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## Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 84, no. 4)

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# *The Kentucky Warbler*

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## IN THIS ISSUE

SUMMER SEASON 2008, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., and Lee McNeely .....	83
KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY FALL MEETING, September 25-27, 2008, John Brunjes .....	90
FIELD NOTE	
Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Open Pond, Fulton County, Ben Yandell and Mary Yandell .....	93
BOOK REVIEW, <i>Birds in Flight; the Art and Science of How Birds Fly</i> , Blaine R. Ferrell .....	94
SELECTED INDEX, VOLUMES 81-84 (2005-2008), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. ....	94
NEWS AND VIEWS .....	99
Rusty Blackbird Hot Spot Blitz .....	99
Discount Available for <i>The Literary Bird Journal</i> .....	100

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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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THE COVER

We thank Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., for the image of the Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) taken 10 June 2008 at the Melco Flood Retention Basin, southern Jefferson County (see Summer Season 2008). Financial support for color reproduction in this issue provided by the Daniel Boone National Forest and the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.



## SUMMER SEASON 2008

## Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., and Lee McNeely

Weather conditions during June-July 2008 were somewhat variable across the state but not extreme. In general, precipitation was lower than normal across central and northern Kentucky during June with near-normal rainfall across southern Kentucky during the month; in July the situation became reversed with near-normal precipitation occurring across the northern half of the state while the onset of a severe period of drought occurred in the southern part of the state. Temperatures were slightly warmer than normal statewide during June, but slightly cooler than normal during July. Vagrants reported during the season were a flock of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, a Roseate Spoonbill, and a Western Kingbird. This year's Least Tern nesting success was dismal, primarily due to prolonged high water levels on the Mississippi and lower Ohio rivers. In contrast, Blue-winged Teal were documented nesting in record numbers, and nesting of Northern Shovelers was confirmed for only the second time.

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** – 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; BBS = Breeding Bird Survey; m. ob. = multiple observers; **Place names:** Barkley Dam = Barkley Dam, *Livingston/Lyon*; Camp #9 = Camp #9 coal preparation plant, *Union*; Camp #11 = former Camp #11 mine, *Union*; Chaney Lake = Chaney Lake, *Warren*; DBNF = Daniel Boone National Forest; Fish Pond = Fish Pond, w. *Fulton*; Fishing Creek = Fishing Creek embayment, Lake Cumberland, *Pulaski*; Guthrie Swamp = Guthrie Swamp, *Todd*; Honey Cypress Slough = Honey Cypress Slough, along the *Henderson/Union* line; Horseshoe Road = sloughs along Horseshoe Road, w. *Henderson*; Ky Dam = Kentucky Dam, *Livingston/Marshall*; Kuttawa = Lake Barkley at Kuttawa, *Lyon*; Lake No. 9 = Lake No. 9, *Fulton*; McElroy = McElroy Lake, *Warren*; Melco = Melco flood retention basin, *Jefferson*; Morgan Pond = Morgan Pond, *Christian*; Natural Bridge = Natural Bridge State Resort Park, *Powell*; Obion WMA = L.E. Schaaf Tract, Obion WMA, *Fulton*; Open Pond = Open Pond, *Fulton*; Pond Creek Marsh = Pond Creek Marsh, Sauerheber Unit Sloughs WMA, *Henderson*; Snake Creek = Snake Creek embayment, Green River Lake, *Adair*; WMA = Wildlife Management Area.

**Fulvous Whistling-Duck** – a flock of 9 birds was present at the Blood River embayment of Ky Lake, *Calloway*, 28 July (†BH et al.). KBRC review required.

**Mute Swan** – singles at Fishing Creek 10 June and General Burnside Island State Park, *Pulaski*, 22 July (RDn) may have been the same individual; 1 was seen on the Ohio River at Augusta, *Bracken*, 22 July (RSe).

**American Black Duck** – what appeared to be an injured bird was present at Fishing Creek 10 June (RDn).

**Blue-winged Teal** – it was an excellent season for nesting birds with the following reports: a brood of young at Swallow Spring Pond, *Christian*, 1 June (MB, DR); a brood at the ditch at McElroy 4 June (DR); a brood on a transient pond near Cerulean, *Trigg*, 5 June (BP); a brood at

Hicks Lake, w. *Hardin*, 11 June (BP); 5 males were still at Chaney Lake 4 June (BP) with 2 or 3 broods there 14 June (DR); a brood at Willow Pond, w. *Fulton*, 21 June (DR, JRm) with 22 birds total there 11 July (DR, HC); and "broods" at Fish Pond 11 July (DR). Most notably, remarkably high numbers nested in the vicinity of Morgan Pond during June with at least 24 broods on a few ponds in the immediate vicinity 5 June (BP); at least 38 broods counted on six ponds in the vicinity 16 June (BP); at least 41 broods counted in the vicinity 22 June (DR, JRm); and a total tally of 698 birds probably representing in excess of 70 broods counted in the vicinity 30 June (BP). Additional reports of summering and/or nesting birds included 3 at Open Pond 20 June (DR, JRm) with 2 there 30 June (HC) and 1 there 10 July (DR); 4 birds on a slough s. of Lake No. 9 on the Tennessee state line 20 June (DR, JRm); 1 at Island No. 8 Slough, *Fulton*, 21 June (DR, JRm); and 6 at Obion WMA 21 July (HC).

**Northern Shoveler** – although a female was present at Chaney Lake 10 June (DR) and a pair was present at Honey Cypress Slough 13-22 June (CC), evidence of nesting was not detected at either site; however, 3 males were still at and near Morgan Pond 5 June (BP) and, although there was no sign of adults later in the season, 7 half-grown young were seen on a transient pond ne. of Oak Grove near Morgan Pond 30 June (ph. BP).

**Ring-necked Duck** – a female continued at Morgan Pond to 11 July (DR); 3 were at Camp #9 on 5 June (BP) with 4 there 17 June (BP) & 12 July (BP, EH).

**Lesser Scaup** – a tardy male was present on a transient pond along US 79, *Todd*, 4 June (DR); 1 at Fish Pond 11 July (DR) was perhaps injured and summering; 3 above Ky Dam and 8 above Barkley Dam, both 29 July (DR), were likely injured and summering.

**Common Goldeneye** – a female, likely injured and continuing from spring, was seen above Ky Dam 22 June (DR, JRm).

**Hooded Merganser** – there were several reports of confirmed nesting as follows: a brood of young at Lake No. 9 on 4 June (HC, ME); broods at Honey Cypress Slough 17/22 June (CC); a brood at Lake No. 9 and another on a slough s. of there at the Tennessee state line, both 20 June (DR, JRm); a brood at Fish Pond 11 July (DR); and a brood at Pond Creek Marsh 14 July (CC).

**Ruddy Duck** – 6 birds continued at and near Morgan Pond to 5 June (BP), but 8 were seen in the vicinity 30 June (BP) and 4 continued there to 5 July (DR); also, 1 was at Open Pond 4 June (HC, ME); and a female was seen at Horseshoe Road 30 June (CC).

**Common Loon** – a bird in alternate plumage was seen on Taylorsville Lake, *Spencer*, 20 June (EH).



Juvenile Northern Shoveler, *Christian*  
30 June 2008  
Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

**Pied-billed Grebe** – there was one report of confirmed nesting: a juv. in the company of an adult on a transient pond ne. of Oak Grove near Morgan Pond 30 June (BP). There were several additional reports of summering/possibly breeding birds as follows: 1 at Camp #11 on 5 June (BP) and 12 July (BP, EH); 2 at Morgan Pond 5/19 June (BP/DR) with 6 there 14 June (DR), 3 there and 1 on a nearby pond 16 June (BP), and 2 there 10 July (DR) with 1 last seen there 11 July (DR); 1 on a transient pond along US 79, *Todd*, 10 June (DR, FL); 1 at Hicks Lake, w. *Hardin*, 11 June

(BP); 1 at Chaney Lake 14 June (DR); 1 at Honey Cypress Slough 17 June (CC); and 1 or 2 at Camp #9 on 12 July (BP, EH).

**Double-crested Cormorant** – summer season records of presumed non-breeders of interest included 1 at Guthrie Swamp 4/14 June (DR, TD); 1 at Snake Creek 18 June/12 July (RDn) and 10 at Lake No. 9 on 21 June (DR, JRm); an increase to 2 birds at Snake Creek 19 July (RDn), 3 there 26 July (RDn), and 1 over Big Gimlet Creek, *Elliott*, 22 July (EM) might be indicative of the commencement of the fall migratory season. Nesting birds expanded remarkably on Lake Barkley this year with the following reports: up to 50 or more nests at Kuttawa during the season (m. ob.); and 100 and 600 nests on two islands, respectively, in the lake near Rockcastle, *Trigg*, 6 July (ER).

