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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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OUR COVER

Our thanks to Phillipe Roca for this portrait of enthusiastic birders at Jonathan Creek during the fall meeting held at Kenlake State Resort Park.
METHODS FOR INSPECTION OF CAVITIES IN TREES AND SNAGS

WILLIAM C. MCCOMB AND PATRICIA L. GROETSCHE

ABSTRACT
This paper is a summary of practical snag and cavity inspection systems, including access to the cavity, internal cavity inspection, and remote monitoring of use. Advantages and disadvantages of each are discussed. A cavity access method to be used when inspecting cavities in soft snags is described. Biases associated with frequency of inspection are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
Recent interest in snags and cavity-trees as important habitat features to cavity-dependent fauna has resulted in a plethora of studies designed to evaluate the importance of snags and cavity-trees to certain species. Despite this recent interest, there is still a lack of information on characteristics of desirable cavity-trees and snags for many species due to the fact that the desirability of a snag or cavity-tree to some species varies geographically (Conner 1978). Additional information on cavity selection, particularly by large cavity-nesters, is necessary throughout their ranges if we are to ensure viable populations and still manage our forests for timber production. Data collection of this type normally entails inspection of cavities for current or prior use, or monitoring of cavities for use over a given period of time (McComb 1979). Methods for access to and inspection of cavities have been presented in the literature (Gysel and Lyons 1980, Moriarty and McComb 1982, Cairns 1983, Speake and Altiere 1983, and others). During the last 6 years, the senior author has been involved with snag and cavity research in bottomland hardwood, upland pine-hardwood, and oak-hickory forests in the southeast and has tried a variety of cavity inspection methods. In an effort to facilitate future studies of snag and cavity use and to promote consistency in data collection among studies, we present methods for cavity inspection in this paper with evaluations on ease of data collection and potential biases. Additionally, a new method of monitoring cavity use is presented.

METHODS

Access to the Cavity
Cavity inspection normally requires climbing a tree or snag. The method of attaining access to a cavity is dependent on the terrain, height of the cavity, frequency of cavity visitation, and soundness of the cavity-bearing tree or snag. Methods available to attain access include interlocking climbing ladders, climbing spurs, 30-cm spikes driven into the tree, and climbing ropes. Regardless of the method, a safety belt should be attached to the cavity-tree or a nearby tree while climbing. Climbing ladders provide a stable support, are quickly assembled at the tree or snag, and they incur little damage to living trees. Constraints on use include height of the cavity, frequency of inspection, and terrain. One person cannot carry more than four 3-m sections at one time for any appreciable distance. Normally, no more than two 3-m sections can be carried by one person during a day.
Climbing spurs are lighter to carry than are ladders, allow access to most living portions of trees, and are relatively safe when used with a safety belt. Spurs are not as effective on tree species with thick or loose bark, such as chestnut oak (Quercus prinus) or shagbark hickory (Carya ovata), as on thin-barked trees. Also, repeated use of spurs will leave scars on the tree, thus providing avenues of infection and degradation of wood quality. Such damage may bias cavity use by enhancing fungal infections in the tree or by attracting insects. Inspection of cavities no more than four times per year (seasonally) is recommended with climbing spurs.

Spikes 30-cm long driven into the tree provide a permanent ladder to cavities in remote locations that must be visited frequently (one or more times per month). Once the initial time investment has been spent in placing these spikes into the tree, many cavities can be accessed very quickly within a given area. Obvious disadvantages of this method are: 1) the tree cannot be sold for timber, which is rarely a problem with cavity-trees and 2) the presence of the spikes may enhance or decrease the value of the cavity-tree to some species and hence bias results of cavity use.

Ropes may be used to climb open-grown trees with large branches within several meters of the ground (Gysel 1961). Within a mature stand, self-pruning usually results in few branches suitable for using ropes for the first 10-m of the hole. Also, if ropes are left in trees to attain access on successive days or weeks, rodents may gnaw on the rope and weaken it.

Some cavities located in snags may not be safely reached by ladders, spurs, spikes, or ropes, so we have devised a cable system to reach some of these cavities. Two trees are selected such that the snag lies on a line between the trees. Each tree is climbed to a height of approximately 1 m higher along a level surface than the height of the cavity in the snag. A 1-cm (%") cable is stretched between the trees and is attached to each tree with two cable clamps. In order for the investigator to be able to approach the cavity via the cable, a harness system was devised. This system is composed of a sit-harness with a standard oval carabiner attached at the waist, which is connected to 1-inch webbing. This webbing leads to a second carabiner. Once in the harness, the investigator is able to attach himself to the cable with the second carabiner and proceed hand-over-hand to the cavity. The cable may have to be adjusted in height depending upon the distance spanned and the weight of the investigator. Cavities in the snag below the cable can be accessed by attaching a rope to the cable so that the rope falls parallel to the snag. The sit-harness is attached by way of 1-inch webbing to a standard oval carabiner connected to an ascender. The ascender is attached to the rope at chest-level. Two stirrups made of 1-inch webbing are used to attach the observer's feet to the rope with another ascender and carabiner at approximately waist-level. This method of ascending a rope is referred to as the "two-footed Texas ascending system." The observer can access the rope either at ground-level or from the cable. We recommend that a chest-harness be used in conjunction with this system. Once the observer is attached to the rope by the ascenders, he can either ascend or descend by moving the ascenders up or down one by one (Larson and Larson 1982:215-218). Potential bias is introduced by this method in providing additional access to the cavity for predators if the cable is left in place. Cavities in soft snags above crown level or where two trees do not align with the snag can only be examined by destructive sampling.
Cavity Inspection

