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WESTERN MEADOWLARK NESTING AT MEMPHIS

By R. DEMETT SMITH

The addition of the Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) as a breeding bird in Tennessee was accomplished upon the finding of a nest near Memphis on May 20, 1951, by Mrs. Floy Barefield and the writer.

On March 11, 1950, we had the pleasure of recording two of these birds as a second State record (MIGRANT, 1950, 21:50) in the same field at Shelby County Penal Farm, in which the above-mentioned nest was found. They again appeared on December 3, 1950 (MIGRANT, 1951, 22:13) and at least three birds stayed throughout the winter. With the continued stay of a pair this spring and into May, Ben B. Coffey made weekly checks and correctly assumed during the May trips that absence of the female indicated incubation had begun. Attempts to find the nest in the meadow by rope dragging and close searching failed. When the Coffeys left for vacation in Mexico, we were left alone with the job.

The afternoon of Saturday May 19th showed both birds to be present. The male was found first by his "chucking" note which is distinctive, and the hunt for the nest was begun again. A small area around where he was first seen was dragged but produced nothing. The female soon appeared and both birds sat on a fence giving alarm notes but no indication as to the location of their nest. There were no other meadowlarks closer than 200 yards, which left a rather large area to be worked and the Westerns seemed to use the whole area indiscriminately. The male never sang when he could see us but frequently burst into song when he thought us gone. At length the female was observed with food in her beak and the hunt became one of "cherchez la femme" for she lit in the grass and was immediately lost to sight. The male's sole function during this game of hide and seek was an excellent lookout for, and director to, the hidden female. At no time did he participate in the feeding (this possibly due to our presence), but was a faithful companion to his mate either afield or standing by during her attempts to feed. He was the perfect decoy with his near position in the open and with his constant alarm note. She was the master of slipping unseen through the grass for she often lit 100 or more feet from the nest, to be seen no more until flushed. By the end of our three hour stay we had reduced the area still to be worked to one having a diameter of about 200 feet.

The following afternoon, Sunday May 20th, we stationed ourselves on opposite sides of this small area. Three times the female dropped in between us and each time after 15 or 20 minutes she flushed, presumably due to some

movement on our part. Each time she flew to the fence near the directing male and dropped the food intended for the young. Her various positions of entrance and exit had by now cut the area to about a 30 ft. square. The young were bound to be hungry, but the fourth time she still lit a good distance away and took nearly 20 minutes to work her way to a point near the nest. Once again she returned to the fence, her mission unaccomplished, but we were now so certain of the position of the nest that we were able to walk right to it.

The nest was placed about 20 feet from a little used gravel road, in the edge of one of the many scattered patches of ranker growth. It was stretched considerably by the six well feathered young. The young were banded the following morning and two made slight attempts to slip away into the tall grass. The next morning, May 22nd, all had left the nest. One was found with little effort about 15 feet from it.

After careful consideration and in the hope that this family might form the nucleus for a breeding population in Tennessee, it was decided to wait until next summer to obtain a breeding specimen. It might be well to state here that the State record for the Western Meadowlark is authenticated by a specimen taken about 5 miles south of the Penal Farm (MIGRANT, 1943, 14:77).

127 N. MONTGOMERY ST., MEMPHIS, TENN.

THE 1951 SPRING FIELD DAYS AND THE SEASON

The earliest Spring Field Days this year were on April 29, held by the Greeneville and Bristol Chapters. Four other chapters: Memphis, Knoxville, Kingsport, and Elizabethton, held their big days on May 5 or 6. The grand finale was the annual meeting and field trip of the T. O. S. on May 12 and 13 at Standing Stone State Park, near Livingston, Tenn. A total of 170 species of birds was observed throughout the State. Several rarities were seen, and notes on these are included in the section describing each area, but the greatest value of this report probably is the general picture it gives of birds over the State at this time of the year.

The number of birds observed are summarized in the Table. For each area there is a general description giving background information on the Field Day held there. From some chapters came seasonal summaries, and these are included here with the general information. Notes for "The Season" also came from Lebanon, and these are included here even tho that chapter held no separate Field Day. For further information on the records marked with an asterisk or included within parenthesis see the remarks for the field trip on that locality.

Greeneville.—April 29, 1951. Same area as in the 1950 Christmas Count lying within a circle of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles radius centered on Greeneville. The day was partly cloudy, temperature about 80 degrees, with a moderate breeze. Nine people participated, working in four parties. C. M. Shanks, compiler.

Bristol.—April 29, 1951. Vicinity of Bristol Tenn.-Va. 5:00 a. m. to 7:30 p. m. Low fog in morning, clear in afternoon, temperature 57 to 75 degrees,

wind zero to 8 miles per hour from west. Fourteen people participated. The two American Egrets were seen near Bluff City by Dr. Lee R. Herndon. Most of the shore birds were observed at Saltville, Virginia.

This spring has been excessively damp, and this combined with cool temperatures made the trees quite late in getting leaves. Compared with last year, the severe cold snaps were lacking, which made waves of migrants entirely absent. Instead most species seemed to trickle thru about on time but in small numbers.

