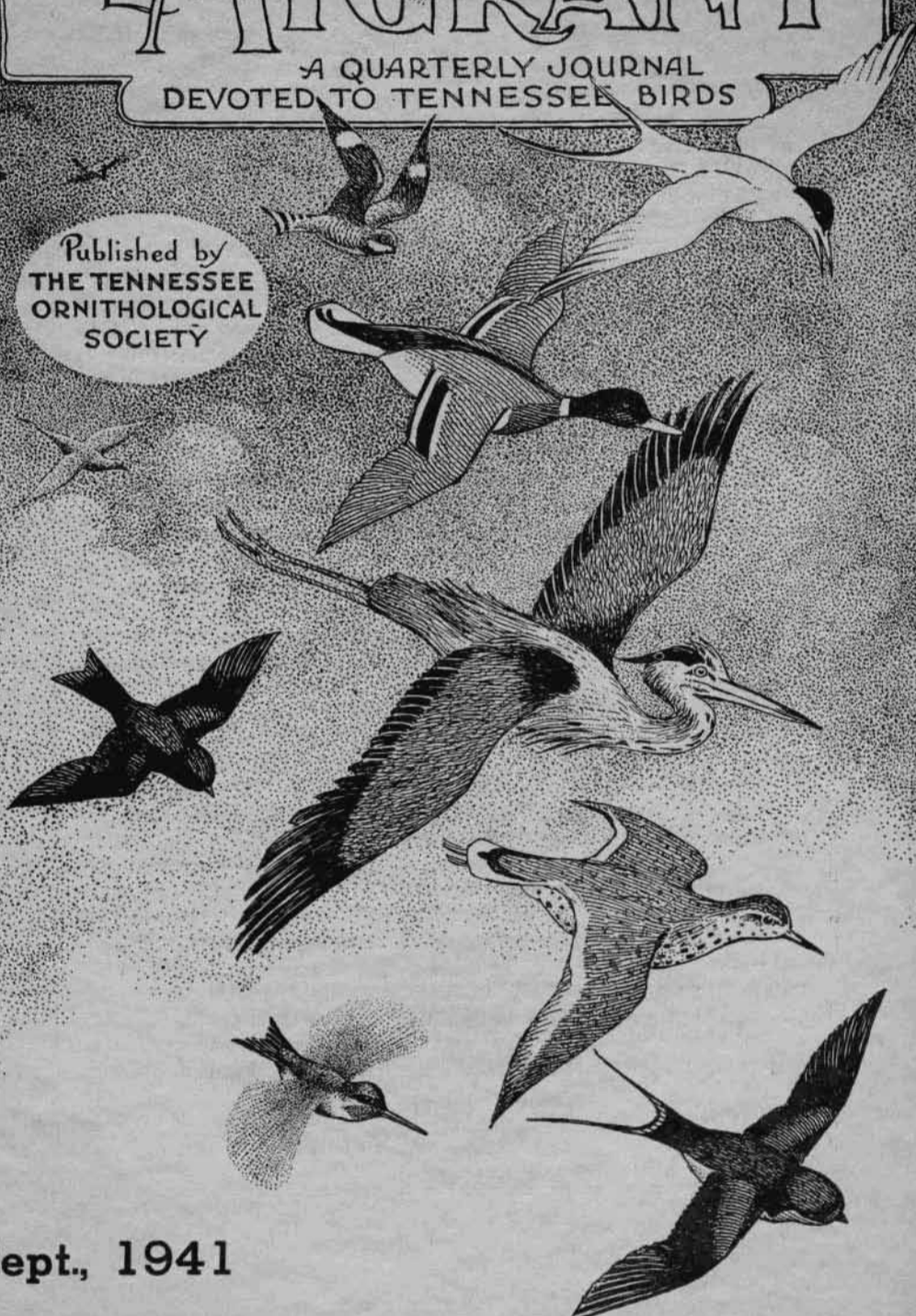


THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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AUGUST, THE SILENT MONTH FOR BIRD SONG—II.

BY GEORGE R. MAYFIELD

In the September *Migrant* for the year 1940 this writer discussed at length the reasons why the eighth month of our calendar year should be called the "Silent Month." An experience at dawn on the morning of this recent August 20 will further confirm the data given in the first article mentioned above.

A streak of color is just beginning to show in the east and the hour on this particular morning is 5:15 (Standard Time). Neither the Chuck-will's-widow, the Nighthawk, nor the Purple Martin feel the urge to greet the light of a new day with a song, as had been their wont during those rare mornings in June. For several minutes a dead silence reigns and then a Wood Thrush begins his chattering scold which seems in sharp contrast to his usual morning hymn of praise. After many efforts there comes just one bar of those silvery arpeggios which mark him as the sweetest singer in birddom. This is a signal for the Carolina Wren (now returned to Birds-I-View after a season of nesting absence since January, 1940) to reveal that he is thoroughly awake. His song at this time is that of mid-summer and justifies for him the title 'All-the-year-round Singer'. Varied songs and calls continue at intervals some fifteen minutes and then he, too, lapses into silence.

The imperious chirp of the Cardinal sounds about 5:30 as he leads his modest wife and only offspring to the feeding shelf where some watermelon seed could be halved for the goodies in them. One or two short strains of music from him and then silence, except for the teasing calls of the young bird hungry from the long hours of the night. Usually the Indigo Bunting, the Cuckoo, the Pewee and the Crested Flycatcher are awake by this time, but their voices keep a solemn silence.

Across the road in the bushy field can be heard the plaintive notes of the Field Sparrow which continue longer in August than those of any other species. At intervals the Towhee tries out his voice but it lacks the beauty and the power of those spring songs which last from dawn almost till dark. Nor can one hear the Chat, the Maryland Yellow-throat, the Kentucky Warbler, the Prairie Warbler, the Sycamore Warbler (so constant with his music), or the Bob-white.

Then comes the twittering of the Goldfinch as he rises and falls on the air waves like some magic boat as it rides the rolling waters. He lit in

the tree just outside my window and continued a low but almost ecstatic melody which indicates that the young have just left the nest and are the delight of the father's heart as he flits busily from tree to tree. The Crows and the Jays are now awake and in small groups they make their way through the trees, disturbing what birds are still drowsy from the night's slumber. A lone Bluebird is flying far overhead with a querulous murmur which characterizes the solitary flight song of this species in August. The Mourning Dove usually calls before the sun rises and can be heard cooing until late August, but our pair has already deserted Birds-I-View, for what reason I do not know. The Meadowlark is absolutely silent. No, there comes a scolding chatter to reveal his presence in the lush grass across the river, haunts which had of late been vocal with cheery music. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher sounds his thin quaver as he feeds in the trees just outside my window. There is none of that low but joyous melody which one hears all through April and May as he darts busily from limb to limb in search of food.

