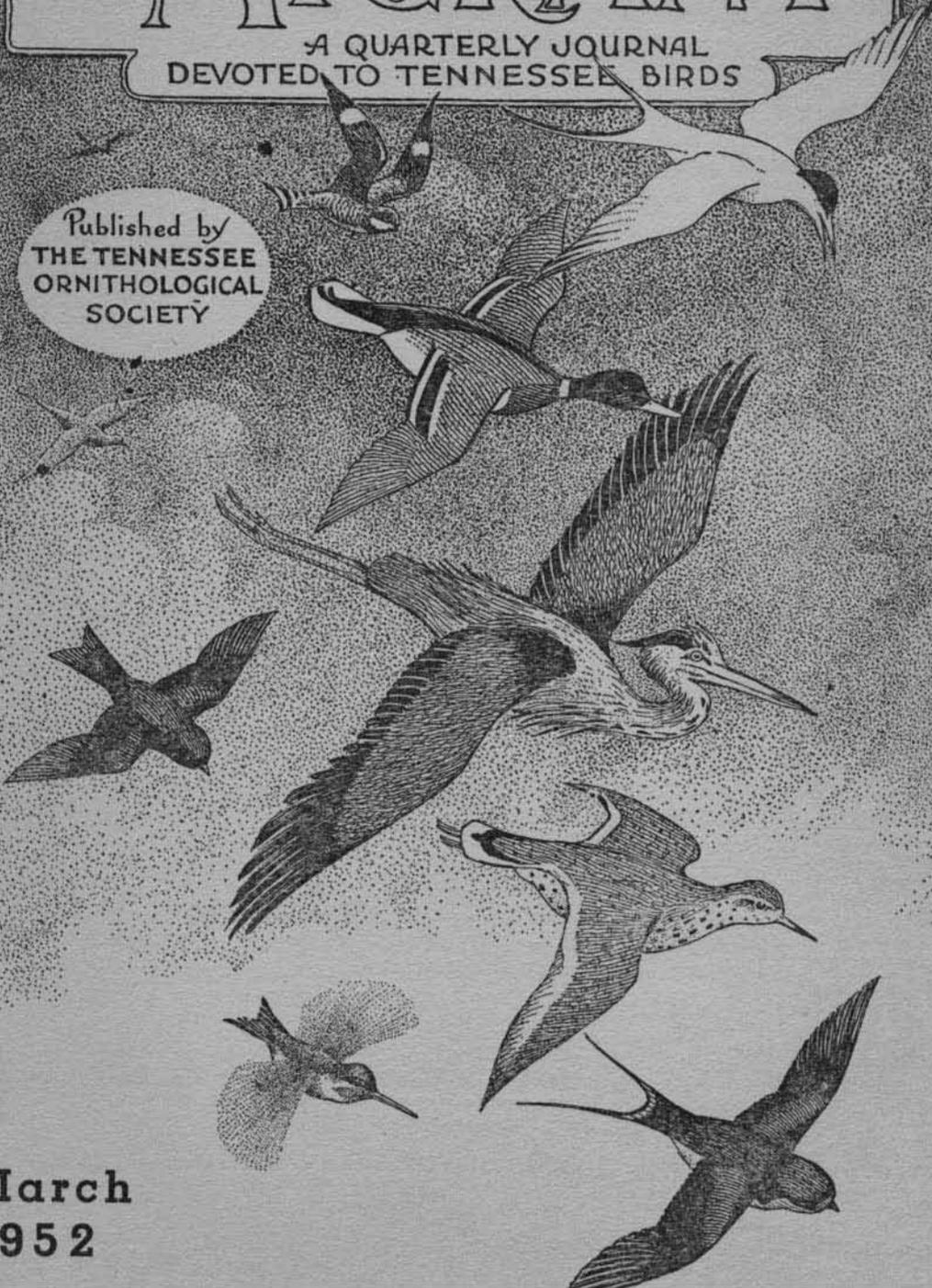


# THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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# THE MIGRANT

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## SOME BIRDS OF THE YAZOO-MISSISSIPPI DELTA

By MERRITT G. VAIDEN

This paper is the seventh in a series on the birds of this region published in *THE MIGRANT* (Sept. 1939; June 1940; Sept. 1940; Sept. 1943; Sept. 1947; Dec. 1948). The records and specimens described come principally from Bolivar County, Mississippi.

Doctor Alexander Wetmore, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., has continued to identify the subspecies of specimens for me; his help is appreciated. All specimens are in my private collection here at Rosedale Miss.

**HORNED GREBE (*Colymbus auritus*).**—I have collected two of these birds in winter plumage; one on November 27, 1949, and the other on December 22, 1951. Both birds are males. These birds are not plentiful winter visitants here and are found usually feeding near shore in the Mississippi River.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*).**—Everyone knows this interesting little bird as the "di-dipper". It is a fairly common breeding bird here in suitable localities where the nest can be properly hidden. The little chicks are beautiful and interesting.

**WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*).**—Any bird that is compelled to carry a scientific name as burdensome as this should be as large as the White Pelican. This bird is found in migration along the river sandbars and occasionally on the mud flats of a few lakes. I have a female taken November 1, 1950. Few summers occur without finding this great bird in flocks of fifteen to many hundreds resting and feeding as they pass through. Lowery, et al, failed to list this bird as a regular west to east migrant in a paper on the subject, (*Wilson Bulletin*, 1944, 56: 152-160).

