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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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THE COVER

We thank Kathy Caminiti for this photograph of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) at a nest in Perry Park, Owen County, Kentucky on June 11, 1989.

THE SPRING SEASON, 2000

Fred M. Busroe

The spring season was mild with near normal rainfall. However, the rainfall was not enough to alleviate long term drought conditions experienced throughout the state last year. A highlight of the season was the pair of nesting Bald Eagles at Yatesville Lake, Lawrence County in eastern Kentucky. Some of the unusual species reported were the Western Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Pomarine Jaeger and Little Gull.

Abbreviations — KBRC = Kentucky Bird Records Committee; WMA = Wildlife Management Area; Ano = Ano Strip Mine, Pulaski County; Bark = Lake Barkley Dam, Livingston/Lyon counties; Ball = Ballard County; Bar = Barren Reservoir, Allen/Barren counties; Barn = Barren County; Bee = Bee Rock, Pulaski County; Bern = Bernheim Forest, Bullit/Nelson counties; BSF = Big South Fork National Recreation Area, McCreary County; Bla = Blaine, Lawrence County; Blo = Blood River Embayment, Kentucky Lake, Calloway County; BGA = Blue Grass Army Depot, Madison County; Bou = Bourbon County; Bro = Brown Power Plant, Mercer County; Cal = Calloway County; Cam = Campbell County; CKWMA = Central Kentucky WMA, Madison County; Cli = Clinton County; Coo = Cooley's Pond, Wayne County; Day = Dayton, Campbell County; Eve = Evergreen Cemetery, Campbell County; Falls = Falls of the Ohio, Jefferson County; Ful = Fulton County; Gri = Basil Griffin Park, Warren County; Hart = Hart County; Hic = Hickman, Fulton County; Jon = Jonathan Creek Embayment, Kentucky Lake, Marshall County; KyDam = Kentucky Dam, Livingston/Marshall counties; LBark = Lake Barkley, Livingston/Lyon/Trigg counties; LCum = Lake Cumberland, Pulaski County; L#9 = Lake #9, Fulton County; Lex = Lexington, Fayette County; Lin = Lake Linville, Rockcastle County; LWC = Louisville Water Company settling ponds, Jefferson County; MCNP = Mammoth Cave National Park, Edmonson County; McC = McCreary County; Mel = Meldahl Dam, Bracken County; MtZ = Mt. Zion, Pulaski County; New = Newport, Campbell County; Open = Open Pond, Fulton County; Owen = Owensboro, Daviess County; Par = Paradise, Muhlenberg County; PWMA = Peabody WMA, Muhlenberg/Ohio counties; Pen = Pendleton County; Pow = Powell County; Pul = Pulaski County; Pum = Pumphouse Pond, Pulaski County; PSF = Pennyrite State Forest, Christian County; Roc = Rock Bridge Trail, Wolfe County; SWMA = Sauerheber unit of Sloughs WMA, Henderson County; Smi = Smithland Dam, Livingston County; SCCT = Swift Camp Creek Trail, Wolfe County; Thu = Thurston's Pond, Wayne County; WKU = Western Kentucky University, Warren County; Yate = Yatesville Lake, Lawrence County.

Common Loon - 4 on March 21 at Jon (Hap); 32 on March 20 and 6 on April 18 at LCum (RD); 1 on April 14 at KyDam (LD).

Pied-billed Grebe - 48 on March 1 at LCum (RD).

Horned Grebe - 20 on March 14 at LCum (RD).

WESTERN GREBE - 1 on March 21 through and April 21 at KyDam (Hap, DO, DR).

Bird was video-taped. KBRC review pending.

American White Pelican - 113 on March 24 at LBark (DR), 38 on April 14 on island above Bark (LD); 9 on April 24 above Bark (DO); 1 on May 16 in Ful (DR).

Double-crested Cormorant - 20 on March 14 at Jon (Hap, CP); 15 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 2000+ on April 10 - 12 on LBark (DR); 750 on April 21 at Bark (DO); 3 on May 29 at Bro (RD).

American Bittern - 1 on March 23, April 14 and May 20 at PWMA (DR); 1 on April 20 in Pul (RD); 1 on April 21 at SWMA (DO).

