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The Kentucky Warbler

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The Kentucky Warbler

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THE COVER

We thank Jamie Baker for his photograph of the Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) taken 23 February 2020 in Todd County.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Birders,

I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. The front of this issue is adorned by a photo, courtesy of Jamie Baker, of the first Burrowing Owl to be reported in Kentucky. There is something special about a state first that entices birders from all over to come see it. The previous chaseable firsts, Cave Swallow and Lark Bunting, did not elicit the same response however. Owls seem to attract interest in those beyond birding and added to that, this is a species that is easily located and active during the day.

From all reports, most people who came to see the bird followed guidelines on how to view the Burrowing Owl. The distance and viewing behavior guidelines were set up to protect the bird from disturbance. We need to educate those that did not observe these guidelines (for the sake of getting a better photograph) on their responsibilities to both the bird and other observers. We should not let the actions of a few ruin it for others, and lead to future observations not being broadcast for fear of what some might do. This seems to be particularly important when it comes to owls. The use of baiting and excess flash photography seems to be an ongoing issue with the greater availability of photographic equipment and location specific reports. Please be aware and follow the ethics of birding as outlined by the American Birding Association (ABA) (<https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/>).

As you are aware the fall meeting has been cancelled, but birding activity will still abound on the KOS website in the form of a virtual meeting. The spring meeting, as reported in this issue by Janet Kistler, was a great success and we hope to further expand on this for the fall meeting.

Stay safe and happy birding,

Ronan O'Carra

CORRECTIONS

In *The Kentucky Warbler* February 2020 (Vol 96, Issue 1):

The Fall Seasonal Report included a report of Barn Owl from Jefferson County. This report is questionable and should have been omitted.

Subsequent documentation was received to add a single House Wren to the Land Between the Lakes (LBL) Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This brings the LBL CBC species count up to 85. In addition, a clarification is needed for the Louisville CBC: one of three Orange-crowned Warblers was observed in Indiana rather than in Kentucky.

On the back page, the Scarlet Tanager image by Jeff Finn was taken in May 2020, not October 2019 as stated and should not have been included.

THE WINTER SEASON, DECEMBER 2019 – FEBRUARY 2020

Ronan O’Carra and Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

Climatic conditions during winter 2019-2020 were warmer and wetter than average. Temperatures during December and January were between 5 and 7°F above normal with February being 3-4°F above normal. Precipitation levels were variable throughout the state. During December rainfall in the west of the state was about average whereas the rest of the state was 2-3 inches above average. January rainfall was normal across the state while rainfall in February was 2-4 inches above normal.

Sightings are extracted from eBird (10,768 checklists and 105,319 individual observation records) with supplementary records from the BirdKy listserv and CBC reports. Comments about previous Kentucky bird records rely on the *Annotated Checklist* by Palmer-Ball, Jr. 2019. The species order is based on the Kentucky State list of Birds, Yandell 2019, with review species being capitalized and state firsts further underlined.

This winter season was unique in the variety of rarities, both lingering summer birds and migrants, as well as rarities for any season, that were found. The list was topped by the state’s first record of Burrowing Owl, but also included Pacific Loon, Green Heron, Prairie Falcon (2), Harris’s Sparrow, Western Tanager, Summer Tanager, and multiple sightings of Grasshopper Sparrows and Indigo Buntings. Winter finches were very scarce, and Red-breasted Nuthatches were essentially absent.

Publication of any unusual sightings in the seasonal report does not imply that these reports have been accepted for inclusion in the official checklist of Kentucky birds. Reports of out-of-season birds and rarities should be accompanied by written and/or photographic documentation. This documentation is reviewed by 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*.

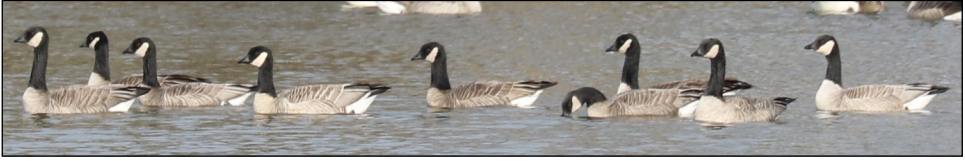
Abbreviations – County names appear in *italics* (sites not listing a county are detailed in the Locations and Abbreviations section); when used to separate dates, the “/” symbol is used in place of “and”; “ba.” next to an observer’s initials indicates that the bird was banded; “ph.” next to an observer’s initials indicates that the observation was documented with photograph(s); “au.” next to an observer’s initials indicates that the observation was documented with a voice recording; “†” next to an observer’s initials indicates that written details were submitted with the report; “m.ob.” within observer initials indicates that the observation was seen by multiple observers.

Snow Goose – Peak counts were relatively unremarkable, probably in part due to the mild weather during the season. One near Maysville, *Mason*, 20 January (BWu) was the farthest east to be reported.

Ross’s Goose – Small numbers were reported from no fewer than 13 counties. Reports of greatest interest included the season’s peak count of 11 over Ky Bend, 27 January (†DRe); 1 along Austerlitz Road, *Bourbon*, 24/25 December (DSv, LCo/TNo) that was a county first; and 1 northeast of Eighty Eight, *Metcalfe*, 16 February (ph. RSh) that was a second record for the county.



Snow Geese – Fulton Co.
8 February 2020, David Lang



Cackling Geese – Oldham Co.
15 February 2020, James A. Wheat

Greater White-fronted Goose – Modest peak counts included 3200 at Ballard WMA, 17 December (BWu, EHo, BPa) and 7400 at the Sauerheber Unit, 6 January (TYo). Nine at Lake Linville, *Rockcastle*, 24 December (ph. RDe) with 15 there the following day (Tsa, LBe) were the farthest east to be reported.

Cackling Goose – Small numbers were reported at mostly now traditional wintering locales; other reports of interest included 4 at Hundred Acre Pond, *Hart*, 14 December (†SKi, JKi) which represented a county first; up to 12 at various locales in *Daviess* during January and February (m.ob.); and the season's peak count of 30 at Reformatory Lake, *Oldham*, 15 February (JWh).

Mute Swan – Most reports came from traditional locales where feral resident birds are known or believed to be involved.

Trumpeter Swan – There were a few reports from the sliver of floodplain north of the Ohio River north of Henderson, *Henderson*, during January, but none could be confirmed (eBird data).

Tundra Swan – The peak count for the wintering flock at the Sauerheber Unit during early December was 245, which were present 11 December (TYo); later in the season these birds apparently moved over to the flooded sloughs in the sliver of floodplain north of the Ohio River north of Henderson, *Henderson*, where up to 215 were reported during mid-January (ph. SGr, TGr, m.ob.). Reports of interest away from western *Henderson* included 2 southwest of Mayfield, *Graves*, 19 December (ph. BYa) - 28 January (m.ob.); 1 north of Lawrence-

burg, *Anderson*, 12 January (JBr, TEs); 2 along Frostburg Road, *Hopkins*, 25 January (DSv, LCo); 8 at the former Camp #11 Mine, *Union*, 26 January (ph. BPa); perhaps the same juvenile on various transient ponds in *Metcalfe*, *Barren*, and *Hart*, 1-17 February (ph. RSh, ph. JSo, m.ob.); and 12 northeast of Harrodsburg, *Mercer*, 19-23 February (†SPe, ph. ROc, m.ob.).

