MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society

2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland

Volume 11 DECEMBER 1955 Number 4

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HEADINGS: By Irving E. Hampe, Art Editor

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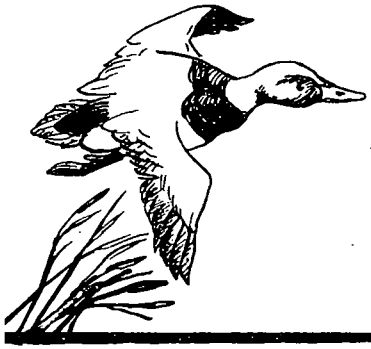

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THE VEGETATIVE IDENTIFICATION OF MARSH GRASSES OF MARYLAND

Elmer G. Worthley

Although to many people grasses seem difficult to identify in the floriferous stage it is never-the-less true that they are actually easy to name, even in the vegetative or nonflowering state, if one is acquainted with their field characters. While, as in most taxa, there are some species that offer difficulty in their identification, most of our poaceous flora are readily named providing one knows what features are typical of a given species. Many an ornithologist, wildlife technician or even a general botanist finds the recognition of grasses extremely difficult-----not because of any inherent difficulty offered by the Gramineae themselves, but because standard manuals of the area offer little or no aid in the identification of specimens without their flowers or florets. As an aid to workers in these and associated fields an attempt will be made to point out the important vegetative features or structures which will enable one to identify sterile, grass specimens. A key to the common marsh grasses of Maryland will also be provided.

GRASS STRUCTURE The rounded to flattened, hollow stem or culm of grasses bears two opposite rows of leaves. Each leaf has a tubular base which ensheaths the culm, and a divergent, outer portion known as the blade. At the junction of the sheath and the blade is a continuation of the inner skin or epidermis of the sheath that projects as a ridge of membrane or row of hairs.designated as the ligule. Rarely the ligule is absent as in the Barnyard Grass genus, Echinochloa. The summit of the leaf sheath near the leaf blade is often of a different color or texture than the rest of the sheath and therefore has a special name----the collar. If the collar has a pair of projections or ears, these are known technically as auricles. Auricles are commonly found in only one tribe of grasses---the Wheat Tribe or Hordeae. The portion of the culm from which a leaf arises is known as a node. The node may be inconspicuous, conspicuous and bulging, hairy or bearded. In the genus Leersia, the collar is bulging and conspicuous with antrorse or apically pointing hairs.

GRASSES VS SEDGES AND RUSHES These 3 groups of plants even though they each are in separate families are all "grasslike" and cause much confusion among the botanical neophytes. Some of the contrasting characters of these otherwise similar plants are: Culm---grasses have roundish or flattened,

hollow culms. Rushes ----culms pithy or hollow, rounded. Sedges often have triangular stems which nearly always are solid. The leaf sheath is split longitudinally in most grasses but is entire in rushes and sedges. A ligule is present in most grasses but is absent in the rushes and sedges. The leaves are in a spiral in rushes, two opposite rows in grasses and in three rows in sedges. Many rushes have narrow, rounded or filiform leaves while most grasses and sedges have relatively wide, flat bladed leaves.

ANNUAL GRASSES AND PERENNIAL GRASSES Annual grasses have fine, fibrous roots. Perennial grasses have tough, enlargened roots and sometimes underground stems or rhizomes in addition to the fine, fibrous roots. Annual grasses do not have rhizomes and are thus usually growing in clumps. Any grass growing in mats instead of clumps owes its matted growth to the underground stems or rhizomes and must therefore be a perennial. However a grass found growing in clumps may have short rhizomes or none at all and thus might be either an annual or perennial. If one digs up a clump of grass, an examination of the roots for the presence or absence of enlarged, hardened roots and short rhizomes will usually determine its annual or perennial nature. Early in the season before the plants flower, the lack of rhizomes in the annual Wild Rice easily separates this grass from the matted stands of Reed or Cordgrass with their large, conspicuous rhizomes which help them to maintain their hold in their muddy habitats.

SALT MARSHES AND FRESH WATER MARSHES While the grasses peculiar to the salt marshes (i.e. those grasses adapted to highly saline conditions approaching sea water in its salt content ---3½ percent) are few in number, and decrease rapidly as one goes upstream with its decreasing salinity, they none-the-less form a zone of intergradation with the species of the freshwater marshes in the intervening brackish zones. The only common grasses of the true salt marsh in Maryland are: Cordgrasses, Spartina and Spike-grass or Alkali-grass, Distichlis spicata. Some of the other grasses of the fresh water marsh such as Wild Rice, Zizania aquatica extend into brackish waters where it can withstand about .3 percent salt conditions. Other species such as the Small-fruited Panic-grass, Panicum microcarpon are unable to stand even brackish waters or swamps.

KEY TO THE MARSH GRASSES OF MARYLAND

Perennials with tough thickened roots or rhizomes

Nodes heavily antrorsely bearded
Ligule present; leaf blades over 2 dm. long Woolly Beardgrass Erianthus giganteus
Ligule absent; leaf blades under 2 dm. long Small Fruited Panicgrass, Panicum microcarpon

Nodes not antrorsely bearded
Ligule a fringe of hairs
Plants growing in clumps, base of blade with long hairs on the upper surface Switchgrass, Panicum virgatum

Plants growing in mats
Leaves folded in young shoots Spike-grass, Distichlis spicata
Leaves rolled in young shoots
Ligule with short hairs and some very long hairs Reed Phragmites communis
Ligule of hairs of about the same length
Blades flat at base and over 5 mm wide
Blade margin very rough Giant Cordgrass Spartina cynosuroides
Blade margin slightly rough or smooth Saltmarsh Cordgrass Spartina alterniflora
Blades rolled or involute and less than 5 mm wide
Plants under 3 feet high Saltmeadow Cordgrass Spartina patens
Ligule a membrane
Auricles often present, ligule ciliate Wildrye Elymus virginicus
Auricles not present, ligule not ciliate Woodreed Cinna arundinacea
Annual, without rhizomes
Lower sheaths very bristly, spreading hairy Echinochloa walteri
Ligule absent
Lower sheaths not bristly, ligule present Wild Rice Zizania aquatica

TWO WINTERING ORIOLES BELIEVED TO BE BULLOCK'S

Richard D. Cole

In 1952, Hervey Brackbill (Maryland Birdlife 8: 10-11) gave an account of the first winter records of the Baltimore Oriole (Icterus galbula) in Maryland: a male in Towson and a female in Baltimore, both in January 1951. There was no report for the following winter, but during the 1952-53 winter season at least four orioles, and possibly as many as eight, were seen in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain sections of Maryland and summarized by Robbins (Maryland Birdlife 10:15). All but one or two of the 1952-53 birds were definitely identified as Baltimore Orioles, and the others were believed by the observers to be of this same species.

There were no reports for the following winter, but between December 21, 1954 and April 11, 1955, several orioles were seen in the Baltimore area and two on the Eastern Shore. The Baltimore Evening Sun of May 10, 1955 carried a column by Hervey Brackbill, giving an account of the Baltimore birds: a female at the home of Mrs. Margaret Royal in Ruxton, Dec. 21 to Feb. 5, and two females there on one day in mid-January; a female at the residence of Mrs. George Buck in Towson on two January days; and a female at the feeder of Mrs. Robert E. Costen in Catonsville, Feb. 10 to Apr. 11.

The writer trapped and banded one of Mrs. Royal's orioles on January 17. Upon comparing it with specimens from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service collection, kindly loaned by Dr. John W. Aldrich, it was determined to be a female Bullock's Oriole (Icterus bullockii). The bird was not seen subsequent to the date of banding.

