

# THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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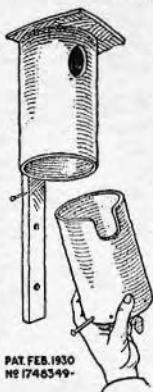


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# THE MIGRANT

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## HABITS OF THE WARBLING VIREO

By HARRY C. MONK.

As no one seems to have written on the habits of the Warbling Vireo in Tennessee the following sketch may be of interest. It is based upon general observations made over a period of years, chiefly in the Centennial Park colony, in Nashville.

The chosen haunts of this vireo are groves of medium sized trees growing about houses or in parks. Like the Robin this species clings to man's lawns and shade trees. Not many such situations are occupied by the birds as they are very locally distributed.

Spring arrival is in April, with the dates spread over the first three weeks of the month, in a period of years. Earliest is April 5, 1931. Usually but one or two birds are seen at first, with the remainder coming in soon after. One year however, five arrived on the same day.

There is much singing, chasing and quarreling among the birds following arrival. Some of this activity must be due to territorial disputes, but much of it may be ascribed to courtship. Little time is lost in settling down and nest building begins early. Some birds begin incubating within four weeks after arrival.

The nest is a typical vireo structure, a small basket suspended from a forked twig. It is quite distinct in appearance from the nests of other local breeding vireos, being expertly constructed of fine materials, the whole being smoothly felted together and remindful of the fabric of nests of the Yellow Warbler. It lacks the coarse fibers and looseness seen in the nest of the Red-eyed Vireo and the shaggy look of the White-eye's home. The bottom is almost flat and rather wide, the nest being shallow and with a contracted brim.

Nests are usually placed well out on a limb so that they swing free and have nothing beneath them. Only one of thirty-five recorded nests was invisible from beneath. One-fourth of this number were hung directly over roads. All were in deciduous trees, there being nine species in the list.

Height above ground of the nest varies much. While none have been measured, they appear to range from eight to forty feet in the air, with the majority below twenty-five feet. Several have been found so low that they could be examined from the running board of a car standing on the road under them.

Fresh sets of eggs have been found from May 5 to May 25 in different years, but the majority are laid in the first half of the month. In general, nesting dates correspond with migration dates and vary somewhat with different pairs.

A set contains three or four eggs. Five nests held four eggs each, and four nests contained three eggs apiece. Only one brood is reared in a season as far as is known. Nests that have met with an accident are quickly replaced in a neighboring tree.

The young remain in the nest about two weeks. In one case where the

date of hatching was known the birds left the nest on the fifteenth day. It has been difficult to learn much about family life after the nest is vacated. The fledglings are known to remain with their parents for two weeks and doubtless receive some care for a longer period. No dependent young have been seen after July in any year.

The majority of these birds remain in their nesting locality throughout their stay here, but a few wander about in late summer. They regularly appear in the trees about the writer's home, nearly a half mile from the nesting colony.

Departure takes place in September and most of the last dates are in the first half of that month. These last birds are often heard singing in fair voice. Latest fall date is September 25, 1934.

NASHVILLE, TENN., Sept., 1934.



## TENNESSEE'S PROGRAM FOR WILD LIFE RESTORATION

By DAMON HEADDEN, State Game Warden.

The purpose of the Department of Game and Fish of Tennessee is to save and increase the valuable wild life of the State. We who constitute the personnel of the Department at this time have projected a definite program to the end that a basis may be established upon which may be built a self-perpetuating system. Our greatest need in bringing this primary program to fulfillment is the co-operation of the people of Tennessee.

Our program calls first for the enactment of laws which give adequate protection to the game and fish of Tennessee. Second comes proper enforcement of these laws. Next on the program is the restocking plan. We have gone into this feature of the program with considerable expenditures after careful consideration. In the past, many thousands of quail have been bought in Mexico and Virginia and planted in the Tennessee cover. Now, however, we have three quail hatcheries, all operating successfully, so that this year and next spring we shall be able to plant more than twice as many quail from the hatcheries as we have bought in any year.

Fish hatcheries are located at Morristown and Springfield. From them we have removed hundreds of thousands of bream, bass and trout for placement in the streams and lakes of the State.

Placing of new stock of quail in suitable cover has already shown impressive result. Not in generations has Tennessee had so many quail in her fields and thickets as this year. The result of our stream and lake restocking will begin to show within a year or two. Our assumption is that in no state are the waters better adapted to fish propagation than in Tennessee. We propose to make Tennessee one of the nation's finest fishing states. We are placing deer in the forests where once there were great herds of them. We are restoring the wild turkey to river bottom and mountain cover. We are experimenting with the guinea fowl as a game bird, and our progress thus far has been encouraging. The guinea has shown an aptitude to atavism which is little short of astonishing. It is fast and wary. We are restocking red fox for the fox hunter in territory where the fox's presence is not offensive to the farmer. We are even taking care of the shortage of raccoons in 'coon hunting country. The Department co-operates fully with federal authorities in protecting migratory waterfowl.

Briefly, our program is founded upon a determination to strive for sufficient legislation, to enforce the game and fish laws and to educate the people of Tennessee to conservation ideals. This last, we undertake to do through

wide publicity, lectures, radio dissemination of information, local educational efforts of deputy game wardens, co-operation with conservation groups in various communities and, we hope, an eventual text book in a lower grade of the public schools of Tennessee. The program is financed by moneys paid in to the Department for license badges.

NASHVILLE, TENN., Sept., 1934.



## SUMMER BIRDS ABOUT A COUNTRY HOME

By NANCY LEE MORGAN

This has been a wonderful summer for the study of bird life. At "Oaklee", the birds have held high carnival and I have gotten more thrills than one can imagine, grown more intimately acquainted with old bird friends and found many new and interesting ones. To really know and enjoy birds to the fullest, one must be an early riser. No music is more sweet to the ear of a bird lover than the sweet, low good-morning chirps or notes one hears just as dawn is breaking. Gradually the light comes, and then the whir of many wings as they dart in every direction. "Oaklee" is only a mile and a half from Columbia, and for years it has been a game preserve. Some of our neighbors became interested and joined us, so now there are several hundred acres under protection. One rarely hears a gun, and they are never fired upon this place. I always dread the coming of Dove season, for it opens much too early; there were young Doves in a nest in our trellis on Sept. 1st.

