concentration of 5,000 was also present in southern Fulton County on February 17 (CP); smaller groups of 37 and 30 were along the Ohio at River Hash, Boone County (LMc) and Rock Haven, Meade County (DS, S), respectively, and more birds than usual frequented the Rough River area (KC). The duck population at BWMA was only 7,875 in December as compared with 19,000 in December 1985 (CW). A male Wood Duck at Dix Dam on January 30 was the first to be recorded there (FL). Black Ducks and Mallards were reported as "abundant" in the Danville area (FL). Blacks totaled 100+ on the Ohio at Louisville, January 29 (LR) and a similar number at Cave Hill Cemetery (S). At least 1,000 Mallards were observed in Livingston County on February 20 (BPB, D. Parker) and 1,000 in western Henderson County on February 28 (BPB); 200 at LP on January 12, where most of the lake was frozen (JH) and smaller numbers at other locations. Fifty Northern Pintails were seen in Livingston County, February 14 and 30+ in western Henderson County on February 27-28 (BPB). Fifty Gadwall and at least 30-50 Canvasbacks were noted at LP on December 26 (BPB), but 1,150 Canvasbacks were at Lake Barkley, above the Dam on February 14 (BPB, LR, D. Ebel). Other Canvasback records included 30 at Smithland Dam, February 20, 65 near Grassy Pond, February 26 (BPB); a few at Danville (FL) and 14 at Louisville on January 20 (LR). Redheads began showing up from February 18-28, but only in small flocks. Concentrations of Ring-necked Ducks were mainly in the Land between the Lakes area and at LP, with the highest number at the latter. Counts at LP ranged from 322 to 1,500 during December 26 - February 22 (JH, BPB). There were several sightings of Greater Scaup. At least one Greater Scaup was seen on LP on December 26 (BPB); five on the BWMA CBC (m.ob.); several at Smithland Dam, February 14-20 (BPB); one at Towhead Island on February 18 (S, W. and P. Peaks); and others along the Ohio River at Louisville in February (BPB). An Oldsquaw was seen at Towhead Island on February 18 (LR, m.ob.) Common Goldeneyes were widespread, but no large numbers were reported. Largest numbers of Buffleheads included 35+ at LP and 50 at Honker Lake in Land between the Lakes (BPB). An estimated 623 Hooded Mergansers were on the CBC at LBL, December 18 (CP); some 67 at Green River Lake on January 10 (JEl); and 35-50 at LP, December 26 (BPB). Ten Red-breasted Mergansers were present at Louisville on the Ohio on December 27 (LR) and one at Markland Dam, Gallatin County (LMc) were the only ones reported. Ruddy Ducks were few, but 75-100 at LP (BPB).

*Hawks* — More than 40 Black and Turkey Vultures were seen in western Kentucky in the vicinity of U.S. 68 and Rt. 1489 on January 16 (CP). Black Vultures were seen more often than usual and in larger numbers at Danville (FL); eight in Fayette County on December 28 (W. Haag *vide* GR). A single Turkey Vulture was seen January 2 near Berea, where January records are few, but they were easily observed by late February (AR). An Osprey in early February at Cumberland Falls was unusual (Steve Kickert *vide* GR). Numbers of wintering Bald Eagles were reduced from last year, possibly a result of the greater availability of open water. Details of the January survey are published in this issue. Bald Eagles were observed at the Fulton County nest near Hickman in late February (L. Andrews *vide* BPB) and at the old BWMA nest, but left the area in mid-March (L. Andrews *vide* CW). Northern Harriers continued to remain in low numbers and all reports were from western Kentucky with the exception of singles in Boone and Rowan counties. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were fairly widespread, but in low numbers. A dark-

phase Red-tailed Hawk was seen in Gallatin County, near Warsaw, December 19 (LMc). The only Rough-legged Hawks reported were the five in Livingston County on February 14 (BPB, M. Bierly *et al.*). Two Golden Eagles were reported: one adult five miles north of Bayou, Livingston County on February 20 (BPB, D. Parker) and one on the Bernheim Forest CBC (D. Parker, S. Washburn *vide* BPB).