Blue-winged Teal – It was extremely unusual for early winter to have a report of 3 at McElroy Lake, 17 December (ph. RSh) with 2 still there 19 December (ph. RSh) and 1 continuing there to 20 December (ph. RSh). Two at Camp Ernst Lake, *Boone*, 16 February (†THa) were the earliest returning spring migrants with small numbers present at scattered locales by the last week of February (eBird data).

Gadwall – Peak counts during the season included 800 at Ky Bend, 29 January (ALy) and 500 at McElroy Lake, 23 February (BPa, MMo).

American Wigeon – Peak counts during the season included 500 at Ky Bend, 29 January (ALy), 200 in the Lower Hickman Bottoms, 16 February (CBI), and 104 east of Susie, *Wayne*, 3 February (RDe).

Northern Pintail – Relatively impressive peak counts included 2500 at Ky Bend, 27 January (DRe) and 1750 at and near Lake Number 9, west *Fulton*, 15 February (RDe). Other notable local peak counts included 270 at the Sauerheber Unit, 9 February (JMe) and 150 off the end of Frostburg Road, east *Hopkins*, 21 February (BPa).

Green-winged Teal – Peak counts during the season included an impressive flock of around 1600 at Ky Bend, 31 January (EHo, BPa, MMo) and 350 in the vicinity of Midway Church Road, Lower Hickman Bottoms, 19 February (LBo, AHi).



Long-tailed Duck – Bullitt Co.
5 January 2020, Steve Brown

Canvasback – Peak count during the season was 100 in floodwaters northeast of Anton, Hopkins, 21 February (BPa).

Redhead – Peak counts during the season included 300 on McElroy Lake, 23 February (BPa, MMo); 300 on Chaney Lake, Warren, 26 February (LBo); and 250 above Wolf Creek Dam, Russell, 29 February (DSv, LCo).

Ring-necked Duck – The peak count during the season was 1000 at Ballard WMA, 15 January (JBr).

Greater Scaup – The lack of cold weather during the season resulted in a below-average presence this year; very modest peak count of 50 on Ky Lake off Sherwood Shores, Marshall, 22 February (BPa).

Lesser Scaup – Peak count during the season was 700 on Blood River, 20 December (HCh, CBl, GBa).

Surf Scoter – There were two reports: a female/immature on the Ohio River just upstream from Louisville, 3 December-12 January (ph. BPa, JAr, m.ob.) and 2 females/immatures on Ky Lake above the dam, 4 December (BPa, †JBa).

White-winged Scoter – There were two reports: 1 on Ky Lake above the dam, 4 December (BPa, JBa) and 2 at the Ky Dam

Village marina, 22 February into March (ph. BPa m.ob.).

Black Scoter – There was only one report: a female/immature continued on the Ohio River in the Portland Canal, Louisville, to 15 December (m.ob.).

Long-tailed Duck – A female at Lake Nevin, Bernheim Forest, Bullitt, 5 January (ph. LMc m.ob.) was the only one reported.

Bufflehead – Peak counts during the season included 245 at Waitsboro, Somerset, 7 December (LBo) and 125 at Blood River, 20 December (HCh m.ob.).

Common Goldeneye – Peak counts during the season included modest tallies of 280 on Ky Lake above the dam, 25 January (DSi m.ob.); and 250 on Lake Barkley above the dam, 14 December (MAu).

Hooded Merganser – Peak count for the season was 395 at Lexington Reservoirs #2/#3, 22 January (SBr, MBr).

Common Merganser – Small numbers were reported at mostly traditional locales; reports of interest included 5 at the Sawyer Boat Ramp, Lake Cumberland, McCreary, 14 December (LMi, TMi, JKs); 2 on the Ohio River at Maysville, Mason, 28 January (DPa); and 3 on Lake Cumberland at Carter Dock, Wayne, 29 February (RBo).

Horned Grebe – 250 on Lake Cumberland above Wolf Creek Dam, Russell, 22 January (LBo) represented the peak count for the season.

Eared Grebe – A single bird again wintered on Lake Cumberland above Wolf Creek Dam, Russell, with reports from 22 January/5 February (LBo) and 1 February (JSo).

Rufous Hummingbird – There were two reports: an immature female that continued from November and wintered outside LaGrange, Oldham, through the season (ph. APe, JPe, BPa, m.ob.); and an adult female at Florence, Boone, first noted during early November, banded 8 December, and last observed 10 December (DBr, ba. BPa, ph. JCa).

Virginia Rail – The species was reported at two locales: up to 4 [31 January] were present (grunt calls heard) at the Long Point Unit, 14 December-1 February (BPa, CBl, TJo, m.ob.); 1 was also heard at the former Camp #11 Mine, *Union*, 26 January (BPa).

Sora – There were two reports: 1 heard (whinny) at the Sauerheber Unit, 8 December (JMe), and 1 heard (kree) at the Long Point Unit, 31 January (BPa, EHo, MMo).

Sandhill Crane – Excessive winter rains caused Barren River Lake to rise well above summer pool level, so few cranes gathered there during the winter season as normal; the modest peak count of 921 occurred there 26 December (WTa); all other peak counts came from west *Hardin*, where up to 5000 were counted during mid-February (JSn m.ob.).

Killdeer – Peak counts during the season included 700 at McElroy Lake, 8 December (RSh); 400 at a transient pond north of Hadensville, south *Todd*, 26 December (JHa, SAR); and 350 northwest of Oak Grove, south *Christian*, 23 December (JHa).

Dunlin – 2 lingered on a farm pond southwest of Trenton, south *Todd*, to 3 December (JHa) with one last seen there 23 December (ph. SAR).

Least Sandpiper – A few birds lingered into early December in *Christian* (JHa) and *Todd* (JHa), and at Blood River (HCh); the species wintered at Frogue Pond, *Todd*, with a high count of 5 there on a few dates during the

season (JHa, ph. SAR, m.ob.); also reported were 7 at Jonathan Creek, 7 December (HCh); 1 on a pond in southwest *Logan*, 26 December (ph. DHa); 2 along McDonald Landing Road, west *Henderson*, 16 February (ph. RCr); and 6 on a transient pond southwest of Trenton, south *Todd*, 27 February (ph. JHa). The appearance of a few more birds during the last two weeks of February likely indicates an early push of spring migrants.

Pectoral Sandpiper – 5 south of Middleton, *Simpson*, 23 February (†DPa) and 15 at McElroy Lake, 28 February (†BWu, EHo, BPa) were the earliest spring migrants to be reported.

Greater Yellowlegs – One individual lingered on a pond southwest of Trenton, *Todd*, to 11 December (ph. JHa); 1 at McElroy Lake, 14 February (ph. RSh) was the earliest spring migrant to be reported.

Herring Gull – Peak counts for the season all came from the Calvert City landfill and included an estimate of 500 there on 21 January (ALy, DRe).



