

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society

2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland



Volume 10

MARCH 1954

Number 1

THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Md.

State President: Chandler S. Robbins, Laurel, Md.
State Secretary: Orville W. Crowder, Chase, Md.
State Treasurer: A. J. Fletcher, Route 1, Denton, Md.
Vice Presidents: Miss H. Elizabeth Slater, H. C. Heineman,
Harry Cox, Dr. John W. Richards, Ralph
Peakes, Marvin Hewitt, W. Bryant Tyrrell,
Richard L. Kleen

LOCAL UNITS:

Garrett County Bird Club	Baltimore Club of M. O. S.
Alleghany County Bird Club	Harford County Bird Club
Washington County Bird Club	Caroline County Bird Club
Frederick Branch, M. O. S.	Takoma Park Nature Society
Talbot County Bird Club	

Active membership (including Maryland Birdlife and
membership in one of the local units) \$2.00
Out-of-state membership (Maryland Birdlife only) \$1.00

C O N T E N T S

March 1954

Summary of Maryland Nest Records, 1952 Edwin Willis	3
THE SEASON - January - June, 1953 Chandler S. Robbins	11

COVER: Baldpate and Pintail Ducks
Photograph by Charles J. Stine, Jr.
HEADINGS: Irving E. Hampe

M A R Y L A N D B I R D L I F E

Published Quarterly by the Maryland Ornithological Society
to Record and Encourage the Study of Birds in Maryland.

Editor: Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Refuge, Laurel, Md.
Art Editor: Irving E. Hampe
Production: Grace Williams, Mary Lou Travis, James Travis



MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

*Published quarterly by the
Maryland Ornithological Society
2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland*

Volume 10

March 1954

Number 1

SUMMARY OF MARYLAND NEST RECORDS, 1952

Edwin Willis

We usually think of the nesting season as that period between the May spring migration and the September fall migration when rare birds and our energy vanish with rising temperature and thickening foliage. But actually nesting is an almost year-round activity of Maryland birds. Mourning Doves begin nesting in March; the Goldfinch nests in September. Many other birds are preparing to nest during the winter months.

Such birds as Carolina Wrens often stay in pairs all winter--the bright little ditty of the male from a low bush on a warm day in January is sure to be interrupted by a scold from his mate in the underbrush, as much as to say, "Get down, you fool! Can't you see that man coming?" We Maryland observers must watch Blue Jays, Tufted Titmice, Cardinals, and other birds to see how many remain mated all year.

Singing is not confined to summer--come a warm morning in January, and our back-yard Song Sparrows hop up on weed stalks and sing quietly. A regular morning chorus of Cardinals, Mockingbirds, and many other birds proclaims to the February and March world that the males have territories and are ready to welcome mates.

Maryland observers found this year that there are birds nesting from March to October, though most of the 850- nests were found in May and June. Of the ninety-three species reported, seven were nesting in March. On March 14 an egg in a Black Vulture nest started a season which was to produce records of Green Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Horned Owl, Fish Crow, Migrant Shrike, Pine Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark, Boat-tailed Grackle, Blue Grosbeak and White-throated Sparrow for the first time in these summaries (1949 on).

GREEN HERON - Three young left a nest at Patuxent Refuge, July 17 (Francis Uhler). Four nests waist high in groundsel bushes on small island near Swan Point, July 3; one had 4 eggs, one had 1 egg and 2 downy young, one had 4 eggs (W. L. Hendersons and M. Bolton).

MALLARD - Willis saw 4 broods at Middle River, May 11 to July 20.

BLACK DUCK - Nest at Dames Quarter, Somerset Co. hatched on June 20 (Ellis Miller).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - Nick Kerr established the first breeding record for Anne Arundel County when he discovered a female with 9 young at Sandy Point on June 19.

WOOD DUCK - On June 3 a female had several small young with her in a marsh at Strawberry Point, Baltimore County (Edwin Willis).

BLACK VULTURE - Arthur D. Jones collected one egg, March 14, from a Swan Point, Charles County, nest, the earliest record for Maryland.

OSPREY - Nest with 1 young on a duck blind in the West River, Anne Arundel County on June 29 (E. John Besson).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - About May 2, young hatched in the same White Marsh nest which a pair had used last year (C. Douglas Hackman).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK - Building in the Pocomoke swamp near Libertytown, Worcester County on May 11 (David A. Cutler).

BALD EAGLE - Adults visited the large Gunpowder Neck nest and the smaller Carroll Island nest on March 9 (M. O. S. trip).

SPARROW HAWK - A Denton pair nested in the hay inside a hole in the Morgans' barn, where A. J. Fletcher banded 4 grown young on June 2.

RUFFED GROUSE - Nest with eggs, June 15, at Pleasant Valley near Bittinger, Garrett County (Allegheny Bird Club Junior Camp).

BOB-WHITE - Young out of Calvert Co. nest, Aug. 2 (Donald Power).

KING RAIL - Young found in a Greensboro marsh (Marvin W. Hewitt).

AMERICAN OYSTER-CATCHER - John Buckalew banded 1 young on an island off South Point, Worcester Co., July 4; second Maryland nest.

KILLDEER - Eight nests. Three Gibson Island young were with their parents on the early date of April 14 (Judge and Mrs. W. L. Henderson, Mrs. Gail Tappan). Four Denton eggs were incubated 27 days before 2 young hatched (Fletchers).

WOODCOCK - Nest with eggs near Glen Echo, May 4 (Lawrence Kilham).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - A tiny young one was attended by an anxious parent at Strawberry Point on June 25 (Willis).

GULL-BILLED TERN - Buckalew banded 4 young off South Pt., July 4.

