

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.

2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland



Volume 12

SEPTEMBER 1956

Number 3

THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.
2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Md.

State President: Richard L. Kleen, St. Michaels, Md.
State Secretary: Charles M. Buchanan, 104 W. Melrose Ave, Balto 10, Md.
State Treasurer: A. J. Fletcher, Route 1, Denton, Md.
First Vice President: Richard Douglas, 511 Talbot St., Cumberland, Md.
Second Vice Presidents: Edwin Barry, Elmer Worthley, Marvin Hewitt,
Melvin Partridge, Oliver Gaines, Hilda Smith, Dr. Thomas Ambler
Trustees: Richard Douglas, John Workmeister, Edwin Barry, Mrs. Chase
Kirtley, Elmer Worthley, Dr. Charles Stine, Marvin Hewitt,
Naomi Hewitt, Dr. John Richards, William Shirey, Rebecca
Munnikhuysen, Oliver Grimes, Gladys Clark, Mrs. Goldie
Thomsen, Edith Adkins, Dr. Thomas Ambler

LOCAL UNITS

Allegheny County Bird Club Frederick Branch, M. O. S.
Avid Avists of Anne Arundel Co. Harford County Bird Club
Baltimore Club of M.C.S. Takoma Park Nature Club
Caroline County Bird Club Talbot County Bird Club

Active membership (including Maryland Birdlife and membership in one of the local units)	\$2.00
Out-of-state membership (Maryland Birdlife only)	\$1.00
Junior membership (under 18 years)	\$.50

CONTENTS, SEPTEMBER 1956

1954-1955 Invasion of Black-capped Chickadees	Stephen W. Simon	75
Gadwall Breeding in Dorchester County	Robert E. Stewart	86
Grackles "Anting" with Walnuts	Richard D. Cole	86
The Season - April, May, June, 1956	Chandler S. Robbins	87
Junior Activities: Ninth Junior Nature Camp	Gordon A. Knight	92
1956 Baltimore Saturday "Bird Walks"	Charles M. Buchanan	93
Coming Events		95

COVER: Black Skimmer with egg and chick. Photo by Charles J. Stine
HEADINGS: By Irving E. Hampe, Art Editor

M A R Y L A N D B I R D L I F E

Published Quarterly by the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.
to Record and Encourage the Study of Birds in Maryland

Editor: Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Refuge, Laurel, Md.
Editorial Board: Mrs. Roberta Fletcher, Mrs. Mabel Hoyler,
Richard L. Kleen, Gordon Knight, Mrs. Martina Luff,
Mrs. Helen Miller, Charles Stine, W. Bryant Tyrrell
Junior Editorial Board: Wilbur Rittenhouse, Gordon Knight, Joe Spurry
Production: Charles Buchanan, Ray Geddes, Shirley Geddes,
Richard Kleen, Martha Schaffer, James Travis,
Marylou Travis



MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Published quarterly by the
Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.
2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland

Volume 12

SEPTEMBER 1956

Number 3

THE 1954-1955 INVASION OF BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES INTO MARYLAND

Stephen W. Simon

The Invasion

Bird students witnessed a spectacular invasion of Black-capped Chickadees (*Parus atricapillus*) into Maryland during the winter of 1954-1955. These chickadees are permanent residents at the higher elevations in Western Maryland, but they are rarely seen in the piedmont or coastal plain sections of the State where the Carolina Chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*) occurs.

The movement of the Black-cap into Maryland was orderly and rapid. It was first observed by Dr. John W. Richards on October 20, 1954 at Emmitsburg in northern Frederick County. One was reported by Mrs. William L. Henderson and Mrs. Gail Tappan at Gibson Island on October 22. Chandler S. Robbins saw 8 at Laurel on the 24th. The species arrived at its southernmost point in northern Virginia by October 26, when Mrs. Elizabeth D. Peacock banded her first one near Fairfax (Dennis, 1955).

Black-capped Chickadees are known to have winter migrations and partial withdrawals from northern regions, but these occur mainly within the range of the species. Wallace (1941) discusses those that are recorded in the literature. There is only one previous record of large numbers of Black-caps moving into the parts of Maryland where they are not found normally. This was in the 1913-1914 winter season, when they were observed south to the Chevy Chase (Montgomery Co.) area (Mellott, 1914).

The most recent southward flow of Black-caps below their range occurred in central Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania in the winter of 1951-1952 (Audubon Field Notes 6(1):15, 20; (3):195, 198), but this migration did not affect Maryland. During this same winter, Dr. Maurice Broun (1956) banded a Black-capped Chickadee at Hawk Mountain, Pa. (within the range of the species), that was later found dead 475 air miles to the northeast. It was banded on January 13, 1952 and was recovered at Sebec Station, Piscataquis County, Maine, its probable place of origin, on November 25, 1952.

The invasion of 1954-1955 was not restricted to Maryland. In Ohio it proved more remarkable than the invasion of two winters before (Audubon Field Notes 9:31). The Christmas Bird Counts (Audubon Field Notes

9: 166, 168) reported a single Black-capped Chickadee from Indianapolis and three from Richmond, Indiana. These represented the western edge of the invasion. Within its range, impressive migrations were recorded in northern parts of the eastern United States. At Rochester, New York, 10,500 Black-caps were counted migrating eastward along the Lake Ontario shore on October 9, and on the 12th 12,000 were seen (Audubon Field Notes 9: 23).

Banding Aspects

The primary concern of this paper is to summarize the information gathered by Maryland banding cooperators during the winter of 1954-1955. The invasion aroused much interest among banders, since groups of from 2 to 46 birds stayed in the vicinity of the trapping stations where the food supply was plentiful.

All Maryland banders who reported Black-capped Chickadees to the bird banding office were contacted; these people banded a total of 154 Black-caps during the invasion. The banders, their localities and the number each banded are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Maryland Banders of Black-capped Chickadees

<u>Bander</u>	<u>Locality and County</u>	<u>No. Banded</u>	<u>Methods of Capture</u>
Stephen W. Simon	Monkton, Baltimore	46	all purpose, sparrow, chardonneret & potter traps; nets
John W. Richards	Emmitsburg, Frederick	34	trip-set
Chandler S. Robbins	Laurel, Prince Georges	19	potter traps; nets
Kendrick Y Hodgdon	Cumberland, Allegany	17	traps
Seth H. Low	Unity, Montgomery	13	traps; nets
Elting Arnold	Chevy Chase, Montgomery	10	drop trap
Elmer G. Worthley	Owings Mills, Baltimore	5	all purpose trap
Orville W. Crowder	Chase, Baltimore	4	potter traps
Mrs. W. L. Henderson	Gibson Is., Anne Arundel	2	trap
Richard D. Cole	Towson, Baltimore	2	traps; nets
Haven Kolb	Fullerton, Baltimore	2	traps

The writer would like to acknowledge and express appreciation for the information conveyed to him by these banders. From the correspondence received it can be stated that the Black-caps entered all the basic traps that banders use (see Table 1).

Table 2 shows the first and last dates of banding compared to the first and final sight records. Dennis (1955) reported that the dates for banding the first bird coincided with the arrival of the species in the local area of the three cooperators in Virginia. The dates were October 24 for Arthur Fast at Arlington, October 26 for Elizabeth Peacock near Fairfax, and November 9 for John Dennis near Leesburg.