The weather seemed to have made little difference in the nesting activities of either spring arrivals or residents. Noticeably scarce have been Nuthatches of both species and the Golden-crowned Kinglet, even in its breeding grounds. As an incidental note, a Broad-winged Hawk was observed at 5500 feet on Mt. Rogers on May 13 carrying nesting material. A Chuck-will's-widow was heard on the King College campus at Bristol in the latter part of April by Dr. B. A. Barrington; this is possibly the most northern record in the area.—STEPHEN M. RUSSELL

Memphis.—May 6, 1951. Lakeview, Miss.-Tenn., and Riverside Park. Species observed outside of this area are included in parenthesis. 6:00 a. m. to 7:00 p. m. Weather changing from cloudy to light rain to fair, temperature from 59 to 56 to 62 degrees, wind from 5 to 15 miles per hour, south to west. About ten observers participated thru-out the entire day, eighty being present part of the time. —BEN B. COFFEY, Jr. compiler.

Four Pied-billed Grebe nests, two with eggs, were found. The Alder Flycatcher was seen by Ben Coffey at a distance of twenty feet, and its call note was heard several times. The Chipping Sparrow was reported by Kilian Roeber.

The migration of Golden Plover this spring was as heavy as last spring with Demett Smith seeing about 1400 in the Walls-Lake Cormorant, Miss., area on Mar. 24. On Mar. 18, the Coffeys found small flocks west to about Forrest City, Ark., and on the 25th at the Ft. Pillow farm, then Covington, and three areas near Ridgely, Tenn. Some 49 were still present on April 15 at the Shelby County Penal Farm. Upland Plovers were regularly seen in small numbers. The usual shorebird species were disappointing in numbers even at favorable pits near Coldwater, Miss. The Greater Yellowlegs, usually uncommon, could be termed fairly common this season.

The early transients were slightly late while others appeared on schedule but becoming common later than usual. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher did not appear until April 1 (Spring Lake S. P., Miss.) and April 6 in Overton Park, being common at the latter only on April 19-21. The Tennessee Warbler, on schedule, did not become common until May, being present later than usual. The Myrtle Warbler continued uncommon from winter into spring and the White-throat also was in reduced numbers in the park. On the other hand, the migration of Indigo Buntings and Dickcissels was heavier, perhaps, than other seasons. A Mourning Warbler on May 15 was my first record for Overton Park in 23 years; another was seen April 29 at Lakeview, Miss., by Mrs. Floy Barefield.—BEN B. COFFEY

TABULAR RECORD OF SPRING FIELD DAYS

SPECIES	Greenville Apr. 23	Bristol Apr. 23	Memphis May 6	Knoxville May 6	Kingsport May 5	Elizabethton May 6	Standing Stone May 12-13
Pied-billed Grebe	.....	4	*1	1	.....	4	.....
Great Blue Heron	.....	4	10	.....	.....	.....	.....
American Egret	.....	*2	10	.....	.....	.....	.....
Little Blue Heron	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....
Green Heron	3	3	4	4	2	3	2
Black-crowned Night Heron	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....
American Bittern	1	.....	4	.....	.....	.....	.....
Least Bittern	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....
Blue-winged Teal	.....	8	39	1	.....	.....	.....
Baldpate	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Wood Duck	.....	2	1	3	.....	3	.....
Lesser Scaup	.....	10	13	.....	2	.....	(3)
Red-breasted Merganser	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....
Turkey Vulture	7	18*	2	5	28	4	3
Black Vulture	2	3	7	.....	8	8	.....
Mississippi Kite	.....	.....	(2)	.....	.....	.....	*1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	(1)	3	1	(1)	1
Red-tailed Hawk	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	2	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Broad-winged Hawk	.....	.....	1	1	.....	.....	1
Golden Eagle	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	*1
Osprey	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Sparrow Hawk	6	6	4	2	1	4	.....
Ruffed Grouse	1	2	.....	.....	.....	4	.....
Bob-white	23	5	8	15	6	19	5
King Rail	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	.....
Sora Rail	.....	.....	7	.....	.....	.....	(1)
Coot	.....	7	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Semipalmated Plover	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	(1)
Killdeer	8	20	4	8	24	13	(2)
Wilson's Snipe	.....	1	3	1	.....	.....	.....
Spotted Sandpiper	1	10	3	4	8	5	6
Solitary Sandpiper	1	2	5	7	.....	1	2
Greater Yellowlegs	.....	9	1	.....	1	.....	.....
Lesser Yellowlegs	.....	19	1	1	2	.....	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Least Sandpiper	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	(3)
Black Tern	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	*1	.....
Mourning Dove	63	53	12	64	27	9	3
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2	.....	1	6	2	.....	4
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	.....	.....	1	.....	1	4
Barn Owl	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Screech Owl	1	1	.....	1	1	.....	.....
Barred Owl	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	1
Chuck-will's-widow	.....	.....	(4)	9	2	.....	.....
Whip-poor-will	.....	2	.....	3	.....	3	3
Nighthawk	2	4	(12)	1	1	4	1

