

THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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“NOTES ON SOME ADAPTIVE NESTING BEHAVIOR OF THE KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) IN EAST TENNESSEE”

RICK A. PHILLIPS AND FRED J. ALSOP, III

The following observations were made by Dr. Fred J. Alsop, III, and me (Rick A. Phillips) while studying and photographing nesting Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) during May-June 1976. The nests were located on the graveled roof of the Kingsport University Center (KUC) building in Hawkins County, approximately five miles west of Kingsport, Tennessee.

The KUC building is on the former Allendale Farm site which encompasses about 600 acres of land. This land consists of second growth deciduous woodlands, brushy overgrown fields, and grazed pastures. Two ponds are present in the pastures. One pond is approximately 100 yds. south of the KUC building, and one 200 yds. east. Both ponds have gently sloping banks composed of a mixture of sandy loam, clay, and gravel. These banks, along with the nearby grazed pastures, present favorable nesting habitat for Killdeer.

The roof of the two story KUC building is a flat surface covered by tar paper over which has been placed a two to three inch layer of crushed gravel. On approximately two-thirds of the roof surface a dark, limestone gravel has been used; covering the remainder of the roof is a light sand-colored gravel. The flat roof is bounded on all sides by a verticle parapet eighteen inches high and without openings.

On various field trips about the KUC campus, Dr. Alsop and I had noticed Killdeer flying noisily about the roof of the building, as well as feeding near the ponds. Because of our interest in photographing the birds at the nest, we decided to check the roof as a possible nesting site for the plovers. Our examination of the roof produced an active nest site containing four eggs. It was located on the side of the roof covered by dark gravel, where the eggs blended almost perfectly with the color and pattern of the stones.

Several possible advantages in choosing the roof as a nest site may be considered: 1) the camouflage of the eggs on the gravel, 2) reduced predation on the high roof, it being virtually inaccessible to any but winged creatures, and 3) isolation from disturbance.

Evidence of several previous nesting attempts of the year was also found on the side of the roof covered by dark gravel. A nest was found containing only

one egg, and was determined to be abandoned. Upon further examination of the roof, I found the body of a young Killdeer only two or three days of age. The fledgling was dead, and the body was quite dehydrated. Two other old nests were found; neither containing eggs or young.

As we prepared to leave, after our extended examination of the roof, I realized what a truly barren and sterile site these birds were attempting to exploit. The black tar-paper covered by the dark gravel absorbed great amounts of heat, so much in fact that the surface would burn one's hand upon touching it. I wondered how the parent birds could possibly maintain the eggs at a cool enough temperature, approximately 34° C (Welty, 1975) for normal embryonic development.

Subsequent observations of the activities of the nest revealed a very interesting form of adaptive behavior being employed by these Killdeer to cool their eggs. The adult bird would at times take as many as six trips in an hour to one of the ponds and then back to the roof, each trip being of very short duration. The bird flew directly to the pond and performed an act which at first appeared to be bathing. But, as I observed this more carefully, and compared its behavior with the bathing of the other Killdeer in the area, it became apparent this bird was behaving differently. I believe that if the bird had actually been bathing, fewer trips would have been taken and more time would have been spent at the pond.

On the afternoon of 23 June, Dr. Alsop and I found young birds on the roof that had hatched a few hours earlier. There we also observed one of the adult birds (we assumed it to be the female) standing over the chicks with her breast feathers saturated with water. The nest area was moist from the water dripping from the adult bird's feathers. During the time we spent photographing this family, one chick, unnoticed by us at first, wandered several feet from the adult and its nest mates at the nest site. We spotted the missing chick less than ten minutes after he left the protective shading of the adult bird at the nest, but by this time it was dead from the searing heat on the open roof. The air temperature on that afternoon reached 88° F, but the temperature of the roof's surface, with its enormous heat absorbing properties, was over 120° F.

During the period of incubation the Killdeer had been flying to the pond and saturating its breast feathers with water, and then flying quickly back to the roof. It had distributed the water over the eggs and nest area. This action would not only produce a cooling effect by the evaporation of water from the egg's shells, but also increase the humidity in the immediate nest area, thereby reducing excessive water loss, which can be a critical factor in the percentage of eggs hatching (Welty, 1975). This form of behavior has been noted in other birds. The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is known to exhibit similar adaptive behavior by shaking water from the feathers over the eggs (Welty, 1975). The male Namaqua Sandgrouse (*Petrocles namaqua*) of the Kalahari Desert of Africa, flies as far as 80 kilometers to the nearest waterhole to carry water back to the young birds until they are able to fly (Cade and Maclean 1967; Maclean, 1968; in Welty, 1975). Also, the Little Ringed Plover (*Chardrius dubius*) in similar fashion carries water to its newly hatched young (Welty, 1975).

These Killdeer have clearly exhibited a form of adaptive behavior to meet the needs of their developing eggs and newly hatched young, and in the process exploited a man-created habitat. Although the Killdeer were successful in protecting the eggs from the extremely hot temperatures of this xeric environment long enough for them to hatch, they were not successful in rearing a single chick to the point of its leaving the roof. After the chicks hatched I observed them for four days.* There was no source of food or water present on the roof, and the young, being precocial, were left to find food for themselves. The parents exhibited no further modifications of behavior after the chicks left the nest. On the fourth day after hatching I found the three remaining chicks dead at different points upon the roof. At no time did I observe the parents making any effort to feed the chicks nor to transport them bodily from the roof, therefore I assume they starved to death. It is ironic that the parents' behavior could be modified to cool the eggs and insure their hatching, yet they did nothing to aid the chicks in their need for food on the sterile roof-top environment. Could these Killdeer, and others using similar roof-tops, be hatching several clutches of eggs each year, and yet every single chick be dying? Only further observations at other sites may answer the question and birders are encouraged to report their observations to the author and this journal.

*Post Note: No attempts were made to interfere with the natural cycle of these birds in order to learn the ultimate fate of the young. This year a ramp will be placed at the edge of the inner wall to see if the young can escape to the ground below by jumping as Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) do.

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Biology Department, Kingsport University Center, East Tennessee State University, University Blvd., Kingsport 37660. Accepted 6 May 1977.



TWO RED-NECKED GREBES AT NASHVILLE

PAT STALLINGS

Late in the afternoon of 7 September 1975 while birding in the woods behind Spring Hill Cemetery in Nashville I emerged from the trees into a narrow, cleared strip alongside a small lake where I saw two grebes swimming in the middle of the lake. This lake is in a valley near the Cumberland River and the land slopes down to it on all sides. There are residences around the lake opposite the cemetery with large yards wooded enough to attract, at times, a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), a Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) or a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*).

My first thought upon spying the grebes was that they were Horned Grebes (*Podiceps auritus*). They had already spotted me and were swimming toward the opposite shore. As I continued toward the lake, they sank below the surface and reappeared on the opposite side. I walked to an opening in a fringe of trees along the shore where I sat down to study the grebes. Strollers on the opposite shore flushed them back toward the center of the lake which brought them into excellent view through a Bausch and Lomb 15-60x zoom telescope at a distance of twenty to thirty yards. The grebes seemed very uneasy and eyed me warily during the fifteen minutes I was there.

These grebes seemed large with very long necks held erect, not curved. They were in changing plumage with one bird lighter all over than the other. The necks had a light, dusky, reddish wash on the front and sides, and were darker dorsally. The throats and cheeks were definitely lighter; the yellow bills were noticeably thicker at the base with one bird's bill being slightly darker at the tip. After consulting *Birds of North America* by Robbins, et al, I concluded that I was looking at two Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*).

Fishermen arrived on one side of the lake and I could hear children playing in the creek at the head of the lake. The grebes seemed very uneasy about all this activity. Without attempting to flush the birds, I left to try to find someone else to see them. About 18:30 CDT I contacted Bill and Sally Fintel who met me at the cemetery, but the grebes were not on the lake.

