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THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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OUR COVER

Again we extend our thanks to our staff artist, Ray Harm, for the attractive painting of the Red-headed Woodpecker on our cover.

WINTER BIRD DENSITIES IN EASTERN KENTUCKY FORESTS

WILLIAM C. MCCOMB AND JOHN J. MORIARTY

Much of the contiguous forest habitat in eastern Kentucky is rapidly being altered by surface mining. Such changes have dramatic effects on the avian community. Allaire (1978a) quantified densities of breeding birds in forests adjacent to surface mines and he found an 18% decrease in bird density one year after mining. Although some species benefited from conversion of forest to reclaimed surface mines (Allaire 1978b), other species were adversely affected by even slight changes in the forest vegetation structure. In another study, Stauffer and Best (1980) found that Wood Thrushes (*Hylocichla mustelina*), Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapillus*), and Scarlet Tanagers (*Piranga olivacea*) required large unbroken tracts of forest.

Previous studies of eastern Kentucky avifauna have dealt with breeding bird communities (Barbour 1956, Mengel 1965:36-37, Allaire 1978b, Davis et al 1989). We could find no studies which quantified the winter bird communities of eastern Kentucky, however. The objective of this study was to determine the densities of common wintering birds in undisturbed and altered forest habitats which were not associated with surface mining activity.

We thank Gina M. Gigante and Jill B. Davis for their help with field work; Bart A. Thielges, Wayne H. Davis, Gina M. Gigante, and Ronald S. Caldwell for reviewing an early draft of the manuscript; and the Robinson Forest staff for their assistance in many phases of the study.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

Birds were counted along 3 transects in Laurel, Falling Rock, and Bucklick watersheds, in the University of Kentucky's Robinson Forest, located in Knott and Breathitt Counties, Kentucky. This is a mixed mesophytic forest typical of much of the central Appalachians (Carpenter and Rumsey 1976). Ridges are dominated by shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*), pitch pine (*P. rigida*), chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*), and scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea*); south-facing slopes by hickories (*Carya spp.*), white oak (*Q. alba*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), and sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*); and north-facing slopes by northern red oak (*Q. rubra*), cucumber-tree (*Magnolia acuminata*), and yellow-poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) are common along the drainages. The forest has a history of high-grading and fire abuse (Carpenter 1976).

Two transects were located on north- and south-facing slopes in watersheds with undisturbed forest and one transect was in disturbed forest (cutting, clearings, etc.). All birds seen or heard were recorded on a map, and densities were derived from transect widths (Mikol 1980). Birds were counted within about 3 hours before sunset or 3 hours after sunrise, January through March, 1980 and 1981. Eight visits were made to each transect in undisturbed forest and 15 visits were made to the transect through disturbed forest. Birds flying over the forest, except raptors which could use the area for feeding, were not recorded. Any birds observed while we were en route to the transects were also recorded, but no density values were derived for them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Wintering bird densities are presented in Table 1. Twenty-eight species were observed during the study; 18 in undisturbed and 22 in disturbed forest. Carolina chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*), Hairy Woodpeckers (*Picoides villosus*), Tufted Titmice (*Parus bicolor*), Cardinals (*Richmondia cardinalis*), and White-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta carolinensis*) were the most frequently observed species. These species, except Hairy Woodpeckers, were also reported common in the 1979-1980 Jackson, Kentucky mid-winter bird count (Shadowen 1980). Carolina Chickadees and Hairy Woodpeckers were the most abundant species in disturbed forest and Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice were most abundant in undisturbed habitat. Undisturbed forest supported 73 individuals per 100 ha and disturbed forest supported 248 individuals per 100 ha. These numbers are conservative estimates because some birds may have been present but not seen or heard during counts.

McComb and Noble (1980) reported higher winter bird densities in partially cut forests of Louisiana and Mississippi than we found on our study areas. Disruption of the forest canopy allows increased light penetration and increased growth of the shrub layer, thereby increasing the vertical structural diversity within the forest which is important to bird species diversity (MacArthur and MacArthur 1961). This is probably why we observed more species and more individuals in disturbed forest habitats. Stauffer and Best (1980) predicted that partial removal of the forest canopy would be detrimental to Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), and Common Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*), but we found these species more common in disturbed habitat. Snags were abundant in and around the disturbed forest habitat on our transect, so this may have influenced cavity- and snag-dependent species densities on disturbed sites. If snags had been lacking, then a shortage of feeding and/or roosting sites may have reduced densities of 10 of the 29 species.