Another oriole, this one a Baltimore, was banded at the Towson feeding station of Mrs. Carl Lubbert on March 2. The first of the two Eastern Shore birds was a Baltimore Oriole found near Berlin on December 27 by the late Renwick R. Kerr. The other, observed by Richard Kleen on March 3 and March 8 at Claiborne in Talbot County, was identified as a Bullock's Oriole.

Since the Bullock's Oriole, a western species, is very similar in appearance to the Baltimore Oriole, the Bullock's must remain on Maryland's hypothetical list until further substantiation is obtained. We urge all Maryland Ornithological Society members to keep their eyes open for wintering orioles this year, and to notify their Bird Records Chairman immediately if one is seen.

625 Valley Lane, Towson

HIGH-LOW NESTING CATBIRDS

Hervey Brackbill

In Maryland Birdlife for September-December 1952 I recorded three Catbird nests that were built 23½ to 30 feet up. I have always been driven to wonder whether the individuals which depart so strikingly from the Catbird's custom of low nesting belong to a special strain within the species. Do these particular birds always nest high? Or are they just ordinary Catbirds picking extraordinary nest sites in response to some whim, or some environmental circumstance that I was not keen enough to discern?

Since Catbirds nested in one treetop in two successive years, although there was abundant low growth immediately at hand, it seemed likely that one or both of these birds were the same in both years and had a predilection for tree nesting. Still, this was only a conjecture, for who can tell whether this year's pair of Catbirds is last year's unless, of course, they are banded? But those birds weren't, and all of the Catbirds that did wear my bands nested, year after year, in typical low situations.

In 1954, however, there was a pair near my home in northwest Baltimore, the female of which was color-banded, although I never succeeded in trapping the male. This pair's first nest was set 6 feet 7 inches up in the top of a privet hedge, but its second nest was 19 feet 3 inches up in a Norway maple. And so—while it still may be that one member of the pair picked one site, and the other member the other—it was demonstrated at last that the same pair of Catbirds may nest either low or high.

2620 Poplar Drive, Baltimore 7

LATE NESTING OF CAROLINA WRENS

Margaret R. Gatchell

A pair of Carolina Wrens (Thryothorus ludovicianus) built a nest in our garage early in August 1955. It was in a basket turned on its side about four feet from the ground. Mrs. Wren sat on the five eggs for a week or ten days, after which time the eggs disappeared.

Later I saw a pair of Carolina Wrens, presumably the same ones, carrying material for a nest into our well-house. Some time afterward I found the nest with four eggs in it, over the door. The birds entered the building through an open window when the door was closed, and on September 16 the parent birds were observed taking food to the nest. I examined the nest on this date and found three baby birds. On September 26, when I made my daily early morning trip into the building, the three young birds had just left the nest and were hopping about. (I do not know what became of the egg that did not hatch.) I left the door open and the fledglings flew to freedom. They were seen during the next fortnight or so getting food from their parents.

The above nest was almost exactly one month later than any previous Carolina Wren nest reported from Maryland. The latest previous egg date was August 10, 1893, and the latest previous observation of young in the nest was August 26, 1948.

Joppa

MOCKINGBIRD TAKES OVER A CARDINAL NEST

Roberta B. Fletcher

On July 25, 1955, a Cardinal (Richmondena cardinalis) began building a nest in a dogwood tree in our flower garden. For two days the nest was built slowly. Then, on the 29th, I noticed that a Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) had taken over the nest building. The nest was completed and eggs were laid. On August 14 the Mockingbird was carrying food. We banded one nestling almost ready to fly on August 21. Three days later the young bird left the nest successfully.

Route 1, Denton

EXCHANGE BULLETINS ON FILE AT PRATT LIBRARY

Maryland Birdlife is sent free of charge to many other state and national ornithological organizations, which in turn send us complimentary copies of their publications. Current issues of these exchange periodicals are now filed in the Science Department of the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore. Anyone desiring to read or use these publications for reference may ask for them at the desk in that department. In a future issue we shall give a list of the periodicals being received.

Send your 1955 County List to CHARLES M. BUCHANAN by Jan. 31.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER SEEN IN CAROLINE COUNTY

Marvin Hewitt

On October 21, 1955 at Linchester Pond near Preston, Maryland, I first thought I was seeing just another woodpecker. A second glance, however, rewarded me with a very pleasant surprise as I was looking at an immature Red-headed Woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus). This is my first for Caroline County and the only one of this species seen here since January 1950. I had a good close look at the bird (20 feet); the lower half of the wings were a distinct white as shown in Peterson's field guide. The bird somewhat resembled the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker but lacked the longitudinal white stripe.

Several decades ago the Red-headed Woodpecker was a breeding bird through much of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, but in the past ten years there have been no nesting records and only three or four reports of migrants from the entire Eastern Shore.

Greensboro

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER NEW BIRD FOR CAROLINE COUNTY

Marvin Hewitt

On Friday, August 26, 1955, I was very pleasantly surprised to see a Semipalmated Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) on the mud flats of what used to be Linchester Pond near Preston, Maryland. There were numerous "peeps" mixed in with the lone plover. The mud flats were caused by hurricanes "Connie" and "Dianne" bringing an enormous amount of water which made a break in the bank next to the dam. It is interesting to note that water from the dam turns a wheel which grinds flour for one of the very few remaining old type flour mills. The draining of this twenty-acre pond has created a bonanza for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Other waders noted there have been the Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, Pectoral Sandpipers, and Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers. On succeeding days Semipalmated Plovers were seen as follows: 6 on September 1 and 5 on September 4 by Roberta Fletcher, and 1 on September 15 by Naomi Hewitt.

Greensboro

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS !

The next issue of Maryland Birdlife will contain a Membership List. We should like to include telephone numbers as well as addresses. Since we do not have a complete file of telephone numbers on hand, we must ask each member to take the responsibility of sending us his number no later than January 15. Please follow closely the form used by the telephone company (for example, PArkwy 5-1176) and send your number on a postal to Mr. Seth H. Low, Route 2, Gaithersburg.

NESTLING ROBINS RESCUED

Margarete Butenschoen

A heavy rainstorm in August 1955 created a pitiful sight by tossing a nest with three young Robins (Turdus migratorius) to the ground. Since the nest was without a bottom and the wing feathers of the birds were not fully grown, the trio, with heads erect, were prepared to drown in the rain. One of them was much smaller and less feathered than the rest. The parents lamented about them. After being taken into the house and placed in a basket for the night, they greeted the morning, dry and eager to keep on living. When the basket was placed under their nest tree, the parents appeared at once. Within twenty minutes the young Robins were able to hop out of the basket and hunt for shelter in the nearby shrubbery. For four days the surrounding area echoed with "We dare you to come near" cries of the adults, supported by Catbirds. Then all became quiet again. The young had learned to fly and had taken to the trees.

Denton

REPORT ON ROBIN NEST SURVEY

David E. Davis

Last spring the Baltimore Club of the Maryland Ornithological Society began a study of the clutch-size of robins in Baltimore Metropolitan area. Members were asked to record the regular information on nest cards and send them in as usual. Also, notices were placed in the Baltimore Sun, urging people to send in a post card with the information about date, number of eggs or young, type of site and height from ground. The results are to be compared with a similar study in Ithaca, N. Y.

