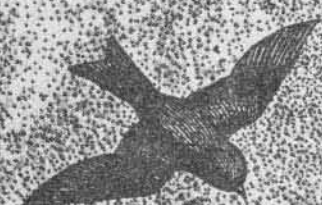


# THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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MARCH  
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## SNOWY OWL

An "alert" was set in motion, when on the evening of December 18, 1960 the Director of the Nashville Children's Museum, positively identified a Snowy Owl not one block from the Museum!

A local newspaper released the story. From then on numerous reports trickled in concerning its whereabouts. None of these bore fruit, until on Tuesday, January 10th, the Museum received a call from a Nashville grocer—who claimed to have the bird alive, at his home, neatly packaged in a cardboard box!

Being somewhat skeptical of such obvious absurdity an interrogational call was made to the "boastful" party. "How high did you say it stands?" "Oh, about 20 inches," "And it's all white?" "Sure is, except for some dark spots!"

There was little need to further press the issue. Three members of the Nashville Chapter (T.O.S.) including its current President, and one charter member President Emeritus, quickly "roped off" the area. While our friend was nervously untying the rope which held down the lid, I could not help noticing how small this box was! How in the world, I thought, could this mysterious monarch of the frozen North possibly be contained there-in. At last the rope fell limp to the floor. The lid sprang up just a little. Our friend hesitated for a moment, to caution us about this ferocious creature, that it was thirsty for blood (obviously his). Not being able to stand this suspense one more second, I reached over and with one felled-swoop replaced darkness with light!

The light was strong, black pupils quickly retracted. Brilliant yellow irises grew in size and intensity, then as with an explosion, the nictitating membrane momentarily clouded the startling beauty. With a defiant hiss, and a defensive snapping of its black bill, the displaced bird proclaimed its authenticity.

The bird was not white, but soot gray (from the city living), it was not ferocious, but docile. An examination of its breast bone indicated it had been a long time without proper food. With some further questioning, we found that the bird had been captured on Thursday, January 5th. Five days without proper food. It seems the bird was just "picked up" in an alley. How this was possible must remain somewhat of a mystery.

Our friend, firmly convinced, that a bird of such race occurrence was more than he cared to retain, was given to the Children's Museum.

Without further ado the owl was whisked off to a large cage at the Museum where for almost two days the bird would not eat, refusing: white rat, white mouse, and even a lemming-like-hamster, all alive!

There came a ray of hope however, during this trying time. A large rectangular pan was placed in the cage and a water-drip set up. From a concealed point I was to witness her (as I shall call it) immediate interest. Within minutes she was leaning over the water and commenced to drink for a duration of two and one-half minutes (about forty dips into the pan) she was parched!

At 3:00 p. m. Thursday, January 12th she killed and consumed her first meal in seven days, a Starling. Seventeen hours later she passed a pellet. The following is a feeding schedule recorded for 13 consecutive days:

No. days	Date	Feeding & Pellets	Food & Pellet remains	Hours Between Feeding & Pellets
1	Jan. 12	1st feeding	1 Starling	
2	Jan. 13	1st pellet	Starling remains	17 hrs. passed between 1st feeding and 1st pellet
3	Jan. 14	2nd feeding	1 Starling	46 hrs. between 1st & 2nd feeding
3	Jan. 14	3rd feeding	1 pigeon squab	4 hrs. between 2nd & 3rd feeding
4	Jan. 15	2nd pellet passed	Starling and squab remains	23½ hrs. between 1st & 2nd pellet
5	Jan. 16	4th feeding	adult pigeon	39 hrs. between 3rd & 4th feeding
6	Jan. 17	3rd pellet passed	adult pigeon remains	14 hrs. between 2nd & 3rd pellet
7	Jan. 18		Bird Content	
8	Jan. 19	5th feeding	adult pigeon	62 hrs. between 4th & 5th feeding
9	Jan. 20	4th pellet passed	adult pigeon remains	72 hrs. between 3rd & 4th pellet
10	Jan. 21		Bird Content	
11	Jan. 22	6th feeding	1 Starling	74 hrs. between 5th & 6th feeding
12	Jan. 23	7th feeding	1 adult pigeon	24 hrs. between 6th & 7th feeding
13	Jan. 24	5th & 6th pellet passed	1 Starling and 1 adult pigeon remains	103 hrs. between 4th, 5th, 6th pellets

The bird was kept alive and "well" at the Museum for 48 days! Arrangements were being made to ship the bird, via air to Goose Bay, Labrador when on the 45th day the bird suddenly showed no interest in eating, the 46th and 47th days showed a marked weakness in the bird.

On the 47th day two mice were consumed, and on the morning of the 48th day the owl died.

The bird was immediately turned over to the Vanderbilt University laboratories for autopsy.

There proved to be a wide spread fungus growth. (Generic Name *Aspergillus*) throughout the internal organs, notably the lungs. The owl apparently had been suffering from this disease (*Aspergillosis*) prior to her capture, perhaps this explains how she was caught! She fought gallantly to overcome her malady, for there were areas where the infection had become somewhat arrested. However, in the final analysis the disease proved stronger.



**Mr. Albert F. Ganier and Snowy Owl.**

Aspergillosis is by no means uncommon—pigeons it seems are prone to the infection, there are other cases of infection among captive penguins, poultry, caged birds, and one or more recorded cases among Snowy owls.

I am not overlooking the possibility that the bird might have contracted the infection from an infected pigeon, perhaps one it had killed and eaten while living free, in and about Nashville, or one given to her at the Museum. The latter seems less likely as the disease showed every indication of being long established.

ALAN R. MUNRO, Children's Museum, 724 Second Ave., So., Nashville 10.

## THE SEASON

MEMPHIS.—Late fall transients included 5 Black Terns, Sept. 24, 1960, at Booker, Ark., a Golden Plover there Dec. 3 (small previous flock last seen Oct. 1), and 6 Dowitchers (species?) there Dec. 3 & 4. An Avocet at Booker, Oct. 1, was the first ever recorded by a Memphis observer, short of the coast. An adult Bald Eagle was seen Nov. 19 at Saddle, Ark. (Helen & Henry Dinkelspiel) and Mar. 4, south of Norfolk, Ark. (Dr. W. L. Whittemore). An adult Pigeon Hawk was seen Oct. 23 near Melbourne, Ark. and a Harlan's Hawk (dark phase) Feb. 4 near Hazen, Ark. (U S 70 at Hwy 11). Only Short-eared Owls, 2, Booker, Dec. 17. A Common Crow Roost was apparently across the river in Missouri, near Reelfoot Lake, Dec. 18; 7,430 estimated on this side as we drove from Kentucky Bend to Tiptonville (BCs, Alice Smith). Robin roosts were 2,000 on Oct. 31, Hickory Flat, Miss. (left there) and Feb. 19, about 4,000 moving north from Frayser (Memphis),

