

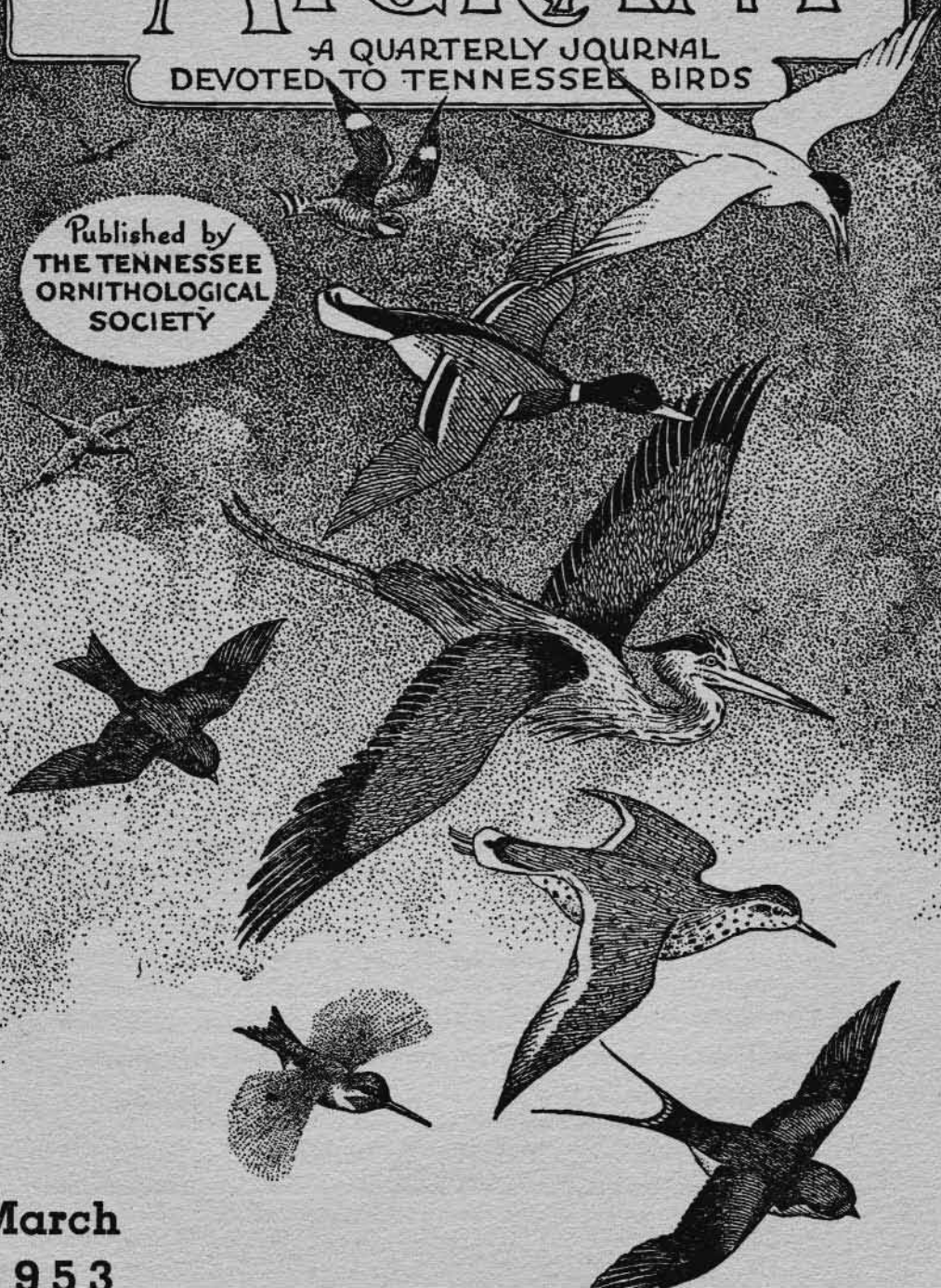
THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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SCREECH OWL

This Screech Owl was banded as an adult on Feb. 28, 1948, at Memphis, Tenn., and returned to roost in the same box at intervals until April 10, 1950.

—Photo by JOHN J. O'CALLAGHAN

THE MIGRANT

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No. 1

SOME NOTES RELATING TO THE MORTALITY OF SCREECH OWLS IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

By ARTHUR STUPKA

Over a fifteen year period beginning in December, 1936, the writer examined a total of 41 Screech Owls which had been killed by automobiles along highways in or near Great Smoky Mountains National Park. My primary interest in these birds was in analyzing their stomach contents; a record was also kept of where and when the owl was found and the color-phase represented. Although most of these birds were found by the writer, some were brought in by wardens, rangers, and other people. More than half the number were discovered within a few miles of Gatlinburg. It would be interesting to know how many additional Screech Owl carcasses were removed from the roads and vicinity by Crows and by such mammals as foxes, bobcats, opossums, skunks, dogs, and house cats. In the stomach of an opossum which I examined in this area in November, 1938, were the remains of a Screech Owl.

In addition to the 41 dead owls which were handled, 28 others were observed sufficiently well during this period to determine their coloration. Of the total of 69 Screech Owls, 56 were of the red phase and 13 of the gray phase—a ratio of 4 red to 1 gray.

One might assume that the mortality of these non-migratory birds would prove to be proportional to the amount of automobile travel over the roads of this area—at least to some degree. However, a comparison of the park's travel figures, by months, with the numbers of Screech Owls killed during these months, reveals a lack of correlation so complete that one is forced to seek elsewhere for a possible explanation of why the birds are killed more frequently at one time of year than another.

Using official figures for 1950 as a basis for determining the percentage of park travel, by months, we find that whereas 70 percent of the travel took place in the five months' period, April through August, only 5 percent of the Screech Owls were found during that time. No owls were found during the May—June—July period when 42 percent of the travel takes place. Whereas only 26 percent of the travel comes in the five-month interval of September through January, 85 percent of the dead birds were discovered during that time. Altogether 35 of the 41 owls were found in the five month interval of September through January while only six were found in the seven months period of February through August. October, with 14 birds, was by far the month of greatest mortality. Following in order came January, 7 birds; December, 6 birds; September and November, 4

each; February and March, 2 each; April and August, 1 each; and, as already stated, no birds in May, June and July. If we group the 41 dead owls according to seasons, we find 3 in Spring (March-May), 1 in Summer (June-August), 22 in Autumn (September-November), and 15 in Winter (December-February).

