

THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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THE MIGRANT

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OBSERVATIONS ON RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS

By ALBERT F. GANIER

In considering our wide variation of bird life, one is prone to think of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird* as just another member of the feathered tribe but on closer analysis, we come to realize that it is so totally different in many ways as to be unique. In the matter of flight for example, none of our Tennessee birds is so constantly on the wing, except the Chimney Swift, and its ability as a flyer is due to a remarkable difference in its anatomy and muscular development. The smaller species of hummingbirds are the smallest of all warm-blooded animals.

The Ruby-throat breeds all over the eastern United States and thru-out eastern Canada. It migrates in winter to Central America and Mexico, with a fair number remaining in southern Florida. It has been observed making the long journey across the Gulf of Mexico with as much assurance as that of our larger birds, despite the almost infinite number of wing-beats involved in the long journey. It would be quite impossible for a hummer to soar long enough to rest its wings. Late fall birds that I have examined were extremely fat, this fat having been stored up to use up as energy for the long and final migratory flight.

While engaging in migration, our hummingbirds appear not to be nocturnal flyers for among the thousands of other migrant birds picked up dead at ceilometer disasters and reported upon, they have not been reported among the casualties.

Almost every year, one or more hummers are brought to me that have been picked up dead. The most frequent cause of their death has been collision with a window pane thru which the bird had attempted to fly upon seeing thru it another window on beyond. Several of these specimens have been prepared as study skins and needless to say, the process of removing the skin from the body and finishing it without tearing is a difficult though not an impossible task.

The small body that has been removed is very striking. The shoulders are developed all out of proportion and the humerus (shoulder to elbow) is relatively quite short. To it are attached a mass of muscles that connect with the forward part of the body. The rear section, containing the bird's tiny stomach, appears ridiculously small by comparison. The legs are so short as to seem little other than a connection for the foot.

**Archilochus colubris* (Linnaeus) of the A. O. U. Check-list.

In spring, the hummer returns to us at about the same date as the majority of our other small birds. A compilation of the twelve earliest arrival dates at Nashville from 1915 to 1934 (Ganier, 1936), showed the average to be April 17. These dates were April 11, 13, 14, 15, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 19, 19, and 21. A similar compilation made to include the early records of succeeding years would probably advance the average to April 15th.

While their food is popularly considered to be nectar from the flowers of plants and trees, yet examination of their stomach contents (Lucas, 1893) revealed that a considerable portion of its food consists of small insects, particularly those which frequent flowers. The fact that hummers feed avidly upon sweetened water provided in artificial containers (Pickering, 1953) is good proof that nectar is no inconsiderable part of their food. Dr. Pickering's article, here referred to, is accompanied by a photograph of the birds in flight that is unexcelled as an example of high-speed photography.

One would think that a city's suburbs, with its gardens of flowering plants and shrubs, would be a favored location for hummers to choose as their nesting sites but such is apparently not the case. About Nashville, most of them repair to the woods of the Highland Rim where the altitude is from 700 to 800 feet, which is several hundred feet higher than the city and of a different ecological association. There, their choice is usually over one of the many little streams that come down out of the hills, on a horizontal limb and at a height of ten to twenty-five feet. It would seem that the open "lane" made thru the woods by the stream becomes attractive as a rapid access route, thus obviating what would be a zig-zag route thru tree limbs and foliage.

The nest is saddled upon the limb, rather than in a fork, and the diameter of the limb is usually from three-quarters to one and a quarter inches in diameter. The nest is placed far out upon it and preferably just under another limb, or under leaves, that serve to screen the two white eggs from above from such predators as the Blue Jay and perhaps tree-climbing snakes. I have examined more than a score of nests and find them to be quite uniformly built of soft fibres and plant down, covered with blue-gray lichens. Spider's web is used to hold the latter in place as well as to tie the nest to the limb. The lip of the nest curves inward to prevent spilling the eggs during windy weather.