Iceland Gull – Lyon Co.
4 December 2019, Jamie Baker



Rufous Hummingbird – Oldham Co.
23 February 2020, Mike Callan

Iceland Gull – There were reports (all of *L. g. thayeri*) from four locales: an adult at Barkley Dam, 4 December (ph. BPa, ph. JBa) with a first-year bird there 28 December (†ALy); a first-year bird at the Melco Flood Retention Basin, *Jefferson*, 10 December (ph. BPa, JBa); a first-year bird continuing from November at Ky Dam, 13 December (†BPa) and 25 January (DSi m.ob.); a first-year bird at the Calvert City landfill, 7

December (ph. JPo, HCh, m.ob.) with 2 first-year birds there 21-25 January (ph. ALy, DRe, m.ob.); and an adult and a first-year bird at Barkley Dam, 30 January (†EHo, BPa, MMo). Also, a paler bird, possibly an intergrade or *L. g. kumlieni*, was at the Calvert City landfill, 7 December (ph. JPo, HCh, m.ob.).

Lesser Black-backed Gull – The species was reported mostly at traditional locales; reports of interest included 3 adults on the Ohio River at Louisville, 16 December (ph. JBa m.ob.); a remarkable total away from the lakes and landfill of 7 with a large collection of other gulls in a flooded field southwest of Mayfield, *Graves*, 24 January (ph. ALy, ph. CBl); and 1 adjacent to the Long Point Unit, 16 February (JHa). Other local peak counts during the season included 6 at Ky Dam and 18 at the Calvert City landfill (for a new state high count of at least 24), all 13 December (BPa), and 6 at Sledd Creek, 22 February (†BPa).

Glaucous Gull – There were two reports: a first-year bird at and near Barkley Dam, 4-14 December (ph. BPa, ph. JBa, m.ob.) and a first-year bird at the Calvert City landfill, 30 January (ph. EHo, CBl, MMo, BPa).



Glaucous Gull – Marshall Co.
30 January 2020, Mark Monroe

Forster's Tern – As is the norm, small groups lingered on the Sledd Creek, Jonathan Creek, and Blood River embayments of Ky Lake into mid-December with a few lingering

through the season at the first two locales (HCh, CBl).

Red-throated Loon – There were two reports: 1 on Lake Pee wee, *Hopkins*, 5-7 January (BPa, ph. MMo, MSt, m.ob.); and 2 on Ky Lake off Sherwood Shores, *Marshall*, 22 February (ph. BPa).

Pacific Loon – There were two reports: singles (perhaps the same individual) at Sledd Creek, 4 December (ph. JBa, BPa) and 22 February (ph. BPa).

American White Pelican – The only report away from traditional western Kentucky locales was a migrant flock of around 90 individuals north of Waverly, *Union*, 9 February (MSt, ph. BPa).

Great Egret – There were three reports of birds lingering into early winter: 1 lingered below Barren River Lake dam, *Allen/Barren*, to at least 19 December (SSt m.ob.); 2 at Sandy Watkins Park, *Henderson*, 20 December (ph. CCr); and 1 northeast of Temperance, northeast *Simpson*, 4 January (†KWe).

Green Heron – There was one report: 1 at the Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery, north *Franklin*, 1 February (ph. RCh).

Black-crowned Night-Heron – In addition to observations of a few birds at traditional wintering spots, one was present at the Van Buren boat ramp, Taylorsville Lake, *Ander son*, 5 January (ph. DPa).

Osprey – There was one report: 1 on a quarry lake off Aiken Road, east *Jefferson*, 15 December (†JWh).

Golden Eagle – 5 different individuals were noted at the traditional wintering locale at Bernheim Forest, *Bullitt/Nelson*, during the season (KVo); other reports included 1 just north of LBL near Grand Rivers, *Livingston*, 14 December (†ARa); a juvenile over Highland Church Road, *Allen*, 28 December (ph. VSt/RSt); a probable sub-adult over the Ky River at Lockport, *Henry/Owen* (RRa, ph. BPa, MAu, m.ob.); and a probable juvenile at Ft. Campbell, *Christian*, 19 January (†CRo/HDo).

Red-tailed Hawk – There were nearly a dozen reports of western forms during the season (eBird data). All were from expected areas and during expected times. The recent transition in prevailing terminology used for some of these birds has resulted in replacement of names of birds formerly considered to be *B. j. calurus* now being referred to as *B. j. abeitticola*. There will certainly be some confusion of terminology as this topic evolves, but photo-documentation of birds in non-typical plumages for future review is advisable.

Rough-legged Hawk – This species has essentially become a rarity in the state over the past ten years. There was only one report during the season: 1 along Brown Road, northeast Hopkins, 17 December (ph. DLa, JSo).

Barn Owl – The species continues to be more regular in occurrence with six reports in eBird during the season and 1-4 reported on four CBCs.

BURROWING OWL – First state record. A single bird wintered at a road culvert west-southwest of Allensville, Todd, (JBc, ph. JHa, ph. SAR, m.ob.). It was first noted during mid-February and lingered through the season. KBRC review required. See details elsewhere in the Field Notes section of this issue.

Short-eared Owl – It was a poor season for the species with reports from only four locales: 1 -2 at the Sinclair Unit on a few dates between 2 December (Pfo, Sfo) and 8 January (TGr, SGr); 1 north of Nicholasville, Jessamine, 14 December (KBi, SpE, LTh); 1 on the south side of Lexington, 7 January (EMa); 1 at Ky Bend, 27 January (DRe) with 3 there 31 January (ph. BPa, MMo, EHo); and 1-2 at Talon Winery, Fayette, 16 February (m.ob.).

Merlin – Winter season reports have become so remarkably common as to not warrant listing herein! There were reports from no fewer than 13 counties in eBird for the

season including 7 on the Louisville CBC 15 December (*vide* JWh).

Peregrine Falcon – Essentially all reports were of birds from known nesting or wintering territories; the exception was 1 northeast of Olmstead, Logan, 26 December (ph. DHa).

PRAIRIE FALCON – Probably the same individual that has been present off and on during the past few winter seasons northeast of Anton, Hopkins, continued from late November through December; it was last reported 14 January (ph. SGr m.ob.). Also, quite remarkable was one photographed at Louisville, 15 Dec (ph. JBa) for an unexpected county first. KBRC review required.



Prairie Falcon – Hopkins Co.
07 January 2020, Steve Graham

Loggerhead Shrike – A tally of 7 on the Hart County CBC on 14 December (*vide* SKi) was quite impressive. 1-7 were reported on 11 CBCs.

White-eyed Vireo – There were *three* reports: 1 south of Elkton, Todd, a few times during the week or so prior to and on 26 December (JBc, MBe, ph. ATr); 1 at the Walnut Creek embayment, Barren River Lake, Allen, 28

December (ph. VSt, RSt); and 1 at Diamond Caverns Resort, *Barren*, 15 January (†SKi, JKi, CFr).

American Crow – An estimated 1500 were at the traditional roost along I-75 at the US 25 Corbin exit, *Knox*, 27 December (MCm).

Fish Crow – There were several reports from western Kentucky during this mild winter season including 2 over Murray, *Calloway*, 8 December (†ALy); 1 at Blood River, 14 January (†HCh); and 2 at Ky Bend, 8 February (DLa, JTe). Small numbers were then reported at a few locales by mid- to late February.

