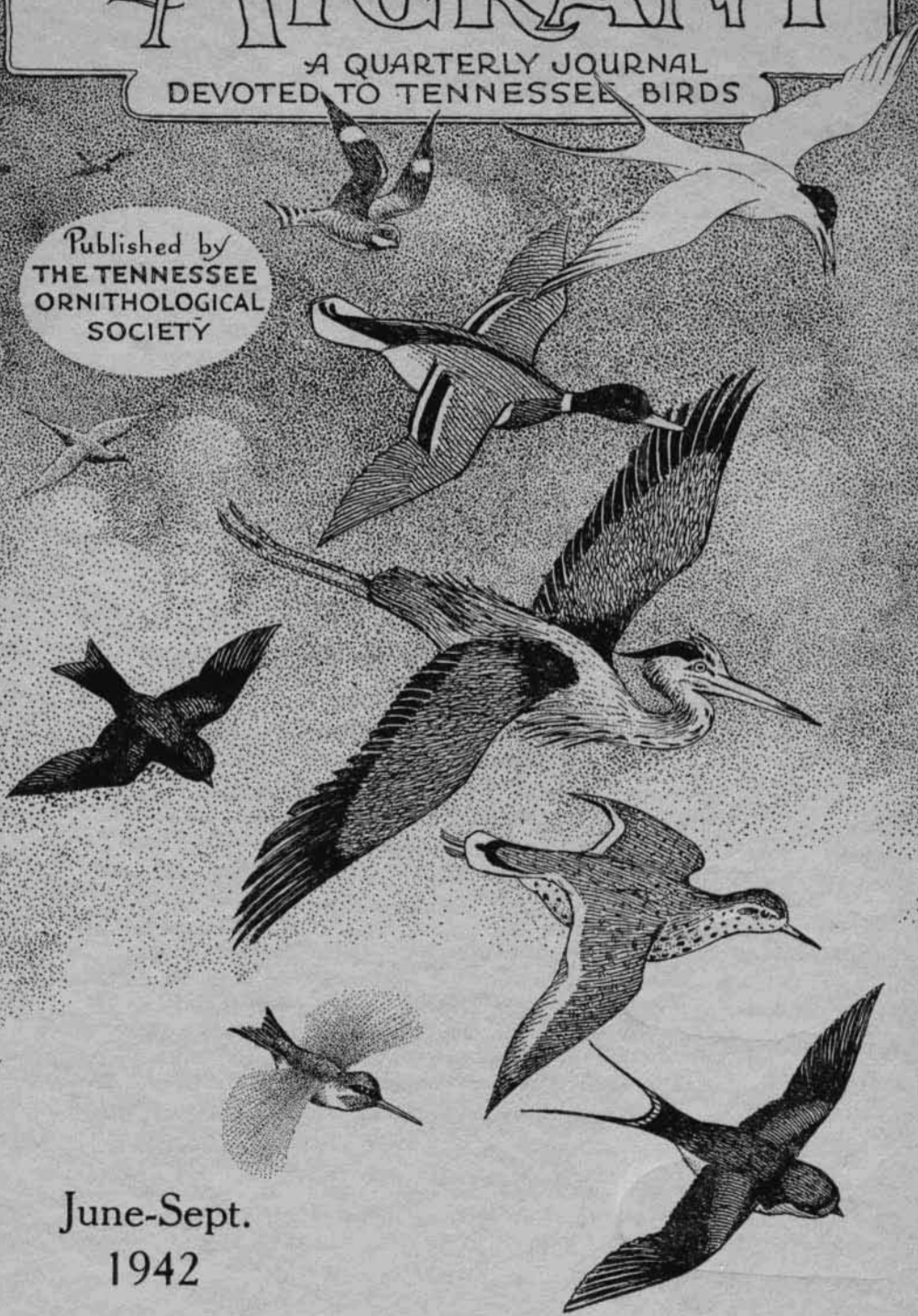


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NESTING OF THE PEREGRINE FALCON IN TENNESSEE

By WALTER R. SPOFFORD

The falcon eyries in Tennessee constitute, in general, the southern and western border of the breeding range of the Peregrine, Falcon (*falco peregrinus anatum*) in the Appalachian system. The nesting sites may be divided somewhat arbitrarily into the following types: *mountain eyries*, remote sites on open cliffs in the high peak region of the Great Smoky Mountains; *canyon eyries*, on deeply recessed ledges of the sandstone escarpments lining the rim and canyons of the Cumberland Plateau; and *river bluff sites*, on relatively low bluffs overlooking the waters of the Tennessee River, and its major tributaries. *Tree sites*, the broken off tops of giant cypress trees in extensive swamps, occur along the Mississippi River but these do not belong to the Appalachian system.

The writer is attempting to study the breeding status and nesting success of the falcon in each of the above nesting regions. The data collected up to the present is too fragmentary for a complete report, and the following account is of a first attempt to visit some of the sites.

In April 1942, Mr. Richard Herbert, secretary of the Hawk and Owl Society, New York, visited the writer, and a short trip was first made to the Cumberland Plateau. Two of the eyrie sites discovered by Mr. Ganier in the Pickett Forest region were visited, one of these now being extinct, (occupied however by a pair of Kestrels, the American Sparrow Hawk), and no birds were seen at the other site. The actual site of the latter eyrie was not discovered, however, and it is possible that the birds were overlooked. A new eyrie was discovered in a deep canyon rimmed with spectacular cliffs, and there was every indication that young were in the nest, although time prevented a visit to the recessed nesting ledge.

The well known eyrie near Fall Creek Falls was visited, and no sign of the falcons was seen. Falcons have not been reported at this picturesque gorge since 1939. The site at Falling Waters, near Chattanooga and mentioned by Rhoads in 1894, revealed no signs of occupancy. A hitherto unreported eyrie in the Signal Mountain massif was examined from a distance with field glasses. Although no birds were seen, the typical peregrine perch pattern on the extensively whitewashed cliff left little doubt that the eyrie was active. No birds were seen at a site in the Mullins Cove region, but birds were reported present at a nearby eyrie, in March.

In a cliff-lined gorge in north-western Georgia an eyrie was found on April 23, 1942 with at least three half-grown "eyasses" on the nest ledge

beneath a great overhang of rock. The whole forest area above and below the eyrie had recently been burned out, and smoke still hung in the gorge, but the eyrie was apparently undamaged. Although falcons have been suspected of breeding in Georgia, it is believed that this is the first actual record.

The most interesting find of the trip was the rediscovery of a Peregrine's eyrie in the extensive swamp forests at Reelfoot Lake on April 20. The nest was located by hearing the "warning-wail" cry of the old falcon, soon followed by the familiar "scolding-cackle" as she circled overhead. The actual nesting tree was not discovered until after nearly two days of wading through the swamp during which our only clues were occasional "long wail" calls of the falcon, and sometimes a glimpse of her perched in the sun on a lofty cypress snag well above the forest crown level. There we could note her unusually colorful plumage, and see her dark "helmet" head turning from side to side as she watched a Cormorant, a Wards Heron, and more frequently an American Egret passing beneath her. They paid no attention to her, and she showed no indication of defending her territory from their intrusion. No sign of the tiercel (male) was seen the first day, but the falcon (female) once or twice gave the conversational "eee-chup" note, indicating that the tiercel was in view. Beneath one tall cypress snag many feathers of several varieties (Green Heron, Blue Jay, Grackle) were floating on the dark water.

The nesting tree was a giant dead cypress broken off sixty feet above water level, in a dense forest of mixed woods, standing in two feet of water. Several other similar stubs stood nearby, and the actual eyrie was identified when food call of the young was heard. The open hollow top resembled a hugh cask half filled with a variety of debris, dead wood, small bones, and many feathers. A live tree two inches in diameter growing in the open top furnished shade for the two eyas falcons which were just under four weeks of age. The young were banded and photographed and other pictures were made of the stub and surroundings. It is believed that this is the first time that a nest of the Peregrine Falcon in a hollow tree has ever been examined in situ.

The food remains in the eyrie consisted of wilderness species entirely although pigeons were numerous in a small city not ten miles away. (At wilderness eyries in the northern Appalachain chain, remains of pigeons are almost always in evidence.) No trace of Egret remains were found although the site is within a few miles of an extensive breeding colony of these birds. However, a pair of Great Horned Owls nested in a similar stub only two hundred yards away, and there was some indication that the owls had occasionally fed on Egrets.

The dominant raptore of this swamp forest are the Red-shouldered Hawk and the Barred Owl, both being numerous, and it seemed strange to see the Peregrine, whose usual raptore associates are the Red-tailed Hawk and the Great-Horned Owl, in such humble company. However, a male Red-tail did come once by the Falcon's nesting tree and the pair of Great horned Owls nested nearby. The two young owls, having recently left their nest, were being mobbed almost incessantly by raucous Crows and angry Red-shouldered Hawks. Attempts were made to locate another site less than ten miles away which was in use in 1932 (Ganier, *Migrant*, 1932, p. 29) but no success was attained in the short time remaining.

