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The Kentucky Warbler

(Published by the Kentucky Ornithological Society)

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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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THE COVER

We thank Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. for the photograph of the Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*). See the Field Notes section.

THE NESTING SEASON, 1993
BURT L. MONROE, JR. AND ANNE L. STAMM

Temperature for the months of June and July was above normal, almost five degrees so in July. Rainfall for the month of June was above normal by about half an inch, and of July nearly normal. Severe weather, including tornadoes, swept across Kentucky June 11 creating considerable damage, but there is no evidence that it had any significant effect on breeding bird populations.

Abbreviations: BWMA=Ballard Wildlife Management Area, Ballard County; BPS=Big Pond Sanctuary, Grayson County; BOCL=Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve, Boone County; CEL=Camp Ernest Lake, near Burlington, Boone County; CRL=Cave Run Lake, Rowan County; Hick=Hickman, Fulton County; LCWMA=Lake Cumberland Wildlife Management Area, Pulaski County; LPew=Lake Pewee, Hopkins County; LBL=Land Between the Lakes, Trigg/Lyon counties; Lou=Louisville, Jefferson County; MCK=Middle Creek Park, Boone County; NeJC=Northeastern Jefferson County; PHSM=Peabody Homestead Surface Mine, Ohio County; Pet=Petersburg, Boone County; PCP=Pulaski County Park; PRP=Pumphouse Road pond, Pulaski County; SWMA=Sauerheber Wildlife Management Area, Henderson County; Som=Somerset, Pulaski County; TEWMA=Twin Eagle Wildlife Management Area, Owen County.

Least Bittern — immature, Mayfield Creek (Yellow Dog Cutoff), June 26 (CP).

Great Blue Heron — heronry with five active nests near Steamboat Hollow, along the Kentucky River, Franklin Co. (KP); one present all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Great Egret — >200, Fulton Co., July 31 (CP, HCh, SL).

Snowy Egret — ±25, Fulton Co., July 31 (CP, HCh, SL).

Little Blue Heron — 18 adults, 14 immatures, Fulton Co., June 17, same numbers all season (CP).

Cattle Egret — 8-12 present all season, Fulton Co. (CP).

Green-backed Heron — pair at 1992 nest near Owsley Fork Lake, Madison Co., May 5, one on nest May 25 (AR, TR); two, all season, BPS (HC, KC); pair nesting, Kentucky Lake near Hamlin, Livingston Co. (JTE).

Black-crowned Night-Heron — Lou, nesting colony, at least ±200 nests, established on grounds of Louisville Zoo in 1993, none on Shippingport this year (BM, MS); one seen, PRP, June 30-July 24 (JE).

Canada Goose — A pair arrived at a small lake in Ten Broeck subdivision, east of Lou, March 25 and remained to nest, five young hatching on May 10 (FW, AS).

Wood Duck — two all season, BPS (KC, HC); one female with 3 young, TEWMA, July 5 (LM); 15, Rough River Lake, Grayson Co., July 24 (KC, HC); 85+ seen, PRP, July 24, numbers increased due to nest boxes at site (JE).

Mallard — five, LPew, capable of flight, June (JH).

Blue-winged Teal — two at pond NeJC, June 1 (KC, JA); three pair, two with paddling chicks, Fulton Co., June 15 (JTE, CP); one male seen, PRP, June 30-July 24 (JE).

Hooded Merganser — A female with nine young was on a small pond in the LCWMA, May 12 (JE); one female, Fulton Co., June 15 (JTE, CP).

Osprey — Honker Lake, LBL, nesting (CP, PB, JB).

Mississippi Kite — near French Point, Fulton Co., 11 on June 15 (JTE, CP), and five on July 31 (HCh, SL, CP).

Bald Eagle — LBL, BWMA: abundant, 8 nests LBL, several BWMA (CP); Sauerheber NWR, Henderson Co.: one on nest, March 27 (KC, BBC); levee near Lake #9, Fulton Co. (CP), with three immatures and two adults on nest, May 22 (PB, JB, BBC).

N. Harrier — one male, two females, 1 June, PHSM (KC, HC).

Red-shouldered Hawk — one immature, BPS, 19 July (KC),

Broad-winged Hawk — two in Cumberland Co., June 1, one in Bell Co., June 17, one in Knott Co., June 18, and two in Johnson Co., June 19 (SS).

