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Mississippi Kites at home

THE MIGRANT

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FEEDING AND NESTING OF THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

BY GORDON VAIDEN

My experience with the Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia Missisippiensis*) has been limited but since 1918 I have had opportunity to study them here from time to time in the vicinity of Rosedale, in Bolivar County, Miss. This locality is on the east bank of the Mississippi River and one-hundred miles southwest of Memphis.

My first experience with the nesting of this bird was in 1919, when a nest was located some one and one-half miles north of Rosedale, Bolivar County, Miss., on June 4. The nest was built about fifty-five feet up and against the trunk of a very large cottonwood, that required a great deal of time and exertion to reach. It was about twenty-five feet to the first limb and this part of the climb was made by a knotted rope thrown over the first limb and then climbed by the hand over hand method. After resting and working out a plan of procedure, I finally managed to negotiate the balance of the tree to the nest crotch. Since at that time I was particularly interested in securing a set of eggs for my collection, I was surprised and disappointed to find a young bird in the nest some 10 days old. One of the parent birds, the female I believe, was very angry and persisted in attempting to make "sashays" at my head. The other seemed more willing to allow an examination of the nest and remained some distance away in a sycamore, always alighting in the foliage, even though there was a dead limb near the top of the tree. Occasionally this bird would soar near the nest tree but gave no indication of the anger and battle being staged by his mate.

The nest was about twenty feet from the very top of the cottonwood and was made of sticks, leaves, and lined with fresh leaves of pecan and sycamore. However, most of the leaves were rapidly drying out. The nest proper was some seven and one-half inches across the top, about seven inches high, and measured about twenty-six inches in circumference. It was well concealed from above and below. The nest was located by a plantation manager when the birds continued to alight in the trees near the spot containing the nest tree. These birds, presumed to be the same pair, nested again in this tree

NOTE: The frontispiece represents a pair of Mississippi Kites at their nest in a sweet-gum tree, found at Vicksburg, Miss., on May 26, 1901. In the air are two more Kites, catching and eating cicadas on the wing. The drawing was prepared from photographs and field sketches made at the time of the nest and of a living bird, by the Editor. Photographs of this bird and of other nests are reproduced in A. C. Bents Life Histories of North American Birds, Proceedings, U. S. National Museum, Volume 167.

during 1920 but I did not attempt to reach the nest that year as I was away most of May and June.

In 1921, after a much more careful watching of the nest tree and a pair of Kites, presumably the same birds, I succeeded, on May 18, in attaining a desired wish, that of collecting a set of two eggs. The eggs were white or dark white, with a possible bluish tinge. There were no markings at all other than a little nest stain caused by fresh pecan leaves in the nest. Little if any new work had been done on this nest except possibly a new lining and the green leaves of the pecan, which had been noted in the center of the nest during the 1919 visit. These birds continued to nest in this tree until the woods were partly cleared for firewood in the fall of 1925. Since the date mentioned, one or more pair of Mississippi Kites have been noted in and near Rosedale in May or June, or both months, up to the present year. However no nests have been found nor has any careful search been made.

In 1937, on May 5, a pair of Kites were observed flying and sailing high over Rosedale. Later, on the same date, a pair was observed soaring higher and higher about one mile south of town. On May 9, a pair was seen not over two-hundred fifty feet up, gliding upward, as my observation proved, until lost to sight. On May 19, while riding the crown of the Mississippi River levee some eleven miles south of Rosedale a pair of these birds were noted. We drove for possibly three miles further south on the levee and then retraced our route. In a clump of woods between levee and the cleared fields a flight of Kites was observed and we counted nine birds. The woods were some four-hundred yards wide and possibly a mile long, running parallel with the levee and open fields. The trees consisted of red gum, sycamore, and a few large, partly dead cypress. The birds were observed flying in and out of the woods for possibly an hour; some leaving for a soaring flight of a possible two-thousand feet upward, and then diving back with partly, mostly, closed wings, to the tops of the trees. After a watch of an hour we went into the woods and found everywhere, on everything green, thousands of cicadas. Upon these insects the Kites were filling their crops and gizzards. The cicadas were the periodical type, the thirteen or seventeen year, red-eyed 'w' "locust" as called by most people.

On May 20, I returned to the woods again, by way of the crown of the levee, and witnessed the greatest flight I have observed. We counted thirty-four birds, but accepting a few as repeats there were at least twenty-eight in the woods at this time. Two specimens collected for skins, one a male and the other a female, contained fifty-one and forty-two cicadas respectfully. The female's crop also contained one grasshopper. The majority of cicadas had had their wings removed but a good many had wings and legs yet remaining on the body. Of course the red eyes were mostly counted as the gastric juices had failed to digest these at time of taking the specimens. On May 21, I again returned and found only six Kites during some two hours stay. On May 22, only a pair were observed near the woods in or near the place; however, two others were observed some five miles north of this area. Yet the woods continued to ring with the wing vibrations of the cicadas. The trees were quite thickly populated with Kingbirds, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Crested Flycatchers, Redwing Blackbirds, Crows, Bronzed Grackles, Blue Jays, and a few Summer Tanagers. Following this date, I continued to locate

an occasional Kite at the above mentioned "cicada lunch-room" south of Rosedale until on July 1st, when I observed fourteen of them flying over the willows on the river side of the levee. Following the levee northward for about six miles, nine more Kites were counted, making a total of twenty-three seen during the morning.

For graceful, gliding, motionless, sailing the Mississippi Kites are flyers to the last degree of excellence. Upward on outstretched wings, with only a movement of their 'rudder', and then a high dive downward to the top of a sycamore or sweetgum and again upward with the speed of the fastest; then it makes circle upon circle upward to almost beyond the range of vision and yet the bird is back with us in the woods feeding on cicadas as though they had not made a high journey within the past two to five minutes. Their marvelous gyrations, long head-long dives, with half-closed wings, upward banks, and rudder-tailed dips without a movement of outstretched wings was most delightful to watch. Whenever a cicada ventured out into the open above the highest or lowest trees, there was a Kite right there to take him in with his red, scaly-legged talons; in a moment it transferred cicada from foot to mouth. Some times I saw wings float away on the breeze and at other times I am sure wings and all went down. A great many of the insects were taken on the wing from the leaves without a momentary halt in flight.

I found that these birds begin to feed about four-thirty to five in the morning and about noon start a long rest of some two hours or more. While a few individuals, or perhaps two at a time, remained in the air, the majority alighted in live foliage to rest and doze with a full gizzard. After four o'clock in the afternoon they started to leave and had disappeared entirely by four-forty. Not a one was in the woods so far as we could detect after that time. There is no doubt in my mind that this has been a great year for this bird, at least in this immediate vicinity and I wonder if there has not been drawn to this area, nesting birds from other sections by reason of the plentiful supply of its favorite food, cicadas, the 13-year or 17-year "locusts."

ROSEDALE, MISSISSIPPI, July, 1937.



OBSERVATIONS ON MIXED FLOCKS IN AUTUMN

BY GEORGE R. MAYFIELD

During late summer and early fall one may go afield in search of birds without finding more than a few scattered individuals. Then after becoming somewhat discouraged by the absence of the birds the observer will suddenly come upon a well defined flock moving slowly along with Chickadees and Titmice leading the group. By following the flock quietly the observer will often be surprised to find that there are more than a dozen species represented in this little company.