Tree Swallow – A very tardy individual was seen at McElroy Lake, 10 December (†/ph. RSh); the earliest returning spring birds included 1 at Jacobson Park, Lexington, 19 February (ph. DLa), and singles in south *Todd*, 21 February (JHa) and 22 February (DHa).

Purple Martin – 1 at Bowling Green, *Warren*, on 27 February (TDu) was the earliest to be reported.

Red-breasted Nuthatch – The species was essentially absent during the season without a single report documented with photos or voice recordings.

Brown-headed Nuthatch – Up to 6 (19 January [DSv, LCo]) continued at the London Ranger District Office, DBNF, *Laurel*, territory through the season.

House Wren – There were not quite as many reports this winter, all being included here: singles along London Dock Road, *Laurel* (†RDe), and in north LBL, *Lyon* (†MAu), both 14 December; 1 on the Anchorage Trail, *Jefferson*, 15/25 December (ph. PSp, JBe, PBe/JBe, PBe); 1 west-northwest of Hydro, *Warren*, 19/26 December (au. AHu); 1 on the Barren River Lake CBC, *Allen*, 19 December (*fide* JWh); 1 in north *Russell* 21 December (†RBo); 2 on Ft. Knox, *Meade*, 28 December (ph. BPa); 1 at Lily Mt. Nature Preserve, *Estill*, 5 January (ph. TNo, NBr); 2 at different locales northeast of Monticello, *Wayne* (LBo), and 1 northeast of Betsey

(BKu), all 4 January; 1 at Ky Bend, 31 January (ph. BPa, MMo, EHo); 1 at the Kendall Recreation Area, *Russell*, 5 February (†LBo); and 1 near Bens Cliff, *Wayne*, 16 February (†LBo).

Sedge Wren – There were reports from three locales: 2 at the Long Point Unit, 14 December (†BPa, CBl); 1 at West Ky WMA, *McCracken*, 30 Jan (ph. CBl, BPa, EHo, MMo); and 1 below Barkley Dam, *Lyon*, 21 February (ph. JTe). Under KBRC review.



Sedge Wren – Lyon Co.
21 February 2020, Jeremy Teague

Marsh Wren – There were reports from five locales: 1-2 at the Long Point Unit, 14 December (ph. CBl, BPa), 31 December (JTe, MGr), and 31 January (BPa, MMo, EHo); 1 heard along Rockport-Paradise Road, east *Muhlenberg*, 30 December (BPa); 1 along KY 502 at Clear Creek, *Hopkins*, 5 January (ph. MMo, BPa, MSt); 2 along Gray-Aldridge Road, *Union*, 26 January (ph. BPa); and a remarkable count of at least 5 (1 seen and 4 more heard calling) at the former Camp #11 Mine, *Union*, 26 January (†BPa).

VARIED THRUSH – A male was present in a yard northeast of Lyndon, *Jefferson*, 10 February (ph. PBe, JBe, ph. BPa). KBRC review required.

Gray Catbird – There were four reports: 1 at Douglass Hills, *Jefferson*, 15 December (†MYa); 1 north of Wolf Creek Dam, *Russell*, 21 December (ph. RDe); 1 at the Russell Springs City Park, *Russell*, 21 December (RBo); 1 at the Walnut Creek embayment of Barren River Lake, *Allen*, 28

December (ph. VSt, RSt); and 1 at the Louisville Water Company Ponds, northeast *Jefferson*, 23 February (†MCA).

Cedar Waxwing – A few more birds lingered through the season than during the past few winters; 1-280 were reported on 27 CBCs.

American Pipit – Typical numbers appeared to be present, mostly in farmland of the south part of the state, with 1-310 reported on eight CBCs.

Purple Finch – After being barely reported during fall migration, there were only a handful of verified reports during the season; 2-10 were reported on six CBCs.



Purple Finch – Metcalfe Co.
29 February 2020, Rickey Shive

Pine Siskin – The species was very scarce during the season, with the only well-verified report in eBird being 2 continuing from November at a feeding station at Prospect, *Oldham*, 2 Dec (ITh). The only report from CBCs was for 3 on the Allen County East count.

Lapland Longspur – Not numerous this winter, probably in large part due to mild weather. Mostly found at traditional locales with 1 in east *Shelby* on 24 December (KRi) being the farthest east to be reported. A very modest peak count of only 50 was reported in the Lower Hickman Bottoms, 14 December (BPa, CBl).

Grasshopper Sparrow – There were remarkably *three* documented reports during the season: 1 at West Ky WMA, *McCracken*, 19 December (†BPa, EHo) and 30 January (ph. CBl, MMo, EHo, BPa); 1 along Stratton

Road north of Elkton, *Todd*, 26 December (†RSt, †VSt); and 1 at Ky Bend, 27 January (ph. DRe). All under KBRC review.

Chipping Sparrow – Not quite as numerous this winter with 1-49 reported on 18 CBCs.

Clay-colored Sparrow – 1 at Ballard WMA, 17 December (†CBl, ph. DRe, ALy) represented a first report for the state during the winter season. See details in the Field Notes section of this issue. Under KBRC review.

Fox Sparrow – Not particularly numerous this winter with 1-27 reported on 20 CBCs.

American Tree Sparrow – Not numerous or widespread this winter (probably in large part due to relatively mild weather) with 1-10 reported on only eight CBCs.

Dark-eyed Junco – There were three reports of members of the western race, *J. hyemalis oregonus* (Oregon Junco): a male present off and on for the fifth winter in a row in a yard at Douglass Hills, *Jefferson* (ph. MYa, BYa); a male at Wilmore, *Jessamine*, 17 January (ph. KBi) and a likely female at Ft. Knox, *Meade*, 28 December (ph. BPa).

White-crowned Sparrow – Up to 75 (8 February [ALy]) were reported at Ky Bend during the season.

Harris's Sparrow – One was at a yard along Kingston Road, southwest *Graves*, from at least 31 December to the end of February (ph. MCo); this was certainly a bird returning from winter 2018-2019.

Vesper Sparrow – There was an above-average number of reports, all being included here: 1 along Justice Road south-southeast of Murray, *Calloway*, 20 December (†ALy); 3 along Old Volney Road, *Todd*, 26 December (RSt, ph. VSt, BPa); 1 at Guthrie Swamp, *Todd*, 26 December (†SAr, †JHa); 1 along Frostburg Road, *Hopkins*, 14 January (†TGr, SGr); and 8 at Ky Bend, 20 January (ph. DRe, ALy) with 4 still there on 29 January (ph. ALy).

LeConte's Sparrow – The species was reported from three locales as follows: at

least 3 at the Long Point Unit, 14 December (ph. BPa, CBI); at least 6 at Ballard WMA, 17 December (ph. ALy, ph. DRe, CBI, m.ob.); 1 along Doss Kennedy Road southwest of Maynard, *Allen*, 28 Dec (†JBk); and good numbers at Ky Bend, 20 January-19 February (ALy m.ob.) with new state high counts of at least 23 there on 27 January (ph. DRe) and at least 34 there on 31 January (ph. BPa, MMo, EHo).

