

THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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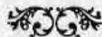
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A DAY IN "CRANETOWN"

By HARRY S. VAUGHN

On Saturday, May 28, 1933, five members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society left Nashville at noon and motored westward, some 200 miles to Reelfoot Lake. We arrived at Samburg in good time for a fine dinner of fresh fish, and immediately made our arrangements with Dee Shaw, local warden, for an early morning start. The State's lodge at the Spillway, having been placed at our disposal for the night, we repaired there and were shortly joined by five of our Memphis members under the leadership of Ben B. Coffey. After a prolonged exchange of bird news and other pleasantries we turned in for a good night's rest. Our course next morning, from Samburg, lay across about four miles of chiefly open water, so two motor boats were engaged and to the rear of these six light skiffs were tied. When we had crossed the open water, our motor boats were anchored among the "fields" of water lilies and we began the balance of the more than a mile journey by poling the small boats through the flooded swamp, detouring constantly in order to escape floating logs and tangles of underbrush. After more than an hour of this, our guides admitted that they were stumped as to just where the "Cranetown" was, and one of our party, who had visited it twice before, by wading in from the west, frankly admitted that he was "lost." We then began to watch the flight of the big birds over the trees and found them going north and south, so on a vote, it was decided—and luckily—that we go north. Shortly afterwards, the clattering notes of young birds floated to us through the trees and redoubling our efforts we raced our boats through the thick swamp until we pushed their prows through into an open slough, and there before us, in the tree tops, lay the great and tumultuous avian city.

Boats being too slow for the sort of inspection we wanted to make, most of us stepped out into the nearly waist deep water and proceeded, with considerable merriment, over our splashing about, to look the birds over. Every one of the big old cypress trees was crowned with many nests and the honks of the big Ward's (Great Blue) Herons,¹ and the constant clamor of the young Double-crested Cormorants² was so loud that we had to shout our conversations to one another. We were presently attracted by a Black-crowned Night Heron,³ a species not heretofore found nesting in Tennessee, and a short search revealed the fact that a dozen pairs had formed a small nesting colony among the deciduous trees toward one side of "Cranetown." The nests of these herons ranged from 15 to 25 feet above the water, and were very recently built, in ash and in maple trees. Some of the nests were not yet finished, while others held from one to five fresh eggs. The graceful Water Turkey⁴ was much in evidence, as it soared about and through the tops of the big cypress trees where it nested alongside the Cormorants, Ward's Herons and American Egrets.⁵

Having brought motion picture and still cameras in hopes of getting an array of pictures, the writer and Messrs. Ganier and Sharp looked about for trees from which good nearby views into adjacent trees might be taken, and were soon in the tops and at work. Messrs. Coffey and Cheek explored the colony from below and reported that previous estimates of a thousand nests seemed to be entirely conservative. Viewed from the tree tops, the sight is most absorbing. Looking about, one could see eggs in the nests, sitting

birds and young of all ages. The young Cormorants and Water Turkeys were black, the Egrets were white and the Ward's Herons were bluish grey. Some of the latter, old enough to stand in the nests, when approached too closely, would venture out to the ends of the limbs and, losing their balance, would regain their perch with difficulty or fall and catch on a limb below. The young Egrets would venture out quite as far, but had the knack of keeping their balance nicely. The awkward young Cormorants wisely stuck to their nests. One thing that impressed me very much was the apparent lack of fear of the old birds after they had become accustomed to our presence. For instance, in the tree where I sat for several hours, there were a number of nests, some containing eggs and others young. The parent birds sitting or feeding young would alight on the limbs quite near me and would sit there until I would move, whereupon they would take flight. Some of these nests were in easy reach of my hand as I sat in my perch a hundred feet above the water.

Many of the trees held fifteen or more nests and in some all four species were noted. The different species apparently had no objection to another sort nesting in close proximity. An amusing instance was that of a Ward's Heron which flew in to feed its young. From a nest, a yard away, four young Egrets rushed in for a share of the food; the big Heron hissed them off, whereupon the young Egrets "reversed gears" and scuttled back to their nest. The feeding process of the Herons was noted with a great deal of interest. The old birds would alight on the edge of their nests and after looking their young over, would apparently give a big belch which would immediately cause the young to clamor for food, but it usually took two such efforts to force the food up into the throat. This done, the old bird lowered her head in the midst of the young, and they immediately ran their bills and heads up into her gullet for their meal. When disturbed on the nests shortly after being fed, the young Herons would at times disgorge their food. Perhaps this was intended to be a peace offering. At any rate, it was noted that such food was shortly covered with large weevils which had been hiding inside the nests. Many Bronzed Grackles were about the colony and their duty about the "big city" may have been to keep these weevils from getting too thick. A specimen of each the Water Turkey and Ward's Heron were collected for museum purposes by Earl Henry. Upon the firing of his gun, more than a thousand of the big birds swarmed into the air over the entire nesting area, amid screams and clatter and the harsh calls of the "big blue cranes." In a very few minutes, however, they would all settle down to their affairs, as calm as ever. The Egrets were the most numerous of the nesting birds, and being later with their nesting, perhaps a fourth of their nests still held eggs. Their nests were built of willow twigs, while those of the Ward's Heron were built of cypress. The small Snowy Heron was carefully looked for, but none was seen.