**LOUISIANA HERON (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*).**—An immature was collected July 22, 1951, at Legion Lake and three were seen on August 11, 1951, and an immature collected. No adult was seen during the summer or fall of this year. This bird is a rare wanderer to this area.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Florida caerulea*).**—Guy Thompson, Jr., located a small breeding colony in this county on May 17, 1951, consisting of approximately eighty birds; also nesting in this colony were a few Water-turkeys, (*Anhinga anhinga*), and Great Blue Herons, (*Ardea herodias*).

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*).**—A small

heronry was located in a cypress swamp in April, 1949. We counted fourteen birds. Five active nests were examined in June, all containing young.

**AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)**—On June 10, 1951, we collected a male in full adult plumage at a borrow-pit two miles north of Rosedale. We found no indication of nesting although the testes were fully developed.

**WOOD IBIS (*Mycteria americana*)**—This interesting bird wanders through our area annually in early summer and remains until the small fish have been consumed from the drying-up borrow-pits. Our earliest date of observation is by Guy Thompson, Jr., on June 29, 1951, and the latest date of observation is December 3, 1951. Both dates occurring in 1951 is interesting, since observations began in the summer of 1919.

**WHITE IBIS (*Guara alba*)**.—I saw, while accompanied by W. A. Welshans, Jr., the first immature White Ibis I have recorded in this area at Legion Lake on July 19, 1951. The White Ibis is a rare bird here in any plumage.

**BLACK DUCK (*Anas rubripes*)**.—During the hunting season of 1946 I started checking certain hunters' game bags and found this species fairly common in the majority of the bags. Since that time I have continued to check the kill of certain sportsmen and have found only one bird of this species, a male taken on December 18, 1950, at Lake Concordia. What has become of the Black Duck?

**BUFFLE-HEAD DUCK (*Glaucionetta albeola*)**—The "Butter-ball" as this duck is sometimes called, is usually during winter confused with the more plentiful Ruddy Duck. The Buffle-head is never plentiful on our lakes or borrow-pits, but during the winter of 1950-1951, conditions for feeding must have been satisfactory for this species was much more common than the Ruddy Duck. It is a very pretty duck in full spring dress.

**OLD SQUAW DUCK (*Clangula hyemalis*)**.—An extremely rare duck here for the thirty-three years of my residence. A beautiful male specimen in full winter plumage was taken on February 6, 1950, at Welshans Slough and is my only Bolivar County record. I have seen two specimens taken in Washington County at Lake Ferguson in December 1934 and January 1936.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*)**.—A female taken April 30, 1949, at Legion Lake, is my second record and first collection. It is not normally found here in this county.

**WOODCOCK (*Philohela minor*)**.—On February 6, 1950, at sunset, just north of the city limit of Rosedale, it was an amusing and pleasant sound to hear at least twenty-five of these fine game birds "peenting" away as they went to roost in short grass and stubble at the base of the levee. The note

of this bird would hardly receive a prize for beauty and quality. During December 1950 and January 1951 these birds were found fairly often in suitable cover.

**MEXICAN GROUND DOVE (*Columbigallina passerina pallescens*).**—When I first reported finding the species in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta fairly plentifully distributed over the area, I gave in error the form as *passerina*, the Eastern Ground Dove. Please see the "Oologist" for January, 1939, page 8 for this first report. Specimens, however, identified by Dr. Alexander Wetmore have proved to be the western form, *pallescens*. Birds identified by Dr. Wetmore were secured on February 7, 1937, a male; December 19, 1947, a female; and December 30, 1950, a male. All three specimens were taken in Bolivar County. Again we have here west to east migration. I have additional sight records.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*).**—This species was common in April, May, and June, 1945. The week beginning May 25, 1951, this bird was again fairly common around the willows at Legion Lake. A few were found feeding among the pecans at the lake area and other localities. This bird is erratic in migration, probably depending on the tent caterpillar for its supply of food.

**WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Caprimulgus vociferus*).**—This bird had not to my knowledge been heard, seen, or collected in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta until Carl Black collected an immature male on October 25, 1951, from a sandbar one-half mile west of Rosedale.

**HOWELL'S NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor howelli*).**—I have two specimens in my collection identified by Dr. Wetmore as this form. These birds were obtained on September 7, 1947, and October 2, 1949, from flocks that were flying rather high and in a direct northwest to southeast line. The two flocks seemed in a hurry and the usual migratory-feeding flight of this bird was not observed.

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Nuttallornis borealis*).**—On May 8, 1948, eight of these birds were located at Black's Cypress Brake perched high, probably 100 to 125 feet, on the spires of partly dead cypress trees. I failed to collect a specimen although five shots were made with a large bore gun. On May 18, 1949, at the same locality a fine male specimen was taken from a dead limb of a willow some sixty feet up. Two others were present. The cypress and willow trees are gone by reason of lumbering.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus mexicanus*).**—On October 1, 1950, at Legion Lake, I collected a beautiful male of this species. There is no other record of this bird having been secured in Mississippi north of the three Gulf coast counties. This, too, is another west to east migration or wandering.

**PRAIRIE HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris praticola*).**—This seems to be the most common form to be found here. I have eight identified specimens and seven have proved to be this race. The Horned Lark is fairly common or plentiful in some winters.

**EASTERN VEERY THRUSH (*Hylocichla fuscescens fuscescens*).** A bird taken September 20, 1947, at Old River Lake was identified as this form by Dr. Wetmore. The Veery is a very rare migrant, this being my second record.

