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# THE MIGRANT

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### TRAMPING WITH 'THE BIRD MAN' BY BRUCE P. TYLEB

### I. THE BIRD MAN

An early spring morning finds the ornithologist roaming alone among the cedars of Boone's Creek near where it pours its waters into the Watauga River. The trees are full of Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Titmice, and Warblers. The sun is very bright, the wind cold and bracing. The sunny nooks along the stream are comfortably inviting. Slowly the ornithologist wends his way down-stream and finally settles himself on a huge rock at the mouth of the creek, feeding his soul on the magnificent scenery that the river affords. His serenity is disturbed only by the gusts of wind ruffling the smooth waters. A pebble rolling down the bank behind the dreamer announces the arrival of a small boy of about twelve summers, who advances and sits respectfully silent nearby. The ornithologist engages the boy in conversation which leads to the subject of the river birds. Soon the bright face of the boy turns with heaming eyes to the ornithologist and, full of joyous enthusiasm, he exclaims, "Oh! You are the Bird Man!"

### II. THE SPY OR THE LAW

The Bird Man loves to wander over the Boone's Creek farm of Uncle Dave. The cedar thicket along the creek and the patch of swampy land sometimes hold rare birds. Thus early one morning, the towering sycamores, matted cedars, underbrush, and swamp grass are given careful inspection. Aided by binoculars, the Bird Man searches diligently for his feathered friends, all unmindful of the new tenant who, from the humble home, is observing him as intently as he hunts for glimpses of his birds. Many and vague are the thoughts of the tenant. The Bird Man is soon lost in the creek thickets, to be seen no more, but the tenant continues to marvel, and some days later, confides to a mutual friend that the 'Law' was abroad, that his house had been carefully watched by an officer with field glasses and he feared some trouble as a result. His fears are soon allayed by the rollicking laughter of the friend, who tells him, "Oh, that was the Bird Man searching out strange birds in the tree tops—he didn't know that you were within a thousand miles of him."

### III. THE MOONSHINERS

Near our cities often may be found suburban sections that harbor the riffraff of society,-those who live by pilfering and by illegitimate traffic in 'white mule' or other contraband. Close inspection will often reveal social conditions that might be expected in such remote districts. Through such a setting one cold winter morning, strides the Bird Man, out of his usual habitat, but seeking the Hermit Thrush which frequents the nearby thickets year after year. The Bird Man is cold to the marrow and walks rapidly, passing close to a shack, on through an old garden, over a piece of high ground, then into a lovely dell, preparatory to climbing a wooded ridge where dwells the Hermit Thrush. As he passes the shack he notices hurried glances from belind the rough window curtains and, as soon as he crosses the first high ground and is out of sight of the shack, he hears the excited voices of men and dogs on his trail. The Bird Man continues to walk briskly and into the cover of the wooded ridge. Yes, there come the men and dogs hurrying on his trail, likely imagining that their cache of liquor is in danger. Now, a pack of hound dogs are not dangerous, and decreasingly so as they get away from home. Knowing this full well, the Bird Man chooses to meet them in the open beyond the woodland and possibly beyond their cache. Proceeding to the open plateau above the woods, he awaits, in full view of the margin of the woods, the arrival of the 'delegation.' The yelping of the dogs and the calls of the men are heard approaching nearer and nearer. When they come to the top of the ridge and are in full view of the Bird Man, idling in the open field, the dogs are called in hastily and none dare break the cover of the friendly woodland. Convinced that their booty is safe, they turn homeward and the Bird Man returns to his quest of the Hermit Thrush.

### IV. THE SLEET STORM ON BEECH MOUNTAIN

How lovely are the mountains when winter rules! Many lovers of the out-of-doors prefer the sunny days of spring to go afield and, to the uninitiated, a bird walk in winter is quite out of the question, but not so to the Bird Man! To him the seasons bring, each for itself, a new beauty and interest. The falling of the leaves, the Indian summer days, the snow and sleet of the winter solstice call but for proper clothing and a heart that answers to the call of the forest. Early one January, the Bird Man finds his face turned toward the mountains bordering the Tennessee-North Carolina state line, and chooses as his goal for the day, Beech Mountain, a 5,400 foot peak, just over the state line in North Carolina. Leaving his car at Banner Elk, he faces the mountain and its five-mile trail to the top. The day is rather warm and a storm is brewing. How sweet is the mountain air in the nostrils of those who love the woods! The birds, sensing the approaching storm, seek cover and few are seen, but on goes the Bird Man, full of the joy of the forest. Up and ever upward the trail leads. Nearing the top he advances in the lee of the mountain, almost unmindful of the fury of the approaching storm. No birds are to be seen save one lonely hawk perched high in a tree top amid cover so thick that it could not be identified, but it meant company for the Bird Man. Ever leisurely on he goes. It is getting colderthe heavy coat, too warm on the steep ascent, is now very comforting. The

wind is rising and moans ceaselessly in the tree tops which reach above the mountain's crest, but below, in the lee of the mountain, all is calm. On and on, the top is not far distant. The wind is approaching hurricane velocity and it grows colder. The sky is dark and threatening. Sometimes the clouds cover the mountain top and wrap all in mist and fog, then they lift and reveal billowy storm clouds rolling over Grandfather Mountain enroute to the Beech. Thus comes the Bird Man to the mountain top. Before him a vista of marvelous beauty opens across the valley to Grandfather Mountain, which now is lost in the fog and mist and again is clear and beautiful, viewed through breaks in the clouds as they scud by. The Bird Man stands spellbound, viewing the beautiful valley and the storm-lashed mountain tops. The wind is so strong that footing is retained with difficulty-in fact, had the wind been in reverse direction, it would have been unsafe to stand on the top lest one be swept by the fury of the wind over the cliff to disaster below. How many years of such life it must have taken to awaken in the heart of the Psalmist the thought which burst forth in his later years, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my strength." Even so today, muses the Bird Man. Now, it is beginning to rain-each drop that strikes his face stings deeply, but still he stands on the mountain top. Now the clouds surround him, then lift to reveal the storm over the valley below. How feeble are words to portray such scenes! It is getting still colder, now it is sleeting. Even the heavy coat fails to turn the driven blasts, and reluctantly the Bird Man turns his steps backward toward the valley. But not before he seeks shelter behind a massive beech and gains renewed vigor and warmth from a thermos of hot coffee and a light lunch, necessary equipment for all trips.