Stauffer and Best (1980) predicted that removal of all woody vegetation, as in surface mining, would lead to the elimination of 32 of the 41 species of birds which they studied. Among the species that they predicted would be eliminated, they included 10 of the species of their congeners which we observed (Carolina chickadee, Red-bellied Woodpecker [*Centurus carolinus*], Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker [*Picoides pubescens*], Common Flicker, Tufted Titmouse, Cardinals, Rufous-sided Towhee [*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*], White-breasted Nuthatch, and Blue Jay). Seven of these were among the 10 most abundant species at Robinson Forest (Table 1). Extrapolating from Stauffer and Best's (1980) predictions, about 144 wintering birds representing 10 species would be eliminated for every 100 ha of forest which was removed. Elimination of Brown Creepers (*Certhia familiaris*), Pileated Woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*), Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius*), Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), Winter Wrens (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), Carolina Wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*), owls, Golden-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus satrapa*), and Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) seems likely if all woody vegetation were removed (Mengel 1965). This would mean an additional 22 individuals/100 ha or a total of 166 (91.2%) wintering individuals lost per 100 ha until woody vegetation was

reestablished. Revegetation of surface mines through reclamation is frequently in the form of grasses and forbs. Trees must be planted if the above species are to recover from habitat loss. Allaire (1979) suggested maintaining some grassland on surface mines to promote interspersed habitats and hence ecological diversity, but he was quick to point out that some areas should be allowed to return to forest.

The reclamation specialist should realize that for every 100 ha of surface mine which is maintained as grassland for ecological diversity, about 166 individual birds of 23 species which wintered on that site prior to mining may be replaced by other species. Allaire (1980) analyzed the costs of returning surface mines to habitat for game and nongame birds and mammals. He found that reclamation for grassland habitats or to promote shore birds was less costly than reclamation involving establishment of woody species. Without trees and shrubs, many species and individuals would not be present following mining and reclamation.

In summary, 91.2% of the individuals and 78.6% of the species of wintering birds indigenous to Robinson Forest, and probably similar areas, would be eliminated if all woody vegetation were removed through surface mining. Surface mines must be revegetated with woody plants, as described by Rafaill and Vogel (1978) and Allaire (1980), if bird densities can be expected to return to pre-mining levels. Maximization of vertical structural diversity in unmined forest, and probably post-mined forest, would lead to greater bird density and species richness. Since cavity and snag-dependent species comprised 74.4% of the individuals and 50% of the species, snags should be left during forest management operations to maintain cavity- and snag-dependent populations.

Table 1. Wintering bird densities per 100 ha at Robinson Forest, Knott and Breathitt Counties, Kentucky, January to March, 1980 and 1981.

Species	Undisturbed Forest (N=16 visits)	Disturbed Forest (N=15 visits)	Average
Carolina chickadee (<i>Parus carolinensis</i>)	30.3	74.1	52.2
hairy woodpecker (<i>Picoides villosus</i>)	6.9	52.8	29.9
tufted titmouse (<i>Parus bicolor</i>)	14.4	20.4	17.4
cardinal (<i>Richmondia cardinalis</i>)	ND ¹	15.7	15.7
white-breasted nuthatch (<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>)	1.9	21.3	11.6
red-bellied woodpecker (<i>Centurus carolinus</i>)	0.3	16.7	8.5
pileated woodpecker (<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>)	6.6	10.2	8.4
rufous-sided towhee (<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>)	ND	7.4	7.4
golden-crowned kinglet (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)	3.2	6.5	4.9
common crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	4.4	ND	4.4
white-throated sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	ND	3.7	3.7
brown creeper (<i>Certhia familiaris</i>)	1.9	4.6	3.3