Descriptions of grebes in Bent's Life Histories and Peterson's Field Guide have convinced me that these were indeed two Red-necked Grebes. This sighting appears to be the second for the Nashville area; Albert F. Ganier reported one bird 1 May 1920 at Radnor Lake.

Michael Bierly listed for me the references he found in *The Migrant* to Red-necked Grebes (formerly Holboell's Grebe) in the state of Tennessee. I also asked Harry C. Monk to check his extensive files for any reports that he might have. Their combined efforts resulted in the following: 1895, Reelfoot Lake (1) Samuel N. Rhoades; 1920, May 1, Radnor Lake (1) Albert F. Ganier; 1948, February 2, mouth of Duck River (1) Eugene Cypert, Jr. and C. R. Markley; 1956, December 2, Laurel Lake (1) Mary Enloe; 1975, February 18, Chickamauga Lake (1) Ken and Lil Dubke.

In a summary of Christmas counts, William Walker refers to a Holboell's Grebe found on Radnor Lake in 1926. In "A Review of Tennessee Christmas

Counts," 1965, Laurence Trabue refers to the same record. Harry C. Monk who participated in this count at Radnor Lake told me that the record was in error and should not have been printed. I recount it here in an attempt to correct the record.

It appears that my sighting is the earliest fall date for the state and the only incidence of more than one bird.

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406 North 17 Street, Nashville 37206. Accepted 6 May 1977.



MINUTES OF THE 1978 SYMPOSIUM AND FALL MEETING

The 12th Annual Symposium and Fall Meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society was held 21-22 October at Fairfield Glade near Crossville, Tennessee.

The meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 11:00 A.M. with the President, Kenneth H. Dubke, presiding.

The minutes of the 1978 Spring Meeting were read and approved.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

There was no report from the Vice-Presidents for East and West Tennessee. There was no formal report from the Vice-President for Middle Tennessee, Sanford McGee, however, Glen King mentioned that a jaeger had been sighted at Woods Reservoir. He also mentioned that a firm commitment had been made by the Methodist Assembly at Bersheebe Springs for a Spring Meeting in 1979 but that final rates had yet to be set.

There was no report from the Secretary.

The Treasurer, Ray Jordan, stated that the checking account held \$1,264.65 and the savings account held \$1,735.00 and had gained \$27.00 in interest. Michael Bierly mentioned that bequests are an important source of funds for the Society and he stressed that being specific in the wording so the funds will go to the proper entity.

The Editorial Staff for *The Migrant*: Editor, Gary O. Wallace, made his request once again, for sending records in on time because of time constraints. He stated that *The Migrant* was now being published in 24 page format. "The Season" Editor, Fred Alsop commented those submitting information from the regions and asked everyone to get records in as soon as possible to the regional compilers. There was no report from the State Count Compiler, Richard Lura.

The Curator, James T. Tanner, reported that the "backcopy business" had slowed somewhat but that the archives were being tapped from time to time.

There were no reports from the Directors-at-Large.

REPORTS—STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance Committee Chairman, Jo Stone, reported that the records of the Treasurer had been examined and were in order. He further stated that the Certificates of Deposit were maturing in 1979 and that the Finance Committee would reach some decision as to their proper disposition.

Conservation Committee Chairman, George Mayfield, mentioned that a letter had been sent to Colonel Lockeridge, District Engineer of the Memphis District of the Corps of Engineers. Ken Dubke stated that the area of Savannah Bay near Chattanooga was being considered as a NonGame demonstration area by TWRA. Michael Bierly discussed efforts being made to preserve the Bordeaux Black-Crowned Night Heronry. George mentioned that the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River Recreation Area had not received any appropriations

since the President had vetoed the bill which contained funding, however, some effort was being made to get some funds approved separately for land acquisition purposes. Charles Nicholson stated that the NonGame Wildlife Bill which had been supported by TOS for some time had died but would be resubmitted in the next session of Congress. Arlo Smith stated that the State D.O.T. was going to come up with yet another proposal on the Overton Park/I-40 controversy.

OLD BUSINESS

Ken Dubke mentioned that a Foray Director had never been officially designated. Fred Alsop moved that the position of Foray Director be established and that a person be appointed for a two year term with responsibility for organization, coordination, and promotion of the foray in addition to putting together a report of findings. Lil Dubke seconded the motion and it was carried.

Ken Dubke mentioned that due to questions about the constitutionality of the vote on a dues increase which was held at the 1978 Spring Meeting at Fontana, the issue would be reconsidered. Fred Alsop moved that an increase in dues of \$2.00 in all categories be considered as well as an increase in Life Membership to \$200.00. After much discussion, an amended version of Fred's motion was put to a vote which called for the following dues costs: Life—\$150.00, Sustaining—\$10.00, Family—\$7.00, Active—\$6.00, Student—\$3.00. Steve Steadman, voting a proxy, seconded the motion. On a vote of 34 in favor and 10 opposed, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Charles P. Nicholson suggested that the Society establish a state newsletter to be printed twice a year. He offered to serve as editor for the newsletter. After some discussion, Mrs. Allen seconded the motion and it was carried.

Michael Bierly gave an overview of the activities surrounding the Bordeaux Rookery acquisition efforts and suggested that the Tennessee Ornithological Society make a contribution to the effort of \$500.00. John Sellars asked if the Society could "pledge" the amount pending a close examination of the Society's finances after the receipt of new dues funds. Mike indicated that this would be acceptable. The final proposal was for the Society to pledge \$500.00 for the acquisition of the Bordeaux Heronry payable by June 30, 1979. There were 34 votes in favor and 5 opposed. The motion was carried.

Gary Wallace mentioned that an official State List was being considered for the Birds of Tennessee to be issued under Avifauna IV. Fred Alsop would coordinate the effort. Sam Cowart seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Ken Dubke revealed that he had received correspondence from Morris Williams suggesting that the Board authorize funds for the printing of the *Gazeteer* and a Geographic Index to *The Migrant*. Ray Jordan moved that these issues be deferred until the Spring Meeting—1979. Lois Herndon seconded the motion and it was carried.

Fred Alsop asked that some procedure be considered for informing members of sightings of rare birds. He asked that some sort of workshop be established for the promotion of new memberships as well. Lil Dubke seconded his motion and it was carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Michael Bierly announced that the Albert F. Ganier Memorial had been dedicated and that he had brought a display of photographs for viewing by the membership.

John Sellars announced that the Dixon Merritt Memorial would be dedicated on October 22, 1978 in Cedars of Lebanon State Park.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 by the President.

R. BRUCE WILKEY, *Secretary*

BOOK REVIEW

BIRD SOUNDS. 1976. By Gerhard A. Thielcke. Ann Arbor Science Library. The University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, Michigan. viii + 190 pages. Clothbound \$6.95. Paperback \$2.95. This is an English translation of a German book first published in 1970. As a result, the book is not as current as its publication date would indicate. There has been much ornithological research on this subject between the publication date and this translation. The book is well organized, low priced and with little duplication of other books on this subject.

It is a book on sound as a functional part of bird life and not a description of sounds made by birds, intended to be used as an aid in field identification. With the aid of 95 illustrations, the author discusses how birds sing, how they hear, what kind of messages are communicated, how they learn to make sounds, and the role of sounds in the evolving of new species.

Most information presented is based on studies of European birds. The terminology used in the translation and the European bird names may present a minor problem to most Tennessee birders.

GARY O. WALLACE

ROUND TABLE NOTES

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: A NEW BREEDING SPECIES FOR THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK—In June of 1974, Bill Deane located the nest of a Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctamassa violacea*) in Cades Cove, Blount County, Tennessee. He told me that he saw one young in the nest and an adult nearby.