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireo philadelphicus*).** This is normally a rare visitor in spring or fall. However, beginning with May 5 and ending on May 16, 1951, we recorded daily three to nine birds feeding in willows and small cottonwood trees at Legion Lake. Three of the birds were taken.

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora pinus*).**—On August 16, 1948, almost one year later than my first recorded observation of this species, another male was taken in fair plumage from a willow at Old River Lake.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Vermivora ruficapilla*).** Three of these birds were seen feeding very high in cottonwoods at Legion Lake on May 8, 1951. One was collected, a male in nice plumage. It is a rare spring and fall migrant.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS (*Agelaius phoeniceus*).** Beginning at about 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. there come in to roost about one million "black-birds" at a willow thicket of approximately fifteen acres lying between Ray's Lake and the Mississippi River. The roosting area is about two miles southeast of Rosedale. The flocks that pour over have been estimated by many observers as much higher than the figure given here. Counting the birds that have been destroyed by target hunters and collected by the writer, I believe that the following percentages give the correct ratio of "black-birds" in the total flock: Red-winged Blackbird, 42%; Cowbird, 27%; Starling, 20%; and Grackles, 11%.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*).** Mr. Albert F. Ganier, Nashville, Tennessee, collected and donated a specimen of this bird to me that was taken at Grace, Mississippi, at the south side of Washington County. The bird, a female, was taken on November 18, 1951. Washington borders Bolivar County on the south side. I have three sight records for Bolivar County but no collection. It is not at all a common migrant here.

**EASTERN COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*).** At a bird bath in my yard I noticed a Red-eyed Vireo feeding a Cowbird twice the size of its foster-mother. On August 16, 1944, one month later, I noticed a Maryland Yellow-throat feeding an immature Cowbird at least three times larger than its foster-mother. I collected both Cowbirds and had a feeling that in both instances the "mothers" felt relieved of a great burden. The immature Cowbirds were males.

**ROSEDALE, BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI,  
DECEMBER 15, 1951.**

## SUMMER BIRDS OF CAMP MACK MORRIS, BENTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

By THOMAS WALKER, JR.

From about June 20 to July 31 in the years 1946-1950, the author served as a nature-study counsellor at Camp Mack Morris, Benton Co., Tennessee. The camp is located about eight miles southeast of Camden on an arm of Kentucky Lake known as Birdsong Branch. The camp includes about 500 acres, mostly of rather poor oak-hickory forest. The land in the valleys supports heavier forest, and there is approximately 100 acres of land once cropped now reverting to woodland.

The following report is compiled from notes taken on bird hikes made from 4:30-7:30 a.m., five mornings a week, during the entire stay at camp. Four of the field trips each week included oak-hickory forest, shrub-filled fields, more-recently abandoned cropland, a garden and orchard of an abandoned farm house, and the weedy shore area of Birdsong Branch. One trip was made each week by boat to the marshy area at the head of Birdsong Branch. Birds not seen in these areas, even though common in the towns and on the farms near by, are not listed. A total of 80 species was recorded.

The following 28 species were either seen or heard almost every day: Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Bob-white, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chuck-Will's-Widow, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Crested Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Blue Jay, Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow throat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Red-wing, Summer Tanager, Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Towhee, Field Sparrow.

These 23 species were seen or heard frequently but not consistently: Green Heron, Wood Duck, Killdeer, Turkey Vulture, Screech Owl, Barred Owl, Whip-Poor-Will, Nighthawk, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Rough-winged Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Mocking-bird, Brown Thrasher, Wood Thrush, Eastern Blue-bird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Meadowlark, Purple Grackle, Common Goldfinch.

The remaining 29 species deserve special note:

**PIED-BILLED GREBE.** One record of one on July 16, 1948, in Badger Creek.

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT.** One record of one on July 22, 1949, over Birdsong Branch.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON.** Seen occasionally in Birdsong Marsh in flocks of up to 37 individuals after July 1.

COOPER'S HAWK. Three records of one: July 2, 1947, July 19, 1949, and June 19, 1950.

RED-TAILED HAWK. Two records of one: June 28 and July 11, 1950, both records from Birdsong Marsh.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK. Nine records of one or two birds each.

SPARROW HAWK. One pair seen occasionally in 1946 and 1947.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER. One record of one on Birdsong, June 21, 1950.

LEAST TERN. Two records of one on Birdsong: July 13, 1948 and June 21, 1950.

BLACK TERN. Two records of one on Birdsong: June 21 and July 17, 1950.

MOURNING DOVE. Seen fairly often in 1948, 1949, and 1950. One record of seven in 1946 and no record in 1947.

BLACK VULTURE. Three records in three years, the largest number seen at one time being five.

FLICKER. One or two seen occasionally in 1946.

BARN SWALLOW. Two records in 1950, one of three birds.

PURPLE MARTIN. One record in 1946, 1947, and 1948; as many as three recorded at once.

BEWICK'S WREN. Seen often in 1949 and 1950, a pair successfully nesting in the author's tent in 1949.

CATBIRD. One record of one on July 3, 1950.

ROBIN. Two records in 1948, one in 1950, two individuals the largest number recorded.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE. Seen rarely in 1946 and 1947.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER. Seen occasionally on Birdsong.

PARULA WARBLER. One record of two on July 9, 1948.