*Coots through Shorebirds* — American Coots lingered in unusual numbers throughout December, possibly due to the mild temperatures. There were "several thousand" in the sheltered areas of Lake Barkley (CP); 840 at LP on December 19 (JH) and 750-1500 there on December 26 (BPB). A late flock of 90 Sandhill Cranes was present on Barren River Lake on January 2 (RS *et al.*). Early migrants were the two over Crescent Hill Water Tower, Louisville, February 17 (HS) and two at BWMA, February 21 (BPB). Several small flocks of shorebirds of 25-30 birds each were present at Jonathan Creek on December 21 and one flock was identified as Least Sandpipers (CP). More Common Snipe lingered through December than during the same period last year (m.ob.). The species appeared to be more numerous in the LBL area with a dozen birds frequently seen. There were no reports for the months of January and February. Spring migrant American Woodcocks returned to Louisville on February 9 (BPB) and at Somerset, February 26 (JEl).

*Gulls* — An immature first-winter Laughing Gull was present at Barkley Dam, February 13-20 and provided our fourth winter record (BPB, M. Bierly *et al.*). Bonaparte's Gulls were "abundant" in the bays and inlets upstream from K&B Dams until late December (CP); one on Kentucky Lake on February 14 (BPB) and 20 on Lake Barkley at Silo Overlook on February 20 (BPB, D. Parker). After the lakes in LBL filled, huge numbers of gulls gathered and an estimated 8,000 Ring-billed Gull were present in the Kentucky Dam vicinity and fewer but still large numbers at Barkley Dam (CP, M. Miller); some 10,000-20,000 at Kentucky Lake in mid-February (BPB). Smaller groups included 30-100 at Markland Dam (LMc), Barren River Lake (RS), Danville area (FL) and Cave Run Lake (FB). Herring Gulls were not numerous this year, probably due to the mild winter, but a few were at most lakes, with a peak of several hundred to 500 birds at K&B Dams (CP, BPB) on February 13. The following Thayer's Gulls were observed on January 9: one adult at Smithland Dam and one adult and one first-winter bird at Kentucky Lake above the Dam (BPB). The two Iceland Gulls above Barkley Dam, Lyon County, February 13 were well described and substantiated with color slides (BPB, LR, D. Ebel). A first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull, a rare visitant, was discovered at Lake Barkey on December 19 (BPB) and an adult at K&B Dams, December 27-28 (BPB *et al.* and latter sighting by BA); an adult (perhaps a different bird with different bill pattern) was at Smithland Dam, Livingston County on January 9 (BPB). At least one adult Glaucous Gull was at K&B Dams, January 9 and February 13 (BPB); one first-winter bird was there February 13, 14, 20 (BPB).

*Owls through Thrushes* — A Snowy Owl was reported north of Sligo, Trimble County, February 10 (T. Robinson *vide* BM). The only Short-eared Owl reported was the one in Hart County, January 5 (LR, KC). An immature *Selasphorus* hummingbird (Rufous/Allen's) visited a sugar water feeder in Jeffersontown, Jefferson County in November and remained until February 5, providing a first record for Kentucky of this western stray (m.ob., photo BPB). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker numbers were much im-

proved over last winter. During early February flocks of 25-30 Horned Larks were seen in the fields along Chamberlain Lane in eastern Jefferson County (MC), but 250-300 noted at Surrey Hills Farm during the snowy weather February 12-13 (BPB). Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce except at Bernheim Forest, where they were fairly common. Eastern Bluebirds were uncommon in the Berea area as compared to last winter (AR, TR), however, elsewhere across the state they were in much higher numbers than last year (m.ob.). American Robins remained in higher numbers throughout December than they have for the past two years. Spring migrants began arriving in mid-February in flocks of 25-50 in east Louisville (KC); a flock of 350+ fed on holly berries in Oldham County, February 28 (S, FS). A single Brown Thrasher was known to winter at Madisonville (JH).