no stop to look for other lines. House Wren, one, Jan. 6, Germantown, Mrs. Ed Carpenter and Mrs. Chas. Seahorn, Redheaded Woodpecker common, wintering locally, Memphis spots, and one area, Saddle, Ark. (HD & HD). Flocks of 30 to 41 Water Pipits at the Penal Farm, Jan. 28 and Feb. 11; highest, 115, Mar. 5, West Memphis, Ark. A male Common Yellowthroat was seen (Victor Julia, Chas. Wilmeth) Nov. 20, Booker, Ark. Western Meadowlark more common than usual in Crittenden County, Ark. Booker and north, Clarkedale, Marion, Horseshoe Lake (and enroute), and (usual) at Crawfordsville. Three singing, Feb. 19 (BCs, AS), old air base, Halls, Tenn. Four Tree Sparrows seen Jan. 22, Hardy, Ark. The Harris' Sparrow reappeared on the Memphis and Lonoke Counts. Mrs. Seahorn's first this year were two on Dec. 30. Lapland Lonspurs still low, almost absent at Penal Farm, but 1200 at Booker, Ark. Dec. 17. Smith's Longspur: no Tenn. records, missing at Hot Springs (1st time) Nov. 24 and Hope, Ark. Nov. 25; 7 at Texarkana, Nov. 26; 29 at Jonesboro airport, Jan. 21, and only 2 singles, Feb. 4, at Stuttgart. In Miss., only: 10 on Bruce Campbell Field, Jan. 2 (Mrs. Coffey, BC, AS) and 12 on Grenada airport, Feb. 5. At same sites, the Sprague's Pipit down to 1 or 2 or missing, except 7 at Texarkana airport and 10 on pastures 13 miles east of same. A total of one LeConte's Sparrow at all these fields.

Pinewood species were practically absent (5 trips, 5 areas including Chickasaw S.P. and Ben Carr pines, Pocahontas, Tenn.); 4 Pine Siskins, Nov. 25, between Narrows Dam and Murfreesboro, Ark.

Special search for shorebirds, Feb. 26; arrivals were noted only Mar. 5, Booker: Greater Yellowlegs 6, Lesser Yellowlegs 11, Pectoral Sandpiper 18, Golden Plover, 3. Purple Martin, late, 1 on Mar. 1, (James Lancaster, his box, Memphis); next report was one on Mar. 18 (1st by Speeds). Two Bachman's Sparrows singing, dusk, Mar. 11, Hickory Valley, Tenn. (BC & R. Demett Smith, Jr.)

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

NASHVILLE.—The fall migrations in Nashville, although not as long awaited as spring migrations, still produce their quota of interesting records. After the initial big wave this fall during the first few days of September, the build up of migrants continued at a steady and unexcitable rate until a peak was reached during the week end of the 24 and 25 of that month when an area wide count by the chapter produced 109 species. On this day, 9-25, was recorded the Orange-crowned Warbler, earliest ever recorded here in the fall (John C. Ogden). Following this peak there was a rapid decrease in the migration as only 38 species were found at 2Js on Oct. 2, after 68 had been recorded in the same area one week before.

Highlights of the fall season, other than those recorded in the Round Table notes, were: Upland Plovers, heard calling at nights while migrating on 9-7 and 9-8 (JCO); Dowitchers on 10-25 (Louis Farrell Jr.); Caspian Terns from 9-11 to 9-17 at Bush Lake (JCO et al); Western Kingbirds, 2 from 9-28 to 9-30 near Donelson, Tennessee (Alan Munro); Traill's Flycatcher, banded on 9-18 at Basin Springs (Katherine A. Goodpasture et al); and Bobolink on 9-8 near Ashland City, Tenn. (JCO, Albert F. Ganier).

Duck migration reached its peak in early November with flocks of several hundred birds at Bush and Radnor Lakes. Contrary to the usual practice, a much larger number of ducks than usual remained on Bush Lake through the first half of the winter. On almost all trips through December and the first half of January between 75 and 100 ducks of about 10 species could be seen including 2 species which don't often winter in Nashville,

the Oldsquaws and Greater Scaups. Common Goldeneyes were also more common this winter while Pied-billed Grebes, a usual winter resident, were absent from mid November till early March.

Highlights of the winter season other than those recorded in the Round Table section were: Blue Goose, one immature at Bush Lake from 11-7 till 12-12 (Henry E. Parmer); an adult Bald Eagle flying up the Cumberland River on 1-8 (HEP, JCO); winter records of a Least Sandpiper at Bush Lake from 11-25 till 1-4 (HEP), and of a Dunlin, which remained at a pond near Old Hickory Lake till 12-28 and probably the same bird seen on the lake on 2-4 (Laurence O. Trabue); Bonaparte's Gulls, a flock of approximately 115 at Old Hickory Dam on 11-27, 5 of which still remained on 1-2 (HEP et al), (first Nashville winter record); a Brewer's Blackbird at Bell's Bend on 2-10 (JCO); one Tree Sparrow on 2-18 near Basin Springs (KAG, Amelia R. Laskey); and the first Nashville record of the Lapland Longspur was one bird at Bush Lake farm on 12-31 (JCO). Several observers commented that Brown Thrashers were more common this winter; 3 were gotten on the Christmas Count and several others were seen for varying periods of time in different parts of town.

The beginnings of the spring migration were noted with the return of the Sharp-shinned Hawk and Horned Larks to their nesting territories at Basin Springs on 2-26 and 3-4 respectively (KAG). The first Woodcocks were on 2-18 when one was heard singing at dusk by Louis Farrell III near his home and one on the following day flushed at 2Js by Earl Bishop. On March 5, a Woodcock was heard singing at 2Js (EB, JCO). The return flight of Canada Geese occurred in the main on 2-12 when 5 different people reported seeing 6 different flocks in widely scattered areas totaling over 560 geese (JCO, KAG, EB, Harry C. Monk and Mary F. Holloway). The peak of the spring duck migration was on 3-1 and 3-2 and one highlight of this period was 46 Redheads on 2-28, an unusually large number for this species around Nashville (HEP).

The first Chipping Sparrow was on 3-4 (Mrs. H. Hodgson).

But the most remarkable series of incidents to happen was the extremely early arrival of 3 species possibly due to the unseasonably warm weather in February and March. On 2-25 a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seen at very close range crouched against a window trying to get warm following the passage of a cold front the previous night (E.W. Sallati). This is 55 days earlier than the recent average arrival time. Then on 3-12, Mrs. Katherine Goodpasture and Earl Bishop found both a Broad-winged Hawk and an Eastern Kingbird! These two birds were 31 and 33 days earlier than their recent average arrival dates respectively. It is records like these that make ornithology truly a fascinating vocation or avocation.

JOHN C. OGDEN, 515 Fairfax Avenue, Nashville 12.

LEBANON.—We have been intrigued by an over-wintering and apparently injured Brown Thrasher. He headquartered during the early part of the winter in the shrubs of the Boutons' back yard in Lebanon. He fed on the ground under and about the feeder but never on it. He was never seen to fly though he was observed at the Hobbs feeder six blocks away and at two other places about town. His crouching posture while feeding identified him. He remained at Boutons' to be counted in the Christmas census on January 2 but disappeared the next day.

