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A NEW RACE OF THE YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER

By ALBERT F. GANIER

The eastern population of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, now recognized as *Sphyrapicus varius varius*, breeds from the southern provinces of Canada into the northern United States and southward thru the Appalachian Mountains to extreme northern Georgia. The Rocky Mountain district marks the western limit of its range where it merges with the Red-naped Sapsucker (*S. v. nuchalis*).

Dr. Oberholser (1938), in his book on Louisiana birds, attempted to divide the eastern birds into two races, assigning the name *atrothorax* to those birds which bred from Pennsylvania northward and retaining the name *varius* for those birds which bred south of that line. Wetmore (1939) examined the material then available and gave it as his opinion that the difference in size, which had been advanced by Oberholser, did not warrant the recognition of a new race. Considering the specimens examined and the insufficiency of Oberholser's treatment of the matter, Wetmore's stand was logical and proper.

Since that time, however, important new material has become available, including more breeding birds from the mountains of western North Carolina and specimens collected by the writer from the Unicoi mountains of Tennessee near the Georgia line in 1944 and 1946, as well as additional specimens from the northeastern limits of its breeding range.

Of the southern group of birds, taken in breeding season (June and July), in the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina, the following measurements (in millimeters) are given:

6 males; wing 117.7 (115.5-120), tail 68.4 (63.5-70.6), bill 21.2 (19.5-22.5)

6 females; wing 118.5 (116-124), tail 71.9 (69.5-76), bill 21.9 (21.5-22.5)

Adding four North Carolina specimens taken in late May (27th and 28th), we have the following:

7 males; wing 118.1 (115.5-120.5), tail 68.8 (63.5-71)

9 females; wing 119.4 (116-124), tail 72.0 (69.5-76)

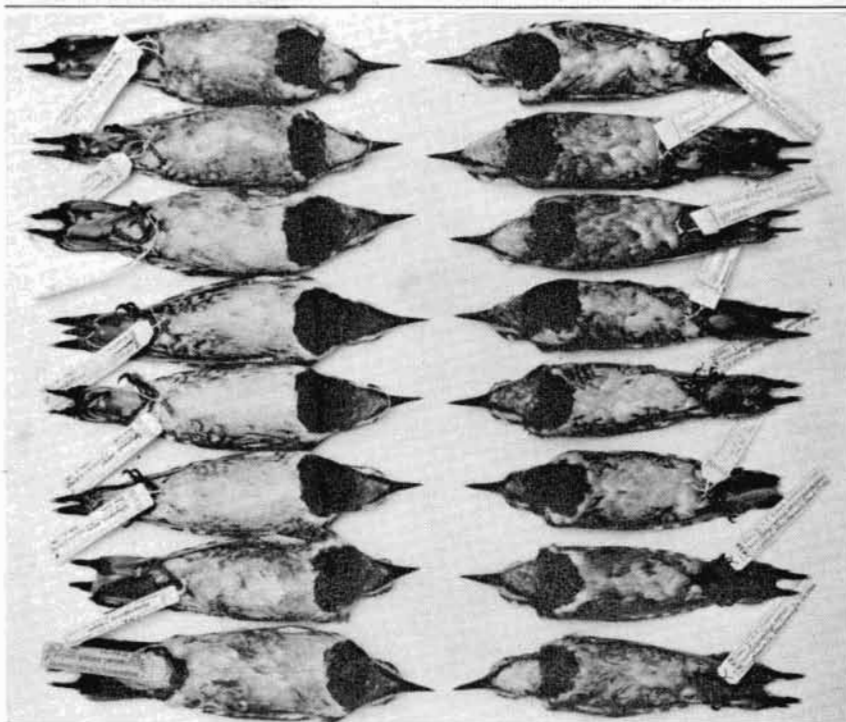
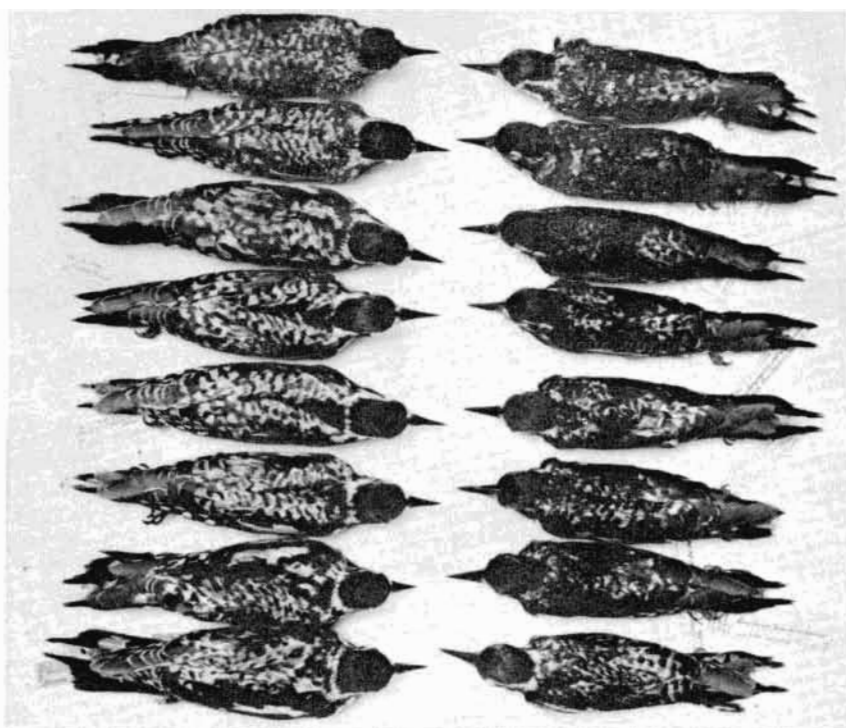
Adding seven more specimens, from southwestern Virginia a bit further northward, collected June 17 to July 5, we have the following:

11 males; wing 118.7 (115.5-122.5), tail 69.2 (63.5-71.5)

12 females; wing 119.2 (116-124), tail 70.2 (64-76)

These are all the available birds from the above mentioned localities within the date ranges given.

Corresponding measurements which have been taken from northern



COMPARISON OF EASTERN SAPSUCKERS

Left

Sphyrapicus varius varius

Right

Sphyrapicus varius appalachiensis

males (Newfoundland 7, Nova Scotia 1, Minnesota 1, northern Michigan 2, Saskatchewan 1, and Alberta 2) are as follows:

14 males; wing 125.4 (122.5-131), tail 72.2 (67-78), bill 22.4 (19.5-24)
15 females; wing 125.0 as given by Wetmore (1939), mentioned further on.

