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The Kentucky Warbler

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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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Editor..... B.R. Ferrell, Ogden College of Science and Engineering
Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101

Editorial Advisory Board

Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. and Wayne Mason

Secretary, Kentucky Bird Records Committee.....Lee McNeely
P.O. Box 463, Burlington, KY 41005

THE COVER

We thank David Roemer and Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. for the photographs of the Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) on the front and back covers. Both were taken on May 1, 2003, in Fulton County (see Field Notes).

SUMMER SEASON 2003

Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., and Lee McNeely

June and July 2003 were characterized by approximately average rainfall and slightly below average temperature. Highlights from the season included confirmed records of two new nesting species for the state (Gadwall and Ruddy Duck), nesting of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher for the second year in a row, and a few vagrants (including White-winged Dove and continued Painted Bunting). As of late July, only a few avian cases of West Nile Virus had been reported (J. Roberts, *pers. comm.*), perhaps portending a much less devastating late summer season than in 2002.

Publication of any unusual sightings in the seasonal report does not imply that these reports have been accepted as records for the official checklist of Kentucky birds. Observers are cautioned that records of out-of-season birds and all rarities must be accompanied with good details or documentation for acceptance. Documentation must be submitted to the Kentucky Bird Records Committee (KBRC). Decisions regarding the official Kentucky list are made by the KBRC and are reported periodically in *The Kentucky Warbler*.

Abbreviations – Miscellaneous: county names appear in *italics*; when used to separate dates, the “/” symbol is used in place of “and”; “ph.” next to an observer’s initials indicates that the observation was documented with photograph(s); “vt.” next to an observer’s initials indicates that the observation was documented on videotape; “*” next to an observer’s initials indicates that written details were submitted with the report; ad. = adult; imm. = immature; juv. = juvenile; yg. = young; KDFWR = Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. **Place names:** Barkley Dam = Barkley Dam, *Lyon/Livingston*; Barren = Barren River Lake, *Allen/Barren*; Big South Fork = Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, *McCreary*; Black Mt. = Black Mountain, *Harlan* (unless otherwise noted); Blood River = Blood River embayment of Kentucky Lake, *Calloway*; Camp #11 = Peabody Camp #11 Mine, *Union*; Caperton = Caperton Swamp Nature Preserve, *Jefferson*; Chaney Lake = Chaney Lake State Nature Preserve, *Warren*; Cumberland Gap = Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, *Harlan* (unless otherwise noted); DBNF = Daniel Boone National Forest; Grassy Pond = Grassy Pond Unit Sloughs WMA, *Union* (unless otherwise noted); Ky Bend = Kentucky Bend, *Fulton*; Ky Dam = Kentucky Dam, *Livingston/Marshall*; Ky Lake = Kentucky Lake, *Marshall/Calloway/Livingston/Lyon/Trigg*; Kuttawa = Lake Barkley at Kuttawa, *Lyon*; Lake Barkley = Lake Barkley, *Livingston/Lyon/Trigg*; Lake No. 9 = Lake No. 9, *Fulton*; Long Point = Long Point Unit Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, *Fulton*; Meng’s Pond = Meng’s Pond, *Warren*; Morgan’s Pond = Morgan’s Pond, *Christian*; Open Pond = Open Pond, *Fulton*; Paradise = Paradise Power Plant impoundments, *Muhlenberg*; Petros Pond = Petros Pond, *Warren*; Rock Bridge = Rock Bridge, DBNF, *Wolfe*; Sauerheber = Sauerheber Unit of Sloughs WMA, *Henderson*; Sinclair = Sinclair Unit Peabody WMA, *Muhlenberg*; WMA = Wildlife Management Area.

Common Loon – 1 in basic plumage was at Kuttawa 7 June (BP, AC); 3 birds (2 in basic, 1 in alternate plumage) were above Ky Dam from 22 July through the remainder of summer and likely had been present the entire period (BP, MM *et al.*).

Pied-billed Grebe – the species lingered into

June at Chaney Lake and an ad. with 7 juvs. was observed 4 June (ph.DR); a bird also lingered at Caperton to 3 June and may have nested (BY); at least 2 lingered at Camp #11 to 6 June with 1 heard/observed there to 6 July (BP *et al.*); a family group was observed on Island No. 8 Slough, *Fulton*, 23 July (BP).



Pied-billed Grebe family, *Warren*
4 June 2003
David Roemer

American White Pelican – only reports for the period were the injured bird on Lake Barkley above the dam 17 June (BP, KB, JC) and 6 at Ky Bend 25 June (KL, NM).

Double-crested Cormorant – as is becoming the norm, a number of birds lingered through the summer. Reports included 40 at Paradise 17 June (BP, KB, JC); 2 at Ky Bend 25 June (KL, NM), 5 at Lake No. 9 on 8 July (KL, NM); 6 on Green River Lake, *Adair*, 19 July (RD, SS, SBC); and 35+ at Kuttawa 24 July (BP, MM). The Ky Lake, *Calloway*, nesting colony was again active this summer with about the same number of nests (15-20) as in 2002 and 68 birds present 26 July (HC).

Least Bittern – 4 were heard at Camp #11 on 6/20 June (BP) with at least 1 lingering there to 13 July (BP, AC); 1 was heard at Sinclair 13 June (MV).

Great Blue Heron – new heronries were reported at two sites along Eagle Creek, *Carroll* and *Owen*, 20 June (CG, RP) and along Beaver Creek, *Menifee*, in late June (WM).

Great Egret – not especially abundant in western Kentucky this summer, with peak counts being 154 at Ky Bend 25 June (KL, NM) and 73 in *Fulton* 6 July (HC).