For the past ten years, the writer has usually spent September and early October at his camp on Stone's River. Bird records have been kept daily and one of the most interesting features of the fall migration has been the flocking of birds during these two months. Many autumns have been spent near College Park, Georgia, before this time and also in other sections of the South and the observations made in these localities seem to tally with those mentioned above. This camp, Birds-I-View, is one of several summer

places located on a bluff overlooking Stone's River, about ten miles east of Nashville at the end of the Elm Hill Road. This particular bluff tract comprises twenty-five acres of woodland with much underbrush. Second-growth hickory, oak, ash, elm and cedar prevail as the most common types of trees. The young of these trees with many kind of shrubs make this area popular with both low and high-feeding birds. For thirteen years no fires have swept this tract as they formerly did every year or so and the results of this protection are quite a lesson in tree production to near-by farmers who still burn over their wood lots. The banks of Stone's River, the cultivated fields near by, the hedges along the road and a willow growth marsh in the lowlands, have also been included in the daily walks for bird study. Weeds, grass and briers, bordering the woodland, furnish food and shelter for many birds which feed low during migration. The flocks discussed in this article, however are for the most part tree-feeding species rather than ground-loving birds.

The groups begin to form about the first of September. The nucleus is always made up of noisy Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice with numbers ranging from two to six for each species. The chatter and scolding of these two species betray the presence of the flock. Close examination will usually show one to three Wood Pewees, one to three Summer Tanagers, one or more Black-and-white Warblers, Carolina Wrens, White-eyed Vireos, Red-eyed Vireos, Yellow-throated Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a Crested Flycatcher, one of the Woodpeckers and some migrating Warblers. The most common species of the latter are the Black-throated Green, the Magnolia, the Chestnut-sided, the Bay-breasted and the Redstart. Occasionally a Blackburnian, Sycamore, Cerulean, Hooded, Kentucky, or Canadian is found and adds zest to the hunt. The Tennessee and Wilson's Warblers, the Chat, the Maryland Yellow-throat and the Ovenbird seem to prefer to migrate as individuals or in flocks of their own.

The main flock on the bluff begins moving from the northeast end of this area about sunrise. They feed southwest along the edge of the bluff usually and thus furnish an excellent target for binoculars. Chickadees and Titmice lead the way with their whistling, clucking and other calls. The Wood Pewee, the Summer Tanager and the Black-and-white Warbler are usually in the vanguard. The Vireos, the Warblers and other kinds of birds appear to rely on their leaders to set the pace and select the best feeding grounds. Snatches of summer songs from many of these species often intersperse the continual chips or calls of the throng.

In the course of two hours they reach their limit about one-half mile from the starting point and then begin a leisurely return to the morning rendezvous and there remain in comparative quietness during mid-day. Generally the party will form again for the afternoon trip. The permanent residents seem to fix the time, the area to be covered and the rate of travel. The local species of migrants are apparently the same for weeks at a time. The presence of two to four Blackburnians, Redstarts or other less common species of the same age or sex remaining for some days in succession would indicate that migrants drop down to rest and feed for a while before resuming their long flight to southern climes. A change to cooler weather often marks the end of one flock and the formation of a new one. One by one the migrating

species nesting locally will vanish from the flock and as cool weather comes on the winter visitors will join with the Chickadees and the Titmice for their daily trips.

The calls from the leaders will usually reveal the situation, socially and psychologically. The "all's-well" feeding call is the most common note heard and conduces to keeping the flock together and setting the pace for all the birds. The normal calls may give way to a "snake-call" when some keen-eyed explorer discovers a serpent enemy lying along a limb or partly hidden among the vines. The whole group gathers around with cries of alarm and defiance to look over the situation for a few moments; each bolder bird flutters up very close to the snake and takes one daring look as though to challenge him for a strike. Then they all pass on to new fields. The discovery of an owl is the signal for fun and noise making. The poor owl is always the subject of vulgar gossip and scolding for the birds seem to have little fear of the owl by day. Should a hawk fly over there is a sharp danger signal and the birds sit motionless and almost hidden from view. At times I have followed them a long time and then, as though they had grown tired of being watched, the leader gives the signal of "duck." In less than a minute the entire flock has vanished as if by magic and a little later their feeding calls would be heard again some distance away.

The reasons suggested for flocking, like those for migration, are many and uncertain. The protective watchfulness afforded by many birds in a group, the pleasure of companionship, the vacation period after rearing the young and moulting their summer plumage, and the advantage of following leaders well acquainted with the best feeding grounds, are some of the causes advanced by those who have watched this tendency to flock in the Fall. Among human beings we have noted the same tendency in the lives of the Pilgrim Fathers, the pioneers of the West and the explorers of new areas. The writer of this article will be pleased to receive additional observations from others in connection with this annual tendency of migrating birds.

NASHVILLE, TENN., August, 1937.



A SEPTEMBER VISIT TO REELFOOT LAKE

BY CHAS. F. PICKERING, M.D.

On my arrival at Reelfoot Lake, my guide or "pusher," Mr. Williams, immediately told me he had a sight to show me after lunch. I had met this man in May of this year and he therefore knew I was interested in birds. I believe that he too is interested, for during my four-day stay on the lake he called my attention to many things he had observed and things he wanted to do. I mention this man's interest before I proceed with my story because I believe my interest in what I saw in May and my association with him then, showed him the interesting possibilities he had with birds on the lake.

About two o'clock we took a boat and pulled through very heavy moss to Buck Basin, a large open area of water close to Samburg. Here we saw 1000 or more American Egrets, mostly standing about on the stumps and logs. Many Great Blue (Ward's) Herons as well as Little Blues were with them but the Egrets were quite in the majority. The birds were "fishing" in this spot and we saw them poised in the many attitudes they take when setting near the water to eat or make a catch. There were so many of these

birds and we were among them so long that they became accustomed to our presence and before we left we were able to maneuver in any direction we wished. This made it possible to make many photographs quite close at hand, some of the birds on the stumps and others of them in flight. They were also made at a distance with a telephoto lens. The effect of many years of protection is reflected in the comparative gentleness of these birds.

My companion said that they would go to roost at sunset so we waited around to watch them do so. As the time grew near, we saw them leave the water in bunches of twenty-five, fifties, hundreds, and fly into the trees close at hand, presenting a very beautiful sight. The trees into which they flew were cypress trees which stood in the water. About the same time our Egrets were going to roost, we saw some twenty-five or thirty Wood Ibis in the air and they too, went to the trees the Egrets were in but the Ibis invariably chose the topmost branches. Each afternoon before sunset, during the remainder of my stay, we could see the Egrets and Ibis flying high and low and all in the general direction where we had first observed the roost.

I visited the Bald Eagles nest, near Mud Basin, which I had seen in May but did not see them near the tall cypress in which the nest was built. However I saw both the adult and immature birds the next afternoon over Blue Basin which is at the north end of the lake. Also in Blue Basin was seen, in flight and at rest, a Duck Hawk. When this falcon was first seen, on a tall dead stump, he was sitting quite peacefully and I had an excellent view of him there, through my 7x35 glasses. Suddenly he darted out and I saw that he had dashed forward to meet twenty-five or thirty Crows which must have thought they would "clean house" with him, but the Duck Hawk cleaned house with the Crows and my last view of them was over the tops of the trees close by and he had the Crows flying in all directions away from him.

On Blue Basin were many Pied-billed Grebes and Coots. With the Coots I observed a Florida Gallinule and many Least Terns were flying about. Finally two large birds came winging their way along near the surface, that gave me a real thrill, for they were Caspian Terns. They were the size of Herring Gulls and wore black caps, red bills and forked tails. We could see Wood Ducks everywhere we went. They are quite plentiful and a goodly number raised there I am sure for I saw many birds in May and also found a number of nests. Most of my time was spent in a boat and on the one trip I made into the woods, I found nearly all of our usual summer birds together with a few transients. Nearly all of these land birds were in song and this was a delight, for they had been quiet for some time past.