- Least Bittern** - 1 on May 2 at SWMA (DR); 1 on May 27 at SWMA (DO).
- Great Blue Heron** - 35 on March 10 at Lee's Ford Dock, LCum (RD); a rookery on BGA has 12 - 15 nests (GR).
- Great Egret** - 1 on March 27 at Yate (MF); 1 on April 8 at Owen (RD); 10 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 1 on May 10 at Coo (RD); 10 on May 28 at Open (Hap, RD).
- Snowy Egret** - 1 on April 22 west of Hic (DO); 9 on May 28 at Open (Hap, RD); 1 on May 23 at Falls (RGD).
- Little Blue Heron** - 1 on May 28 at Open (Hap, RD).
- Cattle Egret** - 1 on March 22 at Bark (DR); 60 on April 21 near Bark (DO); 22 on May 12 at Blo (Hap).
- Black-crowned Night-Heron** - 1 on April 14 at Bark (LD); 2 on April 22 at SWMA (DO); 67 on May 23 at Falls (RGD).
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** - 2 on May 9 at Kendall Recreation Area, LCum (FR).
- Gadwall** - 21 on March 2 in Pul (RD).
- American Wigeon** - 47 on March 1 at Coo (RD).
- Blue-winged Teal** - 12 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 22 on April 10 at Thu (RD).
- CINNAMON TEAL** - 1 male on April 8 at SWMA (DR). Video-taped.
- Northern Shoveler** - 780 above KyDam and 40 near Bark on March 27 (DR); 1 on May 20 at Bro (SBC).
- Redhead** - 16 on March 10 at LCum (RD).
- Green-winged Teal** - 22 on March 27 at Thu (RD); 75 on April 9 in Ful (Hap).
- Lesser Scaup** - 100 on March 1 at Mel (FR); approximately 7600 on March 21 at Bark and KyDam (DR).
- Surf Scoter** - 3 on April 25 at Bar (DR, BPB); 1 on April 26 at Bar (LD, DC); 1 immature male on May 7 at Bar (DR).
- Red-breasted Merganser** - 10 on March 5 at Jon (Hap); total of 600 on March 21 at Bark and KyDam (DR); 24 on March 21 on LCum (RD).
- Ruddy Duck** - 45 on March 5 and 50 on March 21 at Jon (Hap); 1 on March 25 at Gri (LD); 1 male on May 20 at Bro (SBC); 1 male on May 29 at Bro (RD).
- Osprey** - 1 on April 1 at Bla (DO); 1 on April 1 in Cli (FR); 1 on April 9 in Ful (Hap).
- Mississippi Kite** - 1 on May 4 near KyDam and 1 on May 11 in Ohio County (DR); 1 on May 13 in Warn (DR, MB).
- Bald Eagle** - 2 on March 5 at Jon (Hap); 1 on March 27 at Yate (MF), pair nested there later; 2 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 1 adult and 2 immatures on April 22 at L#9 (DO).
- Northern Harrier** - 4 on May 28 at PWMA (DO).
- Sharp-shinned Hawk** - 1 on April 1 at Bla (DO).
- Cooper's Hawk** - 1 on April 23 in Hart (MS).
- Broad-winged Hawk** - 1 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 7 on April 29 at SWMA (DO).
- Red-tailed Hawk** - 3 nests with 1 nestling/nest at BGA (GR).
- Merlin** - 1 on March 23 and May 11 at PWMA (DR).
- Peregrine Falcon** - 1 was harassing ducks above Bark on March 3 (DR)
- Virginia Rail** - 1 on April 30 and 2 on May 2 at SWMA (DR).
- Sora** - 1 on April 21 at SWMA (DO).
- Common Moorhen** - 1 on May 11 at PWMA (DR); 2 on May 28 at PWMA, Muhlenberg County, (DO, BPB).
- American Coot** - 150+ on March 25 at Gri (LD).
- Sandhill Crane** - 1 on April 26 in War (DR).
- American Golden-Plover** - 1 on March 12 at Blo (Hap).