*Pipits through Warblers* — Three Water Pipits lingered at Jonathan Creek, Marshall County and were present December 21 (CP). Cedar Waxwings were widespread and numerous compared to last year, particularly in December. There was a flock of 200+ at Morehead, Rowan County from February 8 to 17 (FB). A flock of 58+ birds was seen in Doe Valley Estates, Meade County on December 26 (HS, S) and some 30 at CKWMA on December 22 (GR). The state CBCs showed the Loggerhead Shrike fairly widespread and with the highest count — 70 — since the census of 1980. Strangely enough, only one report since then was received of a single bird on the Shelby/Spencer County line, January 30 (TL). Surely there were other sightings? An Orange-crowned Warbler wintered in a suburban yard in Jeffersontown from early January-March 10 (JB, PB). Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers were widely distributed across the state in higher numbers than last year. A Pine Warbler was unexpected at a feeding station at Murray on January 2 and "late" February (WB). Also, a Palm Warbler lingered in suburban southwestern Frankfort, Franklin County and visited a feeding station in late December and early January (L. Andrews *vide* BPB).

*Dickcissel through Blackbirds* — A Dickcissel, late in departing, was observed at a feeder at Radcliff on January 10-13 (RH). One to five Savannah Sparrows were found at three locations. White-throated Sparrows were quite common at Madisonville with counts of 36-37 during late January and early February (JH), but were in lower numbers than usual in the Louisville area (KC, S). Lapland Longspurs were scarce and only one to two recorded at the following locations: Louisville, BWMA and Livingston County (BPB). On the snowy days of February 12-14 one to two Snow Buntings showed up with Horned Larks in eastern Jefferson County on Surrey Hills Farm and off Chamberlain Lane (BPB). Blackbirds were not numerous this year except where roosts were present. The roost in Bowling Green contained approximately 1,000,000 birds (HS). The roost in Somerset was sprayed in mid-January and it was reported that 422,000 birds were killed of which 1% were Rusty Blackbirds (S. Kickert *vide* GR). The large roost at Buechel Bank Road (outskirts of Louisville) contained about 2.5-3 million birds, according to Burt L. Monroe, Jr. A count taken on December 22 of only "three flight lines was 1,168,400 birds; about 20 samples of bird species resulted in 45% starlings (525,780 birds), 38% grackles (448,992), 15% cowbirds (175,260) and 2% red-wings (23,368)" (BM). Monroe saw only a few Rusty Blackbirds from which a total of 5,000 birds was estimated.

*Finches* — Purple Finches were widely distributed — and numbers were above last year. House Finches continued their spread with at least 30 birds at Louisville feeders (KC, S), some 36-40 at Murray (CP) and 100+ at Science Hill, Pulaski County feeders (JEL), numbers were reduced at Berea (AR). There were few Pine Siskins in the Louisville area during the period, but east and west of the city they were present in fair numbers. At Murray the birds were "common to abundant" (CP); 30+ at feeders all winter in northwest Hopkins County (B. West *vide* JH), 100 at Berea on December 25 and present throughout the period (AR, TR), 35 at a Richmond feeder (GR), and about 75 banded at Cumberland Falls State Park (S. Kickert *vide* GR), and 75 daily at Morehead (FB). It was a good year throughout the state for the American Goldfinch (m.ob.). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce in some sections of the state, particularly central and western Kentucky. They were recorded in only five locations: one sighting at Murray, Calloway County (CP), a small flock at Iisley, Hopkins County (JH), peaked at 100 at Cumberland Falls State Park where 16 were banded (S. Kickert *vide* GR), a pair in mid-January at Whitley City, McCreary County (D. Stephens *vide* BPB) and 10 at Morehead on February 28 (FB).

*Contributors* — Brad Andres (BA), Jane and Pat Bell (JB, PB), Wally Brines (WB), Marion Chamberlain (MB), Kathryn Clay (KC), Jackie Elmore (JEL), James W. Hancock (JH), Richard Heally (RH), Frank Krull, Jr. (FK), Tim Love (TL), Frederick Loetscher (FL), Lee McNeely (LMc), Burt L. Monroe, Jr. (BM), B. Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), Clell Peterson (CP), Lene Rauth (LR), Art and Tina Ricketts (AR, TR), Gary Ritchison (GR), Thane Robinson (TR), Russell Starr (RS), H. E. Shadowen (HS), Helga Schutte (HS), Anne Stamm (S), F. W. Stamm (FS), Donald Summerfield (DS), Charles Wilkins (CW).  
— 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville, Ky. 40241

## BALD EAGLE COUNT IN KENTUCKY — 1988

LYNDA ANDREWS, ROGER YANCEY AND JAMES DURELL

This year's census recorded a total of 166 Bald Eagles, and no Golden Eagles. January 8 was the target date, within a time frame of January 1-15, 1988. This census was done in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Waterfowl census. The National Wildlife Federation now records only the counts at Ballard County, Lake Barkley and Dale Hollow, rather than the full state census. Weather during the period was unusually warm and clear.