Chimney Swift	58	139	10	92	141	120	c
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	16	7	10	20	9	6	fc
Belted Kingfisher	2	2	1	6	3	8	2
Flicker	30	52	1	19	27	38	5
Pileated Woodpecker	4	1	2	6	2		3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4	1	5	7	5		5
Red-header Woodpecker	1	1	4	10	1		
Hairy Woodpecker	2		2	1		(2)	2
Downy Woodpecker	10	14	3	16	6	7	3
Eastern Kingbird	8	13	26	12	14	*28	(3)
Crested Flycatcher	19	8	12	21	20	4	fc
Phoebe	26	45		19	19	37	c
Acadian Flycatcher		1	2	7	2	3	c
Alder Flycatcher			*1				
Least Flycatcher					1	31	
Wood Pewee	10	4	13	14	16	14	fc
Horned Lark			1	1	2	4	
Tree Swallow			75		24	5	*1
Bank Swallow			53		2		
Rough-winged Swallow	8	17	82	28	23	25	8
Barn Swallow	9	10	34	5	9	16	2
Cliff Swallow				3	3	12	
Purple Martin	49		7	27	27	6	2
Blue Jay	52	138	11	27	56	33	4
Raven						(3)	
Eastern Crow	25	73	17	49	68	73	7
Fish Crow			7				
Carolina Chickadee	33	34	15	39	34	43	10
Tufted Titmouse	34	31	11	33	45	43	fc
White-breasted Nuthatch		1	1	5	10		3
Brown Creeper					1		
House Wren	10	11			10	3	
Winter Wren						(7)	
Bewick's Wren	11	5	1	9	5	9	(1)
Carolina Wren	34	53	14	50	37	46	5
Long-billed Marsh Wren			3				(1)
Short-billed Marsh Wren			5				
Mockingbird	41	39	9	63	41	18	2
Catbird	37	99	4	35	30	90	7
Brown Thrasher	36	44	4	30	29	30	2
Robin	79	126	14	55	117	167	
Wood Thrush	24	37	10	39	87	92	fc
Olive-backed Thrush	1		4	11	11	6	fc
Gray-cheeked Thrush			1		2		
Veery			5	2		(2)	
Eastern Bluebird	35	62	6	39	34	34	4
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	33	14		13	29	1	c
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2				1	(3)	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		3					
Cedar Waxwing	20	35	10	3	82	44	1
Loggerhead Shrike		1	2	1			
Starling	86	170	3	100	100	118	
White-eyed Vireo	9	31	12	9	13	19	fc
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	3	1	13	12	2	fc
Blue-headed Vireo		1	1	2		(3)	
Red-eyed Vireo	8	21	14	67	51	116	c
Philadelphia Vireo							*7
Warbling Vireo			4	5	2	5	

Black and White Warbler	8	16	1	12	11	53	8
Prothonotary Warbler	2	.....	17	5	1	.....	1
Worm-eating Warbler	1	.....	.....	.....	1	18	4
Golden-winged Warbler .....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	(2)	.....
Tennessee Warbler .....	.....	.....	19	15	7	.....	c
Nashville Warbler .....	.....	.....	2	1	2	.....	.....
Parula Warbler .....	.....	14	9	.....	7	36	6
Yellow Warbler	34	100	18	32	29	57	5
Magnolia Warbler	3	.....	1	13	7	3	2
Cape May Warbler .....	.....	3	.....	13	10	12	3
Black-throated Blue Warbler .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	62	.....
Myrtle Warbler	19	2	15	11	54	19	(1)
Black-throated Green Warbler	1	8	(1)	13	4	13	4
Cerulean Warbler .....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	1	fc
Blackburnian Warbler	2	3	(1)	12	10	5	2
Yellow-throated Warbler	1	2	10	7	3	1	.....
Chestnut-sided Warbler	7	1	.....	22	8	34	5
Bay-breasted Warbler	1	2	2	13	11	13	fc
Black-poll Warbler	1	.....	4	26	3	1	4
Pine Warbler .....	.....	1	.....	4	.....	.....	.....
Prairie Warbler .....	.....	24	.....	4	11	5	fc
Palm Warbler .....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....
Oven-bird	3	9	1	9	5	54	10
Northern Waterthrush .....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	.....	*1
Louisiana Waterthrush	8	4	(1)	5	9	14	8
Kentucky Warbler	4	2	7	13	11	7	fc
Mourning Warbler .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	*1
Yellow-throat	31	33	41	37	16	31	7
Yellow-breasted Chat	10	25	24	34	25	18	fc
Hooded Warbler	1	7	8	8	5	51	fc
Wilson's Warbler .....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Canada Warbler	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	14	3
Redstart	2	27	14	4	8	11	fc
English Sparrow	64	102	.....	39	30	77	1
Bobolink	2	1	310	40	17	9	(1)
Eastern Meadowlark	84	92	34	44	50	89	(4)
Red-winged Blackbird	80	149	105	83	32	61	(8)
Orchard Oriole	14	7	37	28	12	5	(2)
Baltimore Oriole .....	.....	9	13	3	4	7	3
Purple Grackle	73	225	42	40	63	57	(3)
Cowbird	12	42	72	34	20	38	8
Scarlet Tanager	12	5	.....	9	18	23	fc
Summer Tanager	14	5	15	32	17	3	fc
Cardinal	69	147	50	126	123	89	c
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	6	8	4	17	8	5
Indigo Bunting	32	33	255	112	136	98	c
Painted Bunting .....	.....	.....	4	.....	.....	.....	.....
Purple Finch .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....
Dickcissel .....	.....	.....	450	5	.....	.....	.....
Pine Siskin .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10	.....	.....
Goldfinch	53	189	17	23	167	157	c
Red-eye Towhee	37	61	1	54	89	66	fc
Savannah Sparrow	1	1	25	5	3	1	(2)
Grasshopper Sparrow	44	10	1	14	22	9	.....
Vesper Sparrow .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	24	.....
Bachman's Sparrow	3	3	.....	.....	2	.....	.....
Slate-colored Junco .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	(26)	.....
Chipping Sparrow	36	71	*1	36	16	54	c