Many nest locations however do not follow the orthodox pattern described above. I recall one nest, observed when I was a boy, that was built near the extremity of the limb of a big oak and twelve feet above the back yard of a dwelling. This back yard was the congregating place for the family's numerous chickens, ducks, dogs and cats, yet all the commotion below seemed not in the least disconcerting and I believe the hummers enjoyed it more than the solitude of the woods that grew all about.

Hummingbirds, or their succeeding individuals, are quite likely to return to the same locality and even to the same tree on successive years. On the J. J. Duke farm near Nashville, I found a nest in July 1955 on the limb of a sugar maple that grew above his lawn. The nest was twelve feet up and twenty feet from the rear of the dwelling. Since the young had recently left, one of our party procured a ladder and sawed the limb off so as to save the nest in situ. During August 1957, I again had occasion to visit the place and was shown a nest built within a foot of the end of the same sawed-off limb and was told that it had recently fledged a new brood.

The eggs are smaller than those of any other bird, as might well be anticipated when we consider the very small abdominal cavity of the bird itself. Instead of being oval like those of most birds, they are narrowly elliptical with relatively flattened sides. The incubation period is said to be twelve days, which is the same as for many other small birds, but the fledging period is much longer. This is because the young must remain in the nest long enough to develop and toughen those powerful little wing muscles to the point where they can sustain themselves in flight when they finally take wing. In the excellent chapter on this species given in Bent's Life Histories (1940), Bradford Torrey is quoted as giving twenty days as the time from hatching to flight.

For some days before leaving the nest they vigorously exercise their wings, standing erect in the nest or upon its rim but not trusting to release their grip. Some years ago, my friend Dr. Harry Vaughn decided to cut down and photograph a nest in which he had observed the young to hatch about three weeks before. From his ladder, he did not examine the nest closely while taking it down but walked with it some distance to his cottage where he had set up his camera. Imagine his surprise, when in focusing on the ground glass, to see a nearly fledged young hummer sitting on the rim. The procedure over, he tied the limb with its imperturbable little occupant, back to the location from which he had taken it.

About Nashville, the nests are built in deciduous trees, elms being given the preference. At Athens, in southeast Tennessee and where pines are abundant, Richard Gettys found many nests and pines were most favored (Ijams and Hofferbert, 1934). His dates for nests with eggs begin with May 4th (three), 7th (three), 10th (two), and continue into June. My earliest Nashville date with eggs is May 10th (one), 14th (one), 17th (two), etc., but from May 20 to 25th would cover the period during which most of the birds begin incubation.

During late August, hummers come into evidence in the city gardens and in the floral beds grown in the city parks. We assume that these are birds which have spent the breeding season in rural areas and include young of the year for there are few adults among them. Dr. Pickering has likewise noticed this at Clarksville. Their favorite flowers at this season are salvia and the red color of these is no doubt a welcomed sight to a hungry hummer. Cannas, morning glories, etc., are greatly favored too in the city areas. In certain rural localities, where the jewel weed grows in boggy glens, hummers gather in numbers and Abernathy (1955) has recorded between sixty and one-hundred of them at one time in a lush patch of this growth, on Sept. 20, 1955.

Most of our hummers are well on the way southward when the first killing frost (average date, Oct. 30) has laid the flowers low. We continue to see them after most of our migrant species have moved on and when our winter birds from the north have come and established themselves about us. Those who maintain feeders for hummers find them well patronized into late October. Mr. J. P. Jones of Nashville is one of these and has many dates during the last ten days of that month. Dr. Pickering, in the paper cited above, records them at his feeders on Oct. 19, 21 and 29th. During 1954, he had one to come on Nov. 11, which so far as I know is the latest date for this area.

In closing, I cannot resist telling the fanciful little story about how the Hummingbirds are said to "hitch-hike" a ride southward. I am told that it is an old Cherokee Indian legend but be that as it may, it runs like this. Late October sees the Canada Geese wending their way southward and, having power to spare and plenty of down to offset the chilly upper air currents, they "honk" to the hummers below to come get aboard. The weight of a silver dime wouldn't be noticed, they say, so the hummers arise to mount their steeds, snuggle under the fleecy feathers and ride both in comfort and style to the lands of winter sunshine.

