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THE GREAT SMOKIES AND THE WEST VIRGINIA MOUNTAINS: A CONTRAST

BY MAURICE BROOKS.

The ancient mountain system of eastern North America rises to three climactic regions. To the north the mountains of New England and New York have arctic-alpine peaks above tree-line, with extensive spruce and fir forests coming in just below the critical point where trees cease to grow.

Not too far from the center of the Appalachian system the Alleghenies of West Virginia and northwestern Virginia have extensive areas above 4000 feet elevation, the higher points clothed (originally at least) with a wonderful forest of red spruce and occasional stands of balsam fir.

The third of these climaxes is to the south, beginning with Whitetop and Mt. Rodgers in southwestern Virginia, and rising to greatest heights in the Great Smokies and the North Carolina Blue Ridge. Here is the southeastern extremity of the Canadian spruce-fir forest, modified it is true, but more nearly resembling the northern coniferous forest than any other woodland type in North America.

In the New England-New York highlands I have climbed most of the higher peaks, in the West Virginia-Virginia mountains I have spent my life, but in the southern reaches of the Appalachian system I have enjoyed only occasional short visits. It was, therefore, a peculiar pleasure to be able to spend a week in the Great Smokies during the latter part of May, 1945.

On a trip of such short duration the visitor gets impressions, sharpened if he has had experience in similar regions, and especially if he has expert guidance as I did in Art Stupka, the Park Naturalist. Knowledge of even a single mountain, let alone a vast wilderness, is not gained in a week or a year, so my notes must be, at best, superficial. Nevertheless, there are many striking similarities, and some sharp contrasts, between the Great Smokies and the West Virginia spruce-clad peaks which I know best.

The Great Smokies are both higher and much more spectacular than are the West Virginia mountains. The effect of greater elevation is heightened by the abrupt rise of the Tennessee-North Carolina massif from a comparatively low base; in West Virginia our highest peaks often rise from a plateau which is itself 2000 feet or more in elevation. The central axis of the Great Smokies therefore looks much bigger and is much bigger than anything in the mountain line which my own state can offer.

Due to the beneficent regulations of the National Park Service, the Great Smokies still are clothed in a vast forest which is, for a considerable part, virgin. West Virginia has only remnants of its original woodland, and only tiny fragments of the great red spruce forest which once glorified 700,000 of our mountain acres. True enough, under favorable conditions,

the spruce forest is regenerating, but of course it cannot again be pristine.

There is nothing in the West Virginia mountains to correspond to the grass balds of southern peaks—those peculiar elevated openings which serve the dual purpose of creating an illusion of tree-line, and of confounding the ecologists. Neither does my own state have such extensive rhododendron "slicks" and azalea and kalmia "pink beds" as are to be found southward.

It is always inspiring to trace out a species to its ultimate limits, north or south. Such delimiting points are, of course, frequent in the Great Smokies, as they are in my own mountains. The last great stand of the spruce-fir forest on Clingman's Dome, the clear, ringing notes of the Olive-sided Flycatchers at the southern extremity of their breeding range, these and many more add zest to the mountain scene.

For those of us who have an interest in the cold-blooded vertebrates, no other region in the world, perhaps, can offer so many species of salamanders as does the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. One must travel there to see the striking red-cheeked Jordan's salamander, so common in every situation above the 4000 foot contour. The tiniest of all our species, Wright's salamander, is perhaps as common in its type locality at Mt. Leconte as at any other place on the earth's surface. I have never, outside the Park, seen so many salamanders of so many species in any one locality.

A region which has elevation differences of 5000 feet or more on a single unbroken mountain slope is certain to offer sharp contrasts in its bird populations. At my home we do not find Chuck-will's-widows and Sycamore Warblers at the foot of a high mountain, but both these species seem common around Sevierville, just where one begins to climb toward New-found Gap. Thus in effect one journeys in a few miles from the Carolina lowlands to the Canadian woods with its Kinglets, Creepers, Winter Wrens, and northern warblers.

Both the Great Smokies and the West Virginia mountains are well-watered, a multitude of swift mountain streams, fed by high rainfall, enriching the scene. As a result of this heavy precipitation, well distributed throughout the year, there is a wonderful wealth of woody and herbaceous vegetation. We have here a genuine mid-latitude rain forest, without the climbers and aerial plants for the most part it is true, but with a wonderful understory of broad-leaved evergreens; rhododendrons, kalmia, leucothoe, andromeda, and others. Trees grow very rapidly, and in almost tropical profusion of species.

I was amazed to see buckeye trees growing near the 6000 foot level on Mt. Kephart. Yellow-wood (*Cladrastis lutea*), a species which I associate with the lowlands of south-central United States, was opening its fragrant white blossoms at 3000 foot elevations. It is the tree species, I believe, which serve most effectively to dilute the true Canadian character of these high peaks; most of the birds and mammals, and many of the herbaceous plants are of northern affiliation, but the trees of the central hardwoods region do creep in to give the heights a mixed-forest aspect. Thus the region is only quasi-Canadian, and all the more interesting to the biologist because of that fact.

