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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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THE MIGRANT

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No. 1

Status of the Wild Turkey in Tennessee

By VINCENT SCHULTZ

This paper is an attempt to assemble information on the status of the Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris* Vieillot) in Tennessee. The literature contains only scanty references to the distribution and abundance of this bird in various sections of the State, and to the writer's knowledge, no life history data. Rhoads (1895) remarked only that the turkey is found in considerable numbers in secluded areas of the Cumberland Plateau and "Great Smoky Range" (Unaka Range?) and also that they occur in Haywood County. Howell (1910) mentioned that an ever persecuted and declining turkey population occurs on Walden Ridge. He reported turkeys on the ridge west of Soddy in 1908. Ganier (1928), attempting to summarize the status of the turkey in Tennessee, stated: "After persistent inquiry and reports of illegal 'killings,' since it is now protected, it would seem that the turkey population is confined to a few in and about Lauderdale County near the Mississippi River, a small flock on Reelfoot Lake (not heard from recently), scattered flocks in the tier of counties bordering the east side of the Tennessee River, a few in the upper Cumberland Mountains in and north of White County and a remnant among the Great Smoky Mountains along the Carolina line." McClanahan (1940), making no reference to his source of information, presented a map showing the original and present breeding range of the wild turkey. The present range was shown as including the Cumberland Plateau, portions of the east Tennessee Valley, Unaka Range, western Highland Rim, western drainage of the west Tennessee River, southern tier of counties extending along the state line from the west Tennessee River to the Mississippi River, and northwestern Tennessee. The validity of this distribution is questionable although it does include the current range in the state. Calhoun (1941) remarked, "... a few wild turkey remain in McNairy and Hardeman Counties . . ." Wing (1940) published a paper on a game survey of the area roughly between the Holston River and the Tennessee-Kentucky state line. He stated that the turkey has been "driven out" of this region and that it was reported that they still occurred on the Cumberland Plateau. He was told that a turkey was killed about 1927 in Long Hollow on the Powell River and that they still persisted there although he could find no sign of them. It was also reported that a gobbler passed through "Cove Creek Peninsula" during the winter of 1936-37 and that turkeys occurred on Lone Mountain and adjacent ridges until about 50 years ago. Caldwell et al. (1947), in a booklet for school children, stated that there were still a few Wild

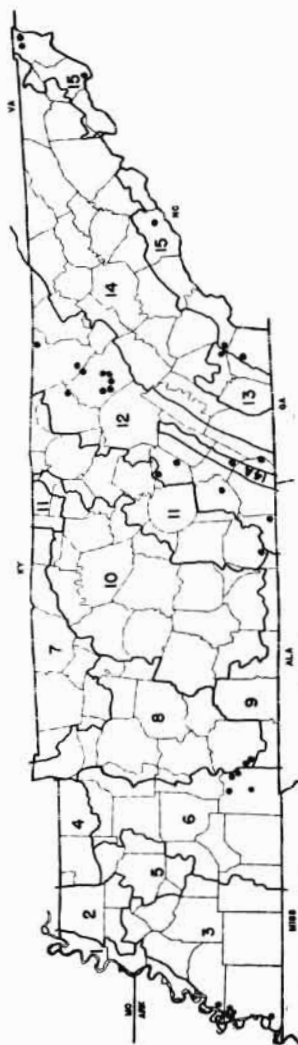


Fig 1. Farming-Types and Location of Turkey Reports on Farms, 1950-1951.

- 1: Mississippi bottoms, 2-6: Plateau of West Tennessee, 7-9, 11: Highland Rim; 10: Central Basin;
 12: Cumberland Plateau; 13-14: Valley of East Tennessee; 14A: Sequatchie Valley; 15: Unaka Range
 (Luebke, 1947)

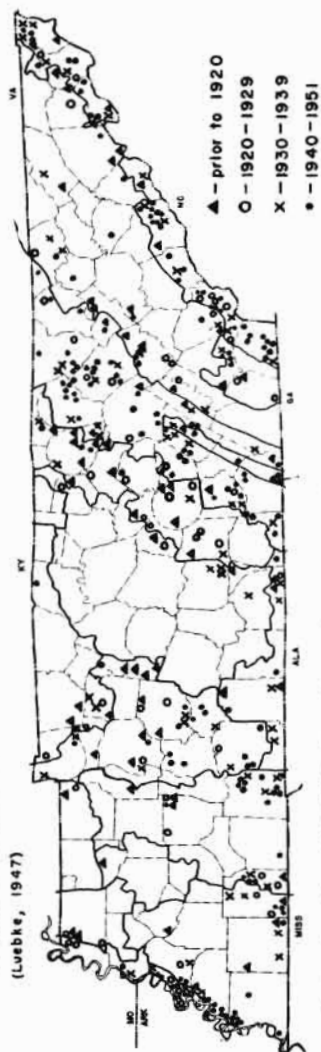


Fig 2. Location of Wild Turkey Observations by Decades.

little doubt that the turkey range is as follows:

Wild Turkey Range in Tennessee—the Unaka Range of mountains, the Cumberland Plateau, portions of the western Highland Rim, and portions of the Mississippi bottoms.

Altho there is probably a bias because of farmers neglecting to report old observations and an abundance of younger farmers, it appears that the distribution of the observations for different decades gives a picture of the history of the turkey population in the State (Figure 2). As to be expected, it appears that the turkey was decimated first in the better farming regions of the State, i.e., the Central Basin, portions of the Plateau Slope of West Tennessee, northern Highland Rim, and Valley of East Tennessee. Apparently the last flocks in these regions occurred in the valley ridges of the Valley of East Tennessee, and the tributaries of the Mississippi River in West Tennessee, with some still existing in the Hatchie River bottoms. It appears that the turkey was extirpated from the fauna of the Central Basin years ago. The next regions of extirpation or reduction apparently were in the western and eastern Highland Rim with fair populations still existing in portions of the former region. Some birds reported as personal observations are undoubtedly progeny of released birds or the released birds themselves; however, it is doubtful if the degree of restocking in Tennessee would alter the history of the turkey population as presented above.