January 28 was the third day of driving sleet and snow showers. At 9 o'clock that morning the Brown Thrasher appeared under our feeder here at Cabincroft, seven miles south of Lebanon. Had his instinct for southern

migration pulled him painfully over that length of frozen hills and hollows? He still fed in his characteristic crouching posture but flew to the branches of near-by trees and finally into the rambler rose clumps along the garden fence. He repeated this performance for a few mornings but was gone with the ice on February 3.

On February 26 the Brown Thrasher was back at the Bouton feeder, his power of flight improved and most of the crouch gone from his feeding posture. He was last seen on March 6. But, before then, the time had come for Thrashers to move north, even to arrive here. We can speculate that these incidents almost pinpoint the time at which instinct went into reverse for this poor bird and he started limping north. He made the seven miles north in two days' less time than he took for the same distance south. This may indicate, we fondly believe, that his strength is sufficiently restored to enable him to go successfully through the nesting season somewhere about here.

In-flight from the south increased the duck population on Old Hickory Lake refuge from an estimated 9,000 at the time of the census to an estimated 15,000 on March 15 when another survey was made. The actual in-flight has been greater than these figures indicate since 1,600 man-days of hunting on the lake resulted in the taking of 2,000 ducks. The in-flight included about 500 Wood Ducks, some of which will nest near the lake. All others are expected to be gone by the early days of April.

There are more Great Blue Herons on the lake than ever before. Twenty-two individuals have been counted in the refuge.

DIXON MERRITT, Route 6, Lebanon.

COOKEVILLE.—Winter finally came with a vengeance in mid-February with a full week of snow and the temperature ranged between 30° and 3°. Many birds returned to almost deserted feeders. Warmer days between Feb. 20 and Mar. 3 caused many buds to open, among them, plum and pears. After this came THE BLIZZARD on Mar. 4. It was short and mostly bluster but it gave us a light freeze and the eighth snow of the season, nevertheless enough to make the feeders attractive again.

Several chapter members (S. and M. McGee, C. H. and T. T.) had an excellent number and variety of winter birds in their back yards. The first Brown Thrasher of the season 2-25 in the Hollister yard; Meadowlarks 2-20 (12) and Robins 2-22 on the Tech. campus. Mourning Doves and Meadowlarks paired off 2-27. Flocks of Crows (500?), Grackles and/or Starlings (10,000?) were found by Tech. students about 10 mi. north of Cookeville. These boys are trying to trace the feeding range of the Crows in relation to their roosts.

By Mar. 1, Starlings were becoming scarce and Grackles were appearing in small flocks. With the increase in food available, these are likely to disappear completely from the Upper Cumberland area.

P. L. HOLLISTER, Biology Dept., Tenn. Tech., Cookeville.

CHATTANOOGA.—A winter very much in contrast to last is the report here. Early winter cold this season was not accompanied by snow, and since late January, temperatures have been absolutely Springish. So no snow—much less news from the feeder. The Evening Grosbeak has not its last year invasion, a fact which will probably raise no eyebrows around the State. Nor have we a single Pine Siskin. And the Purple Finch, so abundant last year, has been downright sparse in 1961. We have at hand just three reports on this species since January 1.



It has been an interesting winter for waterfowl. Benton Basham heralded the start with his discovery of the Oldsquaw off Harrison Bay State Park on the first day of the year. Here was an area first. All through January and into February, this species could be seen at different points along the shore of Chickamauga Lake. The five Mr. Basham noted on January 28 was probably the peak of the "invasion."

The area's first January (22) records of the Common Merganser and the Common Loon were brought in by Adele and Gene West.

On Sunday, March 12, eighteen members of the Chapter took part in a field trip to the Hiwassee Island State Waterfowl Refuge. A trip highlight—six Ring-necked Pheasants seen during the day. Mr. Samuel Rogers, District Game Biologist of the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission has this to say on the Pheasant at Hiwassee:

"Hiwassee Island . . . was the site of the last release made in this area. (Hamilton and surrounding counties). 422 pheasants were placed on Hiwassee Island on November 5, 1959. The water surrounding the island did not keep these birds from moving. A few days after release they began to fly from the island. There are very few birds on the island at present." Incidentally, one of the six pheasants left the Island when flushed on the field trip.

On November 4, Benton Basham reported this same species in the Sequatchie Valley near Dunlap, no doubt the remnant of an earlier release in that section.

The Barn Owls reported by Ralph Bullard and Kenneth Dubke on the Christmas Census bears a bit more of a note here for it was our area's first recorded report on this species. The roost for these birds was the underside of a bridge on a heavily-travelled city street in Chattanooga—within easy range of a large city garbage dump. Several club members have since reported venturing to this roost for a view of these unusual birds.

Arnold Aslinger, Refuge Manager on Hiwassee Island tells of Bald Eagles seen on the Refuge on 1/8 and 1/16, three individuals on one of these days, two on the other. A week after this, Adele West also identified this very uncommon bird.

The waterfowl inventories conducted by the Refuge staff through the winter show positively that the Blue Goose can now be classified as a winter resident around here. Between 10 and 20 individuals were seen during five separate counts conducted over a span of 2 and a half months. The Refuge records show the duck populations down somewhat this season in contrast to other recent years, especially the Black Duck and the Mallard.

Perhaps again the Sandhill Crane caused the most excitement when it was seen flying overhead by members of the field party of March 12 who were on the way home from Hiwassee Island.

ROCK L. COMSTOCK, JR., 1624 S. Rugby Place, Chattanooga 11.

KNOXVILLE.—Three rare Fall records were made last year, 1960, as follows: a Lincoln's Sparrow seen on September 26 by Joseph C. Howell, a Short-eared Owl on November 24 (see beyond), and a Bewick's Wren seen on November 26 by John Elson. The Short-eared Owl was shot by a hunter on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, on a farm in southeastern Knox County. It was mounted and placed on exhibit in a local sporting goods shop, where it was examined and identified by James T. Tanner. It was an unusually white bird, being almost completely white below. This is the second record of a Short-eared Owl in Knox County, the first having been made in October 1930.

The winter season began seriously with snow and colder than average weather in December, followed by a comparatively warm and dry January. Heavy rains came in February with warm weather in late February and early March so that vegetation in mid-March is developing faster than normal.

Ducks have been relatively scarce in Knox County this winter. On March 5 the Knoxville Chapter of the T. O. S. made a field trip to Paint Rock Refuge on the Tennessee River below Loudon. About 400 Canada Geese were seen, but few ducks were present. Hugh Johnson, the wildlife agent for the area, said that the sloughs and backwaters had frozen over early in the winter and that there had been very few ducks in the area since then.

Common Snipe have been more numerous in Knox County than in several years; 83 individuals were counted on the Christmas Count on January 2 and on February 7 about 70 were found in one small area. Woodcock were singing and performing near Mary Enloe's home on the outskirts of Knoxville between February 17 and March 2, with five being the highest count of individuals at any one time. Several people visited the place to hear the performance.