Both of our regions have a share in the birds of the highlands. Ravens soar about all the high peaks or over the mountain valleys, calling hoarsely

at infrequent intervals; this bird is the very spirit of the mountain wilderness. Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers whisper through the spruces. The latter species sings frequently, its notes sounding to me like a softer and somewhat abbreviated version of a Winter Wren's outpouring. In the Smokies, as in West Virginia, I have never heard the Kinglets, no matter how abundant they may be, give the full song which is so often heard in the higher Adirondacks.

At mountain heights in both regions one looks and listens for those erratic northern finches, the Red Crossbills and the Pine Siskins. The more extensive spruce and fir forests of the Smokies make for more permanent populations of these two wanderers than in West Virginia, or so it seems at least. Perhaps this is more apparent than real, since the best of the spruce forests in my own state are not reached by a single road or trail, and are therefore very infrequently visited by any ornithologist.

In the Smokies I miss the soft warble of the Purple Finches and the vibrant notes of the Mourning Warblers and Northern Water-thrushes, all characteristic of the high West Virginia mountains. Most of all, I miss the choruses of Hermit and Olive-backed Thrushes which seem to tie my own mountains so definitely and irrevocably to the North Country.

Missing too from the Smokies are the extensive cranberry bogs which in West Virginia are reservoirs of boreal plant and animal life. Art Stupka led me to a rich little hanging bog at the foot of Andrews Bald, but such areas are measured in hundreds or thousands of acres in Cranberry Glades, Canaan Valley, or Cranesville Swamp, all near my home.

Carefully assessed however, the similarities between the two areas are much greater than the sum of their differences. Each excels at some points. In scenery, in forests, in plant species, and in large animal life the advantage is definitely with the Smokies. For a wealth of bird life, both as to species and as to individuals, the balance, I think, swings somewhat toward the West Virginia mountains. Certainly this will be true if our best mountain area, The Cheat range, be compared with the Smokies.

Both areas are peopled by fine human stocks, Scotch-Irish, English, and Pennsylvania "Dutch." If their opportunities have not always matched those of their lowland brothers, the highlanders have done much to keep alive and develop those native crafts and customs which the world at large is finding so attractive in recent times.

One feels in both areas that the surface, biologically speaking, has just been scratched, that there remains a tremendous untapped resource for oncoming generations of students and investigators. This is as it should be; we must have behind us such resources. Our eastern country is but a few generations away from the wilderness, yet we have little wilderness left with us. I am happy that these great mountain areas which we share are doing much to conserve so vital a portion of our heritage.

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY, MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA.

NOTE: In connection with Professor Brook's description of The Smokies and its birdlife, the reader may find additional information in an illustrated article on the summer birds of that area, published in THE MIGRANT for September 1938, V. 9, pp. 41-45 and 55-58.—Ed.

NESTING RECORDS OF THE TOWHEE AT MEMPHIS

J. SOUTHGATE Y. HOYT

When one comes to a new area of the country it is always with considerable excitement and pleasure that he goes afield to see and learn the ways of the new birds common to this area but strangers heretofore. It is with equally great pleasure that one sees old friends as well and renews acquaintances with birds which he is already accustomed to seeing in the field. Often it is a shock to observe that some of these old friends are not acting as we knew them at home and not infrequently they seem almost as strangers to us.

It is a situation such as this that brings me to record the first nesting record of the Red-eyed Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) in the Memphis, Tennessee, area. I have been with this species in many areas and have spent considerable time watching them in all stages of their life, from nestlings to birds of considerable age as repeats in a banding trap. When I first went afield here I was not in the least surprised to meet the Towhee in the same habitats as I had seen them in other parts of the country. In May, 1944, I was greatly surprised to learn that the Towhee had not been recorded as a nesting species in this area.* Furthermore I was told that the ornithologists of this area had made a diligent search for the nest of this species without success; they believing as I that it must nest here. By June Miss Pauline James had introduced me to the woodlot known as King's Woods and previously described in THE MIGRANT. At this time there were several Towhees in this wood lot. Later, on June 18, Miss James and I searched these woods from one end to the other without finding any Towhees. From this date to September 6, 1944, no Towhees were reported from any area around here and King's Woods could not produce any. Where had they gone? Surely they had not gone farther north to nest at this late date, for they are generally early nesters in the areas where I have found them breeding. I do not know the answer to this question but undoubtedly further study in this area will produce the answer. I do know that on September 6 there were two adult birds in King's Woods and from this date throughout the winter they were recorded regularly and in considerable numbers.

As spring, 1945, came on, I kept very close watch on the Towhees that had wintered in this woodlot. On April 3 I flushed a female from under some smilax and lonicera. I hastily looked for a nest but could not find one, however I made a mental note of the exact spot from which the bird had flushed. I was unable to return to the woods before April 6 at which time Miss James and I again flushed the female from the exact same spot. Being on the alert for the least movement before I reached the spot I saw just where the bird came from. Looking carefully under the vines we found the first nest to be found in this area. The nest was placed on the ground on the side of a slight slope inclined to the east. A depression was scooped out of the ground by the bird; into this the nest was carefully built. The exterior was of small twigs and the inside was lined with grass. The nest was so placed that one could step on the ground around the nest and not mash it for it was sunken into the ground. Four eggs were in

the nest and I believe incubation had started when I first flushed the bird from this place April 3. Photographs were taken that came out well and the nest was guarded with every possible precaution. The next time I returned to the site was April 11 at which time the eggs had hatched. On April 14 I tried to photograph the parent feeding the young but did not have time for the work so I had to content myself with photographs of the four young. By April 19 the young were out of the nest and being well cared for by the parents who kept the family in this small, isolated patch of woods where they had hatched.