Altho the survival of released game farm birds is generally known to be poor, it is well to include in this paper restocking records as they may be of value in future taxonomic or life history studies. Mr. A. E. Hyder of the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission has informed the writer that the source of stocked birds is somewhat mixed. The original stock of Commission game farm birds was purchased from the Woodmont Gun Club near Baltimore, Maryland, and also from Mr. Strickland of Kosciusko, Mississippi. The available release records cover the period from 1941 to 1950, inclusive, and probably cover the major portion of the birds released in the State. These records are summarized in Appendix A.

To insure a more adequate coverage of wilderness areas which were inadequately sampled by the sampling method, interviewers questioned persons other than those on "sampling areas." The wilderness areas studied in this way included portions of the Mississippi bottoms, western Highland Rim, Cumberland Plateau, and Unaka Range. The data are not included in either Table 1 or the figures, but are presented in Appendix B.

Conservation officers received a questionnaire on the status of the Wild Turkey in their assigned counties. Officers were requested to indicate the turkey as being common, rare, or absent. An additional request for specific localities was sent to those officers who listed turkeys as rare. In general, the officers' reports agree with those obtained by personal interview. The results are included in Appendix C.

Information on population trends was requested from respondents reporting the wild turkey as present on "sampling areas." Population

trends were requested only from persons residing on or within two miles of the area during the last five years. Of the 64 eligible respondents, 13 (or 20 per cent) reported the population up during the last five years; 9 (or 14 per cent) reported down; 9 (or 14 per cent) reported no change; and 33 (or 52 per cent) reported trend as unknown. These small sample sizes as well as the smaller samples for the individual farming-types preclude the drawing of conclusions concerning trends other than that the preponderance of replies of "unknown" emphasizes the need for technical personnel to obtain this information.

In conclusion it is hoped that the data presented in this report, as well as the final survey report (Schultz and others, 1954), will stimulate much needed research in the ecology of the wild turkey in Tennessee.

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APPENDIX A. — Releases of Game Farm Turkeys in Tennessee

The year, site, and number of released game farm birds as reported to the writer are as follows: 1941 — Selmer (Rose Creek), 25; Natchez Trace Park, 75; Decaturville, 75; Reelfoot Lake, 25; Savannah (Harbert Lands), 50; Waynesboro, 75; Stribling Game Preserve, 50; Stewart Forest, 25; Cheatham County Game Farm, 100; Monterey (England Grant), 50; McMinnville (Rockey River), 50; Marion and Franklin Forest, 25; Pickett Forest, 25; Morgan Forest, 25; Bledsoe Forest, 25; Speedwell, 25; Roan Mountain (Laurel Fork), 25; Emory River (Wartburg), 25; Gernt (Jamestown), 25; Etowah (Stars Mountain), 25; Andrew Johnson Game Refuge, 50; Newport, 25;

Embreeville, 50; Grandview (Jud Cummings), 25; Walden Ridge (Horseshoe), 25; 1942 — Decaturville (Brownsport Furnace), 35; Savannah (Harbert Lands), 30; Waynesboro (Eagle Creek), 35; Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, 160; Newport (Long Creek and French Broad River), 40; Embreeville (Clark Creek), 40; Roan Mountain (Laurel Fork Wildlife Management Area), 40; 1943 — Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, 200; Horseshoe Bend Area, 100; Waynesboro (Eagle Area), 100; Prentice Cooper Wildlife Management Area, 30; Cheatham County Area, 42; 1944 — Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, 200; Prentice Cooper Wildlife Management Area, 200; Shelby State Park, 50; West Tennessee, 25; 1945 — Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, 200; Prentice Cooper Wildlife Management Area, 100; Cheatham County Area, 31; West Tennessee, 40; 1946 — 115 released in fall of 1946 but apparently there is no records; 1947 — Unicoi Wildlife Management Area, 40; Laurel Fork Wildlife Management Area, 30; Johnson County, 30; Hardeman County, 20; Mr. Kirkpatrick (Memphis), 35; 1948 — Johnson County Game Refuge, 30; Laurel Fork Wildlife Management Area, 30; Unicoi Wildlife Management Area, 30; Andrew Johnson Game Refuge, 30; Central Peninsula Wildlife Management Area, 20; Tellico Plains Wildlife Management Area, 30; Prentice Cooper Wildlife Management Area, 40; Hardeman County, 20; 1949 — Johnson County Game Refuge, 35; Laurel Fork Wildlife Management Area, 35; Unicoi Wildlife Management Area, 35; Andrew Johnson Game Refuge, 35; Central Peninsula Wildlife Management Area, 35; Tellico Plains Wildlife Management Area, 35; Prentice Cooper Wildlife Management Area, 35; Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, 50; 1950 — Laurel Fork Wildlife Management Area, 25; Kettlefoot Wildlife Management Area, 25; Unicoi Wildlife Management Area, 50; Pickett State Forest, 30; Oak Ridge, 30; Central Peninsula Wildlife Management Area, 33; Andrew Johnson Game Refuge, 33. The writer has attempted to modify the site records only where abbreviations occurred; otherwise they are presented as reported to him.

APPENDIX B. — Reports of Turkeys from Selected Wilderness Areas

The exclusion of counties from the tabulation does not imply that persons reported no turkeys in those counties; rather they mean persons were not interviewed there.

MISSISSIPPI BOTTOMS: Lake County — trapper captured yearling turkey hen on Rat Island, Reelfoot Lake (1952), two other trappers also observed turkeys here; Lauderdale Counties — two reports of one near Crutchers Lake; Tipton County — present on Siegler Island and three miles west of Drummonds (1952).

