

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.

2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland



Volume 12

DECEMBER 1956

Number 4

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

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Junior membership (under 18 years)	\$.50

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COVER: Laughing Gull. Photo by Charles J. Stine, Jr.

HEADINGS: By Irving E. Hampe, Art Editor

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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WILSON'S WARBLER WINTERING IN TALBOT COUNTY

Jane Offutt

Someone once said to me, "Bird watchers must be terrible liars, because they never believe anyone." My friend had just reported a rare bird at her feeder and I voiced my disbelief. But how true it is that so many of us who share this marvelous interest in birding let our imagination run away with us. We are often convinced that we have seen a great rarity. Most of the time it is no rarity at all, but a misidentification instead. Bird watching has devotees in all stages of proficiency. Some of us believe a Red-bellied Woodpecker is a Red-headed. Others cannot tell a Towhee from a Robin. Is it any wonder that one of our experts raised an eyebrow when informed of the presence of a Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) at my home in December? So much doubt was expressed that, when asked just how rare this was, the reply came, "Just like seeing a polar bear in the Everglades."

A Wilson's Warbler was first seen here at Llandaff Cottage three years ago, November 17, 1953, but at that time I knew no birders to impress. However, when I first heard his familiar "chit, chit, chit" this past November 30, and later spied this gleam of gold working all around the buildings, flycatcher-like, I knew at once it was the Wilson's Warbler again. On a number of occasions it appeared not more than three feet from me, just outside an upstairs window where it was giving the raingutter and the shingles of the roof a thorough going over. Here I could see the black patch on its yellow head, the diagnostic field mark for this species. I noted, as in 1953, that it seemed to stay ten to fifteen feet above the ground when insecting on the barn, studio, or house, and even lower when searching in the bushes. It never came to any of the many feeders in the yard though it often appeared near the house. I do not recall its date of departure in 1953, but this year it remained until December 30. It obliged by appearing a number of times when various members of the Talbot County Bird Club came to view it, so there could not be any doubts as to its identification.

I was requested not to leave the vicinity of my home until I had spotted him for sure on December 29, official Christmas Count day for the St. Michaels area. It would seem he understood the situation, for on this day he came to the back steps and gave his characteristic call. There he was working around a group of iris not six feet from where I stood in the "Bird Room." Besides the Wilson's Warbler, three handsome Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*), a fully-colored male, a female, and an immature male, showed up faithfully at my feeder on the day of the Count.

Easton

SUPPLEMENTARY 1955 NEST SUMMARY

A total of 81 nesting records from Baltimore County, contributed by the Elmer Worthley family and F. S. and W. Reese, were accidentally omitted from the 1955 Nest Summary published in Maryland Birdlife 12:

41. Unless otherwise stated, the records are from Owings Mills.

KILLDEER - Two nests reported in May.

FLICKER - Nest found on May 10; young in nest on June 6.

DOWNY WOODPECKER - Young in nest on May 7.

EASTERN KINGBIRD - Nest on May 28, feeding young on June 20.

EASTERN PHOEBE - Five nests reported from Baltimore County and one from Carroll County, from April 9 to June 25. Height ranged from 4 ft. to 10 ft. Two nests were successful.

BARN SWALLOW - Twenty nests from July 5 to August 2. Six eggs in one nest.

BLUE JAY - Nest on May 1, about 30 ft. up.

HOUSE WREN - Eight nests reported at heights from 3 ft. to 7 ft., from May 30 to August 3. One nest was found in a clothes bag.

MOCKINGBIRD - On April 15 nest found. Young left nest on May 22.

CATBIRD - Six nests from May 21 to July 4.

BROWN THRASHER - Four nests reported, the earliest on May 2. One nest had 5 young.

ROBIN - Two nests.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - Three reports, the earliest on April 11.

RED-WING - Three nests in hayfields as early as May 11.

ORCHARD ORIOLE - Building on June 5, feeding young on June 27.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Building nest on May 9, 14 ft. up; feeding young on June 27.