After some difficulty, the climbers were induced to descend from their lofty perches, and all partook of lunch, served in the boats, by Mrs. Coffey and Miss Smith. Two young Red-shouldered Hawks which had just left the nest and were found flying about from log to log, were added to the party and studied as the meal was disposed of. After lunch, Messrs. Calhoun and Turner gave further attention to the Night Herons, while the other members of the party explored other tree tops or listed the small birds about the swamp. A find of interest was a nest of the White-eyed Vireo, containing four eggs of the owner and one of a Cowbird. A list of all the birds noted during the day will be found on another page.

Much more could be written about the habits of the birds we saw at this interesting place, but lack of space forbids. Each of our party, however, expressed the intention of coming again and for a longer stay, if possible.

Nashville, Tenn., June, 1933.

(Scientific names: 1—*Ardea herodias wardi*; 2—*Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*; 3—*Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*; 4—*Anhinga anhinga*; 5—*Casmerodius albus egretta*.)

SPRING BIRD CENSUS FOR TENNESSEE

By MEMBERS OF THE T. O. S.

A year ago we printed the 1932 spring census lists, and, realizing that a great deal of carefully done field work was thus recorded in compact form, it has been decided to repeat this feature for 1933. The introductory remarks printed with the 1932 list hold good for the present one and are therefore not repeated. Where the actual number of birds seen is not shown, they are designated as: (c) Common, (fc) Fairly common, or (p) Present, but number not recorded. Other symbols are explained at the bottom of the list.

	Beersheba Springs, April 10	Hardin Co., April 23	Knoxville, April 30	Johnson City, Apr. 30 May 14	Mt. Pleasant, May 7	Nashville, May 14	Reelfoot Lake, May 29	Memphis, May 14	May 7
Horned (?) Grebe			1						
Pied-billed Grebe							4	1	5
Double-breasted Cormorant							200		
Water-turkey							50		
Ward's (Great Blue) Heron							200	1	1
American Egret							400	1	1
Little Blue Heron			1						
Green Heron			3	p		2		9	3
Black-crowned Night Heron							20		
American Bittern									1
Ring-necked Duck								1	
Lesser Scaup Duck			4					2	8
Turkey Vulture	3	fc	2	c	c	6	5	3	4
Black Vulture		7		c	c	6	1	4	3
Cooper's Hawk			1		c				
Red-tailed Hawk	2			p					
Red-shouldered Hawk							2	1	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1						
Broad-winged Hawk		6				1			
Bald Eagle							1		
Osprey			1	p					
Duck Hawk	1				2				
Sparrow Hawk			2	p	fc	3			
Bob-white	11	2	fc	fc	fc	p	fc	10	8
King Rail								2	
Sora Rail								1	2
American Coot			1				6	1	
Semipalmated Plover								3	
Killdeer		3		c	fc	6	c	10	10
Spotted Sandpiper			c	p	c	1		2	
Solitary Sandpiper		2	p	fc	1				
Greater Yellow-legs								7	
Lesser Yellow-legs					1			4	1
White-rumped Sandpiper								20	
Least Sandpiper					6			39	
Semipalmated Sandpiper								10	
Stilt Sandpiper								5	
Common (?) Tern			1						
Least Tern							3	20	
Black Tern								1	
Mourning Dove	3	fc	c	c	c	fc	c	12	6
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			2		fc		c	6	10
Barn Owl			1						
Screech Owl	2	1	1						
Chuck-wills-widow						*3		1	*1
Whip-poor-will	2			p					
Nighthawk			1	p	fc	2	2		8
Chimney Swift		fc	c	p	c	p	c	15	11
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		1	fc	p			1		3
Belted Kingfisher			2	p	fc	4	1		3
Flicker	4	1	c	c	c	4	fc	6	9
Pileated Woodpecker	6	fc	1	p			6	5	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	2	3			1	4	6	2