YELLOW WARBLER. One record of one on July 11, 1950.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER. One record of two on June 21, 1950.

KENTUCKY WARBLER. Seen occasionally in 1948 and 1950. A nesting pair was observed in 1948.

HOODED WARBLER. Seen occasionally in 1947.

ORCHARD ORIOLE. Seen occasionally in 1950.

COWBIRD. Seen often in 1949 and 1950.

BACHMAN'S SPARROW. One pair seen regularly in 1948 and 1949.

CHIPPING SPARROW. One pair seen often in 1946 and 1950.

ROUTE 3, DYERSBURG, TENNESSEE.

## THE ROUND TABLE

**A BLACK VULTURE ROOST** — On Dec. 12, 1951, the writer visited the largest roost of Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) he has ever observed in Tennessee, there being approximately 450 birds present. The site was at Indian Lake in the Cumberland river bottoms 15 miles north-east of Nashville. The vultures were roosting in large trees of a woods which, except in summer, stood in backwater from the lake. The water afforded protection in deterring intrusion from nocturnal hunters. I arrived at the site about half an hour before sundown and remained nearly an hour. Most of the birds were already in but late comers still came in small flocks and settled in four or five favored trees within a diameter of 200 feet. The temperature was at the freezing point with a light north wind blowing and, as though to keep warm, the birds would frequently arise and fly about flapping vigorously. When they had finally settled, I made two counts, using binoculars from the opposite shore 800 feet away, and arrived at the figure mentioned. There were a few Turkey Vultures with the Blacks but not more than 6 of them. I first observed this roost on the morning of Oct 27, and counted 55 vultures in it at mid-day. Light rain fell during most of that day and these birds had elected to remain at the roost. A local resident told me that this "buzzard" roost had been in use for many years. The country all about is a rich, stock raising section and, with the present upward trend of stock production, these vultures no doubt find a sufficiency of dead animals.—ALBERT F. GANIER, Nashville 12, Tenn.

**ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF THE SANDHILL CRANE IN EAST TENNESSEE.**—Ijams (*Migrant*, 1942, 13; 56) lists four recent records for this species in Tennessee. Two additional records are as follows: Dr. J. Gordon Carlson, Head of the Zoology and Entomology Dept., University of Tennessee, reported four Sandhill Cranes calling as they flew over the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Anderson Co., on February 25, 1950. The writer heard and saw four Sandhill Cranes as they circled briefly overhead near Sequoia Point, Norris Lake, in Anderson Co., on October 21, 1951.—J. C. HOWELL, Zoology and Entomology Dept., University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

**AN UNUSUAL WINTER VISITOR.**—On January 25 I was told that a Miss Ada Maxwell in Island Home reported that a strange bird had been coming to her feeder since December 7. Except for the white tail, the description suggested a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

The next day, a rainy Saturday, Mrs. Robert Dunbar and I went over about noon, and were invited to watch, from the breakfast room window, the feeding tray just outside. Miss Maxwell described the bird as being quite unafraid of anyone at the window, but aggressive in driving off other birds; and said it ate sunflower seeds, corn, suet and peanut butter. Three hours brought only common birds. We left, returning about 4:40 p.m., thinking that food was usually put out about this time.

A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at the tray. Guests arriving at

the front door sent it up to the branch of a nearby tree where we observed it with binoculars from every angle. The heavy white bill was unmistakable. The head was black, except for a light eye stripe, wings very black with conspicuous white markings, the red breast triangle was clear, but breast and underparts very dingy, and the back flecked with brown. The tail appeared to be all white but almost transparent suggesting that some tail feathers were missing. Because of the black head and black and white wings the bird must be an adult in winter plumage.—MRS. R. A. MONROE, Tugaloo Drive, Knoxville, Tenn.

RANDOM NOTES FROM THE MEMPHIS AREA.—On November 17, 1951, a group from Memphis consisting of the writer and wife, Richmond Gill, George Peyton, Johnny and Ralph Johnson, and George Ragsdale journeyed to the rice fields near Lonoke, Arkansas, to observe the large concentrations of ducks as well as the other marsh birds of the area. We were surprised to see a Golden Eagle sailing over Nixon's Ponds where thousands of ducks were gathered. The bird was observed at close range in good light for several minutes by the whole group. The ringed tail and white spots at the base of the primaries showed it to be an immature bird. Also of note at Nixon's were 12 American Bitterns. This is our second record of the Golden Eagle for Arkansas, the other being March 16, 1947, when Mrs. Barbig and I observed an adult at Porter Lake, Ark., about 25 miles south of Memphis.

We wish also to take this opportunity to report a Lawrence's Warbler seen at 15 feet for several minutes at Overton Park, Memphis, on April 14, 1951, by Mrs. Barbig and myself. This was a typical specimen and conformed to Peterson's illustration in every detail except that the white wing bars had a slight yellowish cast. Our attention was first attracted to it by its song which resembled the Blue-winged Warbler and Golden-winged, but did not sound exactly like either.

On December 31, 1951, in Mosquito Bayou, between Horseshoe and Porter Lakes, Ark., Fred Griffin, Mrs. Barbig and I saw thirty-two American Egrets, a large number for this date.—HOWARD T. BARBIG, Route 10, Box 424, Memphis, Tenn.

