

# THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

Published by  
THE TENNESSEE  
ORNITHOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY



R.P. James  
36

**JUNE, 1978**

VOL. 49, NO. 2

# THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGY

FIRST PUBLISHED, JUNE 1930

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PUBLISHED BY

THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded at Nashville, Tenn., 7 October 1915

A non-profit, educational, scientific, and conservation organization.

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Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December). Printed by Mallicote Printing Inc., 509-511 Shelby Street, Bristol, Tennessee 37620, U.S.A. Postage paid and mailed at Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643, U.S.A.

# THE MIGRANT

Published by the Tennessee Ornithological Society,  
to Record and Encourage the Study of Birds in Tennessee.  
Issued in March, June, September, and December.

VOL. 49

JUNE, 1978

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## SOURCE OF COMMON GRACKLES AND RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS WINTERING IN TENNESSEE

BROOKE MEANLEY AND RICHARD A. DOLBEER

Considerable national attention has been focused on the blackbird-Starling winter-roost problem in Tennessee in recent years (Graham 1976). In the 1974-75 winter, 36 roosts containing a roughly-estimated 45,732,000 blackbirds and Starlings were reported in Tennessee (Meanley 1976). Fourteen of these roosts each contained an estimated 1 million or more birds; nine others had populations estimated at 100,000 to 1 million birds, but two of these have since been deleted as duplicates (Fig. 1). Overall, this wintering population had the following approximate species composition: 44% Starlings, 35% Common Grackles, 11% Red-winged Blackbirds, 9% Brown-headed Cowbirds, and 1% Rusty Blackbirds.

Questions often asked by farmers, ornithologists, and other interested persons include: Where do these birds come from? When do they arrive in the fall? When do they depart in the spring? Partial answers to these questions were obtained through an analysis of 33,000 band recoveries for Common Grackles and 11,000 band recoveries for Red-winged Blackbirds. These recoveries have accumulated from more than 50 years of banding in the United States and Canada.

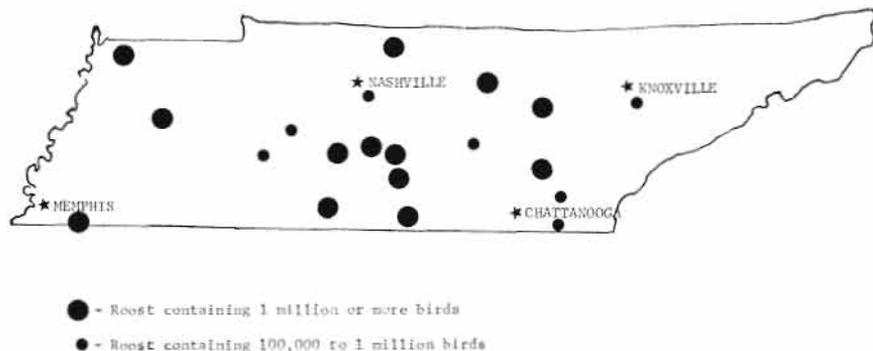


Fig. 1. Locations of the large blackbird-starling roosts in Tennessee during 1974-75 winter.

## METHODS

The source of birds that winter in Tennessee was determined by tabulating and mapping recoveries of birds banded during the 5-month breeding and post-breeding season (May 1-September 30) and recovered in Tennessee during the winter (December 15-February 14). Data for the breeding and postbreeding banding seasons are combined because earlier analyses of recoveries of banded Grackles and Redwings indicated that the breeding populations and their offspring remain in the same general geographical areas of origin throughout the summer, until fall migration. In late summer, these species undergo a molt that is not completed until early autumn, which probably contributes to their remaining in the summering area until they are ready for prolonged migratory flight.

## RESULTS

Of 1,828 Grackles banded in the north (north of and including Maryland, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado) during the height of the breeding season (May 1-June 30) and recovered during the postbreeding period (July 1-September 30), 1,753 (95.9%) were in the State or Province in which they had been banded; and another 67 (3.7%) were in adjacent States or Provinces. For the 231 Redwings banded in approximately the same northern areas during their breeding season (April 26-July 31) and recovered during the postbreeding period (August 1-October 15), the average distance between the banding and recovery sites was only 57 miles.

Fall or southward migration of Common Grackles and Redwings occurs mostly in November and early December: 98.8% (1,703 of 1,724 recoveries) of the northern Grackle population was still in the north during August 15-October 31. During the late fall (November 1-December 14), however, only 51.1% (356 of 646 recoveries) of the northern Grackle population was still in the north. For the 116 Redwings banded in the north during the breeding season and recovered during the late fall (November 1-December 14), the average distance between banding and recovery site was 395 miles—a very substantial increase over the average distance of 57 miles for Redwings recovered during the postbreeding period (August 1-October 15).

Grackles that winter in Tennessee breed mostly in the central Great Lakes region and the Upper Mississippi Valley (Fig. 2). Of 130 winter recoveries in Tennessee, only 9 birds had been banded during the breeding or postbreeding seasons in Tennessee. Approximately 90% of all Tennessee recoveries were in the western half of the State, where more large roosts occur and where more trapping is done by bird banders than elsewhere in Tennessee. The largest concentration of Grackles in Tennessee reported in the 1974-75 winter-roost survey was at the Milan Arsenal, Gibson County, where an estimated 9-million-bird roost contained about 6 million Grackles (Meanley 1976).

There are only three winter recoveries in Tennessee of Redwings that were banded in the breeding-postbreeding period: one each from Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin (Fig. 2). No Redwings winter-banded in Tennessee have been recovered during the breeding-postbreeding period. These limited data suggest that the regional source of most Redwings wintering in Tennessee is generally the same as for Grackles. Obviously, many more winter bandings and recoveries



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P. O. Box 2097, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.  
Accepted 6 Dec. 1976.



## COMPARISON OF AMERICAN WOODCOCK COURTSHIP ACTIVITIES IN KNOX AND WEAKLEY COUNTIES, TENNESSEE

T. DAVID PITTS

The purpose of this note is to compare some of the courtship activities of American Woodcock (*Philobela minor*) I observed in Knox County in East Tennessee and Weakley County in West Tennessee.

During the months September 1972 through June 1973 I was in the field daily on the farm of Mr. Jim Cunningham, approximately eight miles (13 km) south of Knoxville in Knox County. The first woodcock courtship activities were observed on 5 November when a single woodcock repeatedly gave "peent" notes and then briefly performed the courtship flight. Courtship continued until 16 May. On 28 December two woodcock performed, and during the last week of February and the first week of March four woodcock performed, after which the number of performers declined. The singing ground was a heavily grazed cattle pasture where most of the vegetation was less than 10 cm in height, but some plants were 20-30 cm tall. Occasional bare areas were present. Three parallel ridges were the centers of activity. Woodcock were seen approaching and departing the singing grounds; flight paths indicated the woodcock were using a heavily wooded area to the south as diurnal cover. In spite of my intensive activity in the area I flushed only one woodcock during the daytime and no nests were found.

On most of the days during November 1975 through May 1976 I checked the vicinity of my home in Weakley County, three miles (5 km) southwest of Martin, for woodcock courtship activity. The first performance was on 5 February and the last was on 1 March. The maximum number of performing males was three on 12 February and four on 18 February. Initially all of the woodcock performed from a field which has been undergoing secondary succession for at least 10, and possibly 12 or 15 years. The vegetation in the field was very dense and consisted of tangles of Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), blackberry vines (*Rubus* sp.), and numerous other herbaceous perennials interspersed among ash (*Fraxinus* sp.), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), and box elder (*Acer negundo*) saplings 4-6 m tall. Performing woodcock centered their courtship activities in small natural openings. Later, one woodcock performed from a field road in a similar field about 150 m away. An adjacent pasture and a mowed hayfield of very short vegetation (less than 10 cm) were not used. Although I did not check the area thoroughly I suspect that during the day most of the woodcock remained near their singing grounds as I did not see or hear woodcock approach or depart the field. Sheldon (1967:65) reported that woodcock frequently walked to their singing grounds from their diurnal covers. On 7 February I twice flushed two woodcock from the edge of the field used for a singing ground; both times the woodcock remained in the field.

The vocalizations and behavior of the Knox County and Weakley County woodcock were similar and were typical of the species, based on the reports of Sheldon (1967:44-62), Davis (1970), and Samuel and Beightol (1973). One slight difference involved the light intensity at the time of the first evening performance. The Knox County woodcock typically arrived on their singing

grounds when barely enough light remained for an observer to see the woodcock, and the performances continued until after darkness settled. The Weakley County woodcock normally arrived on the singing grounds when the light level was still high; ground and aerial activities were easily viewed, and even during the last aerial performances the woodcock could be followed with binoculars. On one moonlit night the Weakley County woodcock performed from 20:00 to at least 20:30; similar activities on moonlit nights have been reported by Herndon (1950) and Sheldon (1967:54-55).