On 15 June 1975, I found a nest in the same area where Deane had found the 1974 nest. Later, using a color transparency of the nest that Deane had found, I was able to determine that the 1975 nest was in exactly the same position, if not the same structure, as the 1974 nest. The nest was saddled on a horizontal branch about 14 M from the ground and 2.5 M out from the trunk of a pine (*Pinus* sp.). The nest tree was in a stand of pine trees (35° 35' 35" N; 83° 47' 22" W) near a small unnamed pond 100 M SE of the point where the Cades Cove Loop Road fords at an elevation of 573 M. The nest contained five young which varied greatly in size. The smallest young was only one third



Young Yellow-Crowned Night Herons, Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 15 June 1975.

as big as the largest young. When I climbed to the nest, the larger birds moved out of the nest onto the supporting branches. While I was photographing the nest, two of the young birds opened their bills wide and lunged at me. Two birds regurgitated food, and several of them defecated. Both adults, which were perched near the nest, flew away when I began to climb to the nest.

During the following month I regularly

visited the nest. Four young birds were always present in the nest tree and occasionally an adult heron was seen. I last saw young birds on 21 July. On most visits I examined the remains of food items which had been regurgitated or dropped below the nest. As well as I could determine, the young were fed entirely on crayfish.

These are the first breeding records of this species for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The species was first recorded in the Park in 1971 when Ranger Thomas E. Henry saw one bird at the sewage ponds in Cades Cove on 26 and 30 May. Alan Smith saw one bird in the cove on 5 July 1973. (These data were taken from records on file in the park library). I saw an adult along Abrams Creek in Cades Cove on 2 July 1974.

When I visited the nest site on 3 April 1976, the nest was no longer present. I was not able to find the herons on this or several subsequent visits later in the spring.

MORRIS D. WILLIAMS, Department of Zoology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37916. Present address: Department of Zoology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70893. Accepted 12 Aug. 1976.

WHISTLING SWAN IN SULLIVAN COUNTY—On the afternoon of 8 March 1977, while driving east on Netherland Inn Road in Kingsport, I sighted a large white bird swimming on the South Fork of the Holston River about a mile down-stream from the C. P. Edwards Bridge. I was able to approach to within twelve meters of the bird and to distinguish enough field-marks, with a pair of 7 x 50 binoculars, to identify the bird as a Whistling Swan (*Olor columbianus*), i.e., black bill without a basal knob and the neck held straight while swimming. This identification was confirmed later that day by Fred J. Alsop, III, who concluded that the bird was a young Whistling Swan since it possessed the buffy coloration about the head and neck characteristic of juveniles of that species. The swan was also observed by several members of the Kingsport University Chapter of the T.O.S. later that same afternoon. It remained in the same area where it was observed by local birders through the week and was last seen by Dr. Alsop on 13 March 1977.

BILL KAPPA, 1425 Dobyns Drive, Kingsport 37664. Accepted 10 May 1977.

IMMATURE TIERCEL IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY—On 7 January 1976, I observed an immature tiercel (male Peregrine Falcon—*Falco peregrinus*) near Franklin, Tennessee. Approximately 10 days before George Mayfield had seen what he thought was a Peregrine Falcon sitting on a barn along Route 31, several miles southwest of Franklin. He did not have his binoculars with him and could not get close enough to make a positive identification.

On 7 January 1976, I drove Route 31 from Springhill to Franklin carefully inspecting every falcon that I saw. Across the road from the Holiday Restaurant, near the city limits of Franklin, I saw a very dark falcon land on a telephone wire. For three minutes it sat very still, intently inspecting the ground. As we moved the car closer the falcon flew about 70 yards to the corner of a low, flat topped concrete building. It remained on this corner for over fifteen minutes and allowed the car to approach to within 50 feet without becoming visibly agitated. During this time the falcon spent most of its time inspecting the ground but regularly turned its head to look toward the car. The portions of the following paragraph in quotation marks were taken directly from my field notes recorded while watching the falcon. These notes were recorded without reference to a field guide.

The falcon was "slightly bigger than a pigeon, slightly but noticeably bigger than a female kestrel seen very soon afterward." Size was estimated at "approximately 15 inches." The bird had a "falcon shape" with "brown streaks lengthwise on cream breast and abdomen, very light streaks on breast, darker, bolder, and more distinct on abdomen." It had a "dark head with white cheeks" interrupted by "two sideburns," one "extending down into the white cheek,"

the second extending "from the rear forward and horizontally." The back and tail were a "uniform dark gray brown." In bright sunlight "the tail had a russet sheen."

The sighting occurred at 15:30 under sunny skies with the temperature in the 40's. The bird was observed for approximately 20 minutes with Leitz Trinovid 10 x 40 binoculars. The observation distance ranged from 50 yards to 50 feet with the majority of the time spent at the closer distance. My brother Jeff Gray was present and can confirm the description in my field notes.

I identified the bird as a peregrine falcon from its shape, size, and coloration as given above. Based on its small size I called the bird a tiercel. The lengthwise streaks on the breast and abdomen and the brownish back indicate that the bird was immature. Dr. Tom Cade, head of the Peregrine Project at Cornell University, has let me view over 50 Peregrine Falcons including more than 15 immature tiercels. Comparing them with the bird I saw confirmed my age and sex determination.

DANIEL R. GRAY, III, Gaslight Village 10 E, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. Accepted 28 May 1977.

RAILS WINTERING IN MAURY COUNTY—Eight days during the past two Christmas seasons Sora (*Porzana carolina*) and Virginia Rails (*Rallus limicola*) were found at the Monsanto Chemical Company settling ponds just west of Columbia, Tennessee. All the rails were found at pond #6, originally a 12 acre pond now containing approximately 6 acres of open water at the western end, 2 acres of thickly clumped 12 to 18 foot high willows in shallow standing water at the eastern end, and 4 acres of cattails in between. Small patches of shrubs are spotted within the cattails.

On 1 January 1976, while Olin Hotchkiss and I were using a Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) tape to attract sparrows in the cattails and brush at pond #6, I heard what sounded like an abbreviated *wak* call of a Virginia Rail. (Call syllabifications are those given by Peterson in *A Field Guide to the Birds*.) I regularly carry bird tapes into the field and had one of rails with me. I played a Virginia Rail tape containing both *wak* and *kidick* calls and was quickly rewarded with *wak* responses from several locations within the cattails. Based on simultaneous calls 3 Virginia Rails were located. In response to a Sora tape containing both whinny and *ker-wee* calls, 2 Soras were located.

Eventually 1 Virginia Rail came out of the cattails into the open area below the bank where we stood and spent 15 minutes parading and calling in response to the tape. The bird was identified as a rail by its plump body with short tail, its shy secretive movements, and its habitat. Its small size, russet breast, and long slender bill made it a Virginia Rail, as did its diagnostic call.

During the winter of 1975-'76 I checked pond #6 for rails 4 times, on January 1, 2, 5, and 6. Each time 2 Soras and 3 Virginia Rails were located, except 6 January when 4 Virginia Rails were heard. Each time 1 Virginia Rail was seen. Confirmation of the hearings and sightings were: 1 January by Olin Hotchkiss; 2 January by Olin and his wife and my father, Dan R. Gray, Jr., and 6 January by my wife, Susan.

During the winter of 1976-'77 rails were searched for and found on 4 days. On 27 December 1976, while birding alone, 3 Virginia Rails and 2 Soras were located by sound but none were seen. On 28 December, my wife, Susan, and I saw 1 Virginia Rail and 1 Sora and heard a second Virginia Rail. This was the first time a Sora had been seen. The bird was identified as a rail by the same criteria given above and as a Sora by its size and short yellow bill. On 30 December, our Christmas Count Day, 1 Virginia Rail was heard at 04:30 while birding alone, and 2 Virginia Rails and 1 Sora were heard that afternoon with Bedford and Ann Lockridge. On 7 January 1977, with Jim and Barbara Finney, 2 Virginia Rails and 1 Sora were seen. A third Virginia Rail was heard.