In another area of King's Woods, we came across another family of young Towhees being fed by their parents. To make sure this was not the same family moved across the fields, one of us stood with each family and called to each other from across the fields, each watching a pair of parents with young.

This makes two nests in this area for this year but only one actually located. The young soon were flying and leaving their nesting area behind. As in the past we recorded Towhees in this area up to the latter part of June then lost all trace of them. At the time of this writing, August 16, 1945, there are no Towhees to be found in this area. I earnestly wish that I had the time to put into this mystery for I should like very much to learn the whereabouts of these birds during their summertime absence from the Memphis area.

KENNEDY GENERAL HOSPITAL, MEMPHIS 15, TENN.

*NOTE: In an earlier issue, Ben B. Coffey has cited the rarity or apparent absence of Towhees from the Memphis area during the summer. (MIGRANT, 1941, 12:51-57.) It is quite likely that the form of Towhee nesting at Memphis is the southerly race, Alabama Towhee (*P. e. canaster*).—ED.

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF NORTH MISSISSIPPI

HENRY M. STEVENSON, JR.

It was the author's privilege to live in Oxford, Mississippi, from September, 1943, to June, 1944. This town is located in the north-central part of the state, 40 miles south of the Tennessee line. Altitudes within 10 miles of the town vary from 200 to 600 feet above sea level. The forests are predominantly hardwood, oaks being especially numerous. Pine woods are few, and no tracts of these trees cover an area of more than a few acres.

During the latter part of the writer's stay in Oxford occasional opportunities were found for a study of the breeding birds of the region. Furthermore, even after I had moved to Memphis in early June, return trips were made to Oxford on two week-ends, and some time was spent in the field. This field work during May and June, 1944, established fairly well the relative abundance of most species of breeding birds in a region where little summer work had been undertaken previously.

The probable status and range of the birds of Mississippi were described by Ben B. Coffey, Jr., in May, 1936 (*A Preliminary List of the Birds of Mississippi*, mimeographed). In a later paper (THE MIGRANT, Sept., 1939, pp. 50-56) he supplemented the information contained in the first paper with

data from Tishomingo State Park, in the northeastern corner of the state.

The present paper by no means contains a complete list of the breeding birds at Oxford. It purports only to add to the known distribution of certain species and to modify previous statements regarding the relative abundance of other species in northern Mississippi. The terms used here to describe relative abundance, however, are based on the average number of individuals (exclusive of nestlings) counted per hour of field work. These terms and the corresponding frequencies (numbers of individuals per hour) are as follows:

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Abundant ----- | more than 3.00 | individuals per hour. |
| Common ----- | 1.00-3.00 | individuals per hour. |
| Fairly common ----- | .30-1.00 | individuals per hour. |
| Uncommon ----- | .05- .30 | individuals per hour. |
| Rare ----- | less than .05 | individuals per hour. |

The period covered by such data varies with the period of migration of each species. The shortest period used for any species (May 24-June 18) is for the latest spring migrants and embraces 17½ hours of field work. Other periods and the number of hours represented are: May 10-June 18, 22½ hours; May 1-June 18, 36 hours; April 1-June 18, 51 hours. (The last of these periods was used only for certain rare and relatively sedentary species.) An effort was made to spend equal amounts of time in the various habitats, but high waters made some habitats almost inaccessible.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*). Coffey (1936) gives its breeding range as "Delta Swamps and Coast." Oxford could hardly be classed with the Delta region, but this species occurs uncommonly during March, April, and May and probably breeds in the region.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*). In 1936 this species was considered a questionable breeder in northeastern Mississippi, but a pair was later found in Tishomingo State Park in June, 1939. It may also be considered a rare summer resident at Oxford, having been recorded on June 10 and 18. (According to the statistical methods described above, most species of hawks are less common at Oxford than Coffey has described them.)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*). Only uncommon or fairly common at Oxford in summer.

FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*). Rather uncommon at Oxford in summer.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*). Very common; during 22½ hours, 44 individuals were counted.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*). Averages uncommon in the Oxford region.

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH (*Sitta pusilla*). Very rare, due to lack of extensive tracts of pines. Two individuals found at County Lake (Lake Lafayette) on June 18 were the only ones recorded during my entire stay at Oxford.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). Averages fairly common at Oxford. The frequencies for the winter months were somewhat higher, usually about 1.00 per hour.

SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*). Uncommon summer residents at Oxford.

STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Fairly common summer resident, doubtless having increased since 1936.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*). Although considered by Coffey (1936) to be uncommon or fairly common throughout Mississippi, this species appeared to be entirely absent at Oxford in the breeding season.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*). Breeding range previously described as the northeastern corner of Mississippi, but it breeds uncommonly at Oxford.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*). It is uncertain whether Oxford belongs to the "alluvial region" where Coffey calls this species an uncommon summer resident, but it did prove uncommon there.

PARULA WARBLER (*Compsothlypis americana*). Uncommon or rare at Oxford in summer.

SYCAMORE WARBLER (*Dendroica dominica*). Very uncommon summer resident at Oxford. Individuals observed there invariably inhabit cypress trees.

