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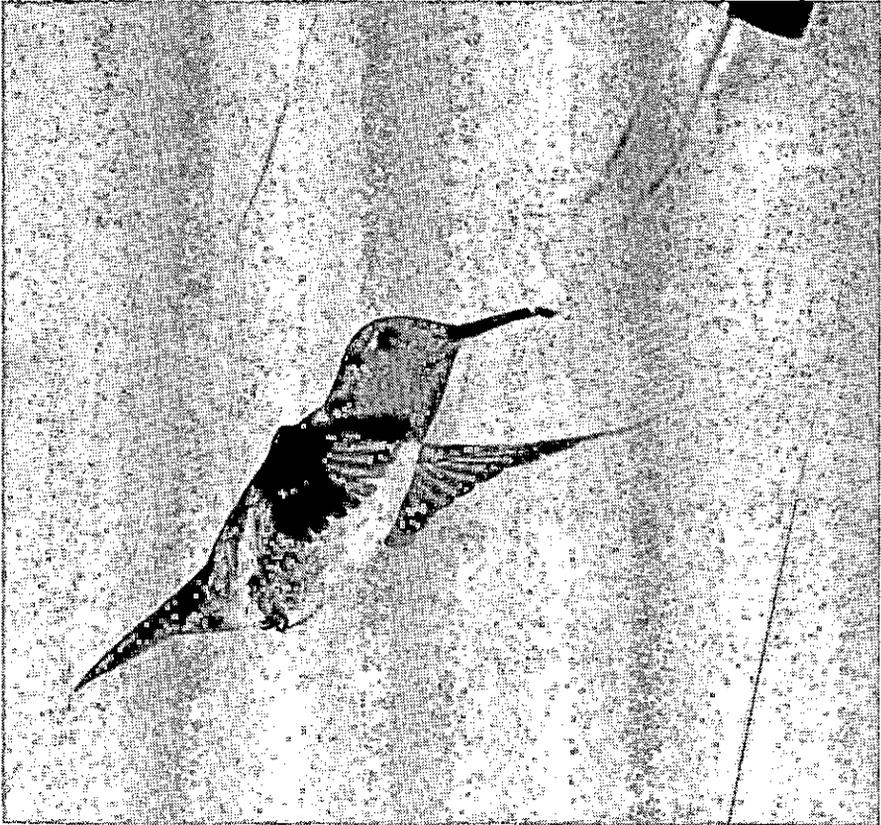
The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

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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.

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

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THE COVER

We thank Dr. Herbert L. Clay, Jr. for the excellent photograph of the Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) taken at Big Pond Sanctuary (See Field Notes).

THE WINTER SEASON, 1989-90

ANNE L. STAMM

Mild weather persisted through December 6. A few days later the pattern changed and one to four inches of snow fell all across the state. Temperatures began dropping by the middle of the month and it was 4 degrees below zero in Gallatin and Jefferson counties on December 16. A strong cold front brought a blast of arctic air into the state on December 21-24. Temperatures plunged from 9 to 23 degrees below zero in central Kentucky. The gusty winds produced a wind chill of 35-50 degrees below zero at Louisville.

Lakes and rivers were ice-covered and waterfowl was found frozen in the ice. Some land birds were found dead due to the harsh weather.

December experienced below-normal and January and February above-normal temperatures.

It is interesting to note that Canada Geese were more numerous than usual, particularly in western Kentucky. Wintering Bald Eagles were numerous, perhaps due to frozen waters in the north. Interesting species of gulls were found on Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake.

Winter finches were disappointing. Red Crossbills, White-winged Crossbills and Common Redpolls failed to show up, however, Pine Siskins were fairly common. Evening Grosbeaks were almost nonexistent.

Abbreviations — BWMA = Ballard Waterfowl Management Area, Ballard County; BBC = Beckham Bird Club; BPS = Big Pond Sanctuary, Grayson County; CBC = Christmas Bird Count; LBL = Land Between the Lakes. The transient lakes are Chaney and McElroy, south of Bowling Green, Warren County.

Loons through Grebes — A single Common Loon was seen on a small pond southeast of Cool Springs in southern Ohio County on December 2 (BPB) and one was still present on Kentucky Lake above the dam on the LBL CBC on December 16. Several wintering Pied-billed Grebes were reported: 20 above Kentucky and Barkley Dams on January 5 (CP), nine at Green River Lake, Taylor County on January 14 (JEl), two on the Ohio River at Louisville on January 30 (LR) and one at the Cool Springs Lake, Ohio County on February 10 (KC *et al.*). The only Horned Grebes noted in December were the three birds on the LBL CBC, however, a few began reappearing in mid-February with singles at Freeman Lake, Hardin County (RH), at McElroy Lake, Warren County on February 18 (LR) and three there the following day (BPB). An Eared Grebe at the transient lakes on February 18 was unexpected (LR).

Cormorants through Herons — A fair number of Double-crested Cormorants was present before the cold weather in late December: at least 50 were seen at Lake Barkley, near Silo Overlook on December 10 (BPB), 20+ on Energy Lake, Land Between the Lakes on December 3 (BPB, Ed Ray), two flying over Shippingport Island, Jefferson County on December 20 (LR) and a single bird south of Markland Dam, Gallatin County on December 16 (KCa, JCa). One bird was still present on Lake Barkley on January 26 (JB, PB). Great Blue Herons were present in good numbers in early December, but January records showed fewer birds due to the cold and ice (m.ob.).

