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THE MIGRANT

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IN MEMORIAM—WILLIAM MASSIE WALKER, JR.

By HARRY C. MONK

In the passing of William Massie Walker, Jr., the Tennessee Ornithological Society has lost one of its oldest, most loyal and accomplished members. This loss is the more distressing because he was in the prime of life.

He was born September 20, 1900, on a farm a few miles east of Hopkinsville, Ky., where he grew up, taking a boy's active part in farm life, and enjoying an unusually fine family life. There were three brothers and three sisters. "Bill" he was invariably known to all, enjoyed the sports of the countryside, was fond of hunting and was an expert shot.

He attended public schools in the county and in Hopkinsville, and in 1920 entered Vanderbilt University, remaining five years, taking a B.S. degree in 1924 and the M.S. in 1925. His major was chemistry. After graduation he worked as a chemist in the laboratories of the Division of Tests of the State Highway Department in Nashville, remaining there until 1934.

In Vanderbilt, Walker met Dr. Mayfield who was always on the lookout for young men interested in the outdoors. Field trips followed and on February 17, 1922, Bill attended a meeting of the Nashville chapter, joining the society at that time. He attended meetings regularly, and devoted spare time to bird walks and field trips. Already familiar with the more prominent birds of our southern countryside, it was relatively easy for him to round out his field knowledge of the birds of this section. On Nov. 12, 1926, he was elected secretary-treasurer of the Nashville chapter, serving three years.

In March, 1934, Walker moved to Knoxville to work in the newly organized TVA laboratories; this move was in the nature of a "loan" to last one year; it actually lasted ten years. These Knoxville years were doubtless the happiest of his life. Marriage to Miss Sue Roberts, of Nashville, in August, 1935, was followed with the establishment of a home in Knoxville. The Walkers were active in the Knoxville chapter; Bill was president in 1926 and later served as secretary-treasurer and several terms as curator. From 1939-45 he was regional editor of THE MIGRANT for the Knoxville area. In 1939-40 he was state President of the T. O. S.

Prof. Henry Meyer, a close associate of these days, has written:

"From the time of our first meeting in September, 1937, until his departure for Nashville in 1945, we spent many pleasant hours afield together. Bill helped me immeasurably with the ornithology classes at U.T. and I know that the attitudes he helped me inculcate in the students improved their field work.

"Bill Walker was a chemist by vocation. As a worker in an exact science he realized the importance of careful observation, accuracy in reporting facts, and cautious analysis of data. Because he applied these methods, essential to an exact science, to his hobby of bird study, he advanced the ornithology of Tennessee. His contribution to the promotion of bird study, however, extends far beyond the publication of the many articles he prepared for THE MIGRANT, for his interest in the study of birds was of the kind that stimulated others to activity.

"In spite of physical handicaps, his was a life of action. He was not a 'fair weather naturalist' for inclement weather could not keep him from (as he would say) 'getting the records'. He displayed the kind of energy and courage, which coupled with patience and honesty, make for accurate field records. Because of these qualities, during the years he lived in Knoxville, he vitalized the activities of the Knoxville chapter of the TOS."

Miss Elise Morrell, of Knoxville, has written, in part:

"The Knoxville branch of the T. O. S. will remember Bill Walker as a tireless worker in all of the club's activities, spreading an interest in birds to all who came in contact with him through his own enthusiasm. The many trips, bird counts, camps, etc. which he attended are some indication, but can hardly be used as a measure of his interest in ornithology, because he had an awareness of birds that existed every minute that he was awake. Trips to and from work, from home to town, anywhere, were all 'field trips.' A keen and persistent observation revealed to him the rare visitant, the new arrival, the chimney swifts' change of roosting places, and things that many others would pass by. . . .

"He helped the Boy Scout and the interested youngster. While keeping count of the chimney swifts and their band numbers he could speak interestingly of bird banding to the casual passer-by who stopped to investigate what was going on. Hardly an issue of THE MIGRANT went to press without some contribution from him. He seldom asked for help in the detailed task of record keeping, which he attended to without complaint."

Anyone who reads the long series of articles he wrote from Knoxville will find reflected there his deep interest in the water birds of Andrew Jackson Lake, and in the arrival and departure of birds in the whole region. He reveled in the natural beauty and fascinating bird life of the Smokies. Occurrence records were meticulously kept on cards especially designed for the purpose; the resulting files are possibly the most extensive for the eastern part of our state. In some years he took part in as many as three Christmas census counts, which he valued for their record of winter bird life.

In 1932 he contributed his first article to THE MIGRANT, a table of the first seventeen Christmas censuses at Nashville. In 1935 his first note from Knoxville appeared, written in collaboration with George Foster. Thereafter thirty-three additional articles appeared, totaling in all thirty pages, and

placing on record a substantial amount of data for the Knoxville region. Henceforth, anyone who studies the bird life of that region will be indebted to him, as well as to those who cooperated with him in gathering field records. In thus publishing the gist of his observations he has set all of us a good example, for the data is preserved for all time, rather than being lost as it might have been.