Traditionally, cavities have been inspected by lights and dental mirrors on periscope devices (DeWeese et al. 1975, Seidensticker and Kilham 1969). These methods work well for most animal-made cavities where the occupants are directly below the lip of the cavity. For heart-rot formed cavities with irregular interiors, we have found a fiber optics system superior to previous methods (Moriarty and McComb 1982). Jackson (1976) found that glass windows placed in the side of the cavity allowed continual observation of the inhabitants for behavioral studies.

Remote monitoring of cavities allows an investigator to know the number of exits and entrances made at a cavity and, with sufficient equipment, what time the entrances and exits occurred and by what species. Previous investigators have used swinging gate entrances (Simons 1981), mercury switches (McComb 1979), and micro-switches (Carlson and Sloan 1976) to activate an event recorder. All of these methods force the animal to contact an unnatural surface upon entering and exiting a cavity so cavity use may be biased. We are using an infra-red light-emitting diode (LED for activating event recorders at cavities and nest boxes. The LED's are 3 cm x 3 cm x 0.5 cm in size, span a distance of 7-10 cm, and are available at a cost of about $4.00 each. Since the light emitted is infra-red, there is no apparent barrier or contact that the animal must make to activate an event recorder. LED switches can be used with any appropriate voltage counter (McComb 1979), event recorder (Carlson and Sloan 1976, Simons 1981), or photographic equipment (Temple 1972, Goetz 1981). The switches may be attached directly to the cavity entrance or to a yoke prior to placement at the cavity to facilitate alignment of the beam across the entrance.

Frequency of Cavity Inspection

The frequency with which cavities should be inspected will be the result of a compromise between collecting the maximum amount of data and avoiding biasing use of the cavities. If an organism uses any one cavity once during a year, the chance of finding that organism in that cavity if checked once each year is 1/365 (100) or 0.3%. If inspections are seasonal (four times per year), that chance is increased to 1.1%, and monthly inspections increase chances to 3.3%. Inspections more frequent than once a week will likely bias use of cavities by some species, but even an inspection rate this frequent will result in only one chance in seven (14.3%) of finding an organism in a cavity or nest box. Of course the chance of discovering use of a cavity by species that use one cavity for many months or that will leave scats, nests, hair, or feathers is greatly increased, but the chance of finding cavity use by species that do not leave signs of use or may change cavities frequently, such as reptiles, amphibians, or some invertebrates, is reduced. Indeed, it should not be surprising to find low reptile and amphibian use of cavities if inspections are less frequent than weekly (McComb and Noble 1981). Furthermore, data collected infrequently will not likely be normally distributed and may have to be transformed to normality before analysis or analyzed nonparametrically.

Continuous monitoring of cavity use is more costly, but it provides substantially more information on total use of a cavity. We recommend monitoring a subsample of cavities with continuous monitoring devices while inspecting a large sample of cavities at least monthly for birds and mammals, or weekly for reptiles and amphibians.
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LITERATURE CITED


— Department of Forestry, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0073.
THE NESTING SEASON, SUMMER 1986
ANNE L. STAMM

The summer of 1986 was hot, especially in July. At Louisville June temperatures ranged in the nineties during the last few days of the month and precipitation was deficient by more than one inch, while July had 17 days 90 to 96 degrees with above-normal precipitation. The hot, dry weather (with rainfall below normal for the year) apparently produced a fairly successful nesting season. In late June, however, high water in western Kentucky and at the Falls of the Ohio on various dates, due to heavy rains above Kentucky, affected ground nesting species.

Breeding Bird Surveys, in some locations, showed a decrease in numbers of many species. Purple Martins showed some decline in many areas. Bewick's Wrens disappeared from Murray, while on the more positive side Tree Swallows were found nesting in new locations. House Finches continued to expand their breeding range with nesting now confirmed in Pulaski, Boone and Calloway Counties. Other positive news included the fledging of four Barn Owls and the confirmation of Great Egrets nesting in southern Ballard County.