PURPLE GRACKLE - One record.

CARDINAL - Three eggs on June 4.

GOLDFINCH - Nest finished in buttonbush in meadow on July 29.

Five eggs, August 3; 3 well-feathered young, August 23; empty, Aug. 30.

CHIPPING SPARROW - Three nests.

FIELD SPARROW - One record.

SONG SPARROW - Eight nests, May 2 to August 14.

* * * * *

A CONSERVATIONIST'S PRAYER

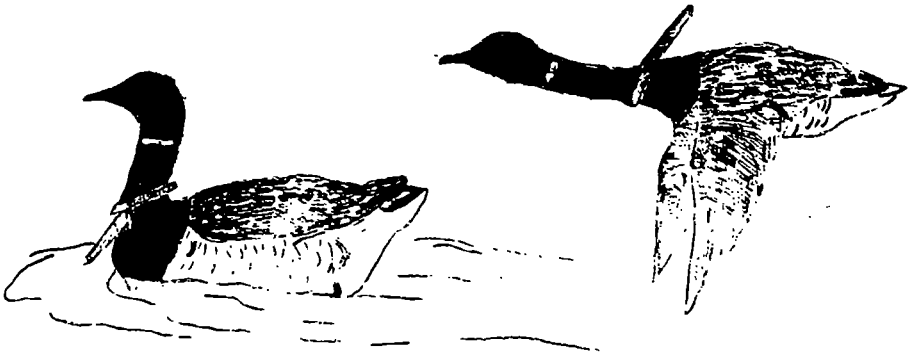
Fr. Edward Stoehr, o.f.m.cap.

O good Saint Francis of Assisi, ardent lover of nature, who didst recognize infinite power in all creatures animate and inanimate, infinite wisdom ruling and governing them, and who didst break forth into a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for so great goodness and wisdom on the part of the Creator, PRAY that we might be led by His creatures as by so many steps to the knowledge of Him, and, aid us in our program to conserve these God-given wonders of nature, so that we and others might be enlightened in mind, that we, too, might see Him in all creation, and thus may know, love, and praise Him upon earth, until we have the happiness of knowing, loving, and praising Him with thee forever in Heaven, Amen.

BRANT FROM SOUTHAMPTON ISLAND, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
WEAR YELLOW NECK-BANDS

Where do the Brant from the Maryland coast spend the summer? At least one, and probably many more, go to Southampton Island, a large island in northern Hudson Bay, some 1,700 miles north of here.

During the Ocean City Christmas Count a Brant with a yellow neck-band was seen in a flock of 30 Brant by the Assateague Island party. This was one of several hundred birds marked this past summer on their nesting grounds by an expedition sponsored by Cornell University and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The bands, which consist of a slip-proof neck loop with a four-inch streamer, can be seen up to a mile through binoculars.



Keep an eye peeled for these neck-banded Brant and report all observations to Thomas W. Barry, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. Record the date, place, number with neck bands and number without.

* * * * *

MR. R. J. REICHERT, a recognized authority on BINOCULARS, is speaking to most of our local clubs in March. His talk will include: How to use your glass to best advantage, how to choose the model best suited to your purpose, and how to check a glass -- both for condition and for the claims made for it. He will also briefly review the binoculars currently available, with reference to their country of origin. He will have a simple chart and diagram to illustrate details every birder should know, and an assortment of binoculars and telescopes of various types and powers, including a couple of "phonies" as examples of misrepresentation.

Mr. Reichert will also show some color slides of birds he has photographed through binoculars (the new Bino-Fotography).

Members who would like to ask Mr. Reichert about their personal glasses may bring them along and consult him after the meeting. Mr. Reichert is the author of "Know Your Binoculars" published in Audubon Magazine, as well as numerous other articles, and is listed in "Who Knows - And What" as an authority on binoculars.



JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1956

Chandler S. Robbins

Although no full-fledged hurricane crossed Maryland's borders this season, we had more than our share of violent local storms and floods. Many late nests were doubtless destroyed by the high gusts and rushing torrents. Temperatures were a little on the cool side during all three months, and during July the precipitation was well above normal. In fact, Maryland did not have a single rain-free day in July.

Cormorants and Pelicans. Although frequently seen along the coast and around Chesapeake Bay during the summer months, the Double-crested Cormorant is rare in other Maryland areas at all seasons. One was seen at Preston on Sept. 17, the first September record for Caroline County (Marvin Hewitt). The Brown Pelican is a southern species which most of us have not had the pleasure of seeing in Maryland; one was noted circling St. Michaels harbor on Sept. 2 by a score of observers, several of whom were familiar with the bird in the deep south.

Geese and Ducks. Small flocks of Canada Geese again arrived from the north in mid-September, the earliest report coming from Talbot County on Sept. 12 (Richard Kleen). A Sept. 3 arrival date for the Buffle-head in Preston (Hewitt) was unusually early.

Hawks. The southward flight of Broad-winged Hawks in mid-September was disappointing this year, not only in Maryland but at Hawk Mountain and other eastern locations as well. The most significant observations reported this year did not involve large numbers, but revealed a new migration pathway used by this species. A flock of 9 was seen in Talbot County on Sept. 9 (Kleen, Edith Adkins, Stewart DeButts and Caroline Borden-Smith), and several people reported small flocks moving southward just east of Kent Narrows, Queen Annes County (Martha Dubois, Paul Springer).

Shorebirds. Inland shorebird records of interest included a Knot and 7 Sanderlings on the Choptank River shore below Cambridge on Aug. 27 (Harry Armistead), and 5 to 8 Dowitchers on Tilghman's Island, Aug. 28-31 (Kleen and Armistead).

Gulls and Terns. Dick Kleen made his regular summer trip to Sharp's Island on July 1. His party found the island now covers less

than half the area it did the previous summer. However, the Herring Gull population rose from 3 nests in 1955 to 6 this year. One of the young Herring Gulls was banded. Fifteen Common Tern nests were found on the island, but the shell areas formerly used by the Least Terns were submerged. Four pairs of the latter species were found nesting together with 12 pairs of Common Terns, 2 of Black Ducks, 4 of Green Herons and 35 of Red-wings eight miles to the northeast on one-acre Nelson's Island off Neavitt by Armistead. This same observer made a high count for the Bay of 30 Royal Terns at Tilghman's Island, Aug. 31.

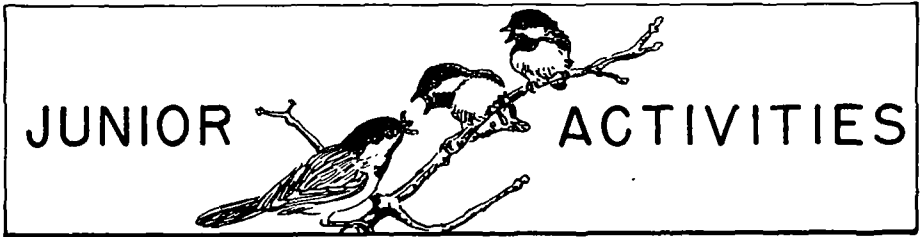
Cuckoos. Many nesting-season reports of Black-billed Cuckoos were received, showing that this species was more common than usual, especially in Coastal Plain areas where it is generally a scarce breeder.

Flycatchers. More Arkansas Kingbirds than usual were seen along the Atlantic coast this fall. Although Marylanders generally see many fewer of this species than do people in coastal states just to our north, we shared in the 1956 reports. Two individuals were closely observed at Wye Island in Queen Annes County on Sept. 9 (Ronnie and Nita Nevius, Miss Adkins and Kleen). Two others were seen on the barrier beach north of Ocean City, Sept. 17, by Richard Cole and others, and one was banded there the next day (Gladys Cole). Systematic trapping and banding in the thickets on the barrier beach north of Ocean City, Sept. 8-23, rewarded "Operation Recovery" participants with 5 Yellow-bellied, 5 Acadian, 2 Alder and 4 Least Flycatchers. The only Olive-sided Flycatcher reported was seen near Easton by Edith Adkins; Talbot County now has more records of this species than all other Eastern Shore counties combined.