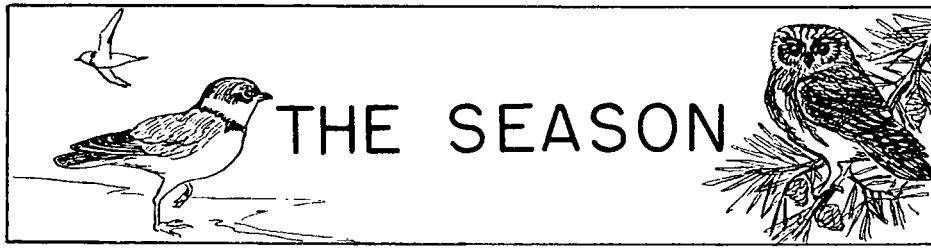
The number of nests reported was smaller than expected. While about 50 cards were sent in, only 32 had complete data on number of eggs or young. Ten nests had 3 eggs, 14 had 4, and 1 had 5. Three nests had 2 young, 3 had 3, and 1 had 4. The sites selected showed a clear preference for rose bushes and other dense locations.

It is hoped that during the spring of 1956 the reporting can be intensified and more nests recorded.

615 N. Wolfe St., Baltimore 5

COOPERATIVE MIGRATION STUDY - SPRING OF 1956

We would like to have many more members participate in this project during 1956. Just record the first and last migration dates and dates of peak movements of common species in your neighborhood. Report forms listing the birds for which dates and numbers are requested may be obtained from your local club.



JANUARY THROUGH JUNE 1955

Chandler S. Robbins

The long-continued drought reached its climax in January, when Pretty Boy Reservoir dropped to the lowest point in the 21 years of its existence. Moderate excesses of rainfall during the next two months provided enough soil moisture to take care of the immediate needs of gardens and natural vegetation. Deficiencies in April and May were replenished in June, and vegetation in our area developed at close to the normal rate.

Temperatures averaged a bit low from the first of January through mid-February, but snowfall was unusually light and there was no damage from ice storms; there is some local evidence of winter fatalities due to weather conditions, but on the whole the winter weather was not unfavorable.

The spring months were uniformly warm. In fact, the trend toward spring-like weather began on Feb. 15, after which time most cold snaps were of light intensity and short duration. The one important exception was an extensive and vigorous high pressure system which engulfed the eastern half of the country in late March and sent temperatures plummeting not only in Maryland but throughout the Southeast. In our State, thermometer readings of 7° at Bittinger and 14° at Waldorf in southern Maryland on the 27th did little if any damage to developing vegetation. But picture the devastation which overspread the Southland, where the leaves were well out and many spring flowers were in bloom. Hard freezing temperatures in that area not only killed the fresh leaves, but split open the sap-filled trunks of peach and pecan trees, killing them outright. Many of our warblers, gnatcatchers and other insectivorous birds were migrating through the southern states at that time, and even if they survived the severe cold they must have been hard pressed to find sufficient insect food for the next few weeks. No one knows the full impact that this cold wave had on the Maryland migration or on our nesting birds. Some observers along the Gulf coast suspect that the strong northerly winds caught hordes of migrants far out over the Gulf and prevented their reaching land safely. Those tropical-wintering birds which had already arrived in the southern states may have been held back for weeks--first struggling to find insect food for survival, then building back up the fat reserves so necessary to supply energy for migration. Consider also the tropical migrants that arrived

in the southeastern states in April and found the vegetation greatly retarded. Many such transients may have lingered there waiting for the foliage and the food supply to develop. If their migration was delayed in this way, they may have made fewer and shorter stops during the remainder of their northward flight, contributing to our impression of scarcity of migrants in Maryland.

Loons, Grebes, Herons. A count of 45 migrating Common Loons over Emmitsburg on Apr. 30 is relatively high for an inland locality (John W. Richards) and coincides with peak counts elsewhere. A concentration of over 1,000 Horned Grebes was reported from Point Lookout on Apr. 13 by Paul G. DuMont and Eddie Hall; this is the first gathering of this size to be reported from the west side of the Chesapeake, and certainly indicates that the migration was at its height. A Cattle Egret, the second for Maryland, was discovered in a pasture near Bucktown in Dorchester County on May 1 by Elois Rogers, and was viewed by many observers; it was last seen on May 8 by Paul DuMont, Karl Stecher and Hall. A scattering of Snowy Egrets spread north of the nesting colonies in April and May, the first 3 being spotted at Sandy Point on Apr. 2 by Alice Kaestner. The Wood Ibises, which went on one of their rare northward wandering sprees in late June, were first noted at Gibson Island on the 24th by Captain George Fisher. Details of these and the subsequent Maryland records will appear at a later date.

Swans and Geese. Feral Mute Swans have been well established in the Long Island, N. Y., area for many years, but have not tended to spread up and down the Atlantic coast in any numbers. Recent reports of this species from Ocean City, Md., are believed traceable to a release on the Delaware coast. Three birds which appeared at Gibson Island on Jan. 25 (Jackson M. Abbott and others) are of undetermined origin; one remained until Jan. 28. Mr. J. W. Day observed a heavy preponderance of young Whistling Swans (about 2 young to each adult) wintering in Cecil County. A five-day spell of unseasonably warm weather triggered the start of the Whistling Swan flight a week earlier than last year. The first flock flew over Patuxent Refuge on Mar. 8 (Lois M. Horn), and on Mar. 12 a major northward flight of thousands passed Gibson Island. Five went over Emmitsburg as late as Apr. 21 (John W. Richards), and the State departure record was broken on May 27 when Mrs. Ralph Stauffer discovered an immature on Conococheague Creek in the Hagerstown Valley. An unusually large number of cripples spent the summer on the east shore of the Chesapeake. A heavy northward flight of Canada Geese took place on Mar. 20, which was the warmest day of the month at many stations on the Eastern Shore; on this date Arthur Kraeski noted 110 near Laurel, and Dr. Richards estimated as many as 800 over Emmitsburg. On Mar. 9 Mrs. John Richards observed a flock of 50 Snow Geese passing over her Emmitsburg home--a most unusual sight for the interior of the State. A late Brant was seen on Kent Island, May 8 (Stephen W. Simon).

Ducks, Coots. Of local interest was the first observation of Gadwall at Gibson Island. Seven birds arrived on Feb. 25, and one remained until Apr. 7. Then on June 30 2 were seen there by Mrs. W. L. Henderson and Mrs. Gail Tappan, for the first summer record of the

species west of the Bay. Strangely absent from Gibson Island this winter was the American Merganser. The only European Widgeon identified was at Smithville Pond near Federalsburg on Apr. 5, the first Caroline County record (Marvin W. Hewitt). Rod Smith reported a fine concentration of 30,000 to 40,000 Pintails feeding in a large cornfield near Chestertown for 5 weeks in the early spring. The second and third Maryland records for the Harlequin Duck were obtained at Ocean City inlet on Mar. 1 (Robert E. Stewart, Don P. Fankhauser) and Apr. 30 (David A. Cutler and others). According to J. W. Day, at least 300 Coots were stranded when the North East River froze over during the early February freeze; an undetermined number of the birds starved. Usually, the diving birds leave this area before the surface becomes entirely frozen over, so we surmise that the near-zero temperatures of Feb. 3-5 closed the last openings in a single night, or reduced them to such small size that the Coots were unable to take flight.