Grebes through Herons — A Pied-billed Grebe was present at Burlington, Boone County on June 30 and July 1, but no evidence of breeding (LMc). An adult Double-crested Cormorant was reported at Lake #9 on July 31 (CP). A colony of Great Blue Herons was checked in Union County and held 432+ nests on June 3 (BPB, J. MacGregor of the Nongame Department); common in Ballard County (CP) and many of these birds may have come from the colony at Axe Lake Swamp which was checked on June 23 and found to contain 100 nests (BPB, S. and M. Evans, C. Justis). This colony originally described by Burt L. Monroe, Sr. in 1937 contained 300 nests (Ky. Warbler, 13:13, 1937). Little is known of this colony from 1937 to 1983 when B. P Pullin of the TVA made an aerial survey of the waterbirds in Kentucky and Tennessee and found 106 nests in March 1983. Later during July 1983 Sherri and Marc Evans made a ground survey and found 110 nests of which 87 were active. The colony is on private land and entrance is restricted and requires a boat (S. Evans, 1984 unpublished report KDFWR). Great Blue Herons were also common in Marshall County (CP); small numbers in Fulton County, June 5 (S, DS, FS), Hopkins County (JH) and Falls of the Ohio (LR). Two fledged young Great Egrets and two nests containing large, dead young were found at the Axe Lake Swamp Great Blue Heronry, June 25 (BPB, S. and M. Evans, C. Justis). This is the first known nesting of the Great Egret in the state since 1951. Ten Great Egrets were seen at Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter Reelfoot NWR) and five at Lake #9 on June 5 (S, FS, DS) and 46 at the latter location on July 31 (CP). A Snowy Egret was observed at the Falls of the Ohio on June 19 (LR) and one at Swan Lake, Ballard County, June 29 (BPB). Fair numbers of Little Blue Herons were observed; one adult at Swan Lake on June 4 and a group of 12 adults feeding in southern Fulton County, June 5 (S, FS, DS); four adults in Ballard County, June 8 (CP, MM); and fifteen adults at Swan Lake, June 29 (BPB et al.). There were three Cattle Egret nests and 10 adult birds present on Shippingport Island on July 15 (BPB); one at Swan Lake, June 29 (BPB et al.). Green-backed Herons appeared to be in low numbers: singles in Henry and Shelby
Counties (S); four at the Falls of the Ohio, June 21 (LR); three nests containing young in the western Clark County Black-crowned Night Heron colony, June 25 and a small group nesting on an island in Lake Barkley, June 25 (BPB, J. MacGregor). The Black-crowned Night Heronry on Shippingport Island was not accurately surveyed this year, but a comparable number of the approximately 250 nests appeared to be active (BPB). The colony at Lake Barkley was checked on June 4 and it was estimated to contain 100 nests with some birds still incubating eggs (BPB, J. MacGregor). A new colony of Black-crowned Night Herons was discovered in western Clark County by Tom Edwards of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife. The colony was later checked on June 25 and 28 nests were counted, but only one young bird was still present (BPB, J. MacGregor, G. Jacoby). Nests of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron were found in three locations: Lexington (BA), Shippingport (BPB, BBC) and a new nesting area on the Jenny Hole Unit of Slough WMA in northeastern Union County (Mike Morton of the KDFWR, BPB, J. MacGregor); several birds sighted at Blizzard Ponds, McCracken County, June 9-10 (BPB, M. Evans).

Waterfowl — A Canada Goose was found nesting on an artificial nest platform at the Lexington Reservoir (BA) and a single bird was present on the Falls of the Ohio during most of the period (m. ob.). Wood Ducks apparently had a good year. Five females with broods totaling 40 birds were seen in Boone County, a female with 10 young in Owen County (LMc); other broods included five young in Washington County (JC, BC), 10 in Fayette County (BA) and young fledged (no number given) at Big Pond Sanctuary, Grayson County (KC). Fourteen rather large young Mallards were with an adult along the stream in Seneca Park, Louisville on July 6 (S, FS). Blue-winged Teal are uncommon in summer, but a pair was observed below McAlpine Dam, July 2 (LR). Young Hooded Mergansers were seen on the Sauerheber Unit of Sloughs WMA, June 21 (BPB).

Raptors — Since the hacking program Ospreys have been more widely reported: one at the Falls of the Ohio observed on numerous occasions from June 20 (LR) to July 30 (S, FS); one unsuccessful nesting on a tall tower line at Lake Barkley (BR, BPB); one at Kentucky Lake with one young (BPB, BR) and one with two young in Livingston County (BPB). One of the latter pair was a banded bird by Kentucky FWS and successfully hacked several years ago. A number of Mississippi Kites were reported: two along the levee in Fulton County, June 5 (DS, S, FS); one at Ballard Wildlife Management Area (hereafter BWMA) on July 8 (MM, CP); five at Middle Bar, in the Mississippi River, Hickman County, July 9 (BPB, J. MacGregor); and two along the levee southwest of Hickman, Fulton County, July 31 (CP). The observation of several Bald Eagles during the period was of interest: two flying south over the levee in Fulton County, June 5 (S, FS, DS); two immatures in east Shelby County, July 27 (fide WB); and sighted occasionally in the Land Between the Lakes area (ER). Single Cooper's Hawks were reported at the following locations during June: Fulton County (DS, S, FS), Grayson County (KC), two locations in Taylor County and in Franklin County (BPB). A nest of the Red-shouldered Hawk was seen in Grayson County (KC) and singles were reported at two locations in Hopkins County. Single Broad-winged Hawks were observed near Worthville in Owen County and near Jonesville, Grant County and may have nested there (LMc); also observed on several occasions at Bedford, Trimble County (JY). Nests of the Red-tailed Hawk were found at Taylorsport, Richwood and Verona, all in Boone County (LMc); and in
Boyle County (FL). American Kestrels were reported as more widespread than usual (JC) and numerous in western Kentucky (CP). An immature Peregrine Falcon was present at the Falls a number of times: July 14 (BPB), July 17, 31 (LR) and sitting on the Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge on July 30 (S, FS).