WESTERN HIGHLAND RIM: Hardin County — present on Boone Creek and on Whites Creek (1947); Stewart County — seen near Dover (1948), Thorpe (1938), Byrds Creek (1942), Ft. Henry (1938); Wayne County — released in 1947 on Green River, two miles south of Natural Bridge (1935), Barnett Creek (1951), Double Branch Creek (1940), Chalk Creek (1940), Tally Fork (1950), Route 2 Waynesboro (1947), Route 2 Collinwood (1932).

CUMBERLAND PLATEAU: Anderson County — Buffalo Camp (1920), Right Fork (1952), Ligias Fork Creek (1952), Indian Creek (1900), Charleys Branch (1927); Bledsoe County — near Brockdell and Big Brush Creek (1952); Campbell County — Stinking Creek (1927), Walnut Mountain (1950); Claiborne County — Valley Creek (1934), Tackett Creek (1951), Stinking Creek (1948); Cumberland County—Grassy Cove (1943); Fentress County—northeastern portion of county (1951), Poque Creek and Wolf River (none since 1920 or 1930), Rotton Fork Creek (1943), Brooks Creek (1943), Fairview (1940), White Oak Creek (1952), "Wilderness" 1952, Good (1952); Grundy County—Nigger Den Creek (1952), Savage Creek (1952), Carunger Creek (1952), headwaters of Collins River (1952); Hamilton County—Walden Ridge west of Falling Water (1952), north of Signal Mountain (1952); Marion County—Swecler Cove (1952), Big Fiery Gizzard Creek (1952) Morgan County—headwaters of Emory River (1952); Scott County—Burt (1949), Buffalo Creek (1951), Last Stop (1920), South Sinking Creek (1940), Thomas (1920), south fork of Cumberland River (1950), Brimstone Creek (1951), Leatherwood Bridge (1941), Pickett State Park (1950); Sequatchie County—headwaters of Massey and Cain Creek (1952), Walker Branch (1952), Dry Creek (1952), Savage Creek (1952), Glady Fork Creek (1952), Big Brush Creek (1952); Warren County—High Rock (1925); Morgan State Forest—released in 1943 and moved to Mill Creek; Pickett State Park—released but none present now according to park supervisor.

UNAKA RANGE: Carter County—two persons reported turkeys stocked on Laurel Fork Creek (Dennis Cove) but none seen since 1950, one person reported them present there in 1952, headwaters of Tiger Creek (1952), Holston Mountain (1930); Johnson County—Taylor Valley (1952); Monroe County—two miles above Tallassee Ferry (1952); Polk County—Archville (1952), McFarland (1952), near Turtletown (1952), four miles north of Farnar (1952), mouth of Smith Creek (1952); Unicoi County—Rock Creek (1952), headwaters of Martin Creek (1951), Unaka Springs (1952).

APPENDIX C. — Reports of Turkeys from Conservation Officers.

Conservation officers reported the wild turkey as occurring in the following counties. In counties omitted from this list, conservation officers listed the wild turkey as absent, and in counties not followed by parentheses it was listed as common. In counties followed by a location in parentheses they were listed as rare. Additional information was requested of all officers listing the species as rare. Their reply is that enclosed in parentheses. It should be realized that these reports do not necessarily indicate actual observations by the officers. Bledsoe (Falls Creek Falls State Park, Cumberland Plateau, Walden Ridge), Blount (in mountains above Calderwood, near Townsend), Campbell (unknown), Carter (Laurel Fork Wildlife Management Area, Holston Mountain), Cheatham (Cheatham Wildlife Management Area), Claiborne (unknown), Cocke (entire county), Coffee (Brumelon Creek, Red Hill area),

Cumberland, Fentress (Clear Fork Creek, South White Oak Creek), Franklin (Cumberland Plateau), Grainger (Norris Lake at Lone Mountain and Union County line, Clinch Mountain, Richland Ridge), Grundy, Hamilton (Walden Ridge, Signal Mountain), Hardin (flatwoods in southeastern part of county, Burnt Church area), Jackson (area between Whitleyville and Clay County), Johnson (Kettlefoot Wildlife Management Area), Lauderdale (Open Lake bottoms), Marion (Prentice Cooper Wildlife Management Area, Sequatchie Cove), Monroe (Tellico Wildlife Management Area), Morgan, Overton (Alpine, Cramford), Pickett (State Park), Polk (Cherokee National Forest), Putnam (east of Monterey along Clarkrange Road), Roane (Walden Ridge), Scott (South Fork River, Jellico Creek), Sequatchie (tops of mountains and gulfs), Sevier, Shelby (Cow Island, Presidents Island), Tipton (northwestern part of Tipton County, near Shelby Forest), Unicoi (Rich Mountain in Unicoi Wildlife Management Area), Union (Central Peninsula Wildlife Management Area), Van Buren, Warren (Long Mountain, Powder Hill gulf), Wayne (head of Indian Creek, Arnold Hollow), White (Bee Creek gulf, Caney Fork gulf).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Some Interesting Bird Observations on Kentucky Lake

By EUGENE CYPERT, JR.

For the past nine years birds observations on the middle part of Kentucky Lake by personnel of the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge and by various birding groups and individuals have been reported. From these observations, it is believed that the following are of sufficient interest to be worth reporting:

HOLBOELL'S GREBE (*Colymbus grisegena*). One of these birds was observed February 2, 1948, by C. R. Markley and me near the old mouth of Duck River. It was seen at about 40 yards and was swimming and diving occasionally. There were some mallards nearby which we used for comparison to determine the size of the bird. It appeared nearly as large and, because of its long, straight neck, "taller" than the mallards. We had our glasses and our field guide with us and had ample opportunity to verify our identification. Its sharp, straight bill could be easily seen and the whole bird appeared dingy. The cheeks were some paler than the rest of the head.

