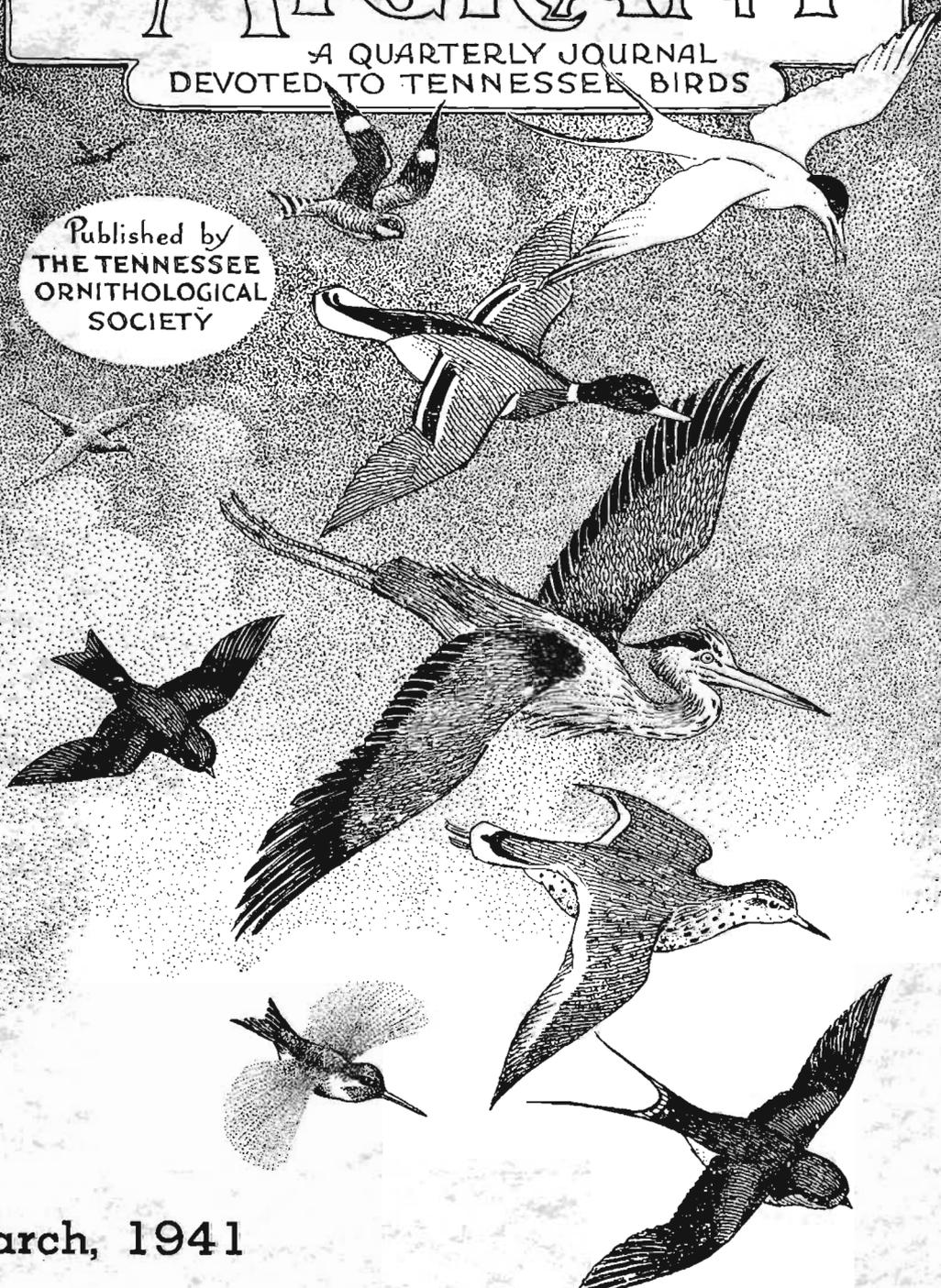


# THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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## THROUGH THE SEASONS WITH THE CARDINAL

BY ALBERT F. GANIER

If there be a spell of warm, sunny weather in mid-January, one may rather confidently expect to hear the first cheery spring song of the Cardinal\*. On such occasions he is most apt to mount to the topmost branch of a tall tree. From time to time during February his song is heard and by early March it is given all through each day. Almost unique among our song birds is the female of the species, for she, too, indulges in song during the breeding season. Her song is that of the male but is softer and is usually rendered from the lower branches and shrubbery.

In early March the winter flocks pair off and scatter, beginning their nests as soon as the thickets begin to turn green with early leaves. Favored sites for early nests are small red cedar trees, honeysuckle vines, and briar patches. In the cities, where are planted many hedges of Amoor River privet, this early leafing shrub is much favored. Courtship at my feeding shelf is evidenced by the feeding of the female by the male. No such consideration is accorded her during early winter, but a touch of spring-like weather during late January brings out this demonstration of a changing attitude. During the few weeks preceding nesting the male becomes quite tender in his attentions, and his mate follows him about on his rounds. If another male intrudes upon the territory, he is pursued in flight until he leaves, but I have never seen an actual combat, such as we often witness between English Sparrows. The female, too, is jealous of her territory. In *The Migrant* for March, 1938, Miss Reed writes of a female Cardinal that fought her reflection in a window pane.

The first nest is built with great care, consuming from two to three weeks. When the nest is finished, a week will sometimes elapse before the first egg is laid. Late nests contain much less material and are often carelessly built. Cardinal nests follow a distinct pattern and may readily be identified when either new or old. Their outer structure is a thin 'basket' of vines, weed stems, and slender twigs, and into this is laid several layers of leaves and occasionally bits of paper and finally a lining of rootlets and grass stems. Building and forming of the nest is done chiefly by the female, although the male also assists. If he brings material while she is engaged in weaving the nest, she takes it from him and he flies away for more. Nests were built each year in a privet a few feet from my bedroom window and when seated in a chair just inside, the birds paid no attention to our presence.

\*Eastern Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis cardinalis*)

Cardinals are among our earliest nesters, my earliest date at Nashville being of a completed set on April 3. Laying usually begins between April 10 and 20, as between early and late seasons. A full clutch is three eggs, although about one nest in thirty will contain four. Late summer nests often have but two eggs. The ashy-white shells are thickly spotted with shades of brown, occasionally forming a distinct wreath at the large end. One egg in each set is always more lightly marked than the others.

Incubation is carried on solely by the female and she is not infrequently caught on the nest by cats while incubating or brooding. These nocturnal prowlers will stealthily climb the bush under the nest at night and the female, being reluctant to leave without seeing its enemy, suddenly is caught by a paw quickly thrust over the rim of the nest from below. This has happened on my premises a number of times.

Both parents attentively feed the young and upon leaving the nest these young are prone to wander aimlessly. The male usually keeps up with one and the female with the other; more often than not the third is lost within a few days. The young are slow at learning to feed and permit the kindly father bird to feed them for six or eight weeks after leaving the nest. This is especially true of the last brood, for they are not thrust aside by the needs of later broods. Their food at this time consists largely of caterpillars, and the parents spend much time in the trees, searching the leaves after the manner of vireos.

Two or three broods are raised each season, the attempt for a third brood being dependent upon fairly wet conditions during mid-summer. In other words, if a drouth is in progress at the time a third nesting is due to begin, the birds will abandon the attempt. This is because weather too dry and hot is apt to prevent hatching of the eggs and also creates a scarcity of insect life upon which the young are dependent. Cardinals as well as other birds have enough intelligence to recognize the presence of these unfavorable conditions and to be guided accordingly.

For some weeks after leaving the nests the young are appreciably smaller than the adults, are rather stupid in their actions, and fall an easy prey to cats, small hawks, and Screech Owls. Their lusty cries for food from daylight to dusk are an open invitation to these predators to 'come and have lunch'. Until early fall the plumage of the young is a brownish, dull 'mouse color' with beak of slaty-black color. In early fall one can note that the beaks are developing coral-red spots, and these grow until by cold weather the beaks have become entirely red. During this time, also, the post-juvinal molt is proceeding, the new feathers being like those of the adult birds, and until completed the young present a dappled appearance. The fresh fall plumage of the females presents a creamy appearance upon the breast with an over-cast of rose-red. By spring the thus tinted tips of the feathers have worn off and the females' breasts become a uniform buff in color. Fall males have whitish tips to their otherwise uniform red plumage and are therefore less brilliant than in spring after the tips have worn off. Occasionally one will see a tail-less Cardinal after an ice-storm or heavy freeze. This is because

of the tail becoming frozen to a limb behind its roosting perch. New tail feathers begin quickly and in the case of an individual that came daily to my feeding shelf, the new tail was practically full-length again in six weeks. Those who make up bird skins for study purposes know that the skin of the Cardinal is very thin and much more easily torn than that of other birds.