Nuthatches. A flock of 3 Brown-headed Nuthatches was found at the Ocean City trapping site in mid-September by Stephen Simon and the Coles; this is the first time they have been seen on the barrier beach north of Ocean City. This was an off year for Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Warblers. These species were generally late in arriving from the north and several observers commented that numbers were below normal. The Ocean City banding crew trapped 27 species of warblers including such rarities for the Eastern Shore as the Tennessee (3), Nashville (3), Connecticut (7), Mourning (1), and Wilson's (4). The species most commonly trapped there were the American Redstart (132) and Yellow-breasted Chat (66). Red-eyed Vireos and Catbirds showed a marked decrease from the same period in 1955. W. M. Davidson, trapping at Claiborne, banded an Orange-crowned Warbler on Sept. 10 and 2 the following day.

Blackbirds, Tanagers, Finches and Sparrows. Highlights in these families included an early migrating Bobolink over Laurel on July 4 (Robbins); a late Summer Tanager at Denton on Sept. 28 (Alicia Knotts); 3 Red Crossbills at the Ocean City banding site throughout mid-September; single Dickcissels at Laurel, Sept. 2, and Chestertown, Sept. 4 (Robbins) and banded at Ocean City, Sept. 21 (Coles); and several Lark Sparrows at Ocean City, one of which was banded on Sept. 17 (Coles).



MY TRIP TO DORCHESTER COUNTY

Terry Moore

On November 4, Ronnie Beaven, Michael Messix, my father, and I left Queen Anne and started out for Golden Hill in Dorchester County. We wanted especially to see the Red-cockaded Woodpecker which had been seen there earlier this fall.

About one mile below Easton we saw an adult Bald Eagle. We did not see much more until we reached the Choptank River Bridge at Cambridge. There we saw several Ring-billed Gulls and Common Terns in with some Herring Gulls. A little past Golden Hill we saw a male Belted Kingfisher, which was perched on a power line, and some Greater Yellow-legs. We drove on. Soon we saw a Great Blue Heron which looked us right in the eye!

On our way back we stopped at the South Dorchester High School. Here there was a pond with some Mallards in it. As we watched the Mallards, we saw three other ducks fly over. They circled several times and landed. They turned out to be Gadwalls, a new bird for all of us.

In all we saw forty-three species. Although we did not see the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, we all thought the trip was a successful one.

Queen Anne

A NOTICE TO JUNIORS

Wilbur Rittenhouse

Let's make our section of Maryland Birdlife the part that everybody reads first. We can do this if every junior member who sees, hears, or does something interesting will write it up for our section. Surely you can write at least a short article and send it to me. My address is below. Remember, this is your section. The more things and the better things you write, the better our section will be.

Queen Anne

A MEMORIAL TO MISS PEARL HEAPS

In addition to the active part Miss Heaps played in the Maryland Ornithological Society, she was Bird Chairman of the Cylburn Wildflower Preserve and Garden Center, a recent addition to the Baltimore Department of Parks. Anyone wishing to contribute to a group planting of American hollies at Cylburn in her memory please contact Mrs. Robert E. Kaestner, 6005 Lakehurst Drive, Baltimore 10, Md.

STATE DUCK TRIP

The regular state duck trip will take place on March 10th. The place of meeting will be St. Michaels High School at 10 A.M. Boats will leave from various places in Talbot County to cover the Chesapeake Bay, Miles River and other tidal inlets and estuaries. The charge for the boat trip will be two dollars per person. Wonderful observation of Old Squaws, Scoters, Mergansers and other water birds are promised. Register with Mrs. Ronald Nevius, Easton, by March 4th.