Red-headed Woodpecker	4		fc		2	6	fc	5	8	6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2		l							
Hairy Woodpecker		1	l					2		1
Downy Woodpecker	4	4	c	fc			3	4	2	4
Kingbird		3	l		fc	4	2	8	6	3
Crested Flycatcher		4	fc	fc	fc	2	c	10	14	8
Phoebe	4		fc	c	c		2			
Acadian Flycatcher			4	c	fc		2	8	4	1
Wood Pewee		fc	4		c		c	6	9	8
Tree Swallow									1	9
Bank Swallow			2							1
Rough-winged Swallow		2	fc	fc	c	2	4	2	10	8
Barn Swallow					l	fc	90		2	8
Purple Martin		fc	fc		fc	fc	fc	40	132	2
Blue Jay	8	c	c	c	c	4	e	3	15	13
Crow	5	fc	c	c	c	fc	fc	2	6	1
Carolina Chickadee	6	fc	fc	c	fc	4	8	3	2	2
Tufted Titmouse	9	fc	c	c	c		fc	2	6	7
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	fc		p			3	2		
Bewick's Wren	3		l	p		fc	c			
Carolina Wren	8	fc	c	c	e	p	c	12	12	9
Mockingbird	1	2	fc	c	c	fc	c		11	10
Catbird		1	fc	c	c	6	fc		1	1
Brown Thrasher	3	2	fc	c	c	4	c		4	2
Robin	12	3	c	c	c	fc	c	10	1	1
Wood Thrush	1	4	c	c	c	4	c		17	12
Hermit Thrush		1								
Olive-backed Thrush			1				3			
Veery			1							
Bluebird	21	fc	fc	c	c		fc		1	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		fc	fc	c		2	2	5	5	5
Golden-crowned Kinglet	6									
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1		p						
Cedar Waxwing			3		fc	10	9	6	30	5
Loggerhead Shrike									3	2
Starling			fc	c	e	fc	6			
White-eyed Vireo		fc	c	c	e		c	10	10	7
Yellow-throated Vireo	2	c	3				fc	2	1	3
Red-eyed Vireo		c	fc	c	c	2	c	25	12	13
Warbling Vireo					fc	1	2	4	5	
Black and White Warbler	8	e	2	p	c		3	3	1	2
Prothonotary Warbler			2	p			1	20	10	8
Worm-eating Warbler				p						
Blue-winged Warbler		2	1				6			
Tennessee Warbler										5
Parula Warbler	1	1		e	e			3	2	2
Yellow Warbler		2	3	c	c		8			3
Magnolia Warbler			1				2			2
Cape May Warbler					l					
Black-throated Blue Warbler			2		1					
Myrtle Warbler	5	3	1							
Black-throated Green Warbler	7	2		p						
Cerulean Warbler			1							
Blackburnian Warbler			1				1			
Sycamore Warbler	1	1					4	6	2	1
Chestnut-sided Warbler			fc		fc		1			1
Bay-breasted Warbler										*1
Black-poll Warbler			2	p		p	20			1
Pine Warbler	12	c								
Prairie Warbler	2	fc			4		c			
Palm Warbler	2	8				1	2			
Oven-bird	7		fc	c	c		1			1
Louisiana Water-thrush	5	1	fc	fc	fc	fc	fc	3	1	2
Kentucky Warbler		fc	fc	fc	c		3		8	6
Maryland Yellow-throat		2	fc	fc	c	2	c	10	25	30
Yellow-breasted Chat	2		3	c	fc		c	10	13	12
Hooded Warbler	5	fc	1					1	5	7
Redstart			4	p	c		1	4	16	15
Bobolink				6		20	8		54	40
Meadowlark			fc	c	c	c	c	15	40	25
Red-wing Blackbird			fc	c	c	fc	2	30	48	30
Orchard Oriole		1	1	p	e	fc	fc	8	10	10
Baltimore Oriole				p	fc		fc	2	5	2

Purple Grackle	----	--	f c	c	c	----	----	----	----	----	
Bronzed Grackle	----	----	----	----	----	c	c	20	10	9	
Cowbird	----	----	1	p	f c	----	2	1	2	5	
Scarlet Tanager	----	4	f c	p	f c	----	4	----	----	2	
Summer Tanager	----	----	c	c	p	f c	2	c	8	9	
Cardinal	6	f c	c	c	c	c	4	c	12	30	21
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	----	----	----	p	8	----	----	----	----	----	
Indigo Bunting	----	8	3	p	e	----	c	6	37	22	
Painted Bunting	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	x1	----	
Dickcissel	----	----	----	----	----	----	2	8	----	64	
Goldfinch	2	f c	f c	c	c	----	c	----	70	20	
Towhee	5	4	f c	c	f c	2	c	----	----	1	
Savannah Sparrow	----	----	f c	----	f e	10	----	----	9	1	
Grasshopper Sparrow	----	----	f c	----	f c	c	8	----	----	----	
Vesper Sparrow	----	----	----	p	f e	----	----	----	----	----	
Lark Sparrow	----	----	----	----	----	----	*3	----	----	----	
Bachman's Sparrow	1	1	----	----	----	----	2	----	----	----	
Slate Colored Junco	8	----	1	----	----	----	----	----	2	----	
Clay-colored Sparrow	----	----	----	1	----	----	----	----	----	----	
Chipping Sparrow	6	f c	f c	c	c	----	c	5	----	----	
Field Sparrow	5	f c	f c	c	c	----	c	----	2	1	
White-throated Sparrow	12	c	c	p	----	6	4	----	----	7	
Swamp Sparrow	----	----	2	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	
Song Sparrow	----	----	f c	c	c	----	----	----	----	----	

^o Seen previous day. x Seen May 17.