Cattle Egret – the northern Lake Barkley, *Lyon*, nesting colonies were active through the period.

Black-crowned Night-Heron – 4 juvs. in the company of several ads. at Paradise 14 June through the remainder of the pe-

riod suggested nesting somewhere in the local area (MV *et al.*); an imm. at Lexington 22 July may have indicated persistence of that local nesting population (SM).

Gadwall – a male lingered at Camp #11 to 6 June (BP); 18 June, a female with 2 ducklings was observed there (BP, KB, JC) and on 20 June the pair and yg. were observed all together (BP); the female and yg. were observed through 1 August (BP *et al.*). This represents the first confirmed breeding of Gadwall in the state.

American Black Duck – 1 was at Camp #11 on 18 June (BP, KB, JC) and 20 June (BP).

Blue-winged Teal – a male was at Morgan's Pond 5 June (BP); a few birds lingered at Camp #11 into June with 6 males and a female there 20 June (BP); on 6 July, at least two broods of nearly full-grown yg. were observed (BP, BY); a female and brood was observed on a farm pond in *Jessamine* 2 July (JL), representing a new county nesting record; in addition, 2 were at Ky Bend 25 June (KL, NM).

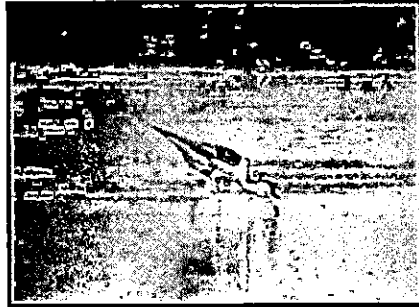
scaup sp. – a lingering male at Paradise was last observed 13 June (MV).

Hooded Merganser – the species nested at Caperton with a female and brood of yg. observed as late as 29 June (BY); a juv. on Banklick Creek, *Kenton*, 20 June indicated possible breeding in the vicinity (ph.FR); not far away, at least 4 birds possibly representing a family group were observed at the Petersburg gravel pits, *Boone*, 21 June (LM); the species was also reported at Sauerheber 14 June (BY); and above Ky Dam (3 birds — family group of local origin?) 24 July (BP, MM).

Ruddy Duck – at least 6 birds (5 male/1 female) lingered to 20 June at Camp #11 (BP); 2 males and 1 female were still there 6 July (BP, BY) and 12-13 July, a female was observed with 4 downy yg. (ph.BP, AC); by 22 July, only 1 yg. may have been present with the female and 1 or 2 males (BP, MM, LPv). This represents the first confirmed breeding of Ruddy Duck in the state.

Osprey – the 2003 nest survey on L. Barkley, *Lyon/Trigg*, yielded observations of 43

- nests, at least 27 with yg. (ER); 3 nests are now known along the Green River, *Muhlenberg/Ohio*, with the addition of a new one near Smallhouse, *Ohio* (MV); four nests were active on southern Ky Lake, *Calloway*, as of late July (HC).
- Mississippi Kite** – again this year, at least 1 bird was present at Sinclair throughout the summer period (MV, *et al*); also, the same nest site at Long Point was active again this year with a chick observed in the nest on 6 July (HC).
- Bald Eagle** – yg. were still in the Audubon heronry nest, *Henderson*, in mid-July (BP); an ad. was observed near Trailwood Lake in northeastern *Shelby* 1 June (HB); a second-year bird was observed at the Homestead Unit Peabody WMA, *Ohio*, 14 June (MV); an ad. was on Green River Lake, *Adair*, 19 July (AM, SBC).
- Northern Harrier** – the continuing Eastern Kentucky University/KDFWR sponsored study of nesting birds at Peabody WMA, *Muhlenberg/Ohio*, yielded reports of an additional 19 nests in 2003 (MV).
- Cooper's Hawk** – an ad. at Yahoo Falls 5 June was thought to be a first summer record for Big South Fork (SS) and a begging juv. from the same area 8 July constituted a first confirmed breeding record (SS).
- Peregrine Falcon** – a bird from last year's hacking project in the Red River Gorge, DBNF, *Powell*, returned to the site during late June (KH).
- Virginia Rail** – quite unusual was a calling bird that lingered at Pumphouse Pond, *Pulaski*, to 13 June (RD). It is possible that this bird was nesting.
- Common Moorhen** – 1 to 3 birds lingered at Camp #11 to 6 July (BP *et al.*); on 18 July a pair was observed attending 4 half-grown downy yg. (BP, AC); a total of 9 birds (including 3 yg.) was present at Camp #11 on 22 July (BP, MM, LPv).
- American Coot** – at least a dozen birds lingered at Camp #11 into June (BP); by 18 June, a few pairs of ads. were observed with yg. (BP, KB, JC).
- American Golden-Plover** – 1 in full alter-
- nate plumage was observed at Open Pond 17 June (BP, KB, JC).
- Semipalmated Plover** – latest spring reports included 4 at Chaney Lake and 2 at Petros Pond, both 1 June (DR), and 1 at Morgan's Pond 5 June (BP). First fall report was 1 at Brown Power Plant, *Mercer*, 31 July (BP).
- Black-necked Stilt** - 5 birds observed east of Open Pond 31 May (HC, ME); a male was present at Morgan's Pond 5 June (ph.BP); single birds were observed at and east of Open Pond 17 June (BP, KB, JC); 2 were in a flooded field at Ky Bend 25 June (KL, NM); a pair was at Camp #11 on 20 June (ph.BP); finally, a single bird was at Grassy Pond 30 June (*CC). KBRC review required for reports outside of *Fulton*.