Remains of food were found in 39 of the 41 stomachs. Based on these 39 specimens, the percentage of owls with one or more insects in the stomach was 85; spiders, 33; other arthropods (centipedes, millipedes, and crayfish), 23; small mammals, 15; and small bird, salamanders, and earthworms, 2½ percent each. (Insects occurred in 33 of the 39 stomachs; spiders, in 13; other arthropods, in 9; small mammals, in 6; and small bird, salamanders, and earthworms in 1 each). A Screech Owl which I found near Gatlinburg on the morning of January 19, 1951, had eaten 4 red-backed salamanders, 4 spiders, 2 earthworms, 8 centipedes, 1 millipede, 5 carabid beetles, and 14 noctuid larvae resembling army or cut worms. No other specimen had taken such a variety of food, although there were two instances of owls having consumed a greater number of individuals. One of these owls had eaten 37 noctuid larvae, 2 spiders, and 2 centipedes, while another had taken 27 noctuid larvae, 10 carabid beetles, 3 spiders, and 1 millipede. One might raise the question as to whether a bird with so much food in its stomach would be handicapped in its attempt to escape an on-coming car. The large numbers of noctuid larvae, all of which were taken in December and January, can be explained, in part, by the fact that these insects are nocturnal in their activities. The wide variety of food items which are acceptable to this owl has been recorded by A. K. Fisher, A. C. Bent, E. H. Forbush, A. A. Allen, and others; and the proportion of these items varies from place to place.

Here in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and vicinity the availability of orthopterous insects during the autumn season appears to be of real significance. Of 23 owls found dead in the four months period August through November, 19 had remains of Orthoptera in the stomachs; 12 of the 14 owls found in October, the month of peak mortality, had eaten katydids, grasshoppers, camel crickets or other kindred insects. The sudden drop-off in the number of owls found dead during the month following the October peak could possibly be correlated with the die-off of these Orthoptera following the mid-autumn frosts.

Since the prevailing kind of road-surfacing in the area in question is a black asphalt, the warmth-retaining properties may be a factor in the occurrence thereon of insects and other prey on cool autumn nights. Whether attracted to, or temporarily stranded upon, the road, the insect is exposed to an avian predator who finds more ready passage along the open course of the road than in the dense young forest growth on either side. Over much of this area, at low and middle altitudes, the highways are passage-ways through more or less dense stands of young trees; for this reason, they appear to be acceptable hunting grounds for Screech Owls. The fact that automobiles kill or injure large numbers of insects and other small animals whose bodies remain on or near the road may have further bearing upon the occurrence of Screech Owls along our thoroughfares.

It is my belief that in most instances the death of these birds came about not from any tendency to be drawn to the glare of on-coming headlights, as some birds are drawn to lighthouse beacons, but by being struck while occupied in feeding upon prey in the highway.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE. JANUARY 1953.

*This paper was read April 26, 1952, before the 33rd Annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club, in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

MOVEMENTS OF ROBINS BANDED IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

By AMELIA R. LASKEY

For a number of years it has been obvious that a bountiful crop of fruit on hackberry trees (*Celtis* sp.) is coincident with a large winter population of Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) as well as of blackbirds (*Sturnus vulgaris*, *Molothrus ater*, *Agelaius phoeniceus*, *Quiscalus* sp., *Euphagus carolinus*). These congregate for weeks or months in a great roost at night and scatter for miles daily to feed over the country and in residence areas. It has been my aim to learn through banding something about the status of these winter Robins—whether they are migrants from the north, Tennessee breeding birds, or a combination of the two groups.

However, winter trapping of this species at my banding station has been very disappointing. The birds are seldom lured into traps; they find ample food in the trees and plenty of water in the numerous "wet-weather creeks".

The greater number of the 2,945 Robins that have been banded from 1931 to 1951 has been trapped with water-drips as bait in the dry years from August into November when they are migrating or wandering. A lesser number of those banded are adult breeding birds, nestlings, and summer first-year birds. In addition, 126 Robins were banded in their roosts at night. From this total number, 132 return and recovery reports have been accumulated in subsequent years (4.5% of the number banded). Robins do not re-enter traps readily, therefore, without color-banding, it is not easy to find out how long an individual remains in a given area. As examples: a Robin that had never been retaken at the banding station was found dead on the road a few hundred yards away three years after banding. A sick Robin was found by a neighbor 500 yards from the banding station almost nine years after banding, yet it had never been retrapped in that long interval.

There were 110 returns after a migration in this group of 2,945 Robins, involving 96 individuals, some of which came back several years. There were 22 recoveries as follows: in Tennessee, outside of Nashville—6 birds;

in states south of Tennessee—13 birds; in states north of Tennessee—3 birds.

Reports from numerous observers indicate that the winter roosts build up from November and December to reach their peak in mid-January or a little later. At my home station, Robins that had apparently been absent begin to appear in January and February. First records for these returning birds (usually color banded) are as follows: January 26, 1937; February 3, 1944 (2 birds); February 14, 1945; February 18, 1936 and 1940; February 21, 1933; and December 27, 1945 (a pair). In some of these years a Robin roost is known to have existed. Only the 1945 pair is known positively to have been breeding birds that spent the winter on their nesting grounds. That year an immense Robin roost was located at Charlotte and 33rd Streets, three and one half miles north of the banding station. The male of this pair had been banded October 6, 1941, had migrated the previous years in autumn and returned in February. There is no proof that the banded individuals, seen in January and February at the station or elsewhere in Nashville (some were shot with Christmas rifles), had been in the area all winter.

In February 1950, Madden Phillips spent four evenings in the Hillsboro-Stokes roost, a mile from my banding station, and banded 110 Robins. Reports were received later from three of these, all from Nashville: Spring, 1950; June 27, 1950; Jan. 29, 1951.