Species	Undisturbed Forest (N=16 visits)	Disturbed Forest (N=15 visits)	Average
slate-colored junco (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)	ND	2.8	2.8
ruffed grouse (<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>)	1.6	3.7	2.7
American woodcock (<i>Philohela minor</i>)	+ ²	1.9	1.9
downy woodpecker (<i>Picoides pubescens</i>)	ND	1.9	1.9
yellow-bellied sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	ND	1.9	1.9
turkey vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	ND	0.9	0.9
blue jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	0.6	0.9	0.9
red-tailed hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)	0.3	0.9	0.6
winter wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>)	0.3	ND	0.3
yellow-rumped warbler (<i>Dendroica coronata</i>)	0.3	ND	0.3
wild turkey (<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)	+ ²	+	
common flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	ND	+	
screech owl (<i>Otus asio</i>)	+	ND	
great horned owl (<i>Bubo virginianus</i>)	+	ND	
barred owl (<i>Strix varia</i>)	+	ND	
Carolina wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	ND	+	
Total	73	248	182

ND — no data

+² — occurrence recorded on Robinson Forest en route to census areas.

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THE NESTING SEASON, SUMMER, 1981

ANNE L. STAMM

The 1981 breeding season (June and July) was not as warm as last year, although on some days, particularly the second week in July, the temperature ranged from 90 to 95 degrees on eight consecutive days. Heavy rains in western Kentucky in early June caused flooding conditions there. Uniontown recorded seven inches of rain during the first week of June. Thunder storms and heavy rains blocked some roads east of Glasgow, June 6, while strong winds and golf ball-size hail ripped through Brownsboro and Crestwood. Rainfall in July was only slightly above normal.

Weather conditions in the early part of June surely had some effect on ground-nesting species of birds. The sandbars and islands in western Kentucky were flooded and they remained so the entire summer. The rock ledge at the Falls of the Ohio was covered with water the early part of the season and caused havoc for such nesting species as the Spotted Sand-

pipers and Song Sparrows. Many old trees were uprooted during the period and caused additional problems for cavity-nesting species.

More members provided information for this season and as a result many interesting and meaningful data have emerged. Three species extended their breeding range: one southward (Song Sparrow) and two eastward in the state (Tree Swallow and Blue Grosbeak). Also, first breeding records for the state were established for the Little Blue Heron and the Cattle Egret.

Loons through Ducks—A Common Loon was a late straggler at Bernheim Forest Lake on June 7 (JB, PB). Three Great Blue Heron colonies were reported: one colony which had been inactive in recent years on Bear Creek, Marshall County, (JEr) had 25 nests on June 9 (BP *vide* JEr); one on the Tradewater River, Crittenden County, had 80 active nests (BP *vide* JEr); one at Fish Lake, Carlisle County, with 33 nests in April (JEr), had 56 in June (BP *vide* JEr). Two pairs of Green Heron nested successfully and fledged seven young at Big Pond Sanctuary, Falls of Rough (KC); observed throughout the season at Walton Reservoir (EG); singles reported in various other locations; but found in "lower numbers" than in previous years in Boone County (LMc). Twenty-five Little Blue Heron, in immature plumage, were seen in Hickman County along the Mississippi River, June 12 (JEr); one adult at Falls of the Ohio, July 30 (S, FS); two nests were found in a Black-crowned Night heronry in Trigg County, during the period (BP *vide* JEr) and established the first breeding record for Kentucky. A nest of the Cattle Egret was reported in the same Black-crowned Night heronry, located on an island in Barkley Lake (BP *vide* JEr). For a number of years, breeding of the Cattle Egret has been surmised, but this is the first known for the state. The only mention of a Great Egret was one sighted at the Falls of the Ohio, July 26 (LR, & JEl); possibly the same bird there, July 30 (S, FS). Two hundred active nests were found in the Black-crowned Night Heronry mentioned above (BP *vide* JEr); highest count of adults at Falls of the Ohio, July 8, was 82 and 34 immatures there on July 31 (LR). The only mention of a Yellow-crowned Night Heron was of a single bird, June 4, two miles north of Empire, Christian County (AS).