Although my observations cover only one season at each locality the numerous reports in *The Migrant* (e.g., Nicholson, 1974; Herndon, 1972) indicate that in East Tennessee woodcock can be found on singing grounds from mid-winter into the spring months. In contrast, records of woodcock courtship in West Tennessee are sparse; the report of Coffey and Poole (1957) is the only one I am aware of. The presence of singing males does not necessarily indicate woodcock nest nearby as Sheldon (1967:58-59) stated that migrating males may perform courtship flights.

These observations suggest that Knox County has a group of nesting woodcock whose courtship activities extend over a period of several months, but during spring migration the singing grounds may contain both locally nesting individuals and migratory individuals. The timing of the courtship activities in Weakley County suggests that only migratory woodcock were present on the singing grounds. Evidence does exist that woodcock nest in Knox County (Bamberg, 1933; Tanner, 1950), but to my knowledge no nests have been found in Weakley County. However, other workers (e.g., Sheldon, 1967:66) have commented on the difficulty of finding woodcock nests, so my conclusions must be considered as tentative until intensive efforts have been made to locate nests.

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## STATUS OF THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK IN TENNESSEE

T. DAVID PITTS

In view of the currently increasing interest in American Woodcock (*Philobela minor*) as a game bird in Tennessee (Gore, 1975) it seems appropriate to review the many woodcock observations reported in *The Migrant*. Each issue of *The Migrant* from Volume 1 (1930) through Volume 46 (1975) was checked for information pertaining to woodcock in Tennessee.

### COURTSHIP

The rather conspicuous courtship activities of woodcock have been recorded for the eight months October through May. The only October record is that of Patterson (1967) who reported courtship flights of up to ten individuals beginning in mid-October in Hardin County. November courtship flights have been reported by Nicholson (1973a) for Knox County and Patterson (1967, 1972) for Hardin County. Numerous reports (Coffey and Poole, 1957; Coffey, 1969; DeVore, 1968; Enloe, 1963; Nicholson, 1973a, 1974, 1975; Patterson, 1968, 1972; and Williams, 1972) indicate courtship frequently begins in December, especially in mild winters. In the Chattanooga area woodcock courtship activities have been initiated during December in at least five of the last eight years (Coffey, 1969; DeVore, 1968; Nicholson, 1974, 1975; Williams, 1972). Other December courtship records are for Shelby County (Coffey and Poole, 1957), Hardin County (Patterson, 1968), and Knox County (Enloe, 1963; Nicholson, 1973a).

In January courtship activities continue in the southern counties (e.g., Hardin County: Patterson, 1968; and Hamilton County: Coffey, 1969; DeVore, 1968; Nicholson, 1975) and begin in some of the more northern counties such as Carter County (Herndon, 1972). Woodcock courtship records are more numerous for February than for any other month and are widely distributed across the state (Gray, 1934; Herndon, 1950; Ogden, 1961; Parmer, 1971; Tanner, 1962). Searches for woodcock in February have in some cases revealed many performing males; for example, 27 were located in the Nashville area in late February 1971 (Parmer, 1971). An unknown number of these males may have been transients as Sheldon (1967:58-59) indicated migrating males may perform courtship flights. Although numerous March observations have been reported (Enloe, 1963; Ganier, 1945; Herndon, 1950, 1954; Ogden, 1961; Parmer, 1971; Spofford, 1947; Tanner, 1960, 1962; Williams, 1975) some of these reports indicate the termination of courtship activities. The last observed performance near Knoxville in 1962 was 7 March (Tanner, 1962), and Parmer (1971) referred to a 21 March performance near Nashville as that of a late singer. Most of the few April records of courtship refer to last performances: 5 April near Chattanooga (Campbell, 1971), 14 April near Elizabethton (Smith, 1967), and 16 April near Chattanooga (Jacobson, 1975). Occasionally courtship continues into May as shown by observations on 10 May in Carter County (Eller, 1973) and 16 May in Knox County (Pitts, unpublished records). Figure 1 summarizes the reports of courtship activities. The variable nature of the beginning of courtship is emphasized by Patterson's (1969) report that while courtship flights from up to 16 individuals were observed all winter in

1967-1968, in the winter of 1968-1969 courtship did not begin until February and then only two woodcock were present.

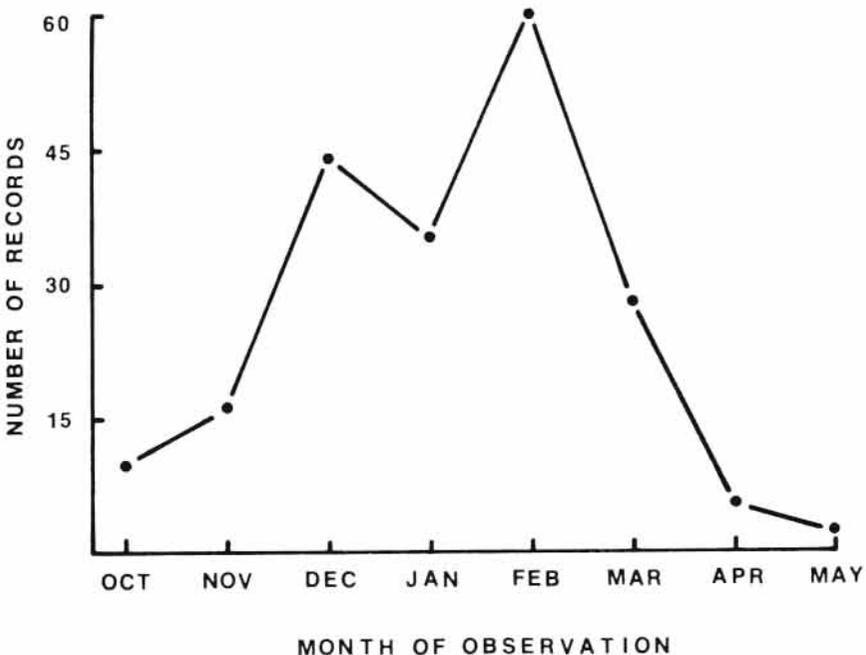


Figure 1. Number of reports of woodcock courtship activities in Tennessee.

#### NESTING

Information on the location of 26 woodcock nesting attempts in Tennessee has been presented in *The Migrant*. Evidence of two other nests is presented (Lyle and Tyler, 1934), but the location is not specified. Scattered spring and summer records of adults from numerous other counties may indicate a much wider nesting distribution. No evidence of nesting in West Tennessee has been reported; of the reports from Hardin County the two nests found by Patterson (1966) were east of the Tennessee River, but the exact location of the nest found by Counce (1934) was not given.

The counties in which eggs or broods have been found are shown in Figure 2

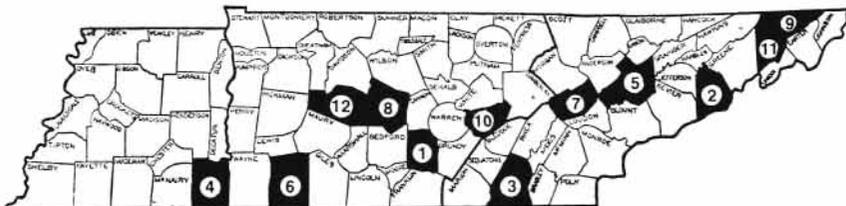


Figure 2. Tennessee counties from which woodcock nests have been reported. 1. Coffee; 2. Cocke; 3. Hamilton; 4. Hardin; 5. Knox; 6. Lawrence; 7. Roane; 8. Rutherford; 9. Sullivan; 10. Van Buren; 11. Washington; 12. Williamson.

and are as follows: Coffee (DeVore, 1975), Cocks (Walker, 1935), Hamilton (Jacobson, 1975), Hardin (Counce, 1934; Patterson, 1966), Knox (Bamberg, 1933; Tanner, 1950), Lawrence (Gray, 1934), Roane (Jacobson, 1975), Rutherford (Todd, 1944), Sullivan (Campbell, 1968; Coffey, 1964), Van Buren (Ganier and Clebsch, 1940), Washington (Jacobson, 1975; Nicholson, 1973b), and Williamson (Caldwell, 1936). In addition to these records J. F. Gore (*vide* Morris Williams) found 12-15 nests on the Laurel Hill Wildlife Management Area in Lawrence County.