Immature eagles increased from 51 (27%) to 60 (36%), while mature birds were down from 142 to 104. This is the second year of decline, but the warmer winter may have kept more eagles up north. Fewer waterfowl came south and Indiana eagles increased from 42 to 56.

Again no eagles were reported from Obion and Mayfield Creek Bottoms, nor in the Barlow Bottoms, near the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. These were very productive in 1984.

Land Between the Lakes lost 33 eagles and the Mississippi 10. The Lower Ohio gained six. This count includes some eagles across the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

Table I summarizes the 1988 census, with some earlier high records.



**TABLE I**—Kentucky Bald Eagle Census, January 2-15, 1988  
with earlier high counts.

ROUTE	Ad.	1987		Earlier records	
		Imm.	Tot.	High	Year
Land Between the Lakes .....	21	2	23	67	1987
Mississippi River .....	20	14	34	72	1984
Ohio River, Wickliffe to north Livingston Co. (Carrsville) .....	24	27	53+	89	1986
Ohio River, Carrsville-Owensboro .....	4	1	5	7	1984
Ohio River, Battletown-Louisville .....	2		2	5	1986
Ohio R., Louisville-Markland Dam .....	1		1	1	1987
Green River Lake .....	4	1	5	12	1986
Dale Hollow, Kentucky portion .....	17	10	27	27	1988
Lake Cumberland .....	2		2	14?	1983
Cumberland R., dam to Burkesville .....	2		2*	8	1986
Cave Run Lake .....	2	2	4	7	1984
Laurel Lake .....	2	3	5	9	1985
Martin's Fork .....	3	—	3	3	1988
Totals	104	60	166+		

+ Includes 2 eagles, age unknown. Ballard County 49 eagles.

\* Excludes 1 eagle, possibly duplicated on Lake Cumberland.

Twelve parties reported 121 other hawks. Counts for 1987 and 1986 are in parenthesis: American Kestrel 57 (99, 105); Red-tailed Hawk 55 (40, 68); Marsh Hawk 1 (6, 7); Rough-legged Hawk 2 (4, 3); Red-shouldered Hawk 3 (1, 3); Sharp-shinned Hawk 3 (1, 2); Black Vultures 0 (16, 0); Turkey Vultures 0 (1, 0).

There were 64 participants in 30 parties. They represented the Kentucky Ornithological Society, federal and state Fish and Wildlife agencies, TVA, U. S. Forest Service, Audubon Society and Owensboro Area Museum. Space does not permit listing these individuals, but their help is gratefully acknowledged, and solicited next year.

—Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, Frankfort 40601

—Kentucky Ornithological Society. 1027 Algonquin, Frankfort.

## THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING MEETING, APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 1988

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its 65th annual Spring Meeting on April 29 - May 1, 1988, at Otter Creek Park.

The Friday evening session was opened with a welcome to members and guests by President Jim Williams. Virginia Kingsolver outlined the following day's field trips and introduced the evening speakers. Anne Stamm spoke on the history and birdlife of Otter Creek Park. Fred Busroe presented an essay on categories and types of birdwatchers, followed by an update on the status of the Kentucky Breeding Bird Atlas given by Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr. Members were encouraged to increase their participation during the final two years of the project. Gary Ritchison concluded the session with a review of his research on post-fledging behavior of Eastern Screech-Owls.

Excellent weather on Saturday morning greeted field trip participants, who explored various areas of the park.

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

The Saturday evening program began with a thanks extended to Otter Creek Park for their service during the weekend. Sunday morning field trips were reviewed. Anne Stamm introduced the evening speaker, Dr. Burt Monroe Jr., who discussed many of the new discoveries in ornithology regarding classification of birds.

Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr. led in compiling the day's bird list, which totaled 111 species. Note was made of the Fall Meeting to be held at Kentucky Dam Village on September 30 - October 2, 1988.

Additional species seen on Sunday brought the weekend total to 113. Total registrations for the Spring Meeting were 66.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lee McNeely  
Recording Secretary

### ATTENDANCE AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1988

There were 66 members and their guests in attendance at the spring meeting held at Otter Creek Park. Eighteen Kentucky cities and two other states were represented.