Waterfowl through Hawks—Mallards had a good year in 1980 at the lake in Simpsonville, but this year the lake was drained. There were no comments on ducks, with the exception of a female Wood Duck with nine young at Walton Reservoir on June 13 (EG). A Mississippi Kite was sighted in Hickman County, June 12 (JEr). A nest of the Sharp-shinned Hawk on Pine Mountain during June was of interest (MD). Cooper's Hawks were seen regularly during June along the highest flanks of Pine Mountain (MD); two observed frequently at Falls of Rough (KC); one captured a Common Flicker at Hamlin (JEr), and was considered "uncommon, but holding their own" at Murray (CP). Two nests of the Red-tailed Hawk were discovered in Madison County; one with two young was deserted, and in the other, one young fledged (PM); young also fledged successfully at Springfield (JBa); the species seemed to have replaced the Red-shouldered at Glasgow, where formerly it was common (RS). Red-shouldered Hawks were seen and heard quite regularly on the ridges of Pine Mountain during June (MD), but continues to be scarce and in low numbers in most areas. Broad-winged Hawks were observed in a few locations where they probably were breeding birds: Pulaski County Park,

July 8 (JEl); pair at Glasgow since spring (RS); pair in vicinity of an abandoned Red-shouldered Hawk nest on Pine Mountain (MD); and observed all during the period at Hamlin (JEr). A complete surprise was the sighting of an adult *Bald Eagle* on June 7, two miles from Silent Grove Church, near Mammoth Cave National Park, while conducting a breeding bird survey (Wm. Mason, Blaine Ferrell, Mike Jones). There were conflicting reports on the American Kestrel: "less frequent" at Murray (CP); "somewhat more in evidence" on the Radcliff Breeding Bird Survey (LaS); and small numbers were reported from various parts of the state.

Bobwhite through Shorebirds—The Bobwhite was up slightly at Danville (FL) and on the Pleasureville Breeding Bird Survey (S), but in low numbers on the Radcliff BBS (LaS). Shorebirds arrived later than usual in the Louisville area (S); migration was under way on July 18 at East Bend Bottoms (northern Kentucky—LMc). A single Spotted Sandpiper at Jonathan Creek, Marshall County, June 12 may have been a late straggler, or a breeding bird (RE); four at East Bend Bottoms, July 18 and two on an island in Kentucky Lake, July 24, may have been summer resident birds (LMc & JEr, respectively); a few, late in the season, also at Falls of the Ohio (S). Eight Least Sandpipers at East Bend Bottoms, Boone County, July 18, were later than usual (LMc); Solitary Sandpipers arrived, too, at the same location (LMc). Two Western Sandpipers were reported at the Crescent Hill Reservoir, Louisville, July 26 (JEl, LR); two at Falls of Ohio, July 29 (LR).

Gulls and Terns—Ring-billed Gulls arrived unusually early in two locations: three birds on an island in Kentucky Lake, July 2 and eight on July 24 (JEr); and one at Falls of the Ohio, July 29 (LR). An adult Laughing Gull was at Ballard waterfowl Management area, June 20—documented (AB). Seven Least Terns were observed feeding in flooded waters along the road, south of Columbus-Belmont State Park, June 12 (JEr). Sandbars and river islands in western Kentucky, where the Least Terns nest, were flooded the entire period and it was thought that nesting was unsuccessful (JEr). The two Black Terns observed at Fishing Creek area of Lake Cumberland, near Pulaski County Park, July 29 were of interest (JEl).

Cuckoos through Hummingbirds—The Yellow-billed Cuckoo was considered not as numerous at three locations: Springfield (JBa), Fort Wright (EG) and on Radcliff BBS (LaS). Black-billed Cuckoos were less common than in 1979; one was seen feeding with Yellow-billed Cuckoos on worms on the Catalpa tree at Eubank, Pulaski County (JEl). Two young Great Horned Owls were raised successfully in Madison County (PM). Chimney Swifts were "well above means" on the Radcliff BBS (LaS). Common Nighthawks were not mentioned, but the species was definitely down in numbers in the Louisville area. Both the Chuck-will's -widow and the Whip-poor-will were heard during June and July at Falls of the Rough (KC) and during June in Marshall County (RE). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were scarce at Burlington and in Louisville, but fair numbers were present throughout the period at Falls of Rough, where feeders are placed for them.