PINE WARBLER (*Dendroica pinus*). Fairly common summer resident.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Dendroica discolor*). Breeding range described by Coffey (1936) as northeastern Mississippi. It is not certain whether this section should include Oxford, but the species breeds abundantly in the hills about County Lake, averaging fairly common for the entire Oxford Region. (It was also heard singing just west of Walnut, Mississippi, on or about May 20.)

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH (*Seiurus motacilla*). Apparently a rare summer resident at Oxford.

REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*). Status as a breeding bird in Mississippi somewhat uncertain in 1936. It is fairly common, however, around Oxford in summer.

GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*). Only a fairly common summer resident at Oxford.

COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*). Common in the Oxford Region in summer. Many of the individuals seen were adult males.

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*). Probably does not breed around Oxford, but a very late individual seen on May 24 seems worthy of mention in connection with John B. Calhoun's record of a pair seen on June 20, 1939, near Pocahton, Tennessee, just across the state line from Mississippi (*Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science*, 1941, 16:293-309).

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Guiraca caerulea*). Uncommon or rare summer resident. A singing male found on June 2 was probably breeding. A singing female was seen on May 17.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*). Although Oxford apparently lies outside the breeding range described by Coffey, a few of these birds breed around the airport about 10 miles south of town, where six were recorded on June 18.

GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*). Breeding records lacking in 1936, but the species was recorded in Tishomingo State Park in June, 1939. M. G. Vaiden (THE MIGRANT, Sept., 1940, 11:66-68) also found them 16 miles east of Grenada (central Mississippi) on July 14, 1940. I found the species to breed fairly commonly at Oxford.

TOWHEE (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). Coffey (1939) calls this species "very rare . . . in North Mississippi in summer," however, the writer found it to be uncommon to fairly common at Oxford at this season.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*). Coffey (1936) calls this species a "rare to uncommon summer resident" without reference to particular parts of Mississippi. In view of the fact, however, that none were found in the Oxford Region it can hardly be more than a very rare summer resident there.

DEPT. OF BIOLOGY, EMORY AND HENRY COLLEGE, EMORY, VA.

THE ROUND TABLE

GLOSSY IBIS NEAR MEMPHIS: On September 23, 1945, Mrs. Irene Daniel, Miss Mary Davant and the writer, after hunting over some new territory in Mississippi, decided to stop by Mud Lake, in Tennessee, to see if any of the shorebirds were still present. After passing through the wooded margin and looking across to the far shore, several hundred yards away, we saw two apparently black, heron-like birds fly away over the trees. We at once thought of Glossy Ibis but at that distance, could not be certain. After about ten minutes we saw one of the birds coming back and saw that it alit at the water's edge on the opposite side of the lake, in front of about fifty immature Little Blue Herons and back of a large flock of Blue-winged Teal. In order to get a good look at the unusual bird, I waded across the shallow lake and succeeded in getting within about 125 feet. From there I observed it carefully with six-power glasses until it flew. The bird while about the shore was feeding by continually probing the entire length of its long, curved bill into the mud. Looking closely for the white markings on the face, I was able to see that these were present on two occasions. The first time was when the bird turned his head slightly and I could see the white but could not be sure of its extent; then a little later, it turned its head directly toward me and I could then see a rim of white about the base of bill. When I attempted a closer approach, the Ibis took wing and, with his neck outstretched and his long bill curving downward, made a beautiful silhouette. He gave one guttural note as he flew off over the trees. The bird was almost certainly the White-faced Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis guarauna*) judging by its facial markings and known range. The other quite similar and rarer form, the Eastern Glossy Ibis, is chiefly confined to Florida and is without the white face except for a patch of whitish skin before the eye.—JOE MOUNT, Memphis, TENN.

FALL RECORDS FROM MEMPHIS: A series of trips to Mud Lake, south of Memphis, by a number of our members, produced some records of interest. These trips were taken on August 19 (by 6 observers), Sept. 3 (7 obs.), Sept. 8 (3 obs.), and Sept. 15 (3 obs.). Most of the water birds listed are given below as well as some others of interest. Wood Ibis, 2 on 8/19 and 1 on 9/3; Great Blue Heron, 25 on 8/19, 4 on 9/3 and 2 on 9/15; Amer. Egret, 260 on 8/19, 184 on 9/3, 75 on 9/8 and 70 on 9/15; Snowy Heron, 1 on 8/19, and 3 on 9/8; Little Blue Heron, 162 on 8/19, 120 on 9/3, 90 on 9/8 and 225 on 9/15; Green Heron, 1 on 8/19; Blue-winged Teal, 200 on 8/19, 300 on 9/8 and 500 on 9/15; Semipalmated Plover, 12 on 9/3; Killdeer, noted each trip; Spotted Sandpiper, 3 on 8/19 and 2 on 9/15; Solitary Sandpiper, 1 on 8/19, 2 on 9/3 and 1 on 9/8; Greater

Yellowlegs, 1 on 9/3; Lesser Yellowlegs, 42 on 9/3, 40 on each 9/8 and 9/15; Pectoral Sandpiper, 28 on each 9/3 and 9/8, 110 on 9/15; Least Sandpiper, 26 on 9/3 and 1 on 9/15; Longbilled Dowitcher, 1 on 9/3; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 34 on 9/3 and 9 on 9/15; Wilson's Phalarope, 1 on 9/3; Common Tern, 2 on 9/3; Least Tern, 40 on 8/19, 19 on 9/3, 60 on 9/8 and 5 on 9/15; Compared with normal years, shorebirds were much less numerous than usual this fall. Among the land birds of interest in our lists are: Mississippi Kite, 3 on 8/19; Duck Hawk, 2 on 9/8 and 2 on 9/15 (Mud Lake); Nighthawk, 1 on 10/6 and 12 on 10/7 (rather late); Tree Swallow, 75 on 9/8; Fish Crow, 100 on each 9/8 and 9/15; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1 on 10/7; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 1 on 8/19, and Brown Creeper, 3 on 10/6, this being rather early.—LUTHER F. KEETON, Memphis, Tenn.