Eleven nests with eggs were reported; ten of the nests contained four eggs and one nest contained three eggs. The set of three eggs was collected and found to be fresh (Todd, 1944); therefore, the clutch may have been incomplete. Five of these nests were found in March and three were found in April; the month of observation was not given for the other three nests. The exact date on which the eggs were laid is not known for any of the reported nests although Counce (1934) observed hatching on 29 March, indicating egg laying began about 4 March. Patterson (1966) observed a brood still at the nest in mid-April. These young were probably no more than one or two days old as the broods usually leave the nest soon after hatching (Sheldon, 1967:72-73). Egg laying at this nest would have begun about 20 March. If the set of three eggs found by Todd (1944) on 3 April was incomplete, egg laying at that nest began about 1 April.

Of thirteen broods reported two were in March, eight in April, and three in May. In most reports no indication of the age of the young is given. Some evidence of renesting is indicated by Bamberg's (1933) observation of a nest in Knox County that was abandoned after being disturbed by humans; another nest was found later a short distance away.

#### SEASONAL TRENDS

A comparison by month of the reported woodcock observations (Figure 3) shows peaks in February and November; these peaks presumably indicate spring and fall migration dates. Reports from Christmas Bird Counts and Spring Field Days are not included in Figure 3 as a disproportionate amount of field work was done during these two periods. The greater number of February observations can be attributed to an influx of migrating woodcock, and the increased conspicuousness associated with courtship activities. The May peak may be due to the increase in the numbers of juveniles. Sheldon (1967:75) states that most broods break up between six and eight weeks after hatching; therefore, many Tennessee broods probably break up during May and the solitary juveniles may be more conspicuous due to their wandering or less wary nature. The small number of reports from July, August, and September may be due to the more elusive nature of woodcock during their molt; also, fewer observers are afield during the warm weather of these months. Occasionally, large numbers of woodcock may be present in an area during the winter. Patterson (1973) reported more than 50 in the Savannah area during the winter of 1972-1973; this report was not included in Figure 3 as the month of observation was not indicated.

#### SUMMARY

The American Woodcock is a permanent resident in Tennessee; many additional woodcock migrate through the state. Peak numbers are present in Feb-

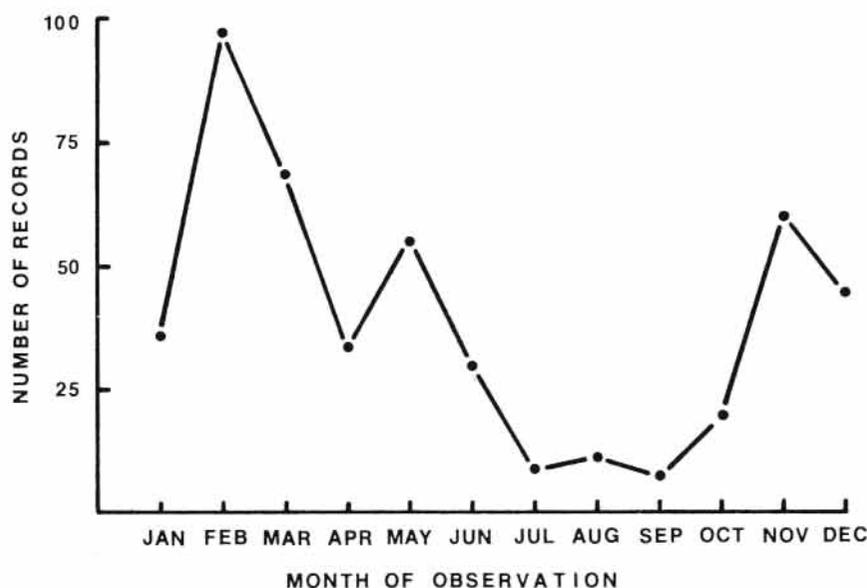


Figure 3. Monthly distribution of records of woodcock in Tennessee (1930-1975) excluding Christmas Bird Counts and Spring Field Days.

ruary and November, the times of spring and fall migration. Eggs or broods have been found in twelve counties. One nest in Hardin County may have been in West Tennessee; all of the other nests were in Middle and East Tennessee. The presence of adults in late spring and summer in numerous other counties may indicate a wider nesting distribution than the few nesting records show. The initiation and duration of courtship is variable but normally begins in December in the southern parts of the state and continues into April. Most areas have maximum numbers of displaying males in February; some of these males may be transients. Eggs are normally laid in March and April, with four being the usual clutch.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

CHECKLIST OF THE WORLD'S BIRDS: A Complete List of the Species, with Names and Areas of Distribution. By Edward S. Gruson with the assistance of Richard A. Forster. Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., NY, 212 pages. \$10.95. This book provides an almost complete list of all the living species of birds in a compact 180 pages. Given for each species are the scientific and English names, one or more sources of information and a general idea of its range. The book has been compiled from standard ornithological references without pretense of taxonomic expertise. Typographic errors are common and Gruson uses the Old World sequences of families. But with its orderly arrangement and modest price, this book could be a useful addition to the library of any birder.

GARY O. WALLACE

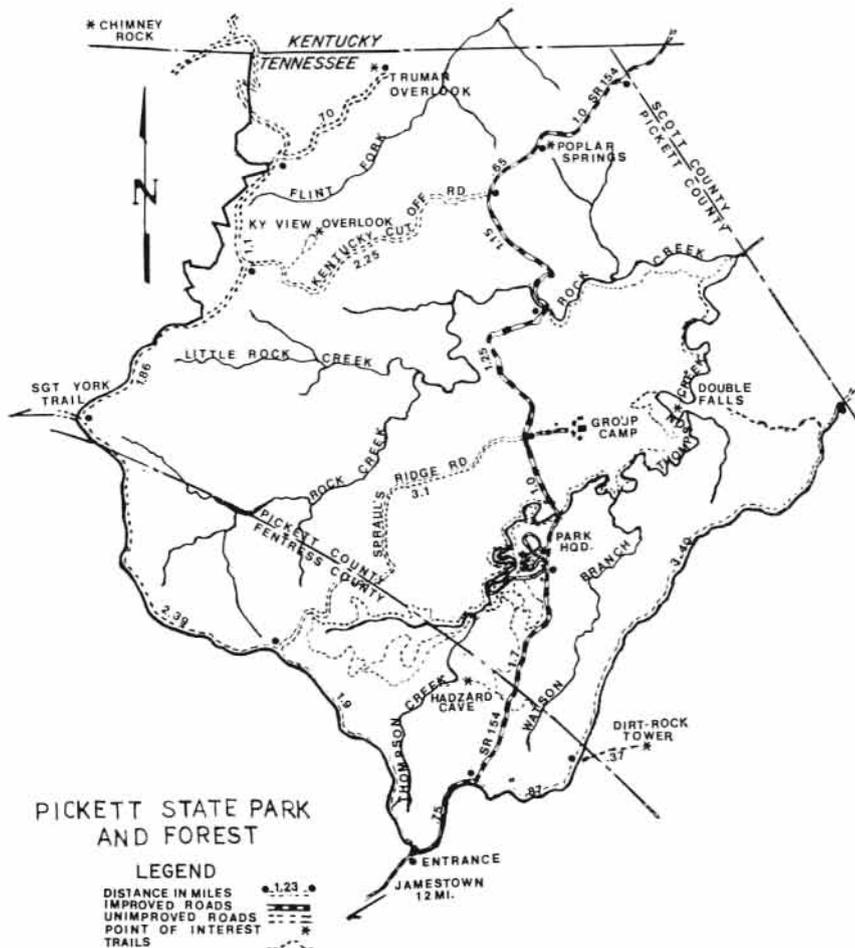
A GUIDE TO BIRD-WATCHING IN MALLORCA. By Eddie Watkinson. 1976. Published by Fack in Stockholm, Sweden, but available from M. Philbrick, P. O. Box 83, Vashon, Washington 98070. 56 pages. 22 maps on habitat sketches. \$3.90. Mallorca is a Spanish island in the western Mediterranean. The island is in a good location for the observation of European migrants and this book is a good source for details of the best birding locations. The first 17 pages give instructions on when to come, places to stay, car rental information, what to bring, telephone, bus service and complaints. The rest of the book gives detailed maps and instructions on where to go and what to look for.

GARY O. WALLACE



## BIRD FINDING IN TENNESSEE PICKETT STATE PARK AND FOREST

Starting at the entrance of Pickett State Forest in the Eastern part of Pickett County, the birder is free at any time to drive or walk the forest roads or trails. Pickett State Park occupies a small part of the Forest and is reached



by driving Hwy. 154, 2.45 miles from the entrance of the forest. Within the park are rustic and modern cabins that are available by reservations. There is also a campground for tents and trailers and an excellent group campground consisting of bunkbed cabins and a large dining hall which is available to groups but they must provide the cook and food.