On the evening of March 16, 1940, three high school boys accompanied me on a banding expedition to the Crescent-Woodlawn roost, 2.3 miles from my banding station. The night was not dark enough so only 16 Robins were captured. During that month I banded 11 additional Robins. From this group of 27, two were recovered in the northern tier of states: No. 40-226129, banded March 25, 1940, was found dead June 19, 1940, at Gowanda, New York; No. 40-226110, banded March 16, 1940, was found dead at Freedom Station, Ohio, on April 14, 1941. Another, No. 40-202347, banded the previous autumn, November 3, 1939, was found dead at Davison, Michigan, on May 18, 1941.

The late summer and autumn season of 1939 has been my most successful period for trapping this species. From August 6 to November 22 (when banding was temporarily halted to attend the meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club), I banded 694. From this group, there were 23 returns and recoveries. The latter showed that in the winter of 1939-1940, despite an ample hackberry crop and the existence of a roost, there had been a migration to the south. The reports received from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C., are presented in the upper part of the accompanying table.

In addition to the recoveries of birds banded in August to November 1939 and reported in the table, there were 13 individuals retaken at the banding station in 1940, 5 of them while the Crescent-Woodlawn roost was in use in February and March, 5 during the nesting season, and 3 in August.

Additional southern recoveries for other years are presented in the lower part of the table.

Banding Date	Recovery Date	Point of Recovery
Nov. 13, 1939	Dec. 27, 1939	New Orleans, La.
Nov. 18, 1939	Dec. 29, 1939	Lewisburg, Tenn.
Oct. 18, 1939	Jan. 31, 1940	Wauchula, Fla.
Nov. 11, 1939	Feb. 1940	Gonzales, La.
Nov. 21, 1939	Feb. 16, 1940	Decatur, Ga.
Nov. 10, 1939	Feb. 17, 1940	Goss, Miss.
Aug. 6, 1939	Mar. 10, 1940	Newnan, Ga.
Oct. 15, 1941	Mar. 15 1934	Hanceville, Ala.
July 13, 1934	Feb. 20, 1936	Carville, La.
Sept. 18, 1936	Spring, 1940	Evergreen, Ala.
Oct. 9, 1939	Jan. 23, 1944	Valdosta, Ga.
May 5, 1948	Jan. 25, 1949	Scottsboro, Ala.
Apr. 13, 1950	Dec. 15, 1950	Marrero, La.

Two recoveries of first year birds, banded September 28, 1931, are worth mentioning as their recoveries in June, 1932, suggest a possible tendency toward extension of breeding range to the south. One was taken in Cowan, Tennessee, the other in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Although Fish and Wildlife Service reports are not available at this time on all birds banded in the north and recovered in Tennessee, the following, have been published: a juvenal banded at Bangor, Maine, on July 8, 1910 was found in Nashville on February 21, 1911; another banded in Sandusky, Ohio, was recovered at Nashville, dates not given (AUK, 27: 159. 1910). Another banded July 13, 1946, at Demarest, New Jersey was recovered December 27, 1946, in Wayne County, Tennessee (EBBA NEWS, 2 (6): 37. 1948).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the 132 return and recovery records from 2,945 Robins banded at Nashville, Tennessee, in the years 1931-1951, the following conclusions are submitted: There are definite spring and autumn migrations of local Robins and northern Robins passing through.

Some local birds migrate as far south as Louisiana and Florida.

In favorable years of abundance of hackberries, some local birds remain for the winter.

Some local Robins may wander for the early part of the winter, or make short migrations, and return in January and February.

Winter populations of Robins at Nashville embraces migrants from the northern tier of states: Michigan, Ohio, New York; and also Tennessee breeding birds.

Although autumn dry seasons are conducive to success in trapping and banding Robins, winter flocks are difficult to trap. Intensive efforts should be made to trap large numbers in the roosts as more data are needed on the birds present from December through March.

1521 GRAYBAR LANE, NASHVILLE 12, TENN. March 1953.

NOTES ON BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, BIRDS

By MERRITT G. VAIDEN

This paper is the ninth in a series on the birds of this region published in THE MIGRANT (Sept. 1939; June 1940; Sept. 1940; Sept. 1943; Sept. 1947; Dec. 1948; March 1952; and Dec. 1952).

The records and specimens mentioned in this paper are from Bolivar County, Mississippi. All specimens are in my private collection.

Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Dr. John Aldrich, and Mr. Allen Duvall have identified some species to subspecies.

With the introduction of rice as one of the major money-crops of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, we find a greater number of certain species of birds either stopping over or wintering with us. Thousands of acres of rice are now being planted; some of the fields are left flooded and these prove attractive to rails, bitterns, and ducks. Black and Common Terns stop to feed in these lakes. We find the Mourning Dove using the dry rice fields as a feeding area. Barn, Barred, and Short-eared Owls have increased greatly; in the dried-out rice fields we find many Short-eared Owls. Certain hawks have been more plentiful than ever before.

HARLAN'S HAWK (*Buteo harlani*). A female of this species was taken on December 27, 1947, by John Brister, Jr., about nine miles south of Rose-dale. It is my second collection, (MIGRANT, 19:61. 1948).

NORTHERN RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo l. lineatus*). Mr. Allen Duvall of the Fish and Wildlife Service identified a specimen taken on September 17, 1950, as this form. It is a pretty female.

MARSH HAWK (*Circus cyaneus hudsonius*). The female Marsh Hawk is normally a most common hawk here as a winter visitant. Now with the planting of rice there can be counted almost any afternoon two to ten males as they 'hawk' the the rice areas for mice. A specimen had just eaten two white-footed mice when collected. On February 8, 1953, seven were found feeding over one rice field, five were males.

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus l. limicola*). On November 4, 1952, an immature male of this species was taken from a flooded rice field three miles east of Malvina, Mississippi. Nine Virginia Rails were counted as we walked along the rice levees while young men plodded along in the water running the birds before us. These birds had departed on November 15th when we returned to this field. It is my second collection, (MIGRANT, 18:33. 1947).

