

THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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AN APRIL VISIT TO THE REELFOOT CRANE-TOWNS

BY FRANKLIN M'CAHEY

At one p.m. on April 27, we set out from Walnut Log Lodge, rowing up Bayou du Chien. The party consisted of Mr. A. F. Ganier, Mr. H. O. Todd and John Calhoun of Nashville, Dr. Steagal and Mr. Evans of Illinois, Mr. W. M. Walker of Knoxville, a guide, and the writer. We rowed some three miles up the bayou and after portaging the boats across 200 yards of land, began the tedious half-mile poling job through the willows and rushes. Finally we reached Otter Basin and "Little Cranetown." And what a sight it was to the writer, who had never seen the like before. American Egrets and Great Blue Herons flew about, voicing their harsh, guttural notes, and rising from the trees. A flock of 40 Black Vultures commenced circling about the nest trees and their presence here was viewed by us with suspicion. A large nest tree with a small maple growing against its side was located, and the ascent begun, first on the maple until we reached the first limbs of the big old cypress, then upon it. The final stage was made with the assistance of a rope thrown over a limb above.

This colony consists of over 200 nests, and about 450 adult birds. The Egrets with their aigrettes and the Herons with their plumed crests sat near, scolding, or flew excitedly about, while the Vultures and a lone Water Turkey (Anhinga) circled overhead. Pictures were taken of the squawking adults, of the few young, and of the numerous blue eggs in the nests. As the sun dropped lower, we descended and began the tiresome journey back, after a memorable afternoon. Earlier in the day, out on the open lake two Common Terns, an Osprey, an American Bittern, Scaup, Teal and Coots had been seen; these brought the total list for the day to 86 species.

Early the next morning, we motored south to Samburg and were joined there by Mrs. L. D. Hicks and A. C. McCloskey of Columbus, Ohio. The State motorboat towed our rowboats three miles across the lake, passing a flock of several hundred Tree Swallows, a "raft" of Cormorants and many Coots enroute. Our objective was "Big Cranetown," in the swamp the west side of the lake. We left the motorboat at the edge of the lily pads and paddled through them in the three small boats. When the lilies ended, the two-mile struggle through the thickets, saw-grass, willows and flooded forests began. Nobody knew exactly the direction to go; we merely followed the flights after the Herons and Egrets as they flapped back and forth between "Big Cranetown" and the open lake. Soon we could hear the cries and squawks of the birds at their nests, and suddenly we passed from the willow growths into the stand of ancient cypress where the nests were located. As many as 40 nests were in some of the big trees, many of which were over 100 feet tall, and some were six feet in diameter. They grew in water from two to three feet deep. The excited birds flew about in great numbers, much as the day before, except that there were about five times as many.

Repeating the previous day's procedure, we climbed some of the large trees and viewed our surroundings. In one tree were 14 nests, 2 of the Cormorant, 5 of the Great Blue Heron, and 7 of the Egret, all with eggs except one with two young. The nests were great loosely-woven platforms of large twigs; some were two feet across and a foot thick; some hollowed, others mere flat

platforms from which it seemed the eggs would roll off. From our position we had a wonderful view of our surroundings. In the green cypress trees on all sides of us were perched the white, graceful Egrets, in every conceivable position, with their plumes waving in the breeze. We could count nearly 500 in sight at one time. A few Great Blues sat about, appearing uninterested in the proceedings, while dozens of Cormorants perched near, or sat on eggs in the next tree, and with necks extended and orange throat-pouches vibrating, showed their disapproval of our intrusion by harsh, rattling, croaking sounds. Several hundred nests of the four species, many with eggs and some with old birds sitting on them, could be seen from our tree. We took pictures and collected a few eggs, and having had our fill of the beautiful view, we descended to eat lunch. In the water, under the nest trees, were found many dead fish of worthless varieties dropped from the nests and also a few young that had been killed by the fall from above. This colony numbered over a thousand nests, and hence somewhat over two thousand birds.

After lunch we waded about, trying unsuccessfully to climb several trees, while one of our party, with his climbing spurs, ascended a large tree containing twenty nests, mostly of the Cormorant, and secured additional photographs. Finally the writer found a tall tree in the open that was well branched. After some difficulty he reached the swaying top, nearly ninety feet above the water, and collected a set of Cormorant eggs. But the sun was sinking, and not wishing to be caught in the forest when darkness fell, we began to start back. As the writer began a sliding descent from his lofty perch, the surrounding Egret-studded cypress, the pair of Red-shouldered Hawks soaring overhead, the Cormorants croaking farewell, and the hazy hills far in the background, presented a beautiful picture. Then he was back in the mud and water below, and soon the trip back through the dense flooded swamp began. On the way out to the motorboat we espied a hitherto unknown Bald Eagle's nest in the top of a tall dead cypress, and an American Bittern was flushed from the "sawgrass" a little further on.

The rest of the trip was enjoyable, being pulled behind the motorboat. A great raft of about 500 Cormorants "took off" from the water only a short distance ahead, and Coots frequently pattered along the surface at our approach. Three Canvasbacks and forty Scaup floated a short distance away, as two Wood Duck and some Teal whistled by overhead and Herring Gulls flapped lazily along. This eventful day ended when the boats bumped the dock at Samburg at 4 p. m., and the total list for the day was 80 species.

MEMPHIS, TENN., May 1, 1935.



IN SEARCH OF THE DUCK HAWK

BY BRUCE P. TYLER

When early ornithologists came to choose a scientific name for the Duck Hawk or Peregrine Falcon, they decided upon *Falco peregrinus anatum*, and this was derived as follows: Falco from Falx (Latin), a sickle. Peregrinus from (Latin) per, through, and ager, a field or land. Anatum from (Greek) ana, up, and temno, to cut. Hence, the bird with sickle-like talons that searches through the fields for its prey which is duly torn, or cut up, and needless to say, devoured. This is the species used during Medieval times in the ancient sport of falconry. The strong, the swiftest, the most daring of birds. It is now rare in American but where found it usually breeds along the water courses, nesting in high cliffs, and feeds to some extent on water-loving birds.

On March 17, 1935, J. D. Roller, Howard Long, Robert B. Lyle and the writer essayed to discover the nest of the Duck Hawk, a perilous task at the best. For years we have known that the Duck Hawks nested in the cliffs along Holston River. In fact, we knew the very cliff where they dwelt.

Formerly, Mr. Lyle had collected their eggs from this same locality and we were all hopeful that we would return rewarded with a clutch of their beautiful eggs and photographs of the nest. We started shortly after noon, drove as near as possible to our rugged cliff, then afoot, over two ridges and came to the home of the Duck Hawk, but no falcon was in evidence. Slowly we continued our climb into the cliffs and continuously the going became steeper and harder. Here Mr. Lyle suggested that I remain on a point that commanded a view of the face of the cliff that was supposed to harbor the nest, to see if the birds flew out as the rest of the party advanced to a point where a rope ladder could be dropped over the cliff, but I had no idea of remaining behind. I might have done so had I known the nature of the cliff we were bound for; however, I continued with the party. When we approached the supposed nesting site, no hawk could be seen and we proceeded to roll a few large stones over the cliff, and to our joy, out came the Duck Hawk, cackling and screaming, very evidently disturbed from its nest by the falling stones. Now, the detail of the nesting site was somewhat as follows: We were on a narrow ledge, say 350 to 400 feet above the river, above us a sheer cliff, below us a sheer cliff, the sloping ledge, about ten feet wide, supported a few small trees. A little further along, the ledge it widened slightly and a cave opened into the upper cliff, the home of the Vultures.

Mr. Lyle, (Bob), commander-in-chief of the expedition, joyously began to get the rope ladder and life-line ready for the descent over the face of the lower cliff. Mr. Roller, the youngest and fittest, made the descent. It tested my courage to see that splendid boy go over the edge of the cliff. In fact, I almost had the "jitters," an absolutely forbidden thing in such surroundings, but I must admit that I had to take myself rigidly in hand and it was with greatest relief that I saw the climber's head and shoulders, and very shortly all of him, come up over the edge of that yawning abyss and hurry up the life-line to the rest of the party. All the king's horses and all the king's men could not have induced me to go over that cliff. I kept all my anxiety to myself, but it hindered my usefulness, and I sought a sunny nook in the upper cliff where I could observe the flight of the falcons, while twice again the intrepid climber went over the cliff in vain effort to locate the sought for nest. I had learned long since to "bend a bowlin' on a bight of rope" and it was my only service to the expedition. I had tied the life-line firmly and without possibility of slipping about the manly chest of the climber, and it never failed him.

As the rest of the party searched the cliffs, I lay in my sunny nook in the upper cliff, watching the flight of the Duck Hawks, beautiful beyond description as they flew back and forth over the river and along the craggy cliff, scolding, screaming, cackling, because we were very near their nest. Poising high above, they would fold their wings nearly to their bodies and dive, once at a Vulture that seemed to annoy them, frequently seemingly at nothing, possibly just for the joy of flying, the joy of strength and the skill of ages. Again they would soar back and forth. My field glass gave me a near view of all this. I was wonderfully impressed, for I had never before observed their flight so closely. Possibly no one but us knew of their presence here and there was satisfaction in feeling that while nearly anyone else than a bird lover would have thought they should be shot down because they were hawks, our viewpoint was one of admiration and nothing could have induced us to kill one of them.