Woodpeckers through Wrens—Two nests of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker were successful: one in Pulaski County and one in McCreary

County; the latter nest was known to fledge three young (GM). Two broods of Tree Swallows were being fed on an island in Kentucky Lake, July 1 (JEr) and about twelve were seen going in and out of cavities in tree trunks 10 to 20 feet above the water on the North Fork area of Cave Run Lake, June 24 (WG). Bank Swallows nested again at Chalk Bluff near Columbus (JEr), and a small colony was found at a gravel pit in western Boone County during June and July (LMc). There was quite an increase in the population of Barn Swallows on the Radcliff BBS—highest count since 1975 (LaS). Cliff Swallow colonies are gaining in Kentucky and were reported from Falls of Rough (HC, KC), Campton (DC) and Clifty Creek bridge on Grayson Lake (WG). Carolina Chickadees appeared to be greatly reduced in the Pine Mountain area (MD), but fair numbers were recorded on the Breeding Bird Surveys in Carter and Greenup counties (FB). A House Wren nested at Glasgow, where it is a rare breeding bird (RS); one noted at Falls of Rough, but no nest found (KC); and an expanding population in the Murray area (CP), where 10 to 12 years ago it was not found during the summer months. Three records of the Bewick's Wren were reported: singles in Calloway (CP) and Trigg counties (CP, JEr); and two in Christian County (CP). The Carolina Wren showed a slight increase, but as yet not back to the period before the severe winters m. ob.).

Mockingbirds through Starlings—The Mockingbird continued to increase on the Radcliff BBS, but was still below the census of 1977 (LaS); also low numbers in the Louisville area (S), and none recorded on the Carter BBS in Carter County (FB). A nest of the Veery containing three eggs, located in a wild hydrangea bush on Black Mountain, June 4, was exceptional (MD). The species is in the "Special Concern" category in Kentucky. There were encouraging signs for the Eastern Bluebird; all observers noted some slight increases, but still in reduced numbers when compared to the early seventies. The Cedar Waxwing was fairly common throughout the month of June in many areas of Boone County (LMc) and also common during the first two weeks of June in Kenton County (EG). Sharp increases in the Starling population were noted on both the Radcliff (LaS) and Pleasureville (S) BBS's.

Vireos through Warblers—Three Bell's Vireos were heard singing at the Western Wildlife Management Area, June 20 (AB). A singing Black-and-white Warbler at East Bend Bottoms, July 18 was considered noteworthy (LMc). The Blue-winged Warblers observed regularly throughout June in various locations of Boone County were of interest since the summer status is little known in that section of the state. Parula and Cerulean Warblers were present during the period along Middle Creek Road in western Boone County, though neither species was very common (LMc). The Yellow Warbler was singing on an island in Kentucky Lake, June 20 (JEr) and one was noted along Jonathan Creek in Marshall County (no date—RE). A nest of the Louisiana Waterthrush, with three young, was found in Boone County Cliffs Nature Preserve, May 12 (LMc).

House Sparrows through Tanagers—A young Brown-headed Cowbird was seen being fed by a House Sparrow in the Falls of Rough area (KC). The latter species usually "seems to be practically free from the Cowbird's molestation." The House Sparrow was up considerably on the Radcliff and Pleasureville BBS's (LaS & S, respectively). The Orchard Oriole seemed

absent at Fort Wright (EG), while the Northern (Baltimore) Oriole was considered more common in Calloway and Trigg Counties than in recent years (JEr). Numbers of Common Grackles continued to climb on the Radcliff BBS (LaS). The Summer Tanager remained in low numbers for the third consecutive year during the summer months at Burlington, Boone County (LMc).