As previously stated most Cardinals gather in flocks during the fall and remain thus during the winter, for the mutual protection afforded by many pairs of eyes. They mix freely at such times with Towhees, native sparrows, Titmice, and other species. Established pairs about residential grounds are, however, apt to remain thus paired as residents through the winter. Their favorite food at this time is the seed of the giant ragweed (*ambrosia trifida*) and the fruit of the hackberry (*celtis*). They feed upon the ground considerably, too, and at such times pick up a great variety of other weed seed. In eating hackberries they do not swallow the entire fruit and digest the unimpaired seed pits as do other birds. Instead, they 'chew' the fruit in their strong beaks until they have removed the sweet skinlike covering and toss aside the hard core. In dry weather they prefer to hunt these berries on the ground under the trees, for the ground moisture has swelled and softened the covering, and it is not only more palatable but more easily removed. I have watched as many as twenty Cardinals at a time on my lawn thus feeding upon these always abundant fruit. The seed of the giant ragweed are enclosed in a hard, horny burr, but this is readily split apart by the Cardinals and only the sweet nutlike center is eaten. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are also able to split these burrs and are quite partial to them in autumn. W. L. McAtee, of the Biological Survey, in listing the food of the 'redbird', does not mention the ragweed, perhaps because the emacrated kernel is difficult to identify. He states that from an economic standpoint the Cardinal is one of our most beneficial birds with regard to food habits. Its value from an aesthetic standpoint is even greater.

The birds that make up the flocks in fall gather together in numbers of from six to twenty-five depending probably on the amount of cover and food supply available. If one comes across such a flock, he will find that they become alarmed and rapidly move on beneath the screen of brush and briars. Sometimes one may follow an overgrown ditch bank and see no birds ahead, but when he arrives at the end of it, several Cardinals will emerge and take flight. When feeding on the ground they do not scratch like Towhees but hop about looking for food and sometimes tossing a leaf aside in order to look beneath it. Only occasionally do the birds engage in distant flights but at times they will fly several hundred yards at a distance of as much as a hundred feet above the ground.

During the winter they roost where they may find the best cover and protection. Where cedar trees are available, they often repair to these or to thickets overgrown with evergreen honeysuckle. Briar patches are also favored places for, although there may be no green leaves to protect, there is usually a mixture of grass, and the briars ward off most marauders. In the city suburbs the evergreen Amoor River privet hedges are favored roosting spots. When the birds are ready to go to roost they utter frequent 'chipping'

notes before settling down to sleep for the night. One winter at my home the hedge leaves were killed in mid-winter by the cold, whereupon the pair of Cardinals that fed daily at my shelf, began to roost in my neighbor's garage.

Winter flocks become smaller in size as the season progresses, due to mortality. I do not believe the birds ever lack food, even in coldest weather, for hackberries and ragweed are always above the snow. Owls probably get a few, but their chief winter enemies in the country are the Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. I have often come upon a pile of Cardinal feathers that marked the scene of a raptorial feast. In January, 1941, Dr. W. M. Spofford saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk carrying a Cardinal in its talons. A few weeks later, on February 15, 1941, we flushed a Cooper's Hawk from a pile of fresh Cardinal feathers in a deep ditch. Nothing whatever remained of this victim but the bright red feathers and even its head with the heavy bill had been swallowed by the hawk, to be disgorged later. In spite of predators, however, Cardinals survive the winter in greater numbers than most of our birds, and there remains an ample quota to begin the breeding season in spring. Based on a long series of Christmas census lists taken about Nashville, the Cardinal is second only to the Slate-colored Junco, in abundance, the average number recorded on these lists being one hundred and fifty individuals.

Beginning in 1923 the writer banded many Cardinals at his home and learned something in this way of their habits. One fact of interest was that although his premises were visited almost daily by a flock, the personnel of this flock was constantly changing. In addition to these roving birds, however, a resident pair remained about the place all through the year. Among these early banded Cardinals was a male that lived to the unprecedented age of more than thirteen years. It was first banded on February 12, 1924, and during its last years was trapped several times each year and was last seen, in poor physical condition, on November 20, 1936. This bird and its mate fed daily on a shelf at my dining room window, they nested in shrubs about the house, and it was thus my privilege to chronicle the history of this individual, perhaps the oldest small wild bird of which there has been record. Its history was published serially in *The Wilson Bulletin*, issues of December, 1933, December, 1934, December, 1935, and March, 1937.

NASHVILLE, March, 1941.

## WHERE TO LOOK

BY BENJ. R. WARRINGER

Birds as a subject for study may be approached from a wide and interesting variety of angles. Each subdivision of the general subject has within itself material enough to permanently hold the attention of the student. For instance, each species or subspecies of the general family of birds is a subject within itself. And of course there are the matters of the habitats of birds, their food, nesting habits, roosting habits, songs, body shapes, sizes, colors, migration, economic worth, esthetic worth; eggs—number, color, and size; the number of broods per annum; frequency of occurrence and distribution in summer and winter.

Among all of these phases of bird life, none is more absorbing than the subject of habitat. Nature evidently has a keen appreciation of bird life for she has distributed it far and wide, and placed it into every nook and corner in practically all parts of the out-of-doors world.

There are birds of the trees, birds of the ground, birds of the air, birds of the water. And there are birds of the mountains, of the meadows, of open fields, of the hedges, of swamps, of dry and parched areas. There are birds that fly almost endlessly, and birds that spend most of their lives on the ground, never taking to their wings except in great emergencies. Nothing adds more to the pleasure of a bird hike than the ability to enter a particular kind of terrain knowing in advance the special kinds of birds that are apt to be found there. A personal experience last spring proves the point. With a fellow hiker I came to an open slough, lined on one side by a thick skirt of woods and on the other by open country. The banks were muddy and sloped back barely above the water's level. I remarked to my companion that it was a perfect spot for sandpipers. We looked and sure enough there appeared three Spotted Sandpipers and one Solitary; then a Little Blue Heron took wing. Half a mile farther we came to a meadow lush with deep grasses. I suggested that Bobolinks range in such places during spring migration, and that a walk through the place doubtless would result in the flushing of that species. While we talked the matter over, the Bobolinks doubtless heard us and decided to be quite accommodating, for a small drove of them flew up and came down again midst the reeds. A ditch bank heavily covered with grass produced three kinds of sparrows, the identical ones we expected to flush there. A great hawk approached us from up the shallow valley, flying low over the ground. We predicted that it would prove to be a Marsh Hawk, judging almost entirely by the surrounding area. A Marsh it was.

It is true, of course, that a good many birds cover ranges of wide varieties. Robins, for instance, may be found both in the heavy woods and in open country; in trees and on the ground. In the spring they stick more to the meadows and fields where there is little growth of grass, where they feed largely on worms and grubs pulled from the soft, damp earth. In fall and winter they are found in the bottoms where they search for small berries. They nest, as all know, in trees and sometimes in nooks in houses and other structures.

At the other extreme the Brown Creeper is never found except in the woods, and even there the bird confines itself to the trunks of trees. Almost without exception the Brown Creeper begins his search for food at the bottom of a tree and works upward. When as high as he wants to go, this little feathered apparition darts swiftly to the bottom of another tree trunk nearby, and starts his performance all over again. It is a matter of up and down, up and down, all day long.

White-throated Sparrows may be found in both woods and fields, but preferably in woods where thickets are abundant. Field Sparrows, as the name suggests, live in old fields, though an occasional one is seen in thickets. Larks, too, are birds of the open country; though in flying cross-country they do stop in wooded places; they nest in the grass, and feed on the ground. Bob-whites are birds of the ground, feeding and nesting there. Usually they are found in the fields, yet it is not unusual for a covey to be flushed in

the woods and especially in heavy thickets. Doves are seed and grain eaters, hence live for the most part on the ground. At certain seasons they roost in trees and of course at all times the favorite parking place for a Dove is a limb of a dead tree, a vantage point that enables the bird to have clear vision in all directions. This interesting Dove finds all of his food open on the ground. He cannot open pod or shuck, nor does he pull a single bit from vine or twig.