For further comparison with the above, Wetmore (1939) gave the following wing averages: 5 southern males, 119.3 (117.5-122); 10 southern females, 121.4 (117.7-124.7); 15 northern males, 124.2 (121.1-126.2); 15 northern females, 125.0 (120.8-128.7). His southern birds were from North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; his northern birds from Nova Scotia, Alberta, Athabasca and Mackenzie.

Oberholser (1938) gave an average for southern males of wing 120.8 and tail 70.8. For an unspecified number of northern males, wing 124.5 (121-128.5), tail 69.2 (61.5-77). His figures for southern birds were derived from the measurements of 6 males; 2 taken in Maryland (6-23-99 and 6-28-99), 1 in West Virginia (3-30-92) and 3 in North Carolina (3-18-30, 4-17-32 and 4-18-30). It will be noted that the first two were from near his line of intergradation and that the last four could have still been in process of migration. I have used none of these birds in compiling my figures. It is apparent that Oberholser did not have proper and sufficient material from the extreme southern range of the species to get a correct picture of the situation.

He proposed as a new subspecies the northerly breeding birds on a basis of larger size and gave them the name of *S. v. atrothorax*, from Lesson's name for the species. He retained the name *S. v. varius* of Linnaeus for the southern race, which was based on Catesby's (1737) painting, made 1722-1726, of a sapsucker presumably taken near Charleston, South Carolina, and in that case, a transient not on its breeding ground. It is my opinion that Oberholser erred in this proposed treatment; that the southern breeding birds should be set up as a new race on the basis of size and color, and that the name *varius* should continue to be applied to the northern breeding birds, most of which migrate into the South in large numbers for the winter and which form would be much the most likely to be passing or wintering at Charleston.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a rare breeding bird in the southern mountains. This was well illustrated by the results of three collecting trips of a week's duration each, in June of 1944, 1945, and 1946, in the Unicoi mountains of southeast Tennessee, when Alfred and Edward Clebsch and I were only able to list 6, 1 and 5 birds respectively during the three periods tho we especially looked for them (Ganier and Clebsch, 1946). Similar trips into the Great Smoky Mountains in earlier years found them to be even rarer there. The total number of sapsuckers breeding in this restricted mountain area is very small compared with the vast number which breed from Nova Scotia westward to the Rockies, and the chance of one of the southern race having fallen to the gun of Mr. Catesby is quite remote. It is true that this early ornithologist located himself for a time at a point up the Savannah River which he says was "300 miles from its source in the mountains—and engaged in several journeys with the Indians higher up the rivers." Yet anyone who has

seen the miles of rhododendron and laurel jungle which block the way to the mountain-top breeding ground of the Sapsuckers could never picture Catesby as reaching there in those early years.

Dr. Witmer Stone (1929) calls attention to the fact that Dr. Mearns and Dr. Oberholser, after careful study decided to make Charleston the type locality for all of Catesby's birds. Going along with this assumption, we may say that the case of the Sapsucker is not comparable with that of the Flickers and Blue Jays, for which Bangs and Oberholser gave new names to the northern race when they separated them from those that had been depicted by Catesby. Those two birds are common breeding birds and permanent residents of the Charleston area, whereas the Sapsuckers are winter visitants only.

The breeding grounds of the southern race lie entirely outside of South Carolina, for the most part in the high mountain areas including those having a Canadian faunal aspect. This same area has produced a number of new subspecies, including the Southern Winter Wren, Southern Creeper, Mountain Vireo, Mississippi Song Sparrow, Carolina Junco, Cairn's Warbler, and races of Ovenbird and Swainson's Warbler that recently have been described. Like the Carolina Junco, it is probable that the southern race of the sapsucker indulges in little more than a "vertical" migration, into the valleys below. It has not been found among my twenty specimens from middle Tennessee; for these the average wing length is 124 mm.

The difference in length of wing of northern and extreme southern males is 125.4 less 117.7 equals 7.7 mm. or 6.5%. The same for females is 125.0 less 118.5 equals 6.5 mm. or 5.5%. This difference is sufficient to justify separation. Aside from size, there is also a distinct difference in color, the southern birds being nearly black dorsally while the northern ones display a great deal of white thus giving a white-spotted appearance to the back. This is clearly shown in the accompanying illustration. The white spots on the primaries are approximately one-third smaller, and therefore less in evidence, in the southern birds. Ventrally, the southern birds show more of the blackish markings on the sides, and this color difference is likewise shown in the lower view of specimens taken during their breeding season. The specimens are not unduly worn and are from those included in my measurements.

The Sapsuckers breeding in the northern portion of the range of this genus should in my opinion retain the name of *S. v. varius* of Linnaeus as given in the A.O.U. Checklist (1931), and for their description we may continue to use that given by Ridgway (1914) or the more recent one published by Howell (1952).

I wish to propose the name *Sphyrapicus varius appalachiensis*, Appalachian Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, for the race which breeds in the southern Appalachians and in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. For the type specimen I have selected my number 1426 collected by myself; a male taken June 21, 1946, at 4400 feet altitude in the Unicoi Mountains, Monroe County, Tennessee. This specimen has a wing measurement of 116.5 mm, tail 68.5 mm, bill 20 mm, and length (before

skinning) of 202 mm. The plumage, in so far as it varies from the northern race (*S. v. varius*), has been described above. The breeding range of this southern race extends from the mountains of extreme northern Georgia, extreme eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, north to include southwestern Virginia. The two races apparently intergrade at the latitude of West Virginia and western Maryland. Specimens examined from these areas (six June and July birds available) lack uniformity in size and show intergradation.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the U. S. National Museum, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and the American Museum of Natural History for the loan or use of specimens; of Messrs. A. J. Duvall and Dean Amadon for laboratory assistance; and of Dr. Alexander Wetmore for looking over this report, the appended tabulations, and the specimens used.

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2112 WOODLAWN DR., NASHVILLE, TENN.
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WARBLERS BREEDING AT BASIN SPRINGS, TENNESSEE

By KATHERINE A. GOODPASTURE

During five seasons, 1949-1953, 14 species of warblers were observed to breed in the small limited area of Basin Spring in northeastern Williamson County, Tennessee. The Columbia Quadrangle Map locates the area precisely on Bedford Creek in the drainage basin of the South Harpeth River. Geological maps describe it as part of the first Mississippian level or the escarpment rising from the Nashville Basin to the Highland Rim.