An Analysis of banding data shows what happened to the flocks of

Table 2. First and Final Dates for Black-capped Chickadees

<u>Bander</u>	<u>First Seen</u>	<u>First Banded</u>	<u>Last Banded</u>	<u>Last Repeat</u>	<u>Last Seen</u>
Simon	10/26	10/28	3/16	3/31	6/27
Richards	10/20	11/28	2/5	2/5	4/17
Robbins	10/24	10/26	12/12	4/6	4/24
Hodgdon		3/26	4/3	4/2	
Low		11/6	2/2	3/25	
Arnold		12/24	2/2	3/26	
Worthley		12/15	1/24	3/12	
Crowder	about 10/30	11/6	11/11	11/13	
Henderson	10/22	11/9	11/9		5/8
Cole		11/7	12/12	3/6	
Kolb		12/6	12/14		

chickadees the rest of the winter. Robbins was the only bander who color-banded each bird caught. He had the singular advantage of being able to rely on sight records to tell the size and fluctuations of his flock through the winter. Color-banding also provided the most accurate method of determining when individuals left his area. Other banders had to rely on retrapping or resetting to determine whether or not their birds remained in the area.

Data reveal that next to color-banding, banders who used both traps and nets had a truer picture of the population trends than did those who used traps alone. There was an observed tendency for the birds to become trap-shy, particularly toward the end of the season. This is reflected in the low repeat records (Table 3) in February and March of Dennis, Fast and other banders using just traps.

Table 3. Summary of Repeat Records

<u>Bander</u>	<u>% Non-repeats</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>
Robbins	16%	4	86	40		9	10	10
Simon	22%		67	57	66	39	24	
Peacock*	17%		9	27	16	28	18	2
Fast*	25%	1	31	29	16	3	1	
Dennis*	35%			12		14	3	
Low	38%		15		4	4	3	
Richards	41%			4	21	4		
Arnold	30%			3	11	2		
Cole	50%			1		1		
Worthley	40%			2				
Hodgdon	71%						2	5
Crowder	25%		5					

Henderson and Kolb: no repeats.

*Figures from Dennis (1955)

Nets presumably caught birds as long as they were in the area. Simon began using nets extensively in March, and his repeat records (Table 3) were high in March. Without the March netting records, Simon

would have had only 8 instead of 24 repeats (Table 3), and only 7 March final dates rather than 19 (Table 4).

Dennis (1955) felt that the Black-capped Chickadee population remained relatively stable through the winter season. This implies that both non-repeating birds and birds that stopped repeating in mid-season were trap-shy and stayed in the area without being caught. Data from Maryland banders does give evidence of fluctuation in the winter flock size and composition. Definite evidence shows that some birds left the area and other records show that there may have been a mid-season influx.

Robbins found that 16% of his color-banded birds were not seen again. This compares favorably with Peacock's 17% that did not repeat. The higher percentages of other banders, most of whom did not use nets, may be due either to some birds departing or to the fact that a few of the non-repeaters stayed in the area without being caught (Table 3).

Table 4 shows the final records for the individuals in Simon's and Robbins' case. This includes non-repeats as well as final repeat records. Comparing the two sets of figures, it was found that 21% of Robbins' Black-caps left the area by December 1st and during the same period Simon had 24% leave. By March 1st, 63% of Robbins' birds had left and 58% of Simon's birds had left. Simon's trapping data parallels Robbins' sight departure records closely enough to show that trapping data may be used as evidence of departure.

Table 4. Monthly Last Records: non-repeats and final repeats

<u>Bander</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>
Robbins	19	1	3	5	-	1	1	8
Simon	46	0	11	5	5	6	19	0

Since the Black-caps left a given area during the winter it would follow that they may have joined other flocks. The possibility of birds coming into a flock is shown by Simon's records. He operated traps regularly through the season and Table 5 shows that although no Black-caps were banded in January, he banded 9 in February. Dennis' records show a similar happening, but he did not operate his banding station during January.

Robbins, on the other hand, banded all his birds in October, November, and December, and although he did not trap again for the rest of the season, he saw only one unbanded Black-cap on one occasion (February 20), in the area until the next seasonal migration. Dennis (1955) felt that those birds not banded until later in the season were a part of the original flock. Robbins' data would corroborate this, except for the one unbanded bird. If Simon had used color-bands, the status of the 9 February birds could be easily answered, but it is his opinion that these birds moved into the area at the time they were banded or shortly before, as did Robbins' February 20th bird.

Table 5. Monthly Banding Record

<u>Bander</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>
Simon	3	23	10		9	1	
Robbins	5	12	2	(no trapping after Dec.)			
Peacock*	4	9	13	4	2		
Richards		9	17	6	2		
Dennis*		11	9	no trapping		6	1
Fast*							
Low		10		2	1		
Arnold			1	6	2	1	
Hodgdon						14	3
Worthley			3	2			
Crowder		4					
Henderson		2					
Cole		1	1				
Kolb			2				

*From Dennis (1955)

Departures

It has been verified that the Black-cap flock lost some of its members regularly throughout the winter. Robbins' records show that the final departure of the Black-caps was as spectacular as their arrival. Within a week's period, March 31-April 6, he observed the remaining nine birds of the original flock for the last time. One was seen last on March 31, 4 on April 1st, 3 on April 3rd, 1 on April 5th and 1 on the 6th. He saw one unbanded Black-cap on April 9, 10 and 21. It is interesting to note that the 9 birds represented the whole flock from February 21 until March 31.

Several observers saw stragglers even later than Robbins' bird of April 24. Mrs. Henderson saw her last one at Gibson Island on May 8. Simon saw and heard three on May 6, one on May 9, one on the 20th, one on the 30th, and one on June 27. These were unbanded birds.

Winter of 1955-1956

The year following the invasion, Simon reported the only banded Black-cap. A single bird was heard singing on November 6, 1955, and he heard it regularly after that time. He trapped and banded the bird on December 26, and it remained in the area throughout the winter, spring and summer, being seen and heard last on July 25, 1956. Whether or not it nested is a good question, and why it was here at all is another.

Other Studies

Extensive studies have been made on the dynamics of winter flocks within the normal range of the species. It is interesting to look at some of the pertinent findings and compare them with this study.

Hammerstrom (1942) found that there was no association among individuals of a wintering flock. Wallace (1941) observed a close association among some individuals in the flock. Simon frequently caught several Black-caps at a time in his all-purpose traps. No two Black-caps were caught together more than once.

Hammerstrom (1942) found that the winter flock was always changing, some new birds coming in, other regular feeders leaving, either for a short time or permanently. The act of Black-caps leaving an area for good has been demonstrated in this paper, as has the possibility of birds arriving in mid-season. The history of several of Simon's individual Black-caps shows that they may have left for a period of time. Number 24-24075 was trapped on December 11 and recaptured on March 13. The length of time that elapsed would make it a return (a bird re-taken after a 3 month period). A better example is 24-03095, which repeated regularly (39 times) between its banding on November 9 and January 25. All but one of these repeats was in a particular all-purpose trap. Its next repeat was about one month later on February 21. It repeated twice on that date, once on the 23rd, and twice on the 24th, in the same trap. It was not caught again after the 24th. Because of these actions, it seems that this bird left the area between January 25 and February 21, and then left the area permanently after February 24.

The flocks in Maryland acted little differently than those studied in Massachusetts by Wallace (1941). He found that non-resident chickadees joined the winter flocks late in November and dispersed in March and April. Some chickadees, he found, eluded all attempts to band them. The Maryland flocks came into the area earlier, but left about the same time as the Massachusetts birds.

