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## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 75, no. 2)

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# *The Kentucky Warbler*

(Published by 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 \$8.00; Contributing, \$15.00; Student \$4.00; Life, \$100.00; Family, \$2.00 in addition to Regular, Contributing or Life Membership dues; Corporate. All articles and communications should be addressed to the editor. Subscriptions, memberships and request for back issues should be sent to the Treasurer.

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## THE COVER

We thank our staff artist, Ray Harm, for this excellent painting of an American Robin, *Turdus migratorius*.

Fred M Busroe

The Winter was an unusual season with many extremes in weather conditions. January was the third warmest on record with above normal precipitation. February 11 had a record high temperature of 70+°F, followed by a 45° temperature drop over the next 24 hours. There was a heavy influx of Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings into northern Kentucky during the severe weather in January.

Abbreviations - WMA = Wildlife Management Area; AJP = A J Jolly Park, Campbell County; Aur = Aurora Ferry Road, Boone County; BWMA = Ballard WMA, Ballard County; Bark = Barkley Dam, Livingston/Lyon counties; Barn = Barren County; Bell = Bellevue, Campbell County; Bern = Bernheim Forest, Bullitt/Nelson cos.; Big = Big Bone Creek, Boone County; BGA = Blue Grass Army Depot, Madison County; Blo = Blood River Embayment, Calloway County; Bur = Burlington, Boone County; CEL = Camp Ernst Lake, Boone County; CHC = Camargo Hunt Club, Boone County; CRL = Cave Run Lake, Bath/Rowan cos.; Cha = Chaney Lake, Warren County; Cra = Craig's Creek, Gallatin County; Dale = Dale Hollow Lake, Clinton County; Day = Dayton, Campbell County; EBP = East Bend Power Plant, Boone County; EKV = Eastern Kentucky University, Madison County; Falls = Falls of Ohio, Jefferson County; FtT = Fort Thomas, Campbell County, FtW = Fort Wright, Kenton County; Ful = Fulton County; Ghe = Ghent Power Plant, Carroll County; Gri - Basil Griffin Park, Warren County; Gun = Gunpowder Creek, Boone County; Hart = Hart County; Hic = Hickman Bottoms, Fulton County; Ky Dam = Kentucky Dam, Marshall/Livingston cos.; Ky Lake = Kentucky Lake, Calloway/Livingston/Marshall counties; KOS = Kentucky Ornithological Society field trip; LBark = Lake Barkley, Livingston/Lyon/Trigg cos.; LPew = Lake Pewee, Hopkins County; LWC = Louisville Water Company, Jefferson County; Mad = Madisonville, Hopkins County; Mark = Markland Dam, Gallatin County; McEl = McElroy Lake, Warren County; Mel = Meldahl Dam, Bracken County; MCFH = Minor Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan County; New = Newport, Campbell County; Ohio = Ohio River, Jefferson County; Open = Open Pond, Fulton County; OLF = Owsley Fork Lake, Jackson/Madison cos.; PBF = Palmer-Ball Farm, Jefferson County; PWMA = Peabody WMA, Muhlenberg/Ohio cos.; Pet = Petersburg, Boone County; Rab = Rabbit Hash, Boone County; RNWR = Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, Fulton County; SC = Short Creek, Grayson County; Smi = Smithland Dam, Livingston County; Thu = Thurston's Pond, Wayne County; Tow = Towhead Island, Jefferson County; War = Warsaw, Gallatin County.

**Red-throated Loon** - 1 on December 7 at Ky Dam (DR).

**Common Loon** - 11 on December 5 at Ky Dam (Hap, CP); 1 on

December 20 on Ohio and 10 on January 2 on Ky Lake (DO); 1 on February 15 at Big (LMc); 1 on February 28 at OFL (RG, GR).