Basin Spring represents second growth hardwood forest rising to 800 or more feet from valley land largely in pasture. Easily tramped ravines between steep wooded hills, and brushy edges surrounding cleared land, are ecologically significant. Bedford Creek and Basin Spring Branch maintain a small stream habitat. The "essential" area brings under surveyance territory within visual and auditory range along about a two mile tramp. A large proportion of it is wooded, some having the character of ravines, and the edge is increased by small cleared patches in a narrow valley. Nests of two species were found nearby on the regular approach to the "essential" territory.

These breeding records are extracted from the larger record of 143 species of birds found from time to time within this limited location. Recognition of breeding status derives from an observation of incubation, of adults feeding nestlings, or of adults feeding fledglings recently out of the nest. These criteria are rigidly adhered to. Three instances of a young bird giving food-calls to alarmed parents that did not feed it are recognized as brood records only for species already established to be breeding. Eleven species were observed at their nests and three species are recognized as breeding on the basis of seeing adults feed young birds recently out of the nest. In all 26 active nests and 28 fledged broods are reported.

Following is a list of warblers breeding in the Basin Spring area 1949-53. Annotations summarize observations that establish breeding status and dates given are those of actual field observations. Recognized separate breeding records are indicated by small letters. When dates appear to overlap, complete records will show they are separated by annual dates or by a distance that establishes their integrity. Hyphenated dates indicate the earliest and latest seasonal records of the species in this particular area including spring dates for 1954.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*). Mar. 28-Sept. 21. Two broods. Fledglings fed: (a) May 1, (b) May 24. Cowbird fed May 25. With incomplete coverage of their habitat 4 or 5 territories are recognized each year. After early vocal conspicuousness, Black and Whites are quiet until active with fledglings.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*). Apr. 10-Aug. 5. Two broods. Nestlings: (a) May 26, (b) May 30, fledging June 3. These adjoining territories, at the mouth of Bedford Creek just outside the

essential area, have been occupied at least 3 years. Territorial contentions may be quite fierce.

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helmitheros vermivorus*.) Apr. 11-Sept. 7. Three broods. Fledglings fed: (a) May 28, (b) May 31, (c) fledgling with parent, not fed, July 4. Three territories in 1953. If all ravines were covered, the breeding population of this species might be surprising.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora pinus*.) Apr. 11-Aug. 15. Three broods. Incubating: (a) 6 eggs, May 7, nestlings, May 15 (Goodpasture, 1949); fledglings (b) May 27, (c) May 28. Four territories were recognized in 1951, 1952 and 1953. Species becomes inconspicuous in late June but may reappear briefly in August.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Dendroica petechia*.) Apr. 11-Aug. 30. One brood. (a) Nestlings fed, June 3. This nest was in the South Harpeth Valley on the road approaching the "essential" area. Two territories were recognized in 1953. The population seems thin and toward the valley more than the hills.

CERULEAN WARBLER (*Dendroica cerulea*.) Apr. 11-Aug. 5. Five broods. (a) building, May 7; incubating, May 21 and 27; fledglings fed May 28 (Goodpasture, 1951). Fledglings fed: (b) July 1, (c) July 8, (d) July 9, (e) July 28. Ceruleans regularly occupy three to four territories. Notable wave dates are noticed in the spring when on top of the hills "Ceruleans sing everywhere." A breeding census including the hill-tops might be rewarding.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Dendroica dominica*.) Mar. 21-Sept. 23. Four broods. (a) building in pine, Apr. 23, incubating May 7 and 15 (Goodpasture, 1949); (b) nestlings in pine June 3; fledglings fed: (c) June 30, (d) July 4. Two territories near each other are occupied each season. One pair regularly builds in the pine grove. Eye marks appear white. Earliest arrival for Nashville area recorded in South Harpeth Valley Mar. 21, 1953. (EG).

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Dendroica discolor*.) Apr. 11-Sept. 25. Three broods. (a) building, 25-30', May 31; fledglings fed: (b) July 8, (c) undated but located in Shale Hollow. Two regular territories.

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH (*Seiurus motacilla*.) Mar. 13-Sept. 1. Five broods. (a) incubating 5 eggs, April 22, nestlings, May 3; nestlings: (b) 4, May 10, fledged on May 13; (c) 4, May 14; Fledglings fed: (d) May 22, (e) May 29. Three territories occupied each season. The Water-thrush returns ahead of all warblers. Throughout the nesting period spirited contentions take place often at dusk. A territorial line seems to bar passage up or down stream and great snapping of beaks and seemingly uncontrollable outbursts of song appear to be part of this behavior pattern.

KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Oporornis formosus*.) Apr. 17-Sept. 25. Nine broods. Incubating: (a) 3, with 1 of Cowbird, May 11; (b) 4 with 1 of Cowbird, May 11; (c) 5, May 16; (d) 5, May 20; (e) 4, May 28; nestlings: (f) 3, well-feathered, May 29; fledglings fed: (g) June 3, (h)

June 19; (i) fledglings with adult, not fed, June 6. Five territories recognized. A census would reveal many more. Complete notes on five active nests reveal two of them successful, three unsuccessful. Three fledged broods represent additional successful nests. Two nests were parasitized by Cowbirds.

YELLOW-THROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*). Apr. 11-Oct. 6. Two nests: (a) building in tall pasture grass, May 21; 1 egg, May 25; incubating 3 warbler eggs and 1 of the Cowbird, May 27; (b) 2 recently hatched nestlings, 2 unhatched eggs, June 2. Usually three territories. Population very thin.

YELLOW-THROATED CHAT (*Icteria virens*). Apr. 20-Oct. 6. Seven broods. Nests: (a) building, just begun, May 16; 1 egg, May 20; 3 eggs, May 22; May 26, nest empty; (b) 3 eggs, June 3, 50 feet from nest (a); incubating: (c) 4, May 20, (d) 4, May 27; (e) 4, May 27; (f) 3, June 28; fledgling fed: (g) July 16. The Chat proved one of the most engaging species in the area. Edge with brushy cover offers good "Chat habitat." During the vocal season one seemed "never out of ear-shot of a Chat." From one spot 4 territories could be recognized by hearing as many males sing. On May 28, 1950, eleven territories were plotted on a walk of less than a mile. June 8, 1952, a tramp of less than two miles gave 16 Chats singing "on territory" and the count was confirmed on June 10. Territories seemed contiguous except when interrupted by woods, and males sang from 150 to 300 yards apart. This high proportion of Chats may result from vocal conspicuousness rather than a relatively higher population density.