Hammerstrom (1942) and Wallace (1941) felt that it took a number of years to build up large flocks in an area where regular artificial winter feeding took place. Simon had a wintering flock of 46 birds, which possibly indicates a maximum size attained in the one season. Table 1 shows the wide variance in the flock sizes of the Maryland banders. The large groups probably represent the carrying capacity of the locality, as judged by the studies made of the winter flock sizes within the range of the species.

Carolina vs. Black-capped Chickadees

Tanner (1952) conducted a major study of Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees in areas where they occur together. He did not observe any conflict or competition between the two species in the wintertime. Simon found that Carolinas and Black-caps fed together peaceably and both species entered the same trap at the same time.

Several banders have mentioned that there was an increase in the number of Carolina Chickadees during the winter of 1954-1955. Simon banded 20 Carolinas during the 1954-1955 season, and over the same period the following winter he banded 13 Carolinas and had 4 returns from the

previous year. This would make a total of 17 for 1955-1956, which indicates that his Carolina flock size was not appreciably affected by the presence of Black-caps.

Attraction

Simon banded the largest number of chickadees and perhaps had the largest flock. It may be useful to discuss what the birds liked to eat at his banding station. Sunflower seed was their favorite food and they would feed on the ground if the seeds were there. Peanut butter was spread in crevasses on tree trunks and this was a popular food. There were several commercial suet feeders in use, but the chickadees came as regularly to suet painted, when melted, on tree trunks. The Black-caps were allowed to feed freely on a feeder above one of the all-purpose traps. They did not hesitate to enter the trap even though food was plentiful on the feeder.

Identification

One of the problems that has been brought into focus by the occurrence of Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees together is how to tell them apart. It is hoped that if Black-caps return to this area, banders and other observers will be better prepared to distinguish between them.

In the field there are several means of identification. The easiest is by their songs. Once in a while each species sings in the winter. The Black-caps in Simon's flock did so a few times throughout the winter, but sang more frequently during their arrival in late October and their departure in March and April. Tanner (1952) describes the Black-cap song as "phe-bee-ee" or "phe-bee". The first note is higher pitched than the second one or two. The Carolina has 4 notes described by Tanner (1952) as "se-fee-se-fu", the first and third notes being higher pitched than the other two.

Tanner (1952) mentioned his pet way of telling the call notes of each species apart. The "dee-dee-dee" note of the Carolina is higher pitched and more rapid than the Black-cap's. By counting the "dee" notes for 5 seconds--counting at the same rate when the bird stops calling--one can determine the number of notes per 5 seconds. Table 6 shows the statistical analysis of this system, using Tanner's results.

This table may need clarifying for those not familiar with statistical methods. This form is standard in the interpretation of sample

Table 6. The "dee" Rate of Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees
(Information from Tanner, 1952)

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
Carolina Chickadee	179	38.9	5.5	25-52
Black-capped Chickadee	183	23.6	2.8	17-32

observations, and will be used again in this paper. The "number" represents the units which are being used. The "range" means the lowest and the highest observations of the units. The "mean" is the average observation. The "standard deviation" measures the "scatter" of the observations about the mean and enables us to determine whether two or more populations are significantly different from one another. Nineteen out of 20 observations fall within two standard deviations of the mean. Therefore, Table 6 tells us that 19 out of 20 Carolina Chickadees have a "dee" rate between 27.9 and 49.9, while 19 out of 20 Black-caps are between 18.0 and 29.2.

Besides the voice, the plumage differences help sometimes to tell the two species apart in the field. These plumage differences vary within the species, so they are not always reliable. Tanner (1952) found that differences showed up the best in the fall, which would be to our advantage.



Fig. 1. Black-capped Chickadee. Photo by the author.

Black-caps usually have more white in the wing feathers and outer tail feathers than do Carolinas. The white cheek of the Black-cap is usually larger and whiter. In many of the Black-caps that Tanner (1952) studied in the southern Appalachians, the brown under-parts at the sides of the body contrasted with the gray in the middle, while in Carolinas the underparts were more uniform gray or brownish gray. Orville Crowder (by letter) mentioned that he could tell the few Black-capped Chickadees in the Bird River area apart from the Carolinas by the point of the black bib extending to the gray of the back in the Black-caps, while in the Carolinas there was a small whitish area in between.

Sometimes, the writer found, the bib gradation into the light under-parts was a sharp line in the Carolinas and more gradual in the Black-caps. This feature was more noticeable when the bird was held in the hand.

In a large Black-cap the longer and thicker tarsus is noticeable, and the tail seems as long as the body. The tail is much shorter in a small Carolina. Another tail feature, seen more easily in the hand than in the field, is that a Carolina Chickadee's tail is fan-shaped when spread out, with all the feathers about the same length. Some Black-caps, on the other hand, have shorter middle tail feathers, making the tail look slightly forked or more square.

In the field the Black-caps form fairly large groups, whereas rarely are there more than 4 or 5 Carolinas together. Black-caps can be attracted to the observer by squeaking noises, but Carolinas keep their distance.

The bander has the advantage of other criteria for the identification of chickadees. Measurements help the bander in telling the two apart. The

Table 7. Wing and Tail Measurements of Banded Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees (From Robbins' and Simon's Data)

mm.	<u>Tail</u>																		
	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	
57				1															
58	1		1	1															
59					2	2		1											
60				3															
61			1		1							1							
62			1	3	1						2			2					
63				1							1	2	5	1					
64					1	1		1				4	7						
65					1		1					1	2						
66			<u>Carolina</u>		1	1					1	3	4	1	3			1	
67											1	1		1			1	1	
68														1	1	1	3		

tail measurement was the most diagnostic in the flock of chickadees that visited Maryland. In areas where the two species of Chickadees occur together normally, there is overlap in tail length. Most of the Black-capped Chickadees that were here had tail lengths over 58 mm. while Carolinas had tails under 57 mm. One exception was a Black-cap measured by Robbins that had a tail length of 56 mm. Table 7 shows the tail and wing measurements, and the number of individuals with the same measurements. The birds were measured to the nearest $\frac{1}{2}$ mm., but in Table 7 the $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. lengths were raised to the next full mm.

The wing measurements, although not so consistent, are relatively longer in the Black-caps. This feature can be reflected in a ratio between the tail and wing lengths, *i.e.*, T/W ratio. Table 8 shows how these ratios for Robbins' and Simon's birds of both species compare.

There is some overlap in ratios, but by combining the T/W ratio with plumage differences there would be very few individuals that would be found doubtful. Even Robbins' 56 mm. Chickadee had a T/W ratio that positively placed it as a Black-cap. Simon and Robbins were able to identify conclusively all the birds of both species. It can be seen that in the field and in the hand a combination of methods should be used for positive identification.

Subspecific Determination

It would be interesting to know exactly where the Black-capped Chickadees came from. Recovery of the birds banded in Maryland would give the answer, but to date no recoveries have been reported. If the measurements of the Maryland birds conformed closely to any of the subspecies found to the north, this might help solve the problem. However, it can be seen from Table 8 that the birds during the 1954-1955 invasion did not differ significantly from any of the eastern subspecies.