Where are the Vireos is my next musing query. These are generally the late risers, but it is now halfway between dawn and sunrise and they are still unheard. Then comes the shortened and subdued "Chip-per-per-wee-we" of the White-eye. Just a few times and he shuts up as if peeved with his own rehearsal. The Red-eye mews a few times as is his custom when Jays are around, and he essays a few bars of that monotonous song which entitles him to the nickname 'the Preacher'. That is all as compared to those days when every tree seemed vibrant with the music of these abundant singers. Chickadees and Titmice drop down on the feeding shelf and take turns hammering out the juicy hearts of cantaloupe seeds. The Titmouse finds that watermelon seeds are easy, too, as he holds them in his toes and busily knocks the dicotyledons apart. And still not a sound from any of the many warblers in the trees and field nearby.

Another bird calling. Oh, yes, it is the cry of a Summer Tanager which scolds a teasing youngster for his insatiable appetite. All through the day in late August these hungry brats follow their parents and I believe I saw a peeved mother give the youngster a peck on his tender head instead of handing him a juicy insect. And who could blame her for this final warning to shut his hungry mouth? And those harsh chucks nearby prove that an enemy has been spied by a pair of Brown Thrashers. Some wandering feline is near and the Catbird joins with the Thrashers and the bevy of other birds to make life miserable for his 'Serene Highness,' Mr. Tomcat.

Now the sun is peeping over the distant hills to light up the dark corners in the valley of Stone's River. The latest riser of the bird world twitters overhead as the lazy Chimney Swift (or is this slander since he flies the whole day long without once resting) crawls out of his sooty bed and warbles a few notes. Then more silence, only the blessed Carolina Wren sings with jubilant notes and the listener realizes all too well that the August

"Days are come

The saddest of the year."

NASHVILLE, August, 1941.

DO BIRDS THINK?

BY BERT POWELL

Science contends that birds and animals have no power of thought or reason, but rely solely on instinct to provide them with substance and safety. I do not denounce this theory but my observations have been such that I must, at least, accept a modification rather than the absolute. I have seen (I am sure you all have) instances in which instinct was coupled with reason or thought.

The Aesop fable of the Raven that dropped stones into a partially filled water-jug in order to make the water rise to a drinking level, is applicable to the Bronzed Grackle which will invariably soften hard bread in water before attempting to eat it. Last winter I saw Grackles take crusts of hard bread from the feeding shelf and fly to the bird bath where they would soften the food in water. Starlings also followed this practice. This summer I witnessed a parent Grackle instructing his three squalling half-grown youngsters in the gentle art of 'dunking'. The adult bird picked up a large piece of bread and dropped it into the water, picked it up and repeated the performance, all the while the young birds were perched on the edge of the birdbath watching. When the bread was soft enough, the birds noisily devoured it.

How did these birds learn to do this? Bread is a comparatively new food for birds—certainly not a natural one—and as the Grackle's beak is not equipped to break the hard crust, the bird had to think how it could be eaten. Instinct told him it was edible, but intelligence showed the way in which it could be consumed.

Housewives may complain about the untidiness of the English Sparrow, the bird student may berate him for driving off other birds (?), but friend and foe alike admit that he is clever. The English Sparrow is dirty, a bully, an urchin of the bird world; but his resourcefulness, backed up by his pugnaciousness, has earned him many a tid-bit. During last winter's short-lived snow, I enjoyed a drama of exceeding interest between a Blue Jay, a Bronzed Grackle, and a smutty English Sparrow. The Grackle had picked up the last remaining piece of bread (on the feed tray) and was about to fly off with it; a Blue Jay flew down and tried to take the bread away from its rightful owner. A lot of fuss resulted and a watchful Sparrow came 'double-time' to the scene of action. The Grackle, of course, dropped the bread and the ever ready Sparrow seized the prize before the contenders could take up the pursuit. The thief-in-feathers left to enjoy his booty. The Sparrow, by adopting the policy of "the smart take away from the strong" as his personal philosophy, dined par excellence.

The reason why people say that birds (and other animals) have no powers of thought is that by comparison to our own intellect the antics of resourcefulness that the birds show are dwarfed or absolutely unnoticed. It is certainly more than instinct to allow a bird such as the Indian Mynah to talk. I have in my scrapbook a clipping from the *Honolulu Advertiser* about a "bi-lingual" Mynah—a bird that can talk in Japanese and English. In the San Diego Zoo I heard a Mynah with a vocabulary of astonishing

variety (this bird spoke with a clear enunciation). It certainly takes more than plain instinct for a "dumb" bird to learn to speak; learning requires thinking and thinking is not an instinct reaction.

I realize that this issue is highly controversial and that more than one member of the T.O.S. will disagree—some may even agree—but I feel certain that birds do use a modified form of thought. It goes without saying, however, that instinct predominates.

MEMPHIS, August, 1941.

TRAMPING WITH THE BIRD MAN—X-XIII

BY BRUCE P. TYLER

X. SICK DAYS

It is early April and the Bird Man finds himself laid low by an encounter with old man Streptococcus—yes, "Strep Throat" and Quinsey. Fast in the bed and the birds migrating! Unfortunate but all too true.

One might ask why it is that poets or dreaming writers of prose sing of trees and rivulets as if they were alive as men are. They refer to the spirit of springtime, a living thing—it is even so. Why, then, should there be wonder if one who has spent a lifetime with the birds, sees in them a living spirit, an understanding beyond the ken of man. As it appears to the Bird Man, we have but scratched the wisdom of the birds. Perhaps we will never know the whys and wherefores of avian activities: likely not, as many of the rudimentary activities of the birds are wrapt in antiquity far preceding the advent of man on earth. Yet, we have a little knowledge, dangerously little, on the subject.

But the Bird Man is ill and impatient—the birds are migrating. Now, of all the beautiful songs of our native birds the Bird Man loves best is the soft, gentle warbling song of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. How often has he lain prone on the floor of the forest listening, listening in ecstasy to their beloved songs. This day, while the Bird Man tosses restlessly on a sick bed, the Rosebreasts were migrating and singing in the tree tops of the forest. Day dreaming thusly, there comes to the ears of the Bird Man the soft, sweet note of his sylvan friend—yes, there can be no doubt of it—in one of the liriiodendron, very near by, the Rosebreast is singing—and this in the city. Many years of observation has never revealed this bird in town, yet, here he was singing his heart out to his friend. The succeeding morning he came again and sang as before. The Bird Man could hardly believe his ears, but it was true. His nurse pulled aside the curtain and there, in full view, sat the Rosebreast singing, singing, and while he watched it flew away to its woodland home, leaving behind cheer and a better spirit for the fight. Can any tell why this lovely bird left its beloved forest and came to sing a soft comfort to the Bird Man?

