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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 Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) taken 29 July 2020 in Marshall County.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Birders,

2020 is done and dusted and life is getting back to normal. It is great to see groups getting together to go birding and heartening to have nearly all of those people present getting vaccinated. The pandemic really affected people's ability to go birding and those who did, changed their birding habits by going out individually or in small pods and away from crowded areas. The KOS meetings continued to be virtual, Breeding Bird Surveys were cancelled, and rarities were seen at a distance from the birds as well as the other birders. Did this affect what birds were seen and how much birding was undertaken? It did, but not in the way one would have thought. The number of species seen in Kentucky over the previous five years had been 297, 288, 304, 304, 302 (2015-2019). In 2020 there were 312 species reported. That may have been skewed a bit by the efforts of Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr. to get 303 species in the calendar year, which one can read about on the KOS website. What we did see was a continued increase in the number of dedicated birders (species seen by the Top 100 birders in the state increased from all having seen greater than 93 in 2015 to all having seen greater than 138 in 2020) as well as an increase in those new to the hobby.

We need to concentrate on those new to the hobby to keep them interested as all other things open up. We as individual birders should be looking to work with birding groups, libraries or other such community groups to lead more beginners outings. How we title or describe these outings is important so that they are more inviting to beginning birders and do not intimidate those that may be thinking of coming. We also need more walk leaders. To be a walk leader the most important things to have are enthusiasm and the awareness that you don't have to know every call or every bird. You just need to get people out there and enjoying it. So if you are part of that list of top 100 eBirders, and even if you are not, you should definitely be trying your hand at leading walks so that we can have more leaders and thus have a greater ability to engage with the community. If there are no walks being held in your area why not give it a try, we are always here to help.

Happy Birding

Ronan O'Carra

THE SUMMER SEASON, JUNE – JULY 2020

Ronan O'Carra

Climatic conditions during summer 2020 were close to average. The June temperatures across the state were within a half degree of the average temperature whereas temperatures in July were between 2-3°F above normal. Precipitation levels were variable throughout the state. The only deviations from average rainfall through the season were 1-2 inches more precipitation in the west and central regions for June and 2 inches above normal in the west for July.

Sightings are extracted mainly from eBird with supplementary records from the BirdKy listserv. 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 underlined. Highlights for the season include the continuing expansion of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck into the state, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, White-winged Dove, a hurricane driven Sooty Tern and Swallow-tailed Kite.

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*; 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 about identification or number were submitted with the report; “m.ob.” within observer initials indicates that the observation was seen by multiple observers. “per. comm.” after an observer’s initials indicates that the report was personally communicated to the subsequent reporter.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK – KBRC review required. The regularity of sightings of this species dictate that it be removed from the review list. There were reports from *Marshall*, *Trigg*, *Calloway*, *Metcalfe* and *Fayette*. The observation near Benton, *Marshall*, 3 June (ph. †TVi) was of 2 birds at a nest box. Nine birds were reported east of Cadiz, *Trigg*, 7 June (ph. †CHa, CHn, HHn) with all other reports being of single birds.

FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK – KBRC review required. There was one report of 9 birds at Lake Number 9, *Fulton*, 4 July (ph. †RSt, VSt, JBe).

Mute Swan – There were three reports from *Fayette*, *Barren* and *Scott*. The provenance of those are in question as they are likely from domestic origin.

Blue-winged Teal – Successful breeding was again reported in *Christian*, with family units being seen at Morgan Pond and the vicinity from 6 June (ph. †JHa, m.ob.)



Fulvous Whistling Duck – Fulton Co.
4 July 2020, Victor Stoll

Gadwall – There were two reports. 2 birds were last reported at Spindletop, *Fayette*, 14 June (†TSa) having been a location for late birds for a number of years. The last report was of a single bird at Former Camp #11 Mine, *Union*, 23 June (†CBl, ph. BPa).

Ring-necked Duck – 1 at Upper Bottom Road, *Fulton*, 8 July (†CBl, BPa) was the last reported.

Lesser Scaup – There was one report of a single bird at Chaney Lake, *Warren*, 15 June (ph. BPa, RSh).

Common Merganser – The only report away from *Jackson*, a known breeding location, was of a single female in Carter Caves SRP, *Carter*, 13 June (ph. †TNo, NBr).

Pied-billed Grebe – There were four reports, all of single birds; 1 in *Calloway*, 2 June (†MEa); 1 at Basil Griffin Park, *Warren*, 12 July (ph. WAh, DHn); 1 at Melco Flood Retention Basin, *Jefferson*, 28 July (†JBa); 1 northwest of Glasgow, *Barren*, 28 July (ph. RSh).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – KBRC review required. There was one report of a single bird southwest of Benton, *Marshall*, 29 July (CBl, ph. †JBa m.ob.).

Black-billed Cuckoo – There were two reports. A single bird at Big Bone Lick SP, *Boone*, 2 June (†ELn) and a single bird in the Red River Gorge, *Powell*, 6 June (†JDr).