The sun was getting low as we turned our weary feet homeward down the narrow ledge, down the rock-strewn bluff to the river, over the two ridges to our waiting car and homeward, tired, hungry and disappointed, but loving it. Meanwhile, father and mother Duck Hawk returned to find their nest intact, to cluck to their precious eggs or fledgelings, mindful that their ability to choose an impregnable stronghold for their nesting had saved them.

JOHNSON CITY, TENN., April 1, 1935.

NOTES ON SOME EVERYDAY BIRDS

BY JAMIE ROSS TIPPENS

There is drama and excitement in the everyday happenings in the bird world, even in so small and prosaic a place as a suburban yard. For those of us who love to peek into the family affairs of our feathered friends and follow the fortunes and misfortunes that are theirs as they mate and build and rear their young, there is much that reminds us of the daily doings in a village of people, like ourselves. In turn, they have their moments of happiness, of anxiety, of play, of fear, of conquest and of toil. Sometimes I set down in my notebook the chief events of the day that I have noted in the little "bird village" that centers about my home and at the request of the Editor, am giving some of the notes below.

"April 3, 1934—Pair of Brown Thrashers building a nest in thick rose vine on the fence. April 4—the nest was abandoned when only about half done and another nest has been begun a few feet away. April 6—nest seems to be nearly completed but the Thrashers are on the ground some distance from the nest apparently disturbed because a man is working nearby in the yard. April 14—The Thrashers are at the nest; I can't see into it because it is too deeply hidden among vicious thorns.

"May 13—Maryland Yellowthroats have a nest in a low bush; top of nest about 15 inches above the ground. I failed to set down the date on which the first egg was laid. The first egg, however, remained in the nest two days before the second was laid; the third and fourth were laid on consecutive days. Incubation was not begun until after the fourth egg was laid. When there were two eggs, the nest was nearly destroyed by a man who was cutting the weeds. Although it was left partially exposed the nest was not harmed and the birds did not desert it as I feared they would.

"May 21—Robins seem to be having a hard time finding enough food for their young; the ground is so hard and dry. One young Robin with tiny pin-feathers, fell out of its nest in my side yard and, the night being chilly, died from exposure.

"May 21—Young Thrashers are out of their nest in the thick rose vine. Three in number; must have hatched some time ago as their feathers are well grown and they are nearly as large as their parents. One adult of this pair has a leg band, which seems to bother the bird at times. I did not band this bird.

"May 22—More Robins falling from the nest. They have nothing in their crops. I am trying to feed them on a mixture of egg and mashed Irish potatoes. They are too weak to open their mouths and I am compelled to force-feed them. I have two on my hands. About birds falling from their nests, John Calhoun says the young Crested Flycatchers often fall prematurely from the nests which the old birds build in his Martin box. May 22 (later in the day)—The young Robins seem to be getting stronger and I am placing them in the yard where their visibly distressed parents can reach them. Feel sure a fresh worm once in a while will benefit them more than my egg and potato mixture.

"May 23—Weather warmer; brought the young Robins in the house and kept them overnight. Put them in the yard early next morning. They are now strong enough to scramble to the back of a bench, where the parent birds are feeding them meagerly. They can't fly yet.

May 24—I left a cup of the egg mixture in the yard and find the Thrashers literally cramming it down the throats of their overgrown youngsters. The parents are nesting again in the top of a large plum tree. The banded one must be the female for it is on the nest most of the time.

"May 26—Yellowthroat sitting on her four eggs; is very shy and darts off when I come near.

"May 29—Tragic discovery; this morning I found three Thrashers sitting on the edge of my bird bath, and one adult among them was all humped up with feathers ruffled. A lump of something in the water proved to be the

other parent, dead and stiff. This dead bird had the leg band, number B-215608. I found that it had been banded about two years before by Mrs. Cochran, at her station five blocks south. May 29—Found an adult Robin dead, in another watering place. May 30—Another dead Robin at a drinking place and a sick Thrasher is near the spring in the back yard. It had great difficulty in trying to fly and finally hid in some weeds. Called Dr. Harwood of the Vanderbilt biology department and he very kindly came over and decided the birds were getting poison of some kind. The dead Robin, upon examination was found to have its gall bladder infested with parasitic worms but since the bird was fat and well plumaged, these were evidently not responsible for its death. A small amount of arsenic was present in the intestines. I later discovered that a neighbor had been putting out rat poison on bread, scattered in her yard, to kill these rodents. I then increased the variety and amount of food at my feeding stations in order to keep my birds at home.

"June 1—The Brown Thrashers had two eggs in their new nest today.

"June 2—Two young Maryland Yellowthroats have hatched, in the nest found May 13. June 3—Now there are three young and an egg which is added. June 4—The nest was found tilted and two of the young were on the ground. This was discovered by my children, Sara and J. Ross, and their friend, Bobby Lockart. Bobby used to shoot any bird he could hit but he is now their protector. As evidence of his "conversion," it was Bobby who came running to me for help when the young Yellowthroats were in danger. I put the nest back in the fork of the bush and the babies back in the nest. One naked little thing had three big black ants fastened so tightly to it that I had trouble in dislodging them.

"June 5—The little Yellowthroats seem to be thriving. Found the added egg on the ground; presume the old birds threw it out as it was in the nest with the young the day before. Parent birds are feeding their young on green worms. I should say the mother instead of parents for I haven't seen the male bird feed them at all. June 6—only two young in the nest this morning. I am suspicious of a Blue Jay that I have seen hanging around near the nest. The two remaining young have downy feathers. June 7—The little fellows have acquired a fairly good coat of feathers.

"June 10—The Yellowthroats' nest is empty; the young probably left yesterday or this morning. The two adult birds are in some nearby bushes, playing hide and seek with me as is their custom. Hope the young were not drowned by a deluge of rain that fell last night."

And so on through the summer, the autumn, the cold of winter, then back to spring, when the avian cycle begins all over again. There is always something going on among the birds and right well do they entertain those of us who watch them from day to day.

(MRS. C. B. TIPPENS), NASHVILLE, TENN.



REELFOOT LAKE IN 1875: In Kellebrew and Safford's "Resources of Tennessee," in the sketch of Lake County, on page 1123, we find this: ". . . in Reelfoot Lake there is the greatest abundance of excellent fish, such as trout, perch, cat, buffalo and other varieties found in Western waters. In the southern and northeastern sections of the county, a few bears, deer and turkeys are found, and on the river and lake there are immense numbers of ducks and geese, and a good many swan, all of which are hunted by professional hunters, who annually send many tons of them to market. Trappers, too, are very successful in trapping beavers, raccoons, otters and wildcats, all of which are found in considerable numbers, especially in the lake and along its banks."

GOOSE POND AND ITS MARSH BIRDS

BY ALBERT F. GANIER

Birds of the marshes have always interested me exceedingly. Probably it is because they are rare and because even well experienced bird students know very little about them or their habits in this part of the country. The bird books are practically blank with respect to the nesting of marsh birds in the Central South. Then too, marshes in Tennessee are now a rarity, for drainage ditches have bled them of the water which makes them what they were and now most of them are commonplace fields or sedge patches full of crayfish holes.

In the minds of many, marshes are abhorrent. They are held to be the abiding places of malaria and miasma, the hatcheries of snakes and snapping turtles, and the idea of wading about in them, shoe-top deep in mud and gumboot deep in pungent waters, is repellent to the uninitiated. But when one has once overcome these little inhibitions and taken the pains to wade a few marshes with an "open mind" he finds them the most interesting of all places. The plant life and the animal life is found to be abundant, varied and totally different from that which can be found upon dry land areas.

For a good many years the writer has taken pains to locate and explore every marsh of consequence which he could locate in Tennessee and in this way has accumulated considerable information about the marsh birds which are known to nest within the State. It was only this spring, however, that it was his good fortune to be able to explore the most extensive one of all, Goose Pond, in the southwest corner of Grundy County—about midway between Murfreesboro, and Chattanooga. Messrs H. O. Todd of Murfreesboro, John Calhoun, and the writer, of Nashville, arrived on the scene the night before and early in the morning of May 26th we were at the shore. Goose Pond covers about fifty acres and is really a shallow flat-bottomed lake, about two feet deep and with the exception of a few open pools, it is entirely grown over with marsh grass and various water plants. About the edges and well out from the bank were patches of blue flags and pickerel weed, both showy with blossoms. Water lily pads were all about, in patches here and there, and a thick submerged growth of plant life slowed down our wading to some extent. There were no trees in the pond but there was a growth of wild rose and button bushes along its banks. As we waded in we noticed innumerable little duck trails all through the growth and were not surprised a few moments later when a Blue-winged Teal arose and winged away to the other side. Next, a Wood Duck came flying rapidly by and from then on we flushed one or the other sort every now and then. There must have been at least half a dozen of each species, not counting young unable to fly. Of these we captured a four weeks old Teal and a ten day old Wood Duck. A pair of the latter were flushed from the ground in the swampy woods a hundred feet from shore and we were quite certain that a new brood was here being escorted from their nest tree to the water. The Blue-winged Teals build on the ground in the grass but we did not find their nests. Red-winged Blackbirds were nesting here and there in the marsh, having tucked their compact straw nests down in the tufts of coarse green grass about a foot above the water. Most of them held four blue eggs marked with black scrawls about the larger end. Green Herons, "Shite-pokes," flew lazily about or eyed us suspiciously from a nearby tree.