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2112 Woodlawn Drive, Nashville 12, Tenn.

RECOVERIES OF BANDED RED-TAILED HAWKS

During the past years, I have accumulated three recovery records of banded Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), supplying some data on migratory movements. The species is listed as a fairly common permanent resident of middle Tennessee by A. F. Ganier (1933, Dist. List of Tenn. Birds, Tenn. Ornith. Soc.)

No. 40-742209, banded in Nashville on March 20, 1943 was shot on October 26, 1943 at White Heath, Piatt Co., Illinois which is near Champaign. This bird had been found with a slightly injured wing at Camden, Tenn., by G. R. Mayfield in late winter and kept by W. R. Spofford until ready for banding and release.

No. 527-75258, first-year plumage, had been caught by a toe in a steel trap on a Goodlettsville farm. As the injury was slight and the bird in good condition, I released it immediately on Sept. 28, 1956 on a wooded farm in Williamson Co., about 15 miles south-west of Nashville. It was killed on January 19, 1957 near Jackson, Mississippi.

No. 507-97758, which had been banded October 8, 1956 near Two Harbors, Minnesota, was shot in Joelton, Tennessee (15 miles north of Nashville) on December 6, 1956. It was killed by an employe on a farm, adjacent to an immense Starling roost. The farm owner contacted me by phone, but could not identify the bird so I went out there, finding it to be a beautiful bird with considerable white in its plumage. It had been banded by Dr. D. W. Warner on the western shore of Lake Superior, a few miles north of Duluth, Minnesota. The farm owner at Joelton told me that another Red-tail appeared a little later, but this one was not disturbed.

From these records, it appears that northern Red-tailed Hawks may winter in middle Tennessee or may stop here enroute to wintering grounds further south.

Since 1939, I have banded 6 nestling Red-tails and another that was caught in a barn near Warner Parks. I have also cared for a number that had been injured by gunners. Seven of them recovered to be released in good condition and 3 kept in separate large, outdoor cages for their lifetime, as they did not attain good flight. One individual, obtained from Gainsboro, Tenn., as a first year bird on January 27, 1947, is still alive and in fine plumage. On March 9-10, 1957 when she was 10 years old, she laid two eggs although she had no mate or nest.

Red-tailed Hawks are very gentle and readily become tame. The birds that I have handled thrived in captivity on any dead natural food that I was able to find in fresh condition, such as mice, rats, snakes, small mammals, with pieces of Grade C dressed poultry as substitute food. The poultry is kept in a freezer and thawed as needed.

—AMELIA R. LASKEY, 1521 Graybar Lane, Nashville.

IMMATURE BLUEBIRDS HELP CARE FOR SECOND BROOD

On July 20, 1957, I was surprised to see a Blue Bird (*Sialia sialis*) in juvenile plumage carrying food into the nesting box. I had noticed a young bird on top of the nesting box several days earlier, but as this had been observed in other years I was not greatly surprised. On July 21 I decided to watch the nesting box from eight to nine a. m., so placed a chair concealed by bushes about forty feet from the box. I had found that if I was in full view the birds would not always go to the box as they invariably flew first to an observation perch, though not always the same branch. During the hour of observation the four young birds were fed sixteen times, six times by the adult male, three times by the adult female, and seven times by immatures. These also were seen removing the feces from the box. At least one bird appeared to be a young male with bright blue on primaries and scapulars as well as on the tail.

The nesting box is cylindrical and constructed of green roofing material. The feeding bird usually fed the young by putting its head inside the entrance hole while still clinging to the outside of the box. But occasionally the bird went all the way in. Once when a juvenile was inside, the adult male arrived with a bright green grasshopper. Junior promptly put his head out, grabbed the grasshopper and both birds pulled. The male soon released it and flew off, and junior went inside, returning almost immediately without the bug.