Savannah Sparrow – Peak counts during the season included up to 350 at Ky Bend, 8 February (ALy) and 115 at Ballard WMA, 17 December (ALy, DRe, CBI).

Lincoln's Sparrow – There were reports from two locales: 1 along Claudis Harris Road southwest of Scottsville, *Allen*, 4 January (†JBk); and a remarkable total of at least 3 (2 photographed) were seen at Ky Bend, 31 January (ph. BPa, MMo, EHo).

Swamp Sparrow – An impressive tally of at least 467 at Ky Bend on 31 January (EHo, MMo, BPa) represented a new state high count.



Spotted Towhee – Fulton Co.
31 January 2020, Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr.

SPOTTED TOWHEE – A female was present at Ky Bend, *Fulton*, 31 January-19 February (ph. BPa, ph. MMo, EHo, m.ob.). KBRC review required.

Western Meadowlark – There were four reports: 1 along KY 87 between Tracy and Austin, *Barren*, 28 Dec (†RBo) that represented a county first; 2 along KY 307 several miles north of Fulton, *Hickman*, 28 January (†DRe); 2 in the Lower Hickman Bottoms,



Northern Waterthrush – Jefferson Co.
06 January 2020, Maria Koukoulas

19 February (†LBo, AHi); and 1 along Ogden Landing Road, *McCracken*, 23 February (†ALy).

Orchard/Scott's Oriole – A “yellow” oriole reported as a female Orchard was documented from Prospect, *Jefferson*, 15 December (wr. JKr) but details did not eliminate Scott's from consideration.

Rusty Blackbird – Peak counts during the season included 775 in farmland near the mouth of the Green River northeast of Henderson, *Henderson*, 14 December (JMe, SHe); at least 425 adjacent to the Louisville landfill, 12 January (MAu); 200 at the Highland Creek Unit Sloughs WMA, *Union*, 7 December (KMl); and at least 200 in east *Hopkins*, 21 February (BPa).

Brewer's Blackbird – Mostly small numbers were reported at mostly traditional locales as follows: 2 along Lawson-Poindexter Road, south *Todd*, 1 December (ph. SAR); small numbers along and near Frostburg Road, east *Hopkins*, 1-17 December (m.ob. [eBird data]); singles at the Calvert City landfill, 4 December (BPa, JBa) and 23 January (DSi); 17 along Smokey Road, *Ballard*, 17 December (ph. BPa, m.ob.); 1 east of Flaherty, *Meade*, 28 December (ph. BPa, m.ob.); at least 115 along Pack Church Road, *McLean*, 5 January (ph. BPa, MMo, MSt); and 1 west of Allensville, *Todd*, 23 January (RSt, VSt).

Northern Waterthrush – One was present at Caperton Swamp Park, *Jefferson*, 5 January-1 February (ph. MKo m.ob.). Under KBRC review.

Orange-crowned Warbler – Continuing the trend from the previous several winter seasons, there were an above-average number of reports, all being included here: 1 at Shippingport Island, *Jefferson*, 7/8 December (†/ph. PBe, JBe)-30 January (PSP); 1 at the Shawnee Park Riverwalk, *Jefferson*, 14 December (JSd); singles (possibly same bird) at Lake No. 9, west *Fulton*, 14 December (ph. CBl, BPa) and 4 February (ph. DRe, ALy); singles at Surrey Hills Farm († BPa) and at Riverfront Park, Louisville (ph. JBa), both 15 December; 1 at the Larue County Sportsman's Lake, 27 December (†JSn, SCl); 1 northwest of Austin, *Barren*, 28 Dec (†RBo); 1 coming to a suet feeder at Rolling Hills, *Jefferson*, during all of February (ESc, ph. BPa); and 1 below Ky Dam, *Marshall*, 21 January (ph. DRe, ALy).

Nashville Warbler – A tardy individual was photographed at Ky Dam, *Livingston*, 4 December (BPa, ph. JBa).



Nashville Warbler – Livingston Co.
4 December 2019, Jamie Baker

Common Yellowthroat – There were reports from five locales: 1 at the Sauerheber Unit, 8 December (au. JMe); 1 at the J.J. Audubon State Park wetland, *Henderson*, 14 December/14 January (au. JMe, SHe/†TGr, SGr); 1 heard along Rockport-Paradise Road, *Muhlenberg*, 30 December (†BPa); a male at the former Camp #11 Mine, *Union*, 26

January (ph. BPa); and 1 at Ky Bend, *Fulton*, 31 January (ph. BPa, MMo, EHo).

Northern Parula – 1 at Caperton Swamp Park, *Jefferson*, 15 December (ph. JBa) was a first for the state during the winter season.



Northern Parula – Jefferson Co.
15 December 2019, Jamie Baker

Palm Warbler – Average number of reports with 1-2 reported at no fewer than seven locations during the season (eBird data) and singles reported on seven CBCs.

Pine Warbler – As is the norm, small numbers (1-3) were reported at scattered locales during the season.

Prairie Warbler – One was photographed below Wolf Creek Dam, *Russell*, 21 December (ph. RDe). Under KBRC review.

Summer Tanager – A female was present in a yard at Louisville, 20 January-1 March (ph. BNi). Under KBRC review.

WESTERN TANAGER – A male wintered in a yard at St. Matthews, *Jefferson*, 8 December through the season (ph. LSq m.ob.). KBRC review required.

Indigo Bunting – There were reports from three locales: 1 was present at a yard at Mt. Zion, *Pulaski*, 2 December-9 January (ph. RDe); 1 at Richmond, *Madison*, 23 January (ph. DPR); and 4 at Ky Bend, *Fulton*, 29 January (ph. ALy) with perhaps a different individual located more than a half mile away 31 January (ph. BPa, MMo, EHo).

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Yandell, B. 2019. 19th Report of the Kentucky Bird Records Committee. *The Kentucky Warbler*, 95: 112-120

LOCATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS (*Italics* indicate a county name)

Ballard WMA, *Ballard*

Barkley Dam, *Lyon* (unless otherwise noted)

Barren River Lake, *Allen/Barren* (unless otherwise noted)

Blood River = Blood River embayment of Ky Lake, *Calloway*

Calvert City Landfill, *Marshall*

CBC = Christmas Bird Count

Jacobson Park, Lexington, *Fayette*

Jonathan Creek = Jonathan Creek embayment, Ky Lake, *Marshall*

Ky Bend = Kentucky Bend, west *Fulton*

Ky Dam = Kentucky Dam, *Livingston/Marshall*

Ky Dam Village SRP, *Marshall*

Ky Lake = Kentucky Lake, *Calloway/Marshall/Trigg*

LBL = Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, *Lyon/Trigg*

Lexington, *Fayette*

Long Point Unit = Long Point Unit Reelfoot NWR, *Fulton*

Lower Hickman Bottoms, west *Fulton*

Louisville, *Jefferson*

McElroy Lake, south *Warren*

Sauerheber Unit = Sauerheber Unit Sloughs WMA, *Henderson*

Sinclair Unit = Sinclair Unit Peabody WMA, *Muhlenberg*

Sledd Creek = Sledd Creek embayment of Ky Lake, *Marshall*

SP = State Park

SRP = State Resort Park

WMA = Wildlife Management Area.