Wild Turkey — nest with 17 eggs, MCNP, May 10 (MS); four hens with 20 + chicks, Pulaski Co. July 11 (Elaine Walton, *vide* JE); adults were also reported in Owen and Boone counties (LM).

Killdeer — nest with 4 eggs at PCP, April 7 (JE); nest with 4 eggs, Ft. Knox, Hardin Co., May 19-20 (CMS).

Black-necked Stilt — all records west of Sassafras Ridge, Fulton Co.: June 6, one adult (Mark Bennett); June 18, 7 adults with at least 3 chicks, Open Pond (JE, DP); June 20, 8 adults with at least eight chicks, and some adults still brooding (photographed), by late June, at least 16 young hatched (BM, MM, CMS) [second state record, first breeding report]

Solitary Sandpiper — one, two miles south of Hick, July 31 (CP, HCh, SL).

Semipalmated Sandpiper — five, two miles south of Hick, July 31 (CP, HCh, SL).

Least Sandpiper — one, two miles south of Hick, July 31 (CP, HCh, SL).

Pectoral Sandpiper — three, two miles south of Hick, July 31 (CP, HCh, SL).

Forster's Tern — one seen, PCP, June 29 (JE).

Least Tern — one, Pond Slough, Fulton Co., June 15 (CP).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo — two, BPS, all season (KC, HC).

Eastern Screech-Owl — successfully nested in nest box, MCK (JC, KCa).

Great Horned Owl — SWMA: two juveniles out of nest and free-flying, Apr. 24 (MM, CMS, BM).

Com. Nighthawk — one downy chick, parking lot, Somerset Hospital, Pulaski Co., July 15 (JE).

Chuck-will's-widow — three, BPS, all season (KC, HC).

Whip-poor-will — two, near BPS, all season (KC, HC).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird — four, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); 3-15, BPS, June 5-July 9, 15 on last date included 8 immatures and females (HC, KC).

Red-headed Woodpecker — feeding young, TEWMA, July 5 (LM).

Red-cockaded Woodpecker — 3-4 seen at Seminary colony near Cumberland Falls, Whitley County, during June-July census (Somerset Bird Club, *vide* JE); one seen

by Bradford Elmore, July 22, Ponder colony, Laurel Co. (*vide* JE).

Eastern Wood-Pewee — eight, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Acadian Flycatcher — four, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Willow Flycatcher — one at Brazzle Bridge and two along Elk Creek, Hopkins Co. June 3 (JH); one seen, TEWMA, July 5 (LM).

E. Phoebe — building nest, Glasgow, Barren Co., March 27 (RS); three, all season, BPS (KC, HC).

Great Crested Flycatcher — four, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); two, all season, BPS (KC, HC); one carrying nesting material, MCK (LM).

E. Kingbird — nest with young, in fork of dead tree over water, CEL, June 4 (LM); one on nest at TEWMA, July 5 (LM).

Purple Martin — Good colony at Leitchfield, Grayson Co., during season (AW).

Tree Swallow — nesting in bluebird boxes was also evident this year at MCFH (FB); feeding young at a nest box, CEL, June 4 (LM); one adult seen, Pulaski Co. Park, June 29 (JE).

Bank Swallow — colony with about 50 cavities in gravel pit, near Belleview, Boone Co., May 7 (JC, KCa); two nesting holes in a bank of the Kentucky River, Owen County, with entering, May 19-20 (KP); also nest cavity in slide area along Kentucky River, Mercer County, June 1 (KP).

Cliff Swallow — noted nest building, Wolper Creek, near Pet, May 8 (LM); nesting on dam tower at CRL (FB); 35+ near nesting colony, Ansel, northwestern Pulaski Co., July 4 (JE).

Fish Crow — singles, July 29, Mayfield Creek (Yellow Dog Cutoff), Carlisle Co., and on BWMA, (CP); about a dozen, Fulton Co., July 31 (CP).

Carolina Chickadee — one in nest hole on eggs in Hart Co., Apr. 26 (MS).

Carolina Wren — two nests in NeJC, one in car port in June and one in "hard hat" on porch in July (FW, AS).