HOODED WARBLER (*Wilsonia citrina*). Apr. 7-Sept. 30. Three broods. Fledglings fed: (a) June 28, (b) July 11; (c) fledglings with adults, feeding not observed, July 5. Three or four areas recognized. On his territory a male Hooded sings without reserve, feeds his fledglings without shyness, and leads his rollicking family swiftly through the woods, but his nest and its treasure he secretes well.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*). Apr. 20-Sept. 25. Five broods. (a) incubating, May 30, nest in sycamore; fledglings fed: (b) June 6, (c) July 4, (d) July 8, (e) July 26. Fledglings are conspicuous because they beg for food for noisily.

Four warblers, Pine, Parula, Swainson's and the Ovenbird, known to have nested in Middle Tennessee, have not been found breeding at Basin Spring. Several nests of the Pine and one of the Ovenbird were found some years ago by A. F. Gainer at Craggie Hope on the Highland Rim about ten air miles northeast of Basin Spring. Parula Warblers have nested in past years and currently near the Narrows of the Harpeth about twelve miles distant. Swainson's Warbler was found nesting in Mark's Slough, Montgomery County, by Ganier and Clebsch (Ganier, 1940). The above are the only regional nesting sites of the Parula and Ovenbird known to me, and breeding locations of the Pine and Swainson's are almost as limited. A singing male Parula may appear at Basin Spring for two or three days in mid-summer and then be gone. There is one July record of the Ovenbird for the area.

Most surveys of specific areas, not only in Middle Tennessee but in other sections of the State, have been made on a "summer resident" or a "summer record" rather than an actual nesting-record basis. Vernon Sharpe (1931) in a review of nesting records for Middle Tennessee listed thirteen warblers "with appropriate average dates" and without location notes. Ben Coffey (1948) in a July 4-6 survey at Natural Bridge, Wayne County, found twelve summer resident warblers. Eleven warblers were recorded July 6 at Craggie Hope on a one-day field trip (Nashville TOS, 1941). With the exception of the Great Smoky Mountains, no summer survey has reported more than fifteen warblers for a state park, county, or similarly limited area.

In view of these lists of summer resident species and additional isolated nesting records it would appear that the small, limited area of Basin Spring with its approach supports a group of breeding warblers representative in large measure (14 to 18) of the summer resident warblers of all Middle Tennessee. This is not to say that this small area is unique; any number of areas within twenty-five miles of Nashville in the zone leading from the Central Basin to the Highland Rim may support a similar population. This report establishes a certain concentration of nesting warblers in a small territory; it offers a few fragments for life history notes, and it indicates in small measure the kind of information that accumulates with frequent and regular attention to a particular locality.

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SMITH'S LONGSPUR IN THE MID-SOUTH

By BEN B. COFFEY, JR.

The Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) was recorded in Tennessee on November 22, 1953, and in Mississippi on November 29, 1953, apparently for the first time. The Memphis Christmas Count of Dec. 27 listed the only ones of this species reported from the entire country. This is another "short-grass" species which is apparently extending its winter range southeastward as a result of drouths in the plains and in spite of lesser drouths here. The increase in pasturage in the Mid-South may be a factor. Altho we speak of some species as "westerners" it must be remembered that they are just as rare west of the Continental Divide as here. In a recent letter Dr. Allan Phillips mentioned that the last addition to the Arizona state list was the Smith's Longspur.

Beginning with the 1947 Christmas Count, "Audubon Field Notes" has tabulated the high count for each species. No Smith's Longspurs were listed for the first four years. In 1951 the only ones were 15 on Dec. 24 at Lonoke, Ark., our first Mid-South record and the second Arkansas record. In 1952 the species was listed on one count in each of three plains states (high count, 105), plus one bird at Lonoke and 35 at Shreveport. For 1953 two flocks at Memphis were the sole reports. Undoubtedly the species' wintering areas are not embraced in the limited area of the various Counts. There are occasional references in the "Notes" for other times, of flocks up to 150, as far south as Houston, Texas, and east to Oxford, Ohio.

On Nov. 22, 1953, I was on a third visit to the Penal Farm, just east of Memphis, in an attempt to learn if Sprague's Pipits had returned. I left the creek bottom fields preferred by the flocks of "lapits" (coined for Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks and American Pipits) and tried the gentle rolling pastures, usually barren of results. On a small knoll I heard a Sprague's note overhead and then flushed one or another bird back and forth out of sight. I called to Orval Wood for help as I realized then it was not always a Sprague's that took flight. There was one with a longspur rattle but with white outer tail feathers conspicuous from above. We got up four Sprague's Pipits separately and apparently just the one Smith's Longspur three more times before we had to leave. On Nov. 28 I returned to this site and eventually got up a flock of 27 which, after moving some distance, returned to circle (freely speaking) before alighting not too far away. The flock was checked Dec. 5 and 27, Jan. 30, and Feb. 6 for respective counts of 25, 28, 24 and 30. Later we found there: Mar. 6, 2; Mar. 14, 1; and Mar. 28 and Apr. 3, none. The birds were nearly always in the same small area.

On the Christmas Count, Dec. 27, Mrs. Coffey's party accomplished their mission of getting the Smith's and two other "westerners." Meanwhile I was surprised to see Charles Marcus get up nine Smith's at Field 21, near Woodstock, north of town, with Edwin Poole and the writer at hand. I was hoping for Sprague's Pipit there and did get two on Feb. 6 plus one Smith's. Neither were found there later. These two

localities were the only ones where we found these two species in West Tennessee. Outside Shelby County we tried north on U. S. Highway 51 and on another trip U. S. No. 45 W. and 45 E., north of Jackson.