BEERSHEBA SPRINGS: April 16, Beersheba Springs (Grundy County), and escarpment for five miles south, above Collins River. Messrs. Mayfield, Ganier, Yarbrough and Woodring.

HARDIN COUNTY: April 23, Tennessee State line to Pickwick and Red Sulphur Springs and return. Mr. and Mrs. Coffey, Miss Smith, Dr. Counce, Messrs. Warriner, Wright, Allen, Mayfield and Ganier.

KNOXVILLE: April 30, Ijam's Place and vicinity. Island Home Bird Reservation. East Tennessee Ornithological Society. List furnished by Ijams.

JOHNSON CITY: April 30, Forks of Watauga and Holston Rivers. Gray's on Holston and Cox's Lake. Bruce P. Tyler and Robert B. Lyle.

JOHNSON CITY: May 14, Head of Spivy, Chucky River, Boone's Creek. Bruce P. Tyler and Robert B. Lyle.

MOUNT PLEASANT: May 7, Dan Gray's farm and vicinity. Two miles north of Mt. Pleasant. Messrs. Ganier, Monk and Gray.

NASHVILLE: May 14, Cub Creek School, twelve miles west of Nashville, on River Road. Valley above and bottoms to Cumberland River. Members of the T. O. S. Annual Spring Field Day.

REELFOOT LAKE: "Cranetown" on Reelfoot Lake, also en route by motor boat from Samburg, also Samburg. Messrs. Vaughn, Cheek, Sharp, Calhoun, Ganier, Mr. and Mrs. Coffey, Henry and Turner. May 29.

MEMPHIS: Lakeview, Miss., north on Y. & M. V. R. R. into Tennessee, back to barrow pit, then three miles north along pits. From Mud Lake to Mississippi River. Memphis Chapter, T. O. S. May 14.

MEMPHIS: Lakeview, Miss., barrow pits, then north along Y. & M. V. R. R. into Tennessee. May 7. Lists furnished by Coffey.

For other notes on the above lists, see items in The Round Table on pages 19 to 24.

A ROOST OF THE WILD PIGEON

By W. R. MANLOVE

I was an eye-witness to the last flight of wild pigeons that occurred in Tennessee. As nearly as I can recall, it was in the fall of 1870. I was a boy on my father's farm in the White Creek valley about six miles north of Nashville.

For a fortnight, flocks of five or six birds, pioneers of the great horde to follow, had been seen flying about, searching the feeding grounds. Then came the great flight.

It was a clear, crisp, autumn day, with just a faint haze, remnant of Indian summer, dimming the distant hills. The leaves had turned brown and yellow, and, for the most part, had fallen from the trees. From hickory, beech and chestnut trees nuts were dropping.

The dreamy silence of early morning was broken by a rushing sound as a great column of wild pigeons came flying swiftly up the valley. This column was so wide that it reached almost from range to range of the side hills, a distance of a mile, and so dense as to darken the sun, so that we had to light lamps in the house.

As the birds passed directly overhead, the swishing of their wings could be distinctly heard amid the roar of their flight, which was like that of a rushing, mighty wind. Hour after hour they passed, and it was nearly noon when the last swept below the horizon, leaving us gazing after them in astonishment.

Soon after this they established a general camp, or "pigeon roost," on Paradise Ridge, near the head of the valley. Here every morning the great horde separated into several divisions and flew to as many parts of their feeding ground.

At that time much of the valley and adjacent hills was covered with groves of beech. The small, rich nuts of this tree seemed to be their favorite food. In fact, though I have seen scores of wild pigeons dressed, I recall seeing no other food in their crops except beech nuts and acorns of the chinquapin oak.

When a flock of pigeons approached a grove the column would wheel and the first birds would alight on the ground under the trees in perfect alignment and begin to feed. The birds following would hover a moment on the wing and then drop in front of the first rank. When the first had advanced to where the second rank had begun feeding, it would again take wing and drop in front, as before. This constant movement gave to the flock the appearance of a great cylinder of fluttering birds, hundreds of yards long, rolling through the woods with machine-like precision, and at about the speed a man would walk. Not a nut could be found after they had thus passed over ground that before had been thickly strewn with them.

When they had passed through the grove, they would rise with a rush and a roar of wings, wheel into column again and fly to some other part of the neighborhood in search of food.

During their stay in the vicinity, every gun in the countryside was brought into action, and men and boys would vie with each other to see who could slay the greatest number of these innocent creatures. This constant firing was not unlike an infantry skirmish all day long as the flocks passed to and fro over the hunters.

It was pathetic to see the efforts of the comrades of a wounded pigeon to support him in his flight. One after another would dart under the stricken one as he began to sink, as if to buoy him with their wings. They would continue these efforts long after he had sunk below the general line of flight, and not until all hope was lost would they reluctantly leave him and rejoin the flock.