Major events now entered his life. On July 8, 1941 a son, William Massie III was born. In December, 1942, there first appeared signs of what became a very severe illness, followed by a long convalescence. After 25 months he returned to work, this time back in the Highway Department in Nashville, in July 1945. Never in robust health, he was now in a greatly weakened condition and carefully husbanded his strength. Field trips could last but a few hours, but they were made to count. He explored the suburban area about his home, and studied the big roost in West Nashville, contributing an account of it (MIGRANT, 1946, pp. 11-12) which is typical of his careful work.

I made several field trips with Bill in this period. I found he had a keen ear, and a good knowledge of bird songs and calls; his eye missed little that transpired in the woods, and he had the book knowledge and field experience to make a well-rounded, thoroughly competent field observer. He told me frankly of his impaired health and the realization he had but a few years to live at best. As Christmas, 1946, approached careful plans were laid to take part in several census trips. A much hoped for trip to the Smokies had to be abandoned, but a trip to the old home in Kentucky on December 20 was carried out. There we spent some hours both morning and afternoon, listing the birds of the farm and countryside. He had made these census trips in this area for years, publishing them in the "Kentucky Warbler." As we moved over the familiar acres Bill recounted many incidents out of the past. Every field and woodland had its memories for him.

The Nashville census on December 22 was his last field activity with our group. Early in January a cold bothered him. It was indicative of his weakened condition that this became pneumonia; hospitalization was necessary and other complications set in. He passed away in the early morning hours of January 23, 1947. Burial was in the family plot in Riverside cemetery, Hopkinsville. This was most appropriate for while he had made Tennessee his own state there was never any doubt where his heart lay.

He is survived by his wife and son, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Walker, Sr., of Hopkinsville, and by three brothers and three sisters.

William Walker, Jr., was a long time member of the Kentucky Ornithological Society, and attended its meetings and contributed to its publication. He also belonged to the American Ornithologists Union, the Wilson Ornithological Club, and the Tennessee Academy of Science, as well as several chemical organizations. All of his bird publications appeared in THE MIGRANT and "The Kentucky Warbler." Some of the Christmas counts

he took part in have appeared in "Bird-Lore" and the "Audubon Magazine." While in Vanderbilt he took several courses in geology, and maintained a life-long interest in that subject. He accumulated a creditable collection of fossils as a by-product of field trips.

Handicapped from birth, Bill Walker met obstacles every waking hour of his life. These he overcame, seeming to ignore them, and in so doing displayed the rarest, highest type of courage, which was all the more remarkable because of the modest, unassuming manner in which he mastered difficulties. On his death-bed, facing the unknown, he said, "I am not afraid." Of course not! When was he ever afraid? How often have his friends remarked, "Courage is the name for Bill Walker."

He is gone a little ahead of the rest of us, leaving behind the record of his work, and the example of his life, for us to use and profit by. Let us honor his memory more with deeds than with words.

406 AVOCA ST., NASHVILLE, TENN.

EDITOR'S NOTE—A brief article written by William Walker some time before his death is printed in The Round Table of this issue.—J.T.T.

THE HOLSTON RIVER VULTURE ROOST

By JAMES T. TANNER

Every afternoon numbers of vultures congregate on a large bluff on the Holston River in northeastern Tennessee. Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) and Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) soar in from all directions to light on the bare rock of the bluff or in the trees at the top; they meet there just before going to their nightly roost. Vultures at close hand are probably the ugliest of birds; but their wide-winged flight is graceful, and the number of them soaring and circling in to the face of the bluff is a beautiful and lively sight.

The bluff visited by the vultures is located on the South Fork of the Holston River, in southern Sullivan County, and is two and three-quarters miles in a stright line upriver from the bridge that carries U. S. Route 23 across the Holston. It faces southeast, the river at its foot. It is labelled "Dorn Bluff" on the topographic map of that area published by the Tennessee Valley Authority, altho "buzzard's bluff" would be a better name.

The bluff itself is slightly more than one half mile long, low at both ends and rising toward the center to a maximum height of 330 feet above the river. The lower one-third to one-half of the bluff is a talus slope of large rocks thinly covered with deciduous trees. Above this slope the cliff rises almost perpendicularly with a few set-backs and irregular ledges to the crest, which is rimmed with trees. A few juniper and other trees cling to the face of the cliff; except for these and a little grass on the ledges, the gray and reddish-brown rock of the cliff is bare. The face of the cliff is marked by the opening of a cave and several deep cracks and fissures,

some of which are probably used by vultures during their nesting season. At the foot of the cliff and in the middle of the river is a small, heavily wooded island. The surrounding country is of hilly fields and pastures with numerous small patches of woods.

The number of vultures coming to the bluff has varied from a low count of 25 to a high of between 200 and 250. The observations made at the roost during 1946-47 indicate a regular seasonal variation, but a few records of another year do not confirm this.