The rocks, the grass, the trees, the Bird Man, become covered with ice from the sleet storm. Ever colder and colder blows the gale, and ever closer and closer comes the valley and shelter and warmth. The men loitering in the general store looked up quite surprised as in strides the ice-covered stranger with a hearty "Howdy, men!"

### V. THE SPIRIT OF THE BIRDS AND THE FLOWERS

The Bird Man is often impressed with the idea that there is something about the birds and flowers that the mind of man does not generally recognize. Some few years ago he read from the *War Cry* an article by William Booth, entitled "My Idea of Heaven," in which he said, "Strange as it may seem, the animals were there." And, why not? Why do men imagine that there is no spirit in the bird or in the flower? In his delightful book, "Birds in the Wilderness," George Miksch Sutton in his closing chapter sings of the spirit of the old apple tree.

The Bird Man knows that his saddle horse has a tender conscience and a sense of humor. He knows that his dog recognizes the difference between right and wrong. He knows that his flower garden produces marvels of beauty on particular occasions, and he knows that the birds revel in the ecstasy of love for their mates and in devotion to their nestlings. THE MIGRANT

The American Indian dreams of the happy hunting ground as the home of the departed. The Jew dreams of heaven as a place of eternal rest in Abraham's bosom or as a place with golden streets and mansions of precious stones, but not so the Bird Man. He dreams of eternity among the peaceful valleys, the green pastures, by the still waters, among the forest trees lit with eternal brightness, and among all the birds and the flowers. He has heard it quoted from Confucian lore, "That whereby man differs from the lower animals is little. Most people throw it away."

The Hindu will not stop the life of anything, being unwilling to destroy what he cannot create. Would that our hunters might not destroy our wild life, often for the love only of killing, to the end that our abode here may more perfectly reflect the glory that is to be.

JOHNSON CITY, June, 1939.

### NESTING OF THE GREAT HORNED OWL

BY H. O. TODD, JR.

The Great Horned Owl lays its eggs earlier than any Tennessee species. and since very little has been published on its nesting in the state, the following notes may be of interest. This species is a rare breeding bird in Rutherford County where I live, and where most of my bird work has been done. In some twenty years of active effort I have only looked into five occupied nests of this bird, and one of these was in Van Buren county.

This Van Buren county nest has been mentioned in *The Migrant*, 1936, p. 47. In company with A. F. Ganier I visited on March 8, 1936, an old eagle nest which he had found the preceeding fall. It was found to contain two eggs of the Great Horned Owl. The nest was inaccessible and the eggs were removed by using a small dip net at the end of a long cane. They were quite cold, and on further examination found to contain dead embryos at the point of hatching. It was concluded that the owl had been killed, leaving the eggs to chill.

On April 24, 1936, two young birds were found in an old squirrel bed about twenty feet above the ground. This was in a second-growth oak and hickory woods near Murfreesboro. There were no large trees with suitable hollows in this woods, and the birds were evidently forced to use this somewhat unusual site for want of a better one. The amount of refuse on the ground beneath this nest clearly proved the young had been reared in it The birds were almost ready to fly and a week later they were gone.

A heavily timbered section northeast of Murfreesboro was worked for three years in the hope of finding a nest of this owl. The trees were very large and many were dead and contained hollows. I knew the birds were nesting in the woods for two or three were flushed on each visit. I could find plenty of pellets under some trees but never a nest until the afternoon of February 21, 1938, when I was about ready to give up and go home. On reaching the edge of the woods about two hundred yards from a dwelling, I saw a

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large oak with the top blown out and a large hole in the side. As it was one of the very few in the whole woods that had not been climbed I went over to it and rapped on the side. An owl flushed from the cavity and I lost no time in climbing to the hole, using a tall cedar close by for the ascent. On looking into the hollow three young owls and one egg were discovered. The nestlings were of varying ages, the smallest apparently just hatched. It was evident that four eggs had been laid at intervals of several days each, and that incubation had begun with the laying of the first egg, this being a well known habit of the species. I left the nest quickly as a rain began and I knew the old bird would be anxious to return. There was no food in the nest.

This nest was revisited two weeks later. The owl flushed as before and returned to the tree while I was looking into the nest, but did not alight there. The nest held almost a whole rabbit. A third visit was made on March 14, when the young were banded. At that time a dead Crow lay in the nest. It seemed that the parent owl had taken revenge on the Crow because these birds gave chase every time it was flushed. An old farmer who lived close by in sight of the nest tree reported he could see the Crows there scolding the owl as it brooded its young. The Great Horned Owl is a well known enemy of Crows and it was interesting to know that it begins to feed on them while yet in the nest.—This site was again visited on January 1, 1939, but the cavity was full of leaves and so unsuited to the owl.

Another woods located about a mile from the above mentioned tract contained a nesting hollow in which four young Barred Owls had been found on May 30, 1936. This was in a large black oak, about thirty-five feet up. The tree was too large to be easily climbed, but a tall cedar growing close by enabled me to get above the nest hole and see into it. On climbing this cedar, January 1, 1939, a Great Horned Owl was discovered in the cavity. I waved my hand and the bird flushed, revealing at least one egg. On January 8 I returned with Prof. George Davis and Erma Herrod, an expert climber. Herrod went up the cedar and again flushed the owl. I then climbed to the nest cavity and found two eggs resting on quite a few owl feathers. These were removed for photographing. The owl returned while we were at the tree, but soon left with the Crows giving chase as usual.