I believe there is only one other record of this species for Tennessee; that reported in the Nashville Christmas bird count, 1926 (Migrant 3:42. 1932).

WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). These birds are occasional visitors to Kentucky Lake. Twelve were reported June 6, 1945, at Cuba Landing by Earl Cady, C. R. Markley, and Robert H. Smith. I observed a flock of ten on an island near the old mouth of Harmon Creek in Duck River bottom on July 9, 1948. Thomas B. Dickerson observed two of these birds on Duck River October 10, 1948.

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*). A few of these birds are regular summer residents in Duck River bottom. Five nests of this species were identified in the Duck River heron rookery on Grassy Lake in 1953.

BRANT (*Branta bernicla*). December 29, 1952, Thomas B. Dickerson observed what he took to be a flock of 19 of these birds in Duck River bottom near Grassy Lake. Mr. Dickerson had been patrolman for the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge for several years and he was familiar with the more common species of geese and, knowing he had seen something different, referred to his field guide and tentatively identified them as brants. The birds were observed through 8-power glasses while feeding in a field at a distance of about 75 yards. On January 9, 1953, Mr. Dickerson saw what was apparently the same flock of 19 Brants in Duck River bottom near Odum Shanty Pond. By this time he had familiarized himself with the characteristics of the species and was certain of his identification. The birds were feeding in a field and were observed from about 40 yards. Mr. Dickerson noted the relatively small size of the birds and the conspicuous white under parts and he stated

that he was close enough to see that the white marks on their necks were "not solid white."

I believe this is the first record of this species in Tennessee.

BLUE GOOSE (*Chen caerulescens*). On July 6, 1951, Mr. Thomas B. Dickerson and James M. Dale observed a flock of two adults and six immatures of this species in Duck River bottom. Mr. Dickerson again reported this flock on July 9 and July 18 and saw them several times after that. It seems likely that this was a family group. Earlier in the year, a farmer had reported a wild goose with goslings in the bottom. If it is assumed that the geese had nested here, it is probable that one member was unable to migrate in the spring. However, all were able to fly at the time of the observations.

This observation is of especial interest because the Blue Goose does not normally nest south of the Arctic.

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*). This species may be more common on Kentucky Lake than is realized. Because of its similarity to the common Lesser Scaup, it could be easily overlooked. Parker B. Smith identified a Greater Scaup which had been killed by a hunter on the West Sandy arm of Kentucky Lake, December 30, 1946.

OLD SQUAW (*Clangula hyemalis*). This species is a rare winter visitor to Kentucky Lake. I observed a lone female at Sulphur Well, November 12, 1950. John Gibson observed a pair near Paris Landing, March 10, 1950, and a flock of eight near the same locality January 2, 1951.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (*Melanitta fusca*). This species is a rare winter visitor to Kentucky Lake. C. B. Markley reported one on the Big Sandy River October 21, 1949. Parker B. Smith reported three in Duck River bottom, January 18, 1954.

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Golden Eagles have been residents of Duck River bottom during the period of heavy duck concentrations in the winters 1952-53 and 1953-54. These birds have been reported by Mrs. William F. Bell in "The Migrant" (23:58, 1952).

FLORIDA GALLINULE (*Gallinula chloropus*). One adult of this species was observed by Mrs. Cypert and me June 5, 1953, in Duck River bottom near Harmon Creek.

GOLDEN PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*). One of these birds was found dead near Sulphur Well by Bruce C. Johnson, March 23, 1950. The specimen was mounted by L. D. Thompson.

UPLAND PLOVER (*Bartramia longicauda*). Two of these birds were observed on the Duck River dike near the pump station by C. R. Markley and me, August 8, 1947.

DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*). A flock of about twelve of these birds were flushed by me near the Duck River pump station, May

6, 1954. Four of them were in winter plumage or were changing. The remainder were in spring plumage.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER (*Tryngites subruficollis*). Two of these birds were observed by Mrs. Cypert and me in Duck River bottom, September 9, 1953. They were feeding on mud flats in company with Killdeers and Pectoral Sandpipers.

I believe there are only two other records of this species in Tennessee; one by Burt Monroe, September 19, 1943, near Halls (Migrant, 15:76, 1944) and the other by Lula Coffey at Mud Lake, September 16, 1952 (Migrant 23:47, 1952).

AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*). Four of these birds were observed by Mrs. Cypert and me in the Duck River bottom near Harmon Creek, September 25, 1953. They were feeding in shallow water.

I believe there is only one other record of the avocet in Tennessee; that reported by Joe Howell in Knox County, November 7, 1948 (Migrant 19:73, 1948).

TENNESSEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
PARIS, TENNESSEE

T.O.S. ANNUAL MEETING, 1955

The site for the T.O.S. meeting near Waverly, Tennessee, on May 7-8, 1955, promises something quite interesting and different for our annual gathering. A group from Memphis and Nashville made a special trip to this area before deciding on it. Mrs. Cypert has arranged field trips for Saturday and Sunday to the Duck River rookery and nearby areas. A dinner will be held Saturday night at the Waverly School Cafeteria. Notices regarding accommodations will be sent out as soon as plans are complete.

If you are not sure that you want to go, read Mr. Ganier's article in the March 1951 MIGRANT, one by Mr. Cypert in the November 1954 KENTUCKY WARBLER, and one by Mr. Cypert in this issue of THE MIGRANT. — MURIEL MONROE, President, T.O.S.

TENNESSEE CONSERVATION LEAGUE WINS AWARD

For the second straight year the Tennessee Conservation League has won national recognition for its activities in behalf of the better management of the soils, waters, forests, and wildlife of our State. The League was awarded the annual plaque presented by the National Wildlife Federation to the state organization having performed the "most distinctive service" during the preceding year. This is the first time the award has been won two years in a row by the same state.