Virginia Rail – There was one report of a single bird that responded to playback at Peabody WMA, *Muhlenberg*, 7 June (†TGr).

American Coot – There were two reports. A single bird at Chaney Lake, *Warren*, 15 June (†BPa, ph. RSh) and a single bird remained at Lexington Reservoir #4, *Fayette*, 19-28 July (†LCo, DSv).

Black-necked Stilt – Breeding was again confirmed with a flock of 15 containing young being reported in Lower Hickman Bottoms, *Fulton*, 8 July (†BPa, CBl). There was one report outside of *Fulton*, of 2 birds

at Sloughs WMA, Sauerheber Unit, *Henderson*, 2 June (ph. CCr).

American Avocet – There were two reports. A single bird was reported in the Morgan Pond Vicinity, *Christian*, 18-25 June (ph. †JHa, SAr) and a single bird was reported north of Uniontown, *Union*, 29 July (ph. CCr).

Semipalmated Plover – There were reports covering the end of spring migration and the beginning of fall migration. 2 birds at Farm Pond, *Christian*, 1 June (JHa) were the last report for spring migrants. 1 at Melco Flood Retention Basin, *Jefferson*, 29 July (BPa) was the first of the fall migrants.

Upland Sandpiper – There was one report of a single bird flushed at Open Pond, *Fulton*, 24 July (†JPo, HCh).

Stilt Sandpiper – There were two reports. 2 birds were seen northwest of Glasgow, *Barren*, 28 July (ph. RSh) and 2 birds were reported north of Uniontown, *Union*, 29 July (ph. CCr).

Least Sandpiper – There were reports covering the end of spring migration and the beginning of fall migration. The last spring migrants were reported at Farm Pond, *Christian*, 5 birds on 1 June (JHa) and a single bird on 6 June (JHa). The first of the fall migrants was a single bird at Lake Number 9, *Fulton*, 4 July (VSt, RSt, JBe).

White-rumped Sandpiper – There was one report. 1 continuing from May at Farm Pond, *Christian*, 1 June (ph. †JHa) and last reported on 15 June (ph. BPa).



White-rumped Sandpiper – Christian Co.
15 June 2020, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

Pectoral Sandpiper – 4 at Lower Hickman Bottoms, *Fulton*, 8 July (BPa, CBI) were the first reported fall migrants.

Semipalmated Sandpiper – 35 at Farm Pond, *Christian*, 1 June (JHa) were the last reported spring migrants. 22 July was the first day for returning fall migrants with reports from 3 locations; A single bird at Horse Pond Slough, *Henderson*, (BPa); 4 birds north of Uniontown, *Union* (BPa); 3 birds at Camp #9 Coal Preparation Plant, *Union*, (BPa).

Western Sandpiper – There was one report of a single bird at Lake Number 9, *Fulton*, 11 July (†RSt, JBe).

Short-billed Dowitcher – Returning fall birds were first reported when 2 were seen at Lower Hickman Bottoms, *Fulton*, 8 July (BPa, CBI). Other reports included single birds at Minor E Clark Fish Hatchery, *Rowan*, 12/19 July (ph. TNo/LCo, DSv), 1 at Petros Pond, *Warren*, 17 July (RSh), 1 at South Beargrass Creek Retention Basin, *Jefferson*, 19 July (PSp) and 1 north of Oak Grove, *Christian*, 31 July (JHa).

American Woodcock – There were 3 reports; 1 at Mays Road, *Anderson*, 5 June (PGb); 1 at McNeely Lake Park, *Jefferson*, 11 June (SBr, MBr); 1 at CVG Grassland, *Boone*, 10 July (TYo).

Wilson's Snipe – There was one report. 1 at Sand Slough, *Henderson*, 22 July (†BPa).

Spotted Sandpiper – Reported throughout the season with only one account of there being young present. A single bird was first reported at Mt Zion Loop Road, *Pulaski*, 16 June (†RDe) with up to 3 young being seen on 23/24 June (ph. †RDe).

Solitary Sandpiper – The first returning birds were reported in Obion Creek WMA, *Fulton*, 7 July (HCh, JPo).

Lesser Yellowlegs – A single bird at Morgan Pond, *Christian*, 15/18-25 June (ph. BPa/ph. JHa) was the last spring bird recorded. The first returning migrants were 3 at Lower Hickman Bottoms, *Fulton*, 8 July (CBI, BPa).

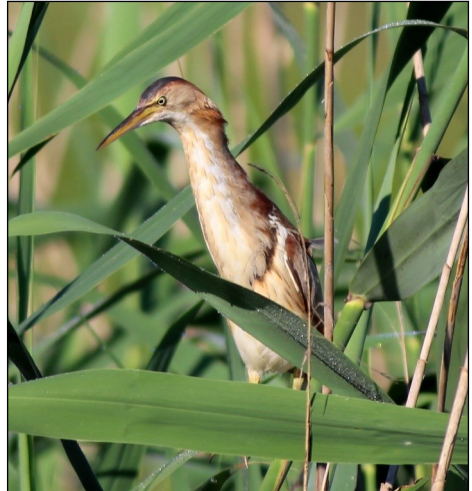
Greater Yellowlegs – The first returning birds seen were 2 at Sutton Road, *Fulton*, 5 July (TGr).