On April 10, 1938, while walking through a large wooded section known as 'Lillard Woods' I heard young Great Horned Owls screaming. Hurrying to the point from which the sounds came I found three young birds in an oak. They were being attacked by Crows and were hard put to keep balanced on their perches even though the two parents were present and defending their brood. The Crows left as I came up but the two old owls remained, seemingly indifferent to my presence. The sight of five of these large owls together at one time was an experience quite new to me. Next year on January 14 an owl was flushed from a hollow in these woods but there were no eggs. Perhaps I was too early for this particular individual.

These observations have established a new early nesting date for this species in Middle Tennessee and present the first evidence that the Great Horned Owl ever lays more than two eggs at a sitting in this state. I hope that others who have information on rare breeding birds will make it available to all of us through the pages of *The Migrant*.

MURFREESBORO, June, 1939.

### "CRANETOWN" AT REELFOOT LAKE By Frank A. Pitelka

INTRODUCTION. Reelfoot, the earthquake lake in northwestern Tennessee, offers many opportunities to the midwestern ornithologist who seeks adventure, yet cannot journey too far from home. The region of Reelfoot Lake supports a decidedly varied bird life, since habitats such as river and lake margins, marshes, cypress swamps, mature floodplain forest, and climax beechmaple forest can be visited within a few miles of each other—not to mention "man-made" habitats. The chief attraction, however, is the expanse of aquatic and semi-aquatic habitats and the water and marsh birds which congregate there. Observations of these have been made particularly by Ganier (2, 3, see appended list of references) and to a lesser extent by Crook (1). Recently Maslowski (4) published a short account, accompanied by some excellent photographs, of a visit to "Cranetown." Ganier's paper treating the water birds in particular (3) includes a map and excellent description of the area.

Interest in Reelfoot Lake, other than that of biologists, who study its rich and varied plant and animal life, is centered on its history, and the region is endowed with numerous legends such as the bear-hunting exploits of David Crockett in the early 19th century. The lake is of comparatively recent origin, having been formed by the New Madrid earthquake in 1811-12. It is 12 miles long and 5 miles across at the widest point, and its unusual shape is due to the fact that it occupies an old bed of the Mississippi River ("ox-bow"), the river having moved to the west as a result of the earthquake. Especially in the center and southern end, hundreds of stumps stand just above or just below the water level—remains of trees submerged and killed when the lake was formed. Reelfoot Lake, considering its expanse, is very shallow, being over ten feet deep in but a few places; in addition to this, seasonal fluctuations in water level have resulted in the development of an abundant hydrophytic vegetation of the lake and its floodplain.

Such a region is not only attractive to the ornithologist, but also to the ecologist who is interested in succession and the dynamics of plant and animal communities, and for more than ten years a group of zoologists from the University of Illinois have spent each Easter vacation in field studies at Reelfoot Lake. In the spring of 1938, the writer had the opportunity to join the group under the leadership of Dr. V. E. Shelford and Dr. S. C. Kendeigh. The trip proved particularly profitable because of the remarkable advance of the season, two to three weeks ahead of the normal advance, so that the landscape presented an early summer aspect at that early date. Without a doubt, the highlight of the trip from the ornithologist's point of view was the visit to the heronry.

"CEANETOWN." The heronry, known among the natives as "Cranetown," is located at the (north) end of Big Ronaldson Slough on the west side of Reelfoot Lake along which the zone of cypress swamp is particularly broad. It is well secluded and a newcomer finds a native guide almost necessary. On the morning of April 17, 1938, our group was led over surrounding cultivated fields into the wooded swamp, and after following a tortuous path for perhaps half an hour, climbing several high deer fences and wading through several feet of water for most of the way, we were rewarded with the unmistakable clamor so characteristic of heron and egret congregations. As we came closer, our progress became slower; for wading through one-to-four-foot depths of water necessitated increasing care to avoid holes and submerged trunks and branches and to climb over numerous floating logs that were thickly carpeted with plant life, particularly mosses (*Climacium Kindbergii*, a "tree moss," and *Mnium* spp, were most abundant). Against the beauty of the feathery cypress foliage and the fresh leaves of the intermixed river maples (*Acer saccharinum*), egrets and herons arose from hidden perches or flew overhead as they commuted between nesting and feeding grounds. In such a setting plus the warmth of the day—not to mention the important point that mosquitoes, flies, and gnats were totally absent—our enjoyment of the spectacle was complete.

Entering "Cranetown" proper and in the midst of occasional but heavy showers of "whitewash." we were able to notice that nesting was remarkably advanced. Needless to say, during most of our stay, the birds squawked and screamed-milled about in much confusion-and general bedlam prevailed. The heronry covers an area about one-quarter mile in length and about 400-500 feet in width (Ganier). Several hundred nests of American Egrets, Ward's Herons (southern form of the Great Blue Heron), and Doubled-crested Cormorants were observed in the tops of partly defoliated cypress trees. Some trees had as many as twenty to twenty-five nests each. All three species were incubating eggs, and some nests of the Heron contained young. The Egret was twice as numerous as the Ward's Heron, while the Cormorant fell in between these numbers; our estimate listed approximately 300 American Egrets, 200 Double-crested Cormorants, and 150 Ward's Herons. About 25 Anhingas (or Water-turkeys) were observed flying about the colony, and two Blackcrowned Night Herons were also seen. Both of these species, particularly the latter, no doubt become more numerous later in the spring since both are known to nest in "Cranetown" in addition to those species mentioned previously.

Grackles moved about in the colony, probably stealing fragments of food left by the nesting birds. Black Vultures soared overhead, very likely feeding on dead and deserted young. Several dead young of the Ward's Heron were found below the trees. Other than these nesting species of the colony and the additional ones attracted by it, the bird life of the cypress swamp included the Wood Duck, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Sycamore Warbler, Redeyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, Carolina Wren, and Pileated and Red-belied Woodpeckers. The Prothonotary Warbler was especially abundant and is perhaps the most conspicuous of small passerine birds in the wooded swamps about Reelfoot Lake.