XI. KEEN INTELLIGENCE

The Bird Man is the happy possessor of a conservatory, not of extensive proportions, but supplying ample space for amateurish ventures in propagation and the raising of seedlings for the garden. There are two doors, two windows and two weep holes in the structure. Through the doors and win-

dows birds frequently enter and, having entered, fail to find the way to a safe retreat and often fly against the glass, ceaselessly seeking an exit where none exists. Sometimes by keeping away to avoid scaring the bird, it finds safe exit. Occasionally I find the lifeless body of a bird amid the plants. On one occasion I found a Ruby-throated Hummingbird lying quietly among the pansies, beautiful beyond description. I took it in my hand holding it in the open palm. I took it out to show it to Mrs. Bird Man but she was not to see it. As I stroked its plumage it suddenly opened one eye, then another, and noting its strange surroundings it sprang into the air and from the top of a nearby apple tree contemplated upon the strange incident, and likely in its own way, thanked and loved the Bird Man.

But all this is only introductory to its real theme. The term weep hole is more or less technical, so to explain, in this case, the two weep holes mentioned are sections of two inch iron pipe set in the concrete wall at lowest points to provide drainage. Within the structure they are at corners and on the floor, without, they emerge just above the surface of the ground. Now at times during the winter months, the Winter Wren comes to visit us in the lower elevations (1700 feet above sea level). One of these boreal visitors came to stay with me for a few weeks and chose for his quarters my greenery. I was very much surprised one morning upon opening the door to note his welcome presence. I retreated at once, fearing to scare him so badly that he would fly against the glass and injure himself, but as I came around the corner of the glazed enclosure I noted the bird fast bound for the shrubbery. Could it be the bird that was in the Conservatory? No! All the doors and windows were closed, but search failed to disclose his presence indoors. How could he have left so promptly? Days followed and my pet roosted within the conservatory, yet at will he fed in the garden and enjoyed the solitude of the shrubbery. My vigilance was soon to be rewarded; the wren had found the weep holes, never closed, and understood them, and so had used them for his entrance to comfortable sleeping quarters and to a refuge from the cats. At the approach of the Bird Man, he simply ducked under the bench and out the weep hole, to return at his pleasure. What is this but keen intelligence!

XII. CATS ET CETERA

To the urban dweller who loves the birds and seeks to have them nest in his door yard, nothing is more disturbing than the presence of *felis domesticus*.

The Bird Man has labored with this difficulty for many years, even unto the present time. The implements used to rid the premises of the cats have been three; the pistol, the rifle, and the box trap. The two first mentioned remedies are more or less dangerous to use in town. The box trap is ideal, if such a thing can be.

One year the cats were remorseless in their destruction, and apparently legion in numbers, which brought about severest relief measures by the Bird Man. Four fell to the pistol, one to the rifle, and four to the box trap. These were what we call alley cats, strays, with no home. They live from garbage cans, and on mice, rats and birds. Four years in succession the

baby Bluebirds were destroyed which led to the parent birds deserting their home. The baby Robins were killed as soon as they left the nest, and on one occasion a cat destroyed nest and young high in an apple tree.

There is little of interest in shooting and burying a cat where it can do the most good, viz, under the grape vines; but the procedure in the case of a trapped cat is quite another matter. The box is set and baited with a small fish—a tid-bit for pussy. After making the night hideous, morning brings the cats out in search of food and the scent of fish fills them with that primeval urge and the thought of filling their maw with fishie blinds them to the danger of the trap. They enter, eat, and the door, the port cullis, falls and they are prisoners. A well directed pistol shot ends their career and they are gathered unto their fathers and sleep beneath the vines.

On one early morning occasion the Bird Man noted that the trap was sprung, and as he was leaving on a business trip, he spoke to his colleague, "Bob", requesting that he attend to the last rites for pussy. In moving the trap to a convenient location for the kill, Bob noted the extreme weight and commented "That is the heaviest cat we ever caught," and sure enough, it was. The pistol spoke and the door opened revealing a huge opossum, which was so fat that it could not turn in the trap. Some said it must have weighed twenty pounds. In due course the body was delivered to a friendly negro who reported very favorably upon the excellency of its flesh.

After each kill in the trap, it was cleansed, sunned and rebaited and was effective until fatalities among the cats became a matter of discussion at the cat congress. Most of them had disappeared but one old tom who loved to sleep beneath an overhanging plant in the peony garden. He was dangerous as could be to the birds and distasteful to the Bird Man, so the trap was produced and placed near the lair. To the surprise of the trappers the trap was not sprung and the old tom disappeared, not to be seen hereabout again, and no more cats entered the trap nor passed on my domain. The cats were on to the game, and in congress assembled they gave notice to beware of 'Tylers' Garden, where today seven robins feed contentedly and undisturbed.

XIII. HOMEWARD BOUND

How often, going afield with the birds, one goes too far, not thinking of the homeward steps, until that tired feeling cautions. Thus admonished, the Bird Man turned backwards from a trip and determined to follow the highway, the easiest and most direct route home. Now, it happened, by entire accident, that this was the time for the bus, so in climbed the Bird Man, and reclining in the easy seat, marveled at the efficiency of a gallon of gasoline and the enterprise that made such transportation possible, when, but a few years prior, naught but a long legged mule could have negotiated this road in the spring time. The Bird Man was lost in dreams of the observations of the day and the beauty of the springtime landscape as the bus rambled merrily along. The buzzer buzzed, the bus stopped, and from the passengers there stepped a workman in blue jeans, dinner pail in hand. There was a brief stop to take on other passengers and the Bird Man watched the toiler as he left the pike and climbed a little hill to his abode

—a neat little cottage on a hillside. From the door ran four children, all in blue jeans, except the least one, a little girl. None could have been over five years old. Perhaps, there was a pair of twin boys. In the doorway stood the mother wreathed in smiles. The children hurried down the path to meet their daddy, clinging in ecstasy to his legs, while he gathered up the little girl in his arms and climbed slowly toward his cottage. An illuminating smile passed over the faces of the bus passengers, and well they might smile, for they had had a glimpse into heaven. Surely a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of his possessions.

JOHNSON CITY, September, 1941.