- Pied-billed Grebe** - 22 on December 4 and 27 on December 15 at LPew (JWH).
- Horned Grebe** - 1 on December 5 at LWC and 1 on December 20 on Ohio (DO).
- Eared Grebe** - 1 on December 8-9 at Bark and 1 on December 9 at Barren River Reservoir, Barn (DR).
- White Pelican** - 15 on January 23 at Bark (Hap); 55 on February 7 at Ky Dam (Hap, Ben); 47 on February 29 at Blo (Hap, JTE).
- Double-crested Cormorant** - 1 at LWC and Ohio on December 20 (DO).
- Great Blue Heron** - 15 on December 20 at Falls (DO); 1 to 3 during the period at AJP (FR).
- Black-crowned Night-Heron** - 1 on January 17 at Bark (DO, DR).
- Black Vulture** - 14 on December 13 at RNWR (DO); 2 on February 18 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Turkey Vulture** - 7 on February 18 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Snow Goose** - 1 blue phase on December 5-6 at AJP (FR); 115 (including 35 blue phase) on February 20 at Hic (KOS); 1000+ on January 16 at BWMA (DO); an adult and an immature at MCFH during February 15-22 (FB); 2 (blue phase) on February 28 at McEl (BE).
- Ross' Goose** - 1 on January 20 and 24 at Gri (LD, DR); 2 on February 28 at McEl (BE).
- Greater White-fronted Goose** - 4 on December 13 at RNWR (DO); 85 on February 14 in Ful (Hap, CP); 60 on February 20 at Hic (KOS); 7 on February 28 at McEl (BE).
- Canada Goose** - Numbers increasing from 336 on December 23 to 700 on January 20 at AJP (FR); 98 on January 8 at OFL (RG, GR); 212 on January 10 at LWC (DO).
- Mute Swan** - 3 on January 8 at OFL (RG, GR); 7 on January 16 at Gun (LMc); 9 on January 21 at Thu (RD).
- Wood Duck** - 3 on January 16 at BWMA (DO); 7 on February 13 and 2 on February 28 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Gadwall** - 126 on December 5 at Falls (DO); 1 on January 8 at OFL (RG, GR); 6 on January 15 at Bel (FR).
- American Wigeon** - 4 on January 1 at PWMA (DO).
- American Black Duck** - 12 on January 1 at PWMA (DO); 34 on January 8 at OFL (RG, GR); 25 on January 18 at Ghe (LMc).
- Mallard** - 120 on December 16 at AJP (FR); 72 on January 8 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Blue-winged Teal** - 1 on February 3 at Cha (DR).
- Northern Shoveler** - 35 on December 3 at RNWR (DO); 18 on December 6 at Blo (Hap); 6 on December 19 at AJP and 5 on December 23 at Mel (FR).
- Northern Pintail** - 9 on December 3 at RNWR (DO); 5 on January 18 at Ghe (LMc); 300+ on February 14 in Ful (Hap); estimated 500 on February 20 at Hic (KOS)

- Green-winged Teal** - 12 on December 6 at Blo (Hap); 3 on December 20 at Falls (DO); 20 on January 18 at Ghe (LMc); 15 on February 20 at RNWR (Hap, CP).
- Canvasback** - 8 on January 8 and 1 on January 22 at OFL (RG, GR); approx. 110 on January 16 at Mark and 63 on January 20 at Mel (FR); 34 on January 16 at Rab, 15 on January 18 at Mark and 10 on January 18 at War (LMc).
- Redhead** - 1 at CEL February 13-28 (LMc).
- Ring-necked Duck** - 400 on January 1 at PWMA (DO); 204 on January 8 and 1 on January 22 at OFL (RG, GR); 3 on January 18 at Mark and 2 on February 15 at Aur (LMc). ;
- Greater Scaup** - 1 on December 5 at LWC and 2 on January 17 on Ky Lake (DO); 1 on February 15 at Aur (LMc).
- Lesser Scaup** - 9 on December 5 at Falls (DO); 10 on January 18 at Mark (LMc); 25 on February 28 at OFL (RG, GR); 100 on February 28 at Blo (Hap, JTE).
- Surf Scoter** - 1 on December 12 at Day and 4 on December 28 at FtT (FR); 2 on January 2 at Rab and 1 on January 18 at Mark (LMc) .
- White-winged Scoter** - 1 on January 28 at Bark (DR); 1 on February 4, 1 on February 10 and 2 on February 19 at Mel (FR).
- Black Scoter** - 1 on December 7 at Smi, 1 on December 12 at Ky Dam and 1 on December 12 at Bark (DR).
- Oldsquaw** - 2 on January 2 at EBP (LMc),
- Hooded Merganser** - 5 on December 12 at LWC (DO).
- Common Merganser** - 4 on January 2 at EBP (LMc); 3 on January 5 at Day (FR); 9 on January 22 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Red-breasted Merganser** - 2 on January 9 at Tow (DO).
- Ruddy Duck** - 1 on December 26 at Mel and 7 on January 18 at Mark (LMc); 3 on January 1 at PWMA (DO); 6 on January 2 at Bel (FR); 3 on January 8 and January 22 and 2 on February 28 at OFL (RG, GR); a high of 29 on February 13 at LPew (JWH).
- Bald Eagle** - 1 adult on December 9 and an immature on December 12 at Rab (LMc); 2 on January 10 at Blo (Hap); 5 on January 16 at BWMA (DO).
- Northern Harrier** - 1 on January 5 in Hart (MS); 2 on January 9 at Day (FR); 3 on January 16 at Aur and 1 on January 18 at Ghe (LMc); 10 on January 18 at PWMA (DO).
- Sharp-shinned Hawk** - 1 on February 17 in Hart (MS).
- Cooper's Hawk** - 3 on January 1 at PWMA (DO); 1 on January 11 in Barn (MS); 1 on February 16 at EKU, 1 on February 18 and 28 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Rough-legged Hawk** - 4 on January 1 at PWMA (DO).
- Golden Eagle** - One immature on January 18 at Bern (DO).
- Peregrine Falcon** - 2 on December 20 on Ohio (DO); 1 adult on January 18 at Ghe (LMc) ; 2 on February 28 at New levee (FR).