Another tree nest was visited on May 11, 1942 by Mr. Roger T. Peterson, who believed that young were present in the dead cypress top. This nest, in northeastern Louisiana, is the first recorded breeding of the Peregrine Falcon in that state, and is more than one hundred miles further south than any other recorded eyrie in eastern North America. The writer is attempting to gather more information on the extent of a little known tree-nesting population of Peregrine Falcons in the cypress swamps of the Mississippi River. The presence of falcons in the swamp forests along the Mississippi River and its tributaries was discovered in the late 1870's by Goss, and Ridgway, and again in the 1930's by Ganier, and Bellrose. It is not surprising to find peregrines nesting along such a major waterway and flyway as the Mississippi, but their presence is definitely conditioned by the availability of suitable nesting trees with a spacious hollow top, in a protected wilderness situation.

During our April trip, no visits were made to the high mountain sites in East Tennessee, or to river bluff sites. The latter type of eyrie is undoubtedly the most vulnerable to human predation, and of the half dozen such sites known to the writer, only one or two are still active, few or no young ever leaving these nests. No eyries have been reported from the variously extensive river bluffs west of the Cumberland plateau in Tennessee, although farmers near such cliffs describe gray "bluff hawks" as formerly having nested there. The most southwesterly of such sites, at Florence, Alabama, is now extinct, although one bird was seen near there in June, 1940. High mountain sites, on the other hand, seem to be relatively successful, if one can judge from the scanty data at hand. Several of these sites are in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, and authorities there have shown a commendable hesitancy in disclosing information concerning the breeding status of the park falcons.

Canyon Eyries, in the Cumberland Plateau, are thinly spread over a wide area. The excellent and extensive cliffs walling the numerous gorges form unmatched environment, but the scanty supply of flying food is probably the main restrictive factor. A tremendous series of gorges has only one pair of falcons, while a similar but much smaller area in New York supports five pairs. Each active canyon eyrie, however, seems to produce a normal complement of young, in contrast to the situation around New York, where some pairs are non-breeders and there is a low incidence of nesting success. Whatever fringe of the range factors may be active in this area, they apparently do not adversely affect the individual nesting success. Perhaps a most significant limiting factor is the great prevalence of extensive forest fires throughout the Cumberland Plateau area every spring which probably cut down severely on the small bird population of the area.

NASHVILLE, TENN., August, 1942.

A WEEK IN WEST TENNESSEE

By ALBERT F. GANIER and ALFRED CLEBSCH

During the week of June 15-20, 1942, we had decided to investigate certain ornithologically interesting localities in West Tennessee, a section neglected by us in recent years in favor of mountain areas eastward. Monday morning, the 15th, found the rear of our coupe packed with hiking clothes, hip boots, maps, lunch materials, and various collecting paraphernalia and we were glad to be on our way for a week in the woods and fields.

Car window lists for each day were kept and constant practice of naming perched or flying birds, made these lists quite comprehensive as to species and their relative numbers. Our first stop was on the north approach to the Dover bridge across the Cumberland, where we had found a large colony of Cliff Swallows nesting on May 16, 1937. There were none present but when we stopped here on our return, June 20, we found that about six pairs had arrived and nests were under construction on the concrete girders that support the bridge floor. Reaching the Tennessee River, we found that Bronzed Grackles were again nesting in the steel beams across the top of the bridge spans, this being a wide divergence from their usual nesting site.

Looking up and down the broad flood plain of the Tennessee River, we found the scene radically changed since our last visit, for in preparing the valley to become the pool of the great Kentucky dam, all trees had been cut and brush burned. We looked with regret on the destruction of specialized habitats which had been provided by cypress grown swamps and lagoons, where such species as Swainson's Warbler, Wood Duck, Yellow-crowned Night Heron and other unusual and rare species were wont to dwell. We knew that no similar habitats were available in the valley of the Tennessee and that these birds will become rare in that region.

Famed old Sulphur Well, near Paris, with its unique tupelo swamp, had been scheduled for our next stop and we were fearful that the clearing had reached westward up the Big Sandy Valley to this point but on arrival, found it had not. A handsome Red-tailed Hawk soared above the doomed forest there and four Wood Ducks flew down the valley. Steady rain had now set in and after waiting awhile, during which time we watched La. Water Thrushes playing in roadway puddles, we decided to travel southward to McNairy County, at the Mississippi line, and stop at Sulphur Well on the return trip.

South of Jackson next morning, some acres of marshy ground, grown with tule-sedge and alder bushes, looked as though they might be attractive to Short-billed Marsh Wrens and other marsh loving species. Our search revealed only Redwings, Northern Yellow-throats, Catbirds and the usual common birds. Several miles further on, an artesian well had formed a fresh cat-tail marsh along the roadside so we stopped again, donned our hip boots and waded in. We were at once besieged overhead by Redwing Blackbirds and within a few minutes we found ten of their nests containing eggs or small young. A luckless Crow flapped lazily toward the scene of the excitement and was promptly set upon by the angry Redwings who chased him away much faster than he had come. On other days we saw both Kingbirds and Redwings chasing Crows and the large hawks, sometimes boldly pursuing them for nearly a mile.

At the old "cotton town" of Selmer we stopped for mid-day lunch and a few miles further south we halted to look over one of the ancient graveyards where quaint customs still prevail. Many of the graves have little shelters built over them and most of them are decorated with all manner of broken china and glass-ware, mussel shells as well as the large fossil sea shells which are found in this area. At Ramer, we turned westward and found patches of short-leaved pine becoming more numerous and finally, along the high ridges just east of the Hatchie River, we came into perhaps the finest growth of this tree in West Tennessee. This location had been our objective for here, in the late summer of 1939, John B. Calhoun, Alfred Clebsch, Jr., and John Pond had spent some weeks and had found and collected the only Red-cockaded Woodpeckers as yet recorded in West Tennessee.

The open pine woods gave us a refreshing change of habitat and we spent the afternoon listing and observing the birds to be found there. As had been expected, we found the Pine Warbler present but more common than anticipated. The major number of them were young of the year and they had not as yet donned the yellow and green plumage of maturity. Acadian Flycatchers, Yellow-throated Vireos, Summer Tanagers, Florida Blue Jays, Florida Nuthatches, Chipping Sparrows and many others, were common among these tall pines. A patch of brush land revealed Cardinals, Prairie Warblers, Field Sparrows, Indigo Buntings and several Bachmans Sparrows.

The next morning we returned and then motored by a side road about two miles north to the Ben Carr pines, which consist of a virgin forest of these trees covering more than a hundred acres of ridge. It was here that the above mentioned party had found the Red-cockaded and here we searched for them the better part of the day but without success. We also kept on the lookout for Brown-headed Nuthatches, a species which is also found only among pines. A fair list of birds was made here, including a handsome Pileated Woodpecker that marched up a tall tree in full view and a beautifully "pied" second year male of the Summer Tanager, which was collected. The partly green and yellow plumage of this specimen was dappled with red.

In a nest of the Indigo Bunting there were three eggs of this species and one of a Cowbird. Not far away a pair of Kentucky Warblers were found devotedly carrying food to a young Cowbird, apparently unmindful of such of their own young as may have fledged with it. During the late afternoon we motored northwest to Bolivar for lodging and supper. Enroute we stopped at swampy woodlands to collect a specimen of the elusive Northern Yellow-throat, to watch one of the only four Red-headed Woodpeckers seen west of the Tennessee, and in front of a farm house to look into a Shrike's nest full of young. At a roadside orchard stand we "took aboard" a gallon jug of excellent cider for thirsty hours ahead.

Early the next morning, at a 15 acre buttonbush marsh on the Jackson Highway a mile north of Bolivar, we spent an interesting hour, even though, aside from Redwings and Green Herons, no marsh birds were to be found here. Some miles north of Somerville we stopped at a two acre shallow pond grown up in willows and large buttonwood bushes. Here we found a considerable number of Redwings and Bronzed Grackles nesting above the water, about 20 nests of each being found. The Redwings nests held eggs and young while only three of the Grackle nests still held young. A Barn Swallow near

Covington was considered a rare record for this section as was also a Phoebe which had its nest under one of the long concrete bridges. A lone American Egret was noted at a roadside pond.

In listing the roadside birds from Somerville, thru Covington and on to Ripley we noted considerable difference between that and any corresponding stretch in Middle Tennessee. For example, Shrikes were along every mile of road, Dickcissels were numerous, while Mockingbirds, Meadowlarks and Doves, were other species that were more abundant. On the other hand, some species, such as Barn Swallows, Phoebes, Starlings and Towhees were practically absent. Of Starlings, we observed only one bird, this near Covington. Our only Towhee for the trip was a specimen of the Alabama Towhee taken at Sulphur Well, just west of the Tennessee River. In this connection, Calhoun's group found no Towhees during the summer of 1939 in Hardeman and McNairy Counties and our findings therefore tally with Ben B. Coffey's recent report on the scarcity of this bird as a breeder in West Tennessee.