Table 8. Tail/Wing Ratios of Several Populations of Chickadees

<u>Bander or Author</u>	<u>Species and Subspecies</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
	<u>Black-capped Chickadee</u>				
Simon	subsp. ?	38	.947	.022	.895 - 1.000
Robbins	subsp. ?	18	.957	.020	.928 - 1.000
Duvall, 1945	<u>anamesus</u> (Canadian)	67	.963		
Duvall, 1945	<u>atricapillus</u> (East.)	13	.954		
Duvall, 1945	<u>frigoris</u> (Newfoundid)	26	.950		
Duvall, 1945	<u>practicus</u> (Appalach.)	24	.938		
Tanner, 1952	" (S. Appalachians)	116	.926	.022	.880 - 1.000
	<u>Carolina Chickadee</u>				
Simon	<u>extimus</u> (Northern)	17	.859	.032	.818 - .915
Robbins	"	10	.884	.025	.870 - .930
Lunk, 1952	" from Md, WV, NJ	20	.866		
Tanner, 1952	" from S. Appalach.	152	.850	.028	.770 - .920

Conclusion

Some of the questions and problems raised by this study could be answered by banders and observers in the event of future invasions of the Black-capped Chickadee. Better banding records could be obtained by the wider use of nets and color-banding. Measurements, plumage details and other identification features noted by banders would be helpful. General observations by birders in the field and at feeding stations would contribute toward a clearer picture of Black-cap behavior.

Summary

An orderly and rapid invasion of Black-capped Chickadees into Maryland occurred during the last 10 days of October 1954. The methods used by banders to study the winter flocks, that ranged in size from 2 to 46 individuals, in order of effectiveness, were color-banding, netting and trapping, and trapping alone. Data show that some individuals left the banding stations throughout the winter, temporarily or permanently, and others may possibly have joined established flocks. The final departure took place during the first week in April 1955, but a few stragglers remained in the area until later. Only one Black-capped Chickadee was reported at a banding station outside its normal range the following winter. Other studies within the range of the species were mentioned. The resident Carolina Chickadee seemed unaffected by the encroachment of its near relative. Characters of voice, plumage, measurements and the tail/wing ratio for distinguishing the two species were discussed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Broun, Maurice. 1956. Long Distance Recovery of a Chickadee. Ebba News 19:7.
- Butts, Wilbur K. 1931. A Study of the Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch by Means of Marked Individuals. 2. The Chickadee. Bird-Banding 2:1-26.
- Dennis, John V. 1955. Banding Black-capped Chickadees (*Parus atricapillus*) in Northern Virginia during the Winter of 1954-1955. Raven 26:104-107.
- Duvall, Allen J. 1945. Distribution and Taxonomy of the Black-capped Chickadees of North America. Auk 62:49-69.
- Hammerstrom, Frances. 1942. Dominance in Winter Flocks of Chickadees. Wilson Bull. 54:32-42.
- Lunk, William A. 1952. Notes on Variation in the Carolina Chickadee. Wilson Bull. 64:7-21.
- Mellett, S. W. 1914. The Chickadees of Chevy Chase. Bird-Lore 16:117-118.
- Odum, Eugene P. 1942. Annual Cycle of the Black-capped Chickadee -3. Auk 59:499-531.
- Tanner, James T. 1952. Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Auk 69:407-424.
- Wallace, George J. 1941. Winter Studies of Color-banded Chickadees. Bird-Banding 12:49-67.

Blue Mount Road, Monkton

GADWALL BREEDING IN DORCHESTER COUNTY

Robert E. Stewart

On May 4, 1956, a Gadwall nest containing 5 normal-sized eggs and 2 "runt" eggs was found in southeastern Dorchester County by Don P. Fankhauser and the writer. The nest was located about 6 miles northeast of Elliott in the large brackish bay marsh between Fishing Bay and the Nanticoke River. It was situated about 40 feet from Pokata Creek in an isolated clump of unburned Salt-meadow Grass (Spartina patens) that was surrounded by burned-over salt meadow.

This nest represents the first breeding record for the Gadwall in Dorchester County and is also the earliest nest record reported so far for Maryland. The only previous breeding records for this species in the State were from northwestern Somerset County in the marsh between Dames Quarter and the Manokin River, between 12 and 16 miles south of the Dorchester County nest. In the Dames Quarter marsh, Springer and Stewart (Auk 67:234-235, 1950) observed a nest with broken eggs on May 19, 1948, a nest with 8 eggs on May 20, 1948, and a brood of downy young on July 3, 1948. On July 19, 1955, a nest containing 9 eggs was found on Fish Island in the Manokin River by Chandler S. Robbins, Don P. Fankhauser and the writer.

Patuxent Refuge, Laurel

* - *

GRACKLES "ANTING" WITH WALNUTS

Richard D. Cole

The evening of July 5, 1956, was warm (82° F.) and clear with a slight westerly breeze. At 6:30 P.M., E.S.T. Mrs. Cole and I observed a flock of approximately 30 Purple Grackles (Quiscalus quiscula) approach from the east and light in the tops of our two English Walnuts (Juglans regia). A few minutes later we were attracted by their sounds and noted that all of those in sight were vigorously preening their feathers. Closer observation through a 7 X 35 binocular disclosed that the birds were using small pieces of the outside husk of the walnut fruit in their preening. The fruit was held with one of the feet, a piece of husk was removed by the bill and then run along the feathers: primaries, secondaries, remiges and contour feathers. All feathers were treated in the same way. Vigorous scratching with the feet on the head and body were noted between the preenings. One bird was watched for about 45 minutes at the same station. Others were replaced at their particular station by different birds moving from place to place. The replacement action may have been peck order activity.

We collected pieces of the husk and nuts (some partially free of husk and some completely free) that were knocked down by the action in the trees. The small, irregular, pieces measured about 3/16 inch.

625 Valley Lane, Towson



APRIL, MAY, JUNE, 1956

Chandler S. Robbins

Old Man Winter was reluctant to relinquish his grip on the Maryland countryside. All three months showed negative departures from long-term average temperature records. Leafing out of vegetation was a week or two behind schedule in April, and bird migration was equally delayed. The final arrival of spring-like weather was most dramatic, and was accompanied by a veritable avalanche of avian migrants.

The first three-and-a-half weeks of April, you will recall, were uniformly cool, with the mercury in the 30's or low 40's almost every night, and, after the 6th of the month, seldom reaching 60° in the "heat" of the day. The 24th brought light snow to all parts of the State, and on the next morning there was a State-wide freeze. Then, on the afternoon of the 25th, southerly winds put a temporary end to the cold weather. A strong southerly wind flow from the afternoon of the 27th to the 30th shot the mercury up to 91° at Hancock and 90° at Baltimore (5 degrees above the previous record) on the 29th. As luck would have it, April 28-29 was a weekend, and Maryland birders were prepared for the great influx of migrants that arrived those two days. Four times as many arrivals were recorded on Apr. 29 as on any other day during the spring migration period except Apr. 28 and May 5 (both of which had less than half as many as the 29th). These included (on the 28th and 29th) the belated Parula Warblers, Redstarts and Yellow-throats (7 to 10 days late), a few birds that should have appeared in early April (such as my local nesting Louisiana Water-thrush, 3½ weeks late), nearly all of the normal late April species, and a scattering of premature May migrants such as the Olive-backed Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, and Black-poll Warbler. This major influx of birds from the south was accentuated by the leafless character of the vegetation. Several people commented that they had never seen so many Scarlet Tanagers; actual numbers reported, however, were far below those of 1950, and we suspect that the belated vegetation rather than the actual number of tanagers created the impression of abundance.

One might suspect that the late vegetation, continued sub-normal temperatures in May (an unprecedented general freeze west of the Bay on the 17th), and the late arrival of birds from the south would be followed by many unusually late departure dates; but this was not the case.