- American Coot** - A high of 300 on December 4 at I.Pew (JWH); 12 on December 12 on Ohio (DO); 106 on January 8, 40 on January 22 and 40 on February 28 at OFL (RG, GR).
- Sandhill Crane** - 45 on December 31 over Louisville (DO); 45+ on December 10, Hart, 40 on January 18 in Barn, 38 on January 18, Metcalfe Co. and 39 on February 5, Hart (MS); 52 on January 1 at ECU (RG, GR); 120 on January 4 over Bur (LMc); 30 on January 13 at FtW (GC); 500+ on February 21 at McEl (BE); approx. 1400 on the ground on February 22 at McEl (DR).
- Lesser Yellowlegs** - 1 on January 31 at McEl (DR).
- Least Sandpiper** - 10 on December 6 at Blo (Hap); 6 on January 2 in Calloway Co. (DO).
- Dunlin** - 4 on December 14 at Open (DO).
- American Woodcock** - 2 on February 27 at Maywoods, Garrard Co. (RG, GR).
- Common Snipe** - 4 on January 2 in Calloway Co. (DO); 75 on February 6 in Mercer Co. (NE, VE, AR, TR); 30 on February 14 in Ful (Hap, CP).
- Pomarine Jaeger** - 1 immature on January 23 (MB, Hap, DR, CS) and January 24 at Ky Dam (DO); 1 on February 7 at Ky Dam (Hap, Ben).
- Franklin's Gull** - 1 on December 5 at Ky Dam (Hap, CP); 1 on December 7 at Bark and at Smi (DR).
- Bonaparte's Gull** - 75 on January 2 at EBP and 8 at Rab (LMc); 30 on January 8 and 25 on January 9 at MCFH (FB, LK); 2 on January 18 in Cumberland Co. (MS); 2 on February 28 at McEl (BE).
- Ring-billed Gull** - 310 on December 20 on Ohio (DO); 15 on January 4 in Bern (MS); 30 at mall on January 9 at Mad (JWH); 200+ on January 9 at MCFH (FB, LK); 150 on January 18 at Cra (LMc); 1 on February 18 at BGA (RG, GR); 19 on February 28 at McEl (BE).
- Herring Gull** - 4 on December 20 on Ohio (DO); 5 on January 2 at EBP and 1 on January 20 at LPew (JWH).
- Thayer's Gull** - 1 (1st yr.) on January 17 and 24 at Bark and 2 (1st yr. and 3rd yr.) on January 17 at Ky Dam (Hap, DO, DR); 1 on February 7 at Ky Dam (Hap, Ben).
- Lesser Black-backed Gull** - 1 on January 17 at Bark (DO); several observations of different-aged birds during the period at Bark (Hap, CP, DR).
- Glaucous Gull** - 1 adult on January 11 at Calvert City, Marshall Co. and a 1st yr. bird at Ky Dam (DR); 1 on January 24 at Ky Dam (DO); 1 on February 7 at Ky Dam (Hap, Ben).
- Eastern Screech-Owl** - 7 on December 27 in Bern (DO).
- Great-horned Owl** - 1 on December 2 and 10 in Hart (MS); 1 on nest on February 15 at CEL (LMc); 1 being harassed by crows on February 27 at City Park, Mad (JWH).
- Short-eared Owl** - 3 on January 1 at PWMA (DO); 12 on January 6 at BGA (RG, GR); 1 on January 9 at Day (FR).
- Eastern Phoebe** - 1 on December 26 in Pendleton Co. (LMc); 1 on January 4 in Hart (MS).