COMMON TERN - Buckalew banded 15 young on islands off South Point on June 20, and 143 on July 4.

LEAST TERN - Hewitt found thirteen nests on the sand along a Kent Narrows road, May 22; Buckalew banded 15 young, South Point, July 4.

BLACK SKIMMER - On July 4, Buckalew banded 132 young off South Pt.

MOURNING DOVE - Out of 15 nests, from 5 to 12 feet up, 9 were in pines. Grackles destroyed 2 of the 8 unsuccessful nests. Duvall Jones reported incubation of 13 days (April 5 to 18) in a Westminster nest. On October 4, Hackman banded 2 large young in a late White Marsh nest.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - Two eggs in Towson nest, July 22 (Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Cole). Young left 2 Middle River nests, Aug. 3, Sept. 10.

HORNED OWL - Full grown in Berlin nest, April 20 (D. A. Cutler).

CHIMNEY SWIFT - Chandler Robbins heard young in a Patuxent Refuge chimney, July 2-7. Yg. left another nest there Aug. 7 (M. M. Trombley).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - Young had left a Prince Georges County nest shortly before Arthur Jones discovered it, July 12.

BELTED KINGFISHER - Young left a nest burrow in the side of a Middle River ditch on June 30 (Duvall Jones, Edwin Willis).

FLICKER - The average height of 8 nests from 2 to 38 feet up was 23 feet. Three produced young birds. Nest-building began in mid-April. One young left 5 unhatched eggs in a Middle River nest on June 29, 21 days after it had hatched (Willis).

PILEATED WOODPECKER - Two young in Pleasant Valley nest near Bittinger, Garrett County, June 15-21 (Allegheny Bird Club Junior Camp).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - Young left a Middle River nest about May 21. Hewitt found a nest with large young at Cordova on June 1.

EASTERN KINGBIRD - Young left 5 reported nests from July 4 to August 13. Apparently pairs return to their old nest areas; 4 nests were in trees near nests of previous years.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER - The Fletchers found 2 nests in Denton mail boxes; 5 eggs were in the second nest by June 16. Three hatched at Gibson Island, July 7 (Mrs. Gail Tappan).

EASTERN PHOEBE - The 7 nests reported were all on or in buildings. Duvall Jones found that the incubation period for 6 eggs in a Westminster nest was about 16 days. Hackman saw adults feeding 2 young in a White Marsh apple orchard on September 15.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Hewitt saw 2 young being fed in an early nest 15 feet up in a Denton beech tree on June 9.

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE - The 8 nests reported were from 18 to 63 feet up in deciduous trees. John W. Richards saw one building a nest at Emmitsburg on June 5. Young left 5 successful nests between July 15 and late August.

HORNED LARK - Young never hatched from 3 eggs (March 20) and 4 eggs (March 30) in 2 Middle River nests. Four young were in a Greensboro nest, June 6 (Elsie Bilbrough).

TREE SWALLOW - Adults were feeding young in a nest 4 feet up in a snag at Garland Lake, Denton, on June 22 (Fletchers).

BANK SWALLOW - The nests in a bank of Campbell's Sand and Gravel pits, U.S. 40 at White Marsh, were occupied by 50 pairs (Hackman).

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - One carried twigs and cattail down to a Denton nest on April 19. Young were out of this or a nearby nest on June 14 (Fletchers). A colony of 12 or more birds was nesting in a bank on Dobbins Island in the Magothy River, June 16 (Mrs. Henderson).

BARN SWALLOW - The 52 nestings (at least 4 pairs used the same nest for 2 broods) reported this year were all on man-made structures. Clutches of 2 to 6 eggs were in the nests (average, 4.1). In general, May and June were the months of the 31 first-brood nests, while July and August were the months of the second-brood nests.

PURPLE MARTIN - Adults were building in Denton boxes, May 5 to June 5; young left these nests from July 12 to August 11 (Fletchers).

BLUE JAY - Of 11 Middle River nests, 27 to 58 feet up in oaks (1 was in a pine), 4 produced one or more young. From April 8 to June 21 (usually in April) adults were building nests. One pair raised 2 broods, the young leaving on May 26 and July 24.

CROW - Maryland observers reported 6 nests of this common but wary bird. Young left 4 nests in late May and early June. Five young were in a Westminster nest, April 20 (Jones). Median nest height was 55 feet.

FISH CROW - Two nests with eggs, North Beach on Assateague Island, May 16 (Buckalew).

CAROLINA CHICKADEE - Six or 7 eggs were in a rotten aspen stub at Middle River on May 7 (Willis).

TUFTED TITMOUSE - Three young were in an Emmitsburg nest, May 24 (Dr. John W. Richards). Young left a Middle River nest on June 8.

HOUSE WREN - All of 9 nests, up to 11 feet up in nest boxes or buildings, were probably successful. Four to 7 eggs were laid. Three nests were first-brood nests. Young left after 12 days in a Laurel nest (Eleanor C. Robbins). Four young hatched in another nest between 8 and 12 a.m., July 6; the other young in that nest hatched after 4 p.m.

CAROLINA WREN - Four Denton pairs picked odd nest sites--a bushel basket in a shed, a tool box in a tractor, the beam of a shed door, a beam of a roof behind an old tire. Five young left the former nest on May 9; 3 left the latter nest on August 11 (Fletchers).

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN - Fourteen Middle River pairs built 22 nests. The only second- and third-brood nests were built by 2 pairs which had had unsuccessful first nestings. The nests were in narrow-leaved cat-tails (excepting 2 in Baccharis bushes) from 1 ft. 1 in. to 4 ft. 9 in. high (median, 2 ft. 3 in.). The average clutch was 4.2 eggs; 9 out of 10 sets of 5 eggs were laid before July 1, while 5 out of 8 sets of 4 eggs were laid after July 1. From 90 eggs, 29 young left the nest (June 24 to August 24)--a success of 32 percent.