I have mentioned that I was on the lake in May of this year. An interesting observation made on that trip was of a Brown Creeper, seen on May 10th, which at that late date would indicate that this bird was on its nesting ground. This species was found nesting across the river, about forty miles southwest, in the St. Francis Basin, by Mr. Otto Widmann, who in his "Birds of Missouri," states that a nest with eggs was found there on June 2, 1894, and that in 1898, three more nests were found on May 16.

For one who is interested in birds, I advise a trip to Reelfoot. Here, not only the land birds may be observed but the less familiar water-loving species may also be seen and in a most picturesque and interesting environment. Such a trip will always prove highly interesting.

CLARKSVILLE, TENN., Sept., 1937.

BIRD BANDING BREVITIES NO. 11

BY AMELIA R. LASKEY

As the No. 10 installment of Brevities, appearing last March, did not include all the spring items of interest to bird banders, an unusual coincidence of return dates of a male Indigo Bunting, No. H73036, is worthy of mention here. He was banded on Aug. 30, 1933, and was not recaptured until the spring of 1935. Repeat records indicate he spent three consecutive seasons near the station. Each spring he returned on the same date, May 14, 1935, May 14, 1936, and May 14, 1937! He was at least 4 years old.—Lincoln Sparrows were banded on April 23rd and May 14, 1937. A few of this species are trapped consistently each year: 34 at Blossomdell in 5 years. Its seeming rarity is doubtless due to the difficulty of field identification.—On April 21st, Red-eyed Towhee No. C. 186966, banded in December 1933, was killed by an automobile near home, at an age of at least 5½ years. So many birds become victims of speeding cars that it is well worth the effort to examine dead birds on the highways for bands. Several good records have come from this source and this is a fine way for everyone to cooperate in this great project.—Brown Thrasher B.252931, banded in June 1933, was a "return—3" in June 1937, at least five years old.—Another bird in the five-year group is Blue Jay No. B353924, banded Sept. 1932 and trapped at a neighbor's in May 1937. It had never been retaken at the banding station.—Two Catbirds, 34-107521 and -535 banded as adults in the nesting season of 1934 were not retaken until this year, four or more years old. None of these old birds showed signs of age.—Although the home station and several sub-stations are within a four mile by two mile area, it is very seldom that a bird trapped in one place is retaken at another station. But a female Cardinal banded in December 1935 at Belle Meade, was captured in May 1937 at Blossomdell, 4 miles northeast. How many years of bird banding it will take to get enough records to determine something definite about the dispersal movements of these wandering groups of Cardinals that appear in fall and winter for brief stays at feeding stations.—Another instance of an old bird returning after many years was that of H17826, a female Maryland Yellowthroat. She had been banded in August of 1932 and not retaken until June 1937, remaining for several weeks. This is my second five year old Maryland Yellowthroat. This species proved to be unusually numerous at Blossomdell this summer. During June and July, 27 individuals were trapped, 12 of which were returns of birds banded in previous years. As these birds did not all nest in the immediate vicinity of the station, one is at a loss for an explanation of their sudden appearance. Was it the water-drips that attracted them or does a migration movement begin early for this species? A pertinent fact is that of the 12 returns, 8 had been banded the previous September.—Handling many thousands of birds, some of them many times, there is ample opportunity to note ecto-parasites, deformities, and progress of diseases among this individualized avian population. About 10 per cent of my Field Sparrows and individuals of several other species bear evidence of a parasitic disease of the toes which in its final stage, causes the loss of the tip of the toe and the claw but is not fatal to the bird. Numerous other afflictions have been noted and all are given whatever aid possible. Usually

the affected parts are treated with 5 per cent mercurochrome or iodine. However, this summer, a number of Field Sparrows and a Chipping Sparrow have been found with afflictions that either directly or indirectly proved fatal or caused the entire foot to drop off. In some cases there was a very large smooth soft growth or cluster of growths on head or body; in other cases the feet became so swollen they were useless and death resulted. One bird when trapped was found with disease in its final stage in one foot which was about to fall off. These badly diseased sparrows were in immature plumage. Sometimes it was possible to amputate diseased portions with apparent success and release the bird in a less handicapped condition, but one is hindered by lack of knowledge of the nature of many of these afflictions. In the July issue of *Bird Banding*, C. Brooks Worth, M.D., discusses ways and means of a nation-wide survey of bird diseases and methods of conducting studies of these birds. It is hoped a plan may be found practical for such investigations so that we who trap birds may become competent to intelligently treat them.—Another interesting phase of investigation has been put into practice at the home station this past year: the weighing of birds. Although it is tedious and time-consuming, it suggests unlimited possibilities for discovering data of much interest to students of the living bird, such as: What is the average weight of each species? Do weights of individuals vary greatly? What is effect of cold weather? Of breeding? Of the molt? etc. All species are being weighed (using metric system) as well as repeating birds. Occasionally some are weighed at dark and again before releasing early in the morning. It is most fascinating to record the weights of resident Mockingbirds through the seasons. One male has been weighed 25 times since his arrival last fall. The very few studied thus far show a rather rhythmic fluctuation of a few grams during the various phases of the nesting cycle. By February and early March they have reached a high point in weight which decreases during the ecstatic singing of the mate-calling and courtship period, dropping somewhat lower by summer when the last brood is being fed; a gradual increase occurred in late summer and highest weight during the inactive period of molting.—The following reports have just come from the Bureau of Biological Survey: Mockingbird No. 36-215357, banded as a nestling at the home of Leo Rippey on June 23, 1936, was found dead in March 1937 at Rising Fawn in northwest Ga.; Starling No. 34-200090, banded Feb. 11, 1934 was found dead about Oct. 15, 1936 at Clifton Springs, N. Y.; Starling No. 36-200437 banded Feb. 18, 1936 was shot Feb. 4, 1937 at Pleasant Unity, Pa.; Chimney Swift No. 34-45351 was one of 47 trapped Aug. 28, 1937 in a chimney in South Nashville by Arthur and Charles McMurray. It had been banded May 16, 1936 at Kingston, Ontario.—As the fall migration starts, pokeberries and water-drips attract transients, and visiting Mockingbirds are appearing in groups. Color-banded individuals that had moved from the station for their later nestings are reappearing in various stages of the molt.—On Sept. 6th two Gray-cheeked Thrushes were banded and on the 9th, a Wilson's and a Black-throated Green started the autumn list of migrant warblers.

NASHVILLE, TENN., Sept. 10, 1937.

THE OSPREYS BUILD A NEST

BY WILLIAM M. WALKER

The Osprey, which has been an occasional visitor at Lake Andrew Jackson near Knoxville for the past few years, returned in early April, 1937, with a mate and began prospecting for a homesite. The first nest was built and abandoned between April 10 and 26. This nest was lined with straw that had been used as bedding for horses.

At 6:15 the morning of April 26 I saw the Osprey on the top of another dead oak tree near the middle of the lake. Apparently a storm had twisted out the tree top about twenty-five feet above the surface of the water. The oak has been dead for a long time and now only the stumps of a few larger limbs remain.

A hurried glance through my binoculars—yes, there on the broken trunk were a maximum of eight or ten sticks, possibly the beginning of another nest. Immediately the bird took wing but instead of flying away, it went over me toward a dead tree, struck by lightning two years ago. But it did not perch. Instead, it grabbed a small twig with its claw and snapped off a two foot length as its momentum carried it past. This twig was carried with one foot; perhaps only one was used in securing it. During the next half hour only one bird was present, and it made six trips for nesting material in thirty-five minutes breaking limbs from five different trees.