- Semipalmated Plover** - 11 on April 22 at L#9 (DO).
- American Avocet** - 18 on May 4 at KyDam (DR); 1 on May 17 at KyDam (DR, Hap).
- Greater Yellowlegs** - 16 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 1 on May 27 at Falls (DO).
- Lesser Yellowlegs** - 30 on April 9 in Ful (Hap).
- Solitary Sandpiper** - 1 on April 21 at SWMA (DO); 3 on May 1 in Barn (MS).
- WHIMBREL** - 3 at KyDam and 2 video-taped at Bark on May 16 and 1 at Smi on May 17 (DR).
- MARbled GODWIT** - 1 on May 4 at Falls (RGD).
- Ruddy Turnstone** - 6 on May 15 at KyDam (Hap).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper** - 21 on May 12 in Pul (RD); 30 on May 28 at Open (Hap, RD).
- Western Sandpiper** - 1 video-taped on May 4 in Ful (DR).
- Least Sandpiper** - 5 on March 14 at Jon (Hap, CP); 4 on May 1 in Barn (MS); 1 on May 28 at Open (Hap, RD).
- White-rumped Sandpiper** - 2 on May 26 at Par (RD); 5 on May 28 at Open (Hap, RD); 1 on May 29 at Bro (RD).
- Pectoral Sandpiper** - 100 on March 14 at Jon (Hap, CP); 700 on April 9 in Ful (Hap).
- Dunlin** - 1 on May 19 in Pul and 1 on May 29 at Bro (RD).
- Stilt Sandpiper** - 1 on May 2 in Pul (RD).
- Short-billed Dowitcher** - 1 on May 2 in Henderson County (DR); 27 on May 15 at Falls (RGD).
- Long-billed Dowitcher** - 1 on April 29 at SWMA (DO).
- Common Snipe** - 45 on March 14 at Jon (Hap, CP); 34 on March 20 in Boyd County (LT); 120 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 10 on April 21 at SWMA (DO).
- POMARINE JAEGER** - 1 adult was present March 22 - 27 at Bark (DR). Video-taped and under KBRC review.
- Laughing Gull** - 1 on May 4 and 2 on May 17 at KyDam (DR); 1 on May 27 at beach of KyDam (DO).
- Franklin's Gull** - 2 on May 15 at Smi with 2 on May 17 at KyDam (DR); 1 on May 18 at KyDam (Hap).
- LITTLE GULL** - 1 immature on April 4 Ohio River at New (FR). Documentation to be submitted to KBRC.
- Bonaparte's Gull** - 3 on March 21 at Jon (Hap); 27 on March 10 and 40 on March 20 at LCum (RD); 15 on March 12 at Day (FR); 1200 on March 22 at Bark (DR); 30 on March 25 at Lin (RD, Hap).
- Ring-billed Gull** - 60 on March 1 at Mel (FR); 25 on March 21 at Jon (Hap); 8 on March 27 at Yate (MF).
- Herring Gull** - 8 on March 21 at Jon (Hap); 2 on May 18 at KyDam (Hap).
- Lesser Black-backed Gull** - Several of various ages were seen in the KyDam and Bark area through April 16 (DR).
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** - 1 first or second year bird on March 3 and 22 at Bark (DR). KBRC review anticipated.
- Caspian Tern** - 1 on April 14 near KyDam (LD, DC).
- Forster's Tern** - 6 on March 5 and 10 on March 21 at Jon (Hap); 5 on March 14 at Jon (Hap, CP); 5 on April 23 at Blo (DO); 3 on May 2 at Falls (RGD).
- Black Tern** - 2 on May 29 at Bro (RD).
- Eurasian Collared-Dove** - 1 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 1 on April 21 in Ball and 1 on April 22 at Hic (DO).
- Black-billed Cuckoo** - 1 on May 5 in Ful (DR).
- Barred Owl** - 1 on March 13 in Cam (FR); 1 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 2 on May 12 at Blo (Hap); 1 on May 21 in Pow (FR).