SUMMER RANGE OF MID-SOUTH TOWHEES

By BEN B. COFFEY

The Red-eyed Towhee (*pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus*) is a fairly common to common winter resident in the Mid-South, arriving about October 10 at Memphis and remaining here as late as May 8. Because it is also a fairly common nesting species at Nashville, its absence was noticeable to me the first summer (1928) after I became a resident of Memphis. At this time, as now, Mr. Albert F. Ganier was assisting and encouraging my ornithological studies in a pioneer territory, by correspondence and other means. In his early days our mentor personally knew every bird around Vicksburg, Miss. and found the Towhee nesting there, although not as common then as in winter. Thus it seemed to him that this species was being overlooked at Memphis and to me that here was a local problem in distribution to be worked out.

As I became more familiar with the distribution of our bird life in this area I resolved to see, at some date, how close to Memphis the Towhee came in its summer range. In 1936 after some prior desultory correspondence I wrote all bird students and those interested in wildlife in the Mid-South. Scoutmasters in the territory under survey were written—the various Scout Executives in Mississippi, Eastern Arkansas, and West Tennessee furnishing me their names and those of naturalists. Various trips were made along the border of the summer territory of the species in order to ascertain its approximate outline. A close watch was kept on all other trips also. Certain of our Rover Scout naturalists served as Nature study leaders at Mississippi Scout camps and looked for it especially.

By now it was realized that the breeding bird north and east of us was evidently the common eastern form, the Red-eyed Towhee. The race breeding at Vicksburg and southward was the southern form known as the Alabama Towhee (*pipilo erythrophthalmus canaster*). From Reelfoot Lake to near Vicksburg there appears to be a definite hiatus in the breeding range of these two almost similar birds but their ranges probably close in and perhaps overlap in northern or central Alabama or northeastern Mississippi. The outlining of the Alabama Towhee's range was, therefore, one of the objectives of a two-weeks bird study trip in central and southern Mississippi, June 7-22, 1936, and one week, June 19-25, 1939, in eastern Mississippi.

The Towhee is a bird that would be easily noticed and easily identified even by our less experienced correspondents. On our trips when most

observations are made at frequent short stops along highway or road, it is not difficult to locate a Towhee, if it is present, within 100 yards or perhaps farther. Some will be passed up, it is true. We had that experience to some extent on return trips to check up on that point. During hot dry afternoons, just about the time we would think no self-respecting Towhee would venture to call under such conditions, then one or more would confound our thoughts at the next listening post. The reports from our observers and our own results on side trips by foot and on extended stays well substantiate the results obtained by the quicker method.

Albert F. Ganier kindly went thru records on his numerous West Tennessee trips, sending us a list of same with data on the Towhees. Those trips made between May 8 and October 10 apparently bear out our conclusions. In fact he records very few Towhees, listing none on several trips in areas where we show them breeding. On Aug. 9, 1926, three were listed near Bruceton; May 26, 1926, one from Saltillo to Shiloh (6-day trip in that area); Sept. 6-7, 1931, three, Pickwick to Savannah, and fairly common, Pickwick, White Sulphur, and Waynesboro.

Wetmore (7) in his "Notes on the birds of Tennessee" indicates that the breeding distribution of the two races of Towhees in Middle and East Tennessee is somewhat involved with numerous intergradations predominating. Unfortunately all West Tennessee specimens taken by the U. S. National Museum party were transients. Those taken at Frayser, April 8, and Hickory Withe, April 12 and 15, 1937, were assumed to be breeding individuals. It is very doubtful that they were.

For Alabama Howell (9) writes "the Alabama race . . . occurs nearly throughout the state, both summer and winter . . . Those from the most northern counties are intermediate." The actual records, when plotted, are scattered. "The northern race is not known to breed."

Since the outlines of these areas were plotted several years ago, several recent records have tended to dispute our theory. The University, Marks, Greenwood, and other records are not necessarily the only possibilities but we believe they are still too infrequent to jeopardize our conclusion that the Towhee rarely breeds in the area shown. Some of the recent exceptions may be in a class with similar Shelby County records (reported in respective 'Seasons') which we were able to check on. A Towhee was found near Ellendale June 5, 1938. It was not there on June 26 nor in subsequent summers. On May 30, 1940, a male was found in Riverside Park. It couldn't be found again an hour later or on subsequent dates. On May 21, 1941, one was again found there and a second nearby; both were absent on the May 30 census and subsequently. Reported in this issue are records at two localities east of town by Mason and Burdick on July 19 and 20, respectively. The birds were not found later. These violate for the first time the rule that the Towhee stays out of this non-breeding area until mid-October when all our bona fide winter residents begin moving in. Altho nesting relatively close to Memphis there is no straggling in during August and September as in the case of warblers and shorebirds. We can offer no explanation for the presence of this species at Rosedale. We have failed to find it at Moon Lake, below Greenville, and other Delta localities. Likewise on the heights S. of Yazoo City, June 2 and 16, 1935.

We have expressed as best we could in semi-tabular form following the information on which we based our conclusions on the summer range of the two Towhee races. It is not as complete as we would have desired but our field work recently has been curtailed to such extent that we do not see the opportunity to add to our data any time soon; therefore we thought best to offer it now, such as it is. All dates shown are inclusive:

A. REPORTS OF RESIDENT OBSERVERS

WEST TENNESSEE

McKenzie	Rev. Geo. L. Johnson: fairly common (to 1936).
Milan	Miss Mamie Knox: fairly common (1940).
Milan	H. C. Monk: common in suitable cover, W. to Trenton and N. to Bradford (1941).
Pickwick Dam	J. C. Lamon: seen June 28, July 5 & 11 (1936).
Counce	Dr. Cynthia Counce: none seen on visits (to 1936).

MISSISSIPPI

Corinth	Benj. R. Warriner: 1 record, same place 1935 & 36. A few records east of town only (See The Season, this issue).
Paris	Wm. Shepherd, Jr.: none (1937 to date).
Water Valley	M. M. Turner, Jr.: none (1933-37).
Rosedale	M. G. Vaiden: common near Rosedale.
Scott County	Clay Lyle: common (about 1900).
Moselle	Miss Marie Grayson: fairly common.

ARKANSAS

	W. J. Baerg (1): "said to nest mainly in the Ozark region."
Monticello	C. M. Owens: none.
N. Little Rock	Mrs. Rowland Thomas: none.
Hot Springs	Dr. Wm. H. Deaderick (4): none.
London	Chas. Miller: none (to 1936).
Ravenden	Byron C. Marshall: 1 nest, June 4, 1927, four miles S., no other records (1920-1936).

SOUTHWEST KENTUCKY

Columbus State Park and Clear Lake, Ballard Co. (casual)	R. J. Fleetwood: fairly common (to 1936).
Clinton	Mrs. C. C. Robert: fairly common (to 1936).
Hickman (casual)	Wendell Whittemore: none (1936).
West Ky. & South Ill.	Gordon Wilson: fairly common to common (to 1936).