Two large Starling roosts were established in or near Knoxville. The smaller was underneath the Gay Street bridge which crosses the Tennessee River, the birds roosting on the girders of the bridge. About three miles west of Knoxville, near Rocky Hill School, at least 10,000 Starlings roosted in a small pine thicket. Cowbirds, Grackles, and Rusty Blackbirds also utilized this roost. The birds poured into the roost area so rapidly that it was never possible to make a reasonable estimate of the numbers. Several large winter roosts of Crows were established in Blount County; they apparently broke up during the first week in March.

A flock of 30 Pipits was seen on January 2; these birds are not observed here every winter. Winter Wrens have been reported more regularly than in previous winters. Red-breasted Nuthatches have been absent this winter, and Phoebe, Purple Finches, and White-crowned Sparrows have been scarcer than usual. There have been no records of Evening Grosbeaks or of Pine Siskins around Knoxville.

JAMES T. TANNER, Dept. of Zoology, U. T., Knoxville.

GREENEVILLE.—In our report this time there is a notable scarcity of certain species quite common in this area during the winter months. "No Purple Finches so far this winter" is the lament of several of our members. One large flock was reported recently, feeding in a budding Elm tree in the yard of the Nevius home. Usually the Clinards enjoy many Finches and Cedar Waxwings in the shrubs around their home—this year—none. Marjorie Clemens reported a large flock of Waxwings moving through her yard March 4—they appeared to be in a hurry, stopping only a few minutes. She reports no Mockingbirds and very few Robins. She has had more Rufus-sided Towhees than usual around her home and on the unusual side—a Brown Thrasher has been eating at the feeders all winter.

Birders are always hoping to see something different—Helen White did one day when she looked out—a Starling with white tail and white lower mandible feeding in her yard.

March 5, three members went "duck hunting" for about three hours during the morning. Being night-duty nurses, they didn't feel up to doing too much hiking, and really did not see many ducks. Several were flying

over Davy Crockett Lake, too far up to identify and a few Mallards, but they did see three Herring Gulls on the lake in the same place three were seen on a previous trip. They also saw three Canada Geese and two Blue Geese on a small lake in the same vicinity. A record was kept of all species observed that morning—much to their surprise, their 'count' amounted to 34 species in less than three hours of just casual looking. (C. Christiansen, G. Horton and E. Darnell).

Two previous records of Blue Geese in Greene County are—in 1952 in a corn field along Roaring Fork Creek 25 were feeding and on Lick Creek near Mohawk Apr. 2, 1956 7 were observed. (RN).

Mar. 17—A Brown Thrasher and a Vesper Sparrow were seen by Richard Nevius. He also reports larger numbers of Starlings than usual this winter, and large flocks of Common Grackles not usually present during the winter months. Migrating shore birds were heard flying over the lowlands along the creeks near the Nevius home about the 10th of March.

No Evening Grosbeaks have been reported in this area this season.

ELVA DARNELL, Rt. 4, Greeneville.

KINGSPORT.—After a hot and humid September with no rain we had a warm October with our first heavy frost delayed until the first week in November. For the third fall no shore birds were observed. We recorded one flight of hawks over Kingsport, 124 seen by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Smith on Sept. 24. Pied-billed Grebes, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, and White-throated Sparrows arrived early. Nighthawks, Catbirds and Brown Thrashers stayed late with Nov. 3 as the last date for a thrasher. The last three weeks of November were warm with temperatures as high as 68° at noon. We first recorded Common Loon on Nov. 15 and again Nov. 21 with Pintails. The first ice appeared on the ponds Dec. 1. By the first week of December to our water birds we added Horned Grebe, Mallard, Coot and Ring-billed Gulls. The second week of December brought the first snow and a low of 7°. By the last week of December we had Red-throated Loons, about 200 Mallards with 150 Black Ducks, a few Redheads, Goldeneye, a pair of Oldsquaw with an immature, and a pair of Hooded Mergansers.

For the next six weeks we had many light snows and unusually heavy rains. The ducks dwindled to a few Black Ducks, Lesser Scaup and Goldeneye, augmented occasionally by Gadwall. January 26 we had a very heavy sleet during the night. The next morning at my feeders I saw many birds dragging ice coated tails. One Song Sparrow was tail-less; I supposed his feathers were frozen to his perch and pulled out in his attempt to fly. The snows continued during the first two weeks of February.

But by Lincoln's Birthday the Cardinals, Purple Finches, Towhees, Field Sparrows and Song Sparrows were singing, and flocks of Robins, which had been missing during the winter, appeared again on the lawns. On Feb. 26 Howard Young saw a Woodcock scratching in the leaves of his back yard; this was, perhaps, our most unexpected observation of the season. By the first of March the temperature was up to 65° at noon. The wintering ducks on the lakes had been joined by Wood Ducks, Canvasback, Bufflehead and Common Mergansers. Mr. and Mrs. J. Winston Smith saw a flock of 10 Canada Geese on March 5.

To generalize about bird populations is always difficult, and not always profitable, but I shall venture a few conclusions about the past season. Although we had the usual species of water birds in the winter the numbers were low. Wood Duck are, perhaps, increasing, as in the past few years

we have seen them more frequently in several different areas over longer periods of the year. Noticeably scarce this past season were Black Vultures, Carolina Wrens, Cedar Waxwings, and White-crowned Sparrows.

ANN HARNEY SWITZER, 1620 Fairidge Place, Kingsport.

BRISTOL.—Increased interest as indicated by good attendance at meetings has characterized the club recently. Most observations have been at feeders and from roadside by car.

On Mar. 1 and 2 a King Rail was observed by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Miller. The bird was bantam hen size, was wading and feeding in a swampy area near Bristol. Both days the bird was observed late in the afternoon with the following characteristic features observed: breast, reddish brown; indistinctly brown striped back; horizontal stripes on belly; short tail sticking up and white under tail coverts; legs long and bill about  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " long. Its call, after dusk—a rapid kic-kic-kic. Trips on the two succeeding days revealed a large cat patrolling the area but no evidence of the rail.

Robert Quillen is collecting data on a Horned Lark's nest in the Bluff City area. A flock of Purple Martins, not common in the area, has been present for several days and a non-member is rushing work on an apartment house for them.

Evening Grosbeaks have been absent this winter in contrast to their abundance during the 1959-60 season.

MRS. HERBERT MILLER, 801 Piedmont St., Bristol, Va.

ELIZABETHTON.—On all week-ends during Sept. and the first one in Oct. Operation Recovery was carried on at the same locations as during 1959. Our own group assisted by personnel from the Bristol, Greeneville and Chattanooga chapters banded 1302, removed and released 157 repeats and six returns representing a total of 60 species. Netting and banding was continued on a reduced scale on all favorable week-ends during the winter. For the calendar year of 1960 we banded 3,003 birds of 87 species. Some of the rarer birds banded were: Bicknell's Thrush, 1; Connecticut Warbler, 1; Dickcissel, 4; Lincoln's Sparrow, 15. The most abundant species were: Indigo Bunting, 830; Song Sparrow, 285; White-throated Sparrow, 260; American Goldfinch, 241; Cardinal, 125; Myrtle Warbler, 124; Swainson's Thrush, 121; Field Sparrow, 113 and Catbird, 105. The only other species represented by more than 42 individuals was Purple Finch, 67, all of which were trapped and banded during the heavy snows beginning Feb. 13 and ending Mar. 20. The only Purple Finches reported during the past winter were on the Christmas Count.