One time the limb selected did not snap off with ease, causing the Osprey to lose its balance and almost do a "forward spin" as it clung to the branch it had selected. With frantic beats of the wings it righted itself, only to have the perch break under the load. After a descent of approximately twenty feet the bird regained equilibrium and began a slow flight back across the lake. The weight of the limb caused the bird to lose more altitude for the first fifty or more yards and then began a desperate climb toward the top of the tree on which the nest was being constructed. As the Osprey worked its way across the lake I estimated the slender limb it carried was around ten feet in length. Trips for nesting material averaged two minutes of flight and four minutes spent in placing the stick and walking about the structure.

It is with regret that I must report both nests were torn down from the dead trees and after two days of distracted flights the Ospreys left the area. The reason given for removing the nests was, "the birds caught too many fish,"—out of this 40 to 50 acre lake. The two birds, according to a report, caught 19 fish in one day. One fish that I saw dropped on land was a carp. Thus we unfold another tragedy caused by man. To save his thousands of fish for the hook and line, he must drive away the Osprey, another of those large birds, perhaps marked for extinction except along the sea coasts.

KNOXVILLE, TENN., June, 1937.

NOTE: The economic status of the Osprey is fairly summed up, in U. S. Biological Survey leaflet BS-83, "Birds in Relation to Fishes" by Clarence Cottam and F. S. Uhler, 1937, as follows: "The Osprey occasionally preys on larger fishes in hatchery ponds, but rarely takes valuable game species under natural conditions. Forty-three of these birds collected in 14 states, the

District of Columbia and two Canadian Provinces, representing every month from April to October, were examined in the laboratory. Sluggish fishes formed the bulk of their diet and only one contained an important game fish—a trout. Suckers and menhaden formed by far the most important single item of food, composing nearly 43 per cent of the total. Other fishes taken frequently included yellow perch, bullheads, sunfish, carp, and flounders." As to fish-eating birds in general, the leaflet further says: "No important group of birds is more widely misunderstood in terms of economic relationships than the diverse assemblage classed as "fish-eating birds." Many persons lump the whole class as destructive because they assume that the so-called fish-eaters must be inimical to the popular and widespread sport of angling and even to commercial fishing. The name is not always applicable, however, as some of the birds do not eat fish at all, others only to a limited extent, and many feed primarily on fishes that are either worthless to man or are themselves destructive to other fishes. While a few fish-eating birds are known to inflict damage of economic importance when protective measures are not taken around fish hatcheries, a careful study reveals that under natural conditions such damage is usually slight and in most instances is more than offset by the birds consuming large numbers of spawn eaters and predators of valuable fishes. In most instances abundance and accessibility are the primary factors determining the types of fishes taken by birds. The more sluggish surface-feeding or shallow-water species not utilized by man greatly outnumber the valuable species and are more easily captured; in consequence they usually compose the bulk of the fish diet of fish-eating birds."—EDITOR.



THE AUDUBON MUSEUM AT HENDERSON, KENTUCKY

Honoring the memory of John James Audubon, famous American artist and ornithologist, a museum is being erected by Works Progress Administration workmen in the Audubon Memorial Park, a mile north of Henderson, Kentucky. High on a hill overlooking a majestic stretch of the Ohio River, the gray stone two-story building is surrounded by the 400-acre park with its rolling land and thick woods.

The Federal Government, the State of Kentucky, the city of Henderson, the Henderson Historical Society and the Transylvania Society are sponsoring the undertaking. In addition, Audubon enthusiasts from all over the nation have agreed to send in valuable prints, papers, portraits and other mementoes of the great naturalist, it is announced.

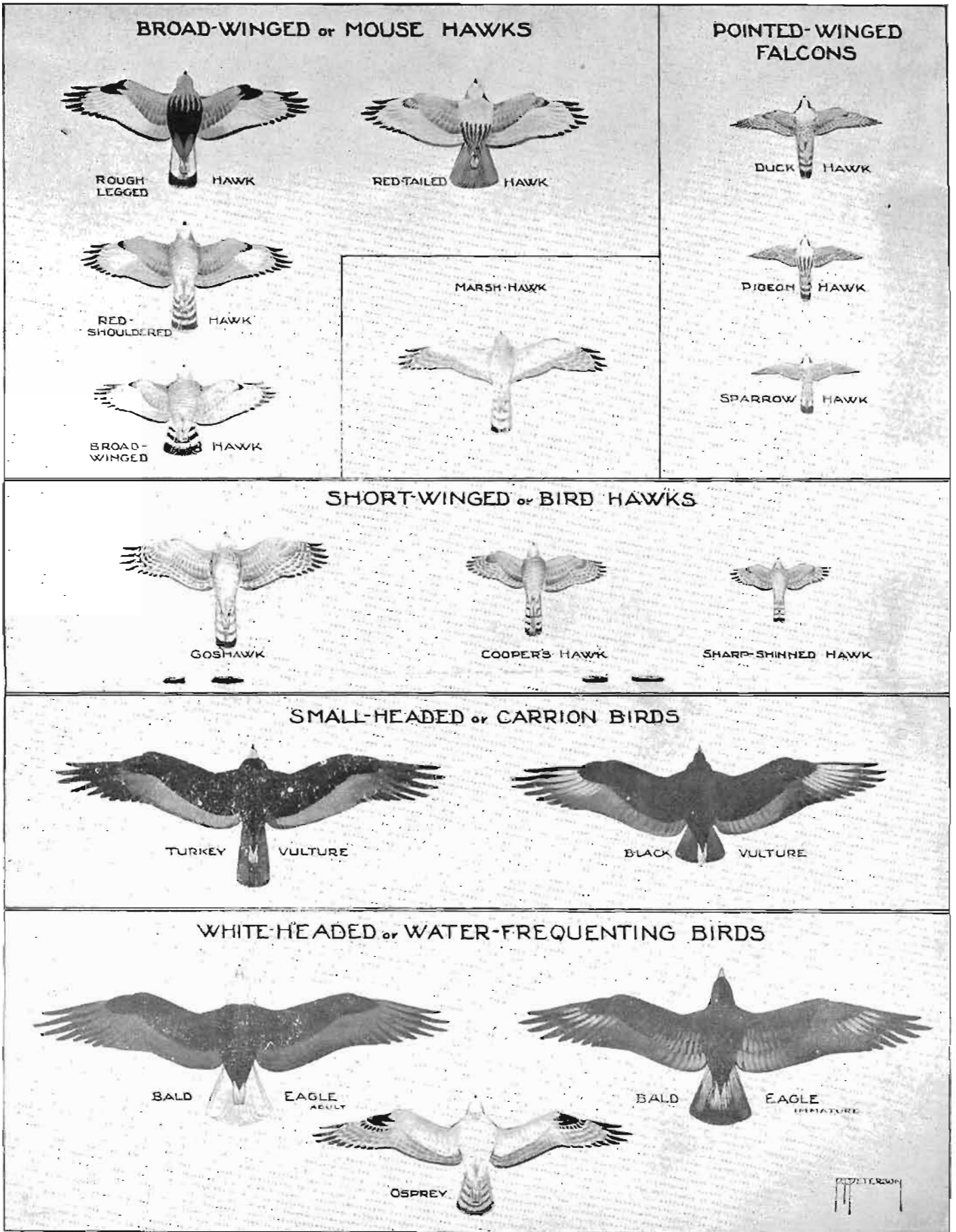
A complete collection of Audubon prints will be exhibited in a double frieze in the main gallery on the first floor of the museum. The second floor will have space for mounted birds, books, portraits and other Audubonia. There will also be a Kentucky room, which will contain the relics of Daniel Boone, who was a close friend of Audubon, and mementoes of other contemporaries. A Transylvania room will honor the notables of this Society of early settlers.