A small dam on Thompson Creek within the park creates a small but deep and narrow lake that fingers back into the wooded ravines. An occasional duck or grebe can be found here but on the whole the area is limited to woodland

birds. Color coded foot trails in the park wind around and under cliff overhangs, across creeks and through deep woodlands where the most common birdsongs in the nesting season are of the Ovenbird, Carolina Wren and Hooded Warbler.

Tall pines mixed with deciduous trees in the campground and group camp harbor many warblers in the spring and summer including the Black-throated Green and Pine Warblers. Probably the most sought and less seen bird is the Red-cockaded Woodpecker which is now on the endangered list. On 1 June 1969 we observed one adult female feeding two fledged juveniles (one with feathers partly plastered with resin) among the pines in the campground. We were able to watch them closely for 45 minutes. Albert Ganier gave an account of apparent nesting birds (*The Migrant*, 33:39-45) and in a personal letter to us of finding an occupied nest in a pine on the Natural Bridge in the park.

Repeated efforts by us to find a nest reported by Mack Pritchard on the Hidden Passage Trail, have been unsuccessful. This is probably due to a tornado in the Spring of 1974 that destroyed many trees in that area and no sightings have been reported since then, but it is believed they may have moved to some other part of the forest.

Flickers, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are found in fair numbers in the Forest. Early morning or late afternoon walks on the Hidden Passage Trail should produce a Ruffed Grouse. On 1 Sept. 1975 while driving the Sprauls Ridge Road, .2 miles from Hwy. 154, we found a Wild Turkey crossing into the woods.

To drive some of the interesting back roads start at the visitors center and proceed North on Hwy. 154, 3.3 miles and turn left on the second unpaved road locally called Kentucky Cutoff Road. Follow this road to the Kentucky View Overlook sign for an optional one mile roundtrip hike. Continue on to the Old Sharps Road, turn right and drive 1.1 miles, turn right again for .7 miles to Truman Overlook. From here you can see the Chimney Rock protruding over 100 feet from a ridgetop. Albert Ganier named it "Bluebeards Castle" and at the age of 52 scaled the rock to photograph a nesting Black Vulture. The Chimney Rock is located outside the park and forest and to reach it you must hike an approximate three miles roundtrip. Contact park or forest personnel before attempting this strenuous but exciting climb.

Return to Old Sharps Road and turn left, continuing on this road back to Hwy. 154 and the entrance to the forest, stopping along the way at a small field on the right for sparrows, etc.

Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Wood Thrushes, vireos and Great Crested Flycatchers can be heard throughout the forest in the Summer. Barred Owls and Whip-poor-wills are the night songs.

We know of no recent list of birds that has been compiled for this area. To compare Albert Ganier's past study "Summer Birds Of Pickett Forest," (*The Migrant* 8:24-27) with a present study would be very interesting and revealing.

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## THE SEASON

FRED J. ALSOP, III, *Editor*

WINTER SEASON: 1 NOVEMBER - 15 MARCH



Cold, COLD, COLD!!! . . . but, for those who watched their feeders and who made it out into their favorite birding haunts what rewards there were! We experienced the coldest winter on record with conditions that brought boreal species southward in impressive numbers. "Invasions" of some species were reported from across the State. And here-and-there among the northern finches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and raptors lingered tangers, orioles, warblers, and other birds better suited for wintering in the American tropics. There are so many notable and unusual records in the reports that follow that one finds any attempt to summarize them in these introductory lines as difficult as the winter was severe.

Two species, one northern and one western, that had been reliably reported from Tennessee only once or twice before are represented by Common Redpoll sightings in the Nashville Area and on Roan Mountain near the Tennessee border and a female Yellow-headed Blackbird photographed near Clarksville. The House Finch seems destined to become a "regular" wintering species here with reports from Kingsport and Johnson City in the Eastern Ridge and Valley and, perhaps more significantly, reports of from one to three birds each from 7 counties in the Central Plateau and Basin Region.

Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins were recorded from all areas of the State with numbers varying from small scattered flocks to numbers equal to or greater than any before reported. Evening Grosbeaks were especially abundant in the Central Plateau and Basin and Eastern Mountain Regions. Tree Sparrows were found in all but the Eastern Mountain Region as were Lapland Longspurs. White-winged Crossbills were present in the largest numbers since 1964 and were located in the Western Coastal Plain and in the Eastern Mountain Regions. Red Crossbills were observed in the Chattanooga area and in the Eastern Mountain Region. A Harris Sparrow wintered in Memphis.

For most the birds of prey bring an inner excitement and to watch them in the gray shades of winter is always special. The bird of this winter season has to be the Rough-legged Hawk. It was recorded in every region and in what would seem to be unprecedented numbers—at least 46 reported from across the state from the grassy balds above 5000 feet on Roan Mountain to

the lowlands of the Mississippi Valley. A Goshawk was seen in the Eastern Mountain, Merlins in the Eastern Ridge and Valley and in the Central Plateau and Basin, and the last region had a Peregrine at Columbia as well. Bald Eagles were seen in the Eastern Ridge and Valley and the Central Plateau and Basin, but none were reported from the Western Coastal Plain where they must have been present at least at Reelfoot Lake. Golden Eagles were seen on Roan Mountain in the east and Cannon County continues to be the place to find wintering eagles of this species in Tennessee with 5 of the 7 Central Plateau and Basin records coming from there. Short-eared Owls were noted in all but the Eastern Mountain Region and an active Barn Owl nest was found in Kingsport on 17 Dec. with one egg and one young.

Scoters get the nod in a good list of waterfowl species seen this season, many in larger than usual numbers. The rare (for Tennessee) Black Scoter was observed in the Central Plateau and Basin and 17 individuals of this species were found on Nickajack near Chattanooga in the Eastern Ridge and Valley. These two regions also had White-winged Scoters and the latter a Surf Scoter, Whistling Swans, and an "invasion" of Common Mergansers. The most uncommon waterbird has to be the Red-necked Grebe located in the Eastern Mountain Region. Several species of "peep" sandpipers wintered in the Eastern Ridge and Valley.

The Sandhill Crane migrations, both south to the wintering grounds and north to the nesting areas were recorded within this season. Birds were seen in the two middle regions of the State. The peak numbers of migrants in the Fall flight came on 24 November with several hundred birds reported in both regions, and 5-7 March in the Spring movement.

The Black-capped Chickadees were seen and studied at length on Roan Mountain where there is much suitable habitat for the species, but almost a complete absence of records for any season for the year.

Birds that lingered included Nashville Warblers in November in the Western Coastal Plain and the Eastern Mountain regions, the latter also had a Dec. Solitary Vireo; Pine Warblers at feeders in Chattanooga; House Wren and a Long-billed Marsh Wren on 31 Dec. in the Nashville Area; Gray Catbirds wintering in the Western Coastal Plain; wintering Northern (Baltimore) Orioles and Summer Tanagers in both the Western Coastal Plain and the Central Plateau and Basin; and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Knoxville.

And the Red-breasted Nuthatches came to Tennessee, in "invasion" numbers in the Central Plateau and Basin . . . American Woodcock sang on 18 Dec. in the Eastern Ridge and Valley . . . and it was very cold . . . much more follows . . .

**WESTERN COASTAL PLAIN REGION:** Stations reporting the Evening Grosbeak were numerous in Shelby County; numbers ranged from 2 to 30. They were reported in Tiptonville, 16 Feb-10 Mar (1-4) by Mrs. Bettie Sumara; in Martin, 17 Jan-10 Mar (6-15) by Dr. David Pitts; and in Dyersburg, 2-4 Dec (1) by Mrs. Virginia Lamb. The Tree Sparrow wintered in West Tennessee again. The first report was 26 Dec (2-4) C (RM), other reports were from the Memphis area in flock numbers up to 25. The latest date, 18 Mar, reported 4 at the Penal Farm. Dyersburg reported one on 8 Jan (WGC), and Weakley Co. had flocks of (2-8) 26 Jan-5 Mar (DF). Dr. David Pitts reported *WHITE-*

WINGED CROSSBILLS in a hemlock tree on the UTM campus. This is the second report for this species in West Tennessee.