Cormorants, Ibises. An unusually heavy northward flight of Double-crested Cormorants passed Gibson Island on May 5 and was witnessed by Mrs. W. L. Henderson, Mrs. Gail Tappan, and others. The rare Glossy Ibis was seen at Ocean City on the early date of Apr. 7 (Paul A. Buckley).

Grouse. The Ruffed Grouse, formerly resident through most of the Maryland Piedmont, has not been seen in Baltimore County or adjoining counties for the past 25 years. One appeared at Monkton on Apr. 30 (Simon), and the Maryland Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has verified that they have not released any in this area. It is not likely, however, that they will become re-established there.

Shorebirds. The fourth spring record for the Golden Plover was established at Ocean City on May 12 when three were seen by a Sinepuxent Bay boat party under the leadership of Richard L. Kleen. This same observer added the White-rumped Sandpiper to the Talbot County list on May 18 at Tilghman; and with other members of the Talbot County Bird Club he watched a dowitcher at Tilghman's Island two days later--another "first" for the county.

Gulls, Skimmer. The Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, rare visitors from the north, seldom reach our latitude before late December; yet, the few individuals that do wander into Maryland frequently linger in our tide-water areas until May. This spring an Iceland Gull was discovered at Gibson Island on the record-breaking date of June 4 (Mesdames Henderson and Tappan); it remained through the 6th. Another late gull on the Chesapeake was the Great Black-backed; one was seen on May 12, also at Gibson Island (same observers), and another at Tilghman, May 20 (Talbot County Bird Club). On a Tilghman's Island shell bank, Kleen found a Black Skimmer on May 18; this bird, which was last seen on the following day, is the northernmost Chesapeake Bay record.

Land birds (general). In Tables 1 and 2 extreme 1956 arrival and departure dates are summarized for several counties. As in the past, scores of reporters have contributed to these tables. Those who submitted the most comprehensive records were: Frederick Co.--Dr. and Mrs. John W. Richards; Montgomery Co.--Mrs. Katherine Goodpasture, Seth H. Low and John H. Fales; Baltimore Co.--Charles Buchanan, Stephen Simon and Mrs. Robert Kaestner; Harford Co.--Gordon Knight (compilation from the records of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Braun, Miss Cairnes, Orville Crowder, George Fletcher, Oliver Gaines, Evelyn Gregory, Gordon Knight, Samuel Mason, Jr., Robert Merkel, Mrs. W. B. Munnikhuysen and Sara Wright); Prince Georges Co.--Chandler Robbins, Robert Stewart, Paul Springer and John Fales; Anne Arundel Co.--Mrs. W. L. Henderson, Mrs. Gail Tappan, Prof. and Mrs. David Howard, Martina Luff, Capt. J. E. M. Wood, Father Edward Stoehr, Prof. and Mrs. William Conrad, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Long; Queen Annes Co.--Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dubois and Wilbur Rittenhouse; Caroline Co.--Mrs. Alicia O'C. Knotts (compilation including records of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Bobby Fletcher, Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Hewitt, A. May Thompson, Virgil Wright, W. Pippin, C. Guthrie, Robert Butler, I. Bilbrough and Bob Maloney); Talbot Co.--Richard L. Kleen; Worcester Co.--M. O. S. Convention and David A. Cutler.

Table 1. Spring Arrival Dates, 1956

	Fred	Mont	Balt	Harf	Pr.G	Anne	Q.An	Caro	Talb
Green Heron	4/22	4/22	4/15	4/29	4/28	4/21	4/22	5/1	4/14
Broad-winged Hawk	4/22	4/22	4/18	4/23	4/21	4/4	5/5	0	0
Spotted Sandpiper	4/29	4/22	--	5/9	4/24	4/20	5/5	4/23	--
Solitary Sandpiper	4/22	4/20	4/21	5/10	4/29	5/2	4/25	0	4/29
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4/29	5/6	5/9	5/13	5/3	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/14
Black-billed Cuckoo	5/7	0	0	5/10	5/14	5/12	0	5/5	5/18
Whip-poor-will	4/28	4/26	4/19	4/12	4/22	4/12	4/19	4/23	4/4
Nighthawk	5/13	--	5/9	5/10	5/3	--	4/30	4/30	5/3
Chimney Swift	4/5	4/5	4/6	4/22	4/15	4/5	4/24	4/19	4/4
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	5/14	4/30	5/5	5/9	4/30	4/26	5/15	4/23	5/3
Eastern Kingbird	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/25	4/27	4/28	5/5	4/25	4/22
Crested Flycatcher	5/5	4/27	4/28	4/29	4/27	4/20	4/27	4/27	4/12
Acadian Flycatcher	5/5	4/29	--	--	5/7	5/5	--	5/5	5/5
Eastern Wood Pewee	5/5	5/6	5/7	5/9	5/5	5/6	5/7	5/5	5/5
Tree Swallow	4/7	4/14	--	--	4/29	4/4	4/9	--	--
Barn Swallow	4/5	4/5	4/1	4/10	--	4/3	4/5	4/4	4/1
House Wren	4/26	4/20	4/26	4/7	4/25	4/20	4/27	--	5/5
Catbird	4/29	4/30	4/28	4/27	4/28	4/28	4/30	--	4/28
Brown Thrasher	4/4	4/11	4/5	3/25	3/10	4/3	4/5	4/1	4/7
Wood Thrush	4/28	4/28	4/27	--	4/26	4/28	4/26	4/25	--
Olive-backed Thrush	5/1	4/28	4/21	5/12	4/30	5/5	5/5	5/16	5/5
Gray-cheeked Thrush	5/5	--	5/5	5/16	5/2	4/30	0	5/21	5/5
Veery	5/1	4/29	4/30	4/29	4/29	5/5	0	5/9	5/5
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/14	4/5	4/7	4/5	4/17	4/8	--	4/3	4/7
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	--	4/12	4/4	4/13	4/4	4/13	--	4/17	--
White-eyed Vireo	5/5	4/29	4/28	4/27	4/28	4/29	--	4/22	4/7
Yellow-throated Vireo	5/5	4/28	4/30	4/29	4/27	4/29	--	5/2	5/5
Blue-headed Vireo	4/25	4/24	4/15	4/29	4/22	5/9	0	0	0
Red-eyed Vireo	4/29	4/29	5/1	4/29	4/28	4/29	4/30	4/26	5/5
Black & White Warbler	4/30	4/22	4/18	4/22	4/27	4/22	4/30	4/16	4/27
Worm-eating Warbler	5/13	5/1	4/29	4/30	4/29	4/28	0	0	5/5
Blue-winged Warbler	5/10	--	4/29	4/29	5/4	5/5	0	4/28	5/5
Nashville Warbler	5/5	4/29	4/29	5/9	4/29	5/5	0	5/5	0
Parula Warbler	5/10	4/22	5/5	5/5	4/27	4/28	--	4/28	5/5
Yellow Warbler	5/5	4/22	4/28	4/29	4/28	4/26	5/5	4/26	5/5
Black-thr Blue Warbler	4/29	4/29	4/26	5/5	4/29	5/5	--	5/9	5/5
Blk-thr Green Warbler	4/29	4/29	4/29	5/5	4/29	5/5	--	5/5	5/5
Blackburnian Warbler	5/3	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/29	5/12	0	5/5	5/5
Chestnut-sided Warbler	4/29	4/29	4/30	4/30	5/1	4/29	0	5/5	5/5
Bay-breasted Warbler	5/10	--	5/9	5/15	5/5	5/12	0	0	5/15
Black-poll Warbler	4/29	5/7	--	5/9	5/4	4/29	--	5/5	5/14
Prairie Warbler	4/29	--	4/28	4/27	4/27	4/29	--	5/5	5/5
Oven-bird	4/28	4/27	4/28	4/29	4/27	4/29	5/5	4/22	4/14
Northern Water-thrush	0	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/29	0	0	4/22
Louisiana Water-thrush	4/3	4/22	4/8	4/28	4/28	4/29	--	4/3	4/2
Kentucky Warbler	--	4/29	4/29	4/30	5/4	5/5	--	5/5	5/5
Mourning Warbler	5/13	5/19	5/19	--	--	--	0	0	0
Yellow-throat	4/30	4/28	4/28	4/28	4/25	4/29	4/7	4/23	4/17
Yellow-breasted Chat	4/29	5/5	4/28	4/29	5/4	5/3	5/7	4/28	5/5
Hooded Warbler	4/29	4/27	4/28	4/29	4/28	4/29	0	0	5/6
Wilson's Warbler	5/8	5/10	5/19	5/18	--	5/12	0	5/18	0
Canada Warbler	5/10	--	4/30	5/5	5/5	5/5	0	5/19	5/20
American Redstart	4/29	4/28	4/28	4/28	4/29	4/22	5/5	4/27	5/5
Bobolink	--	5/5	5/7	5/9	5/2	4/30	0	5/2	5/3
Orchard Oriole	4/28	4/28	--	5/1	5/4	4/29	4/30	4/28	5/5
Baltimore Oriole	4/28	4/28	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/30	5/5	4/26	4/28
Scarlet Tanager	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/29	4/27	5/9	4/28	5/5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4/29	5/5	5/5	--	4/28	5/6	0	0	5/5
Indigo Bunting	5/5	4/29	4/29	4/30	4/29	4/22	4/27	5/1	5/4
Grasshopper Sparrow	4/10	4/20	5/5	--	--	4/15	5/5	4/29	5/2
White-crowned Sparrow	--	4/29	4/30	5/1	4/30	4/29	0	--	0