Most of the Woodpeckers are birds of the trees, though the Flicker frequently ventures into the fields where he may be flushed from the ground. I have seen possibly a thousand Wood Thrushes but never one far from wood or bottom or other spots where trees grow. The Shrike prefers a wire along a roadside or perhaps a low dead limb. Beneath him in the grass he discovers a hapless grasshopper and pounces upon it. Sometimes he attacks some small and defenseless bird.

Almost without exception wading and shore birds must be looked for in the marshes, along ponds and streams, and on shores of bays and other bodies of water, both fresh and salt. True, some of the so-called water birds nest on dry ground, yet water is not far away and to the water they soon go with their new broods.

In a word, certain kinds of birds are found in certain kinds of places. If the bird student is well posted on this matter of habitat, he is able to economize both in time and in distance, as he searches for his feathered friends. CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI, March, 1941.

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CENSUS

BY OUR MEMBERS

Our twelfth annual state-wide mid-winter or Christmas Census of birdlife is given in the following two tables. Thirteen localities in the state are represented, one less than last year. After five annual trips to the Montgomery Bell Park at White Bluff, by a committee from the Nashville chapter, the project was considered completed and no census was made there this year. No lists were received from Henderson and Humboldt. Reelfoot Lake appears again (previously made in 1934) and a census was taken at Mt. Pleasant by Henry M. Stevenson, Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson also slipped home from Vanderbilt campus and participated in censuses at Tuscaloosa, Foley, and Birmingham, Alabama which are given in the *Audubon Magazine* (formerly *Bird-Lore*). An earlier census by Stevenson at Florence, Ala. is also included herewith. As usual the Iosedale, Miss. list is included but Corinth is absent for the first time. Two other Mississippi lists by Memphis members—Tupelo and Hickory Flat—are included because they have been in *Bird-Lore* in previous years. This year they were made after the *Audubon Magazine's* date limit due to the Reelfoot trip. The Moon Lake, Miss. list was inserted at the last minute for purposes of comparison, altho it is given in the *Audubon Magazine*. Tennessee lists published therein (1941, supplement to Vol. XLIII, No. 1, pp. 117-118) are from Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Greeneville, Memphis, Nashville, and Reelfoot Lake.

The highest single list is 72 species from Memphis, one less than the record set last year from the same locality. The composite list for all Tennessee reports embraces 93 compared with 96 in 1939 and 92 in 1938. Species appearing in *The Migrant's* census lists for the first time; for Tennessee—Leconte's Sparrow; for adjacent areas—see Addenda bottom of Table I. Re-appearing on Tennessee lists are Red-breasted Nuthatch, Prairie Marsh Wren, Pine Siskin, and Chipping Sparrow. Dropped from last year's list are Eastern Turkey and Barn Owl. The American Egret and Shoveller (out-of-state) are also missing. Seven species—Horned Grebe, Gadwall, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Wood Duck, Ruddy Duck, and American Merganser—are dropped from Tennessee lists but are present in the other censuses. The Nashville list, due to a belated report on Cowbirds, has one more species than is shown in the *Audubon Magazine*.

TABLE I

	Nashville Dec. 22, 1940	Clarksville Dec. 22	Norris Dec. 24	Gt. Smoky Park Dec. 22	Reelfoot Lake Dec. 25	Memphis Dec. 22	Moore Lake, Miss. Dec. 29	Rosedale, Miss. Dec. 22	Tupelo, Miss. Jan. 1, 1941	Florence, Ala. Dec. 16
Number of Species .....	66	52	38	42	55	72	66	62	54	53
Number of Individuals.....	2832	1723	812	1667	23265	8993	3673	5119	1158	586
Number of Observers .....	27	8	2	28	5	23	11	3	3	1
Pied-billed Grebe .....	1	.....	5	.....	2	1	3	7	13	2
<b>Double-crested Cormorant</b> .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	270	28	.....	.....
Great Blue Heron .....	1	.....	1	.....	1	1	3	5	.....	.....
Canada Goose .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	45	.....	.....	.....	.....
Common Mallard .....	7	9	102	.....	.....	12	31	275	166	1
Black Duck .....	8	7	311	.....	.....	2	2	400	27	35
Baldpate .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	9	34	.....
American Pintail .....	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	20	.....	.....	1	3
<b>Green-winged Teal</b> .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	65	12	1
Ring-necked Duck .....	31	42	1	.....	2	16	.....	155	172	.....
Canvas-back .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	14	11	1
Lesser Scaup .....	14	.....	.....	.....	11	38	16	750	60	.....
American Golden-eye .....	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Buffle-head</b> .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	9	3	.....	.....
Hooded Merganser .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	100	11	.....	.....
Turkey Vulture .....	1	3	.....	1	.....	8	6	3	2	7
Black Vulture .....	122	.....	.....	.....	2	6	9	8	2	.....
Cooper's Hawk .....	2	.....	1	.....	.....	7	.....	.....	.....	.....
Red-tailed Hawk .....	3	.....	.....	2	6	36	4	7	.....	.....
Red-shouldered Hawk .....	3	3	.....	.....	4	9	1	2	1	1
Marsh Hawk .....	1	2	.....	.....	3	7	8	8	.....	.....
Duck Hawk .....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Sparrow Hawk .....	21	3	1	.....	1	19	10	3	3	2
Ruffed Grouse .....	.....	.....	.....	10	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Bob-white .....	25	37	20	9	.....	62	25	9	4	.....
American Coot .....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	2000	3	.....
Killdeer .....	35	17	3	.....	.....	58	70	38	11	3
Wilson's Snipe .....	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	1
Herring Gull .....	1	.....	1	.....	1	8	8	.....	.....	7
Ring-billed Gull .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	30	40	18	3	26
Unidentified Gulls .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Mourning Dove .....	178	39	.....	.....	1	105	66	43	37	.....
Screech Owl .....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Great Horned Owl .....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Barred Owl .....	2	.....	.....	.....	3	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Belted Kingfisher .....	9	2	3	2	1	2	3	2	1	1
Flicker .....	23	13	.....	2	14	124	8	17	11	6
Pileated Woodpecker .....	9	6	2	2	13	.....	.....	5	.....	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker .....	16	10	1	.....	12	59	6	8	5	2
Red-headed Woodpecker .....	.....	1	.....	.....	8	31	1	1	4	.....
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker .....	2	1	.....	1	2	15	.....	.....	1	1
Hairy Woodpecker .....	7	2	.....	11	11	13	1	.....	1	.....
Downy Woodpecker .....	35	7	3	5	13	38	1	3	2	3
Phoebe .....	.....	1	1	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....
Prairie Horned Lark .....	95	80	.....	.....	.....	43	8	.....	.....	.....

TABLE I—Cont.