Hawks, Rails, Shorebirds. Talbot County's first Goshawk was shot on Jan. 5 at Bellevue by a Mr. Valient, who painted a beautiful portrait of the bird upon a tray, substantiating the record. The most notable hawk reports of the spring period were a Pigeon Hawk on the record-early date of Mar. 4 at Patuxent Refuge (Fred Schmid) and a phenomenal spring count of 5 Duck Hawks at Gibson Island on Feb. 25 (Mrs. W. L. Henderson, S. Henderson). Also from Gibson Island comes a Clapper Rail report on Jan. 1 (Mrs. W. L. Henderson and Mrs. Gail Tappan). Any phalarope seen in Maryland is worthy of mention. A Northern Phalarope appeared in a new impoundment on the Patuxent Refuge on May 26 (Francis M. Uhler, Paul F. Springer, Clark G. Webster) and remained until June 3.

Gulls and Terns. Great Black-backed Gulls are continuing to increase as wintering birds in Chesapeake Bay. As many as 5 were counted at Gibson Island on Jan. 25, and 2 birds remained until May 8 (the same departure date as last year--Mesdames Henderson and Tappan). A Royal Tern seen at Plum Point, Calvert Co., on Apr. 23 (John H. Fales) is not only the first spring record from the Maryland part of Chesapeake Bay, but a very early arrival date as well. On Feb. 16 a venturesome Forster's Tern, apparently taking advantage of the southerly winds and springlike weather, flew up the Choptank River to Denton in the interior of the Eastern Shore. Mrs. Henderson commented that all terns were late in arriving in Chesapeake Bay and that numbers were remarkably low all summer, coinciding with the very poor fishing in the Bay.

Land Birds (General). The table of spring arrival dates has been enlarged this year to include more species than ever before. Although the number of areas shown is the same as last year, two of last year's counties, Allegany and Worcester, were replaced this year by Washington and Carroll Counties, which had better coverage at the peak of the migration period. As usual, an "0" signifies that a species was unreported during the spring migration, and a dash shows that the species was seen but that no arrival date was obtained. Most of the people whose names are mentioned elsewhere in this summary contributed dates to Table 1. Those who supplied the largest number of observations, however, should be identified with the counties from which they reported:

Table 1. Spring Arrival Dates, 1955

	Wash	Fred	Carr	Mont	Balt	Pr.G	Anne	S.Md	Caro	Talb
Canada Goose	--	3/20	3/19	4/2	3/10	3/11	3/3	--	2/17	--
Broad-winged Hawk	--	4/16	4/13	4/16	4/16	4/20	4/28	--	0	0
Osprey	--	4/16	--	--	4/8	4/16	3/22	3/16	3/7	3/10
Killdeer	--	--	2/27	1/29	2/28	3/8	2/17	--	3/19	--
Spotted Sandpiper	5/7	5/12	--	4/18	4/20	5/7	4/23	5/7	5/7	5/7
Solitary Sandpiper	--	4/11	--	5/7	5/7	5/7	4/10	5/7	5/7	5/7
Greater Yellow-legs	--	4/22	--	5/1	4/3	--	--	5/7	4/15	5/7
Lesser Yellow-legs	--	4/25	5/7	5/7	3/20	--	4/4	5/7	4/25	5/7
Mourning Dove	2/24	2/21	2/11	2/19	2/18	2/28	2/20	--	--	--
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5/7	5/7	--	--	4/30	5/4	5/21	5/7	4/28	6/1
Black-billed Cuckoo	0	0	0	0	5/18	5/6	5/8	5/7	0	5/14
Chuck-will's-widow	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/23	4/27	4/26	4/23
Whip-poor-will	5/7	5/2	--	4/22	4/9	4/19	4/23	5/7	4/18	4/14
Nighthawk	5/5	5/6	5/7	--	4/14	5/20	5/19	--	5/5	4/27
Chimney Swift	4/24	4/11	4/13	4/16	4/17	4/9	4/3	4/24	4/9	4/8
Ruby-throated Humm.	5/10	5/16	5/7	5/7	5/3	5/6	4/19	5/7	4/23	4/19
Eastern Kingbird	5/3	5/2	4/30	4/23	4/28	4/23	3/10	4/23	4/19	4/23
Crested Flycatcher	5/7	5/5	5/5	5/7	4/28	5/1	5/1	5/7	4/27	4/25
Eastern Phoebe	--	3/6	3/27	3/10	3/20	3/5	3/7	--	3/26	3/27
Acadian Flycatcher	5/7	5/12	0	5/7	--	5/4	5/8	5/7	5/7	--
Eastern Wood Pewee	5/7	5/14	5/7	5/5	5/7	5/6	5/8	5/7	4/27	5/2
Tree Swallow	--	4/14	4/17	4/20	4/9	3/20	4/10	--	3/7	4/12
Rough-winged Swallow	--	4/10	5/7	4/20	4/10	4/9	4/3	4/24	4/10	4/23
Barn Swallow	4/18	4/8	4/10	4/3	3/23	3/11	4/6	--	3/31	3/31
Purple Martin	4/2	4/9	4/12	3/25	--	3/29	4/2	4/24	3/16	3/24
House Wren	4/22	4/19	4/26	4/16	4/16	4/20	4/20	4/23	4/19	4/21
Catbird	4/25	4/30	5/3	4/27	4/23	4/28	4/19	--	4/23	4/23
Brown Thrasher	4/16	4/11	4/21	4/12	3/24	4/3	3/25	--	4/9	4/16
Robin	--	2/10	2/13	3/2	2/7	2/28	2/19	--	--	--
Wood Thrush	4/24	4/21	4/20	4/17	4/20	4/23	4/23	--	4/19	4/19
Olive-backed Thrush	--	5/10	5/19	5/7	5/7	5/9	4/20	--	0	5/21
Gray-cheeked Thrush	--	0	0	0	0	5/20	5/21	0	5/18	5/16
Veery	--	0	5/11	5/7	4/29	5/7	5/8	0	5/11	4/25
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	--	--	5/7	4/18	3/24	4/20	4/20	4/24	3/29	4/2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	--	4/12	--	4/3	4/29	4/20	4/1	--	4/25	4/18
White-eyed Vireo	--	5/16	5/7	4/24	4/16	--	4/24	4/23	4/21	4/20
Yellow-throated Vireo	5/7	4/28	5/7	5/1	4/27	4/20	5/8	5/7	4/30	0
Blue-headed Vireo	--	5/7	0	--	4/21	4/20	5/7	0	0	4/30
Red-eyed Vireo	5/4	5/6	5/7	4/23	4/26	5/6	4/25	4/24	4/28	4/25
Warbling Vireo	5/3	0	0	0	4/28	0	5/4	0	4/27	5/7
Black & White Warbler	4/20	5/5	4/21	--	4/18	4/12	4/20	4/14	4/13	4/18
Prothonotary Warbler	0	0	0	5/7	4/26	--	--	--	4/19	5/7
Worm-eating Warbler	5/7	5/6	--	4/23	5/7	5/5	4/30	--	4/30	5/3
Golden-winged Warbler	5/7	5/9	0	4/26	5/7	5/10	0	0	0	5/7
Blue-winged Warbler	--	5/16	0	5/7	5/5	5/7	5/8	0	5/1	5/4
Tennessee Warbler	--	5/19	0	0	5/7	0	5/19	0	0	0
Nashville Warbler	--	5/7	0	0	4/30	0	5/14	5/7	0	0
Parula Warbler	5/7	5/7	--	4/24	4/21	4/19	5/4	4/14	4/30	4/23

Table 1. Spring Arrival Dates, 1955 (cont.)