Birds are very responsive and soon find new feeding stations and baths. I have come to the conclusion they love people and human habitations. They certainly feel secure here, for when we are sitting upon the porch they fly over our heads, taking a short cut, and do not seem in the least disturbed by our presence. I have a bird bath, an 18 inch disc plow, placed about four feet high in the center of the lawn, another fifteen or twenty feet from the house to the right, and still another to the left. A large pool and other discs are in the flower garden, so they have plenty of water. These are used constantly and enjoyed. Only yesterday, when I opened the front door I counted seven Bluebirds frolicking like children in one, not minding in the least and undisturbed when I took a seat not ten feet away. There were others in an oak above. The Mockingbirds leave me for about three weeks in August. They fold their tents like the Arabs and steal silently away, to the thickets I suppose. I have missed them; then some early morning I hear their greetings at the sun, and behold! There they are, in the beauty of new plumage, the perfection of grace and their trying period of moulting is over until another year.

When I hear an unfamiliar note I go out with my field glasses and quietly wait until I can locate the bird. I wait for the call or song, watch closely, see and hear; in most cases the bird and note remain firmly fixed in my mind. When possible I repeat the lesson and it is most interesting. I have six feeding stations around the home and they are all well patronized. Three are upstairs and three down and all can be filled from indoors. Those downstairs are the tops of round cheese boxes, painted green and set upon iron pipes so as to be secure from cats. The feeding station at my upstairs window I believe is the most popular and it is so placed that I can remain in bed, and watch the birds upon it. I am in the habit of putting out the feed before I retire. Sometimes, not often, I forget and when I do, the Downy Woodpecker knocks loudly on the shelf in protest.

The Blue Jays make morning hideous sometimes. I think the Creator must

have given them their beautiful plumage to compensate for mean dispositions and shrill voices. When the weather is dry and water runs low, I have noticed we have more unusual bird callers. Water seems more important to them than food; it certainly attracts them more certainly than does any food I have found. We each have one favorite bird. My little granddaughter, age five, knows many birds by sight and note. In the Spring she watched a little Carolina Chickadee make many trips to a hole in a gate post, bringing up sawdust, getting ready for housekeeping. She was so afraid something might disturb the bird she did not tell for several days. We have a large wild cherry tree in the front yard near the house. It had a heavy crop of cherries this summer and for many weeks was filled with birds of varied sorts. I would not venture to say how many birds dined upon those very large luscious cherries. The beautiful Brown Thrasher was the greatest drunkard among them. The others seemed to get by but the Thrasher would often fall from the tree, then stagger under a nearby shrub, there to sleep off the drunk, I suppose. I have often picked them up and kept them safely over night. The effect of the wild chrries on these birds is believed to be due to the presence of prussic acid in the fruit.

After the first mowing of the lawn I found a nest full of Quail eggs in a clump of yucca. I watched careully but the birds deserted it. The eggs remained for several weeks and what finally became of them I do not know; one morning all were gone. We have always had quail about the place and when I fed the chickens they often fed with them at my feet. On going into the flower garden one often hears the whir of many wings as they rise and fly to an alfalfa field beyond. This summer I had five quail nests only a few feet from the house, including one under a shrub against the house. The premises looked rather unkept for I would not allow the grass to be cut for fear of disturbing the birds. One Quail nest especially interested me. Upon the ground under a large oak very near the house, I found a nest with seventeen eggs. We had often sat upon an iron bench near the gazing globe and bird bath but fortunately this summer there flourished poison ivy and I cautioned the children and others to keep away from this special place. There in a nest of ivy leaves I found the eggs. I could watch it from a window above. I well remember the day the little ones came off, we had house guest but I would steal out and listen. How I wish I could reproduce sound! I have never heard or read anything like the notes of ecstasy that came from the throats of those two parents. Beautiful, clear, caressing, and unlike anything of which I ever dreamed. I had read that they left the nest so soon they often carried pieces of shell upon their backs. This must be true, for all around the nest, many feet away, there were shells and only tiny pieces in the nest.

Year after year the Orioles build in pear trees near our back porch. Last year a pair built a nest in a hackberry tree so near the porch we would watch the young and see how the busy old birds were. Their business in life is just feeding their young. We have a great many berry-bearing shrubs and trees on the place and all elder and pokeberry plants are allowed to mature in fence rows so as to furnish food for the birds. In spite of this, the birds seem to visit the feeding stations quite as often in summer as in winter. In fact, there is no dull season at Oaklee. It is no uncommon sight to count ten' or twelve different kinds of birds for breakfast. In winter I kept out a supply of suet, which they greatly relished. When the bird baths are hard frozen, I put bowls of water at feeding stations. They have to be closely watched for they too often freeze, but this is little trouble to one who really loves birds. The Mockingbird is certainly the cock of the walk. When he visits the feeding stations, the other birds stand by and wait until he finishes his meal. Even the bully of a Jay plays second fiddle. We have a great many Mock-

ingbirds about the place; I often count nine or ten at one time at the baths.

They are building a splendid highway from town by our place. The road for several months has been in almost an impassable condition and only those whose business compel them to, travel it. Our friends feel very sorry for us, so exiled, as it were. Our house is so located that we have a splendid view of wonderful sunsets, and such moonlight! August and September brought us great swarms of gorgeous butterflies. The nights have been glorious with meteoric showers, and Venus, large, brilliant and beautiful beyond words, charmed us nightly. The garden is filled with the beauty of bloom, and at night the atmosphere is fragrant with the perfume of many flowers. Above all there is the sight and song of many birds about us. With Nature so generous and beautiful, I think we are to be envied rather than pitied.

"OAKLEE," COLUMBIA, TENN.



## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON DUCKS

By GEORGE B. WOODRING.

Ducks to many students of bird life offer as great a problem of identification as do the sparrows and the warblers. Some are content to learn only the three or four of the more common species. With this in mind I will give some pointers that may enable them to identify a few more. Along with the large order of Anseriformes, which include the ducks and geese, comes the order of Grebes, Cormorants, and Loons; the whole group usually being spoken of as wild fowl.