SORA RAIL (*Porzana carolina*). In the same field and on the same day that the Virginia Rail was taken, over twenty-five Soras were driven over the dry levee tops by young men wading through the mud and slush. One was collected, my first fall collection. Bobby Collins seems to think that my count was not high enough.

WOODCOCK (*Philohela minor*). On November 9 and 10, 1952, we had over two inches of rain; most of the rain falling during the night up to 1 a. m. There was some lightning and thunder indicating a squall line above us. Two Woodcocks were found dead on the 12th in the town and another,

injured, was located on the 13th. The latter was made in to a bird skin. Its crop and gizzard were empty. A blood clot was plainly visible between skull and skin showing a probable collision with the earth or a tree. The skull however was not broken.

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba pratincola*). An adult bird of this species was found along the highway at Perthshire, twelve miles north of Rosedale. A nice skin was made from the specimen. Another specimen, badly crushed, was located along the highway eight miles south of the city. These observations were made on February 1, 1953.

SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio f. flammeus*). On November 9 and 10, 1952, we located not less than fifty of these birds feeding in a drained, burned-over rice field. Three were collected at this locality on these dates, two were males and the other a female. I have found two of these birds dead along the highway at Perthshire, Mississippi, and one was made into a skin. Of interest was the taking of a specimen at 9 p. m. from side of the levee by Reubin Waren. Bobby Collins collected a specimen on December 29, 1952. Many flocks of these birds are here with us to date of this paper. My only other collection was a bird taken on March 18, 1940 (MIGRANT, 14: 50-52. 1943).

NORTHERN BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata bromia*). An adult female taken on March 1, 1952, and an adult male secured on April 19, 1952, have been identified by Dr. Alexander Wetmore of the Smithsonian Institution, as the northern form. I find no other record of this form having been secured in the State.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (*Anthus spraguei*). An adult male and female of this species was taken on January 4, and another, a female, on January 11, 1953. Two others were found partly eaten by either foxes or hawks. The specimens taken in this county were feeding along the slope of the levee in short, dead grass. Talmadge Bradley and Carlton Johnson assisted me in spotting the small flock. This is the second record for the State. The first record was by Andrew and W. B. Allison when a bird was taken on January 1, 1902, at a locality near Bay Saint Louis, Hancock County. (AUK, 23: 232. 1906).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Dendroica virens*). On November 25, 1952, an adult male of this species was collected at Old River Lake. It is my latest fall record. The bird was quite active and was chased to the third tree before being taken. A slight injury to a wing had probably slowed down migration with the regular waves that moved through during the fall.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*). Many fine flocks have been located this winter. One flock contained fourteen birds. I have collected seven of the birds at different dates and localities; all collected birds were using a short song that I have designated as the 'winter song'. No bird was taken that was not identified before collection. I have found the Western Meadowlark showing a preference for row-plowed land without a particle of growing grass. I have found them, however, going to roost

in short stubble in a church yard and along short grass growing on ditch banks.

EASTERN GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum pratensis*). Three specimens, taken on April 14, 1944, from a nice flock feeding along a slope of the levee three miles south of Rosedale, were assigned by Dr. John W. Aldrich (1946), of Fish and Wildlife Service, to this form. It is a regular but scarce migrant and winter visitant in this area.

LECONTE'S SPARROW (*Passerherbulus c. caudacutus*). While this bird has been a regular winter visitant to this area, the planting of rice has produced at times, this fall, an abundance of these beautiful little sparrows. While checking the flooded fields for rails, we flushed from the levees in the rice field many of these birds. An immature female was taken on November 16, 1952.

RED-CROWNED PARROT (*Amazona viridigenalis*). An immature female secured one and one-half miles west of Waxhaw, Mississippi, on October 23, 1952, from a corn field while feeding with grackles was identified as this species by Dr. Alexander Wetmore. This parrot's normal range is northeastern Mexico.

A question immediately comes to mind as to the specimen being an escaped parrot from captivity; that is certainly probable, but the collection is worth recording with these facts: (1) The bird shows no feather wear or abrading whatever, (2) It is an immature bird, (3) It was first seen on May 12, 1952, two days following a sixty m. p. h. wind from the southwest, (4) Within very recent years Road-runners, Anis, Mexican Ground Doves, Vermilion and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, and Fulvous Tree Ducks have been seen or collected in Arkansas, Mississippi, or both, (5) This bird was actively living and feeding under all wild conditions with 'blackbirds'; the bird was feeding on corn and other grain and roosting at a regular 'blackbird' roost at Lake Concordia, (6) It was chased by Mr. William Beard, the collector, and by others for over four months; it was found to be extremely wild and no one could get in gunshot range until the day of collection when the bird was found feeding near a large and deep ditch and near a herd of cattle. The ditch was used for close approach and collection of the parrot, (7) Every effort has been made since collection to find some person who has lost a bird from a cage or otherwise, without any success.

PURPLE GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula 'ridgway'*). An adult female was collected from a large flock of grackles on December 30, 1951, near Legion Lake. It was identified by Dr. Alexander Wetmore as "a specimen of the supposed hybrid between the purple and the bronzed forms". There is no available record to show that this form has been secured before in northern Mississippi.

ROSEDALE, BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, February 10, 1953.

THE ROUND TABLE

SANDHILL CRANES AT MEMPHIS.—On February 1, 1953, at the Shelby County Penal Farm, about one and a half miles east of the Memphis city limits, I noticed two large birds flying side by side above the trees bordering the Wolf River. As they approached with necks outstretched and legs trailing behind, it became apparent that I was seeing another "first" for this area. They followed the river at first and then swung north in a long glide, losing altitude as they came. Passing almost directly over my head, hardly twenty feet above the ground, I got the best look at a Sandhill Crane that I have ever enjoyed. They stayed at the Penal Farm about one quarter hour, and then, rising side by side in large circles much like Ibis, ascended until they were hardly visible with my 10X binoculars. They departed northward towards the Mississippi River. They were in the "brown" plumage of an immature, and quite similar to immature Sandhill Cranes I saw at Red Rock Lake, Montana, a year and a half ago. (This note is reprinted from "The Tennessee Warbler, Bulletin of the Memphis Chapter of the T. O. S., Feb., 1953.)—HOWARD T. BARBIG, Route 10, Memphis, Tenn.