Bewick's Wren — noted at three Owen Co. locations on summer breeding bird surveys: near Fairbanks, June 1, near Long Ridge, June 3, and near Sweet Owen, June 3 (LM).

House Wren — four, all season, BPS (KC, HC); three, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — feeding young in nest, BOCL, May 25 (LM); two, all season, nested, BPS (KC, HC).

Wood Thrush — Recently fledged noted, BOCL, June 26 (LM).

Gray Catbird — nest with 4 eggs, MCK, May 26 (LM); two pairs nesting at Leitchfield, Grayson Co. (AW); two, all season, BPS (KC, HC); three, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Brown Thrasher — four, all season, BPS (KC, HC); two, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Cedar Waxwing — pairs seen at various locations, Pulaski Co., June-July (JE); 24-30, BPS, during June, absent July (KC, HC).

Loggerhead Shrike — one, Short Creek, Grayson Co., June 2 (KC); one, near Glen-

coe, Owen Co., June 3 (LM); family group of at least six, near Pond Slough, Fulton Co., July 31 (CP).

White-eyed Vireo — three, all season, BPS (KC, HC); ten, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Solitary Vireo — five at five locations, Bell Co., June 17, and one in Knott Co., June 18 (SS).

Yellow-throated Vireo — five at five locations, Hopkins Co., June (JH).

Warbling Vireo — six at five locations, Hopkins Co., June, seems to be declining in some areas (JH).

Red-eyed Vireo — two, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); adult feeding young cowbird, BOCL, June 12 (LM); adult feeding young cowbird, 10 July, while ignoring young vireo nearby, Pulaski Co. (JE).

Yellow Warbler — one, Elk Creek Road, Hopkins Co., June 2, very rare (JH).

Black-throated Green Warbler — one singing in McCreary Co., June 15 and 16, and two in Harlan Co., June 17 (SS, BS).

Yellow-throated Warbler — one, at Lock Mary, Hopkins Co., June 19 (JH); one, northern Hopkins Co., June 30 (JH).

Pine Warbler — heard, Hopkins Co., to June 27 (JH).

Prairie Warbler — two, all season, BPS (KC, HC); two, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); two, along Antioch Rd., Hopkins Co., June 16 (JH).

Cerulean Warbler — eight in Knott Co., June 18, two in Johnson Co., June 19, and four in Pike Co., June 20 (SS).

Black-and-white Warbler — family of five seen at Cumberland Falls State Park, Whitley Co., June 12 (JE).

Prothonotary Warbler — quite unusual was one in Johnson Co., June 19 (SS).

Swinson's Warbler — one carrying food, along Martin's Fork in Red River Gorge, June 5 (Northern Kentucky Bird Club); one in Bell Co. and three in Harlan Co., June 17 (SS).

Ovenbird — attending young recently out of nest, BOCL, June 26 (LM).

Louisiana Waterthrush — one, Olive Branch Rd., Hopkins Co., June 16 (JH); one, at Lock Mary, Hopkins Co., June 19 (JH).

Com. Yellowthroat — two, all season, BPS (KC, HC); five, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Yellow-breasted Chat — four, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); fair numbers during June in Cumberland, Wayne, Knott and, particularly, Johnson counties (SS).

Summer Tanager — two, all season, BPS (KC, HC); two, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Scarlet Tanager — nest-building, three locations, BOCL, two on May 8, one on May 25 (LM); two, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); several heard, various locations, Hopkins Co., June 16-29 (JH).

Blue Grosbeak — three, Owen Co., June 3 (LM); 4-5 singing males, reclaimed strip-mine near Ano, Pulaski Co., June 6 (JE); seven at five locations, Hopkins Co., June 23-July 30 (JH); one, near Pet, July 17 (LM); and others in Cumberland, Johnson

and Wayne counties, June 1-19 (SS).

Indigo Bunting — two, all season, nested, BPS (KC, HC); 18, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Dickcissel — ten, PHSM, June 1 (KC, HC); 3-4 singing males, reclaimed strip-mine near Ano, Pulaski Co., June 6 (JE).

Field Sparrow — 30, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA); 30 on summer count, Nelson Co., June 13 (KC, HC).