Weekly trips have been made to the Roan Creek area of Watauga Lake, except when the roads were too slick to travel, to keep tabs on wintering waterfowl. Numbers have been much lower than last winter when there was much more snow and colder weather. These observations will be summarized at a later date.

Some noteworthy observations and first arrival dates follow: Oldsquaw, 2-12 (8); Common Merganser, 2-12 (19); Phoebe, 2-25 (scarce); House Wren, 3-11 (very early LRH); Bluebirds, very scarce; Savannah Sparrow, 2-26; Vesper Sparrow, 3-10 (KD); Chipping Sparrow, 3-6 (KD). Pine Siskins were reported on Roan Mountain from 10-23 through Dec. Two reports of Snow Buntings on Big Yellow Bald Mountain, 12-11 (1), 12-25, (15) (FWB). Evening Grosbeaks have been absent all winter.

LEE R. HERNDON, 1533 Burgie Place, Elizabethton.

## THE QUEST OF THE TROGON

The description in **Peterson's Guide** had always fascinated Lou and me—

"Coppery Tailed Trogon . . . 11½. Male:—head and upper parts dark glossy green (blackish at a distance) under parts bright rose red, separated by a white band from the dark head . . . Range:—Mts. of s. Ariz."

Of course, the "Mts. of s. Ariz." also appear to be the habitat of numerous exotic species—exotic, that is, to a Tennessee father and son. There one looks for the hummingbirds of Mexico, which range north in summer—the Broad-billed, the White-eared, Rivoli's, Costa's, Black-chinned and a half dozen others. In the same area are Band-tailed Pigeons, Beardless Flycatchers, Vermillion Flycatchers, Vaux's Swifts, Red-faced Warblers, Lucy's Warblers, Black-throated Gray Warblers and many many others.

The more that Lou and I read about the wonders of the Southwest, the more determined we became to go birding in the "Mts. of s. Ariz." and to see that rarest of U. S. species, the Trogon. From many previous automobile trips to the west, we were well acquainted with most of the species of the Rocky Mountain, Great Plains and Pacific Coast areas. Those are areas relatively easy to reach, accommodations are good, and the weather in summer is generally pleasant. Southern Arizona, though, sounded different. A study of the map showed hundreds of miles of desert, with few towns and little hope for good places to stay. Besides, Lou was 13 in 1959, and the unfortunate demands of the County School Board effectively restricted our birding trip to summer. Summer along the Mexican border, in the desert, is hot!

All these drawbacks to a southern Arizona trip discouraged the rest of the family, so Lou and I planned a trip *a deux* for July. Since motels would be rare, we planned to camp. Incidentally, this was very wise, as camping proved to be the only practicable way to see the remote bird areas of the Southern Southwest. Pettingill's "**Guide to Bird Finding, West,**" was our chief planning book, and it is almost 100% reliable. With its help, and that of maps, Park Service pamphlets, and other material, we planned a trip by car with five days in the Pinos Altos Mountains in Southwestern New Mexico near the Arizona border, an equal time in the Chiricahua Mountains in Southeast Arizona, two days in the flat desert near Tucson, and three days in the Huacachua Mountains in South Central Arizona.

This itinerary, we felt, gave us an opportunity for some time in several of the habitat associations found in South Arizona—the southern desert (4500-5000 feet) the lower canyons and the live oak mountain slopes (5-7,000 feet), and the ponderosa pine forests (above 7,000 feet). En route to and from Arizona, we passed along the Texas coast as far south as Galveston, and took in much of the southern plains of Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

The 1959 trip lasted from June 27 to July 17, and we had marvelous luck in finding birds. One afternoon for instance, driving near Shamrock, Oklahoma between four and five P. M. we saw **sixteen** Mississippi Kites. On the morning of July 9, in the Chiricahua National Monument, we were awakened by the screaming of five Golden Eagles, circling the cliffs above our tent. They were apparently nesting or roosting on a ledge, below

which the rocks were white with droppings. Altogether, on the trip we added 115 species to our year's list and 75 to our life list. These included some real rarities—the Rufous-winged Sparrow, Black Rail, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Beardless Flycatcher, and Sennett's White-tailed Hawk. But no Trogons!

We had really searched for Trogons! There was a rumor that a pair had nested in 1958 in a canyon on the eastern slope of the Chiricahuas, near the S. W. Experiment Station of the American Museum. For several days we haunted this canyon, climbing among the manzanita, scrub oak and sumac which clothed the sides of the dry stream bed, and walking endlessly under the sycamores, ash and other deciduous trees which lined the watercourses. But we didn't see a Trogon and no one to whom we talked knew of any.

After we got home, Trogons became an obsession with both of us, and we were determined someday to take another trip to the "Mts. of s. Ariz." and find our bird.

In the spring of 1960, a business trip to South Texas permitted me to get off for a wonderful weekend at Rockport, Texas, that mecca of migrant study. There Mrs. Connie Hager, the best known field observer in Texas, took me into her motel and told me where to look for species I especially wanted to see—but that is another story. My second night in Rockport, I was surprised and pleased at the arrival of an old friend, Dick Cunningham of Miami. Dick is a research biologist for the National Audubon Society, and he had planned to go on the 1959 trip with Lou and me, but could not make it. He knew about our unsuccessful Trogon quest, and that night in Rockport told me that we had simply missed our birds—they were there in 1959!

Dick said a pair had nested in the canyon in the Chiricahuas—the one we had searched so long—according to several reports made to the Audubon Society.

That did it. Lou and I had to return in 1960.

This time we headed straight for the Chiricahuas and our canyon. It was the same time of year, and we reached the canyon on July 6th. It was hot in the desert, but at 5500 feet, the heat was not too bad in daytime, and the nights were delightful. There are many excellent camping grounds maintained by the National Forest Service in the Chiricahuas, and there are few visitors, even in midsummer. After making camp in the late afternoon, we prospected a bit for birds; and found a Beardless Flycatcher in the same tree he had occupied last summer. A Black Phoebe was nesting near us, and great flocks of Band-tailed Pigeons made rustling noises as they came into the trees to roost. After dark, Lou discovered a nest of Mexican Spotted Owls with some young which kept peeping out of the hole in the tree. We were up late in entirely unsuccessful attempts to photograph these owls.

Next morning, at sun up, Lou and I were walking up the dry watercourse, paying little attention to any bird which didn't have some resemblance to a Trogon. About 5:30, and a quarter of a mile from camp, we heard a croaking which sounded like a bull frog to me, though Lou immediately identified it as a Trogon. Peterson describes the Trogon's call as "kown, kown." Pough, in Audubon's Western Guide, renders the call as "coa, coa coa." In fact, it is somewhat closer to the call of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo than anything else I can think of.