The sightings on 7 January 1977 were particularly important since both species were observed in the open, in good light, and for long periods of time; the Virginia Rail for 35 minutes, the Sora for 15 minutes. More importantly, the rails seen this day had just survived $3\frac{1}{2}$ days of intense cold bracketed by snowfalls of 4 and 2 inches. The majority of the cattail region of pond #6 had frozen over for the second time in two weeks. The rails appeared healthy; their feathers were well groomed and sleek, they were active, alert, constantly feeding, and the Sora was seen flying once. Apparently the rails can survive the typical rigors of winter weather in Columbia.

During both winters all Virginia Rail vocal responses were with the *wak* call, never the *kidick* call. All Sora responses were with an abbreviated to occasionally full length whinny call, never the *ker-wee* call. The Virginia Rail responded readily, the Sora was more reticent. The Sora failed to respond during the one nighttime check, the Virginia Rail responded only once. This is distinctly different from these rails' reactions while on their breeding grounds. In Massachusetts during the summer, these rails answer this same tape as readily at night as during the daytime and both rails respond with both of their calls, often approaching to within a few feet of the recorder. The warmer the winter day at Columbia, the more likely the rails were to respond and the more frequently they seemed to call.

Twice each winter a King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) tape was played at pond #6 with no response. Several other cattails marshes were checked for all three rail species but none were found. This survey covered only a small portion of the potential rail habitat in Maury County and a more extensive survey is in order.

I know of one published record of winter rails in Maury County. As reported in *The Migrant* 1966, 37:11, George and Cleo Mayfield found 1 Virginia Rail on the ice above Arrow Lake and fed it cracked corn. Nashville is also in the Central Basin and has comparable terrain and similar but more extensive marsh habitat. Henry Palmer in *Birds of the Nashville Area* gives two winter rail sightings, both of King Rails. None of these individuals were reported on more than one day.

In summary, during the winters of 1975-'76 and 1976-'77 up to 4 Virginia Rails and 2 Soras were found at Monsanto Chemical Company pond #6 west of Columbia. The rails were identified by both sight and sound with the identifications confirmed by eight other birders. The rails were apparently wintering and are known to have survived at least one bitter cold and snow period. As far as I have determined, this is the first published account of Vir-

ginia Rails and Soras establishing wintering grounds in the Central Basin of Tennessee.

DANIEL R. GRAY, III, Gaslight Village 10 E, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. Accepted 28 May 1977.

SECOND RECORD OF MARBLED GODWIT IN THE NASHVILLE AREA—At 16:55 on 17 August 1976, a Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) was found at Green's Lake near Gallatin. When first seen, the bird was bathing and preening in shallow water at the north end of the lake, approximately 250 meters from the observers. Dot saw the bird first and immediately identified it as a Marbled Godwit, using 7x35 Bushnell binoculars. With our 20-45x60 Bushnell spotting scope, we confirmed the identification and then moved up to approximately 50 meters from the bird. Light conditions were ideal with bright afternoon sunlight and no obstructions between us and the bird. Both observers are familiar with the Marbled Godwit, having seen them at various locations in Texas, Kansas, Florida, and the east coast. We noted the large size; the long



Photo by Paul Crawford

up-curved beak, dull orange at the base and black at the tip; the over-all tan or tawny color; the darker, mottled back; the blue-gray legs. The bird raised its wings several times while it preened, allowing us to see the bright cinnamon wing linings.

After studying the bird for about 15 minutes, we returned home and alerted birders in Nashville. Pat Stallings, Bessie Hagan, Rocky and Cathy Milburn were able to see the godwit that afternoon. Many birders from various parts of the state saw the bird before it left. Several pictures were made, both color and black-and-white.

The bird was last seen the afternoon of 24 August. Heavy rains during the night of 24 August raised the lake level some 3½-4 feet which covered all the exposed mud flats. The bird was not found the morning of 25 August and was not seen again.

PAUL AND DOT CRAWFORD, Route 4, Gallatin 37066. Accepted 1 Nov. 1976.

COMMON CROW OBSERVED CATCHING LIVING FISH—On 8 March 1976 I observed an interesting bit of behavior being exhibited by a Common Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). I had been scanning the waters of Boone Lake, 10 miles east of Kingsport, Tennessee, for ducks when I noticed a crow standing two feet from the shore in water up to its belly. The bird seemed to be concentrating intensely upon some object beneath the water. Suddenly the crow darted its beak into the water and held up a living fish. It then waded to the shore, flew about fifteen feet from the water and landed on the ground. Upon landing it began to beat the fish vigorously on the sandy soil. Then the bird wiped the fish slowly back and forth on the sand as if to scale it. The

crow laid the fish down and promptly proceeded to dig a hole in the beach, picked up the fish, dropped it in the hole and covered it with the soil it had previously removed. The bird then flew back to the spot where I originally saw him and resumed his fishing once again. It repeated the pattern just described for about 20 minutes at which time I scared the crow away when I walked down to expose one of the four fish I had observed him bury. The fish was a Gizzard Shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*) and was still barely living when I reached it. I can offer no explanation for this odd method of obtaining and storing food, and would welcome speculations.

RICK A. PHILLIPS, Biology Dept., East Tennessee State University, Kingsport University Center, University Blvd., Kingsport 37660. Accepted 8 June 1977.

BROWN CREEPER NESTS IN NASHVILLE—On 13 May 1976 Frank Ritter observed two Brown Creepers (*Certhia familiaris*) at Radnor Lake and realized that their occurrence there at that time of year was unusual. He contacted Michael Bierly about the sighting, wondering if there was any later date of departure for the area than 25 April as listed in *Birds of the Nashville Area*. There was none. In the late afternoon of 13 May Karen Ritter observed two creepers at the same location. On the morning of 14 May in a steady drizzle Bierly went to the site at Radnor and found two Brown Creepers carrying food to a nest situated behind a piece of bark on a dead tree. The parents were watched for some thirty minutes busily feeding the young birds. In the afternoon in a heavy rain Katherine Goodpasture, Ann Tarbell, Frank Ritter and Bierly observed the nest and feeding of the young.

The nest was located at the northwest corner of "Little Pond" along Otter Creek Road in the Radnor Lake Natural Area. The nest tree was at the base of the small pond about four vertical feet below the road, an elevation of 777 feet above sea level. The woods immediately surrounding the nest site was a mixed deciduous forest of trees 20-75 feet in height composed primarily of box elder (*Acer Negundo*), sugar maple (*Acer sp.*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) and hackberry (*Celtis sp.*). A large trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*) was attached to the entire length of the nest tree.

On the morning of 14 May from 08:00-10:30 observations were made at the nest site under sunny skies. The parents fed frequently and at times were at the nest at the same time. Judging by the frequency of the feeding visits and the ability to often watch the birds search for insects it seemed that most of the food was gathered in a small area around the nest site. When entering the nest the parents would always alight on the side of the tree or edge of the bark containing the nest and then move inside holding onto the underside of the bark containing the nest and not the main trunk of the tree opposite this bark. No sound could be detected from the young in the nest.

On 15 May at 06:30 a parent was observed coming and going from the nest site. There was a steady rain and observations were made for only a few minutes and from a car. The rain stopped around 16:00 and a visit was made to the sight at 17:00. No activity was observed around the nest. After about 15 minutes it was assumed that the young had fledged. High, thin notes then

were detected, like those of young birds. Without knowing there were Brown Creeper young in the area these notes could have easily been passed over as those of any young bird or even insects. After an hour of trying to locate these notes, the parents and three young were found 175 feet from the nest site. Further observations on the 15th, 16th and 17th revealed that a minimum of five young were fledged. The area was not checked on the 18th and no signs of young or parents were detected on trips on the 19th and 20th. Occasional observations were made at the nest site during the summer, but no extensive search was made for the birds. On 14 August Richard Rimmer located a Brown Creeper on the northside of the lake along the North Lake Trail. He was not aware of the nesting and encountered the bird during general field work. Rimmer's bird was on a hill across the lake and to the northeast of the lake during the summer. Even though the bird was a considerable distance from the nest site it seems reasonable that it was associated with the nesting. Frank and Karen Ritter searched this area on 17, 18 August, but did not find the bird. No other positive observations were made.

