

THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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THE MIGRANT

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THE DEGREE AND EFFECT OF SOCIABILITY AMONG BIRDS

By ALBERT F. GANIER

This subject is a relatively unexplored phase of bird study and one upon which very little has been written. It is one that does not readily lend itself to laboratory methods and one upon which conclusions can only be reached after long experience in the field.

The subject divides itself into two categories, each of which is related to the other. First, the degree of sociability among the various species, and second, the effect of this sociability or non-sociability upon the deportment and success of the birds themselves.

For the best examples of socially inclined native birds we will of course look to the gregarious species, such as members of the "blackbird" family, so prone to associate in flocks. We know that Grackles as well as Red-wings usually nest together in groups and that nesting over with, they merge in large flocks for the fall and winter and that these flocks gather together at night to form large roosts. During this long off-season association, there are no disrupting factors present, such as territorial defenses and sex attraction and the true personality of the species is brought out. When not engaged in gathering food, we find them resting together in trees and emitting a din of soft calls and miscellaneous "bird-talk." As warm days appear near the verge of spring, the soft calls grow in volume until they become a roar of song. The metallic song of a flock of Grackles in March is one of the finest harbingers of spring.

Likewise, flocking Robins and Starlings stimulate each other to the point where they become exceedingly songful long before time for nesting. Returning flocks of Chimney Swifts and Purple Martins too are happy with their particular vocal expressions, before time for pairing begins.

Having now cited a high degree of sociability among the above mentioned species, let us look to see what its effect has been. The first effect we note is that sociability helps to make what may be termed a successful species. In other words, the stimulus of group association results in early mating, the rearing of vigorous broods and the persistent replacement of nests that for one reason or another have been destroyed. The hustle and bustle of the flock produces a desire on the part of each of its members to "get in the game" and carry out nature's plan of reproduction.

The effect of flock stimulus to nesting activity is wonderfully illustrated in Reelfoot Lake's "Cranetown," where hundreds of herons, Egrets, Cormorants and Anhingas nest in the tops of the big cypress trees which grow in a couple of acres of waist-deep water. As early as mid-March, the Great Blue Herons begin to repair their old nests or to build new ones amid

a din of croaks and other raucous noises. Shortly thereafter, the other species converge and contribute their voices to the noisy din. The excitement they find in this mixed and vociferous aggregation is a great contrast to the lonely stalking of some minnow or froglet in the nearby swamps and quickly arouses within them the latent instinct of reproduction. From then on, thru April, May and June, "Cranetown" becomes a busy bird city and the annual cycle of reproduction has then been successfully accomplished.

There are many other examples that might be cited of sociable and therefore successful species, such as Goldfinches, Field Sparrows, Towhees, Cardinals, Bluebirds, Bobolinks and other species. In each of these species we find sociability, emanating from winter flocking, to be a prominent characteristic, with the result that they maintain themselves among our most common birds. Among other of our common birds are those which migrate southward and whose winter habits we are not able to observe, but we do know that in their winter territory such species as the swallows, buntings and others associate together during their period of sojourn.

'Tis a poor rule that has no exceptions, so let us look for an explanation of why the unsociable Mockingbird and the Carolina Wren manage to hold their goodly numbers. The Mockingbird is prone to establish and hold his territory throughout the whole year about some farmstead or suburban home. For winter company he recognizes as his good friends the resident human beings, as well as the farmstock, chickens, sundry birds, dogs and even the cat which he no doubt takes pride in being able to evade. He is, therefore, not without social stimulus. When he regains his voice in late winter, he becomes one of those eminently self-satisfied artists of the musical world and happy to begin the raising of new broods of progeny.

The sprightly Carolina Wren, by reason of his happy propensity for singing during every month of the year, thus becomes his own source of sociability and so stimulates himself that he can hardly wait for spring to come before starting the first nest for one of several broods to follow.

It is probably true that there is no such thing as an entirely unsociable bird, for even those which are encountered only in singles or in pairs derive more or less pleasure from the presence of other species. We know that a number of species will gather together in winter to form mixed flocks for protection from predators, for food finding and for sociability. But these flocks move along too rapidly for the Phoebe, the Hermit Thrush, the Winter Wren and others so these slow-pokes become the relatively unsociable species of the winter woods.

Were it not for the high period of spring song that comes in April and May from happy returning migrants and transients, as well as from winter sojourners which by now are ready to tune in on the cycle of spring, no doubt nesting and mating activities would be delayed or perhaps would not develop at all. But calls and song at this season permit every male to announce and advertise himself with such insistence and self-reliance that the presumably more passive females become willing to mate and take on the joys as well as the drudgery of raising a brood or broods. Among many of our small birds, the nearly two weeks of incubation is done entirely by the female. To relieve the monotony of her assignment, the male spends quite a bit of time singing from some nearby tree-top to let her know that he will be on hand when the time comes to feed the nestlings. I know of one case where a female Towhee deserted the eggs upon which she had begun to incubate when her mate was shot by a small boy. I suspect this could be the usual result rather than an exception.

A large percentage of our species may be regarded as rare or very rare, even over their whole breeding range, and these we regard as unsuccessful species. Some of these, like the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the Swallow-tailed Kite and the Bachman's Warbler are on the verge of extinction. These and many other of our rare birds are prone to keep their own company. The chance for their getting mates at the beginning of the season is less favorable than of sociable, songful or abundant species; nesting gets a late start and if the first nest results in failure, they often do not try again. This is unusually true of hawks, owls and vultures, none of which are sociably inclined.