	Nashville Dec. 22, 1940	Clarksville Dec. 22	Norris Dec. 24	Gl. Smoky Park Dec. 22	Reelfoot Lake Dec. 25	Memphis Dec. 22	Moon Lake, Miss Dec. 29	Rosedale, Miss. Dec. 22	Tupelo, Miss. Jan. 1, 1941	Florence, Ala. Dec. 18
Blue Jay	28	40	...	1	38	314	1	5	43	6
Raven	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Crow	64	312	6	220	11	90	52	17	4	7
Chickadees*	135	47	13	145	39	132	...	13	2	4
Tufted Titmouse	65	41	16	31	5	130	1	8	16	13
White-breasted Nuthatch	6	3	2	...	...	11	...	...	...	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	...	...	...	46	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brown Creeper	4	1	...	2	5	21	...	6	4	2
Winter Wren	5	1	1	3	2	12	1	3	...	1
Bewick's Wren	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Carolina Wren	12	16	5	10	19	65	5	7	3	8
Prairie Marsh Wren	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...
Mockingbird	51	6	...	1	3	57	6	2	1	1
Brown Thrasher	...	...	...	...	1	11	1	4	1	1
Robin	7	2	...	3	47	103	1	7	...	...
Hermit Thrush	1	1	3	13	2	21	1	...	...	...
Bluebird	100	40	26	19	...	59	1	...	5	7
Golden-crowned Kinglet	...	1	...	18	19	83	2	35	...	12
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	...	...	...	6	3	25	1	18	1	3
American Pipit	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	73	6	20
Cedar Waxwing	21	16	2	4	...	56	1	...	...	...
Shrike	2	...	...	1	1	41	14	52	4	6
Starling	302	136	9	...	182	843	53	...	4	1
Myrtle Warbler	5	6	8	2	13	108	5	72	4	1
English Sparrow	200	68	74	30	75	com.	108	...	36	55
Meadowlark	56	47	2	...	7	728	248	19	70	20
Red-wing	...	...	...	...	1386	7	10	50	62	100
Rusty Blackbird	25	41	...	...	206	140	...	...	...	1
Bronzed Grackle	24	...	...	...	234	135	4	100	25	...
Unidentified Blackbirds	...	...	...	...	20000	1175	...	...	...	...
Cowbird	8	2	...	...	1	228	...	150	...	...
Cardinal	282	189	5	65	81	251	12	17	16	27
Purple Finch	10	...	5	11	...	72	...	...	...	...
Pine Siskin	...	...	...	400	...	...	...	...	...	...
Goldfinch	70	11	13	53	12	130	6	...	13	7
Towhee	52	24	5	8	...	55	1	9	2	16
Savannah Sparrow	5	...	...	2	...	28	133	...	4	7
Leconte's Sparrow	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
Vesper Sparrow	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	9	...	...
Juncos*	377	195	15	220	87	525	37	352	17	14
Tree Sparrow	3	1	...	...	16	...	...	...	...	...
Field Sparrow	37	28	95	180	30	351	89	...	53	27
White-crowned Sparrow	32	2	...	...	...	100	20	...	1	...
White-throated Sparrow	75	100	20	69	64	773	110	61	7	85
Fox Sparrow	23	3	...	...	10	92	3	6	...	2
Swamp Sparrow	19	23	3	...	7	93	2	...	...	5
Song Sparrow	56	30	25	64	14	184	24	94	10	16
Lapland Longspur	...	...	...	...	...	911	35	...	158	...

TABLE I ADDENDA

Listed for the first time:  
 Rosedale, Miss.: King Rail, 1; Lesser Yellow-legs, 3; Least Sandpiper, 1; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 7. See also notes with census date.  
 Moon Lake, Miss.: Short-eared Owl, 2; Western Meadowlark, 1; see "The Season—Memphis Area Census Notes".  
 Also not listed in Tennessee:  
 Moon Lake, Miss.: Horned Grebe, 11; Ruddy Duck, 1450; American Merganser, 450; Red-breasted Merganser, 25; Herring Owl, 1 (second year).  
 Rosedale, Miss.: Gadwall, 14; Wood Duck, 4; House Wren, 2.  
 Tupelo, Miss.: Blue-winged Teal, 1.  
 Florence, Ala.: Bald Eagle, 1; Pine Warbler, 2.

## \*SPECIAL NOTES

Species in bold-face type in tables were not recorded in Tennessee.

Chickadees—Carolina Chickadee only at every locality except the Great Smoky Mts. Nat'l. Park where both the Black-capped and Carolina were observed but not listed separately.

Shrike—should be Migrant Shrike except possibly some Loggerheads wintering at Memphis, Moon Lake, and Rosedale.

Bronzed Grackle—should be Purple Grackle for all East Tenn. censuses.

Juncos—should be Slate-colored Juncos at all localities except in the Great Smoky Mts. Park, the count for which includes both this species and the Carolina Junco.

TABLE II

	Covington Dec. 24	Hickory Flat, Miss. Jan. 1, 1941	Mt. Pleasant Dec. 14	Murfreesboro Dec. 22	Springfield Dec. 29	Knoxville Jan. 1, 1941	Greenville Dec. 23	Johnson City Dec. 22
Number of Species	27	30	34	30	37	42	33	44
Number of Individuals	557	881	520	913	918	1623	1661	1218
Number of Observers	1	*1	1	3	10	10	2	6
Great Blue Heron	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	1	.....
Common Mallard	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	4
Ring-necked Duck	.....	.....	9	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Turkey Vulture	.....	4	.....	3	2	.....	30	11
Black Vulture	.....	.....	.....	187	5	.....	20	1
Cooper's Hawk	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	1	1
Red-tailed Hawk	2	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	2
Sparrow Hawk	.....	3	1	7	2	5	1	2
Bob-white	.....	.....	25	.....	.....	.....	.....	31
Killdeer	.....	.....	1	2	.....	8	.....	1
Wilson's Snipe	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	.....	8
Mourning Dove	12	1	.....	4	2	21	65	10
Screech Owl	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....
Belted Kingfisher	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	4	.....	1
Flicker	2	4	4	4	8	10	1	11
Pileated Woodpecker	.....	.....	1	.....	2	.....	.....	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	2	2	1	14	4	.....	.....
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	.....	.....	.....	1	1	1	.....
Hairy Woodpecker	2	.....	2	2	3	.....	.....	.....
Downy Woodpecker	.....	1	10	3	12	18	.....	7
Prairie Horned Lark	.....	.....	.....	28	5	.....	5	10
Blue Jay	20	6	4	2	41	8	1	14
Crow	300	2	35	273	63	.....	1275	104
Carolina Chickadee	.....	7	46	14	23	59	8	23
Tufted Titmouse	.....	13	9	2	66	33	4	19
White-breasted Nuthatch	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	3	4	5
Brown Creeper	.....	5	2	.....	2	1	.....	2
Winter Wren	.....	.....	5	.....	.....	1	.....	1
Bewick's Wren	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	1	1	.....
Carolina Wren	3	3	5	.....	6	13	6	23
Mockingbird	3	3	2	15	2	20	3	11
Robin	30	.....	.....	.....	.....	69	.....	88
Hermit Thrush	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	1
Bluebird	1	1	10	25	2	24	3	34
Golden-crowned Kinglet	.....	19	.....	.....	2	3	.....	21
Shrike	1	2	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	3
Starling	.....	51	11	13	400	138	134	283
Myrtle Warbler	1	2	.....	130	.....	27	6	21
Palm Warbler	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	1	.....
English Sparrow	30	10	105	25	47	75	22	135
Meadowlark	10	7	1	3	28	30	8	16
Red-wing	.....	35	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Bronzed Grackle	1	500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Cardinal	16	6	49	50	54	62	7	16
Purple Finch	3	.....	3	.....	1	9	.....	.....
Goldfinch	5	.....	17	8	3	150	2	20
Towhee	.....	.....	7	.....	39	14	2	3
Savannah Sparrow	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	12
Slate-colored Junco	30	58	29	80	37	63	26	94
Pied Sparrow	20	68	35	4	.....	222	10	27
White-crowned Sparrow	3	.....	19	11	.....	10	4	.....
White-throated Sparrow	30	43	17	2	23	197	5	21
Fox Sparrow	8	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Swamp Sparrow	.....	2	15	.....	1	.....	.....	.....
Song Sparrow	20	19	34	10	5	62	2	55

TABLE II ADDENDA

ALSO: Knoxville—Hooded Merganser, 1; American Woodcock, 1; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4; Chipping Sparrow, 4 (Goddard, Yambert, and Walker at 30 feet).

Johnson City—Black Duck, 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Cedar Waxwing, 63.

Springfield—Marsh Hawk, 2; Barred Owl, 2; Tree Sparrow, 4.

Palm Warbler, in the above table, and Woodcock, Chipping Sparrow, and Sharp-shinned Hawk herein are Tennessee species additional to those listed in Table I. Hooded Merganser is not shown in boldface in Table I because of the Knoxville record herein.

NASHVILLE:—Dec. 22, 8 to 5; dense fog until 10, then clear; ground bare and wet; calm; temp. 31° to 47°. Radnor Lake, Overton Hills, Hillsboro, Hobbs and Harding Roads, Bellemeade, Percy Warner Park, Westmeade, Hill Estate, Jordonia Marsh, Marrowbone Lake and Creek, Cumberland River bottoms at 9th Ave. and above Shelby Park, Mill Creek, etc. 26 observers in 10 parties; total—79 party-hours. For comments on the list, see also 'The Season'.—Mr. and Mrs. B. H. Abernathy, Paul Bryant, M. S. Carter, Mrs. Sandford Duncan, A. F. Ganier (compiler), Wayland Hayes, Conrad Jamison, Jr., Mrs. Amelia R. Laskey, Harry C. Monk, G. R. Mayfield, Geo. Mayfield, Jr., Jas. Merritt, Mrs. Robt. Orr, C. E. Pearson, John Pritchett, Jas. Robins, E. D. Schreiber, J. M. Shaver, Wm. Simpson, W. R. Spofford, Mabel Slack, Mr. and Mrs. J. Murray Speirs, H. Tracy, H. S. Vaughn and Geo. B. Woodring.