OTHER AREAS

N. Louisiana (Caddo)	H. H. Kopman: not present (to 1936).
N. Louisiana (Monroe)	Lowery (5): absent during the summer.
Louisiana	Oberholser (6): the Alabama form breeds north to Tallulah and Tendal, west to Tendal and Baton Rouge.
Florence, Ala.	G. A. Craig: 8 nests, 1935: 5 nests, 1936.
Florence, Ala. (casual)	Benj. R. Warriner: common, Aug. 10, 1936.

B. EXTENDED PERIODS OF OBSERVATION

WEST TENNESSEE

Reelfoot Lake Area	Wendell Whittemore (8): none (June 5 to Sept. 5, 1936).
Pocahontas-Hornsby	Dept. of Conservation Survey. Calhoun (2); Pond, Clebsch, Jr.: none.
Bolivar	Same: none (combined period—June 17 to Sept. 9, 1939).

MISSISSIPPI

Hickory Flat (Incidental)	Mrs. Ben Coffey: none (1930 to date).
Tishomingo State Park	Ben Coffey (3): 1 at Mingo (June 12-19, 1939).
Camp Bianchi, Whynot	Franklin McCamey, Jr.: none (June 8-13, 1937).
Camp Waukaway, Stafford Springs	James B. Batson: none (1936).
Camp Waukaway	Jim Vardaman: none (Aug. 17-20, 1937; July 11-15, 1938).
Camp Dantzer, S. of Hattiesburg	Jim Vardaman: fairly common (Aug., 1937; July 26-28, 1938).
Camp Coulter, near Columbia	Jim Vardaman: no records (July 18-20, 1938).

ARKANSAS

"Y" Camp, Mammoth Spring None recorded, John Bamberg, summer of 1929. Ben Coffey, Aug. 15-25, Aug. 31-Sept. 3, 1929, plus incidental observations later.

Kamp Kia Kima, Hardy None recorded 1929 to date. Visited each summer by older Scouts and leaders, fair to expert observers, making incidental to active observations. Include Ben Coffey: July 4 holidays in 1929 to 1933; July 17 to 25, 1932. Franklin McCamey: July 28 to Aug. 16, 1934. Fred Fiedler, Jr., June 15-30, 1937. Richard Taylor, June 20 to Aug. 11, 1938; Ben Welch, July 9 to 21, 1938, and Austin Burdick in Aug., 1938. Ben Welch, July 1-24, 1939. Also other scattered unrecorded periods for all observers listed above.

C. PERSONAL TRIPS

WEST TENNESSEE

1934: July 14	Ky. Line at S. Fulton; 9 heard singing, from Hwy. 51.
July 15	Obion River bottoms, on foot to Trimble, stops at Dyersburg and Ripley: none.
Sept. 2	Same as July 15, reversed, and to Reelfoot: none.

- 1936: July 12 Brownsville, Humboldt, Dyer, Newbern, Obion, Kenton, Union City, Martin to Jackson, Bolivar, Henderson, Lexington, Jack's Creek: see map.
 July 26 Bolivar to Adamsville, Milledgeville, Chester Co. pine belt, Jackson, Lexington, Jack's Creek: see map.
- 1937: August None at Henderson, several near Humboldt (toward Jackson); few hours each place.
- 1938: July 2 Somerville to Bolivar: none.
 July 2-4 Decaturville: Ben Welch, 4.
- 1939: Aug. 6 To Pocahontas and Pine Top (same area as in Calhoun's paper): none
- 1941: June Census at Chickasaw Bluffs (15th), Chickasaw Forest (22nd), and Gallaway-Covington-Stanton (29th), see last issue: none.
 June 22 Henderson, Jack's Creek, Reagan, Saltillo, Milledgeville, Henderson: 1 near Reagan.
 July 4 Savannah Census, 5 within 6 mi. on Hwy. 69.

MISSISSIPPI

(Delta trips omitted except for accidental records shown.)

- 1936: April 26 Included as this indicates the species only fairly common during migration. Corinth to Eastport to Short: 7 records.
 May 10 Corinth to Iuka to Golden: 1, might be transient.
 June 7-22 Trip over entire state. Found fairly common in South Mississippi. Map shows doubling back (daytime) to work out border of the range. Laurel, Stafford Springs, Carmichael, Waynesboro, Laurel, Forest, Meridian, Whynot, Macon, Louisville, Newton, Forest, Kosciusko, Durant, Way (recorded), Lexington, Carrollton, Columbus.
 July 26 Hickory Flat, Walnut, Corinth, Blue Springs: none.
- 1937: June 12 Memphis to Oxford and Paris: none.
 June 13 Columbus, SE; then NE to Greenwood Springs; pair on NE edge of Columbus.
- 1938: July 3-4 Tishomingo State Park: none.
 July 4 Iuka to Eastport: 1; also 1, 8.2 mi. W. of Iuka.
 July 10 Spring Lake State Park: 1, 6.6 mi. S.; University: 1 just west of same (also recorded June 1 by Shepherd).
 July 18 Charleston: Wm. Shepherd, none.
- 1939: June 12 To Tishomingo S. P. (via Selmer, Iuka): none. See Section "B" for June 12-19.
 June 19-21 Tishomingo, Booneville, Tombigbee S. P., Shannon, Greenwood Springs, Aberdeen to Columbus: none.
 June 22 Columbus: 3 locations N.
 June 23 Columbus: 6 records in lowlands between river junction; 1 N. and 1 in town.
 June 24-25 Columbus to State College, Okolona, Buena Vista, Calhoun City, Pontotoc: none.
 July 23 To Sardis, Oxford, Spring Lake S.P.: pair at 1938 University location above, other locale cut over.

- 1940: May 18 To Booneville (via Tupelo): 1 at Red Banks, might be transient.
 May 19 Tishomingo S.P., and to Eastport: none.
 May 26 Greenwood Area, 1 W. of Avalon in bottomland with Swainson's Warbler. Return via Webb, Marks, Jonestown: 1 S. of Marks.
 July 4 To Spring Lake S.P., Oxford: none. University locale of 1938, 1939 about half cut over.
- 1941: May 17 To Booneville (via Tupelo): none.
 May 18 Tishomingo S.P., Iuka, Cook's Ldg., Burnsville; 2 records from highway near latter. Probably same area as July 4, 1938, W. of Iuka.

We wish to express our appreciation to the ornithologists, wild life lovers, Scout leaders, and others who so generously furnished information for their respective localities or helped us to contact others, and to the Scouts assisting us on field trips and at camps.