The woodpecker family is a group which seems never able to become abundant, with the possible exception of the sociable little Downy. Individuals of this group are so absorbed with the task of satisfying their appetite that they have little or no time for sociability. Perhaps woodpeckers were capable of song during some early stage of evolution but have lost it along the way. Only the Flicker expresses himself in song but his vocal efforts, while cheerful, could never win a place in competition.

And what is the effect of non-sociability upon the deportment of the bird? Such species as the Cuckoo, the Phoebe, the Wood Pewee, and the Green Heron, feel no call to keep up with the passing throng. There is no need for them to be vivacious or overly active for theirs is a very small world and they settle themselves down to such a hum-drum existence as to appear to be the mental dunces of the avian world.

For comparison, let us consider that loquacious and sociable fellow, the Common Crow. During most of the year, Crows associate in boisterous flocks. They countenance no laggards and whether they are bedeviling a hapless owl or just playing a game of devil-take-the-hindmost, they keep mentally alert to all about them. Their voices may be heard any day in the year, and they have perhaps the largest "vocabulary" of any native bird. What then is the effect of these expressions of sociability? Simply, that the Crow is generally regarded as the most intelligent and quick-witted of our birds and, despite his large size, he maintains his status of being one of our common, and therefore a successful, species.

In closing, I would like to say that I hope I have awakened the reader's interest by some of the examples I have cited and that he will be on the lookout to develop this subject further as a part of his bird study program.

2112 WOODLAWN DR., NASHVILLE 12, TENN. June 1959.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.—As part of a study of the shorebird population on the Florida Gulf coast, a large number of Short-billed Dowitchers, Semipalmated Plovers, Dunlins, and lesser numbers of other waders were trapped, banded and color-dyed in spring, 1959. Birds caught in May were dyed a vivid golden color which is known to have remained unaltered after at least one month on a Dowitcher. Birds trapped in June were dyed scarlet, though dyed birds seen two weeks later were only pinkish in hue. All birds dyed were presumed to be in northward migration. Other colors will be used in the fall, 1959.

It is earnestly requested that anyone observing such colored shorebirds please communicate promptly with the undersigned, stating color, species, and date and location of observation.

HORACE LOFTIN, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

THE 1959 SPRING FIELD DAYS

By T. O. S. Members

Six chapters and those present at the State annual Meeting participated in the fourteenth annual Spring Field Days. The Nashville Chapter served as host for the Annual Meeting. This was the fourth highest count of the fourteen and all of the other higher counts had more chapters participating. Also on all of the higher counts the Reelfoot Lake area was covered. Thirteen species were represented by a single individual and twenty-two additional species were reported from only one area. Two species, the Horned Grebe and the Western Meadowlark, appear on the list for the first time. Forty-nine species appear on all seven lists. Of the thirty-six warblers reported only six—Black-and-white Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Hooded Warbler and American Redstart—occurred on all the lists.

Numbers of individuals were reported in all instances except the Nashville list where "C" is used to indicate "common" for several of the more abundant species. Species numbers accompanied by an asterisk (*) are commented upon by the compilers of the appropriate area.

MEMPHIS.—The April outing, at Reelfoot Lake on April 18-19 was too early and the May outing at Shelby Forest Park on May 10 was too late for a big list. Actually any date was not exceptional since the migration was poor and the chapter has discontinued going to a now radically changed Lakeview. The list is predominantly a Shelby Forest list, no individuals elsewhere being included unless the species was not found there, in which case counts elsewhere are shown in parentheses.

BEN B. COFFEY, JR., 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis 7.

NASHVILLE.—The count in the vicinity of Nashville was made over a three day period, May 1, 2 and 3, 1959, by T. O. S. members and guests attending the annual meeting. The weather was fair and the temperature normal for the season.

ALBERT F. GANIER, 2112 Woodlawn Dr., Nashville 12.

CHATTANOOGA.—Spring Census was made in an area just slightly larger than the usual Christmas count area, on April 25, by the following members of the chapter: Leo Acuff, Mr. and Mrs. T. Stanley Barr, Dr. W. K. Butts, Mr. and Mrs. Rock L. Comstock, Miss Gladys Conner, Mrs. Hugh Crownover, Miss Shirley Crownover, Mrs. J. S. Hall, Garry Jones, Mrs. Joe Parker, Mrs. C. F. Prestridge, Mrs. Henry L. Sliger, Miss Ginger Sliger, James W. Shaw, and guest, David Scott.

The following species were recorded for the first time on the local spring census: Bank Swallow, Solitary Vireo, Blue-winged and Orange-crowned Warblers. A buteo that was evidently a piebald Red-tailed Hawk was also observed. Rock L. Comstock was the compiler.

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

KNOXVILLE.—The Spring Field Day, Harry Ijams Day, was held in Knox County on April 26. The area was enlarged this year to cover the entire county; this was done to include a greater variety of habitats and because so much of the area previously used is occupied by the city of Knoxville. Because of the larger area, and its thorough coverage by a high number of observers, a record number of 151 species was found; last year's count, a previous record, included 139 species.

Conditions of the count: April 26, 1959, 4 a.m. to 8 p.m.; 40 observers in 13 parties; Knox County; partly cloudy to clear; temp. 60-80°F., wind 2-20 m.p.h.