Tennessee is so situated geographically and has so few lakes that the average bird student in Middle and East Tennessee finds but little opportunity to study this interesting group of birds. However, in the western part of the state, the Mississippi River, Reelfoot Lake, Open Lake, and others are regular havens for the water fowls during migration, and at times are to be found there in countless thousands. The Mississippi River valley is the route over which an immense number of water birds travel. A few artificial lakes and the smaller rivers are the only attraction to ducks to other parts of Tennessee.

For several years the Mergansers, Buffhead, Goldeneye, and many others, were entirely foreign to me until I decided that they too, could be learned. Radnor Lake, an artificial body of water covering about seventy-five acres and eight miles south of Nashville, became my favorite location for the fall and winter of 1933 and '34. Trips to this lake were made regularly every Sunday morning for six months regardless of weather conditions. As a result of these regular observations, I have come to believe that ducks are the easiest group of birds to study and identify. Usually, if the observer is careful, they will sit placidly upon the water affording him ample time for study. One of the first observations made was that some of the ducks fed by diving beneath the surface for food and others merely dabbled in shallow water near the shore. Close observation of their feeding habits helps greatly in identification of a species. To the first group I have given the name "Scaup Group", including in it all diving ducks and to the second, was given the name "Mallard Group", which included those ducks that are to be found feeding at the edge of the lake. After this large simple grouping has become fixed in the mind, then perhaps the size of the bird and the color becomes next in importance. As a general rule the smaller ducks belong to the "Scaup Group"; however, there are a few exceptions such as the large Canvas-back and the Redhead. The smaller diving ducks are the Lesser Scaup, Ringnecked, Golden-eye, Bufflehead,

and Hooded Merganser. Into the "Mallard Group" falls the abundant Mallard or Green Head, Black Duck, Pintail, Baldpate, Shoveler, Blue and Green-winged Teal, and Wood Duck. The last three named are the exceptions to the large surface-feeding ducks, as they are all rather small in size. The exact coloring of each species can be found by reference to one or more of the several sets of colored plates now to be had. With the aid of a 6 power or stronger field glass, or even a telescope, they can be brought relatively close to the observer.

After identification is mastered, there comes a still more interesting phase of the study, which is their habits. As in all other species of birds, each has its particular way of doing things, whether it be flying, feeding, diving, fighting or nesting. When one has learned these individual traits, it becomes a great aid in making identity more certain. By putting down in writing, such traits we may fill in gaps in the life history of each species which observers to the north of us do not witness. An extract from my notebook covers a feeding habit of the Snow and Blue Geese which were released on Radnor Lake last autumn with wing feathers clipped. On March 4th, all seven of these geese were seen feeding on the grassy slope where the water had receded and left the dead grass about four feet from the water edge. Each goose would pull the dry grass up by the roots, walk to the edge of the water, wash the dirt from the roots and proceed to eat it. This process was watched for about an hour until they had cleared all of the grass from the slope.

Another page from my notebook, taken on a mid-winter visit, reads as follows: "Feb. 12th, a bright morning, the temperature about 40 degrees. A Golden-eye spreads his tail in a fan shape when starting his lunge forward for the dive and remains under the water about 80 seconds. It preens its feathers while floating on the water, turning well over on its side enough to expose its belly. They are feeding in the deepest part of the lake, by diving from the surface, along with ten Lesser Scaup. While watching them, a Cooper's Hawk flew over the flock; two sharp calls were given by the ducks and all feeding ceased, the entire flock turned to face the direction of the hawk."

The present season has been a very hard one for the water fowls, for the reason that most of them breed in the northwest plain states where during their nesting season, the most disastrous drouth on record dried up most of the prairie sloughs and small lakes. The hunting season throughout the country has been curtailed to thirty days—three days a week for ten weeks—but conservationists say the ducks really should have a closed season. Duck hunting may be a thing of the past within another generation if not even sooner.

NASHVILLE, TENN., Sept., 1934.



## BIRD BANDING BREVITIES—NO. 2

By MRS. F. C. LASKEY.

The first Catbird trapped at my station, banded as an adult in August, 1931, was retaken April 23, 1932, April 24, 1933, and this year on June 21st. A Maryland Yellowthroat banded Sept. 9, 1932, returned in 1933 and was recaptured again in June, 1934. This Spring, from Feb. 11th to March 4th, about 200 Starlings were banded and by May 20th reports were received on 5 of that number; 3 had been killed near by (Nashville, Old Hickory, and Wilson County) but one, banded Feb. 24, 1934, was shot April 27, 1934, at Dunkirk, N. Y. A delayed report has been received from the Bureau of



Biological Survey of a Dove banded June 7, 1933, and shot in November, 1933, 7 miles south of Milford, Ga. Looking over the records of the 1150 Field Sparrows banded to date, it is quite evident this species is the most persistent "repeating" groups at my station and in springtime, some of them have been trapped with unusual frequency. In 85 consecutive days, one was taken 84 times; another in 58 days, 122 times; another in 79 days, 164 times. A Chipping Sparrow almost lived in the trap for a while, it having been removed 132 times in 55 days (April 4 to May 29). In 1933, Mockingbirds began their autumn movement much earlier than this year in this area. New birds began to arrive at the station in August of 1933; this year not until September. Records of 1933 show 76 banded between August 7 and Sept. 25, 1933, and only 8 from Sept. 12th to Sept. 25, 1934. The frequent rains and heavy dews this season are doubtless influencing factors in this decrease in numbers. Last year the water traps were responsible for a large percentage of the captures. The Warbler catch this season is far below that of last year, presumably for the same reason. This Fall Jack Calhoun was able to trap 17 Towhees for banding in one week at a substation 100 feet from his home in the West End section of Nashville. My total number of birds banded now is 4,184; species, 73.

NASHVILLE, TENN., September, 1934.



## WILSONS AND AUDUBONS WORKS IN TENNESSEE LIBRARIES

A canvass of all large libraries in the State and inquiries among our members has enabled us to prepare the following list of the above mentioned works. These two authors produced the first comprehensive works on the birds of North America and their first editions were of such a sumptuous character that in many respects they remain unsurpassed.