	Wash	Fred	Carr	Mont	Balt	Pr.G	Anne	S.Md	Caro	Talb
Yellow Warbler	4/30	5/16	4/30	4/9	4/23	5/5	4/27	5/1	4/22	4/30
Magnolia Warbler	5/7	5/11	--	5/7	5/7	5/8	5/8	0	5/5	5/11
Cape May Warbler	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/5	5/7	5/6	0	5/19	5/7
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	5/7	5/7	5/7	4/28	4/23	5/7	5/8	5/7	5/11	4/25
Myrtle Warbler	4/30	4/26	4/24	--	4/13	4/19	4/24	4/23	--	--
Black-thr. Green Warb.	5/7	5/7	5/7	4/23	4/29	4/22	5/8	5/7	0	4/23
Cerulean Warbler	5/7	5/7	0	5/1	--	0	0	0	0	0
Blackburnian Warbler	--	5/23	5/7	5/1	5/5	5/7	0	5/7	0	5/24
Yellow-throated Warb.	0	0	0	5/7	5/7	--	4/14	4/10	5/7	4/12
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/7	5/5	0	5/7	4/27	5/7	4/24	0	0	5/7
Bay-breasted Warbler	5/7	5/7	0	5/12	5/11	0	0	0	5/20	5/7
Black-poll Warbler	--	0	5/9	5/7	5/7	5/8	5/8	5/7	5/7	5/7
Prairie Warbler	5/7	4/24	5/7	5/7	4/23	4/20	4/20	4/14	4/25	4/22
Yellow Palm Warbler	--	0	4/16	--	4/10	--	4/20	0	4/20	4/18
Oven-bird	5/7	5/7	5/7	4/24	4/28	4/19	4/24	4/23	4/18	4/25
Northern Water-thrush	--	0	0	4/19	4/20	5/21	4/28	0	5/7	4/24
Louisiana Water-thrush	--	4/12	--	4/15	4/9	4/4	--	--	4/3	4/1
Kentucky Warbler	--	5/7	--	5/7	5/6	5/5	5/8	5/7	4/30	5/7
Yellow-throat	5/7	4/27	5/7	--	4/19	4/24	4/21	4/13	4/19	4/20
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/1	4/23	5/7
Hooded Warbler	--	5/7	--	4/29	5/1	4/20	4/24	5/7	5/7	4/29
Wilson's Warbler	5/7	0	0	0	0	5/18	5/8	0	0	5/2
Canada Warbler	5/7	5/8	5/18	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/23	0	5/19	5/17
Redstart	5/4	5/7	5/7	5/3	4/19	4/22	5/4	4/30	5/7	4/29
Bobolink	--	--	5/10	5/1	5/10	5/8	--	5/6	5/6	5/6
Red-wing	--	2/28	2/25	2/19	2/6	2/20	2/24	--	--	--
Orchard Oriole	5/7	5/7	5/7	5/7	—	5/7	4/29	5/1	4/23	5/7
Baltimore Oriole	4/30	5/5	5/4	5/7	4/27	4/26	5/8	5/7	4/27	4/24
Scarlet Tanager	5/4	5/7	5/4	4/24	4/27	4/30	5/4	5/7	4/30	4/24
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/7	0	5/7	5/7	5/6	5/7	5/8	0	0	5/7
Indigo Bunting	5/7	5/6	5/3	5/7	5/2	5/4	4/21	4/13	4/19	4/19
Goldfinch	--	4/21	4/12	4/16	4/16	4/18	4/20	4/24	--	--
Grasshopper Sparrow	5/7	4/23	5/7	4/18	--	5/5	--	5/7	5/3	4/22
Vesper Sparrow	--	4/1	4/10	3/10	--	3/31	--	4/13	3/29	--
Chipping Sparrow	--	4/11	4/12	3/12	4/8	3/11	3/20	--	3/21	4/2
Fox Sparrow	--	2/28	2/13	2/20	2/12	2/22	2/11	--	--	--

Dr. and Mrs. Ralph S. Stauffer, Washington County; Duvall A. Jones and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dubois, Carroll County; Dr. John W. Richards, Frederick County; John H. Fales, Jack Hailman and Seth Low, Montgomery County; Charles M. Buchanan and Stephen W. Simon, Baltimore County and Baltimore City; Chandler S. Robbins, John H. Fales, Paul F. Springer and Fred Schmid, Prince Georges County; Mrs. W. L. Henderson, Mrs. Gail Tappan and Prof. and Mrs. David Howard, Anne Arundel County; Elizabeth Slater, Friel Sanders and John H. Fales, Southern Maryland (principally Calvert County); Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher and Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Hewitt, Caroline County; and Richard L. Kleen, Talbot County.

In examining the table we are struck by the unusually large number of 0's, and by the fact that even in the most intensively covered counties numerous common species were not recorded until ten or more days later than their arrival in adjacent counties. The logical conclusions are: (1) that fewer transient birds were in evidence than in a more nearly normal year; and (2) that while a few individuals arrived at normal dates (some even at very early dates), the bulk of the individuals were delayed in reaching our latitude. There was general agreement that the migration was one of the poorest in recent years, and there certainly were not any spectacular waves of migrants. Instead, the transients simply filtered through, with comparatively small numbers present daily.

Attempts to compare the migration of one year with that of another year on the basis of only one day's observations from each year may be highly misleading, and such comparisons are generally avoided. However, in view of the widespread complaints of a poor migration throughout the eastern states and the possible connections with last fall's hurricanes and the severe March freeze in the Southeast, it seems worthwhile to present comparative figures for purposes of discussion. The counts used are those taken from ten areas that were covered on both May 8, 1954 and May 7, 1955 on the State-wide Bird Count. All parts of the State except the Allegheny Plateau and the lower Eastern Shore are included. The figures presented are the total number of individuals for all ten areas combined. Since both counts were taken on days when virtually no migration took place, they represent minimum populations for the two years and should provide more reliable comparisons than would be possible if one or both counts had been made during a heavy migratory flight. It is a well known fact that sharp temperature drops and northerly winds greatly retard spring migration. Data compiled by the U. S. Weather Bureau show that on the night preceding the 1955 count there was a temperature drop of more than 50° at such widely scattered points as Hancock, Towson, and Waldorf. Such sharp drops are uncommon in Maryland at any season and must certainly have held migration nearly to a standstill.

Comparative figures from 1954 and 1955 Statewide Counts

	1954	1955		1954	1955
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	9	10	Bank Swallow	60	30
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	8	Cliff Swallow	2	10
Eastern Kingbird	240	296	Purple Martin	441	374
Crested Flycatcher	138	114	House Wren	134	229
Eastern Phoebe	108	81	Olive-backed Thrush	5	9
Eastern Wood Pewee	34	27	Veery	30	4
Acadian Flycatcher	27	16	Vermivora warblers	23	20
Least Flycatcher	2	1	Myrtle Warbler	214	284
Alder Flycatcher	3	0	Other Dendroica warblers	241	164
Barn Swallow	874	734	Oven-bird thru Canada W.	43	22
Tree Swallow	63	75	Total transient warblers	307	206

The species selected for the above comparison were those that most

observers declared were scarcer than usual in 1955. The warbler figures include only the transient species--that is, those which do not nest in the areas where they were observed. It is interesting to me that most of the species that we felt were drastically reduced do not show up badly at all in this tabulation. We can infer, then, that our impressions of greatly reduced numbers were more a result of absence of heavy waves of migrants, than of a serious decline in the population. Two exceptions seem to be the transient warblers (excluding the Myrtle) and the Veery. The apparent sharp increase in House Wrens is misleading as it resulted from better coverage of House Wren habitat at Gibson Island than had been attained the previous year; most other areas showed a slight drop in this species. The apparent decreases in pewees and Empidonax flycatchers are easily accounted for by the lateness of the 1955 season; these birds are late migrants and had not arrived in any numbers by the time of the 1955 count. The Myrtle Warbler, whose peak passes through in April, would be expected to make a better showing in a late season like 1955 than in a normal year.

Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds. Although Whip-poor-wills were consistently late in arriving, the first Chuck-will's-widows were heard at near-normal or early dates. The first Chuck-will's-widows, which arrived on Apr. 23 in Anne Arundel County (Misses Slater and Sanders) and in Talbot County (Kleen), just barely broke the earliest State record; the next was encountered at Federalsburg in Caroline County on Apr. 26 (V. Wright). Notice the wide spread of hummingbird arrival dates: from Apr. 19 in Talbot County (Kleen) and at Gibson Island (Mesdames Henderson and Tappan) to May 16 at Emmitsburg. At most other locations arrivals of this species were about a week late.

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers. Two Pileated Woodpeckers were seen in parts of Maryland where they are seldom encountered. The first was at Monkton in northeastern Baltimore County on Jan. 5 (Simon); the other was seen in early April in the vicinity of Harper's Mill Road in Harford County (reported to Miss Everett). An extremely early Eastern Kingbird was studied at Gibson Island on Mar. 10, during an unseasonable warm spell (Mrs. W. L. Henderson, Mrs. Gail Tappan). We may hypothesize that it had been migrating in the vicinity of the Gulf coast on Mar. 8 and that it was carried far to the northeastward by gale force winds aloft (that were reported blowing from 70 to 85 miles an hour some three miles above the earth's surface, but were naturally not that severe at the height at which we assume the bird to have been migrating). The northernmost wintering Eastern Phoebe reported was found at Monkton on Jan. 12 (Andrew Simon); it remained until at least Jan. 28 (Stephen W. Simon).

Jays, Chickadees. As might have been expected following last fall's record southward movement of Blue Jays, the spring flight was also a record-breaker. The top count was of 597 birds flying northward along the Fall Line at Laurel on May 5 (Robbins). The Black-capped Chickadees began thinning out in March, but lingered into May at Gibson Island (13 on May 8), and Monkton (3 on May 6). A single individual was seen at Monkton on three later May dates and again on June 27 (Stephen Simon).

Wrens, Mockingbirds, Shrikes. The Denton Bewick's Wren remained through February. On Apr. 7 the first migrant of this species was seen at Alesia in Carroll County (Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dubois), and on the following day the first for Allegany County was seen at McCools (L. M. Llewellyn). Wintering Carolina Wrens and Mockingbirds were apparently decimated in the vicinity of North East by the early February freeze (Day). The only Northern Shrike reported was found south of Frederick on Jan. 22 by Philip and Paul DuMont.

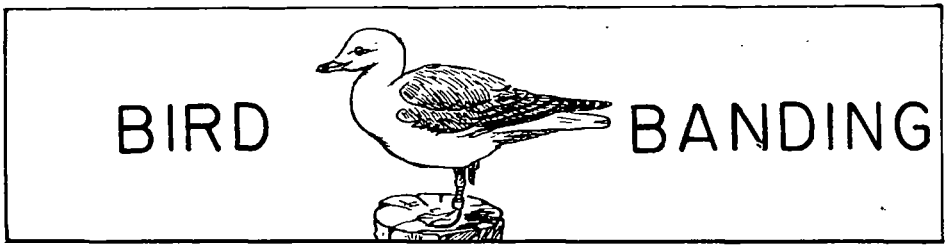
Warblers. Some good counts for early in the season were 9 Yellow Warblers at Bethesda on Apr. 10 (Jack Hailman) and 25 Yellow-throated Warblers in the Pocomoke Swamp on Apr. 4 (John Terborgh and Hailman). A singing individual of the latter species was found along the Patapsco River near Ilchester on May 7 (Robbins). Although most warblers were late in arriving, no especially late departure reports were submitted. The last migrant noted was a Mourning Warbler at Darlington in Harford County, June 4 (Stephen Simon).

Finches and Sparrows. A Brazilian Cardinal, presumably an escaped or released cage bird, successfully wintered at the feeding station of Col. Richard Scarborough at Fort Meade. Many observers flocked to see this spectacular-looking bird during the latter half of March and early April. The Gibson Island Dickcissel was seen daily through Mar. 13 (Vera Henderson). Evening Grosbeaks wintered sparingly in all parts of the State, the highest count comprising 68 birds at Beltsville on Feb. 28 (Fales). The spring flight of this northern species was very disappointing, and the only persons who reported Evening Grosbeaks at their feeding stations were Janet Malcolm and Mr. and Mrs. Francis Albert, all of Baltimore. Last departure dates were May 1 at Lake Roland (Buchanan), May 3 at Laurel (Robbins), and May 7 in Howard County (Robbins). The only additional Pine Grosbeak for this winter was seen at Monkton on Jan. 6 (Stephen Simon). Omitted by mistake from the preceding Season report was a Red Crossbill at the David Howards' feeding station in Annapolis on Nov. 20. Hilda Smith identified the only White-winged Crossbills of the spring on the very late date of Apr. 17, when about a dozen descended into her back yard at Silver Spring. Savannah Sparrows summered again near Clear Spring in the Hagerstown Valley (Dr. and Mrs. R. S. Stauffer). The only Bachman's Sparrow reported was a singing bird two miles northwest of Savage in Howard County on May 7 (Robbins). Migrating White-throated Sparrows stayed much later into May than is usual; the last May report was on the 21st at Laurel. Single birds far past the normal migration period were found at Gibson Island on June 15 (Al Varrieur) and at Solomons on June 28 (Karl Stecher).

Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel

EARLY DEADLINE

Please draw a big red circle around January 5 on your favorite calendar. Field notes for the period July through December 1955 should be mailed by that date. Please send a complete list of fall arrival and departure dates for your county as well as unusual records, counts, and comments.



"OPERATION RECOVERY"

Richard P. Riesz

One of the principal means by which ornithologists obtain information about bird habits and activities is through bird-banding programs carried out in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior. In particular, virtually all that is known about the migratory habits of birds--where birds fly, how fast they migrate, and when they migrate and why--has been discovered by means of this technique. With this in mind, Dr. James Baird of the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Newport, R. I., initiated this fall a bird banding project, termed "Operation Recovery," designed to obtain more information about the migratory habits of birds which fly along the eastern coast of the United States.

Briefly, the plan was to establish stations along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida and to trap, band, and release at these stations during a nine-day period of intensive banding (dates staggered, north to south). In addition to the usual valuable information gathered during an intensive banding program, the hope was that some birds banded at one station might be recaptured at another station, thus giving directly information on speed of migration.

It was the pleasure and priviledge of a group of Maryland Ornithological Society members, including Mr. and Mrs. Richard D. Cole, Chandler S. Robbins. Stephen W. Simon. Dr. and Mrs. Richard P. Riesz. Richard L. Kleen, Thomas Lord, Bruce Davenport, and Joe Spurry, to operate a station in the vicinity of Ocean City, Maryland, from September 10 through September 18, 1955. Banding operations were conducted in two areas. One was between Ocean City and the Delaware State Line, while the other was about ten miles south of Ocean City on Assateague Island. The Ocean City sites were characterized by growths of tall pines and considerable areas of dense, head-high bayberry thickets. The Assateague Island areas were typical of barrier beaches along our coast, with vegetation similar to that at Ocean City, though considerably stunted by the action of wind and salt water; and in addition, there were extensive salt marshes and mud flats.