TABULAR RECORDS OF SPRING FIELD DAYS

SPECIES	Memphis 5-10	Nashville 5-1, 2 & 3	Chattanooga 4-25	Knoxville 4-26	Greeneville 5-2	Kingsport 5-10	Elizabethton 4-25
Common Loon							1
Horned Grebe				1*			
Pied-billed Grebe		1	5	7			3
Great Blue Heron		1		2	1	2	1
Green Heron		6		9	6	4	7
Little Blue Heron	(3)						
B.-Cr. Night Heron		80					
Least Bittern				1*			
American Bittern		1					
Canada Goose					9		
Mallard		2			1	6	7
Gadwall				1			
Blue-winged Teal		10	19	46	4	2	7
American Widgeon					1		11
Wood Duck	1	2		12	1	6	13
Ring-nk. Duck							2
Lesser Scaup	1	43	12	420		3	9
Bufflehead							3
Ruddy Duck		1		11	1		
Hooded Merganser							6
Turkey Vulture	4	18	1	19	17	22	8
Black Vulture	2	9		5	2	1	1
Mississippi Kite	4						
Sharp-sh. Hawk				2			
Cooper's Hawk				5	1	1	3
Red-tailed Hawk	(1)	3	2	1	1	1	1
Red-shld. Hawk		1		1			
Broad-winged Hawk	1	3		4		1	6
Marsh Hawk		1					
Osprey		1		2	1		3
Sparrow Hawk	(1)	5	5	12	2	2	1
Ruffed Grouse						2	1
Bobwhite	12	35	9	57	20	7	15
Sora				5	2		
American Coot		16	91	3	2	1	
Semip. Plover		2					
Killdeer	(1)	26	20	44	14	7	14
Amer. Woodcock		1					
Common Snipe		3		22	22		9
Spotted Sandpiper		12	1	25	3	7	10

Solitary Sandpiper	(1)	8	1	51	1		5
Gr. Yellowlegs				3	1		
Lesser Yellowlegs		2	30	12		1	
Pect. Sandpiper				6			
Least Sandpiper		2	1	1		4	
Herring Gull		1		1			
Ring-bld. Gull	(1)		9	9		1	
Common Tern				2*			
Forster's Tern				3*			
Rock Dove			27	78	45		7
Mourning Dove	7	50	70	340	100	25	39
Yel.-bld. Cuckoo	10	24		3	6	7	
Bl.-bld. Cuckoo		6				2	
Barn Owl				2*			
Screech Owl				1	1	1	1
Gr. Horned Owl		1		3		1	
Barred Owl	2	3		1			
Chuck-will's-widow		1	5	19	2	2	
Whip-poor-will		3		6	8		
Nighthawk	(11)	15	2	4	8	6	
Chimney Swift	3	87	52	270	117	39	69
R-th. Hummingbird	11	21	1	9	7	5	
Belted Kingfisher		9		8	2	5	9
Yel-sh. Flicker	(1)	27	14	58	35	9	38
Pil. Woodpecker	2	5		15	8	4	5
Red-bel. Woodpecker	10	30	6	24	10	4	
Red-hd. Woodpecker	(5)	4	7	6	12	2	
Hairy Woodpecker		6	1	3	2	1	1
Downy Woodpecker	5	38	6	22	20	3	9
E. Kingbird	(5)	20	6	53	28	12	8
Gr. Cr. Flycatcher	10	24	6	11	26	10	
E. Phoebe		12	5	32	23	9	11
Acadian Flycatcher	23	28		2		11	
Least Flycatcher		5					2
Wood Pewee	19	19	2	5	17	21	2
Ol.-sd. Flycatcher						1	
Horned Lark	(5)	7	4	13	4	6	2
Tree Swallow	(1)			5			2
Bank Swallow			4*				
Rough-wng. Swallow	(1)	11	12	70	12	11	12
Barn Swallow	(25)	21		53	32	7	14
Cliff Swallow		1	100			4	2
Purple Martin	(4)	13	43	210	40	14	12
Blue Jay	13	6	84	230	60	53	61
Common Crow	2	18	22	280	40	17	71
Fish Crow	1						
Car. Chickadee	16	32	18	135	34	7	22
Tufted Titmouse	35	31	24	120	31	20	57
Wh.-br. Nuthatch		4	6	4	3		
Red-br. Nuthatch				1	2		
House Wren		1		3	10	12	1
Bewick's Wren	1	22	2	12	8	1	1
Carolina Wren	21	30	19	195	24	25	47