MOCKINGBIRD - Of 9 nests reported this year, 5 produced one or more young. The nests were from 3 ft. 4 in. to 15 ft. up in bushes near houses. Four nests contained 4 eggs each, while 3 nests had 3 eggs each. Three eggs in a Middle River nest, April 15, were rather early, as were large young flying easily on May 27. Two broods left the nests of a Middle River pair on June 11 and July 27. The latter young stayed in the nest 13 days.

CATBIRD - In 55 nests from 2 ft. 4 in. to 16 ft. 6 in. up (median, 5 ft. 6 in.), 2 to 5 eggs were laid, for a mean of 3.58 eggs in the first brood and 2.72 in the second--mean 3.18. One hundred and four young left the nest from 155 eggs--a success of 67 percent. First-brood young left the nest from June 7 to July 4, after the usual 13-day incubation and 10 or 11 day stay in the nest. The young of the 24 second-brood nests left between early July and late August. Young left 3 nests of a Middle River pair on June 7, July 10, and August 12.

BROWN THRASHER - The 25 nests reported from Maryland this year were from 1 ft. 1 in. to 16 ft. up (median, 4 ft.) in dense bushes or thickets. They contained 3 to 5 eggs (mean, 3.68). Twenty-four young left the nest from 81 eggs--a success of 30 percent. Young in a Middle River nest which had 4 eggs on April 29 hatched about May 11. Incubation at Middle River lasted 12 days in 3 nests and 13 days in one. Young out of the nest were common in late May and early June. The only second broods reported were of pairs which had had an unsuccessful first nesting. The Fletchers reported that one pair laid eggs in a last-year's nest.

ROBIN - One hundred and thirty-eight nests. Although the nests were usually in trees, such sites as a building, a martin box, and the top of a pole were used. The median height of 91 first-brood nests was 10 feet; of 40 later nests, 22 feet; of all nests, 11 feet (extreme heights were 2 and 49 feet). Sixty-eight out of 115 of these nests produced one or more young--a success of 59 percent. There were 30 sets of 4 eggs, 29 of 3, and 6 of 2. The Fletchers found 4 eggs in a Denton nest on April 6. Many young of the first brood were out of the nest from May 8 to June 11. When a first-brood nest was successful, 3 to 16 days elapsed before the first egg was laid in the second-brood nest. Three pairs reared their second broods in their first-brood nests. Young of late broods were abundant during July, and left the nest as late as August 20 (Middle River, Willis).

WOOD THRUSH - We found 27 first-brood nests and 15 second-brood nests this year. The earliest set of eggs was laid in a Middle River nest, May 11 to 14. Young left first-brood nests there quite commonly from June 10 to 28. About a week to a month (about 16 days, on the average) elapsed between young leaving one nest and the first egg in the second-brood nest of the parents. The young of the second brood left the nest from mid-July to early August. Nest-building took 6 days (for 3 first-brood nests); eggs were incubated 13 days (5 nests); and young stayed in the nest 12 days (3 cases). Two to 4 eggs (mean, 3.3) were laid. From 83 eggs, 41 young were fledged--a success of 49 percent. The nests were from 4 to 31 feet up (median, 8 ft. 3 in.).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - The 16 nests reported were all rather low (from 2 to 10 feet) in boxes or in holes in old stumps or trees. Young of the first brood left the nests in May (May 6 at White Marsh--Hackman). Soon afterward the eggs of the second brood were in the nest. Young of the second brood left the nest in early July. Some pairs evidently raise a third brood, for on August 19 the Fletchers saw a pair feeding young in a Denton nest box. They found that incubation was 13 days, and that young stayed in a nest for 18 days. Two to 6 eggs were laid in each nest (mean, 4.4 eggs).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - On May 3, Sarah E. Quinn saw adults at a nest near the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Frederick County.

CEDAR WAXWING - Building at Gibson Is., June 14-15 (Mrs. M. North).

MIGRANT SHRIKE - Dr. Stauffer found a nest in Washington County.

STARLING - This bird breeds so commonly in and near buildings that few nests are reported. At Middle River Starlings were building nests in April. From May 12 until the end of May noisy, well-flying gray

young were following their parents, begging. The young of the second brood, which left nests about early July, were independent by mid-July.

WHITE-EYED VIREO - Nest at Seneca with 3 young and 1 egg, June 21, parasitized by Cowbird, June 22 (Lawrence Kilham, see Atl. Nat. 8:36).

RED-EYED VIREO - Although this is our most abundant woodland bird, its suspended nests are so hard to detect that only 4 were reported from Maryland this year. Three eggs were in a Towson nest on June 30 (Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Cole). Young out of the nest were common from early July to early August. Migrant juveniles were fed as late as Sept. 20).

WORM-EATING WARBLER - June 8 nest near Seneca contained 2 young, 1 dead young, 1 egg of host, and a young Cowbird (Lawrence Kilham).

YELLOW WARBLER - Two out of 3 Middle River nests produced young. Five eggs in one nest were incubated 12 days (May 15 to 27).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - Pleasant Valley nest (Jr. Camp, June 15-21).

PINE WARBLER - The first nest reported in the past 4 years was being built on April 13, 20 ft. up in a Federalsburg loblolly (Hewitt).

OVEN-BIRD - A nearly-grown immature was with its parents in the Middle River woods, June 24 (Willis).