Grasshopper Sparrow – Fulton Co.
27 January 2020, Daniel Redwine



Vesper Sparrow – Fulton Co.
20 January 2020, Daniel Redwine

KEY TO OBSERVER CODES

- AHi – Asher Higgins
- AHu – Aaron Hulsey
- ALy – Andrew Lydeard
- APe – Anna Perry
- ARa – Andy Radomski
- ATr – Alan Troyer
- BAt – Brooks Atherton
- BKu – Bret Kuss
- BNi – Barry Nichols
- BPa – Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.
- BWu – Brian Wulker
- BYa – Ben Yandell
- CBl – Clay Bliznick
- CCr – Charlie Crawford
- CFr – Carol Friedman
- CRo – Craig Robson
- DBr – Debbie Brungs
- DHa – Debbie Hamilton
- DLa – David Lang
- DPa – Daniel Patrick
- DPr – Dave Pritchard
- DRe – Daniel Redwine
- DSi – Damien Simbek
- DSv – Dave Svetich
- EHo – Eric Hope
- EMa – Erich Maul
- ESc – Eileen Schweinardt
- GBa – Gage Barnes
- HCh – Hap Chambers
- HDo – Heidi Doman
- ITh – Indira Thirkannad
- JAr – Jim Arnett
- JBa – Jamie Baker
- JBc – John Beachy
- JBa – Jane Bell
- JBk – John David Brubaker
- JBr – John Brunjes
- JCa – Joey Caminiti
- JHa – Joe Hall
- JKs – James Kiser
- JKi – Janet Kistler
- JKr – John Krull
- JMe – John Meredig
- JPe – Julie Pezzarossi
- JPo – Josh Powell
- JSD – Jake Souder



LeConte's Sparrow – Fulton Co.
31 January 2020, Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr.

- JSn – Jennifer Snyder
- JSo – Jeff Sole
- JTe – Jeremy Teague
- JWh – James Wheat
- KBi – Kyle Bixler
- KMi – Keith Michalski
- KRi – Keith Richardson
- KVo – Kelly Vowels
- KWe – Karl Weaver
- LAt – Lyn Atherton
- LBe – Larissa Bernecker
- LBo – Lyle Bontrager
- LCo – Lisa Combs
- LMc – Lindsey McMahon
- LMi – Lynda Mills
- LSq – Lee Squires
- LTh – Laurie Thomas
- MAu – Michael Autin
- MBe – Marvin Beachy
- MBr – Meg Brown
- MCa – Mike Callan
- Mcm – Matthew Campbell
- MCo – Marta Coleman
- MGr – Mark Greene
- MKo – Maria Koukoulas
- MMo – Mark Monroe
- MSt – Matt Stickel
- MYa – Mary Yandell
- NBr – Nancy Braun
- PBe – Pat Bell
- PFo – Preston Forsythe
- PSP – Pam Spaulding
- RBo – Ray Bontrager
- RCh – Rob Chadwick
- RCr – Rodney Crice
- RDe – Roseanna Denton
- ROc – Ronan O'Carra
- RRa – Reuben Raber
- RSh – Rickey Shive
- RSt – Ruben Stoll
- SAR – Sharon Arnold
- SBR – Steve Brown
- SCI – Sean Clinning
- SFO – Shari Forsythe
- SGr – Steve Graham
- SHe – Stephen Heeger
- SKi – Steve Kistler
- SPE – Sydney Penner
- SSt – Stephen Stedman
- TDu – Tom Durbin
- TEs – Terri Estes
- TGr – Teresa Graham
- THa – Troy Hale
- TJo – Timothy Jones
- TMi – Tom Mills
- TNo – Teresa Noel
- TSA – Thadius Sales
- TYo – Thomas Young
- VSt – Victor Stoll
- WTa – Wayne Tamminga



KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (KOS) VIRTUAL SPRING MEETING

Kentucky, April 17 – 19, 2020

Janet Kistler, KOS Recording Secretary

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, KOS had to cancel the annual spring meeting, scheduled to take place the 3rd weekend in April at Carter Caves State Resort Park. Instead, we went virtual, creating an online birders' experience for the same weekend.

The activities started a few days before the meeting on Wednesday, April 15, with the first round of voting in our April Madness Tournament. Participants voted in an online poll to name the favorite KOS warbler of 2020 – 32 warblers/16 matchups. Voting continued the next day in the “Tweet 16” to narrow the field.



Beginning April 17, participants were able to access an array of activities. There were some events that were offered every day. Number one was the charge to “Go Birding” while observing safe social distancing and to report observations on eBird. Other features that recurred daily were *Steve’s Bird Quiz* (a different quiz each day provided by Steve Kistler) and *Old School Bird Name Puzzler* (3 different puzzlers, provided by James Wheat). Voting continued in the April Madness tournament each day with the “Chirpionship” on Sunday. Participants were encouraged to share pictures and comments during the weekend, as well.

Special Day 1 features included a welcome message from James Wheat, KOS President. Visitors were wowed by a video showing stunning photos taken by KOS members – *Birding with a Camera*, produced by Pam Spaulding. Also featured on Day 1 – *The 2019 Bluebird Report* by Bob and Judy Peak who monitor and maintain 230 bluebird nest boxes at Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area and Lake Barkley State Resort Park. In addition, there was a short but challenging *Feather Quiz*, written by Regina Garr.

On Day 2, visitors to the KOS site were able to access more activities. Special Day 2 features included information about our “keynote speaker,” Todd Fearer, American Bird Conservancy, Appalachian Joint Venture Project Director. Since he was unable to physically attend our meeting, he provided access to some of the Project’s *Virtual Field Tours*. KOS member Win Ahrens shared a slide show of his trip from Portugal to Africa’s southern tip in 2018 showing many exotic birds and sights. Bob and Judy Peak contributed a bird quiz – *What’s in a Name* – testing our knowledge of scientific bird names.

In addition to the daily features, Day 3 was packed with things to do. Steve and Janet Kistler provided a virtual wildflower walk through the beautiful Cedar Sink Trail at Mammoth Cave National Park. Kate Slankard, with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, shared a report about *Barn Owls in Kentucky*. Meg Brown created a presentation to showcase Tommy Quarles’s bird photos. He won first place for photography in the American Birding Association (ABA) 2020 Young Birders competition. KOS member Rickey Shive shared an awesome video about birding at McElroy, a transient lake in Warren County. And, the Blackburnian Warbler was crowned

Favorite KOS Warbler of 2020, after a hard-fought contest with the Kentucky Warbler in the final match.

Using eBird reports, we listed the birds that were reported each day of the virtual spring meeting, with a whopping 190 species seen across the state. Good work, Kentucky's birders! We created a remarkable list of birds working together, but safely apart.

Several folks worked hard to put it all together. Steve and Meg Brown were responsible for the amazing website – creating it in record time (with little sleep some days). They wrote the copy for the pages, organized the offerings, posted comments and photos, and made the technology work beautifully. Steve and Janet Kistler contributed content, created graphics, managed the April Madness tournament, and offered ideas. Teresa Noel was involved in every aspect of the weekend and helped solicit content. We are very grateful to the other contributors: James Wheat, Pam Spaulding, Win Ahrens, Regina Garr, Bob and Judy Peak, Rickey Shive, Kate Slankard, and Todd Fearer.