The wind of the flight and the aid of his comrades would frequently carry a bird hundreds of yards beyond his slayer after he had received a mortal wound. Experienced hunters never fired into an approaching flock, as the plump breasts and thick feathers made such a shot of little effect. They would wait until the birds had passed, when a shot from the rear would drive under the feathers and thus be more deadly.

The worst slaughter, however, was at the roost, which comprised several acres of forest. There the birds gathered at night in such countless numbers that they broke branches and sometimes small trees by their weight. There the slayers went and killed without mercy, so that the poor pigeons got little rest, day or night. One hunter stated that he picked up 150 birds, after firing both barrels of a heavily-loaded gun into a tree at the roost. This destruction continued, night after night, during their stay.

After two or three weeks, when the forage had been exhausted, the survivors of the great horde left the country as suddenly as they had come.

I am convinced that few men have ever seen a wild pigeon in all its beauty, as the birds were so shy that one could not approach them closely in the daylight. Once only I saw a living bird so closely as to be able to note its exquisite beauty. I gazed with wonder on the spirit-like creature, to my boyhood mind the emblem of innocence. Aside from the perfect symmetry of its dainty form, I saw that in life it had an eye like a brilliant topaz, softened by a dark iris, and every feather glowed with color, so that the creature, from shapely head to sweeping tail, was a living gem. It was not one color, but all colors, as if each feather were a prism, and the curve of each feather tip a tiny rainbow reflecting the rays of the morning sun.

Nashville, Tenn.



THE ROUND TABLE

THE SEASON AT MEMPHIS: The Spring Field Day was postponed from May 7 to the 14th, although several cars were driven through a terrific storm to Lakeview, and two carloads remained for a trip after the storm ceased. The weather was also threatening on the 14th, and the attendance was reduced to 21. In addition the party was not able to search the wooded bottoms in search of Mourning Warblers and Philadelphia Vireos, last year's high spots, but had to remain on the Y. & M. V. R. R. tracks, due to the high waters of the Mississippi River and tributary creeks. A flock of six White-rumped Sandpipers were the only shore birds seen at the barrow pit (Lakeview, Miss.), in contrast with quite a variety noted last year. A heavy growth of vegetation in the pit, before it filled up to last year's level, left no attractive muddy shores. The flood waters embraced in a mighty whole several small ponds, so that no very good places were left to find shore-birds. Instead of arriving later this year, most of this group apparently passed us by. After the field trip was officially over on the 14th, we drove around and back to the levee near Mud Lake and followed it south about three miles to the river. These "bar-pits" yielded better shore-bird results as shown in the list for May 14. Chief in interest among the species noted and new to our list for the Memphis area, was the Stilt Sandpiper, *Micropalma himantopus*, five of which were noted from as close as 12 feet. They were larger than the White-rumped; about the size of the Solitary Sandpiper, and darker underneath than the White-rumped, Yellowlegs, or Solitary. The white on the tail was like that of the Yellowlegs, except that whereas the black bars on the end of the latter's tail are not prominent, those on the Stilt Sandpiper were prominent and more numerous. The legs were

dark greenish. The place at which they were seen was about three miles south of Tennessee state line.

The Lakeview barrow pit finally regained last year's water level, but weeds and other growth had been burned off during the winter. Despite this, however, three Pied-billed Grebe nests were found on April 16th, with 6, 4 and 7 eggs, respectively. An eighth egg was not added to the last set, and slightly over a week later the eggs were missing. In all, seven nests were noted this season, the seventh probably being a second attempt. The first young were noted on May 7th, and were probably hatched the day before. This particular nest was practically in the open, no effective cover. All the others could easily be seen after approaching to within 20 feet. On May 30, a flock of six young Grebes, evidently those hatched on the 6th, were noted and also a string of six others about ten days old in the wake of an adult. Two and possibly three adults were noted on our visits.

Soras, King Rails, and Wilson's Snipe were scarce this spring at this location. A Least Bittern was seen May 2 and a Purple Gallinule May 30. The Glossy Ibis recorded last spring was not noted this year—the crop of young leopard frogs was small and about three weeks late (May 30). An Osprey was seen at the lake here April 25th and 30th. Two Yellow-crowned Night Herons were seen flying over on April 22.

The last of our scheduled meetings was held on June 5, at which time the following officers were elected for the Memphis chapter: Miss Mary Davant, president; Earl Henry, vice-president, and Miss Jacquelin Hall, secretary.—Ben B. Coffey, Memphis.

NOTES FROM CORINTH AND SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE: On March 19, I found 5 Brown-headed Nuthatches in a patch of pines near Waukomis Lake, a small body of water 9 miles southeast of town, and about 8 miles south of the Tennessee state line. On May 8, at the same location, a small flock was observed. I am sure that this flock included some of this year's hatch, since there appeared to be 8 or 10 of them. They were ranging in a small pine woods lot near a farm house. Other small patches of pine were in the neighborhood, but there were no extensive areas of it. These Nuthatches were noisy and full of pep. In between the above dates, two searches made on the Tennessee side of the line were unsuccessful. The first, on March 26, by Mr. and Mrs. Ben B. Coffey and Henry Turner of Memphis, in the pines along the Savannah-Florence road, and later, after joining Elgin Wright and myself, near Counce and Red Sulphur Springs. On April 23, this same group, augmented by Messrs. Mayfield and Ganier of Nashville, searched again for them in the region about Red Sulphur Springs. These Nuthatches have not as yet been recorded in Tennessee.