Open Lake was to be our next objective and we arrived there late in the afternoon of June 18th. This lake of about 1400 acres lies in the heavily timbered bottom lands of the Mississippi River and is unprotected by levees from floods. A number of summer camps have been built along the shore closest to the highway and they are unique in that each is built upon a raft of hugh cypress logs which float upon the surface when the big river is on a rampage. From genial Mr. Morris, who owns the fish dock, we engaged a good batteau and secured some information about the water birds to be found there. Paddling out into the lake and then along the shores, we were first attracted by a few Least Terns which were ceaselessly fishing the surface in their elastic and erratic flight. Nearly every headlong dive in the water seemed to produce a tiny fish. They nest on the river sandbars a few miles westward. An American Egret swung by us along the cypress bordered edge and a brace of Wood Ducks flew swiftly overhead. About the tree trunks, Prothonotary Warblers were conspicuously common while overhead, Cerulean Warblers proclaimed that they were present in equal number. A La. Water Thrush, calling from the low wet woods, made us wonder where he could find an elevated location in which to build its nest.

Next morning we packed lunch and equipment in the boat for a full days exploration. Our map showed that the "East Arm" could be entered thru a chute or slough and this appealed to us. Poling and paddling our way thru this channel we were soon attracted by a song which could be none other than that of a Swainson's Warbler yet markedly different from that given by this bird in Middle Tennessee. We waded ashore in our boots and for an hour played hide and seek with this will-o-the-wisp of the swamps. It sang all about us, at as close as fifty feet while walking about on the ground or slipping among the fallen tree limbs, yet only once during this time did it present itself to open view. Birds were numerous and kept us adding to our list card frequently. Finally, our boat nozed its way out of the chute and into the deep rippling waters of the East Arm of Open Lake. Entirely surrounding this narrow, half mile long lake is a fringe of stately bald cypress while out in the clear water stand others which sunk with the land when these lakes were formed. They have grown no taller but their bases have swollen to great size and become deeply fluted from the muddy bottom to well above

the waterline. A more beautiful lake would be difficult to find and the camera was brought into play to record the picturesque scenes.

Several more Egrets winged their way back and forth and a Ward's Heron, surprised at its vigil, arose with a startled squawk as though humans were rare visitors here. Ahead of us on one of the low "waterlogged" cypress trees were two heavy robust birds, one black, one gray. The glasses revealed their identity and as the boat neared the adult and immature Double-crested Cormorants pitched off into rapid flight. After seeing these birds, the Ward's Heron and the Egrets, we surmised that a small "cranetown" probably existed in some of the cypress grown sloughs of the vast forest about the lake. The nearest such breeding ground that we know of at the present time is the great "cranetown" on Reelfoot Lake, some 50 miles to the north.

An Osprey next appeared and after patrolling the lake a bit, dived into the water with a splash but we could not see with what success. Of considerable interest to us was the presence of three Tree Swallows that were doubtlessly breeding here for there were woodpecker holes in the dead cypress snags to serve as nesting sites. Numerous Sycamore Warblers, including young, were among the cypress trees which grew in the water. We were loath to leave and it was nearly dark when we finally drew our boat on the wharf.

The following morning found us journeying eastward with Sulphur Well again our goal. After numerous roadside stops we reached it shortly after lunch and donning our rubber boots waded in the extensive swamp. As on other visits, we were again impressed with the unique beauty of the place. The water, like clear thin coffee, was studded as far as we could see with tall straight tupelo trees, each rising from hollow, bell-shaped bases, such as gnomes and dwarfs would find ideal for their revels. Patches of golden sunlight trickled down thru the dense green dome overhead, playing upon the surface made iridescent with pollen from the water plants which grew there. The Prothonotary's yellow flashes darting thru the stillness, the great Pileated Woodpecker calling as though to wake up an enchanted princess, made us feel that we should like to tarry long and see what mysterious things might yet transpire within this magic setting. We pointed our way to the heronry, which we had located here on March 14, 1937 and presently were apprised of its nearness by what sounded like the barking of a pack of dogs. It proved to be the young of the herons, some of which were already out of the nests. Counting the nests as well as we could among the tupelo leaves we judged there were about thirty in all, about the same as on our first visit. We do not know if these birds are the Great Blue Heron or the paler Ward's Heron, which latter race is the form nesting on Reelfoot Lake. This will be their last season for by spring, Sulphur Well swamp will be obliterated. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen but its nest was not located.

We stopped at the hundred year old artesian well for sulphur water and found it gushing out its usual copious stream. We noted the great oaks spreading their shade over the grassy ridge where the rural folk have gathered on holidays for generations, then bidding the place adieu we resumed our journey home ward, a bit worn but well satisfied with the results of our trip. We prepared a number of study skins from which to determine the range or presence of certain subspecies and our consolidated list showed a total of eighty-eight different species of birds observed.

NESTING OBSERVATIONS FOR 1942 a la BIRD BANDING

By AMELIA R. LASKEY

Each season from March through August, my interest, in addition to trapping at home, centers on a search for nests, observation of their progress, and banding of the young. Aside from the inspiration and keen pleasure these trips afield bring to a nature enthusiast with an inquiring mind, they have embodied research with certain major objectives: 1. To obtain accurate data on length of incubation and nest-occupancy periods. 2. To obtain information on the dispersal of young through recoveries of banded nestlings.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C. (formerly Biological Survey) will not furnish bands for *promiscuous* banding of nestlings but young may be banded in the nest at stations where systematic trapping is practiced and in the field when scientific studies are in progress. It is obviously necessary to use care in this type of work so that nests will not be disturbed.

For the records a loose leaf book and envelopes of 3x5 inch cards are carried in the field; a page in the book is used for each Bluebird box in Warner Parks and a card for each of the other nests found. For computing incubation and nest-occupancy periods, it is necessary to know when the first egg is laid. Then daily visits to the nest are required during the egg-laying period, after incubation has progressed about 10 days, and during the remainder of the time until all young leave. Data is usable only from successful nests.

This season little was added to my short list of incubation-nest-occupancy data but I banded several hundred nestlings, found some unusual nests, and compiled other information on life history.

Because the sub-zero weather of January killed many shrubs and vines that are normally evergreen, there was a dearth of nest sites this spring. In spite of this handicap, nesting began early. On March 15 Mourning Doves and Robins were amicably gathering nest material in a corner of our shrub border while building in trees 20 feet apart. The Dove began incubating March 18 and the Robin a few days later. Another Dove, near Warner Park, had completed her set of 2 about the 21st. From the first nest, 1 squab fledged April 18; from the other, 2 on April 21. A Redeyed Towhee laid the first egg of 3 on March 27 in an unusually high early nest. It was 6 feet 9 inches up in a small cedar. On March 28 a Phoebe was incubating her full set of 5. By March 22 a pair of Brown Thrashers had completed a nest 5 feet up in the center of a leafless syringa shrub—very conspicuous—and had started laying March 28. A Carolina Chickadee began her set of 7 also on March 28 in a nest box at home. She practiced the usual cunning trick of this species, pulling material over the eggs each day after laying. To a casual observer, the nest would appear incomplete. When incubation started she sat closely and neglected to cover them during her brief morning and evening absences. On March 30 a Bewick Wren laid 4 of her 7 eggs in a nest built under porch eaves in Warner Park.

The earliest Mockingbird egg was laid March 28, the 3 young hatching April 12. This year in April I found three areas where nests of this strongly territorial species were built rather close together. At my home three pairs occupied 200x300 feet; at the home of Fred Webber, Jr. (suburban), three

pairs nested in a diagonal strip 100x300 feet; in Percy Warner Park near the home of a workman, three pairs built along a 500 ft. line. In the latter location the middle area was the scene of much excitement between the males as the females watched from the sidelines. Later nests were all farther apart.

Among the 43 Mockingbird nests examined this year, only 2 contained 5 egg sets while last year (1941) there were 11 out of 41 or 26.8 per cent. My six year old resident Mockingbird "Abe" had 3 successful nests for 1942. The first set contained only 2 eggs. Among 16 nests of the Cardinal, 4 in April and 1 in June had 1 Cowbird egg each. All parasitized nests had less than the usual complement of 3 Cardinal eggs.

Bachman Sparrow nests are difficult to find. There are only three or four Nashville records. Males may be heard singing in Warner Parks' meadows from April to August but on May 3 I located my first nest of this species with 2 eggs (complete set 4). It was built on the ground beside a tiny buckbush on a hillside near a road. As I approached the roofed nest, the incubating bird left it but instead of flying, she moved quickly along the ground for several yards, stopping in the road under the car to watch me. The nest was robbed.