The Norman style of architecture has been employed in the museum structure because of Audubon's ancestry. This allowed the construction of a round tower in the museum with pigeon holes so that birds can nest in the

EASTERN HAWKS—*What They Look Like in the Air*

Atlantic Coast West to the Great Plains

All Birds Drawn to Same Scale



Some of These Hawks are Among Our Most Useful Birds

The ability to identify all of our hawks on the wing is an art that should be perfected by all bird students. Since most of our hawks are more beneficial than harmful, hunters and farmers should also learn to distinguish between them. The "short-winged hawks," pictured above, are the only ones that are more harmful than beneficial and of these, only the Cooper's is common. We are indebted to the National Association of Audubon Societies for this cut.—EDITOR.

masonry. A formal garden will be laid out in front of the building with the wheel from the grist and lumber mill that Audubon built at Henderson, and which ended so disastrously for him, in the center. Near the museum will be a French gatehouse.

The decade that Audubon spent in Henderson included the saddest as well as some of the happiest years of his life. Kentucky was practically a wilderness when he, unsuccessful in the mercantile business in Louisville, arrived at Henderson on a flatboat in 1810 at the age of 25. With him was Lucy Bakewell Audubon, whom he had married two years before. Their daughter, Lucy, died and was buried there while still a child. He continued to live at Henderson until 1820, when he became attracted to the newly developed Natchez region on the lower Mississippi and removed there.

The fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society has been scheduled for Henderson, on October 22 to 24, and the new Audubon museum will be made the center of its meeting activities. The K. O. S. invites all of our members who can attend, to do so. The Secretary, Miss Evelyn Schneider, 2207 Alta Ave., Louisville, may be addressed for further particulars.

THE ROUND TABLE

THE SEASON AT MEMPHIS: Last year we reported the unusually common occurrence of Short-billed Marsh Wrens during August, in the fields alongside the Lakeview levee, with a peak of 40 noted on August 9th. Not a one has been recorded this season, at any locality visited. Grasshopper Sparrows were also absent. Three were noted in fields near the Penal Farm, east of Memphis, in late July but none in mid-August at the field where 3 were noted July 16, 1936, for our first local summer record. One to two Great Horned Owls have been seen on most weekly trips, in the fringe of tall trees between levee and each lake. The swallow migration along the levee this August was very light and by Labor Day had almost dwindled to nothing. The most unusual migration noted was the presence on the evening of September 5th, of about 5,000 Kingbirds, half of which appeared to be about to go to roost in a large area of willows in the western section of Mud Lake, and the other half all around, part in the taller cypresses along the levee. John Pond and I visited this spot after dark and managed to catch one Kingbird and one Yellow-billed Cuckoo by using a spotlight. We found about 200 Kingbirds, easily frightened and too high to reach. The others had apparently moved on. The next afternoon Pond did not find a one here but reported seeing 100 at North Lake.—Another migration phenomenon was the passing of Green Herons overhead in the city on the nights of Sept. 5th and 6th. Returning home late on the night of the 5th I heard their calls at the rate of about one bird a minute for some time before retiring. The next night the calls were more infrequent but were still noticeable.—I have been unable to decide whether evening flocks of Grackles and of Robins are transients or local summer resident groups going to roost in a nearby group of large trees. One evening recently about 30 Robins were present on the lawn, and three bird baths, closely grouped for the July flock of Robins which

completely stripped the sumach clump of a bountiful berry crop, were given a rush. As many as three at a time in one and a total of six birds in the three, with others sitting on the edge waiting. Some had to do more fighting than bathing.—Wood Ibis have been reported several times at Mud Lake; on Aug. 24th, 150 were seen by Pond and on the 29th, 42 were seen. A few reports of one and two have been made by other Scout observers. Mud Lake's water level held up better than usual this year but moderately large mud flats on the north and west side have proved attractive to shorebirds while the herons still have most of the lake remaining to feed in. Lesser Yellowlegs have ranged in numbers from 10 to 50, Pectoral from none to 20, Solitary Sandpiper from 6 to 16. Spotted Sandpiper records are, 3 on Aug. 29 and 2 on Sept. 5. On Sept. 12 we spent most of our time in distinguishing Stilt Sandpipers from the numerous L. Yellowlegs which flushed with them. Final estimates were 15 of the former and 50 of the common species. Fourteen Semipalmated Plovers were noted on Aug. 29 and 9 on Sept. 5th. The most numerous were the "peeps" ranging from 100 to 400. Partial estimates for the Least, Semipalmated, and Western Sandpipers respectively were 25, 50 and none on Aug. 29; 30, 100 and 100 on Sept. 5; and 75, 150, and 25 on Sept. 12. A few were seen other dates and many others on these dates could not be listed by species.—Blue-winged Teal numbered 15 on Aug. 29 and 60 on Sept. 5th and 12th. Only a few Wood Ducks were reported. Seven Pintails in either female, immature or eclipse plumage were on hand Sept. 5 and a Mallard hen on the 12th.—Black Terns were seen Aug. 29 (five) and Sept. 12 (three) and Least Tern last seen on the former date (six).—With only two previous records for the Memphis area the presence of Snowy Egrets has been interesting. I saw my first one in this section on Sept. 5 and a week later estimated 15 present. Pond saw one on Aug. 21 and found two on Sept. 6 which had been shot at the edge of Mud Lake. American Egrets have frequently numbered 150 and Little Blue Herons up to 100. Estimates of the adult and immature forms of the latter species are 50 and 60, respectively, on Sept. 5, and 20 and 50 on Sept. 12. The large proportion of adults on the 5th is unusual. Great Blue Herons have ranged up to 12 in number, but generally uncommon.—Jack Shaffer reports hearing a Whip-poor-will at Camp Currier on Sept. 1. John Pond reports 3 Black-throated Green Warblers in Overton Park, Aug. 7.—BEN B. COFFEY, Memphis, Tenn.

NOTES ON THE BIRD LIFE OF REELFOOT LAKE: The writer, in company with Mr. Woodrow Goodpaster and Peter Koch, of Cincinnati, spent the period from the 6th to the 18th of June of the past summer at Reelfoot Lake. Our chief aim was to record in still pictures and movies the home life of the birds of 'Cranetown.' Mr. Goodpaster who represented the Cincinnati Society of Natural History devoted much of his time to collecting reptiles, amphibians, and insects, chiefly from the two arms of the lake that reach into Kentucky. Mr. Koch and I spent most of our time huddled behind our cameras in a small blind some one-hundred feet up in a staunch cypress tree, and consequently our range of observation of the bird life of Reelfoot Lake was chiefly limited to that which nested within range of our cameras or flew overhead. We managed to spend about eighteen daylight hours on the lake itself exploring the reed beds for marsh birds and one full day searching the

Mississippi River sandbars for Least Tern nests. We made our headquarters at Tiptonville, Tennessee.