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH - In a nest in the bank of a Greensboro stream, Marvin Hewitt found a young water-thrush, a young Cowbird, and an unhatched egg on May 21. The former left by May 29.

KENTUCKY WARBLER - Five eggs were in a Towson nest, June 8; 4 young had hatched by June 17 (Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Cole).

YELLOW-THROAT - The nests of this common denizen of bushy fields are hard to find; young were out of the nest at Middle River and White Marsh in June, but no nests were reported from Maryland this year.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - Four eggs in one Middle River nest were incubated from May 30 to June 11 (12 days), and young left in 11 days.

AMERICAN REDSTART - Seen on a Port Tobacco nest on May 4 (Catherine Crone), and on a Forest Glen nest on May 11 (Frank C. Cross).

ENGLISH SPARROW - Hackman saw 2 young leaving a White Marsh nest on April 24.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK - To George B. Saunders belongs the honor of reporting the first 2 nests found in Maryland in the past 4 years. Four young were in each Patuxent Refuge nest, May 27 and June 1.

RED-WING - Eighty-eight nests were reported from Maryland marshes. Males sang from nearby trees from early February to late July. Nest-building took 5 to 8 days (rarely a nest would be deserted for an additional week). In 6 cases incubation took 11 days; in 3 cases, 12 days. Young stayed in the nest 10 days (4 cases), 11 days (1) or 12 days (2). From May 23 until June 24 young were leaving the 63 first-brood nests. From June 21 to August 1 young were leaving the second-brood nests. Thus the ratio of first-brood nests to second-brood nests was 8 to 3; only 11 pairs raised 2 successful broods. Of some 282 eggs

laid in these nests (mean clutch, 3.26), about 154 young left the nest-- a success of about 55 percent. The median height of 75 nests in cat-tails was 1 ft. 10 in.; the median height of 13 nests in bushes was 3 ft. 10 in. The nests were from 1 to 7 feet up (Willis).

ORCHARD ORIOLE - The 5 nests were from 6 to 50 feet up in deciduous trees. Broods left a Towson nest (Duvall Jones) and a Denton nest (Fletchers) on June 19. Males at the former nest and at an unsuccessful Middle River nest were one year old birds.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Young left 3 successful Middle River nests high in oak trees on June 15 and June 19 (2 broods). Two Denton nests were apparently unsuccessful (Fletchers).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE - Buckalew found about 15 nests with young at West Ocean City on May 13.

PURPLE GRACKLE - Forty-two nests were from 6 to 55 feet up (median, 30 feet). Twenty-four were in scrub pines. Six sets of 4 eggs, 10 sets of 5 and 1 set of 6 were reported. After an incubation of 12 to 13 days, young stayed in the nest 11 to 14 days. Most nests were built the last week of March and the first three weeks of April. The first set of eggs was laid, April 5 to 9. Young left the 28 or so successful nests from May 1 to 28, mainly the first week in May at Denton (Fletchers) and the second week in May at Middle River. Three late broods, probably renestings of pairs whose first broods had been unsuccessful, left Middle River nests about June 17.

COWBIRD - Thirteen species were reported parasitized this year: Chipping Sparrow (8), Red-eyed Vireo (3), Carolina Wren (2), Cardinal (2), Field Sparrow (2), Song Sparrow (2), Phoebe, White-eyed Vireo, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Louisiana Water-thrush, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Indigo Bunting. Many eggs were laid in late April and early May, some in July (Fletchers). From 30 eggs laid, less than 14 young were fledged (due in part to human interference).

SCARLET TANAGER - Three Middle River eggs hatched about July 1.

CARDINAL - Only 8 of the 18 nests reported produced one or more young, but 20 young left from 37 eggs--54 percent success. There were 8 sets of 3 eggs and one set each of 2 and 4 eggs. Nests were from 2 ft. 6 in. to 11 ft. high (median, 6 ft.). A first-brood nest at Middle River was built in 7 days; a second-brood nest was built in 5 days. Eggs were laid in a nest April 17-20; young hatched May 1 (12-day incubation) and stayed in the nest 11 days. Since this pair's second brood left on June 20, the eggs must have been laid about 2 weeks after the first brood left. On July 26, eggs were in another nest of this pair.

BLUE GROSBEAK - Hewitt found this year's most noteworthy nest in a Ridgely hedgerow. The 4 eggs were destroyed soon after June 6.

INDIGO BUNTING - Four young were in a nest in a White Marsh peach tree, July 12 (Hackman). Three young and 1 young (from 3 eggs) left 2 Middle River nests, June 26 and June 28; young of a later brood were fed near the latter nest in late August.

GOLDFINCH - Five out of 7 Middle River nests produced young. On July 6 one was building a nest there. Young were still in the last nest on September 21. Incubation was 14 days in 2 cases, and 12 days in one case; young stayed 12 days in each of 2 nests. One nest had 6 eggs, 2 had 5, and one had 4.

TOWHEE - Seven ground nests, one bush nest. Young left the first Middle River nest, May 30; in June young out of the nest were so common in the woods that it is a wonder we did not find more nests. Second-brood young were out of the nest in late July and early August.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - Nest with 3 eggs at Broad Creek Scout Camp, Aug. 19 or 20 (Duncan McIntosh).

VESPER SPARROW - On June 29, Hackman found 3 eggs in a nest at White Marsh; a farm truck ran over the eggs on July 6. Three eggs were in a Greensboro nest, May 5 (Hewitt).

CHIPPING SPARROW - This familiar domestic species provided Maryland observers with 18 nests this year. Their small nests were from 1 to 12 feet up in bushes near buildings. The first young left a Denton nest, June 3 (Fletchers). Second-brood young were out in July, and third-brood young were fed on August 22 (Denton, Fletchers). Heavy Cowbird parasitism, inclement weather, and predators account for the fact that only 5 of 14 nests produced young.