Wilson's Phalarope – There was one report. A single bird at Melco Flood Retention Basin, *Jefferson*, 29 July (ph. †JWh).

Laughing Gull – There were two reports; 2 in the vicinity of KY Lake Dam, *Marshall/Livingston*, 9 June (MMo, BPa, m.ob.); a single bird at the Falls of the Ohio, *Jefferson*, 9 June (ph. †JBa, m.ob.).

Franklin's Gull – There was one report of a single bird at KY Lake Dam, *Marshall*, 9 June (†MMo, BPa, JSo).

Ring-billed Gull – Reported throughout the season mainly in the KY and Barkley Lake areas. 408 at KY Dam Village SRP, *Marshall*, 12 July (ph. †TVi) was the highest number reported.



Least Bittern – Muhlenberg Co.
3 July 2020, Steve Graham

Herring Gull – A first cycle bird was first reported at the Falls of the Ohio, *Jefferson*, 9 June (ph. †JBa, m.ob.) and continued through the season and was joined by an adult on 14 July (†JBa, m.ob). A second report was of up to 2 birds were reported in the vicinity of KY Lake Dam, *Marshall/Livingston*, 29/31 July (†LBo/†HCh, MEa).

SOOTY TERN – KBRC review required. A single hurricane driven bird was reported at KY Lake Dam, *Marshall*, 9 June (†MMo, BPa).

Caspian Tern – There were reports from two locations. 2, possibly 3, birds at KY Lake Dam, *Marshall*, 9 June (†BPa, MMo) and 2 birds at Falls of the Ohio, *Jefferson*, 14 July onward (ph. WAh, m.ob).

Black Tern – There were four reports; 7 at Camp #9 Coal Preparation Plant, *Union*, 22 July (BPa); 1 at Horseshoe Rd. Slough, *Henderson*, 24 July (ph. CCr); 1 south of Lewisport, *Hancock*, 30 July (†BNo); 1 at Jonathan Creek Embayment, *Marshall*, 31 July (HCh, MEa).

Forster's Tern – There was one report of 5 at Jonathan Creek Embayment, *Marshall*, 31 July (HCh, MEa).

Double-crested Cormorant – 1850 at Land Between the Lakes, *Trigg*, 5 July (†DRe, ALy) was the highest number reported.

American White Pelican – All reports were from western Kentucky with 54 at Sutton Road, *Fulton*, 22 June (ph. ALy, DRe) being the highest number reported.

Least Bittern – All reports were from Peabody WMA, *Muhlenberg*, with 4 on 3 July (ph. TGr) being the highest number reported.

Great Egret – 400 at Lake Number 9, *Fulton*, 11 July (†JBe, RSt) was the highest number reported.

Snowy Egret – There were reports from *Trigg*, *Henderson*, *Fulton*, and *Ballard*, some continuing from the previous season. 5 at Land Between the Lakes, *Trigg*, 5 July (DRe, ALy) was the highest number reported.

Little Blue Heron – There were reports from 7 counties through the season. 15 at Land Between the Lakes, *Trigg*, 5 July (DRe, ALy) was the highest number reported.

Cattle Egret – Reports from *Trigg*, *Lyon*, *Jefferson*, *Marshall*, and *Calloway*. 251 at Land Between the Lakes, *Trigg*, 5 July

(†DRe, ALy) was the highest number reported.

Green Heron – 13 at Minor E Clark Fish Hatchery, *Rowan*, 25 July (MEr) was the highest number reported.

Black-crowned Night-Heron – 35 at Falls of the Ohio, *Jefferson*, 14 July (†JBa) was the highest number reported.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – Reported in only *Jefferson* and *Marshall*. A family unit of 8 in the middle of Louisville, *Jefferson*, 11 June (†PSP) was the highest number reported.

Osprey – 22 at KY Lake Dam, *Marshall*, 29 June (DRe, ALy) was the highest number reported.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – KBRC review required. There were two reports. A single bird was seen in eastern *Fayette*, 20 July (ph. †DSv) but did not linger. 2 were reported southwest of Benton, *Marshall*, 28 July (ph. GHo, m.ob.) and stayed through the first week of August.



Little Blue Heron – Jefferson Co.
14 June 2020, Eric Nally

Northern Harrier – 1 at Boone's Ridge, *Bell*, 3 July (†DLd) was the only sighting reported.

Mississippi Kite – 17 at Ballard WMA, *Ballard*, 5 June (†DWi, SLy) was the highest number reported.



Veery – Harlan Co.
12 June 2020, Kyle Bixler

Barn Owl – There were reports from *Franklin*, *Muhlenberg*, *Ballard*, *Logan* and *Clinton*.

Merlin – There was one report of 1 at Minor E Clark Fish Hatchery, *Rowan*, 25 July (†MEr).