Alexander Wilson (1766-1813), generally spoken of as the "Father of American Ornithology," began publication of his work entitled **The Natural History of the Birds of the United States**, in 1808. On his death, in 1813, he had produced seven of the nine volumes comprising this first edition. The eighth and ninth, completed by Ord after Wilson's death and largely from Wilson's manuscripts, came out in 1814. In this work there were 76 large plates, reproduced by steel engraving and colored by hand. Only one volume of this original edition is known to be in Tennessee and it may have a most interesting history. It is volume two, published Jan. 1, 1810, and is in the library of Peabody College at Nashville. It is said to have come from the effects of old University of Nashville, founded as an academy in 1785. There is a strong probability that this volume was left in Nashville by Wilson himself when he visited the town in May, 1810. On that trip he carried samples of the two volumes already issue, for the purpose of soliciting subscribers to his work. Southward as far as Nashville he had been able to forward his baggage by coach but from Nashville on to Natchez there was only a horseback trail. He therefore rid himself of all baggage that he could not carry on his saddle horse and doubtless any extra samples he may have had were disposed of. There are no inscriptions in this volume to give its history. The next set of Wilson's work to be printed came out in 1828 and consisted of three volumes of text and a portfolio of seventy-six colored plates. There is a set of this edition in the State Library at Nashville, it having been acquired from Cooley's Book Store several years ago. Mr. L. R. Campbell of Nashville also has a set of this edition. The Cossitt Library of Memphis, Vanderbilt University, and A. C. Webb of Nashville own editions, produced about 1870, con-

sisting of three volumes of text and a portfolio of 103 engraved plates. Still other late editions are owned by A. F. Ganier and G. R. Mayfield of Nashville.

James John Audubon (1770-1851), an accomplished painter and a born naturalist, succeeded Wilson as the Nation's greatest ornithologist. With the latter's work as a beacon, he set himself to the task of surpassing it and the first installment of plates of his famous **Birds of America** was brought out in 1827, followed by 86 other "parts," until the series of 435 plates was completed in 1838. This was followed in 1831-39 by his **Ornithological Biography**, which described the birds figured on the plates. On account of their large size, these plates are known as the elephant-folio edition. No set is known to exist in Tennessee, although two of the large plates are hung in the Biology Library of Vanderbilt University. There are three sets of the later editions at Nashville and three elsewhere in Tennessee, as follows: The State Library has **The Birds of America**, 7 vols., 8 vo., N. Y. 1840. On the fly leaf of volume one of this set is written in pencil, "Tennessee State Library, 1854, 7 vols. from Little and Brown, Boston, \$80.00." This edition now brings around \$400.00. The Vanderbilt University Library and the Carnegie Library at Nashville each have the edition of 1856, in 7 vols., 8 vo., N. Y., the Cossitt Library at Memphis has the edition of 1870, the last one issued, in 8 volumes, and there is a set at the Columbia Institute at Columbia. The Vanderbilt set was formerly owned by the late Felix Ewing of Cedar Hill. We have recently learned on good authority that still another set of Audubon is stored at Knoxville along with other effects of an estate which cannot be dismembered for some years.

In the State Library at the Capitol may also be seen Audubon and Bachman's **The Quadrupeds of North America**, in 3 vols., illustrated with 155 colored plates, 8 vo., N. Y., 1856.

All of these famous volumes will afford a treat to those of our members who will take a few hours to look them over.—A. F. G.



## THE ROUND TABLE

**A HUDSONIAN CURLEW AT MEMPHIS:** A single bird of this species was observed on July 8, 1934, at Mud Lake, south of Memphis near the Mississippi line. He flew southward into Mississippi, giving a clear penetrating call, and did not return. The bird had been feeding at the shore in the soft mud flats which bordered the now shallow lake, in company with a large assemblage of shorebirds. It flew up with a group of them and rather leisurely winged its way across in front of us at a distance of 100 feet. With the benefit of binoculars and sunlight behind us, we could view it perfectly and note its profile, including the long down-curved bill. Its size was a little smaller than a pigeon and its build was that of a Woodcock. It was by no means as large as the western Long-billed Curlew nor was its bill so long. We examined all color plates and descriptions on our return and decided it could be nothing else. There are very few recent records of this now rare bird in the Mississippi Valley region and the one here recorded is the first for Tennessee. A similar species, the Esquimaux Curlew, is now extinct.

Associated with the Curlew on the mud flats were Killdeer 100, Lesser Yellowlegs 8, Solitary Sandpiper 5, Least Sandpiper 3 and Spotted Sandpiper 1. Along the shores or flying about, were also noted, Ward's Heron 8, Little Blue Heron 10 adults and 190 immatures in white plumage, American Egret 10, Yellow-crowned Night Heron 1 (immature), Wood Duck 4 (in eclipse plumage), Duck (species ?) flock of 14 flying overhead, Double-crested Cor-

morant 4 and Least Tern 3. It was truly a wonderful assemblage of water birds. With us were Mrs. Coffey, Frank McCamey and Fred Carney.—A. F. Ganier, Nashville, and Ben B. Coffey, Memphis.

**A WOODCOCK'S SONG:** At dusk, on the evening of March 4th, we were returning from a day of tiring search for Yellowlegs and other early migrants, when I made my first acquaintance with a Woodcock. We had slowed the car down, near the water filled barrow pits back of the levee, and soon among the chorus of hylas and tree frogs we caught a strange note. All ears strained to catch it again. There it was! *Bzzzt!* Piling out of the car, we crashed toward the sound, thru the tangle of vines and bushes along the road. There it was again! It greatly resembled the rasping note of the Nighthawk. But we approached too close, and a shadowy, snipe-like bird arose and flew farther away. Following thru weeds and water, we came near the spot from whence the last note had come. But the strange call now vibrated from another direction. We started stealthily toward it, but the bird this time winged his shadowy way toward us. We glimpsed the silhouette of his indistinct form as he swung around between us and the glowing West. Barely able to discern his form as his whistling wings carried him ever higher above our heads, we suddenly thought of the Woodcock. That must be the identity of this strange bird. The bird was out of sight and hearing now, and we waited in the semi-darkness, a cold wind bearing down upon us, and our feet, wet from previous wading, beginning to numb from the cold ground. Suddenly a strange, beautiful song burst out from the unseen bird far above our heads. The melody circled about and we glimpsed its maker again, as he glided down on set wings thru the dying light. Then, plunging noisily to the ground, he took up his ear splitting "*Bzzzt!*" again, near where we stood. As we waited, he went thru this unusual performance three times, as if for our special benefit. Then he took wing and flew off over the bushes into the night, leaving six pleased bird students with a thrilling new experience to keep in their memories.—Franklin McCamey, Memphis.