*Goose-Tanager*: Hutchin's Goose race of the Canada (*Branta canadensis butchinsii*): 23 Jan through 23 Mar (1) M (RM). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 28 Jan (1) PF (HBD, MW). ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: 17 Nov. (2) PF (HBD); 25 Nov (1) PF (JGH); 27 Nov (1) F (JGH); 29 Jan (1) PF (DW); 11 Feb (1) PF (TOSMC). American Golden Plover: 11 Mar (27) PF (HBD, MW); 16 Mar (250) PF (HBD, SF, MW); 19 Mar (68) PF (NS, MW). American Woodcock: first courtship displays on 26 Feb; continued through 15 Mar UTM (DP). Pectoral Sandpiper: 11 Mar (2) PF (HBD, MW); 16 Mar (36) PF (HBD, SF, MW). YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO: 1 Nov (1) H (JGH); 2 Nov (1) OP (JGH); 6 Nov (1) D (VL). SHORT-EARED OWL: 20 Jan (2) PF (AL) seen irregularly through 12 Feb (1) PF (DW). Purple Martin: 25 Feb (1) M (JG), one found dead 20 Feb M (TLS). Winter Wren: 18 Dec (4) CC (TOS), winter number was low. GRAY CATBIRD: 18 Dec (1) M (AS, NS); 2 Dec through 2 Jan (1) D (VL). American Robin: 1-10 Feb flocks of 25 to 1,000 in Weakley Co. (DP). Eastern Bluebird: 9 found dead in boxes in Obion Co. during Jan (DP).

*Warbler-Longspur*: Nashville Warbler: 24 Nov (1) D (LW, CH, VL); Common Yellowthroat: 26 Dec (1) TWA (WGC). Northern (Baltimore) Oriole: 4 Nov (1) D (VL). SUMMER TANAGER: 5 Dec (1) OP (VJ, OI); 2 Feb through 15 Mar (1) M (GO, PO, MW). Dickcissel: 24 Jan (1) UTM (DP). Pine Siskin: reported at some feeders (1-6) in M with a total of (51) on 18 Dec. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: 28 Nov (2 males), 2 Dec (2 females) UTM (DP). Rufous-sided (Spotted) Towhee: 12 Jan through 26 Feb (1) R (JF, SF). Chipping Sparrow: 18 Dec (1) PF (GP, ER). HARRIS'S SPARROW: 18 Dec (1) M (LC, FD). Lincoln's Sparrow: 18 Dec (1) PF (HBD, MW). LAPLAND LONGSPUR: 20 Jan (30) PF (AL); 30 Jan (50) PF (DW).

*Observers*: LLC—Lula C. Coffey; WGC—W. G. Criswell; FD—Fred Dickson; HBD—Helen B. Dinkelspiel; SF—Sue Ferguson; JF—Jim Ferguson; JG—John Gregory; CH—Celia Hudson; JGH—James G. Holt; OI—Oliver Irwin; VJ—Victor Julia; AL—Allan Larrabee; VL—Virginia Lamb; RM—Robert McGowan; GO—George Owen; PO—Peggy Owen; GP—George Payne; DP—David Pitts; AS—Arlo Smith; BS—Bettie Sumara; NS—Noreen Smith; TLS—T. L. Smith; TOSMC—TN Ornithological Society, Memphis Chapter; ER—Ernest Restivo; DW—Dick Whittington; LW—Latta Woods; MW—Martha Waldron.

*Locations*: C—Collierville; D—Dyersburg; H—Hopefield, Tn. west of Mississippi River, due west of downtown Memphis; M—Memphis; OP—Overton Park; PF—Penal Farm; TWA—Tigrett Wildlife Area; UTM—University of Tennessee at Martin.

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CENTRAL PLATEAU AND BASIN REGION—As the winter got colder the birding got better. The winter of 1977-78 was the coldest on record as was the single month of February. Snow fell in Nashville on more than forty

days and most nonnavigable bodies of water were frozen from mid-January to early March. Boreal species highlighted the winter scene.

*Heron-Hawk*: Little Blue Heron: 23 Nov (1) Nash (MPS), 45 days latest Nash area. White-fronted Goose: 17-29 Dec (1 adult) Old Hickory 1 (NTOS), fourth record Nash area. Ring-necked Duck: Large number—5 Mar (3,000), 12 Mar (2,000) Cheatham L (BB). Common Goldeneye: 20 Feb (155) Woods Reservoir (KLD), nice number. White-winged Scoter: 25 Nov-9 Dec (1) Radnor L, Nash (MLM); 28 Dec (1) Woods Reservoir (FB); 4 Feb-15 Mar (1) Franklin, Williamson Co (CS); 12 Feb (1) Woods Reservoir (LD, DRJ, JWS). There is a possibility that the Radnor Lake and Franklin birds were the same and, of course, the same true for the sightings at Woods Reservoir. *BLACK SCOTER*: from end previous period—10 Nov (1) Radnor L (MLB, *et al*). Accipiters: During the snow of Jan and Feb reports were received of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks staking out feeding stations with some success. *ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK*: Major invasion, perhaps unprecedented. First for winter—31 Dec (1) Cheatham L (RJM, SS). Then beginning 21 Jan-4 Mar a minimum of 38 individuals sighted in 13 counties—Cannon (1), Cheatham (3), Coffee (1), Cumberland (2), Davidson (4), Maury (4), Montgomery (6), Overton (1), Robertson (1), Rutherford (3), Sumner (4), Williamson (1), Wilson (7)—(AH, BB, BJ, CS, DPC, DRJ, JS, KA, LK, MMcM, RHu, RJM, RMcM, RR). Golden Eagle: 1 Jan (1 adult) Byrdstotwn (RH); 25 Feb (1 immature) Cheatham L (RJM, TMM); winter 1977-78 (2 adults, 3 immatures) Cannon Co (FB). Bald Eagle: Some reports—28 Nov (1 adult) Woods Reservoir (KLD); 31 Dec-12 Mar (1 adult, 1 immature) Cheatham L (RJM, SS, TMM, BB); 6 Jan (1 adult) Spencer Creek, Wilson Co. (JBH *vide* JS); 11 Feb (6 adults, 1 immature) upper part Dale Hollow L (DH); 6 Mar (1 adult) Byrdstotwn (RH). Marsh Hawk: General consensus; during winter 1977-78 more than usual "Middle Tennessee." The weather could have been a factor in the increased sightings. *MERLIN*: 9 Dec-9 Jan (1-2) Lascassas, Rutherford Co (RMcM, MMcM), rare anytime. *PEREGRINE FALCON*: 19 Dec (1) Columbia (AP), rare anytime.

*Crane-Nutbatch*: Sandhill Crane: Fall migration—23 Nov (12) Woodbury (FB); 23-24 Nov (200) Port Royal, Montgomery Co (BH *vide* JDA), apparently second Montgomery Co record, 7 Dec 1975 (25) over Red River, Montgomery Co (DS) first county record; 24 Nov (98+22) Cookeville (KSC); 24 Nov (90) Nash (WMS), third Nash area record; 24 Nov (150) Clay Co (DH); 1 Dec (24) Monterey (KSC); 2 Dec (heard) Byrdstown (RH). Fall migration was extensive and westward of usual pattern. Spring migration—5 Mar (56) Byrdstown (RH); 6 Mar (208) Byrdstown (RH), sighted between 4:45 p.m.-5:45 p.m. in several flocks; 7 Mar (23) Tenn 42 and Obey River bridge, Pickett Co (RH). *SHORT-EARED OWL*: Nash area reported two locations total 5 individuals; 7-22 Jan (2) Rutherford Co (RHu, AH). Chimney Swift: 13 Nov (1) Radnor L (JA), latest Nash six days and broke a 52-year old record. Screech Owl: In February two individuals found Nashville suffering from apparent starvation during time of lengthy snow cover, one could not sit up. Food taken voluntarily, recovered and released (MLB, VP). Horned Lark: The snow cover of Jan and Feb produced flocks throughout the region. Large flocks—10 Dec (200) Cannon Co (FB); Jan (100) Lawrenceburg (LC); 21-28 Jan (100+) Murfreesboro (AH); 29 Jan

(300) Tenn 42 at Monroe, Overton Co (RH); 30 Jan (2,000) and 7 Feb (300) mile 125, I-24, Coffee Co. (KLD). Red-breasted Nuthatch: Major invasion "Middle Tennessee." Most reporting areas commented more than usual winter. Many came to feeding stations.