L.-bld. Marsh Wren				1	1		
S.-bld. Marsh Wren				1*	1		
Mockingbird	1	C	41	500	53	30	59
Catbird	2	29	7	47	50	20	20
Brown Thrasher	11	23	16	65	45	33	61
Robin	4	29	52	270	59	39	88
Wood Thrush	34	28	27	130	36	38	14
Hermit Thrush				1		1	
Swainson's Thrush	6	41		3		14	
Gray-ch. Thrush	2	9					
Veery		3			1		
E. Bluebird	(4)	48	10	96	14	5	16
Bl.-gray Gnatcatcher	21	66	11	185	39	14	37
Ruby-cr. Kinglet		3		13			1
Cedar Waxwing	5	89	84	150	67	28	72
Loggerhead Shrike	(11)	7	1	9	2		
Starling	2	C	142	610	109	50	431
Wh.-eyed Vireo	25	31	11	72	15	18	22
Yel.-th. Vireo	2	19	8	17		10	8
Solitary Vireo		2	*	1	1		3
Philadelphia Vireo	1						1
Warbling Vireo	1	15		8		7	4
Bl.-and-wh. Warbler	1	17	4	65	14	20	21
Prothonotary Warbler	29	20		3	2		
Swainson's Warbler	2						
Worm-eating Warbler		4		16		12	4
Golden-winged Warbler				6			
Blue-winged Warbler		C	1*	1			
Tenn. Warbler	38	74		7		5	
Orange-cr. Warbler			1*				
Nashv. Warbler		11	1	4			
Parula Warbler	18	9		5		10	13
Yellow Warbler		17	12	53	23	14	93
Magnolia Warbler	4	8		5	2	6	
Cape May Warbler		15		1	2	1	
Bl.-th. Blue Warbler				5	11		1
Myrtle Warbler		36	9	120	12	2	10
Bl.-th. Green Warbler	6	11		16	6	10	2
Cerulean Warbler	18	39		39		24	6
Blackbur. Warbler	1	6		3	1	9	3
Yellow-th. Warbler	1	18	5	8	1	6	
Chestnut-sd. Warbler	6	14		5	4		4
Bay-br. Warbler	3	7			1	15	1
Blackpoll Warbler	1	54		4		3	
Pine Warbler			2	16		1	1
Prairie Warbler		14	8	88	1	7	8
Palm Warbler		35	8	12	2		1
Ovenbird	3	12	4	33	14	10	24
No. Waterthrush		3					
La. Waterthrush	1	31		7	4	11	4
Ky. Warbler	23	46		14		16	1
Conn. Warbler	(1)						
Yellowthroat	11	35	11	135	22	18	28

YL.-br. Chat	14	40	3	26	18	36	1
Hooded Warbler	14	20	1	26	1	12	9
Wilson's Warbler		1					
Canada Warbler	1	3			1	2	
Amer. Redstart	32	20	1	9	8	7	21
House Sparrow		C	66	110	50	54	157
Bobolink	(19)	2		19	5		
E. Meadowlark	2	90	87	240	126	33	65
W. Meadowlark				1*			
Redwg. Blackbird	10	93	128	430	42	53	25
Orchard Oriole	1	32	5	48	18	10	7
Balt. Oriole	(10)	9	1	2		3	
Rusty Blackbird					4		
Common Crackle	2	C	42	300	168	77	254
Br.-hd. Cowbird	75	C	24	160	114	28	36
Scarlet Tanager	(1)	17	1	22	3	18	7
Summer Tanager	26	49	3	32	30	16	
Cardinal	36	C	82	400	75	65	123
Rose-br. Grosbeak	4	28	3	5	7	5	5
Blue Grosbeak						2*	
Indigo Bunting	46	C	5	56	24	48	3
Painted Bunting	(3)						
Dickcissel	1	27		2			
Purple Finch				4			26
Amer. Goldfinch		88	42	360	44	30	191
Ruf.-sd. Towhee	1	42	41	240	62	34	64
Savannah Sparrow		5	9	5	1		1
Grasshopper Sparrow	(3)	11		26	14	10	8
Vesper Sparrow		1		1			1
Bachman's Sparrow				1		3	
Sl.-cl. Junco				2	2		1
Chipping Sparrow		50	18	90	27	8	33
Field Sparrow	(3)	70	18	170	63	20	47
Wh.-cr. Sparrow			1	21	33		13
Wh.-th. Sparrow		43	53	270	23	12	55
Lincoln's Sparrow		3					
Swamp Sparrow	1	1	1	11			2
Song Sparrow			12	200	23	28	118
TOTAL SPECIES	97	139	91	151	115	114	111
GRAND TOTAL SPECIES							186

The Horned Grebe, found by J. C. Howell, was twenty days later than any previous spring record here. Rare birds in this area in the spring were the Least Bittern (J. Hill), Common Terns (K. Dubke), Forster's Terns (J. T. Tanner), Barn Owl (K. Dubke), and Short-billed Marsh Wren (R. B. Hamilton).

The Western Meadowlark, a singing bird, was first found on a farm near Concord by K. Dubke and R. B. Hamilton on April 19. It was observed by others since then and three or four people found it on the Field Day. This is the first of this species reported from Knox County.

Several small to medium-sized flocks of Lesser Scaup were found, resulting in an unusually high count for that species. The large numbers reported for Mockingbirds, Cardinals, and other common birds reflect the number of parties in the field on this day. A year ago we found few Bluebirds, Phoebe's, and Robins because of the hard winter of 1958-9. This year the Phoebe's and Robins appeared to be almost back to normal, but the Bluebirds were still only about two-thirds of their usual relative numbers.

JAMES T. TANNER, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

GREENEVILLE.—The Spring Census covered our usual territory and a short trip toward Bald Mountain. May 2 was clear until late afternoon and the temperature ranged from 60-86°F.

Thirteen adults and eight children in 7 parties participated for various lengths of time totaling about 50 hours and 106 miles—16 on foot and 90 by car.

The Canada Geese and Ruddy Duck were observed by Mrs. J. B. White—the duck on Guinn's pond and the geese near by—one goose nesting. The Sora Rails and Greater Yellowlegs were reported by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nevius.