On March 24, 1946, there were counted 75 Turkey and 20 Black Vultures; on June 22, 10 Turkey and 15 Black; on September 9, 100 Turkey and only 4 Black; on October 26, 1946, 140 Turkey and 60 Blacks; and on February 18, 1947, Dr. L. R. Herndon with other members of the Elizabethton chapter of the T. O. S. visited the bluff and estimated a total of 250 with "the ratio . . . just about as we had observed" on October 26, or about 175 Turkey and 75 Black. These figures would indicate that the fewest vultures came in June, and from then the number increased to a maximum sometime during the winter. In 1941, however, the highest number was recorded on June 5 — 100 Turkey and 30 Black, and the lowest on Sept. 28, 20 Turkey and 6 Black. There are certainly other factors than season controlling the numbers of vultures visiting the bluff, but my observations are too few to give any clue as to what these factors could be.

My observations of the vultures were made on picnics and field trips taken to the area by my family and groups of friends, the Johnson City bird club, or college zoology classes. The bank of the river across from the bluff could be reached in a car by a narrow road. That spot made a good and pleasant observation post. Across the river lay the wooded island, and beyond that the bluff rose impressively from the trees on its lower slopes. Because of the width of the river and island and because the vultures perched near the very top of the bluff, the distance to them was rather great. That distance made identification of the vultures on the rocks and trees difficult, but it created a wide view and allowed us to better watch their movements because their flight was silhouetted against the sky.

The earliest in the afternoon that I ever arrived across the river from the bluffs was two and a quarter hours before sunset, and by then there were already several vultures of both species on the cliff and in the air nearby. From that time on their activities followed a fairly regular pattern. The number of vultures mounted as new arrivals came in, apparently from all directions. Turkey Vultures approached singly or in small groups, rather slowly because of their wheeling and soaring flight. Frequently small groups of them circled over the bluff, or sailed back and forth in unison before the face of the cliff, from one end to the other and back. The Black Vultures, in contrast, came in much more directly, gliding swiftly to a perch on the cliff. Usually they came individually, except in March when several of the Blacks approached in pairs. The two members of each pair chased each other thru the air; their swift swoops and abrupt turns made the flight

of the Turkey Vultures appear slow and sedate.

Most of the vultures landed at the very highest point of the bluff where the rocks were rough with several projections and ledges. The two species of vultures appeared to be intermixed, some perching on the rocks, some on the trees near and on the top. A few birds settled to the right or left of this favored spot, and a few part way down the cliff face.

The number of new arrivals and of vultures in the air dropped sharply by an hour before sunset, and soon thereafter the number on the cliff reached its maximum. Usually at about thirty minutes before sunset the exodus from the cliff to the vultures' roosting place began. Gradually they left and flew down to one of two places. The Black Vultures usually preferred some trees on the wooded island at the base of the bluff, and they reached this place simply by swooping down from on high, circling to reduce their speed, and flopping onto a limb with vigorous back-pedaling of their stubby wings. Most of the Turkey Vultures plus some Blacks glided across the river and a field to a small patch of beech woods on a low hill top. Each individual circled a few times before alighting in a tree. There the dozens of birds concentrated in but two to four trees so that the branches were heavily laden with the black forms; silhouetted against the sky the trees appeared completely full of vultures. The flight from the cliff down to the trees was usually over by sunset, the bluff was empty, and the roosting trees were full.

One afternoon my wife and I drove and walked to the northward side of the river and the bluff itself. We explored the talus slope and the lowest part of the cliff, and then circled around to climb the hill behind the bluff thus to reach its top. A few vultures had already flown in to the cliff. We approached cautiously and were able to reach the edge of the cliff without scaring away the birds. But the moment that our heads appeared over the edge, the vultures on the rocks just below left. It was a dizzy sight. They leaned forward and pushed off into thin air, dropping swiftly away from us until their wide wings opened and the birds swung out into a level glide. After this breath-taking (for me) plunge, the broad-winged birds soared back and forth below. Watching them from above gave a totally different impression of their flight than when seeing them outlined from below. Instead of thru the sky, they were sailing over the earth.

When considering the large number of vultures that congregate at this bluff, it is natural to wonder about the distance they travel and the size of the area from which the birds assemble. I have not even an estimate of these figures. The distances and the area must be rather large, as on field trips in the vicinity of Johnson City (about twelve miles from the bluff) the usual number of Turkey Vultures recorded in a half-day is from one to three, while Black Vultures are much less frequently observed.

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE, TENN.

THE ROUND TABLE

PARTIAL ALBINO RED-TAILED HAWK—On March 8, 1947, along the road just east of Percy Warner Park, Nashville, a large bird was noted perched in a tree, and it was soon identified as a Red-Tailed Hawk. It appeared to be unusually light in color, and as it flew away, its tail appeared to be almost white, with perhaps a dusky band near the tip. Several days later Mrs. Amelia R. Laskey reported seeing the white tailed individual near the same spot. Several years ago the writer saw on several occasions a Red-tail with a white tail within a half mile of the same location, during the winter, and possibly this is the same one returned for another winter.