Chipping Sparrow — four, all season, BPS (KC, HC); six, all season, NeJC (KC, LR, JA).

Henslow's Sparrow — two, June 16, NeJC (KC, LR).

Grasshopper Sparrow — 15, PHSM, June 1 (KC, HC); several, reclaimed strip-mine near Ano, Pulaski Co., June 6 (JE).

Song Sparrow — many located, Hopkins Co., June-July (JH).

Bobolink — one male, reclaimed strip-mine near Ano, Pulaski Co., June 6 (JE); five sites near Danville, Boyle County, at least 30 adults present, May 3-July 16, by June 7 barely flying juveniles noted, all sites mowed by July 16 (BK, FL).

Orchard Oriole — a few in Bell, Cumberland, Johnson and Wayne counties, June 1-19 (SS); six, various localities, Hopkins Co. June 2-July 6 (JH).

N. Oriole — one at Highway 1069 (Stagecoach Rd.), Hopkins Co., June 16, and one at Loch Mary, June 19 (JH).

House Finch — nest in a shrub with five eggs, Som, Apr. 9 (JE); another in a spruce with five young, southern Pulaski Co., May 9 (JE); two nests in hanging fern plants and one in spruce tree, southwestern Lou (VJ).

Observers: Janet Aylward (JA), Beckham Bird Club field trip (BBC), Jane Bell (JB), Pat Bell (PB), Fred Busroe (FB), Joe Caminiti (JC), Kathy Caminiti (KCa), Hap Chambers (HCh), Herbert Clay (HC), Kathryn Clay (KC), Dona Coates (DC), Jackie Elmore (JE), Joe Tom Erwin (JTE), James Hancock (JH), Violet Jackson (VJ), William Kemper (BK), Kentucky Ornithological Society field trip (KOS), S. Leedom (SL), Fred Loetscher (FL), Judith McCandless (JM), Lee McNeely (LM), Fred Mansmith (FM), Burt Monroe III (BMIII), Burt Monroe, Jr. (BM), Mark Monroe (MM), Donald Parker (DP), Clell Peterson (CP), Kerry Prather (KP), Lene Rauth (LR), Art Ricketts (AR), Tina Ricketts (TR), Anne Stamm (AS), Russell Starr (RS), B. Stedman (BS), S. Stedman (SS), C. Michael Stinson (CMS), Mitchell Sturgeon (MS), Bonnie West (BS), F. Williams (FW), Alita Wilson (AW).

— Dept. of Biology, University of Louisville, Louisville 40292, and 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40241.

Corrigenda to Winter Season, 1992-1993, report — The following records were incorrectly submitted and need to be corrected: p. 32, in list of localities, Jonathan Creek (JC) is in Marshall County, not Calloway County; p. 34, Franklin's Gull entry should be changed to "Three *Franklin's Gulls* were at JC, Dec. 19, and six there on Dec. 22 (CP)." p. 35, Forster's Tern entry should be changed to "Three *Forster's Terns* were reported at JC, Dec. 19 (CP) and Dec. 20 (DP)." American Pipit entry should read "Two Am. Pipits were at JC, Dec. 19 (CP) and Dec. 20 (DP)."

The Kentucky Ornithological Society Fall Meeting, September 24-26, 1993

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its 70th annual fall meeting at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park on September 24-26, 1993. President Lee McNeely opened the Friday night session by welcoming everyone to KOS and acknowledging first time participants. He then turned the program over to Vice-President Fred Busroe who introduced Steve Phillips of the U.S. Forest Service. Steve gave us an excellent presentation on Red-cockaded Woodpecker management in the Daniel Boone National Forest. His presentation was followed by Lee McNeely with a report and slides on birding at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. He also reported on Swainson's Warblers in the Red River Gorge. Dr. Herbert Clay, Jr. also had slides to share. Fred Busroe announced the morning field trips would be led by Steve Phillips (Red-cockaded Woodpecker roost site) and Bert Powell (lodge area). Lee McNeely and his wife hosted a social hour in their room following the meeting.

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

Lee McNeely opened the Saturday evening program and introduced the speaker, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. whose presentation was entitled "Results of Kentucky Breeding Bird Atlas 1985-91". Distribution maps and slides gave us indications of what we can look forward to when the atlas is ready by early 1994.