*Wren-Dickcissel*: Carolina Wren: Concern expressed region wide for species because of snow and cold. Spring and breeding censuses should be more revealing as to population levels. *HOUSE WREN*: 31 Dec (1) Cheatham L, first winter record Nash area (CDC). *LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN*: 31 Dec (1) Cheatham L, Dickson Co (CDC), third winter record Nash area. Eastern Bluebird: Concern expressed for species because of snow and cold. Spring and breeding censuses should be more revealing as to population levels. Cedar Waxwing: By late Dec most had departed, then few until late Jan and early Feb when scattered small flocks reported. Palm Warbler: 18 Jan (1) Nash (TMM), occasional winter. *YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD*: 14 Jan-5 Feb (1 female-photo) Clarksville (AHH, JH), third confirmed state and first Middle Tennessee record; 4 Mar (1 male) Nash (MLM), first Nash record. *NORTHERN (BALTIMORE) ORIOLE*: 15 Jan-end of period (1) Murfreesboro (CA *vide* AH), limited records winter. *SUMMER TANAGER*: 15-26 Dec (1 male) Murfreesboro (JJC, then others), few if any winter records state. Dickcissel: 14 Dec (1) Murfreesboro (AH), occasional winter.

*Grosbeak-Longspur*: Evening Grosbeak: Major invasion throughout "Middle Tennessee." Birds still present end of period. Purple Finch: Good to excellent numbers "Middle Tennessee." Banded 3030 Nashville (BW, HJR, KAG, MLB, MPS, VP). *HOUSE FINCH*: Rapidly becoming expected winter species. Reported from seven counties: Cannon—winter 1977-78 (2) Woodbury (FB); Cheatham—31 Dec (3 males) Cheatham L (RJM, SS); Davidson—16 Dec-27 Mar (1 brown) Nash (JA); 22 Jan (1 male) Nash (RR); 1-21 Feb (1 brown) Nash (LOT); Maury—26 Dec-26 Jan (1 brown) Columbia (EB); 19-26 Jan (1 male) Columbia (GRM); Putman—4 Mar (1 male) Cookeville (DL *vide* KC); Rutherford—10-27 Feb (1 male + 1 brown) Murfreesboro (LE, CE, AH); Wilson—12-15 Dec (1 male-banded) Mt. Juliet (BW). *COMMON REDPOLL*: 9 Jan-11 Mar (small number-photo) Nash area (FT, AMH, KAG, DPC, LRW, WJB, LK, VJW, EE, JPJ, HD), second known occurrence Nash area. Detailed invasion note forthcoming. Pine Siskin: Major invasion "Middle Tennessee." Good numbers reported throughout area with variations among feeding stations. None Byrdstown (RH)! American Goldfinch: Major influx to feeders at least in Clarksville, Nashville and Murfreesboro. General comment was "most ever." Some Nashville feeders with 100+, most with minimum of 20. Banded 1801 Nashville (BW, HJR, KAG, MLB, MPS, VP). Tree Sparrow: 31 Dec (1) dam, Cheatham L (TMM); then major invasion beginning 13 Jan and continuing through Feb into early Mar. Most feeding stations had a few birds while snow cover present. Reported from eleven counties—first date reported: Cannon—26 Jan; Cheatham—22 Jan; Coffee—Feb; Davidson—19 Jan; Lawrence—26 Jan; Maury—13 Jan; Montgomery; Pickett—26 Jan; Rutherford—15 Jan; Sumner—19 Jan; Wilson—22 Jan. In Nashville several sightings of flocks 100 or more. Last dates, 5 Mar (1) Woods Reservoir (CSB); 18 Mar (2) Buena Vista, Nash (TMM). *LAPLAND LONGSPUR*: 28 Jan-24 Feb (1-5) Old Hickory L, (LK, *et al*), eighth

record Nash area; 30 Jan-7 Feb (3-2) mile 125, I-24, Coffee Co (KLD); 8-15 Feb (1-6) South Harpeth Valley (KAG), ninth record Nash area.

*Observers* (alphabetically beginning first initial): AH—Anne Hettish; AHH—Annie H. Heilman; AMH—Ann M. Houk; AP—Allen Presnell; BB—Bill Blakeslee; BH—Bill Hudson; BJ—Bill Jones; BW—Bessie Walker; CA—Charlotte Allen; CDC—C. Dwight Cooley; CE—Cleo Edwards; CS—Carol Stewart; CSB—Carroll and Stan Barr; DH—Dave Hassler; DL—Dock Little; DPC—Dot and Paul Crawford; DRJ—Daniel R. Jacobson; DS—Dave Snyder; ES—Ed Byassee; EE—Evelyn Ellis; FB—Frances Bryson; FT—Frances Thomson; GRM—George R. Mayfield, Jr.; HD—Howard Duncan; HJR—Heather and John Riggins; JA—Jan Alexander; JBH—John and Betty Hill; JDA—Joe D. Allen; JH—Juanita Harris; JJC—James and Josephine Cantrell; JPJ—John Paul Jones; JS—John Sellars; JWS—Jo W. Stone; KA—Kenneth Anderson; KAG—Katherine A. Goodpasture; KC—Kathryn Coward; KLD—Ken and Lil Dubke; KSC—Kathryn and Sam Coward; LC—Lloyd Clayton; LD—Lil Dubke; LE—Lou Erwin; LK—Lee Kramer; LOT—Lawrence O. Trabue; LRW—Linda and Roy Webster; MLB—Michael L. Bierly; MLM—Margaret L. Mann; MMcM—Mac McMillan; MPS—M. Pat Stallings; NTOS—Nashville Chapter Tennessee Ornithological Society; RH—Robbie Hassler; RHu—Richard Hunter; RJM—Robert J. Milburn; RMcM—Ruth McMillan; RR—Richard Rimmer; SS—Steve Schon; TMM—Tim M. Mann; VJW—Violet J. Watkins; VP—Virginia Price; WJB—William J. Bryan, Jr.; WMS—Winslow M. Shaughnessy.

MICHAEL LEE BIERLY, 2415 Crestmoor Road, Nashville 37215.

**EASTERN RIDGE AND VALLEY REGION**—For the second year in a row the region experienced an extended numbing cold season. Heavy snow conditions farther north forced many species to winter beyond their usual ranges where they were seen and reported by a large number of birders. Thus, the numerous observations of Rough-legged Hawks and unprecedented numbers of Tree Sparrows and the record of a Lapland Longspur.

The fall waterfowl flight was not conspicuous, but on the other hand, the spring flight observed on 14 March was the largest ever recorded in the Chattanooga area. The Red-breasted Nuthatch movement was modest with varying numbers of Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins being reported. House Finches seem to be increasing in the Johnson City area.

*Loons-Mergansers*: Common Loon: Scattered numbers 1-10 ChL, ChL BL (mob); 7 Nov (30+) BL (DL). Horned Grebe: 1-50 on ChL, BL irregularly through out period (mob). Pied-billed Grebe: 1-33 ChL during period (mob). Double-crested Cormorant: 1-6 wintered HRA (KLD, JWS); 6 Nov (1) NL (GLB, DRJ, LMJ). Great Blue Heron: Regular SB, HRA (max 95) (KLD); 1-5 irregularly BL thru end of period (DL *et al*). Green Heron: 12 Dec (1) NL (DRJ, Lloyd and Betty Anderson); 18-19 Dec (1) AM (JWS, BRW, DRJ). **CATTLE EGRET**: 25 Nov (1) HRA (JWS). Great Egret: 6 Nov (1) NL (GLB, DRJ, LMJ); 12 Nov-10 Dec (1) HRA (JWS). Black-crowned Night Heron: 13 Feb (11) KP (RAP). **WHISTLING SWAN**: 13 Nov (1) ChL (JWS, LD); 27-28 Nov (2) SB (DRJ, LD). Canada Goose: approx 200 wintered CL (CPN). Snow Goose: 21 Dec-12 Feb (1-4) HRA (mob); 9-15 Mar (1) BL (DL *et al*). Snow Goose (blue morph): 24 Nov-12 Feb (1-5)