Much of the credit should go to John H. Bailey, secretary of the Tennessee Conservation League. He is a professor at East Tennessee State College, Johnson City, and a member of T.O.S.

Unusual Winter Visitors in 1954-1955

Several species of northern birds have penetrated farther south this past winter than has ever before been recorded, and Tennessee received a few of these. White-winged Crossbills were seen in Memphis, a new state record, on Dec. 26, 1954 (MIGRANT 25 (4): 74.) Two other species, altho not new to the State were seen in new localities and in larger numbers; these are the Evening Grosbeak and the Snow Bunting. In addition to the reports below, an Evening Grosbeak was seen at Greeneville on March 5, 1955 (Ruth Nevius.) Reports of Grosbeaks have reached us from as far south as Rome, Georgia.

Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins are not rare winter visitors, but they have been more frequent this winter than usual at Chattanooga (Adele H. West) and Nashville (Katherine Goodpasture). In the early part of the winter Red-breasted Nuthatches were much commoner than usual around Knoxville.

SNOWY OWL ON KENTUCKY LAKE — On November 11, 1954, John Gibson, of Paris, reported seeing a Snowy Owl at Eagle Creek Bay on Kentucky Lake near Paris Landing, Henry County. When seen, the bird was perched on a stump in the draw down zone of the lake.

Several weeks later it was reported that a Snowy Owl had been killed and given to Robert Barker of Camden, Tennessee, who mounted it. I went to see Mr. Barker who has the mounting in his place of business, Barker & Sons Jewelry store, in Camden. It is a beautiful specimen and well mounted. Mr. Barker advised me that it was killed by a hunter on Kentucky Lake near Faxon, Benton County, Tennessee, "about two weeks before Christmas." This is doubtless the same bird reported by Mr. Gibson.

The Snowy Owl was reported from Henry County by L. D. Thompson in the winter of 1930-31, when four of these owls were reported from Tennessee and vicinity. This 1954 record is the first since that time. EUGENE CYPERT, JR., Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, Paris, Tenn.

EVENING GROSBEAKS AND SNOW BUNTING FOUND IN NASHVILLE AREA—It was startling to find both a flock of Evening Grosbeaks and a Snow Bunting for the first time in the Nashville area within less than a week.

On November 14 a flock of at least ten Evening Grosbeaks was found on the South Harpeth River, 20 miles southwest of Nashville near Basin Spring. Attention was first directed toward the birds by their loud call-notes. Two birds perched in a leafless tree and sat in good, clear view. There was no moment of hesitancy in recognizing the colorful birds with whitish beaks as Evening Grosbeaks. The several birds gathered in a well-fruited hackberry and sat for a short time. I could not determine if they actually ate the hackberries. When the whole flock

rose there appeared to be easily twice five birds and probably more. They flew quickly away and could not be located in the area on the following day.

Within the week, on November 19, a single Snow Bunting was flushed from grass on a farm surrounding Bush's Lake near the Cumberland River at the edge of the Nashville city limits. The bird flew a short distance, settled again in dry Bermuda grass and allowed approach to within 15 feet. It moved deliberately as it fed and seemed to creep along close to the ground. Comparing the appearance of this bird with Dwight's descriptions of various plumages of Snow Buntings one may reasonably judge it to have been a female.

Several TOS members were able to study the Bunting the following morning for two to three hours. It was not located on November 21 nor has it been observed later.

The nearest locations of previous records of Evening Grosbeaks in Tennessee are those reported by Hebard for Van Buren Co. about 80 miles southeast (Migrant, Sept., 1947) and by Mrs. West for Harriman about 150 miles east (Migrant, June, 1952). Mr. Fred Behrend's records of the Snow Bunting on Big Bald Mountain for the winters of 1948 and 1953-54 (Migrant, Dec., 1948 and Dec., 1953) and his records at the same location for the current season (personal communication) are the only Tennessee records of which I am aware previous to this one.

It will be interesting to note if the appearance of these two species in this area at this time is a part of an unusual influx of boreal species. Except for a short-lived light snow on November 2 followed by day or two of abnormal cold (low of 19°), local weather for November was moderate. The week of November 14-20 was generally open with slight precipitation and moderate temperatures. — KATHERINE A. GOODPASTURE, 408 Fairfax Ave., Nashville, Tennessee.

EVENING GROSBEAKS IN THE GATLINBURG-KNOXVILLE AREA — The first record of Evening Grosbeaks in this area in two and a half years was made on November 9, 1954, when Stupka heard some notes of this species near his home, five miles east of Gatlinburg. The next observation was on November 21 when ten birds were seen flying over Gatlinburg. Beginning on December 18, Grosbeaks were seen frequently thru March 15 (the time of this writing) by Mr. Joe Manley, Assistant Park Naturalist Henry Lix, Chief Ranger Granville Liles, District Ranger Ealy, and Stupka. The several localities of these observations were Gatlinburg, Park Headquarters, Newfound Gap, and north of Cherokee, N. C.; the last three localities are within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The numbers of Grosbeaks seen each time varied from a few to about 100, except on February 23 when Mr. Manley estimated a flock along the main street of Gatlinburg to contain 250 birds, by far the largest number of which we had any report.

Medium-sized flocks of Grosbeaks were occasionally reported from Sevierville during February and into late March by Paul Pardue.

The first record of this species in Knox County was made by Miss Dorothy E. Williams at her home on Sherrod Road, Knoxville, when

she saw a single bird come to her bird bath just under her window about mid-January. The next record in this area was made by Tanner at his home about five miles southeast of Knoxville where five or six birds were seen on January 23, 1944. One or two birds came to his feeder irregularly until February 16, and two birds were reported coming to another feeder in Knoxville until February 24, but there have been no reports since then.—ARTHUR STUPKA, National Park Service, Gatlinburg, and JAMES T. TANNER, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.