On that same day another Red-tailed Hawk was seen sitting on her nest, with snow piled high on all sides of her except where her tail appeared in a notch.—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

GOLDEN EAGLE IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE—Mr. Todd, of Murfreesboro, had reported several times during the winter a rumor of a Golden Eagle. To check on this, the two of us visited a farm in the Auburndale region along the eastern Highland Rim on February 9, 1947. The farmer told us that he had frequently seen an eagle in a steep-walled corrie or ravine, either perched in a tree or circling overhead, and that even though he had sheep and several small lambs, these had been unmolested. His son offered the information that on the previous morning the eagle had been perched on a fence well up in the corrie, and that a week before he had seen one perched and another come down and seem to stoop at it, presumably in play.

As we walked up a path along the sheep pasture, a Red-tailed Hawk flew out, and I confessed to vague feelings of doubt. But a moment later Mr. Todd called "Look!" An immature Golden Eagle was circling close above us, rising slowly and finally passing over a saddle into the next corrie.—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

WOODCOCK "SINGING" AT NASHVILLE—On March 5, 1947, as I entered my yard in the outskirts of Nashville about 6:00 P.M., I heard the "Peeee-ent!" call of a woodcock coming from the low scrubby growth in the vacant lot behind my house. Closer observation revealed that at least four birds were calling in the four or five acre tract. A peculiar "clock-spring-running-down" sort of note was heard twice, and each time the writer was able to flush a Woodcock from nearby.

On the next evening the same call was heard at regular intervals from two or three spots in the same lot. Also they were engaged intermittently in flight song, flying up and up with a rapid wing-beat, then slowly descending in wide circles with the characteristic "song,"—a rhythmic, rising and falling "tweet,-TWEET,-tweet,-tweet; tweet,-TWEET,-tweet,-tweet" etc.

For the next several days there was a severe winter storm, and nothing further was seen of this group of birds.—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

PILEATED WOODPECKER AT FEEDING STATION—Several woodpeckers, including a number of Downy, one Hairy, and one or more Red-Bellied Woodpeckers, regularly feed at each of the writer's two feeding stations. These are located at his home in the Lealand section of Nashville, an outlying residential section near the extensive woods of the Overton Hills. Altho Pileated Woodpeckers pass thru the yard frequently, they had never in five years of observation been seen near one of the feeding stations until recently. On March 16, 1947, I noticed a male Pileated climbing down the ash tree not far from the kitchen window. He stopped at a level of about eight feet, where with many bobs of his head and looks in various directions, he proceeded by a few well-directed chisel blows to open up a fair sized hole in the main trunk. At this position he was just opposite one of the feeding stations built of a stick and small platform hanging from a limb. After perceptible hesitation, the woodpecker hopped across to this "shelf" and was soon whacking away at a piece of suet. This occupied his attention for some fifteen minutes, when he became restless and flew off. An hour later he appeared in the next tree, but was scared away; later he was flushed from the station tree but I did not see whether or not he had been feeding.

On March 21, my children remarked that the Pileated had again been at the feeding station. On March 28, I saw from the bedroom window a male Pileated this time on the front lawn feeding shelf, which hangs from the limb of a large ash tree about twenty yards from the house. He fed undisturbed from 6:30 to 7:00 A.M. It may be added that to sit at the breakfast table with the window open and a pair of 7x50 glasses is rare sport with a Pileated at twenty feet for game!—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER IN MISSISSIPPI—Apparently this species (*Dryobates b. borealis*), always local in distribution and being a bird of the southern pine woods only, is an uncommon resident in Mississippi. In June 1936, the writer accompanied by John Pond, Eugene Wallace, and George Foster, on a two weeks bird-listing tour of that State—down the west side, four days on the coast, and returning up the east side—failed to record it at any point. In the pine-forested areas that we searched Pine Warblers were often seen, and less frequently, Brown-headed Nuthatches. The summer previous, Wallace had seen one of the woodpeckers near Hattiesburg. Thomas D. Burleigh has reported it¹ as uncommon on the Gulf Coast. Andrew A. Allison, during his stay near Iuka, Miss., from April 17 to May 17, 1904, reported² the Red-cockaded as "fairly common, very noisy and not likely to be overlooked if present." This statement inspired an unsuccessful search in adjacent parts of Tennessee by T.O.S. members; and the writer, searching the Iuka area in 1941, failed to find it even there.³ During June 1939, a week was spent making a bird census of nearby Tishomingo State Park but the species was not recorded. The following week was spent on the move in north-east Mississippi and on June 21, 1939, 60 miles south of Iuka and 5 miles north of Greenwood Springs, I heard and saw my first individual of this species. The following spring, I returned

with a party for a week-end at Tishomingo State Park and on May 19, 1940, at the picnic pavillion, we found three Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. This had been the starting point for several of my hikes during the 1939 week, during which I recorded none. The three birds were only moderately noisy, no more than a Downy usually is. Later on in the day I found another 30 miles northward in the old Eastport area mentioned by Allison and near the "Phoebe tunnel." This location is about 10 miles south of the point where Dr. Counce reports, in our last issue,⁴ seeing one on March 31, 1946.—BEN B. COFFEY, Jr., 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis, Tenn.