Since Federal laws prohibiting the traffic in Egret plumes were passed years ago, we were anxious to determine what single factor might still be called the chief enemy of the American Egret. During our first week we had a splendid opportunity to learn. Storms of gale-like proportions twice ripped through Cranetown, flattening our blind and hurling certainly hundreds of young birds to the swamp below. Perched in the lower limbs of our blind-tree after the first storm, we were able to count fully a hundred young Egrets and Ward's Herons strewn about the base of a dozen cypress trees in range of our vision. Some were dead, others crippled, while a few stalked around unharmed. We put a merciful end to the crippled birds. The live ones we left to their own devices since we had no way of knowing from which nest they had fallen. Seventy-five per cent of the young birds we found on the ground or in the water were Egrets. Four hours after the storm, scores of Black Vultures were gorging themselves on the carcasses of the dead birds. The second storm was not as severe since we counted only twenty-five birds in the same area where before we saw more than a hundred.

Strangely enough we found not one young Cormorant among the birds blown from their nests. Apparently the long legs of the herons are their undoing during such elemental disturbances. The only Cormorant we saw fall from a nest met his death under most unusual conditions. An adult Ward's Heron came to rest in a cluster of Cormorant nests extending along a horizontal limb. A young Cormorant about two-thirds grown, raised its body as though begging for food. Its bill barely touched the heron's legs. Stooping swiftly, the heron drove its sword-like bill into the youngsters back with such force that the Cormorant tumbled backward out of the nest to the water, a hundred feet below. It struck with a resounding smack and lay quite still. The heron calmly preened itself for a moment and then departed. We later examined the young bird and found that the heron's furious attack and not the fall had killed the young Cormorant for its back was pierced through to the vital organs by the long hard bill. Another enemy of the Egret we saw in action was a raccoon which was fleeing sure-footedly along a cypress branch from a nest he had just pilfered. His escape was made most unpleasant by half a dozen old birds that stormed along in back of him. We also found a set of three Egret eggs that had been punctured as though by a Crow.

During the time we spent searching the marshes for nests we found five Least Bittern nests. All contained eggs, ranging from one to five. One set of five was pipped. This set and another on which we had blinds, were both being incubated by the male bird only, during our observations. Four of these nests were found in the marshes of Nix Towhead almost due north of Samburg. The fifth nest was discovered in the reeds growing along the northeast shore of the lake less than a mile from the same village. Peculiarly enough we flushed no Florida Gallinules, but did manage to scare up at least two Purple Gallinules. Both of these were in the same marsh where we found the fifth Bittern nest. One of these birds alighted in a willow tree not forty feet distant from us and afforded us a splendid view. We discovered one Gallinule nest on Nix Towhead with five eggs. We were unable to

determine to which species it belonged since we found it destroyed when we returned to make pictures of it three days later.

Least Terns were always to be found on the lake and following Mr. Ganier's advice we visited the Mississippi River sandbars opposite New Madrid in an effort to find a nest. We eventually discovered one after a half day's search, and later learned to our surprise that the nest, which was on a sandbar, was in Fulton County, Kentucky, and not in Tennessee as we had supposed. At the time of our original discovery the nest contained two eggs. We collected the set as a complete one three days later, since it still had the same number of eggs and both birds were still incubating. This, we believe, is the first nesting record of this species for the state of Kentucky.

We had taken along a copy of Whittemore's report on 'The Summer Birds of Reelfoot Lake' and found it most helpful. His analysis of the relative abundance of various species corresponded quite accurately with our limited observations in all respects except one. That exception concerns the abundance of the Dickcissel. Whittemore reports, 'Two records, July 16th and August 10th, each of three birds in the fields of the south end of the lake, compromise all the data for Dickcissels.' We traveled the highway by auto from Tiptonville to the state line nearly each day during our stay and found this finch to be quite the most abundant land bird in that area, seeing at least two dozen of them strung along the weeds and wires on each trip. We learned that Whittemore's observations were largely confined to those made on foot or by canoe, so naturally he would not have the same advantages as we did in seeing these birds in more suitable habitat, away from the lake along the highways.—KARL MASLOWSKI, Cincinnati, Ohio.

A CANOE TRIP ON CUMBERLAND RIVER from Clarksville to Dover and back August 14th to 20th enabled us to list 69 species of land and water birds. We visited the nesting site of the Cliff Swallows at Lock D below Dover, but saw neither there nor during the rest of the trip any of these birds. In view of the large number of them that we found last year at Lock B, we suppose that by the middle of August colonies have already combined in getting ready to migrate. There was a flock of 30 or more Rough-winged Swallows at Cumberland City and on the last day out we met at dusk, just above Palmyra, a mixed flight of Purple Martin, Rough-winged Swallows, Barn Swallows and Kingbirds. They were travelling at great speed close to the water. Later that night we saw two groups of American Egrets take wing at our approach in the uncertain light of the moon breaking through clouds. This last day had been our lucky one, for at Lock C we had found Black and Least Terns (4), the latter a new species for our Montgomery County list. The finest sight we beheld was a flock of 8 Little Blue Herons in their white plumage; none of the old birds were seen by us. Regularly occurred, in order of their abundance, were the Green Heron, Kingfisher, Great Blue Heron and Wood Duck. The Kingfisher's rate of occurrence was about one bird, or sometimes a pair, every mile and a half.—ALFRED CLEBSCH, Clarksville, Tenn.

BIRD ROOSTS IN NASHVILLE: As in former years, immense numbers of Grackles, Starlings, Cowbirds and Robins have been roosting thru August and September in the trees between Blair, Portland, 18th and 20th Avenues. With them on Aug. 21 were many Purple Martin.—A. F. GANIER, Nashville.

NOTES FROM MEMBERS OF THE CLARKSVILLE CHAPTER

The following are some of the items that have been reported at our meetings. Horned Grebe: August 22, a female or immature on Dunbar Cave lake.—Great Blue Heron: Since July 5th in fair numbers.—Turkey Vulture: Lamar Armstrong saw several of them falling upon and devouring an injured young rabbit.—Broad-winged Hawk: Observed occasionally along the course of the Cumberland River.—Marsh Hawk: One shot by a farmer near the Kentucky line on Sept. 5th; the bird it was claimed, had done damage among young guineas.—Solitary Sandpiper: Well distributed since July 19th.—Least Sandpiper: A pair at the pond at edge of town since Sept. 2.—Mourning Dove: We heard of one nest that held young birds the first week of Sept. Since the season opened, Sept. 1, hunters tell of finding young hardly able to fly as yet.—Cliff Swallow: Four were seen "inland," on highway 112, on Aug. 31, by Mrs. Hutchison.—Short-billed Marsh Wrens arrived at Idaho Springs marsh, between Aug. 2 and 4, fully a week later than last year and in much smaller numbers.—Cedar Waxwing: Returned August 28.—Migrant Shrike: Observed in three places; on May 30 the young were flying but still being fed.—Black-and-white Warbler: Increase in numbers since late August.—Blue-winged Warbler: On Aug. 29, one was seen fighting on the ground with a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. A new bird for our county list, bringing it to 175 species.—Magnolia Warbler: A small but distinct wave around Sept. 1.—Black-throated Green Warbler: The first fall migrant seen Aug. 7; the same date as last year. Very few observed since.—Blackburnian Warbler: Since Sept. 4.—American Redstart: Rare in spring and summer, now in fair numbers.—Bachman's Sparrow: Found established at four separate sites; on July 11 seen with fledglings.—Several of our members heard the calls of migrating small birds during the nights of Sept. 5 and 6. There is also a report of Wild Geese going over after dark, following the rains of Sept. 5th.—ALFRED CLEBSCH, Sec'y., Clarksville, Tenn.