FIELD SPARROW - The nine nests were on or near the ground in bushy fields. The average clutch in 6 nests was 3.7 eggs. Five nests were apparently unsuccessful; a Denton nest had 4 Cowbird eggs (Fletchers). Five eggs in a White Marsh nest, April 21 (Hackman), were the first eggs of the season. Young out of the nest were common from June to August. Three young stayed in a Middle River nest 8 days.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - The first nesting evidence for Maryland was established on June 17, when excited adults were studied at Cranesville (A. F. Ganier and F. W. Buchanan, *Wilson Bulletin* 65: 277-279).

SWAMP SPARROW - Young were found out of the nest in Cunningham Swamp near Bittinger in mid-June (Allegany Junior Camp).

SONG SPARROW - The 43 nests this year were all in bushy or weedy growth, frequently near houses. The nests were from the ground to 8 ft. 8 in. up (median, 1 ft. 5 in.). All first-brood nests were under 4 feet, while second-brood nests were under 6 ft. 9 in. Two to 5 eggs (mean, 3.72) were laid in each nest. The first-brood mean was 4.18 eggs, while the second-brood mean was 3.8 and the third was 3.3. Out of 152 eggs laid, only about 42 young left the nest--a success of 27.6 percent. Five of the 11 first-brood nests, 3 of the 16 second nests, and 8 of the 16 third nests produced young. Nest-building probably began about mid-April, for the first young were out of the nest, May 16. The first-brood young were abundant in late May and early June. Young of second broods left nests during July. Third-brood young and fourth-nesting young first fluttered from their nests in July and August. Incubation was 12 days in 2 nests; young stayed in 2 other nests for 10 days.

1631 Gail Road, Baltimore

THE SEASON -- January-June, 1953

Chandler S. Robbins

The mild weather of December continued throughout the winter, giving half-hardy southern stragglers a good chance to survive. The spring was warm and exceedingly wet, and without the normal alternation of warm and cool weather upon which we rely for heavy migratory "waves." May 2 was generally recognized as the best day of the season for migrants.

Hérons and Ibises. The heron tribe created considerable excitement during the winter and spring. The Gibson Island Green Heron, which had been present since Dec. 10, remained through Jan. 6 (Mrs. G. Tappan and Mrs. W. L. Henderson); and another, or perhaps the same individual, was seen in the Middle River area on Jan. 29 and Feb. 3 by Douglas Hackman. These are the first January and February records of the Green Heron for Maryland. William Barry estimated that up to 10 Great Blue Herons wintered at Gibson Island. An American Egret at Denton on Jan. 22 (Mrs. A. J. Fletcher) and another that wintered at Chase (Orville Crowder) were the first winter records for their respective areas, and the northernmost for our State. Catherine Crone and Katherine Keeley added another Glossy Ibis to our mere handful of Maryland records when they closely studied one of this species at Port Tobacco on May 2. Dr. John W. Richards identified a Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Emmitsburg, May 4, the second Frederick County record.

The Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis), an inhabitant of Africa and adjacent Mediterranean countries, mysteriously appeared in British Guiana about 25 years ago. Since that time it has increased to the point where it is now common in several countries in northern South America. The first North American records were established in 1952 in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Florida, presumably birds which had wandered northward from the Guianas. On Apr. 25, 1953 the first Cattle Egret was seen in Maryland on the private estate of Mr. Henry W. Heine near Berlin (C. S. Robbins and Delaware Valley Ornithological Club). From the scattering of records in other eastern seaboard states it seems likely that we may expect more reports of this interesting species within the next few years.

Swans, Geese and Ducks. The five commonest ducks wintering at Gibson Island were the Ruddy, Ring-neck, Redhead, Lesser Scaup and Baldpate in that order (W. Barry). The Ring-neck was the only one of these to increase during early February. Two drake Shovellers wintered as far north as Gibson Island, where they were last seen on Mar. 5 (Mrs. Tappan and Mrs. Henderson). These same observers reported the peak of the spring waterfowl flight at Gibson Island on Mar. 14, when they noted the largest rafts they have ever seen in that part of the Chesapeake. It was impossible to estimate numbers or even to determine percentage composition as tens of thousands of the ducks were far out in the Bay; but Lesser Scaups, Canvas-backs, Baldpates and American Golden-eyes were the most conspicuous species. The best count on Gadwalls came from Charles County, Jan. 27, when Allen Stickley estimated 1,300 birds present. There were numerous late departure dates, many of them undoubtedly representing sick or injured birds. The following reports, however, were from areas under almost daily observation, and

refer to birds capable of prolonged flight: 2 Whistling Swans at Patuxent Refuge, May 9 (Robert Stewart); 5 Baldpates at Unity on June 1 and a female Blue-winged Teal at the same place on May 26 (Seth Low), and 12 Old-squaws at Gibson Island on June 8 (Mrs. Henderson). High counts of summering Ruddy Ducks in Charles County were 40 on June 11 and 37 on June 27 (Stickley); these most likely included birds incapable of making the trip north to their breeding grounds.