REFERENCES CITED

- ¹The Bird Life of the Gulf Coast Region of Mississippi, Occasional Papers, Museum of Zoology, La. State Univ., No. 20.
²The AUK, 1907, 24:12-25 and MIGRANT, 1943, 14:71.
³MIGRANT, 1941, 12:56.
⁴MIGRANT, 1946, 17:13.

PRAIRIE HORNED LARK AND LARK SPARROW NEAR McMINSVILLE—On June 14, 1945, while driving eastward for a stay in the Unicoi Mountains, we recorded both of the above species near Cedar Grove school, 14 miles S-S-east of McMinnville, Tenn. The Lark flew across the fields toward us and alit on a fence post by the road, singing as it did so and permitting a good view. We left the car and searched in the adjacent pasture for a nest but without success. While thus engaged, we came across a pair of Lark Sparrows, and in thick, tussock grass, found an abandoned nest. The male was collected and proved to be in breeding condition. This is a new nesting area for both of these species and for this reason should be of interest.—ALBERT F. GANIER, Nashville, and ALFRED CLEBSCH, Clarksville, Tenn.

CANNIBALISTIC THRASHERS.—A pair of Brown Thrashers built their second nest of season on our premises in the top of a weigelia bush. It was so close to the top that there was little protection from the hot sun, but 3 eggs were laid and duly hatched. A few days later, Sunday June 16, as I sat nearby reading, I noticed one of the Thrashers dragging a tiny dead and featherless young from under the bush, occasionally pecking at it and eating the flesh. On my approach to examine this, the old bird flew a few feet away to a tree. One Thrasher fledgling was found missing from the nest. Calling my husband, we watched for half an hour and during that period saw that each bird returned to the dead fledgling, pecked at it vigorously and ate part of the flesh from it. The next day there was only one fledgling in the nest and on the day following, it too had disappeared. It is probable that lack of shade caused the hot sun to kill the naked young and that the parent birds threw them from the nest in process of cleaning. Once dead, quite likely the parents did not react as they would have toward a young begging for food but rather as they would have to any article of food such as they might find upon a garbage pile.—AMY WEEDON MOORE, 439 Patterson St., Memphis 11, Tenn.

ROBIN CAPTURES SMALL SNAKE—One day this past spring I noticed a Robin having trouble with what I at first thought to be a large worm. The bird was unsuccessful in trying to break it into pieces as they do worms and observing more closely, I noticed the object was yellow underneath. Realizing then that it was a small snake, I went to investigate and found the little reptile to be six or seven inches long, probably a De-Kay's Snake. The Robin had been loath to give it up, running through the yard and behind the garage carrying its prize, but finally the bird dropped it. I then placed it where I could watch it, and during the ensuing half hour noted that Blue Jays, Thrashers, and Grackles all flew down and looked it over but made no attempt to eat even the ants that had gathered on it. I was then called away for not more than five minutes, but when I returned it had disappeared. It was too badly mangled to have gotten away by itself, and I assume one of the birds must have carried it off.—AMY WEEDON MOORE, 439 Patterson St., Memphis 11, Tenn.

CARDINALS NOT ALWAYS SEDENTARY—(The following note, taken from **Bird-Banding** for April, 1946, p. 78, is reproduced here because of its especial interest to bird students in Tennessee where the bird is common at all seasons.—Editor)

"One of the many surprises that have come to light as a result of bird-banding is that species that have been supposed to be entirely sedentary in their habits sometimes make fairly long journeys. The following records for the Cardinal are an example. In all probability most of the individuals of this species live out their entire existence within a mile or two of the nest, but banding has demonstrated that a few of them have been really adventuresome.

"35-204712, banded at Sutherland, Iowa, September 26, 1935, by Gustav J. Schultz, was found dead November 1, 1935, at Newell, Iowa, about 35 miles away.

A293311, banded at Sioux City, Iowa, December 24, 1931, by Mrs. Marie Dales, was found dead May 11, 1932, about 80 miles away, at Santee, Neb.

B270818, banded as an immature, at Battle Creek, Michigan, October 23, 1933, by L. C. Nielson, was captured by hand in the early morning of December 14, 1933, by Dr. J. Van Tyne, at Ann Arbor, about 85 miles distance. The bird seemed to be suffered from cold but was released in good condition two hours later.

39-247157, banded as an immature, at Chevy Chase, Md., August 20, 1943, by A. E. Clattenburg, Jr., was found, slightly injured November 2, 1943, at Ranks, Lancaster County, Pa., a flight of about 85 miles.

36-120378, banded at Raleigh, N. C., May 29, 1938, by J. L. Primrose, was found dead Dec. 26, 1939, at Winston-Salem, N. C., about 95 miles away.