At any rate, we discreetly pursued the calling bird for some 200 yards through rather thick chapparal, and finally discovered our Trogon on a sycamore branch 20 feet off the ground. He was nearly a hundred yards from us, across the canyon, so we circled around and crossed the dry creek-bed to get a closer view. We wound up at the edge of a clearing, rimmed with sycamore and ash, with a few low conifers. In the clearing, were not one, but three male Trogons. (We did not see any females.) They stayed in the clearing for fifteen minutes, perching on low branches, and changing their perches occasionally. Needless to say, Lou and I sat quietly, and the birds at times approached within fifty feet. Their brilliant yellow beaks are cardinal-sized—otherwise, the birds looked and acted like parrots. Their coloring is beautiful, and so bold as to be a bit unbelievable. Peterson's description is quite accurate, and Pough's use of the adjective "lovely" is well warranted.

Finally, the birds left the clearing, going up the canyon. It had been, certainly, the most exciting quarter hour of all my birding. Lou evidently felt the same way, for as he got up, he came over and shook hands. He said, "Well, Dad, I guess we can give up birdwatching after this." I knew he didn't mean it literally, but I knew exactly what he **did** mean.

Now we want to see the Rose-throated Becard. It lives in "Mts. of s. e. Ariz."

LOUIS FARRELL, Jr., 4419 Iriquois Ave., Nashville 5.

## ROUND TABLE NOTES

BASIN SPRING OPERATION RECOVERY—Two banders and eight assistants "manned" with a deal of vigor and enthusiasm 6-10 mist nets at Basin Spring from Sept. 10-Sept. 20, 1960 in an Operation Recovery program. The Operation was organized and carried out as recommended for similar programs along the Eastern Seaboard. This limited operation is not expected to contribute significantly to Recovery as a whole but there is that old rhyme about "little drops of water and little grains of sand." In addition to 142 new birds banded of 34 species plus 1 unidentified Empidonax our Basin Spring Station gave an introduction to another technique for studying migration and individual birds and gave participants the pleasure, oft times the thrill of studying species rarely examined in hand. We handled both Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, measured Traill's and Acadian Flycatchers; we blew for fat on Magnolias that were number 3 and Ovenbirds that had a trace. We measured and weighed, discussed and looked up and learned an awful lot. Earl was the Founder of the "I-Let-One-Get-Away" Club and John was elected President when he finished with the highest score. Yours truly turned out to be the most distinguished member with the escape of the **only** Kentucky Warbler netted. Early morning mists gave the woodland a mystical aura from which calls of thrushes came haunting and unreal. One senses migration in this environment but one knows as well as feels when a "wave" crosses the net lane; one puts real meaning into the expression "here today, gone tomorrow" when, after banding Indigo Buntings steadily for 2 or 3 days, suddenly there is not a single one, then on the day after that there are more than ever before without a single repeat.

It is recognized from previous years of field observation that Basin Spring is not a location for concentrated migratory flights. There is no topographical funnel or ecological magnet there. It is a deciduous woods with scattered cedars and pines which slopes steeply from 950' to narrow valleys and draws through which Bedford Creek and Basin Spring Branch flow. Net lanes crossed wood's-edge, stream's-edge and old fields.

Hours of operation ranged from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. totaling 543 net-hours. Temperatures ranged from 52° at 6:30 a.m. on Sept. 15 to an 87° high on Sept. 19 with temperatures during netting hours mostly ranging between 70 and 80 degrees. All birds were weighed, wings were measured and estimates of migratory fat recorded.

Numbers of principal species banded were: 25 Indigo Bunting, 17 White-eyed Vireo, 14 Magnolia Warbler, 11 Cardinal, 10 Chickadee, 7 Catbird, 6 Tennessee Warbler, 6 Chat. One Hummingbird, 1 Philadelphia Vireo, the thrushes and Empidonaces were of especial interest. Ten species of warblers were banded. One nestling Yellow-billed Cuckoo got a band.

Seventy-five per cent of the White-eyed Vireos were immature, as were 5 of the 6 Chats. All the Catbirds were immature and with 1 exception each showed recognizable deposition of fat. The warblers, thrushes and flycatchers consistently had demonstrable fat. In both the White-eyed Vireos and Indigos slightly more than half failed to show fat.

So small a series of birds does not allow significant generalizations but these few notes indicate some of the things we can look for from an OR series of birds. This eleven-day operation has too many variables for any correlation of migration with weather. The fact that 142 new banded birds represented 34 species indicates the sampling value of a netting technique. Or we may say that since 1 of each 4.2 birds represents a different species we could suspect that Basin Spring is not an area of concentrated flight but one through which a fair spread of species moves.

Those taking part in this program were: Banders, Alan Munro and Katherine Goodpasture; Assistants, Sue Bell, Earl Bishop, Albert Ganier, Ernest Goodpasture, Amelia Laskey, John Ogden, Henry Parmer, and Jennie Riggs.

KATHERINE A. GOODPASTURE, 3407 Hopkins Lane, Nashville.

**BANDING BIRDS OF PREY.**—During a six weeks portion of January and February 1961, we in Nashville were fortunate enough to have as a visitor Mr. Jack Oar of Rockford, Illinois. Mr. Oar is a member of the Chatri Club, a hawk and owl banding organization in Illinois and Wisconsin and while he was here numerous trips were made throughout Davidson County and surrounding areas to trap and band birds of prey. The type trap which he brought with him and that we used was the Bal Chatri, a quonset shape wire trap which holds a mouse or Starling, depending on the size of the trap and type bird of prey desired. When a hawk or owl lands on the trap trying to get the bait inside it, the bird is supposed to get his feet caught in one or more of the many monofilament nooses on the outside of the trap. The Bal Chatri is successful to varying degrees depending upon the type birds of prey desired but it seems to work best with Kestrels. During the time Mr. Oar was here approximately 90 Individual Kestrels were seen, traps were put out on roughly two thirds of these and 30 were caught. Also caught and banded during the period were 7 Shrikes, 1 Red-tailed Hawk, and 1 Screech Owl.



Other important accomplishments made on trips with Mr. Oar were the location of two active territories of Barn Owls, one in the Cumberland River Bottoms in Nashville centered around a cement plant in which they probably breed. The second territory was below Ashland City, Tennessee also in the Cumberland River bottoms. Several barns were located that were used as feeding areas for this pair.

Also on one of our trapping trips a Harlan's Hawk was found along the north side of Old Hickory Lake about 3 miles southwest of Gallatin, Tennessee. The bird was in the dark phase and all field marks were seen as it soared low, once even circling low over our heads. It was essentially a black *buteo* with a white tail. There was a mottled dark sub-terminal band on the top of the tail and the wing primaries and secondaries from below were pale and barred.

This is apparently the third Tennessee record for this species, the other records coming from the Memphis area in December and February 1940-1941, (THE MIGRANT 12:15) and in early March 1957, (THE MIGRANT, 28:7).

JOHN C. OGDEN, 515 Fairfax Avenue, Nashville 12.

DEPREDACTIONS AT MIST NETS.—During the fall of 1960 the Elizabethton Chapter of TOS cooperated with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Operation Recovery. On several occasions, during the short intervals which we were away from the nets, a predator had visited a net and only fragmentary remains of half a dozen birds remained as evidence of the visit. Usually the incident occurred before mid-morning and only one time during the day. The incident usually took place at a net, either in or near a wooded area. Usually little or no damage was done to the net, although bird remains, such as wings, an occasional leg bearing a band or just a mass of feathers were found anywhere from the top to the bottom shelf, or from 8' above ground to the lower shelf which was near ground level. Occasionally an almost whole bird would remain with only the head crushed.