Few Brown Creeper nests have been recorded out of their normal breeding range at low altitudes in the south. In 1894 and 1898 several nests were found in cypress swamp in southeast Missouri (Widmann, Otto, *A Preliminary Catalog of the Birds of Missouri*, 1907, 17(1):253). Pickering observed this species at Reelfoot Lake 10 May 1937 and indicated the late date suggested possible nesting (Pickering, Charles F., *The Migrant*, 1937, 8(3):50). The nesting of this species at Radnor Lake apparently represents in Tennessee the first recorded nesting outside of the eastern mountains of Tennessee.

MICHAEL LEE BIERLY, 2415 Crestmoor Road, Nashville 37215. Accepted 1 October 1976.

FIELD SPARROWS WITH BLACK BILLS—On 13 April 1977 while birding with an ornithology class behind the Kingsport University Center, Hawkins County, Kingsport, Rick Phillips, brought to my attention a bird which looked like a Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) only it had an uncharacteristic blackish bill. We brought this to the attention of the class instructor, Dr. Fred J. Alsop. He observed the bird and said that the bird was indeed a Field Sparrow. The black bill he believed was the result of a residue formed from feeding on vegetative growth. Later that day Marcia Davis also reported seeing on the campus Field Sparrows with black on the maxilla.

On 18 April 1977 while banding birds with a mist net behind the Kingsport University Center, I netted a Field Sparrow with a black waxy-like substance covering the mandible which could be scraped off with the findernail. The substance was apparently some type of vegetative residue.

TOM F. LAUGHLIN, Route 1, Arcadia, Kingsport 37660. Accepted 1 June 1977.

A LATE MAY SIGHTING OF THE FOX SPARROW IN TENNESSEE—On 31 May 1976, I saw a Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) in a low wet woodland (35°01'16"N, 87°17'39"W) 3.25km southeast of Five Points, Lawrence County, Tennessee. I had excellent views of the bird through 7 x 35 binoculars for about five minutes. I often approached within eight to ten meters of the

bird as it fed around the edge of standing water, and I flushed it several times. The bird appeared healthy and flew well. I did notice a small unfeathered scar on the right side of its head in the lore region.

This sighting is a month later than any published Tennessee record that I can find. The previous late date was 30 April 1967, when one bird was reported on the Chattanooga spring count (*Migrant*, 38:35). Most Fox Sparrows have departed Tennessee before April. However, there are 10 published records of this species between 25 and 30 April (*Migrant*, 35:48 and 49; 38:35; 44:47; 45:44; and 46:55).

I have not carefully searched the literature of the surrounding states for late Fox Sparrow records, but I am aware of a few recent May records from the mountain region of western North Carolina (*Chat*, 38:61; and 39:81). The latest of these records was one bird on 18 May 1974. There was some concern about the validity of these unusually late records (*Chat*, 38:62). The latest Alabama record for the Fox Sparrow is 25 April 1974 at the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (Imhof, T. A., 1976. *Alabama Birds*, 2nd ed. University of Alabama Press. 445pp.).

In view of the above records, it appears that the Five Points bird was not simply a late migrant, but a bird that probably was prevented from migrating north by some unusual circumstance. I did not search for the bird again.

It is interesting to note that none of the late Tennessee Fox Sparrow records comes from West Tennessee (seven records are from the eastern third of the state, and three are from the central part), where the species is apparently abundant during some winters. The number of Fox Sparrows on the Memphis Christmas bird count is usually higher than the total from the rest of the state's counts combined. Often more than 100 individuals are found, and on 26 December 1965, 173 birds were recorded in the Memphis area.

I wish to thank Monty Halcomb for his suggestions on improving this note, and Cathy Duncan for preparing the manuscript.

MORRIS D. WILLIAMS, Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge 70893. Accepted 30 March 1977.



THE SEASON

FRED J. ALSOP, III, *Editor*

NESTING SEASON: 16 MAY - 31 JULY

Flycatchers are *the* bird family of this nesting season! This summer TWO new species were added to the list of birds known to nest in Tennessee and both were members of the flycatcher family, Tyrannidae. *ALDER FLYCATCHERS* were found in several locations on Roan Mountain in the Eastern Mountain Region during the breeding season and two females were seen feeding newly fledged young though no nests were located. A *SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER* nested unsuccessfully (the nestlings died before fledging) in the Central Plateau and Basin Region. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was also seen in the Western Coastal Plain. Willow Flycatchers were reported as nesting in the Eastern Mountain and the Ridge and Valley regions and were found singing through June in Obion County in the northwest corner of the State. They seem to be continuing their range extension across the State and some field work in June and July in West Tennessee should prove them to be nesting there.

Barn Swallows were seen in mid-July in the Nashville area. They returned to their former nesting site at Austin Springs in the Ridge and Valley but apparently did not nest this year, and both Bank Swallows and Tree Swallows were found nesting in the Western Coastal Plain.

Hérons were reported from all the regions and your attention is called to the numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons nesting in the Central Plateau and Basin and Ridge and Valley regions, as well as the heron roost in the Western Coastal Plain.

The severity of the winter past is reflected in the reports of declines for the second consecutive year of Eastern Bluebird populations in the Western Coastal Plain and the Central Plateau and Basin. The latter also notes the numbers of Carolina Wrens are down as well. Some winter visitors stayed on well into summer with many late waterfowl records in the Eastern Ridge and Valley, where Blue-winged Teal nested. Two male Ruddy Ducks were still present in late June in the Western Coastal Plain and a Hooded Merganser in July in the Central Plateau and Basin. Evening Grosbeaks lingered well into May in some areas and the first House Finch known to stay in the State in summer visited a feeder through June in Maryville just south of Knoxville in the Ridge and Valley—how long before this species is added as a nesting bird in Tennessee?

Lark Sparrows were seen in the Western Coastal Plain and in several counties in the Central Plateau and Basin. In the latter region a Golden-winged Warbler was found singing in May and June on the *western* highland rim and in the coastal plain a Chestnut-sided Warbler was observed in July. Birders in the Chattanooga area report the House Wren is expanding into many areas there. Red Crossbills were noted on Roan Mountain in mid-July and Black-capped Chickadees, a species most infrequently reported there, were also observed and heard on Roan Mountain in June and July.

There were many interesting raptor reports including large numbers of Mississippi Kites in the Western Coastal Plain. The nesting Sharp-shinned Hawk in the Nashville Area and the June record of an Osprey on Cheatham Lake in the same region. There were two successful Osprey nests on Watts Bar Lake in the Ridge and Valley and three *BALD EAGLES* on the same lake all season. The last region also had a Golden Eagle into mid-May.

Accidental species are good portion of the grist for birders and some of the best were in the Central Plateau and Basin where a *BELL'S VIREO* and an American Avocet were seen. Three White Ibis were located in the Ridge and Valley. The details of these and many more informative and exciting observations follow. Please make sure your regional compiler has your finds for the next issue.

WESTERN COASTAL REGION—A heron roost south of Dyersburg has yielded some interesting numbers. Mr. Criswell's first report of herons in the Dyersburg area was last year. The number of species and individuals has increased this year as indicated by the following data.