Black-necked Stilt, *Christian*
5 June 2003
B. Palmer-Ball, Jr.

- Greater Yellowlegs** - first fall reports were 1 at Paradise 9 July (MV); 1 at Meng's Pond 13 July (DR); and 1 at Sauerheber 13 July (BP, AC).
- Lesser Yellowlegs** - first fall reports were 2 yellowlegs sp. at Grassy Pond 2 July (CC); 11 at Sauerheber 6 July (BP, BY); an 1 at Lake No. 9 on 8 July (KL, NM).
- Solitary Sandpiper** - first fall report was 1 at Sauerheber on 6 July (BP, BY); 17 were at Petros Pond 17 July (DR); 26 were in *Fulton* 19 July (HC).
- Spotted Sandpiper** - latest spring reports included 1 at Meng's Pond 1 June (DR); and at least 1 at Morgan's Pond 5 June (BP);

an ad. in western *Henderson* 6 July was acting territorial but may have been an early fall migrant (BP, BY).

Ruddy Turnstone - only report was 1 on Ky Lake, *Calloway* 26 July (HC)



Black-necked Stilts, *Union*
20 June 2003
B. Palmer-Ball, Jr.

Semipalmated Sandpiper - latest spring reports were 13 at Petros Pond and 1 at Meng's Pond 4 June (DR); 40 at Morgan's Pond 5 June (BP), and 1 at Open Pond 17 June (BP, KB, JC). First fall report was 1 in western *Henderson* 22 July (BP, MM).

Western Sandpiper - first fall reports were 2 ads. at Paradise 24 July (MM, MV *et al.*).

Least Sandpiper - first fall reports were 3 at Camp #11, 3 at Sauerheber, and ca. 130 at three additional locations (at least 80 at one spot) in western *Henderson* 6 July (BP, BY).

White-rumped Sandpiper - latest spring reports were 7 at Petros Pond and 3 at Meng's Pond 4 June (DR), and 40 at Morgan's Pond 5 June (BP).

Pectoral Sandpiper - first fall reports were 2 at Camp #9 mine, *Union*, and 1 at Sauerheber, 13 July (BP) and 1 at Petros Pond 17 July (DR).

Dunlin - latest spring report was 1 at Morgan's Pond 5 June (BP).

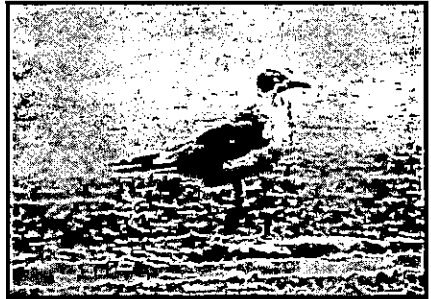
Stilt Sandpiper - first fall reports were 1 at Blood River (HC) and 2 at Paradise (BY), both 27 July.

Short-billed Dowitcher - first fall reports were 1 in western *Henderson* 13 July (BP, AC); 1 at Lake No. 9 on 17 July (KL, NM); and 3 at Paradise 19 July (DR).

American Woodcock - relatively uncommon for the season were reports of single birds at Dog Slaughter Falls, DBNF, *Whitley* 8 June (FR); near Mt. Victory, *Pulaski*, 14 June (RD); and Barren, *Barren*, 20 July (DR).

Laughing Gull - a very molty, first-summer bird was above Ky Dam 24 July (MM, BP).

Franklin's Gull - quite unusual for mid-summer was a first-summer bird at Paradise 17 June (BP, KB, ph.JC).



Franklin's Gull, *Muhlenberg*
17 June 2003
John Cassidy

Ring-billed Gull - 2 were at Ky Dam 17 June (BP, KB, JC); 40-50 were above Ky Dam by 22 July (BP, MM) with 75-100 there by 24 July (BP, MM); 2 were on the Ohio River at Newport, *Campbell*, 31 July (FR).

Caspian Tern - as in some past summers, it appeared that a few birds may have summered as indicated by observations of 1 at Paradise 14 June (MV); 3 on Lake Barkley above the dam 18 June (BP, KB, JC); and 2 (probably different birds) below Barkley Dam 18 June (BP, KB, JC). At least 13 birds had returned to Ky Lake, *Calloway*, 26 July (HC).

Forster's Tern - presumed fall migrants arrived relatively early and included 5 at Barren 11 July (DR).

Least Tern - a number of birds likely attempted nesting in agricultural fields during abnormally high water of June. Several scrapes were observed in a field east

of Open Pond 17 June (BP, KB, JC). The lower Ohio River population was likely mostly unsuccessful at nesting again this summer due to high water levels; the site above Caseyville, *Union*, hosted 18 ads. and 6 active nests 1 July, but the sandbars soon went under water from a rise in the river (PB, EC).

Black Tern – first fall report was 1 at Walton's Pond, *Warren*, 22 July (DR).

Eurasian Collared-Dove - the species continued to be reported in new areas and increased numbers. 1 was observed at Harford, *Ohio*, 2 July (DR); 5 were seen at Monticello, *Wayne*, 1 July (CB); and 14 were seen at the same location 9 July (RD); also 1 was nest building in Cadiz, *Trigg*, 13 July (BL, PL).

White-winged Dove - representing the fourth record in two years was a bird at Berea, *Madison*, 1-2 June (ph.AR, TR, *et al.*). KBRC review required.



White-winged Dove
Madison, 1 June 2003
Art Ricketts

Black-billed Cuckoo - only report for the period was 1 in eastern *Fayette* 2 June (SM).