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MEMPHIS, September 25, 1941.

Chimney Swift 39-93352, banded Sept. 10, 1938, at Memphis, has an interesting history. It was in a fall flock at Southwestern and was classed as an immature bird. On my first attempt at summer banding, June 30, 1940, it was one of a flock of about 45 in the same Palmer Hall chimney. On July 7 it was one of about 10 still using the chimney. Among the fall flocks of 1940 we found it Sept. 22 at Idlewild School, 1.6 miles south, and in the big flock downtown, Oct. 13, 4 miles southwest. On May 16, 1941, Mrs. C. H. Moore found the bird in her home at 1243 N. McLean, 1 mile northwest of the college. It was released in good condition. Here's hoping this enterprising Swift shows up again.

THE SEASON

MEMPHIS AREA:—Again as in past years during late summer the attraction for Memphis bird students has been Mud Lake, located on the Tenn.-Miss. line. The writer with Joe Mason, Ben Welch, and Robert Tucker made weekly trips to this bird haven from July 20 until Sept. 1. Quite a number of rarities were recorded and birds as a whole were above the average in numbers. On July 20 the water was still up into the willows and the only shore birds present were 3 Spotted and 3 Solitary Sandpipers. At one end in very shallow water, the following birds were seen: 5 Wood Ibises, 4 Snowy Egrets, 60 Am. Egrets, 100 Little Blue Herons, 8 Blue-winged Teals, and 5 Wood Ducks while 3 Anhingas sailed overhead. Few swallows were seen on the levee at this time although among them were a very early Barn Swallow and 5 Tree Swallows. By July 27 the water level had fallen and there was a little shore line, along which were seen: 1 Semipalmated, 10 Spotted, 20 Solitary, 10 Least, and 20 Pectoral Sandpipers. 2 Yellow-crowned Night Herons were also seen. Along the levee about 25,000 Swallows (Rough-winged, Bank, and Tree) were seen. On Aug. 3 the lake was still lower and shore birds were more numerous. New arrivals were: Semipalmated Plover, 3; Greater Yellowlegs, 2; and Western Sandpiper, 2. Black Terns were first seen on Aug. 10 when 6 were recorded. On Aug. 17 no additional species were seen although the shore birds had increased. On Aug. 22 a new visitor appeared in the form of a Forster's Tern. This bird was seen at very close range and was still present Aug. 24 when it was also seen by Ganier, Coffey, and party. 8 (Eastern?) Dowitchers were seen both the 22nd and 24th. On the latter date, before Ganier and party arrived, a Glossy Ibis was seen flying over the lake. The bird was seen at close range by Tucker and Welch as it flew from Miss. into Tenn. It is not certain whether this bird was of the Eastern or White-faced sub-species as they are practically indistinguishable in the field during autumn. However, this was probably a White-faced as they are supposed to range farther north than the Eastern. This is the second record for this area (see *The Migrant*, 1932, p. 28) but the first for Tennessee. Shore birds reached a peak on Aug. 24. Pectorals had increased to 800, Least to 400, Semipalmateds to 300, Westerns to 20, L. Yellowlegs to 100, and Semipalmated Plovers to 30. Also, 250 Wood Ibis were seen at the west end of Horn Lake and about 400 White Pelicans were seen circling in the distance toward the river. On Sept. 1, heavy rains had filled Mud Lake and no birds of interest were present.—On July 19, Mason reported a Towhee just east of town. The writer saw 2 Towhees the following day about 2 miles from Mason's. This is a very rare summer bird in the Memphis area; these were probably stragglers as they were not found on later trips.—Mississippi Kites again nested in Overton Park as immature birds were seen on Aug. 16.—Warblers arrived very early this year and they are listed as follows: Black-throated Green on July 28, Yellow on Aug. 1, Blue-winged on Aug. 7, Worm-eating, Canada, and Cerulean on Aug. 11, Magnolia on Aug. 14, Cape May on Aug. 20, Nashville on Aug. 21, Golden-

winged on Aug. 24, Tennessee on Aug. 25, Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided on Aug. 26. Black and White and Parula Warblers were quite numerous during the summer months; the former apparently after the nesting season. Tucker reports the last Swainson's Warbler on Aug. 7 and on Aug. 20 he saw a Common Tern on Wolf River. On Aug. 22 an Olive-sided Flycatcher was seen on a tall cypress along the levee at Mud Lake—this is the first record for the Memphis area. Aug. 24, a Western Meadowlark was heard singing near Lakeview. Although this bird was in Miss. it should be found in Tenn. in the near future. A very early Marsh Hawk was seen by Mason at his place on Aug. 19.—Empidonax Flycatchers were quite numerous this fall.—On Sept. 3, a Whip-poor-will was seen by the writer in Nonconnah bottoms.—Upland Plovers were first seen on July 20 near home and have been heard very often since as they passed over during the night. Large flocks of Nighthawks and Kingbirds have been seen this fall, rapidly moving southward.—Coffey reports a second nesting site of the Barn Swallow in this area. On July 2 a pair were seen at a wood bridge on the Penal Farm and the nest found underneath. Standing in the dry ditch bed he lacked a foot of reaching the nest for examination of contents. The road and bridge were new. The field where Grasshopper Sparrows are usually heard each June, had been cut, but one of this species was heard to the eastward. On July 13 Welch found a Lark Sparrow along the L.&N., a block east of Coffey Grounds. The bird was there a short time later when Coffey had to be shown. Joe Mason found one on his place on July 23.—About 5:30 A.M. on the 21st Coffey heard Jays and a Mocker scolding and hurriedly raised a bedroom shade. This frightened up a large hawk from the bird bath just outside. The bird perched in a sweet gum, a few feet above the walk and facing the front door. From this lookout it was identified as a Red-shouldered Hawk.—AUSTIN BURDICK, JR., Box 6732, University, La.