CLARKSVILLE:—Dec. 22, 8 to 5; dense fog until 10:30, gradually clearing, by 1 P.M. sunny; calm; temp. 30° to 46°. Period of cool and dry weather. Near Cumberland and Red Rivers, Roosevelt School; Dunbar's Cave, Meriwether farm, Spring Creek, River bottoms from Cunningham bridge to Edmondson ferry; below Palmyra, Hayne's Lake, Dotsonville; T. C. R. R. tracks to Mark's Slough, return along Cumberland River. 30 miles on foot; auto partially used. Total 28 party-hours.—Lamar Armstrong, Alfred, Sr., Alfred, Jr., and Edward Clebsch, Clarence Collier, Jr., Mrs. John Y. Hutchison, Dr. Chas. F. Pickering, and Curtis Swift.—NORRIS:—Dec. 24, 9 to 3; clear; light W. wind; temp. 28° to 50°. Norris and Caryville Lake. 20 miles by auto, 3 on foot.—W. M. Walker and Bill Yambert—GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, TENN.:—Dec. 22, 7:30 to 4:30; clear; ground frozen, thawing at low altitudes; wind light; temp. 25° to 62° in lowlands, colder in uplands. Same area as in past 3 years,—circle of 7½-mile radius centering on Bull Head of Mt. LeConte, and including a section of the Tenn.-N. C. divide from Siler's Bald to the Sawteeth; also the towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Altitude range, 1200 to 6600 feet. 28 observers in 5 groups. Total 40 group-hours, 54 miles on foot, 69 miles by auto. A good seed crop of fir probably accounts for numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins present. Also seen between Dec. 18-22: Sparrow Hawk, Turkey, Phoebe, and Red Crossbill.—William F. Alston, Mrs. Harvey Broome, Carlos C. Campbell, Mary Ruth Chiles, Edward W. Dougherty, Frelan Goddard, John J. Hay, Dr. Earl O. Henry, H. P. Ijams, Elizabeth, James, Robert, and Mr. and Mrs. William M. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Leonhard, Dr. Henry Meyer, Elise Morrell, M. C. Myles, Jr., Richard Nevius, S. A. Ogden, Eugene Orr, Mrs. Ralph Penland, Willie Ruth Reed, A. R. Tuell, William M. Walker, Jr., William Yambert, and Arthur Stupka, Park Naturalist.—REELFOOT LAKE:—Dec. 25, 7:30 to 5; light mist and rain most of day; calm; temp. 51° to 54°. Mississippi River at Tiptonville and along lake by road to Samburg to Walnut Log. By auto 25 miles, occasional short stops; last 3 hours,—3 observers 6 miles on foot (along S. Side Upper Blue Basin and return) and 2 in boat, 1 mile. Total 12 party-hours.—Austin Burdick, Jr., Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Harold Elphinstone, Franklin McCamey, Jr., Virginia Taber.—MEMPHIS:—Dec. 22, 6:30 to 4:30; fog at start, lifting early, then fair; wet underfoot; calm; temp. 35° to 61°. Same territory as previous years, omitting Mud Island and Mound City Chute, adding lower end of Benjestown Rd.; better coverage due to separate party for Raleigh. 4 separate auto parties,—north, to Raleigh, southeast, and south;

all day; equal 7 groups when on foot, 3 to 6 miles for each. One on foot E. 8 miles, all day; 2 in Overton Park 4 hours and 2 at river front 1 hour; 1 in cruiser on river, late in afternoon. Total, 77 party-hours.—Austin Burdick, Jr., Fred Carney, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Coffey, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. John H. Embury, Fred Fiedler, Jr., Luther Keeton, Lawrence Kent, Dr. Louis Leroy, Joe Mason, Jr., Franklin McCamey, Jr., Dr. C. E. Moore, Alice Smith, Virginia Taber, Mrs. M. L. Torti, Robt. Tucker, Eugene Wallace, Billy Walker, Ben Welch, Jr., Bob White, Mary Frances White, and Neal Wyatt.—MOON LAKE, MISS.:—Dec. 29, 7:30 to 8:20; muddy underfoot; brisk wind, max. 16 m.p.h., whitecaps on lake; temp. 42° to 54°. Highway just N. of Dundee to Lula, along E. and S. sides of Moon Lake, W. side along levee, thru bottoms to Helena Ferry, back N. end of lake, frequent stops with observers deploying slightly from one party. By auto 51 miles. No 40X telescope as in previous years but same would not have aided list of ducks materially. Negligible hunting at time of census.—Mr. and Mrs. Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Alice Smith, Austin Burdick, Jr., Joe Mason, Jr., Harold Elphinstone, Franklin McCamey, Jr., Virginia Taber, Ben Welch, John Pond, James Vardaman.—ROSEDALE, MISS.—Dec. 22, 9 to 5:15; clear; visibility good; temp. 47° to 54° to 44°. Rose-dale to Legion Lake, thence to Lake Bolivar, and return via levee; 46 miles by auto, 4 miles on foot. Observers together.—Sammy M. Ray, Thomas Smith, and M. G. Valden. Special notes by latter: Not as many ducks and Coots at Lake Bolivar as usually found. Sparrows not as plentiful as normally expected. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers unusual here for mid-winter; one collected. Finding a Least Sandpiper is very unusual and upon examination of collected specimen we found nothing to indicate any reason this bird should have remained over this long. The three Lesser Yellowlegs were found nearby but they have been recorded here heretofore during early part of mid-winter. Not an owl heard or seen, although generally we have them singing nightly within the city limits during winter. Hawks were not as plentiful as to be expected. A beautiful male Marsh Hawk was seen and watched for an half-hour as he quartered a field near the levee. As a rule the males move much farther southward toward the southwestern part of Louisiana and I have few records for winter here. With exception of an early cold spell weather has been fairly mild with much rain during latter part of November and all of December.—TUPELO, MISS.:—Jan. 1, 8 to 4; overcast, slight drizzle 1 to 2, downpour at 4 p.m., ending trip; calm; temp. 50°. Memphis highway 6 miles W. of town, Legion Lake, Fish Hatchery, Gum Pond, Tombigbee State Park (and lake), and Hwy. 45 just S. of town.—Austin Burdick, Jr., Ben Coffey, Jr., Joe Mason, Jr.—FLORENCE, ALA.:—Dec. 16, 10 hours; fair; strong W. wind; temp. 46° to 52° to 45°. Also seen,—one Scoter, prob. Surf Scoter. Have had previous field experience with all three Scoters in adult plumage on Long Island. This bird was an immature and not seen in very good light. There is no doubt that it was one of the Scoters.—Henry M. Stevenson, Jr.—COVINGTON:—Dec. 24, 7 to 11; overcast; slight wind; cold; 2 miles on foot (Liberty area), 2 miles by auto (to one mile N. of town).—Alice Smith.—HICKORY FLAT, MISS.:—Jan. 1, 8:15 to 12:45; heavy mist, changing to rain; 4 miles on foot. Tupelo party by auto along highway 7 miles to Myrtle with stop at Spring Lakes.—Mrs. Ben B. Coffey, Jr.—MT. PLEASANT:—Dec. 14, 8½ hours; cloudy; medium N. wind;

temp. 40°.—Henry M. Stevenson, Jr.—MURFREESBORO:—Dec. 22, 8:30 to 5:00; cloudy and rain; light wind; temp. 38°.—Geo. Davis, Robt. Duckworth, H. O. Todd, Jr.—SPRINGFIELD:—Dec. 29, 9 to 4, cloudy and foggy; N. wind. 5 to 7 miles N. of town, in wet woods, big marsh, and old fields.—Alfred Clebsch, Clarence Collier, A. F. Ganier, Harold E. Hughes, Conrad Jamison, Arthur McMurray, H. C. Monk, C. F. Pickering, Wm. Simpson, Gordon Wilson.—KNOXVILLE:—Jan. 1; fair; light W. wind; temp. 35° to 50°. Highland Memorial cemetery, Lake Andrew Jackson, Island Home, Sander's Ridge, Lynnhurst Cemetery, Fountain City, and Harrill Hills. Observers in 5 parties. Total: 17 party-miles on foot; 10 party-hours afield.—Chas. Baird, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Broome, Frelan Goddard, H. P. Ijams, Dr. and Mrs. Henry Meyer, A. R. Tuell, W. M. Walker, and Bill Yambert.—GREENEVILLE:—Dec. 23, 7:15 to 12, 1:30 to 4; clear; temp. 33° to 50°. Reed farm along Roaring Fork Creek, Lick Creek, Bay's Mt. 4 miles on foot, 12 miles by auto. The Great Blue Heron was apparently injured, observed at a range of 3 yards.—Richard Nevius and Willie Ruth Reed.—JOHNSON CITY:—Dec. 22, 7:15 to 5; fair; calm; temp. 28° to 50°. Ten miles around the city.—Ruby Doak, Elizabeth Dyer, Albert Hyder and W. M. Hendrix (Party 1); R. B. Lyle and Bruce P. Tyler (Party 2).