**Loggerhead Shrike** - 1 on December 13 in Ful (DO); 6 on February 14 in Ful (Hap).

**Horned Lark** - 37 on January 2 at EBP and 100 on January 9-10 at CHC (LMc); 15 on January 9 at FtW (GC); as many as 150 observed January 3-15 at Day(FR); 340+ on January 10 at PBF (DO).

**Brown Creeper** - 2 on January 6 in Jefferson Co. (DO); 2 on February 9 at Goose Pond, CRL (FB).

**Winter Wren** - 2 on December 26 at Mel (LMc).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** - 1 on December 31 in Ohio Co. (DO); 30 on February 9 at Goose Pond, CRL (FB); 3 on February 13 at OFL (RG, GR).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** - 2 on January 18 in Cumberland Co. (MS); 6 on January 30 at Bern (DO); 1 on February 13 at OFL (RG, GR).

**Hermit Thrush** - 2 on December 27 at Bern (DO); 4 on February 13 and 1 on February 18 at OFL (RG, GR).

**American Pipit** - 1 on January 2 at EBP (LMc); 7 on January 2 at Ky Lake, 1 on January 9 at Falls and 3 on January 24 at McEl (DO).

**Orange-crowned Warbler** - 1 on December 5 at LWC (DO).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** - 2 on January 8 and 2 on February 13 at OFL (RG, GR).

**Pine Warbler** - 1 near feeder through February at Mad (JWH).

**American Tree Sparrow** - 1 on December 12 at LWC (DO); 30 on January 3 and 10 on January 6-8 at Day (FR); 1 at feeder on January 9-10 in Mad (JWH).

**Chipping Sparrow**- Observed through the period with a high of 12 on January 25 in Warn (DR).

**Savannah Sparrow** - 4 on January 4 at Day (FR).

**Fox Sparrow** - 2 on December 13 in Ful (DO); 1 on December 26 at Mel and 1 on January 3 in Bur (LMc); 1 to 3 observed through January in Mad (JWH).

**Lapland Longspur** - 4 to 60 observed between January 3-February 2 on 9 days at Day (FR); 14 on January 9 at PBF (DO); 5 on January 9-10 at CHC (LMc).

**Snow Bunting** - 8 on January 9 at PBF and 1 on January 10 in Louisville (DO); 3 on January 9-10 at CHC (LMc); 1 on January 10 at McEl (DR); 5 to 22 observed between January 8 and 16 at Day (FR).

**Northern Cardinal** - As many as 37 during February at feeder in Mad (JWH).

**Western Meadowlark** - 1 singing on December 7 at Open (DR).

**Rusty Blackbird** - 11 on January 9 at PBF (DO); 8 on January 9-10 at CHC (LMc).

**Purple Finch** - 1 on January 4 and 3 on January 9 at SC (JP); 1 male on January 18 at Bern (DO).

**Pine Siskin** - 1 on February 19 near Dale (DC).

**Evening Grosbeak** - 1 on February 7 at SC (JP).

Contributors - Frank Bennett (Ben), Mark Bennett (MB), Fred Busroe (FB), Hap Chambers (Hap), David Chaffin (DC); George Crabtree (GC), Roseanna Denton (RD), Lester Doyle (LD), Neil Eklund (NE), Virginia Eklund (VE), Bradford



Elmore (BE), Joe T. Erwin (JTE), R. A. Gelis (RG), James W. Hancock (JWH), Lewis Kornman (LK), Lee McNeely (LMc), Darrin O'brien (DO), Clell Peterson (CP), Joyce Porter (JP), Frank Renfrow (FR), Art Ricketts (AR), Tina Ricketts (TR), Gary Ritchison (GR), David Roemer (DR), Chris Sloan (CS), Mitchell Sturgeon (MS).