EVENING GROSBEAKS AND SNOW BUNTINGS ON ROAN AND BIG BALD MOUNTAINS, TENN.-N. C. — Two species of northern birds, Snow Bunting and Evening Grosbeak, re-appeared in Upper East Tennessee in the fall of 1954, the former after an absence of less than eight and a half months, the latter after a lapse of three years. Both species were found on high mountains of the Appalachian System east of the Tennessee Valley. The localities in which they were observed are at altitudes of from 5500 to 6200 ft., with but two exceptions in which Evening Grosbeaks were found at lower elevations.

The return of the Snow Bunting to Big Bald Mountain in Unicoi County, Tenn., present there in 1948 and during the 1953-54 season was exceptionally early, the date of first observation in the 1954-55 season being October 24.

Finding the Evening Grosbeak and Snow Bunting for the first time in the Roan Mountain area last fall was not the result of planned search but attributable rather to serendipity. A flock of approximately 30 birds unidentified in flight was found to consist of Evening Grosbeaks after having been located, by their chirping, in the spruce of Roan Mountain, at 6100 ft., on November 13. A flock of 13 Snow Buntings was found on treeless, grassy Round Bald, situated immediately east of the coniferous forest of Roan Mountain, on November 20 at 5700-5800 feet.

These chance observations led to a series of checks on the continued presence of both species. Carried out under varied and in part most rigorous weather conditions, these checks were highly successful and proved the stay of both species in the localities under review during practically the entire winter.

On three trips to Big Bald Mountain, in addition to the one of October 24, Snow Buntings were seen at about 5500 ft. as follows: 3 on November 7, 1 male in unusually white plumage on January 2, 1 male, apparently the same bird, on February 20. None could be found on March 6 in driving rain, fog and very strong wind.

Ten trips to Round Bald subsequent to November 20, extending on two occasions to Grassy Ridge Bald farther east of Roan Mountain proper than Round Bald, resulted in seeing Snow Buntings at altitudes of from 5600 to 6175 ft. as follows: 13 on December 4, 10 on December 11, 13 on January 1, 13 on January 8, 12 on January 22, 12 on January 23, 2 on February 5, 10 or 11 on February 12, 14 on February 19, 11 on February 26. None could be found on December 18, March 5, 12 and 26. J. C. Browning and H. P. Langridge of the Elizabethton Chapter ac-

accompanied the writer on the December 4 and March 5 trips, respectively.

Checks on the Evening Grosbeaks on Roan Mountain were, for lack of time, less regular, and this species was seen less frequently. Following the November 13 observation, it was found on seven out of fourteen trips, most of which were combined with the Round Bald trips listed in the preceding paragraph. The numbers of Evening Grosbeaks observed at altitudes of from 5750 to 6200 ft., unless otherwise stated, were as follows: flock of 4 on January 1, additional undetermined small number on Roan Mountain approaches at 4200 to 4500 ft. on same date, flock of about 40 on January 8, 1 on January 22, flock of 5 on January 23, flock of 24 in Roan Mountain village at 2575 ft. on February 12, flock of at least 60-80 on February 26, flock of 5 or 6 on March 20. On the latter two dates the Grosbeaks were, at 4:15 and 3:45 P.M., respectively, flushed out of balsam trees in which they apparently had gone to roost. None were found on the latest two checking dates, March 26 and 27, when Roan Mountain was snow and frost covered and a severe cold spell which had just reached the region had lowered temperatures to near zero.

The question arises as to the causes of the unusually early seasonal appearance of these birds, and their remaining throughout winter, in the localities named.

In the case of the Evening Grosbeak, inadequate food supply or premature severe winter conditions in their usual habitat, together with supposed over population, account, in the opinion of some observers, for the Evening Grosbeaks' southward exploration of recent year. It is conceivable that Roan Mountain's extensive stands of spruce and fir, characteristic of their customary habitat, and climatic conditions of Roan Mountain approximating those of their usual environment, appeared inviting to the Evening Grosbeaks, even though the season's scant crop of conifer seeds left much to be desired in the matter of food supply.

The Snow Bunting's drifting southward 2000-3000 miles from its breeding grounds in the Arctic Zone to high mountains in the Southern Appalachians, on which to winter, is not readily explainable. According to J. Dewey Soper in "Ornithological Results of the Baffin Island Expeditions of 1928-29 and 1930-31" (AUK, Vol. 63, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 1-24, 223-239, 418-427) and Dr. N. Tinbergen's study of the Snow Bunting in the Angmagssalik District of eastern Greenland, entitled "The Behavior of the Snow Bunting in Spring" (Transactions of the Linnaean Society of New York, Volume V, 1939), the Snow Bunting starts leaving its summer habitat in the Arctic in September and by the middle of October practically all of these birds have departed. During winter the species occurs commonly in northeastern, northern, and northwestern states of the U. S. Records in the South, except along the Atlantic Coast, have been scarce. No literature reference has been found by the writer to the sustained stay of the Snow Bunting in any locality in the South during an entire season. One may assume in the present cases of observation that the Snow Buntings, however they happened to find their way to them, were attracted to the southern "balds" by the latter's possible resemblance, in character of surface and vegetation, to their far northern

summer habitat. Information contained in the publications cited above reveals that the first males return to their breeding grounds in late March or early April, the females about the middle of May, and that the first young are observed from about the middle of June on. Interesting in connection with the Snow Bunting's range in its summer habitat is Dr. Raymond A. Paynter's reference (AUK, 72 (1): 79-80) to the observation of small numbers of these birds on Fletcher's Ice Island, in close proximity to the North Pole, during the summer of 1953. — FRED W. BEHREND, 607 Range Street, Elizabethton, Tenn.