	Lt. Bl. Heron			Cattle Egret	Yel.-cr. Nt. Heron		Green Heron	Gt. Bl. Heron	Great Egret	White Ibis
	Ad.	Im.	Pied	—	Ad.	Im.	—	—	—	—
July 8	295	99	7	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
July 10	354	221	13	3	—	2	8	—	—	—
July 15	456	289	10	—	—	2	10	—	—	—
July 20	464	323	14	—	—	7	10	—	—	—
July 22	NC*	NC	NC	1	—	9	—	—	—	—
July 23	NC	NC	NC	4	—	7	15	—	—	—
July 24	NC	NC	NC	2	1	13	12	—	—	—
July 26	NC	NC	NC	50	—	5	11	—	1	1 imm
July 30	600	Ad. & Pied	—	—	—	—	9	—	—	1 imm
August 1	NC	404	NC	3	—	2	11	—	1	1 imm
August 2	NC	NC	NC	15	—	3	9	1	2	—
August 3	NC	NC	NC	15	—	2	7	—	—	5
August 5	NC	NC	NC	—	—	8	—	—	—	—
August 8	706	NC	NC	—	—	8	—	—	—	—
August 9	NC	828	NC	—	—	8	—	—	—	12 imm

* NC = no count

Heron-Swallow: Great Blue Heron: 28 Jan (6) R (MLB). Least Bittern: 28 Jun (4) Upper Blue Basin (MLB), 7 Aug (nest with 3 young about 10 days old) T (WGC). Blue-winged Teal: 28 Jun (2) West of Phillipy (MLB). *RUDDY DUCK*: 25 Jun (2 males) RP (MLB). Black Vulture: 29 Jun (2 young in abandoned house) V (DP). Mississippi Kite: All the following obser-

vations, with the exception of those on 30 June, were made by Pete Kalla, graduate student, E.T.S.U.—8 Jun (6) Riverside Park; 13 Jun (1) Overton Park; 15 Jun (4) T. O. Fuller State Park; 15-16 Jun (11) Ensley Bottoms; 30 Jun (9) Frayser (Memphis) reported to PK by John Stokes; 21 Jun (30) Shelby Forest St. Park, 9 Jul (3) Ft. Pillow S. Pk.; 27 Jun and 10-12 Jul (4) Ft. Pillow St. Prison Farm; 13 Jul (19) Anderson-Tully WMA; 27 Jul (4) Dyer Co.; 28 Jul (16) Moss Island NWR; 30 Jul (18) Lake Co.; 31 Jul (2) Lake Isom NWR; 31 Jul - 1 Aug (20) Reelfoot Lake. Broad-winged Hawk: 18 Jun (1 adult, 3 young) C (AS, NS, MW), 24 Jun (1 adult, 1 young) SFSP (PK). Common Gallinule: 26 Jun (2) Upper Blue Basin (MLB). Black-bellied Plover: 28-29 May (1) D (WGC). American Woodcock: 27 Jun (2) SFSP (MLB). Least Tern: 27 Jun (60) Island 13 (MLB, NS, MW), (2) Mississippi River at Fulton (MLB). Caspian Tern: 27 Jun (4) Island 13 (MLB, NS, MW). *SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER*: 20 May (1) PF (HD, MW). Willow Flycatcher: songs heard at Crockett Bottom throughout Jun (DP). Tree Swallow: 21 Jun (2 nests at Crockett) (DP). Bank Swallow: 14 Jun (193 nests), Island 21 (DP), 29 Jun (50+, nesting colony) F (MLB), 31 Jul (3,000) RNWR (DP).

Wren-Sparrow: House Wren: present in 3 locations in Martin, 2 locations in Union City. This is the nesting season for each county (DP). Eastern Bluebird: Lowest population in Obion Co. since 1968. Nesting pairs ranged from 25-30 pairs in past to 7 pairs this year (DP). Swainson's Warbler: May, Jun, Jul (Last heard 28 Jul OP (BBC)). Worm-eating Warbler: 27 Jun (1) SFSP (MLB). Chestnut-sided Warbler: 7 Jul (1) C (BM). Prairie Warbler: 4-6 Jun (Widespread throughout eastern part of Weakley Co.; none noticed in western section. Louisiana Waterthrush: 7 Aug (1) OP (BBC). Blue Grosbeak: 28 Jun (1) PF (HD). Grasshopper Sparrow: Jun-Jul (2) UTM, alfalfa pasture (1) fescue pasture, none in Obion Co. where previously seen (DP). Lark Sparrow: 20 May (1) PF (MW), 16 Jun (nest) Cm (DP).

Locations: Crockett Bottoms—S. E. Obion Co.; C—Collierville, Shelby Co.; Cm—Camden, Benton Co.; D—Dyersburg, Dyer Co.; F—Fulton, S.W. Lauderdale Co.; Island 13—Lake Co.; Island 21—Dyer Co.; M—Memphis; OP—Overton Park; Mid-town city park in Memphis; Penal Farm—East Shelby Co.; Phillipy—Lake Co.; R—Reelfoot; RNWR—Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge; RP—Riverside Park/Martin Luther King, Memphis; SFSP—Shelby Forest State Park, N.W. Shelby Co.; T—Tatumville, northcentral Dyer Co.; Upper Blue Basin—North end of Reelfoot Lake; UTM—Univ. of Tenn. at Martin; V—Vale, N.E. Carroll Co.

Observers: MLB—Michael L. Bierly; BBC—Ben B. Coffey, Jr.; WGC—W. G. Criswell; HD—Helen Dinkelspiel; PK—Pete Kalla; BM—Bob McGowan; DP—David Pitts; AS—Arlo Smith; NS—Noreen Smith; MW—Martha Waldron.

MARTHA WALDRON, 1626 Yorkshire Dr., Memphis 38117.

CENTRAL PLATEAU AND BASIN REGION—*Heron-Tern*: Great Egret: 9 Jun (1) Clarksville (SG). Black-crowned Night Heron: The Bordeaux Heronry in Nashville was successful with minimum 50+ young seen at one time. No exact count was attempted. Hooded Merganser: 10 Jul (1

male) I-24 mile post 122 (LD, BPB), summering? *SHARP-SHINNED HAWK*: July nest (2 young) Basin Spring, Nash area (KAG), first nesting since 1962 where regular previously. *Cooper's Hawk*: 17 Jun (1) Ashland City (RJM). *Red-shouldered Hawk*: 17 Jun (15) Cheatham L (RJM); June nest (3 young) Spring Creek, Lebanon (JS), same nest as 1977. *OSPREY*: 17 Jun (1) Cheatham L (RJM), continued nesting reports unverified. *Solitary Sandpiper*: 7 Jun (2) Cannon Co (FB), coming or going? *Upland Sandpiper*: 21 Jul - end of period (1-5) Metro Airport, Nash (MLM), negative reports 7 Jun, 19 Jul. *AMERICAN AVOCET*: 28 Jul (2 photo) Van Buren Co (RB, TF), fourteen days earliest fall Tenn, first Van Buren Co record. *Forster's Tern*: 25 Jul (4) beach and dam, Old Hickory L (MLB, LJG), fifth July record Nash area. *Least Tern*: 18 May (1) Gallatin Steam Plant (DPC), seventh record Nash area. *Black Tern*: 15 Jul (1) Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge (MLB).

Hummingbird-Bluebird: Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Sparce Cannon Co during period (FB); an encouraging number of reports Nash (NTOS). *SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER*: July nest (1 adult, 3 young) Murfreesboro (RMcM, AH), nesting unsuccessful, first Tennessee nesting record. *Bank Swallow*: 17 Jun (3) Harpeth R (RJM), possibly nesting, no nesting records Nash area. *Red-breasted Nuthatch*: 20 May (2) two locations Nash (JCA, RJM), four days latest Nash. It took a record Red-breasted year to break this 54-year old record! *Bewick's Wren*: 27 May (1 singing) Byrdstown (RH). *Carolina Wren*: In comparison with 11 of 12 Middle Tennessee Breeding Bird Survey Routes, species in 1977 declined 70.4 percent from 1976 level and showed a 37.5 percent decline in 1978 from 1977 level. Thus the winter of 1976-77 was harder on the Carolina Wren than the winter of 1977-78. *Eastern Bluebird*: In comparison with 11 of 12 Middle Tennessee Breeding Bird Survey Routes, species in 1977 declined 24.6 percent from 1976 level and showed a 74.5 percent decline in 1978 from 1977 level. Thus the winter of 1977-78 was harder on the Eastern Bluebird than the winter of 1976-77. Martha Herbert's bluebird route in Cheatham Co showed a 90.9 percent decrease in active boxes 1978 from 1977 and a 89.2 percent decrease in the number of young banded (455 young 1977 and 49 young 1978). The widespread observation of more adult bluebirds seen as spring and early summer progressed cannot be explained.