The first of May an unusual nest of the Field Sparrow was found in the Park on the ground in a grassy fence row, roofed like the Bachman Sparrow nest with a set of 5 eggs being incubated. May 9th four had just hatched but the fate of the 5th egg is unknown for all were taken by a predator. A late nest was found elsewhere built 2½ feet up in the outer twigs of a boxwood shrub from which 3 young left in early August. This cup-shaped nest was nearly 3 inches deep. In Warner Parks Chipping Sparrows are abundant. One may see fierce fights among them in early spring over nesting territory. This year by April 13 four eggs were being incubated. The young of the last nest found this season left on July 31.

On July 2 a brood of Chimney Swifts was banded from the lower part of a chimney of a Warner Park house. As often happens, the nest had fallen but the young were raised on a ledge above the fireplace. Of particular note is the record of one of the adults which was caught in the house during the nesting period. It had been banded at Ward Belmont Schools in April, 1940.

Two nighthawk nestlings were banded on the roof of a three story building on Peabody Campus on July 21 where Arthur McMurray had found two pairs incubating earlier in the season. He banded 3 young that apparently were running together on June 6. As I ascended the roof, a parent was brooding the two late nestlings of different sizes but it dragged itself across the gravel roof to a parapet where it watched with snarling noises the banding of the young. They were very still until touched then they also started the snarling with wide open mouth just like the parent. The unhatched egg of an early set was found attached to the roof by a bit of exposed pitch.

Bluebirds began nest building in mid-February; egg laying started in early March. On March 14 four nests contained 5, 4, 2, 1 eggs respectively. From the earliest nest young hatched on March 25 or 26. Of the 63 nest boxes available in the parks, 61 were used at least once this season. A total of 174 sets, 774 eggs, were laid. From this large number only 261 young, 33.7 percent, left the nest box safely. Predation was heavy, 81 nests being entirely unsuccessful. Among these, 18 mother birds and 46 nest-

lings are known to have been destroyed by cats and 55 eggs failed to hatch through the loss of the incubating females. A boy robbed 11 nests of eggs; 42 were rifled of their contents by snakes. A 54 inch specimen collected in one of the boxes last year after eating the young was identified by Dr. Jesse M. Shaver, Peabody College, as a Southern Pilot snake (*Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta*.—Say).

Each year several sets of albino eggs have been laid but this season 14 sets (71 eggs) were found, comprising 9 percent of the total laid. Among them was a most unusual set of 7 pure white eggs, laid from March 27 through April 2; one of these was spherical and it hatched like a normal egg. Six of the set hatched but the young were taken by a snake a week later. In June the feathers and band of the mother bird were found below a box two and a half miles from her early nest. A cat had pulled her from the box as she incubated a set of 5 white eggs including another spherical one. The last Bluebird nestling of the 1942 season left the box August 23.

Worthy of mention is the pair of Starlings that assisted in raising some 5 day old Bluebird nestlings whose mother had been eaten by a cat. On April 16 I removed the 4 Starling eggs that had been incubated 10 days in a Flicker box on a tree at my home, substituting the 6 cold hungry baby Bluebirds. The Starlings immediately began feeding them and fussing at me when near. Three of the orphans survived which I took at two weeks of age to finish raising by hand.

In August an immature Screech Owl surprised a West End resident by coming down a chimney into her living room. I placed the little fellow in the vacant half of my duplex lath owl house where the Barred Owl with the partially amputated wing lives. The Screech Owl did not like to live alone and persistently worked its way into the larger owl's cage through an aperture caused by warped laths. During its stay of almost two weeks its time was spent on the perch beside the big fellow or roosting on a spike in the wall just behind him. Both birds appeared content with the arrangement.

A few recovery records of banded nestlings have been acquired this year. Of particular interest are those of three Mockingbirds. One, banded in May, 1941 in a nest on Vanderbilt Campus, came down a residence chimney two miles distant on the very cold snowy evening of Jan. 8, 1942. It was released safely. Another nestling, which I had rescued from a stray dog as it left a nest in our neighborhood in May, 1937 and raised by hand until it could care for itself, was killed by a cat in June, 1942. This occurred less than half a mile from its birthplace. In the intervening five years it had come to our garden only once; during a drouth in 1940 it entered a water trap. The other nestling, banded in June, 1940 in Percy Warner Park, had migrated and was found dead in Cumming, Ga., in April, 1942. This band was sent to Washington by the finder for identification. Previously I have had three other migrant Mockingbird nestlings reported; one each from Camden, Tenn., Fulton, Miss., and Rising Fawn, Ga. A few others are on record that had remained within a mile or two of their birthplaces for breeding.

NASHVILLE, TENN., Sept. 1, 1942.

VESPER SPARROW

By BENJAMIN R. WARRINER

The Vesper Sparrow probably does not know it, but this member of the multitudinous Sparrow family bears a name meaningful and appropriate in great degree. The name is a truly high-bred word, one that can be traced straight back to times and places when and where modern culture first got off to a good start.

Vesper has copious quantities of Greek, Latin, French, and good old English blood in its verbal veins. The Greek *hesperos* means evening, and *hesperos aster* means evening star; and of course Venus is usually considered the most prominent of the stars, or rather planets, that sometimes stud the skies at the twilight hour. *Vespera* is the Latin for evening, and *Hesperus* is the evening star. Vesper, English, (French *vespres*), as everyone knows, is that period between sunset and dark. A very beautiful word, with still more beautiful meaning. It is usually associated with things musical, religious, peaceful. There are vesper bells—played at eventide; vesper hymns—sung at the day's close; and vesper prayers—said when peace has settled over the scene. Vesper religious services have long been popular with churches sponsoring a variety of creeds.

Now all of this has been gathered up and wrapped around a poor little, innocent grass Finch. A heavy burden that he has had to bear for more than sixty years; for it was in 1880 that John Burroughs started a movement that resulted in the bird's being named Vesper. This was due to the fact that this Sparrow was, and doubtless ever will be, at his best as a songster at twilight. His soft musical notes do blend perfectly with the peace and quietude of that restful hour.

On Sunday evening March 29, 1942, at the precise vesper hour, I found cavorting in a bit of lowland some fifty Vesper Sparrows. (One of the very rare occasions when I have run across this, here, rare bird). The setting was perfect; no noise, no wind; mild temperature; the end of a perfect spring day. In a small field of broken corn stalks, sparse sedge, and short-cropped grasses, all bordered by a wire fence and a slight sprinkling of small trees and shrubs, the birds sang a perfect vesper song. In fact it was a chorus, for as best I could tell every one was trying to burst his little throat. The silver notes of Bobolinks in a meadow in May, at the vesper hour, could not possibly have been any sweeter. It was my first experience of hearing them sing, and I thought that surely John Burroughs must have been inspired when he first suggested that the name Vesper would be more appropriate for so fine a bird than just plain Grass Finch.

Very early in the morning of March 31, I went back to the same spot to see whether the Vespers were still there. They were, to my delight. Except that there were a hundred instead of fifty, counting a few Field Sparrows mixed in. The wind was wild and high, and cut me almost to the bone in spite of the heavy clothing I wore; frost covered the fields, and the ditch showed thin ice. Near, a plowman yelled with anger at his team; on a paved highway a hundred yards distant, the horns of trucks were blown raucously and long; a dog belonging to a farmhouse close by resented my presence and barked furiously.

The Vesper Sparrows? Well, they should be called Aurora Buntings, for they sang the same sweet notes they had sung in the evening. The mellowest of tunes, not one whit different from the chorus of the vesper hour, except that there were decidedly more singers. A few Field Sparrows joined in and sang, "We can sing too - ooo - oo - o !", quite jealous apparently of the visitors.

Now of course it all goes to prove that environment does count heavily when one is making an appraisal of a bird's song. The ears of the listener are an important factor and there must be no disturbing elements to compete with the bird's vocal chords. The song a mockingbird sings in the broiling sun is the same one he sings in the moonlight at midnight, but the listener, possibly by bringing into play a little poetic license, would declare it entirely different. At any rate, and on second thought, the name of the Vesper Sparrow does not need to be changed. Call him a Grass Finch until the sun goes down, but from that hour the name becomes an impossible one, for the little minstrel lifts his voice to Hesperus and forgets the earth that is his daytime habitat.

CORRINTH, MISS.

BIRD NOTES FROM THE SMOKIES

By ANN KING

On May 16, 1942, a group of school-weary professors and students set out from Johnson City to spend a few days in the Great Smoky Mountains. The group consisted of: Dr. J. T. Tanner, professor of Zoology at State Teachers College, and president of the Johnson City Chapter of the T. O. S.; Mrs. J. T. Tanner of the Department of Education; Dr. D. M. Brown, professor of Botany; William Pearson from Kingsport; Albert Hyder, student at State Teachers College; Maxine McClain, also a student; and, your writer, Ann King, who had just finished being a student.