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### THE SPRING MEETING OF THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

April 30-May 2, 1999 at  
Jenny Wiley State Resort Park

The Spring meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was convened at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park near Prestonsburg, Kentucky on April 30, 1999. The meeting was called to order by President Wendell Kingsolver at 7:30 p.m. The Friday night program consisted of four excellent presentations.

The first presentation was made by David Roemer. Mr. Roemer presented video clips of 'good birds' located between the Fall 1998 meeting and the Spring meeting. The clips included birds filmed by David and Lester Doyle. Highlights of the video were a Pomerine Jaeger from Kentucky Dam, a Brown Pelican from Kentucky Dam, a Caliope Hummingbird banded at Reidland in McCracken County, and scenes of Sandhill Cranes and other species from the transient lakes of Warren County.

Members were also treated to a slide presentation by the park naturalist on the history of Dewey Dam, Jenny Wiley State Park, and Jenny Wiley, a pioneer woman captured by the native Americans. During her capture her four children were killed and she eventually lost a fifth child during the ordeal. Ironically, she was captured in a case of revenge and mistaken identity. The presentation included slides of Dewey Dam at various stages of construction and the evolution of the park to its present state.

Lee McNeely presented slides of a recent trip to south Texas accompanied by Kathy Caminiti, Joe Caminiti, and Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. Kathy Caminiti had taken most of the slides. Highlights included Green Jays, White-throated Robins, Whooping Cranes and Clay-colored Robins. Dr. Robert Young, K.O.S. member and free lance photographer, complemented the McNeely presentation with excellent slides of the resident birds of south Texas.

Two field trips departed from the lodge on Saturday morning. Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. led a trip on trails near the lodge and the lakeshore. Mr. Fred Busroe led a trip to more remote regions of the park around the Odd Fellows group camp.

On Saturday evening, K.O.S. members enjoyed a video film presentation by Steve Maslowski. The film was a preview of an upcoming 55 minute documentary on birds of North America. The film contained excellent footage of common North American birds.

Sunday morning, one field trip left the lodge for trails in the park, and another group birded by pontoon boat on Dewey Lake. The boat was supplied at no charge by the staff of the park. Fifty five members were in attendance. A total of 83 species was observed during the weekend meeting.

### MEETING ATTENDANCE

BEREA: Art Ricketts, Tina Ricketts

BOWLING GREEN: Blaine Ferrell, Lawrence Finley, David Roemer, Joan Roemer

BRONSTON: Margaret York

BUCKHORN: Eileen Sandlin

BURLINGTON: Joe Caminiti, Joey Caminiti, Kathy Caminiti, LeeMcNeely, Sara McNeely

CANEYVILLE: Mary Harrel

CARLISLE: Ginny Kingsolver, Wendell Kingsolver

COCOA BEACH, FL: Phyllis Mansfield

DANVILLE: Ginny Eklund, Neil Eklund, JoAnn Hamm, Michael Hamm

FALLS OF ROUGH: Kathryn Clay

FORDSVILLE: Brenda James, Mike James

HAZARD: Dennis Sandlin, Terri Lynn Sandlin

JAMESTOWN: Arlene Morton

LEXINGTON: Carolyn Truman, Paul Young

LOUISVILLE: Bill Clay, Doris Clay, Bonnie Dever, Robert G. Dever, John Koenig, Kay Mudd, Derreck Neese, Kim Neese, Zack Neese, Doxie Noonan, Darrin O'brien, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Anne Stamm

MADISONVILLE: John W. Hancock

MOREHEAD: Fred Busroe

MURRAY: Hap Chambers

OWENSBORO: Carroll Tichenor, Doris Tichenor, Bill Tyler

RHODE ISLAND: Judy Keller

RUSSELLVILLE: Andrea Bennett, Mark Bennett

SCIENCE HILL: Roseanna Denton

SOMERSET: Linda McClendon

UTICA: Brenda M. Eaden, Tony D. Eaden

### BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE SPRING MEETING 1999

Bird species observed in the proximity of Jenny Wiley State Resort Park during the period April 30 through May 2 included: Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Wild Turkey, Spotted Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Wood

pecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. The total number of species observed was 83. The weather was sunny, calm to breezy with a temperature that ranged from 45°F in the morning to 75 ° F for a high.