In addition to the birds inhabiting "Cranetown," other species of the family Ardeidae frequent Reelfoot Lake. Yellow-crowned Night Herons and Little Blue Herons occasionally nest about Reelfoot. The latter become numerous during late summer along with the appearance of flocks of the Wood Ibis from the South. The Green Heron, American Bittern, and Least Bittern are also summer residents and complete this remarkable list. "Cranetown" is perhaps one of the largest inland heronries and adds considerably to the other undoubted avifaunal attractions of Reelfoot Lake. At the height of the nesting season, according to recent estimates (3), about 1,500 birds representing five species are present. These together with the presence of nesting Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Bald Eagles, Duck Hawks, and other larger species, the abundance of bird life in general, and the stretches of virgin cypress swamp and luxuriant floodplain forest create a distinctly primeval atmosphere—the sort of atmosphere that has become more and more distant from our reach.

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### Experimental Zoology Laboratory

### Champaign, Illinois

Note: This article was published in The Audubon Bulletin, published by the Illinois Audubon Society, April, 1939, pages 9-12. With the author's kind permission it is reproduced herein in full. It is not only an interesting account of a visit to Reelfoot but it should also make us appreciate what an unique naturalists' paradise we have in our own state. All members should visit Reelfoot at least once and the more ambitious might plan a trip into the heronry described, generally called 'Big Cranetown' by past students of the area.—EDITOB.

### IN THE FRONT YARD OF MEMPHIS

BY MRS. BEN B. COFFEY, JR.

Riverside Drive runs for about a mile at the foot of the Memphis Bluffs. Between the northern half and Wolf River lies a narrow public parking area for downtown Memphis. Across the Wolf is Mud Island with a heavy growth of willows. At the foot of Beale the island ends and the Mississippi River itself laps at the base of the southern half of the Drive. While parking this spring I have paused for a short time each day to note what birds were present and often have driven the length of the Drive in the hope of adding something of particular interest. Between the foot of the island and the mouth of the sewer at Talbot Avenue is a favored area for ducks, gulls, and terns in season.

On April 16 the first Prothonotary Warbler was heard singing on Mud Island and has been heard there daily since then. Occasionally I would see one dash out over the water. Dr. Louis Leroy, in whose boat a pair of these birds nested during the past two years (*The Migrant*, June, 1938, pp. 21-22) says that a pair came into the boat several times but did not build a nest, although suitable places were fixed for them and the window always left open.

On April 18 a drive down Riverside Drive was rewarded by seeing a Barn Swallow skimming over the water near the street. Lesser Scaup were seen from April 19 until June 6. The largest flock was one of 70 (May 6). On May 12, during the Cotton Carnival, a skeet shooting match was held at the small park at the foot of Beale Ave. Six Scaup were feeding about 50 yards away and the firing of the guns did not disturb them at all. Several times they were seen in the harbor feeding close to the boats and to the shore, not more than 15 feet from the parked cars. On May 29, only a single pair was seen and on June 6 only a male remained.

Maryland Yellow-throats were heard singing on April 21. Other birds heard frequently on the Island were: Baltimore Oriole, Warbling Vireo, Wood Thrush, Catbird, Cardinal, White-eyed Vireo, Red-wing, Carolina Chickadee, and Tufted Titmouse. Only once did I see Red-wings join the Grackles (which were seen almost every day) on the barges and cobblestones in search for food. I noticed one Grackle flying low over the water and picking up bits of floating bread. When the water was high very large trees would be seen floating down the river. At one time I counted 40 Grackles in a willow tree which was rapidly being carried downstream. Crows also enjoyed free rides on the floating trees. Six Crows were noted April 28 at the foot of Beale Avenue hovering and picking up food from the water.

On April 28, I noticed a large bird out in the middle of the river channel. It was diving often and moving downstream with the swift current. Looking through 7x binoculars I could easily identify it as a Common Loon. I drove slowly down the Boulevard keeping pace with it for about a quarter mile and watching it closely. While returning to the parking lot I found one Herring Gull and two Bonaparte's Gulls feeding at the sewer at the foot of Talbot street. These Gulls, all immature birds, were observed from a distance of 50, feet. One Rough-winged Swallow and two Purple Martins were also seen there. One adult Ring-billed Gull was seen on May 15, a very late date for this species.

Although Least Terns were found at Lakeview, Miss. on the T. O. S. Field Day, May 7, I did not see them on the River until May 12 when 20 were counted. They have been seen every day since this date. 19 Black Terns were seen on May 15, and 3 on May 17. On May 22, I noticed that a large flock of Terns were feeding where the muddler waters of Wolf River meet the Mississippi. I drove down to this point and counted 55 Common, 40 Least, and 12 Black Terns. No observations were made from this date until May 29, when only Least Terns were present. On June 12, Frank McCamey reported seeing six Black Terns and the usual number of Least Terns feeding off the point of Mud Island.

MEMPHIS, June, 1939.

BY BENJ. R. WARRINER

The Baltimore Oriole is a rare summer resident at Corinth. In fact, I have no record of the bird's presence here after May 1. This scarcity adds a degree of interest to a bird which is surpassed in beauty by no other kind. Generally in April of each year, the result of constant searching, I do find one or two transients and these brief glimpses have constituted my only acquaintance with the Baltimore.

Early on the morning of last April 20 I came unexpectedly upon a male Baltimore beside a country road eight miles from town. The bird apparently was busily engaged in building a nest in a very small free in a farmyard. A sling-shot was lodged in the tree a foot or so beneath the nest. This was to me positive evidence that residing nearby was a boy who was an enemy of the birds. Doubtless unable to hit his target, he had, in his impatience, thrown the whole works at it. Sure enough, I saw farther back in the yard a woman and three small boys, all engaged in a farm chore. This was a perfect opportunity for me to put in a good word for the cause of bird preservation. I walked within twenty feet of the tree while the Baltimore paid not the slightest attention to me. He was too intent on arranging the details of the almost completed nest,.