41-202287, banded at Elberton, Elbert Co., Ga., April 4, 1944, by P. B. Smith, was "found" Jan. 18, 1945, about 105 miles north in Dickinson County, Virginia, 3 miles north of Herald.

37-231808, banded at Iowa City, Iowa, April 18, 1940, by C. G. Danforth, was killed by a train at Des Moines, Iowa, 110 miles distant.

35-208878, banded at Memphis, Tenn., Feb. 18, 1936, by Mrs. G. W. Govert was killed about Nov. 25, 1936, 145 miles away, 3 miles north of Russellville, Alabama.

37-237826, banded at Takoma Park, Md., March 10, 1939, by L. M. Ashley, was found dead July 20, 1940, almost 200 miles away, at New Kensington, Pennsylvania.—MAY THACHER COOKE, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bowie, Md."

BIRDS CROSS THE ATLANTIC ON SHIPS:—During World War I, the writer as a member of a gun crew on a slow-moving transatlantic merchant ship had an opportunity to witness the unheralded arrival on the east coast of the United States of two different species of European birds. Although my knowledge of birds at that time was very limited, I could not help but make a few casual observations since I was in close contact with these birds for approximately two weeks on each occasion.

On the first occasion, two small yellowish birds (I called them "canaries" in my diary) came aboard the ship as we were leaving France. Members of the gun crew put food out for them on the deck-house roof, and they became fairly tame. A little too much so, however, for during the first week at sea the ship's cat killed one. Thenceforth, the gun crew appointed itself a committee to see that a like fate did not befall the other bird, and thanks to their vigilance, it survived the cat as well as the voyage. On the day we sighted land, our "hitch-hiking" friend deserted us and flew toward shore.

On a subsequent trip, the second day out from France, a small hawk, in all probability carried out to sea by a storm, took refuge on the ship's foremast yard-arm. Although I spent many hours in the crows-nest, not more than 10 feet from where the bird perched, I was not able to recognize it as a familiar species. The crew made no attempt to feed this bird and as far as I could determine, it had nothing to eat during the entire trip across the Atlantic. At least once each day the bird would leave its perch and make a wide circle around the ship, at times being out of eye range, presumably in search of land or food. On the day before we sighted land, the hawk left its perch as usual but this time it did not return. Obviously it had sighted land from on high and had flown to reach it.—ROBERT J. DUNBAR, 106 Glendale Lane, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

COMPETITION FOR NESTING BOXES—The two following incidents seem to illustrate the need for more nesting boxes to be erected, especially in suburban areas. The first reported by Mr. H. P. Ijams of Knoxville, concerned a pair of Bluebirds which had built a nest in one of his boxes and deposited a set of four eggs. At this stage of the nesting activity, a pair of Tufted Titmice entered the scene and decided that the box met with their approval also. A nip and tuck battle for its possession now began, and in a few weeks the Bluebirds admitted defeat and four Titmouse eggs were found to have been added to the previous occupants' eggs. Only a slight amount of nest material had been added by the new occupants.

The second incident concerned a pair of Flickers which chose a nesting

box near the back porch and which were attacked by Starlings for several months. One day in early June, three Flicker eggs were found on the ground below the box and the Starlings had taken possession. The writer began to help out by throwing stones at the interlopers otherwise frightening them away, and altho the Flickers remained at the box constantly, it was approximately five weeks before they resumed their nesting activities. By then the Starlings had ceased to interfere. Conditions were quiet until August 8, when I heard a commotion near the box and saw that the Starlings had returned. Soon one of them entered the box only to hurriedly leave with a Flicker in hot pursuit. Twice more within the next thirty minutes the Starling entered the box, but in these cases the female Flicker dragged out the intruder, aiding herself by her wings and one foot. The Flicker on each occasion gripped a wing tightly in its foot and both birds fought furiously as they fluttered to the ground. After each tussle, the Flicker would return immediately to the nest while its antagonist alighted on a nearby limb to preen and apparently to lay plans for another attempt. The Flickers won out, and some time later five of their young successfully left the nest.—W. M. WALKER.

NOTES FROM ELIZABETHTON ON THE ARRIVAL DATE OF PURPLE MARTINS AND OTHER BIRDS—The last end of the 1946-47 winter was accompanied with high winds, low temperatures, and unusually frequent and heavy snowfalls beginning the second week in February and lasting almost uninterruptedly till nearly the end of March (eight inches of snow on March 27), had an apparent adverse effect on the arrival of many migratory birds. Purple Martins, however, appeared on schedule.

Near the eastern limits of Elizabethton, Mr. Stanley Gregg has at his residence four Martin houses. The first house was erected in 1929, and since then the number of houses and Martins has increased until during the past few seasons some 25 pairs frequented the place. According to Mr. Gregg's observations, the Martins arrived year after year on or about March 15; this was the exact date in 1945 and 1946. Despite this year's extremely wintry weather, two male Martins arrived at this place about four o'clock in the afternoon of March 15, 1947. During the severe winter weather which immediately followed this date, the Martins disappeared for a day or so at a time. By March 23, two pair of Martins were present at the houses, and by April 3, approximately eight pairs of the birds had arrived.