## RUFFED GROUSE IN TENNESSEE

BY JOHN C. CALDWELL

Ask a native Tennessean if there are any Ruffed Grouse in the state and he'll say "no." The mountain people know these birds as pheasants or mountain pheasants. It was not until a few years ago that it was known that there were any number of these birds left in the state. The grouse is subject to a seven to ten-year cycle of abundance and it may be that the birds have been upon the crest of a cycle during the past three or four years and are therefore more abundant than they have been for the past decade.

During the past five years I have hunted grouse extensively and have spent a good deal of time studying them and inquiring about them of the natives. To my surprise I find trustworthy reports of grouse occurrence within the past two years in Hickman, Davidson, Dickson, and Sumner Counties. I believe, however, that the birds are exceedingly rare in the Highland Rim. There are a few left along the Harpeth River and along Marrowbone Creek about fifteen miles west of Nashville.

Grouse are now common in the Cumberlandlands from the Kentucky line to the vicinity of Monteagle. They seem to disappear there and are quite rare in Franklin County. Farther east they are found throughout the mountainous areas but seem to be most common above an elevation of 1500 feet. They are very common in Monroe, Carter, and Johnson Counties.

Most of my studies of this grand bird have taken place in the Cumberlandlands. I have found them most abundant in Van Buren, Cumberland, Morgan, and Fentress Counties with the center of population seemingly in Cumberland County in the Peavine Mountains and around Ozone and a little settlement known as Dogwood.

During the fall and winter the 'pheasants' will be found almost exclusively along the streams and 'branches,' hiding among the laurel and rhododendron. When the weather is good they will venture out quite a way into the oak flats but will very rarely be found more than a half mile from the 'gulfs' and 'coves'.

In the spring and summer the range is greater and birds will be found far out in the oak and beech woods. I have found the birds drumming in nearly every month of the year but the main drumming season begins in March and extends through May. The food of the grouse that I have shot has consisted almost entirely of acorns and laurel leaves.

It is my belief that if woods fires can be controlled we will have very little worry about the grouse. Their habitat is so rough that hunters will never bother them to a great extent. The present state law is reasonable and affords ample protection.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, NASHVILLE, March, 1941.

## PLANTING TO ATTRACT BIRDS

BY FLOYD BRALLIAR

Anyone who understands the habits of birds realizes the importance of shrubbery in their life economy. This is especially true of the small birds whose lives would be in constant jeopardy from not only birds of prey but from predatory animals, were it not for shrubbery and thick bushy trees. Anyone who has ever watched a hawk chase a small bird, only to be forced to give up the chase when his intended prey darts into a bush or shrub will understand this. Thick shrubs are almost as great a protection against cats and other animals as they are against birds of prey. This being true, it is very important that those of us who are interested in the welfare of our birds should plant shrubs in strategic places. If we can plant shrubs that are not only thick and bushy but bear food for the birds also we have accomplished a double purpose.

Where should these shrubs be planted? The most important place is in close proximity to their bath or drinking place. A bird is doubly at the mercy of its foes immediately after it has taken a bath while its feathers are still wet. Therefore we should never put a bird bath on a lawn without having it in close proximity to one or more thick shrubs that stand higher than the bath.

In planting projects carried on by the United States government to serve the double purpose of stopping erosion and for the protection and feeding of birds, the common buckbrush (*symphoricarpos vulgaris*) is more widely used than any other plant. It is true that birds do not eat the berries of this plant until a real food shortage develops or until late spring, but it is equally true that they do ultimately eat most of the berries that grow on this plant. Cedar Waxwings are especially fond of these berries and do much to clear up the crop in early spring. In any territory that is visited by these birds, *berberis thunbergi*, commonly known as Japanese barberry, is also of special

value for this purpose. It is decidedly ornamental at any time of the year. It contains enough thorns or spines to keep animals and birds of prey from entering it, yet it seems to offer no obstacle at all to small birds. It bears heavily and the bright red berries are eatable. We have frequently known of people making jelly from the fruit of this plant. Again, the birds do not usually eat these berries as long as there is an abundance of food more suited to their taste, but they eat it freely when other food is scarce.

The weeping mulberry or, for that matter, the tree mulberry are excellent to plant for birds. The weeping mulberry is especially desirable to plant near a bird bath, or in some out-of-way corner of the yard for it never reaches a very great height. The branches afford a very good protection to small birds. The Hick's everbearing mulberry is one of the best to plant. Both of these varieties of mulberry bear a large quantity of fruit over a long period of time and the birds are fond of it. We would prefer that it bore its fruit in the late fall and winter instead of in the spring and summer. However, the birds seem to make good use of it when it comes.

*Etacagnus pungens* is evergreen and makes a reasonable good size and dense growth. It blooms in November and ripens its fruit in late winter and early spring. The birds are very fond of this fruit and it comes at a time when they need it most. In ordinary seasons these plants bear a heavy crop of fruit; although they may fail to bear fruit at all, especially in very cold winter. Most of the cotoneasters bear heavily and produce berries that are relished; moreover, they do not ripen until the middle of winter. Unfortunately, most of these are not hardy, except in the warmer parts of our state.

We might easily extend this list. The best shrubs are strawberry bush and spindlewood. Both are very satisfactory, although the birds are not enthusiastic over their berries when they can find plenty else to eat. The dwarf Juneberry only grows to the height of five or six feet and produces an abundance of early berries which are very much relished by man or birds. The bush is dense enough to fill all the requirements for protection and, as it is among the very first shrubs to bloom in the spring, is classed among the desirable for this purpose.

NASHVILLE, March, 1941.

## THE SEASON

MEMPHIS AREA:—The number of individual birds present this winter is roughly 25% less than normal, according to Coffey, based on Christmas Census trips from Reelfoot to Moon Lake and Memphis to Tupelo. The severe winter of last year evidently reduced last season's breeding stock. Notes on most of our field work then were crowded out of last March's issue but because of their unusual nature we hope to yet record them in these pages.—As a result of last season we have been on special lookout for the reappearance of Leconte's Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, and Lapland Longspurs. Tree Sparrows have been seen this year in the rows and fields just north of Gallo-

way Park. First recorded were 5 on Feb. 8. On Feb. 17 we saw 12 and on Feb. 18 Geo. H. Lowery, Jr. collected 2 for the Louisiana State University museum. On Feb. 24 at least 15 were seen, this being the last record so far.—At this same locality a Harlan's Hawk was seen on Feb. 8, soaring with a normally-plumaged Red-tailed Hawk. At one time he was as close as 100 feet. On the 18th 3 Leconte's Sparrows were flushed from tall sedge grass here.—A Short-eared Owl was seen just south of Shelby Forest on Feb. 18, while on the same day Eugene Wallace and Lowery found 3 at the Municipal Airport along with about 200 Lapland Longspurs. On March 1 a similar flock of Longspurs were seen flying rapidly northward over Galloway golf course, near home.—An adult Gambel's Sparrow was seen on Feb. 17 about 7 miles east of the city limits. The next day this or a similar one was collected by Lowery. This is our third record this season. On Nov. 22, 1940, I banded an immature (repeating Jan. 17, 1941) and on Jan. 10, 1941, an adult (repeating Jan. 15).—While an old barn on our farm east of town was being torn down by workmen on Feb. 28, 1941, a Bewick's Wren's nest containing 7 eggs was found. This is a very early nesting record.—Nothing unusual was seen at Moon Lake, Miss. on Feb. 14 except a female Am. Goldeneye and 36 Horned Grebes. On Mar. 9 at Mud Lake (Miss.-Tenn.) we saw about 3,000 Mallards, 4,000 Pintails, 100 Green-winged Teals, 25 Baldpates, and 6 Shovellers.—On Mar. 8 I saw my first transient, a Purple Martin passing over home. This species was reported Mar. 5 by Mrs. John E. Hooper in the Normal section.—AUSTIN BURDICK, JR., Memphis.