Grosbeaks through Sparrows—The Blue Grosbeak is definitely expanding its range eastward in Kentucky; formerly, it was known only as a casual summer resident in the western part of the state; recorded from 12 locations from Murray to Eubank (m.ob.). Indigo Buntings showed some decrease in some areas, but good numbers were found on the Kehoe BBS in Greenup County (FB). The Dickcissel was absent in the Lexington area (DC). A few House Finches remained in Creason Park throughout the period (AB). Four Grasshopper Sparrows were heard singing on the Horner Wildlife Sanctuary, Oldham County, June 28, where they were not present in past years (AB). A Bachman's Sparrow at Brigadoon, Glasgow, July 18-19 was of special interest (RS). Field Sparrows showed no drastic decline in Boone County, but numbers were still low in many locations. The Song Sparrow gradually spread out in Barren County (RS) and was observed on the Obion River, north of Hickman, June 12, where one was seen two years ago (JEr) and apparently is expanding its breeding range southward along the rivers.

Reports for the Fall Migration Season (August through November) should reach the writer by December 7, 1981. Contributors are asked to pay particular attention to species which may be endangered or for which we have some concern for their future.

Contributors—John Barber (JBa), Alan Barron (AB), Fred Busroe (FB), Dennis Coskren (DC), Kathryn Clay (KC), Herbert L. Clay, Jr. (HC), Mark Dalton (MD), Diane Elmore (DE), Jackie Elmore (JEl), Joe Tom Erwin (JEr), Roger Eberhardt (RE), William Greene, Jr. (WG), Ed Groneman (EG), James W. Hancock (JH), Frederick Loetscher (FL), P. M. Mastrangelo (PM), Lee McNeely (LMc), G. A. Murphy (GM), James Pasikowski (JP), Clell Peterson (CP), Burleen Pullen (BP), Lene Rauth (LR), Lawrence D. Smith (LaS), Anne L. Stamm (S), Frederick W. Stamm (FS), Russell Starr (RS), Allen Stickley (AS).

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THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

FALL MEETING

October 2-4, 1981

The fifty-eighth Annual Fall Meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was held at Kenlake State Resort Park on October 2, 3, and 4. A total of 59 persons registered for the meeting.

President Ramon Iles presided at the Friday evening gathering. Plans for the Saturday field trips were discussed. Mike Miller and Clell Peterson reported on some possible birding areas in the L.B.L. area. Newton Belt presented an interesting discussion and exhibit of some of his paintings. A social hour followed the meeting.

The Saturday field trips were led by Mike Miller, Clell Peterson, Joe Tom Irwin, and Bert Powell. Many migrating warblers and other species were seen. On Saturday afternoon Dennis Sharp, a T.V.A. biologist, presented an interesting program entitled T.V.A.'s Wildlife Restoration Center—The Giant Canada Goose Project. Following the evening meal, the Society was treated to a multi-media presentation, entitled "Come Spy with Me", by Mr. J. O. Knight of Louisville. The photography was excellent.

At the business meeting prior to the program the Nominating Committee report was presented by Bert Powell as follows:

President: Pierre Allaire

Vice-president: Blaine Ferrell

Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer: John Krull

Recording Secretary: Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver

New Councillors: Fred Busroe and Wayne Mason.

The candidates were duly elected. It was announced that the 1982 Spring Meeting is scheduled for Rough River State Park April 16-18.

The Sunday morning field trip was led by Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver and Dr. Clell Peterson. A total of 101 species of birds were recorded during the weekend.

BIRDS REPORTED ON FIELD TRIPS AT THE FALL MEETING AT KEN LAKE STATE PARK

October 2-4, 1981

Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Common Egret, Canada Goose, Mallard, Black Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Osprey, American Kestrel, Turkey, American Coot, Killdeer, American Golden Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Rock Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Empidonax sp., Eastern Wood Pewee, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, Wood Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Yellow-throated Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Canada Warbler, American Redstart, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Redwinged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Summer Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, American Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow.—Total species: 101.