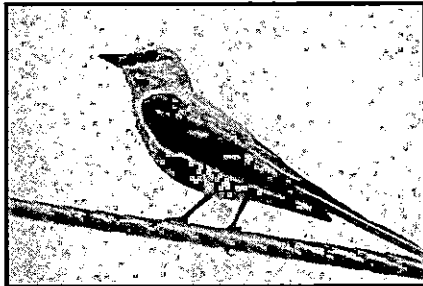
Barred Owl - 2 juvs. were observed 1 June at the summit of Black Mt. (DT, AT) where nesting has not been reported previously.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher - a lingering migrant at the Lexington Cem. 7 June (SM) represents a new late departure date for the state.

Least Flycatcher – the species was reported

at the summit of Black Mt. 1 June (DT, AT); a family group including 3 recently fledged yg. (nearly full grown, but with tails 1/2 to 2/3 normal length) was observed at the same location 1 July (BP); also present 1 July were 3 additional birds, 1 singing and 2 calling (BP). Unique for mid-summer was a report of a singing bird at Ky Bend 25 June (KL, NM).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher - the pair near Grand Rivers in southern *Livingston* was observed 7 June (BP, AC) and 17 June (BP, KB, ph.JC); on 22 July an ad. was observed with what appeared to be a juv. at this site (MM, BP). KBRC review required.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Livingston, 17 June 2003
John Cassady

Bell's Vireo - 2 were observed at Camp #11 from 18 June to mid-July (BP, *et al.*); the nesting population at Sinclair now may exceed two dozen pairs with numerous reports this year (m. ob.).

Blue-headed Vireo - there were a number of reports of birds in traditional breeding areas including 1 ca. 2.5 mi. west of Yamacraw Bridge in western *McCreary* 8 June (SS), the species was found to be numerous at Cumberland Gap 10-19 June (MM).

Warbling Vireo – 1 was encountered in western *Metcalfe*, where the species is seldom reported, 14 June (SS).

Fish Crow – an apparent family group was seen/heard just north of Sauerheber 22 July (BP, MM); another likely family group was seen/heard near Long Point 23

- July (BP, MM).
- Common Raven** – at least 1 was reported from Kingdom Come State Park, *Harlan/Letcher*, 1 June (DT, AT); 1 was heard in the vicinity of White Rocks, Cumberland Gap, 15 June (MM).
- Purple Martin** – a roost at Blood River contained an estimated 1,200 birds 26 July (HC).
- Tree Swallow** – further evidence of this species' increase across the state as a breeder is reflected by the presence of 1 in southwestern *Metcalfe* 14 June (SS) and 3 in north-central *Wayne* 15 June (SS).
- Bank Swallow** – 1 bird 4 June and 2 birds 12 July at Pumphouse Pond, *Pulaski*, were in an area where no nesting colonies are presently known (RD); the colonies at Petersburg, *Boone*, were active during the period (LM); a sizable colony of ca. 450 burrows (with many active) was reported at a new site on the Lewis WMA, near Quincy, *Lewis*, in early July (SF).
- Red-breasted Nuthatch** – 2-3 birds were heard at the traditional Rock Bridge nesting area 28 June (BP, KH) and 29 June (FR).
- Sedge Wren** – up to 3 were heard at Camp #11 beginning 6 July and remaining through the period (BP *et al.*); 1 was heard 26 July in eastern *Jefferson* where the species nested last year with a second there by 29 July (BP).
- Marsh Wren** – 1 was heard at Camp #11 on 6 July (BP, BY).
- Veery** – 1 was seen at the Pinnacle Overlook parking area, Cumberland Gap, *Bell*, 11 June (MM); in addition, ca. 7 birds were seen/heard at high elevations from Hensley Settlement to just west of White Rocks at Cumberland Gap 17 June (MM).
- Gray-cheeked Thrush** – latest spring report was 1 at the Lexington Cem. 1 June (SM, RB).
- Cedar Waxwing** – what seemed to be above-average numbers of probable and confirmed breeding birds were present at a number of locations statewide during June-July (m. ob.).
- Golden-winged Warbler** – the KDFWR/Cornell sponsored atlas project continued into June with a final tally of 16 presumed territorial birds detected as follows: 4 birds in three different areas in *Bell*, 5 birds in two areas in *Harlan*, 5 birds in two areas in *Pike*, and 1 each in *McCreary* and *Whitley* (LP *et al.*). Full details will be published in an upcoming article.
- Brewster's/Lawrence's hybrids** – the KDFWR/Cornell sponsored atlas project also resulted in the observation of 5 Golden-winged x Blue-winged hybrids as follows: single Brewster's in *Bell*, *Harlan*, and *Knox* and single Lawrence's in *Knox* and *Pike* (LP, SF). Full details will be published in an upcoming article.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler** – the species was reported at Kingdom Come State Park, *Harlan/Letcher*, 1 June (DT, AT) where nesting may be occurring. The latest spring report away from suspected or known breeding areas was 1 at the Lexington Cem. 1 June (SM, RB). The species was encountered at only two locations at high elevations between Hensley Settlement and White Rocks, Cumberland Gap 18-19 June (MM) where the species has formerly been considered more numerous.
- Magnolia Warbler** – latest spring report was 1 on Black Mt. 1 June (DT, AT).
- Black-throated Blue Warbler** – as would be expected, the species was observed at the summit of Black Mt. 1 June (DT, AT); the species was considered common at higher elevations at Cumberland Gap from Gibson Gap, east to the Park's northeastern border 10-19 June (MM).
- Black-throated Green Warbler** – a trail count of 19 birds on DBNF near Vanhook Falls, *Laurel*, 21 June was relatively impressive (RD).
- Blackburnian Warbler** – quite significant was the observation of 5+ males at high elevations from Hensley Settlement to just west of White Rocks at Cumberland Gap 17-18 June (MM). This species has previously been unreported as a possible breeder in Kentucky away from Black Mt.
- Swainson's Warbler** – birds were heard at traditional breeding areas at the Big South