Peregrine Falcon – All reports (*Marshall*, *Mercer*, *Trimble*, *Jefferson*, *Boone*, *Fayette*, and *Livingston*) were from areas near known nesting locations.

Least Flycatcher – There was one report away from known breeding areas in *Harlan*, of 1 in Schochoh, *Logan*, 18-19 July (ph. †STy). 9 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (KBi) was the highest number reported.

Common Raven – There were two reports. 3 at Cumberland Gap NHP, *Bell*, 18 June (THo) and one in Whitesburg, *Letcher*, 3 July (LCo).

Cliff Swallow – Breeding location confirmed for *Bourbon*, 23 July (ph. RGr per. comm. ROc).

Brown-headed Nuthatch – All reports were from a known nesting area in *Laurel*. 5 at London Ranger District Office, *Laurel*, 29 July (†SBr, MBr) was the highest number reported.

Eastern Bluebird – Reports on nest box monitoring in the areas of Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area and Lake Barkley State Resort Park showed a continuing upward trend over the previous five years with an increase in fledgling numbers of 10% and 20%, respectively, over the previous year (BPe per. comm. ROc).

Veery – There were two reports. 8 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (ph. KBi) and 2 at Cumberland Gap NHP, *Bell*, 18 June (THo).

Red Crossbill – One report of 3 at Fort Campbell Military Reservation, *Christian*, June 25 (DMo per. comm. BPa)

Bachman's Sparrow – Reports from known Fort Campbell Military Reservation locations (each for separate areas), *Trigg*; 2 on June 25; 1 on June 29; 1 on July 2; 1 on July 9 (DMo per. Comm. BPa)

Lark Sparrow – Reports from three counties. Probable nesting with up to 4 continuing at McDonald Landing Road, *Henderson*, 13 June (ph. JFa m.ob.); 2 east of Shiloh, *Calloway*, 16 June (†ALy); a single bird east of Murray, *Calloway*, (†ALy, DRe); A single bird southeast of Hickman, *Fulton*, 12 July (ph. †RSt, JBe).

Dark-eyed Junco – All reports from known breeding spots. 10 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (ph. KBi) were the most reported.

Vesper Sparrow – A single report of 1 bird at McDonald Landing Road, *Henderson*, 27 June (†NBr, ph. TNo).

Henslow's Sparrow – Recorded in six counties. Confirmed breeding at Talon Winery, *Fayette*, where a 5 acre parcel of conserved meadow was maintained and allowed for successful fledging of young (see Field Notes). Confirmed breeding location also reported in southeast *Calloway*, 27 June (ph. †ALy). Other locations with possible nesting were 4 singing at Perryville, *Boyle*, 17 June (†MHn) and 4 at Boddie Road Prairie, *Christian*, 5 July (DRe, ALy).

Savannah Sparrow – Recorded in known breeding locations in *Fayette* and a single record at CVG Grassland, *Boone*, 10 July (ph. †TYo).

Bobolink – Confirmed new breeding location north of Stanford, *Lincoln*, 8 June (ph. †JEl). All other reports were restricted to *Fayette*, *Jessamine*, *Scott* and *Mercer*. 20 at Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park, *Jessamine*, 11 June (†JWa, SPe) was the highest number reported.

Ovenbird – 17 at Wolf Knob DBNF, *Whitley*, 24 June (RDe) was the highest number reported.



Kentucky Warbler – Jefferson Co.
14 June 2020, James Wheat

Louisiana Waterthrush – 7 at Land Between The Lakes, *Trigg*, 13 July (HCh) was the highest number reported.

Golden-winged Warbler – 1 on a reclamation site as part of the Golden-winged Warbler Monitoring Project, *Harlan*, 23 June (MPn) was the only report of the season.

Blue-winged Warbler – 5 at Buck Creek Trail, *Menifee*, 12 June (au. BWu) was the highest number reported.

Black-and-white Warbler – 15 at Gray's Arch/Rough Trail in Red River Gorge, *Powell*, 1 June (KBu) was the highest number reported.

Prothonotary Warbler – 25 on the Green River, *Hart*, 24 June (†JSo) was the highest number reported.



Prothonotary Warbler – Franklin Co.
22 July 2020, Jeff Sole

Swainson's Warbler – 8 at Swift Camp Creek Trail in Red River Gorge, *Wolfe*, 2 July (†ASp) was the highest number reported.

Kentucky Warbler – 11 at Mammoth Cave NP, *Edmonson*, 23 June (AHu) was the highest number reported.

Common Yellowthroat – 40 at Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, *Mercer*, 3 July (†KBi, CCf) was the highest number reported.

Hooded Warbler – 51 at Wolf Knob DBNF, *Whitley*, 24 June (RDe) was the highest number reported.



Hooded Warbler – Powell Co.
6 June 2020, John Dreves

American Redstart – 12 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (KBi) was the highest number reported.



Canada Warbler – Harlan Co.
12 June 2020, Kyle Bixler

Cerulean Warbler – 9 at Wolf Knob DBNF, *Whitley*, 24 June (ph. RDe) was the highest number reported.