MEMPHIS NESTING CENSUS: The annual Nesting Census was made this year on June 3 and covered Riverside Park which extends along the bluffs above the Mississippi river. Approximately forty members and several visitors participated from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m., and we were favored with good weather. A summary of results showed that 52 species of birds were recorded for the area and these included 238 pair. While a considerable portion of the park's 410 acres was traversed, the count by no means included all birds that were resident. Of nests in actual use, 51 were recorded of 19 species. Not included among these were more than a score of Bronzed Grackle nests from which the young had recently fledged. They were built among honeysuckle vines that covered small trees in a thicket. Perhaps the most interesting nest found was that of a Mississippi Kite, which was situated about 40 feet up and near the top of an old sweet gum just inside the woods. The bird was present and at this date was about due to have laid. Later in the season they were again seen at the nest. This was one of at least two pair which have been nesting in the park woods. A pair of Painted Buntings was located on the bluff. The half dozen Least Terns noted on the river were due to nest later, on the nearby sandbars. Warblers listed during the day were the Hooded, Kentucky, Parula, Sycamore and Prothonotary, the Maryland Yellowthroat, the Redstart and the Yellow-breasted Chat. In the last MIGRANT, Mrs. Coffey has given some results of a later census, taken June 24, in Forest Hill Cemetery, which location we used for our census area in previous years.—LUTHER KEETON, Memphis, Tenn.

PRAIRIE HORNED LARKS AT CORINTH, MISS.: On August 2, 1945, I came across a flock of from 40 to 50 Prairie Horned Larks (*Otocoris alpestris praticola*) about 8 miles west of Corinth. They were in an extensive open area and were feeding over recently ploughed ground. They permitted an approach to within 30 feet and their head markings left no doubt of their identity. The birds were also present the following day. Horned Larks occur all over Tennessee, chiefly as winter visitants from the North, but a flock here in north Mississippi so early in the season might indicate that they gathered from nesting areas nearby or not very far distant.—BENJ. R. WARRINER, Corinth, Miss.

TOWHEE-COWBIRD NESTING DATA FOR 1945: After a mild winter and an unusually warm March, deciduous shrubbery attained dense foliage two to three weeks earlier than usual this year which probably accounts for the relatively numerous Red-eyed Towhees (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) that were found nesting in the banding station area. The first nest was found, partially complete, on March 16 with the first of 3 eggs laid March 24. Although the earliest nests were unsuccessful, eggs in one nest were hatching April 13 and 4 young banded April 19. By the end of June 1945, 11 nests had been found in and near the station, while for the 1944 season, only 3 had been located, the earliest hatching that year on May 4 with the entire brood of 5 young leaving on May 12 (nest 20 inches above ground in an Amur river privet hedge).

From 10 of the 1945 nests, data were gathered. The sets varied from 2 to 4 eggs, total 31, plus 8 Cowbird eggs (2 in one nest). As some nests with less than the normal complement of eggs were not found until the interloper had deposited her egg, it seems proper to assume that at least 36 eggs were laid as Cowbirds habitually remove an egg of the host. Only 13 Towhee eggs hatched, 36.1 per cent of the number laid; 6 young matured to the nest-leaving stage (16.6 per cent). All Cowbird eggs were removed for my study collection. Among the entirely unsuccessful nests, one female disappeared at the beginning of incubation; 3 nests were robbed of eggs and 1 of young by snakes or some other predator that removes contents without disarranging the nest itself; in 2 nests, eggs were punctured or were removed, one at a time as in bird predation (possibly Cowbird); one brood of 4 large nestlings, already banded, was taken by a cat.

Most of the nests were built 2-3 feet from the ground in dense shrubbery or vines. One May nest was built 5½ feet up in a syringa bush but another, located in a bit of wildwood 100 yards from the banding station was placed on the ground among plants of the lacy-leaved spreading chervil (*Chaerophyllum Tainturieri* Hook) which grows nearly a foot high but is so feathery that it affords no concealment to the nest. It was unsuccessful. However on June 24, another nest was located a few yards away as a youngster was leaving and the parents excitedly calling. This one had been built 10½ feet from the ground in a tangle of vines interlacing the crowns of saplings.

It seems an odd coincidence that this season no Cowbird egg was found in any but Towhee nests and no Cardinal nests parasitized. In previous years, the latter had taken the brunt of early season parasitism. Although I have a number of April egg-laying records for Cowbirds, the two found in separate Towhee nests on April 6, 1945 are the earliest published for Tennessee.—AMELIA R. LASKEY, Nashville.