## FIELD NOTES

### First Nest Record of the Black-throated Green Warbler in Kentucky

Although numerous records exist for sightings of the Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) during the breeding season in Kentucky, only limited data on the nesting habitat of this species in the state are available (Mengel 1965). The Black-throated Green Warbler is a rare to common summer resident on the Cumberland Plateau in eastern Kentucky (Mengel 1965, Palmer-Ball 1996). Observations of this warbler in Kentucky date back as far as 1908 (Howell 1910), with the species being observed regularly in recent times (Palmer-Ball 1996, Baker and Lacki 1997, Lacki and Baker 1998). In all cases these accounts refer to either adult birds or fledged young. The lack of any prior confirmed nest of this species in Kentucky is surprising, as the nesting habits of this species are well documented (Ehrlich *et al.* 1988, Palmer-Ball 1996). Here we report the first documented record of a Black-throated Green Warbler nest in Kentucky.

On 13 May 1998, a female Black-throated Green Warbler was observed on a nest in a large (51.4 cm in diameter at breast height) eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) located in the Red River Gorge National Geological Area, approximately 3 km northeast of Pine Ridge, Wolfe County, Kentucky. The nest was 10 m above ground and 5 m from the bole of the tree on top of a branch. The nest was located at the edge of the limb, and was situated relatively low in the canopy of the tree. The nest was complete when found and the female left the nest infrequently,

suggesting incubation or brooding. The nest was revisited on 20 May and the female again remained on the nest for long periods. On 27 May, the nest was still intact, but the female was not observed. With the aid of a mirror pole, we discovered that the nest was empty, suggesting an unsuccessful nesting attempt. The male was frequently heard singing high up in the same hemlock tree throughout the nesting attempt, and for several days after the apparent nest failure. On 15 June, another pair of Black-throated Green Warblers was observed feeding two recently fledged young, approximately 200 m south of the unsuccessful nest. However, we were unable to confirm the location of this pair's nest.

The eastern hemlock with the unsuccessful nest was located at the bottom of a small drainage near a small patch of American holly (*Ilex opaca*). The habitat in the immediate vicinity of the nest site was comprised of eastern hemlock, white oak (*Quercus alba*), and northern red oak (*Q. rubra*), with an understory dominated by red maple (*Acer rubrum*). The nest tree was 24 m from a cliff face and 20 m from a small ephemeral stream. Palmer-Ball (1996) suggested that summer populations of Black-throated Green Warblers in Kentucky are commonly associated with forests containing eastern hemlock. He postulated that the irregular distribution of Black-throated Green Warblers in eastern Kentucky may be attributed, in part, to the localized occurrence of eastern hemlock. Our observation supports this contention, and indicates that Black-throated Green Warblers do nest in eastern hemlocks in eastern Kentucky.

Funding for this study was provided by the E. O. Robinson Trust and the Department of Forestry, University of Kentucky. This investigation (KAES #98-09-165) is connected with a project of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station and is published with the approval of the Director.

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- HENRY F. YACEK, JR., MICHAEL J. LACKI, Department of Forestry, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0073.

**WINTER HUMMINGBIRDS IN KENTUCKY: 1998-1999**

During the winter of 1998-1999 Portia Macmillan and I, both licensed to band hummingbirds in Kentucky, banded three hummingbirds of two different species. In addition, at least three other hummingbirds were reported during the winter but disappeared before they could be banded and identified. In this article, I discuss the details of the three birds that were banded, and I will briefly summarize the current status of winter hummingbirds in Kentucky.

**Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)**

On 23 November 1998, we banded a hummingbird that had been coming to a feeder near Bardwell in Carlisle County for at least a week. The rusty-orange coloration prevalent in the bird's plumage in combination with the rapid 'tic' call notes identified it as one of the members of genus *Selasphorus*, either an Allen's (*S. sasin*) or a Rufous (*S. rufus*). The extensive striations covering 75% of the bill marked this as a hatching-year bird (Ortiz-Crespo 1972). The extensive rufous in the central rectrices confirmed this bird was a male (Baltosser 1987). Finally, the presence of a highly-emarginated tip to the second rectrix identified it as a Rufous Hummingbird (Baltosser 1987).