Baerg, "Birds of Arkansas" (1951), lists a record from Fayetteville, Feb. 28, 1885 (Harvey). We know of no other Arkansas records besides our three recent ones. In addition to the two Lonoke Count records previously mentioned, we found two on the West Helena airport, Mar. 7, 1954. On Nov. 29, 1953, four of us tried for a first Mississippi record and deployed on Sanders (air) Field, a mile south of Walls, and our best Sprague's Pipit field of the previous season. When Mrs. Coffey noted the "different" rattle of a group of eleven longspurs, Harry Landis, Jr., and I joined her and George Peyton, Jr., for further verification of the Smith's on flushing. Other Delta fields were tried but my next Smith's Longspurs were six at the Tupelo, Miss., airport on Dec. 6. This was a first winter visit to that field despite the ten Christmas Counts at Tupelo; no Laplands were found. A long jaunt south on Jan. 1 and a return on Jan. 3 yielded one Smith's Longspur on the 3rd at Bruce Campbell Field east of Madison, north of Jackson. Two of the uncommon Sprague's were there but not one of the common "lapits!" Subsequently we continued to check Sanders Field at Walls (BC, GP, HL, R. Taylor); 8 on Mar. 6 was the last record of the flock, with a few until Mar. 21 and none on Mar. 27 and 28.

Despite the amount of walking involved I developed an affection for this species. The first and only time I saw them on the ground was in sparse grass, the eve of March 6, and light was not good enough for a reliable identification. You know the flock is in the grass, a few get up twenty to thirty feet ahead of you and the remainder still defy detection until they also flush. Those in the air circle, sometimes widely; all assemble and eventually drop back into the grass elsewhere. The Lapland Longspur has white outer tail feathers which show on the underside and are noted when the bird is over us, but which are very hard to see from above as the bird moves away from us. As we look down on the Smith's when it rises, the white outer tail feathers are as noticeable as those of either pipit. (The Vesper Sparrow's white is noticeable chiefly as it alights.) In the air a short white arc is noted at the front of the wing on some. The underparts are buffy. The rattle of this species is softer than that of the Lapland and has been compared to the winding of a cheap watch. It also gives a weak sparrow-like note but, to date, I haven't heard it give any note resembling the "cheuuu" of the Lapland. The notes of the Sprague's Pipit (usually on the same field) are abrupt, hoarse-like, and high-pitched, given in twos, threes, or singles. This pipit has a very bounding flight.

As yet we haven't found the two longspurs together, and the Smith's has been restricted to an area where the grass *Aristida* (sp.) is found as pointed out by Horace H. Jeter (The Wilson Bulletin, 1953, 65 (3): 212). I am indebted to Mrs. Coffey for the identification of this grass. Jeter submits the first Louisiana record of the species: Shreveport, old

airport, one, Dec. 13, 1952, later up to 45 and tapering to 10 on Mar. 1, 1953. He writes that they returned the following season but left later when the grass was burned off. *Aristida* has been present wherever we have found the species and our general procedure is to drive, usually all day, and check all fields and pastures of at least moderate size where we see this grass. A few others we may check for Sprague's which is more general in distribution. Undoubtedly, if the species returns, we can find more but records are few for the number of highways traversed and fields walked.

Very rarely has a collection been made under the writer's scientific permit, but we thought it very desirable in the case of this species (non-descript only if you don't know it in the field) for some outside doubter, twenty or fifty years from now. I am indebted to R. Demett Smith, Jr., for his assistance at the Penal Farm and to Mrs. Coffey at Walls. On Mar. 6, 1954, a Mississippi collection was made at Sanders Field, Walls, and thru the courtesy of Capt. Tom Hooker, a Tennessee specimen was secured as well as a Sprague's Pipit, the latter also a first Tennessee collection altho recorded a year previously. If the bill is concealed from view, the inanimate skins of the two species are difficult to distinguish. The weights, in grams, of the two Smith's Longspurs, both females, about an hour after collection were: Tenn., 28.6, and Miss., 28.8, or more than 6 grams heavier than the pipit. Collections were made at 3:30 and 6 p.m., respectively. Stomach contents were almost entirely broken pieces of what appeared to be *Aristida* seeds and grit with six of the complete seeds in the Tennessee bird and ten complete seeds plus one hulled Johnson Grass seed (*Sorghum halepense*) in the Mississippi specimen. The Sprague's, on the other hand, contained no weed seeds. These data were supplied by Mrs. Coffey and Mr. Smith. The Mississippi specimen is at the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, and the Tennessee specimen in the collection of Albert F. Ganier, Nashville.

MEMPHIS, TENN.

The Round Table

PIPING PLOVER AT MEMPHIS—On August 9, 1953, near the north end of President's Island, a short distance from downtown Memphis, Mrs. Barbig and I noticed a flock of mixed shorebirds feeding on the mud flats along the Mississippi River. Approaching quite close, we identified eight species. One individual was outstanding from the Ringed (Semipalmated) Plovers which it was with. Its light, almost white, plumage and bright yellow feet and legs identified it as a Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*). This is apparently the third record for the state, the first being south of Memphis, May 5, 1935 (Migrant, 6:35, 1935) and the second at Knoxville in 1952. The area was again checked on August 15 and 16, and the bird was present on both dates.—HOWARD BARBIG, Memphis, Tenn.

HORNED GREBE AND DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT ON LAKE PHILLIP NELSON—A Horned Grebe in breeding plumage was seen on Lake Phillip Nelson (15 miles s.e. of Elizabethton, altitude 3500') by the writer in the early morning of May 30 and by Mrs. Behrend and the writer in the evening of May 31. According to Mr. Tom Morgan, who lives at the Lake, this bird had been present approximately two weeks. It was still on the lake on June 19.

Further in the morning of May 30, watching a Pied-billed Grebe on the Lake through binoculars, the writer saw a large dark bird in flight pass through the field of vision. Identification was not possible, but it was surmised the bird was a Cormorant. In the evening of May 31 the bird was confirmed to be a Double-Crested Cormorant. An unexpected close view of it was obtained when, only about 30 ft. distant, it was accidentally flushed. It skittered awkwardly on the water before rising, flying low a few hundred yards and alighting on the Lake among dead trees and bushes near the opposite shore. The back of the bird in flight looked brownish. The orange chin patch and webbed feet were plainly visible. The only previous published record of the Double-Crested Cormorant in the Elizabethton area is that of two birds on Watauga River and, I believe, Wilbur Lake, a few miles southeast of town, in late Fall of 1948 (MIGRANT, 21:58): — FRED W. BEHREND, 607 Range Street, Elizabethton, Tennessee.