The nominating committee presented the following slate of officers for the coming year: President - Dr. Herbert Clay, Jr., Vice-President - Wayne Mason, Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer - C. Michael Stinson, Recording Secretary - Tina Ricketts, Councilors - Marilee Thompson and Art Ricketts. The membership approved the slate. President Lee McNeely presented the Board recommendation that a special KOS Research Grant Fund be established. This was approved by the membership and a collection of funds was started.

Virginia Kingsolver read a tribute to Dr. Burt Monroe, Jr. and showed the plaque that will be presented to him. Blaine Ferrell tallied birds seen by the group on Friday and Saturday and a list of species was compiled. Bad weather contributed to the low total.

Sunday morning Fred Busroe led a field trip around the lodge and Lee McNeely's trip was a return to the Red-cockaded Woodpecker roost site. A good time was had by all despite the rain. — Tina Ricketts, Recording Secretary.

Attendance At The Spring Meeting At Cumberland Falls State Resort Park

BEREA: Art Ricketts, Tina Ricketts

BOWLING GREEN: Blaine Ferrell

- BURLINGTON:** Joe Caminiti, Kathy Caminiti, Lee McNeely, Lynda McNeely, Karen Stephens, Tom Stephens
CARLISLE: Ginny Kingsolver, Wendell Kingsolver
DANVILLE: Ginny Eklund, Neil Eklund
COX'S CREEK: Dona Coates
FALLS OF ROUGH: Herbert Clay, Kathryn Clay, Joyce L. Porter
GILBERTSVILLE: Rowena Cary
LEXINGTON: Jean Flynn, Mike Flynn, Gerry Williams, Jim Williams
LOUISVILLE: Jane Bell, Pat Bell, Wayne Dahl, Celia Lawrence, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Don Summerfield, Donald B. Summerfield, Emily Summerfield, Anne Stamm, C. Michael Stinson
MOREHEAD: Fred Busroe
OWENSBORO: Margaret Craig, Joy Fitzgerald, Mary Lydia Greenwell, Bert Powell, Millie Powell, Marilee Thompson, Wendell Thompson
PADUCAH: Bernice Cadell
PROSPECT: Coleen Mansmith, Fred T. Mansmith
RICHMOND: Delores Nelson, A.L. Whitt, Willie Witt
RUSSELLVILLE: Mark Bennett
SCIENCE HILL: Jackie B. Elmore
SOMERSET: Roseanna Denton, Carolyn Gay Hodges
STANLEY: Anna Lee Stevenson, Tom Stevenson
- COOKEVILLE, TN:** Stephen Stedman
RICHMOND, IN: Janet Wickersham
ROCKPORT, IN: Rebecca Hinton

Birds Observed at the Annual Fall Meeting, 1993

Birds observed on Friday and Saturday on field trips at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park were Great Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Wood Duck, Mallard, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Solitary Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Tennessee Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow for a total of 57 species. An additional species, Swainson's Thrush was observed on Sunday field trips, bringing the total to 58 species.

KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

TREASURER'S REPORT — SPECIAL FUNDS

23 September 1993

ENDOWMENT FUND

Total Endowment Fund balance on 30 September 1992 — 9262.52

BANK—	ACCOUNT ABBREVIATION—	VALUE
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CDs:

Great Financial Federal—	948—	1076.66
Great Financial Federal—	930—	1614.98
Great Financial Federal—	140—	2399.97
Republic Bank & Trust Company—	598—	1024.63

Savings account:

PNC—	295—	3437.74
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Interest income, 1 October 1992 to 23 September 1993 — 291.46

TOTAL CURRENT VALUE — 9553.98

GORDON WILSON FUND

Total Gordon Wilson Fund balance on 30 September 1992— 6934.74

BANK—	ACCOUNT ABBREVIATION—	VALUE
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CDs:

Republic Bank & Trust Company—	605—	1024.63
Republic Bank & Trust Company—	041—	1082.45

Savings account:

Great Financial Federal—	604—	4996.16
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Interest income, 1 October 1992 to 23 September 1993 — 169.50