Wild Turkey through Moorhen — There was a high yield of young Wild Turkeys this year in the Land Between the Lakes Area (ER). Four Common Moorhens were still present at the Sauberheber Unit of Sloughs WMA on June 21 (BPB).

Shorebirds — Shorebird migration began in early July with the arrival of both the Least and Semipalmed Sandpipers and the Short-billed Dowitcher. A number of species were late in arriving and numbers were low, with the exception of the peeps. The only Semipalmed Plovers were the nine at Lake #9, Fulton County, July 31 (CP). Killdeer were common to abundant in western Kentucky (CP), nests with young were found at Burlington and East Bend, Boone County (LMc); some 30 birds were on the Falls of the Ohio on July 30, but the high water on several occasions may have interfered with successful nesting (FS). An Avocet was present at the Falls of the Ohio on July 20 and tied Louisville's 1977 record (BPB, R. Klapheke). A single Willet was seen at Smithland Dam, Livingston County on June 22 (BPB) and another at Lake #9 on July 31 (CP). Although Spotted Sandpipers were observed in small numbers at the Falls of the Ohio, the high water on several dates probably prevented successful nesting; also, a pair noted July 9 on a Mississippi sandbar, Hickman County (BPB). A single Sanderling at the Falls of the Ohio on July 27 was the only one reported (LR). Two Least and two Semipalmed Sandpipers returned to BWMA July 8 (MM, CP). The only concentration of shorebirds included 300 Least Sandpipers and a flock of 700 sandpiper species at Lake #9 on July 31 (CP). A Short-billed Dowitcher was observed and heard at BWMA on July 8 (MM, CP). An American Woodcock was flushed at Blizzard Ponds, June 10 (BPB).

Gulls through Terns — Two Laughing Gulls were still present at Kentucky Dam, June 4 (BPB), and 12 to 25 Ring-billed Gulls were there on three dates between June 4-22 (BPB); one Ring-billed flying over the Falls of the Ohio, July 31 (S). Two to five Herring Gulls were seen at Kentucky Dam in June and last observed there on June 22 and one to five at the Falls of the Ohio June 15-19 (BPB). A few terns were reported: a Caspian at Kentucky Dam, June 22 (BPB); two Least Terns at Swan Pond on June 4 (S, DS, FS); one at the Falls of the Ohio, June 15 (BPB). Several nests of the Least Tern were reported upstream from Paducah in June by the Corps of Engineers, but were unsuccessful due to high water in late June. In the survey made along the Mississippi by John W. Smith of the Missouri Department of Conservation there were approximately 120 nests on a sandbar downstream from Middle Bar, Hickman County, several smaller colonies in Fulton County and about 30 nests in Carlisle County, but some of these were destroyed by high water, although the colony in Hickman County was successful (fide BPB). The large colony was visited on July 9 by John MacGregor, Jeremy Dreier and Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. and they saw many nests and young. A single Black Tern was noted at Smithland Dam on June 11 (BPB, Sherri and Marc Evans).

Cuckoos through Woodpeckers — A Black-billed Cuckoo in northeast Pulaski County on June 8 was the only one reported (JEl). Few Yellow-
billed Cuckoos were observed in Jefferson, Henry and Shelby Counties (S), but a nest with one egg and one young was found at Union, Boone County, July 19 (LMc). The Chuck-will's-widow was last heard calling in Hopkins County on July 18 (JH). Common Night Hawks were scarce in the Louisville area (S). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were common in the Madisonville area where as many as 10 were counted at Bonnie West's feeder (JH); also common in Grayson County (KC) and fair numbers in Jefferson and Shelby Counties (S). Red-headed Woodpeckers were common in early June at Columbus-Belmont State Park, Hickman County and in southern Fulton County (S, DS, FS); other June sightings in Boone, Carroll and Owen Counties (LMc). Four Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were seen at dusk at a nest cavity in Laurel County, July 4 (DN, J. R. Noonan) and at least two there on July 7 (DN et al.).