CORINTH CHAT:—Though plentiful in the Corinth area in winter, the Towhee is a rarity here in summer. I have records of the birds in the vicinity that lies some six or seven miles east, toward the Alabama line, along Highway 72. I have seen and heard them there in June, July and August. At one spot I have not failed to find the Towhee a single time, the last date being Aug. 9. This evidence indicates that this particular area is the westernmost border of the bird's summer range, so far as this general section of the country is concerned. At considerable distances on the south and north, the Towhee nests, but it seems that it is only on the east that a few individuals come near. Several summers ago I heard a lone bird singing at Waukomis Lake, 5 miles southeast, and last summer I saw one at Pickwick Dam.—During the past June and early July I enjoyed making a little study of the Chuck-will's-widow. The most interesting conclusion from my observations was that the bird sticks during the season to a very definitely fixed spot. In driving over the county almost every early evening during the period, between sundown and dark, I found twelve such places. I went to each one often enough to find positively that the individual bird was in the habit of calling from exactly the same spot at practically the same hour each day. A space of one acre would cover the ground where I could go and find the Chuck-will's-widow greeting the approaching night with his weird call. Perhaps a mile or so farther

down the road I would drive to another patch of woods, stop and listen. Soon came the call from the same place it had come the night before. Doubtless in their search for food they do a bit of meandering, but return for the long daylight stretch to very definite haunts, where likely their nests are located. A few times I found birds flat on the ground in the dust in some country road, with their spooky eyes shining like those of some bigger and wilder creature. Just as I thought the car would run over a bird, the little befeathered ghost would rise swiftly and miss the blow by inches.—On May 11 I found my first Blackburnian Warbler, at the end of a search that had lasted nearly fifteen years. The elusive sprite was feeding in the tiptop of a tall cypress tree in Tuscumbia Bottom. Come next May I will be scrutinizing every cypress in the country. (Editor's note—and get a stiff neck, too.)—For a period of three weeks a flock of Bobolinks cavorted in the reeds and tall grass of a meadow that borders along Cane Creek. From the tiny silver bell that is the throat of a Bobolink comes the sweetest music in all Birdland. It is true that the bird's call or whistle does have a slight metallic sound; but the real song itself is a soft musical tinkle, expressive of all of the beauty of a meadow that blooms in May.—One Yellow-crowned Night Heron, one Sora, most furtive of all birds, and thanks to friend Ben Coffey, one Painted Bunting, are the three rare ones on my list for the season. The Bunting was exactly where Ben said he would be and doing exactly what he said he would be doing—perched on a telephone wire near a Memphis cotton compress plant, and singing his little heart out in the last place on earth where one would look for bird so beautiful.—BENJ. R. WARRINER, Corinth, Miss.

THE ROUND TABLE

AN INDIGO BUNTING IN DECEMBER AT NASHVILLE:—On Dec. 6, 1940, I trapped and banded an Indigo Bunting in the dull plumage of a young female. The wing measured 63 mm. The outer two pairs of rectrices were somewhat abraded at the tips and were narrower and more pointed than the others, suggesting the theory that this was a bird of a late brood that still retained some of her juvenile plumage. She remained at my home station for ten days and was caught several times during that period. She appeared to be in good physical condition, gaining a gram in weight. She had weighed 14.9 grams at 3 P.M. on Dec. 6 and 15.9 grams at noon on Dec. 11. Her power of flight was not impaired for I repeatedly watched her fly into trees at some distance. She disappeared after Dec. 16 although the weather was still moderate. Searching for late Tennessee records I have found none for the Indigo Bunting after October. My latest banding date had been Oct. 15, 1936.—AMELIA R. LASKEY, Nashville.

SPRING RECORD OF A GOSHAWK AT NASHVILLE:—On the morning of March 19, 1941, as I was making a routine inspection of the Warner Parks Bluebird boxes, I noticed a hawk perching in a small tree at the edge of a thicket where sloping blue grass meadows border the wooded crests of the hills. At first glance I assumed it was a Cooper's Hawk but its larger size and gray breast immediately arrested my attention. As I watched it from the car, it suddenly dropped to the underbrush beneath its perch and I heard the distressed shriek of a Red-eyed Towhee. To my surprise the hawk returned with empty talons to a perch very close to a young cedar, assuming an attitude of watchful waiting, turning its head sideways to look downward but also watching me. It made some short flights among the saplings but returned to the cedar where it hopped from side to side around the dense evergreen, peering in as it searched for its quarry. All this time the shrill "t-wee" call of the Towhee issued from some hiding place in the tangle of vines on the ground or from the depths of the cedar which a few minutes earlier had saved its life.

I realized I was not only seeing my first living Goshawk but having the unique experience of watching its attempt at capturing a meal. With very deliberate and noiseless movements, I left the car, climbed an embankment, and walked across the meadow toward the hawk as it remained quietly perching, alert at my approach but unwilling to leave the quarry that seemed within its reach. From a distance of approximately 30 feet, I paused to examine the bird more closely. It would have been an excellent subject for a photograph as it posed in clear sunlight in unobstructed view but I was equipped only with 8x binoculars. All markings were very distinct. First I was attracted by the steady gaze of its bright reddish brown eyes fixed upon me, then the yellowish color of the cere, toes, and exposed portion of the tarsi. The under side of the long square-cut tail showed bands of a darker hue, three being visible below the under tail coverts. The underparts were entirely gray with indistinct barrings of a darker shade, more noticeable on the breast. The wings were darker than the breast; they were blue-gray in color with streaks of blackish. When it made short flights, bars of some dark color were noted on the light wing linings but the back showed no markings of any type. No trace of brown or reddish brown appeared in any part of its plumage.

After watching it for many minutes and having observed it from all angles, I tried, by waving my arm, to scare it to flight without disturbing the Towhee. Instead of flying, the Goshawk kept its perch still attempting to find a way to get to the hidden bird as long as its calls gave proof of its proximity. For ten minutes or more the siege lasted but only when the calls ceased, did my arm waving seem to have any effect for then the hawk flew low to settle at some distance on another sapling in the woods. During the entire observation period the hawk made no sound. I was unable to learn what happened to the Towhee for a later visit to the spot revealed no clew and no bird feathers on the ground.

This is the third record for the Goshawk in Tennessee and the first spring record. The other two were of birds shot near Nashville, an adult on Oct. 19, 1918 and an immature on Dec. 13, 1939 (*The Migrant*, Vol. 11, p. 1).—AMELIA R. LASKEY, Nashville.

AN EIGHT YEAR OLD MOCKINGBIRD:—In early spring of 1934 Mrs. K. P. Wright who lives adjacent to Ward Belmont School asked me to trap and deport a Mockingbird that had recently become a regular visitor at her window sill feeding shelf. She said it had been monopolizing the food supply to such an extent that she feared the Cardinals, Chickadees, and Titmice were being deprived of the suet and seeds provided for them. On Saturday afternoon, March 10, 1934, I set a banding trap baited with half an apple near the feeding place. The Mockingbird readily entrapped itself and was brought to my home three miles south. There it was released after aluminum band No. 34-200174 had been placed on the right tarsus and for sight identification, one of green celluloid on the left leg. The following Monday morning the bird was again at Mrs. Wright's feeding shelf, easily identified by the two bands. However its visits there ceased soon afterward and nothing was known of its whereabouts until nearly four year later.