Fork 8 June and 8/9 July (SS, BS); Little Lick Recreation Area, DBNF, *Pulaski*, 14 June (RD) and 13 July (SM); Rock Bridge 12 June (DG *et al.*), 28 June (BP, KH) and 29 June (FR); Cumberland Gap, *Bell*, 11 June (MM); and Bad Branch State Nature Preserve, *Letcher*, 1 July (BP). Others reported included 1 at Cumberland Falls State Park, *McCreary*, 22 June (RD); 1 at Fishtrap WMA, *Pike*, 10 June (SF); and 3 at Ned's Branch, DBNF, *Laurel*, 26 July (RD).

Canada Warbler – at high elevations at Cumberland Gap, 1 male was heard just west of Gibson Gap 14 June (MM) and 2 males were heard at Chadwell Gap 18 June (MM).

Bachman's Sparrow – again this year, a few birds were seen/heard on Fort Campbell, *Trigg*, during June (DM, JG).

Lark Sparrow – at least two nests were found on Fort Campbell, *Trigg*, during June (DM *et al.*).

Grasshopper Sparrow – a count of 24 on reclaimed surface mines near Ano, *Pulaski*, 7 June was impressive (RD, SBC).

Henslow's Sparrow – the species was especially numerous at Sinclair during the period (m. ob.); 5 were on Beech Grove Ridge, *Pulaski*, 15 July (RD); 2 were heard 9 June and may have nested in a grassy floodplain field in Land Between the Lakes, *Trigg* (BL).

Song Sparrow – reports of 3 singing birds in the Big South Fork may represent a re-

cent spread into that area in summer (SS). **Dark-eyed Junco** – quite significant was the discovery of small numbers at high elevations in Cumberland Gap 18 June (MM); 6 singing males were heard from just west of Chadwell Gap to just west of White Rocks and a juv. was observed being fed just west of Chadwell Gap 18 June (MM). This species has previously been unreported as a probable breeder in Kentucky away from Black Mt.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – ca. 8 males were detected at high elevations from just east of Hensley Settlement to just west of White Rocks in Cumberland Gap 17-19 June (MM). This represents a distinct increase in the species' occurrence in the Park since earlier survey work. Also of interest was the capture of 6 different juvs. at two MAPS banding stations in *Rowan*, 1 in the Big Perry area and another on Elk Lick Rd. near Cranston 14 July – 6 August (ARB).

Painted Bunting – the male at Miller, *Fulton*, lingered well into summer and was last reported 23 July (BP, MM).

Bobolink – a lingering bird or summer vagrant was observed at Sinclair 14 June (MV); nesting birds were observed at Masterson Station Park, *Fayette*, 15 June (MK); a male that may have been territorial was observed near Cropper, *Shelby*, 19 June (HB).

Baltimore Oriole – one was encountered 14 June in southwestern *Metcalfe*, where the species is seldom reported (SS).

Erratum: The location for at least 3 Alder Flycatchers on 16 May reported in the Spring 2003 report (*KW* 79:71, 2003) should be changed to “near the Riverqueen Unit of Peabody WMA, *Muhlenberg*.”

Contributors: Clay Black (CB); Pat Brandon (PB); Kenneth Brock (KB); Horace Brown (HB); Rhonda Bryant (RB); John Cassady (JC); Hap Chambers (HC); Elizabeth Ciuzio (EC); Amy Covert (AC); Charlie Crawford (CC); Roseanna Denton (RD); Melissa Easley (ME); Scott Freidhof (SF); Jim Giocomo (JG); Darlena Graham (DG); Chris Grasc (CG); Kathryn Huie (KH); Michael Kenawell (MK); Joe Lacefield (JL); Ken Leggett (KL); Bill Lisowsky (BL); Paula Lisowsky (PL); many observers (m. ob.); Scott Marsh (SM); Lee McNeely (LM); Mark Monroe (MM); Nancy Moore (NM); Arlene Morton (AM); Daniel Moss (DM); Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BP); Laura Patton (LP); Larry Peavler (LPv); Rocky Pritchert (RP); Ed Ray (ER); Frank Renfrow (FR); Art Ricketts (AR); Tina Ricketts (TR); Arlinda Robertson (ARB); David Roemer (DR); Somerset Bird Club (SBC); Barbara

Stedman (BS); Stephen Stedman (SS); Allan Trently (AT); David Trently (DT); Mark Vukovich (MV); Wes Mattox (WM); Ben Yandell (BY). – 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY, 40222 (brainard.palmer-ball@mail.state.ky.us) (Palmer-Ball) and P.O. Box 463, Burlington, KY, 41005 (lkmc9@netscape.net) (McNeely).

**Kentucky Ornithological Society
2003 Fall Meeting
October 3 through 5, 2003
Henderson, KY**

The Fall Meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was held October 3-5 in Henderson, Kentucky. President Kathy Caminiti called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM CDT on the 3rd of October. Several first-time attendees were present at the meeting. Following the introductory remarks, Vice President Hap Chambers and Councillor Phyllis Niemi challenged the attendees to a bird trivia contest.