**BOWLING GREEN:** Dr. and Mrs. Blaine Ferrell, Jeff Jones, Mr. and Mrs. William Mathes, Dr. and Mrs. Herb Shadowen

**BUCKHORN:** Eileen Sandlin

**BURLINGTON:** Lee and Linda McNeely

**CARLISLE:** Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver

**ELIZABETHTOWN:** Doug and Janet Gebler

**FALLS OF THE ROUGH:** Joyce Porter, Dora Lee St. Clair

**FRANKFORT:** Mr. and Mrs. Scott Hankla, Howard Jones

**HAZARD:** Dennis Sandlin

**HENDERSON:** John Humphrey

**LEXINGTON:** Mr. and Mrs. Michael Flynn, Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Uterhart, Mr. and Mrs. James Williams

**LOUISVILLE:** Jane Bell, Pat Bell, Richard Cassell, Diane Ebel, Arthur Figg, Dr. and Mrs. R. G. Hectorne, Frank Krull, John Krull, Tim Love, Dr. Burt Monroe, Jr., Mark Monroe, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Martha Pike, Mr. and Mrs. Frances Shannon, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Stamm

**MACEO:** Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Powell

**MOREHEAD:** Dr. Fred Busroe

**MURRAY:** Dr. Ciell Peterson

**OWENSBORO:** Mary Lydia Greenwell, Neal Hayden, W. T. Perkins, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Wilson

**PRINCETON:** Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Rowland

**RICHMOND:** Dr. and Mrs. Gary Ritchison, Tim Towles

**STANLEY:** Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

**TITUSVILLE, FLORIDA:** Don Shannon

**BUCHANAN, TENNESSEE:** Dr. and Mrs. Hunter Hancock

**DYERSBURG, TENNESSEE:** Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Leggett

## BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE SPRING MEETING, 1988

Birds observed on Saturday field trips within Otter Creek Park include: Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee 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, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Northern Oriole, Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow for a total of 111 species. The weekend total reached 113 species with the sightings of a Cape May Warbler and a Cliff Swallow on Sunday.

## FIELD NOTES

### NORTHERN GANNET ON I-65: SECOND RECORD FOR KENTUCKY, FIRST RECORD FOR TENNESSEE

On 29 November 1987, while driving north with my family on Interstate 65 just north of the Kentucky-Tennessee border, the last thing I expected to see was a pelagic bird. After all, we were nearly 600 miles from the Atlantic Ocean and 450 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. So I was a bit unprepared when I spotted a large, gray brown bird flying south along the median strip of the highway toward us. My first thought was, "That's odd, a juvenile Herring Gull." But, as the bird drew nearer, my impression of it quickly changed. It had long, slender, pointed wings, and, as it zipped past my window, I could see its tapered, dagger-like bill. I knew immediately it must have been a large seabird, probably a booby or gannet. But with the bird rapidly disappearing in my rear view mirror, I had the sinking feeling that I would never know for sure.

Luck was with us, however. Just ahead, we encountered one of those highway crossovers with a sign "Emergency Vehicles Only." This being an obvious emergency, I crossed over. Now we were headed back south in hot pursuit of the bird. Amazingly, it seemed to be following the path of the highway. The day was cold, misty, and overcast, and the road surface was wet. Perhaps the highway resembled a watercourse enough to be attractive to the bird. It certainly looked as much like a body of water as anything else in that rolling Kentucky countryside.

Within a few minutes we caught up to the bird, and I slowed down to keep pace with it. It flew down the median along side the car at heights of 20-100 ft. My initial impression that the bird was a booby or gannet was confirmed by its typical sulid flight silhouette: cigar-shaped body; tapered tail, dagger bill, and long, thin, pointed wings with a distinctive crook at the bend. It's flight was also typical of the Sulidae: sustained shallow flapping to climb into the wind followed by a short downward glides. The bird was in juvenile plumage; gray brown above and whitish below, with indistinct, dark streaking on the neck and breast. Its dark legs and feet were visible under the tail.