Northern Parula – 14 at Hematite Lake, Land Between the Lakes, *Trigg*, 13 June (BCa, DSk) was the highest number reported.

Magnolia Warbler – There was one report of the final bird of spring migration at Big Bone Lick SP, *Boone*, 2 June (†ELd, ELn).

Blackburnian Warbler – There was one report of a spring migrant at Big Bone Lick SP, *Boone*, 1 June (†ELn) and one report on probable breeding area at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (KBi).

Chestnut-sided Warbler – All reports were from known breeding areas. 11 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (KBi) was the highest number reported.

Black-throated Blue Warbler – All reports were from known breeding areas. 6 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (KBi) was the highest number reported.

Canada Warbler – 2 at Black Mountain, *Harlan*, 12 June (ph. †KBi) were the only birds reported.

Scarlet Tanager – 29 at Wolf Knob DBNF, *Whitley*, 24 June (RDe) was the highest number reported.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – Continuing birds in *Boone* produced a number of fledglings 26 June (ph. †KCi) with all other reports being from the higher elevations in *Harlan*.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak – Boone Co.
12 July 2020, Kathy Caminiti

Dickcissel – 23 at Lower Hickman Bottoms, *Fulton*, 8 July (CBI, BPa) was the highest number reported.

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

Most locations are based on their eBird Hotspot Name

CVG = Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky

International Airport

DBNF = Daniel Boone National Forest

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

KY Dam = Kentucky Dam, *Livingston/*
Marshall

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

Lower Hickman Bottoms, w. *Fulton*

NHP = National Historical Park

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

SP = State Park

SRP = State Resort Park

University of Kentucky, CAFE, Research
Farm, *Fayette*, formerly Spindletop Research
Farm.

WMA = Wildlife Management Area.

KEY TO OBSERVER CODES

AHu – Aaron Hulsey

ALy – Andrew Lydeard

ASp – Andrew Spencer

BCa – Beverly Carrico

BNo – Brandon Nooner

BPa – Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

BPe – Bob Peak

BWu – Brian Wulker

CBl – Clay Bliznick

CCf – Corey Critchfield

CCr – Charles Crawford

CHa – Christian Hawn

CHn – Conway Hawn

DHn – D A Hamilton

DLd – David Ledford

DMo – Daniel Moss

DRe – Daniel Redwine

DSk – Donna Stricklin

DSv – David J Svetich

DWi – David Willard

ELd – Edna Lindemann

ELn – Elizabeth Lindemann

GHo – Gloria Hollifield

HCh – Hap Chambers

HHn – Heather Hawn

JBa – Jamie Baker

JBe – Jamin Beachy

JDr – John Dreves

JEl – Jackie Elmore

JFa – Julia Farmer

JHa – Joseph Hall

JPo – Josh Powell

JSo – Jeffery Sole

JWa – Johnny Walker

JWh – James Wheat

KBi – Kyle Bixler

KBu – Katey Buster

KCi – Kathy Caminiti

LBo – Lyle Bontrager

LCo – Lisa Combs

MBr – Meg Brown

MEa – Melissa Easley

MEr – Mark Ernestes

MHn – Martina Hines

MMo – Mark Monroe

MPn – Michael Patton

NBr – Nancy Braun

PGb – Pamela Graber

PSp – Pam Spaulding

RDe – Roseanna Denton

RGr – Rex Graham

ROc – Ronan O'Carra

RSh – Rickey Shive

RSt – Ruben Stoll

SAr – Sharon Arnold

SBr – Steve Brown

SLy – Sean Lyon

SPe – Sydney Penner

STy – Stephen Tyson

TGr – Teresa Graham

THo – Tully Hochhausler

TNo – Teresa Noel

TSa – Tim Salzman

TVi – Tammie Vied Smith

TYo – Travis Young

VSt – Victor Stoll

WAh – Win Ahrens



KOS 2020 Virtual Fall Meeting

The fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society (KOS) was held over the weekend of September 18-20. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, the KOS board felt it would be too risky to have an in-person meeting, so they hosted the next best thing – a virtual meeting filled with activities for young and old.

The kick-off to the meeting weekend started on Wednesday, September 16, with the start of the “Migration Mania Tournament.” Thirty-two of our most beloved migrants were featured, with online voting for the favorite. Voting took place each day until Sunday when the favorite migrant was announced; Sandhill Crane triumphed over Common Nighthawk in the final match-up.



Visitors were able to access Day One activities on Friday, September 18. The meeting started out with a welcome message from KOS President, James Wheat. Each day participants were encouraged to “Go Birding” with necessary precautions and complete eBird reports. A list was compiled from everyone’s reports for a state meeting total of 173 species. Also featured daily were “Steve’s Bird Quizzes.” Steve Kistler enjoys preparing these for our regular member meetings in addition to one for each day of the virtual meetings.