Members participating were Mr. and Mrs. Willis Clemens, Dr. and Mrs. Turner Clinard, Mrs. Chester Darnell (compiler), Mrs. Wilma Irvine, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nevius, Dr. and Mrs. Royal Spees and Mrs. J. B. White.

KINGSPORT.—The three night birds were heard by Thomas W. Finucane on Bays Mountain at 3:00 a.m. The Mallards were reported by Helen Harris. We consider the Blue Grosbeaks the most unusual species. They were seen by E. W. Gift. They have been regular visitors to the feeding station of Edward M. McMahan since April 26.

ANN H. SWTIZER, 1620 Fairridge Place, Kingsport.

ELIZABETHTON.—The usual area was covered, except Roan Mountain on the early date of April 25. The weather was fair with the temperature ranging from 44 to 74°F. The number of species listed was about average for the spring count. Because of the early date some species had not departed, which we frequently do not record when the count is conducted on a later date; however, other species had not arrived. No new species was added to our spring count list. Those participating in the count were Mrs. Earl Bashor, Mrs. F. W. Behrend, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Browning, Ed Davidson, James and Thomas W. Finucane, Lee R. Herndon, Mrs. Ruth D. Hughes, Roby D. May, Jr., and Frank Ward.

T. O. S. ANNUAL MEETING, 1959

The Tennessee Ornithological Society held its annual meeting May 1-3, 1959, at Nashville and vicinity.

Upon arrival on Friday afternoon members were urged to meet at the Children's Museum to register and for a general get-together. Members of the Nashville Chapter acted as guides through the Museum, after which light refreshments were served. Every one was particularly interested in the Bird Room which is beginning to take shape. This room is in memory of Dr. Harry Vaughn, known as the father of the museum and who was a most valued member of the TOS for many years. His wonderful collection of bird's nests will be one of the most interesting exhibits.

Saturday morning at 7:00 o'clock, members met at the Parthenon parking area and there decided between either of two field trips. The trip to Radnor Lake is especially good for warblers and water birds; the other trip to Buena Vista Marsh and Bushes' Lake is usually the best place for shore birds. This latter trip also included a visit to the Black-crowned Night Heron rookery.

At around 11:30 a.m. both groups met at The Two Jays Sanctuary where they ate lunch and had the afternoon to ramble over the trails and study the flowers as well as the birds in the 63 acres of woodland on the banks of the South Harpeth River.

The Board of Directors Meeting was held at the cabin of Two Jays, beginning at 1:30 p.m. There the business of the society was transacted.

The Auditing Committee found the Treasurer's report in fine shape and a detailed accounting was made by the treasurer, Mr. Finucane.

The Nominating Committee with Mrs. Monroe as chairman presented the following slate of officers which were accepted unanimously:

President	Mr. Paul S. Pardue
Vice-President for East Tennessee	Mr. David Highbaugh
Vice-President for Middle Tennessee	Mr. Ralph Dunkel
Vice-President for West Tennessee	Miss Mary Davant
Secretary	Mrs. H. C. Garlinghouse
Treasurer	Mr. Thomas W. Finucane
Curator	Mr. A. F. Ganier
Editor	Dr. Lee R. Herndon
Director-at-large, East Tennessee	Mrs. E. M. West
Director-at-large, Middle Tennessee	Mr. John Ogden
Director-at-large, West Tennessee	Mr. L. D. Thompson

There was an interesting discussion of the deadly effects of broadcasting insecticides on mammals and birds. It was decided that after Dr. Peters' talk on the subject that a proper resolution be made stating the feeling of the society on the subject.

Mr. Ganier offered to assume the responsibility of revising the Distributional List of Birds of Tennessee making it conform to the A. O. U. check list and possibly leaving out subspecies entirely.

Appreciation was expressed to Mr. Ruhr for the great success of the News Letter. It was decided that the new president carry it on with the help of Mr. Ruhr in getting it printed and submitted to the editor for inclusion with each issue of the MIGRANT.

Mr. Pardue brought up the subject of the National Audubon Societies Model Bird Law which would place all birds on the protected list with the exception of the House Sparrow, Starling and Crow. Mr. Ganier thought the most pressing need, just now, is to have the Turkey Vulture put on the protected list. Mr. Ruhr thought that we could do the most good by having a committee of TOS members meeting and consulting with the Game and Fish Commission since state control is vested in that body. A motion was passed to this effect.

Mr. Ganier read a letter from the Wilson Club stating their desire to have their 1960 meeting in Gatlinburg. The Knoxville Chapter had already accepted the responsibility to act as host with the Smoky Mountain National Park. The meeting is to be held the first week in May and it was decided that the TOS have its business meeting at this time also.

Mr. Finucane was complimented for his work as coordinator of the hawk count and he was asked to carry on for another year.

Mrs. Coffey suggested that a roster of membership be prepared by the secretary. Mr. Hightaugh also brought up the advisability of having addressograph plates prepared. Mr. Shreiber moved that both of these matters be left up to the discretion of the president and secretary.

Saturday evening dinner was served at the Highland Crest Restaurant after which Dr. Harold Peters gave a most enlightening talk on the Hazards of Broadcasting Toxic Insecticides. He brought out the danger not only to birds and small mammals but also to human beings. He suggested that we as a society take a definite stand and do all in our power to halt the unnecessary use of the pesticides which are being manufactured with more and more potency.