- Short-eared Owl** - 1 on April 9 at the airport, Warn and 1 in Ful on April 11 (DR).
- Northern Saw-whet Owl** - 1 on March 5 at Bar (DR); 1 on March 2 (SS) and 2 on March 5 (SS, AC, BPB) at BSF; 1 mist-netted and 1 spotlighted on March 7 at CKWMA (MM); 1 on March 10 at BSF (RD); 1 on March 26 in McC (SBC).
- Chuck-will's-Widow** - 1 on April 25 in Allen County (LD).
- Olive-sided Flycatcher** - 1 on May 11 in Ohio County and 1 on May 15 in Ball (DR); 1 on May 20 in eastern Jefferson County (DO).
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** - 1 on May 13 and 1 on May 17 in Pul (RD); 3 on May 20 in eastern Jefferson County (DO).
- Alder Flycatcher** - 3 to 5 singing on May 10 in Warn (DR); 4 on May 13 in Warn (DR, MB).
- Willow Flycatcher** - At least 18 singing on May 20 at PWMA (DR); 1 on May 20 at LWC (DO); 1 on May 20 in Boyle County (SBC).
- Least Flycatcher** - 1 on April 30 at PWMA (DO).
- Great-crested Flycatcher** - 3 on April 22 in Ful (DO).
- Loggerhead Shrike** - 1 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 1 on April 22 in Ful (DO); 5 pairs located with 2 pairs fledging 8 young and a nest with 4 eggs at BGA (GR).
- Bell's Vireo** - At least 16 singing on May 20 at PWMA (DR); 2 on May 26 at PWMA, Ohio County (RD).
- Blue-headed Vireo** - 3 on March 26 at BSF (SBC); 1 on April 22 in Ful (DO); 2 on May 21 at SCCT (FR); 1 on May 30 at Bee (RD).
- Fish Crow** - 1 on April 9 in Ful (Hap); 1 on April 21 at SWMA (DO).
- Bank Swallow** - 50+ on April 22 at Hic (DO).
- Cliff Swallow** - 3+ on April 22 at KyDam (DO).
- Black-capped Chickadee** - 1 on April 1 at Bla, previously banded by MM (DO); 1 on April 19 in Boyd County (DR).
- Red-breasted Nuthatch** - A pair digging nest hole on March 22, seen on April 6, last observed on April 23 at Eve (FR).
- Brown Creeper** - 1 on March 22 at Eve (FR).
- Bewick's Wren** - 1 on May 26 in Logan County (DR).
- House Wren** - 1 on April 21 in Ball (DO).
- Winter Wren** - 1 on April 15 at Bern (DO).
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet** - 1 on April 1 at Bla and 5 on April 9 at Bern (DO).
- Eastern Bluebird** - At least 130 young have fledged from nest boxes at BGA (GR).
- Swainson's Thrush** - 1 on May 21 at SCCT (FR).
- Hermit Thrush** - 5 on April 9 at Bern (DO).
- American Pipit** - 200+ on March 15 at WKU farm (DR); 1 on April 1 at Frankfort (DO); 4 on April 9 in Ful (Hap).
- Cedar Waxwing** - 45 on March 24 at Bern (DO).
- Blue-winged Warbler** - 1 on April 21 in Lex (WD); 1 on April 22 at Blo (DO); 3 on May 20 in Boyle County (SBC).
- Golden-winged Warbler** - 1 on May 2 at Somerset, Pul (RD).
- Northern Parula** - 2 on April 2 at MCNP (RD); 2 on April 9 at Bern (DO); 4 on April 12 in Pul (RD); 5 on May 21 at SCCT and 5 on May 22 at Roc (FR).
- Cape May Warbler** - 1 May 10 at MtZ (RD).
- Black-throated Green Warbler** - 3 on March 26 in McC (SBC); 1 on April 22 at Blo (DO); 10 on May 21 at SCCT, with a female completing a nest on May 22 at Roc (FR).