Note especially the general lateness of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood Pewee (none before May 5!), House Wren (only three before Apr. 25), White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireos, Parula Warbler, Louisiana Water-thrush, Yellow-throat (only three before Apr. 25), Hooded Warbler (none before Apr. 27), American Redstart (one before Apr. 27) and Bobolink (one April record). In the case of the Chimney Swift a few people had very early records, but most observers did not see the species until Apr. 20 or later.

It is apparent from Table 1 that weather this year played a more important role than did geographic location in determining arrival dates. The four Piedmont counties on the left have about the same average dates as the five Coastal Plain counties on the right, and the three Eastern Shore counties on the extreme right differ little in arrival dates from the Western Shore Coastal Plain counties. Allegany County records (Leonard M. Llewellyn), although not included in the table, indicate that late April arrivals in the mountains were no later than those farther east! The great majority of arrival dates fell on weekends; this was due in large part to the fact that relatively high temperatures and southerly winds prevailed on the last three week-ends of April.

Table 2. Spring Departure Dates, 1956

	<u>Fred</u>	<u>Mont</u>	<u>Balt</u>	<u>Harf</u>	<u>Pr.G</u>	<u>Anne</u>	<u>Caro</u>	<u>More</u>
Hermit Thrush	--	--	5/19	5/10	5/3	4/29	5/5	--
Olive-backed Thrush	5/22	5/29	5/30	5/20	6/3	5/28	5/21	5/13
Gray-cheeked Thrush	5/23	5/30	--	5/20	6/3	5/19	5/21	5/13
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4/25	4/21	--	4/29	5/8	5/12	4/17	--
Blue-headed Vireo	5/12	5/12	--	5/10	5/1	5/12	0	5/12
Tennessee Warbler	5/20	5/19	--	--	5/25	--	0	0
Nashville Warbler	5/20	5/7	--	5/20	5/10	--	0	5/12
Magnolia Warbler	5/20	5/23	5/30	5/21	5/22	5/12	5/24	5/13
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	5/13	5/12	5/20	5/20	5/14	5/12	5/20	5/13
Myrtle Warbler	5/20	5/12	5/20	--	5/20	5/12	5/20	5/13
Black-thr. Green Warbler	--	5/12	--	5/30	5/20	5/12	--	5/12
Blackburnian Warbler	5/13	5/12	--	5/20	5/22	5/12	5/12	0
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/20	5/20	--	5/20	5/21	5/22	5/10	5/12
Bay-breasted Warbler	5/20	--	5/26	5/22	5/23	5/12	0	5/12
Black-poll Warbler	5/15	6/1	5/30	5/31	6/3	5/12	5/24	5/13
Mourning Warbler	5/20	5/23	5/26	--	5/25	5/29	0	0
Wilson's Warbler	5/11	--	5/30	5/20	5/19	5/19	5/21	0
Canada Warbler	5/22	5/12	5/30	5/20	5/22	5/12	5/24	5/13
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/13	5/11	--	5/5	5/21	5/20	0	5/13
Evening Grosbeak	0	4/19	4/23	5/7	5/14	--	4/7	5/11
Purple Finch	5/5	--	--	4/29	5/24	5/5	--	--
Slate-colored Junco	4/28	5/24	5/30	4/28	5/14	4/26	5/5	5/1
White-crowned Sparrow	5/12	5/20	5/20	5/17	5/15	--	5/11	5/12
White-throated Sparrow	5/14	5/24	5/21	5/20	5/20	5/22	5/19	5/13
Lincoln's Sparrow	5/13	5/19	5/20	5/12	0	0	0	0

Owls, Chuck-will's-widows, Sapsuckers. Richard and Martha Dubois are the first observers in 18 years to report Short-eared Owls in Maryland during the breeding season; they watched a pair near their home at Kent Narrows through the month of April, again on May 5, and then later on in the summer. We still have no bona fide nesting record for this species in Maryland. The Chuck-will's-widow was one of the few species to arrive ahead of its earliest previous record; one was identified in Tilghman, Talbot County, on Apr. 19 by Jan Reese. Northern records for this species were established at Gibson Island (Apr. 29, Mesdames Tappan and Henderson) and at Federalsburg (May 24, Virgil Wright). A most extraordinary summer bird for the Eastern Shore was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Miss A. May Thompson's suet feeder in Denton on June 20.

Flycatchers, Warblers. The Alder and Least Flycatchers were less common than usual this spring, but the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was reported several times in the area between Catoctin Mountain and Chesapeake Bay. The first was seen at Emmitsburg on the early date of May 13 (Richards), one was at Cylburn (Baltimore Co.), May 16 (Alice Kaestner), two (!) were noted at Loch Raven on the 19th (Buchanan), one at Laurel, May 19-21, and May 25 (Robbins), and one in Harford County on the 26th (fide Knight). An Olive-sided Flycatcher seen at Patuxent Refuge by Stewart on May 5 is the earliest State record. One of our rarest spring warblers, the Orange-crown, was seen on three dates, Apr. 10-26, at Emmitsburg by Dr. Richards. The Bay-breasted Warbler, much more commonly seen in fall than in spring, was especially plentiful this May. The Black-throated Green, on the other hand, was unaccountably scarce. Almost as rare as the Orange-crown in spring is the Western Palm Warbler; Mrs. Romaine and Mrs. Tappan submitted the first spring report from Gibson Island on the typical date of May 7--the eastern race, the Yellow Palm, is seldom encountered at our latitude after the close of April. Two other Western Palms were identified in Talbot County, May 5 (Kleen).