Presently a large brown bird arose ahead of us and flapped heavily away to alight in the grass some distance ahead. An American Bittern it was, and here, at this late date and with ideal habitat, it must surely be breeding. As yet there had been no Tennessee record of its nesting although the writer has flushed it in several other marshes about the State in summer and felt sure it was a breeding bird though a rare one. We set about looking most carefully for the nest and after considerable search found it a hundred yards away. The nest held but one buffy, unmarked egg and it was

found to be addled and deserted. We began to search anew and, 40 feet away, found an occupied nest, this one with three young about five days old. They resembled little buffy colored powder puffs with large toes and legs and heavy beaks. As they hissed at us in a most threatening manner, they attempted to back off the edge of the nest and had to be set back repeatedly while being photographed. (On a visit four days later, all the young except one were found to have wandered away in the grass.) The nests were a pile of marsh grass about 13 inches across, quite flat on top and built up about 8 inches above the knee-deep water. We were much elated with this first Tennessee nest record. Entering a long arm of the pond, which was thickly grown with long grass, we began to look for nests of the King Rail. Presently a Least Bittern arose a few steps ahead and later others were seen; however, their nests were not found. More Red-winged Blackbird nests were observed here and the ducks flew past us on the way to tend their young. Searching closely in the long grass for Rail nests we presently found one containing a single egg, built as usual about a foot above the water and well hidden from above. Rail eggs are greenish buff color, spotted over with dull brown and lavender.

Calhoun was some distance back and presently called out that he too had found a nest of the King Rail, with six eggs. I told him to tie a white string above it and I would photograph it on the way back. When I returned I found that Todd had stopped to look at the eggs as he passed on. A glance showed me, however, that they were not those of the King Rail at all but were those of the Purple Gallinule and the six nearly fresh eggs in the nest made a beautiful picture. The eggs were about the size of those of the King Rail but had a rich pinkish-buff background dotted over with spots of bright reddish brown. The nest was similar to that of the Rail but was smaller and was a platform of rushes built in the marsh grass about 15 inches above knee deep water. The Purple Gallinule is a semi-tropical species, the most beautifully colored of all marsh birds, and is not known to nest elsewhere in the State except at Reelfoot Lake where the writer found it nesting in 1923.

What a wonderful place for a wild life refuge, we thought, and what a splendid place for them to rear their young and to give transient birds a safe stopping place on migration, if adequately protected. What a splendid variety of plant life had established itself here through the centuries and what a creditable quota of marsh birds clung to the place, yet at that a mere remnant of those which formerly existed in the State. I had spotted some fresh excavation over on one shore so went there to examine. To my surprise I saw that a drainage ditch had been opened up to the very edge of the lake and it was but a day's work to complete it and drain the marsh. From a native who came by, I learned that the work would be begun again in a few days and finished up. "The Government is doin' it to stop malarly, they says, but we aint been bothered by mosquitoes and we hate to see old Goose Pond go," he added. Here truly was an opportunity for conservation so when I returned to Nashville the following day I made a written report and protest on the matter to Mr. Damon Headden, State Director of Conservation, and he in turn took it up with authorities in charge of the drainage and had the work held up. There were no mosquitoes about the place and subsequent examination showed none of their larvae in the water. Suffice it to say for the present that every effort will be made to save Goose Pond and to acquire it for a wild life refuge.

Completing our wading at noon we had lunch and motored forty miles to a small but long established marsh near Morrison. On the way we picked up a little dead Sora Rail from the highway; it proved to be a female and was not in breeding condition so was evidently a transient. The marsh covered only about two acres, was about knee-deep although there were some deeper holes, and was thickly grown with long grass. It was rich in bird life and

here we flushed two King Rails, several Least Bitterns, finding two of their nests, and, best of all, found two more nests of the American Bittern, not more than 50 feet apart, each containing small young. Not knowing of any other marsh in that part of the country we motored homeward feeling well repaid with the information gathered during an eventful day.

NASHVILLE, TENN., June, 1935.



BIRD BANDING BREVITIES—NO. 5

BY MRS. F. C. LASKEY

The record of the past season for *White-crowned Sparrows* is interesting. There were 70 individuals banded and 13 birds returned that had been banded in previous years. The repeat records indicate that at least 23 of the new arrivals and 6 of the returns spent the winter about the station. On March 24, 1935, the third *Gambel's Sparrow* of record at my station was banded. It was in adult plumage. The first spring capture of a *Lincoln's Sparrow* this year was on March 27th; 6 individuals were trapped later, the last date being May 22nd. *Field Sparrows*, as reported in the March *MIGRANT*, continue to appear in much decreased numbers at the station. March and April, like January and February, 1935, have been far below the same period of the two years previous in numbers; March and April, 1933 show 196 banded; 1934 there were 197; but in 1935, the total for the two months was only 87. A few individuals have furnished interesting records; F-70913, banded October 13, 1931, was retaken October 9, 1932. He returned on March 28, 1933, remaining for nesting until late summer. He returned again April 3, 1934, was here until August, and returned March 24, 1935 for his fourth year. H-17838, an adult female, was banded September 9, 1932 and also comes each year for nesting. Her return dates are April 1, 1933; March 15, 1934; March 20, 1935. Her records show that she, like F-70913, is at least four years old. She has been trapped 156 times. F-91609, banded June 18, 1932 as an adult male is another old bird. He is a summer resident, returning March 16, 1933; March 17, 1934; March 14, 1935. F-91632 banded June 23, 1932, immature female, has apparently closed her interesting record for she disappeared last November after spending practically all of her life at the station since her arrival. In her two and a half years as a permanent resident, she was removed from the traps 216 times. The most persistent repeater, however, is H-38833, a male, banded July 18, 1933, returning March 13, 1934 and repeating 193 times before migrating November 1st. He came back March 19, 1935 and by the last of May, had been captured 112 times. *Indigo Buntings* have been abundant at the station this spring. In May there were 23 banded and 10 returned that had been banded other years. There have been 9 *Brown Thrasher* returns during March, April and May. The most interesting of these is A-280729, a male banded as an adult in 1931, returning each spring for nesting. This bird is therefore at least 5 years old. He carried food from the drop trap to the nestlings, and when they were nearly full grown, brought this year's brood of three under the trap in May to feed them. His mate of last year also returned a few days earlier than he, but was already mated with another bird. She did not remain for nesting nearby. A *Bronzed Grackle*, banded at the Belle Meade substation October 3, 1934, was killed January 25, 1935 by C. A. Gentry 7 miles east of Rienzi, Miss. A *Bronzed Grackle* made a rather remarkable homing record recently. He was banded May 1st, deported, and released about 3 miles north. His return was not anticipated but he was seen and recognized a few days later on account of his distinctive banding. May 13th he was trapped, deported 4 miles northeast late that afternoon. At noon the following day he was re-trapped at the station. At 4:30 p. m. (May 14) he was released 6½ miles

(Continued on Page 33)

WATERBIRDS OF EAST TENNESSEE

By JAMES TRENT, JR.

The eastern portion of Tennessee, with its generally hilly or mountainous terrain, is not at all well situated for the study of waterfowl, since the majority of our streams are small, more or less swift, and with few of the exposed and open margins so appreciated by shorebirds; neither do we have many lakes to attract ducks and geese, having near Knoxville only one lake worthy of the name and which, although it is our largest, contains only about 70 acres. This one lake, however, Lake Andrew Jackson (formerly known as Dead Horse Lake) is largely responsible for the variety of our waterbird records. The Tennessee River, flowing through Knoxville, together with the French Broad which joins it 5 miles to the East, have also been productive of records. In this hilly country marshes are few and almost without exception are small, furnishing little desirable cover to marsh-loving birds. For these reasons, while we have a number of records of species, the total numbers are small, while species may be numerous. In this way we differ from West Tennessee where waterfowl in the thousands are not uncommon. For example, on October 28, 1934, a day's trip by canoe down the French Broad river as a sort of preliminary survey of the duck hunting situation disclosed 105 ducks by actual count, mostly in small "gangs" of from 2 to 17 individuals. We were very pleased, since that was a large number of ducks to be seen over that particular stretch of water. That may seem peculiar to persons in middle and west Tennessee who are accustomed to seeing ducks by the hundreds and thousands, but it illustrates very well the small scale on which we are forced to observe the waterfowl. Too, we are forced to watch most of our ducks in flight or at long range, since most of them are flushed either by boat or by observers on shore, from the margins of streams or ponds. The exceptions to this situation are those birds observed on Lake Andrew Jackson, where shooting or trespassing is not allowed and the ducks are not so shy.