1956 COUNTY BIRD LISTS

The 1956 tabulation will be compiled by Richard L. Kleen, St. Michaels. Please send him before February 15 a list of all species you observed in your county during the past year. And if you have records of birds seen in other Maryland counties, send these along too. The county tabulation is already well under way. Worcester County is in the lead with 227 species reported so far; Talbot is second with 224; Anne Arundel is third with 195, followed closely by Frederick, Prince Georges, and Baltimore. Cecil County, with only 59 species to its credit, is in last place. Other counties that have not yet passed the 100 mark for 1956 are Somerset, Calvert, Carroll, Kent and Allegany. Fourteen species have already been checked off for all 23 counties.

ADVERTISING

Starting with the March 1957 issue, MARYLAND BIRDLIFE will carry a limited amount of advertising. The following rates were approved by the Editorial Board at their October 29 meeting: \$15 per issue for full page (except \$20 for back cover), \$8 for half page, \$5 for quarter page; 10% discount for full year contract (4 issues). An additional fee of \$2 is charged for the first time each add appears and for any subsequent change in ad (to cover cost of setting up the ad); this fee is waived if advertiser furnishes finished copy suitable for photographing. Send all communications to Dr. Charles J. Stine, Chairman, Advertising Committee, 6305 Belair Road, Baltimore 6, Md.

1956 NEST RECORDS

Last call for 1956 nest records. Send to Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Denton, Maryland.

NEW MEMBERS

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 Dr. Albert Steiner, 4301 Miami Place, Baltimore 7
 Mr. Marc Steiner, 4301 Miami Place, Baltimore 7
 Father Edward Stoehr, St. Conrad's Friary, Annapolis

COMING EVENTS

- Feb. 2 Anne Arundel Club field trip, meet at Sandy Point, 8 a.m.
 4 Talbot Club Seminar, Bird Songs, 13 Aurora St., 8 p.m.
 10 Baltimore Club field trip to Kent Island, meet Sam Smith
 Park, 8 a.m.
 10 Talbot Club Field trip to Tilghman's Island, meet St.
 Michaels High School, 9 a.m.
 11 Talbot Club Seminar, Bird Songs, 13 Aurora St., 8 p.m.
 11 Takoma Park regular meeting.
 12 Anne Arundel regular meeting, Waterfowl Management by
 Vernon Stotts, Presbyterian Church, Annapolis, 8 p.m.
 13 Frederick Club regular meeting, Migration of Waterfowl,
 by Seth Low, Dr. Tanner's residence, 8 p.m.
 15 Baltimore Club regular meeting, Relationship of Birds
 and Mammals by Dr. Kyle Barbehenn, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
 15 Talbot Club regular meeting, Birding From Cuba to Canada
 by Richard L. Kleen, Easton Library, 8 p.m.
 18 Talbot Club seminar, Bird Songs, 13 Aurora St., 8 p.m.
 20 Allegany Club regular meeting, Recordings, Board of
 Education Building, 7:30 p.m.
 24 Baltimore Club field trip to Bombay Hook, meet Edgewood
 Diner, 8 a.m.
 25 Talbot Club seminar, Ferns of Talbot County, 13 Aurora
 St., 8 p.m.
 28 Caroline Club regular meeting, Birds in the Hand by
 Stephen Simon, Greensboro High School, 8 p.m.
- Mar. 2 Anne Arundel Club field trip, meet Upper Patuxent, 8 a.m.
 4 Harford Club regular meeting, Binoculars by the Reicherts,
 Belair Library, 7:30 p.m.
 6 Baltimore Club seminar, Birds of Gaspe Peninsula by
 Roland Clement, Natural History Building, 8 p.m.
 8 Baltimore Club regular meeting, Binoculars by the
 Reicherts, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
 10 State Duck Trip, meet at St. Michaels High School, 10 a.m.
 two dollars per person.
 11 Takoma Park regular meeting.
 13 Frederick Club regular meeting, Binoculars by the
 Reicherts, the Shirey's residence, 8 p.m.
 13 Baltimore Club seminar, Natural History Society, 8 p.m.
 14 Talbot and Caroline Clubs combined meeting, Binoculars
 by the Reicherts, Denton, 8 p.m.
 16 Anne Arundel Scavenger Hunt, 137 Monticello Ave., 3 p.m.
 17 Frederick Club field trip, meet Band Shell, 2 p.m.