- Yellow-throated Warbler** - 2 on March 30 in Pul (RD); 3 on April 9 at Bern (DO); 5 on May 26 in McC (SBC).
- Pine Warbler** - 1 on March 1 at MtZ (RD); 1 on March 5 at Jon (Hap); 4 on March 24 at Bern (DO); 2 on May 22 at SCCT (FR).
- Prairie Warbler** - 3 on April 23 at PSF (DO).
- Palm Warbler** - 1 on April 22 in Ful (DO).
- Black-and-White Warbler** - 2 on March 26 in McC (SBC); 6 on May 21 at SCCT (FR).
- Prothonotary Warbler** - 9 on April 23 at Blo (DO).
- Worm-eating Warbler** - 3 on April 22 at Blo (DO).
- Swainson's Warbler** - 3 on May 11 at Bee (RD); 1 on May 14 at MCNP (DR); 1 on May 21 at SCCT and 1 on May 22 at Roc (FR).
- Ovenbird** - 4 on May 21 and on May 22 at Roc (FR).
- Louisiana Waterthrush** - 2 on March 26 in McC (SBC); 1 on April 1 in Cli (FR); 2 on April 9 at Bern (DO); 1 on May 22 at Roc (FR); 2 adults and 1 fledgling on May 30 at Bee (RD).
- Kentucky Warbler** - 1 on April 23 at Blo (DO).
- Connecticut Warbler** - 1 on May 14 at MCNP (DR).
- Hooded Warbler** - 6 on May 21 at SCCT and 8 on May 22 at Roc (FR).
- Vesper Sparrow** - 2 on April 1 near Bla (DO).
- Savannah Sparrow** - 2 on April 1 near Bla (DO).
- Henslow's Sparrow** - 7+ on April 30 at PWMA (DO); 3 on May 7 at Ano (RD).
- Lincoln's Sparrow** - 1 on April 22 at Hic (DO); 1 on May 8 at Bee (RD).
- Swamp Sparrow** - 1 on May 4 in Pul (RD).
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak** - 1 on April 20 at MtZ (RD); 1 on April 23 in Ful (DO).
- Blue Grosbeak** - 1 on April 21 at MtZ (RD); 1 male from April 26 and 1 female on May 15 in Hart (MS); on male on May 24 in Pen (FR).
- Dickcissel** - 1 on April 22 in Ful (DO); 5 on May 22 in Bou (FR).
- Bobolink** - 6 on May 22 in Bou (FR).
- Western Meadowlark** - 1 on March 20 in Warn (DR).
- Rusty Blackbird** - 3 on April 30 at SWMA (DO).
- Brewer's Blackbird** - 2+ on April 21 at SWMA (DO).
- Baltimore Oriole** - 1 to 2 almost daily in Hart from May 16 (MS).
- Purple Finch** - 1 on April 1 at Bla (DO); 1 on May 3 at MtZ (DR).
- White-winged Crossbill** - 1 on April 15 and 16 at New Concord, Cal (SW, DR).
- Pine Siskin** - 16 on March 14 at Bee (RD); 12+ on April 1 at Bla and 2 on April 23 in Cal (DO).

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The Forehead Patch of Tufted Titmice: A Possible Status Signal

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Abstract.— Among birds, morphological features, called status signals or badges, may provide information about relative fighting ability and, as such, permit birds to avoid costly fights. Tufted Titmice (*Baeolophus bicolor bicolor*) have black forehead patches that vary in size, and our objective was to determine the possible relationship between patch size and dominance status in winter flocks in central Kentucky. Patch width was significantly correlated with dominance rank, with higher ranking birds having wider patches. Such results suggest that the forehead patch of titmice might serve as a status signal, particularly during encounters between unfamiliar individuals. Variation in patch size may also be an important intersexual signal.

Introduction.— Status signals are morphological features that convey information about relative fighting ability. These signals may allow assessment of potential competitors and permit birds to avoid costly fights with dominant individuals (Rohwer 1975). In birds, prominent plumage patterns often function as status signals and such signals have been reported in several species, including the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*; Møller 1987) and Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*; Yasukawa and Bick 1983). Status signals have also been reported among species in the family Paridae, including Great Tits (*Parus major*; Jarvi and Bakken 1984, Wilson 1992) and Willow Tits (*P. montanus*; Hogstad and Kroglund 1993). Among North American parids, Otter and Ratcliffe (1999) found that bill morphology varies among Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*), but the signal value of such variation remains unclear. Similarly, Tufted Titmice (*Baeolophus bicolor bicolor*) have black forehead patches that vary in size among individuals. The objective of our study was to determine if the size of these forehead patches is correlated with dominance status in winter flocks of titmice in Kentucky. During the non-breeding season, Tufted Titmice occur in small flocks of 2 - 5 birds that typically consist of a pair of adults plus a variable number of juveniles (offspring and juveniles from unknown natal sites) (Grubb and Pravosudov 1994, Pravosudova *et al.* 1999). Dominance hierarchies develop within these flocks and flock members may also interact with titmice from other flocks (Brawn and Samson 1983, Grubb and Pravosudov 1994). Thus, as with other flocking species, Tufted Titmice might benefit from the presence of a status signal.

Methods.— We studied titmice at the Central Kentucky Wildlife Management Area (CKWMA), located 17 km southeast of Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky. Beginning in September 1996, six feeding stations were stocked with sunflower seeds. From October 1996 through February 1997, titmice visiting these stations were captured in mist nets and banded with numbered aluminum bands plus a unique combination of colored bands. The size of the forehead patch (top width, bottom width, and height) was also determined. From December 1996 - March 1997, titmice were observed at feeding stations to determine the dominance relationships among flock members. During interactions at feeders, an individual was considered dominant if it either chased or supplanted another titmouse or if another titmouse waited nearby and did not visit the feeder until the dominant bird left.