Field Sparrow	54	57	1	47	79	47	5
White-crowned Sparrow	18	5	7	1	23	4	—
White-throated Sparrow	20	55	35	28	51	11	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	—	—	16	—	—	*1	—
Swamp Sparrow	1	4	5	—	—	—	(1)
Song Sparrow	67	121	—	85	93	114	—
TOTAL SPECIES	96	111	123	113	116	114	106

Knoxville.—May 6, 1951. Within a circle of 7½ mile radius centered on Sharp's Gap in northwestern Knoxville. Observations began at daybreak and culminated for most of the participants at noon at a meeting at the home of Harry Ijams. Weather was fair and cool. About 18 people participated.

Cold weather persisted into April this year, and it seemed to delay the arrival of many migrants. The largest number arrived between April 21 and 29, when 35 different species were reported for the first time this year. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were last seen on April 30. The nest of a King Rail containing five eggs was found by Joseph C. Howell on April 29.

Kingsport.—May 5, 1951. Within a circle of 10 miles radius centering on the Civic Auditorium in Kingsport; includes pasture 50%, woodland 40%, and residential area 10%, as well as rivers and the fish hatchery at Gray's Station. 5:00 a. m. to 10:00 p. m. Showers and overcast with occasional sunshine, temperature from 55 to 60 degrees, no wind. 24 observers in 8 parties. —W. C. McHARRIS, compiler.

Elizabethton.—May 6, 1951. Area around Elizabethton, including Roan Mountain; the species observed only on Roan Mountain are indicated by a parenthesis enclosing the number. Weather clear and sunny until mid-morning, subsequently cloudy and with a brief shower in the afternoon, sleeting on Roan Mt. at noon; cool; light to medium northwest wind. 3:30 a. m. to 6:15 p. m. Ten participants.—FRED W. BEHREND, compiler.

The Black Tern was observed by Dr. L. R. Herndon and Dickie Hughes on Watauga Lake. The Lincoln's Sparrow was observed by Mr. and Mrs. Evans. Of the Kingbirds, a flock of 20 were perched on a wire fence and in an adjacent field near Smalling's Bridge, seen by Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Herndon and Dickie Hughes.

In regard to the season, the temperature has been lower with a minimum of 30 degrees on April 18, and therefore the spring season later than the average. Rainfall for March was approximately average while for April it was below normal. Of 63 migrating species, the arrival dates for 54 averaged 10.5 days later than the earliest during the past seasons. Twenty days or more later than the earliest records were the Green Heron, Purple Martin, Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, and Orchard Oriole. The latest of these was the Yellowthroat, 21 days. Six species arrived from one to nine days earlier than the earliest dates previously recorded; these are, with this year's arrival dates: Upland Plover, 5 on April 15 (L. R. Herndon); Hummingbird, April 20; Tennessee Warbler, April 27, the second spring record (E. Evans); Nashville Warbler, April 26 and 30 (L. R. Herndon), these records constituting the second and third spring records for this species;

Cape May Warbler, April 26; Pine Warbler, April 27; Canada Warbler, April 30. A Magnolia Warbler seen on April 8 probably was a wintering individual (see MIGRANT 22:18).

The Old Squaw Duck remained on Wilbur Lake until April 18. Two mature Little Blue Herons seen on April 21 (one on the 22nd) by F. W. Behrend are the first adult birds of this species recorded in Carter County. The following are also first records or first spring records for Carter County: Philadelphia Vireo, April 18 and 19 (E. Evans); Pectoral Sandpiper, April 15, (Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Broley); Yellow-throated Warbler, Sept. 25, 1950 (E. Evans), April 26, 1951 (L. R. Herndon), and May 5 (E. Evans).

Woodpeckers and Nuthatches have been extremely scarce during the winter and spring.—LEE R. HERNDON.

Standing Stone State Park.—May 12-13. Several field trips were held during the annual meeting of the T. O. S. at this state park near Livingston, Tenn. Most of the observations were made within the heavily wooded park, which contains a lake, several small streams, and a few open areas. The weather was clear and cool with little wind. There were over 90 people present, and because of the number of people and the fact that much of the area was worked repeatedly by separate parties it was not practical to get a count of the number of birds seen that belong to the commoner species; therefore these were designated as "fc" for fairly common and "c" for common species. The figures enclosed within parentheses indicate that these species were observed outside the park, mostly at a small lake near Livingston.