Swans through Geese — An adult Tundra Swan was present at BWMA from early to mid-December (BPB) and one reported on the Louisville CBC, December 17. Feral Mute Swans were numerous in late December: six were present on Cool Springs Lake in southern Ohio County on December 23 - February 10 (KC), up to eight there during that period — no date given (BPB). Two birds were noted on a small pond in southern Ohio County on February 3 (RH, KC). A large flock of "about 20 unspecified swans" was seen on Lake Barkley on December 26 by Ed Ray. The birds were seen daily until January 3 when he reported them to Carl Mowery and Clell Peterson who identified the birds as 17 Mute Swans (16 adults, one immature). Two of the birds were wearing yellow neck bands (no letters or numbers were seen on the bands). This is the largest flock ever reported in the state (CM, CP, Ed Ray). Only seven swans were present on January 5, the last date they were seen (CP, Ed Ray). A single bird was also observed at Towhead Island, Louisville on January 5 (LR). Five Greater White-fronted Geese (three adults, two immatures) were observed on a lake, locally known as Cooley's Lake, in northeast Wayne County on December 10-February 7 (JEL, D. Elmore, Steve Kickert, Richard Hines); only three birds on the latter date and all were gone after that (JEL). Snow Geese peaked at 15,000-20,000 at BWMA on December 19 (CW); nine were on a small lake near Union, Boone County on December 2 (LMc); 10+ in southern Ohio County on January 27 (KC, BBC); an adult and an immature at Cooley's Lake on December 3 (JEL); and three at McElroy Lake, Warren County as early as February 18 (LR). An adult Ross' Goose was seen at McElroy Lake on February 24 (Gary Boggs *vide* BPB) and observed the following day, February 25 (BPB, DE) and still present on March 4 (BPB, JB, PB, LR). Canada Geese were numerous this winter and peaked at 170,000 at BWMA on December 19 (CW). The species was widespread with thousands in southern Ohio County on December 23 (KC) and a similar number in Muhlenberg and Ohio counties during late December and early January (BPB); 600+ at Mills Springs on Lake Cumberland, Wayne County on December 20 and 250+ at Cooley's Lake on December 13 (JEL). January high records included 294 at Lake Pewee (JH), 300+ at a pond, locally known as Thurston's Pond, Wayne County, north of Monticello, January 6 (JEL), 500+ at Larue County Sportsman Club Lake on January 7 (JEL), 150 on Honkers Lake, LBL on January 26 (JB, PB), 75-200 at different locales in Pulaski County (JEL), 200+ in a flooded field at East Bend, Boone County on February 11 were transients moving northward (LMc). Smaller numbers were found in Taylor County (JEL) and Grant County (KCa, JCa).

Ducks — The duck population peaked at BWMA on December 19 with 15,000 to 20,000 (CW) with the majority being Mallards. American Black Ducks and Mallards were more numerous in late December than the previous year. The CBCs showed the former species as being up 59% and the latter species up 142% over the CBCs last year, probably due to the frozen waters up north. Wood Ducks began showing up at various locations in February with the earliest (several pairs) on February 8-9 near Swan Lake, Ballard County (BPB), a pair at Petersburg, Boone County on February 11 (LMc), four at Mills Springs on February 14 (JEL), others at Chaney Lake, Warren County (BPB) and Lentz's Pond, Louisville (JB, PB) on February 19 and 25, respectively. A flock of at least 50 Green-winged Teal was still present at Honker Lake in LBL December 10 (BPB) and 15 was the largest number observed on Thurston's Pond on January