Results.— We captured 29 titmice, and were able to determine the age of 13 (4 hatching year and 9 after-hatching year) (Pyle *et al.* 1987). AHY birds had longer (Mann-Whitney U test, $P = 0.02$) wing chords ($x = 81.3$ mm) than HY birds ($x = 76.8$ mm), but AHY and HY birds

did not differ ($P > 0.15$) in tarsus length, tail length, mass, or any measure of patch size (top width, bottom width, height, or total area). Fifteen titmice were observed throughout the study and formed five flocks, with flock size ranging from 2 to 5 birds. Dominance hierarchies in titmouse flocks are linear peck-right, with each member of a flock consistently either dominant or submissive to other flock members (Brawn and Samson 1983). For all flocks combined, we observed an average of 2.9 interactions per dyad and, based on these interactions, assigned each flock member a dominance rank. We found a significant correlation between rank and patch width (measured along the top of the patch), with higher ranking birds having wider patches ($r_s = 0.55$, $n = 15$, $P = 0.032$). Correlations between the width of the bottom of the patch and rank and between patch area and rank, respectively, approached significance, with higher ranking birds having both wider ($r_s = 0.44$, $n = 15$, $P = 0.099$) and larger patches ($r_s = 0.47$, $n = 15$, $P = 0.07$). The height of the forehead patch was not correlated with rank ($r_s = 0.002$, $n = 17$, $P = 0.99$).

Discussion — The significant correlation between the width of the forehead patch of Tufted Titmice and dominance status suggests the patch may serve as a status signal. However, the results of previous studies of titmice also suggest that variation in patch morphology may be important only during intrasexual interactions with unfamiliar individuals and as an intersexual signal. Several factors appear to support this hypothesis. First, dominance status within flocks of titmice is typically age- and sex-related, with males dominant to females and, within a sex, adults dominant to juveniles (Brawn and Samson 1983). If so, and assuming that male titmice were the top-ranked individuals in the flocks observed during our study, the observed correlation between patch size and status in our study may have been due, in part, to sex-related differences in plumage. In addition, flocks of titmice are stable (Samson and Lewis 1979) and often composed of parents and offspring (Pravosudova *et al.* 1999). As a result, flock members typically know, and know the status of, other flock members, making status signals unnecessary.

However, even badges that reflect age or sex may serve as a signal of potential fighting ability among unfamiliar individuals (Lemel and Wallin 1993). Thus, status signaling may be important during encounters between members of different flocks because they might not remember the fighting ability of birds with which they interact only rarely (Jarvi and Bakken 1984). Because they interact occasionally with conspecifics from other flocks and with satellite birds with no flock membership (Brawn and Samson 1983, Grubb and Pravosudov 1994), titmice might benefit from the presence of a status signal.

Morphological variation in the forehead patch of Tufted Titmice may also be important as an intersexual signal. For example, Norris (1990a, b) found that female Great Tits may use the breast stripe of males as a criterion for mate choice, and may benefit from such discrimination because large-striped males are more attentive to the nest and more likely to defend the brood. Similarly, female House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) prefer large-bibbed males as mates, and such males tend to obtain better territories and nest sites (Moller 1988). Additional study is needed to determine the possible role, if any, of the forehead patch in the mate choice decisions of male and female Tufted Titmice.

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FIELD NOTES**Marbled Godwit at the Falls of the Ohio**

A MARBLED GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) was observed on 4 May 2000 between 12:20 and 12:40 p.m. at the Falls of the Ohio in Jefferson County, Kentucky by Robert G. Dever, Peggy Oates and three staff members from the Falls of the Ohio State Park. The godwit was seen by Dever through binoculars as it landed on the outer fossil beds. Through a Kowa scope it was observed to make several short flights of 10-20 yards as it moved up the edge of shallow water out from the fixed weir before finally leaving the area, flying away over Shippingport Island. The observations were made from the deck of the State Park located in Clarksville, Indiana using two Kowa scopes and the distance from the bird was approximately one-third of a mile. The bird was under constant observation during the 20 minutes it remained in the area. The temperature was 70°F and the sky was clear. One of the most striking features was the long, bicolored bill which was upturned and dark near the end. The color of the bird's wings were somewhere between cinnamon and burnt gold. The bird was

large and comparable in size, except for its long legs, to some Ringed-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) which were standing nearby. — Robert G. Dever, 1872 Princeton Drive, Louisville, KY 40205-1854