NIGHTHAWK USES UNUSUAL METHOD TO RETURN YOUNG TO NEST: On June 28, 1945 at 3:35 P. M. during observations of a nesting Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) on the gravel roof of Hillsboro High School in the suburbs of Nashville, I saw the adult use remarkable strategy to bring together the tiny baby bird and the unhatched egg so that she could cover both for brooding.

Earlier that day, the first egg had hatched but a portion of the shell had clung, in drying, to the breast of the adult. As I went closer to re-

trieve the shell which had dropped, the female (presumably) moved two to three feet from the nest site. In the absence of the parent, the baby wandered at least a foot from the egg. After I had taken a position some eight feet away to watch, the parent tried, with her bill, to guide the baby bird back to the nest site. This seemed to frighten the chick into moving farther away. Seeing what was happening, the adult promptly sat over the baby as if to brood, and in that position, slowly moved toward the egg. After getting both egg and young under her, she settled to brood.

This was the only time during my numerous observations of this pair that this occurred. On later occasions, when young were several days old, the adult would always choose a spot and the babies would come to her at their own discretion.—W. WARREN BOSMAN, Nashville 4, Tenn.

A LATE HUMMINGBIRD: Mild weather during October, together with ample rainfall, caused a prolonged season of bloom among fall flowering plants. Probably because of this, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported by several members well into October. At my own home, one remained extremely late it having been recorded on each morning of the following dates; October 13, 17, 18 and finally on the 20th. Careful examination of the bird on the 18th, showed it to be male. On the last mentioned dates, the bird was feeding among salvia blossoms.—H. O. WATTS, 2010 Riverside Dr., Nashville, Tenn.

NOTE.—In a communication dated Oct. 26, Benj. R. Warriner of Corinth, Miss., stated that he observed a very late Ruby-throated Hummingbird the day before, at the flowers of a hawthorn bush. On the same day, he saw a flock of 60 wild geese going south and commented at the unusual combination.—Ed.

SPRING SEASON AT ELIZABETHTON:* With the exception of a few days the end of January and beginning of February, when morning temperatures dropped to a minimum of 7°, the weather during the winter months was relatively mild. Coopers, Sharp-shinned and Sparrow Hawks were seen on various occasions, but none of the larger species. Ducks were present regularly in the Watauga River vicinity. The list of winter birds included the Kinglets and the Brown Creeper. Grouse were flushed on two trips on Lynn Mountain very close to town. Myrtle Warblers were abundant throughout the winter. Cedar Waxwings in substantial numbers were observed frequently along Watauga and Doe Rivers. Noteworthy was the continuous presence of a goodly number of White-crowned Sparrows in the evergreen hedges at the Franklin Club. With the advent of warmer weather a check was kept on the early arrivals. First dates of observation are for: Red-winged Blackbird, Feb. 15; Rusty Blackbird and Cowbird, Feb. 17; Pipit, Feb. 18; Phoebe and Woodcock, March 4; Purple Martin, March 15; Great Blue Heron, Chipping Sparrow and Savannah Sparrow, March 18; Vesper Sparrow, March 20; Louisiana Water Thrush and Black-crowned Night Heron, March 25; Grasshopper Sparrow and Brown Thrasher, March 27. A most interesting find was that by Dr. Herndon of two Ring-billed Gulls on Watauga River near the Franklin Club on March 18.—FRED W. BEHREND, Elizabethton, Tenn.

*Note.—Above item was inadvertently omitted from our June issue.—Ed.

30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE T. O. S.

From time to time, it is well for busy enthusiasts to pause in their work, to glance backward for a brief summary of their past activities and, after screening the wheat from the chaff, to seek from the residue fresh inspiration for the future. Such a pause was made in October, 1945, and the items which follow will serve to record not only the enthusiasm of the moment but bits of history for those who carry on in years to come. Miss Mary Franc Holloway, our Corresponding Secretary, has furnished the following:

30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT NASHVILLE: On the evening of October 20th, at 6:30 o'clock in the private dining rooms of the B and W cafeteria in Nashville, began a week-end of celebration commemorating the anniversary of a similar occasion which took place just thirty years before—the founding of The Tennessee Ornithological Society.

The festivities were off to an excellent beginning with the dinner meeting presided over by a former president of the Nashville chapter and toastmaster of the occasion, Vernon Sharp, Jr. Impromptu reminiscences of the other years by those members of at least fifteen years standing were headed by Dr. Harry Vaughn, who declares that he would have been a charter member had he been old enough for the founders to appreciate his value to the organization at the time of its origin.

Dr. Gordon Wilson, one of the founders of the Kentucky Ornithological Society and head of the department of English at Western Kentucky State Teacher's College, Bowling Green, delivered the principal address of the evening. Dr. Wilson expressed appreciation to the group for its sponsorship and promotion of the founding of the Kentucky organization. He affectionately referred to the T O S as God-father of the K O S and invited all Tennesseans to be present at the first field meeting of the K O S since the beginning of the war.