It must be remembered that references to comparative abundance are from the observations of the various bird students who have contributed their notes and from the information we are able to collect from hunters. If we but had the records of more of the ducks killed by hunters certain of these ducks would probably not seem so rare. However, we have a very good way of locating unusual ducks, since it is the habit of many hunters to bring the heads of ducks they cannot identify to certain of our local ornithologists. We owe a great deal to the diligence of certain members who have made river trips and, more particularly, trips to Lake Andrew Jackson during the migration seasons.

It is hoped that this list will serve to compare the abundance of

waterbirds in East Tennessee before and after the completion of Norris Dam and the establishing of the immense lake above it, along the Clinch River. There is no doubt that the lake will furnish a sanctuary and resting place for transient waterfowl and we hope that they will gather there in larger numbers than we are used to seeing here.

The writer wishes to express his deep appreciation to Mr. A. F. Ganier of Nashville for the initial stimulus to this activity; also for the use of his "Distributional List of the Birds of Tennessee" as an outline for this list, and for the many helpful suggestions and additions he so kindly provided. Acknowledgement is also hereby made to Mr. Bruce P. Tyler and Mr. Robert B. Lyle of Johnson City, Tennessee for their kind assistance; to Mr. H. P. Ijams and other members of the Knoxville branch of the Tennessee Ornithological Society and to Dr. Earl O. Henry and Mr. Arthur Ogden for notes from specimens in their collections. The frequent visits of W. M. Walker and George Foster to Lake Andrew Jackson during 1934-35 have been of tremendous value in adding not only additional data but new occurrence records.

The local branch of the T.O.S. has a small collection of mounted birds at Knoxville and these are referred to in the notes which follow. The figures shown in parentheses, refer to previously published data upon the species in question, a key to these citations being appended to this article.

COMMON LOON *Gavia immer immer*

The loon is rather rare here but occasionally one is brought in or reported by duck hunters. The Society's collection includes a mounted specimen taken here and mounted by Mr. Ogden, Nov. 23, 1932.

PIED-BILLED GREBE *Podilymbus podiceps podiceps*

Our only common grebe; a fairly common transient. The "didapper" known to everyone. They arrive here in August and may be found occasionally on the cold mountain rivers as well as the larger rivers and lakes. A pair makes a few days' stop on the little lake at the Scout Camp at Elkmont each August to provide entertainment and study for the Boy Scout Campers.

WHITE PELICAN *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

A single transient bird was observed at Knoxville, on the afternoon of May 8, 1935, by Mr. W. M. Johnson, who gives full details of this unusual occurrence in the Round Table section of the present issue. (Reference No. 1.) Another is said to have been taken here about thirty years ago.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax auritus auritus

The "nigger goose" of the duck hunters. It is a rare transient but one or two are to be found on Lake Andrew Jackson here rather regularly until the most extreme winter weather arrives. We first recorded this bird at Lake Andrew Jackson Mar. 29, 1929.

GREAT BLUE HERON *Ardea herodias herodias*

The Great Blue is to be found at Lake Andrew Jackson at all times of the year. It is likely that they leave if the weather gets too severe.

However, there was no time this winter that from 1 to 4 were not to be found at the lake every trip. They are not such regular visitors along rivers and in other sections where conditions are not so suitable.

AMERICAN EGRET *Casmerodius albus egretta*

A specimen was taken at Hodges Lake, 15 miles east of Knoxville, in July, 1929 and mounted by Earl Henry; another was taken at the same place in July, 1932. A single bird was seen at Lake Andrew Jackson April 14, 1935 and on April 21 there were two. These are our first spring records. Most transient records of this species are made in the late summer.

LITTLE BLUE HERON *Florida caerulea caerulea*

In the late summer the almost pure white immature Little Blue Herons arrive and immediately reports of "white cranes" begin to pour in. We have no records of mature birds here so it would seem that only the young of the year are given to this northward migration.

EASTERN GREEN HERON *Butorides virescens virescens*

The "shite-poke" frequently seen along the streams and about ponds in the summer time. A specimen in Earl Henry's collection was taken in July, 1929. It is a common summer resident.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli

A rather rare transient and, having been observed in summer on the Tennessee River, is believed to nest there. It possibly is more common than supposed, but is seldom seen because of its more or less nocturnal habits. A specimen in the collection here was taken Nov. 18, 1933. A spring date is April 14, 1935.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

Nyctinassa violacea violacea

This species is probably a rare though regular transient visitor here. A recent record is of one seen by Walker and Foster at Lake Andrew Jackson on April 13, 1935. (2) An old record is that of April 24, 1885, observed by Fox in Roane Co. (18).

AMERICAN BITTERN *Botaurus lentiginosus*

A rare transient, seldom seen because of its hiding ability. A specimen in Earl Henry's collection was taken in July, 1929, which might possibly indicate a breeding bird or at least a bird that nested not so far distant. One was reported at Lake Andrew Jackson April 13 and 21, '35. (See also note under Red-Breasted Merganser).

EASTERN LEAST BITTERN *Ixobrychus exilis exilis*

A very rare summer resident. The writer's only record was one killed by frog hunters May 26, 1932 and mounted by Mr. Ogden. The bird was an adult in breeding plumage.

WOOD IBIS *Mycteria americana*

A specimen mounted by Mr. Ogden was killed from a flock of 5 at Cumberland Gap, near the Kentucky line, June 13, 1932. It was an immature female and so far off its range that it must be termed accidental. (3)

WHISTLING SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Possibly still a very rare migrant. At rare intervals we hear reports of "large white geese" which may be these birds. The last record we have of this species is that of two birds which were shot near Knoxville on Dec. 8, 1926, on the Little Tennessee River, south of this city. The culprits were deservedly prosecuted. (17).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis canadensis*

These noble birds never fail to excite even the most stolid farmer along the river bottoms. They are to be found at practically all times during the winter around Half Moon Island below Rockwood, Tennessee and are fairly common transients throughout the entire Tennessee valley. This last winter (1934-35) they seemed to be more common than usual.

COMMON MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*

A fairly common transient and winter resident, but not nearly so common as a few years ago. Formerly the most common of the larger ducks, this season (1934-35) found them very uncommon, not over 25 percent as common as Black Ducks. They are usually rather late in arriving in the winter. A flock of 25 was seen at the head of Dickinson's Island, March 17, 1935.

RED-LEGGED BLACK DUCK *Anas rubripes rubripes*COMMON BLACK DUCK *Anas rubripes tristis*

Apparently both forms of this species occur here, since birds with olive-green legs and at least one with bright red legs have been shot in hunting by myself and others. Black Ducks have for the past year or two replaced the mallard as the more common larger duck. They were the commonest of all ducks seen 1934-35, coming early and staying late. The hunters apparently confuse this bird with the hen mallard and commonly term it "black mallard."

GADWALL *Chaulelasmus streperus*

A very rare transient. We have only one record, that being a female at Lake Andrew Jackson Feb. 17, 1935.

BALDPATE *Mareca americana*

A very rare transient. A female was killed on the Tennessee River above Kingston Nov. 9, 1934. 2 males and 2 females were seen at Lake Andrew Jackson Mar. 17, 1935, and 2 birds April 14, 1935.

AMERICAN PINTAIL *Dafila acuta tzitzihoa*

A very uncommon duck in East Tennessee. On February 17, 1935, the members of the E.T.O.S. were treated to a rare sight when a flock of 27 pintails passed over several times at Lake Andrew Jackson. A single drake had been seen there a few weeks before. We also have a record of 30 on April 30, 1932.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Nettion carolinense*

A very rare transient, much less common than 10 years ago. The only one reported here in recent years was a female collected in 1932 on the river near the Bird Preserve.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Querquedula discors*

A rare transient. Both the teals are rather scarce now, with the Blue-winged the more common. April 23 a flock of 18 was seen at Lake Andrew Jackson. Also dates of Nov. 9, 1934. April 21, 1935.

SHOVELLER *Spatula clypeata*

A very rare transient. A pair of these strikingly colored ducks was recorded on Lake Andrew Jackson March 30, 1929. Five were seen on the Lake on April 13, 1935.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

A very rare summer resident; East Tennessee's only breeding duck, breeding very rarely here. They are thriving under state and Federal protection and are among the commonest ducks early in the season. They were particularly common the fall of 1934. The latest record is Nov. 29 (1934). They move on very early. A spring date here is March 29.

REDHEAD *Nyroca americana*

A very rare transient. A mounted specimen in the Society's collection was taken near Looney's Island just below Knoxville a number of years ago.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Nyroca collaris*

A common transient. They were among the most common of the ducks 1934-35. Those killed early in the season, Nov. 8-10, were in Island March 17, 1935.

very poor condition. They are holding their own better than some other ducks. 6 were seen on ETOS field trip to Lake Andrew Jackson, Feb. 17, 1935 and several on April 13, 1935.