MID-JULY HOUSE WREN SURVEY — Again the Elizabethton Chapter of T.O.S. has sponsored the House Wren survey during the period July 10 to 19 inclusive. The area was more extensively and more thoroughly covered than in the past. All towns in which T.O.S. members are located, from Chattanooga to Bristol, were invited to participate and the response was indeed gratifying with all towns reporting except Bristol.

Mrs. West reported from Chattanooga stating that in twenty months of record keeping only one House Wren has been recorded, that on March 9, 1954. Mrs. Clara Dunbar from Oak Ridge states she toured the city from 7 to 8:30 a.m. and did not see or hear a House Wren. Mrs. E. E. Overton of Knoxville reported two nesting pairs during the census period and two at an earlier date (J. B. Owen). One pair was located in Sequoyah Hills in West Knoxville and a pair in East Knoxville which were apparently incubating their second clutch during the survey period.

From Gatlinburg, Dr. Arthur Stupka reports that he has neither seen nor heard House Wrens in the area during the period in question. Dr. Tanner reports that he made several trips through parts of Gatlinburg, Sevierville and Pigeon Forge but had heard no House Wrens. Mr. and Mrs. J. B. White made an afternoon trip to Newport but failed to locate any singing House Wrens. From Greeneville Mr. White reports that on five trips during the census period nine singing House Wrens were located in the vicinity of Greeneville.

Johnson City appears to have had more complete coverage with approximately 15 singing individuals located. They were fairly well

distributed over the city and outlying suburbs. Mrs. Jackson states, "The House Wren has nested at 224 East Holston Avenue for 7 consecutive years and at 210 East Unaka Avenue for the fourth straight year. Individuals participating in the Johnson City count were Mrs. Hugo Doob, Jr., Mrs. S. D. Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. White, Mr. and Mrs. Fred W. Behrend, Mr. Bruce P. Tyler, the Sinclairs, and the Herndons.

On the morning of July 11, Mr. J. C. Browning and the writer passed through Milligan and Unicoi on the way to Erwin. In Erwin five singing birds were located; one bird was found on the South end of town singing from the top of a utility pole near the railroad tracks at Robertson and Vinton Streets. Four others were located in the Northeast edge of town in the vicinity of New, Tucker, Park, Ash and Fifth Streets.

Mrs. Switzer reports from Kingsport as follows: "We had only five other members participating in this year's count. We covered approximately the same territory as last year. We found a total of 19 nesting pairs in this residential area."

On the morning of July 10, Mr. Roby D. May, Jr., Mr. Dickie Hughes and the writer toured the entire city of Elizabethton and the suburbs, finding four singing House Wrens on the outside of the city limits to the Southwest. Two were near the end of Pine Hill Extension and the other two on the Gap Creek road between the Douglas and Southside schools. Mr. and Mrs. Web Mottern reported a House Wren nesting in their garage which is located on the North side of the Watauga River near the West end of town.

During the afternoon of July 11, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Browning covered the area in the vicinity of Hampton but found no House Wrens.

On the afternoon of July 17, Harry Farthing and the writer located two singing House Wrens (1 nest) at the home of Mr. E. E. Hampton near the Cloudland High School in Roan Mountain and one near the intersection of the Shell Creek and State Line Roads. On the same trip we continued through Burbank to the top of Roan Mountain but no House Wrens were located along the way.

On July 18, Mr. Roby D. May, Jr. and the writer toured up Stoney Creek to Shady Valley and made a loop through the valley but located no House Wrens. We then proceeded to Mountain City and located four singing House Wrens within a space of about one mile and a half before we entered the city from the Northwest. On the road from Mountain City to Laurel Bloomery we located one singing bird about two miles from Mountain City. On the return trip we toured Butler, Hampton and Valley Forge but found no other House Wrens. On July 17, the Behrends reported two singing House Wrens in Newland and two in Linville, N. C.

A total of fifty odd singing House Wrens were reported during this survey which indicates very definitely that the House Wren is quite well established in Upper East Tennessee, has been nesting here for several years and is extending its territory down the Tennessee Valley.

We acknowledge with grateful appreciation all of those who have participated in the survey and reported their findings.—LEE R. HERN-DON, ELIZABETHTON, TENN.

A HOUSE WREN AT LEBANON — A lone male House Wren appeared in my garden at the end of May, 1953. He immediately took possession of a nesting box from which a brood of Bluebirds had emerged only a few days before. He sang endlessly and worked prodigiously cleaning out the box and carrying in new nesting material. This continued for about four days when the bird disappeared. I thought he might have gone to bring his mate to the new home and I was thrilled when, after an absence of one day and night, the song sounded from the garden again. The male was at work at the box, stopping frequently to sing, but no female ever appeared. Just a week from the time I first noticed him, the male House Wren again disappeared.

I delayed reporting this incident in the hope that the wren would come back again, maybe with a mate, this season. I have watched carefully throughout the season but there has been no reappearance of my unusual visitor—the only House Wren, so far as we can ascertain, that has ever visited this area.—TRESSA WATERS, BOX 326, LEBANON, TENN.

The Season

MEMPHIS—Spring migration was marked by early arrivals, very occasional "waves" of transients, and the rapid drying up of shorebird habitats. A Purple Martin on Feb. 27, 7 Golden Plover at the Penal Farm on Mar. 6 (HL et al), and an Upland Plover at Sanders Field, Miss., on Mar. 13 were early. The latter species was uncommon and the first Tennessee arrivals noted were 5 at the Penal Farm, Apr. 3. Plowing was about three weeks early, probably accounting for the Golden Plover bypassing areas of former abundance in nearby cotton plantations of Mississippi and Arkansas, altho they were commoner than usual at the Penal Farm pastures with highs of 450 on Mar. 21 and 310 on Apr. 3. For a second season we had a "flock" of Greater Yellowlegs with 32 on Mar. 21 near Walls, Miss.; a week later the temporary solough was dry. Seen there on Mar. 13 were 5 and 8 Tree Swallows (GP, BC), about a month early. First Broad-winged Hawk records, all on Apr. 4, were: 2, Overton Park (GP); 2, Chickasaw S. P. (Alice Smith, BC. LC); and 1, West of Scottsboro, Ala. (Dr. and Mrs. Tom Simpson).