The trip was principally for a little relaxation in the form of chasing down the more interesting birds to be found in the Smokies. We were not disappointed. On our first day, accompanied by Arthur Stupka, Park Naturalist, the group observed from the highway from Gatlinburg to Newfound Gap, Collins Gap, and Clingman's Dome. Our first interesting observation was of the Olive-sided Flycatcher, characterized by singing from the tips of tall dead trees above the thick underbrush. Its song is also very characteristic and interpreted by some to be: "Whoops, free beer" with the accent on the first word! Actually it is a very beautiful, clear toned song with considerable volume. Soaring above us at Collins Gap was a magnificent specimen of the Broad-wing Hawk. At Clingman's Dome song notes fell on our ears from all sides, a mountain medley of the voices of: the Veery, Mountain Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Cairn's Warbler, Carolina Junco, Towhee, and Goldfinch, as well as distant notes we could not identify.

The climax of the day was not a bird song. We were walking along on a trail just below Collin's Gap when we heard the drumming of the Ruffed Grouse. Hyder asked Mr. Stupka if there would be any chance of seeing

the Grouse. Stupka answered, "Well, it's doubtful, the sound of the drumming can be carried quite a distance and it is usually difficult to trace." A few minutes later the group was quietly sitting in a little open space, very much absorbed in another bird. Again we heard the drumming, and two or three of the group saw the movement of the beating wings in a wooded area not more than thirty feet away. When the excitement died down sufficiently to allow observation, we settled down to watch, making as little sound as possible, so as not to disturb the bird. The Grouse was sitting on a large fallen log and did not seem to be aware of our presence. For nearly an hour we sat motionless, binoculars trained on the bird, and watched the unusual sight of its drumming spaced at intervals of four to five minutes. In an effort to determine just when the drumming sound was made, Dr. Tanner crept closer. The majority of the group seemed to think that the noise was heard when the wings flapped away from the body. A number of explanations for this might be possible. Literature on the subject is scant so if any of the MIGRANT'S readers have made any personal observations or know where any information may be found about the Grouse's drumming either Albert Hyder, 908 W. Maple St., Johnson City or Ann King, Route 1, Erwin would appreciate hearing from them.

On the following day the group hiked from "The Grass Patch" to the top of Leconte on the Alum Cave Trail. Never were we out of hearing of the Cairns (Black throated Blue) Warbler, they were so abundant. Other common species encountered were: the Red-eyed and Mountain Vireos, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Oven-bird, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Towhee, and higher up the; Veery, Junco, and Appalachian Chickadee.

On top of Leconte the next morning, half an hour before sunrise, the Veery was heard in full song. He had no competition from other birds that early. I know of no sight and sound more inspiring than a Leconte sunrise accompanied by the melodious song of the Veery. The group then returned to Newfound Gap via the high Boulevard trail. The next day we very reluctantly packed up our camping equipment and started home—but with the satisfaction of having seen some very unusual and beautiful sights.

ROUTE 1 ERWIN, TENN.

THE ROUND TABLE

A VISIT TO CRANETOWN: On a previous trip to the heronry at Reelfoot Lake, in late May, 1941, the size of the nesting colony was estimated at less than three hundred nest (see *Migrant* Dec. 1941). During April, 1942 another visit was made to the colony under more favorable conditions for estimating the number of nests, because the cypress had not leafed out. In a ninety degree quadrant over one hundred American Egrets were easily counted, indicating more than four hundred birds present, and this does not include the large number away from the colony, as they are coming and going at all times. If most birds are breeding, and there is no reason to think otherwise, there must be over two hundred nests of Egrets alone.

Since the Cormorants seem equally numerous, and Ward's Blue Herons also, there are probably well over five hundred nests. Besides these, there are some nests of Black-crowned Night Herons, and a few Anhinga's. Only seven of the latter birds were seen, and they are by all odds the most scarce as well as the most shy bird present.

Yellow-crowned Night Herons were seen occasionally, but not at the nesting colony. One nest from which the birds flew, was found thirty feet above water level on a cypress limb, near Otter Basin at the upper end of the lake, on May 17, 1942.

The Ward's Herons and Cormorants were in the preliminary stages of nest-building, while most of the Egrets were sitting on eggs, on the 19th of April. Later, in the middle of May, most of the Egrets had young birds. On this latter date, Mr. Roger Peterson of the Audubon Society made a series of close-up photos of the birds from a treetop blind. During a three hour period at the blind a variety of other birds were seen, including Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Black Vultures, Pileated Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warblers, etc. The vultures frequently stooped from a considerable height, low over the observation platform, with a loud "whoosh" of their wings.—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, Nashville, Tenn.

FISH CROW AT MEMPHIS: This small crow (*Corvus ossifragus*), is a bird of the seacoast but extends inland up the larger rivers. Memphis is now the farthest point inland where it is found. On Aug. 2, 1931, I visited Grassy Lake (now in Shelby Forrest) and recorded, among other species, two Fish Crows (*The Migrant*, 1931:24). In subsequent seasons these Crows were occasionally encountered whenever we were near Horn Lake, Ensley-Darwin bottoms, and up and down the Mississippi River. In 1922 H. E. Wheeler found the Fish Crow along the Arkansas River in central Arkansas (*Wilson Bulletin*, 1922:239). Accordingly, J. D. Black (*Auk*, 1935:90), when he collected a small crow in this region on May 18, 1929, assumed it to be a Fish Crow. However, the specimen was subsequently identified as the Southern Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos paulus*) which is smaller than *C. b. brachyrhynchos* of northwest Arkansas. Black was thus inclined to doubt the occurrence of the Fish Crow since no specimens had been collected. Wheeler's description of the birds and their nests leaves no doubt in this writer's mind that he correctly identified them.

Such doubts being natural we have often thought of the desirability of securing specimens at Memphis. Several rivermen were asked to watch for a good shot at one. Generally, on our trips, we were not collecting. Several years ago we went down to the Ensley bottoms and McCamey spent several hours trying to stalk several close enough to shoot, but without success. On May 31, 1942, we made another special trip there for this purpose and Austin Burdick, Jr. secured two specimens. The first was from a group of five or six; the second was from three which flew over. Burdick mounted one for the Memphis Museum and prepared the other as a skin for Mr. Ganier's Tennessee collection. The latter was first sent by Robert Tucker to Dr. Alexander Wetmore at the U. S. National Museum. We are indebted to Dr. Wetmore for an authoritative identification of the specimen.—BEN B. COFFEE, JR., Memphis, Tenn.

THE SEASON AT MEMPHIS: March and April continued warm with normal amounts of rain; there were no cold waves except for those of one or two days duration. High and spectacular waves of Kinglets (mainly Golden-crowned) and Brown Creepers, began passing in mid-March and continued until the last April. A similar flight of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers occurred in April. Otherwise, the spring migration was disappointing in that the number of transients fell to from 25 to 30 per cent below the average of other years.—Of especial interest were: American Egret, Overton Park, April 3 (Tucker, Miller); Osprey, Mud Lake, April 12; House Wren, Millington, April 26 (Coffey, Tucker); Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-headed Vireo and 12 Scarlet Tanagers in Overton Park on April 25; many records of Philadelphia Vireo all around Memphis thru the first half of May; Mourning Warbler, Ensley bottoms, May 10 (Coffey, Tucker); Black-billed Cuckoo at two locations, May 14; Swainson's Warbler, almost "common" in all bottoms around Memphis; Olive-sided Flycatcher, Shelby Forest, May 24 (studied by Tucker, et al, at leisure while perched atop dead limb and in clear view), and a Whip-poor-will calling during April in Overton Park.—Cerulean Warblers are now known to be probably nesting in at least four locations about the city, having been found in the Ensley, North Lake and Mud Lake bottoms and in the Wolf River bottoms near highway No. 70.—Thirteen Mississippi Kites put on a never-to-be-forgotten aerial display, in the Ensley bottoms below Memphis, for our party on May 31. One Kite is a beautiful site in the air but 13 is a noteworthy treat.—Fall shorebirds records are lacking, since Mud Lake, their favorite gathering place, has been high and without muddy shorelines. In Overton Park, 2 Black-billed Cuckoos on Aug. 20 (Smith, Tucker), a Golden-winged Warbler on Aug. 20 (an early date), and 2 Wilson's Warblers on Aug. 25, were seen. A Grinnell's (or Northern) Water-thrush was collected Aug. 29 on Wolf River. The Yellow bellied Flycatcher appears to be the second most common *empidonax* flycatcher at Memphis in the fall; three specimens of this species were collected, on Aug. 19, 26, and 29.—Mr. B. B. Coffey has handed me the following notes: "Painted Buntings were absent at many previous locations. "6-C" on Bodley Avenue continued on exhibit and our field-day group found 4 at or near Lakeview, May 3. Occasionally what appears to be a first-year male is heard singing. One appeared at Coffey Grounds May 14 and again June 8. The uncommon Wilson's Warbler appeared in the yards of three T. O. S. members. One was seen May 11, 1942, in the azalea bed at Coffey Grounds while Joe Mason and Demett Smith each reported one. Upland Plovers were first seen at the old Bry's Airport on Apr. 8 (four Towhees were reported last by Mason on May 23 and 24; these might have been stragglers. A Black Tern was seen on the river, May 24. The Barn Swallows again nested under a bridge at Shelby (Penal) Farms. Single pairs and nests were seen under two concrete bridges on Highway 78 near Oakville and Capleville. On June 7, we saw a Barn Swallow along the highway about 5 miles south of Tunica, Miss.—At the Municipal Airport on May 24 I watched a large airliner depart and numbers of others warm up and take off. Thru all the man-made noise I could hear the song or a Prairie Horned Lark. The singer was finally located about 200 feet up.