The Round Table

A NOVEMBER HIKE AT MANCHESTER—Returning from a business conference at Gatlinburg, I planned a day's hike at some point normally too far to reach readily from Memphis. Based in part on bus schedules, I selected Manchester and spent November 7 in the field there. Some sixth sense guided me to the fields and thickets along Duck River and its small canyon which I hope to revisit when the mountain laurel is in bloom. Swinging to the southwest, then into town for lunch, I spent the afternoon to the northeast. Several pastures were worked, also weedy fields and those with drouth-burnt cover crop stands. The list, apparently normal, follows. Of personal interest were the Woodcock and Vesper Sparrows. Weather fair, changing to part cloudy, 30°-40°; wind east, fresh; 8-12:20, 1:30-4:15. Turkey Vulture, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1 ad; Bob-white, 23; Killdeer, 4; Woodcock, 2; Mourning Dove, 5; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Flicker, 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Phoebe, 1; Horned Lark, 9; Blue Jay, 35; Crow, 424 plus; Carolina Chickadee, 4; Tufted Titmouse, 4; Winter Wren, 4; Bewick's Wren, 4; Carolina Wren, 13; Mockingbird, 5; Brown Thrasher, 2; Robin, 1; Bluebird, 10; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 3; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1; Am. Pipit, 2; Cedar Waxwing, 5; Loggerhead Shrike, 1; Starling, 907; Myrtle Warbler, 17; Meadowlark, 88; Bronzed Grackle, 70; Cardinal, 36; Goldfinch, 84; Red-eyed Towhee, 35; Savannah Sparrow, 55; Vesper Sparrow, 21 (scattered, except flock of 12); Slate-colored Junco, 45; Field Sparrow, 121; White-crowned Sparrow, 2 (Imm); White-throated Sparrow, 130; Song Sparrow, 108.—BEN B. COFFEY, JR., Memphis.

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OBSERVATIONS AT LONGLEATH, NASHVILLE—It was noon and hot on August 15, 1953, when we stopped for a better look at a flock of birds in a pasture about Longleath on Belle Meade Pike. The birds were on the ground and on close examination we saw they were 28 Barn Swallows concentrated in an area of a yard square. Their wings and tails were spread to the sun. When flushed, they moved to the inner branches of an oak tree although there were utility wires close by.

To see 28 Barn Swallows apparently sun bathing or perched within the branches of a tree seemed an unusual behavior not previously observed by any member of the party (Mr. Ganier, Ruth Castles and the writer).

In the same pasture we noticed a dead bird supported by the wire and upright post of an electric fence. Miss Castles found a second bird on the ground along the same fence. Both specimens were too badly decomposed for identification but we believed they were members of the Flycatcher family. The evidence was strong that these birds had been electrocuted through some mechanism by which the current was grounded through their bodies. On a later visit, I talked with Mr. Phil Kerrigan, the owner of Longleath, who said that occasionally Bluebirds had been found dead on the wire fence.

Mr. Kerrigan also said that a barn once stood where his residence is and that the swallows have been returning to nest about the house and garage since they were built over ten years ago.—JENNIE RIGGS, 3313 Fairmont Drive, Nashville, Tennessee.

A WHITE PELICAN AT NASHVILLE—On November 4, 1954, I received word that a White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) had been caught on the afternoon of November 3 on the Cumberland River about 11 miles north of the Nashville courthouse and was still in captivity. I went after the bird, expecting to band and release it thus putting on record the first White Pelican for the Nashville area. One other record for middle Tennessee has been published from a newspaper account of a bird of this species (apparently dead) found by a farmer in his barn lot at Tullahoma, September 24, 1926, (A. F. Ganier, 1929, *Wilson Bull.* 41:96).

The Nashville bird was in bad condition. It had been pursued in a motor boat, then carried a good many miles in the closed trunk of an automobile where a can of oil had spilled, soaking tail, wing tips and underparts. We brought it home that evening, placing it in a large bath house and providing it with fish in a large pan of water, but it died in the night.

As it was not usable for a specimen, only the wings were preserved after it was kept a week for display. At death it weighed 12 pounds. The folded wing measured 23 inches; the tail (24 rectrices), 5.5 inches; bill, from gape, 14.5 inches. The bill was of a light cream color with bluish edges on the upper mandible, terminating in a yellow hook. The gular pouch was yellow as were the tarsi and the webbed feet. The lining of the pouch was infested by a large number of the black and white striped parasites that are commonly found there on White Pelicans. Some were collected. The gray color of the lesser wing coverts is probably indicative of immaturity.

Of particular interest were the short, compact body plumage and the great, hollow wing bones that contribute to the beautiful flights of this magnificent bird. — AMELIA R. LASKEY, 1521 Graybar Lane, Nashville, Tenn.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS NESTING IN GREENE COUNTY. — A pair of Yellow-crowned Night Herons (*Nyctanassa violacea*) nesting on Roaring Fork Creek north of Greeneville is the first nest of this species found in Greene County; previously its most easterly nesting in Tennessee appears to have been at Nashville (Ganier, A. F., "The Breeding Herons of Tennessee," *Migrant*, 22:7-8, 1951). The nest was found April 18 in the elm where these herons were first seen April 11 and was located about eighteen feet above the creek and fifteen feet out from the trunk on a horizontal branch. At first the herons stood when approached, but by April 24 they sat closely on the nest. The nest, soon becoming concealed by foliage and being almost constantly attended, escaped predation by crows which crossed the area carrying food from the creek bottoms to their young in the woods. Of the five eggs, three hatched, the movements of the young being noticeable May 20. On June 30 they were last seen standing in and about the nest. On page 133 of the chapter "Herons with Golden Crowns" (Nice, M. M., *The Watcher at the Nest*) is a sentence local T.O.S. members came to appreciate: "From babyhood up the chief occupation of Yellow-crowned Night Herons appears to be complete immobility."