For more notes on the Mississippi Kite and the Golden Eagle, see THE ROUND TABLE of this issue. The Tree Swallow was indentified by Jim Tant, the Northern Waterthrush by Howard Barbig, and the Mourning Warbler, which was singing, by James T. Tanner. Six of the Philadelphia Vireos were first found by Demett Smith and the seventh by Ben Coffey.

The Season at Lebanon.—The recently organized Lebanon Chapter has commenced keeping a complete record of the reports of its members, with Mrs. Henry Waters maintaining the record. Sixty-one species of birds have been reported since March 1, and of these, 23 species have shown little change in numbers during this period. The greatest numbers of these permanent residents are for the Cardinal, Robin, English Sparrow, and Meadowlark. The fewest counts are for the Great Blue Heron, Pileated Woodpecker, Killdeer, Screech Owl, and Phoebe. Several members have commented on the scarcity of Killdeers.

Since Feb. 10, shortly after the extreme cold, there have been no reports of the Brown Creeper, Myrtle Warbler, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, and Goldfinch.

First arrival dates are: Orchard Oriole, Chimney Swift, and Catbird, April 2; Purple Martin, April 20; Crested Flycatcher, April 25 (?); Red-headed Woodpecker, April 26 (two nests constructed by this pair on the Cumberland University campus were taken by Starlings); several species were not reported for the first time until the first week in May.

Two Black Vulture nests were found with two eggs each on April 8 under limestone crevices. Two quarter-pound young and one egg were observed in one nest and two recently hatched young in the other on May 5. On May 10 the young of the former nest weighed nearly a pound, but only remains of a foot were found in the latter nest.—JAMES W. SHAW.

THE ROUND TABLE

MISSISSIPPI KITE AND GOLDEN EAGLE IN OVERTON CO., TENN.—

On the morning of Sunday, May 13, 1951, both of the above species were observed by the writer and other members of the T. O. S. who had gathered at Standing Stone State Park for the Society's annual meeting.

The Kite was first observed at 7:30 a. m., while circling 300 feet above the trees about the headquarters buildings and it gradually soared eastward over the adjacent lake. The long, pointed wings, long tail, and manner of flight were conclusive evidence. Indistinct barrings across the tail showed it to be a year-old bird. (For description of plumage at this age, see Bent, vol. 167, p. 67). Three hours later, another individual or perhaps the same one was seen about 1.5 miles eastward, by Dr. and Mrs. James T. Tanner, circling over the F. F. A. group camp. This Kite breeds regularly in the Memphis area but the only previous record for the State, east of West Tennessee, is that of one seen by Austin Burdick over Shelby Park at Nashville on June 12, 1941 (MIGRANT 12:38).

The Golden Eagle was observed at 10 a. m., soaring over and about the high hills east of the lake, in company with a pair of Red-tailed Hawks. It too was an immature bird, having the large whitish patch beneath the "wrist" of the wing, the whitish inner half of the tail and the sprinkling of white and buff on the neck. The size, contour, and manner of flight provided further identification. The bird reappeared several times during the following half hour and was viewed by a dozen observers. At times it soared with the Red-tails and at others it rose almost beyond reach of the naked eye. It was perhaps a visitor for the day in the 8,700 acre densely forested park, and its headquarters were most likely to be in the almost unsettled, cliff-clad region of the Obey river some 25 miles eastward, where I found them in breeding season a number of years ago. The numerous knob-like hills rise 700 feet above the lake surface, to an elevation of 1400 feet above sea level, and this topography produces thermals (upward air currents) in which raptorial birds like to soar. At approximately the same place during the two days, other hawks seen were the Broad-wing, Cooper's, and Sharp-shin, as well as the Kite above mentioned.—ALBERT F. GANIER, 2112 Woodlawn Dr., Nashville, Tennessee.

HAWK MIGRATION AT NASHVILLE.—On Sept. 30, 1950, near Nashville, the writer observed migrating flocks of hawks, some and perhaps all of which were Broad-winged Hawks. The first group, of five, were seen circling over Gale Lane which is on the southern outskirts of the city and were identified as of this species by the wide tail-bands and their buteo outline. The writer was accompanied by three fellow Boy Scouts and we were beginning a hike, one of the objectives of which was to look for migrating hawks. At nine o'clock, a half hour later, we had arrived in the wooded hills near Radnor Lake and at this point one of my companions pointed out a flock far toward the horizon. On looking them over with my 6x binoculars, I could easily see that they were hawks of the buteo type. With the aid of the glasses, I counted fifty-six in the flock and one of my companions counted the same number with naked eye. As we completed this count, I raised my glasses and discovered another flock, of apparently the same kind of hawks, above and farther away than the first flock. As they moved about among themselves, we were unable to make an accurate count but finally settled on eighty-five as the number. While we watched, a hawk that we could definitely identify as a Broad-wing sailed across the field where we were standing and we decided that those distant specks of birds fading in the distance were most likely of this species. Mrs. F. C. Laskey, of Nashville, has record of a similar migration several years ago in the same vicinity.—FAIRMAN CUMMING, 824 Sutton Hill Road, Nashville 4, Tenn.