Birds were captured by one of two methods. At both locations Japanese mist nets were erected at favorable spots and birds flying into these near-invisible nets became entangled--to be removed at frequent intervals with an infinity of patience, banded and released. Almost all

birds caught in this way were small land-birds. On Assateague Island in addition to the nets, an all-purpose trap of wire mesh with chicken-wire runways was used to catch shorebirds on the mud flats.

The results of these banding operations were extremely gratifying in several ways. The total number of birds banded was 816, representing 75 species. Over 200 repeat records (birds trapped more than once) were obtained, indicating that many birds remained in the vicinity of the banding locations for several days. Species particularly in evidence included Least Sandpiper (26 banded), Semipalmated Sandpiper (62), Catbird (71), Olive-backed Thrush (36), Red-eyed Vireo (67), Cape May Warbler (23), Western Palm Warbler (39), Northern Water-thrush (27), Yellow-throat (26), American Redstart (67), Cardinal (27), and Red-eyed Towhee (34). Altogether, 25 species of warblers and 8 species of fly-catchers were banded, giving an unexcelled opportunity to study the differences between the "confusing" species.

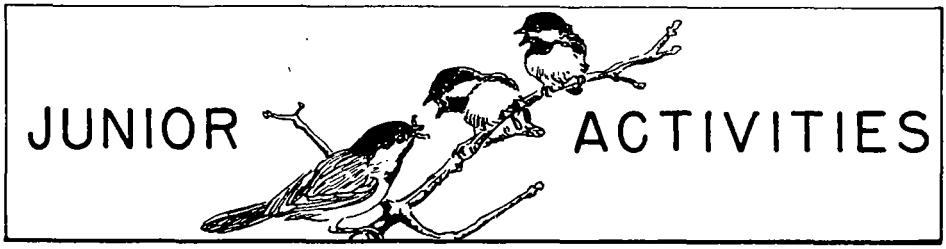
Some surprises were found in unusual species. The Connecticut Warbler (9), Philadelphia Vireo (9), and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (10) were notable since they are observed so seldom in any part of our State. A single Mourning Warbler and 3 Alder Flycatchers were the first ever to have been reported from the Eastern Shore. Two Lark Sparrows banded on Assateague Island were the first of this species ever to be banded in Maryland. Incidentally, they were trapped at exactly the same location where one was seen last year [see Maryland Birdlife 11: 42]. Among unusual sight records were two observations each of Golden Plover and Dickcissel.

The influence of the weather on migration was easily discernible even over the short period of observation. A weak cold front passing through on the 18th nearly tripled the number of warblers caught, compared with other daily records. Unfortunately, no birds banded at more northern stations were captured; but another year may bring more favorable results in this phase of the study.

Some "extracurricular" highlights of the operation were a trip through the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge guided by Louis Conklin, the unexpected "dropping in" by plane of Dr. and Mrs. Christiansen of Iowa with Maurice and Irma Broun from Hawk Mountain, and the evening rehashing of each day's banding results.

"Operation Recovery" was felt to be a real success, particularly at the stations operated by the M. O. S., which banded more birds than did any other group in a similar period. Plans are already being laid for next year's program, particularly with respect to banding more shorebirds. Those who participated in 1955 are looking forward to another period of good banding and good fellowship, and they welcome all others who wish to share these experiences. Tentative dates for 1956 are September 8 through September 16, and there may be a chance to participate on other September dates as well.

114 Franklin St., Morristown, N. J.



EDITORIAL

Gordon A. Knight

Certainly every M.O.S. member realizes the value of a junior birding program--or does he? We know that youth educated in conservation will become the defenders of our natural resources tomorrow. But how many children are being taught the principles of conservation? Are we as organized bird lovers fulfilling our responsibility to youth by teaching them the pleasures of birding?

Let us examine our record. Of our eight local units only two have strong youth programs: The Allegany County Bird Club and the Talbot County Bird Club. The newly organized Talbot unit deserves the commendation of all M.O.S. members for its accomplishments with a junior program. The Junior Nature Camp sponsored by the Allegany unit provides many children with an informative week at Pleasant Valley, where birding is excellent. Why haven't the other clubs developed a youth program?

The purpose of this junior news page will be to keep M.O.S. members informed on the accomplishments and activities of our junior clubs. I believe too few people realize the potentialities of juniors. If the articles which appear on this page fail to stimulate and aid the local units which to date do not have functioning junior programs, then we shall be only partially successful.

A junior editorial board has been appointed to be responsible for a junior department. This committee is composed of five people: Gordon Knight, Chairman, from the Harford club, Joe Spurry and Peter Bailey, from the Talbot club, and two members still to be appointed from the Allegany club. Juniors will write and edit the items for the column. A junior page is planned for every issue henceforth.

R.F.D. 1, Aberdeen

[GORDON KNIGHT, one of our outstanding junior citizens, Editorial Board representative from Harford County, and Chairman of the Junior Editorial Board, received national recognition last spring for his achievements in the conservation field. He was chosen by Governor McKeldin's Committee to represent our State at the Young Outdoor America conference sponsored by the Izaak Walton League at Chicago on March 30.--Ed.]

MY BIRD-WATCHING SON

Marjorie C. Spurry

"My son is a bird watcher". A year ago, after making the above statement to various friends, I was a little hesitant about repeating it; for they looked at me as if they wished to console me for having a son interested in such a "silly thing".

But now, I can say with pride that I shall ever be grateful to those who have opened up an entire new world for him.

To be truthful, I passed off this new interest as just another fad. I have tolerated and lived through bottle tops, stones and shells, matchbook covers and a praying mantis in every canning jar I owned. I thought this would go the way of all the other hobbies, but I was wrong.

I myself thought bird watching was a little foolish. Why birds are just creatures that fly away if you come too near! Just to spot the first robin of the spring was sufficient.

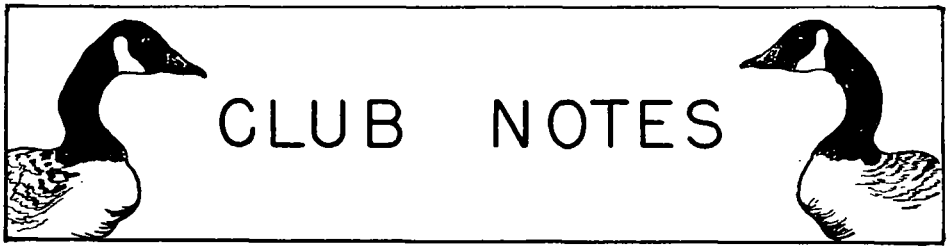
When I found this new hobby required binoculars, special bird books, etc., I was a little peeved with myself for encouraging Joe. But as time passed, with each bird hike, each new entry listed in his bird book, I realized that here was a sport not only healthful and educational but a never ending challenge as well.

For weeks Joe searched for a Baltimore Oriole. The day he finally spotted one was a never-to-be-forgotten day in his young life. Another advantage of this hobby then scored itself upon me. There is a code among birders of absolute honesty. No birder worth his salt would ever claim to have seen a bird he wasn't absolutely sure of.

It is true that there have been times when I wished I had never heard of birds; when my son is at his "Bird Watching Window" I dare not enter the room; when at 6:30 on a Sunday morning he would yell to his brother, "Come quick, there's a chickadee at the feeder"!; when he found a deserted baby Killdeer and brought it home to tend, using my best linen napkins for its bed.