Bald Eagle Scavenges a White-tailed Deer Carcass in Redbird Wildlife Management Area

As many as one-half million Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) occupied the pre-colonial continental United States (Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988). John J. Audubon attributed their decline to losses of prey such as Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) and bison (*Bison bison*), and overharvest by Europeans and native Americans (Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988). Subsequent declines occurred during the twentieth century following wetlands drainage, the clearing of riparian forests (Monroe 1994), and widespread pesticide use (Monroe 1994, Palmer-Ball 1996). By 1963, only 417 nesting pairs of eagles occurred in the lower 48 states (USFWS 1995). Conservation efforts have led to an increase in Bald Eagle numbers over the past two decades (Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988, Palmer-Ball 1996) and its recent downlisting to threatened by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 1995).

Bald Eagles in Kentucky were infrequent during early winter surveys through most of the twentieth century. In 1960, Mengel (1965) reported only 5-10 pairs of eagles in western Kentucky in 1960. Restoration efforts in Kentucky, have raised eagle numbers from less than 150 in the 1980s to more than 320 during the 1990s (Lowe 1980, Durell and Stamm 1984). Today, Bald Eagles frequently inhabit the central and western regions of the state (Monroe 1994), and are most common along the Mississippi and Ohio River floodplains (Anderson *et al.* 1984). Eagles occur less frequently near impoundments in the Cumberland Plateau (Mengel 1965, Barbour *et al.* 1973, Durell and Yancy 1990, Monroe 1994).

At approximately 9 a.m., on February 17, 2000, near the head of Elisha Creek in Leslie County, within the Redbird Wildlife Management Area of the Daniel Boone National Forest, we approached a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) carcass used as bait with a coyote trap set at a distance of 1 m. The carcass was located in a clearing approximately 5 m from a dirt road, and was placed at the base of a dead tree near fallen brush. Our arrival startled a Bald Eagle that took flight from its perch on the midsection of the carcass. The Bald Eagle landed near the top of a tall pine tree approximately 50 m away from its previous position, where we observed it with binoculars for approximately 30 sec before it took flight. We noticed that the white head displayed a few brown patches of feathers, but no terminal band on the tail. We estimated the eagle to be between 3.5 and 4.5 years old (Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988). Upon inspection of the deer carcass, we found an 8-10 cm hole punctured through the rib cage and into the rumen.

On Feb 26, 2000, we observed what may have been the same eagle perched on the deer carcass. The eagle was observed for approximately 20 sec before taking flight. The rumen hole had been enlarged by 10 cm. Although the eagle may have been a winter transient, nearby impoundments (*i.e.* Combs Lake, Buckhorn Lake) may be attracting Bald Eagles to the region. More distant impoundments, such as Martins Fork and Laurel Lakes, have produced occasional eagle sightings (Durell and Stamm 1984, Durell and Yancy 1990, others). Bald Eagles often prey on injured animals (Parker 1963) and are frequently scavengers of carrion (Spencer 1976, Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988); a behavior that makes them vulnerable to traps set for mammalian predators (Laycock 1973, Gerrard and Bortolotti 1988). We caution those involved in trapping for harvest, depredation control, and research to place carrion bait at least 5 m from traps to minimize the possibility of capturing scavenging raptors.

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NEWS AND VIEWS**The K.O.S Fall Meeting**

The fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society will be held at the Barren River Lake State Resort Park from October 6-8. Rooms will be held until September 6, so make reservations for the Louie B. Nunn Lodge early by calling 1-800-325-0057. If you are interested in making a presentation at the Friday evening session, please contact the program chair, Kathy Caminiti, 4980 Middle Creek Road, Burlington, Kentucky 41005-8663; phone: (859)-689-4166; email krzy4owls@aol.com.

Kentucky Bird Records Committee

Rare bird sightings and birds observed out of season should be well documented and the documentation should be sent to Lee McNeely, Secretary of the KBRC, P.O. Box 463, Burlington, Kentucky 41005, for consideration by the committee for official state record status.