Both adults and immature Bluebirds frequent my suet feeder, but always approach the nesting box from the opposite direction where there is an expanse of lawn, usually bringing a small worm and only an occasional winged insect.

Subsequent observations indicate about fifty percent of the feedings by the immature birds. On July 22 between eleven and eleven forty-five the birds were fed thirteen times, twice by male four times by female and seven times by immatures. On July 23 I spent two hours taking a dozen or more color pictures with a Leica M-3 35 mm camera at five feet. The birds were most cooperative, coming frequently and showing no fear of the camera.

It appears that these young birds are taking half the care of the later brood.

MURIEL B. MONROE, 1424 Tugaloo Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE CHATTANOOGA AREA LIST

UPLAND SANDPIPER—This species, Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) has evaded us for the five years we have lived in Chattanooga until August 24, 1957, when we saw one with Kildeer, Solitary Sandpipers and a Pectoral Sandpiper at the tiny remains of a large cattail swamp which the city has taken over for a dump. Most of the cattails have been covered and the water drained, but one small muddy spot remains which is still popular with a few shorebirds.

DOWITCHER—A search of THE MIGRANT reveals no Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) records east of Nashville. However, on August 18, 1957, two were found on the flats at Long Savannah Creek. One was in the brownish plumage of a spring bird. The other had a broken leg and was in the gray or fall plumage. On August 25, again 2 were seen, not including the lame bird which had disappeared. Two were present again at the same location on September 8. Both Mr. West and I have seen Dowitchers on several coastal trips and as recently as April 1957, had ample opportunity to study them in Florida and in quantity.

COMMON TERN—On September 11, 1956 a bird of this species was tentatively identified as a Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) at Long Savannah Creek. On September 8, 1957 25-30 Common Terns were observed feeding at the foot of Chickamauga Dam. Also one was at Long Savannah Creek on the same date. These were the first positive identifications of this species for the area.

BLACK TERN—On September 3, 1956, a tern was seen at Long Savannah Creek at a distance that made identification as a Black Tern (*Chlidonias nigra*) uncertain. I noted in my records that this was a questionable identification. However, on August 25, 1957 at the same location, a flock of about 25 Black Terns appeared while we were watching shorebirds. About two hours later another flock of about 25 arrived and were seen circling overhead at about 100 feet. As they reached us they descended rapidly and joined the others. From about 7:00 a. m. until we left at 11:30 a. m., about half of them were always feeding while the others sat on a narrow spit. Of the approximately 50 terns, only 2 were obviously adults. We were able to approach rather closely to the preening birds with a movie camera.

LARK SPARROW—On August 10, 1957, Mr. West and I made the first late summer trip to the flats at Long Savannah Creek to look for early shorebirds. After approaching the flats from the two usual directions, we took a road to a farmhouse in a third direction. Between the house and the water's edge was a cotton field and a fenced meadow on a gentle slope. As we walked down the slope, several sparrows flew up and away. One flew to a fence and perched on the top wire. I looked at it as a matter of course and immediately noticed the unusual face pattern and a breast spot. The bird held a caterpillar in its bill. It watched us for a couple of minutes, then flew to the ground where it squeezed the caterpillar repeatedly and ate it. I have seen many Lark Sparrows (*Chondestes grammacus*) in the western states and found this one very easy to identify, though not in good plumage. Either it was in a molting condition or it was an immature that had not reached the clean cut pattern of a spring adult. An attempt will be made next year to search the same vicinity for possible breeding birds.

—MRS. E. M. WEST, 2914 Haywood Ave., Apt. 1-D, Chattanooga 5, Tenn.