A CHAT NEAR NASHVILLE ESTABLISHES FIRST WINTER RECORD FOR TENNESSEE—A Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) was observed at close range February 22, 1953, northwest of Nashville on the Hyde's Ferry Pike by the writer and Miss Jennie Riggs. The bird was first observed in a low shrub. Its brilliant yellow breast was a surprising spot of color in the winter sun. Leafless gray branches not only deprived the Chat of the camouflage in which we are accustomed to see it but actually pushed it forward as if in relief. It flew from the shrub to a perch about fifteen feet up in a bare tree and then leisurely dropped thirty feet beyond into buck-bush and briar. It was in fine color: breast clear bright yellow, back feathers fresh glossy olive, underparts distinctly white; its eye mark was clearly evident but somewhat less sharp than a male's at the height of breeding. The bird showed no sign of ill health or injury. It was silent.

As far as I can determine this is the first winter record of a Yellow-breasted Chat in Tennessee. The earliest spring date for the Nashville area seems to be April 13, 1930, as established by Ernest L. Spain, and October 3, 1925, is probably the latest local fall record (GRM, HCM, WMW).

"Audubon Field Notes" for three winter seasons in June issues for 1950, 1951, and 1952 include at least sixteen winter records of Chats east of the Appalachians. The same numbers of the magazine report for the Mississippi Valley only two such records: 1 at Pensacola December 26, 1949, and 1 at New Orleans January 15, 1950. Messner reported Michigan's first winter Chat January 26, 1949 (WILSON BULL, 61:236. 1949). This bird showed an irregular moult suggesting its having been delayed by injury.

Ben Coffey and H. C. Monk very kindly sent me several of the above references.—KATHERINE A. GOODPASTURE, 408 Fairfax Ave., Nashville, Tenn.

A CENSUS OF HOUSE WRENS IN UPPER EAST TENNESSEE—On July 13, 1952, a survey was made of the singing House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) in upper East Tennessee. The Bristol, Kingsport, Greeneville, and Elizabethton chapters of T. O. S. were invited to participate and encouraged to locate singing birds prior to that date so that their presence could be detected quickly on the designated date, thus permitting a greater area coverage in the available time. The sky was clear and the temperature ranged from 67 to 93 degrees F. and the area was suffering from the lack of rain. Although the area coverage was nothing like complete and the very high temperature of the afternoon was not conducive to House Wren singing, the results show that there are substantial numbers of House Wrens present in the area during or immediately following the breeding season.

In Bristol Dr. B. A. Barrington located three birds between 3:00 and 5:00 p. m. as follows: Georgia Ave. and Cedar St. (1); Golf Course N. E. (1); Columbia Rd. and West King Springs (1). The writer located three additional birds in Bristol between 2:00 and 4:00 p. m. at Pine and Spruce Sts. (1); Maple and Georgia Sts. (1); and Suffolk and Kings Mill Rd. (1).

From Greeneville twenty-one House Wrens were reported between the hours of 5:00 and 8:00 a. m. The first hour and one-half Mr. J. B. White worked alone and then was joined by Mrs. J. B. White and Mrs. Bill Clemens for the remaining hour and one-half. The locations of singing House Wrens in and near Greeneville were as follows: near J. B. White's, 104 Union St. (3); opposite Forest Park Pool (1); Brown's Hill of McKee St. (2); opposite 412 Park St. (1); near Andrew Johnson Club House (1); South Main at Susong House "Hill Top" (1); Night home, Maple Ave. extension (1); Leonard St. and Highland Ave. intersection (1); Pat Harrison's, 104 Sevier St. (3); 105 Sevier St. (1); Franklin and Sevier St. intersection (1); 613 Franklin St., Dr. J. C. McGuffin (1); G. Lovette home Rt. 8c, two miles from town (1); Teague residence, 404 Church St. (1); George Rhea residence, Maple Ave. (1) and one (1) in addition for which no location was given.

Mrs. Hugo Doob, Jr., reported two (2) House Wrens from Johnson City between 8:15 and 9:15 a. m., one (1) at 209 W. Watauga Ave. and Ridge Crest Road (1).

Robert Herndon and the writer covered Elizabethton quite thoroughly between 5:00 and 10:00 a. m. and located only two singing House Wrens, at the junction of Carter and Parkway Blvds. (1) and behind the Douglas School (colored) (1). Between the hours of 11:00 a. m. and 2:00 p. m. together with Robert Brownell we covered the area between Elizabethton and Bristol via Stony Creek, Shady Valley and Boy Scout Camp Tom Howard. Not a single House Wren was heard on this route, even in Shady Valley where House Wrens have been heard many times and are known to be summer residents.

No report has been received by us from the Kingsport Chapter of the T. O. S.

This was the first attempt at trying a summer survey of a single species

in this area and since the House Wren has been extending its range down the tributaries of the Tennessee River, an actual count during the first part of July appeared desirable. A more intensive survey covering a larger area and extending further southwest is suggested for a future date.

We acknowledge with sincere appreciation the contributions of all those who participated in this survey.—LEE R. HERNDON, 1533 Burgie Place, Elizabethton, Tennessee.

FALL RECORDS OF THE BOBOLINK.—On Oct. 16, 1952, about four miles west of West Memphis, Ark., I was able to observe at twenty to twenty-five feet two Bobolinks perched in the open on the tips of rice stalks. On Oct. 18, accompanied by Rev. Wm. Hearn, I found a third, at Lehi, Ark. These are apparently the first fall records for this species in the immediate Memphis area. Baerg in "Birds of Arkansas" (1951) quotes fall records for Arkansas County, Sept. 1 to Oct. 15, 1950, by Meanley. Burleigh (1943) gives none for the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. For Louisiana, Oberholser (1938) reports the species as casual to Sept. 27. In **Audubon Field Notes**, Feb. 1950, 4 (1): 21, Tom Imhof gives a third fall record for Alabama. The species should be found regularly but sparingly each fall in Mid-South rice growing areas. This point was discussed on a recent trip to Lonoke, Ark., but lack of time prevented a search for this species. A report of a rice field in Tennessee sent us to one near Rossville but it proved to be only a half-acre experiment. The records given were the results of five afternoons, Oct. 13-19, in the West Memphis-Lehi area.—ALAN ZIEGLER, MEMPHIS.