I had a pleasant visit with the boys and their mother. Lectured them vigorously, though as kindly as I could, on the wrong involved in killing the birds. A search of my pockets brought out three dimes, all the money I had. I gave each boy a coin and exacted from each a promise that no harm should come to the exquisite gold and black bird that had come from the Far South to weave his intricate nest near their very doorstep. It required only a little understanding for each of them to appreciate that indeed the Baltimore was a distinguished visitor. When I left I told the boys that I would be coming back soon to see them, the bird, and the nest, and that there would be other dimes.

When I passed again close to the tree the Baltimore cocked his impudent head and, — laughed! Laughed in tone so strident it would have been most unbecoming in any bird I know, to say nothing of one named after a distinguished Lord. The nest was only a caterpillar nest, shaped and suspended from the tree almost exactly like that of the oriole. The bird had been burying his head deep into it and gorging his hungry belly on the delicious, fuzzy tidbits. His hunger and his sense of humor satiated, his vanity more lordish than even, he high-tailed it across the pasture towards the north.

A few days later, somewhat in the mood of the criminal who is drawn back to the scene of his crime, I passed that way again. The little tree, leafless when I first saw it, was now a mass of new spring foliage, but utterly birdless. The boys had retrieved their sling-shot.

CORINTH, MISS., June, 1939.

To our fellow member, Mr. R. A. Wilson of Nashville, we offer our congratulations upon his approaching birthday, July 8, on which day he will have reached the age of 88 years. For nearly 30 years Mr. Wilson has conducted the Fin, Fur and Fea<sup>th</sup>ers column in the Nashville Banner and therein has written many delightful stories of birds and the out-of-doors.

### THE SEASON

MEMPHIS AREA:-Except for the Spring Field Day the writer has been able to be out but twice since the Xmas censuses. On March 19, at Lakeview, we recorded the American Bittern and several early species. On April 16, a short trip to Overton Park was made and a good list, including many warblers, was recorded. The most uncommon species noted was the Worm-eating Warbler,-one individual being studied at close range by all of our party. Several first arrivals were recorded on the home grounds including the Grasshopper Sparrow on April 2, a very early date among the few records we have of that species in spring and, as always, the Warbling Vireo. A male Mourning Warbler was a late transient on May 25 and was the first and only one of the species to be banded by the writer. On May 1, a Veery sang nearby and on May 3, one appeared in the yard. A Painted Bunting was present in the back lot from May 2 to about May 15. It was an immature male and had not only the usual song of the species here but a louder one resembling that of the Louisiana Water-thrush, altho shorter and more abrupt.----At Lakeview on April 2, Whittemore and Pond recorded 3 Golden-eyes, 1 Sora, 1 Solitary Sandpiper, and 1 Least Sandpiper. Frequent rains had filled most of the shallow 'pits' but, as in recent years, shorebirds were uncommon this spring.-On the Spring Field Day, May 7, we were honored by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Ganier, Roger Ganier, Dr. G. R. Mayfield and H. C. Monk of Nashville, and Mr. and Mrs. M. G. Vaiden and party of Rosedale, Miss. Approximately 125 species were recorded but the number of individuals was very low. The wooded bottomlands were completely flooded; thus restricting our morning trip. Two Mississippi Kites were seen. In the afternoon at the 'highway pit', nests of King Rail, Pied-billed Grebe, and Least Bittern, and newly hatched young of the first two species were viewed by the party.-BEN B. COFFEY, JR., Memphis.

CORINTH CHAT:----In the song of the Black-throated Green Warbler there are two or three striking Chickadee notes. The Swamp Sparrow sings like the Field, though decidedly weaker. April 26, a Purple Gallinule appeared at Liddon's Lake,-a rare and beautiful visitor. My first Black-poll came April 29. Daily until May 22, his kind were plentiful. A close-up view of the Black-poll shows the bird to be a neat and beautifully marked, diminutive cavalier. Another two thousand miles to go does not seem to hurry his leisurely journey. May 12 I found a large flock of Bobolinks in a broad low field of green oats and hairy vetch. Again, May 22, in the same place, there was a large flock composed almost entirely of female birds. In the first lot males outnumbered the females ten to one. The brightest spot of the season was an Oven-bird, extremely rare in this section. Late in the afternoon of May 21, following heavy rain, the timid sprite fed under a patch of thick shrubs in my backyard. In a little while he ventured into the open and paid no attention to me. A fragrant breath of the wild woods, the little fellow seemed incongruous in a spot so crowded. At last startled, he flew rapidly away and missed only by inches the eaves and roof of the house.-BENJ. R. WABBINER, Corinth, Miss.

CLARKSVILLE AREA:-At last, fully four weeks after their scouts had taken up their stations, the Purple Martins arrived here on April 5. A sharp disturbance in the weather accompanied or caused their coming. The same day the Chimney Swifts, whose advance guards had been seen for a week, multiplied in numbers. It is interesting to note that in the four years past, for which we have records, these two species have shown up here on earlier dates than those published in 1936 for Nashville, 40 miles southeast of us. The variance ranges from two to four weeks in case of the Martins but amounts to only a few days with the Swifts .---- Other early dates for this season are Chuck-will's-widow and Gray-cheeked Thrush, April 6; Redstart, April 11; and Magnolia Warbler, April 16 (last year April 14).---Spring was retarded by moderately cool weather and the first half of May was particularly wet and chilly; only during the latter half did the blackberries come into full bloom. The flocking of Swifts continued through April and even after pairs had taken up individual chimneys, unpleasant weather on May 13 made them hover all day over the common roosting places and go into them once more at dusk. -----The cold spring may have been the reason for the delayed arrival of some of our summer residents. Green Herons were first observed April 16, two weeks later than usual, and the Yellow-billed Cuckoos, coming May 23, were the last to appear on the scene. Cedar Waxwings had been scarce during winter and early spring but came back in good numbers when the mulberries ripened. Red-headed Woodpeckers after being rare from November till March, returned in reduced numbers. We attribute their decrease to the Starlings who rob them of their former nest holes by prior occupation. Other Woodpeckers suffering from this intruder are the Red-bellied and the Flicker. We have seen both of them lose in open fight the holes they had dug, to Starlings, and this happened in the woods as well as near dwellings. (But unwise is the Starling that tries to dislodge a Woodpecker after an egg has been laid!) Bluebirds seem less troubled by the invader, as he does not seem to care for their usual nesting sites which are too low over the ground.-Savannah Sparrows became quite common during the first part of April and a group of migrating Swamp Sparrows appeared in our backyards on the 18th. Our yards were also visited by Lincoln's Sparrows in fair numbers during the period from May 8-15. This was the time when the White- throated Sparrows gradually thinned out, although we have positive sight records of single birds on May 25 and May 28.—Among the waterbirds the abundance of Bluewinged Teal was marked. This species outnumbered the Ring-necked and Scaup Ducks which heretofore had been our most plentiful ducks .---- Among the rarer occurrences the following deserve mention: March 26, Golden-eye, 1, and American Bittern, 1, at Marks' Slough: March 30, Herring Gulls, 4 at a 'rain-lake' in bottomland; April 6, Buffle-head, 1, among a dozen Scaups on the Cumberland River; April 13, Greater Yellowleg, 4, near the river; and April 9, Osprey, 1, flying over the river. April was a banner month for our observations as 130 species were recorded as seen in that time.----ALFRED CLEBSCH, Clarksville.