**ANOTHER WHISTLING SWAN RECORD FOR REELFOOT LAKE:** Since the numbers of the Whistling Swan, *Cygnus columbianus*, have become so depleted that one is a rare sight in the Mississippi Valley, it seems important that all recent records of the species be preserved.

The writer was informed by Mr. O. T. Wollaston of Walnut Log that on November 24, 1932, one of these birds was shot in the lily fields just east of Upper Blue Basin, Reelfoot Lake, by an unnamed hunter, who supposed it to be a snow goose. The swan was examined by a number of hunters at Walnut Log Lodge, and its identity was verified by reference to a bird manual.

The hunter's guide on the occasion, Carlyle, interviewed independently by the writer, repeated Mr. Wollaston's story of the shooting. He also supplied the definite date given above. Mr. Wollaston recalled it as "late November, 1932". The hunter carried the specimen to his home, intending to have it mounted, according to Carlyle.

There seems to be little doubt as to the validity of this record. The only bird with which an experienced duck and goose hunter might confuse the Whistling Swan is the still rarer Trumpeter Swan, of which there is no published record for Tennessee.—Compton Crook, Boone, N. C.

**JUNE NOTES FROM REELFOOT LAKE:** On an ornithological auto-camping trip which Mr. Coit Coker and I made this summer out to the west coast and back, Reelfoot Lake was one of the most unique places that we visited. Although we spent but half the day of June 23 out on the lake at Walnut Log we were more than impressed with this unusual body of water and particularly its bird life. The great abundance of Prothonotary Warblers was particularly thrilling to us inhabitants of the hills. American Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants, and Coots were plentiful. Several Bald Eagles,

one or two adult Little-blue Herons, a small group of Pied-billed Grebes—perhaps a family which probably bred on the lake or very near it, were among some 45 species which we recorded during our little boat ride. The prize of all, tho, was the actions of a female Least Tern which completely fooled us. She acted so much like a young bird, continually crying and being fed by the male, reluctantly leaving her perch when we drew near only to flutter to another nearby, that had we not later been informed that the Least Tern does not lay until well into June, we would have marked them down as parent and young instead of spoiled wife and hen-pecked husband!—Eugene P. Odum, Chapel Hill, N. C.

AN AUGUST LIST FROM REELFOOT LAKE: It may be of interest to report on my recent trip to Walnut Log, Reelfoot Lake, Tenn., August 24th thru 30th. The accompanying list is shown in relative numbers and not by the actual count. (A) indicates Abundant; (C) Common; (F.C.) Fairly Common and (S) Several. The species noted on or about the lake were American Egret (A), Little Blue Heron (immature) (A), Green Heron (A), Great Blue Heron (Ward's) (A), Double-crested Cormorant (C), Pied-billed Grebe (C), Least Bittern (C), Wood Duck (C), Coot (C), Florida Gallinule (C), Sora Rail 1, Rough-winged Swallow (A), Purple Martin (F C), Black-crowned Night Heron (one flock) (12), Kingfisher (C), Red-wing Blackbird (C), Bronzed Grackle (C), Least Tern (S), Lesser Yellow-legs (2), Wood Pewee (C), Cardinal (C), Maryland Yellow-throat (C), Carolina Chickadee (C), Summer Tanager (C), Pileated Woodpecker (C), Red-bellied Woodpecker (A), Barred Owl (S), Great Horned Owl 1, Yellow-billed Cuckoo (C), Prothonotary Warbler (S), and Sycamore Warbler (1).—Paul D. Harwood, College Park, Maryland.

WOOD IBIS IN HENRY COUNTY: About August 15th, a flock of twenty of these birds were seen near Paris and one of them, which was shot by a farmer, was brought to town. A party who measured it stated that the wing-spread was six feet and the length of bill was nine inches. Its plumage was mostly white with some black. On August 16th, another one of the birds, from a flock of about twenty and presumably the same flock, was taken about fifteen miles from where they were first seen. This specimen was given to me but was in such condition that it could not be preserved. This is the first record of the Wood Ibis that I know of in this vicinity. Incidentally, this occurrence illustrates the need for teaching conservation to the general public to prevent their shooting large and harmless birds merely to satisfy their curiosity.—Buster Thompson, Paris.

STARLINGS WESTWARD: In the last part of June I was in McKenzie and with Rev. George L. Johnson, I verified the nesting of the Starlings in the wall of Shiloh Church and in the hollow limbs of an oak tree at the home of Mrs. Robbie Thomas. We also found them nesting on the campus of Bethel College. Mr. Huley Pugh assured me that he saw the Starling in the nesting season of 1933, going in and out of a hole in a telephone pole near my old home in McKenzie. When we went to examine the pole the telephone company had replaced it during the winter. I think there is no doubt however that the Starlings nested there in 1933. The first week of August of this year I was roaming over the farm of my boyhood home, one and one half miles northwest of Guntown, Mississippi, and I saw a pair of Starlings. Mr. Whittaker, who lives at the old home, was very much interested in them and called my attention to them. He showed me where they had nested in a side of the house where the weather-boarding had fallen off. This is about forty miles below the Tennessee line. A few days later at Corinth, Miss., I saw a number of Starlings which seemed to radiate from the Reubel Building and Mr. Warriner told me that they had nested there in numbers this year.—Jas. A. Robins, Nashville.