Another was heard June 16 at the Shelby Farms; a new location for this species. A pair were seen July 5 at the Holly Springs (Miss.) location.—The Mississippi Kites of Overton Park wandered far afield; one evening we watched one soar over our yard.”—ROBERT TUCKER, Memphis.

NOTES FROM THE MILAN AREA.—(August thru November, 1941, chiefly on Ordnance Plant area). A hot and dry summer and fall. Song ended in this period, dwindling away in August with a few individuals singing in cooler parts of day. Some last song dates: Dickcissel, July 24; Meadowlark, July 24; Bobwhite, Aug. 23; Towhee, Aug. 28; Field Sparrow, Sept. 2; Indigo Bunting, Sept. 9; Dove, Sept. 10. A Mocker was still giving its gay summer song July 31. Song was resumed in September, Meadowlarks heard on the 2nd became the dominant bird voice in this and ensuing months and continued to sing on fine days into December. Mockers sang freely in Sept. and Oct. and once on Nov. 18. A Yellowthroat gave a poor flight song Sept. 10th; a Phoebe was heard Sept. 26th at dawn on a chilly morning. Towhees sang some Oct. 20 and 21 and Song Sparrow Oct. 29th and later. Carolina and Bewick Wrens were heard frequently in this period.

Only the more conspicuous transients could be observed. Upland Plover recorded July 30, Aug. 2, 7 and 13; Sept. 17 and 23, all in flight very early in morning or after dark. Solitary Sandpiper heard Sept. 4 and 6, daybreak and earlier. Swallows frequent in late summer were seldom identified, their flocks of twenty or more individuals passing swiftly across country; Aug. 26, Sept. 2 and 3. Barn Swallows noted Aug. 11 and 12, Sept. 4 and 9 were well marked males. A Martin seen Aug. 39th. Red-headed Woodpecker noted in flight cross country Sept. 6th and 17th, two each time. Last group seen at sun-up easily cleared a 200 ft. water tower, so high were they. None noted summer or winter on the area. Some last dates: Thrasher, Sept. 23; Summer Tanager, Sept. 22; Green Heron, Sept. 18. In July, Starling and Grackle roosts were found in most villages of the area covered but these did not become large and all species of blackbirds have been scarce during the fall and winter. Starlings are virtually unknown on the ordnance plant area now. A Swift roost flourished in the Milan High School reaching at least a thousand birds in late August. It was last noted Oct. 8th, but probably lasted longer than that. Most interesting roost was a Kingbird gathering in weedy bottoms of John's Creek at Whitthorne, which reached a peak on Sept. 9, when a partial count of incoming flocks showed 584 birds—total may well have been 1000. All were gone on 12th. Jays were numerous thruout the summer and very noisy in the hot days of August and September. Undercover of this constant screaming and behind the thick foliage of the oaks, some kind of migration takes place. Their numbers became noticeable less in late September and the species is now scarce. Millet fields attracted Doves in numbers: July 25 counted 76 on a power line crossing such a field. Oct. 16 saw 100 there. Today can still find groups of 3 to 9 along roads.

Fall arrivals were seldom recorded. Oct. 16 two large flocks of Canada Geese passed over; one seen by writer at 9:30 a. m., counted 150 birds. A Creeper on Sept. 27 seemed early by Nashville standards. Juncos, White-throated, Song and Swamp Sparrows and Sapsuckers are regularly observed now. Horned Larks in small flocks noted on parking lots, lawns and other

bare spots, Sept. 2; Oct. 6, 8, 22 and 29, and later, connect pretty well with summer dates and convince the writer the species is a permanent resident in these two counties. Other winter bird life: hawks of several species, Sparrows, Cooper, Marsh and Red-tailed, all present in small numbers, Crows, which have learned to forage for scraps from lunches; Vultures, chiefly Turkey but a few Blacks now occur, all from a roost to south in Madison County. Bluebirds perch on wires along the roads, an occasional Shrike (as many as two on a ten mile drive), Titmice and Chickadees are confined to woodlands and the rather numerous Cardinals tend to keep to cover. This sketchy report cannot do justice to the bird life of the interesting Milan region, but summarizes the records caught on the run.—HARRY C. MONK, 406 Avoca St., Nashville, Dec. 15, 1941.

NOTE: The above is a continuation of seasonal data presented in the Sept., 1941, issue. It was misplaced by the undersigned but is now submitted because of its information on an unworked region.—B. B. COFFEY.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER NESTING NOTES: Summer 1942 was the third consecutive season that the Swainson's Warbler was found at Cumberland River sloughs. We came to think that in the scarcity of this type of habitat might be found an explanation for the rarity of this warbler. The lay of the land in the river bottoms shows that once there were many such sloughs. Draining makes choice corn land out of them and even in the last fifteen years Cunningham's and Neblett's Sloughs in the Clarksville vicinity have been laid dry. Left are now Haynes' Lake at Dotsonville, Marks' Slough at Lock B and, nearly half way to Nashville, the largest of them at Chapmansboro. They are fed under the bluffs by springs whose marshy courses stay wet even in times of unusual drought, while the rest of the slough down to the yoncopin patches dries up. Then wood-cutting makes inroads into the stand of cottonwood and water maple that surrounds the button-bush and willow areas. In the shaded portions cane is scattered whereas on the sunnier stretches of the border dense patches of cane taper off into blackberry and saw-briar fields. At Mark's Slough Swainson's Warblers were seen this year on May 3 and May 14, but we do not know if they nested there as they did in the past two years. On May 24 the Chapmansboro slough was visited by A. F. Ganier, Chas. F. Pickering, my son Edward and myself. Swainson's Warblers were seen in three places and Mr. Ganier located a nest with two eggs, the bird sitting on them. It was in cane that had bushed out well on top, near fresh water and deep shade, yet receiving sunlight during part of the day, in all an ideal location. The surmise that this Warbler's careful choosing of nesting area confined him to our sloughs was changed later as Mr. Ganier predicted it would be. We were on a canoe trip to West Fork Creek on June 2 and had searched cane patches along the banks for nesting species when, near the mouth of West Fork into Red River, Edward called me to a nest with three eggs and one young just hatched. The old bird that flew off, he said, was brown and had a stripe over the eye. The nature of the nest, the white color of the eggs confirmed our hopes and if proof were lacking, we soon had it by seeing two adult Swainson's Warblers feeding among the dead leaves that stuck to the ground. Two days later Dr. Pickering photographed bird and nest and secured a fine picture of the sitting bird.

Several flash bulbs set off within two feet did not make her move and I even picked her off the nest. June 24 the three eggs—they must have been addled—were still in the nest. The birds were ranging not far off as we were told by the male's song which was true to type but rather short and explosive. That is the only Swainson's song I have heard this year in my own bailiwick. We had started a systematic search for other nesting sites of this Warbler and on June 6 found two empty nests in cane on the banks of Cumberland River near the Seven Mile Island (so called from its distance from town by river). They were this season's used nests indicating early broods. Hordes of tiny ants that had possession of them made them untouchable. In a deep gully that a rivulet had cut to the river a short way above the island Dr. Pickering saw on July 16 several Swainson's Warblers and a few days later, while we did not see the birds again (no sign they weren't there!), we found a third nest. We seem to have here the first instance in Middle Tennessee of this species nesting in groups, a habit that is reported from other sections.—ALFRED CLEBSCH, Clarksville, Tenn.