**American White Pelican** – some birds lingered along the Mississippi River, w. *Fulton*, through the season with the following reports: 51 at Open Pond 4 June (HC, ME); 32 at Lake No. 9 on 16 June (ME); 1 at Lake No. 9 on 24 June (HC, ME); ca. 130 at Open Pond 20 June (DR, JRm); ca. 80 at Lake No. 9 on 21 June (DR, JRm); and 4 at Lake No. 9 on 10 July (DR).

**Least Bittern** – there were reports from only two locales as follows: at least 3 at Clear Creek WMA, *Hopkins*, 27 June (DB, EW) and 3 July (DB, EW, BP, JBr, SV); and 1 heard at Pond Creek Marsh 14 June (BY, MY) and 18 June (CC).

**Great Blue Heron** – a new nesting colony was reported on the Buck Creek embayment of Cave Run Lake, *Menifee*, 13 June (EM et al.).

**Little Blue Heron** – reports of wandering birds included 1 at Snake Creek 19 & 26 July (RDn) and 1 at Fishing Creek 10 July (RDn). The only report of a post breeding congregation was ca. 50 at Lake No. 9 on 28 July (DR).

**Snowy Egret** – there were three reports away from far w. Kentucky: 1 at Horse-shoe Road 12 July (CC, BP, EH); 1 at Pond Creek Marsh 14 July (CC); and 1 at

the Falls of the Ohio, *Jefferson*, 23 July (T&CB).

**Great Egret** – 3 over the Ohio River at Dayton, *Campbell*, 8 June (FR) were rather out of place for the time of year. The only substantial count of post breeding birds was 600-700 at Lake No. 9 on 28 July (DR).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – there were several reports, all being included: 2 nests were successful along Woodbine Drive, Lexington, with 1 and 3 young fledged, respectively (PD); an adult along US 60 near Future City, *McCracken*, 2 June (JRw); an adult along Bethany Lane, sw. *Jefferson* 8 July (CL); and a juv. at Lake No. 9 on 29 July (DR).

**Roseate Spoonbill** – a juv. was present at Lake No. 9 on 28 July (ph. DR). KBRC review required.



Roseate Spoonbill, Lake No. 9  
28 July 2008  
David Roemer

**Osprey** – a new nest was located on a powerline tower near the Barkley Dam power house during June (KL, BLc).

**Mississippi Kite** – the only report of birds away from known nesting areas involved at least 2 seen at Sinclair 26 July (BP, EH, MS).

**Northern Harrier** – there were three reports of birds away from known nesting areas: a female along KY 848 w. of Keysburg, *Todd*, 1 June (MB, DR); 1 over Hickman, *Fulton*, 21 June (DR, JRm); and a female at Camp #11 on 12 July (BP, EH).

**Bald Eagle** – there were a few reports of interest including an imm. at Morgan Pond 1 June (MB, DR); 1 over US 23 at the Narrows, *Greenup*, 4 June (RSe); and 5 imms. at Cave Run Lake, *Rowan*, 13 June (EM et al.).

**Peregrine Falcon** – this year there were 9 territorial/nesting pairs along the Ohio River corridor including a newly established pair at East Bend Station, w. *Boone* (KH et al.). Of these 9 pairs, 6 were known to successfully fledge young (*vide* KH). The pair at Louisville was scarcely seen during the late summer period (m. ob.), and it was unknown if any young fledged successfully at that locale.

**American Coot** – a few birds lingered at four sites: 2 were at Camp #11 on 5 June (BP) with 1 still there 12 July (BP, EH) but no evidence of breeding was observed; 5 lingered at Morgan Pond to late June (m. ob.) with 3 still there to 11 July (DR); 1 was seen at Chaney Lake 14 June (DR); and 1 summered at Griffin Park, *Warren* (DR). The origin of 1 at Ky Dam 23 July (DR) and 16 at Ky Dam 29 July (DR) is unclear as the dates seem way too early for migrants; it is much more likely that a summering group moved around on Ky Lake.

**Sandhill Crane** – a bird at Morgan Pond 5/10 July (ph. DR) represented the state's first record for July.



Sandhill Crane, Morgan Pond  
5 July 2008  
David Roemer

**Black-bellied Plover** – 1 at Open Pond 24 June (HC, ME) represented a new late

spring date (assuming the bird was still moving north).

**Semipalmated Plover** – ca. 10 at McElroy (DR), ca. 30 at Morgan Pond, ca. 15 along KY 739, *Logan*, and 1 at Swallow Spring Pond, *Christian* (MB, DR), were all still present 1 June (MB, DR); 3 along KY 739, *Logan*, 4 June (DR) were the latest to be reported in spring. One at Open Pond 24 June (HC, ME) in between normal spring and fall migratory periods.

**Killdeer** – peak counts included ca. 120 in the vicinity of Morgan Pond 29 June (DR); 125+ at Camp #9 on 12 July (BP, EH); 183 at Guthrie Swamp 16 July (DR, FL); and 300+ at Lake No. 9 on 29 July (DR).

**American Avocet** – 1 was present along the Ohio River at Dayton, *Campbell*, 31 July (ph. FR).

**Black-necked Stilt** – it was an interesting season for nesting, although most attempts appeared to be unsuccessful. Reports of nesting originated from three locales. At Open Pond, 6 adults (some on nests) were seen 4 June (HC, ME) with 5 there (1 incubating) 16 June (ME); 2 there 20 June (DR, JRm); 3 there 24 June (HC, ME); 5 there 30 June (HC); 3 pairs with 1 pair in the company of young there 2 July (JBr, CBo); 2 family groups (1 with large young probably of non-local origin) there 10 July (DR), and 1 family group remaining there to 21 July (HC). At Morgan Pond, 7 birds were still incubating with several others present 5 June (BP) with 16 birds acting very distressed there but no nesting activity and only empty nests observed (predation must have recently occurred) 16 June (BP); 11 still there 30 June (BP); 4 still there 5 July (DR); and 2 there 10/11 July (DR). Along Horseshoe Road, at least 1 bird was present 14/17 June (BY, MY/BP, CC) with a pair behaving as if defending a nest site there 22 June (CC) but subsequently gone (CC). Also observed during the season were 1 at Guthrie Swamp 8 June (DR, TD); 1 at Ellis Park, *Henderson*, 12 July (BP, EH); and 2 at Obion WMA 21 July (HC).

**Greater Yellowlegs** – 3 at Open Pond 13 July (HC, NM, PHO) were the earliest fall birds to be reported.

**Willet** – 1 was at Lake No. 9 on 10 July (DR).

**Lesser Yellowlegs** – tardy spring birds were at Melco (EH) and Morgan Pond (BP) both 4 June; 1 at Morgan Pond 19/22 June (DR) was in between typical spring and fall migratory periods; 5 at Morgan Pond and 2 at Guthrie Swamp, both 29 June (DR), and 1 on a transient pond near Morgan Pond 30 June (BP) were more likely early fall migrants. A count of 140+ at Open Pond 13 July (HC, NM, PHO) was remarkable for so early in the fall migratory season.

**Solitary Sandpiper** – a tardy bird was at Chaney Lake 4 June (DR); 1 at Open Pond 10 July (DR) was the earliest fall bird to be reported.

**Spotted Sandpiper** – 1 along the Ohio River at Dayton, *Campbell*, 8 June (FR) was rather tardy or summering; 1 at Open Pond 20 June (DR, JRm) was in between normal spring and fall migratory periods; 1 at Morgan Pond 5 July (DR) was likely an early fall migrant.

**Least Sandpiper** – 1 at Open Pond 24 June (HC, ME) and 2 there 30 June (HC) were probably early fall migrants; the increase in fall migrants at Open Pond was demonstrated by 75 + there 10 July (DR), 120+ there 13 July (HC, NM, PHO), and ca. 300 there 29 July (DR).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** – as is the norm, small numbers of spring migrants lingered at several locales into the first week of June with several at Morgan Pond (BP) and 10 at Camp #9 (BP), both 5 June, and 1 at Morgan Pond 14 June (DR, TD) being the latest to be reported. One at Open Pond 10 July (DR) was the earliest fall bird reported (DR), and 30+ were at Lake No. 9 by 29 July (DR).

**Western Sandpiper** – 2 at Open Pond 13 July (HC, NM, PHO) were the earliest fall birds to be reported; also reported were 5 at Lake No. 9 on 29 July (DR).