**AN OSPREY NOTE:** Reed's Bird Guide says, "The Osprey is protected by law in some states, and by public sentiment in most others." I am afraid that the poor 'fish hawk' gets but little protection anywhere—law or no law. The very name by which he is commonly known arouses animosity, and the average man will kill the bird on the theory that he is destructive of fish. But my argument is that because of his beauty, grace and skill, he deserves to live. Of all the birds I know the Osprey is the most spectacular, and in some ways the most courageous. It was only yesterday that I watched one at Waukomis Lake. During the entire day he searched for food. Time and again he dropped a hundred feet or more from mid-air, like a leaden ball, into the water for prey. The lake was rough from a high wind, consequently the Osprey had no luck at all so far as I could tell from close watching. Late in the afternoon, he came close to my boat; he was perhaps two hundred feet up. He paused dead still, then straight down he came. When he rose from the water he carried a black object which I could not at first identify. Then I could see—a turtle some six or seven inches across. The Osprey fought desperately to hold his victim, but of course the turtle's bony covering prevented the bird's claws from penetrating below the surface. Suddenly he lost his hold and the turtle came down hard upon a big stump, and bounced off into the water. I am sure the turtle sank to the bottom dead, for he had fallen more than one hundred feet.—Benjamin R. Warriner, Corinth, Miss.

**FALL WARBLER MIGRATION, 1934:** For the past five years the writer has kept almost daily records, in September and October, for the warblers that come to Idlewild Wood, which is located on Stones River a mile south of Stewart's Ferry bridge. This area consists of a wooded tract of twenty-five acres overlooking the valley of Stones River. Adjoining it is a cultivated field and a swampy area grown rankly with ragweed and small willows. Almost every species of warbler can find suitable cover and food in this territory. The autumn migratory flight has been very disappointing so far. From my return from the East on Sept. 12, to Oct. 8, the report is as follows: The Canada Warbler, the Wilsons Warbler and the Parula Warbler have not been recorded as yet. The first two are usually found fairly common while the last species is generally recorded once or more times at this season. The Black-and-White, the Sycamore, the Maryland Yellowthroat, the Redstart and the Ovenbird, show about 50% of their usual numbers. The Bay-breasted, Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia and the Tennessee, about 75%. Only the Blackburnian and the Myrtle (first date Oct. 6) show numbers up to the average. It is possible that some of the above species are lagging behind in their southward movement due to the unusually green condition of the woodlands in Tennessee and to the north of us. Ample rainfall has produced a "late Fall" and October may bring us more than our usual number of warblers. Comparing notes with several other Nashville observers, I find that their experience has been the same. Transient vireos have also been unusually scarce.—G. R. Mayfield, Nashville.

**ROOSTING NOTES:** Under abnormal weather conditions the roosting flight of the Chimney Swifts vary. On a rainy afternoon in September, the Swifts gathered a half an hour earlier than usual. They milled about with no orderly formation whatsoever and at nearly dark they all tried to fly into the chimney at once. A week later, on a clear afternoon, this same roost at Clemons School was again watched. On this occasion the Swifts gave a beautiful example of their typical roosting flight. In a large circle they swept by the chimney and the direction of the circle would change from time to time in a soldierly fashion. This change in direction was brought about by a few leaders changing direction until all had followed suit. As darkness approached, a few at a time dropped into the chimney. There were about five thousand in this colony. Two other roosts are not far away. One of about two thousand

at the Belmont Baptist Church, the other of about three thousand at Ward-Belmont College in a cold air shaft. The latter colony has come back both fall and spring for a number of years.

On Sept. 22nd, I accompanied Mr. Ganier to a blackbird roost at Franklin, Tenn. This roost was in maple trees and covered the entire east end of town. First the Bronzed Grackle with a few Cowbirds came in. Running them a close second were the Starlings. There were both mature and immature birds of all three species present. The numbers of these birds we were unable to estimate because only a restricted area could be seen at one time. Even so there were many thousands.—**Jack Calhoun, Nashville.**

**BEWICKS WREN TRAGEDIES:** A pair of Bewick's Wrens had chosen my basement entrance as a nice dry place in which to start house keeping. The ledge was wide enough, and sufficiently secluded from constant passing to enable them to use it for their nesting site. The nest was completed within a very short time, awaiting the deposit of the eggs. Days passed by but no eggs were to be seen. Each morning and evening the male bird would sit on the light wire that hung just above the entrance to the cellar and sing his little song, but no mate was in sight. In spite of the disappearance of the female, the male continued to take his perch and sing. This continued for ten days, then no more song. Passing by some low shrubbery one morning about this time, I noticed the feathers of the Bewick's Wren on the ground where the neighbor's cat had disposed of the female. After the disappearance of the male bird for five days, early one morning I was surprised to hear again that trilling note from the wire outside. Although the light of his life had gone out, he struck another match, and was back on the job to begin housekeeping with a new mate. Being late in the season and the nest being ready, and new, they decided not to delay matters further, but to use the ready-built nest and start at once to rear a family. Within two days there was one egg, then followed the other five in rapid succession. The brood was successful in the incubation and things progressed favorably for five days with both birds on hand each day feeding and singing in turn. Then came a lull. No song, no feeding, no birds were observed. An investigation revealed that all young birds were dead in the nest. Just what caused this tragedy will never be known. Perhaps the old birds were victims of the cat, or possibly some other enemy. Whatever the cause, this story goes to show how many failures there must be in the life of birds in the attempt to bring forth their progeny.—**H. S. Vaughn, Nashville.**

**SUMMER NOTES, 1934:** On July 16, I was shown 2 young Nighthawks on the roof of an 8 story downtown office building. They were about 2 weeks old. The door from the penthouse was kept locked and with only a slim steel ladder to the fire escape below, cats could not have reached the roof. Five days later, nothing could be found of the young birds but legs, wing tips and a few feathers. The mystery was probably solved a few days later when a Sparrow Hawk was seen cruising about in the air nearby. These little hawks probably get most of the young Nighthawks that hatch on downtown roofs. . . . The Grackles mid-summer roost in Nashville was in a line of hackberry trees between Sunset and Westwood avenues. About Sept. 1, they shifted their roost to trees a mile westward but still in the city. With them are many Starlings and Cowbirds. . . . The shorebirds are even scarcer than usual this Fall and some are back before they could have had time to nest in the far North. I believe they were turned back by the drouth belt in the Plains States. Attention is called to the list made at Memphis July 8, on another page. At or near Nashville the following shorebirds were listed: Solitary Sandpiper July 21 (2), July 28 (8), Aug. 3 (8), Aug. 11 (6), Aug. 12 (3), Sept. 8 (1), and Sept. 16 (2). Spotted Sandpiper Aug. 3 (4), Aug. 12 (3). Least Sandpiper, Aug. 3 (5), Aug. 21 (1). Semipalmated Sandpiper Sept. 16 (1).