Sunday morning field trips were taken to Radnor Lake and vicinity. The trip to the marshes was discouraged because of the poor results of the previous day in that area. We met for dinner at Rand Hall at Vanderbilt, after which there was a short business meeting where matters brought up in the Directors Meeting were presented and accepted by the society.

The Resolutions Committee presented the following suggestions:

1. Expression of thanks to the Nashville Chapter as host for the 1959 meeting.

2. A vote of appreciation to the officers of the society.

3. Appreciation to Mr. Ruhr for his excellent guidance and execution of the "News Letter."

4. That the TOS go on record as definitely opposed to the broadcast pest control methods.

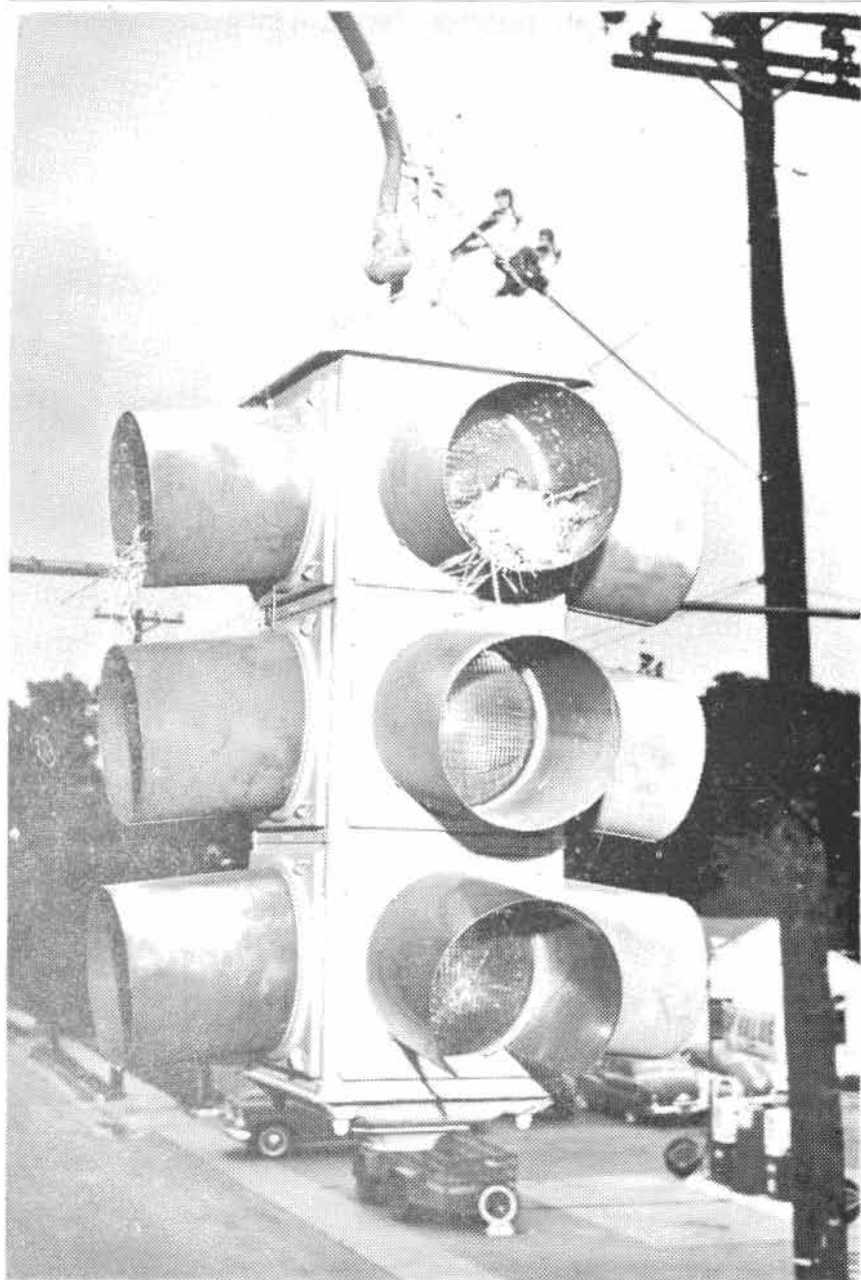
The composite list of birds found during the two day period was 139, which was the largest count ever recorded for this area.

RUTH CASTLES, Secretary, 7-B Forrest Hills Apt., Hillsboro Rd., Nashville 12.

A TWICE-USED CROW'S NEST.—I have examined many nests of the Common Crow, but not until this year have I ever found them to use an old nest. This is probably because of the fact that the birds use a thick lining of soft materials which hold dampness and cause decay of the interior, thus providing an unsanitary foundation for a new nest and a harboring place for insects. In the early spring of 1958, a pair of crows took up quarters on the 25-acre grounds of Belle Meade mansion in the western suburbs of Nashville. They built a nest high up in one of a clump of cedar trees and in due time fledged their young. During incubation and while the young were in the nest, the parent birds were vociferous in their protests when I was in the vicinity, as I often was while adding young trees to the Belle Meade arboretum. This year, the birds made no audible protests, so I think that the raucous member of the pair must have been succeeded by another individual of different temperament. In fact, I did not know that the nest had again been put into use in 1959, until on May 17, when the Nashville T. O. S. chapter was looking over the grounds, we espied two or more young sitting on the edge of the nest and nearly ready to make their first flight.