On April 20, I noted the Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Redstarts and Hooded Warblers appeared to be more common than usual. On May 8 I saw a flock of about 100 Bobolink in a recently plowed meadow. At that date, Mr. Wright reported that Starlings were prospecting for a nesting site in the gable of his house. There was a small hole at the top of the roof into which they were going in and out for several days. They were about the yard for two weeks at least, after which I did not see them. They may have nested, but I cannot be at all sure. A pair of Prairie Horned Larks were reported by Mr. Coffey on March 26, and on April 23, west of Wayne's School, in Tennessee, 7 miles south of Shiloh Military Park. The latter date is good evidence of their nesting nearby.—Benj. R. Warriner, Corinth, Miss.

NOTES FROM HARDIN COUNTY: On April 22, the day was spent in searching the pine woods areas in the vicinity of Red Sulphur Springs, in an effort to record the Brown-headed Nuthatch and Red-cockaded Woodpecker, which species had been recorded many years ago, a few miles south, in Tishomingo County, Mississippi (*Auk*, 1907, pp. 12-25). Some very extensive tracts of nearly pure pine growth were searched for these species, which are partial

to these trees, but, as on the occasion of two previous trips, we could not find the birds. We were so fortunate as to observe Broad-winged Hawks in three places and they were soaring about with noisy cries as though much enthused over their approaching nesting activities. After searching for some time for a nest, one of our party saw one of the hawks fly to a partly finished nest about 30 feet up in a hardwood tree in thick woods. Pine Warblers were noted to be abundant in the pine woods and were singing continually. Blue Jays are unusually abundant in this section, particularly in the "flats" covered by black-jack oaks. Sixteen species of warblers were listed, although it was a bit early for this group of birds. A Great Blue Heron was observed near the Springs, flying toward the Tennessee River, a mile away. On our drive down from Nashville we noted many migrating shorebirds along the way, at small ponds, including Solitary Sandpiper (18), Spotted Sandpiper (1), Lesser Yellowlegs (3) and the ever-present Killdeer.—George R. Mayfield, Nashville.

UNUSUAL WATER BIRDS: I have a small collection, chiefly of water birds, which I have mounted from time to time, some of which may be worth placing on record. A Ring-billed Gull, a Herring Gull, and an Old Squaw Duck (male) were collected on Laurel Lake, three miles southwest of Spring Hill, late in the fall of 1932. A three-acre marsh a short distance west of Thompson Station attracted the following migrating water birds, which I have: Black-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern (2), Sora Rail, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper (2) and Least Sandpiper. Messrs. Ganier and Monk, who called by my place on May 7, were shown these specimens.—W. H. Sedberry, Thompson's Station.

SPARROW NOTES: The Lincoln Sparrow (*Melospiza Lincolnii*) is considered a rare transient in Middle Tennessee, but bird-banding may prove this species to be more abundant than past records indicate, due to the difficulty of identifying it in the field. Last spring, three individuals were banded and this spring, five on the following dates: May 3rd, 1933, two birds; May 12th, two birds; May 19th, one bird. One of these Sparrows was observed on May 14th, the T. O. S. Field Day, and watched at close range by our group.

In 1932, from February 1st to May 14th, twenty-two White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) were banded at Blossomdell, my home station. From Oct. 15th, 1932, to May 3rd, 1933, forty-two more were trapped and six individuals banded the previous season were retrapped, a return record of 27%. At the two substations operated, also suburban, not even a sight record of a White-crowned Sparrow was made, though the White-throated was abundant at both the Belle Meade and Green Hills substations.—Mrs. F. C. Lasky, Nashville.

SCREECH OWLS have not been disturbed as they came to the garden in the past, and in the day book, under dates of March 28, 1933, are the following notations: "Seven p. m., Screech Owls calling soft little trill, very close to house." On April 5, during a wind storm, a box placed in a dead tree for Flickers blew down and was examined. As it was emptied, out poured the sawdust and quantities of fresh feathers, red, blue and brown, several portions of bird bills, a claw and bits of crayfish shell and plenty of owl pellets. Identification of the bills revealed the fact that the owl had used the box as a cache and in it had consumed portions of at least two Bluebirds, two Cardinals and a Robin. An abundance of food at the banding station attracts large numbers of birds, which in March of this year experienced difficulty in finding cover for roosting after the disastrous Spring freeze denuded the privet and honeysuckle of leaves. The sleeping birds were doubtless easy prey for the owl in his search for food. Now the Screech Owl is persona non grata at the banding station.—Mrs. F. C. Laskey, Nashville.