ATTENDANCE AT THE K.O.S. 1981 FALL MEETING AT KENLAKE STATE PARK

- BLANDVILLE: Newton Belt
BOWLING GREEN: Dr. and Mrs. Blaine Ferrell, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Jones, Mr. and Mrs. William Mathes, Dr. and Mrs. Herb Shadowen
BURLINGTON: Mr. and Mrs. Lee McNeely
CARLISLE: Dr. and Mrs. Wendell Kingsolver
FORT KNOX: Lt. Col. John Getgood
FRANKFORT: Howard Jones
HAMLIN: Joe Tom Irwin
HARDIN: Roger and Janet Eberhardt
HAZARD: Philip Pitchford, Dr. and Mrs. Don Spencer
LEXINGTON: Bob Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Williams
LOUISVILLE: Alan Baron, Richard Cassell, Mrs. O. F. Hook, John Krull, Dr. and Mrs. J. Robert Noonan, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Martha Pike, Mr. and Mrs. Pat Shannon, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Stamm
MACEO: Mike Brown, Marty Brown, Joey Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Powell
MOREHEAD: Fred Busroe
MURRAY: Mike Miller, Dr. Clell Peterson, Paul Sturm
OWENSBORO: Mary Lydia Greenwell, Mr. and Mrs. Ramon Iles, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Wilson
PADUCAH: Mrs. Perry Arnold, Virginia Foster, Corbin Merriweather
SHELBYVILLE: Mr. and Mrs. R. Bowne
STANLEY: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson
DYERSBURG, TN.: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Leggett

FIELD NOTES

NESTING OF THE BELL'S VIREO IN KENTUCKY

On 7 May 1980, at approximately 1430, I observed a Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) singing along Little Bayou Creek, adjacent to the west side of the ash settling pond at Shawnee Steam Plant, 6 km north-northwest of Grahamville, McCracken County, Kentucky. I returned to the site at 0745 on the following day and observed two vireos singing approximately 200 m apart, apparently on territories. One male was observed closely for about half an hour, and a tape recording was made of its vocalizations. (A copy of this tape has been deposited in the Library of Natural Sounds at the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University.) During most of this period it sang vigorously while perched in the tops of willows (*Salix* spp.) and river birches (*Betula nigra*), which formed a thicket along the creek and ash pond levee. The bird also sang a single-phrased song while carrying a piece of birch bark, probably nest material, in its mouth.

On 26 June 1980, I was present at the site from 1225 to 1420. As soon as I approached the area, I heard two Bell's Vireos singing. At the site of the male with nest material on 8 May, I saw a pair, with the female carrying nest material in its beak, flying repeatedly to a 1.5-m-tall indigo-bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*). After the pair made several trips to the bush, I approached it and found a partially completed nest. The nest was 0.8 m above-ground, suspended from the crotch of a Y-shaped branch on the periphery of

the bush. The foundation of the nest was completed, and river birch bark was being added to the inner lining. While I was photographing the nest, one bird approached me to within 1 m.

After taking several photographs, I again observed the nest from a distance. Between 1403 and 1420, the pair added material to the nest five times. Preceding each visit, the male sang loudly some distance from the nest. Then the pair flew together to the nest, and while the female added material to the nest, the male sang from the nest bush or an adjacent shrub. Then both birds flew from the nest vicinity. This nest-building behavior is similar to that observed by Barlow (1962), who also noted male Bell's Vireos closely following nest-building females, but contributing little to the later phases of nest construction. Barlow (1962) observed the male birds building the foundation of the nest and often singing while carrying nest material. I observed similar behavior on 8 May, and the nest found in June was most likely the second nest built by this pair.

On 27 June 1980, I observed the nest from 0915 to 1055 and took several photographs of the adult birds at the nest using a camera mounted on a tripod and a remote shutter release. During this period I observed nest-building behavior similar to that on 26 June. While the pair were away from the nest, a snake, probably a black racer (*Coluber constrictor*), crawled into the nest bush from an adjoining shrub and passed close to the then-empty nest. The adult vireos did not approach the nest area while the snake was present. Cink (1977) mentions heavy predation on Bell's Vireo nests by black racers and by black rat snakes (*Elaphe obsoleta*).