MEMPHIS AREA CENSUS NOTES:—This area is liberally stretched at this writing. For the first time in four years the Memphis list (Dec. 22) included the Black Vulture. No party was able to find a Wilson's Snipe or a Pileated Woodpecker. The field near Joe Mason's where we recorded 4 Leconte's Sparrows last fall was afterwards partially mowed, then burnt off a week later. Thus we had to work to find this species. The writer and the north party spent over two hours of the afternoon in a special search but without success. Fortunately both Mrs. Coffey and Burdick recorded it separately. Red-tailed Hawks have been common, 36 being listed on the local census. The north party kept recounting Red-tails found overhead at a fire in a hedgerow and finally accounted for 8 individuals. Two of these were plainly seen to be Harlan's Hawks, the melanistic form. At Moon Lake on the 29th we found a Harlan's Hawk and sometime later about two miles to the east we saw either another or the same Harlan's.—Reelfoot Lake was revisited six years to the day since our last census there. As in 1934 we found small numbers of Tree Sparrows altho the 1934 census table shows our count opposite Chipping Sparrow. In 1934 at the end of a dreary afternoon the writer was able to carefully identify a Prairie Marsh Wren. The weather was more favorable this time and the Biological Station boat dock enabled us to walk out into the midst of the lake vegetation. At the end of the dock we heard and saw at least 4 of these Wrens. On a walk along the island 3 miles westward I found another at each of the two places where I waded out to hunt for this species. Woodpeckers seemed very common in the woods along the island. McCamey and Taber rowed out into the Lake. Only a few ducks were seen on the whole.—The Moon Lake list was in-

served in the tabulations herein as space was readily available. It is a peculiar list, particularly in the fact that 17 species are represented by only one individual, all well verified. Often our land bird list there is short because: much time is spent checking the waterbirds; usually rainy weather keeps us in our cars; and scarcity of wooded territory. However, we had fair conditions this trip. One lone Jay on the list seems impossible. Last year's Leconte's Sparrow field was plowed up. We found the Leconte's and Short-eared field of last January (1940) about half mowed. Instead of 10 Leconte's as then recorded, there were none. Two Short-eared Owls were flushed, however. (On a return trip, January 12, with Albert F. Ganier, one Owl was flushed and one found freshly dead; it proved to have been shot.) Stopping to look at a hawk on each side of the highway a distinctive bird song greeted our ears. Almost at once several of us exclaimed, "Western Meadowlark!" altho none had ever heard this species. But the similarity and the dissimilarity were too readily noticeable. A flock of Meadowlarks were singing in an old cornfield. This particular bird was located again later and seen fairly close. Sight identification was not readily made but the song was repeatedly heard on four occasions by most of our party. One part of the song reminded one of the more melodious offerings of the Shrike. That evening we checked with a recording of an imitation by Gorst. Burdick, Mason, and Welch returned with Wallace the next day (Dec. 30) and found one. Wallace was unable to secure it.—BEN COFFEY, Memphis.

NASHVILLE AREA:—Dec. 1, 1940 - Mar. 1, 1941. A relatively open winter with one real snow, about 4 inches, Feb. 28. December and January averaged slightly above, February five degrees below normal. Precipitation is well below the average and all streams and ponds have been low through winter. An unequalled scarcity of birds has prevailed the entire winter. At least a third of our wintering species are affected; local observers consider the total bird population of this region to be about fifty per cent below normal. This condition first appeared in the fall when some birds which usually winter here (e.g. Robin, Field Sparrow, Starling, etc.) largely left with other transients. The expected increases due to migration into the region did not occur, as many winter visitant species are present in reduced numbers. A comparison of the Christmas census with that of other years gives a good picture of the situation. The number of species is about normal, but a third of them are at the lowest levels in 8 years. This is an accurate index of this winter's bird life as I have found it. It is most unusual for our local avifauna to remain static for such a long period with virtually no change in the species present or their status.—Species most affected, and the per cent of their reduction from normal: Robin, 95; Starling, 90; Myrtle Warbler and Hermit Thrush, 80; Field Sparrow, 75; Carolina Wren and Sapsucker, 66; White-throated, White-crowned and Swamp Sparrows, Junco, Mockingbird, Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet, 50; Red-bellied Woodpecker and Flicker, 33. Even English Sparrows appear somewhat below normal numbers. Species at or near normal: Sparrow Hawk, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jay, Song and Fox Sparrows, Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Chickadee. Of course, no two observers would agree on all of the above figures, so varied is individual experience.—I can cite three causes in explanation. First, the severe weather of January, 1940. The species notably

reduced at that time have not recovered. Carolina Wren and Killdeer are as scarce today as they were a year ago. The Kinglet, Winter Wren and Hermit Thrush vanished last winter and are rare today. A part of the shortage in some other species may also be traced to this cause. Second, the freezes of late March and April 12, 1940 which destroyed all the 1940 hackberry crop, much of the mast, and probably damaged some other fruit and seed crops. The hackberry failure drove the Robins and Starlings away and doubtless affected many other species in some degree. Thus last year's weather affects this year's bird life. Third, the near-drouth now prevailing. It is very noticeable that birds are now found chiefly in the immediate vicinity of water, while dry thickets and woods are deserted. I believe lack of food the principal cause of this winter's bird scarcity.

Some migration is evident. American Mergansers left Radnor lake at the end of January; Mallards, Gadwalls and most Black Ducks moved away in February. A pair of Hooded Mergansers appeared Feb. 11, while a flight of Pintails came in Feb. 14 and later. They were noted on the river Feb. 16 (AFG) and on a pond at Donelson Mar. 1. (GRM). No waterfowl have appeared on Centennial lake, which usually has transients this month. A few Doves moved into the Park and suburbs Jan. 31 and later, but their numbers are small and they are not yet spread over the countryside; their migration began on time but has not continued. First Robins were singles, Feb. 12, and 13 (Laskey), and 3 were seen at once Feb. 25, but they have been very slow coming in; the same may be said of Grackles. The return of these birds to their breeding grounds is a month late. The expected spring migration of the Starlings has not appeared.—No nesting records are available as but little search has been made for the few species breeding this early.—Song has been about normal. Carolina Wren, Titmouse and Chickadee are heard occasionally on field trips; all sing throughout the year. A Towhee began Dec. 30 at the writer's home, but voice was very poor until February. Cardinals first heard Jan. 11, and frequently afterwards. Mockers began in January on Vanderbilt Campus; Feb. 12 at Laskey's: Dove, Feb. 11 and almost daily afterward.

The usual rarities have rewarded the faithful (and lucky). A large gull in juvenal plumage, along river three successive December Sundays (Bryant and Jamison). Sharp-shinned Hawk, Jan. 11 and 12 and later (Spofford); immature Bald Eagle, Radnor Lake about Jan. 8 (Baker). Short-eared Owl, near Mt. Pleasant, Jan. 5. (Stevenson) and Jan. 10, Belle Meade Golf Links (HCM). Red-headed Woodpecker, Goodlettsville, Jan. 12, (Spofford) and Murfreesboro Jan. 13 (Dr. Vaughn). Tree Sparrows on Census (AFG) and Feb. 15 (Stevensons and HCM). Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Feb. 21, Edwin Warner Park (HCM).—HARRY C. MONK, Nashville.