Hawks. Several species of hawks are among our earliest spring migrants. Paul Springer noted the first north-bound Sharp-shinned Hawk near Beltsville on Feb. 27, the first migrating Cooper's on Feb. 16 at Takoma Park, and a returning Sparrow Hawk at Beltsville, Feb. 18. Dr. Richards saw the first Duck Hawk of the year over Emmitsburg on Feb. 19. The Osprey and Broad-wing, on the other hand, do not reach our latitude until mid-March and mid-April, respectively; the first this year were an Osprey at Gibson Island on Mar. 17 and a Broad-wing at Emmitsburg on Apr. 11. We have few winter records of the Bald Eagle away from the Coastal Plain, but John V. Dennis recorded one on Jan. 5-6 at Harrison Island in the Potomac River opposite Leesburg, Va. The last Rough-legged Hawks reported were one over White Marsh on Mar. 21 (Douglas Hackman) and 3 in Dorchester and Talbot Counties on Mar. 22 (Edwin Willis and Duvall Jones).

Grouse, Shorebirds and Terns. The first Eastern Shore record of the Ruffed Grouse in many, many years was one flushed from the upper Pocomoke swamp on May 10 by Joseph M. Cadbury. The possibility that this bird had been released somewhere in the vicinity cannot be disregarded. They are not known to occur within 150 miles of this locality. Three Killdeer spent the entire winter at Emmitsburg; although this species is occasionally seen in small numbers in the Maryland piedmont into December, it is usually driven out by snow and cold weather before the winter is over. Jan. 19 was so early for a Woodcock flight song at the Patuxent Research Refuge (Stewart) that the bird may have wintered there. Fifty-five Wilson's Snipe at Sandy Point on Mar. 22 (Willis and Jones) and 46 in Charles County on Apr. 4 are the highest counts on record for those parts of the State. Forster's Terns do not normally wander up the Chesapeake until early July; but this year the first 4 were noted on the Chalk Point trip by E. J. Besson and others on June 28, and the Hendersons counted a total of 10 summer vagrants between Gibson Island and Eastern Bay on June 2. Two Royal Terns seen at Ocean City on Apr. 25 and 26 by David Cutler and many others (D.V.O.C. trip) are the earliest arrivals on record.

Land Birds. For the third year, spring arrival dates for selected species are presented in tabular form to show the rate of progress across the State and to show which areas lie along the fringes of the migration paths of certain transient species. Although more than 50 people have contributed to the reports in Table 1, those who have supplied the largest number of records are: Dr. John W. Richards and Paul J. O'Brien for Emmitsburg; Douglas Hackman, Richard Cole, Miss A. A. Brandenburg, Edwin Willis and Mrs. Herbert Strack for Baltimore County; Robert Stewart, Chandler Robbins and Paul Springer for Laurel (including Patuxent Refuge); Mrs. W. L. Henderson and Mrs. G. Tappan for Gibson Island; Allen R. Stickley, Jr., and Catherine Crone for Charles County; Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Miss A. May Thompson, Marvin Hewitt and Alicia Knotts for Caroline County; and David Cutler

Table 1. Spring arrival dates, 1953

	Ents burg	Balt more	Lau- rel	Gibs Is.	Chas Co.	Caro line	Poco moke
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5/10	5/14	5/5	5/10	5/9	4/29	5/10
Black-billed Cuckoo	5/2	5/20	5/2	5/11	5/9	0	5/3
Whip-poor-will	4/17	4/11	4/15	4/25		4/17	4/25
Chimney Swift	4/9	4/10	4/15	4/25		4/14	
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	5/3	5/2	4/27	4/12	5/8	4/27	4/25
Eastern Kingbird	4/23	4/30	4/25	4/23	4/18	4/18	4/25
Crested Flycatcher	4/30		4/27	4/26	5/2	4/25	4/26
Eastern Phoebe	3/13	3/15	2/27	3/18	3/22	3/1	
Eastern Wood Pewee	5/3	5/8	5/2	3/25	5/2	5/3	5/3
Tree Swallow	4/5	3/21	4/1	4/29	3/29	3/20	
Barn Swallow	4/9	3/30	4/8	4/10	4/7	4/9	
Purple Martin	4/7	4/17	4/1	3/31		3/17	
House Wren	4/23	3/21	4/17	4/23		4/22	
Catbird	4/26	4/26	4/23	4/14		4/29	4/25
Brown Thrasher	4/6	4/18	4/5	4/8	4/4	3/17	
Wood Thrush	4/25	4/27	4/26	4/25		4/25	4/25
Veery	5/5	5/6	5/6	5/11	5/10	0	0
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/16	4/19	4/4	4/12	4/4	3/29	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4/7	4/9	4/1		4/4	4/6	
White-eyed Vireo	5/2	5/3	4/26	5/11	4/12	4/18	4/25
Yellow-thr. Vireo	4/23	4/29	4/26			4/28	4/25
Red-eyed Vireo	5/2	4/26	4/30	4/23			4/25
Black & White Warbler	4/10	4/23	4/11	4/26	4/4	4/11	
Worm-eating Warbler	5/2	5/3	5/1			5/9	4/25
Golden-winged Warbler	5/2	4/29	5/2		5/3	0	5/3
Blue-winged Warbler	5/3	5/2	4/29	5/11	5/2	5/3	5/3
Nashville Warbler	4/26	5/20	4/27	5/11	0	5/2	0
Parula Warbler	4/25	5/2	4/18	5/6	4/12		
Yellow Warbler	5/3	4/23	5/2	4/26	4/3		4/25
Blk-thr. Blue Warbler	4/30	5/2	5/2	5/5	5/9	0	5/3
Bk-thr. Green Warbler	4/23	5/10	4/29	5/11	5/9	0	5/3
Chest.-sided Warbler	4/30	4/23	5/2	5/1	5/9	5/9	
Black-poll Warbler	5/9	5/6	4/28	5/4	5/2	0	5/3
Prairie Warbler	4/29	5/2	4/24	4/26		4/27	4/25
Oven-bird	4/25	4/23	4/24			4/22	4/25
Kentucky Warbler	5/3	5/6	5/1	5/4	5/2		4/26
Yellow-throat	4/25	4/25	4/23	4/23		4/19	
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/2		5/3	5/6	5/2		5/3
Hooded Warbler	4/26	4/29	4/23	4/25			4/25
Canada Warbler	5/2	5/9	5/2	5/11	5/3	0	0
Bobolink	5/9		4/29	4/29	5/3	5/2	
Baltimore Oriole	5/2	5/2	5/1	4/29	0	4/26	5/1
Scarlet Tanager	4/30	5/4	4/29	5/2	5/2	5/2	4/25
Rose-br. Grosbeak	5/2	5/3	5/2	5/11	5/9	5/9	
Indigo Bunting	5/2	5/8	5/2	3/22	5/2	4/11	5/10
Red-eyed Towhee	4/4	3/27	3/15	3/13	3/22		
Grasshopper Sparrow	4/16	5/9	4/16		4/12	4/25	4/25
Chipping Sparrow	4/1	4/11	3/23		3/29	3/14	