The adult herons fed during early morning in nearby creek bottoms, nearly dry but with crayfish available. During the day one often waded near the nest. They often flew about a mile to Lick Creek. They went at dusk with some regularity a half mile across a ridge to Grassy Creek.

Last seen were one young wading on July 10 and two adults in flight August 5.—RUTH REED NEVIUS, Route 1, Greeneville, Tenn.

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SPOTTED SANDPIPER BREEDING IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE—On June 26, 1954, about five miles northwest of Ashland City, Cheatham County, Tennessee, I observed an adult Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) with two young birds. These were along the weedy banks of Sycamore Creek in the Cumberland River floodplain, a suitable nesting habitat for the species. Close examination of the young showed them to be somewhat smaller than the adult, and with the fuzzy tips of the natal down projecting above the juvenal feathers all over the body. When I approached to within a few feet of them, they fluttered, with some difficulty, to the other side of the creek (about 30 feet wide). It seemed apparent to me that these young birds could not have flown into the area from any great distance, and that this constituted a highly probable breeding record for Middle Tennessee.

H. M. Stevenson reviewed the Tennessee breeding records for the Spotted Sandpiper (*Auk* 61:247-251, 1944) and concluded that the only valid record was that of Lyle and Tylor, near Johnson City (*The Migrant* 5:49-57, 1934). A search through "*The Migrant*" reveals a number of June sight records for the species but no other breeding records. Spotted Sandpipers nest regularly in the vicinity of Bowling Green, Kentucky, (G. Wilson, *The Wilson Bulletin* 41:177-185, 1929), only 50

or 60 miles from the site of the present record. — CHARLES M. WEISE, Fisk University, Nashville 8, Tenn.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER NEAR CHATTANOOGA — On June 30, 1954, while making a check on the possible nesting of Blue Grosbeaks in an area of Chickamauga Park, Georgia, where I found them last year, I was attracted by an unfamiliar bird note. Upon stepping from the highway a few yards into the woods, I quickly discovered the source of the constant cries to be a family of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos borealis*). At first only two were in sight, but within a few minutes four could be counted. An adult female worked industriously boring in a dead branch and then appeared to feed a juvenal male with a red head spot. Only one kind of note was heard, and it was carried on unceasingly, apparently by all of the individuals, during thirty minutes of observation. All four birds were active in moving from tree to tree.

Altho there are large stands of pine in the park, the area where these woodpeckers were seen consisted mostly of oaks, with only a few scattered pines.

The second observation of this species was on Dec. 2, 1954, when three individuals were seen about a mile from the original area by June Hall, Mabel Norman, and Adele West. The only sound heard was the frequent use of the same note heard at the time of the original observation.—ADELE (MRS. E. M.) WEST, 1625 S. Clayton Ave., Chattanooga 4, Tenn.

OVENBIRD EATING PEANUT BUTTER FROM SUSPENDED FEEDER—On October 7, 1953, I banded an Ovenbird that was retrapped on the 10th and 13th. During this 7-day period it was seen many times each day about the grounds and on a suspended feeder that consisted of a section of a cedar trunk with branches shortened for perches and holes bored to hold peanut butter. This bird would fly up from the ground to three successive branches and then across about a foot to the feeder where it ate very leisurely for several minutes. It always followed the same procedure, never flying from the ground directly to the feeder. This behavior seemed unusual for an Ovenbird.—ADELE H. WEST, Chattanooga, Tenn.

SUMMER RECORD OF THE RED CROSSBILL IN UPPER EAST TENNESSEE — On a bird hike along the crest of Iron Mountain, from Cross Mountain above Shady Valley southward, in the afternoon of June 20, 1954, I noticed numbers of small birds flitting among the tops of tall oak trees a little ways off the trail. On close approach I was greatly surprised to find these birds to be Red Crossbills, males and females, easily identified by their respective color of plumage and the line down

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the back to the rump. My attempt at counting them was interrupted by their flying away in one flock which revealed the presence of a greater number of these birds than imagined. Owing to their disappearing behind the tree line an accurate count was not possible, but, conservatively estimated, there were about 20 to 25 in the flock. Their call note in flight (chip chip) furnished an additional means of identification. There are no conifers on this part of Iron Mountain. Oak, hickory, maple, black cherry and tulip trees principally cover the crest and slopes. The locality in which the birds were found is at about 4000 feet altitude approximately 15 miles east-northeast of Elizabethton, on the Carter-Johnson counties line.

This species has previously been observed in Upper East Tennessee, on June 8, 1941, by Dr. James T. Tanner, who saw a small flock in some hemlocks at Rock Creek near Erwin. (Migrant, 12:29, 1941).—FRED W. BEHREND, 607 Range Street, Elizabethton, Tenn.

LECONTE'S AND HARRIS'S SPARROW NEAR KNOXVILLE—The first LeConte's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus henslowii*) reported from the Knoxville area was found by Joseph C. Howell on Dec. 13, 1954. Three birds were seen by him, and one collected, in a field of broom sedge and Johnson grass near Concord. One was seen on Jan. 16 and again on Feb. 20 when several T.O.S. members were able to get a good look at it. It was found again on March 20 by members of a T.O.S. field trip.

On Feb. 10, 1955, a Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) began coming to a feeding station maintained by Ralph J. Zaenglein, Willard Avenue, Maryville. It was seen regularly by him, and by myself on Feb. 13 and Mrs. R. A. Monroe on Feb. 20. It was last seen on Feb. 26. This is the first record for this species east of Nashville in Tennessee; it has been reported twice from Nashville and three or four times from Memphis. — JAMES T. TANNER, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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