Warbler-Sparrow: *GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER*: 27 May - 2 Jun (1 singing) Gordonsburg, Lewis Co (GRM), saw, negative reports after 2 Jun, may be first summer record West Highland Rim. *Black-throated Blue Warbler*: 16 May (1 female) McMinnville, Warren Co (GRM). *Chestnut-sided Warbler*: 22 May (1) Tullahoma (GRM). *Mourning Warbler*: All reports—17 May (1) Radnor L, Nash (MW); 20 May (1) Love Circle, Nash (JCA). *Dickcissel*: Two summer locations Nash; 10 Jun (6) Glen Breeding Bird Survey Route (DRJ); 11 Jun nest (1 female feeding 4 two-three days old young) Hillsboro, Coffee Co (DRJ); 30 Jul (1 singing) Warren Co (MLB). *Evening Grosbeak*: 22 May (1 female) South Tunnel, Sumner Co (BH), seven days latest Nash area. *Grasshopper Sparrow*: 10 Jun (10) Glen Breeding Bird Survey Route (DRJ); 7 Jul (1 singing) Cookeville (FJMcL, MLB). *Lark Sparrow*: 21 May (2) Cannon Co (FB); 28 May (1 singing) Hurricane Creek area, Percy Priest L (MLM); during summer several individuals scattered

Rutherford and Wilson counties (RMcM); none Chambers in Lebanon. Song Sparrow: 6 Jun (1 singing) Belvidere, Coffee Co (ATT); The original nesting site in Nashville, inactive since 1971, was "rediscovered" a half-mile away. Two males singing, one nest found, 3 young banded (LJ, KAG). The second nesting area in Nashville, Metro Center, was active.

Observers (alphabetically beginning first initial): AH—Anne Hettish; ATT—Ann T. Tarbell; BH—Bessie Hagan; BPB—Benton and Peggy Basham; DPC—Dot and Paul Crawford; DRJ—Daniel R. Jacobson; FB—Frances Bryson; FJMcL—F. Joe McLaughlin; GRM—George R. Mayfield; JCA—Jan C. Alexander; JS—John Sellars; KAG—Katherine A. Goodpasture; LD—Lil Dubke; LJ—Louise Jackson; LJG—Larry J. Gates; MLB—Michael L. Bierly; MLM—Margaret L. Mann; MW—Miriam Weinstein; RB—Rex Boner; RH—Robbie Hassler; RJM—Rocky J. Milburn; RMcM—Ruth McMillan; SG—Scott Gunn; TF—Tim Frazier.

MICHAEL LEE BIERLY, 2415 Crestmoor Rd., Nashville 37215.

Additional record previous period; *BELL'S VIREO*: 6 May 1978 (1 singing) Clarksville (David H. Snyder), saw, first Middle Tennessee record.

EASTERN RIDGE AND VALLEY REGION—Other than Glen Eller's remark regarding their low population of Screech Owls, no comments were received mentioning the results of last winter's prolonged cold weather on the local breeding birds.

Blue-winged Teal were observed nesting at the Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery for the region's first record. A single Cedar Waxwing was noted feeding four young near the Kingston Steam Plant. House Wrens are apparently moving into and nesting in the Chattanooga area. Observers should keep a close watch out for this bird in 1979 and ascertain the species exact status.

Abbreviations: ad—adult; eop—end of period; et al—and others; imm—immature; y—young.

Loon-Coot: Pied-billed Grebe: 11 Jul (1) HRA (KLD). Cattle Egret: 16 May (1) JB (RK); 31 Jul (2) HRA (KLD). Great Blue Heron: 1-3 irregular near JC (RK). Little Blue Heron: 20 Jun (1) JCo (PP); 11 Jul to eop (2) HRA (KLD, JWS). Great Egret: 18 Jul to eop (1-5) HRA and SB (KLD, , JWS). *BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON*: 111 nests at Concord; 148 nests at Sevierville and 268 nests Cherokee Lake (BP); 10-31 Jul (1-3) AS (RK, et al). Yellow-crowned Night Heron: One nest at Sevierville (BP); the active nest near AM apparently dismantled and pair moving to another nearby site. (JWS et al); 8 Jul (1 imm) K (CPN, MLB). American Bittern: 18 May (1) AS (RK, DL). *WHITE IBIS*: 25 Jul to eop (3 imm) HRA (KLD, JWS). Ibis species? 27 Jul (1) CL (CPN). *BLUE-WINGED TEAL*: pair nested EB (WKJ et al). Redhead: one regular ChL (JWS et al). Ring-necked Duck: 14 Jun (1) Greeneville (JWS); 29 Jul (1) HRA (MLB). Lesser Scaup: 18 May (1) BL (RK); 11 Jul to eop (2) HRA (KLD, JWS). Turkey Vulture: active nest at Sale Creek (CPN). Sharp-shinned Hawk: One throughout season LaFollette (CPN); 3 Jul (1) MC (RL); 22 Jul (1) Big Ridge State Park (Margaret L. Mann). Cooper's Hawk: 7 Jul (1) JC (SG); 31 Jul (1) HRA (KLD). Golden Eagle: 17 May (1 imm) Oak Ridge (JWS).

BALD EAGLE: "At least 2 ad and 1 imm sporadically through season on WBL." (Ed Beddow, WKJ et al). *OSPREY*: 26 May (1) AS (RK); "Two nests on WBL, each fledged 2 y. Further details to be published." (Donald A. Hammer); 2 Jul (1) ChL (JWS); 30 Jul (1) K (PP). *American Coot*: 29 Jul (3) ChL (JWS).

Plover-Owl: *Semipalmated Plover*: 10 May (3) DL (JWS); 18-25 May (2-7) AS (RK, et al). *Black-bellied Plover*: 29 May (1) SB (KLD, RBW). *COMMON SNIBE*: 4 Jun (1) HRA (KLD). *Spotted Sandpiper*: 16 May (30) CL (CPN, WKJ); 28 May (1) AS (RK); 10 Jul (1) AS (RK). *Solitary Sandpiper*: 21 May (1) AS (SG, MD). *Lesser Yellowlegs*: 22 May (1) SB (KLD); 15 Jul (1) HRA (KLD). *Pectoral Sandpiper*: 26 Jul to eop (2-6) HRA (KLD, JWS). *White-rumped Sandpiper*: 19 May (3) HRA (KLD). *Least Sandpiper*: 19 May (4) HRA (KLD); 28 Jul (1) HRA (JWS). *Dowitcher species?* 18 May (3) AS (RK). *Semipalmated Sandpiper*: 19 May (10) HRA (KLD). *Ring-billed Gull*: 18 May (1) K (PP). *Forster's Tern*: 16 Jul (1) AS (GE); 27 Jul (1) HRA (LD, JWS). *Common Tern*: 31 May (1) SB (LD); 27 Jul (4) HRA (LD, JWS). *Caspian Tern*: 16 May (1) CL (WKJ, CPN); 14 Jul (2) AS (RL). *Black Tern*: 25 Jul to eop (2-18) HRA and SB (KLD, JWS); 27 Jul (9) AS (RK). *Barn Owl*: 19 May (2 ad w/3y) AM (RBW, Arthur T. McDade). *Screech Owl*: "very low population, possibly due to last bad winter period." (GE).