SPRING NOTES, 1933: Starlings seem to have increased considerably in Middle Tennessee this spring. They are to be found nesting all over Nashville and in the country around, using chiefly holes in phone poles made by woodpeckers. On April 23, on a trip south into Alabama, they were noted regularly to Mt. Pleasant and even further south, at Lawrenceburg and at Boston. In Alabama, from The Shoals to Iuka, Miss., none were observed. On May 27, on the drive to Reelfoot Lake, I kept a close lookout for Starlings, but none were seen west of the Tennessee River. Mr. Coffey reported none on this date in his drive from Memphis to Reelfoot Lake. As yet, we have no record of its breeding in West Tennessee. Three pairs of Shrikes have been found nesting in and near Nashville this spring: (a) a pair on Fort Negley, in the city, (b) a nest with 5 eggs near Easton on May 6, and a nest near Donelson on May 30, with 5 fresh eggs. In a tree near the latter site, young Shrikes but a few days out of the nest were being tended by the parents. On May 6, with Jack Calhoun, a search was made of two small patches of pine woods near where Brush Creek flows into Harpeth. Here a nest of the Coopers Hawk was found in a remodeled nest which contained 4 slightly incubated eggs. It was the first nest of this species we have ever found in a pine. A short distance away, an Osprey was observed along the creek, apparently a transient. On May 7, H. C. Monk and the writer spent the morning with D. R. Gray near his home at Mt. Pleasant searching, without success, for Upland Plovers. Mr. Gray sees them in April and in September nearly every year. On May 21, we visited Laurel Lake, 3 miles west of Spring Hill, where Mr. Sedberry reported having seen what he believed to be a King Rail with young in 1932. We were not so lucky and found very little marsh grass about the lake. However, we noted a pair of Spotted Sandpipers and a Semipalmated Sandpiper, also a Blue-winged Teal unable to fly well. Under a concrete bridge carrying the main highway near Spring Hill, a colony of Barn Swallows had built and were building nests. These were the first nests we recall, not constructed in buildings. The large colony of Barn Swallows, located in cowsheds near Bellevue (see *Wilson Bulletin*, 1922, p. 184), was visited on May 14th, and found to have increased to 40 or 50 occupied nests. In some there were found fresh eggs and from others the young were leaving. On May 30, nine Cowbirds, mostly males, were seen together—usually flocks are broken up by this date. On June 4, I had the pleasure of finding my first nest of the Lark Sparrow; it contained three nearly fresh eggs. This was from the location near Gladeville described in *The Migrant* for June, 1932. Two or three pairs of birds had been seen here on May 13, but on the June date neither G. R. Mayfield nor myself heard any nor saw one until the bird flushed from a few feet ahead of me. The nest was built on the ground between two knee-high weeds in an old field quite bare except for a sparse growth of these weeds. It was lined with hair and was quite like the empty one I found last year. On June 6, I returned to photograph the nest and found that the field, with the nest, had been plowed up. On June 4, Vernon Sharp found several of these birds at the location nearer town where the empty nest was found last year.—A. F. Ganier, Nashville.

A WOODCOCK NEST AT KNOXVILLE: On April 27, 1931, a nest of this rare and unusual bird was reported to me from a point near the Southern Railway yards and not far from the city limits. On that date it held a set of four apparently fresh eggs. Some days before, it had been discovered by some of the railway workers when they flushed the sitting bird from the nest. On returning the following day, one of them attempted to throw his hat over the bird, which caused her to desert the nest. On April 30, I visited the nest for the first time and found no bird upon it, nor could she be found there on May 1 and 2. On the latter date I began to search the premises for the birds themselves, and had the good luck to flush one of them from a new nest containing four eggs, which seemed fresh. Like the first, it was

rather exposed and placed on a small rise or knoll in the midst of a damp swampy piece of waste land. The bird flushed at ten feet and flew quite a distance away. Two, and again three days later, I was in the vicinity and on flushing the sitting bird, it flew only about ten or fifteen feet away and then, with wings down, began to strut like a turkey cock. On May 8, a friend wanted to see this performance, but on that day the bird flew quite a distance away. It is possible that the bird which strutted on May 1 and 2 was the male. On May 19, I noted that the eggs were still in the nest, and another observer reported them there on the following day. On the 22nd, I found that the nest was empty and gave evidence of having been so at least overnight. I therefore judged that hatching had taken place on the 21st, indicating an incubation period of not less than 20 days. (Mr. F. L. Burns gives the incubation period of this species as 20-21 days.) In 1932, a nest was reported at Fountain City, about five miles north of Knoxville.—John Bamberg, Knoxville.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW AT JOHNSON CITY: On April 30, after my return from an all-day bird trip, I thought I would see what I might find on the grounds about my home, and shortly was greeted by the song of a new bird. It seemed to be in the next yard, yet clear and distinct—zzz-zzz-zzz-zzz, in monotone and harsh. Before I knew it I flushed the bird and immediately brought my field glasses into play. It was very, very like an immature Chipping Sparrow, but the notes were quite different. In addition to the song noted above there was an indistinct low and sweet warble. For three days this little visitor accepted my hospitality and was studied at leisure. Quite friendly, though not so much as the Chippy and always feeding in my garden, sometimes perched on the raspberry bushes, its song came zzz-zzz-zzz-, and then its little throat would bulge, followed by the sweet, low warble.