Day One featured several video or slide show presentations. Pam Spaulding continued her streak of impressive and entertaining videos with the whimsical *Birders Just Want to Have Fun*. Kate Slankard, an avian biologist with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, gave a video report on the status of *Barn Owls in Kentucky* and described conservation efforts aimed at supporting a healthy population.

Freya McGregor, Outreach Coordinator for the radio show and podcast *Ray Brown’s Talkin’ Birds*, offered some tips for making all kinds of birders – including birders with disabilities, birders who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and birders who identify as LBGTQIA+ – feel welcome, respected, and safe in *Birding is for EveryBODY, Part 1*.

Janet Kistler offered a slide show for kids as we approach peak monarch migration in the state: *Identifying Monarch Butterflies*. Jeff Sole shared some of his exquisite photos of non-birds with *Dragonflies & Damselflies – More Winged Critters!!* Finally, James Wheat presented rules for *Bird Banding Codes* in a video, along with some practice quizzes.

Day Two featured our Keynote Speaker, Todd Fear, with his presentation, *Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture – Overview and Focal Landscapes*. Todd joined the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV) in 2010 as the Science Coordinator and became Coordinator in 2012. In his presentation, he discussed the work of the AMJV, which includes parts of 12 states including southeastern Kentucky. Working with government agencies and NGO partners, they are addressing the conservation needs of priority species such as Whip-poor-wills and Cerulean Warblers.

We were delighted to have a presentation by Doug Wechsler, *Discover One Bird, Save a Thousand*. Doug is a nationally recognized, award-winning nature photographer and author. He ran the world’s most comprehensive collection of bird photographs at the Academy of Natural Sciences for 28 years. He has authored dozens of children’s nature books, including *The Hidden Life of a Toad* and the *Really Wild Life* series. Doug’s program for KOS showed how the discovery of a new species of antpitta in Ecuador catalyzed the formation of a national system of wildlife refug-

es. Today, the Jocotoco Foundation protects over 50,000 acres of tropical habitat, home to over one thousand bird species.

Other presentations on Day Two included a slideshow of photos from David Lang, *Kentucky Fauna and a Comet*. There was a report from Gage Barnes, KOS Burt L. Monroe, Jr. Avian Research Fund grant recipient, called *Assessing the Influence of Telecommunication Towers on Osprey Nesting in Western Kentucky*. In this video, Gage provides results from his study to determine how osprey nesting success is affected by the presence of telecommunication towers.

Freya McGregor offered more ideas for being inclusive and welcoming in *Birding is for EVERYbody, Part 2*. She included examples of programs which are leading the way. James Wheat provided a challenge to rename birds which have been named after people. Some in the birding community believe that it would be better to have bird names which are more descriptive than the honorifics. James created the interactive *Bird Names for Birds* to allow participants to suggest better names.

Day Three offered a range of activities. Steve and Janet Kistler contributed a video, *Wildflower Rambles*, that featured some of the glorious September blooms at Mammoth Cave National Park. Jeff Sole provided a slide show of fascinating nonbird critters he has photographed with *Some Other Winged Creatures to Enjoy*. James Wheat showed how to use easily-learned notation to quickly count species in the field in *Dot and Dash Tally*.

Two KOS members made fascinating videos for the weekend. Steve Tyson created *One Small Place*, which chronicles the changes his family has made on their property to make it more attractive to wildlife. Keeping detailed records, they have shown a remarkable increase in species, with changes that were easy to implement. Barbara Brand provided vicarious thrills with a video of a recent trip in *Birds of New Zealand*. In addition to birds, she and her husband included fascinating cultural and artistic content.

David Lang reported about efforts of the Central Kentucky Audubon Society (CKAS) to protect nesting sites of Henslow's Sparrows at Talon Winery this summer. Working with the winery, they were able to prevent mowing on part of a field to protect the sites. They were thrilled to document evidence of successful nesting.

Freya McGregor presented a video about "Pliriding" (Picking Up Litter While Birding). It is an easy thing to incorporate into your regular outings to help make a difference. She gave a quick rundown of different ways you can go pliriding, and why this makes a difference to the birds we love. Learn more at <https://www.talkinbirds.com/pliriding>.

The virtual meeting featured some family content, including some presentations which were previously described, a birding bingo game (Birdo!) and a bird scavenger hunt. We wanted to provide activities to involve children, young adults, and beginning birders of any age. We hope some families took advantage of these offerings.

KOS has elections for board members and officers at our fall meetings. This year, we did things a little differently. Debby Tyson coordinated voting for the slate of candidates via email and mail. The newly elected board members can be found on the front page of the *Warbler*.



Many people worked to make the meeting a success. KOS President James Wheat and Vice-President Teresa Noel spear-headed the project and recruited contributors. Steve Brown is the wizard behind the technology. He designed the website, worked with presenters to develop their programs, wrote the copy, and came up with fantastic ideas for the weekend, ably assisted by Meg Brown, who also did a tremendous amount of work, including compiling photos. They both put in many, many hours to make the meeting a success. Steve and Janet Kistler helped with ideas, managed the Migration Mania tournament, offered opinions, and contributed content and graphics. We want to recognize and thank all the contributors, whose work is described above.