DUCK RIVER BOTTOMS REVISITED—On February 14, 1953, twenty-two members of the Nashville T. O. S. returned to the Waterfowl Refuge, described by Mrs. Bell in **THE MIGRANT**, December, 1952.

The Cyperts were again our hosts but the weather was not quite so favorable for birding. We covered most of the territory covered ten weeks earlier. For some species the population had changed noticeably. This is what we found: Pied-billed Grebe, 2; Double-Crested Cormorant, 130; Great Blue Heron, 200 (many were in trees of an old rookery); Canada Goose, 2000; Mallard, 100; Black Duck, 30; American Pintail, 20; Lesser Scaup, 40; Buffle-head, 3; Red-tailed Hawk, 6; Bald Eagle, 4; Marsh Hawk, 3; Peregrine Falcon, 1; Coot, 2; Killdeer, 2; Ring-billed Gull, 300; Herring Gull, 5; Mourning Dove, 1; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 3; Crow, 15; Bluebird, 5; Shrike, 2; Starling, 300; Red-wing Blackbird, 1500; Grackle, 1000; Cowbird, 3; Cardinal, 8; Goldfinch, 125; Towhee, 5; Savannah Sparrow, 6; LeConte's Sparrow, 3.—JENNIE RIGGS, 3313 Fairmont Drive, Nashville, Tennessee.

THE SEASON

NASHVILLE—The winter just ending has been perhaps the mildest on record. Snow has not covered the ground; the temperature has not often been as low as freezing. The berry crop was abundant. Hackberry trees, privet hedge, and winterberry honeysuckle were laden.

Pine Siskins have been reported by more observers in more localities than in any other year. In the South Harpeth Valley eighteen appeared November 16 and remained in varying numbers thru March 16 when twenty were counted. At Blossomdell they appeared December 11 for the first time ever. Ten were reported in Percy Warner Park on December 21. On December 27 six were on old Hickory Boulevard and four at County Hospital Farm. Numerous others have been reported in and near the city.

The following observations are of birds seldom or rarely wintering around Nashville: On December 30 Gleaves and Schreiber, Jr, found two Short-eared Owls in Buena Vista; they were last seen March 1. A wintering Saw-whet Owl will be reported in a later issue of THE MIGRANT. A record this winter of a Yellow-breasted Chat is reported in "The Round Table" of this issue. Four LeConte's Sparrows have been seen between November 8 and March 8. A Chipping Sparrow banded by Mrs. Laskey on February 7 was re-trapped March 7.

Robins were present all winter, and were in particularly large flocks in early January. Among them was one decidedly blonde Robin and two with large white splotches. Blackbird roosts have been located in Williamson and Wilson Counties, and will be fully described in the next issue. Black and Turkey Vultures formed a roost in northwest Williamson County.

The following observations are of interest: Pied-billed Grebes were on Radnor Lake in November, December, and March 1 when four were present. American Pipits were recorded in November and December and on March 7 thirty-eight were in South Harpeth Valley. Cedar Waxwings appeared in large flocks in the week of February 14 and have remained feeding on the berries and elm seeds. White-crowned Sparrows appeared in larger numbers than usual, fifteen in Bell's Bend Nov. 8, sixteen on Nov. 27 and ten on Feb. 22 at County Hospital. Solitary birds that stayed all winter were a Red-headed Woodpecker seen in West Meade by Mr. Abernathy, a Phoebe at Basin Springs, a Brown Thrasher at Miss Evelyn Norton's feeding station on Love Circle and probably two others seen one on January 4 and one singing on March 11, and three Bewick's Wrens in the city.

Mourning Doves were cooing Jan. 15 and one was carrying nesting material on Jan. 21. Cardinals were courtship feeding Feb. 4. Waterfowl migration notes include Gadwall, 2; Shoveller, 4; Canvasback, 25;—all on March 1 at Radnor and one Coot and 70 Lesser Scaup on March 15 at the same place. On March 1 a Sharp-shinned Hawk returned to its old territory at Basin Springs and was calling on the 8th, even tho this species nests late. A flock of 100 or more Killdeer was in Buena Vista bottoms March 4 and 8. Two Wilson's Snipe that wintered there were joined by 35 others, along with a Greater Yellow-legs, on March 4. A male Cowbird, color-banded

by Mrs. Laskey in 1951 and re-trapped in 1952 returned this year on March 6. Black-crowned Night Herons were back at their old stand March 8, the same date on which they were first seen last year. The first Bluebird egg was reported by Mrs. Laskey on March 11 and Phoebe's started nest building by March 12. A Louisiana Water-thrush was at Basin Springs Farm March 16, two days later than last year.—JENNIE RIGGS

KNOXVILLE—This past winter has been warmer than average, especially so in the latter part of the winter. Altho in November there was an all-time record snowfall, snow stayed on the ground for only a few days then and never covered the ground for more than a day at any other time during the winter. No species appeared to be unusually scarce or abundant except for Robins, Brown Thrashers, and Pine Siskins.

Robins have been commoner this winter than usual, being seen in small flocks all during the winter and a fairly large roost of them, with Grackles, being reported in the vicinity of Norris. A few Brown Thrashers wintered around Knoxville, four different individuals being seen all thru January and others at different times.

For the first time in several years Pine Siskins have been seen here in numbers. They were first reported on Nov. 11 and have been seen regularly thru early March, altho they appear to have been scarcer during the later part of winter. This is the first time they have been seen here since a single record in 1951 and a few in 1949.

The following observations are a little unusual: Several Loons were seen during November, but none since that time. American Egrets were seen until Oct. 20 in few numbers, the first time we have had any October records. Five Canvasbacks reported on Jan. 13 and five on Jan. 25 make the first January records for this duck in recent years. Pine Warblers were first reported on March 1, the latest arrival date for the last four years. Purple Martins were reported in the local newspaper as having arrived on March 4, an average date.