NASHVILLE AREA:—A cool May, with well distributed rainfall, made the usual spring migration quite normal and with vegetation far advanced, nesting activities were a bit earlier than usual. Each week-end for four weeks, one of our T. O. S. chapters put on a Field Day and those of us who

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attend as many as possible, were wishing for a pair of the fabled seven-league boots.----The Spring Field Day at Nashville, held May 14 on Sycamore Creek at Old Hopkinsville Road, drew members from as far east as Knoxville and westward from Memphis. About 80 were in attendance and the usual excellent list of species was recorded. Among the nests found there during the day were those of Black and White Warbler with 2 eggs (they hatched 2 days later), Hooded Warbler with 4 eggs (fresh), La. Water-thrush with 4 small young, and nests of Kingfisher, Cardinal, Field Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, White-eyed Vireo, Downy Woodpecker and others. Sycamore and Cerulean Warblers were quite common along the stream. Among the late transients noted were Olive-backed Thrush, Lincoln's and White-throated Sparrows, and of Warblers the Bay-breasted, Black-poll, Black-throated Green, Chestnutsided, Myrtle, Magnolia, Palm, Tennessee, and Canada. Along a lane to the eastward, J. A. Robins saw Prairie Horned Larks in several places; doubtless at home for summer at this late date.----A Sora Rail was found dead on May 18, on the Peabody College campus in Nashville and given to me for preservation by J. M. Shaver.----A Mockingbird had apparently established himself on the State Capitol grounds, being seen there on April 29 by H. C. Monk and at other times by G. R. Mayfield. This small casis in the center of the city is also the home of a pair of Sparrow Hawks which prey chiefly upon English Sparrows but also upon young Nighthawks fledged upon the downtown gravel roofs. Blue Jays also visit this square in summer but do not nest there.—An unusual 'in the city' visitor was a Whip-poor-will, which called for a short time at 3 A.M. on May 16 at 1605 Villa St., in the yard of Mrs. Talley who reported it. G. R. Mayfield states that this species has also occurred on the Vanderbilt campus. The last mentioned observer reported a Buffle-head on Sanford's pond near Donelson, on April 22 .- A flock of 25 Rusty Blackbirds was seen at the creek on Hobbs Road, on April 19, by Wm. Simpson. He, in company with Arthur McMurray, reported 200 Bobolinks on May 5 at Knapp Farm. Nearby they flushed a Nighthawk from its two eggs; rather an early date for this species.----A Woodcock, feigning a broken wing, was observed on May 19 by Mortimer on Marrowbone Creek: good evidence that a brood of young were nearby.---- A pair of Barred Owls were reported by H. C. Monk to have reared a brood of young in Shelby Park where on May 19 he observed two but recently from the nest. These owls have been reported here in other years also and the writer recalls an adult there, sitting patiently on a limb ten feet above the slough, watching for crayfish and kindred 'fry' in the shallow water below.---Mourning Warblers are rarely reported here, so one observed at close range on May 13 near Radnor Lake by Miss Mary Lee, is of interest.----Mrs. Laskey is again actively engaged in her banding studies of Bluebirds in the Warner Parker nest-box project and has more than 50 occupied boxes under observation .---- A nest of the Cooper's Hawk contain-ing 5 fresh eggs was found by the writer on May 28 at Craggie Hope, this being a very late date. The nest was near the top of a slender pine in a pine grove where the Sharp-shinned Hawks usually breed; the latter were not found there this year.-ALBERT F. GANIER, Nashville.

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### THE ROUND TABLE

SOUVENIRS OF THE SPRING MIGRATION:-The spring migration just passed furnished some interesting records for my notebook. On April 23 a Lark Sparrow was found in a new subdivision, running tamely along ahead of the car. In flight its tail looked unusually long, the tip was conspicuously rounded and heavily tipped with white. These characters readily distinguish this local rarity from other 'ground' sparrows. This species is apparently a regular summer resident in the cedar glades, but elsewhere in our country it is seldom seen. I had not observed it away from the glades before in 23 years local experience.----A very late White-throated Sparrow was seen on Centennial Park hill on May 20. It called frequently, but did not sing. This fact and its rather dull colors suggest it was a female. I rarely hear this species sing in May, and suspect that most of the males move north by this time. The record equals my previous late date of May 20, 1937, and also William Walker's May 20, 1929 record.—Another late record came to hand on May 26 when a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was discovered in Shelby Park. The morning was heavily overcast and the gloomy woods were nearly silent, when the "click" note of this species was heard. These notes led to the bird, which also sang a few low, short songs as it hopped about and fed in a huge oak tree. This bird was exactly one week later than any other I have a record of locally. -Cedar Waxwings are usually the last transients to leave in the spring but did not remain as late this year as they usually do. I saw several small flocks in the mulberry trees in Centennial Park on May 30, and a flock of 24 flew over my home at dusk that day. No more were seen later. The last flocks of this species are always found in mulberry trees, but the birds leave weeks before the supply of this fruit is exhausted. It seems probable that the mulberries influence the Waxwings to tarry here, but do not entirely overcome the urge to migrate to another region to nest.---HARRY C. MONK, Nashville.