The first speaker of the evening was Mike Morton, the Area Manager for the Sloughs Wildlife Management Area. Mr. Morton explained that the Sloughs WMA administration had a two-fold purpose: to provide recreational opportunities for hunters, and to manage the land for waterfowl habitat. He shared several examples of the water management challenges that he and his six-member staff have overcome since the WMA was founded in 1978, including the flooding of their offices in 1997 and the completion of a 2001 shorebird habitat management initiative after it was abandoned by the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Morton also introduced the meeting attendees to a proposal for the Green River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), which would protect and manage lands along the confluence of the Green and Ohio Rivers in Henderson County, KY. He discussed the potential benefits of establishing this new refuge and detailed some of the political obstacles facing the project. Mr. Morton then encouraged those in favor of the refuge's establishment to contact their representatives in Washington and voice their support for Senate Bill 1898, which would authorize the creation of the Green River NWR.

Next, Hap Chambers gave a short presentation on the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Production and Survivorship) bird-banding project. Ms. Chambers described the MAPS project as an effort to check bird populations and determine the effects of management practices and reasons for species declines. Under the MAPS project, breeding birds are netted, banded, measured and released over 6-hour periods during May through August. The information collected from recaptured birds is then used to generate data on population dynamics and species longevity. MAPS stations were established at 475 locations across the USA last year.

KDFWR Water Bird Biologist Beth Ciuzio next discussed several projects that she had recently been involved with, including management of a new shorebird habitat area created on the Sloughs WMA and a Mourning Dove banding project undertaken in Kentucky and 29 other states that allow dove hunting.

Kathy Caminiti, Blaine Ferrell, and Hap Chambers made the final presentation of the evening, which was an award given to Fred Busroe in recognition of his eight years of service compiling Seasonal Reports for KOS. Mr. Busroe was presented with a beautiful woodcarving of a Blue Jay, one of his favorite birds.

Kathy Caminiti closed the Friday meeting with a discussion of the field trips scheduled for Saturday, including the Sloughs WMA and John James Audubon State Park. At the social following the meeting, attendees enjoyed snacks and soft drinks. Several members

brought snacks and appetizers that they had prepared from their favorite recipes to share with the group.

On Saturday, Morning, several members braved the crowd from the Arts and Crafts festival at John James Audubon State Park. Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr. led the rest of the group on a field trip to the Sloughs WMA. Several interesting species of birds were observed at the Sloughs, including American Bittern, Marsh and Sedge Wrens, Sora, and Virginia Rail. At noon, KOS provided a picnic lunch at the Sloughs for all meeting participants.

The KOS Executive Board met from 2:25 to 4:22 PM CDT to discuss KOS business, while other members were free to relax or go birding around the Henderson area.

Saturday Night's program began at 5:30 PM CDT with a catered banquet from the Moonlight Bar-BQ restaurant in Owensboro. After the banquet, Kathy Caminiti called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM CDT, with the introduction of the slate of nominees for KOS offices. The nominees were Hap Chambers (President), Mark Bennett (Vice President), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (Corresponding Secretary), Jim Williams (Treasurer), Gerald Robe (Recording Secretary), Win Ahrens and Mark Monroe (Councillors). The slate of officers was unanimously accepted by the membership.

Following the election, President-elect Hap Chambers made some introductory comments, and thanked outgoing President Kathy Caminiti for her service to the Society.

The first speaker of the night was Lee McNeely, who presented a slide show of a trip he and 10 other KOS members recently made to Montana. In Montana, the KOS group was joined by Denver Holt, who accompanied the group for about two-thirds of their visit. The slide show featured pictures taken by Hap Chambers and Kathy Caminiti. Along with scenes of the beautiful Montana landscape, there were photos of Grizzly Bears, Antelope, Bison, wildflowers, and many birds, including Boreal and Great Gray Owls, Upland Sandpiper, Mountain Bluebird, Western, Red-necked and Clark's Grebes, Harlequin Ducks, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and a Blue Grouse.

Following Mr. McNeely's presentation Hap Chambers introduced Jon Dunn, the evening's featured speaker. Mr. Dunn, a resident of California and noted bird author, first came to Kentucky to bird in July 1990, and now returns to Kentucky at least once per year. Mr. Dunn's presentation, titled "The Identification and Behavior of Sparrows of the Midwest" introduced the meeting attendees to his "Generic" approach to sparrow identification, in which sparrows of the same taxonomic genus that share similar traits are compared and contrasted. With the use of slides, Mr. Dunn illustrated some of the key behavioral traits and field marks that can be used to simplify the identification of these challenging birds. Mr. Dunn concluded his presentation with a discussion of several endangered sparrow species, including the Florida subspecies of the Grasshopper Sparrow, and the Dusky Seaside Sparrow, which became extinct in the 1970's due to habitat mismanagement.

Following Jon Dunn's presentation, Blaine Ferrell led the attendees in the Weekend Species Tally. As of the close of the meeting on Saturday Night, a total of 100 species had been observed.

The Saturday Night Meeting concluded with a discussion of Sunday's field trip to the Sloughs and the announcement of the Spring 2004 meeting at Kentucky Dam Village. Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. announced that the newly updated KOS field cards would be available by the spring meeting, and Hap Chambers made a request for articles for the *Kentucky Warbler*. The meeting closed at 8:49 PM CDT, and was followed by a book signing by Jon Dunn.

On Sunday Morning, Brainard Palmer-Ball led a second field trip to the Sloughs.

Respectfully submitted,
Gerald Robe

BIRDS OBSERVED AT THE FALL 2003 KOS MEETING

Birds observed during Saturday field trips were: Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Northern Bobwhite, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Summer Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. Species added during Sunday field trips were: Bald Eagle, Merlin, Ring-billed Gull, Short-eared Owl, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush making a total of 110 species for the weekend.