for the Pocomoke swamp. As before, "0" means that the species was not recorded during the migration period, and a blank shows that no significant arrival date was obtained.

Owls, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds, Sapsuckers. A Saw-whet Owl captured by Arthur Porter at Greensboro on Feb. 20 is the first record for Caroline County. There were two very late records: one banded at Laurel on Apr. 6 (Robbins), and one closely seen at Emmitsburg on the extraordinary date of May 2 (Richards). The Chuck-will's-widow arrives three or four weeks later than its close relative the Whip-poor-will; lack of frequent coverage in the loblolly pine areas where it occurs is the only reason why Apr. 25, 1953 (West Ocean City, D.V.O.C. trip) is the earliest date on record for Maryland. Although better dates for the Chuck-will's-widow will undoubtedly be obtained in the next two or three years, the Apr. 12 record of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Gibson Island (Mrs. Henderson and Mrs. Tappan) will probably stand for decades as Maryland's earliest. It is interesting that the earliest record for Virginia was broken on the following day. Returning from the Catoclin Conference, the Fletchers obtained the most unusual bird record for the weekend; near the Park headquarters in Frederick County they discovered a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on May 17, the latest spring migration record for the State.

Flycatchers, Raven, Wrens. Early arrival dates for two flycatchers were established this spring. One was an Eastern Phoebe at Patuxent Refuge on Feb. 27 (Mrs. Lois Horn and Dr. A. C. Martin). The other was a singing Eastern Wood Pewee closely watched while it repeatedly gave its two typical songs at Gibson Island on Mar. 25 (Mesdames North, Henderson and Tappan); the earliest this species has ever been recorded from elsewhere in Maryland is Apr. 20. Two singing Least Flycatchers were identified in the Pocomoke area near Whaleyville on May 3 by Cutler--the first record for the lower Eastern Shore. The only Olive-sided Flycatchers recorded were at Emmitsburg (May 9 and May 24, Richards) and at Patuxent Refuge (May 22, Stewart). Elizabeth Slater and Friel Sanders observed a Raven at Swallow Falls on Mar. 1, the first arrival date on file for Garrett County. The first winter record of the House Wren from the head of the Bay was reported by Edwin Willis at Middle River on Dec. 30 and Jan. 2. The easternmost Bewick's Wren was noted from Apr. 6 until early May at Seth Low's farm near Unity, Montgomery County. Leonard Llewellyn had his first Bewick's of the year on the summit of Dan's Mountain in Allegany County, also on Apr. 6. There were more reports than usual of migrating Short-billed Marsh Wrens, and one at Patuxent Refuge on Apr. 27 (Stewart) established an early arrival date outside of its wintering range.

Robins, Pipits, Vireos. Robins were noted as scattered individuals at Mountain Lake Park, Loch Lynn and Accident, all in Garrett County, in mid-January by Miss Slater and Miss Sanders; several others were reported from various parts of that county. Their first migrants were observed on Feb. 28, seven days later than the first movement was detected at Emmitsburg. Although American Pipits are occasionally found in large concentrations in fall and winter, Dr. Richards' count of 600 on Apr. 7 at Emmitsburg is three times the previous high tally for the spring migration in Maryland. Vireo arrivals of special note include a White-eyed on Apr. 12 at Port Tobacco by Miss Crone and Miss Keeley, the earliest Maryland record; an early Red-eye at Gibson Island

on Apr. 23 (Mrs. Tappan, Mrs. Henderson); and the only Philadelphia Vireo of the season, at Emmitsburg on May 11 (Mrs. J. W. Richards).

Warblers. Edwin Willis reported that 2 Yellow-throats survived the winter at Middle River; the fate of a Yellow Palm Warbler seen there through Jan. 1 and a Western Palm on Jan. 2 is not known. Two Western Palms were identified during their northward movement in May: 1 on May 8 at Laurel (Robbins), the other at Emmitsburg the following day (Richards). Unusual distribution records included the first Nashville Warblers for Caroline County (May 2, Mrs. Fletcher) and Gibson Island (May 11, Mrs. Henderson); a Yellow-throated Warbler at Lake Roland in Baltimore County (Mrs. Kaestner) on Apr. 26, the same day that one appeared at Patuxent Refuge; the second Catocin observation of the Carulean Warbler (Emmitsburg by Richards and O'Brien) on the record early date of Apr. 25; and the first lower Eastern Shore record of this same species on Apr. 26 (E. R. Manners, John McIlwain and D.V.O.C. trip). Arrival dates of the following warblers were broken this spring: Swainson's near Willards on Apr. 25 (D.V.O.C.), Tennessee at Emmitsburg on Apr. 28 (Richards); and Wilson's at Gibson Island on Apr. 26 (Mrs. Tappan and Mrs. Henderson). The breeding range of the Yellow-throated Warbler was extended west to Harrison Island in Montgomery County by John V. Dennis, who saw a pair feeding young there on June 28. This find is of special significance because it cuts in half the fifty-mile gap between the Sutton's Warbler's range and that of the Yellow-throated, thus increasing the likelihood that the Sutton's is actually only a hybrid between the Parula and the Yellow-throated.