Development Team’s Masked Bird Avatars

Interactive elements of the meeting made it more meaningful and fun. There were 519 unique visitors to the meeting site, with an average of 2.2 visits each. Visitors submitted many positive comments and fantastic bird photos each day of the virtual meeting. A total of 173 species were reported by birders from all over the state for the weekend tally – pretty impressive for fall!

If you would like to check out some of the meeting’s content, go to <https://browndogdata.com/kosfall2020meeting/index.html> or find the link on the KOS home page: <https://birdky.org>

While we couldn’t meet in person, this was a very successful endeavor. If we can’t meet safely in the spring, we’ll do it again!

Submitted by Janet Kistler, KOS Recording Secretary

FALL, 2020, KOS MEETING STATEWIDE BIRD LIST (173 SPECIES)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ross's Goose | Black-bellied Plover | American White Pelican |
| Canada Goose | American Golden-Plover | Great Blue Heron |
| Wood Duck | Semipalmated Plover | Great Egret |
| Blue-winged Teal | Killdeer | Snowy Egret |
| Gadwall | Sanderling | Little Blue Heron |
| Mallard | Baird's Sandpiper | Green Heron |
| Northern Pintail | Least Sandpiper | Black-crowned Night-Heron |
| Green-winged Teal | Pectoral Sandpiper | Black Vulture |
| Redhead | Semipalmated Sandpiper | Turkey Vulture |
| Hooded Merganser | Wilson's Snipe | Osprey |
| Northern Bobwhite | Spotted Sandpiper | Northern Harrier |
| Wild Turkey | Solitary Sandpiper | Sharp-shinned Hawk |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Greater Yellowlegs | Cooper's Hawk |
| Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) | Lesser Yellowlegs | Bald Eagle |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove | Ring-billed Gull | Red-shouldered Hawk |
| Mourning Dove | Herring Gull | Broad-winged Hawk |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | Caspian Tern | Red-tailed Hawk |
| Chimney Swift | Black Tern | Eastern Screech-Owl |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird | Forster's Tern | Great Horned Owl |
| Sora | Double-crested Cormorant | Barred Owl |

Belted Kingfisher
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
 Red-headed Woodpecker
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 Downy Woodpecker
 Hairy Woodpecker
 Pileated Woodpecker
 Northern Flicker
 American Kestrel
 Merlin
 Peregrine Falcon
 Olive-sided Flycatcher
 Eastern Wood-Pewee
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
 Acadian Flycatcher
 Least Flycatcher
 Eastern Phoebe
 Great Crested Flycatcher
 Eastern Kingbird
 White-eyed Vireo
 Yellow-throated Vireo
 Blue-headed Vireo
 Philadelphia Vireo
 Warbling Vireo
 Red-eyed Vireo
 Loggerhead Shrike
 Blue Jay
 American Crow
 Fish Crow
 Carolina Chickadee
 Tufted Titmouse
 Horned Lark
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
 Tree Swallow
 Bank Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 White-breasted Nuthatch
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 House Wren
 Sedge Wren
 Marsh Wren

Carolina Wren
 European Starling
 Gray Catbird
 Brown Thrasher
 Northern Mockingbird
 Eastern Bluebird
 Veery
 Gray-cheeked Thrush
 Swainson's Thrush
 Wood Thrush
 American Robin
 Cedar Waxwing
 House Sparrow
 House Finch
 Purple Finch
 American Goldfinch
 Grasshopper Sparrow
 Chipping Sparrow
 Field Sparrow
 Vesper Sparrow
 Savannah Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 Eastern Towhee
 Yellow-breasted Chat
 Bobolink
 Eastern Meadowlark
 Baltimore Oriole
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Common Grackle
 Ovenbird
 Worm-eating Warbler
 Northern Waterthrush
 Golden-winged Warbler
 Blue-winged Warbler
 Black-and-white Warbler
 Prothonotary Warbler
 Tennessee Warbler
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Mourning Warbler
 Kentucky Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat

Hooded Warbler
 American Redstart
 Cape May Warbler
 Northern Parula
 Magnolia Warbler
 Bay-breasted Warbler
 Blackburnian Warbler
 Yellow Warbler
 Chestnut-sided Warbler
 Blackpoll Warbler
 Black-throated Blue Warbler
 Palm Warbler
 Pine Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 Yellow-throated Warbler
 Prairie Warbler
 Black-throated Green Warbler
 Canada Warbler
 Wilson's Warbler
 Summer Tanager
 Scarlet Tanager
 Northern Cardinal
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 Blue Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting
 Dickcissel



Yellow Warbler – Jefferson Co.
 11 June 2020, Ron Hirsch



FIELD NOTES

**Protecting Established Henslow's Sparrow
Breeding Colonies Through Selective Haying**

Last June, Katey Buster, a member of the Central Kentucky Audubon Society (CKAS), noticed a breeding colony of at least eight Henslow's Sparrows in a hayfield about to be mowed at Talon Winery and Vineyards in Fayette County. Henslow's Sparrows are a high priority for grassland



Henslow's Sparrow
Fayette Co. – 2 July 2020, Rob Chadwick

bird conservation, listed as both a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and a Conservation Concern Score of 14 on the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's *State of the Birds* report. Talon Winery and Vineyards covers a total of 295 acres including the vineyards, three small ponds, an ephemeral creek, and a few barns, silos, and commercial facilities, but consists primarily of large rolling managed hayfields. In an effort to protect the birds, CKAS asked Talon to stake off roughly five acres of field habitat and reserve it from mowing until the end of July. Although this acreage is much less than researchers recommend for Henslow's Sparrow conservation efforts, several pairs successfully fledged young.