THE SEASON

MEMPHIS—Altho the Mississippi river gauge dipped below zero at the period's end, the local rainfall for July and August was about 9 inches or 50% above normal, with 1957 to date the wettest, for the same 8 months, since 1882. Temperatures were cooler than average. Mud Lake, Tenn.-Miss. remained too high for herons and few have been seen in the area. A cotton-field depression, about 300 yards long, designated "New Hope slough", west of Walls, Miss., had 8 species of shorebirds on July 27, was half dried-up on Aug. 10, but too high Aug. 24 and Sept. 8. The count there July 27 was: Semi-palmated Plover 4, Upland Sandpiper 1, Spotted 3, Lesser Yellow-legs 6, Pectoral 6, Least 15, Semipalmated 5, and Western 20; on Aug. 10: Spotted 4, Solitary 4, Greater Yellow-legs 2, Pectoral 85. Meanwhile Oliver Irwin had a few "peeps" at the "near" corner of President's Island, including 5 Semipalmated Plover, Aug. 4-6, (3 on Sept. 7, BC); he recorded the Spotted Sandpiper there on May 20, then again from July 18. On Aug. 24, he had several flocks of 12 to 35 each, of large terns, presumably Caspians. At the Penal Farm, Upland Sandpipers found, were 3 on July 6 and 3 on Aug. 3; the grass continued high. George Peyton, Jr., saw 4 Wood Ducks there, July 27, also 2 Solitary Sandpipers and a Lesser Yellow-legs.

Irwin located two nests of Mississippi Kites in Riverside Park, with a young on one, noted stretching wings, July 22. He reports he saw 35 of the Kites soaring there June 28; very unusual and, to the compiler, no substantiated explanation apparent for this concentration. At the island (OI) 12 Blue-winged Teal arrived Sept. 3, a total of 40 Great Blue Herons passed over, late on Sept. 4, and an Osprey was seen Sept. 7.

Swallows seen at the "New Hope slough", Walls, Sept. 7 (Bob McLean, BC): Tree 100, Bank 5, Rough-winged 10, and Cliff 15. Barns were only common at the Penal Farm, Aug. 17, — totaling 72. Irwin estimated 250 to 300 Purple Martins, Aug. 8, at the Island. (No flocks were noted at Hardy, Ark., as last year, but 25 Nighthawks flew down the South Fork, Aug. 25.) Irwin saw up to a male and two female Goldfinches near Riverside Park, July 10, 12, and Aug. 1 and 8. A pair were at the Penal Farm but on Sept. 8 we counted 10 adult males and 2 females in the sunflowers at one point there. It seems probable that these males, or most of them, would be non-nesters.

—BEN B. COFEY, JR., 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis.

NASHVILLE—For the second year in succession, Nashville has enjoyed a cooler-than-usual summer — this in spite of the fact that July and August were dry months. Whether these conditions have affected our breeding records cannot be said, though some interesting observations have been made along that line.

Mrs. Laskey reports that in the same number of available Bluebird nest boxes, there were 74 sets of eggs numbering 326 this year while in 1956 there were 97 sets of eggs numbering 463, with 51% fledged from eggs laid in 1957 and 59% from eggs laid in 1956. The 1957 season started later and ended earlier than the 1956 season.

H. E. Parmer reports destruction by high water May 19th when the Harpeth river rose 9 feet. Fledglings of Rough-winged Swallows, Prothonotary Warblers and Cardinals were destroyed in the nests.

We have a first nesting record (so far as is known) for the Nashville and Middle Tennessee area: there were two nestings of the House Wren at the home of A. R. Laskey. "First nesting 5 eggs, 4 hatched, fledged June 10th; second nesting 6 eggs, 6 hatched, 6 fledged July 23rd. All were banded, all left by mid-August".

One later-than-usual Spring date was recorded when two Coots were seen on Old Hickory Lake June 30th. (CEG)

We think our earliest Fall record for the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was established September 5th when two males (one singing) were seen at Radnor Lake. (ARL, CEG) Last year none was seen September 15th when we had our Big Fall Day in this area.