16 (JEl); eight birds were present at a pond near Petersburg on December 2 (LMc). Smaller numbers (1-5) were present in the early part of the winter at Lake Pewee (JH), LBL (JB, PB), and Louisville (JP, BBC). Ten Green-winged Teal had returned to McElroy Lake by February 19 (BPB) and two at Lentz's Pond by February 25 (JB, PB). Northern Pintails were scarce during the winter, but a few began showing up at the Woodburn Lakes, Warren County on February 4 (BPB) and at Lentz's Pond on February 25 (JB, PB). A fair number of Northern Shovelers remained through early to mid-December: 40 at Bailey Hollow, Calloway County on December 9 (CP), five at Cooley's Lake, December 13 (JEl), and two at Lake Pewee on December 10 (JH). A male Northern Shoveler was a fairly early arrival on Kentucky Lake above the dam on February 11 (BPB *et al.*); and a dozen or more showed up at McElroy Lake on February 25 (BPB). Thirty Gadwalls were present at Thurston's Pond from January 6 to February 28 (JEl) and \pm 150 were counted at Bailey Hollow on January 13 (CP). American Wigeons were practically gone by the time of the CBCs, but earlier 75-100 were seen on Honker Lake, LBL on December 3 (BPB, Ed Ray) and 125 there on December 10 (BPB), while 75+ were noted at Cooley's Lake on December 10 (JEl). Spring arrivals began showing up at Lentz's Pond on February 25 (JB, PB) and 28 (LR). As usual, Canvasbacks were not numerous; highest number reported was the flock of 55 along the Ohio River, near Smithland, Livingston County, February 11 (BPB, JEl *et al.*). A few Redheads showed up in February: several in backwater near Swan Lake, Ballard County on February 9 and a male on McElroy Lake, February 25 (BPB); but 23 at Cooley's Lake on February 28 (JEl). Few Ring-necked Ducks were present in December after the cold weather arrived, however, 10 were seen at Cool Springs Lake on December 23 (KC) and 35 observed at McDougal Creek Lake, Larue County on January 14 (JEl). Spring migrants arrived by February 28 at Thurston's Pond with 150+ there, 17 at a small pond near Northern Junior High School, Somerset, Pulaski County (JEl); 41 also present at Honker Lake, LBL on January 26 (JB, PB). Only a few Greater Scaup were present on the Ohio River at Louisville during the period (BPB). Three Oldsquaws were reported: one, a female, at Cooley's Lake on December 13 (JEl) and two noted in flight over the Kentucky Dam on December 3 (BPB). Common Goldeneyes were not as numerous this year as last season, but about 100 were found in LBL (Honker Bay and Hematite Lake) on January 5 (CP). Others reported included two at Cool Springs Lake on December 23 (KC); six on Kentucky Utilities Company Pond just south of Markland Dam, Carroll County on January 1 (KCa, JCa), 36 at Honker Lake, LBL on January 26 (JB, PB), and six birds were on McElroy Lake on February 10 (BPB). Buffleheads were reported from only five locations with a high count of 40 at both Bailey Hollow (CP) and Thurston's Pond (JEl) on January 5 and February 28, respectively. Fair numbers of Hooded Mergansers were present in the early part of December, but the majority had gone by the latter part of the month. High counts included: approximately 500 birds on Energy Lake, LBL, December 3-10 (BPB, Ed Ray), 150+ at Cooley's Lake, December 10 (JEl), 50+ on Lake Pewee, December 10 (BPB) and 94 at Green River Lake, Taylor County, near the dam (JEl). A female Hooded Merganser remained on a small body of water at Mallard Creek crossing, Louisville throughout the month of February (KC). A concentration of more than 400 Common Mergansers was present at Honker Bay, LBL on January 5

(CP) and 60 were on Honker Lake, LBL on January 26 (JB, PB), while a flock of 90 birds was the peak count on Kentucky Lake above the dam on December 27 (BPB). Only a few Red-breasted Mergansers were reported: three on the Ohio River at Louisville, December 2 (JP, BBC), two at Cool Springs Lake on February 10 (KC *et al.*) and a male at McElroy Lake on February 18 (LR). Eighty-six was the high count of Ruddy Ducks at Lake Pewee on December 5 (JH); none were reported on the 23 CBCs; a pair was noted on McElroy Lake, February 25 (BPB).

Raptors — A few Black Vultures were seen in Bullitt, Caldwell, Jefferson, Ohio and Taylor counties (m. ob.), but 12 were seen flying over the Ohio River at Rabbit Hash, Boone County on January 13 (LMc). After the extremely cold weather in late December few Turkey Vultures were present, but birds began reappearing in mid-February. Wintering Bald Eagle numbers were encouraging with the Mid-winter survey totaling 299 birds (David Yancy, Jim Durell); details of the survey will be published later. Northern Harrier numbers appear to be improving and were more numerous on the CBCs this year compared to last year, particularly on the Paradise count with a total of 65 compared to 40 last year. Sightings for this period were also received from Calloway (CP), Gallatin (KCa), Hopkins (JH), Muhlenberg (BPB), Ohio (KC, BPB), Pulaski and Wayne (JEl) counties. There were modest increases in the number of Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-shouldered Hawks during the period. At least two immature Krider's Hawks and an immature "Rufous" phase Red-tailed Hawk were observed on the surface mines of Ohio/Muhlenberg counties on February 10 (BPB, JEl). An adult Krider's Hawk was also seen near McElroy Lake on February 19 (BPB, RH, DP). The Red-tailed Hawk population appears to be stable. Rough-legged Hawks were more widespread this year but may not have been more numerous; greatest numbers occurred in Ohio and Muhlenberg counties. Sightings other than on the CBCs included the following: various dates from December 10-February 10 in southern Ohio County with a high of six birds on the latter date (KC, *et al.*); one at Devon, Boone County on February 28 (C. Whalen); one at Fort Knox, Hardin County, January 6 (RH) and four in Ohio River bottoms above Bayou, Livingston County on February 11 (BPB). Two immature Golden Eagles were observed soaring over Honker Lake and Energy Lake in the LBL on December 3 (BPB, Ed Ray); two reported from Bernheim Forest, Bullitt County "during the winter" (M. McClure *vide* BPB). Although at the present writing the Mid-winter eagle survey is incomplete/ on January 30 it appears that a total of seven Golden Eagles (six adults and one immature) was found (D. Yancy, Jim Durell). A Merlin was seen on Surrey Hills Farm, Louisville on December 25, and was probably the same bird as was photographed there in late November (BPB). A *Prairie Falcon* was studied carefully at Burgin, Mercer County on January 2 (docum. by WK, E. D. Caldwell) and another was seen at Munfordville, Hart County on December 18 (SK).