THE SEASON AT NASHVILLE: The Spring Field Day was held at old Sycamore Powder Mills on May 3 and during the course of the day 101 species of birds were listed. Although 21 species of warblers were listed, they were rated scarce and continued so throughout the migration period. Members from a distance who favored us with their presence were Messrs. Hyder and Pearson of Johnson City, Ijams and Hay of Knoxville, and Davis, Black and Hind from Murfreesboro. The only Mourning Warbler reported during the spring was one by Mrs. Laskey on May 26. (See her article elsewhere for other notes). Dr. G. R. Mayfield reports a late Blackpoll Warbler, having observed it June 2. He reports that the Carolina Wren is increasing in numbers again. Records he kept for 12 years prior to 1940, showed that 5 to 7 pair nested in the Idlewild Wood summer homes reservation on Stones River. During the spring of 1940, however, following the disastrous cold spell of the preceding January, not a single pair nested within the reservation. In the summer of 1941 a single pair established itself about the cottages and possibly another by the end of summer. During 1942, 3 or 4 pair raised their young within the area and it is hoped that 1943 will see them re-established in normal numbers. His first fall transient migrants were Magnolia and Black-throated Green Warblers on Aug. 27, in Idlewild Wood. On the 29th, he found the Canada, Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided Warblers and a Blue-headed Vireo together at the same place. On Aug. 30, the Northern Waterthrush was added to the list. He states that these dates are quite normal for the above species.—Mr. Ganier hands in the following notes: A Woodcock flushed in Compton Hills, April 13, near a wet-weather spring on a rocky hillside; at that date it should have been nesting. Cedar Waxwings were notably abundant during April and May. A Purple Gallinule was brought to him on April 13, it having been captured alive near Ridgetop, 20 miles north. The captor promised to release it. A Barn Owl was seen by a friend on Woodmont Blvd. on July 15, near where Wm. Simpson described nests in *The Migrant* for Dec. 1940. Two pairs of Prairie Horned Larks were found in the Cumberland River bottoms 12 miles west of town, thruout the breeding season. A period of heavy rainfall, July-August, produced abnormal late

summer foliage and in consequence an abundance of leaf-eating insects and caterpillars. As a result, considerable late summer nesting resulted and most of the ground feeding birds spent their time aloft in the foliage feeding on the abundant insects. A Dove's nest with 2 fresh eggs was found Aug. 15. Fall migration has been somewhat retarded.—The writer worked during the summer on the new army camp on Thompson Lane and made notes there. The 4 acre pond, which has been the summer home of Redwings, Kildeers, etc., was drained the middle of June. The Redwings remained on until Aug. 10. The site was graded over to form a level drill field and here Kildeers and Doves came in numbers. As many as 100 of the former have congregated. Doves had come to the field in considerable numbers by July 1st, and on the 12th, 57 were counted. Three pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers raised their young on the camp area this summer. In view of their recent reported scarcity- it may be of interest to state that the writer located 3 or 4 additional pair in and about the city. On May 10th, in company with Dr. W. R. Spofford, we banded 2 young Red-tailed Hawks from a nest in Percy Warner Park. On May 23, the writer with Arthur McMurray and Carswell Hind, found another nest of this hawk in the Overton Hills and the lone young bird that remained in the nest was banded the next day as it was ready to leave.—CONRAD JAMISON, Nashville, Tenn.

A PEREGRINE FALCON AT NASHVILLE: On May 21, 1942, an immature male Peregrine ((Duck Hawk) in its second year was shot near Franklin Road in the suburbs of Nashville. The right wing was broken in two places, but he was otherwise unhurt, and reached the writer about three hours after being shot. A splint was placed on the wing, and by July the bird could fly fairly well, but as he is now moulting his wing feathers he cannot be flown again until November. There are very few records of the Peregrine in the Nashville region. On May 19, 1942, Mr. Roger Peterson saw a bird of this species, equipped with jessies and bells, flying across Broad Street. This may have been a bird that I lost the previous autumn. In April, 1925, Mr. Ganier saw one at a cliff on the Cumberland River about ten miles west of the city. Mr. Baker, at Radnor Lake, has reported seeing a hawk flying back and forth low over a flock of ducks, with rapid wingbeat. He has seen such a bird only a few times in his many years at the lake, and only in the winter months.—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, Nashville, Tenn.

RED COCKADED WOODPECKER STILL AT PICKETT STATE PARK: In June of 1937 a group of observers from the T. O. S. spent a week in Pickett County, and there discovered several pairs of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. It was feared at the time that the removal of the large pines in this and adjacent areas would drive this species entirely away; however, during the week of July 20, 1942, these birds were observed twice by members of the T. O. S. They were two different pairs and now that the pines are growing back rapidly, it is believed that observers will find this species saved for that area.—GEORGE R. MAYFIELD, Nashville, Tenn.

CLIFF SWALLOWS NESTING AT CHATTANOOGA: On the evening of July 21, 1942, while crossing the Market Street bridge over the Tennessee River at Chattanooga, I noticed a total of 5 Cliff Swallows darting about just

below the bridge. They gave every evidence of having nests underneath. I did not have binoculars with me and from the bank the distance was too great to make out any nests. The birds were visiting a dark area on the underside of and in the center of the concrete walkway which projects out several feet from the concrete arch. It was about 100 feet above the water level which does not vary much now due to the Chickamauga Dam. A fisherman of about 35 years of age stated the birds had been nesting there all his life, most certainly for the last 10 to 12 years which was the period I arbitrarily wanted to substantiate. Boys used to throw at the nests over the northern shore, knocking them down, he said, and he had seen young ones in such nests. We walked back under the approach spans, which are 40 to 60 feet above the ground, and could see 3 or 4 nests at one point. At another point, seen in a better light, were two nests, backed against a large concrete girder and plastered on the underside of the concrete bridge slab. The young birds had probably left by late June. The fisherman stated a few nests were always found on the rock bluff on the southern shore, just east of the Walnut Street steel bridge. Standing in the boat he could touch them with his paddle. The bluff does not have much overhang. I did not notice any swallows there when I recrossed. In fact the only ones seen were the five noted originally. This was a very late date but from their actions I believe that young were or had recently been present.—BEN B. COFFEY, JR., Memphis.

CHATTANOOGA NOTES: On the evening of July 21, 1942, under the north end of the Market Street bridge I was surprised to hear a Song Sparrow singing. This is south of its normal summer range. A Yellow Warbler was carrying food for young nearby. Later a second Song Sparrow was heard. On the morning of the 22nd I rode the incline up Lookout Mountain and spent an hour making a circuit from Point Park to the fire station. Towhees, Chipping Sparrows, Robins, Wood Thrushes, Carolina Wrens, and Blue Jays were common. Also seen were Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Wood Pewee, 2; Carolina Chickadee, 4; Tufted Titmouse, 6; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Mockingbird, 3; Brown Thrasher, 3; Red-eyed Vireo, 2; Magnolia Warbler, 1 immature; and Cardinal, 9. Later, in Point Park, a Black-and-White Warbler was heard. From there, on the way down to near Cravens House, nothing was seen or heard. Afterwards, near and at the base, we recorder: Ruby-throats, 3; Flicker, 1; Wood Pewee, 1; Carolina Chickadee, 1; Tufted Titmouse, 5; Catbird, 7; Wood Thrush, 5; White-eyed Vireo, 2; Yellow-throated Vireo, 1; Red-eyed Vireo, 8; Yellow Warbler, 1; N. Yellow-throat, 3; Hooded Warbler, 2; Redstart, 1; Summer Tanager, 1; Cardinal, 9; Indigo Bunting, 5; Goldfinch, 6; Towhee, 10; and Chipping parrow, 4. Along the railroad, at the base, I heard and saw 2 Song Sparrows. On a short walk while waiting for a bus, I heard, among other species, a Starling and 2 more Song Sparrows.—BEN B. COFFEY, JR., Memphis.

HERONS ON CHICKAMAUGA LAKE: From July 9 to Sept. 1, I spent about half of each week working near Hiwassee Island at the junction of the Hiwassee and Tennessee rivers, 30 miles north-east of Chattanooga. This island is low and covered with swamp, marsh and mud flats, affording an excellent feeding place for all water birds. The American Egrets were surprisingly tame and very common; an estimated 50 staying in the vicinity

of the island. Great Blue Herons were regularly seen; on July 14, we saw a flock of 7 of them and in another flock, 19 Egrets. Two immature Little Blue Herons were seen on August 26. Green Herons were quiet common. Other birds of especial interest were a mature Bald Eagle and a large flock of Black and Common Terns. These were seen on August 18th.—WILLIAM YAMBERT, Fountain City, Tenn.

EARLY ARRIVAL OF THE GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: To the best of my knowledge the Eastern Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus sava-narum australis*) does not winter in the Knoxville region. From available records, April 2, 1938, seems to be the earliest date for its spring arrival in this vicinity. From the information compiled by the Knoxville Chapter of the Tenn. Ornithological Society, first records since 1936 are as follows: April 10, 1936; April 26, 1937; April 2, 1938; April 15, 1939; April 27, 1940; April 5, 1941 and March 4, 1942. The 1942 date is so early as to be of more than passing interest. The Knoxville area had experienced a heavy snowfall on March 3. Early in the morning of March 4, Mrs. C. V. Shipe observed a Blue Jay attacking a small bird which was fluttering about on the snow covering her front lawn on the Washington pike, about 6 miles north-east of Knoxville. The Jay succeeded in killing the bird. Later in the morning the attention of Miss Lula Shipe, Instructor in Zoology at the University, was called to the incident. She went out and picked up the sparrow and knowing my interest in birds, brought it into my office. I was greatly surprised at finding it to be an Eastern Grasshopper Sparrow and at this early date. The skin is now a part of our skin collection.—HENRY MEYER, Dept. of Zoology, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville.