**White-rumped Sandpiper** – as is the norm, small numbers lingered at a few sites into the first week of June with several at Morgan Pond (BP), 2 at Camp #9 (BP), and 17 at Chaney Lake (DR), all 5 June, and 6 along KY 739, *Logan* (DR, FL), and 2 at Morgan Pond (DR), both 10 June, being the latest to be reported. One at Open Pond (ph. HC) and 2 (1 injured) at Morgan Pond (BP), all 30 June were in between typical spring and fall migratory periods; perhaps the same bird was still at Open Pond 21 July (HC).

**Pectoral Sandpiper** – a tardy spring migrant lingered at Morgan Pond to 5 June (BP); 1 at Open Pond 24 June (HC, ME) was probably an early fall migrant; 25+ were at Open Pond by 10 July (DR).

**Stilt Sandpiper** – 3 at Open Pond 13 July (HC, NM, PHO) were the earliest fall migrants to be reported.

**Short-billed Dowitcher** – singles at Open Pond 30 June (HC) and at Morgan Pond 5 July (DR) were the earliest fall migrants to be reported.

**Long-billed Dowitcher** – 1 seen and heard at Willow Pond, w. *Fulton*, 29 July (ph. DR) was relatively early.

**American Woodcock** – 1 in farmland near Dot, *Logan*, 23 June (FL) and 1 along a fenceline near Morgan Pond 30 June (BP) were both unexpected, especially for mid-summer.

**Wilson's Phalarope** – the nest at McElroy was destroyed by farming operations during the first few days of June (DR); 3 females feeding together at Morgan Pond 16 June (BP) were in between normal spring and fall migratory periods and added another twist to a uniquely abnormal season for the species.

**Ring-billed Gull** – 2 at Morgan Pond 19 June (DR) and 1 at Open Pond 20 June (DR) and 24 June (HC, ME) were rather unusual for early summer; ca. 35 in the vicinity of Ky Dam 20 June (DR, JRm) was a relatively normal number for late June and may have included some early fall arrivals; 130 were in the vicinity by 11 July (DR).



**Herring Gull** – an adult at Ky Dam 10/11 July (DR) was relatively early if a returning fall bird.

**Least Tern** – the nesting season was relatively dismal, with water levels on the Mississippi and lower Ohio rivers well above normal into July. A substantial number of nesting attempts were initiated in farmland adjacent to Obion WMA (DR), around Open Pond (HC, ME, DR, CBo, JBr), and adjacent to Swan Lake Unit Barlow Bottoms WMA, *Ballard* (CBo), but only single juvs. were seen at the latter two locales and no fledging success was documented (CBo). A few clutches were laid on a small island on the Ohio River above Grandview, Indiana, *Hancock*, but they failed due to a few periods of high water (DA). The only location where fledging success was documented was an industrial pond at Calvert City, *Marshall*, where 14 active nests were counted during July (CBo, DS). Vagrant birds were reported at two locales: 1 at Morgan Pond 1 June (MB, DR), with 4 there 29 June (DR) and at least 1 there 30 June (BP); and 1 at Guthrie Swamp 4 June (BP) and 14 June (DR, TD).

**Black Tern** – sightings of likely lingering spring migrants included singles at Morgan Pond 1 June (MB, DR) and 14 June (DR, TD), with 2 there 4/10 June (BP, DR/DR). Singles at Open Pond 13 July (HC, NM, PHo), Barren River Lake 20 July (DR, JRm), and Obion WMA 28 July (DR) were likely fall migrants.

**Caspian Tern** – 1 at Cave Run Lake, *Rowan*, 13 June (EM et al.) was in between normal spring and fall migratory periods.

**Forster's Tern** – 1 at Open Pond 4 June (HC, ME) was probably a tardy spring migrant; 4 at Plum Point, Green River Lake, *Adair*, 19 July (RDn) and 4 at Barren River Lake 20 July (DR, JRm) were likely early fall migrants.

**Common Tern** – 6 were seen on the Ohio River at Cox's Park, *Jefferson*, 18 July (†P&CM).

**Black-billed Cuckoo** – there were two reports: 1 along Pleasant Hill Church Road,

*Trigg*, 2 June (PL, *fide* BLi) and 1 near the jct. of KY 55 and Clear Creek Rd., ca. 4 mi. n. of Shelbyville, *Shelby*, 15 June (BS).

**Barn Owl** – there were three reports: a family of 3 young in sw. *Logan*, 4 June–early July (ph. FL, MB); 1 at Mt. Zion 6 June (RDn); and a family in an abandoned chimney at Junction City, *Boyle*, during July (BK, *fide* LD).



Young Barn Owls, *Logan*  
1 July 2008  
Frank Lyne

**Least Flycatcher** – 9 birds were reported at the traditional breeding site at the summit of Black Mt., *Harlan*, 20 June (RDn).

**Western Kingbird** – one of the highlights of the season was a bird that was present at Melco 9-11 June and enjoyed by many local birders (ph. EH et al.; see pp. 81 and 100). KBRC review required.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** – the nesting pair continued along KY 453 n. of Grand Rivers, *Livingston*, through the period (KL, BLe, et al.); although young were seen in the nest, successful fledging was not confirmed. A male at Morgan Pond 1 June (DR, MB) represented yet another sighting from the vicinity of the Ft. Campbell airfield over the past decade, suggesting that nesting continues somewhere in the vicinity.

**Fish Crow** – 3 were noted at Kuttawa 11 June (KL).

**Cliff Swallow** – nesting birds continued along the Ohio River, *Campbell/Kenton*, into July (FR).

**Bewick's Wren** – the only report was of 2 (a pair?) at Ft. Campbell, *Trigg*, 1 July (†DM).

**Golden-winged Warbler** – the continuing University of Kentucky research project on a nesting population w. of Williamsburg, *Whitley*, yielded reports of 16 territorial Golden-wingeds, as well as 9 nests of Golden-wingeds, 2 nests of mixed species pairs (Golden-winged/Blue-winged), and 2 nests of Golden-winged/hybrid (i.e., Lawrence's/Brewster's) pairs (PHa et al.).

**Black-and-white Warbler** – a bird at Briarwood, *Jefferson*, 21 June (JBe, PB) is indicative of how early fall dispersal commences for this early nester.

**Swainson's Warbler** – the species was reported only in traditional breeding areas including 2 at the Little Lick Recreation Area, DBNF, *Pulaski*, 21 June (RDn); 2 banded at Natural Bridge, 5 June (KH, ZW, et al.); 1 at Natural Bridge 14 July (BP, ZW) and 19 July (RSI); and 1 along the Rock Bridge loop trail, DBNF, *Wolfe*, 8 July (EM).

**Common Yellowthroat** – a count of 40 at Fishing Creek (where the Lake Cumberland drawdown has resulted in extensive growth of weedy vegetation) 24 July (RDn) was impressive.

**Hooded Warbler** – a count of 46 at Bee Rock Recreation Area, DBNF, *Pulaski*, 12 June (RDn) was impressive.

**Bachman's Sparrow** – some survey work was reinitiated this season at Ft. Campbell, resulting in a few reports, all being included: singles singing in *Trigg* 18 June/8 July (DM) and a pair with a nest from which at least 1 young had just fledged in *Trigg* 2 July (DM).

**Savannah Sparrow** – the observation of 3 birds including an apparent juv. along Snake Creek Road, *Adair*, 18 June (RDn) represents a new county breeding record; also of interest was 1 was heard along KY 1607, ca 1.75 miles n. of Hodgenville, *Larue*, 22 June (BP).

**Lark Sparrow** – there were several reports of this rare breeder, all being included: territorial birds continued along McDonald Landing Road, *Henderson*, to 18 June (ph. CC), and along Vance Road, s. *Warren*, with a nest site present 14 June and at

least 6 birds in the vicinity 7 July (DR); at Ft. Campbell, 2 (a pair?) were seen in *Christian* 30 June (DM), and 1 was seen in *Trigg* 1 July (DM). Also reported were 2 at Lake No. 9 on 29 July (DR).



Lark Sparrow, *Henderson*  
18 June 2008  
Charlie Crawford

**Henslow's Sparrow** – reports of probable nesting birds in new locales included at least 6 males on territory at Bernheim Forest, *Bullitt* (KV, MA); several at Raven Run Sanctuary, *Fayette*, in late June (DL et al.); at least 1 near Rowletts, *Hart*, in late June (AH); and 2 in *Barren* along KY 70 near the *Metcalfe* line in late June (AH). At Ft. Campbell, 1 was in *Trigg* 5 June (DM) and 2 were in *Christian* 2 July (DM)

**White-throated Sparrow** – again this summer, the species put in an uncharacteristic appearance with two reports: 1 heard along KY 416, ca. 1.0 mile ssw. of Hebardsville, *Henderson*, 15 June (†MY); and 1 heard in a yard at St. Matthews, *Jefferson*, 26 June (BW).