This bird remained at the home of Dan and Debbie Jones until 30 December 1998. A series of photographs were taken and have been deposited with Lee McNeely, Secretary of the Kentucky Bird Records Committee (KBRC).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)**

On the morning of 12 December 1998 we banded a hummingbird that had been frequenting a feeder in Reidland, a suburb of Paducah in McCracken County, since mid-November. Immediately obvious was the fact that this bird had a partial gorget consisting of black and iridescent purple feathers. Thus, aging, sexing, and identifying this bird was easy, this was a hatching-year male Black-chinned Hummingbird, the first of this species ever documented in Kentucky.

This hummingbird remained at the home of Fritz and Patti Metzger until 16 December 1998. We took one photograph that clearly shows several of the purple gorget feathers during the banding process that has been deposited with the KBRC, and David Roemer videotaped much of the process.

**Rufous Hummingbird (*S. rufus*)**

On 18 December 1998 we banded a hummingbird that had been coming to a yard in Lexington in Fayette County since at least mid-November. Again, the rusty-orange coloration in the plumage and the 'tic' notes indicated a *Selasphorus* species. The bill was less than 10% striated, which indicated that this was an adult bird (Ortiz-Crespo 1972). Because there were only 14 gorget feathers, this was an

adult female. The sex was also confirmed by the predominantly green central rectrices (Baltosser 1987). The second rectrix was only faintly emarginated, so we measured the width of the first and fifth rectrices. The fifth rectrix measured 3.55 mm, far wider than that of any Allen's. Thus, this was an adult female Rufous Hummingbird.

This bird remained at the home of Bob and Stephanie Gardner through 4 January 1999. A series of photographs of it were taken during banding and have been deposited with the KBRC.

#### Unbanded Winter Hummingbirds

We know of at least three hummingbirds present in Kentucky during the winter that departed before we could confirm their identity. One bird was coming to a feeder in Georgetown in Scott County until 25 December 1998. Two birds, one of which was identified as *Selasphorus* species by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (pers. comm.), visited a feeder in suburban Lexington until 4 and 5 January 1999, respectively.

#### Previous Winter Hummingbird Records

There are three previous records of Rufous Hummingbirds in Kentucky. A photograph of an adult male present in Grayson County from 25 September-16 December 1989 furnished the first verified state record (Clay 1990). A female, present from mid-November 1996-2 January 1997, was banded in Trigg County near Canton (R. Sargent pers. comm.). An adult male was recorded at the Land Between the Lakes banding station on 1 August 1997 (R. Sargent pers. comm.).

Additionally, there are two other records of unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbirds. An immature female was present in Jefferson County from November 1987-5 February 1988 (Palmer-Ball 1989), and an immature male visited a yard in Jessamine County from 17-25 October 1989 (Stamm 1990).

A few Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilocus colubris*) have been reported into mid-November (Monroe *et al.* 1988). However, several of these birds do not appear to have been adequately documented, so the possibility remains that a Black-chinned may have been overlooked. There are no other prior documented records of winter hummingbirds in Kentucky.

#### General Comments about Winter Hummingbirds

At this time, much is still unknown about the status, distribution, and survivorship of winter hummingbirds in the eastern United States. Rufous Hummingbirds have been known to survive extreme winter conditions, but undoubtedly some will not be able to endure the most severe winter weather. Many Rufous Hummingbirds begin their migration as early as the first week of January, and in other

cases the birds may leave a particular area in advance of or upon the arrival of harsh winter weather (R. Sargent, pers. comm.). Thus, given our current state of knowledge, it is premature at this time to assume that the disappearance of a winter hummingbird during harsh winter weather indicates that the bird did not survive.

The presence or absence of feeders in winter may play a role in the survivorship of winter hummingbirds, but how much of a role if any is as yet unknown. However, at this time there is no evidence to suggest that winter hummingbirds are in any way dependent on feeders for their survival. Hummingbirds in winter have been observed feeding on insects, which are readily available except during the harshest weather, and on sapsucker wells. Thus, it seems likely that taking down an existing feeder in an effort to encourage a winter hummingbird to leave will likely be unsuccessful. However, much is still unknown to us about these birds, and it is our hope that ongoing banding research will answer these and other questions.