A pair of Mourning Doves were observed building on the University campus on March 17.—JAMES T. TANNER

GREENEVILLE—Heralding winter's approach, the first Ruby-crowned Kinglet reported was an individual at Camp Creek Bald on September 28, others being seen in the lowlands October 8 and 10. The earliest dates for Golden-crowned Kinglets were October 17, 18, and 23. A Brown Creeper was present October 28. White-crowned Sparrows returned October 13. A Myrtle Warbler was here October 23. Twenty-five Canada Geese settled at dusk, October 12, in a dry bottomland field of shocked corn. Earlier that afternoon on upper Paint Creek, under Camp Creek Bald, an American Bittern obviously several days dead was being displayed by the small mountaineer who had shot it.

The winter season proved comparatively open and mild, with one late November snow of consequence. Since January there has been more than average rainfall.

One of the two Brown Thrashers on Greeneville's Christmas Count, the one recorded by Mr. Shanks near his home, has been seen throughout the winter (conversation with Alfred Irvine). This year Tusculum College campus lacked its wintering Red-headed Woodpeckers (C. M. Shanks). No Red-breasted Nuthatches have been seen. The maximum number of Prairie Horned Larks in the wintering flock was seventy in late November; few have been present since December. Indication of increase in White-crowned Sparrow numbers is that a suitable habitat under Bluff Mountain has been for the first time occupied by a group of this species. Discovery of their presence here was gratifying, as for five winters they had been fruitlessly sought in this particular pasture and brushy roadside. In addition, three places on the Reed farm customarily occupied by these sparrows have them present as usual.

Early song accompanied rises in temperature as spring approached. The Bewick's Wren was first heard January 7, the Phoebe February 23, the Purple Finch March 16.

First of the early migrants were the Red-wings. Throughout winter a few individuals were seen (J. B. White, Alfred Irvine, Richard Nevius). On February 12 a flock of fifteen appeared, with forty-three next day, some in song. Robin flocks began on February 11 with thirty, seventy-five the next day, singing individuals by February 23. Three Grackles arrived February 23; by March 7 around one hundred obliterated other sounds with their jubilant song. A Pine Warbler was reported on March 1 by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Irvine. Six Wilson's Snipe on March 8 and twenty on March 10 were found in Lick Creek bottoms (Richard Nevius). There also on March 8 were seen twenty Rusty Blackbirds. On March 16 a Chipping Sparrow was seen (R. N.).

Scarcity of opportunity to observe water birds prevents any comment upon their seasonal fluctuations. However, spring rains flooding Roaring Fork bottoms have provided some good bird watching. Two Ring-billed Gulls were present February 12 (R. N.). On March 15, there remained two ponds from a later flooding of the creek. This water attracted two Great Blue Herons, two hundred Killdeer, and sixteen ducks. Four Lesser Scaup spent the day on the larger pond. The twelve ducks which alternately swam in the smaller pond or rested on its grassy banks were four male and two female Mallards, two male Shovellers, two male Pintails, a male and female Blue-winged Teal. They seemed unaware of observers 200 feet distant and concealed by a fence row. They were alert to cries and flight of Killdeer, pausing, extending their necks, and, in the case of the two female Mallards, turning their heads to watch the Killdeer in flight.

Little nesting activity has been observed. Incubation was in progress March 12 in one Dove nest, and another was being built March 17.—MRS. RICHARD NEVIUS

ELIZABETH TON—After a very dry summer and fall, the year ended with a deficiency in rainfall of about thirteen inches. We have had more than the average snow during the winter, but the average precipitation

resulted for the winter months. The minimum temperature for the winter was 17 degrees, on Dec. 29, which was appreciably higher than usual.

Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaups, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers have spent the winter in the vicinity of Wilbur Lake since that area has been made a sanctuary. Arrival dates for other species of ducks were: Black Duck, Mar. 1; Mallard and Baldpate, Mar. 2. On March 8 about 300 Mallards, 40 Baldpates, 6 Black Ducks, and 8 Buffleheads were on the upper end of Watauga Lake, while there were about 50 Ring-necked Ducks, 30 Lesser Scaup, and 6 Bufflehead on Wilbur Lake. A lone Herring Gull was observed on Watauga Lake.

Mrs. E. Evans reported a pair of Chipping Sparrows on Jan. 15 and has observed them in the same area at least twice since then. Evidently they spent the winter in this area. The Lukers reported the first Red-winged Blackbirds on Feb. 1. Mrs. F. W. Behrend reported a Bewick's Wren singing on Feb. 3. Phoebees were absent the first three weeks of January and were first reported on Jan. 25. Grackles, Rusty Blackbirds, and Savannah Sparrows were first reported on Mar. 1, and Wilson's Snipe on Mar. 2—a late date.

Numerous reports of Pine Siskins have come in, particularly during February. They have been noted in our yard at least four times recently, for the first time to our knowledge.

On March 7 the Elizabethton Chapter of T. O. S. celebrated the ninth anniversary of founding with a dinner and program at the Franklin Club. This affair was attended by about fifty members and guests, and Mr. A. F. Ganier, President of T. O. S., was our guest speaker. He presented a paper on "The Degree of Intelligence of Birds", and showed a series of about fifty colored slides of scenes and objects of historical interest thruout Tennessee. The audience was much pleased with both the paper and slides. It was indeed a pleasure to have with us again our much beloved president of our society.—LEE R. HERNDON.

KINGSPORT—For the Kingsport Bird Club the fall and winter season began with our field day on Sept. 28, in which we counted 71 species. This census was chiefly notable for the large number of warblers, especially Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, and Magnolia, and for the presence of Nashville and Wilson's Warblers not heretofore recorded in our area. The census was also unusual for the presence of Great Horned Owls, the late record Black-billed Cuckoo, and the absence of Olive-backed Thrushes and Wilson Snipe, which appeared the first week in October.