Flycatchers through Swallows — Willow Flycatchers were observed and heard calling in six counties: Ballard (S), Livingston, Trigg (BPB), Hopkins (JH, B. West), Boone (LMc) and Washington (JC, BC). Four Least Flycatchers were noted on Black Mountain, Harlin County, June 22 (DN, M. Pike). Broods of Eastern Phoebes were observed at Glasgow (RS) and at Shakertown (BA). The Purple Martin colony in Ballard County which had at least 75 pairs nesting in 1984 had a much reduced number this season with approximately 35 pairs (S, DS, FS). There was a successful nesting of the Tree Swallow at Somerset, Pulaski County and established the first breeding record for that County (JEl). Other Tree Swallow nests reported included one each in Grant (LMc), Henderson (BPB), and Shelby (fide BPB) Counties; family groups in Ballard and Livingston Counties (BPB). Tree Swallows were beginning to gather in flocks on July 31 when 20 or more were observed along the Portland Canal (S, FS). No Northern Rough-winged Swallows were found at the roadside colony in Henry County where in recent years they had nested (S, FS). The Bank Swallow colony at Petersburg, Boone County, showed a mild decline while the Belleview colony showed a substantial increase with approximately 80 nesting burrows and adults feeding young throughout June (LMc). Other Bank Swallow colonies along the Ohio River included one on June 29 below Smithland Dam with 150 birds and one downstream from Chalk Bluff with 37 burrows (BPB, J. Dreier, J. MacGregor); two in Carroll County with 150 active burrows in one and 70 in the other, totaling some 400 birds (S, DS, FS). A visit to the Carroll County colonies on July 27 showed the top soil removed from one side of the larger colony where the majority of the burrows were located. Adult birds were feeding young in late May and hopefully the majority of the young fledged before the destruction of the nesting sites; only two Bank Swallows were present on the latter date (S, FS). On a BBS in Henry and Shelby Counties only five Barn Swallows were recorded as compared to 18 last year (S). At least 138 active nests of Cliff Swallows were seen on Barkley Dam with 400+ birds flying to and from the nests and over the water on June 3 (S, DS, FS); two nesting sites, near Hardin, Calloway County (CP). The Cliff Swallow colony under the bridge, near Hamilton, Boone County, showed a decline with only 14 active nests compared to 29 last year (LMc).

Corvidae through Shrikes — The Fish Crow at Jonathan Creek, Marshall County, July 4, was of interest (CP); also observed at BWMA on July 8 (MM, CP); two downstream from Middle Bar along the Mississippi River, Hickman County, July 9 and one along the Ohio in Ballard County (BPB). An adult Common Raven and a very young fledgling were observed
on Black Mountain, June 22 (DN, M. Pike). A group of three or four Brown Creeper was seen at Axe Lake Swamp on June 29 and nesting was suspected (BPB, C. Justis, S. and M. Evans). There were few reports on the Carolina Wren, but successful nesting was observed in Louisville and at Big Pond Sanctuary (S, KC). The Bewick's Wren was absent from Murray where one to two were present in recent years (CP); one was seen at Somerset on July 18 and may have nested since one was heard there on May 19 (JEI). A nest of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found near Union, Boone County on June 7 with an adult incubating (LMc). Eastern Bluebirds had a very successful year at Land Between the Lakes (ER). Eight Veeries were seen on Black Mountain, Harlin County on June 22 (DN, M. Pike). Of particular interest was the discovery of an egg of the Brown-headed Cowbird in the nest of a Brown Thrasher, an uncommon victim of the species (LMc). Breeding records of the Loggerhead Shrike included two broods in Calloway County (MM); three young with adults in Washington County (JC, BC) and a nest with three young in Grant County (K. Caminiti /ide LMc); also several adult birds observed along the roadside in Hickman County, June 4 and Fulton County, June 5 (S, DS, FS).

**Vireo through Warblers** — A pair of Solitary Vireos was observed in upper Bad Branch on Pine Mountain, Letcher County, June 7 (BPB). A Blue-winged Warbler was heard singing at Blizzard Pond on June 9 (BPB) and summering Northern Parulas were present at East Bend and Middle Creek (LMc). An adult Pine Warbler was seen feeding young at Cumberland Falls State Park on May 18 (DN, P. Noble) and one singing at Ilsley, Hopkins County on June 6 suggested breeding (JH). Singing Cerulean Warblers were present at Elk Creek on June 5 (F. Clayton /ide JH) and northeast of Madisonville on June 27 (JH). A broken-wing act was put on by a Worm-eating Warbler, near Union, June 7 (LMc). Single Swainson’s Warblers were reported in McCreary County in early June (B. Peterjohn /ide BPB) and at Bad Branch, June 7 (BPB). An adult Common Yellowthroat was observed feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird in Carroll County (LMc). Common Yellowthroats were more numerous on the BBS in southern Hopkins and northern Christian Counties than last year (AS), but still below that of 1984. Three male Canada Warblers were noted on Black Mountain on June 22 where the species breeds on the higher elevations (DN, M. Pike). Although the Yellow-breasted Chat disappeared from some areas in Hopkins County (JH) the BBS showed numbers up over last year (AS).