- Mar. 17 Baltimore Club field trip to Sandy Point, meet Sam Smith Park, 8 a.m.
- 20 Baltimore Club Seminar, Natural History Society, 8 p.m.
- 21 Talbot Club Special Meeting, Birds in the Back Yard by Miss Esther Heacock, Easton Library, 8 p.m.
- 24 Takoma Park field trip to Rocky Gorge.
- 24 Baltimore Club field trip for evening Woodcock flight, meet Kutzler's parking lot, Towson, 5 p.m.
- 25 Caroline Club regular meeting, Chandler S. Robbins, Ridgely Methodist Church, 8 p.m.
- 27 Baltimore Club Seminar, Natural History Society, 8 p.m.
- 31 Allegary Club field trip to Koon Dam, 2 p.m.
- Apr. 3 Baltimore Club Seminar, Bird Behavior by Harvy Kirk Natural History Society, 8 p.m.
- 6 Frederick Club field trip, meet at Band Shell, 8 a.m.
- 6 Baltimore Club field trip to Loch Raven, meet north end Cockeysville underpass 8 a.m.
- 6 Anne Arundel Club Boat Trip, City Pier, 8 a.m.
- 7 Talbot Club Boat Trip to Poplar Island Heroney, meet at St. Michaels High School, 10 a.m.
- 8 Takoma Park Club regular meeting.
- 10 Baltimore Club Seminar, Natural History Society, 8 p.m.
- 12 Baltimore Club regular meeting, Pratt Library, 8 p.m.
- 12 Frederick Club regular meeting, Birding from Cuba to Canada by Richard L. Kleen, Francis Scott Key Hotel, 8 p.m.
- 13 Frederick Club field trip, meet at Band Shell, 8 a.m.
- 13 Allegary Club field trip to C & O Canal, meet at Millstone Filling Station, 8 a.m.
- 13 Talbot Club migrant hike, Easton Library, 8 a.m.
- 13 Baltimore Club migrant walks, Lake Roland, Wyman Park and Loch Raven, 8 a.m.
- 14 Baltimore Club bus trip to Biological Station, Solomon's Island, meet Sam Smith Park, 7:30 a.m. register by April 10, with Dr. Charles Stine.
- 17 Baltimore Club seminar, Natural History Society 8 p.m.
- 20 Anne Arundel Club supper, Truxton Park, 3 p.m.
- 20 Frederick Club field trip, meet at Band Shell, 8 a.m.
- 21 Baltimore Club migrant walks, see April 13 for details.
- 24 Baltimore Club seminar, Natural History Society, 8 p.m.
- 25 Caroline Club regular meeting, Bombay Hook Refuge, Camp Mardella, 8 p.m.
- 26 Talbot Club regular meeting, Wild Flowers, Easton Library, 8 p.m.
- 27 Talbot Club Wild Flower Hike, Easton Library, 9 a.m.
- 27 Baltimore Club migrant hikes, see April 13 for details.
- 27 Allegary Club field trip to C & O Canal, meet at Millstone Filling Station, 8 p.m.
- 28 Talbot Club migrant hike & lunch, Easton Library 8 a.m.
- 28 Takoma Park field trip.
- 28 Baltimore Club field trip to C & O Canal, meet at Great Falls parking area, Maryland side, 8:30 a.m., register Miss Burner, Liberty 2-0797.