A BANDED CARDINAL AT CLARKSVILLE:—Last March I banded a female Cardinal with a No. 2 band that must have been too large for this individual's tarsus. Such a band can become the cause of injury when it catches on some pointed object and the bird is jerked to a stop or struggles to get loose. In this case, at least, later events show that the band made trouble for my Cardinal, yet, strangely, it then helped cure the ill it had brought. Yesterday, after a lapse of three months, the bird returned Her right leg on which the band was worn, was glued into the feathers of the breast by dried blood. When this mass was gently loosened with warm water I saw that the leg had been broken, but, held by the band as in a sling and, probably aided by rest as the bird sat on her eggs, it had healed completely. Although the shank had a knot and was crooked, the use of the toes was left unimpaired and mother Cardinal was foraging for her young.—Mrs. JOHN Y. HUTCHISON, Clarksville.

June

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NESTING HABITS OF THE LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:-Some observations, which to the writer seemed quite interesting, were made upon a Loggerhead Shrike (Lanius ludovicianus ludovicianus) and her young, at Baton Rouge, La., during the spring of 1931.---The nest was situated about four feet from the ground in a small clump of bamboo cane (Arundinaria) located about one foot from a concrete walk along which people passed during the day. This proximity to human traffic first attracted the writer's notice, and daily observations were begun concerning the nesting bird's feeding habits and general activities. Among the points observed, the following seemed to be of most importance:----(1) The nesting bird, presumably the female, did all of the incubating altho her mate, who could be distinguished by a slight brownish holdover from his immature plumage, was often seen in the vicinity.----(2) One definite time was established when she left the nest daily. This was within a half-hour interval at about four r.M. (3) After a few days she became tame enough to accept food left upon the side of the nest. Her usual behavior was to scold a bit, fly to the other side of the clump and return for the food as soon as the hand placing it was withdrawn.----(4) Frogs, lizards, beetles, crickets, earthworms and pillbugs were fed to her and the only thing she ever refused was a large slug. This she took and dropped about thirty feet away upon the sidewalk. Immediately afterwards she accepted a large frog. (5) Fourteen days after observations were begun all five eggs were hatched. This occurred sometime during the period from 5:00 p.M., April 6 to 5:00 p.M., April 7.

April 23, on the approach of the writer, all of the young except one left the nest and hopped about in the cane.——The following outline traces their development through the 17-day period:

April 7-Young hatched.

April 12-Some growth apparent.

April 14-A few feathers showing. Eyes beginning to open.

- April 16-Marked feathers appear. Eyes almost completely open. Considerable growth.
- April 19—Crowding the nest. Legs, wings and tail covered with feathers. Eyes completely open.

April 22-Fully feathered.

April 23-Can use wings a little. Able to leave nest readily.

FORREST V. DURAND, Springfield, Tennessee.

Note:--The Loggerhead Shrike or its related and more northern subspecies, the Migrant Shrike, is found thruout Tennessee but can be said to be fairly common only in western and south central Tennessee. This interesting account is included principally to direct our readers' attention to what interesting observations can be recorded if we will only make the effort.--

A State Conservation Commission has been appointed by Governor Cooper to act in an advisory capacity with the Dept. of Conservation. The T. O. S., having worked constantly for wildlife conservation for 24 years, finds considerable satisfaction in the naming of Dr. Geo. R. Mayfield, one of our founder members, as Chairman of the new Commission. While of an advisory nature we believe the Commission will be able to accomplish much in promoting a long-time conservation program.

The Blue Grass Chapter held its spring field day on April 30 at Beaver Dam Springs in Hickman County. With unsurpassed weather and a bountiful lunch the outing was especially pleasant. We only wish that those members who were unable to be present knew just what they missed. We were pleased to have many guests with us.---The Louisiana Water-thrush was common and its song was conspicuously frequent throughout the day. Several Scarlet Tanagers were seen near the picnic table. They appeared very gentle, resting on low limbs long enough for everyone to observe them closely .-The birds seen were recorded by the following members: Mr. Alfred Clagett, Mrs. F. C. Laskey, Dr. O. J. Porter, Mrs. Sam Rogers, and Mr. Porter Stone. -A suggestion was made and tentatively adopted, that, since the members of the Blue Grass Chapter are so scattered, our meetings be held hereafter at Osceola, the beautiful farm of our president, Dr. O. J. Porter, located near Columbia. All members attending will bring a basket lunch. The Fall Field Day was scheduled for the last Sunday in October and we hope that this date will not coincide with that set by any other chapter. We hereby extend a cordial invitation to members-at-large and members of other chapters to join us on that date.-MRS. SAM H. ROGERS, Pulaski.

HATCHIE RIVER WILDLIFE SURVEY: In *Tennessee Wildlife* (June 1939, p. 10) we note with particular interest an announcement by Director Richard G. Turner of the Game and Fish Division, Department of Conservation, of a wildlife survey of the Hatchie river watershed in southwest Tennessee. The project is under the immediate direction of Mr. Val Solyom, Game Technician, who will make use of the results in his game managment studies. The announcement reads in part:

"The field survey of the Hatchie river watershed got under way June 15. The survey began in the southern section of McNairy County and will proceed downstream through the counties traversed by the Hatchie river and will include its tributaries encountered as the survey progresses.

"So far as is known at present, biological survey work in this area has never been undertaken before in a thorough manner. The Hatchie river seems to be the meeting point of northern and southern flora and fauna, hence should produce valuable information on game management, propagation and conservation.