LAUGHING GULL OBSERVED FOR FIRST TIME AT MEMPHIS.—The Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) is commonly a bird of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. It is listed (Ganier, "Distributional List of Birds of Tennessee" 1933) as accidental based on a record of one collected from a flock of six near Knoxville on September 18, 1932 (MIGRANT, 1933. v. 4: 8-9). The only other records are of a single blackheaded bird taken about 1915 near Del Rio in Cocke Co., eastern Tennessee (MIGRANT, 1935. v. 6:50), and an immature bird collected August 9, 1938, by Tom Simpson at Reelfoot Lake (MIGRANT, 1938. v.9:68).

On May 7, 1950, while on an early morning trip to the Mississippi River, Mrs. Floy Barefield, her son Cooper, and I suddenly saw a small black-headed gull which was feeding with the larger Ring-billed Gulls between the point of Mud Island and the projection of the bluff at the foot of Beale and Riverside. A careful observation for approximately fifteen minutes, as close as fifty feet, was made of the bird. The solid dark wings with the black-tipped primaries at once clinched the identification as a Laughing Gull. Plato Tuliatos later the same morning observed the gull and on the following day Ben Coffey was able to get excellent views of the bird.—R. DEMETT SMITH, P. O. Box 55, East Station, Memphis, Tenn.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO NESTING NEAR JACKSON, TENN. — On June 5, 1950, at the West Tennessee Experiment Station one mile west of Jackson, Tenn., I came upon a cuckoo sitting on its nest about seven feet from the ground. I supposed that it was the common Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

It left the nest, and when I climbed up to look, I found there were three blue-green eggs. On June 11 while with Mr. and Mrs. Ben B. Coffey and Demett Smith I decided to show them the nest altho I did not think it would be of much interest. This time the cuckoo had its head in plain sight and Mr. Smith observed that it had a black lower mandible. We then checked it for the red eye, even-colored wings, and narrow tips on the tail feathers. The bird flew before we could photograph it. It was without doubt a Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*).

On June 12 there were two young in the nest. At this time both parents were feeding them. On June 15 I went to the nest and found the adults feeding one bird on the ground which had thick black pinfeathers. The other young bird was in the nest. One egg never hatched and was still in the nest at this time.

As far as I have been able to find out, this is the southernmost record for Black-billed Cuckoos' nesting in Tennessee with the exception of the mountains of east Tennessee. It has been found nesting at Nashville. — KILIAN ROEVER, Route 2, Jackson, Tenn.

CHATTANOOGA REVISITED.—In a Round Table note of the June-Sept., 1942, issue (pages 47-48), I mention finding Cliff Swallow nests at Chattanooga, July 21, 1942, under the Market Street Bridge. The note following that one gave some other results of a few hours afoot,—free time from the Army Induction Center, and included reference to the presence of Song Sparrows, not previously recorded in summer that far south in our State. In June of this year Mrs. Coffey and I spent the night of June 17 at Chattanooga, on our way northeast, and birded some on Lookout Mountain late in the evening and until noon of the 18th there and on Signal Mountain with stops in between at the bridge and the two previous Song Sparrow areas where they were still fairly common (12 singing). Being earlier in the season than before we were able to get a better estimate of the number of Cliff Swallows there and counted approximately 110 nests. These were under the overhanging sidewalk slabs at the top. On several intervening occasions Mr. L. C. Moser, T.O.S. member of Iuka, Miss., has kindly verified the continued presence of the swallows there.

The common species on Lookout (Tennessee portion) were the Towhee, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, and Chipping Sparrow, followed by the Hooded Warbler, Carolina Wren, and Yellow-throated Vireo. Additional warblers were: Oven-bird, Black and White, Kentucky, Pine, Redstart, and Sycamore. On Signal Mountain the Indigo Bunting was next most common to the Red-eyed Vireo, while the Towhee was only fairly common. The only Field Sparrows were there, and a Black-throated Green, and two Prairie Warblers, and four Oven-birds were noted. The Yellow-throat was found with the Song Sparrows, and along the north shore of the Tennessee River, at the bridge, we found four male Yellow Warblers. We might add that the songs of two Song Sparrows were heard as we drove thru Cleveland on our way northeast.—BEN B. COFFEY, Jr., Memphis, Tenn.

CERULEAN WARBLER'S NEST IN NASHVILLE AREA.—This report is to record observations on a Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) nest at Basin Spring, twenty miles southwest of Nashville and in the South Harpeth River Valley.

On May 7, 1950, a small trim bird was observed building a nest about fifty feet from the ground, far out on an overhanging branch of an American Elm. The height of the nest from the ground, the small size of the bird and its quick movements as well as the poor light of late afternoon militated against identification.

May 14 there was no activity at the nest which appeared completed.

May 20 the incubating bird sat well down in the nest. Incubation continued through May 21, 25, 27. The incubating bird was not observed to leave the nest nor a mate to approach. During this three weeks of anonymity a male Cerulean sang regularly within the immediate area. Descriptions of the female Cerulean and the characteristic location of its nest supported the suspicion that the singing Cerulean belonged to the nest high in the elm.

On May 28 the female flew to and from the nest at frequent intervals, apparently feeding and brooding young. Careful observation while she perched showed wing-bars, pale eye-stripe, the palest buffiness on the breast beneath the shoulder and the faintest lateral streaking on the breast. Each detail confirmed my suspicion, but it was not until her mate came to feed the nestlings that identification of the nest as that of the Cerulean Warbler became certain.