NASHVILLE CENSUS NOTES:—The dense fog kept the 26 listers from doing effective work until after ten but considering the marked shortage of birds this winter, the final list was much better than had been hoped for. Only 65 ducks (5 species) were found on Radnor Lake though 225 had been observed there a few days before. The Pied-billed Grebe recorded had been wintering on Centennial Park lake. The Herring Gull and the Coot were listed on the Cumberland River by Bryant. Juncos as usual led the list in

numbers with 377. Of the 178 Doves listed, 100 were in one flock. The chiefly gregarious species—Grackles, Robins, and Cowbirds—were practically absent during December and only a few could be found for the census. Carolina Wrens and Killdeers remain extremely scarce, presumably having been thinned out by last winter's severe cold. Towhees, White-throated, Swamp, and other Sparrows were noticeably scarce. Barn Owls, found at four locations last winter, were not 'at home' this Christmas. The Warner Park Black Vulture roost yielded 110 of these birds for the list. Two Migrant Shrikes, which had been 'tied out,' were found faithfully waiting at their posts. The Great Blue Heron was at the small Donelson pond; a day or two after, one was seen at Radnor Lake. Species conspicuous by their absence were the Kinglets, Phoebe, Barn Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Red-headed Woodpecker. The following 15 species were listed by one party only: Coot, Herring Gull, Golden-eye, Black Duck, Great Blue Heron, Pied-billed Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Marsh Hawk, Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Hermit Thrush, Cowbird, Cedar Waxwing, Rusty Blackbird, and Savannah Sparrow.—A.F. GANIER, Nashville.

CORINTH CHAT:—My home here in Corinth is close to the business part of town and houses are fairly thick in every direction. For some 3 or 4 years a large Barred Owl has frequented the area nearby. Three times this winter the bird has growled and screamed within a few feet of my bedroom window. On rare occasions he lets out a regular 'hoot' but more often sounds like the cry of a child followed by a low growl. One night 2 years ago I was awakened and got to the window in time to see the owl fly away. On another night a neighbor flushed him from thick shrubs at his porch where the owl had doubtless gone in search of small birds.—On a day in November more than 300 gulls were on the Tennessee River at Pickwick and large numbers of them have been there all the winter. Counting fish that evidently were killed at the locks and those injured by fishermen and thrown back because of their undersize, the gulls find abundant food on the river.—Redbirds, Robins, and Brown Thrashers started their spring chorus in late February. Bluebirds seem more common than usual along the roadsides in the country. They have been looking for nesting places for at least a month past. I have been on a sharp lookout all the winter for Horned Larks here, but without success.—BENJ. R. WARRINER, Corinth.

KNOXVILLE AREA:—Notes from Knoxville will be very short this time because the writer has not been out as often as usual and reports from others are short or lacking. The day before Christmas an emaciated King Rail was found at Fountain City but it failed to rally to artificial feeding and soon died. The specimen was mounted by Dr. Earl O. Henry. Mr. Ijams and Mr. Johnson have almost run a bird hospital this past fall and winter. Patients and the time of entering were: Blue Goose in late October, soon to be followed by a Black Duck. On Dec. 21 a wounded Great Blue Heron was brought to Mr. Ijams at the News-Sentinel. A Canada Goose was found in captivity by a Knox County game warden. The bird was confiscated on Jan. 20 and later brought to Mr. Ijams who in turn asked Mr. Johnson to band and release it.—The warm weather of Jan. 24-26 was a welcome period because the birds around the house began to sing, but not in full song. On those days we noted

songs from the Bluebird, Robin, Mockingbird, White-throated Sparrow, and Song Sparrow. Apparently the Carolina Wren made no effort to sing at that time.—Migration has been very slow, due, perhaps, to the consistently cool and cold weather. Reports to date show the following arrivals. Vesper Sparrow on Mar. 2, 7, and 8. A small flock of Grackles on Mar. 17 and three Red-wings on the same date.—Once we considered a comparison of species and individuals to see what effect the winter of 1939-40 has had on the present population. A review of our notes shows that we have insufficient material on any one locality to hazard an opinion. However, generally speaking, we have found fewer individuals and have had to hunt over the territory more thoroughly than usual to find the average number of species.—The Robin roost in the Kudzu vine and honeysuckle on the adjoining lot began with about 50 or 60 birds in November but has now (Mar. 20) dwindled to a dozen. No large migrating Robin flocks have yet been reported.—W. M. WALKER, Knoxville.

ROBIN PERSISTENCE:—Last Spring I started banding birds under Dr. C. W. Quaintance's permit. In our talks Quaintance had told me that if I could ever trap a Robin I was getting pretty good. About two days after he told me this I became very elated when I found a beautiful male Robin in my trap. Upon examining the bird, however, my elation changed to fear when I discovered that the lower half of the mandible was split all the way through the horn at the front and into the flesh at the back. I was afraid at first that this had happened in the trap, but, there was no blood on the wound or on the trap, so I decided that it was very old and that the bird had used the trap as an easy means of obtaining food. I banded him and released him. A few days after this I discovered that this same bird and his mate were building a nest on a downspout of our gutter. They had almost finished their nest when a hard wind came and blew the nest down, but seemingly dauntless, they started to work again and completed their nest and raised 3 young birds. I watched the deformed bird quite a lot through binoculars, and through them, I could see his tongue running through the split place when he was pulling worms out of the ground. This condition handicapped him some, but it didn't stop him by any means. He performed the usual duties at the nest, and after the brood had been reared he stayed around our house until the Fall migration, but he never took another chance on getting food from a trap. This deformed Robin has caused quite a bit of contemplation on my part. Since observing this bird, I have often wondered why more humans can't transcend their troubles as this Robin had done.—ALBERT E. HYDER, Johnson City.

CARRIED OVER are several interesting Round Table notes and acknowledgements of gifts to the recent Anniversary issue. We are grateful to Dr. Bralliar, Dean of Madison College, and gardening authority, for his interesting article, contributed at our special request. Some seasonal banding notes were unavoidably eliminated; also a plea for 'copy' not later than June 1st (please!). Due to the expense of the important notice appended to this issue, we had to trim from 24 down to 20 pages.

A list of new members will be published in the June issue. The Secretary will prepare this on May 31. Local chapters please note.

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## THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF TENNESSEE BIRDS

PUBLISHED BY THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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it is not necessary to go beyond it."*

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### JUNE CENSUS LISTS

The cross-section of our winter bird life which is presented in a comparative tabulation each year should have a summer counterpart. Such a project could eventually develop the widespread field work that is evidenced in the censuses listed in this issue. At one time we printed the results of the various spring field days. We still think there should be field days at more locations and that the results be discussed in 'The Season'. But we do not think that our field days should necessarily be the intensive effort that most of our winter holiday censuses are. Rather they should be the days of an open house in the out-of-doors, when we can invite all who are similarly interested to come join us and when we can make an effort to aid them in knowing and appreciating more about birds and their surroundings. Too, they are days when we can get to know each other better and look forward to visits from fellow members from far and near.

The groups of T. O. S. members who have spent a week each summer in recent years in making a census of some representative areas of our own state, are doing good work which is being well summarized and is recorded in the pages of our journal. But Tennessee is a large state and we need to know more about our summer bird life. After the spring migration rush we all tend to desert the field. The appeal of the fresh and new has then worn off. Even the field work we do most often fails to find its way to the pages of *The Migrant*. If it takes a project to enlist a systematic effort and to have it presented for the record, then let's have it, effective now as you read this.

In 1938 we received splendid response to our plan of publishing lists of the most common summer birds, based on members' estimates for respective localities. This time we desire current field work. The plan of the Christmas Census will be used and the list should be for any one day between June 1 and July 6, inclusive. Please send only one list from a given locality. If several are available, send the most representative. Better still, make a trip to some other area that we should know about and send us the results. Certain conflicts—schools' end, vacation trips, and the like—are inevitable, but we believe the period set the best for the purpose. The success of the project depends on you and is thus assured.

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### IMPORTANT T. O. S. NOTICES

As an accommodation to those of our regular members who have overlooked 1941 dues, your Secretary-Treasurer asks that this issue be sent to the complete list. He will appreciate your cooperation. We are thankful for his efforts in our behalf and in missing his Clarksville seasonal notes we realize his already heavy sacrifice of time for the T. O. S.

### THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY WILL BE HELD AT NASHVILLE, MAY 4, 1941

This meeting will be very important so we ask that you please reserve this date and make every effort to arrange to be there. Additional details will be sent you later.

### HELP WANTED ON BACK NUMBERS

With the publication of the three-year index in the December, 1940 issue many members arranged to complete their block of the 1938-39-40 volumes so that they could be bound in one cover. Our supply of March, 1938 and March, 1939 issues is almost exhausted. We ask those that don't save their copies to see if these copies can be found and donated to the T. O. S. Send either to Clebsch or Ganier. As previously mentioned by Ganier, who has charge of the 1931-1937 stock, the following issues are also needed: 1931—all issues; 1933—March and Sept.; 1934—March and June; 1935—March. We still advise you to carefully preserve your copies—bind them if possible.

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