Cranes through Shorebirds — American Coots were in lower numbers than last year and the majority left after the severe cold weather in late December. Some American Coots were found frozen in the ice of Kentucky Lake. At twilight on December 22 Clell Peterson saw a red fox "feasting on coots frozen in the ice." This same scene was also witnessed an hour earlier by Michael Miller. After the 15 to 23 degrees below zero temperatures subsided it was interesting to find 200 coots at Birmingham Point, LBL

and more than 300 at Bailey Hollow on January 6 and 13, respectively (CP). Migrant American Coots began returning in small numbers at Lake Pewee (JH) and in southern Ohio County (KC) on February 8 and 10, respectively and 150 at McElroy Lake by February 25 (BPB). Sandhill Cranes were still migrating over Kentucky on December 1 where a flock of 600 was noted over northeast Jefferson County (MSu), several groups totaling 300 over southeast Jefferson County (FK, Jr., F. Krull, Sr., J. Krull) and a few over Hart County (SK). Later December records included 25-30 over BPS (KC) and 500 over St. Matthews, suburb of Louisville, as late as December 21 (DN). A single Sandhill Crane lingered on a farm, near Burlington, Boone County January 9-10 and observed "later into February" (LMc). The bird appeared capable of flying and its prolonged presence suggests that it wintered there. Returning birds began appearing in mid-February with about 30 in Hart County (SK), eight at McElroy Lake on February 19 (BPB, RH, DP) and at least 150 or more in farmland in west Hardin County, near Cecelia in late February (JN).

Shorebirds — Lingering shorebirds included a Lesser Yellowlegs at Lake Pewee, December 10, a late date (BPB), six Western Sandpipers at Jonathan Creek, Marshall County, December 7-13 (CP—no details), five Least Sandpipers at Paradise Steam Plant, Muhlenberg County, December 2 (BPB), two Dunlin at Paradise Steam Plant, December 2 (BPB), three at Lake Pewee, December 10 (BPB) and 11 at Jonathan Creek, December 13 (CP). Fair numbers of Common Snipe appeared in early December with 29 at Lake Pewee on December 5 (JH) and 16 at Jonathan Creek, December 7 (CP), but few were around in late December. Returning American Woodcocks were heard February 5 in Hardin County (RH) and at BPS on February 11 (KC) and about the same time in Calloway (BPB) and Barren (RS) counties.

Gulls — Small numbers (2-100) of Bonaparte's Gulls were present in six locations in early December, but few could be found after the severe cold of late December (m.ob.). A few began reappearing on February 11 on Lake Barkley at Silo Overlook (BPB, JEl, LR). Normal numbers of Ring-billed Gulls were at the western Kentucky Lakes during the period, however, numbers were reduced in late December. The 300+ birds at Green River Lake, Taylor County on January 14 were unusual (JEl). A few were present at the Cool Springs Lake area on February 10 (KC). Herring Gulls were few in the early part of December, but the cold weather brought 3000 to 5000 to the vicinity of Kentucky Dam by December 26-27 (BPB). An adult *Lesser Black-backed Gull* was seen on Kentucky Lake above the dam on the LBL CBC, December 16 (DP, BPB); one, possibly two, adults were present above Kentucky Dam, December 26-27 (BPB), with CM on 27th). An adult Glaucous Gull was also observed on Lake Barkley on LBL CBC, December 16 (BPB, DP); and one, perhaps two, first-year birds noted near Kentucky Dam on December 26-27 (BPB, with CM on 27th). A *Great Black-backed Gull* (adult) and two first-year birds were present in the vicinity of Kentucky Dam on December 26-27 (BPB, with CM on the 27th). This represents the first occurrence in the state of more than one bird. At least one, perhaps two first-year and at least one, perhaps two adult Thayer's Gulls were present in the Kentucky Dam area, December 26-27 (BPB, with CM on 27th).

Owls through Woodpeckers — Only one Snowy Owl was reported and that was seen during the week of the Lexington CBC. Two Long-eared

Owls were present in eastern Muhlenberg County from mid-December-January 1 (BPB); one in extreme southern Ohio County, January 27 (JB, PB *et al. fide* KC); an injured bird was picked up during the first week of January near Mundys Landing, in extreme southern Woodford County and turned over to a veterinarian. The bird did not recover from its injury (Jack Dyer *fide* BPB). Short-eared Owls were again numerous in southern Ohio and Muhlenberg counties. Twenty-five to 35 were counted on December 9-10 in Ohio County (KC) while a total of 64 was on the Paradise CBC, January 1 (BPB *et al.*). Other records were: three birds at the Outer Loop Landfill, southern Jefferson County during December and January (m.ob.), one at Standiford Airport, Louisville, January 8 (RH), several north of Danville in late December (WK). One bird was found dead at the Louisville Airport mentioned above on January 21, possibly hit by an airplane (RH, m.ob.). The Rufous Hummingbird which had been at a feeder at BPS since August was last seen on December 16 when the temperature was 10 degrees below zero (KC, HC). Belted Kingfishers were quite scarce in Boone County where none were recorded on the Burlington CBC for the "first time in 15 years" (LMc). Numbers were lower elsewhere in the state during the latter part of December and early January. Numbers were greatly reduced too for the Red-headed Woodpecker during late December.