The fall season brought the earliest locally recorded date for Coot, Sept. 21. Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets were in unusual numbers. Two Red-shouldered Hawks reappeared for a few weeks residence in November in the woods along Reedy Creek flats where they were seen regularly in October and November 1951.

The very mild winter showed increasing numbers of ducks. By Dec. 15 we had records of Mallards, Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Redheads, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, and Hooded, American, and Red-breasted Mer-

gansers. We recorded Canada Geese as late as the third week of December and as early as the second week of February. There were during the winter a scarcity of snipe and of Horned Larks and unusual numbers of Pine Siskins and Cedar Waxwings.—ANN H. (MRS. ROBERT M.) SWITZER.

BOOK REVIEW

BIRDS OF THE EVERGLADES, By Henry H. Collins, Jr. Illustr. by Roger Tory Peterson. 16 p. 1952. Blue Heron Press, Box 236, Bronxville, N. Y. 25c.

BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS, By Henry H. Collins, Jr. Illustr. by Roger Tory Peterson 16 p. 195.. Blue Heron Press, Box 236, Bronxville, N. Y. 25c.

These two pamphlets were written with the aim of providing beginners in bird watching with cheap and simplified guides to the birds of limited areas. Each consists of very brief remarks on the commoner birds of the area, a list of good places to see birds, and a check-list of species known from the area. The pamphlets are illustrated by black and white and colored figures by Roger Tory Peterson, some being reprinted from his plates in "A Field Guide to Birds". The color reproduction is only fair. These little guides may serve to stimulate an interest in birds by providing people with a cheap aid to their identification, but once an interest is established, these would not be satisfactory and the student would abandon them for Peterson's "Field Guide".—J. T. T.

(Minimum mail order for these pamphlets is \$1.)

ENJOYING BIRDS IN MICHIGAN. Edited by Homer D. Roberts and Clarence J. Messner. Michigan Audubon Society. Order from Mrs. Tafh Johnson, 48400 North Ave., Route 2, Mount Clemens, Michigan.

This sixty-four page guide to Michigan bird life contains a variety of items. There are descriptions of characteristic Michigan birds, directions on how to find birds in that State, suggestions for bird study, suggestions for attracting birds, descriptions of the activities of the Michigan Audubon Society, and a check-list of the birds of the State. More than twenty people participated in writing the various sections. It should be very useful to bird students in Michigan, either resident or visitor, and it should do a lot to stimulate the study of birds in that State.—J. T. T.

THE MIGRANT

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A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Fifty years ago, in 1903, the Tennessee legislature passed a law giving legal protection to birds. The following is quoted from the Report of the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on the Protection of North American Birds for the Year 1903 (AUK, 21: 192-193, 208) and pertains to Tennessee.

"LEGISLATION—During the session of 1903 (of the Tennessee legislature) the American Ornithologists' Union model law was adopted. This admirable improvement was due entirely to the devoted and energetic work of Senator J. M. Graham, who introduced the bill in the Senate, assisted by Representative Birdsong in the House.

"The initial movement in this great work was made many months before the legislature convened, by Senator Graham, who wrote to the National Committee for information regarding good bird legislation. From that day until the law went into effect he was untiring in his labors to give legal protection to the birds of Tennessee, thus conserving one of the best assets of the State. The next session of the legislature will be held in 1905.

"WARDEN SYSTEM—No wardens were employed by the Thayer Fund. The State officials, however, are alive to their duties. Mr. J. K. Acklen, State Game Warden, writes as follows: "The enforcement of our laws for the protection of both game and non-game birds is a difficult task in this State. I have labored for years on the subject, and only succeeded in our last Legislature in establishing the Department of Game, the whole expense of which Department I am bearing out of my individual means. You may judge from this as to how I feel on the subject."

"AUDUBON WORK—There is practically none done in the State at the present time. The following editorial from the 'Nashville American', of March 19, is such excellent advice to farmers that it is given in full in hope that many thousands of the tillers of the soil will read and follow its

counsel: "A birdless land is a dreary land; where the silence is unbroken by the song of birds there is loneliness that is oppressive. Imagine a farm without the cheering presence and music of birds. Think of the fields and woods barren of feathered songsters. They are well worth protecting and preserving on purely sentimental grounds, but aside from sentiment they are worth protecting because of their value to the farmer and gardener and to nearly every tree and flower that grows. They are as truly the friends of the farmer as the seasons—the wind and the rain and the sunshine, the light and the warmth, the frost and the dew, and all the elements of nature's alchemy. He is a primitive farmer who does not appreciate the value of birds."

Prof. Charles A. Keffer, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, was listed as President of the Tennessee Audubon Society, and Mrs. C. C. Conner, of Ripley, as Secretary. The T. O. S. is the successor and heir of the old State Audubon Society.

Fifty years after the "model law" was passed, we still feel that wild birds need protection, but we know that more than just legal protection is needed. Knowledge and appreciation of birds is the firmest foundation for good conservation, and the T. O. S. has done much to lay this foundation by its aim: "to record and encourage the study of birds in Tennessee". We know further, for we know that the best laws and the strongest will and sentiment to protect birds will not suffice if proper habitats are not protected or created. Preservation of some of our rarest species is almost entirely a problem of preserving the needed habitat. The conservation-minded individual, to be effective, must be forward-looking and well enough informed to see such needs before it is too late. The program of conservation started by the passage of a law in 1903 has gone well but it is not yet finished; it never will be, but we must see that it never even hesitates.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

May 9 and 10, 1953

The 38th annual meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society will be held at Nashville on Saturday and Sunday, May 9 and 10, 1953. The Nashville Chapter will be hosts upon this occasion and are looking forward to a fine attendance from all over the State. Saturday morning will be used for visiting points of interest in and about Nashville, and the afternoon events will consist of a program and business session at the Nashville Children's Museum. The annual dinner will be held downtown at a place to be chosen by the committee. On Sunday a field trip is scheduled for the day and this will be concluded by a brief business meeting at which officers for the coming year will be elected.

Yours for a fine meeting,

ALBERT F. GANIER, President
EDWIN D. SCHREIBER, Secretary

Come To The Annual Meeting!

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