ATTENDANCE AT THE SPRING 2003 KOS MEETING

ABERDEEN:	Deanne McKinney
BEREA:	Tina and Art Ricketts
BISHOP, CA:	Jon Dunn
BOWLING GREEN:	Tom Durbin, Blaine Ferrell, Joan and David Roemer
BURLINGTON:	Kathy, Joe, and Joey Caminiti, Lee McNeely
CARLISLE:	Ginny and Wendell Kingsolver
CARMEL, IN:	Lou Anne Barringer
CORYDON, IN:	Mary Walter
COX'S CREEK:	Dona Coates
CUNNINGHAM:	Maurica and Matthew Toon
DANVILLE:	Ginny and Neil Eklund
EDDYVILLE:	Phyllis and John Niemi
ERLANGER:	Ed Groneman
FALLS OF ROUGH:	Joyce Porter
FRANKFORT:	Beth Ciuzio, Amy Covert
HECTOR, AR:	Leif Anderson
INDIANAPOLIS, IN:	Larry Peavler
KNOXVILLE, TN:	David Trently

LEXINGTON:	Rhonda Bryant, Bruce Cryder, Mike Kenawell, Scott Marsh, Carol Sheppard, Bobbi and Lou Shain, Jim Williams
LOUISVILLE:	Mary Bill Bauer, Richard Cassell, Bonnie and Robert Dever, Celia Lawrence, Mark Monroe, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Esther, Philip, William, and John Tamplin
MOREHEAD:	Joanna and Fred Busroe
MORGANTOWN:	Doris and Carroll Tichenor
MT. STERLING:	Gerald Robe
MURRAY:	Hap Chambers, Melissa Easley, Bonnie and Sam McNeely
OWENSBORO:	Brenda and Tony Eaden, Janet Howard, Marilee and Wendell Thompson, Susie and Bill Tyler
PROSPECT:	Win Ahrens
QUALITY:	Brenda Jenkins
RICHMOND:	Brenda and Pete Thompson, Mark Vukovich
RUSSELLVILLE:	Mark Bennett
SCIENCE HILL:	Roseanna Denton
SOUTH WILLIAMSON:	Joan Carr, Les Estep

FIELD NOTES

PAINTED BUNTING IN FULTON COUNTY

On 30 April 2003, the authors were birding adjacent to the Long Point Unit of Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge in western Fulton County when we were fortunate enough to chance upon a male Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*). The bird was singing from a roadside wire at the corner of KY 94 and KY 1282, and we were able to obtain excellent looks at it over nearly an hour of study. In all respects it appeared to be an adult bird, with blue head, red underparts and eye-ring, and vivid yellow-green back. (see cover photographs)

The Painted Bunting remained in nearly the same spot in the following weeks, moving only a few hundred yards at most, and it continued to sing vigorously into late June. During this period, the bird was frequently observed chasing male Indigo Buntings (*Passerina cyanea*) whose territory overlapped its own. In addition, it was seen on a number of occasions displaying to female Indigo Buntings. It seemed improbable that the many birders visiting the location failed to observe a female Painted Bunting, but it is possible that the male engaged in some extra-pair copulations with female Indigos. We visited the site on 23 July 2003 and observed the male in his usual spot, although song was less frequently heard. We were unable to visit the area again until 31 August 2003, at which time there was no sign of the bird and much less Indigo Bunting activity. On the latter two visits, no evidence of hybrid young were observed, but only one juvenile Indigo Bunting was ever seen in the area, so it is possible that hybrid young could have gone undetected. Interestingly, Painted Buntings from the western portion of the range (from which this individual likely originated) leave the breeding grounds relatively early, migrating to staging areas in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico where they undergo a pre-basic molt before a final move to the wintering grounds in Central America (Lowther *et al.* 1999.). This may explain the bird's absence by late August at a time when many Indigo Buntings remain.

This represents the first fully documented record of Painted Bunting in Kentucky. There have been at least two prior sight reports: a bird in Fulton County in August 1892 (Mengel 1965) and a female at a feeder in Pulaski County on 27 April 1997 (R. Denton, *pers.*

comm.). This southern species is a regular breeder along the lower Mississippi River Valley as far north as Memphis, Tennessee, with occasional birds scattered farther north to the St. Louis, Missouri, area. In addition, records of vagrants, mostly in spring and summer, are known from many states in the eastern United States north of the normal range.

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- Mengel, R.M. 1965. The birds of Kentucky. American Ornithologists' Union Monograph No. 3. The Allen Press, Lawrence, KS.
- Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY, 40222, and Mark Monroe, 1114 Silvercrest Lane, Louisville, KY, 40223.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS IN MCCREARY COUNTY DURING MID- TO LATE MAY 2002

Little evidence of breeding by the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) in Kentucky has been collected in the past. An adult feeding a young bird in Harlan County 17 June 1981 represents the best evidence currently available, while summering birds have been noted in that county, as well as in Bell, Letcher, and Pike counties (Palmer-Ball 2003). Therefore, the presence of this threatened warbler in recent years during mid- to late May at several sites in McCreary County is worth reporting. Information about the sightings is also presented here because it was not included in the recently published 2nd edition of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Kentucky* (Palmer-Ball 2003).