Any hummingbird seen after October is more likely than not a western stray, and any such bird should be studied closely and banded if possible. Given the fact that three additional species of hummingbirds have been recorded in Tennessee (Allen's, Anna's (*Calypte anna*), and Calliope (*Stellula calliope*)), it seems likely that more hummingbird individuals and species will occur in Kentucky in the near future. If you know of a winter hummingbird, please contact me at the address below.

I would like to thank Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. for providing all of the information about previous winter hummingbird records, as well as for reviewing and commenting on this article. I would also like to thank Bob Sargent for reviewing and commenting on this article, in addition to providing much of the general information about winter hummingbird behavior and survivorship.

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## WHITE-TAILED KITE IN HICKMAN COUNTY

On May 5, 1991, we were birding in western Hickman County, Kentucky, when we came upon an adult White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) soaring over the open fields just west of the abandoned community of Hailwell. The skies were clear with a light breeze, and the afternoon sun was at an excellent angle for viewing the bird. When we first saw the kite, it was soaring ahead of us to the northeast. Viewing with the naked eye, our first thought was that it was a gull (*Larus sp.*), then a male Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), but as soon as we viewed the bird through our binoculars, we could clearly see the distinctive upper wing pattern of this beautiful raptor.

During approximately 15 minutes of observation, the bird was mostly viewed flying over a relatively large hayfield at a distance of several hundred yards to about a quarter-mile. During one several-minute period the bird hovered into the southwest breeze before stooping to catch a small mammal, probably a vole (*Microtus sp.*). It perched on a dead snag in the middle of the field to eat the prey. Upon completing at least part of its meal, the bird returned to the air and headed off northward. We relocated it a few minutes later in a nearby tree just as an Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) was harassing it into the air again. This time the bird circled for several minutes and gained a great deal of altitude before disappearing as a speck in the sky to the north. Unfortunately the kite was not seen on subsequent days, although we and others did search for it.

The White-tailed Kite appeared to be slightly larger than a Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), but it was overall whitish in color. The legs, feet and cere were yellowish although the bill was dark and relatively small. The head was white except for a distinctly dark area surrounding and in front of the eye. The back and upper wing coverts were pale gray except for the shoulder areas, which were distinctly charcoal in color, forming the species' distinctive flight pattern. The underwing linings were white except for dark gray or blackish spots at the wrists, yet another characteristic mark for the species. The secondaries were whitish but the primaries were gray; the outer primaries being darkest. The outer primaries stood out as distinctly darker from below, forming a pattern somewhat similar to that of a Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) although not as dark. The unforked tail was white except for the inner feathers, which were pale gray from above.

Throughout the observation period, Palmer-Ball attempted to photograph the bird, but the distance and an incorrect camera setting combined to yield images that were poor in quality. We did, however, have an excellent study of the bird through a 60x Questar telescope, which provided us with the details provided herein. This represents the first record of White-tailed Kite in Kentucky, although most surrounding states have a record or two. Most reliable reports have come during the period from mid-April to mid-May

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**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. Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. 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 Burt L. Monroe, Jr. Avian Research Grant Fund**

Persons that need money (*i.e.*, up to \$500) to assist them in conducting research on birds in Kentucky should contact the K.O.S. Burt L. Monroe, Jr. Avian Research Fund Committee *c/o* Blaine Ferrell, Department of Biology, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101 (email: Ferrebr@wku.edu) for a set of guidelines and an application form.

**Kentucky Bird Records Committee**

Rare bird sightings and birds observed out of season should be well documented and the documentation should be sent to Lee McNeely, Secretary of the KBRC (P.O. Box 463, Burlington, Kentucky 41005) for consideration by the committee for official state record status.

**K.O.S. Fall Meeting**

The Fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society will be September 26-29 at Lake Cumberland State Park. Please make plans to attend. If you would like to make a presentation in the Friday evening program, contact Marilee Thompson, 2443 Old Kentucky 144, Owensboro, Kentucky 42303.

**K.O.S. Web Page**

Check out the K.O.S. web page prepared by the webmaster, Gary Ritchison at <http://www.biology.eku.edu/kos.htm>. It is a great way to keep up with what is happening with K.O.S. and birding around the state.