CANVASBACK *Nyroca valisineria*

A very rare transient. On Dec. 23, 1932 a flock of these ducks was seen by the writer just below Loudon on the Tennessee River. A mounted specimen is in the Society's collection.

LESSER SCAUP *Nyroca affinis*

A fairly common transient, but scarce this past hunting season (1934-35). A male was taken Nov. 8, 1934. A male was watched for some time on Daddy's Creek near Crab Orchard in the Cumberlands, Feb. 10, 1935. These ducks are not at all shy when single or in pairs, but are very shy in flocks; the ringnecks have similar habits. A flock of approximately 150 was on Lake Andrew Jackson April 13, 1935.

AMERICAN GOLDENEYE *Glaucionetta clangula americana*

A very rare winter resident and an uncommon migrant. Feb. 10, 1934, 10 of these ducks were seen on the Tennessee river near the municipal water plant. This flock was present for several days and the ducks were watched at their feeding by numerous persons. One was recorded on the Tennessee River near Chattanooga by Mr. Ganier on March 26, 1933, (4).

BUFFLEHEAD *Charitonetta albeola*

This beautiful little duck is a very rare transient in East Tennessee. There are the heads of two males in the Society's collection which were taken on the Tennessee river several years ago. This duck was reported from Johnson City Nov. 12, 1932 and Nov. 12, 1933. (5)

OLD SQUAW *Clangula hyemalis*

This curious sea duck is a very rare winter visitor. Mr. Ogden has mounted two of them, the male having been taken in February, 1934, and the female having been one of three shot on the Tennessee River, Jan. 15, 1927.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER *Melanitta deglandi*

We have only one record of this far northern sea duck, which commonly winters far to the north of our state and which seldom comes farther south than Long Island Sound. The bird was killed by the writer on the Tennessee river below Loudon, Dec. 23, 1932 and is now in Earl Henry's collection.

RUDDY DUCK *Erismatura jamaicensis rubida*

A very rare transient, our only records being Oct. 19, 1930 and April 13, 1935 on Lake Andrew Jackson.

HOODED MERGANSER *Lophodytes cucullatus*

A rare transient. This duck is almost invariably found in pairs or a single bird. They were fairly common 1934-35 and were practically the only ducks on the river in late January at the close of the hunting season. A pair at Lake Andrew Jackson, Mar. 17, 1935.

AMERICAN MERGANSER *Mergus merganser americanus*

A rare transient. A flock of these large fish ducks was seen at Lake Andrew Jackson from Dec., 1934 until the latter part of March, 1935. The water had been completely open all winter and food is plentiful. Another record comes from H. P. Ijams, of one taken on the Tennessee River near Knoxville, Feb. 12, 1927.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

A very rare transient. The taking by a duck hunter of several of these ducks in 1930 has been recorded. Mr. Tyler has a record of late March, 1932. The back and feet of one of these birds was found by Brockway Crouch in a Duck Hawk's nest, together with two left legs of American Bitterns. This nest was located near Alum Cave Cliff, on the South side of Mt. LeConte, at an altitude of 4500 feet. At this date, May 17, 1931, it held 3 young nearly ready to fly. The water birds were doubtless migrating north and probably came over the summit of the Great Smokies at Newfound Gap, which is at an elevation of 5200 feet above sea level. Identification was made by the U.S. Biological Survey.

KING RAIL *Rallus elegans elegans*

This rail is a rare summer resident and a rare transient. Some years ago a downy young bird was brought to Mr. Ijams which was identified as this species. A specimen taken at Fountain City in Sept., 1934, is in Mr. Ogden's collection. Earl Henry has seen several near Lynnhurst Cemetery in a marsh which has now been almost wholly drained by workers engaged in malarial control.

SORA RAIL *Porzana carolina*

A fairly common transient, but seldom seen, because of its secretive habits. An occurrence is reported at Johnson City, May 6, 1934. Earl Henry reports the occurrence of this bird about 5 years ago. There is a record of one at Athens, Tenn. on April 24, 1902. (6).

AMERICAN COOT *Fulica americana americana*

The coot or "water chicken" of the duck hunters is a fairly common transient and a rare winter resident. Although nearly valueless as food, many of these birds are killed each winter by hunters who are unable to resist the easy target they present as they "patter" along the surface of the water taking flight. Were less than half as common as usual winter of 1934-35, but were common on Lake Andrew in the Spring.

SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER *Charadrius semipalmatus*

A very rare transient. A specimen was collected Sept. 18, 1932 on the bank of the Tennessee River opposite the municipal water plant at Knoxville, and is now the Society's collection.

KILLDEER *Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*

This handsome bird of river, pond and pasture well merits the "vociferous" part of its name. It may commonly be seen or heard in almost all localities. A permanent resident.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER *Squatarola Squatarola*

A very rare transient. An immature bird was killed on the municipal airport at Knoxville October 6, 1933 and is now in the Society's collection. (7).

AMERICAN WOODCOCK *Philohela minor*

A rare transient and a rare breeder. Mr. John Bamberg has made some excellent pictures of nesting woodcock within the city limits of Knoxville, finding a nest with 4 eggs on April 27, 1931. (8), (9), (10).

WILSON'S SNIPE *Capella delicta*

This marsh lover, better known as "Jack snipe" is a fairly common transient. We have recorded it in late January, but it is most com-

men in March and April. Mr. Tyler recorded them as late as May 21 at Johnson City. (11).

UPLAND PLOVER *Bartramia longicauda*

A very rare East Tennessee migrant. We have no record of this bird near Knoxville, but Mr. Tyler, of Johnson City, has a date of March 26, 1933, as well as an occurrence a few years before on which he does not have the exact date.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Actitis macularia*

Fairly common along our streams from spring until fall, most common in the spring. A nest with eggs was found at Johnson City. (9).

EASTERN SOLITARY SANDPIPER *Tringa solitaria solitaria*

A fairly common transient; easily found along streams in spring and fall. This and the preceding are our only fairly common sandpipers.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS *Totanus melanoleucus*

A very rare transient. We have recorded it at rare intervals—on the banks of the Tennessee River, Sept. 18, 1933 and in a flooded pasture, April 22, 1928.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Totanus flavipes*

Not so rare as the Greater Yellowlegs. It was recorded on October 21, 1934 on a rock bar in the French Broad river near Paint Rock. Other dates are Aug. 2, 1928 and Sept. 18, 1933. On April 21, 1935 a flock of eight.

LEAST SANDPIPER *Pisobia minutilla*

A very rare transient. H. P. Ijams and Dr. E. B. Powers recorded this diminutive shore bird in a flooded pasture in Blount County, April 22, 1928. A report of May 14, 1933 from Johnson City is noted by Mr. Tyler.

SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER *Ereunetes pusillus*

A very rare transient. One was recorded here Sept. 18, 1933, while a specimen in Earl Henry's collection was taken on the shore of a small pond in Sevier County, October 25, 1929.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus smithsonianus*

Occasionally, particularly during a time of high water, these large gulls visit us. A flock of 9 was seen on the Little Tennessee River, Nov. 8, 1934. One or two visited Knoxville several times during the winter. One, Feb. 16, 1935 was during very cold weather. (17).

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

A very rare transient, our only definite record being a flock of 3 near Looney's Island below Knoxville, April 13, 1935. We possibly confuse these with the preceding species at times as we seldom see the gulls close at hand.

LAUGHING GULL *Larus atricilla*

This gull is an accidental visitor. The first authentic record for Tennessee was Sept. 18, 1933, when a specimen was taken from a small flock at the Island Home Park entrance on the Tennessee River. (12).

FORSTERS TERN *Sterna forsteri*

A very rare transient. However, this tern is usually recorded at some time every year. The last record was a flock of 11 on the Tennessee River from which a specimen was taken May 10, 1934. (13).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo hirundo*

This tern is much less common than the preceding. A specimen was taken on the French Broad River about 20 miles above Knoxville, Nov. 1930, which proved to be this species. The bird is now in Earl Henry's collection.

EASTERN SOOTY TERN.....*Sterna fuscata fuscata*

While an accidental visitor in Tennessee, this tern has been recorded here twice, July 30, 1926 (17) and June 20, 1934 (14). In both cases the birds were picked up exhausted following severe coastal storms. The latter specimen is in the E.T.O.S. collection.

BLACK TERN.....*Chlidonias nigra surinamensis*

A very rare transient, this bird has been recorded on the French Broad river in 1926 and at Lake Andrew Jackson, August 2, 1928.

There are certain birds on the Tennessee state list which undoubtedly occur here in East Tennessee and which should be included in a list of this nature although we have no definite date record of their occurrence. This list may be said to contain, as a minimum, the following species:

Horned Grebe, Virginia Rail, Purple Gallinule, Florida Gallinule, Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-Billed Dowitcher, Bonaparte's Gull and Franklin's Gull.