Other Fall arrival dates are as follows: 9-5, one Pied-billed Grebe, 1 Olive-sided Flycatcher, 2 Least Flycatchers, 3 Tennessee Warblers, 1 Nashville Warbler, 2 Magnolias, 1 Blackburnian (ARL, CEG); 9-6 one Ovenbird (SMB), 9-7 one Chestnut-sided Warbler, (JR, RC). These are about normal dates for these species except the Grosbeaks. Some several species which should be here still have not been reported 9-10.

—MRS. SUE M. BELL, 210 Carden Ave., Nashville 5.

CHATTANOOGA—The season has produced several firsts for the area (see page 41) as well as several noteworthy records. Little Blue Herons appeared on Aug. 18. At one location was 1 adult and 8 immatures and at another 1 adult and 4 immatures. An immature Bald Eagle was observed on Aug. 10 which was the first August record for this area. A King Rail has been in a location in the city for the third successive year where a family was reared last year but did not appear to have a mate this year. Another was found at a second location. Two Pectoral Sandpipers on Aug. 10 were five days earlier than previous early date. A Semipalmated Sandpiper on Aug. 10 was nine days earlier than last year's first record.

—ADELE H. WEST, 2914 Haywood Ave., No. 1-D, Chattanooga 5.

KNOXVILLE—The late spring and summer seasons have been about "as usual", including the usual inactivity of most birders during the hot summer. The few records that are out of the ordinary concern one or a few individuals; there have been no unusual numbers of any species, nor have any been less common than expected, altho this latter condition is hard to determine.

A late spring migrant was a Ring-necked Duck seen on May 19 by R. B. Hamilton. Also late were two Least Sandpipers on May 19 and one on May 21 seen by J. B. Owen, a Wilson's Warbler on May 27 by Mrs. R. A. Monroe, and a Baltimore Oriole which stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Mengel from May 1 to 17. The following were unusual spring migrants: a Pigeon Hawk on May 13 seen by J. C. Howell, two Woodcock on April 29 by S. R. Tipton, an Olive-sided Flycatcher on May 21 by J. C. Howell, and a Connecticut Warbler on May 16 and 23 by Mrs. R. A. Monroe. The Pigeon Hawk record was the first for Knox County.

Whip-poor-wills have been heard singing into mid-summer in at least two places around Knox County where they have not been present in previous summers. Other uncommon summer residents were a Worm-eating Warbler found on May 20 and 23 by R. B. Hamilton, a Cerulean Warbler on June 2 by a T. O. S. field trip to Roaring Springs, and two Scarlet Tanagers at the same time and place. Blue Grosbeaks were reported on April 25, an early date, by Paul Pardue, and two were observed at Concord on June 30 by a T. O. S. field trip. Pardue found another male on July 27. Pardue also saw one Dickcissel on May 20 and 28, and one was found on the Concord field trip on June 30; we had no records for Dickcissels in 1956. Frances Olson recorded a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Scarlet Tanagers at Norris on July 27.

In the Great Smoky Mountains, Crossbills have been absent most of the winter and spring. Scattered individuals were observed in June by Arthur Stupka and J. T. Tanner. About eight individuals were observed on a T. O. S. field trip to the Mountains on July 21.

Mrs. R. A. Monroe, after making some observations on the flocking of Purple Martins, writes,

"For several years during August, Purple Martins have flocked in large numbers in a certain block in Knoxville. At sundown they crowd on wires and television aerials for a brief period before going to roost. Then they apparently spend the night in the cornfields which stretch from the houses to the river.

"In 1954 the birds numbered six or seven thousand, and were very spectacular in their restless flying and perching.

"This year Mr. Monroe and I drove down to watch them every evening for several weeks. We counted about 200 on August 1, 1000 August 6, and between 2000 and 3000 August 8, 9, and 10. All departed by August 18, when there were a few cold rainy days, considerably earlier than usual.

"Most of the Martins, at least ninety percent, were light-breasted, indicating a large proportion of the season's immatures. This fact makes their choice of the identical block year after year seem quite remarkable."

At the time of this writing, Sept. 4, the first signs of fall, besides the absence of Martins are the flocking of Robins and the appearance of a few migrant warblers.