Grackles and Orioles. Ralph W. Peakes reported more wintering Purple Grackles than he has ever before seen at Bel Air; flocks of 25,000 to 50,000 were present in December and January. For the second time (the first was two years ago) several Baltimore Orioles wintered in Maryland. The first was seen on Dec. 26 in Howard County (Triadelphia Christmas Count). One visited the feeding station of Mrs. Robert S. McCeney in Laurel from Jan. 28 to Feb. 6; two other reports near Laurel probably involved at least one other individual. In the second week of January Mrs. W. D. Munnikhuysen saw one at Bel Air, and on Jan. 27 Allen Stickley and Catherine Crone found another at Port Tobacco. Single birds observed at White Marsh on Apr. 1 (Hackman) and in Baltimore on Apr. 12 (Mrs. M. L. Stout) were more likely winter survivors than early migrants.

Northern Finches. The winter and spring of 1952-53 was the best period Marylanders ever experienced as far as variety and numbers of northern finches are concerned. To be sure, some species were represented by only one or two reports. It was a very poor winter for Evening Grosbeaks. The only Common Redpolls were on the Ocean City and Triadelphia Christmas Counts. And the only Pine Grosbeak flock was near Red Oak in southern Garrett County (6 or 8 birds on Mar. 1 by Miss Slater and Miss Sanders). But even one report of these last two species is exciting news. Add to this the best flight of Pine Siskins ever recorded here, the third White-winged Crossbill flight in Maryland's history, and a scattering of Red Crossbills, and the combination is practically unbeatable in this part of the country. In the previous report we listed six counties in which flocks of 100 or more Pine Siskins had been reported during the fall; to these we can now add Garrett County (200 on Mar. 1 by Miss Slater and Miss Sanders) and

Baltimore County (100 on Apr. 9 at Towson by Mrs. Herbert Strack). Most localities reported Pine Siskins still present in the first week of May, but they abruptly departed before the middle of that month. Goldfinches were also numerous during the period, with a maximum count of 500 at Emmitsburg on Feb. 21 (Richards).

The White-winged Crossbill, one of the most erratic of birds, crossed our borders for the first time since the winter of 1916-17. The first flock of 5 was discovered at Emmorton in Harford County on Jan. 4 by Mr. Peakes. The main southward flight seems to have taken place on Feb. 5 and 6. On Feb. 5 there were three reports from Long Island and southwestern Connecticut. On the following day there were two other reports from southern New York, four from New Jersey, one from Pennsylvania, and a flock of 7 birds at Gibson Island, Md. During the next six days they spread to Laurel, Washington, D. C., and two localities in northeastern Virginia, as well as to several places in Pennsylvania. All Maryland occurrences were of short duration. At Gibson Island, Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Tappan and Mrs. North had 7 to 5 individuals from Feb. 6 to Feb. 8, and 2 (one found dead) on Feb. 25. At Laurel, Mrs. Robert McConeny had one male at her feeding station on Feb. 8 and Feb. 10, and 2 on Feb. 11. On Feb. 20 Paul O'Brien first noted a flock of 5 feeding on hemlock cones at Emmitsburg; the last 2 were seen there on Mar. 1. On this same date Miss Slater and Miss Sanders saw 6 to 8 feeding with Pine Grosbeaks on red spruce cones at Red Oak on Backbone Mountain in Garrett County. The Red Crossbill flight was less well defined, although the total number of individuals seen was larger. Mrs. W. D. Munnikhuysen had one in her yard at Bel Air in late December, Seth Low saw a flock of 20 on the Ocean City Christmas Count, Richard D. Cole had small numbers on several occasions at his home in Towson, and Eleanor and Chandler Robbins saw 4 in their Virginia pines at Laurel on Apr. 26, May 9 and May 10.

Buntings and Dickcissels. In recent years the unseasonably early arrivals of very small numbers of Indigo Buntings along the southern New England coast in March or early April have attracted the attention of ornithologists. Aaron M. Bagg, one of the foremost students of bird migration, is currently studying these occurrences and attempting to correlate them with unusual weather conditions. One of the paradoxes to date has been the lack of similar records from the Middle Atlantic coast. Prior to 1953 there was no Maryland record before the latter third of April. This year, however, Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Tappan and Mr. Varrieur found one at Gibson Island on Mar. 22 and 6 on Apr. 8; and Alicia Knotts recorded one at Denton on Apr. 11. Although the breeding population of Dickcissels at the well-known nesting areas in southern Frederick and western Montgomery Counties showed a decline this summer, Dr. Richards had 4 singing males at Emmitsburg in June, the first record for northern Frederick County. A single migrant was seen at Patuxent Refuge on May 22 (Oscar Warbach and Stewart). The most remarkable occurrence was a singing male discovered in Queen Annes County near Wye Mills on June 19 by Neil Hotchkiss and Ellis Miller. This is not only the first summer record for the Coastal Plain, but the first observation at any season for the Eastern Shore. It is now apparent that this species may turn up in almost any part of Maryland. Alfalfa fields in all parts of the State should be checked for Dickcissels in the summer time, and flocks of English Sparrows should be scrutinized in winter.