"The survey party consists of Willet N. Wandell of Wisconsin, a trained mammalogist, John B. Calhoun, Nashville ornithologist, Albert Reynolds of Michigan, botanist and topographer, and John A. Pond of Memphis, camp chief and assistant mammalogist and ornithologist.

"The party should gather very valuable information inasmuch as this is the first known group to make a detailed survey along this watershed. No available records give any information to show what actually exists in the survey area. Reports of their findings will be published in subsequent issues of Tennessee Wildlife magazine and otherwise made available for the information of the public."

Alfred Clebsch, Jr., also joined the party and we note with pride that Messrs. Calhoun, Clebsch, and Pond are valued members of the T. O. S. They have been most active in field work which fact should stand them in good stead on the expedition. Calhoun has recently graduated from the Miller School of Biology at the University of Virginia and, according to freshman Vardaman of our Memphis chapter, was the busiest man there. Unquestionably our members join us in wishing the Survey party every success.

The usual "Field Week" in the Tennessee Mountains, which has been conducted for several years past by Mr. A. F. Ganier, our Curator, has been omitted this year on account of a trip by him to the Pacific Coast, including attendance at the meeting of the American Ornithologists Union at San Francisco. Mrs. Coffey and Miss Alice Smith of Memphis visited Mrs. C. A. Barefield (who attended the Smoky Mountains trip last June) at Norfolk, Va. The high point of the visit was a trip to famous Cobb's Island which continues to have large nesting colonies of terns, gulls, skimmers, and other water birds. Your editor spent a week listing the birds of Tishomingo State Park in Northeast Mississippi. Several of our Memphis Scouts are taking the opportunity of using binoculars and 'Peterson' in Texas (Wallace), the Gulf Coast and Florida (Taylor, Burdick) and the Middle Atlantic coast (Vardaman). McCamey rushed home from Yale to visit Reelfoot, Moon Lake, and other points of interest. Our mail box reveals that Dr. and Mrs. Henry Meyer are at Ann Arbor, Mich., for the summer but is silent concerning any others of our membership who may be exploring new fields.

The following mimeographed material is to a limited extent available free from Ben Coffey, 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis. Please send postage, $-1\frac{1}{2}c$  for the Mississippi list and  $1\frac{1}{2}c$  for any or all of the others.

- 1. Spring Migration Calendar for Memphis. 1928-1936.
- 2. Birds That Bear Numbers. 1936. (Bird-banding procedure).
- 3. Mississippi Xmas Bird Census Summary. (11 localities, 1935-36.)

4. Memphis Bird Outline. 1939. (Prepared for garden club speakers, etc. in order to give them a specific outline locally applicable to bird study and bird attraction. Most common birds would probably have to be changed slightly for use elsewhere.)

5. Bird Life of Memphis and Vicinity. March, 1932.

(A very preliminary list only and now incorrect in part. On special request).
6. Summer Birds of Memphis Camps in the Ozarks. (Hardy and Mammonth Spring, Ark.) 1931. On special request only.

7. A Preliminary List of the Birds of Mississippi. May, 1936. To aid and encourage bird students in our sister state. Based on the sparse published material on that state, publications for adjacent states, and the writer's frequent field trips into North Mississippi.

In the interest of our persecuted birds of prey we will also include the National Association of Audubon Societies Circular 25, 'Eastern Hawks— What They Look Like in the Air' (reproduced in *The Migrant*, 1937, pp 55-56) and, reverse side, 'What Hawks Eat' (to be reproduced in a later issue). Two copies will be sent so that each side can be displayed on a bulletin board at school, camp, Scout room, or the like. The writer gave 250 for distribution in the Shelby County Schools, and chapters or T. O. S. members individually can secure such quantities at cost from the Association (attention of Mr. Richard H. Pough).

### THE MIGRANT

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF TENNESSEE BIRDS.
PUBLISHED BY THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY. Editor, Ben B. Coffey, Jr., 672 N. Eelvedere, Memphis.
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Items for publication should be sent to the Editor. "The simple truth about birds is interesting enough, it is not necessary to go beyond it."

Last year at this time we urged our readers to note how common the various summer resident species were in their area and to compile a list showing the more abundant species.—preferably in order of occurrence. Lists from all over the state were published in the September issue of *The Migrant* (pp. 46-50). We suggest that each contributor look over his or her list with the idea of subconsciously, if not purposely, checking up and improving the list thru continued observations this summer. Perhaps at some future time we will repeat the project but the published lists should be something on which to base further studies. Those who did not submit lists should refer to the lists for nearby areas and use them in making comparisons with the birdlife in their communities.

In future issues we hope to conduct a 'round table' or symposium on: (1) planting to attract birds; (2) bird study and conservation in the schools. We would like to have our readers' ideas and suggestions on these topics. Send lists of shrubs (with comments) to a regional editor or to the editor. Accounts of practical study projects that have been worked out in schools, by teachers alone or in cooperation with T. O. S. members or chapters, are especially desired. Lists of the more desirable bird books and pamphlets, teaching guides, and other references will be prepared.

There was not sufficient copy for this issue on hand before we left on our vacation and so all work had to be deferred until our return and sandwiched in with July commitments. Our copy basket is practically 'cleaned out' at this writing. We are especially desirous of starting early on the next issue so that we can go after flocks of Swifts without the 'specter' of *The Migrant* down each chimney. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Seasonal notes should be sent in by September 1st. Feature articles should be sent in as soon as possible.— Do it now! Don't be hesitant about sending in notes and articles. *The Migrant* is from the other 'T. O. S. members to you and from you to your fellow-members. 'George' can't describe that experience but you can. Glean the interesting facts from your field cards and notes, then send them in!

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Phillips, Miss Vivian, 421 Center Ave.

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Wynns, Mrs. Anabel, W. College Street.

Nore: Chapter includes Mr. W. P. Morrison, organizer, who was listed on previous roll.

### PARIS CHAPTER

(This is a new chapter, composed of members previously listed under 'Tennessee At Large,' namely: Paul Crosswy, Billy Neal, L. D. (Buster) Thompson, and Dr. M. C. Woods.)

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