**Bobolink** – there were three breeding season reports: 7 males at a BBS stop at the jct. of KY 537 and US 60 on the *Bath/Montgomery* line 1 June (SM); 2 and 4 males, respectively, at two BBS stops along US 60, *Bath*, just e. of the *Montgomery* line 8 June (SM); and a male a few miles sw. of Danville along Caldwell Road, *Boyle*, 16 June (MH).

**Purple Finch** – a female-type lingered near Fisherville, *Jefferson*, to 17 June (EH, JH).

**Observers:** Michael Autin (MA), David Ayer (DA), Danna Baxley (DB), Tom & Colleen Becker (T&CB), Jane Bell (JBe), Pat Bell (PB), Mark Bennett (MB), Caitlin Borck (CBo), John Brunjes (JBr), Hap Chambers (HC), Charlie Crawford (CC), Phyllis Deal (PD), Roseanna Denton (RDn), Lydia DiMartino-Ellis (LD), Tom Durbin (TD), Melissa Easley (ME), Michael Hamm (MH), Barry Hart (BH), Patricia Hartman (PHa), Kate Heyden (KH), Patty Horner (PHo), Eddie Huber (EH), Jennifer Huber (JH), Aaron Hulsey (AH), Brian Kennedy (BK), David Lang (DL), Celia Lawrence (CL), Betty Leggett (BLE), Ken Leggett (KL), Bill Lisowsky (BLi), Paula Lisowsky (PL), Frank Lyne (FL), Scott Marsh (SM), Paul & Carol McAllister (P&CM), Nancy Moore (NM), Evelyn Morgan (EM), Daniel Moss (DM), Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BP), Ed Ray (ER), Frank Renfrow (FR), David Roemer (DR), Joan Roemer (JRm), Jeff Rowe (JRw), Rick Seelhorst (RSe), Ryan Slack (RSI), Brian Smith (BS), Matt Stickel (MS), Don Swearingen (DS), Kelly Vowels (KV), Shawchyi Vorisek (SV), Zeb Weese (ZW), Eric Williams (EW), Barbara Woerner (BW), Ben Yandell (BY), Mary Yandell (MY).

## **KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY FALL MEETING**

**September 25–27, 2008**

**Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park, Burkesville, KY**

**John Brunjes, Recording Secretary**

The fall 2008 meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society meeting was held at Dale Hollow State Resort Park, Clinton and Cumberland counties, near Burkesville, Kentucky. The meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m. CDT by President Win Ahrens, who welcomed more than 60 members and guests. Scott Marsh recognized new attendees and introduced the evenings three guest speakers.

The first speaker on Friday evening was Dr. Wayne Davis. Dr. Davis provided the group with a background on Prothonotary Warbler declines in the United States. He described a project he had been working on to put up nesting boxes for Prothonotary Warblers at two sites along the Kentucky River. In the first season, he had no success getting the warblers to use his boxes, but in subsequent seasons he had good success with warblers using a number of them. Wayne described various designs for Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes. He showed the group nest boxes made from a Metamucil can and one made from an orange juice carton. He described how to mount each and some of the advantages/disadvantages of each design. He also gave some valuable insight into success putting up boxes for Carolina Wrens. He encouraged everyone not to clean out boxes, but to instead put up new boxes. He brought numerous wren and a few Prothonotary Warbler boxes for members to take home and put up.

Dr. Stephen Stedman was the second speaker of the evening. He told the members in attendance about a project he was working on to document the birds of the Upper Cumberland Region in Kentucky and Tennessee. He showed everyone components of his website (<http://iweb.ntech.edu/sstedman/birds.htm>) that he was using to document birds of the region. For anyone traveling to the region, it would be a valuable resource to help you know what birds to expect. Dr. Stedman asked the group for their assistance in an intense birding day in Cumberland County, Kentucky, on Saturday. Several groups were assigned different parts of the county and sought out as many birds as possible. He also asked field trip leaders to keep records of sightings in Cumberland County so they could be included in the database.

The final speaker of the evening was Dr. Geoff Hill from Auburn University. Dr. Hill presented a synopsis of work he has been doing on coloration in birds. He presented the group with an extremely interesting talk describing the various pigments that are responsible for coloration in birds. As an example, he showed various birds with black and

white feathers and described how melanin was responsible for greater resistance to wear in the black portions. Dr. Hill also described how feather structure influenced the colors seen in birds. Throughout the presentation, the group was delighted with some spectacular pictures of birds. At the end of Dr. Hill's talk, Win Ahrens thanked him for this "bonus" program and announced Saturday's field trips. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. CDT, and soft drinks and cookies were available during a social hour that followed.

The Saturday morning field trips were held in warm and sunny, fall weather. The State Resort Park was the focus of the morning's three field trips. One field trip occurred in the campground area and was led by Scott Marsh. A second field trip, focused on the marina and woodlands around the marina; that trip was led by Win Ahrens. The third trip, led by Lee McNeely, explored the Eagle Point Trail. While no organized afternoon trip was planned, many of the meeting participants birded around the park after lunch. In addition to the field trips, many participants scattered out across Cumberland County, participating in the Cumberland County fall bird count. The KOS board meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. CDT; with numerous issues before the board, the meeting lasted until 4:20 p.m..

The Saturday evening meeting was called to order by President Win Ahrens. He announced a new nature license plate, featuring a Northern Bobwhite, that will debut on October 1, 2008; proceeds will benefit restoration of the species in the state. He showed everyone a mock-up of the plate and encouraged members to consider it when they renew. Gay Hodges announced the slate of nominees for the KOS board. All nominees stood and introduced themselves so the members in attendance knew who they were. The nominees were: President – Win Ahrens, Vice President – Scott Marsh, Treasurer – Lee McNeely, Corresponding Secretary – Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., Recording Secretary – John Brunjes, and Councillors – Don Martin, Shawchyi Vorisek, and Mary Yandell. The slate was approved unanimously by the members in attendance. Win then thanked the board members whose term had expired and were leaving at the end of the year (Gay Hodges, Eddie Huber, and Evelyn Morgan). Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., then led the tally of species encountered on the day by members on field trips and those participating in the fall bird survey of Cumberland County. He reported that 101 species had been seen during the day.

Win Ahrens introduced the evening speaker, Dr. Geoff Hill, from Auburn University. Dr. Hill, a native of northern Kentucky, has been the ornithologist at Auburn University for the last 15 years. He presented the story of the search for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers along the Choctawhatchee River in the panhandle of Florida that has been undertaken over the course of the last few years. Dr. Hill began with a history of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the United States, describing the decline of the species and some of the reasons for this decline. He then chronicled some of the reports of extinctions and rediscoveries over the years before describing the truly fascinating tale of his team's efforts to document the possible population in Florida. He told everyone about sightings of the birds by his team and by himself. He provided numerous sound recordings of what they believed were the call notes and "double knocks" of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. He also shared a video of a bird they believed to be an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. While definitive evidence is still lacking, he presented a very compelling argument for the continued existence of the bill along the Choctawhatchee River. If you are interested in his work you can read his book, *Ivory Bill Hunters: The Search for Proof in a Flooded Wilderness* or visit his website [http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science\\_math/cosam/departments/biology/faculty/webpages/hill/ivorybill/index.html](http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science_math/cosam/departments/biology/faculty/webpages/hill/ivorybill/index.html).

At the completion of Dr. Hill's talk, President Win Ahrens thanked him for the Society. Win then announced the next spring meeting on April 24-26, 2009, at Mammoth Cave National Park. He announced the speaker would be Ted Floyd, the editor of *Birding* magazine. He also announced plans for Sunday morning field trips and with that he closed the meeting so that everyone might socialize over refreshments.