Woodpeckers-Wrens: *Red-headed Woodpecker*: "nested successfully JB" (RK, et al). *Willow Flycatcher*: "3-5 pair successfully nested AS . . ." (GE, et al); "6 singing 14 Jun - 21 Jul N. Fork Holston R." (RAP); 30 May - 23 Jul (1 singing on territory) SB (KLD). *Horned Lark*: One pair regular KP (RAP); 29 May (male w/young) Wes (CPN); 20 Jun (3) Winfield, Scott Co. (CPN). *Bank Swallow*: "Birds were present at last year's nesting site until 27 June with no nesting attempt located this year." (GE, et al). *Cliff Swallow*: Four nests WCo (RK). *Purple Martin*: 24 Jul (250) Clinton (CPN); 27 Jul (6000) HRA (LD, JWS). *HOUSE WREN*: Evidence is pointing to efforts of the House Wren to establish itself as a nesting species in the Chattanooga area. Benton Basham reported a pair building two nests in a birdhouse in Red Bank. No eggs were ever deposited and they were last reported on 25 June. Ann Gibson located an apparently active site in Chattanooga, but no young or eggs were ever identified. Another report came from Bill and Adele Hampton on Elder Mountain.

Thrush-Sparrow: *Swainson's Thrush*: 22 May (1) JC (SG). *Cedar Waxwing*: 10 Jul (1 ad w/4y ". . . was feeding flying young still dependent on parent for food . . .") KSP (MLB). *Prothonotary Warbler*: "Two singing males on territory, plus one nest hole on Watauga River." (RK, et al). *Swainson's Warbler*: "territorial birds present in Anderson, Scott and Campbell Counties." (JMC, JCH, CPN); one on territory Reflection Riding. (KLD, et al). *Cerulean Warbler*: ". . . 3-4 singing males usually seen each day." Bays Mt. Park (RAP). *Chestnut-sided Warbler*: 29 May (1 male on territory) Wes (CPN); male did not return to territory at Point Park, Lookout Mt. (KD). *Mourning Warbler*: 20 May (2) Anderson Co. (JMC). *Bobolink*: 19 May (14) HRA (KLD). *Blue Grosbeak*: "6-7 per day in proper habitat KP" (RAP). *Dickcissel*: 9 Jun (1) Blount Co. (Steve Steadman); 11 Jul (1) HRA (KLD).

HOUSE FINCH: through 16 Jun (1) Maryville (Bill and Irene Williams). Grasshopper Sparrow: 1-3 males on territory Tri-Cities Airport. (SG, MD); "present in 3 localities in fair numbers (6-7 males each place) . . ." KP (RAP).

Locations: AM—Amnicola Marsh; AS—Austin Springs; BL—Boone Lake; CL—Cove Lake; DL—Douglas Lake; EB—Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery; HRA—Hiwassee River Area; JB—Jonesboro; JC—Johnson City; JCo—Jefferson County; KSP—Kingston Steam Plant; K—Knoxville; KP—Kingsport; MC—Milligan College; SB—Savannah Bay; WBL—Watts Bar Lake; WCo—Washington County; Wes—Westel.

Observers: BP—Burline Pullin; CPN—Charles P. Nicholson; DL—Dick Lura; GE—Glen D. Eller; JCH—J. C. Howell; JFC—James M. Campbell; KD—Kenneth H. Dubke; KLD—Kenneth H. and Lillian H. Dubke; LD—Lillian H. Dubke; MD—Martha Dillenbeck; MLB—Michael Lee Bierly; PP—Paul Pardue; RAP—Rick A. Phillips; RK—Rick Knight; RL—Richard Lewis; SG—Sally Goodin; WKJ—Wesley K. James.

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EASTERN MOUNTAIN REGION—One of the most outstanding observations of the past several periods was made during this count period. The establishment of the southernmost breeding record of the *ALDER (wee-bee-o) FLYCATCHER* has excited all area birders. After an unconfirmed sighting in 1977 an extra effort was initiated this year to locate this northern species. We were very fortunate in finding at least seven (7) singing males and at least two different females with young birds being fed. All the birds were located on Roan Mtn. between 5500 and 5900 feet elevation. Most of the birds were located between Engine Gap and Jane Bald on Roan Mtn. with the majority of the observations coming from the Tennessee side of the state line.

The Eastern Mountain Region is in dire need of more reports of observations in order to make a more complete report to fit more comparatively in the whole state system. Surely more people are visiting our more mountainous sections than the reports this regional editor is receiving would indicate. Please, are you really doing your own personal part for our TOS reporting?

Heron-Owl: Great Blue Heron: 18 May (1) WatR (GE); 28 Jul (1) RC (MD and SG). Great Egret: 20 thru 28 Jul (2-4) RC (ETOS). Black-crowned Night Heron: 17 Jul (2) E (GE). Yellow-crowned Night Heron: 9 Jun (1) HS (RK). Black Duck: last seen 18 May (1) WatR (DL, GW) late! Bufflehead: last seen 18 May (2) WibL (DL, GW). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 8 Jul (1) RM (GE), only accipiter reported during period! *TURKEY*: 15 Jun (1) Pond Mtn. (ES). Ring-billed Gull: last spring sighting 28 May (3) WatL (GE). Black-billed Cuckoo: last spring sighting after a very heavy flight was on 17 Jun (1) RMSP (RL). Screech Owl: very low population level with no birds being found on spring count day. (severe winter decline?).

Sapsucker-Nuthatch: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 24 Jun (1) Iron Mtn. (SG). Willow Flycatcher: 1st seen on 29 May (1) E (GE). *ALDER (wee-bee-o) FLYCATCHER*: 1st seen on 13 Jun (1) by (ES), 24 Jun (7 singing

males, 1 female, 1 young) by ETOS and last found on 13 Jul (1 female and 1 young) by (RK) all observations from RM. Horned Lark: 11-30 Jun (1-3) RM (ETOS). Raven: thru-out period (1-5) RM and Iron Mtn. (ETOS). *BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE*: 14 Jun (1) by RK; 8 Jul (1) by GE, 13 Jul (2) by MD and SG all on RM. Red-breasted Nuthatch: last seen 13 Jul (1) RM (RK and RL).

Warbler-Sparrow: Swainson's Warbler: 30 May (1) RCP (RK) and 24 Jun (1) Unaka Mtn (SG). Golden-winged Warbler: last seen 27 Jun (1) RMSP (ES). Yellow-throated Warbler: last seen 8 Jul (1) WibL (RL). Prairie Warbler: last seen 20 May (1) Bluff City (GE). Evening Grosbeak: last seen 25 May (1) E (GE). Red Crossbill: 13 Jul (5) RM (SG, MD, RK, GS). Vesper Sparrow: 11 Jun thru 13 Jul (1-2) RM (ETOS).

Locations: E—Elizabethton; HS—Hunter Swamp (near Eliz); RC—Roans Creek; RCP—Rock Creek Park (near Erwin); RM—Roan Mtn.; RMSP—Roan Mtn. State Park; WatL—Watauga Lake; WatR—Watauga River; WibL—Wilbur Lake.

Observers: MD—Martha Dillenbeck; ETOS—Eliz chapter TOS; GE—Glen Eller; SG—Sally Goodin; RK—Rick Knight; DL—Dick Lura; RL—Richard Lewis; ES—Ed Schell; GW—Gary Wallace.

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The purpose of THE MIGRANT is the recording of observations and original information derived from the study of birds, primarily in the state of Tennessee or the area immediately adjacent to its borders. Articles for publication originate almost exclusively from T.O.S. members.

Contributors should prepare manuscripts and submit them in a form acceptable to the printer, after editorial approval. Both articles and short notes are solicited but their format should be somewhat different.

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NOMENCLATURE: Common names should be capitalized followed by binomial scientific names in italics only after the first occurrence in the text for both regular articles and ROUND TABLE NOTES, and should conform to the A.O.U. Check-list 5th edition, 1957 and its Thirty-second Supplement. Trinomial should be used only after the specimen has been measured or compared with typical specimens.

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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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