TOTAL — 7104.24

TOTAL SPECIAL FUNDS ASSETS — 16658.22

KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

TREASURER'S REPORT (Unaudited)

1 October 1992 - 23 September 1993

Total Assets, 30 September 1992— 17949.19

RECEIPTS

Membership dues —	3496.00	
Meeting registration —	232.00	
Sales of <i>Annotated Checklist</i> —	215.29	
Sales of engravings —	33.00	
Sales of checklist cards —	32.00	
Sales of <i>Kentucky Warbler</i> back issues —	30.00	
Memorial contribution —	20.00	
Special funds total interest income —	460.96	
TOTAL —		4519.25

DISBURSEMENTS

Printing, <i>Kentucky Warbler</i> (three issues), and mailing envelopes —	2066.11	
Meeting expenses — (includes room, honoraria for two meetings)	426.82	
Postage —	325.98	
<i>Kentucky Birdline</i> —	297.02	
B. Palmer-Ball, repayment, <i>Ann. Checklist</i> —	223.31	
Audit Fee —	100.00	
D. Coates, reimbursement —	39.60	
Safe Deposit Box rental —	25.00	
Dues envelopes printing —	11.66	
Kentucky State Treasurer, tax —	8.42	
American Birding Association repayment —	6.48	
Kentucky State Treasurer filing fee —	4.00	
TOTAL —		3534.40
TOTAL ASSETS, SPECIAL FUNDS —		16658.22
GENERAL FUND, current assets —		2269.76
TOTAL ASSETS, all accounts, on 23 September 93 —		18927.98

FIELD NOTES

A Natural Nest Site of the Bewick's Wren

Although Mengel (1965) includes details of approximately a dozen nests of the Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), all nest sites noted and cited involve artificial structures. Similarly, more recent literature records include only the use of manmade outbuildings, nest boxes, and other artificial structures of one sort or another.

While conducting field work for the Kentucky Breeding Bird Atlas in the summer of 1991, I discovered a relatively substantial breeding population of Bewick's Wrens in Lyon and Trigg counties of western Kentucky. A few birds were found in the typical rural farmstead habitat one most often associates with the species, but I also found it to be fairly common on recently cleared forest land that was being converted to pine plantations. In 1987, Robinson (1989) found substantial numbers of Bewick's Wrens in such habitat just south of Trigg County in Stewart County, Tennessee. Numbers of Bewick's Wrens seemed equally as abundant at the sites I discovered in Kentucky. For example, in one expansive area of recently cleared land in Lyon County no less than five territorial birds were counted and three family groups observed.

I returned to the Lyon County site on 5 May 1992 and was successful in locating at least five singing males, as well as a pair of birds. While watching this pair I noticed that they were carrying food and seemed agitated at my presence. I moved back and knelt down amidst some cover; within a few minutes the birds reappeared and entered the hollow base of a fallen tree with food. Upon inspection of the site, I found a nest containing at least three half-grown young.

The nest was situated approximately six to eight inches inside the hollow and was constructed of small sticks and twigs, along with a few dead leaves and feathers. Wind had apparently blown over the tree, causing it to break off approximately two feet above the ground. Although the crown of the tree fell to the ground, enough bark was still attached to the stump to support its lower end from falling completely to the ground. The lower end of the tree was hollow, resulting in the presence of a sheltered, horizontal cavity of at least 8-10 inches in diameter. Although natural nest sites apparently have been reported within other parts of the species' range, this appears to be the first such instance documented in Kentucky.

As noted previously, the nesting population of Bewick's Wrens in these areas is rather substantial. The most commonly used sites are typically situated along ridges and upper slopes, and prior to manipulation by man they are vegetated by fairly mature deciduous forest. Each tract is heavily logged, and the slash is piled into rows and often burned to clear the land before planting. Those smaller trees that remain are sprayed with defoliant and die soon afterwards, leaving the appearance of a wasteland. Pine seedlings are planted immediately and allowed to grow as a source for pulpwood. It is apparently soon after the initial logging and clearing that Bewick's Wrens move into these habitats. They appear to use the piles of slash for nesting and foraging, and the standing dead trees serve as singing perches. It is probable that as the pines begin to grow up, the wrens move out as the plant life recovers. Within only about five years, the pines become the dominant vegetation, and scattered piles of logging debris become choked with young trees and brush.