**Attendance at the Fall 2008 Meeting**

Bagdad:	W. Horace Brown
Berea:	Paul Hager, Art & Tina Ricketts
Bowling Green:	Blaine Ferrell, David & Joan Roemer
Burlington:	Joe, Joey, & Kathy Caminiti, Lee McNeely, Donna O'Daniel, Katie Smith
Carlisle:	Virginia & Wendell Kingsolver
Cookeville, TN:	Stephen Stedman
Cynthiana:	Jimmy & Julie Edwards
Danville:	Jane & J.P. Brantley, Ginny & Neil Eklund
Eddyville:	Betty & Ken Leggett
Floyd Knobs, IN:	Tom Becker
Frankfort:	John Brunjes, Terri Estes, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.
Greenville, IN:	Jane Fender
Independence:	Don & Robbie Martin
Lawrenceburg:	Terry Anderson
Lexington:	Rhonda Bryant, Shirley & Wayne Davis, Phyllis Deal, Scott Marsh, Layton Register, Bobbi & Lou Shain, Joe Swanson, Jackie Van Willigen, Jim Williams
Louisville:	Mary Bill Bauer, Jane Bell, Pat Bell, Carol Besse, Carl & JoAnn Bochmann, Richard Cassell, Eddie Huber, Ben & Mary Yandell
Morehead:	Fred, Joanna, & Katie Busroe
Morgantown:	Carroll & Doris Tichenor
Mount Sterling:	Gerald Robe
Murray:	Kathy & Michael Cohen
Prospect:	Win Ahrens
Richmond:	Brenda & Pete Thompson
Russellville:	Mark & Tommie Gail Bennett
Somerset:	Gay Hodges, Connie Neeley
Vero Beach, FL:	Tim Towles

**Birds Observed at the Fall 2008 Meeting**

The following bird species were observed in the vicinity of Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, 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, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak,

Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow. The total species observed during the weekend was 102.

## FIELD NOTE

### Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Open Pond, Fulton County

Just after 8:00 a.m. CDT on 8 May 2008, we spotted a flock of five ducks in flight along the western edge of Open Pond in western Fulton County. Even when seen briefly in flight, the birds were immediately recognizable as whistling-ducks from their goselike appearance, trailing legs in flight, and dark wings. The birds circled and later landed at the edge of the pond. We then were able to positively identify the birds as Fulvous Whistling-Ducks (*Dendrocygna bicolor*; the Latin name is translated literally as “two-color tree-swan”). Despite their common name, neither of us heard them call. If accepted by the Kentucky Bird Records Committee, this will be Kentucky’s first record of this species.

We enjoyed excellent views through binoculars and telescopes and took about 100 digital photographs (see p. 100 and *The Kentucky Warbler* 84(2008):54). The ducks remained in the general area until mid-afternoon and were seen by a few other birders; however, they were not reported again.

The birds were medium-sized waterfowl with long necks and legs. The bill and legs were dark blue-gray. The face, cheeks, neck, chest and belly were a rich buffy to tawny-cinnamon (“fulvous” means “tawny”). The eyes were dark, without a distinct eye-ring. The long neck had a light-gray band and a narrow, blackish vertical streak along the nape.

The back, wings, and tail were dark blackish-brown. The anterior two-thirds of the back had broken transverse chestnut stripes. The wings had no speculum and were dark above and below, without the broad white dorsal wing stripe of the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*). The tail had a white band, visible when flying, and the undertail coverts were white. Bold white streaking separated the dark back from the tawny flanks.

The flock slept, fed, and occasionally flew around in the general area, periodically disappearing from view. At one point, the birds stood in weeds in a muddy field with standing water along Midway Road and could easily have been missed by passersby. A considerable amount of aquatic habitat was present in the flooded farm fields in the area, which is less than 2 mi (3.2 km) east of the Mississippi River and the Missouri border, and about 2 mi (3.2 km) north of the Tennessee border, with Reelfoot Lake to the south and east.

An Internet search revealed previous records of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in every state surrounding Kentucky except West Virginia. At least two other sightings of the species occurred in and near Kentucky during spring and summer of 2008 as follows: on 14 June, Jeff Wilson (TN-BIRD Listserv 2008) photographed a Fulvous Whistling-Duck southeast of Reelfoot Lake in Missouri (Pemiscot County); and on 28 July, a group of Tennessee Valley Authority employees reported a flock of 9 in flight at the upper end of Blood River embayment (Crappie Hollow), Calloway County, Kentucky (Barry Hart, pers. comm.).

Fulvous Whistling-Duck is one of the most widespread waterfowl species in the world, but its range in the United States is limited to southern California, the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana, and southern Florida. It has a primarily seed-based diet and is mostly associated with rice fields in the United States (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2008).

### Literature Cited

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2008. [www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide). Accessed 15 August 2008.

TN-Bird Listserv. 2008. <http://www.freelists.org/archives/tn-bird/06-2008/msg.00076.html>. Accessed 15 August 2008.

—Ben Yandell and Mary Yandell, 513 Lymington Court, Louisville, KY, 40243.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Birds in Flight: The Art and Science of How Birds Fly* by Carroll L. Henderson published in 2008 by Voyageur Press, MBI Publishing Company, 400 First Avenue North, Suite 300, Minneapolis, MN 55401 (ISBN 978-0-7603-3392-1) has 159 pages, 157 photographs and approximately 10 graphic presentations. The first section of this book demonstrates the variety of flight patterns (i.e., soaring, diving, hovering, etc.) using photographs as illustrations. The second chapter of the book concerns the physics of flight (e.g., Bernoulli's principle, aspect ratio, wing loading, etc.) in an easily understandable narrative coupled with graphic depictions and photographs of birds demonstrating each factor. Chapter three explains the structures of birds (e.g., light bones, feathers, etc.) that make flight possible. Chapter four and five cover wing and tail characteristics, respectively. The final three chapters illustrate take off, flight and landing in a variety of birds. The author, who is an Air Force pilot turned wildlife biologist, shares his fascination with all aspects of flight in an informative way without being heavy and illustrates these various aspects of flight with excellent relevant photographs. For anyone interested in learning about bird flight, this book is a very pleasant introduction and easy read.

—**Blaine R. Ferrell**, Ogden College of Science and Engineering, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, 42101

## SELECTED INDEX, VOLUMES 81-84 (2005-2008)

## Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

The names of participants in the Mid-winter Bird Counts, attendees to Spring and Fall Society Meetings, and contributors to the Seasonal Reports have not been included in this index. The names of bird species recorded on Mid-winter Bird Counts, at Spring and Fall Society Meetings, and in the Seasonal Reports also have not been listed. Place names lying outside the state of Kentucky and names of species included in lengthy tables typically do not appear as well. Page references to photos of Kentucky Bird Records Committee review-list species are included.

## AUTHORS

- Ahrens, Win **84**:48-50  
 Brown, Joshua H. **81**:33  
 Burford, Laura S. **81**:39-46  
 Burnett, Gerald **81**:99-103  
 Brunjes, John **82**:85-87; **83**:53-56, 107-110;  
**84**:90-93  
 Chambers, Happy **81**:33-34, 66, 67; **83**:3  
 Ciuizio, Elizabeth **81**:99-103  
 Cox, John J. **81**:33; **83**:36-37  
 Denton, Roseanna **81**:66,67  
 Dever, Robert **81**:33-34  
 Dzialak, Matthew R. **81**:39-46  
 Easley, Melissa **81**:67  
 Ferrell, Blaine R. **81**:17-32; **82**:17-32; **83**:21-36;  
**84**:17-33, 94  
 Hodge, Michael E. **83**:91-102  
 Hulsey, Aaron **84**:77-79  
 Kissel, Mary **84**:39  
 Kuntz, Michael **81**:94-95  
 Lacki, Michael J. **81**:39-46  
 Larkin, Jeffery L. **81**:33  
 Leese, Benjamin E. **82**:37-40  
 Libby, Gary W. **81**:34-35  
 McNeely, Lee K. **81**:3-17, 54-62, 81-94, 103-  
 110, 113-114; **82**:3-17, 43-51, 51-52, 63-76,  
 79-84; **83**:7-21, 43-53, 71-86, 102-107; **84**:3-  
 17, 40-48, 55-72, 83-90  
 Monroe, Mark **81**:46-54; **82**:32-37; **84**:50-52  
 Morse, Donald, Jr. **82**:32-37  
 Moss, E. Daniel **83**:110-111  
 Palmer-Ball, Brainard, Jr. **81**:3-17, 39-46, 54-  
 62, 71-80, 81-94, 99-103, 103-110, 113;  
**82**:3-17, 32-37, 43-51, 55-56, 59-63, 63-76,  
 79-84; **83**:7-21, 37-39, 43-53, 56-57, 57-59,  
 71-86, 86-87, 102-107; **84**:3-17, 33-35, 40-  
 48, 50-52, 55-72, 83-90, 94-99  
 Patton, Laura **81**:110-113; **82**:53-55  
 Peak, Judy **83**:67-71  
 Peak, Bob **83**:67-71  
 Ritchison, Gary **83**:91-102  
 Robe, Gerald **81**:62-66  
 Roemer, David **81**:71-80; **82**:32-37,  
 Seward, Nathan W. **81**:33  
 Smith, Adam **82**:59-63; **83**:4-6, 63-66  
 Stedman, Stephen J. **81**:94-95  
 Veverka, Norman Budd **83**:4-6

Vorisek, Shawchyi **81:39-46; 82:59-63; 83:4-6,**  
63-66  
Vukovich, Mark **81:46-54**  
Walter, Mary **82:32-37**