Larks through Kinglets — Despite the cold weather in late December Horned Larks were present in fairly good numbers during the CBC period (December 16 to January 3). In fact, the total number on the counts was almost double that of last year. A Tree Swallow was observed at Green River Lake, Taylor County on the late date of December 30 (JEl, D. Elmore) and a spring arrival was fairly early at McElroy Lake on February 18 (LR). Although Red-breasted Nuthatches were present in low numbers during the winter months, a few were observed throughout the period. Winter Wrens were present in about average numbers. Golden-crowned Kinglets were numerous and widespread this period (m.ob.).

Thrushes through Shrikes — Eastern Bluebirds were widespread, but in lower numbers than last winter, but still a good population. Wintering Hermit Thrushes were more numerous than usual. The number of American Robins was greatly reduced in late December. They apparently moved farther south due to the severe weather since numbers were much higher last year. At least 10 Brown Thrashers were observed on December 30-January 1 at various locations after the cold weather (m.ob.). A Water Pipit lingered through December 16 in Gallatin County (KCa, JCa) and an early transient was seen on Surrey Hills Farm on February 26 (BPB). Cedar Waxwings were in fairly good numbers in central and northern Kentucky, but low numbers in the western part of the state. The Loggerhead Shrike population appeared to be comparable to last year. Interesting records included single birds off HWY 90 in northern Wayne County and in Russell County on December 13 and January 7, respectively (JEl). February 3-9 records were of single birds in Breckinridge, two locations in Grayson and Hardin counties (KC).

Warblers through Finches — Yellow-rumped Warblers were few in western and northern Kentucky, but in late December the population across the state was slightly above last year. The birds were more numerous at Mammoth Cave National Park and at Bernheim Forest, Bullitt County than elsewhere. In addition to the four Pine Warblers on the Frankfort

CBC and the one on the LBL count, a male was seen in pines in eastern Muhlenberg County on December 24 (BPB). An Ovenbird was found dead on February 9 in the Audubon Park area in Louisville. The bird was last seen alive on December 21 (*vide* JB, PB) and perhaps was a victim of the extremely cold days in late December.

A male *Spotted Towhee*, the western race of the Rufous-sided Towhee, was found on the Otter Creek Park CBC, December 31. The bird remained through February 4 (Richard Cassell, BPB). American Tree Sparrows were in higher numbers than last year with fair numbers in Boone, Gallatin, Ohio, Meade and Muhlenberg counties (m.ob.). A Chipping Sparrow was seen frequently from November 29-December 26 at a feeder in Murray, Calloway County (CP). In addition to the few Savannah Sparrows on four CBCs, a few were found in fields near McElroy and Chaney Lakes in February (BPB). White-throated Sparrows were down in Woodford (SH) and Jefferson (S) counties and fewer numbers were on the CBCs than last winter. The largest number at a feeding station in Madisonville was 22 on December 23 (JH). White-crowned Sparrows were in lower numbers than usual. An adult Harris' Sparrow was present at a feeder in Nicholasville, Jessamine County on January 25 (EB). Fox Sparrows were more numerous than last winter. Lapland Longspurs were present in very low numbers, but it was encouraging that they were found in five counties: one heard calling as it passed overhead in Ballard County on December 10 (BPB); at least six with a flock of Horned Larks in western Fulton County on December 17 (BPB); an immature female at the Outer Loop Landfill in southern Jefferson County, December 18 (RH); five on the Peabody Homestead Surface Mine, Ohio County on December 23 (KC); two on Chamberlain Lane, Jefferson County (JB, PB); and up to six during December and early January in Jefferson and Oldham counties (BPB). The only Snow Buntings reported were the two observed in eastern Muhlenberg County on the Paradise CBC, January 1 (BPB, DE).

At least two Western Meadowlarks were observed (and the distinctive call note of one bird was heard) from a flock of 25-30+ meadowlarks in western Fulton County, December 17 (BPB, R. Cassell, D. Parker). A flock of Rusty Blackbirds (about 1000) was seen on the Outer Loop Landfill during January (RH). Five to 10 Brewer's Blackbirds were noted in farmland near McElroy Lake on February 4, 10, 19 (m.ob.) and 15 of this rare transient were counted foraging on the shore of McElroy on February 25 (BPB).

Although Purple Finches were fairly well distributed, numbers were not large and there were fewer birds in January and February (B. West). House Finches continue to be numerous and at a feeder in Science Hill, Pulaski County 100+ birds were present during the period (JEl); at least 100 also noted at feeders in a Bowling Green, Warren County yard during the winter months (W. Mathes). Smaller numbers at feeders included 35+ at Louisville, Jefferson County (S. FS), 20-30 at Murray (CP), and 20+ at BPS (KC). Pine Siskins were present in fair numbers and widely distributed: 50 were present at feeders at Valley Station, southwest Jefferson County on January 12 and continued there through February and some were still present through April (DS); 35-40 at Hanson, Hopkins County (B. West *vide* JH); peaked at 30 at Murray (CP); 36 birds at LBL on January 26 (JB, PB). The birds were evident throughout the winter season at several locations in northern Boone County (LMe) and at Madisonville from December 4-February 1 (JH). American Goldfinches were

not as numerous as last winter. There were no Evening Grosbeaks except for the two reported at New Haven, Nelson County on February 9 (*vide* JB).