The area around and for a mile westward has now been built up with new homes, and this remnant of tree-filled lawn must seem like an oasis to the crows.

ALBERT F. GANIER, Nashville 12.



LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING.—A pair of Purple Martins keep a close watch on their family. This is one of two families living in a street signal at Navy Road and Church in Millington. Light, Gas and Water Division crews have cleaned out many lights where they found nests before permanent residency was established.

C. E. WILMETH, President, Memphis Chapter, 606 So. Graham St., Memphis 11.

COMMON GRACKLES, WHITE FEATHERS IN PLUMAGE.—A total of ten thousand Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) have been closely examined by me over a period of ten years. Five thousand of these were banded and five thousand others were found dead at winter roosts. White feathers occurred in the plumage of thirty-five of these birds, most often on the head. Eighteen birds were so marked. The most striking bird being a large green-headed male in the spring of 1959. This bird had extensive white over the entire head in large patches that involved the nape, chin, throat, auriculars and cheeks. Two birds in 1954 had white patches about the face and chin. The balance of the eighteen had profusely scattered small "dots" over the head due to the small feathers in this area. Two interesting birds had circles of bright "dots" surrounding the eyes. Care was taken to see that birds had not come in contact with foreign matter that would have caused the discoloration of the feathers. Only three birds had white feathers in the wings; two with outer primaries white and one with white wing patches. White tail feathers were noted in four of these birds, two with outer tail feathers on one side and one with both outer tail feathers white. A very unusually marked Common Grackle had all the tail feathers white at the base and presented a large noticeable "V" upon taking flight. A bird banded last week had a wide gray-white band across the center of the tail, but this was a young bird not fully plumaged. A white feather was noted in the under tail coverts of one bird. The body feathers, including the back, of these birds, being very small, an occasional white feather could have been overlooked.

An albino Common Grackle spent the month of January 1956 on the President's Island roost that numbered into the hundred thousands. Several times, light colored Parakeets, that followed the birds to roost, have been observed. A Red-crowned Parrot was recaptured at this roost, having escaped several miles away. These could be mistaken for "Blackbirds" on a large roost if not examined closely.

Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) examined totaled four thousand. Two thousand seven hundred banded and the balance found dead at winter roosts over a period of ten years. This species has much less occurrence of white feathers in the plumage. Five birds were thus marked. One had a white feather in the under tail coverts. In 1957 one bird had a fully white tail, one had a white tail feather in the center, on the nape and bend of the wing (epaulette), one had a white tail feather in the center only. A Starling was examined on April 5, 1959, that had died on the roost at Elmwood. This bird had white wings and a white tail. In the fall of 1956 a Common Grackle was banded that had white toe nails on the center toe of each foot. A Blue Jay with a white toe nail was banded at this season. No white feathers were noted in the plumage of the following birds banded by me: Blue Jays, 425; Brown Thrashers, 350; Robins, 150 (plus 500 found dead at winter roosts); Cardinals, 525; Slate-colored Juncos, 125; White-throated Sparrows and the balance of eleven thousand birds of various species banded by me. However, I often join the Ben B. Coffeys, Jr., in Chimney Swift banding operations and have noted at least two birds with white primaries. I believe white primaries occur in swifts with the same frequency as in the Common Grackle but can only speculate on this. Several Common Grackles have been banded that had light blue irises but no bird examined had pink irises.

See THE MIGRANT 30, 5, 1959, "An Albino Grackle and a Discussion of Albinism" by Harry C. Yeatman.

OLIVER F. IRVINE, 1789 Glenview Ave., Memphis 14.

A WESTERN MEADOWLARK IN KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE.—

While looking for Bobolinks and Dickcissels in the southwest corner of Knox County, Bob Hamilton heard what he thought to be a Western Meadowlark. After he and Kenneth Dubke followed the bird some distance, they were able to observe it singing atop a fence post. They watched it some time and were able to make a positive identification.

In order that more people would be able to observe and therefore clinch the identification, the Knoxville Chapter's Rare Bird Alert was brought into action.

The bird was first observed on Sunday, April 19th, by Mr. Hamilton. On the following Thursday, April 23, I went to the designated field and spent some time listening but could hear nothing that resembled the Western Meadowlark's song. Returning to the field that afternoon about 4:00, I again listened in vain. I then walked eastward along the railroad right-of-way to a point where I would be able to see the farmland on the opposite side near Fort Loudon Lake. After a few minutes I began to hear a single call note that sounded like the whistle of a Quail. At first there was almost a minute lapse between notes but after each call the time between was shorter until it ended this and began singing a beautiful warbling song, not unlike that of a Baltimore Oriole. After repeating the song several times it became quiet for about twenty minutes. Again it began in the same way as before with the whistled call notes set at shorter and shorter intervals until there was hardly more than two seconds between them and then it started singing the warbling song. The song was bold and clear and carried quite a distance. I walked over to the bird, about a quarter of a mile away, and was able to watch him from about fifty feet through 7 x 35 binoculars while he repeated the whole song beginning as before with the call notes.

On the day of our annual Spring census, April 26, the Western Meadowlark was observed by Dr. Joseph Howell, Berney and Audrey Kaiman, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frister (visiting the Kaimans from Wisconsin), Kenneth Dubke and Ralph Bullard. Mr. Frister is Past President of the Wisconsin Ornithological Society.