Blackbirds. The Yellow-headed Blackbird was discussed in a separate article. Also of particular interest are two more reports of Brewer's Blackbirds from the Eastern Shore; three were seen near Easton and four at Blackwater Refuge headquarters, all on Apr. 8 (Buckley and others).

Finches and Sparrows. On Apr. 28 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks turned up on three Laurel feeding shelves where they had never been seen before (Mrs. Robert McEney and others). Also at Laurel, six were banded, Apr. 28 to May 3, where none had been trapped the four previous years (Robbins). Strangely, no other Maryland community reported the species on Apr. 28. Orville Crowder noted a heavy flight in Harford County, and on Apr. 30 Maurice Brown estimated 100 of these grosbeaks at Hawk Mt., Pa. A Dickcissel was seen at Annapolis on Apr. 27 by Harold Wierenga. A great rarity away from the ocean was an Ipswich Sparrow on the late date of Apr. 15, studied at Gibson Island by Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Tappan, and Mr. and Mrs. Dolf Swing. Stephen Simon and Seth Low vied with each other for the junco departure record. It was first claimed by Simon, but forfeited when his wife found the bird later--dead. Seth Low then turned in a May 24 date, but this in turn was exceeded by a healthy bird trapped and banded at Monkton on May 30 (Simon), four weeks past normal departure time.



JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

A REVIEW OF THE NINTH ANNUAL JUNIOR NATURE CAMP

Gordon A. Knight

On Saturday morning, June 16, 1956, an empty yellow school bus lumbered up the road to the lodge of the Western Maryland 4-H Center near Bittinger in Garrett County. A few minutes later, it went back out the road toward the main highway loaded with smiling young campers who were going home after six wonderful days in the out-of-doors. Thus, the 9th annual Junior Nature Camp sponsored by the Allegany County Bird Club came to a successful close.

The hundred-or-so juniors, many of them first-year campers, adjusted quickly to camp life and were very respondent to their instructors in classes, asking questions and actively participating in discussions.

The regular day began with an early bird walk before breakfast. From 9:30 A.M. to 12:00 everyone had two one-hour classes divided by a rest period. Six subjects were taught in classes: birds in general, bird nests, plants in general, trees, insects, and beaver life. The classes were instructed by senior counselors of whom several are, or were regular, school teachers. After a nourishing lunch the campers had another rest period. The afternoons were divided into two segments, art class and recreation, which included a refreshing swim in beautiful Cunningham Lake, if the weather permitted. A camp fire, film, or speaker was usually scheduled for the evening hours and after a full active day the campers were glad to retire.

During the camp week 80 odd species of birds were observed, in addition; also, 35 nests of 20 species of birds were discovered. Most of the campers saw first hand the remarkable accomplishments of the beavers, which have a large colony at the head of the lake. Between and after classes, the senior counselors capably directed by Mr. William Leeson established an impressive permanent plant check list for the camp area. These and many more activities were conducted under nearly perfect weather conditions.

Everyone who attended camp is a richer person for the experience, and all are eager to return next year. If you didn't make it this year, be there in 1957: it will be the biggest and best session yet. I'll see you at the tenth anniversary Junior Nature Camp.

R.F.D. 1, Aberdeen

SUMMARY OF THE 1956 BALTIMORE SATURDAY "BIRD WALKS"

Charles M. Buchanan

Like the spring of 1955, the 1956 season was a late one, but unlike the spring of 1955, birds were found in good numbers after they finally arrived. The sum total of species seen on all the walks was 124, as compared to 108 last year, due in part to the fact that the final trip this year had complete coverage. Last year only Wyman Park was covered on the last date. It is disappointing to note that the White-crowned Sparrow, a rare transient that is often missed entirely by observers in the Baltimore area but which had one of its finest flights in recent years, was not recorded on any walk. Its peak was apparently reached during the two-week interval between the fourth and fifth walks. Other birds missed included Red-tailed Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Tree Swallow, Golden-winged Warbler and Orchard Oriole.

Leaders for the trips were Dr. and Mrs. Jim Travis for Wyman Park, Mrs. Carl Lubbert, Mrs. Leo Vollmer and Mrs. Robert Kaestner alternating at Lake Roland, and Charles Buchanan with Mrs. Lubbert assisting at Loch Raven. Lake Roland, long one of the most delightful birding spots around Baltimore, is suffering systematic destruction of some of its best areas, at an accelerated pace. First, some land was cleared for a "park", then a lot of dumping occurred until finally stopped by our club, led by Mr. Mitchell Griffith. Now there is wholesale clearing going on in favor of housing construction and roadbuilding, and some additional government buildings have gone up, wiping out a major portion of the former breeding territories of the localized Least Flycatcher and Warbling Vireo. The great majority of the 46 people who participated in the 1956 walks still went to Lake Roland, and indeed most migrants may still be seen there, but not as easily; and certainly the nesting population will never be what it was.

Following is a summary of the five weekends, noting many of the 124 species seen, and accompanied by a few comments on the weather and its effects on the migration.

April 14 - Weather clear, temperature 43° at 6:00 A.M. The season was cool and migrants delayed. Wyman Park, with 30 species in 3½ hours, had the only Sparrow Hawk, Kingfisher, White-breasted Nuthatch and Hermit Thrushes. Lake Roland, 30 species in 3 hours, had 8 Bobwhites, Killdeer, and shared Yellow Palm Warblers with Loch Raven. They discovered Carolina Chickadees nest-building. Loch Raven, 45 species in 3 hours, got 8 of its species during a drive from the dam to the northern end of the lake. Among these were Pied-billed Grebes, American Mergansers, Marsh Hawk, 5 Coots, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. An Osprey at Loch Raven was seen on this and the next 3 weekends, and a Phoebe's nest was observed under construction. Aggregate species total - 54.

April 21 - Clear, temperature 36° at 6:00 A.M. Consistently cool weather and northerly winds kept migrants to a minimum, with the aggregate species total no better than last week and 10 less than the corresponding weekend last year. Wyman Park, 33 species in 3 hours, picked up the only Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Purple Grackles and Purple Finches. Lake Roland, 29 species in 3 hours, had

an exceptionally early Olive-backed Thrush, considering the season, and had the best count on Broad-winged Hawks with 6. Loch Raven, 43 species in 3 hours, specialized in water birds with 2 Horned Grebes, Great Blue Herons, Black and Wood Ducks, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal and Baldpates and shared Spotted Sandpiper with Lake Roland. They also had 1 Louisiana Water-thrush, and found a second Phoebe's nest. Aggregate species total - 54.

April 28 - Clear, 56° at 7:00 A.M. Southerly winds the previous night brought record heat and with it the first major break-through of migrants. Most of them this day, however, were the overdue ones, and the aggregate total was still 14 under the same weekend last year! Wyman Park, 46 species in 5 hours, got the first Crested Flycatcher, Oven-bird, Hooded Warbler and the only Swamp Sparrow. Lake Roland, 43 species in 2 hours, had Fish Crow, 4 Cedar Waxwings, the first Yellow Warbler, and saw 11 Blue Jays migrating. Loch Raven, 50 species in 3 hours, found a Black Vulture, 2 House Wrens, Catbird, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat and the only Red-shouldered Hawk and Meadowlark. They had a long look at a Red Fox. Two trips had Wood Thrush, Black and White Warbler and Prairie Warbler, and all three had Chimney Swift, Yellow-throat and Redstart. Aggregate species total - 65.