Contributors — Mary Bill Bauer (MB), Jane Bell (JB), Pat Bell (PB), Earl Boggs (EB), Gary Boggs (GB), Joe Caminiti (JCa), K. Camaniti (KCa), Kathryn Clay (KC), Herbert L. Clay, Jr. (HC), Tony Eaden (TE), Diane Ebel (DE), Jackie Elmore (JEl), Richard Healy (RH), James W. Hancock (JH), Smith Hundley (SH), William Kemper (WK), Steve Kistler (SK), Frank Krull, Jr. (FK), Lee McNeely (LMc), Carl Mowery (CM), Joan Noel (JN), Doxie Noonan (DN), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), D. Parker (DP), Jim Pasikowski (JP), Clell Peterson (CP), Lene Rauth (LR), Anne L. Stamm (S), F. W. Stamm (FS), Russell Starr (RS), Midge Susie (MSu), Donald Summerfield (DS), Charles Wilkins (CW), C. Whalen.

— 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40241.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING MEETING — APRIL 27-29, 1990

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its 67th annual meeting at Rough River State Resort Park on April 27-29, 1990. Virginia Kingsolver, president, opened the Friday evening session with a welcome to members and guests. Lee McNeely, vice-president, introduced the evening program speakers. Blaine Ferrell presented a Tree Swallow nesting study. Dr. Herbert Clay told about a vagrant Rufous Hummingbird that came to their feeder in Grayson County for an extended period of time last season. He had excellent slides of the bird. Burt Monroe presented a study of numbers of birds in the breeding bird survey correlated with winter temperatures. The evening program concluded with a short photo quiz for which members brought 1 or 2 slides. An informal social hour followed the program.

The weather was partly cloudy with bits of rain and sunshine for the Saturday morning field trips. Lee McNeely led one group in the lodge area and Kathryn Clay led the other group to Falls of Rough.

The Clays entertained the entire group with a lovely lunch at their Big Pond Sanctuary. Members walked the trails and observed the many birds that came to their feeders.

The Board of Directors met at 3:30 p.m. in the lodge.

After a buffet dinner in the lodge dining room, the group assembled for the Saturday evening program. Virginia Kingsolver introduced Steve Maslowski, from Cincinnati, a wildlife photographer with many credits in his field. His program, "Outdoor Yearbook", included a movie of outdoor life through the year with excellent photos of life in a Great Horned Owl's nest, a gray fox's den and American Robins and Northern Cardinals sharing a nest.

A resolution from the Board was read expressing KOS's gratitude to the Clays for their generous hospitality.

The weather was sunny and warm for the Sunday morning field trips. One trip went to the Ohio County strip mine area and the rest of the group wandered in the lodge area and along the air strip.

Blaine Ferrell compiled the bird list which totaled 122 species including Sunday morning's count. Seventy-six people registered for the meeting.

**ATTENDANCE AT THE SPRING MEETING
AT ROUGH RIVER STATE RESORT PARK**

- ANCHORAGE:** Burt L. Monroe, Jr., Rose Monroe, Mark Monroe
BEAVER DAM: Charlotte Moseley
BOWLING GREEN: Blaine Ferrell, Don Freeman, Vera Freeman, Ruth Mathes, William Mathes, Herbert E. Shadowen, Jackie Shadowen
BUCKHORN: Eileen Sandlin
BURLINGTON: Lee McNeely, Lynda McNeely
CALVERT CITY: Henry Lecky, Veda Lecky
CARLISLE: Virginia Kingsolver, Wendell Kingsolver
COX'S CREEK: Dona Coates, Roger Coates
CRITTENDEN: Kathy Caminiti
CYNTHIANA: William Wiglesworth
DANVILLE: Neil Eklund, Virginia Eklund
ELIZABETHTOWN: Bobbie Rickert, Jon Rickert
FALLS OF THE ROUGH: Joyce Porter, Dora Lee St. Clair
FLORENCE: Joan Carey
HAZARD: Dennis Sandlin
HODGENVILLE: Susan Cruse
LEITCHFIELD: Alita Wilson, Montelle Wilson
LEXINGTON: Jean Flynn, Michael Flynn, Gerry Williams, James Williams
LOUISVILLE: Robert K. Brown, Joe Brue, Sandy Brue, Herbert L. Clay, Jr., Kathryn Clay, Shannon Coblin, Diane Ebel, Stephen Figg, Don Jones, Judi Jones, Tim Love, Kathryn Mudd, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Martha Pike, Robert Pike, Frank Schoettler, Bernice Shannon, F. P. Shannon, Anne L. Stamm, F. W. Stamm, Donald Summerfield
MOREHEAD: Fred Busroe, Katie Busroe
MURRAY: Clell Peterson
OWENSBORO: Margaret Craig, Lydia Greenwell, A. L. Powell, Milly Powell, W. T. Perkins, Ed Wilson, Elinor Wilson
PADUCAH: Bernice Caddell
STANLEY: Anna Lee Stevenson, Thomas Stevenson
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA: John Humphrey, Angela Pickron
RICHMOND, INDIANA: Janet Wickersham
DYERSBURG, Tennessee: Betty Leggett, Kenneth Leggett

BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE ANNUAL SPRING MEETING, 1990

Birds observed on Saturday field trips within a 15-mile diameter circle centered at Rough River State Resort Park included: Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Spotted Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Screech-Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff 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, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Water Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Northern Oriole, Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow for a total of 116 species. Additional species observed on Sunday field trips were Black-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Solitary Vireo, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler and Blackpoll Warbler bringing the weekend total to 122 species.