NOCTURNAL MIGRATION: On the nights of Sept. 4, 5 and 6, I heard a most unusual migration of birds. They were flying south or southwest by the thousands. Judging from their calls, they seemed to be small or medium sized birds; their calls were certainly not those of ducks or geese. On Saturday night of the 4th, I heard them going overhead until midnight. On the night of the 5th they were heard passing in far greater numbers. I should say there was hardly five minutes average between the groups that I heard calling to each other as they passed over my home. I listened to them pass over like this until near midnight and when I was awakened by train whistles at 2 a. m. they were still going over and continued until I fell asleep again some time later. On Monday night, the 6th, they were heard but were much fewer in numbers and on the 7th, none were heard. During the early morning no birds were to be seen in the sky, at least within range of the eye.—MRS. JOHN Y. HUTCHISON, Clarksville, Tenn.

NIGHT FLYING MIGRANTS: We had a flight of southbound birds on the night of Sept. 5th, beginning at 8 o'clock and lasting all night. It was small compared with the big flight of Oct. 23, 1935, but still it was unusual. It may be that the birds in small numbers continued to circle the town all

night but at any rate they made plenty of noise and seemed to be at all heights. Some were very low and others were up so high it was difficult to hear them. All seemed to be water birds—herons, plovers and others. Occasionally some big bird, louder than the others, would call. The plovers sounded like chickens under a hen—tremulous notes and I was unable to identify them. Some of them seemed to go over singly and others in small flocks. The night was a few degrees cooler than usual and was very cloudy and misty.—BENJ. R. WARRINER, Corinth, Miss.

NOTE: In *The Migrant* for Dec. 1935, there is an extended report on the calls of night flying birds which were heard at many points on the nights of Oct. 22 and 23. A dispatch to the Nashville Banner from Woodbury, Tenn., dated Sept. 7, 1937, reads as follows: "A flock of honking geees, flying in V formation, crossed Cannon County yesterday, winging their way southward. This was the first flock seen here this year and the only one ever noticed in September." It is worthy of note that this nocturnal migration was reported from Clarksville, Memphis and Corinth, Miss. A triangle drawn to connect these points would have sides of 175, 90 and 135 miles respectively. Rainfall was general over the State on Sept. 5, but temperatures, both in and north of the State, were normal. We would be glad to have further reports. Do the city lights cause these birds to concentrate and tarry on their journey, or, was there a "blanket" of birds from Clarksville to Memphis? Members can help solve this problem, when the opportunity is again presented, by driving a few miles away from all city lights and there listening again for the calls.—EDITOR.

A CARDINAL FEEDS A YOUNG CATBIRD: The following bit of bird lore was recently related to me by my friend Elgin Wright, of this city, and I am passing it on to the readers *The Migrant* with the assurance that Mr. Wright is an entirely dependable observer. "A pair of Catbirds reared four young ones in my back yard. In July the fledglings left the nest and began ranging around in the nearby shrubs and on the ground and the mother bird worked overtime in her efforts to satisfy their ravenous appetites. One of the youngsters seemed slightly crippled as well as stunted in growth. He was therefore unable to get his share of the food brought by his mother. The parent bird tried repeatedly to fight off the stronger ones so that the afflicted one could be sufficiently fed but she had no success. The stronger fledglings would grab the tid-bits from her beak before she could reach the crippled one and his hunger calls became increasingly pronounced. At last a male Cardinal perched himself on a limb nearby, cocked his head and seemingly surveyed the situation. Then he flew away, returning shortly with a small bit of food in his beak. He sought out the Catbird fledgling and crammed the food down his mouth. Then he made frequent trips for more provender for his little ward, returning each time and repeating the performance."—BENJ. R. WARRINER, Corinth, Miss.

A GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER was picked up dead on the morning of September 9th, at the East Nashville High School, and thus adds another local record for this rare species. The bird, a male, was preserved in the form of a skin by Mr. Ganier.—M. LEO RIPPY, JR., Nashville.

SPARROWS ROB A ROBIN: We are all familiar with the versatility of the English Sparrow and the following episode unfolds a new trick of this bird of our adoption. Sparrows are normally seed eaters as indicated by their short, thick bills, while Robins, with long bills and ears tuned for insect noises, are champions in the art of finding bugs, grubs and worms. While sitting on the porch one afternoon, I noticed a Robin hopping about the lawn in search of food for her young and closely followed by an English Sparrow. Presently the Robin dug up some squirming little creature and immediately the Sparrow rushed forward and grabbed it from her bill. The Robin seemed surprised for a moment then resumed her search. Soon she had unearthed another bug and as she started to fly away with it, she was followed by, not one but three Sparrows, in close pursuit. Round and round the yard they flew until the Robin, evidently convinced there was no use, alighted on the ground, whereupon the three Sparrows crowded forward and took the bug from her beak. With a look of disgust, or perhaps resignation, the Robin stood for several moments and then flew away. I have been frequently impressed with the fact that toward other birds, the Robin is friendly and even timid; there is nothing of the bully in their makeup.—HARRY S. VAUGHN, Nashville.

BLACKBIRD ROOSTS ON REELFOOT LAKE: The following letter, dated Jan. 10, 1937, gives information as to the whereabouts of some of our "blackbirds," which at that date have usually not returned to Middle and East Tennessee: "I have been watching the blackbirds for many years and am writing to ask something of their habits. I live on a farm in Obion County, which county borders Reelfoot Lake on the west and is also situated ten to thirty miles east of the Mississippi River. In the morning these birds begin coming in large droves from the west—from the direction of the lake and river. They scatter over the country, stopping in the woods to eat beech nuts. They spend the day in these beech woods, and in the cornstalks fields, where they probably find some corn. Late in the afternoon they start back westward and continue their flight until nearly dark. They pass over in an almost unbroken stream for probably 30 minutes. It would be difficult to estimate their numbers but I would say there were many millions of them. Can you tell me where they roost?"—ALEX SMITH, Obion, Tenn.

NOTE: In reply to the above we wrote Mr. Smith that the blackbirds were doubtless of several varieties. That those which frequented the beech woods were Bronzed Grackles and that in the fields, these were joined by Redwings, Starlings, Cowbirds and perhaps Rusty Blackbirds. That the wild-rice marshes at the head of Reelfoot Lake was doubtless their rendezvous and roosting place. On Oct. 13, 1934, the writer witnessed the incoming of these roosting birds in the marsh adjacent to Walnut Log, at the northeast corner of the lake. It was on the occasion of the Ky. Ornithological Society meeting there and we estimated the birds then using the marsh in the following round numbers which we regarded as conservative. Redwing Blackbirds 2,000,000, Bronzed Grackles 1,000,000, Starlings 1,000,000, Cowbirds 200,000 and Robins 5,000. It was the greatest aggregation of birds any of us had ever witnessed. Previous observations on these roosts, made Nov. 26-28, 1915, were reported in *The Wilson Bulletin* for March 1916, page 29.—EDITOR.

NIGHT SINGING OF THE BROWN THRASHER: The habit of the Mockingbird of singing at night has often been recorded but apparently less is known of his cousin the Brown Thrasher likewise indulging himself. Circumstances recently made it possible for me to make some notes on this performance and these I am giving below. The song was first heard about May 28th and continued through June. During this warm weather I slept with my head very close to an open window and, since my husband's taxi and U-drive-it business keeps him from getting home until around midnight, I rarely slept before that time so was able to check on this Thrasher's night singing. The song always came from the same location; it never varied and I could almost picture him in the very same branch every time he sang. Some nights he began about 10:30—never earlier—and on other nights I would not hear him until near midnight. At other times I would begin to think he was not going to sing at all but finally at around two o'clock he would sing. At about that time, three trains were due to pass below my home and the loud whistling of the first would awake me and I seldom slept again until the third had passed. So during that time I listened for the Thrasher's song. If he had sung before midnight, I would not hear him at the later hour. But if not, I would never fail to hear its song between the times the trains passed by. After July 1st, I did not hear a single night song and but rarely during the daytime. He was not inspired to sing because of the moonlight I discovered, for often as he sang there would not be a sign of the moon in the sky. He only failed to sing when it would rain but even the high winds before a storm did not discourage him in the least. The songs did not last over a few minutes and I do not remember hearing him sing more than once during the time I was awake in one night. He would repeat each note, often repeating as though he liked the sound of certain notes, as high as 8, 10 and even 15 times. I have learned to distinguish between the songs of the Mockingbird and the Brown Thrasher and am quite certain my singer was the latter bird.—MRS. JOHN Y. HUTCHISON, Clarksville, Tenn.