Birds may be suspected of breeding in an area long before proof-positive is established. G. R. Mayfield identified a singing male Cerulean Warbler at Radnor Lake in late May, 1916, and suspected its nesting there. A. F. Ganier collected the bird the same season to confirm its identity. However "proof-for-certain" of a nesting pair must derive from either nest-building (except so-called dummy nests), a nest with eggs, an incubating bird, or adults feeding nestlings or fledged young. H. C. Monk watched a male Cerulean feed young away from the nest on June 15, 1946, in Percy Warner Park. Other records have not come to my attention and it has been suggested that my observations of an active Cerulean's nest from building through incubation and feeding of nestlings may be the only such record to date for the Middle Tennessee area. Record of a nest at Athens in East Tennessee was made by Richard Gettys whose notes read, "Found nest of Cerulean Warbler on June 5, 1904." (Migrant, 1934, 5 (1); p. 3).

In two additional nearby territories I watched adult Ceruleans feed fledged young on July 1 and on July 9. I would not presume to claim three broods from three separate pairs for June-July, 1950, without certain reservations, but I can state that in my judgement the brood seen July 1st was less independent than young from the observed nest would have been after almost a month aflight, and that the brood seen July 9th was less well feathered than the brood observed on July 1.

Singing males were recorded in at least two additional but well removed areas during the same season so that our Basin Spring woodland would seem to offer a fine opportunity for an accumulation of data on the activities of the Cerulean Warbler.—KATHERINE A. GOODPASTURE, 408 Fairfax Ave., Nashville, 5, Tennessee.

SOME EAST TENNESSEE BIRD OBSERVATIONS. — Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*). A single female, or immature, individual was observed on November 5, 1950, five miles north of Andersonville, Anderson County, Tenn., on Norris Reservoir. The Scoter was one of a mixed flock of about thirty ducks which were about 300 yards offshore. The bird was observed under favorable light conditions for about fifteen minutes as it rested on the water and later as it took off and circled overhead. As it flew past it was possible to determine that it did not have white wing patches.

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*). Henry Meyer (1946, *Migrant*, p. 14) reported a number of occurrences of this species in the Knoxville region during the nesting season but observed no successful nestings. My first observation was of a singing male seen near Corryton in northeast Knox Co., on July 16, 1949. No nest was found. On July 4, 1950, in the Lonsdale section of Knoxville I was shown a House Wren nest in a suspended gourd in the backyard of a private home. The homeowner, Mr. R. C. Ailor, and his wife, took an interest in the activities of birds and they told me that the nest contained eggs. A male House Wren sang in the apple tree above the suspended nest and a second individual was seen to leave the nest. In this same yard in a tool house 75 feet from the first nest was a second nest of this species. The male of this pair sang frequently as I talked with the Ailors. A third singing male heard in a yard three blocks away from the Ailor home seems to indicate that this species is becoming established as a breeding bird.

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*). This species seems definitely to be occurring in the Knoxville region with increasing frequency. A male was observed by James T. Tanner near Knoxville on May 2, 1948. On July 4, 1948, the writer observed a singing male near Hardin Valley in western Knox County. No nest or mate could be located. On July 5, 1948, a male carrying a large insect in its bill was observed near Kimberlin Heights in southeastern Knox Co. Again no nest could be located. A singing male was observed on June 7, 1949, near Heiskell in the northwestern section of Knox County. Neither a mate nor a nest was observed. On September 5, 1949, four Blue Grosbeaks were seen near Concord in southwestern Knox County. These birds were together and perhaps constituted a family group. A singing male was observed in the northern part of Knox County on May 7, 1950. These observations indicate that this species is lightly distributed over the entire county throughout the breeding season. While no nest has as yet been found in Knox County the above observations indicate that it probably does nest.—J. C. HOWELL, Dept. of Zoology, Knoxville, Tenn.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

The 1951 Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society was held at Standing Stone State Park, near Livingston, Tenn., on May 12 and 13. About ninety-five people attended; there were representatives from every chapter except Bristol and a delegation of visitors from Kentucky and another from Alabama. Lodging was provided by the cabins and meals by the tea room of the State Park, and this resulted in a convivial atmosphere and in many opportunities to meet and talk with people. The Park contains fine woods, a lake, several streams, and a few fields, and a large share of the time was spent in the field looking for birds. This was perhaps the outstanding way in which this meeting differed from previous meetings, because the close proximity of living quarters and the places where birds were abundant encouraged spending as much time as possible outdoors. The weather was ideal. A summary of the birds observed during the two days is presented in this issue in the report on the Spring Field Days.

Field trips started on Saturday morning and continued thru the day. The directors' meeting was held at 4:00 p.m. on that day. After supper a general meeting was held in the lodge, before a welcome open fire. During this meeting three talks were given: on winter birds of the mountain tops in eastern Tennessee, by Fred Behrend; on waterfowl on Kentucky Lake, by Eugene Cypert; and on Black Vulture nests, by James W. Shaw. An exhibit of photographs of birds, scenes, and nature objects almost covered three walls of the large lodge room. A vote was held to determine the best photographs, and Dr. Charles Pickering of Clarksville won the top honors.