FIELD NOTES

FIRST KENTUCKY RECORD OF THE RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD

The adult male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) is easily differentiated from the Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) by its rufous colored back with only occasional and very slight tufts of green on the back. Its chip note is quite similar to the Allen's. There is a musical or mechanical buzz to the wing beat of the Rufous and this, although not as loud or high-pitched as the Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*), is quite characteristic and certainly different from the Ruby-throated Hummingbird's (*Archilochus colubris*) wing beat which we hear so commonly in Kentucky.

The normal breeding range of the Rufous Hummingbird in western North America is from southeastern Alaska, south Yukon, eastcentral British Columbia, southwestern Alberta, western Montana south through Washington and Oregon to the Trinity Mountain region of northwestern California and southern Idaho; it then migrates to winter in Mexico to Guerrero and Veracruz. Its migration path normally includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

During migration the Rufous Hummingbird has frequently wandered far from its normal course and has been reported frequently in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota with scattered reports from Ontario and even from Nova Scotia (*The Hummingbirds of North America*, p. 177, Paul A. Johnsgard).

As observers of hummingbirds, my wife, Kathryn, and I have been privileged to study and enjoy from ten to thirty Ruby-throated Hummingbirds every year at Big Pond Sanctuary in Grayson County for the past nineteen years. It is the primary hummingbird that one sees east of the Mississippi River.

On Monday evening September 25, 1989, Kathryn and I arrived at our Sanctuary. We knew that all of the adult males had left about fourteen days previously. The adult females left one week later, and we had four immature Ruby-throated Hummingbirds prior to the 25th of September. It was getting dark while we were sitting on our sun deck watching for the remaining immature hummers when Kathryn noticed a hummingbird with a dark gorget; we presumed that it was a late migrant male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. However, a few minutes later it flew down from its perch in a dogwood tree. I noticed a beautiful copper color on its back and immediately recognized it as a Rufous Hummingbird! I had enjoyed photographing this bird during its migration in Arizona, so I was familiar with it.

We immediately called our Louisville Bird Alert, and the following day we had interested "birders" arrive from various sections of Kentucky and the surrounding states.

I was anxious to photograph the Rufous but did not want to disturb it, so I photographed it from inside the house through glass, which was not satisfactory. As the bird gradually became familiar with us, I moved outside and started to use flash equipment, ultimately with two flash units four feet from a feeder. I installed a blue background cloth behind the feeder (to soften the background light) and was able to obtain flash pictures at about 1/30,000 of a second. This did not seem to disturb the bird. I recorded the times of feeding which initially were from 7:00 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. and later from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, on December 16, it fed until 5:45 p.m.

An interesting observation due to my high speed photography, was that the first primary was quite thin and formed a notch between the first and second primaries. This is not present in the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. And, in studying the high speed flash pictures of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Crawford H. Greenwalt's book (*Hummingbirds*, 1960) I noticed that his pictures of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird's primaries are almost identical to the primaries in my pictures of the Rufous. This may be the explanation for the distinct musical or mechanical sound of the Rufous' wing beat because the characteristic high-pitched sound of the Broad-tailed is described by Greenwalt as being due to the thin

first primary, producing a notch in the wing between the first and second primary.

The Rufous at Big Pond Sanctuary had strayed approximately 1,000 miles off course and stayed at our feeders from September 25 until December 16, 1989. In October, with increasingly colder weather accompanied by severe frosts, the insects began to diminish, and I was concerned about the bird's protein and fiber intake. I prepared a formula for our nectar feeders consisting of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Gevral, 1 cup of sugar and 3 cups of distilled water (I referred to this as the Gevral Formula). Initially, I mixed a solution consisting of $\frac{1}{4}$ Gevral Formula and $\frac{3}{4}$ sugar water (3 to 1 solution). I used this mixture until December 12 when I mixed a formula called "Nectar 3" from "Roudybush" in Davis, California. This was made by adding 3 oz. of "Nectar 3" powder to 240 cc. of warm water. As directed by "Roudybush" I sterilized freezer trays and put the formula in them.

On December 13, I filled two feeders with a new formula consisting of 1 part "Roudybush Nectar 3" and 3 parts Gevral Formula.

The feeder on our 6' x 9' front porch (which has a southeast exposure) was protected by panels of plywood on two sides. The feeder on our back sun deck was placed in an enclosed box protruding from our bedroom window so I could record the frequency of the Rufous' visits to it. I hung two thermometers and three outdoor light fixtures in the box; the lights were painted black. I inserted branches on which the bird could perch. On the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of December the outside temperatures were, respectively, 15°F, 10°F, and 7°F. But inside the box the temperatures ranged from 36°F to 46°F. On the front porch the nectar froze until late in the day when the sun warmed the solution.

Finally the temperature dropped to -15°F on December 15th. On December 16th the temperature was -10°F and the hummingbird was closely observed from 9:00 a.m. until 5:45 p.m. This was the latest it had ever fed, and during this day it consumed 18 gms. of nectar, approximately 5.6 times its body weight assuming 3.2 gms. as the average body weight of the male adult Rufous Hummingbird. It did not reappear on December 17, 1989.