Our yard is a "Birds Haven". Bird feeders are everywhere and I guess the butcher often wonders why we need so much suet. More bread graces our yard than our table. But all in all, it is more than worth it to have a boy interested in nature and occupying his mind and thoughts with such a worth-while sport. This more than makes up for any disadvantages and inconveniences it may cause. To mothers who have sons who are truly interested in our feathered friends I will say, "Count this among your blessings".

St. Michaels



AVID AVISTS AFFILIATE WITH M. O. S.

Edwin M. Barry

Formal bird club organizations in Anne Arundel County have had their "ups and downs" depending on the interest and activity of local leaders and residents. The first formal club was established by Dr. F. H. Vinup, Mrs. W. L. Henderson, and Mrs. Gail Tappan at Gibson Island in 1952. Although the formal organization did not remain active, many people on the island have continued to carry on the annual Christmas Bird Count and to report bird observations regularly. Considerable interest in a very informal way has been shown in the Annapolis area since 1950, and through the interest of Captain J. E. M. Wood, Commander E. P. Wilson, E. M. Barry and others, an active informal club was started in the spring of 1954. The outstanding contribution of this club was the annual Christmas Count of that year. With the assistance of the Baltimore Bird Club and of other birders from all parts of the State, 101 species and 47,700 individuals were recorded by 61 observers in 21 parties.

The increased interest in the Annapolis area as a result of President Ed Wilson's continued organizational efforts brought about the formal organization of the "Avid Avists" of Anne Arundel County on July 9, 1955, with Edwin M. Barry, president, Captain J. E. M. Wood, vice president, and Mrs. Carl Long, secretary. The drawing up of the constitution and bylaws, planning an annual program, and carrying out the second formal Christmas Bird Count will make the club year the most active in Annapolis history.

516 Munsey Building, Baltimore 2

ANNUAL CONVENTION - OCEAN CITY, MAY 13-15, 1955

Richard L. Kleen

One of the highlights of the ornithological year for many Maryland birders is the annual State convention of the Maryland Ornithological Society. Not only is this a wonderful opportunity to do some interesting birding, but at these meetings are gathered people from throughout the State, of all ages and from all walks of life. They are drawn together by a common interest, that of birds. An octogenarian may be seen conversing delightedly with a boy not yet in his

teens. A doctor with a string of degrees may be avidly listening to a man who was unable to finish high school and be learning from him. A similarity of interests is the great common denominator and its catalytic forces are at work nowhere more than at our State meeting.

This year, 133 people representing all of the local chapters of the M.O.S. attended the State convention which was held for the first time in Ocean City. In addition there were delegations from both the York and Lancaster Bird Clubs and from Wilmington, Delaware.

Ocean City is ideaLy situated for a birding convention. In no other county of Maryland is there such a diversity of habitats and such a variety of birdlife as is there in Worcester. There we find the barrier beaches of Assateague Island, the mud flats of Sinepuxent Bay so favored by migrating shorebirds, Heine's Pond, famed for duck and geese concentrations, and Pocomoke, the northernmost of the true southern swamps, with its hosts of landbirds.

In this setting, Maryland birders found themselves for three glorious days. In those three days, they recorded 169 species of birds. For almost everyone present there were birds never seen before, experiences to be remembered for years to come.

Among the birds many of us will long remember were: the Swainson's Warbler that so cooperatively flew into a mist net and was thereby seen by most of the convention, the Prothonotary Warblers with their cowls of golden-yellow, the striking American Oyster-catcher, the Purple Sandpipers along the jetty, the magnificent Pileated Woodpecker, the myriads of terns on the islands of Sinepuxent Bay including the Royal, Caspian, Black, Gull-billed, and the rare Roseate, the flock of Golden Plover with such a long ocean voyage ahead of them, and the Greater Shearwater for those lucky enough to glimpse it.

And there was humor too. I will never forget standing along the road to South Point, in the rain with thirty other birders, listening intently for the Chuck-will's-widow Cars passed us constantly and their occupants seemed so disappointed when they were informed there was no accident, and so amused when told we were listening for birds. I'm sure more than one thought there was some dirty work afoot. And I'll remember the well-dressed elderly gentleman walking up to a group of birders standing on the Ocean City Bridge. In answer to the usual question, he was informed they were looking at birds. He gazed placidly over the then barren waters and said, "I must have come too late". Many of us will remember the boat trips miles from shore in search of the elusive pelagic birds. That majority who were seasick will never forget the sea, and the fortunate minority will never forget the majority.

Of course the weekend went too quickly and ended too soon. But, next May we will meet again at Ocean City. Last year's convention was a terrific success. Let's try to make next year's even bigger and better!

COMING EVENTS

Jan. 1 ANNAPOLIS Christmas Count (sponsored by Annapolis & Baltimore).
1 SENECA Christmas Count (Sponsored by Takoma Park Nature Soc.).
2 POINT LOOKOUT Christmas Count, southern St. Marys County.
3 Talbot Club - Leaders Training Discussion Group, 13 Aurora St., EASTON (also Jan. 10, 24, 31; Feb. 7, 21, 28).
4 Harford Club Monthly Meeting, BEL AIR Library, 8 p. m.
8 LOCH RAVEN and LAKE ROLAND Hike, Baltimore Club.
11 FREDERICK Club Monthly Meeting. "What's My Bird?"
13 BALTIMORE Club Monthly Meeting, Pratt Library. W. Bryant Tyrrell's new film on the C & O Canal.
20 Talbot Club Monthly Meeting, EASTON High School, 8 p. m. Film, "Bob-white through the Year."
22 MONKTON Bird Banding Trip to Bluemount Nursery, Baltimore Club.
Feb. -- FREDERICK County Winter Bird Hike.
5 DRUID HILL PARK Duck Pond, Baltimore Club. Meet at Zoo, 2 p. m.
6 Harford Club Monthly Meeting, BEL AIR High School, 8 p.m.
8 FREDERICK Club Monthly Meeting. Bird Classification.
10 BALTIMORE Club Meeting - Chas. Mohr, Nat'l Audubon Soc.Speaker.
17 Talbot Club Monthly Meeting, EASTON Library. Duck film.
17 Anne Arundel Monthly Meeting, ANNAPOLIS Library. Hobby Night.
19 Statewide Waterfowl Trip, Talbot Club host. ST. MICHAELS,10 a.m.
26 TYDINGS ESTATE Field Trip, Harford Club.
Mar. 3 SANDY POINT STATE PARK Field Trip, Anne Arundel Club. 9 a. m.
4 LIBERTY DAM Trip, Baltimore Club. Meet Gwynn Oak Jct. 7:30 a. m.
5 Harford Club Monthly Meeting, BEL AIR Library, 8 p. m. R.L.Kleen.
7 BALTIMORE Club Seminar - Herpetology - Dr. Charles Stine.
9 BALTIMORE Club Monthly Meeting - speaker to be announced.
11 BALTIMORE Club Seminar Field Trip - Dr. Stine.
12 BALTIMORE Club Seminar - Bird Song - Chandler Robbins.
14 FREDERICK Club Monthly Meeting, Richard L. Kleen.
16 BALTIMORE PAID LECTURE,Art Museum, 8 p.m. "Rhapsody in Bluegrass" by Walter H. Shackleton.
17 ROACH'S RUN Waterfowl Sanctuary Field Trip, Baltimore Club.
22 Talbot Club Monthly Meeting, EASTON HIGH SCHOOL. C. S.Robbins.
25 BAY HUNDRED Hike, Talbot Club. Meet St. Michaels High, 8 a.m.
25 BALTIMORE Club - Evening woodcock flight, C. Haven Kolb,Leader.