Our unusual visitor was none other than *Spizella pallida*, the Clay-colored Sparrow, my first observance of this bird in Tennessee, and a new bird for the State list. Its markings and colors were checked against the color plate in Dr. Roberts' *Birds of Minnesota*, and a few weeks later, when in Washington, Dr. Oberholser showed me specimens of these birds along with similar sparrows, and, after discussion with him, I was fully confirmed in my original identification. This Western species is presumably only a casual visitor in the Eastern United States, the 1931 A. O. U. check list giving only two records: one for Massachusetts and one for South Carolina.—Bruce P. Tyler, Johnson City, Tenn.

FIELD DAYS AT KNOXVILLE: On April 30, the annual spring bird census was made at the Island Home Bird Reservation and resulted in 100 species being recorded there and on the Tennessee River. These are listed on page 15. Practically all Knoxville members were in attendance. The third Sunday in June marks an annual hike on top of the Smokies, so this year, on the 18th, our group followed the State line trail from New-found Gap to Mt. Kephart and "The Jump-off" beyond. At the latter point we were lucky enough to hear the Duck Hawk; last year their young were heard in the cliff below. An excellent list of birds was seen and heard during the day.—H. P. Ijams, Knoxville.

T. O. S. SPRING FIELD DAY AT NASHVILLE: This annual event was held on May 14, at Cub Creek School House, on the River Road, 15 miles southwest of Nashville. About 60 people were in attendance, the majority of whom were members. Listing birds of the adjacent foothills of the Highland Rim was indulged in during the morning, and in the afternoon the Cumberland River bottoms were searched. Two heavy showers curtailed field work to some extent, but 85 species of birds were listed during the day. (See list on page 15.) Transient species were found to have nearly all passed

northward. Lunch was prepared as usual, in the splendid beech grove, following which there was the election of officers and further excursions afield.—Geo. B. Woodring.

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JULY, 1933: The annual election resulted in choosing the following to serve: President, Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Memphis; Vice-presidents, Geo. R. Mayfield, Nashville, and Brockway Crouch, Knoxville; Curator, Albert F. Ganier, Nashville; Editor-Treasurer, Geo. B. Woodring, Nashville; Secretary, Mrs. F. C. Laskey, Nashville.

LATE NESTINGS: Information is desired on late summer nestings of all of our common birds since comparatively little is known about the extent to which second and third broods are raised, the number of eggs laid and the success which results in these late broods. Data sent to the Curator will be compiled and presented later when a sufficient amount has been gathered.

Pleasant echoes of the State Bird Contest, conducted by the T. O. S., continue to be heard on every hand. Nearly 73,000 votes poured in, from every section of the State, and when the polls closed on April 11, the 15 candidates had received the following votes: Mockingbird, 15,553; Robin, 15,073; Cardinal, 13,969; Bob-white, 10,468; Bluebird, 9,135; Woodthrush, 2,670; Bewicks Wren, 1,534; Meadow Lark, 1,091; Pileated Woodpecker, 826; Chickadee, 703; Brown Thrasher, 576; Towhee, 518; Sparrow Hawk, 345; Field Sparrow, 240; Flicker, 230; Since each of the species received uniform publicity, the results give a pretty fair idea of how the general public regards their qualities. The majority of the votes were cast by school children, but a considerable percentage was cast by grown-ups as well. A very marked general interest has been aroused in birds as a result of the campaign. A Senate resolution was put through the legislature making the selection of the Mockingbird legal and authoritative.

Keep every number of *The Migrant*, and if you lack any of the back numbers, order them without delay, for of some numbers there are only a few on hand. We expect to be able to reprint volume one, uniform with our present style. At the conclusion of volume five a complete index, by species, will be printed, and when the five volumes are then bound together they will make an invaluable reference book on the birds of Tennessee.

Some of our members have not as yet ordered their copies of Tennessee Avifaunas, Nos. 1 and 2, reviewed in our last issue. The Distributional List of the Birds of Tennessee, particularly, should be in the library of each of our members.

For the birds about your homes, remember that this is the season when they are often dependent on you for water. Keep your drinking fountains and water pans well supplied.

The past spring has witnessed perhaps the most active field work on the part of our members in some years.

The account of the Passenger Pigeon roost, printed in this number, is taken from A. C. Webb's "Our Bird Book," published at Nashville in 1917.



The Migrant is sent to all members not in arrears for dues. Active membership is one dollar per year; associate membership is fifty cents. Subscription to non-members, sixty cents. All articles, correspondence and dues should be sent to the Editor-Treasurer, G. B. Woodring, 1414 Stratton Ave., Nashville.

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