The climax of the occasion was reached when the founders were again heard from. While only two of the five charter members were present, others were represented. Prof. H. A. and Miss Suzanne Webb, son and daughter of the late Prof. A. C. Webb, were present and reassured the group of their father's interest in and love for the study of ornithology in Tennessee. Mary Franc Holloway, a niece of Dixon Merritt and at present a member of the Nashville chapter, read a letter from Mr. Merritt to the organization which is included elsewhere in this issue. Following this Mr. A. F. Ganier, who is known throughout Tennessee and the South for his valuable contributions to the study of ornithology, reviewed the founding and early growth of the organization. He reminded the group that the T. O. S. was organized on October 7, 1915 by five Tennessee "bird-men" who gathered one evening at the Faucon's French Restaurant in Nashville and launched the society. The group met two weeks later at the Tulane Hotel for formal organization. Prof. Webb was named president at that meeting. The other two founders were Dr. George R. Mayfield of Vanderbilt University and the late Judge H. Y. Hughes. A sixth member, Dr. George M. Curtis, joined shortly after the first meeting. Other members

were elected the following year, 1916, including Mrs. William P. Morgan of Columbia, Miss Lillie Hasslock (now Mrs. George R. Mayfield), Dan R. Gray, Dr. Harry Vaughn and Dr. Jesse M. Shaver.

In 1930, THE MIGRANT, T O S quarterly appeared, and has been published continuously since that time as a means of coordinating activities and of making permanent record of observations afield. In 1938, a new constitution providing for a representative state-wide board of directors was written and adopted. And some years ago the T O S affiliated itself with the national Wilson Ornithological Club, the National Audubon Society and the Tennessee Academy of Science.

To bring the meeting to a close, Dr. Mayfield engaged in further reminiscences, then pointed out the aims and objectives of the Society for the future including the inauguration of a membership campaign to begin with the thirtieth anniversary and the close of the war. He drew attention to the character moulding possibilities of ornithology as an avocation to engage the energy and interest of youth.

On the day following the dinner, the annual Fall Field Day of the Nashville chapter was held with visiting members as special guests. Members assembled at Idlewild Wood on Stone's river where are located the summer homes of a number of T O S members. Here the colorful autumn foliage and woods floor carpeted with fallen leaves, hickory nuts and acorns, combined with perfect weather to make ideal conditions for a bird hunt. The morning was spent in making a list of birds in the area and was followed by luncheon served on the bluffs overlooking the river. The afternoon was taken up with reports of the morning field trips, a count of the birds listed for the day, a group photograph, a business meeting and words of encouragement from visiting members as well as local members. The meeting adjourned with a promise from every member to be present and to bring a new member to the thirty-fifth anniversary meeting in 1950.

Out-of-town guests for the week-end included representatives from the chapters located at Memphis, Clarksville, Elizabethton, Kingsport and Murfreesboro. The names of the visitors will be found under the group photo which is reproduced elsewhere in this issue.—M. F. H.

SOME EARLY HISTORY: Twenty-nine years ago, Dr. Lynds Jones, then editor of *The Wilson Bulletin*, called on the T O S for a short sketch of its activities and aspirations. In response, the following report was prepared and submitted; it was published in *The Wilson Bulletin* for December 1916, on page 195.

"TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY: October 1916 marked the close of the first years work of this organization and the results were quite up to expectations. A great deal of field work has been done and the status of many of the rarer birds has been put on a more definite basis. Lack of time and opportunities have prevented observations on other species whose distribution is still much in question. Local lists have been secured from observers, chiefly in the central part of the State, and revisions and additions to these in future is part of the working plan. Arrangement has been made with the State Department of Fish and Game to finance the publication of several bulletins. A number of new members have been added during the year and efforts have been

made to standardize their observations along systematic lines.

The pleasure and recreation afforded by bird study is being advanced as a substitute for the hunting and killing of game birds. Two full page illustrated bulletins to this end have been prepared and published simultaneously in the Sunday editions of the leading newspapers of the State. Meetings or outings have been held semi-monthly except during the summer months. Several joint outing trips have been taken to localities which appeared to offer special faunal variations.

The first annual meeting was held October 20 in Nashville, and the following officers were elected: Prof. A. C. Webb, president; Judge H. Y. Hughes, vice-president; Dr. G. R. Mayfield, secretary-treasurer; A. F. Ganier, curator. New members elected at this time were H. A. Cummins, Prof. E. Carey Davis, H. E. Myers, Jesse T. Shaver, R. M. Strong and H. S. Vaughn. The curator reported that the study collection of skins, now embracing over one-hundred and seventy species of Tennessee birds, was available for the use of the members. The publication of a list of the birds of the State was postponed for a year, pending the securing of more definite data on certain species. The interest shown by a good percentage of the members of the Society is such that its permanency seems assured.—A. F. GANIER, Nashville, Tenn."

That the T O S has hewn closely to the lines originally set forth above, is well known to all of our long-time members. On the occasion of the Society's 20th anniversary, a special edition of THE MIGRANT (Sept. 1935) was gotten out to celebrate the occasion and in it is a complete history of the first twenty years, prepared by four of the original five founders. Since that time the T O S has traveled along on an even keel, it's most tangible work having been represented by the publication of sixteen volumes of it's quarterly journal, THE MIGRANT.—ED.

DIXON MERRITT, one of our founders, former newspaper editor and now engaged in Federal publications activities at Washington, had planned on being at the 30th anniversary dinner but a change of plans interfered. By way of regrets, he penned the following note of greetings which was read on that occasion by his niece.