Other species of birds were not as prompt as the Purple Martin, probably delayed by the snow and cold. Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons, previously recorded as early as March 18 and 23, respectively, were first observed this spring on March 30. The Grackle, first seen this season on March 16, and the Red-winged Blackbird, first on March 23, were both delayed by from three to four weeks compared with preceding years.

Of interest was a notable increase in the number of ducks, species as well as individuals, on the Watauga River; this includes a single Canvas-back on March 23, the first record for this species in this locality.—FRED W. BEHREND, 606 West D. St., Elizabethton, Tenn.

A ROUND-UP OF CHAPTERS AND MEMBERS

The secretary of T.O.S., Mr. Fred W. Behrend, has recently completed the arduous task of checking and arranging the membership list of the Society. This, together with some information that has been furnished to the editor by the members of various local chapters, now gives us a fairly complete picture of the status of the Society and of the activities of the local chapters. Many people will be interested to know what the local chapters are doing, when and where they are meeting, and if they have any inspiring ideas.

The Nashville Chapter has 82 members listed. Mrs. Emily Barry Walker of Ward-Belmont College is the President, and Donald Maynard is the Secretary. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month; the program for the second Monday is a discussion or an account given by some member of the club, and for the fourth Monday is a round-table discussion. The topics have been such as the birds of a particular locality, the flocking of birds, and reviews of particular books on birds. On March 10 there was a special meeting to honor Miss Alma Hollinger; she became a member of the T. O. S. in 1921, and in 1930 when the publication of a magazine was projected, it was she who proposed the name of THE MIGRANT. The annual Spring Field Day will be held on May 11th; for more news on this, see beyond.

The Memphis chapter has 64 members. The newly elected officers are: President, Brother I. Vincent; Vice-President, Mrs. C. E. Moore; Secretary, Miss Alice Smith; Treasurer, Miss Mary Davant. The five directors of the state organization from the Memphis chapter are: Mr. Ben B. Coffey, Mrs. Floy Barefield, Mr. Luther Keeton, Dr. C. E. Moore, Mr. Bert Powell. Meetings of this chapter are held on the second Wednesday of the month at the Memphis Museum, Pink Palace, on Central Avenue. Short field trips or hikes are held once each month. The spring field day will be May 4th, when the participants plan to go to Lakeview, Mississippi, twenty miles south of Memphis.

The Knoxville Chapter lists 18 members. Mr. William M. Johnson is President. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, usually in the office of Mr. Brockway Crouch. Field trips are ordinarily held on the third Sunday of the month. The Spring Field Day will be held on May 4th, centering as before around the home and farm of Mr. H. P. Ijams.

The Elizabethton Chapter has 18 members. At a business meeting in March the following officers were elected for 1947-48: President, Mr. J. C. Browning; Vice-President, Mr. Bill Southerland; Secretary, Mrs. J. C. Browning; Treasurer, Miss Mary Cooke; Historian, Mrs. George I. Leonard; and Statistician, Mrs. L. R. Herndon. At the second March meeting a talk and motion pictures were presented by Mr. W. R. Anderson, forest ranger in that area of Tennessee. Field trips are held once or twice a month by this chapter.

The newly-reorganized Johnson City chapter has 13 members. Mr. Charles Sherrod is President; and the other officers are: Vice-President,

Walter Hendrix; Secretary, Ruby Doak; and Reporter, Mrs. S. D. Jackson. The chapter meets the second Thursday of the month in the club room of the Mayne Williams Library. At these meetings there have been programs of motion pictures and still pictures. Talks have been presented by visitors who were authorities on or who were interested in birds. At one meeting the members brought either a bird house or feeder—the result of a project completed during the previous month. At each meeting there is an open discussion concerning observations of birds and their habits.

The recently organized Greeneville chapter has nine members. The officers, elected at the organization meeting last December, are: President, Mr. J. B. White; Vice-President, Mr. C. M. Shanks; Secretary and Statistician, Mrs. Richard Nevius; Treasurer and Historian, Mrs. Willis Clemens; Publicity Chairman, Mr. Richard Nevius. The member of the state board of directors is Mr. A. L. Brown. The chapter has been meeting at the homes of its members on the fourth Sunday of each month.

In addition to the chapters mentioned above, there are eight members in Clarksville, nine in and near Columbia, three at Murfreesboro, and 26 others scattered over the state. There are 105 members outside of Tennessee. Subscriptions to THE MIGRANT come from about thirty libraries and museums. The total of all subscriptions and memberships on Mr. Behrend's list is 385.

It is hoped that the listing above of some of the activities of local chapters will be suggestive and useful to program committees. These pages of THE MIGRANT will be a good place to pool ideas for programs and activities, so we will be glad to receive news, suggestions, and reports of successful meetings and projects.