May 5 - Clear, 35° at 6:00 A.M. Wyman Park, 54 species in 6½ hours, had the first Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-winged Warbler, 5 Nashville Warblers, 3 Cape May Warblers, Black-poll Warbler, Indigo Bunting, shared Canada Warbler with Lake Roland, and still had Junco. Lake Roland, 47 species in 4 hours, had 6 Warbling Vireos, 4 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and the only Green Herons. They shared Baltimore Oriole with Loch Raven. Loch Raven, 69 species in 7 hours, got Hummingbird, Kingbird, 2 Least Flycatchers, 4 Scarlet Tanagers, and the only Sharp-shinned Hawk and Pheasant, and still had Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Two trips had Veery, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, and Parula Warbler, and all trips had Black-throated Green and Chestnut-sided Warblers, and large flocks of Goldfinches. Loch Raven and Wyman Park had 18 Blackburnian Warblers between them. Aggregate species total - 84.

May 12 - Annual Convention at Ocean City. No Baltimore walks.

May 19 - Clear, 49° at 7:00 A.M., S.W. winds. The delayed season had held up the late migrants as well as the early ones, and a relatively large number had not been reported through May 5, but today's walks accounted for most of them. The three trips together had 25 kinds of warblers. Wyman Park, 53 species in 3 hours, added Black-billed Cuckoo and 2 Nighthawks to the season's list. Lake Roland, 56 species in 4 hours, added 4 Tennessee and 10 Bay-breasted Warblers, and had the high count of Canada Warblers with 20. Loch Raven, 74 species in 6 hours, found a Wood Duck family, Solitary Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, about 7 Alder Flycatchers, Prothonotary and 2 Worm-eating Warblers, and Grasshopper Sparrow. Lake Roland and Loch Raven each had 4 Wilson's Warblers, and all trips had Black-throated Blue Warblers. Aggregate species total - 89.

COMING EVENTS

- Oct. 6 Baltimore Club trip to Loch Raven, meet at Hutzler Parking Lot, 8 a.m.
- 6 Anne Arundel Club Hike, meet at Arnold Fire Station, 7 a.m.
- 6-7 Allegany Club overnight trip to C & O Canal, meet at Canal Barge Station, 2 p.m.
- 8 Takoma Park Club regular meeting.
- 9 Allegany Club regular meeting, Beaver Valley, Allegany High School, 7:30 p.m.
- 10 Frederick Club regular meeting, The Story of Fish Hatcheries by J. Tresselt.
- 12 Baltimore Club regular meeting, Cavalier Country by Dr. Charles Stine, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
- 14 Frederick Club field trip, meet at Band Shell, 2 p.m.
- 14 Baltimore Club field trip, meet at Edgewood Diner, 8 a.m.
- 14 Takoma Park Club field trip to Washington Monument Park, meet at Safeway Parking Lot, Ethan Allen & Carroll Aves., 7 a.m.
- 18 Anne Arundel Club regular meeting, Atlantic Flyway by Ed Addy.
- 20 Talbot Club field trip to Bombay Hook and Philadelphia Zoo.
- 20 Baltimore Club field trip to Lake Roland, meet at Lake & Roland Aves., 8 a.m.
- 20 Allegany Club field trip along C & O Canal, meet at Canal Bridge, Old Town, 8 a.m.
- 25 Caroline Club regular meeting, Ridgely Methodist Church, 7 p.m.
- 26 Talbot Club regular meeting, Falconry by Brian MacDonald, Easton Library, 8 p.m.
- 27-28 Frederick & Anne Arundel field trip to C & O Canal and Washington Monument Park.
- 27-28 Baltimore Club field trip to Hawk Mountain.
- Nov. 2 Harford Club regular meeting, Your Living Heritage.
- 2 Baltimore Club regular meeting, Bird Art by Fritz Hilton, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
- 3 Baltimore Club field trip to Mrs. Gorsuch's Estate, 10 a.m.
- 3 Anne Arundel Club field trip to Experiment Station, 7 a.m.
- 10 Anne Arundel Field trip to Bombay Hook.
- 10 Takoma Park Club field trip to Port Tobacco.
- 10-12 Baltimore Club field trip to the Eastern Shore.
- 11 Allegany Club field trip to C & O Canal, meet at Millstone Filling Station, 2 p.m.
- 12 Allegany Club regular meeting, The Old Canal by Bryant Tyrrell, Allegany High School, 7:30 p.m.
- 12 Takoma Park Club regular meeting.
- 14 Frederick Club regular meeting, Exploration of Caves by Dr. Gordon Thoreau, Mrs Hoyler's Apt., 8 p.m.
- 16 Talbot Club regular meeting, Prairie Wings, Easton Library, 8 p.m.
- 17 Talbot Club field trip to Blackwater Refuge, meet at Easton Library, 9 a.m.

- Nov. 17 Frederick Club field trip to Smithsonian Institute, meet at Band Shell, 12 noon.
- 25 Baltimore Club field trip to Perry Point, meet at Edgewood Diner, 8:30 a.m.
- 26 Caroline Club regular meeting, Local Program by Mrs Ethel Poore Greensboro High School, 7:30 p.m.
- 30 Baltimore Club paid lecture, Nature Around Us by Ralph Lawrence Towson High School, 8 p.m.
- Dec. 1 Anne Arundel Club field trip, meet at Rt 2, South River Bridge, 8 a.m.
- 7 Anne Arundel Club Christmas Count Organizational Meeting, Public Library, 8 p.m.
- 9 Baltimore Club field trip to Sandy Point, meet Light and Redwood Streets, 8 a.m.
- 10 Takoma Park Club regular meeting.
- 12 Frederick Club regular meeting, African Safari by Al Webb, the Partridges home, 8 p.m.
- 14 Baltimore Club regular meeting, Natural History of Catoctin Mt. Park by Marc Sagan, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
- 15 Talbot Club field trip to Tilghman's Island, meet at St. Michaels High School, 7 a.m.
- 22 Denton Christmas Count.
- 23 St. Michaels Christmas Count preview.
- 23 Tridelphia Christmas Count.
- 27 Ocean City Christmas Count.
- 28 Blackwater Christmas Count.
- 29 St. Michaels Christmas Count.
- 30 Annapolis Christmas Count.
- 31 Seneca Christmas Count.
- Jan. 1 Catoctin Christmas Count.
- 1-31 Baltimore Club winter bird population study at Loch Raven.
- 4 Harford Club regular meeting.
- 5 Frederick Club regular meeting, Miss Quinn's home, 8 p.m.
- 7 Talbot Club seminar, Ducks of Talbot County, 13 Aurora Street, 7:30 p.m.
- 13 Baltimore Club field trip to Liberty Dam, meet at Gwynn Oak Junction, 7:30 a.m.
- 14 Talbot Club seminar, Birds of the Feeding Station, 13 Aurora Street, 7:30 p.m.
- 18 Baltimore Club regular meeting, The World of Insects, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
- 19 Anne Arundel Club field trip to Calvert County, meet at Wayson Corners, 8 a.m.
- 21 Talbot Club seminar, Banding Birds, 13 Aurora Street, 7:30 p.m.
- 25 Talbot & Caroline Clubs joint meeting, Bonaventure Island by Dr. L.M. Waugh, Easton Library, 8 p.m.
- 26 Baltimore Club field trip to Roaches Run and Smithsonian Institute, meet at Pratt & Light Streets.
- 28 Talbot Club seminar, Warblers of Talbot County, 13 Aurora Street, Easton, 7:30 p.m.