BIRDS AT "UP YONDAH".—"Birds and all wildlife are necessary to healthy land and contribute to our happiness and standard of living." This sentence appears in Peterson's "Guide", and was the basis for our dream about "Up Yondah". Our property covers about five acres atop Snow Hill, approximately five miles east of Smithville. It occupies a narrow ridge running due east and west between two deep valleys, and is covered with second growth hickory, several types of oaks, maples, poplar, wild cherry, dogwood, gum, and an abundance of mature and scrub black locust. There is a dense undergrowth of brier with laurel and blueberries interspersed. We are deep enough in the woods so that no civilized territory can encroach upon this sanctuary. We opened our residence officially on Labor Day, 1951, and had an opportunity to see many warblers and thrushes during the fall migration.

The following is a list of the regular visitors to our feeding area: Car-

dinal, 16-18; Junco, 25; White-throated Sparrow, 7-8; Fox Sparrow, 1; Towhee, 2; Titmouse, 4; Downy Woodpecker, a pair; Red-bellied Woodpecker, a pair; Carolina Wren, 2; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Mourning Dove, 4. Infrequent visitors are a Hairy Woodpecker and approximately 25 Purple Finches, and coming close to the feeding area, but not into it, are 5 to 15 Flickers, 10 to 15 Doves, 5 to 8 Bluebirds, and a Brown Creeper.

There are three large stands of sumac just over the hill from our house and we can sit in the living-room window and watch the Pileated Woodpecker clinging awkwardly to a sumac head as he eats the seeds. We have not been able to tell whether they eat the suet which is placed on a large tree above the feeding area, but we have seen them on the tree and on the ground nearby.

We shall need another full year before we can report on all the bird visitors and on a complete census of nests and territories. Any information offered by members of the T.O.S. in the establishment of a sanctuary will be gratefully received, and visits from members will be welcomed at all times.—NELLY L. AND MILLARD C. KENT, Route 3, Liberty, Tennessee.

## THE SEASON

MEMPHIS AREA—Horned Grebes, 3 on Dec. 23 (Kent), were a first for the Memphis Count and the second record for our area in Tennessee, altho it is not uncommon at Moon Lake, Miss., and Horseshoe Lake, Ark. At the latter, 8 were seen Feb. 10 (R. D. Smith, Jr.) and 13 on Feb. 24 (T. O. S.), Christmas Counts for the first time recorded straggler American Egrets with one at Reelfoot Lake (Walker and White, 1951:65) on Dec. 27, one near Dundee, Miss., (Moon Lake Count) on Dec. 30, and one in a Lonoke, Ark., rice field with 30 Great Blue Herons, Dec 24. Early return of the species was indicated by a record of 51 at Horseshoe Lake, Ark., on Feb. 24 (T. O. S.). None were seen, however, at Lonoke on Jan. 27, Feb. 17 or 24. A series of winter trips to Lonoke indicated that its large fish hatchery and the rice fields attract wintering marsh and shorebirds. An adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron and two American Bitterns were at the hatchery Dec. 24 while a Bittern was flushed from a roadside ditch on Jan. 27. Three King Rails were recorded on the first date and three others on the second. The hatchery proved a big attraction for Wilson's Snipe, a total count of about 300. A flock of up to 103 Least Sandpipers were noted on visits from Dec. 16 to Feb. 24. Despite this, Lonoke failed to furnish early dates for our first shorebird transients. R. D. Smith, Jr., found Lesser Yellowlegs north of Horseshoe Lake: 3 on Feb. 10 and 24, and 5 on Feb. 17 with one Greater Yellowlegs. Nearer Memphis, at Hurlburt across the river, one was seen Feb. 17 and four on Mar. 2. A Pectoral Sandpiper was seen Mar. 2 at Hurlburt and 22 at Lakeview, Miss., on Mar. 15. No Golden Plover were seen on Mar. 9 at the Penal Farm or north of town, but three were at the Farm on Mar. 15 (McPherson) and 59 on the 16th, while north of Lake Cormorant, Miss., 98 were found late on the 15th.

The Robert Dunbars of Oak Ridge reported an Old Squaw Duck on Mammoth Spring, Ark., Dec. 29. The high count of 68 Turkey Vultures (sometimes missed by several parties) on Dec. 23 was the result of a concentration of 60 at a large area of hog pens at the Penal Farm. Charles McPherson reported 42 were perched and some others were feeding among grapefruit rinds and other garbage in the pens. On some Memphis counts we have failed to record the Black Vulture while at Moon Lake the count will be high, such as 261 on Dec. 30. A Short-eared Owl, Jan. 27, six miles northeast of Lonoke, Ark., was the first for this area apparently since Mar. 25, 1941, at Memphis (Migrant, 1941:35).

The first credible but unverified report of the Purple Martin was on Feb. 20, by an invalided Martin fan at his box. Other firsts at boxes were Feb. 26, 28, Mar. 2 and 12; Oliver Irwin reported a male present at one box Feb. 26 and 27 and the pair on Mar. 1. Four Long-billed Marsh Wrens were at the Lonoke, Ark., fish hatchery Dec. 24, and one was found in a roadside ditch two miles west of there on Jan. 27. R. Demett Smith, Jr., recorded Blue-headed Vireo on the Memphis Count (2d record) Dec. 23, and another on the Moon Lake Count, Dec. 30. Brewer's Blackbird was recorded at the Penal Farm from Nov. 10 (one) to Jan. 20 with up to over 100 on each of three December dates; it was also noticed at three other localities. We failed to find the Western Meadowlark on the Count or on the following week-end but otherwise at least one has been heard regularly at the Penal Farm with six on Feb. 3 (RDS). One was heard at Lonoke, Ark., Jan. 27, two at Moon Lake, Miss., Dec. 30, and two north of Lake Cormorant, Miss., Mar. 15. A very unusual record on the Lonoke Count, Dec. 24, was of 15 Smith's Longspurs; when first flushed they were thought to be Vesper Sparrows but thru 7x50s were seen to be Longspurs. They were with Savannah Sparrows and Lapland Longspurs (the white of the latter is practically never apparent, at least in our experience with many flocks). They were not found again Jan. 20 or 27. A Grasshopper Sparrow, Mar. 2, at Hurlburt, Ark., is early while a single Vesper Sparrow was seen Mar. 9 at Field 21, Woodstock, north of town.—**BEN B. COFFEY, JR.**