Unfortunately, I was unable to return to the area later in the summer and thus did not observe the actual presence of either eggs or young of the Bell's Vireos. However, this is the first published account of Bell's Vireos nesting in Kentucky. Mengel (1965) listed sight-records of the species in April and May, and a historic record in July, but included this species on the Hypothetical list. Since then, there have been sightings of the species in April, May, and September, all from west of the Cumberland Plateau (Monroe, 1969; Kentucky Warbler *in lit.*). Bell's Vireos, however, nest throughout much of Illinois (Bohlen, 1978; Graber and Graber, 1963, Karr, 1968), and parts of Indiana (Nolan, 1960). The nesting birds I observed were less than 1 km from the Ohio River, across from Joppa, and Metropolis, Illinois. Thus, these observations do not represent a major range expansion of the Bell's Vireo but, more likely, document the nesting of the species in a region that receives little spring or summer attention from ornithologists. Several Kentucky spring records of Bell's Vireos are after 7 May, when I observed territorial birds. Future spring sightings, particularly in thickets along streams or rivers, should be followed closely for evidence of nesting.

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- CHARLES P. NICHOLSON, Biologist, Division of Land and Forest Resources, Tennessee Valley Authority, Norris, Tn. 37828.

Figure 1. Adult Bell's Vireo at nest, 27 June 1980.



PURPLE GALLINULE SIGHTING

On 9 May 1981, while participating in the Madison County Spring Bird Count, our group observed a Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*). At approximately 8:30 a.m. we were driving along the north side of Owsley Fork Reservoir when an unidentified bird was seen flying into some vege-

tation near the shore. None of us had gotten a good look at the bird so, while the rest of us remained on the road, one member of our group walked down into the cattails and flushed the bird. It flew about 10 meters and landed on a wire fence located at the edge of the reservoir and about 4 meters from the road. From that distance identification was a simple matter! The yellow legs, white under-tail, and other identifying characteristics were easily noted. The gallinule remained on the fence as we observed it for about 20 minutes, and the bird was still there when we left to continue the bird count.

Mengel (The Birds of Kentucky, A.O.U. Monograph No. 3, 1965) lists the Purple Gallinule as hypothetical for Kentucky, since early reports of the species were not adequately documented. Since Mengel's writing, however, there have been at least 5 well documented reports of Purple Gallinules in Kentucky:

- (1) one sighted on the Ohio River at Henderson on 5 May 1964 (Ky. Warbler 40:55-56, 1964)
- (2) a male collected at Caperton's Swamp near Louisville, on 8 May 1967 by K. P. Able (Ky. Warbler 44:55, 1968)
- (3) one observed about 2 miles south of Providence (Hopkins County) on 7 May 1971 (Ky. Warbler 47:44, 1971)
- (4) one sighted at Land Between the Lakes on 9 May 1972 (Ky. Warbler 48:43, 1972)
- (5) one observed on Kentucky Lake at Hamlin on 15 and 16 May 1980 (Ky. Warbler 56:61, 1980)

Thus, our sighting of a Purple Gallinule is, to my knowledge, the sixth state record for the species.

Although Purple Gallinules are rare in Kentucky, it should be noted that individual gallinules do wander extensively from their normal range. For example, they have been reported at such diverse locations as Bar Harbor, Maine (Am. Birds 34:140, 1980), Stoke, Quebec, Canada (Am. Birds 34:142, 1980), Whitnall Park, Wisconsin (Am. Birds 31:1144, 1977), and Durango, Colorado (Am. Birds 33:200, 1979). Further, Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. No. 135, 1926) lists sightings of this species in nearly every state east of the Mississippi, and Reilly (Aud. Ill. Handb. of Amer. Birds, McGraw-Hill, 1968: 141) reports that Purple Gallinules have "straggled through most of the U.S. into southeast Canada."

The members of the group that observed the Purple Gallinule were Ginger Murphy, Carol Sole, Jeff Sole, and myself. — Dr. Gary Ritchison, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Ky. 40475.

Ed. Note: James Hancock also reported a Purple Gallinule at Goose Pond on April 12.

1981 MIDWINTER BIRD COUNT

Forms for the Midwinter Bird Count will be mailed out in early November. If you desire to participate as a compiler but have not received the forms, please contact the Editor.

1982 SPRING MEETING

Our Spring Meeting will be held at Rough River State Park on the weekend of April 16. This is a popular park; you are encouraged to make your reservation immediately.