There were no observations made the following week due to the members being in Nashville for the State TOS Meeting. During the successive weeks Bob Hamilton made several trips to try to determine if the bird was nesting. During the entire period of observation, no Eastern Meadowlark was heard singing in or near the field in which the Western Meadowlark had taken up residence.

On May 23, both male and female Meadowlark were observed closely. The male was identified as the Western and the female Eastern by Mr. Hamilton. He is sure he saw a difference in the flight of the two birds, the male having a more fluttering wingbeat. He was able to notice the difference in the male's coloration also. The yellow much deeper with a more narrow crescent at the throat and the crown stripes streaked with greyish brown.

Bob has compiled some interesting notes on the actions of these birds. He heard the male sing sixty times between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. on one occasion. He has records showing the number of 'chuck' calls the male made during several hours of observation.

According to our observations, this is the first 'probable nesting' record East of Memphis for this species. At the time I received this information from Mr. Hamilton, June 14, no actual nest had been found.

PAUL S. PARDUE, 6020 Fountain Drive, Knoxville 18, Tenn.

A WHIP-POOR-WILL FORAY.—Late in the afternoon of April 24, 1959, Ed Davidson, Ray Garrison, Roby May, Frank Ward and the writer left Elizabethton in time to arrive at South Holston Lake just before dark. Our destination was the south shore of the lake near the dam. We approached this area by driving along the road on the north side of the Holston Mountain in a northeasterly direction. Some rain had fallen in the area during the early afternoon and some scattered clouds hung over us during the evening. The full moon was due to rise shortly after dark but being on the north side of the mountain it was not until sometime later that we were able to see it. Just a little after dusk at 8:10 p.m. the first Whip-poor-will began to sing. Then we decided it was time to start our return trip and to stop and listen, at least every half mile or more frequently if the terrain warranted it.

At each stop a few minutes were spent listening and recording the singing Whip-poor-wills within hearing. At most stops from one to five birds could be heard. For one stretch of about three miles no birds could be heard. During this period the moon was obliterated by a cloud for a short while. At one location, after the Whip-poor-wills began to sing again, two Barred Owl were heard singing in the general direction of Holston High Knob and at another stop a Screech Owl was heard singing in the distance but in the direction of lower altitude. On at least two occasions the Whip-poor-wills were so close to the road that we could hear the "chuck" preceding each song distinctly. Only one bird was actually seen. Its glistening red eyes were distinctly seen reflecting the light of the car from the edge of the road. We stopped about twenty feet from the bird, from which vantage point, the form of the bird could be distinctly discerned. After observing it as long as we desired, some members of our party got out of the car and started in the direction of the bird. It did not allow close approach but took off directly away from us then circled back and in our direction and vanished into the night.

Over the distance of sixteen miles, all of which was wooded on both sides of the road and along which there were no residences or man-made structures, we logged 56 Whip-poor-wills. The elevation of our course ranged from approximately 1700', or the level of South Holston Lake, to 2400' where we crossed the Holston Mountain to the south side.

I should like to propose that a similar census be taken by each Chapter of our TOS during the spring of 1960. I would suggest that the president appoint a coordinator, similar to what has been done for our fall hawk migrations, who would be responsible for setting the date or period during which the count is to be made, receiving, editing and preparing the manuscript for publication. Individuals as well as groups all over the state could participate in such a venture. Perhaps Chuck-will's-widow could be included or even our owl records could be boosted appreciably by recording them. Write your president and give him your views on the proposal. Perhaps your suggestions would be welcome material for the NEWSLETTER.

LEE R. HERNDON, 1533 Burgie Place, Elizabethton.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My association with the Tennessee Ornithological Society has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life. It is with humbleness and sincerity that I come to you to express my thanks for your confidence in me, by electing me your President for the coming year. I want to assure you I will do my best to carry out the program that was set forth forty-four years ago, when our founders saw the need for such a society and joined hands to create the TOS.

We are fortunate in TOS that our predecessors saw fit to set down rules and regulations to govern our actions in a manner that through the years only a minimum of changes have been necessary to fit them to our changing world. Our primary goal, established long ago, that of promoting bird study in Tennessee, is still eminent. It would be well to remember that another part of our original charter is "to act whenever necessary for the protection of the birds themselves," now that the indiscriminate use of toxic pesticides is presenting a hazard to our bird populations as well as all wildlife.

It will not be easy to take over the reins of TOS after having such superb leadership as we have experienced the past two years. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Gene Ruhr and thank him for giving his time and talents that our organization might profit.

As to the task ahead, I feel I have your entire cooperation. Also I am indebted to you for supplying me with a most able and efficient staff of officers. I am looking forward to meeting TOS members I do not know and will enjoy hearing from each of you individually. Sincerely,

PAUL S. PARDUE, Fountain Drive, Fountain City, Tenn.

Members of T. O. S. extend their deepest sympathy to Dr. and Mrs. Lee R. Herndon in the loss of their son, Bill, who passed away on July 21.

E. E. Davidson, Pres.
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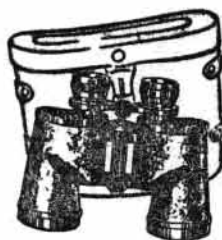
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