**NASHVILLE**—The Winter Season in the Middle Tennessee area has been generally mild with no snow since the first week in November and only short irregular intervals of temperature below freezing. Many damp days with overcast skies, slight wind, and temperature in the low 40's have probably had more effect on field observations than on the birds themselves.

A few records from the fall are worthy of note. A White-rumped Sandpiper Oct. 1, seen by Mrs. Laskey and Mrs. Goodpasture, establishes the first record for the species at Radnor Lake, as far as I can determine. A record for Montgomery Co. was made by Pickering, Sept. 24, 1936 (Migrant, 1936, 7:100). Mrs. Goodpasture's record of an Orange-crowned Warbler, Oct. 13, added to those of Monk, April 22 (Migrant, 1952, 22:47) and Ganier, Dec. 2 (Migrant, 1951, 22:70) brings the 1951 total to three for the area. Previous records are: (1) Clebsch, Oct. 16, 1937 (Migrant, 1937, 8:76); (2)

an unpublished record by Stevenson, April, 1941; and (3) a banding record by Mrs. Laskey, Oct. 2, 1949. Mr. Ganier and Miss Riggs report a Pine Siskin feeding on teasel with Goldfinches in Bell's Bend, Dec. 2. Red-breasted Nuthatches are rarely reported from this area, but ten sight records of a single bird are reported from Basin Spring Woods from Dec. 22 to Mar. 14. (KAG). H. C. Monk saw 50 Canada Geese in flight northwestward over Nashville at noon on Jan. 15. Mrs. Laskey heard another flight at 1:20 A. M., Jan. 25: she, along with others, reported flights over the city on Feb. 6.

An influx of Robins and Starlings into hackberry bearing sections of the city was noticeable from early January to the end of the month. As many as 500 birds came each day between Jan. 20 and 24 to one area and fed all day (HCM, KAG). During this interval an albino Robin was twice reported: once at a feeding shelf by Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Barnes and later daily for about a week by Mrs. Tinsley on Fairfax. Detailed description of the bird at the latter location by Dr. Mayfield indicated an instance of partial albinism.

Miss Mary Moore reported a large Robin-Blackbird roost on the Cumberland River in Buena Vista Bottoms at the edge of the city which increased in size from Jan. 28 to Feb. 11. Mr. Watson, a watchman at Cumberland Air Field adjacent to the three or four acres of sapling growth in the marshy bottom, said the roost had been building up since mid-November. It was judged to be at its height about the middle of February when Dr. Mayfield estimated its size at about 500,000 birds. Starlings, Robins, Redwings, Cowbirds, Grackles, and Rusty Blackbirds largely composed the flock.

On Jan. 21 Mrs. Laskey had her attention called to a wounded Short-eared Owl in northwest Nashville. It was restored to good health and flight, banded and released. She also banded on Dec. 18 a Loon which had been caught a few days before when it attempted to settle on the Berry Field runway. The Loon was released on Radnor Lake.

Phoebes have been irregularly recorded locally throughout the winter. One was first heard to sing its phee-be song Feb. 21 (ARL). Bewick's Wrens have been less frequently reported but there are December, January, and February records. Mrs. Bell had a wintering flock of about 10 Doves at her feeding station some of which began to coo about Jan. 1. Dr. Hawkins had a Brown Thrasher in his yard Jan. 2. Dan Schreiber reported a Thrasher on Love's Hill Feb. 23. Mrs. Laskey had her first Chipping Sparrow March 9, and on the same day two banded Cowbirds returned to her banding station. These were the first returns of the season.

Two winter-absent species have returned to their nesting territories. Four or five Black-crowned Night Herons were found at their heronry by Mr. Ganier and a field party on March 8. A Louisiana Water-thrush was singing on Basin Spring Branch March 14 (KAG).

Mrs. Laskey reports a Bluebird nest with one egg on March 13, and an additional 7 nests practically complete on the same day.

And thus we see the overlapping in time and space of various avian physiological cycles.—KATHERINE A. GOODPASTURE.

KNOXVILLE AND VICINITY.—This winter has been mild with no cold spells and only a little snow that did not stay long. Except for the Evening Grosbeaks described below and a wintering Rose-breasted Grosbeak recorded in "The Round Table", there have been few unusual observations of birds. Instead there seems to have been a scarcity of many species that usually winter here, altho some of this scarcity may be apparent rather than real because there have not been as many observers in the field as in most years past.

To begin with the scarce species, there have been reported this winter fewer than usual Brown Creepers, Hermit Thrushes, and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and no Winter Wrens in the Knoxville area. One Red-breasted Nuthatch spent the winter in the woods near my home and was still there on March 20. At least one Brown Thrasher wintered near Knoxville, reported by William M. Johnson.