Subsequent to finding such substantial numbers of Bewick's Wrens in this habitat, I tried to speculate about why the species was so common there. Man has altered the landscape in many ways, and if birds cannot find naturally occurring habitats they prefer, they often occupy habitats that mimic native conditions as a result of man's activities. For example, species that once occurred in native grasslands primarily occupy artificial situations like hayfields, pastures and reclaimed surface mines today. When one visits the severely altered habitats in which the Bewick's Wrens are so common in Lyon County and tries to relate the condition to a naturally occurring one, the closest example that can be envisioned is some sort of catastrophic natural disturbance such as wildfire or wind storms.

Bewick's Wrens are somewhat nomadic, seemingly moving about from place to place more than most other species. They often nest in an area only once, and are frequently seen or heard at a location in spring or early summer for only a day or two. Considering that naturally occurring forest disturbance is rather random, and that such habitat might be suitable for nesting wrens for only a few years following the occurrence, this nomadic nature would seem to favor the species' ability to encounter new tracts of suitable habitat. One can also envision that when man first began to settle the eastern deciduous forests, the small, scattered openings he created for settlement suited the wrens to a tee. It is even possible that the species increased in occurrence and abundance as man spread across the forested countryside. In more recent times, settlement has become more concentrated, and forest clearing has progressed to a point that prime habitat may no longer be as abundant. Furthermore, as clearing has progressed, the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), long suspected of being a competitor of the Bewick's Wren, has spread southward. What factors have affected the historical occurrence of Bewick's Wrens in Kentucky may never be clear, but it is possible that the species' abundance in the manipulated habitats of western Kentucky today provides a clue — BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR., Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, 407 Broadway, Frankfort, 40601.

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First Reported Nesting of Black-Necked Stilt in Kentucky

BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR. AND MARK BENNETT

On 6 June 1993, Bennett was birding in the lower Hickman Bottoms of western Fulton County when he found a Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) feeding in an open body of water known as Number 8 Slough. This slough parallels the Mississippi River landward of the levee and lies approximately three-quarters of a mile northwest of Fish Pond. The bird was viewed at several hundred yards, but all field marks of this striking shorebird were noted. Later in the day, a second stilt was

observed at much closer range, just south of the state line in Tennessee at an area known as the Pillippy borrow pits.

On 13 June 1993, Palmer-Ball visited western Fulton County in search of the stilt reported by Bennett. Nothing was found at Number 8 Slough, but at least three pairs of stilts were found nesting in a flooded field approximately two miles west-southwest of the small community of Sassafras Ridge. Prior to conversion to agricultural land, this area was a large floodplain slough known as Open Pond. For a number of years, however, it has been planted in crops, flooding only seasonally.

On 13 June, at least seven adult Black-necked Stilts were observed in loose association with one another, mostly feeding in shallow pools that remained from high water of May. On this date the waters had receded into several distinct pools ringing a slightly higher ridge. At the northern end of these pools a pair of stilts was attending four recently hatched chicks that might have been a few days old. The adults challenged the approach of all other birds including Snowy and Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons and Red-winged Blackbirds, chasing them incessantly as the chicks fed nearby.

Several hundred yards to the south of this family group, a stilt could be seen brooding on a nest at the crest of the low ridge. While approaching the nest site, at least six adult birds converged upon the immediate area, calling loudly and engaging in a variety of distress and distraction displays of broken wings and legs. Inspection of the site revealed a nest containing four eggs (see Figure 1). By scanning the entire area with a spotting scope, another incubating bird was detected in between the family of chicks and the southern nest site. Six of the adult birds were obviously associated into three pairs, and the seventh was believed to be associated with another bird into a fourth pair, although a nest site could not be seen.



Figure 1. Black-necked Stilt nest containing four eggs at Open Pond, Fulton County, 13 June 1993.

A search of the rest of western Fulton County on 13 June yielded the observation of stilts at only one additional location. Approximately three miles southwest of Open

Pond, three adult birds were observed in a flooded field just north of the Tennessee state line and east of the Mississippi River levee, but their actions suggested that they were not breeding at this site. Just to the south at the Phillippy borrow pits, at least three birds were observed sitting at nests where Bennett had observed one bird on 6 June.