George Peyton, Jr., and Harry Landis, Jr., undertook the bulk of the Overton Park observations and listed six species there for our first ever in March. These were: Mar. 25, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 1, Kentucky Warbler, 2; Mar. 27, a Crested Flycatcher, a Blue-winged Warbler, two Worm-eating Warblers, and a male Yellow-throat. The Blue-winged and Worm-eating were found at separate times by each observer and again on Mar. 28 (GP). Spring Lake S. P. Miss., Mar. 28, furnished others: 2 Crested Flycatchers (LC et al), Worm-eating (GP & HL), 2 Yellow-throats (GP & RDS separately). Kilian Roever also recorded a

Yellow-throat on Mar. 28 at Huntersville. Peyton reports a Mourning Warbler on Apr. 16 (early) and a Connecticut Warbler (rare) on May 7, in Overton Park. He also found 16 Pine Siskins there on Mar. 19 while Roever reports the species at Huntersville the second and fourth weeks of March.

Summer temperatures were much above normal and rainfall below normal for a third very dry summer. A moderate number of herons and 15 Semipalmated Sandpipers were at Mud Lake, June 12; next week the lake was dry for the duration. The river was near zero gauge much of the time. A few shorebirds were found in Memphis at the northeast corner of President's Island after mid-August. On the 21st, Peyton and Landis found a Black-bellied Plover there, also a Buff-breasted Sandpiper (third Tenn. record). Two of the latter were there Aug. 28 and as close as ten feet to us (GP, HL, BC). No Upland Plovers were found at the Penal Farm June 5 and 19 but 11 scattered ones were noted July 10. On a tip from Kilian Roever a fourth Tennessee nesting colony of Bank Swallows was found at Heloise; June 6 (BC, LC, AS),—possibly 200 nests. Evident extension from the Tennessee River (West) colonies resulted in the first Mississippi nesting record of the Cliff Swallow,—17 nests under a Mississippi Hwy. 25 bridge near Pickwick, June 27. The bridge was completed in 1952. Barn Swallows nested there also. On June 13, I found an adult Lark Sparrow 5 miles south of Paris along old Hwy. 79.—BEN B. COFFEY, JR., Memphis, Tennessee.



NASHVILLE—This third successive hot and dry summer undoubtedly has affected the residence of our summer bird population. Opinion seems to differ as to which group (or groups) have shown most evidence of this effect. It is possible that many birds have been driven into deeper and more moist woods, or into other watered areas, which would make certain species abundant in other areas. Vireos and warblers, for instance, have seemed scarce to one observer, while another observer has seen other species rare in his area. The Prothonotary Warbler seems to have been more common this summer and to have remained in evidence later in the season than usual.

Mrs. Laskey reports the following on the Warner Park Bluebird boxes: "In the third period of Bluebird nesting only half as many nesting attempts were made as during the same period of 1953; only 23 young were fledged in 1954 as compared with 60 for the comparable period of 1953; in late June and July, 6 sets of Bluebird eggs failed to hatch, presumably due to the excessive heat."

Evidences of late nesting reported are: a Yellow-billed Cuckoo's nest with young on Sept. 5 (AFG); young Cardinals leaving the nest on Aug. 22 (ARL); a young Robin being fed by parent on Aug. 15 (HM); a brood of Mockers leaving the nest on July 27 (HM); 9 active nests of

Doves in Centennial Park area Sept. 1, some with eggs, some with young (HM).

Interesting migration notes have been numerous. Upland Plovers were heard in flight the nights of July 16 and 23 and on 12 different nights in August (HM); a Wilson's Warbler was seen Aug. 6 (HM); Mr. Abernathy had Palm Warblers the middle of July; a female Golden-winged was seen at 408 Fairfax on July 26 (KAG) (another record of 1 Golden-winged on the same date in 1936 was reported by Mr. Ganier, page 71 of September Migrant that year); 3 Black-throated Green Warblers were seen at 408 Fairfax on July 31, and 2 at same location on Aug. 4 (KAG); Mrs. Lasky had a Magnolia on Sept. 3; 1 Oven-Bird was reported on Sept. 4 (SB), 1 on Sept. 5 (GM), 3 on Sept. 6 (KAG). These locations were miles apart, which might indicate a wave.

Three Little Blue Herons, white phase, were reported on Stones River on July 11 (GM); this species was reported in the Radnor Lake area about the same time (exact date not recorded) (MC); Dr. Mayfield reported 3 Solitary Sandpipers, 2 Least, 1 Pectoral and 12 Green-winged Teal on Bush's Lake on Sept. 4; a Black Tern was seen on Sept. 6 (JR).

A group found an Olive-sided Flycatcher at Radnor Lake (AFG) Sept. 6, also 22 different species of Warblers, including Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Golden-winged, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Bay-breasted, Wilson's, Canada and the two Water Thrushes.—SUE M. BELL, NASHVILLE, TENN.



LEBANON—The usual late summer sequestration of birds did not come about in our area this year. There has been no apparent diminution at any point at any time. At our August meeting, when we checked from six widely separated points, birds openly present were as numerous, both as to individuals and as to species, as they were in June—or in any month in any year except those at the height of migration.

We are frankly puzzled and we offer no explanation. Conditions of drought, heat, and other weather factors have not differed essentially from those of 1953 and 1952. If anything has acted either to accelerate or to retard moulting, we do not know what it is.

The most striking thing we have observed is a tremendous increase over all previous years in the number of Bluebirds. This has been apparent throughout the season. At most of our check points on August 21, Bluebirds were present in flocks. Many were young birds still showing the speckled breast. We believe that most of our Bluebird pairs reared three broods this season.

In our "Up Yondah" area, along and under Snow's Hill above Dowlletown, there has been in progress a large road-building program involving considerable clearing of woods and the cutting away of whole faces of several ridges on the edge of the valley. This has resulted in major alterations in bird nesting and feeding areas. The effect on different species is in wide contrast.

Hooded and Kentucky Warblers, in previous seasons, nested in a

small deep valley which has been largely denuded. They have not been seen here this year but have nested lower down in an adjacent valley. The Yellow-breasted Chat, on the other hand, has moved in from the perimeter where it formerly nested. Also, one pair of Catbirds and some Chickadees have been observed in this area where they had not been seen before. Bluebirds have abandoned the ridges on both sides of the valley but have been seen at intervals in the surrounding woods. Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers have been present but have kept their distance where formerly they moved close in. Cardinals, Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Red-eyed Vireos, Black and White Warblers and Summer Tanagers have not been disturbed by the changes. Down on the valley floor, Bluebirds, Prairie Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Field and Chipping Sparrows remain as they were.—DIXON MERRITT and MILLARD C. KENT.