Records of Coot and Gadwall at Concord on Feb. 17 are not unexpected, but they are the first records of these species in Knox County in February for at least several years. A Ring-necked Duck has spent the winter on the little lake in Fountain City where last year a Lesser Scaup stayed for eight months. An uncommon record for Knox County was made on Feb. 17 by Brockway Crouch who heard two Great Horned Owls hooting near his home. Arthur Stupka reported that Ruddy Ducks spent the winter on Laurel Lake, near Kinzel Springs, Blount County.

The few spring migrants that have appeared have arrived just about on average dates. The first Purple Martins reported in Knoxville came on March 13. Arthur Stupka reported the following arrival dates for birds in and around Gatlinburg: Chipping Sparrow, March 13; Purple Martin and Rusty Blackbird, March 15; Mountain Blue-headed Vireo, March 16.

The first records of Evening Grosbeaks in the vicinity of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park were reported in the last December MIGRANT (22:69). Since the first of this year Grosbeaks have been seen on at least ten different occasions at the National Park Headquarters, in Gatlinburg, or in Sevierville. The largest flock seen was reported by Joe Manley of Gatlinburg who saw an estimated 150 to 200 birds on February 7 at Sevierville; some of the Grosbeaks were within 15 feet of his car. The flocks usually reported have numbered between 10 and 20. At the time of this writing the last date on which any were seen was March 18. In the pages of the latest issue of the "Chat" (16: 26-27) are summarized records of this bird from scattered localities in North Carolina and even South Carolina for this winter; it has certainly been an unusual year for Evening Grosbeaks.

Mrs. E. M. West wrote that she saw a partial albino Junco near Kingston on Feb. 4; the bird had a white head, neck, and underparts except for a gray spot on the forehead and gray breast streakings where the lower edge of the "vest" should have been. She also reported seeing an adult Bald Eagle on nine dates from Oct. 29 to Jan. 20.—JAMES T. TANNER.

KINGSPORT.—For the Kingsport Bird Club the past season—the mildest winter in many years—was chiefly notable for the scarcity of a number of our common permanent and winter residents. We observed very few Flickers, Bluebirds, Mourning Doves, Field Sparrows, Myrtle Warblers, Juncos, Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, or Kinglets. In some sections Song Sparrows were scarce; in others very abundant. Most observers are agreed that unusual numbers of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows wintered in our area. During the last weeks of February and early in March woodpeckers seemed to cover wider feeding territories. Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Brown Creepers, were noted on the edges of residential areas where they are not usually seen.

Two members of the club had opportunity to observe two species closely over a period of weeks. A pair of young Red-shouldered Hawks were watched daily by Mrs. Switzer during November and December over Reedy Creek valley and an adjacent wooded hillside. Mr. Ed Gift observed a Pine Warbler at his feeding station on Feb. 2 and thereafter.

Despite the warm temperatures we did not hear birds singing more frequently or earlier than usual. The White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows sang thru-out December and January. The third week in February they were joined by Mourning Doves and Bluebirds. During clear weather when the moon was full the second week in March, Killdeers were heard calling thru-out the night.

A few returning migrants have been recorded. The first Purple Martins arrived at 5:30 p. m. March 14 at the martin houses of Homer and Herbert DeGroot. Mr. Homer DeGroot says that the Martins usually appear first in the evening. Mr. Herbert DeGroot recorded March 27 as the arrival date in 1951 and March 12 in 1950. The earliest date in the Kingsport Bird Club records is March 5. Another early date is March 11 for a Brown Thrasher seen and heard by the author. Our previous early record is March 25. I was interested to find that Bent lists a record of a Thrasher as far north as Illinois on March 11. I also saw a Blue-headed Vireo on March 12, the same date as I observed this transient in 1950.—ANN HARNEY SWITZER.

ELIZABETHTON—The winter has been comparatively mild as indicated by average temperatures of 41.1, 44.1, and 43.6 degrees F. for the months of December, January, and February respectively. The minimum temperatures for each month were: Dec. 16, 9 deg.; Jan. 30, 17 deg. Feb. 8, 22 deg. The maximum were: Dec. 31, 70 deg.; Jan. 1, 70 deg.; Feb. 29, 66 deg. Total rainfalls of 4.01", 4.07", and 1.63" were recorded for December, January, and February respectively. The weather for March, to date, has been very similar to the preceding month. Little more than a trace of snow has been recorded at any time during the winter.

The arrival of migrating water birds has been much later than last year and the variety and numbers have been much smaller. Arrival of some of the species and first observation dates for others are as follows: Jan. 9—Lesser Scaup and Bufflehead (from 5 to 10 birds of this species have spent the winter on Wilbur Lake and no more than one male has been seen with this flock); Jan. 19—Purple Finch; Jan. 20—Pied-billed Grebe, Baldpate;

Feb. 2—Mallard, Ring-necked Duck; Feb. 9—Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow; Feb. 16—Mourning Dove; Feb. 25—Purple Grackle; Feb. 29—Red-winged Blackbird; Mar. 1—Rusty Blackbird; Mar. 2—Black Duck, Pintail, Wilson's Snipe; Mar. 6—Woodcock; Mar. 16—Ring-billed Gull; Mar. 18—Chipping Sparrow.—LEE R. HERNDON.