In conclusion, it can only be conjectured as to its final fate. Since we did not know where it roosted, we could not look for it adequately in the dense undergrowth, but we tried without success. We concluded that it may have gone into a torpid state from which it never recovered or, since it had such a feeding frenzy on December 16th, it may have decided to move on to a warmer climate. If it did so it would not have survived the weather in our southern states because the flowers had frozen and the feeders had been removed.

There remain more questions than answers about over-wintering hummingbirds. Should we even try to help them survive? Should we trap or mist net them and transport them to an aviary or a warmer climate? Should we keep them in a basement or an inside room? If so, when should we release them? Or should they be collected for students and professors of Ornithology to study?

After much soul-searching, Kathryn and I decided that since the Rufous seemed to be strong, vigorous and active, we would leave it alone and if we had had a mild winter, we definitely believe it would have survived.

— HERBERT L. CLAY, JR., 434 Mallard Creek Road, Louisville, KY 40207.

CINNAMON TEAL AT BOWLING GREEN

On the late afternoon of 23 April 1989, I was on my way home from birding at the transient lakes near Woodburn, Warren County, when I stopped along US-31W just south of Bowling Green to observe a group of waterfowl on a small pond on the Western Kentucky University Farm. Among a group of about a dozen Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), I observed a male Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) feeding along the margin of the pond. The bird appeared to be paired with a female teal, presumed to be a Blue-winged based on the size of its bill and general coloration and feather patterns. The two birds remained in close proximity to one another during the entire hour or more that I observed them, and the drake repeatedly drove male Blue-winged's away from the female.

The male Cinnamon Teal was identical in all respects to the species as depicted in field guides. Its entire body plumage was a bright rufous-red except for the feathers of the back, which were a mottled brown, buff and black. The vent was black, and when the bird flapped its wings, whitish underwing linings and the "teal" blue patch on the upperside of the wings were obvious. The legs were dull yellowish with darker feet, and the bill was rather long and blackish. Characteristic of males of this species, the eye was bright red. The Cinnamon Teal appeared fairly wary, and there was no indication of feather wear or an abnormal level of tameness, both clues to the possibility of the bird having originated in captivity. Several photographs were obtained through a Questar telescope showing all field marks except the red eye. Duplicates of these have been deposited with Anne L. Stamm, Seasonal Reports editor for *The Kentucky Warbler*.

Soon after discovering the bird, I made a call to Dr. Blaine Ferrell who was able to see the male teal before sunset, and Don Parker observed the bird at the same pond on the 24th. Later trips made by others to see the bird were apparently unsuccessful.

This represents the third Kentucky record for the Cinnamon Teal. The other records were from Campbell County on 20 March 1951 (Mengel, *Birds of Kentucky*, p. 184) and Fulton County on 30 April 1985 (KW 61:43, 1985).

— BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY 40222.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW ON SURREY HILLS FARM

On the morning of 17 May 1989, I was birding on my family's farm in northeastern Jefferson County when I found a Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*). The bird was first seen when I inadvertently frightened it from the ground near the edge of a large hayfield. As luck would have it, the sparrow alighted in the top of a small tree in a shrubby fenceline less than thirty feet away from me where I was able to study it through 9x35 binoculars in excellent light.

During the time of observation, all field marks characteristic of a Clay-colored Sparrow were noted including its long, forked tail and boldly-marked face pattern. The bird superficially resembled a Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*), but was overall more of a buff-brown in tone than the rufous-brown of a Chippy. The crown was a medium brown with a light median stripe and light supercilium. Surrounding and behind the eye was a roughly triangular patch of brown surrounded by lighter color. Below

the light malar area was a well-defined, dark streak. The middle of the nape, back and wings were a medium brown with streaks of darker color and buff. The sides of the nape were distinctly gray. The wings were marked with two light but distinct wingbars on the greater and median primary coverts. The bill was brownish with a suffusion of yellow on the mandible; the legs were flesh-colored. The underparts were generally a light gray but graded into a wash of buff on the breast and whitish belly. On several occasions, a sharp but rather quiet flight note was given, somewhat intermediate between that of a Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) and a Chipping Sparrow.

After a couple of minutes, the sparrow flew off and returned to the ground to feed amidst a fairly heavy cover of grass. After cautiously pursuing it, I was able to flush the bird back into a shrub in the fenceline where I confirmed the above noted field marks. When the sparrow dropped into the hayfield again, I retreated and called several members of the Beckham Bird Club. Within three-quarters of an hour Dr. Burt Monroe, Jr. and Don Parker arrived and after approximately fifteen minutes we successfully relocated the bird in the same field. Upon flushing, the sparrow returned to the same fenceline where it posed patiently in less than optimal (but sufficient) light for viewing, enabling us to study all field marks through a Questar telescope.

During this latter observation, I was able to obtain several photographs through the telescope that turned out quite well given the poor lighting. Color prints of the bird clearly showing most field marks noted have been deposited with Anne L. Stamm, Seasonal Reports editor for *The Kentucky Warbler*, and represent the first photographic documentation of the Clay-colored Sparrow in Kentucky. Prior to this observation, the species had been reported from the state only once, near Lexington on 7 May 1978 (KW 54:47, 1978).

—BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY 40222.

NEWS AND VIEWS

MANY THANKS!

The membership of the Kentucky Ornithological Society expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Clay for their outstanding contribution to the 1990 spring meeting. The success of the weekend was assured by their superb hospitality both in birding opportunities at Big Pond Sanctuary and a delicious luncheon served at their home.