The virtual meeting offered birders a chance to learn, to contribute to the statewide bird list, and to share laughs, beauty, and wonder. Thanks to everyone who took part in the meeting. You made it fun! The KOS website saw a dramatic increase in visitation, with 402 unique visitors over the course of the weekend. Each visitor averaged 2.2 visits. Many visitors contributed photos and positive comments. It is clear the meeting was a success.

You can still access all the weekend's activities on the KOS website – www.birdky.org. We will archive it at some future date, but it will remain available.

Virtual KOS Meeting Bird List

This list is a compilation of 190 bird species seen throughout Kentucky over the meeting weekend.

Canada Goose	Chuck-will's-widow	Lesser Yellowlegs
Mute Swan	Eastern Whip-poor-will	Bonaparte's Gull
Wood Duck	Chimney Swift	Laughing Gull
Blue-winged Teal	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Ring-billed Gull
Northern Shoveler	Sora	Herring Gull
Gadwall	American Coot	Caspian Tern
American Wigeon	Sandhill Crane	Forster's Tern
Mallard	Black-necked Stilt	Pacific Loon
Green-winged Teal	American Avocet	Common Loon
Lesser Scaup	Semipalmated Plover	Neotropic Cormorant
Bufflehead	Killdeer	Double-crested Cormorant
Hooded Merganser	Upland Sandpiper	American White Pelican
Ruddy Duck	Dunlin	Least Bittern
Northern Bobwhite	Least Sandpiper	Great Blue Heron
Ruffed Grouse	Pectoral Sandpiper	Great Egret
Wild Turkey	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Little Blue Heron
Pied-billed Grebe	Long-billed Dowitcher	Cattle Egret
Horned Grebe	Wilson's Snipe	Green Heron
Eared Grebe	Spotted Sandpiper	Black-crowned Night-Heron
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Solitary Sandpiper	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Greater Yellowlegs	White Ibis
Mourning Dove	Willet	Glossy Ibis
Black-billed Cuckoo		

Virtual KOS Meeting Bird List (Continued)

Black Vulture	Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
Turkey Vulture	Purple Martin	Orchard Oriole
Osprey	Tree Swallow	Baltimore Oriole
Northern Harrier	Bank Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Barn Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Cooper's Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Rusty Blackbird
Bald Eagle	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
Red-shouldered Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Ovenbird
Broad-winged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Worm-eating Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Brown Creeper	Louisiana Waterthrush
Barn Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Northern Waterthrush
Eastern Screech-Owl	House Wren	Blue-winged Warbler
Great Horned Owl	Winter Wren	Black-and-white Warbler
Burrowing Owl	Marsh Wren	Prothonotary Warbler
Barred Owl	Carolina Wren	Swainson's Warbler
Belted Kingfisher	European Starling	Tennessee Warbler
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Gray Catbird	Orange-crowned Warbler
Red-headed Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Nashville Warbler
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	Kentucky Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	Common Yellowthroat
Hairy Woodpecker	Swainson's Thrush	Hooded Warbler
Pileated Woodpecker	Hermit Thrush	Cape May Warbler
Northern Flicker	Wood Thrush	Cerulean Warbler
American Kestrel	American Robin	Northern Parula
Merlin	House Sparrow	Magnolia Warbler
Eastern Phoebe	American Pipit	Blackburnian Warbler
Great Crested Flycatcher	House Finch	Yellow Warbler
Eastern Kingbird	Purple Finch	Blackpoll Warbler
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	American Goldfinch	Palm Warbler
White-eyed Vireo	Grasshopper Sparrow	Pine Warbler
Yellow-throated Vireo	Chipping Sparrow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Blue-headed Vireo	Field Sparrow	Yellow-throated Warbler
Warbling Vireo	Lark Sparrow	Prairie Warbler
Red-eyed Vireo	Dark-eyed Junco	Black-throated Green Warbler
Loggerhead Shrike	White-crowned Sparrow	Summer Tanager
Blue Jay	White-throated Sparrow	Scarlet Tanager
American Crow	Savannah Sparrow	Northern Cardinal
Fish Crow	Henslow's Sparrow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Carolina Chickadee	Song Sparrow	Blue Grosbeak
Tufted Titmouse	Swamp Sparrow	Indigo Bunting
Horned Lark	Eastern Towhee	
Northern Rough-winged	Yellow-breasted Chat	



FIELD NOTES

Kentucky's First Winter Record of Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*)

When the Christmas Bird Count season comes around, the Ballard CBC is always one of the counts I look forward to the most. Located in the far reaches of Western Kentucky, just north of where the Ohio River meets the Mississippi, the area is well-known for its overwhelming abundance of wintering waterfowl. While not as recognized, there is also an exceptional diversity of sparrows that spend their winters here foraging in the damp fields of foxtail and bluestem. This was particularly evident on the most recent CBC, on December 17th, 2019.

The temperature hovered around freezing all morning, but the wind was calm. Andrew Lydeard, Daniel Redwine, and I had been birding the fields within Ballard WMA and were having a stellar morning in terms of sparrow species. We then decided to walk out to the Ohio River to scan for waterbirds. On the way we stopped to pish alongside the road, where a considerable number of sparrows responded by flying up from the grass and perching in some bare shrubs. Most of the birds were at eye level, and I was able to use my scope to easily scan the perched birds.

Among the throngs of Swamp, Savannah, and Song Sparrows, one of the perched birds immediately stood out from the rest. The clean buffy-gray breast and contrasting brown and white facial pattern were not representative of any sparrows typically wintering in Kentucky. After the three of us were able to see the bird adequately in the scope, we all suspected it to be a Clay-colored Sparrow. We frantically tried to snap some photos to document our sighting, but the sparrows had grown tired of us and had begun to depart. Astonishingly, Daniel had somehow managed to photograph the bird in question, confirming its identity as a Clay-colored Sparrow. It was the first time this species has been documented in Kentucky during the winter season.

– Clay Bliznick, Hartford; bliznick.birding@gmail.com



Clay-colored Sparrow – Ballard Co.
17 December 2019, Daniel Redwine

First Kentucky Record of Burrowing Owl

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is a small, ground-dwelling raptor that inhabits primarily arid regions of the western portion of North America (subspecies *A. c. hypugaea*). A resident population (*A. c. floridana*) also occurs in peninsular Florida (Haug et al. 1997). The western subspecies is migratory, retreating from the northern portion of the breeding range to the extreme southern United States and Mexico during winter (Haug et al. 1997). The species preys upon a great variety of food items from insects to small mammals and birds. Loose nesting colonies often occur in areas with suitable habitat and may be associated with populations of Prairie dogs (*Cynomys* spp.), although Florida birds usually excavate their own burrow (Haug et al. 1997).

Burrowing Owl populations have declined precipitously during the past couple of centuries as humans have converted native grasslands and shrublands to more intense agricultural purposes and settlement (Haug et al. 1997). For that reason, vagrant birds outside of the normal range have declined significantly in frequency, particularly since the mid-20th Century.