On Jan. 26, 1938, when sub-freezing temperatures followed a snowstorm of the previous day, Miss Anne Ganier, then a student at Ward Belmont, found a double-banded, bedraggled Mockingbird lying on the campus driveway. She took it home where it was kept a day or two until it was able to fly. Its number 34-200174 identified it as my bird and it was released from the Ganier home which is about two miles southwest of the school.

In late April of 1941 while looking for Chimney Swift roosts, I was surprised to find a banded Mockingbird incubating a set of three eggs in a small boxwood shrub near the main drive of Ward Belmont campus. As I had never banded any of that species there, I was eager to know something of the history of this individual. Accordingly I began a campaign to trap her. Offerings of fruits and other foods were readily taken but she was very wary. She hopped all around and on top of the traps attempting to get the food but consistently refrained from entering. Early mornings, long before the students were astir, as well as evenings, I set traps and hopefully waited in the car at some distance from her feeding area. Her eggs hatched, the three young developed to the fledgling stage and left the nest before she finally yielded to the lure of raisins, apple, and corn bread in a top opening trap. She was caught May 8, 1941. My patience was indeed rewarded when I read her band number—34-200174. She no longer carried the green celluloid one. She is at least eight years old, a remarkable age for a bird living in a closely built residence section with its many hazards of cats, automobiles, etc. Her strong attachment for Ward Belmont campus is revealed in her return trips after being carried away twice from the home territory of her choice. It will be interesting to follow her career in future seasons.

To my knowledge there is only one record of an older Mockingbird. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Michener report one that had been trapped eight successive years at their banding station in Pasadena, California. On May 11, 1933, the last time it was caught, it was at least nine years old. (*The Condor*, 37, May-June 1935).—AMELIA R. LASKEY, Nashville.

WITH OUR MEMBERS

New address of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stevenson is Forest Home, Ithaca, New York. Henry, who has had an active and varied field background, is working on a Ph.D. in ornithology.

The address of Mrs. Sam H. (Sarah Ogilvie) Rogers is Sayre School, Lexington, Ky., until next June.

Mr. Ganier spent his vacation in Colorado, the first half of September, attending while there the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists Union. He presented a paper on the program entitled "Distribution of the Bald Eagle in the Lower Miss. Valley" and therein gave the location of more than thirty nesting pairs in this region. The meeting was a well attended and colorful one and was followed by field-days to the prairie sloughs east of Denver and, the following day, thru all the life zones up to the Alpine on top of Mt. Evans, 14,260 feet. Mr. Ganier spent his second week in the high Rockies, getting acquainted with the unusual birds of that region.

NASHVILLE CHAPTER

The young men of the Nashville Chapter have had busy summers, most of them having been employed during the three vacation months. This necessarily curtailed their bird observation activities. However, since July 21 when Chimney Swift banding started this year, several of them found time to participate. This fall the Swifts in Nashville have scattered in numerous small flocks so that in the five bandings to date (Sept. 18) the total number handled has been small, 3,300. Of these, 20 per cent were already wearing bands.

William Simpson is now living in Knoxville where he held a vacation position of responsibility. He is a Junior at University of Tennessee this year, majoring in chemistry. William had become expert in Chimney Swift work in Nashville and is making great progress in banding the large flocks at the more difficult chimneys in Knoxville.—Arthur McMurray has returned to University of Tennessee for his senior year in a pre-med. course, majoring in zoology.—Conrad Jamison, fortunately, remains in Nashville as he is a sophomore at Peabody College. It is hard on Nashville to lose so many of the fine bird students. Besides taking a summer course of study, Conrad has utilized his artistic talent and has made many pen and ink drawings for a forthcoming article and a book in the botanical field. He has become the 'engineer' of the Swift banding project since William left. They both are expert on high chimney work.—J. B. (Jack) Calhoun has returned to Northwestern University for his third year where he has an assistantship in zoology and is finishing his residence work toward a Ph.D. degree. He is working on research problems of the life history of the meadow mouse. During the summer, in addition to his regular 'job', he built a highly complicated apparatus for electrical recordings in connection with this study.—Steve Lawrence is returning to University of Tennessee to continue his course of forestry and Francis Lawrence enters his senior year at Central High. Francis resumed operation this summer of his sub-banding station with excellent results. He has also become proficient in making bird skins and has started a collection, all made from birds that otherwise would have been wasted, such as highway casualties, etc.—Harold Seligman, a high school student, is a new recruit in bird work this year. He worked well this spring on the Bluebird project and this fall is doing good work with Swift banding. He has already formed the habit of taking notes on his observations.—A. R. L.

THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF TENNESSEE BIRDS

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MEMPHIS CHAPTER

Wendell Whitmore receives his M.D. from the University of Tennessee this month. After November 10 his address will be care of John Gaston Hospital, Memphis.—Jim Vardaman is returning to the School of Forestry at the University of Michigan for his senior year. He spent the summer at their forestry camp in the Upper Peninsula.—Fred Fiedler, Jr. returns to the University of Wisconsin to complete his pre-med work.—Robert Hovis, Jr., who majored in chemistry at Yale, now goes with Procter and Gamble at Cincinnati.

John Pond is at 456 Montclair, Bethlehem, Pa. Graduating from Southwestern, he spent last year at the University of Georgia. John now has a teaching fellowship in mathematics at Lehigh University and is working on his Ph.D. He writes glowingly of a recent week-end trip to the coast and down to Cape May, famous bird migration area.—B.C.

WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB MEETING

The annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club, with which the T.O.S. is affiliated, will be held at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Nov. 21-23. It is hoped that a number of our members will plan to be present to enjoy the always excellent program. Dr. O. S. Pettengill is secretary; his address is Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.

IN THE SERVICE

Lt. John H. Embury, Jr., a charter member of the Memphis chapter, reported to Fort Bragg for active duty. His address is 9th Rec. Tr., 9th Div., Fort Bragg, N. C.—Harold Elphingstone is with the 16th Material Squadron, 13th Air Base, Maxwell Field, Ala. Harold completed the local secondary civilian pilot training course but the eyes that could spot a Junco at a hundred yards failed him slightly in his examination for the Air Corps. Here's hoping he soon gets another chance at flying.—Frank Van Hoesen continues his membership from Camp Stewart, Ga., where his address is Med. Det., 70th C. A. (A. A.).—Lt. George A. Reed, a former Memphis Scout and member, is stationed at Ft. Stolsenburg, Phillipine Islands. He is accompanied by Mrs. Reed.

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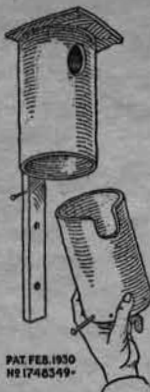
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