Williams, James **81:114, 115**  
Yandell, Ben **82:32-37; 83:111; 84:73-77, 93**  
Yandell, Mary **84:93**

## BIRDS

Anhinga **83:76; 84:74**  
Blackbird, Rusty **84:99**  
Bluebird, Eastern **82:55-56; 83:67-71, 97**  
Brant **81:82; 84:73**  
Bunting, Indigo **81:63; 83:64, 66, 110-111**  
Painted **82:52, 76; 84:77**  
Cardinal, Northern **83:56, 66**  
Chickadee, Black-capped **84:46**  
Carolina **83:64, 69, 70**  
Cormorant, Double-crested **83:86, 87**  
Neotropic **82:51; 83:47, 61, 86-87, 88**  
Dove, White-winged **82:52**  
Duck, Harlequin **84:37, 42**  
Mottled **81:82; 84:73, 74**  
Eagle, Bald **82:59-63**  
Golden **81:50**  
Egret, Reddish **81:6; 84:75**  
Falcon, Peregrine **81:39-46; 83:4-6, 38**  
Flycatcher, Acadian **83:64, 66**  
Least **81:94-95, 96**  
Gallinule, Purple **84:75**  
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray **83:66**  
Godwit, Hudsonian **82:52; 83:75; 84:66, 67**  
Marbled **82:8, 34, 52, 69; 83:75; 84:75**  
Goldfinch, American **83:63**  
Lesser **84:73, 77**  
Goose, Cackling **81:56; 82:44, 51; 83:57-59;**  
**84:73, 74**  
Canada **83:57-58**  
Goshawk, Northern **81:113-114; 84:75**  
Grebe, Red-necked **82:66; 83:9; 84:74**  
Western **83:76; 84:43, 74**  
Ground-Dove, Common **81:59, 66, 68; 84:76**  
Gull, California **82:52; 84:11, 76**  
Great Black-backed **83:14, 49; 84:76**  
Iceland **83:81; 84:76**  
Laughing **82:34, 35, 36**  
Little **84:76**  
Ring-billed **81:34**  
Sabine's **82:52; 83:49; 84:75, 76**  
Harrier, Northern **81:46-54, 66**  
Hawk, Cooper's **81:50**  
Red-shouldered **81:50**  
Red-tailed **81:49, 50, 51, 52, 71-80**  
Rough-legged **81:50; 83:111, 112; 84:73, 75**  
Sharp-shinned **81:50**  
Swainson's **82:57; 84:73, 75**  
Heron, Tricolored **82:6; 84:74**  
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated **83:64, 66; 84:52**  
Rufous **82:52; 84:76**  
Rufous/Allen's **84:76**  
Ibis, Glossy **82:51; 83:74; 84:66**  
White **82:6; 83:10, 104; 84:75**

Ibis, White-faced **81:6; 84:75**  
Jaeger, Long-tailed **81:1, 9, 33-34; 84:73, 76**  
Pomarine **81:34; 82:10; 84:76**  
Kestrel, American **81:49, 50, 51, 52**  
Kingbird, Western **84:81, 100**  
Kite, Swallow-tailed **82:51**  
Knot, Red **84:8**  
Loon, Pacific **82:51; 84:74**  
Yellow-billed **84:73, 74**  
Merlin **81:50**  
Noddy, Brown **82:34**  
Nuthatch, Brown-headed **84:67**  
White-breasted **83:69**  
Oriole, Blatimore **81:113**  
Bullock's **81:1, 61, 113, 116; 84:73, 77**  
Scott's **83:41, 52, 56-57, 60; 84:73, 77**  
Osprey **81:50**  
Ovenbird **83:66**  
Owl, Great Horned **81:40**  
Northern Saw-whet **84:50-52**  
Short-eared **81:46-54**  
Parakeet, Carolina **82:38**  
Pelican, Brown **84:66**  
Phalarope, Red **82:9, 36, 52; 84:75**  
Red-necked **82:52; 83:75, 105; 84:67, 75**  
Phoebe, Eastern **81:33**  
Say's **81:33; 84:67, 76**  
Pigeon, Rock **81:40, 43**  
Pipit, American **81:66**  
Plover, Piping **83:74**  
Rail, Yellow **82:52**  
Raven, Common **81:33**  
Ruff **82:77; 84:66, 75**  
Sandpiper, Baird's **83:38**  
Least **83:38**  
Western **82:34**  
Shearwater, Audubon's **81:105; 82:1, 33, 40;**  
**84:73, 74**  
Shrike, Loggerhead **81:67**  
Northern **81:12, 67, 68; 84:73, 76**  
Skimmer, Black **84:73, 76**  
Sparrow, Clay-colored **82:52; 84:36, 77**  
Grasshopper **81:63**  
Harris's **82:56; 84:77**  
House **83:70, 98**  
Sage **84:73, 77, 77-79, 80**  
Spoonbill, Roseate **84:1, 6, 75, 85**  
Starling, European **81:40, 43; 83:98**  
Stint, Little **83:1, 13, 37-39, 40; 84:73, 75**  
Red-necked **83:37**  
Stork, Wood **83:10; 84:7, 75**  
Storm-Petrel, Band-rumped **82:35; 84:74**  
Leach's **82:36**



- Storm-Petrel, Wilson's **82:36**  
 Swallow, Barn **82:52**  
 Swallow, Northern Rough-winged **84:77**  
   Tree **83:69, 70, 97**  
 Swift, Chimney **81:63**  
 Teal, Cinnamon **82:76; 84:74**  
 Tern, Black **82:34, 36**  
   Common **82:34, 36**  
   Least **81:99-103**  
   Sooty **81:34-35, 36, 107; 82:33, 34, 40; 84:76**  
 Thrush, Wood **83:64, 66**  
   Varied **82:41; 84:77**  
 Titmouse, Tufted **83:66, 70**  
 Towhee, Spotted **84:77**  
 Turkey, Wild **82:38**  
 Vireo, White-eyed **84:77**  
 Vulture, Black **81:41; 83:36-37**  
   Turkey **81:41**  
 Warbler, Black-and-white **83:66**  
   Cape May **84:77**  
   Connecticut **84:34**  
   Golden-winged **83:97**  
   Warbler, Hooded **83:66**  
     Kentucky **83:65, 66**  
     Mourning **84:34, 77**  
     Palm **84:34**  
     Prairie **83:64, 97**  
     Prothonotary **83:64, 69, 70; 84:90**  
     Tennessee **84:34**  
     Worm-eating **83:64, 66**  
     Yellow-rumped **84:33**  
     Yellow-rumped "Audubon's" **84:33-35**  
 Waterthrush, Louisiana **83:64, 66**  
 Whimbrel **82:52**  
 Whistling-Duck, Fulvous **84:53, 79, 93, 100**  
 Willet **82:34**  
 Woodpecker, Downy **82:55; 83:66**  
   Ivory-billed **82:37-40; 84:91**  
   Pileated **82:38**  
   Red-cockaded **84:48**  
 Wren, Bewick's **83:89, 91-102**  
   Carolina **83:66, 69, 70, 93**  
   House **83:93, 96, 97, 99**  
 Yellowlegs, Lesser **84:75**  
 Yellowthroat, Common **83:66**

### LOCALITIES

- Adair County **81:74**  
 Allen County **81:74; 84:75**  
 Anderson County **81:61, 113, 116; 84:77**  
 Anderson Pond **82:61**  
 Audubon Swamp **82:61**  
 Aurora **83:107**  
 Bailey Hollow **82:61**  
 Ballard County **81:17, 74, 76-78, 100, 102; 82:6, 17, 59, 61; 83:21, 58; 84:18, 75, 77**  
 Bandana **81:76, 78**  
 Bardstown **81:113**  
 Bath County **82:62**  
 Bay, Blockhouse **82:61**  
   Cravens **82:61**  
   Demumbers **82:61; 84:74**  
   Duncan **82:61**  
   Fulton **82:61**  
   Higgins **82:61**  
   Honker **84:76**  
   Little River **82:61**  
   Mammoth Furnace **82:61**  
   Pryor **82:61**  
   Rhodes **82:61**  
   Savells **82:61**  
   Smith **82:61**  
   Sugar **82:61**  
   Terrapin **82:61**  
   Turkey **82:61**  
 Bayou de Chien **82:61; 84:74**  
 Bedford **81:42**  
 Bellevue **81:73**  
 Bernheim Forest **81:20; 82:20; 83:32; 84:21**  
 Big Woods, Mammoth Cave National Park **82:55, 56**  
 Birmingham Point **84:74**  
 Bluegrass Parkway **81:76**  
 Boone County **81:43, 73, 77, 113, 114**  
 Boston **81:75**  
 Bowling Green **81:19, 73; 82:19; 83:23; 84:20, 73, 76, 77**  
 Boyd County **81:74**  
 Boyle County **81:73**  
 Brandenburg **81:76; 83:4**  
 Breathitt County **81:33**  
 Brown Power Plant **83:58**  
 Brownsboro **84:52**  
 Buffalo **84:76**  
 Bullitt County **81:75; 83:64; 84:76**  
 Burgin **81:40, 77**  
 Burlington **81:31; 82:30; 83:35; 84:31**  
 Burkesville **82:76; 84:77, 90**  
 Butler County **81:78**  
 Cadiz **81:77**  
 Caldwell County **83:90**  
 Calloway County **81:18, 74; 82:18, 52, 61; 83:22; 84:18**  
 Calvert City **81:73**  
 Camp #9 **81:100**  
 Camp #11 **84:75**  
 Camp Mines **81:75**  
 Campbell County **82:9, 34, 36; 83:4; 84:42, 75, 76**  
 Campbell Dikes **81:101**  
 Canton **82:35**