HRA (mob); Jan-15 Mar (1-2) CL (CPN *et al*). Black Duck: approx 400 wintering Greeneville throughout period (CPN *et al*). Gadwall: 1-100 wintered ChL (mob). Pintail: eight records ChL; max 6 Mar (12) HRA (KLD). Green-winged Teal: 4 records (1-10) ChL (KLD). Blue-winged Teal: 6 Nov (1) NL (GLB, DRJ, LMJ). American Wigeon: 3 records ChL; max 14 Mar (128) ChL (KLD). Northern Shoveler: 29 Dec-26 Feb (1) JC (RK *et al*); 14 Mar (38) ChL (KLD). Redhead: 11 Mar (2) CL (JCH, GM); 14 Mar (250) ChL (KLD). Ring-necked Duck: 18 Dec (50) BMP (RAP) 14 Mar (750) ChL (KLD). Canvasback: 18 Dec (30) BMP (RAP); 3-15 Feb (1) JC (DL *et al*); 3 records ChL (11-16) (KLD *et al*). Scaup (species?): 25-150 present most of period ChL (KLD, JWS); 14 Mar (13,500) ChL (KLD). Common Goldeneye: Scattered records of 1-35 ChL, NL (KLD, DRJ, JWS). Bufflehead: 12 Nov (75) ChL (MD, LD); 24 Nov-25 Feb usual 12-30 HRA (JWS); 16 Dec (107) HRA (KLD). *OLDSQUAW*: 21 Dec-8 Jan (1) JC (DL, PR). *WHITE-WINGED SCOTER*: 18 Dec (1) FLL (JCH, GM); 22 Jan (1) ChL (JWS, RBW, LD); 12 Feb (2) ChL (GLB); 10, 15 Mar (1) Holston River at Surgoinsville (CPN). *SURF SCOTER*: 6 Nov (1) NL (GLB, DRJ, LMJ). *BLACK SCOTER*: 6 Nov (17) NL (GLB, DRJ, LMJ). Ruddy Duck: 27-29 Nov (1) JC (MD, DL); 14 Mar (2) BL (MD, SG, HD); 12 Nov (40) ChL (MD, LD), plus 4 other records of 1-4 individuals during the period (JWS, DRJ). Hooded Merganser: 12 Nov (35) ChL (MD, LD); 13 Nov-16 Dec (8-22) HRA, ChL (JWS). *COMMON MERGANSER*: A very heavy invasion this season on BL from 4 Feb-7 Mar (20-85+) (ETOS); six records from 10 Dec-6 Mar ChL, NL, HRA (JWS, DRJ, KLD). Red-breasted Merganser: 12 Nov-14 Mar scattered reports of 1-35 on ChL, NL (KLD, JWS *et al*).

*Vulture-Cranes*: Turkey Vulture: 15 Mar (30) roost at Da (DRJ, LMJ). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 1 regular at feeder CH (Janet Phillips); 19 Jan (1) BL (DL); 21 Jan (1) JC (RL); 1 Mar (1) BL (RK); 26 Feb (2) Hawkins Co. (RAP); 2 killed in K area by flying into windows at bird feeders (CPN). Cooper's Hawk: Five records during period in Washington Co. (MD, SG, HD, DL, RAP); 3 records Hamilton Co. (KLD, DRJ, JWS): 18, 19 Dec (1) Sullivan Co. (RAP). Both above species "reported during Jan and Feb in above normal numbers in Anderson and Campbell Co." (CPN). Red-tailed Hawk: Regular scattered numbers CH (KLD, JWS *et al*); 4 Mar (1 almost entirely black, no white on tail) PSF (CPN); 3 Feb (1 melanistic adult) LI (RAP, TFL). Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 Mar (2) MC (RL); 6 Mar (1) MC (PR); 2 wintered SB with others reported occasionally CH (KLD *et al*). Above species "... wintering in good numbers until 3rd-4th week of Jan, when numbers were depressed until early Mar." (CPN). *ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK*: 15 Jan (2) SB (KLD); 16 Jan (1) HRA (KLD); 28 Jan (1) Daisy (Roger Woodruff); 3 Feb (1) 1-75 at Norris (JMC, GM); 3 Feb (2) Rock Springs exit Hwy 137, Sullivan Co. and LI (RAP, TFL); 4 Feb (2) LI (RAP and TFL); 19-22 Feb (1) JC (DL, PR); 24 Feb (1 trapped and banded) LI (RAP, TFL); apparently same bird observed to week of 5 Mar at same location (Bill Kappa). Bald Eagle: 1-2 thru period at Norris Dam (CPN *et al*); 4 Feb-5 Mar (1-2 occasional) NL, ChL (JWS, DRJ, LMJ). Marsh Hawk: 1-2 regular CH (KLD, JWS); 9 Mar (1) AS (RK). *MERLIN*: 14 and 16 Jan (1) Da (LMJ). Sandhill Crane: 13 Nov (3) KCo (Besty Ann Murphy); 13 Nov (35) Norris (Donald A. Hammer); 23-30 Nov (5 records of 8-82 birds) NL, SB, HRA

(JWS, KLD); one individual wintered HRA (JWS, KLD); 6 Mar (280) Washington, Rhea Co. (KLD); 7 Mar (30) SB (W. Lee Shafer) 12 Mar (5) HRA (LD, DRJ, JWS *et al*); 12 Mar (4) KCo (Steve and Barbara Steadman).

*Coot-Owls*: American Coot: Up to 3,000 on NL, with lesser numbers elsewhere (KLD, DRJ *et al*). Killdeer: 1 Nov (160) HRA (KLD). American Woodcock: 18 Dec (6 in first flight song for the season) AM (KLD *et al*); 17 Mar (1st returned) AS (DL). Common Snipe: Up to 95 SB all period (KLD); 21 Dec (50) HRA (JWS). Greater Yellowlegs: 25 Nov and 1 Dec (1) HRA (JWS); 6 Mar (1) HRA (KLD). Pectoral Sandpiper: 6 Mar (19) HRA (KLD); 7 Mar (90) SB (KLD). Least Sandpiper: 12 records during period HRA, SB, max 16 Dec (26) SB, HRA (KLD, JWS). Dunlin: Up to 92 regular SB (KLD); 12 Nov-21 Dec (10-50) HRA (JWS). Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 well marked individual with a short distinct bill present from 27 Dec to 16 Jan SB (KLD). Herring Gull: Regular max 30 Nov (52) SB (LD); 29 Dec-28 Feb (1-100) BL (ETOS). Ring-billed Gull: Regular max 22 Jan (500) ChL (KLD); mid-Dec-28 Feb (up to 200+) BL (ETOS). Bonaparte's Gull: 26 Dec-24 Jan (1-3) BL (DL, RK, SG, MD); 11 Nov-25 Dec (1-25) NL, ChL (JWS *et al*); 4 Mar (10) PSF (CPN). Mourning Dove: One nest hatched in late Feb K (D. Eyre *vide* JBO). Barn Owl: 25 Feb (1) JC (RL); 17 Dec (2) ad. w/1 young and 1 egg) Netherland Inn Quarry, Sullivan Co. (RAP, TFL). Screech Owl: 15 Mar (2 early nests: 1 w/4 eggs, 1 w/3 eggs) Hawkins Co. (CPN). Great Horned Owl: 6 Mar (2 young in nest) HRA (KLD). *SHORT-EARED OWL*: 29 Jan (1) NL (GLB, LD, JWS, DRJ); 12 Feb (1) KCo (JMC, JBO, Paul Pardue).

*Flycatcher-Grosbeak*: Eastern Phoebe: "A very hard winter for this species, the last fall bird was seen on 14 Nov and not seen again until 13 Mar." (Glen D. Eller). Purple Martin: 13 Mar (8) SB (KLD); 14 Mar (1) JC (SG, MD, HD). Horned Lark: 27 Feb (53) HRA (KLD). Red-breasted Nuthatch: Only comment came from CH with "scattered numbers" (KLD *et al*). Brown Thrasher: At least 3 separate birds spent the winter near feeders JC area (SG, Elizabeth Osbourn, Kathryn Jonet *et al*). Eastern Bluebird: "No noticeable decline due to cold weather" (GDE); 12 Jan (2 adults and 3 young banded; roosting in same box in which they nested) KP (RAP). Water Pipit: 16 Dec (30) HRA (JWS); 21 Dec (50) HRA (JWS); 5 Mar (50) SeV (JWS, LD, DRJ). Pine Warbler: Up to 7 regular at feeder CH (JP). Rusty Blackbird: 1-10 seen irregularly during period at TCA (ETOS). *BREWER'S BLACKBIRD*: 5 Mar (2) SeV (LD, JWS, DRJ); 7 Mar (2) TCA (DL); 14 Mar (4) TCA (SG, MD). *ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK*: 28 Feb-21 Mar (1 male) K (Louis and Johneta Smith). Evening Grosbeak: 1st report 7 Nov at Norris then varying numbers from few to many CH, K, JC (mob).