**Tanagers through Finches** — The Scarlet Tanager was recorded at two locations in Hopkins County during July where it is a rare summer resident (JH). Fewer Blue Grosbeaks were reported this year, but they were sighted at four locations in Hopkins County (JH), one in Pulaski County (JEI) and two in Fulton County (S, DS). An adult Dickcissel was seen carrying food to young in southern Fulton County on June 4, where they were numerous along state road 94 and along the levee (S, FS, DS); three birds in Spencer County, June 7 (JC, BC); and two on territory at Masterson Station Park, Fayette County in mid-June (BPB, BBC). Two male Bachman’s Sparrows were seen near Hardin, Calloway County (no date given) by Clell Peterson. Another rather unusual bird was the Lark Sparrow, about six miles south of Falmouth, Pendleton County, June 18 (BPB, S. Evans, L. Andrews, C. Justis); also one along Crooked Creek, Lewis County, July 1 (S. Evans /ide BPB). Two to three Savannah Sparrows were seen at Bedford, Trimble County on July 10 (JY) and singing
birds noted in southwest Oldham County during the summer (BPB). There seemed to be an increase in the number of nesting Grasshopper Sparrows this year. The Eastview BBS in Hardin and Breckenridge Counties showed 20 as compared to one in 1985 (BM); other June records were in Grant, Owen (LMc), Pulaski (JEl), and Fayette Counties (JW). The Song Sparrow was recorded at three locations in Hopkins County (JH) and there were three singing males, widely spaced, in Ballard County (CP); and numbers were up on the Pleasureville BBS (S). Bobolinks were present in fair numbers at Masterson Station Park and females were carrying food in early June (BBC). The field was cut during the breeding season and may have caused loss of young (JW). Strangely enough, the Common Grackle showed a decrease on the Pleasureville BBS with only 112 birds this year compared to 195 last June (S). A nest of the Orchard Oriole was found at Wheatley, Owen County, May 24 (LMc). Northern Orioles were fairly common at Columbus-Belmont State Park, Swan Lake and along the Mississippi River in Fulton County (S, DS, FS). Successful nesting of the House Finch was recorded in Boone County (LMc), Pulaski (JEl) and Calloway Counties (CP). Also, two broods were raised again in a hanging fern plant in the Louisville area (WJ). Some movement of the House Finch was noted on July 31 when a flock of 30 was seen in a yard on Spokane Way, Louisville (S).

Contributors — Brad Andres (BA), W. H. Brown (WB), Barbara Croft (BC), Joseph E. Croft (JC), Jackie Elmore (JEl), J. W. Hancock (JH), Wilbur Jackson (WJ), Frederick W. Loetscher (FL), Lee McNeely (LMc), Michael Miller (MM), Burt L. Monroe, Jr., (BM), Doxie Noonan (DN), B. Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), Clell Peterson (CP), Lene Rauth (LR), Edwin Ray (ER), Anne L. Stamm (S), F. W. Stamm (FS), Russell Starr (RS), Thomas Stevenson (TS), A. R. Stickley (AS), Donald Summerfield (DS), Jim Williams (JW), John Young (JY). Other abbreviations — Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge (Reelfoot NWR), Ballard Waterfowl Management Area (BWMA), Beckham Bird Club (BBC), Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

— 9101 Spokane Way, Louisville 40222.
THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Fall Meeting — October 3-5, 1986

The Kentucky Ornithological Society held its 63rd annual Fall Meeting at Kenlake State Park on October 3-5, 1986.

Members and guests were welcomed to the Friday evening session by President Fred Busroe. Jim Williams detailed the following day's field trips, then introduced the speakers for the evening. Anne Stamm described the donated art prints on display, which were available for sale to KOS members. Blaine Ferrell presented slides of his recent trip to Alaska. Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. provided information on the current status of the Kentucky Breeding Bird Atlas, and Phillipe Roca concluded the program with a slide presentation of some of his photography and a discussion of the possible production of a calendar with bird photographs. A social hour followed the evening session.

Overcast skies and mild temperatures greeted those participating on Saturday morning field trips. A 6:00 a.m. walk around the lodge area was followed by 8:00 a.m. trips, one to Jonathan Creek and Lake Barkley led by Clell Peterson, and the other to Hematite Lake led by Blaine Ferrell.

At 2:00 p.m. Sue Draper discussed with members the activities and current work of the Land Between the Lakes Association.

The Board of Directors met at the Lodge at 4:00 p.m.

The evening program began with dinner at 6:30 p.m., then was followed by a fine presentation by Fred Busroe on his recent summer birding trip to Michigan.

A brief business meeting followed the program. The Treasurer's report was given and current KOS membership totals were announced. Dates and localities for upcoming meetings were announced as follows: 1987 Spring Meeting at Cumberland Falls State Park on April 24-26, and 1987 Fall Meeting at Natural Bridge State Park on September 25-27. Anne Ståmm presented the following slate of officers from the Nominating Committee: President — Fred Busroe, Vice President — Jim Williams, Corresponding Secretary — Harriet Korfhage, Recording Secretary — Lee McNeely, and Councillors — Wendell Kingsolver, Mary Lydia Greenwell, Dennis Sandlin, and Thomas Stevenson. All were elected for the coming year as presented.

Jim Williams led members in compiling the day's bird list, with a total of 103 species seen through Saturday. A Sunday morning field trip was announced for 8:30 a.m. to Jonathan Creek.

Additional birds seen on Sunday brought the weekend total to 117 species. Total registrations for the Fall Meeting were 76.

BIRDS RECORDED ON FIELD TRIPS DURING THE FALL MEETING AT KENLAKE STATE RESORT PARK
October 3-5, 1986

Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail*, Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon*, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Piping

ATTENDANCE AT THE FALL MEETING, 1986

BLANDVILLE: Newton Belt.
BUCKHORN: Dennis Sandlin, Eileen Sandlin.
CARLISLE: Wendell and Virginia Kingsolver.
CRITTENDEN: Joe and Kathy Caminiti.
FALLS OF THE ROUGH: Judith Williams.
GILBERTSVILLE: E. J. and Madelyn Conrad.
GLASGOW: Howard and Frances Jones.
HAZARD: Donnie Spencer and children.
HICKMAN: Phillip Drake.
LEXINGTON: Michael and Jean Flynn, Phillip Roca, Andy Uterhart, Jim and Gerry Williams.
MACEO: Albert and Mildred Powell.
MARION: Mike and Pat O'Hara.
MOREHEAD: Fred Busroe.
MURRAY: Happy Chambers, Sally Leedham, Michael Miller, Clell Petersen.
OWENSBORO: Mike Brown, Lydia Greenwell, John Humphrey, W. T.
REPORT OF THE TREASURER  
Fiscal Year 1985-1986