Pectoral Sandpiper Aug. 3 (9), Aug. 11 (8), Aug. 21 (5). Lesser Yellowlegs Aug. 12 (6), Aug. 18 (2). Kildeer were found on each trip; on Aug. 3 on Donelson pond and surrounding pasture I counted 127 together. Radnor Lake was visited only on Sept. 16, else other shorebirds would have been recorded. On Aug. 12, with Calhoun, we canvassed the 12 stock ponds along the road from Guthrie to Clarksville and back to Cedar Hill. This is a sink-hole country and a number of the ponds cover more than an acre. In addition to the 4 shorebirds listed above on this date we observed 2 Amer. Egrets and 2 Little Blue Herons in white plumage. During a normal season our list should have been much larger. . . . On Sept. 16, a flock of 12 Blue-winged Teal were seen at Radnor Lake, this being a very early date. . . . An Upland Plover (*Bartramia longicauda*), the first I have recorded here, was seen on Aug. 3 in the North Nashville river bottoms. It was with a flock of 75 Kildeer in a bare field and permitted me to watch it leisurely with binoculars at 50 feet. . . . On Sept. 11 a young Turkey Vulture was brought to town by a Negro, thinking it was a young Bald Eagle. It was in the perfect plumage of an adult but the head was still black except for a few indications of red here and there. It had been captured in a hay shed where it had been seen roosting for a week or more. . . . A very late Chuck-wills-widow was flushed in Idlewild Wood on Sept. 23; Mayfield reports one there a week previous giving just a few calls at dusk. Several pair nest in these woods. . . . Warblers and other transients have been noticeably scarce thru September. . . . My 11 year old Cardinal and his mate, at my home, have now moulted into fresh plumage and are ready for the rigors of winter.—A. F. Ganier, Nashville.

**AUTUMN BOBOLINKS:** The scientific name *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*, indicates derivation from the Greek *dolichos*, long, and *onyx*, a claw, and the Latin *Oryza*, a genus of grasses, the principal member being the wild rice, and *vorare*, meaning to feed upon. Hence, the long-clawed bird that feeds upon the rice.

The Bobolink winters in central Brazil and migrates through the islands of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, arriving in East Tennessee as early as April 26th. One seldom sees them more than once or twice in a season and then but sparingly. Here the Bobolink is only a migrant enroute to his breeding ground in northern Pennsylvania and New York to Nova Scotia and westward, extending his range constantly to the west, as man-made irrigation ditches make for him meadows which are congenial nesting grounds. The range is now extended to Northern California. The return trip to Brazil might be made through Southern California, Mexico and Central America without encountering the vast water hazard, but odd as it may seem, all reports show that he returns eastward and goes south mostly via the Eastern Shore, arriving in the rice fields of South Carolina with wonderful regularity about August 20th in vast numbers and takes heavy toll of the rice crop, the grain being then in the milky state. The reed bird depredations are estimated at 10% of the rice crop. A wonderfully delicious morsel, the plump breast of the "reed bird" as he is known in his fall migration, brings many thousand of them to the cooks' domains. In the autumnal migration the course followed is mostly via the Eastern Coast but this year something has happened to turn the birds through East Tennessee. On September 9th there were observed here two large flocks aggregating about two hundred and fifty birds, in the open fields feeding on weed seeds. The sight was unique, being the first that have been observed here at this season.—Bruce P. Tyler, Johnson City.

**A BARN OWL'S NEST:** On or about Jan. 17, 1934, I found a nest of the Barn Owl containing five fresh eggs. It was located several miles southeast of Franklin and about 50 yards from the Harpeth River. The birds had been reported in this vicinity for several years. The eggs were in a hollow beech tree which had been broken off about thirty feet above the ground and

the eggs were about six feet below the top of this, lying on the rotted wood. I tried to capture the bird alive but it would leave the hollow when I had climbed about half way up. This was tried several times without success. Each time it was noted that the owl covered its eggs with the debris before leaving, so that they could not be seen. On my last visit, a boy who was with me climbed down into the cavity, uncovered the eggs and passed them out to me. These owls are considered rare in Williamson County.—Clyde Redford, Franklin.

**ATTRACTING BIRDS AT CHATTANOOGA:** For several years my wife and I have been spending our week ends in our log cabin overlooking the lake of the Chattanooga Rod & Gun Club. The property of the Club comprises one hundred and sixty acres, including the lake of about sixty-five acres. It is enclosed under high wire fence as it is posted as a state bird sanctuary. We put up several bird boxes, a feeding tray and always have beef suet in several locations convenient for our bird friends. Last spring three of our boxes were occupied; one by Titmice and the other, much to our delight, by a pair of Crested Flycatchers which were very shy at first but later became quite tame. A pair of Carolina Wrens decided on locating their nest inside our cabin under the eaves and were in reach of our hands. They were like part of our family. Each morning one or both of them searched the window panes inside for moths which had managed to get in the evening before. This was their early breakfast. When the female bird began sitting, the male brought her food, and, shortly after, he also made attempts to feed the young Flycatchers, which caused quite a deal of trouble. We know he succeeded in feeding them several times at least while the parent birds were off foraging but after a few short fights he was cured of the habit. Perhaps the parents did not approve of the Wren's formula for babies. Be that as it may, it was the first time I have ever noted a bird trying to feed the young of another species.

One other strange thing along this line was observed about a family of Tufted Titmice. After the first brood was hatched and out of the box, the parents returned and raised another. One day my wife called my attention to the fact that three and sometimes four Titmice were feeding this second brood. Apparently the parents had pressed into service several of the first birds hatched to help feed the new babies. Still another box was occupied by Bluebirds and they are still with us, coming to the cabin every morning shortly after sun-up. Besides the birds already named we have had Cardinals, Blue Jays, Pine Warblers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers, Flickers, Chickadees, Brown Thrashers, Mockingbirds, Meadow Larks, Mourning Doves, Bob-whites, Chipping Sparrows, Wood Pewees, and many others. We find that we are well repaid for the efforts we have made to attract birds about the reservation and that it is indeed a delightful hobby as well as a most interesting study.—E. Mel Wight, Chattanooga.