*Finch-Longspur*: Purple Finch: Regular and common at feeders CH, K, JC (mob). *HOUSE FINCH*: 6 Nov to end of period (4-10) JC (HD, RK *et al*). Pine Siskin: 15-20 regular at feeders in CH with few scattered numbers elsewhere at JC, K (mob). *RED CROSSBILL*: 5 Mar (1) SM (JWS, LD, DRJ, A. Boyd Sharp). Savannah Sparrow: 1-25 at feeder all period SB (KLD). Vesper Sparrow: 5 Mar (1) SeV (JWS, LD, DRJ). *TREE SPARROW*: Unprecedented numbers since records have been compiled on a regionwide basis. 19 Jan to end of period JC (RL, ETOS); 5 Feb (8) KP (Tommy Phillips); 24 Feb (5) KP (RAP); 16 Dec (2) Gallaher Bend on Melton Hill Lake (GM);

21 Dec (2) and 21 Jan (1) KCo (Bob Floyd); 21 Jan (2) Powell (GM, Bill and Alicyn McNutt); 21 Jan (14) Speedwell (G. W. McKinney); "then many reports of flocks of up to 170 and present until at least 4 Mar (80) PSF (CPN)"; 23 Jan-5 Mar (1-20) AM, HRA, Tiftonia, Da and SeV (LMJ, KLD, GLB, JWS and JP). Chipping Sparrow: 6 Nov (1) NL (GLB, DRJ, LMJ); 11 Nov (1) and 7 Feb (7) ALM (GLB); 26 Jan (1) SM (RBW). White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's race): 25 Feb (1 banded) K (Steve Steadman). Fox Sparrow: Two regular at feeder CH (JWS). *LAPLAND LONG-SPUR*: 21 Feb (1) HRA (KD).

*Abbreviations*: approx—approximately; max—maximum; mob—many observers.

*Locations*: ALM—Atop Lookout Mountain, Ga.; AM—Amnicola Marsh; AS—Austin Springs; BMP—Bays Mountain Park; CH—Chattanooga Area; ChL—Chickamauga Lake; CkL—Cherokee Lake; CL—Cove Lake; Da—Daus; FLL—Fort Loudon Lake; HRA—Hiwassee River Area; JC—Johnson City; K—Knoxville; KP—Kingsport; LI—Long Island, Sullivan County; MC—Milligan College; NL—Nickajack Lake; PSF—U. T. Plant Science Farm, Knox County; SB—Savannah Bay; SeV—Sequatchie Valley; SM—Signal Mountain; WCo—Washington County.

*Observers*: BRW—Dick Wodzinski; CPN—Charles P. Nicholson; DL—Dick Lura; ETOS—Elizabethton Chapter, TOS; GLB—Gary L. Bayne; HD—Helenhill Dove; JBO—J. B. Owen; JCH—J. C. Howell; JMC—James M. Campbell; JP—Janet Phillips; JWS—JoWayne Stone; KD—Kenneth H. Dubke; LD—Lillian H. Dubke; KLD—Kenneth H. and Lillian H. Dubke; LMJ—Lemuel M. Jacobson; DRJ—Daniel R. Jacobson; MD—Martha Dillenbeck; PR—Pete Range; RAP—Rick A. Phillips; RBW—R. Bruce Wilkey; RK—Rick Knight; RL—Richard Lewis; SG—Sally Goodin; TFL—Tom F. Laughlin.

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EASTERN MOUNTAIN REGION—A winter season of unusual birds is always much welcomed by birders. When the weather did permit field trips the braver observers were well rewarded for their efforts, as many uncommon-to-rare species were sighted and carefully identified. The boreal influx that appeared imminent during late fall became a reality. Many of the northern species that we normally expect, plus a few rarer species, turned up—sometimes in surprising numbers—and were seen by many.

Early December weather was colder than normal and was to set a precedent for the entire period. The last week of Dec., the entire month of Jan., and the first ten days of Feb. were very cold. Precipitation for Dec. and Jan. had totals near normal, but February's total was some two inches below normal. What precipitation we did have was mostly in the form of snowfall. We had a total for the period of 36 inches of measurable snowfall.

*Loon-Hawk*: Common Loon: 6 Nov thru 1 Feb (1-6) WatL (ETOS). *RED-NECKED GREBE*: 27, 28 Feb (1) RC (GE, LRH, ES) *AREAS FIRST RECORD*. Horned Grebe: 6 Nov thru 5 Mar (3-10) WatL (ETOS). Great Blue Heron: 13 Jan (1) GLP (GW); 15 Mar (1) BC (GE). Canada Goose:

17 Jan (2) RC (PR); 28 Jan thru 27 Feb (5) WatR (ETOS). Wood Duck: 1st returned 27 Feb (2) SV (LRH). Canvasback: 27 Feb (1) RC (GE, LRH, ES). *OLD SQUAW*: 17 Dec (1) WatL (GE, HF). Hooded Merganser: 1st returned 7 Nov (2) GLP (GE). Red-breasted Merganser: 1st returned 7 Nov (3) WatL (HF). Common Merganser: 27 Feb (6) RC (GE, LRH, ES). Black Vulture: 8 Feb (2) HS (DL, GE). *GOSHAWK*: 3 Dec (1) Eliz (GE). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 10 separate sightings thru-out period. Cooper's Hawk: 20 Nov (1) RM (ES); 17 Dec (1) HM (GW, DL); 5 Jan (1) RM (MD, SG); 11 Feb (1) BC (GE). Red-shouldered Hawk: 13 Dec (1) WatL (DL); 27 Dec (1) HS (HF). *ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK*: 17 Feb (1) RM (FA, MD, HD, RP, TL). Golden Eagle: 15 Feb (3) RM (GE, HF). Bald Eagle: 2 Jan (1 ad) RM (ES, RL). Marsh Hawk: 15 Feb (1) RM (GE, HF).

*Woodcock-Wren*: American Woodcock: last fall record 7 Nov (1) PR and 1st spring record 6 Mar (1) (JM) both along WatR. Great Horned Owl: 8 Nov (1) IMG (SG); 17 Dec (1) HM (GW, DL). Belted Kingfisher: a noticeable decline this winter. Eastern Phoebe: another cold weather casualty, last fall sighting on 17 Dec and not seen again until 14 Mar. Purple Martin: 1st returned 14 Mar (1) Eliz (GE). Common Raven: 1-15 irregular on RM thru-out period; 17 Feb (14 in one group) RM (FA, GE, RL, SG). Carolina Wren: no noticeable decline during very cold weather.

*Thrasher-Sparrow*: Brown Thrasher: at least 2 birds spent entire winter near feeders. Hermit Thrush: only 2 reports?? 17 Dec (2) HM (GW, DL); 1-29 Jan (1) Erwin (GS). Eastern Bluebird: no noticeable decline this winter. *SOLITARY VIREO: VERY LATE 17 DEC* (1) Eliz (GW, DL, RK). Nashville Warbler: 7 Nov (1) Erwin (GS) also late date. Rusty Blackbird: 7 Nov thru 8 Feb (1-5) Eliz (ETOS). Evening Grosbeak: many flocks of 35-50 birds at various feeders. Purple Finch: several flocks of 10-15 birds at regular feeders. *COMMON REDPOLL*: 12 Feb (2) RM (GW, DL) only area's 2nd sighting since 1943. Pine Siskin: 1st returned 30 Dec (12) regular since in Eliz (ETOS). Red Crossbill: 10 Dec thru 27 Feb (2-8) WatL; 1 Feb thru 15 Mar (8-25) RM (ETOS). *WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL*: 2 Jan thru 15 Mar (2-50) regular on RM (ETOS). Chipping Sparrow: last fall sighting 20 Nov (3) Eliz (GE, HF). White-crowned Sparrow: (8-10) regular in SV (GW et. al). Fox Sparrow: 22 Dec thru 15 Mar (7-10) regular at separate feeders) Eliz (ETOS).

*Locations*: BC—Bluff City; Eliz—Elizabethton; GLP—Great Lakes Pond (near Eliz); HM—Holston Mtn.; HS—Hunter Swamp (near Eliz); IMG—Iron Mtn. Gap; RC—Roans Creek; RM—Roan Mtn.; SV—Siam Valley; WatL—Watauga Lake; WatR—Watauga River; WibL—Wilbur Lake.

*Observers*: FA—Fred Alsop; MD—Martha Dillenbeck; ETOS—Eliz, Chapter TOS; GE—Glen Eller; HF—Harry Farthing; SG—Sally Goodin; LRH—Lee R. Herndon; RK—Rick Knight; JM—John Martin; DL—Dick Lura; RL—Richard Lewis; TL—Tom Laughlin; RP—Rick Phillips; PR—Pete Range; ES—Ed Schell; GS—Glenn Swofford; GW—Gary Wallace.

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**IDENTIFICATION:** Rare or unusual species identification to be acceptable must be accompanied by verifying evidence. This should include: date, time, light and weather conditions, exact location, habitat, optical equipment, distance, behavior of bird, comparison with other similar species, characteristic markings, experience of observer, other observers verifying observation and reference works consulted.

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