GENERAL FUND

Bank Balance, September 16, 1985 ........................................... $1,763.06

Receipts

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Bank Balance, September 23, 1986 ...................... $1,313.60

ENDOWMENT FUND

Balance in Savings Account, Future Federal

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<td>Certificate of deposit (4)</td>
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<td>$5,329.07</td>
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Receipts

Interest Income:
- Certificate of Deposit .................................. $ 388.60
- Savings Account ............................................. 60.70
- Life Memberships (7) ..................................... 525.00
- Gift from C. Noland Estate ................................ 250.00

Total Receipts .............................................. $1,224.30

Disbursements

Transfer to General Fund .................................. 388.60

Balance in Savings Account, Future Federal,
September 23, 1986 ............................................ $6,164.77

Certificates of Deposit:
- 2 @ $1,000.00 each Great Financial Federal ........................................ $2,000.00
- 1 @ $1,500.00 Future Federal .............................................. 1,500.00
- 1 @ $1,000.00 Future Federal .............................................. 1,000.00

Total Disbursements ........................................ $6,164.77

GORDON WILSON FUND

Balance in Savings Account, September 16, 1985 ........................................ $1,191.81

Certificates of Deposit (2) @ $1,000
- Great Financial Federal ........................................ $2,000.00

Total Receipts .............................................. $3,388.68

Balance in Fund, September 23, 1986
- Certificate of Deposit .................................. $2,000.00
- Savings Account ............................................. 1,388.63

Total $3,388.63

BALANCE SHEET
September 23, 1986

Assets:
- Cash General Fund ........................................ $ 1,313.60
- Endowment Fund ........................................... 6,164.77
- Gordon Wilson Fund ......................................... 3,388.63

Total $10,867.00

Net Worth ....................................................... $10,867.00
FIELD NOTES

NESTING OF HERONS ON SHIPPINGPORT ISLAND

On 18 August 1984, the authors and Marc Evans, John MacGregor and Max Medley visited Shippingport Island, adjacent to the Falls of the Ohio, in search of the location of a nesting colony of Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) suspected of being somewhere on the island. The nesting colony was successfully located in a grove of white mulberry trees (*Morus alba*) ranging from 20-40 feet in height, and approximately 200 active nests were counted.

Much to our surprise, several nests of Cattle Egrets (*Bulbulcus ibis*) containing half-grown young were discovered within the colony. Several adult Cattle Egrets were observed flying overhead, and at least four nests were counted, each containing 3-4 young. The presence of Cattle Egrets in the nesting colony took us by complete surprise since *none* had been observed in the area all year. Based on this fact, it is entirely possible that nesting of Cattle Egrets had gone undetected in the area prior to 1984.

In 1985, this nesting colony was regularly checked as part of a study of avifauna in the vicinity of the Falls of the Ohio for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Black-crowned Night-Herons were first noted on March 29 when over fifty birds were counted in the leafless trees, perching on the previous year’s nests. Courtship and nesting commenced immediately, and in early May Cattle Egrets were observed for the first time. By early July, both young Black-crowned Night-Herons and Cattle Egrets were beginning to fledge, and on July 12 a single nest of Little Blue Herons (*Egretta caerulea*) was located in the colony.

The Little Blue Heron nest was located among the shorter trees in the colony near the eastern edge and in close proximity to the Cattle Egret nests. The presence of a Little Blue Heron nest in this vicinity had been suspected due to periodic observations of a pair of adults in the area since mid-May. When first discovered, the Little Blue Heron nest contained five nearly full-grown young. The young birds’ plumages were entirely white except for dusky tips on the primaries, as is characteristic of this species. Some down was still visible during the first two weeks of observations. The bills were chalky in color and the legs were pale yellow-green.

The young birds were observed being fed by an adult on several occasions. After fledging, the immature Little Blue Herons remained in trees near the colony for several weeks while the adults continued to feed them. In mid-August, they were observed feeding nearby in the shallow pools of the fossil beds at the Falls of the Ohio. Interestingly, the adults were last seen in the area on 15 August, departing over a month before the immatures, which were last observed there on 23 September.

In addition to the pair of Little Blue Herons, the colony also contained the nests of approximately 275 pairs of Black-crowned Night-Herons and five pairs of Cattle Egrets in 1985. In addition, four pairs of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax violacea*) and two pairs of Green-backed Herons (*Butorides striatus*) nested on another part of the island.