—JAMES T. TANNER, Dept. of Zoology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

GREENEVILLE—The weather in Greene County seemed more nearly normal this summer, without the extreme heat and drought of the past three years.

Interesting nesting possibilities were noted. On June 8, Ravens in the trees immediately below Camp Creek Bald called, concentrating their short, below-tree-level flights about one area which we did not approach to inspect for a nest.

Blue Grosbeaks again presented a puzzle. Not until June 3 was a male seen and heard singing. Even when on July 18 the unobtrusive female was found scolding with the male from a densely grown fence row, we did not find a nest. However, on July 26 one newly fledged Blue Grosbeak assured us the nest had indeed been situated nearby.

A marshy area draining crop and pasture land in the Roaring Fork bottoms provided glimpses of bird life in a different habitat. Here on June 10 a Florida Gallinule, red frontal shield plainly to be seen, walked out of the grasses within feet of a tractor mowing bar. Here August 7 through 22 two singing Short-billed Marsh Wrens, each apparently maintaining his territory, suggested a nesting possibility. As late as August 31 one wren was in the usual place, in molt, calling but not singing. Here August 24 and 25 were around 25 Sora Rails, possibly on migration. They flushed before a mowing bar only to drop to the ground a few yards to the side of the tractor. With these on August 24 were two Virginia Rails, small but with long slim bills.

Yellow-crowned Night Herons were present, occasionally being seen singly in morning or evening flights along the same route. Late afternoon of July 6 a closer view of a probable family group was gained when two adults flew together rather high on a course paralleling the creek. Some minutes later three immatures appeared; they came up hill to perch in the lawn trees.

Late summer wandering had begun for two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers seen separately on June 3 and for two together June 27. On the latter date a Louisiana Water-thrush was also wandering, singing softly and calling, in roadside vegetation. On July 18 an immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak came into the lawn mimosas. No wandering American Egrets have been seen.

An early migratory movement occurred August 8, when a group of around 150 Barn Swallows fed in a low, loose canopy over the creek bottoms. At 7:40, deep dusk, the swallows collected and spiralled in a compact unit which, as it attained height, moved in a direct flight southwest.

At that moment, a second nesting of one pair of Barn Swallows was in progress on a porch. The four young of this late nesting left their nest August 19 and 20.

Mrs. Willis Clemens saw an instance of late nesting in a brood of mock-
ingbirds which were able to leave their nest on August 25 and 26.

—RUTH and RICHARD NEVIUS, Route No. 1, Greeneville.

KINGSPORT—Black Vultures have been very scarce this year; no birds of this species have been reported. The Ruffed Grouse on Bay's Mt. have been observed much more often than in any other season since we started keeping records. Our first Hummingbird report was very late—May 11. Hairy Woodpeckers seemed rather numerous on Bay's Mt.

Early in the morning, April 9, the writer heard the Winter Wren and also the Hermit Thrush singing on Bay's. Both birds were singing somewhat subdued versions of their spectacular songs. The Winter Wren was heard on two other days last spring also.

Bewick's Wren was scarcer than ever before. The House Wren has become so numerous that its ups and downs are difficult to detect. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were very abundant in late March and early April.

Six Parula Warblers were seen on Bay's Mt., April 18. On the following day the writer saw 8 Yellow-throated Warblers at the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Holston River. As I walked along the railroad bordering the woods above the river, my eyes were at tree-top level; I could see these warblers chasing one another in circles above the trees. The chase was marked by shrill cries and interrupted, now and then, when a bird would perch just long enough to give forth the soft and rapid song of the Yellow-throated Warbler, a song which seems to come from deep tranquility and loneliness, not the helter skelter of the chase.

The Louisiana Water-thrush was numerous this year; first date was March 24, and five were heard singing on Bay's Mt., March 29. The Kentucky Warbler, whose numbers seem to vary greatly from year to year, was much more seen and heard, this spring and summer, than usual (Bay's).