WOODCOCK NESTING ON ROAN MOUNTAIN: A nest of the American Woodcock, (*Philohela minor*) containing four eggs was discovered on May 24, 1942, on Roan Mountain, Mitchell County, N. C., at an elevation of 6,000 feet. The top of the mountain there is a grassy meadow thickly sprinkled with rhododendron bushes. On the afternoon of the 24th the writer, in company with Mrs. Tanner, Prof. D. M. Brown, Dick Stevenson, and Pal Trusler, found the nest beneath a small rhododendron bush that was only about two feet high. It was in an unusually open place for a Woodcock's nest; the nearest bushes were all small and were several feet away, so the nest was completely exposed except for one side. When found, the four eggs were cold, but the following morning my wife and I returned to the nest and found the bird incubating. It sat very tightly; several photographs were made, and Mrs. Tanner succeeded in stroking the bird's back before it flew. The most unusual thing about the nest was its location in the open, grassy, rhododendron bald. Woodcocks usually nest in or close to low damp thickets. Nearby were several springs making soggy ground where the bird could probably find food.—JAMES T. TANNER, Johnson City, Tenn.

NOTES ON "WHISPER SINGING" OF A YELLOW-THROATED VIREO: Forbush and May (*Natural History of the Birds* . . . , p. 404) recount an instance of the Blue-headed Vireo's singing in a fully subdued tone. This was during the period of molt, on August 19, 1907, in Concord, Massachusetts.

The Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*), a closely related species, on August 25, 1941, was noted by the writer in a similar act, this occurring on a deciduous creek slope near Bert Adams Camp, Vinings (Cobb County), Georgia. Interspersed among the oaks and poplars were several loblolly and short-leaf pines, to which the Vireo seemed more partial. This bird gave a succession of true "whisper songs." Strongly did these resemble the termination of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet's *chanson*, and toward the end of the undertone phrasings a more squeaky quality persisted. It all differed singularly from the ordinary song. As an interruptive sound, and also following the main delivery, the common down-slurring "scold note" was given. The Vireo once hopped to a pine twig where a Wood Pewee was perched, the latter simultaneously leaving the twig. Incidentally, a nearby Vireo of this species sang rudimentary phrases—notably the sweet "three-eights" or "ree-urts." These birds were amongst a loose and leisurely bird-wave comprising several species. From the Yellow-throated Vireo this is the only incident of "whisper song" that has come to my attention. Any cases in which birds deviate from the normal in voice, as well as in general behavior, would be noteworthy.—ROBERT NORRIS, Tifton, Georgia.

GROUND DOVES IN MISSISSIPPI: The normal range of this species (*Columbigallina p. passerina*) is Florida and near the coasts of the South Atlantic and Gulf States. In the northern portion of the latter states, there are but few records so the following occurrences should be of interest. Rosedale is 100 miles south-east of Memphis, in the Mississippi River lowlands. On Dec. 16, 1924, I flushed seven of these birds in a cornfield and observed that they appeared to be eating weed seed. On March 17, 1928, three of these little doves were observed in the dirt road north of Rosedale, near the levee. On Jan. 31, 1937, two were noted in cornfields between the highway and the levee. They were feeding on weed seed and when flushed, would drop down again from 20 to 100 feet further on. They were also observed on several other occasions during the fall and winter of 1936-37. On Feb. 7, 1937, one of a pair, a male, was collected and prepared in the form of a skin. This was at the same location as that of Jan. 31, above referred to. Near Moorhead, Miss., which is 40 miles south-east of Rosedale, a Ground Dove was secured on Jan. 3, 1938, by Mr. Everett of that city, and brought to me to mount for the college museum there. A short time prior to this, he had secured another from the same place, so now they have the pair. These birds in this locality seem usually to go in pairs. It has not been observed in nesting season and so appears to be only a fall and winter visitant from more southerly breeding grounds.—M. G. VAIDEN, Rosedale, Miss.

HERE AND THERE

NEWS OF OUR MEMBERS: John B. Calhoun, instructor in biology at Northwestern, married Aug. 15, Miss Edith Gressley.—Arthur McMurray and William Simpson, both of Nashville, are attending the Univ. of Tennessee Medical School at Memphis.—William (Bill) Yambert, of Fountain City, is the recent recipient of a four year scholarship at Harvard.—Austin Burdick spent the summer as a forest ranger in the State of Washington and returns to L. S. U. this fall.—Robert Tucker, also of Memphis and the artist of our last issue, enters La. State University in Sept.—William Griffin of Atlanta, former editor of *The Oriole*, is being succeeded at that post by Robert Norris of Tifton, Ga., Bill having joined the Marines.

IN THE ARMED SERVICE: Ben B. Coffey of Memphis is in training at Ft. Bragg, N. Car.—Harry C. Monk of Nashville, is at Ft. Belvoir, Va.—James T. Tanner of Johnson City entered the Navy as an ensign in May.—Walter M. Hendrix also of Johnson City is now in the Army.—Burt Monroe of Louisville is with the Air Forces training in Florida.—This list is incomplete and the Editor will be glad to have news of other enlistments.

Bird Banding for July, publishes a list of the 345 cooperators who banded more than 100 birds each during the year ending June 30, 1941. We are proud of the fact that several of our members are near the top of the list. Mr. Coffey's name stands third with a total of 9689 birds banded and Mrs. Laskey is seventh with 6753. Prof. and Mrs. Henry Meyer of Knoxville are in 22nd place with 2068. We note also the names of Mr. H. O. Todd of Murfreesboro and of Mr. and Mrs. L. G. Scott of Mt. Pleasant.

Attention is called to adv. on cover of back numbers which may be purchased to complete files. All proceeds go into our publication fund. Of a good many numbers, the stock is very scant. The March, 1938, is out of print and in demand. Readers are urged to keep their copies for reference but if your files are broken and not to be kept, kindly donate any old issues to our stock and the postage will be refunded.

The second supplemental list of new members (those since Sept., 1940) will be published in our December issue. Our members are urged to have new members whom they may wish to sponsor, apply before that time. To new members who pay 1943 dues before Dec. 15, a copy of that issue will be sent gratis.

MEETINGS: Nashville Chapter, Dr. W. R. Spofford, Pres., announces fall meetings will be held on the 2nd and 4th Monday evenings of each month, a Fall Field Day in late October and the X-mas Census on Sunday, Dec. 27. Meeting schedules for chapters at Memphis, Murfreesboro, Knoxville and Johnson City have not come to hand but will be held as per previous custom.



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EDITOR'S CHAT

We are bidding au revoir and good luck to our erstwhile editor, Mr. Ben B. Coffey, who entered the army in August. Mr. Coffey piloted THE MIGRANT thru a bit more than the past four years of its existence and has done a splendid job. Thru his efforts, more than four hundred pages of well edited literature pertaining to the birds of Tennessee has been put on permanent record. Moreover, during this time he has also carried on his own considerable field work, some of which he has cast into print and much, still unfinished, must await his return. Gathering, editing and preparing the contents of THE MIGRANT is no small job, particularly when one has to do it in off hours. The Society is therefore greatly indebted to Mr. Coffey and we hope that he may again be able to take over when his military services have been ended.

Our president, Dr. Chas. F. Pickering, at the request of Mr. Coffey, has asked the writer to complete the present volume in view of his experience as Mr. Coffey's predecessor. He has accepted, for the time at least, and solicits copy for the December issue to follow. That issue is planned to be held until just after Christmas, in order to be able to report the mid-winter bird census without waiting, as formerly, for the March issue.

The future of the T. O. S. and THE MIGRANT cannot be definitely determined at this time. If their dissolution would aid our Country's war effort, it would willingly be effected. However, most of its activities can be carried on by members beyond the service age or by those engaged in civilian war-time activities. The latter, working under pressure for the most part, are in need of a bit of out-of-door recreation on week ends and we know of nothing so rehabilitating to a tired mind and body as the complete change afforded by leisure hours in the woods and fields, enjoying our pastime of bird and nature study. Until conditions change radically from what they are today, we shall carry on though in a more or less restricted way.

To our young men and women who have entered the Service, we say that we shall follow your activities with solicitous interest. Let us know where you are and what you are doing; as much news as you can give us of yourselves will be published in these columns. We wish you good luck, good health, and a safe return to the Volunteer State.—ALBERT F. GANIER.

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