These depredations continued over several week-ends, since we operated only on week-ends, without any intruder being observed in the vicinity of the net which had been visited. On the first visit to the nets, by the writer, after they had been unfurled on the morning of 10-29 while approaching a net under the cover of a clump of willows, a small accipiter was seen making a strike at a White-throated Sparrow (fortunately it missed) from the same side of the net on which I was approaching. Being within a few feet of the bird and being able to rush it at almost right angles to the net, and the bird attempting to escape directly away from me, I was able to capture it before it could escape. It proved to be an adult female Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*). We did not want to release it in the area in which we were netting, therefore we retained it in a cage until we had finished our netting operations the following afternoon. Since it failed in its attempt to steal its breakfast, a little later on we captured some House Sparrows in our nets, which we placed in the cage with the Hawk. These it would not capture while we were observing but during our absence the sparrow would be devoured and upon our return all the visible remains consisted of a mass of feathers.

The hawk was released wearing band No. 494-77259. A telephone call on 11-7 revealed that the bird had been captured in a barn on the State Line Road, Route No. 17, South of Elizabethton, about seven air-line miles southwest of the banding location. The bird had been injured and suc-

cumbed a short while after recapture. The small boy, Earl Wayne McKinney, whose mother relayed the information to me did not know how the injury occurred and when it was reported to me the dead bird had been disposed of for several days, therefore it would have been impossible to determine the type or extent of the injury to which it succumbed or to make a study skin of the specimen.

On several occasions, usually just at dusk but sometimes at dawn Screech Owls were known to raid the nets. Most of the time they would be caught in the net and would remain in the net-pocket making almost no effort to extricate themselves, and remain almost motionless while being removed from the net. In some instances they were found with a partially devoured bird still in their talons together with many folds of the net. Only a few times was there evidence of owls having committed depredations and subsequently escaped and these were usually where the prey was near the ground or where the weight of the owl would have borne the net to the ground.

LEE R. HERNDON, 1533 Burgie Place, Elizabethton.

BURROWING OWL WINTERS IN MISSISSIPPI.—On a cotton plantation about 60 miles north of Vicksburg, Miss., one of these small owls was first seen in November, 1959. It was seen again several days later on the farm roads and at the edges of fields. Being apparently unafraid of automobiles, it was observed quite readily a number of times at less than 100 feet. When disturbed, it would fly only a short distance and assume a crouching position behind vegetation in an attempt to hide.

At this time of year the fields in this level, alluvial country undergo a change, in that the cotton stalks are cut down and disced or plowed under which leaves the surface bare and open. During December the owl was not seen. However, in January in one of the bare fields described above, a conspicuous mound of dirt was noticed. This was first thought to be a fox's den but a closer look revealed the small brown owl crouched in one of the burrows that had been tunneled into the mound. The bird was quite reluctant to leave his "castle" but leave he would when approached too closely, i.e. about 50 feet. After a short flight it would bob up and down on its long legs and make a clucking noise as if in protest to the intrusion.

The most interesting feature of this observation is the remarkable amount of dirt that was moved by this small bird. The actual mound measured 11 to 12 feet in diameter and rose to a height of about 15 inches at its peak. This mound was thoroly tunneled thruout, without any set pattern as to depth or direction. The longest burrows were about 6 feet in length and large enough to accommodate a small dog. In the immediate vicinity, other burrows were started and abandoned. As of the 27th of March, this small, diligent owl is still with us and is still digging.

ELIE GANIER, JR., Hollandale, Miss.

NOTE.—In their western breeding range, the Burrowing Owl appropriates the holes of prairie dogs and ground squirrels for their homes. The small population which nest in southern Florida, where the above mentioned animals are not present, dig their own burrows. The fact that this Mississippi bird followed the habits of the Florida race could indicate that it was a displaced visitant from that state. The current A. O. U. Check-list gives Baton Rouge, La. as a breeding area for this owl but Dr. George Lowrey advises that no such record is now accepted.—A. F. Ganier.

**A SURF SCOTER AT NASHVILLE.**—On Oct. 31, 1960 the writer visited Bush Lake at Nashville. The only bird on the water was a large black duck with two white face-patches. It could have been a juvenile of either the White-winged or the Surf Scoter, as at the distance it was improbable that the white speculum of a floating bird could be seen. As if to answer the question the duck took off, made two fast trips around the lake and landed in the center again. It landed in typical scoter fashion with its wings extended upward as it plowed into the water, and for a short interval after alighting. In flight the absence of the white speculum proved it to be the Surf Scoter, our first Middle Tenn. record since 1931. (MIG. 27:4,78) John Ogden and Alan Munro came down to help with the identification.

The following day the scoter was seen by both Amelia Laskey and the writer. The next day, Nov. 2, the duck was missing at the lake, but a bird in identical plumage was seen near the dam on Old Hickory lake by Alan Munro. From Nov. 4 through 7 a similar plumaged scoter was at Radnor lake. On Nov. 10 the bird was back at Bush. On Nov. 11, 12, 13, 16, and 19 it was seen again at Radnor. Did one duck travel around this much, or did we have a visit of several juveniles during this period?

HENRY E. PARMER, 3800 Richland Ave., Nashville 5.

**VISIT TO A BLACK VULTURE ROOST.**—On February 4, 1961, Dr. Charles Farrell, Dr. D. Franklin Farrar and myself visited a vulture roost in an attempt to capture some vultures to use in conjunction with the two doctors' study of bird flight. The roost is located 12 miles north-east of Murfreesboro, on Route 96. We were at the roost for almost four hours, and estimated the number of Black Vultures there at 200; no Turkey Vultures were seen. As we approached the roosting area, many vultures arose from their perches on or near the ground and began soaring overhead. Once when we retreated the vultures folded up their wings and dropped in with spectacular swoops. As they leveled off we could hear the wind whistling through their feathers, although we were more than a block away. At other times they returned in a less impressive manner.

As an added treat, we observed an immature Golden Eagle soaring among the vultures; however, it didn't stay with them but soon disappeared to the north-east.

JACK OAR, 1603 Log-cabin Ave., Rockford, Ill.

**HOUSE SPARROW—UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR.**—During Oct. and Nov. 1960 an interesting phenomenon was observed at one of our feeders. House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) brought twigs and pieces of grass and placed them on a shelter type feeder located near a window. Many of the pieces of grass and twigs were dry and dead but pieces of live hemlock were snipped from the hedge beneath the feeder and placed on it.

The material was placed on the shelf in a promiscuous manner and several times replaced or returned after it had been removed from the shelf. There seemed to be no reason for placing the material on the feeder unless it was an attempt to save the food for themselves by trying to hide it from other species.

If anyone has had similar experiences or knows of the reasons for such conduct, or would like to express an opinion regarding this behavior, I would be eager to have your comments.