CHATTANOOGA—This area has experienced the hottest and driest weather on record for the months of June, July, and August since records were begun in 1879. There were 32 continuous days with 90 degree or above, which exceeded all previous records. Rainfall is 5.09 inches below normal for the year. The total rainfall from March through August was 18.16 inches with a deficiency of 9.83 inches for the same period.

Among the Spring migrants, interesting because of scarcity, were the following: Double-Crested Cormorants, Apr. 8; American Egret, Apr. 25; Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Apr. 8; American Bitterns, Apr. 18 to May 5; Olive-sided Flycatcher, Apr. 18; Least Flycatcher, Apr. 28; House Wren, Mar. 9; Worm-eating Warbler, Apr. 10. to 13. A very early Black-poll Warbler was seen Mar. 27.

At least 2 pairs of Bachman's Sparrow nested in Chickamauga Park. An unsuccessful search for a nest was made on several days, but newly fledged young was seen being fed on June 4.

Blue Grosbeaks increased from 4 pairs last year to 7 pairs in the same area. The first 1954 male was seen on Apr. 23.

The first Little Blue Heron (an immature) for the area was seen Aug. 23.

Wandering warblers have been practically nonexistent during August. Only a Canada and a Golden-wing (not known to nest nearby) have been seen. As of September 1, no other early migrants or wanderers have been observed.

KNOXVILLE — April was the warmest on record and drier than usual. During the first three weeks May was abnormally cold with more rain than usual. July was the hottest on record, and the entire summer has been very dry.

Four Sandhill Cranes were reported by Brockway Crouch, seen flying and heard calling near Knoxville on Mar. 25. Other unusual spring migrants seen in the Knoxville area were 2 Least Bitterns on May 2, an Olive-sided Flycatcher on May 23 and another on the 24th, 2 singing Northern Waterthrushes on May 10, and one Connecticut Warbler on

May 20 and another on the 23rd (Mrs. R. A. Monroe). Cape May Warblers, usually rare, were this year quite common; they were seen from Apr. 15 to May 8 with 14 seen on May 2. Pine Siskins were not reported this year except for a group of 12 seen on Apr. 25.

There were several unusually late migrants seen during the cold May; examples were an Olive-backed Thrush on May 27, a Chestnut-sided Warbler on May 30, a Canada Warbler on May 31, and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on May 23. The last White-crowned Sparrow seen was on May 21; this species is usually uncommon but has been reported often this year.

One or two Bald Eagles have been seen thru-out the summer on Norris Lake. On Aug. 15 in the Gallaher Ferry vicinity were seen 1 Piedbilled Grebe, 3 Little Blue Herons, and Cedar Waxwing with food in its bill (JCH). An unusually large flock of Purple Martins roosted in the Sequoyah Hills section of Knoxville during late August; all but a few stragglers disappeared between the evening of Aug. 28 and that of the 29th.

An unusual record is that of a Whip-poor-will calling near Loudon on Sept. 1 (JCH). Early fall migrants were 2 Ospreys on Norris Lake on Aug. 25, a Black-throated Blue Warbler on Sept. 1, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch on Sept. 12.—J. C. HOWELL and J. T. TANNER.

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GREENEVILLE—Spring and summer in general saw continuation of the drought, with some summer rainfall. Two observable results of the little rain and of the heat respectively were, first, a scarcity of ducks and shorebirds, there being no flooded creek bottoms to attract them; second, when the July 2nd heat was broken by afternoon winds preceding rain, the two fresh Chimney Swift eggs which fell down our chimney proved to be hard-cooked.

Interesting spring observations were an American Bittern remaining from March 22 through April 4 (RN); a Hermit Thrush on April 4 singing four times, this species not previously having been heard to sing here (RN, RRN); five Yellow-crowned Night Herons April 11 (RN, JBW); one Blue Grosbeak May 1 (Darnell) and five May 2 (Irvines); a Short-billed Marsh Wren in song occupying a green wheat field May 2 through May 13 (RN).

Species unusual to this area during summer were a nesting pair of Yellow-crowned Night Herons (RN) and a Blue Grosbeak of which no nest was found (RRN), Pine Warblers nested near the home of Tusculum (Irvines) and one near Marvin (RN). J. B. White found nine pairs of House Wrens nesting about Greeneville, a marked reduction over last year's numbers.

Of late summer wandering species, an American Egret was on Roaring Fork July 21, five on Cherokee Lake (Hawkins County) on July 25 (RN). The Whites on a day in early August saw on Cherokee Lake a Black-crowned Heron, American Egrets, an immature and an adult Little Blue Heron.

A Baltimore Oriole August 22 was presumably an early migrant. A

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Redstart was seen September 1 and 8. On August 28 at 6:40 p.m., 75 to 100 Nighthawks proceeded southwest, not in the leisurely manner of feeding but rather in a direct flight suggesting migration (RN). RUTH REED NEVIUS.

KINGSPORT—This summer and early spring have been characterized by abnormal distribution of rainfall, occasional violent winds, and periods of abnormally high and low temperatures. In spite of the shortage of water, which has become an emergency in residential areas supplied by well-water, extra rain fell in spring and early summer, accounting in part for an exceptional growth of vegetation, especially trees and shrubs. Some areas of Sullivan County have been much worse afflicted than others in the droughts of the past few years.

There are distinctly fewer spiders and insects this year.

Birds in general were very abundant, especially those found in residential areas. Many Kingsport residents asked the writer for explanation of this situation and for identification of various species, most frequently yellow Summer Tanagers, of which they had become aware for the first time.

Field birds, especially sparrows, seemed less numerous than usual this year, altho Bachman's Sparrow, a rare bird in any case, was somewhat more active. Woodpeckers were generally more numerous this year. A greater variety of bird songs than usual in late August and early September was noted by Ann Switzer and also by the writer. On the basis of a rather limited coverage of the field, we can say that the southward migration is probably somewhat early.

The newest TVA hydroelectric projects, Boone Dam and Fort Henry Dam, are located in Sullivan County. Both lakes have been filled, and Boone Lake is already open for fishing. These lakes offer increased opportunity for bird study. Green Herons, Chuck-Will's-Widows and Kingfishers are easily located there. Unfortunately we have had little systematic observation.

Mrs. Switzer, our most reliable observer, has seen Wood Ducks at Mr. Fowler's fish hatchery at various times during the summer, our first summer records for this species.—THOMAS W. FINUCANE, Blountville.

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