## BOOK REVIEW

**A CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF VIRGINIA**, by Joseph James Murray.  
113 p. 1952. Virginia Society of Ornithology.

Virginia is a State which has been studied ornithologically for many years, and very much has been learned about its birdlife. The Virginia Society of Ornithology has sponsored and directed this study since its organization in 1929, and has realized a great ambition in the publication of this book. T. O. S. members are glad to applaud the success of a sister society.

The first twenty-six pages of this book are an introduction to the ornithology of Virginia; they describe, and quote extensively from, some early accounts of Virginia birds, they cover the more recent history of Virginia ornithology, and they picture the physical features and faunal zones of the state. The remainder is an annotated list of the birds of Virginia, based on records in the literature, specimens in museums, and the field notes of many people. The notes on each species or subspecies state simply and concisely the known status and range of the bird in the State; there are no descriptions of plumages or behavior; there are no illustrations or maps, altho the latter would have been useful. Commendable caution has been used in preparing the list, and the authority for all unusual records is cited, so that the information can be accepted with confidence.

To this reviewer, a poor characteristic of the book is the treatment of subspecies, which places an undue emphasis on their importance. Where there are two or more subspecies of a species represented in the State, the subspecies names appear as headings of an equal rank with specific names, and the records for each subspecies are given separately. In order to get a picture of the distribution of a species in the State, it may be necessary to read the information on from two to five subspecies and piece it all together. A further disadvantage of this arrangement is that it gives a false accuracy to the sight records, nesting data, and other information not supported by collected specimens but included under a subspecific name; this information is probably correct, but one cannot be sure because usually it is impossible to make subspecific identifications of birds in the field.

Completion of this work fills in a big gap, for now there are fairly recent books on all the southern States of our Atlantic Coast, from Virginia southward. Copies of "A Check-List of the Birds of Virginia" may be purchased for \$1.50 from Mr. A. O. English, 2803 Rosalind Avenue, S. W., Roanoke, Virginia.—JAMES T. TANNER.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE T. O. S.

All members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society are urged to attend the meeting of Wilson Ornithological Club at Gatlinburg, Tenn., April 25-27, the T. O. S. being one of the host organizations for that occasion. Details of that meeting have been prepared by the local committee and are given elsewhere in this issue. The W. O. C. meeting and its programs will be well worth while, and it will afford our members a rare occasion to meet active ornithologists from all over the country.

The annual meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society will be held a month later on the weekend of May 23-25. At our last annual meeting, held at Standing Stone State Park, it was felt that T. O. S. members attending the Wilson Club meeting would wish to give all of their time to the numerous activities there scheduled and that there would be no time to handle our routine business, election of officers, etc. It was therefore decided that we would have our meeting as usual, a month later and in the central part of the State. Many members in that area and westerly, who cannot go to Gatlinburg, will be thus accommodated. The place chosen is Montgomery Bell State Park, situated 35 miles west of Nashville. We will be quartered in the Group Camp there, consisting of cottages, meeting and dining hall. Expenses will be very reasonable. A mimeographed letter giving details will be sent to all chapter secretaries for distribution and to any others who may write in for it.

Let all who can possibly do so attend the Wilson Club meeting; extend your best brand of hospitality, gather fresh inspiration and then attend our own less pretentious meeting in late May.—ALBERT F. GANIER, President, T. O. S.

## GATLINBURG MEETING OF THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

The Wilson Ornithological Club, the second largest ornithological society in this country, will hold its 1952 annual meeting in Gatlinburg, Tenn., on the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, on April 25-27. The T. O. S. will be host at this meeting, with the help of the Georgia Ornithological Society and the Carolina Bird Club. The sessions will be held in the Playhouse of the Greystone Hotel. About 300 visitors, most out-of-state from the eastern half of the country, are expected.

The meeting will begin on Friday when much of the time will be devoted to presentation of papers. On Friday evening there will be moving pictures, followed by a reception sponsored by the T. O. S. Informal field trips will be held early Saturday morning and the regular sessions will not begin until about the middle of the morning. More papers will be given that day, and there will be a banquet Saturday night. On Sunday field trips will be held, some to the higher elevations of the Park, others to the lower elevations, so that the visitors will have a choice of birds and scenery.

## THE MIGRANT

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

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## NOTES HERE AND THERE

The Tennessee Historical Commission recently placed a highway marker at the junction of U. S. Highways 31-W and 41-E north of Goodlettsville to indicate the house where Alexander Wilson, the "Father of American Ornithology", stayed April 22-24, 1810. Here he collected Carolina Parquets and two new species, which he named the Tennessee Warbler and the Nashville Warbler. The dedication of this marker was attended by members of the T.O.S. An account, written by Albert F. Ganier, of Alexander Wilson's visit to Tennessee was published in "The Nashville Tennessean Magazine", Jan. 20, 1952.

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology is this spring trying another method of studying bird migration. Questionnaires are being sent to bird clubs and observers thruout the Mississippi valley; these questionnaires pertain to the 1952 spring migration of a few selected species: geese, Mourning Dove, Baltimore Oriole, and White-throated Sparrow. From the reports to be received it is hoped that migration flights may be traced northward. Questionnaires may be obtained from J. H. Zimmerman, Birge Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison 6, Wisc.

The Elizabethton Chapter of the T. O. S. celebrated its eighth founding anniversary with a dinner on March 1, 1952. The speaker for the program was Arthur Stupka, Park Naturalist of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A field trip was held on the following day.

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