FLETCHER R. BINGHAM, 216 Edgewood Road, Bristol, Tenn.

## FALL SHORE BIRD MIGRATION AT NASHVILLE

For those of us who are especially attracted to shore birds, but are so unfortunate as to live in areas with few suitable habitats for these birds, the result of many searching hours in the field often ends in frustration. But if we really have the "fever" then the many empty hours in the field are more than justified when we do make a "good find." Such is the case in the immediate Nashville area during the fall shore bird migrations. The places which are so dependable in the spring have, for the most part, become dry and weedy by Aug. and the water level in the rivers and their lakes is kept too high to expose mud flats until after the peak of shore bird migration. I don't mean to give the impression that no shore birds are seen in the fall, on the contrary, there are small numbers seen in such places as Bush Lake from Aug. through Nov. But with the exception of Spotted Sandpipers and Dunlins, few shore birds stay at this lake for any length of time, therefore even this, our best area, can not be called truly dependable.

Because of this difficulty we have had to work even harder in our search for shore birds. As a result we have quickly discovered the importance of cold fronts since they supply the two things we need most, suitable habitats and the birds. These cold fronts give us the right habitats, although temporarily, by converting the dry field in the Cumberland River bottoms into wet, muddy fields containing many pools of water, due to the rain which usually accompanies these fronts in Sept. and Oct. They bring us the birds because the cold air stimulates bird migration in the fall, therefore large numbers of birds usually follow close behind the actual cold front.

Two such cold fronts which passed through Nashville in Sept., contributed our two peaks in shore birds for this past fall.

The first such front started through this area on Sept. 10, 1960, bringing rain that day and a drop in temperature during the following night. There had been no shore birds in the river bottoms on the 9th but on the 10th 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 2 Spotted Sandpipers, a Snipe and 16 Killdeers were found. Black Terns were at Bush Lake, which is located in these river bottoms, on both the 9th and 10th. The real increase came on the 11th, following the cold front passage. That morning it was cool and still overcast. The Black Terns had been joined by 12 Caspian Terns, a species which is rarely found in Nashville. The number of Killdeer had increased to over 50. Other shore birds had also come in. A flock of Least Sandpipers was found feeding in the fields along with one Semipalmated Sandpiper. The highlight of the morning however was 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers (*Tryngites subruficollis*) which were found feeding in a field of newly sprouted turnip greens. This was only the second Nashville record for these birds which look and act more like little plovers than sandpipers (THE MIGRANT 30: 35, 1959). Within two days all of these shore birds were gone, with the exception of some of the Killdeers.

The second cold front passed through on Sept. 17. No trip had been made to the area on the 16th but on the 15th the only shore birds were approximately 25 Killdeers and 3 Golden Plovers. The trip to the river bottoms made on the 17th was made during the middle of the day immediately following the passage of the front. It had been raining earlier in

the day and was still misty and very overcast during the trip. Both Caspian and Black Terns were again over Bush Lake. There were 12 Golden Plovers and one Black-bellied Plover feeding in a bare field near by. The highlight of this trip was a Knot (*Calidris canutus*) found in the river bottoms near 9th Avenue. At a distance it appeared as a very uniform gray bird with white underparts and looked about the size and shape of a Golden Plover. It was a shy bird and only after following it for over a quarter of a mile, through mud, were the white wing stripes and light colored rump seen well enough to confirm the identification. This is the first record for this species in Nashville and only the third for the state, the previous records coming from Memphis (THE MIGRANT 26: 32, 1955; 26: 47, 1955).

Other shore birds found in the river bottoms on the 17th were 1 Sanderling, 5 Pectoral Sandpipers, 5 Least Sandpipers, 1 Semipalmated Sandpiper, 2 Common Snipes, 1 Spotted Sandpiper, and the usual Killdeer.

The next day, Sept. 18, was warmer and clear, and the only birds found were the Golden Plovers and Killdeer.

Thus can be seen the importance that a cold front may have to anyone like myself who has the "shore bird fever".

JOHN OGDEN, 515 Fairfax Ave., Nashville 12, Tennessee.

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BALD EAGLE NEAR NASHVILLE. — On the afternoon of Thursday, November 26, I took a trip with Mr. H. E. Parmer to the Two Jays Sanctuary owned by the Nashville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. While Mr. Parmer was setting up a new feeding station at the cabin, I took a hike through the wooded hills around Two Jays to check on a family of Red-headed Woodpeckers that are spending the winter in a valley near our property. When I reached the valley, I found the six Red-heads still there, so I started back by a different route to look for other birds. About half way up one of the high hills bordering the creek I was surprised by the sight of a very large bird right over the tree tops. By the time I got a look at the bird through my binoculars, it had dropped down to about the same level as I was and was flying directly away from me up the valley. As long as it was flying away from me in that manner, I could not see any color, only its large size.

After it had gone about one hundred yards, the bird turned and flew up and over the far side of the valley and out of sight. When it made its turn and flew over the hill, I easily saw its white head and tail and dark body and wings, which identified it as an adult Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

I have seen both the adult and immature Bald Eagle many times before at the Federal Wildlife Refuge on the mouth of the Duck River, but each time I see an adult bird, it is a thrill equal to that first time I saw this majestic species.

JOHN OGDEN, 515 Fairfax Avenue, Nashville 12, Tennessee.

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

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### EDITORIAL

In the midst of expressions of enthusiasm for the use of mist nets to which I hope my own report of a small Operation Recovery program contributes full measure I feel constrained to emphasize editorially that banders who use nets accept special responsibilities to the vast migrating stream of birds they aim to trap. Well managed nets may be handled enthusiastically and with much pleasure and satisfaction but not without the exercise of care, good judgment, and restraint.

It is wise for banders who anticipate using nets to work first with someone experienced in their use. There are tricks to all trades and for the welfare of the birds it is important to learn some of the tricks of this one before assuming full scale responsibilities. It is well to find if one has the patience of temperament, nimbleness of fingers and sharpness of eyesight to use nets with pleasure. The object of these remarks is not to emphasize any difficulty of operating mist nets but to say that we may spare ourselves frustration and discouragement by giving some attention to learning proper techniques. One of the best guides to the use of nets has been written by Seth Low, *Bird-Banding* July, 1957, pp 115-128. I would urge both banders and assistants to read and heed recommendations made by Mr. Low.

We must ever be aware that the object of any banding operation is to band, study, and above all release birds in good condition. Any time we fail to **release in good condition** we have lapsed into irresponsibility. Most accidents can be traced not to the use of nets but to their misuse—to a human fault or frailty.

So with careful planning, with the assumption of full responsibility and an exercise of restraint we would hope that a significant number of Tennessee banders and helpers will join those already enjoying concentrated fall banding programs. Maybe there is a Tennessee Flyway waiting to be mapped, a wintering population to be identified as to origin, a weather pattern to be analyzed or a new state species to be established.

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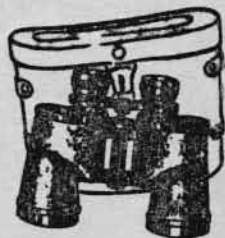
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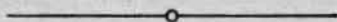
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