Shippingport Island becomes the fourth known nesting location for the Louisville area’s well-known Black-crowned Night-Heron population in the past fifty years. All previous nesting locations, Six-Mile Island upstream from Louisville (used from about 1930 to 1948; Mengel, *The Birds of Kentucky, A.O.U. Monograph 3, 1965*), Goose Island just below the
fossil beds of the Falls of the Ohio (used from 1949 until the early 1960s; Smith, Ky. Warbler 26: 6-8, 1950) and Sand Island downstream from the Falls (used from 1962 for about the next 5-10 years; Wiley, Ky. Warbler 40:3-5, 1964) have been abandoned, and prior to 1984, the location of the nesting colony had been unknown for approximately ten years. In addition, this is one of only three active Black-crowned Night-Heron nesting colonies in the state, the other two being located on an island near the southern end of Lake Barkley, Trigg County (Thomas, Ky. Warbler 58(2):35, 1982) and in western Clark County (John MacGregor, pers. comm.).

The 1985 nesting of the Little Blue Herons is the second reported in Kentucky, the only other nesting occurred in the Lake Barkley colony from 1981-1983. This nesting colony has been declining in recent years for reasons not fully understood and has not contained Little Blue Herons over the past two years (Evans, unpubl. report).

Shippingport is now one of three known nesting locations of Cattle Egrets in the state, the only other locations being the Lake Barkley colony where at least one pair nested in 1981 and a Mississippi River sandbar in Fulton County where approximately 55 pairs nested in 1984 (Evans, unpubl. report; Stamm, Ky. Warbler 60:51, 1984). Cattle Egrets were absent from both locations in 1985.

Finally, Shippingport is one of less than a dozen known nesting locations of Yellow-crowned Night Herons in the state, and the Yellow-crowned Night Heron nesting in 1985 represents the first reported in the Louisville area since 1976 (Kleen, Amer. Birds 30:961-965, 1976).

Obviously Shippingport Island is a highly significant nesting area for herons in Kentucky. Fortunately, the island is jointly owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Louisville Gas and Electric Company and is not open to the public without authorization. It is also part of the recently designated Falls of the Ohio National Wildlife Conservation Area, a designation intended to protect this unique area and the wildlife which depend upon it. — BRAINARD PALMER-BALL, JR. and SHERRI A. EVANS. 8207 Old Westport Rd., Louisville, KY 40222.

**SONG SPARROW MIMICS SONG OF NORTHERN CARDINAL**

The imitation of conspecifics plays an important role in song learning in many species of birds. With the exception of a few groups (e.g., mimids), imitation of the vocalizations of other species is uncommon. Among emberizids, the occasional imitation of heterospecifics has been noted in the Vesper Sparrow (*Poecetes gramineus*) (Kroodsma, Wilson Bull. 84:173-178, 1972), Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*), Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*), and Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) (Borror, Ohio J. Sci. 68:129-138, 1968), and White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) (Baptista and Morton, Auk 98:383-385, 1981). There have been few reports of interspecific mimicry in the Song Sparrow (*Zonotrichia melodia*). Kroodsma (Anim. Behav. 25:390-399, 1976) raised Song Sparrows in captivity and noted that some birds copied song elements from Canaries (*Serinus canaria*). Marler and Peters (Science 198:519-521, 1977) also raised Song Sparrows in captivity and reported that these birds learned components of Swamp Sparrow (*Zonotrichia georgiana*) song. I could find only one report of interspecific mimicry by free-living Song Sparrows. In this study, Eberhardt and Baptista (Bird-Banding 48: 193-205, 1977) described Song Sparrows in California whose songs included components of Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*) songs. On 2 March 1985 I observed and re-
corded a Song Sparrow whose songs included notes similar to those in the Songs of Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) (Fig. 1). This sparrow sang about ten songs before flying off. I subsequently returned to the same area several times throughout the spring and summer but did not hear the atypical songs again.

In the laboratory, deprivation of conspecific song models may lead to mimicry. For example, Lanyon (Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 161:429-627, 1957) found that such deprivation could lead to mimicry in meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna* and *S. neglecta*). The interspecific mimicry observed in free-living birds may result from similar natural "deprivation," where young birds are acoustically isolated from singing conspecifics during the period when song is normally acquired. This could happen among young hatched late in the singing season, at the edges of the breeding range, or among early dispersers of migrants (Kroodsma, Acoustic Communication in Birds, Vol. 2, 1-23, Acad. Press, N.Y., 1982). — GARY RITCHISON, Department of Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY 40475

FIGURE 1. Songs of Song Sparrows and a Northern Cardinal. (a) song of Song Sparrow with notes similar to those of Northern Cardinals (first three notes). (b) song of a Northern Cardinal. (c) 'typical' song of a Song Sparrow.
REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

As part of a species restoration project in north Alabama, 122 Great White Egrets (Egretta alba) have been "hacked" near Guntersville Reservoir. Each egret is marked with a two-inch red flag attached to a Fish and Wildlife leg band. Sightings should be reported to: Burlene Pullin, Wildlife Resources Development Program, Tennessee Valley Authority, Norris, Tennessee 37828; Telephone (615) 632-1642. Please note the number and location of egrets and the date of the observation.

REMINDEr

Members are reminded to pay their dues if they have not already done so.

1986 MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT

Forms for the Mid-winter Bird Count have been mailed, if you desire to participate as a compiler and have not received the forms, please contact the Editor. All birds recorded must be within a 15-mile diameter circle. Extraordinary sightings must be accompanied with a verification form that is provided to each compiler.