No one reported Dickcissels, which we recorded last year for the first time, in July., (see THE MIGRANT 28, 11, 1957). The Vesper Sparrow, perhaps our rarest regular summer bird, was last seen in April. A Lincoln's Sparrow, our first record for this species, was seen "skulking" and heard chattering at the Confluence, in Hawkins County.

—THOMAS W. FINUCANE, 1434 Watauga St., Kingsport.

ELIZABETHTON—The season has been about normal in this area with slightly more than normal rainfall for the year to date. The temperature has reached the low nineties only a few times and with few exceptions the nights have been cool and pleasant.

A few species of ducks departed later than usual. A Baldpate was present on May 5, three days late and Ring-necked Ducks remained until May 4 (10 days late) with 11 present on April 27. The last Osprey of the season was noted May 20 and none has been reported for the fall season although they are frequently observed a month earlier than this. A Virginia Rail was seen on April 30 (Roby D. May), which was the first spring record for the area, the only other record being Nov. 2, 1954. Spotted Sandpipers were absent from the area from May 11 to Aug. 11 when first reported for the fall. A Pectoral Sandpiper arrived March 3 (28 days early) and remained until May 8. The second Chuck-will's-widow for Carter County was heard singing about 10:00 p. m. May 14 (LRH) near Watauga Point. It sang several times during a fifteen minute period. Repeated checks at the same location and surrounding territory on several subsequent dates, by various individuals, did not reveal its presence again. What appeared to be a family group of 5 Ravens were seen flying over Roan Mountain late in the afternoon of Aug. 18. Swainson's Warbler was observed at Rock Creek Park, near Erwin on May 18. (H. P. Langridge, Ed Davidson). A Northern Water-thrush was found at the County Farm (HPL, RDM) May 1. Bobolinks were first noted in migration early in the morning of Sept. 2 when a flock of about 25 flew over traveling in a southward direction.

The fall migration appears to be progressing in about the normal fashion except that no herons or egrets have appeared during this season.

—LEE R. HERNDON, 1533 Burgie Place, Elizabethton.

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EDITORIAL

For the past several years THE SEASON has been run in the March and September issues with ROUND TABLE notes occurring in practically all issues. Usually the seasonal observations of unusual or significant character are prefaced by notes on the weather which may have had some marked influence upon the arrival or departure of migrating species of birds. That the weather, at least on occasion, does indeed have a pronounced effect upon migration, reference is made to Audubon Field Notes, 11:4, 312-325, 1957 "A Summary of the Spring Migration"—Aaron M. Bagg. While TOS was having its Annual Meeting in Gatlinburg in the Great Smoky Mountains on May 4 and 5, compiling a list of 65 species which was considered about normal for the higher altitude covered, the Gulf Coast, from Florida to Texas was experiencing a phenomenal influx of migrants of a variety of species. Many first records for several areas were recorded during the period. Weather maps accompanying the article provide a summary of conditions preceding and during the period which provide an excellent explanation for what took place.

Many other areas farther north experienced similar concentrations or "waves", both before and subsequent to the dates mentioned. The relatively low number of species reported for the Great Smoky Mountain area did not appear particularly unusual since the Knoxville Chapter had logged 118 species on April 28; Kingsport 99 species on May 11 and Memphis 90 species on May 12.

Perhaps the reason for publishing THE SEASON at those times is because of the inactivity of members with regard to ornithology and material is needed for making a reasonable number of pages for publication. At times there appears little to report except the weather, however, I believe there would be many more noteworthy observations as well as Round Table notes to report if our membership would exert themselves by getting into the field when unusual weather is predicted or immediately after abrupt changes in weather conditions.

Judging by the seasonal reports submitted for publication in the September issue, anything more than the usual spring influx of migrants was not even suggested. Perhaps our data are not analyzed adequately and we take such matters for granted without making comment.

If the membership would like a change in this or any other phase of the publication, your editor would appreciate your suggestions or comments.
—LEE R. HERNDON.

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