LITERATURE CITED

Numbers (1) to (16) are from *The Migrant*, as follows: (1) vol. 6, p. 34; (2) Vol. 6, p. 33; (3) V. 4, p. 50; (4) V. 4, p. 5; (5) V. 4, p. 26; (6) V. 6, p. 3; (7) V. 3, p. 48; (8) V. 4, p. 22; (9) V. 5, p. 51; (10) V. 6, p. 14; (11) V. 4, p. 51; (12) V. 4, p. 8; (13) V. 5, p. 31; (14) V. 5, p. 46; (15) V. 5, p. 22; (16) V. 4, p.47; (17) *Wilson Bulletin* V. 41, p. 97; (18) *The Auk* V. 3, pp. 315-320. Numbers (15) and (16) are not cited in the text but contain pertinent information.

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE, May, 1935

south, but at 8 a. m. May 16th was again hunting food at the traps. Each time he was recaptured, he was held several hours in a darkened cage before transporting the covered cage in an automobile. The trips were made in a roundabout way. One wonders what powerful urge it was that surmounted such difficulties and that prompted him to head directly "home" when released from the cage. It is with regret the disappearance of the old *Mockingbird* "B" is announced. He was the first of his species banded at the station and in the known 4 years of his residence, he always remained nearby so his disappearance doubtless indicates his death at the age of 5 years at least. His mate, also a permanent resident (at least 3 years old), is occupying a neighbor's garden now with her new mate, a young bird about a year old. A banded male *Orchard Oriole* that is raising a family in the garden is a return from some previous year, but so far, it has not been possible to trap him and read the band number. Only two adult male *Orchard Orioles* have been banded (1932) as here they enter traps only for water in times of drouth. The females and immatures are not so wary and several of them have been captured.

It is hoped other banders will send interesting items from Tennessee stations for publication in *Brevities*.

NASHVILLE, TENN., May 31, 1935.

THE ROUND TABLE

THE SEASON AT MEMPHIS: Our third record here for Upland Plover proved to be a charm for we had from two to eleven individuals present each day from March 27 to April 4, inclusive, at the old Bry's Airport, inside the city limits. This species was first seen this year on March 26 on Lake Forest golf course, a field which was frequented by flocks of Pipits last year and on which a pair or two of Prairie Horned Larks undoubtedly nest each spring. Looking for Larks I was surprised to flush the Plovers. The next morning I decided to look over Bry's Airport, a site which had always previously proved a disappointment as regards species other than Meadowlarks, Killdeers and (in season) Savannah Sparrows, and found two Upland Plovers. Afterwards we found them there each day, as many as eleven on April 2, and through April 4 when five were seen. On April 6 and 8 none were found. . . . I had never heard a Whip-poor-will here until the night of April 13 when we listened in Riverside Park to one calling close by. McCamey reported hearing five at Camp Currier, Miss., on April 17 together with two Chuck-wills-widows, while Whittemore also heard this species north of town on the same day. Earl Henry collected a specimen Sept. 24, 1932 for our only previous record. . . . Unseasonably cool weather evidently delayed our migrants as they arrived later than usual and in smaller numbers until April 18 on which date I recorded eleven species for the first time during the season. Subsequent migrants were more regular and the last of April and the first of May found our woods full of warblers and other species. A Blue-headed Vireo was recorded on April 23 and 24 and May 18 (McCamey). On April 23 I heard and saw a Nashville Warbler. On the 24th I observed for some time and at a few feet a bird which I believed to be an Alder Flycatcher. A Mourning Warbler was seen May 11 (McCamey, et al.) A Connecticut Warbler was reported April 27 (Alice Smith). . . . On the annual Spring Field Day, 126 species were noted, chiefly through the good work of Scouts led by Eagle Scouts Franklin McCamey, Fred Carney, and Henry Turner, with Jack Calhoun of Nashville. An early start and a disregard of all but the most terrific downpours enabled them and the most adventuresome of the main party to take advantage of the large number of birds present in the wooded bottomlands north of Lakeview. Warblers were especially abundant in spots. Six Veeries, a Philadelphia Vireo, twenty-three species of warblers, includ-

ing one Golden-winged Warbler (Earl Henry), were among the rare land birds seen. Six species of swallows, including the Cliff Swallow, were noted in numbers, skimming over the clover on the levee south of Lakeview. . . . Shorebirds were uncommon this spring. The Lakeview barrow pit was too grassy but suitable muddy shores on the more western string of pits were usually barren of results. On May 4, the day before the Field Day, C. M. Owens of Monticello, Ark., and I were fortunate enough to see 12 Wilson's Phalaropes (second Memphis record) feeding among about 25 Lesser Yellow-legs. A three-mile trek through the mud the next day and repeated visits at all pits on later dates failed to produce anything but occasionally a few Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers. On May 5, however, we did flush one Sora after another, totaling 15 for the whole string of pits. A few on May 8 were the last seen this spring. . . . Other waterbirds recorded at Lakeview were four Black-crowned Night Herons, six Shovelers and nine Blue-winged Teal on April 14 (also an Osprey); one Yellow-crowned Night Heron, an American Bittern, 35 Coots, 9 Shovelers, 30 more Teal on April 21; another Yellow-crowned on April 30; 15 Teal and an American Bittern on May 1; a Purple Gallinule was collected on May 4 by Earl Henry and another of this species was observed on May 16. . . . On April 30 the first Least Bittern was seen, several were noted at various pits on the Field Day and on May 26 a nest with four eggs was found. On May 30 it contained five eggs and a second nest containing three eggs was found. . . . At the Lakeview pit proper, which does not have areas of young willows as does the string of pits extending west and south along the levee, Pied-billed Grebes nested in 1932 and 1933 but not in 1934 when the pit was more shallow than usual and dried up early. This year the frequent rains have maintained a depth to three feet here and six nests were found. The first nest found contained six eggs on April 21 and eight on April 30 when two others with sets of seven were found. On May 1 a fourth nest, located within a few feet of the highway, was found with seven eggs. We could sit in a car and watch the parent on the nest as open conditions at this pit do not favor concealment of any great degree. This last was probably the first laid clutch as the eggs hatched May 8 and six baby Grebes were seen in the water nearby. The first nest mentioned contained 4 eggs on May 11 with four young nearby and on May 12 three eggs; one egg never hatched. The second and third sets also hatched but two later sets were not successful. No. 5, with 3 eggs on May 8 and a full clutch of 8 later, was found on May 30 to be empty with 4 eggs floating and one chick seen swimming nearby; No. 6, discovered with 2 eggs on May 26, was found abandoned on the 30th. Numerous snouts of turtles and snakes noted on the surface of the pond on subsequent days, probably explain these two failures. . . . A King Rail's nest containing 4 eggs April 21, 11 on April 30, 12 on May 1, still contained 12 eggs on May 18, but on the 19th four had evidently hatched. A heavy hailstorm and darkness stopped a search for the chicks. Six eggs remained on the 20th and 22nd—by this time the nest was evidently abandoned, possibly due to daily heavy rains during the last days of the incubation period. This period figures approximately 18 days, in line with the calculated 18 to 20 days for a set of nine eggs completed May 14, 1932 (See *Migrant*, Sept. 1932. About five other King Rails probably nested at these pits. . . . An Adult Bald Eagle was seen May 30 south of the Horn Lake levee (Lakeview). This is our first summer record this near to Memphis. . . . Starlings have nested at Memphis this season for the first time, so far as we know. Eagle Scout Frederick Fiedler casually mentioned a Starling nesting in an old woodpecker hole in a dead bare tree back of his home on April 28. I went there at once and saw my first young Starlings, clamoring for food as the adult returned to feed them. About ten days later, I saw seven immature and two adult birds in Forest Park and later they were reported at three other locations. . . . The Mississippi Kites of Vance Woods were first seen on May 12; three were noted instead of the two seen all last summer and later four were recorded there at one time.—BEN B. COFFEY, Memphis.

A PIPING PLOVER AT MEMPHIS.—A very shallow barrow pit, along Highway 61 at Horn Lake Creek and about half a mile north of the Mississippi line, was found to be frequented on May 4 by a few Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and a Semipalmated Plover. On May 5 our Field Day, our motorcade was scheduled to pause here for a moment but the autos were soon emptied when a light colored plover was seen. Upon careful examination with binoculars and at close range, it was found to be a Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), a new species for Tennessee. The single breast band was complete on this individual but the pale whitish color, the short bill and the dark yellow legs, were features sufficient to distinguish it from similar shortbirds. This species should be recorded here again occasionally in migration but not often as it is a rare bird everywhere at the present time.—BEN B. COFFEY, Memphis.