"My dear fellow members: I can't come to the Thirtieth Anniversary meeting of the T O S. It breaks my heart but such is the fact. A change in my schedule makes it necessary that I be here at the time. . . . Anyway, perhaps it is not terribly important that I be there. Ganier and Mayfield will be, and they are the ones who have done the work—buidled the structure. I may have thrown out a shovelful of dirt to make room for the first stone. That's all. Still, small as it is, I am prouder of it than of any other single thing I have done. . . . My love to everybody, particularly the old ones whom of course I knew best. Tell them I will be there in spirit. And I am sure that Webb and Hughes will be too. Ever yours, Dixon Merritt."

Better luck next time Dixon; we missed you truly and we shall count on you not to miss our thirty-fifth.

NOTES, HERE AND THERE

This item comprises a call for our usual quota of Midwinter Census lists ("Christmas Census") to be published in our December issue. We trust that not only will the usual localities be heard from but that new ones will be added. Groups should scout their territory several times beforehand in order to locate all species. The lists should be made between Dec. 20 and Jan 2.

When we learned recently that Maurice Brooks had made a sojourn last May into the Great Smoky Mountains, the thought occurred to us that his impressions of the birdlife there as compared with the mountains of his own State—West Virginia—would be of interest. Upon our invitation, he very graciously penned the interesting article at the beginning of this issue. Professor Brooks is Associate Professor of Wildlife Management at West Virginia University. He is also editor of West Virginia's bird journal, *The Redstart* and is secretary of The Wilson Ornithological Club.

Poems about birds are wanted for a book on the subject, to be published by the Robert Sparks Walker Audubon Society and Elise Chapin Wildlife Sanctuary at Chattanooga. A total of \$100 is offered in prizes and the contest ends March 1st. Further particulars may be secured by writing Madeline A. Walker, 808 So. Greenwood Ave., Chattanooga 4, Tenn.

For forthcoming issues, we are in need of several full-length articles as well as many Round Table items. Your Editor is anxious that more of our members become frequent contributors to this journal.

This number constitutes our 30th anniversary issue and its lateness is partly due to holding it over for inclusion of matter covering the celebration of that occasion in late October.

Recalling the oft quoted words of Bobbie Burns—"Oh wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oursel's as others see us!"—we invited our long-time friend and fellow bird student—Gordon Wilson—to be "guest editor" for this issue. He very kindly responded with the appreciated tribute which follows. Dr. Wilson is president of The Kentucky Ornithological Society and editor of its publication, *The Kentucky Warbler*.

— EDITORIAL —

THIRTY YEARS OF THE T. O. S.

As a member of the Kentucky Ornithological Society I want to greet the Tennessee Ornithological Society on its thirtieth birthday and to wish it many happy returns of the day, in true birthday style. The two organizations have always been closely connected; in fact, the K. O. S. owes its very existence to the T. O. S. and the encouragement given the few Kentuckians who started the K. O. S. in 1923. Thirty years is a fairly long time in the life of people, but a mere breathing space in the life of a great institution, such as the T. O. S. has grown to be. May the T. O. S. live so long that all of us who have known it will seem in distant times to have been mythological creatures!

In these thirty years much has been accomplished in ornithology. The great era of discovering and naming species passed before our time, but we have been privileged to live when ornithology can become more human, more a matter of common culture than it used to be. The "bird man" has ceased

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Albert F. Ganier, Editor, 2112 Woodlawn Drive, Nashville 5, Tenn.

The Tennessee Ornithological Society was founded, October 1915.

Publication of THE MIGRANT was begun, March 1930.

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

to be the brunt of mirthful jokes in most of Tennessee and Kentucky and now has a chance to pursue his studies with the good wishes of even the most ignorant. The publications of the T. O. S., the radio programs, and the many public addresses before schools and clubs have familiarized thousands of people with the purposes of bird study and thus made it known that ornithology is a worth-while study or hobby. By cooperating with various state and national agencies the T. O. S. has also been able to do much toward preserving wild life and promoting a saner attitude toward man's responsibility to nature. Probably the best achievement has been the bringing together from every profession and occupation, people who get enjoyment out of studying birds. I know of no state or national organization that has so stressed the fellowship of students of the out-of-doors.

Certainly in these post-war years there will be a greater tendency toward outdoor hobbies. Limited for a time in our travels by the lack of gasoline, many of us will eagerly go camping again or will drive to the great state and national parks and forests. The ornithologist will have a great opportunity to make converts among outdoor people; the T. O. S. and all other state organizations of bird students need a steady and healthy increase in membership from all parts of the country. That increase will widen the influence of the brave souls who have fostered the organizations in less happy days and will bring pleasure and knowledge to countless thousands.

Ornithology as it now exists embraces such a wide and varied field that it challenges the interests of many types of people. Even at this time we are merely beginning the study on a comprehensive scale. Records of field trips, of migration, nesting studies, food habits, seasonal censuses, photographic portrayal, records of bird song, public lectures, radio programs, and publication of findings, these are among the many phases of study and usefulness the hobby offers. It is in that time of greater usefulness that the T.O.S. is to live on and function. A great opportunity lies before it and may its many loyal members put their shoulders to the wheel and carry the organization on to even greater heights.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green, Ky.

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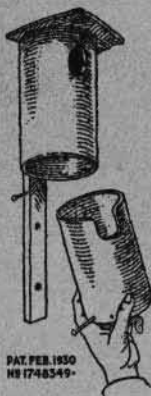
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