After keeping pace with the bird for several minutes, it became clear that we were holding up traffic on the highway. So I drove on until we were well ahead of the bird, pulled over and jumped out with my 9 x 36 Bausch and Lomb binoculars in hand to view the bird as it passed. Now I could see that the back was speckled with white. This speckling was heaviest on the rump, forming a thin, inconspicuous, white "V" just proximal of the tail. The underwing was dark with large light areas, which seemed to be positioned at the base of the flight feathers and in the axillars. The bird passed quickly, so my wife, Kirsten, and daughters, Jessica and Julia, kept their eyes on it, while I jumped back in the car to chase it down the road. We repeated this cycle of driving ahead, pulling over and watching the bird fly by 3 or 4 times. The last time, we parked near the state line marker and watched the bird fly south into Tennessee.

The date and location of this sighting immediately suggest that the bird was a juvenile Northern Gannet (*Sula bassanus*). There is a significant migration of pelagic birds through the Great Lakes region in late fall, and, while Gannets are quite rare on the Great Lakes, available records are from that time of year. The chance of any other booby or gannet occurring in Kentucky in late November seems remote, as these are all birds of tropical or southern oceans. While the juvenile plumages of many sulid species are similar, the sparse white speckling on the back, thin white "V" on the rump, and lack of a white nuchal patch or collar are sufficient to separate juvenile Gannets from any other sulid known from North America (Harrison, Seabirds: an Identification Guide, Houghton, Mifflin, Boston, 1983).

The only previous record of Northern Gannet in Kentucky or Tennessee was of an immature bird on the Ohio River at Cincinnati, December 7, 1967 (America Birds 22:444, 1968). This bird was later captured in a Cincinnati yard and lived several years in the Cincinnati Zoo. I have had previous field experience with Gannets in the North Atlantic on several occasions. I have also seen the Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) in the Gulf of Mexico and in the South Pacific, and both the Blue-footed (*Sula nebouxi*) and Peruvian (*Sula variegata*) boobies off the coast of Peru.

It is natural to wonder how stray birds get to where we encounter them. In this case, it is interesting to note that I 65 begins in Gary, Indiana, at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Given the known migration

of seabirds through the Great Lakes in fall, it is tempting to speculate that this Gannet made it to Lake Michigan, but found no waterway leading south from there. Perhaps the bird then began to follow the Interstate, since it heads south and may have resembled a watercourse to some extent, at least when wet. In any case, from where we saw it, staying on I 65 would have been useful, as this would have led the bird to the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile, Alabama!

—MICHAEL J. BRAUN, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221.

### BALD EAGLE IN MADISON COUNTY

On the sunny afternoon of January 31, 1988 a mature Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was sighted along Red Lick Road approximately three miles east of Highway 421 in southern Madison County. The bird was near the top of a large oak tree about 300 meters north of the road. It was at first assumed to be a plastic bag, child's kite or other debris. It seemed impossible that it could be an eagle, and was ignored. When a companion mentioned that there was a deer carcass near the tree, I immediately stopped and backed the vehicle off the road to investigate. The glossy white top and bottom were a sharp contrast to the extremely coal black color between. Without binoculars I still was not sure it was something alive until I saw the head turn slightly. That excited me enough to climb the fence and proceed through the pasture toward it. Another turn of the head convinced me it was a live eagle, and as I approached to about 150 meters it lifted its wings, dropped from the tree, sailed over the pasture only about 50 meters to my right, and proceeded almost directly over my vehicle where my companion watched.

I have seen adult Bald Eagles at LBL, Ballard County Refuge, and Alaska as well as occasional sightings elsewhere. I have never seen one nearly so glossy and with such a black body as this bird.

The bird proceeded south across Red Lick Road and into the knobs about one mile away where it was attacked by crows. It continued over the dam of the newly constructed Floyd's Fork Lake where it left the crows behind and disappeared into the valley.

The Bald Eagle seems to be rapidly expanding its haunts in Kentucky and is being reported near more small reservoirs.

—DR. PETE THOMPSON, Department of Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky 40475.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### NONGAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES SYMPOSIUM

Proceedings of the Nongame and Endangered Species Symposium held in Athens, Georgia on September 8-10, 1987 are now available for \$10.00 (make check payable to: Planning Committee, 3rd Nongame Wildlife Symposium). Send requests to: Nongame/Endangered Species Program, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Route 2, Box 119A, Social Circle, Georgia 30279.