On 22 February 2020, John Beachy was traveling along Dr. Boyles Road, in southeastern Todd County, when he noticed a small owl sitting next to a road culvert. Upon returning home he checked a field guide and confirmed the identification. He passed word of the observation on to Joe Hall, who went to the location the following day with Sharon Arnold. Joe and Sharon found the bird right where John had said it would be and obtained documentary photos.

During subsequent weeks, many birders were able to enjoy seeing the Burrowing Owl. It was almost always on one side of the road or the other at the culvert. It appeared to retreat into a cavity in the pavement on the edge of the right-of-way. The bird remained at this site for nearly two months when it was last seen 21 April 2020. Conversations with locals revealed that the bird had been present along Dr. Boyle Road for at least a couple of weeks, although it seems likely in retrospect that it was probably present all winter.

Analysis of the bird's plumage indicated that it originated from the western population. Its overall color was paler than Florida birds with a pale stripe down the middle of the breast that separated the profuse barring on either side of the breast. Also, some photographs taken of the bird revealed fine hair-like feathers on the legs, another character apparently diagnostic for individuals of the western subspecies (Pyle 1997). It would stand to reason that the western population would be the source for such a vagrant as that subspecies is migratory. Peter Pyle reviewed photos of the bird and felt that it was probably a second-year bird (hatched during 2019) based on feather wear, but that it was impossible to be sure without in-hand examination (P. Pyle, pers. comm.).

Winter site fidelity has been demonstrated by at least one vagrant bird that has occurred in southern Georgia for three years in a row (eBird 2020), so it is hoped that the bird might return after successfully wintering in Kentucky.

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- Haug, E.A., B.A. Millsap, and M.S. Martell. 1993. Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 61 (A. Poole and F. Gill, Eds.). Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, D.C.: The American Ornithologists' Union.
- Pyle, P. 1997. Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 1, Columbidae to Ploceidae. Slate Creek Press. Bolinas, CA. 729 pp.
- Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., 8207 Old Westport Road, Louisville, KY, 40222
(brainard@mindspring.com)



Burrowing Owl
Todd Co.
23 February 2020
Jamie Baker



“fine hair-like feathers on the legs”
Pyle 1997



NEWS AND VIEWS

Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Kentucky (3rd ed.) now available.

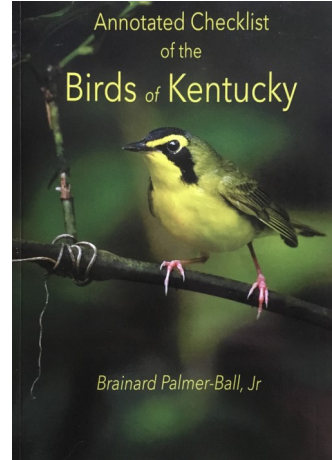
By Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

(Kentucky Ornithological Society).

Paperback 276 pages. 1 August 2019.

“The 3rd edition of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Kentucky* updates the status and abundance of 390 species that have been documented to have occurred in Kentucky. The 3rd edition has been expanded to include more detailed lists of county distribution of many less common species. Included in species descriptions are brief summaries of status, distribution, seasonal occurrence, and abundance.”

– Kentucky Ornithological Society website.



This important reference is available at meetings of the society, through Aerio Book Sales (<https://aerobook.com/maker/productcard-4886075-6955.html>) and wherever books are sold.

Anne L. Stamm Avian Education Fund Grants Available

The Anne L. Stamm Avian Education Fund supports education of children in the deeper appreciation of birds and ornithology. For guidelines on how to apply for grants of up to \$5000, visit the KOS web site (<http://www.birdky.org/anne-stamm-fund.html>) or contact Scott Marsh by mail at 4401 Athens-Boonesboro Road, Lexington, KY, 40509, or via email at (SMarsh@Clayingels.com).

2020 grants:

- \$200 to the Garden Clubs of Warren County (Annie Holt) for environmental education materials providing information about birds, native plantings, pollinators, etc.
- \$500 to McConnell Springs (Dakota Yates) for transporting Lexington area school children to the facility for environmental education programs.
- \$500 to Mary Yandell, Louisville, to expand Audubon-related programs to specific groups in 2 additional schools.
- \$500 to Lost River Cave Education Center (Annie Holt), Bowling Green, for taxidermy (permit controlled) on 3 birds of prey and preparation of small bird specimens as skeletons for environmental education purposes.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Virginia and Wendell Kingsolver Scholarship Available

The Virginia & Wendell Kingsolver Scholarship Fund was established in 2013 to honor the memory of Virginia “Ginny” Kingsolver and the legacy and contributions of Ginny and her husband, Wendell, to KOS and to environmental education efforts across Kentucky. The scholarship is available to young birders between the ages of 13 and 18 who live in Kentucky. The Fund will pay tuition to attend an American Birding Association (ABA) Summer Camp. Details about the ABA camps can be found on the ABA website. To apply for a Kingsolver Scholarship, applicants should fill out the form found on the KOS web site (<http://birdky.org/wendell-and-ginny-kingsolver-fund.html>), write a short essay (500 words or less) on why he or she wants to attend, and include a brief recommendation from a parent, teacher, or mentor. Applications should be sent to Carol Besse (csbesse@bellsouth.net). Recipients will be asked to report on their camp experience either in person to their local bird club, to KOS at a meeting, or in writing. Scholarship applications are due by May 1 each year, however grants will be subject to ABA camp’s space availability.

Burt L. Monroe, Jr. Avian Research Grants Available

The Burt L. Monroe, Jr. Avian Research Fund supports research on birds in Kentucky with monetary awards of up to \$5000. For guidelines on how to apply, visit the KOS web site (<http://www.birdky.org/burt-monroe-jr-fund.html>) or contact Kate Slankard, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, #1 Sportsman’s Lane, Frankfort, KY, 40601 (kate.slankard@ky.gov).

2020 grants:

- \$1,000 to Maggie Anderson, University of the Cumberlands, to study Prairie Warblers and other grassland species on reclaimed land, with the use of trail cameras.
- \$1,000 to Clay Bliznick, Murray State, to study the effects of the Urban Green Project in Louisville on bird populations by monitoring, over time, the changes in bird diversity at 140 locations.

Recipients of KOS grants are expected to submit research articles or summary reports, which will be published in future issues of *The Kentucky Warbler*.

Gordon Wilson Fund Grants Available

The Gordon Wilson Fund was established in honor of Dr. Gordon Wilson, respected Kentucky ornithologist and one of the three founders of KOS. Grants of up to \$ 5,000 may be requested to fund research, publication costs, and environmental education projects. Members of The Society will receive preference for funding, but others are encouraged to apply. For guidelines on how to apply, visit the KOS web site (<http://www.birdky.org/kos-funds-scholarships-and-endowments.html>) or contact Teresa Noel by mail at 1713 Beacon Hill Rd, Lexington, KY, 40504, or via email at (teresanoel@gmail.com)





LeConte's Sparrow
Fulton Co., 31 January 2020
Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.



Western Tanager
Jefferson Co.
12 December 2019
Jamie Baker



White-eyed Vireo
Todd Co., 26 December 2019
Alan Troyer



Varied Thrush
Jefferson Co., 10 February 2020
Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.



Greater White-fronted Geese – Henderson Co., 5 January 2020, Charlie Crawford