- Carlisle County **81:6, 66, 75, 100-102; 82:61; 84:75**  
 Carroll County **81:40, 42; 83:5**  
 Cave Hill Cemetery **83:58, 59; 84:74**  
 Cayce **81:75, 76**  
 Christian County **81:74; 82:52; 83:110**  
 Clark County **81:49**  
 Clarks River NWR **83:63-66, 108, 109**  
 Clinton County **84:90-93**  
 Corbin **84:48**  
 Cottonwood Bar **81:101**  
 Covington **83:4**  
 Creek, Cypress **82:62**  
     Jonathan **82:61; 84:7, 8, 75**  
     Little Mud **82:61**  
     Mayfield **82:61**  
     Mill **83:4, 5**  
     Walnut **84:75**  
     Wilson **82:61**  
 Cumberland County **82:76; 84:77, 90-93**  
 Curlew **81:100**  
 Dam, Barkley **82:35, 36; 84:66, 74, 76**  
     Kentucky **81:33; 82:33-36, 40; 83:49; 84:11, 74-76**  
     Meldahl **84:43**  
     Smithland **81:101; 82:33, 35, 36; 84:76**  
 Danville **81:30; 82:30; 83:34; 84:31**  
 Daviess County **82:56; 84:39, 74**  
 Dawson Springs **82:53**  
 Devil's Elbow **82:61**  
 Dewey Lake **81:32; 82:32; 83:36; 84:33**  
 East Bend Power Plant **81:73, 77**  
 Eddyville **82:35, 61**  
 Elizabethtown **84:76, 77**  
 Elliott County **84:2**  
 Empire Farm **82:61**  
 Falmouth **81:31; 82:31; 83:35; 84:32**  
 Falls of Rough **81:20**  
 Falls of the Ohio **82:34; 82:35; 84:74, 76**  
 Fayette County **81:40, 43**  
 Fort Campbell Military Reservation **82:53; 83:110-111**  
 Fort Knox Military Reservation **83:64, 65**  
 Frankfort **81:30; 82:21; 83:5, 34, 56, 60; 84:30, 77**  
 Frankfort Fish Hatchery **82:35; 84:74**  
 Franklin County **82:35; 83:42, 52, 56-57, 60; 84:74, 77**  
 Fulton **81:77**  
 Fulton County **81:6, 66, 68, 73-78, 100, 101; 82:38, 52, 59, 61; 83:10, 58, 74, 76, 104, 111; 84:54, 67, 74-77, 79, 93**  
 Gallatin County **81:73**  
 Garrard County **83:64, 111; 84:75**  
 Garrison **82:62**  
 Ghent **81:40, 42, 43**  
 Gibraltar Mine **81:74, 77**  
 Glasgow **81:20; 82:19; 83:32; 84:20**  
 Grant County **81:77**  
 Graves County **81:77**  
 Grayson County **82:62**  
 Greenup County **81:42; 82:85**  
 Griffith Woods **83:36**  
 Griffith Tavern **83:36-67**  
 Hancock County **81:100**  
 Hardin County **82:10, 36; 83:64; 84:76, 77**  
 Harlan County **81:74, 94**  
 Harmony Village **81:75**  
 Harrison County **83:36**  
 Harrodsburg **81:73**  
 Hart County **81:21; 82:21, 55; 83:33, 64; 84:30**  
 Hazard **84:33**  
 Henderson **82:38, 59; 83:67**  
 Henderson County **81:73-75, 77-78, 82; 82:60-62, 76; 83:67, 74, 75; 84:74, 75**  
 Henry County **82:62**  
 Hickman **81:73, 74, 75, 76, 77**  
 Hickman County **81:75, 100-102; 82:61**  
 Hopkins County **82:51, 62; 83:110**  
 Horseshoe Road **84:74**  
 Indian Hills **84:77**  
 Island No 1. **81:100; 84:75**  
     No. 6 **81:101**  
     No. 8 **81:101; 82:59, 61**  
     Towhead **84:74**  
     Wolf **82:61**  
 Jefferson County **81:42; 82:35, 52; 83:2, 4, 13, 14, 37, 40, 58, 59, 111; 84:34-36, 50-52, 74-77, 81**  
 Jenny Hole Unit **82:61**  
 Jessamine County **81:40, 59; 84:76**  
 Kenton County **82:9, 36; 84:75**  
 Kentucky Bend **81:100; 82:61; 84:76**  
 Kentucky Point **81:101**  
 Kuttawa **82:35; 84:76**  
 Lake, Barkley **82:33, 35; 83:67, 87; 84:74, 76**  
     Barren River **82:35; 84:75**  
     Cave Run **82:62**  
     Cumberland **81:43; 82:35; 84:74**  
     Freeman **82:36; 84:76**  
     Grayson **84:2**  
     Green River **81:30, 74; 82:21; 83:34; 84:30**  
     Herrington **81:41**  
     Kentucky **81:1, 9, 105, 107; 82:33, 40; 83:67; 84:74-76**  
     Laurel River **82:60, 62**  
     McElroy **81:74; 84:66, 67**  
     Metropolis **81:101**  
     Mitchell **84:75**  
     No. 9 **81:66; 82:61; 84:74, 75, 85**  
     Peewee **82:62**  
     Rough River **82:62**  
     Taylorsville **82:35**  
     Yatesville **82:62**  
 Land Between The Lakes **81:18, 77; 82:18, 59-61; 83:3, 22, 67-71, 107, 108; 84:18, 77**  
 Larue County **82:62; 84:76**  
 Laurel County **81:40; 82:60, 62**