NOTES FROM CORINTH, MISS.—On May 10th, my stenographer placed the following note on my desk: "Mr. Wright says there is a Black Bunion Warbler in his yard; wants you to come up at once." Since I have been looking for the elusive Blackburnian for ten years without success, naturally I hurried to Mr. Wright's home. The bird turned out to be a Magnolia Warbler, and of course, both of us were disappointed. But as luck would have it, that same day I had another call from friend Wright. That time it was a White-crowned Sparrow; neither of us had ever seen this handsome species although we had expected to find it some day as a rarity. He was feeding along a hedge in the yard, and later flew into a freshly spaded spot in the garden. On May 12 I found my first Blackburnian, twelve miles from Corinth, in Tennessee, on the Shiloh Road. One of my bird books says that the Blackburnian is the most gorgeous of all the warblers. I think this must be true. The rich flame that covers his throat, breast, and parts of head is found on no other bird that I know. Another interesting transient to call this year was the Tennessee Warbler. This bird came to my yard April 29th and remained for ten days, singing constantly during his stay. A dozen Dickcissels were found three miles west of Corinth, May 20th. They have nested in this same meadow for several years but there seem to be more this spring than usual. I think our commonest summer resident is the Orchard Oriole. They are found along the roadsides everywhere. Its larger cousin, the Baltimore, is rare; I have seen only one this season.—BENJ. R. WARRINER, Corinth, Miss.

A WINTER HERRING GULL. During the first week in January, I was called and asked to identify "a strange and peculiar bird" which had been brought into town from the country. I went to see the bird at the first opportunity and prior to my arrival, found that others who had viewed it had named it an eagle, a hawk or even an albatross. As soon as I examined it I saw that it was an American Herring Gull, a bird which breeds on northern lakes and spends the winters coursing the rivers to the Gulf of Mexico. The big bird measured 24 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail and had a wingspread of 58 inches. It had not yet donned adult plumage, being darker than the pearly gray color of old birds.

The lady who had it, said that it had been shot by a tenant on her farm who thought it was some sort of hawk. The farm was near the Cumberland River and the tenant had noticed it was feeding with his chickens at the time. It is always regrettable that our large rare birds should be shot so promiscuously but this one will serve some purpose for the plumage was in perfect condition and it has been mounted and preserved.—JESSIE B. ATKINS, Clarksville.

A GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER appeared on April 29th, on the wooded hillside at the rear of my home and is one of the very few records we have of this species near Nashville. The bird, a male in fine plumage, was collected and prepared for my collection.—JOHN CALHOUN, Nashville.

NESTING NOTES FROM MURFREESBORO: There is a small colony of Lark Sparrows on our farm a few miles east of town and here the first migrant was noted to have returned on April 15. I made a search for their nests and on May 8, found one with a single egg but they added 4 more before beginning to set. On May 12, another of their nests was found and this one held 5 eggs incubated about three days. . . . A nest of the Pileated Woodpecker was found on April 20, excavated 50 feet up in a dead oak; it contained 3 eggs, incubated about a week. . . . The Cooper's Hawk is our commonest hawk here in Rutherford County and I have found 7 nests this spring, as follows: April 21, 5 eggs; April 30, 3 eggs; May 4, 4 eggs; May 8, 3 eggs; May 19, 2 eggs, and during the first week in June, a nest with two nearly hatched eggs and another with young.—H. O. TODD, Murfreesboro.

KING RAILS AT MURFREESBORO: King Rails were found nesting here this spring for the first time. In a marshy field, at the city limits, where Redwing Blackbirds have nested for years, I made a careful search for the Rails this spring and found three nests. The first was found on April 26, but the eggs had been broken by Crows or animals of some sort. The second nest was found on May 2 and this one contained 9 eggs, incubated about 3 days at the time. Later, still another nest was found and judging by the appearance of the shells, the young had hatched successfully. On the nest were a number of snail shells which I suppose had been brought there by the Rails to be eaten. All nests were built in clumps of "bull rushes." Ample rainfall this spring may have been the reason for their remaining to nest.—H. O. TODD, Murfreesboro.

SPRING NOTES, 1935: Unprecedented rains all spring have kept the country green and well watered. The early migrants were earlier than usual due to an early period of warm weather. . . . Shorebirds, which were common last spring have been conspicuous by their great scarcity during the spring just past. I attribute these fluctuations to the drouth in the Northwest last May and the ample rainfall in that area during the present season. . . . On March 24, I found a nest of the Barred Owl, in the Cumberland River bottoms, containing 2 eggs. From their incubation I judge they were laid about March 2. A young owl of this species was found May 16, just two blocks from my house in town and it appeared to be only about a week out of the nest. It was kept as a pet until June 13, when it was banded and released on Stones River in Idlewild Wood. . . . A Duck Hawk was observed on April 21, on Caney Creek, near the falls, in Van Buren County, by Mayfield and the writer. We had suspected their presence here but this was our first positive record. The Golden Eagles are reported here still, by the natives but we saw none; the old nest however, has been recently added to. . . . The Sharp-shinned Hawks, which have nested near Craggie Hope for many years were late and it was not until June 2 that they had laid their 4 eggs. . . . The 12-year-old Cardinal at my home still prospers but lost his mate of years on April 7; a cat climbed to the nest at night and caught her. (Incidentally, I caught the cat the following night.) The male re-mated at once and the pair are now nesting about the yard.—A. F. GANIER, Nashville.

GREEN HERON NEST RECORDS FROM NEAR NASHVILLE.—As a common nesting bird on most of Davidson County's stream and pond-sides, the Eastern Green Heron (*Butorides virescens virescens*) is familiar to all observers. The writer finds personal notes on 12 nests of this species within the county, taken in 1930-1933 inclusive, which he would like to place on record for the use of other county observers. Extreme dates for full sets of egg are: earliest, bird brooding 4 eggs on April 14, 1933; latest, bird flushed from 3 eggs on June 1, 1930. In the last instance, the set may have been incomplete. The approximate average date for completed sets of eggs, as determined from these data is about May 3. The 1933 eggs were laid from

4 to 16 days earlier than this average, while 1930 nests ranged from average to 27 days late. Thus it seems that nesting time varies with several factors, probably temperature and the amount of protection the nest locality receives, but on these things the writer has no data. However, the 2 earlier 1933 nests, April 14 and April 21 respectively, were located in thick cedar trees, the only Green Heron nests of the writer's experience so located. One old nest found here in 1932 led to the 1933 search. Several pairs of crows nested in the same cedar grove, and the herons were forced to stand close guard over their own nests, which they seemed to do successfully.

Beside the cedar locations, 1 nest was found in a small plum tree, 1 in an American Elm, and the remaining 8 in small Mississippi Hackberries. This last tree seems to be the bird's favorite, in the writer's experience, probably because it so often is common along the small streams which the heron loves to frequent. All of these nests save 3 were very close to water, 4 being on branches overhanging the stream or pond, and 5 being within 25 feet of the water's edge. Of the remaining 3, the very late 1930 nest was located in a hackberry thicket in a long-dry gully, at least a quarter of a mile from any stream. The cedar grove nests were roughly 150 yards from water. The highest nest found was approximately 25 feet up; the lowest, 8 feet. The average for 12 nests was 17 feet. Seven nests contained 4 eggs, 3 contained 5 eggs, 1 contained 3 eggs, and the contents of 1 was never ascertained. The writer has noted in 2 instances evidence that leads him to suspect that an occasional pair of these birds may repair and use a nest two seasons in succession. Certainly the nests were in exactly the same location, and were unusually thick the second season. However, the localities were not visited in winter, nor were the nest torn apart to determine previous occupancy. The observations of other local bird students on this point would be interesting.—COMPTON CROOK, Cookeville.

RADNOR LAKE NOTES: My records of water birds on the Lake during the past spring, are as follows: The Loon that first appeared on Dec. 13th has been present continuously since that time. It is still here on June 16th, as this journal goes to press, a date decidedly late for this species. There were two Loons present at times during the winter. The last dates on which other waterfowl were seen on the Lake, are as follows: Coots on April 19th, 1 Ring-necked Duck on April 27th, 10 male and 18 female Lesser Scaups on April 27th, 1 Goldeneye on April 7th, 3 male and 1 female Bluewing Teal on April 8th, a pair of Pied-billed Grebes on April 27th, a male Shoveller on April 7th, 4 Horned Grebes on April 8th, a female Red-breasted Merganser on April 14th and a Double-crested Cormorant on April 19th and 27th. A flock of Black Terns were noted on the Lake during mid-May and again during the first week in June.—GEORGE B. WOODRING, Nashville.

THE BROWN THRASHER: I suppose if any bird lover were asked to name his favorite bird he would be sorely perplexed and find it a difficult question to answer. Like children, birds each have a peculiar personality. While I love all birds, even the much abused English Sparrow, after weighing the matter well, I believe my favorite is the Brown Thrasher, close cousin to the Mockingbird. He is the perfection of grace; his red-brown plumage above, creamy breast marked with arrow-heads of olive, long sweeping tail, clean-cut head and long straight bill, make a pleasing picture. Most glorious of all is his song; it is wonderful. While not so varied as that of the Mockingbird, his notes are clear-cut, distinct and liquid. The high notes seem to ascend to the very vault of heaven where they burst and float upon the air and those low caressing notes which he gives at nesting time, once heard can never be forgotten.