On 14 May 2002 many observers including the author heard and saw a singing male Golden-winged Warbler on Indian Knob Road, Stearns Ranger District, Daniel Boone National Forest, McCreary County. This male sang both Type I and Type II songs (Confer 1992) and appeared territorial, but it was not relocated on subsequent visits to the site. However, at a site about one km away another male (perhaps a second individual) was heard singing Type I songs 31 May 2002 by L. M. Mills and T. B. Mills (*pers. com.*). The habitat at both of the sites was composed of thick early successional undergrowth with scattered dead pine snags. This habitat resulted from past management efforts for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Picoides borealis*) and an outbreak of southern pine beetles (*Dendroctonus frontalis*). The elevation of these sites is about 375 m (1200 ft), lower than most breeding sites of Golden-winged Warblers in Kentucky and in adjacent areas of Tennessee where breeding sites usually occur at 500 m (1600 ft) or above (Nicholson 1997).

On 22-23 and 27 May 2002 another male Golden-winged Warbler (likely a third individual) was detected singing Type I songs in similar habitat on Route 478, McCreary County, also within the Daniel Boone National Forest, about 2-3 km from the two sites noted above. This site had also been managed in the past for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and affected by the southern pine beetle outbreak. The male's presence for nearly a week at a possible breeding site suggested it was making an attempt to breed there.

Interestingly, 2002 was not the first time that Golden-winged Warblers had been recorded in recent years in this area during what is likely the early part of the breeding season. On 12 May 2000 L. M. Mills (*pers. com.*) heard a Golden-winged Warbler on Indian Knob Road near the sites described above, and she heard another bird on Pete Owen's Mine Road, also in McCreary County, during the early part of the breeding season in a year prior to 2002. Also, subsequent to the 2002 observations, there have been at least two reports of Golden-winged Warblers in this part of McCreary County. R. M. Denton (*pers. com.*) heard one on Indian Knob Road 20 April 2003, and L. Patton (Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife

Resources, unpubl. data) heard and saw a male Golden-winged Warbler on Indian Knob Road within 1.5 km of the 2002 observations 19 May 2003.

The five egg records of Golden-winged Warbler available prior to the publication of the *Tennessee Breeding Bird Atlas* (Nicholson 1997) indicate a peak of egg laying in the second half of May in Tennessee. If this peak is representative, then it suggests that birds present in adjacent McCreary County during the latter half of May might well be breeders. It is also instructive to note that breeding Golden-winged Warblers on the Cumberland Plateau and in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee often curtail singing considerably by early June (N. Moore, *pers. com.*)

The sites within the Daniel Boone National Forest where the Golden-winged Warblers were found in 2002 underwent a prescribed burn 16 March 2003, changing the habitat considerably and possibly rendering it less suitable for breeding Golden-winged Warblers for several years. However, in part because of extensive U.S. Forest Service management and the southern pine beetle outbreak, an abundance of suitable breeding habitat for this warbler likely remains across a large portion of McCreary County.

If breeding of Golden-winged Warblers have been present in McCreary County in recent years, it would represent an extension of the known breeding range of this species and would be particularly interesting due to the low elevation of the probable breeding sites. As noted above, Golden-winged Warblers have been known to occur in adjacent portions of the Cumberland Plateau of eastern Tennessee and it is possible that they have heretofore gone undetected in McCreary County.

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- Stephen J. Stedman, Department of English, Box 5053, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38505.

A SPRING YELLOW RAIL

The Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops novaboracensis*) is considered to be an extremely rare to rare transient through the interior of the eastern United States. In Kentucky, it has been observed on less than a dozen occasions, but all during fall migration and all during the month of October. In Tennessee, there are at least two spring reports for 30 April and 4 May (Robinson J. 1990. *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee*, University of Tennessee Press) and in Indiana the species is considered a rare spring transient with records from 22 March to 20 May (K. Brock, *pers. comm.*); there is also a record for 3 March 1901 (K. Brock, *pers. comm.*) that I would interpret as possibly pertaining to an individual that wintered in an era when the species was likely more numerous.

On 1 April 2003, I was mowing a field of Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) on our family farm in eastern Jefferson County. The field is approximately seven acres in size, and the grass had stood through the winter and was matted down in places. As I reached one end of the field on a mowing pass, a rail flew up and circled back into the tall unmowed grass. The bird seemed distinctly smaller than a Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) or Sora

(*Porzana carolina*). Because I was looking into the sun, I could not see the rail well, but as it landed in the grasses, I thought I caught a glimpse of white in the trailing edge of the wing. The wind was blowing at 15-20 mph and I thought I would not get another chance to see it, but two passes later I noticed the bird running in the stubble in front of the tractor. It darted in and out of cover, but then turned and ran back into the taller grass. As the mower passed by the place it had disappeared, the bird again took flight, this time away from the sun and closer. It was a warm, buffy brown, obviously smaller than a Sora, but with a shortish bill. As it fluttered back into the grass, I could see the distinct white patches on the inner portions of the trailing edge of the wings characteristic of a Yellow Rail.

I did not see the bird again that day, but on 2 April 2003 I was finishing the mowing of this field, and twice more flushed it from the grasses and once saw it running on top of some of the matted areas of grass. Armed with binoculars, I also was able to see it flying away and dropping into the grass with the aid of magnification, and got a pretty nice look at it and the white patches in the secondaries. Later on the second day, Wallace Gullett and I also saw it flush again as we baled up the grass, getting yet another brief but nice study of the size, overall coloration and white wing patches.

As noted above, this represents the first spring record of Yellow Rail for Kentucky, although the difficulty encountered in attempting to find this elusive species certainly explains at least in part the paucity of records.—**Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.**, 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY, 40222.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Visit the K.O.S. Website

To learn about the Kentucky Ornithological Society and interesting happenings, visit the K.O.S. Website, www.biology.eku.edu/kos.htm, maintained by webmaster Gary Ritchison.