Much has been written regarding the habitat selection and space requirements of Henslow's Sparrows and other grassland bird species. As grassland habitat becomes more and more fragmented and/or lost to development and row-cropping, understanding specific species' minimum requirements for breeding success can help focus conservation efforts. Previous Henslow's Sparrows studies found that the birds prefer areas characterized by herbaceous cover like grasses or sedges with ample uncompressed plant litter, nearby sources of moisture, and the presence of singing perches in the spring (Robins 1971)—habitat akin to that the birds had adopted at Talon. Reports of minimum acreage needed for breeding success vary: Herkert (1994) found no Henslow's Sparrows breeding pairs adopted fragmented habitat patches of less than 100 hectares, Hanson (1994) noted pairs adopting patches of only 23.1 ha, and Samson (1980) indicated that the species would adopt patches of 9 ha and larger. Further, research on delaying mowing indicated that Henslow's Sparrows need at least seventy-five contiguous acres to successfully raise broods (Mazur 1996) - significantly more than the approximately two hectares reserved at Talon.

In Herkert's exhaustive summary of Henslow's Sparrow research (1998), there are no examples of the species successfully raising broods in less than eight hectares, casting doubt that protecting such a small acreage would be enough for the birds to successfully rear offspring. In order to give the birds at Talon the best chance of success, CKAS members walked the fields and staked off boundaries at least fifty yards from any perched singing



Henslow's Sparrow – Fledgling
Fayette Co. – 29 July 2020, David Lang

FIELD NOTES

sparrow to create a small protective buffer for the birds. The marked area comprised roughly five acres of grassed hillside moderately sloping down to the edge of an ephemeral mucky puddled low spot; this damp area was not included in the final reserved boundary. All neighboring areas, including the neighboring moisture patch, were subsequently hayed.

CKAS members and other birders monitored the fields for the next several weeks, sometimes watching from the edges and sometimes watching from blinds. Haying up to the edge of the marked tract did not have a discernible effect on the total numbers nor the breeding behaviors of the Henslow's Sparrows present; Henslow's continued to perch and sing in the unmowed area. By July, several eBird counts indicated that the birds successfully produced offspring despite the small amount of non-mowed acreage allotted to them: birders observed and photographed adults carrying fecal sacs and adults feeding fledged juveniles. After the fields and previously reserved habitat were hayed in early August, the birds dispersed.



Henslow's Sparrow – Carrying Fecal Sac
Fayette Co. – 10 July 2020, Ward Ransdell

These results are notable because they indicate that efforts to preserve even small tracts of managed hayfield habitat, through delayed mowing of carefully selected areas, can help to sustain the population of Henslow's Sparrows and may provide a potential avenue for conservation efforts of near-threatened species.

Submitted by Tony Brusate, President of Central Kentucky Audubon Society.

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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 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 website (<https://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.

At the time of publication the Virginia & Wendell Kingsolver Scholarship is well funded and donations are currently closed. Donations to the general funds, and to those funds below, are still welcome.

Anne L. Stamm Avian Education Fund Grants Available

The Anne L. Stamm Avian Education Fund supports the 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 website (<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).

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 website (<https://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).

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 website (<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).

NEWS AND VIEWS

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

By Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

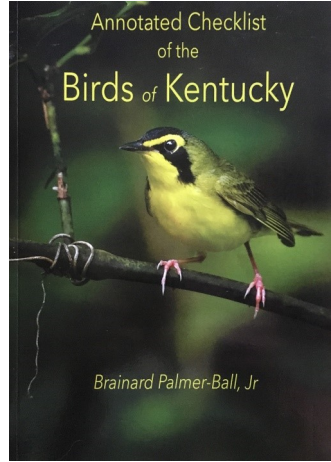
(Kentucky Ornithological Society).

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.



Yellow-breasted Chat – Owen Co.
16 June 2020, Dan Patrick



Swallow-tailed Kites – Marshall Co.
29 July 2020, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.



Least Tern
Henderson Co., 17 June 2020
Charlie Crawford

Blue Grosbeak
Metcalfe Co., 25 July 2020
Teresa Noel



Grasshopper Sparrow
Mercer Co., 17 June 2020
Katey Buster

Northern Bobwhite
Mercer Co., 18 June 2020
Chuck Velios



Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Boone Co., 12 July 2020
Kathy Caminiti