**A SOOTY TERN AT KNOXVILLE:** A second Tennessee record for the Eastern Sooty Tern (*Sterna Fuscata fuscata*) was made at Knoxville, Tenn., on June 20, 1934. The bird, a young male, was picked up in an exhausted condition by Mrs. Henry McDaniel in her yard at 846 Hiwassee Ave. It died shortly afterwards and was mounted by Earl Henry for the E. T. O. S. collection here. The previous record (see Wilson Bulletin. 1929, vol. 41, p. 99) was a specimen picked up on July 30, 1926, near Townsend in the Great Smokies National Park, at an altitude of 3300 feet. This specimen was found by my daughter, Miss Elizabeth Ijams, who made a sketch of it and wrote down a careful description. A bird as conspicuously marked with black as is this species, can readily be identified from such data. The Sooty Tern breeds on the Florida Keys and when found north of that state is regarded as an accidental visitor.—H. P. Ijams, Knoxville.



**CROW REDUCTION CONTEST:** The Nashville *Banner* recently concluded a second contest in an effort to reduce Tennessee's Crow population. The *Banner* and the State Game and Fish Department are of the opinion that the supply of Bob-whites will be helped by the reduction of these now abundant birds. They are also charged with stealing hen's eggs, young chickens, small rabbits and even killing new born lambs. There are those who hold a brief for the Crow but they need not be in any way alarmed for the birds are well able to take care of themselves. Ninety seven hundred adults, young, and eggs taken in the two contests, scarcely makes a dent in the many hundreds of thousands of these birds in the State. The summer contest began on April 16th, and closed July 28th, with 7219 reported taken. Crow eggs and young from the nests counted the same as old birds. The winner was Clyde Redford of Franklin whose total was 480 and whose success was chiefly due to finding many dozens of nests. Other high marks were those of Admiral Wright of Flintville with 447, E. C. Moore of Linden with 397, and A. B. McAbee of Lincoln County with 360. The advisability of summer crow contests is very questionable for the reason that a plausible excuse to be afield with guns is afforded irresponsible parties and they are apt to shoot other birds than the Crow.



We call attention to the fact that this issue contains twenty-five articles relating to the bird-life of Tennessee. These articles, contributed by members from every section of the State and even beyond, indicate the widespread activity and interest in the Society by its members.



**MEETINGS:** The Nashville division of the T. O. S. will hold its meetings during the balance of the year on Oct. 1, 15, 29, Nov. 12, 26, and Dec. 10. These meetings fall on Monday nights, at 7:30 P.M., in the Social-Religious Building of Peabody College. All members are urged to attend and our program committee will make the meeting worth while. The annual Fall Field Day will be held on Sunday, Oct. 22nd, and is always an enjoyable event. The annual Christmas Census of winter birds will be held on Sunday, Dec. 23rd; last year's record of 67 species will be hard to beat. Meeting dates of the Knoxville Division of the T. O. S., together with the names of members chosen to sponsor the programs on those dates, are as follows. Oct. 3, Bird program for the general public, S. A. Ogden and Mrs. Lynn; Oct. 21, Fall Field Day at Lake Andrew Jackson, John Hay; Nov. 7, Anatomy and Classification of Birds, Prof. Ressler; Nov. 18, The Norris dam area, Stanley Clefenger; Dec. 5, President's and Curator's reports, Messrs. Bamberg and Ogden; Annual Christmas bird census, Dec. 23. On Sept. 23, a field day was held at the Island Home sanctuary, attended by 27 members and their families; 55 species of birds were listed.

Meeting dates for the Memphis Division are Oct. 7 and 21, Nov. 4 and 18, Dec. 2 and 16th. The Annual Christmas census is set for Dec. 25th. After Jan. first, all meetings will be on the first and third Mondays of each month. Miss Mary Davant of the Cossitt Library is president.

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*"The simple truth about birds is interesting enough,  
it is not necessary to go beyond it."*

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#### SEASONAL ACTIVITIES.

Autumn, for the student and lover of birds, is a season of keenest interest. The birds by then have donned their fresh feathers and are arrayed in soft shades and rare tints some of which wear off within a few short weeks. For example, there are buffy tinges to the underparts of the Mockingbird and Brown Trasher which are not to be seen at other seasons. The brisk cool weather, brings to our feathered friends a return of keen appetites and nature is ready with a harvest of poke berries, wild grapes, seeds and acorns. At no season of the year are birds so fat as in autumn. Now is the time to look to your feeding shelves, to add others if there is room, and water too, for birds must drink and will bathe even in cold weather. Those of our summer birds which spend the winter to the South are silently slipping away and have been gone for days before we realize it. How different from their return in Spring when they boisterously announce their arrival and are all astir to glean slim rations after winter's desolation. One sees at this season, particularly during September, conspicuous migrations of Mockingbirds, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Kingbirds, Nighthawks, and others. There are steady daylight flights of these birds southward, while others make their flight before the dawn or leisurely flit southward from tree to tree, making but a few miles of their journey during a day. The Chimney Swifts afford a nightly spectacle as they pour into favored empty chimneys by thousands to spend the night; they remain with us until about October 20, unless a premature cold snap hurries them on their way. October brings our winter birds from lands to the north of us and they seem as glad to get back to their winter homes as are our summer birds in the Spring. Learn to know the Winter birds and to study their ways at that season. There are not so many as in the Summer perhaps but they may be more easily seen and watched. One becomes accustomed to wind, cold, and mud; tramps afield in winter soon lose their inhibitions. Choose certain birds if you will and make a study of their winter habits; for instance the woodpeckers, the sparrows, the titmice, the birds of prey, etc. Observe how they get their food and of what it consists; if they are sociable; with what other species do they mingle; listen to their various calls and learn their meaning; what brings about their heavy death rate; how and where do they roost at night; these and many other items in the daily life of our birds form an absorbing study. May we also add, that when your findings have been set down on paper and published in the columns of *The Migrant*, you will be sharing with others the pleasure and interests that have been yours. If you have a friend or friends who are more or less interested in birds, why not assist them to develop this interest further. The T. O. S. desires to spread interest in birds among a greater number of people and we are therefore asking our members to secure, this Autumn, at least one new member apiece.

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