In modern-day slang, I should say the Brown Thrasher "blows in." For years I have kept a record and he has never failed to come in a storm or

strong wind, or on or near March 18th, about the time of the equinox. I remember one 18th day of March. I was sitting, talking with my husband, when all at once I heard a beautiful, clear note. "Oh, listen, that is my Thrasher," I said. "Do you really believe that is the same bird you fed almost at your feet last summer?" "I certainly do," I said, "would you believe it if he came to feed at my feet again?" "I think I should," he replied. I opened the French doors, walked out on the porch and scattered bread crumbs. Just then I espied him in a wild cherry tree near by. In about three minutes he swooped down, not three feet from where I stood and picked up the crumbs as calmly as any chicken—not the least bit afraid. "Well, I give up," said my husband, and from that day to this his interest in birds has increased.—NANCY LEE MORGAN, Columbia.

A WHITE PELICAN AT KNOXVILLE: On the afternoon of May 8th, about 5:30 P. M., I had just put the car in the garage and was going to the house, when my sister called to ask what the big bird was that was flying overhead. I realized that the mallard ducks about the yard were raising a great racket and had thought there must be a large hawk nearby. On looking up, however, I saw that it was a far larger bird than any hawk. It was about 150 feet overhead and all that I could see were its underparts. Its head, being drawn back on its shoulders, was not visible, but a very large bill pointed outward, almost as large as my hand and forearm and of a yellowish color. The body and most of the wings were white but the primaries were black. At first I thought that it was a Great Blue Heron but at once realized that there were no outstretched legs. It was flying very heavily and just before it passed out of sight over the trees, it set its wings and began to sail. It had been crossing a ridge and there was considerable wind that it had to overcome. A few minutes later, Mrs. Johnson and the children drove in from town and told of having seen a very large white bird pass over the hill a half mile away. They commented on the fact that it was flying as if its wings could scarcely hold it up. We decided that the big bird could have been none other than a White Pelican and reference to pictures in our bird books confirmed our belief. After supper, we loaded up the car and set out up the Holston River, in the direction the bird had gone, but were unable to trace it.

A notice was put in the paper and on May 10, Mr. Tom Kesterman, air pilot for the T.V.A., called Mr. Ijams to say that late in the afternoon on May 8th, he and a group were at the Airport on Dickenson's Island and someone looking up, called that an airplane was coming in. In a moment they realized that it was a large bird and at first thought it was a big "crane." It finally came so close that they could see its bill and pouch and the webbed feet. Some time, over thirty years ago, there was a mounted bird in the lobby of the old Palace Hotel, said to have been shot near Knoxville. Before 1895 the hotel was turned over to the Y. M. C. A. and I do not know what became of the bird. We trust that our rare visitor will be able to "run the gauntlet" and safely reach its nesting grounds in the far northwest.—WILLIAM N. JOHNSON, Knoxville.

NOTES FROM THE KNOXVILLE REGION. The earlier part of the past spring migration was characterized by the erratic movement on the part of a number of birds; the latter part of the season, however, regulated itself to a great extent.

At the end of the first week of April, 11 species of warblers were present—including the Yellow Warbler on the 2nd, the Blackburnian on the 4th, and the Prothonotary on the 6th. Those dates, listed above, are 2 or 3 weeks earlier than average. This early movement was broken off quite abruptly by almost incessant cold rains which followed.

On the morning of April 13th 3 Black-crowned Night Herons and three Ring-billed Gulls were observed along the Tennessee River west of Knoxville.

This represents the first definite record of the Ring-billed Gull in the immediate vicinity of Knoxville, although it more than likely occurs regularly. On the afternoon of the 13th a single Yellow-crowned Night Heron was flushed from the border of a small woodland pool near Andrew Jackson Lake. It flew into a dead tree bordering another pond and allowed observation at an extremely close range. It was also observed the following day in the same location. On Lake Andrew Jackson, 3 Ruddy Ducks and 5 Shovellers were observed along with four or five other species of ducks. On the following day at the lake an American Bittern was seen and an American Egret was present. The Egret stayed at the lake until April 21st when it was joined by a second bird. Neither of them was seen after that time. Two Baldpates and an Osprey represent the only other interesting observations of that date. A pair of Prairie Horned Larks which we had previously located, were again found present on April 14th. The male was in full song and as this date was past the usual time of their first nesting, it is probable that they had a nest in the vicinity.—WILLIAM WALKER and GEORGE FOSTER, Knoxville.

LONG-EARED OWLS IN BLOUNT COUNTY: In the last *Migrant*, mention was made of a specimen of this apparently rare bird having been brought to me on Dec. 22 last. On March 6, 1935, another was brought in and given to me to be mounted. It had been caught in Blount County, 12 miles south of Knoxville, near Wildwood Springs by Mr. W. A. Gaut, by means of a pole trap. These birds are not known to nest in Tennessee but this capture at so late a date, would indicate that they may breed in the vicinity. North of the Ohio River, the average date of nesting is said to be the latter part of March.—S. A. OGDEN, Knoxville.

The new Commission of five who will look after the State Department of Fish and Game, was appointed May 15, by Gov. McAllister. They are: L. C. Jacobs, chairman, Nashville manufacturer; J. W. Hoskins, Knoxville, manufacturer; Dr. W. H. Cheney, Chattanooga, physician; Franklin W. Latta, Dyersburg, lawyer, and Malcomb C. Hill, lawyer, of Sparta. Members of the T. O. S. should make themselves known to these gentlemen and enlist their aid in the conservation of bird life.

SPRING FIELD DAYS were held by our Nashville, Knoxville and Memphis chapters as scheduled in our last issue. The Nashville outing was held May 12, at Craggie Hope, 25 miles west of Nashville, with an attendance of about fifty. A total of 106 species were listed during the day, this including an early morning list made at Radnor Lake. The Knoxville group, on May 5, assembled at the Island Home Bird Sanctuary on the Tennessee River and in that general vicinity, listed just a few short of an even hundred species. The Memphis group, in spite of rainy weather, listed on May 5, the unprecedented number of 126 species. Good territory for water birds and varied terrain materially assisted. Highlights of the list are mentioned in Mr. Coffey's notes in the Round Table section.

STATE OFFICERS were elected for the year beginning July 1st, at the annual Spring Field Day at Nashville on May 12, as follows: George R. Mayfield, Nashville, President; Ben B. Coffey, Memphis, Vice-President for West Tennessee; Bruce P. Tyler, Johnson City, Vice-President for East Tennessee; Albert F. Ganier, Nashville, Editor-Treasurer; Vernon Sharp, Jr., Nashville, Curator; John Bamberg, Knoxville, Secretary, and Miss Georgie Reed, Nashville, Assistant Secretary.

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*"The simple truth about birds is interesting enough,
 it is not necessary to go beyond it."*

EDITORIALS

This issue might be termed a "water-bird number" of *The Migrant* and as such it is timely because of the fact that these birds are now facing a crisis and due attention should be drawn to them. Years of drouth in their breeding grounds in the far Northwest have brought most of the ducks to the danger line while in the South the drainage operations of malarial control forces are being executed in a ruthless campaign to wipe out all marshes and shallow lakes in an effort to control mosquitoes. Much of this work is ill-advised for most breeding grounds of marsh birds can be made mosquito proof by other means than drainage. Officers of the T. O. S. have been working to combat this needless campaign of destruction. The present program reminds one of the old story of the unresourceful fellow who killed the dog in order to destroy the fleas.

East Tennessee is not generally thought of as being on the migratory routes of water birds but Mr. Trent's illuminating article in this issue corrects that impression and shows that the mountains which surround it are by no means a complete barrier to the waterfowl in their travels. Incidentally, Mr. Trent, who is a printer, has generously printed and presented to *The Migrant*, the eight additional pages carrying his article.

On April 13 the Associated Press broadcast a news-story to the effect that an eagle near Lynchburg had attacked and attempted to carry off an eight-year-old boy and that his brother had rushed to the rescue and killed the bird with a stick. This highly colored yarn was investigated by the Editor who interviewed the boys and found that they had discovered the eagle on the ground, chased it into a gully and there, while trying to capture it, the small boy was clawed and bitten. It was a Golden Eagle.

The three Golden Eagles sent from Nashville to the Great Smokies National Park were duly released there by Supt. Eakin. Naturalist-Technician Willis King reports that at least one of them was seen regularly afterwards and that it is probable that the eagles seen at various places in the park may mean that all three have succeeding in establishing themselves. The park gives a splendid outlet for eagles captured in Middle Tennessee during the winter, when they are accused of stealing lambs and small pigs.

Tennessee's Department of Fish and Game is to be ruled henceforward by a non-political Commission of five men. It is hoped and expected that the deputies will now hold their jobs by reason of efficiency rather than, as in the past, as a political reward for assisting in the election of local legislators. The Commission has elected Mr. Damon Headden, present incumbent, as Director of Conservation. Those of us who know Mr. Headden are pleased over the outlook for he has proved himself to be an open-minded man and one who is really interested in the conservation of all forms of wild life.

W. H. SEDBERRY

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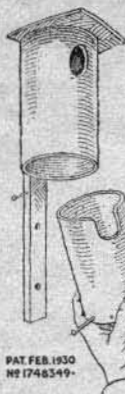
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