More field trips were made on Sunday morning. Immediately after dinner the final business meeting was held. The actions of the directors in the meeting of the previous afternoon were approved. These items included the reports of the treasurer, editor, chairman of the planning committee, and chairman of the membership committee; all these reports indicated that the Society is healthy. Fred Behrend was appointed to coordinate studies of hawk migration. Dr. George Mayfield was appointed a representative of the T. O. S. to be at a hearing held by army engineers on a project concerning Reelfoot Lake. The meeting place for 1952 was tentatively chosen, Montgomery Bell State Park. It was announced that the 1952 meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club, a society with nation-wide membership, was to be held at Gatlinburg, Tenn., and that the T. O. S. would act in sponsoring this meeting to be held in late April.

The following officers were elected: President—Albert F. Ganier of Nashville, Vice-President for West Tennessee—Kirby Stringer of Memphis, Vice-President for Middle Tennessee—Mrs. E. W. Goodpasture of Nashville, Vice-president for East Tennessee—Fred W. Behrend of Elizabethton, Secretary—Edwin D. Schreiber of Nashville, Treasurer—Lawrence G. Kent of

Memphis, Editor—James T. Tanner of Knoxville, Curator—Ben B. Coffey of Memphis, Director-at-large from West Tennessee—Eugene Cypert of Paris, Director-at-large from Middle Tennessee—Alfred Clebsch of Clarksville, Director-at-large from East Tennessee—Mrs. R. A. Monroe of Knoxville, Chairman of Finance Committee—Al H. Mayfield of Nashville, Chairman of Planning Committee—Joseph C. Howell of Knoxville.

The business was dispatched promptly, and immediately after adjournment the exodus began to the different corners of the State.

HAWK MIGRATION PROJECT:—Considerable interest having been aroused during recent years in an effort to trace the direction and course of the southward migration of the Broad-winged Hawk, the matter lends itself nicely to our work afield. Very tangible observations have been made in the mountains of Pennsylvania, Maryland, etc., and to a lesser extent southeastwardly thru the Alleghanies, where trace of the flights is all but lost on their journey to South and Central America. More observations are needed across Tennessee as well as southwardly and our members are urged to be afield thru September to watch for and report such flights. Observers are cautioned to examine distant flocks with care to be certain they are not Nighthawks or vultures and to mention any uncertainty that may exist in identification. I have appointed Mr. Fred W. Behrend of Elizabethton as Chairman of a committee to further this project and am asking our members to cooperate with him. Mr. Behrend has already made considerable observations on hawks in northeast Tennessee and he will be glad to hear from prospective cooperators.—MRS. BEN B. COFFEY, President.

IDENTIFYING THE IDENTIFIABLE

An incident that happened on a New Jersey beach illustrates a frequent occurrence in bird identification. A beginning bird student met an old and respected ornithologist, Dr. Witmer Stone, on the beach and reported to him that he had seen dozens of Noddy Terns, tropical birds, that morning. His statement met disbelief, outright and probably very irritating disbelief. He was ready to swear that they were Noddy Terns: "They must be, they are dark terns with light foreheads". Then it was pointed out to him that immature Black Terns also have dark bodies and light foreheads. He immediately realized that was what he had been seeing, for there were also many adult Black Terns along the beach. All of a sudden the Noddy Terns were no more.

In the manner of Aesop's Fables, the moral of this tale is "Don't identify a bird as one of a rare species unless you have eliminated all of the female, immature, fall and winter plumages of the commoner species." This is not always easy, especially when you consider that some birds like the Orchard Oriole have as many as five different plumages.

What should a person do when he sees a bird he does not recognize?

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

The wrong thing to do is to immediately look at the book, for that is likely to lead to transferring what is seen in the pictures to what was thought to be seen on the bird, and while this is happening the bird will probably fly away. The best thing to do is to carefully look at the bird, and then to draw a sketch of it. You do not have to be an artist. Anyone can draw a simple outline of a bird, as seen from the side or from below, and on this outline mark the positions of wing-bars, streaks, tail bands, other markings, and colors. The shape of the bill, wings, and tail should also be included. If this is done well, the observer will not concentrate on some features and overlook others, but will get a complete record of the bird's plumage and appearance. Then he can examine the book carefully and leisurely. And he will have a record of his observations that he can show to Doubting Thomases.

Despite careful observations, lighting and distance can play mean tricks on a bird student. White-breasted birds among leaves lighted by the sun may appear to have yellow underparts because of reflection from the leaves. Birds in the sky or on the water with no near object for comparison may appear to be of almost any size. Purple Martins have been called hawks and Pied-billed Grebes have been identified as geese.

When in doubt or when seeing a rare species, get someone else, if it is at all possible, to look at it. Two persons agreeing on an identification is far better than one. Remember that an identification with a question mark is not an identification. It is not necessary, in fact it is impossible, to identify every bird seen. Every expert in the field frequently lowers his binoculars and says, "Well, there is one that I cannot tell."

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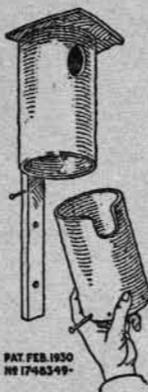
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