- Lawrence County **82:62; 84:46**  
 Lawrenceburg **81:113, 116; 84:77**  
 Ledbetter **81:100-102**  
 Letcher County **81:34, 36; 84:76**  
 Lewis County **82:62**  
 Lewisport **81:100**  
 Lexington **81:31, 40, 43; 82:30, 39; 83:5, 34, 58; 84:31**  
 Lincoln County **81:73; 82:37**  
 Livingston County **81:33, 73, 76-78, 100, 101; 82:33, 40, 62; 84:74-76**  
 Livingston Point **81:101**  
 Lodale **82:62**  
 Logan County **81:73-75, 78; 82:34, 52**  
 Lost River Park **84:77**  
 Louisville **81:21, 40, 42; 82:20, 34, 35, 42; 83:4, 33, 58, 59, 97; 84:21, 74, 77**  
 Louisville Zoo **83:58; 84:74**  
 Lovelaceville **84:77**  
 Lower Hickman Bottoms **81:76, 77; 84:77**  
 Lower Hoods Branch **83:65**  
 Lynn Grove **81:74**  
 Lyon County **81:73, 77; 82:35, 52, 61; 83:49, 67, 81, 99; 84:6, 74, 76**  
 Maceo **84:19**  
 Madison County **81:49; 82:52**  
 Mammoth Cave National Park **81:20; 82:19, 55; 83:32, 64-66; 84:20**  
 Marshall County **81:1, 33, 73, 100, 102; 82:8, 40, 52, 61, 66; 83:64, 75, 76, 107; 84:67, 74-76**  
 Marshall's Bottom **82:62**  
 Mason County **82:62; 83:4**  
 Mayfield **81:77**  
 Maysville **83:4**  
 McAlpine Dam **82:35**  
 McCracken County **81:101; 82:32; 84:77**  
 Meade County **81:76; 82:62; 83:4, 64**  
 Melco Flood Retention Basin **83:37-40; 84:34, 36, 75**  
 Menifee County **81:40, 41, 43**  
 Mercer County **81:40, 73, 77; 83:58**  
 Middle Bar **81:100, 101**  
 Milton **81:42; 83:5**  
 Minor Clark Fish Hatchery **82:78; 84:75**  
 Monkey's Eyebrow **81:74, 76, 100, 102**  
 Morganfield **81:74**  
 Moscow **81:75**  
 Mt. Washington **84:76**  
 Mountain, Black **81:94, 96**  
   Pine **81:34, 40; 84:76**  
 Mud Slough **82:59**  
 Muhlenberg County **81:12, 46-54, 67, 68, 75-78; 82:35, 51, 52, 62, 69; 83:47, 52, 55, 62, 86-87, 88; 84:75-77**  
 Nelson County **81:75, 76, 113**  
 Northern Ditch **83:38**  
 Ohio County **81:46-54, 73-78; 82:35, 36; 83:55**  
 Oldham County **81:73, 75; 82:44; 84:52**  
 Olive Branch **82:61**  
 Olmstead **81:18; 82:18; 83:23; 84:19**  
 Otter Creek Park **81:20; 82:20; 83:32; 84:21**  
 Owen County **83:95, 96**  
 Owensboro **84:39, 74**  
 Paducah **82:32**  
 Paradise **81:19; 82:19; 83:23, 86, 88, 109; 84:20, 75**  
 Pike County **81:32, 78; 84:74**  
 Pond, Morgan **84:67**  
   Open **84:79, 93**  
   Willow **84:75**  
 Powdery **83:52-56**  
 Powell County **81:40, 41, 42, 43; 83:64**  
 Pulaski County **81:82; 82:52; 83:9; 84:73, 74**  
 Purchase Parkway **81:77**  
 Red River Gorge National Geological Area **81:40, 41, 42, 43**  
 Reelfoot NWR **81:76; 82:61**  
 Richmond **81:31; 82:31; 83:35; 84:32**  
 River, Cumberland **83:67**  
   Dix **81:41**  
   East Fork Clarks **83:65**  
   Green **82:35, 36; 83:5, 65**  
   Kentucky **81:40, 41; 82:62; 83:5**  
   Licking **82:36; 84:75**  
   Little **83:67**  
   Mississippi **81:99-103; 82:38, 59-61; 84:75, 76**  
   Ohio **81:42, 43, 99-103; 82:32, 34, 38, 59-62; 83:4, 5; 84:74-76**  
   Rockcastle **81:40**  
   Tennessee **81:99, 100, 102; 83:67**  
   Tradewater **82:62**  
 Rochester **82:36**  
 Rockfield **81:76**  
 Rolling Fork **82:62**  
 Rowan County **82:52, 78; 84:75**  
 Russell **81:42**  
 Russell County **81:110; 83:35; 84:32**  
 Russellville **82:34**  
 Scott County **83:93, 94**  
 Shaker Mill **84:76**  
 Sharkey **84:75**  
 Shaw Branch **82:61**  
 Shawnee Hills **82:60**  
 Shelby County **81:74; 83:111, 112; 84:75**  
 Shelbyville **81:21, 74; 82:21; 83:33; 84:30**  
 Shepherdsville **81:62-66, 75**  
 Sidney **84:74**  
 Slough, Back **82:61**  
   Dunn **83:65**  
   Honey **82:61**  
 Smithland **82:62**  
 Somerset **81:31; 82:31; 83:35; 84:32, 73**  
 Sorgho **81:18; 82:18; 83:22; 84:19**  
 Stanton **81:41**  
 State Nature Preserve, Jesse Stuart **82:85**  
   Pilot Knob **83:64**

- State Nature Preserve, Tom Dorman **81:40, 41; 83:64**
- State Park, John James Audubon **83:67**
- State Resort Park, Barren River Lake **84:77**  
 Cumberland Falls **84:48-50**  
 Dale Hollow Lake **84:90-93**  
 Greenbo Lake **82:85-87**  
 Kenlake **83:107-110**  
 Kentucky Dam Village **82:61**  
 Lake Barkley **83:67-71**  
 Lake Cumberland **81:110-113**  
 Natural Bridge **81:32; 82:31; 83:36, 64-66; 84:33**  
 Pennyrile Forest **82:53-55**
- Steele's Bottom **81:73**
- Taylor County **83:93, 94**
- Trigg County **81:74, 76, 77; 82:35, 51, 61; 83:67, 87; 84:6, 76, 77**
- Trimble County **81:42, 43; 83:5**
- Union County **81:74, 75, 78, 100, 102; 82:52; 83:105; 84:75**
- Union Mills **84:76**
- Uniontown **81:100**
- Upton **81:21; 82:21; 83:33; 84:30**
- Waitsboro Recreation Area **84:74**
- Warren County **81:56, 73-78; 82:51, 52; 83:58, 93, 94; 84:73, 76, 77, 80**
- Warsaw **81:31; 82:30; 83:35; 84:32**
- Watson Point **81:100**
- Waverly **81:74**
- Wayne County **81:32; 82:31; 83:36; 84:33**
- Whitesburg **81:34**
- Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Ballard  
**81:78; 82:59, 61; 83:58; 84:75**  
 Homestead **81:74**  
 Kleber **81:30; 82:30; 83:34; 84:31**  
 Obion **82:61**  
 Peabody **81:46-54, 67, 68, 73-78; 83:54, 56; 84:76**  
 Sinclair **81:75; 84:76**  
 Sloughs **81:73, 77; 82:61, 62; 84:74, 75**  
 Swan Lake **82:59, 61**  
 Westvaco **81:66; 82:61**  
 White City **82:62**
- Williamson **81:32**
- Wolfe County **81:40**
- Woodburn **81:76, 77**

### GENERAL

- Book Review **84:94**
- Bylaws **82:87-91**
- Fall Meeting **81:110-113; 82:85-87; 83:107-110; 84:90-93**
- Hurricane Related Birds **82:32-37**
- In Memoriam:  
 Dr. Clell T. Peterson **83:3**  
 Albert L. "Bert" Powell, Jr. **84:39**
- Kentucky Bird Records Committee Report  
**82:51-52; 84:73-77**
- Mid-winter Bird Count **81:17-32; 82:17-32; 83:21-36; 84:17-33**
- Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program **83:63-66**
- Project SOS (Save our Sialia) **83:67-71**
- Spring Meeting **81:62-66; 82:53-55; 83:53-56; 84:48-50**
- Statement of Financial Position **81:114**
- Treasurer's Report **81:115**

### NEWS AND VIEWS

#### Mark Your Calendars for the Rusty Blackbird Hot Spot Blitz!

The Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) population has been steeply declining with estimates of an 85 to 99% drop over the past 40 years. The cause for this alarming decline is not known, and the increasingly sparse and patchy winter distribution of the Rusty Blackbird is making it more difficult to learn more about distribution, abundance, and ecology as a basis for conservation efforts. Collaborating with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's and the National Audubon Society's e-Bird project, the Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group (RBTWG) needs your help to find local, but predictable wintering concentrations of Rusty Blackbirds by participating in the Rusty Blackbird Hot Spot Blitz. The Blitz will occur, February 7-15, 2009, throughout the Rusty Blackbird winter range in over 20 mid-western and southeastern states. Participants will simply be asked to visit locations where they have previously sighted or would expect to encounter Rusty Blackbirds and submit their observations via e-Bird. As a result of these efforts, the RBTWG is hoping to create maps of wintering Rusty Blackbird "hot spots" that will help direct research, monitoring and conservation attention.

Watch the BIRDKY listserv for more information or contact Kate Heyden at (kathryn.heyden@ky.gov), the Blitz coordinator for Kentucky, if you are interested in participating.

**Discount Available for *The Literary Bird Journal***

*The Literary Bird Journal (LBJ): Avian Life, Literary Arts* is a journal of creative writing with a focus on birds. The journal is a compendium of poems, essays and art related to birds. Watercolor plates of birds by Barry Kent MacKay are included. The Editor-in-Chief, Nick Neely can be reached at [editor@literarybirdjournal.org](mailto:editor@literarybirdjournal.org). K.O.S. members are being offered a 40% discount off the cover price of \$9.00 per issue. If you are interested you can check it out for yourself at [www.literarybirdjournal.org](http://www.literarybirdjournal.org).



Above: Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Fulton Co., 8 May 2008. Photo by Ben Yandell  
(see Field Note, p. 93)

Below Left: Western Kingbird, Jefferson Co., 11 June 2008. Photo by Eddie Huber  
(see Summer Season report, p. 88)

Below Right: Juvenile Northern Shoveler with Blue-winged Teal, Christian Co.,  
30 June 2008. Photo by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (see Summer Season report, p. 84)