Palmer-Ball returned to western Fulton County with Jackie and Bradford Elmore and Donald Parker on the afternoon of 18 June. Several stilts were immediately found at Open Pond, and it was apparent that at least seven adult birds were still present. The day was hot and radiation waves made observation of more distant birds difficult, but the family group of four chicks was observed where they had been seen previously, and the other two pairs were still incubating. No stilts could be found elsewhere in the county, although at least two birds were still present at the Phillippy borrow pits in Tennessee.

Subsequent visits to Open Pond during the following few weeks documented the successful rearing of young in four family groups. Two Tennessee birders, Glen Criswell and Jeff Wilson, visited Open Pond late in the day on 19 June and reported finding four pairs of adults, each tending a brood of four chicks! Palmer-Ball returned with Mark Gumbert on 25 June and found nesting activities still underway. A lush growth of green grass had grown around the pools of water, and a recent rain had inundated the grasses, making observation of chicks rather difficult. The oldest brood of four chicks was easily seen, however, and appeared to be about half-grown. Another brood of at least three younger chicks was watched at rather close range, and the behavior of the other two pairs indicated that their chicks were foraging among the grasses, as well.

Subsequent to 25 June, smaller numbers of stilts were observed at Open Pond on each visit. According to Glen Criswell, at least five adults were still present on 8 July and the oldest chicks appeared to be capable of flight. On 13 July, K.O.S. member Mike Flynn reported observing 11 stilts at the site (including large young), indicating that two family groups probably remained. On 17 July, Palmer-Ball returned for a final visit, and all that remained of the four family groups was a pair of adults with four chicks that could fly well. On this latter date, the family group of chicks was photographed (see the cover).

These observations represent the first documented nesting of Black-necked Stilts in Kentucky and only the third report for the state overall. This species formerly nested in the eastern United States only along the Gulf Coast; however, since 1981 small numbers have nested up the Mississippi Valley at least as far as Memphis (J. Wilson, pers. comm.). According to Wilson, numbers of stilts have been increasing dramatically since the mid-1980s just across the river from western Tennessee in Arkansas, and in 1993 the species nested at several Tennessee and Missouri localities where it had not nested before. Thus, it is apparent that the occurrence of Black-necked Stilts in western Kentucky in 1993 was part of a continuing expansion of the nesting range, and that the species should nest there again. Conditions vary from year to year along the Mississippi River, however, and it is probable that nesting will not be successful some or most years. Water levels were fairly high in late spring of 1993,

and suitable habitat was present when the stilts apparently arrived in late May. During most years, the nesting area at Open Pond is planted in agricultural crops by late May. — 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, 40222 (Palmer-Ball) and 180 Circle Drive, Russellville, 42276 (Bennett).

NEWS AND VIEWS

Reminder of the Kentucky Rare Bird Alert Hotline

Remember, the Kentucky Rare Bird Alert hotline is in service at (502) 894-9538. Mike Stinson regularly updates the tapes with your reports of unusual bird sightings from around the state. Help support this service with your reports.

K.O.S. Avian Research Grant Fund

The Kentucky Ornithological Society voted to start an Avian Research Grant Fund at its fall meeting. Persons that need money (*i.e.*, up to \$500.00) to assist them in conducting research on birds in Kentucky will be able to apply to the Kentucky Ornithological Society Avian Research Grant Fund Committee in the spring. Look for details in the February issue of *The Kentucky Warbler*. Initial research projects considered for funding should focus on the avifauna of the reclaimed stripmine areas in Muhlenburg and Ohio counties that are part of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Service's new wildlife management area leased from Peabody Coal Company.

K.O.S. Field Trip

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 13, 14, and 15 May 1994. A weekend trip to Crane Creek State Park, near Oregon, Ohio. Observers should be greeted with an abundance of spring migrants. This is a very popular area at this time of year with birders coming from all over the country to see returning warblers, thrushes, etc. Therefore it is necessary to make lodging reservations early. For more information about the trip and suggestions for where to stay, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Jane Bell, 306 Fairlawn Road, Louisville, KY 40207-2910. Pat and Jane Bell will organize and lead this trip. (502) 895-7872.