A CONSERVATION PROJECT OF THE ELIZABETHTON CHAPTER

The Elizabethton Chapter is proposing the establishment of a wildlife refuge on the lake which will be formed behind the new Watauga dam. This dam is being constructed as part of the TVA system on the Watauga River; the resulting lake will lie in eastern Carter County. The chapter has approved a proposal which has been drawn up and sent to various **people who might be able to assist in carrying out the project.** To quote from the description of the proposal: ". . . we propose that an area of land and a portion of the (Watauga) lake area be established as a wild life refuge. Although this area will not be in the main water fowl fly-way, some water fowl do frequent this area and with proper food and protection many wild birds could be attracted to this area.

"We have in mind the planting of duck foods in favorable areas, securing some wild Mallard ducks for . . . permanent residents and affording adequate food and protection until they become established.

"We, the Elizabethton Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, request favorable consideration of the establishment of a wild life refuge along the south shore of proposed Watauga Lake, to include suitable areas of both land and water for the propagation and protection of wild life including land animals, birds, and aquatic life. (s) Lee R. Herndon."

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING AND FIELD DAY

May 11, 1947, has been set as the date for the combined annual meeting of the T. O. S. and the field day in the Nashville area. Persons interested in obtaining more information can do so from the president of the Nashville chapter, Mrs. Emily Barry Walker, Ward-Belmont College, Nashville 4, Tennessee. It is hoped that a large number from localities other than Nashville will attend. A field day is always interesting, and it is worthwhile to meet the members from other sections of the state as well as to take part in the annual meeting.

NOTES, HERE AND THERE

Franklin McCamey has recently moved from Memphis to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park where he will assist Park Naturalist Arthur Stupka in his work. Mr. McCamey has a good reputation both as a field observer and a photographer. During part of his four years in the Army he was stationed in Florida, where he cooperated with and assisted the Florida Audubon Society in their visual education work.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its predecessor, the older Biological Survey, have for many years accumulated and filed reports on the distribution and migration of birds. These files now consist of over two million cards, and are used as the basis for statements of bird distribution in many publications. The system of obtaining information for these files is to be expanded by seeking aid from local bird clubs and other agencies; the primary purpose of doing this is to improve the geographical coverage of these reports. In the near future some of the local chapters of the T. O. S. may hear directly from this program as they are asked to participate in it.

Information on the binding of back issues of THE MIGRANT may be obtained from Mr. A. F. Ganier (see address in advertisement on inside back cover). Volumes of THE MIGRANT are usually bound in groups of three, i.e., 1938-40, 1941-43, 1944-46. Mr. Ganier, who is still Curator of the T. O. S. can also replace back issues to complete sets (this information also in advertisement).

EDITORIAL

It is the responsibility of a new Editor to look into the future and to inform the supporters of his publication what he thinks or hopes he can see there. This amounts to stating what he believes should and can be done.

THE MIGRANT is the publication of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, which consists of a group of local chapters scattered over the state. These chapters are the backbone of the state organization, and on their welfare the T. O. S. depends. In turn, the strength of local chapters depends largely on the interest of its members in watching and studying living birds in the field. The purpose of these local chapters should be to increase this interest, for an interest in living things and in nature is one of the healthiest interests for both mind and body that any individual can possess. The aim of THE MIGRANT, therefore, should be to encourage this interest and to aid its development; in so doing it will strengthen the individual, the

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All items for publication should be sent to

**James T. Tanner, Editor, Department of Zoology, University of Tennessee,
Knoxville, Tennessee**

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

local chapter, and the T. O. S.

To accomplish these ends, there will be printed in THE MIGRANT, as there has been in the past, articles which will inform about birds and which will point the way to learning more of birds. This will automatically accomplish other desirable ends: THE MIGRANT will continue to be a repository of much useful information concerning the birds of Tennessee; it will foster the growth of ornithology as a science; it will encourage the field study of birds by presenting concrete results of such studies; and it will integrate the interests of local chapters into the state-wide organization by giving them another common interest, the publication of this journal on birds. It will also serve the T. O. S. by printing notes and news concerning the activities of chapters and members.

The success of THE MIGRANT depends largely upon its contributors. The individuals who really make the magazine are those who write the articles and notes that are printed there. It is highly desirable that the contributors be as wide a representation as possible of the membership of the society, for this will insure both more interesting articles and more complete recording of the facts of bird life as well as a greater participation in the activities of the T. O. S. I can only encourage the cooperation of all in this effort. And there is another reason for writing for THE MIGRANT. Our motto has long been "The simple truth about birds is interesting enough, it is not necessary to go beyond it"; we can also say, "The simple truth about birds is interesting enough—to tell and write about it."

I expect to enjoy this task. I like to talk and read about birds, the next best thing to being in the field, so I should be happy.—J.T.T.

GLENHAVEN

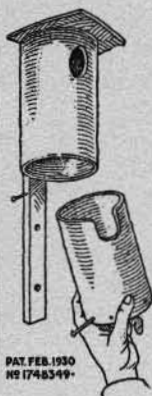
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