UPLAND PLOVERS AT MURFREESBORO: A pair of these birds were seen on March 10th, 1937, at "flat-rock" on the Overall farm, a few miles east of Murfreesboro. They seemed to like the place and I saw them there every week until the middle of May, the last three dates being May 9, 12 and 15. A nest was searched for but could not be found. Not being near this locality after that for several weeks, I did not see them again. The "flat-rock" is an area of limestone rock mostly bare of soil and they stayed on this or in a nearby pastured field. On Aug. 12, while visiting my neighbor Marion Edney, who lives nearby, we observed 14 of these plovers alight in a nearby pasture field. We went over and identified them with our glasses. On the following dates I made these additional records: Aug. 13, 5 birds, Aug. 17, 12 birds, Sept. 4, 3 birds, Sept. 5, 8 birds, Sept. 6, 3 birds, Sept. 8, 4 birds and Sept. 14, 1 single. On Sept. 4, while looking up the plovers, I saw 2 Marsh Hawks, the first I have seen this fall.—HENRY O. TODD, Murfreesboro.

A RING-BILLED GULL ON THE CUMBERLAND: On March 27, 1936, a gull of this species was shot and wounded on the Cumberland River between Nashville and Lebanon. The injury was in one wing and the bird was unable to fly. It was in pure white plumage except for greyish wing-tips on head

feathers and the usual black on primaries. The gull was shown to T. O. S. members at their meeting of March 30th and then turned over to Mr. G. B. Woodring who released it on Radnor Lake the next day.—DIXON MERRITT, Lebanon, Tenn.

THE MEMPHIS MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND ART: In 1922, the city of Memphis was presented with "The Pink Palace," Clarence Saunders' unfinished "million dollar mansion" of pink marble, and thirty-five acres of the surrounding grounds to be used as a park. After some time, it was decided to complete the edifice and there to establish a museum. The gathering of collections was begun and thus far there have been assembled excellent exhibits in birds, mammals, minerals, fossils, insects, archaeology, antiques, bric-a-brac, etc., etc. The exhibit of birds comprises 565 mounted specimens of North American species and a small collection of about 30 skins, also 230 sets of eggs with a few of which the nests are included. The bird exhibit is comprised chiefly of the C. F. Boshart collection from New York, acquired some years ago by the City of Memphis. To this have been added gifts and loans by Mr. Alfred C. Schmidt, Mr. Warren Castle, and others of Memphis. Among the rarities are two Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, two Carolina Paroquets and two Passenger Pigeons. The mammal collection consists almost entirely of big game heads from North America and from Africa. The Memphis Chapter of the T. O. S. holds its meetings at the museum. Mrs. L. P. Cummins is Curator in charge.

MEETING DATES FOR T. O. S. CHAPTERS

KNOXVILLE: Sept. 26, Annual fall bird census at the Ijams farm (Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Ijams in charge); Oct. 6, evening meeting at Flowercraft (Mrs. W. M. Johnson in charge); Oct. 17, outing at Buffalo Springs (S. A. Ogden in charge); Nov. 3, evening meeting at Flowercraft (Miss Lora Bond in charge); Nov. 21, outing at Andrew Jackson lake (Prof. Barton Ressler in charge); Dec. 1, evening meeting at Flowercraft (Pres. Earl Henry in charge); Christmas Census on Dec. 26. Local Secretary, Mrs. Frank Leonhard, 203 Elmwood Ave.—**NASHVILLE:** Evening meetings are held on Mondays, at 7:30 p. m., in the West Parlor of the Social-Religious Bldg. of Peabody College. Sept. 27, Oct. 4 and regularly thereafter. The annual Fall Field Day will be held near Nashville on Sunday, Oct. 17; members from all parts of the State and elsewhere are invited to attend. The Christmas Census will be taken on Sunday, Dec. 26.—**CLARKSVILLE:** Meetings will be held every other Tuesday, at the homes of different members. The schedule is Sept. 21, Oct. 5, 19, Nov. 2, 16, 30, Dec. 14 and 28. Christmas Census on Dec. 26. For information call Dr. Pickering or Alfred Clebsch, secy.—**MEMPHIS:** Evening meetings are held at the "Pink Palace" Museum and are scheduled on the following dates: Sept. 27, Oct. 11, 25, Nov. 8, 22 and Dec. 6. For dates of Fall Field Day, contact the secretary, Mrs. T. I. Klyce, 681 Shrine Bldg., Memphis.

For State Secretary of the T. O. S., the President has appointed Mr. Alfred Clebsch of Clarksville, to succeed H. C. Monk resigned. Our new Secretary will welcome your suggestions for the future development of the T. O. S. The Editor has added Mr. Clebsch to his staff as a regional editor.

THE MIGRANT

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

EDITORIAL CHAT

Fall, and crisp cool days, are again at hand. With renewed energy and our inborn huntsman's urge to be afield, we feel the woods and hedgerows beckoning. Those of our summer birds which have not already gone are restlessly hurrying to and fro, trying out their new fall plumage and fattening themselves on Nature's plenty for the long flight southward. For some weeks now, the warblers from the northland have been scurrying through our tree-tops, stopping here and there to feast along the way. Before September days are past, some of our winter visitors will be with us again and by October tenth all of our native wintering sparrows—the Song, the Swamp, the Savannah, the White-throat and the White-crowned—will be back again to cheer the woods and fields on wintry days to come. Week-end hikes, to list the birds and to enjoy Nature's colorful and fruitful display, are a pleasing tonic that none can enjoy so much as those who know the birds.

Our annual mid-winter census of birdlife will be taken this year as near Christmas as possible. Some have already set their date as Sunday, Dec. 26. Last year there were census lists from a dozen different points in the State and we hope each of these localities and others will be covered. To get the best lists, the localities should be gone over several times in advance—a week or two before the main day. If the weather is bad, try a later date. The making of the list should occupy a whole day if possible. The list should then be compiled, with notes on the unusual species, and promptly sent in to *The Migrant*.

A beautiful new edition of Audubon's "Birds of America," reproducing all of the 500 plates in colors, is announced by The Macmillan Company. The book will be ready by the last of October. A more complete description will be found on the advertising pages in the back of this issue.

If this and other issues have met your fancy, your thanks are due our many contributors for writing up their "finds" for your entertainment.

The American Ornithologists Union will hold its annual meeting this year in the South, at Charleston, S. C. The program sessions will be on Nov. 16, 17 and 18, followed by a Field Day on Friday, Nov. 19th. The A. O. U. meetings are always interesting and well worth attending.

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Editor of *Bird Lore*, official publication of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

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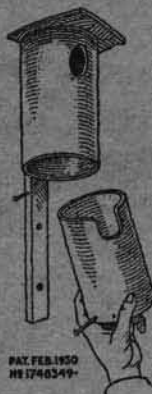
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