

# THE MIGRANT

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DEVOTED TO TENNESSEE BIRDS

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## THE BREEDING BIRDS OF REELFOOT LAKE, TENNESSEE

The Tennessee Ornithological Society's 1984 Foray

T. David Pitts

The Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) held its 1984 foray at Reelfoot Lake on 12 May and 21-24 June. Additional observations were made during other parts of the nesting season. The primary objective of the foray was to determine breeding bird numbers and distribution, but neither foray date was at the peak of nesting activity. April weather was abnormally wet and cool, and early May was stormy with heavy rain and tornado strength winds in northwest Tennessee. Nesting and migration were delayed in several species; consequently, many of the 150 species recorded on 12 May were transients. Virtually all 87 species recorded 21-24 June could be considered nesting species. Some species had completed nesting and were relatively inconspicuous; this caused a lower count than an early June survey would have shown. The foray was restricted to Reelfoot Lake and the adjacent publicly owned lands: Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, Reelfoot Lake State Park, and the Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area. All of the foray area lies in the Mississippi River floodplain, with the west half in Lake County and the east half in Obion County. No data from the bluffs to the east of Reelfoot Lake or from the batture land west of the lake are included in this report.

On 12 May, 11 parties participated in the foray. Seven parties were in boats and 4 were on land; several of the boat parties spent time on land in remote parts of the lake. Each party was assigned a separate part of the foray area, resulting in little overlap of results. On 21 June, 2 parties (1 by boat and 1 by car) worked the foray area. On 22 June 1 boat party was in the area, and on 23-24 June 1 land party worked the area. Weather was excellent for all of the foray except for showers on 23 June.

A summary of the formation of Reelfoot Lake in 1811-1812 and the subsequent settlement of the area is given by Smith and Pitts (1982). The same report also presents a physical, chemical, and biological description of Reelfoot Lake. J.J. Audubon journeyed on the Mississippi River several times, but left no notes indicating he had visited the Reelfoot Lake area (Deaderick 1940). The first extensive ornithological records for the Reelfoot Lake area are apparently those of Pindar (1889, 1925) for the years 1884-1893 from Fulton Co., Kentucky, which is north of Reelfoot Lake and includes a small part of the Reelfoot Lake watershed and the north end of what is now the Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge. A.F. Ganier began

visiting Reelfoot Lake in 1911 and published many of his observations; his summary of the aquatic birds of Reelfoot Lake (1933) is especially valuable. Ben B. Coffey, Jr., and his wife Lula, began birding the Reelfoot Lake area in the 1920's and continue to do so; most of their observations remain unpublished. Wendell Whittemore spent the summer of 1936 at the Reelfoot Lake Biological Station; the summary of his notes (Whittemore 1937) provides a basis for detecting changes in bird populations during the past 50 years. Mengel in his *Birds of Kentucky* (1965) included many notes on Reelfoot Lake birds. Two Breeding Bird Survey routes border, in part, Reelfoot Lake; Christmas Bird Counts have been held at Reelfoot Lake since 1934; numerous TOS spring meetings and field trips have taken place at Reelfoot Lake; and, many individual visits to Reelfoot Lake have been reported. In spite of all of this documentation, the current status of many breeding, or potentially breeding, birds on Reelfoot Lake was not known. Relatively few reports in the last 25 years deal with areas of the lake accessible only by boat; most reports concern areas accessible by automobile.

### FORAY RESULTS

Foray results are presented in the form of lists of the relative abundance of species found on 12 May and on 21-24 June, and an annotated list. Available evidence indicates those 93 species marked by asterisk nested at Reelfoot Lake in 1984.

#### RELATIVE ABUNDANCE: 12 May

The 150 species observed on 12 May are listed below in order of abundance. 1. Red-winged Blackbird\*; 2. Indigo Bunting\*; 3. European Starling\*; 4. Blackpoll Warbler; 5-6. Common Grackle\*, Great Blue Heron\*; 7. Northern Cardinal\*; 8-9. Common Yellowthroat\*, Eastern Kingbird\*; 10. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher\*; 11. Prothonotary Warbler\*; 12. Wood Duck\*; 13. Carolina Chickadee\*; 14. Great Crested Flycatcher\*; 15. Brown-headed Cowbird\*; 16. Tufted Titmouse\*; 17. Carolina Wren\*; 18. Cedar Waxwing; 19. American Coot\*; 20-21. American Crow\*, Red-bellied Woodpecker\*; 22-24. Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-eyed Vireo\*, Chimney Swift\*; 25. Tennessee Warbler; 26. Dickcissel\*; 27. Eastern Wood Pewee\*; 28. Swainson's Thrush; 29. Red-headed Woodpecker\*; 30. Acadian Flycatcher\*; 31. Red-eyed Vireo\*; 32. Great Egret\*; 33. Barn Swallow\*; 34. Mallard\*; 35. Pileated Woodpecker\*; 36. Northern Parula\*; 37. Tree Swallow\*; 38-39. Downy Woodpecker\*, Mourning Dove\*; 40. Summer Tanager\*; 41-43. American Redstart\*, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Blue Jay\*; 44. Ruby-throated Hummingbird\*; 45-46. Purple Martin\*, Blue-winged Teal; 47. Wood Thrush\*; 48. Baird's Sandpiper; 49. Rose-breasted Grosbeak; 50. Bobolink; 51. Turkey Vulture\*; 52. House Sparrow\*; 53. Kentucky Warbler\*; 54. Yellow-billed Cuckoo\*; 55. Barred Owl\*; 56. Gray Catbird\*; 57. Cattle Egret; 58-60. Bay-breasted Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, White-breasted Nuthatch\*; 61-64. Common Moorhen\*, Wild Turkey\*, Northern Oriole\*, Yellow-throated Warbler\*; 65. Red-shouldered Hawk\*; 66-68. Horned Lark\*, Lesser Yellowlegs, Killdeer\*; 69. Greater Yellowlegs; 70-74. Cerulean Warbler\*, Rough-winged Swallow\*, Hairy Woodpecker\*, Least Sandpiper, American Goldfinch\*; 75-76. Palm Warbler, American Robin\*; 77-83. Orchard Oriole\*, Eastern Meadowlark\*, Yellow-breasted Chat\*, Yellow Warbler\*, Northern Flicker\*, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Mississippi Kite\*; 84-85. Pectoral Sandpiper, Canada Warbler; 86-90. Chestnut-sided

Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo\*, Caspian Tern, Black Vulture\*, Little Blue Heron; 91-92. Swainson's Warbler\*, Least Bittern\*; 93-98. Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Osprey\*, Warbling Vireo\*, Eastern Bluebird\*, Eastern Phoebe\*; 99-102. Hooded Warbler\*, Belted Kingfisher\*, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron\*, Pied-billed Grebe; 103-107. Northern Mockingbird\*, Common Nighthawk\*, Spotted Sandpiper, Green-backed Heron\*, Rufous-sided Towhee\*; 108-116. White-throated Sparrow, Wilson's Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush\*, Northern Waterthrush, Nashville Warbler, Brown Thrasher\*, Forster's Tern, Northern Bobwhite\*, Lesser Scaup; 117-119. Least Flycatcher, Ovenbird, Rock Dove\*; 120-134. Blackburnian Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo, Loggerhead Shrike\*, Veery, Fish Crow\*, Dowitcher sp., Sora, Canada Goose, American Bittern, Lincoln's Sparrow, Field Sparrow\*, Scarlet Tanager, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-billed Cuckoo, Ring-billed Gull; 135-150. Blue Grosbeak\*, Mourning Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Sedge Wren, House Wren, Willow Flycatcher\*, Willet, Virginia Rail, King Rail, American Kestrel\*, Red-tailed Hawk, Snowy Egret, Double-crested Cormorant.

#### RELATIVE ABUNDANCE: 21-24 June

The 87 species observed on 21-24 June are listed below in order of their observed abundance. 1. Red-winged Blackbird\*; 2. Indigo Bunting\*; 3. Common Grackle\*; 4. Prothonotary Warbler\*; 5. Wood Duck\*; 6. Great Blue Heron\*; 7. Northern Cardinal\*; 8. Common Yellowthroat\*; 9. House Sparrow\*; 10. Horned Lark\*; 11. Tufted Titmouse\*; 12. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher\*; 13. Carolina Wren\*; 14-15. Eastern Bluebird\*, Eastern Wood Pewee\*; 16. Brown-headed Cowbird\*; 17. American Crow\*; 18-19. Red-bellied Woodpecker\*, Yellow-billed Cuckoo\*; 20. White-eyed Vireo\*; 21. Northern Parula\*; 22. Carolina Chickadee\*; 23. Red-headed Woodpecker\*; 24-25. Barn Swallow\*, Acadian Flycatcher\*; 26. Great Crested Flycatcher\*; 27-28. Chimney Swift\*, Turkey Vulture\*; 29. Dickcissel\*; 30. Red-eyed Vireo\*; 31. Purple Martin\*; 32. Yellow-throated Warbler\*; 33. Least Bittern\*; 34. Northern Rough-winged Swallow\*; 35. Ruby-throated Hummingbird\*; 36-37. Common Moorhen\*, Wild Turkey\*; 38-40. Summer Tanager\*, Yellow-breasted Chat\*, Kentucky Warbler\*; 41-47. Warbling Vireo\*, European Starling\*, American Robin\*, White-breasted Nuthatch\*, Northern Flicker\*, Mourning Dove\*, Mississippi Kite\*; 48-51. Northern Oriole\*, Wood Thrush\*, Mourning Dove\*, Red-shouldered Hawk\*; 52. American Goldfinch\*; 53-57. Yellow Warbler\*, Orchard Oriole\*, Eastern Meadowlark\*, Mallard\*, Pileated Woodpecker\*; 58-60. Field Sparrow\*, Tree Swallow\*, Purple Gallinule\*; 61. Barred Owl\*; 62-63. Cerulean Warbler\*, Killdeer\*; 64-67. Willow Flycatcher\*, Eastern Phoebe\*, Great Egret\*, Green-backed Heron\*; 68-72. Chipping Sparrow\*, Northern Mockingbird\*, Blue Jay\*, Hairy Woodpecker\*, American Coot\*; 73-80. American Redstart\*, Swainson's Warbler\*, Fish Crow\*, Eastern Kingbird\*, Belted Kingfisher\*, Eastern Screech-Owl\*, Osprey\*, Black Vulture\*; 81-87. Rufous-sided Towhee\*, Blue Grosbeak\*, Gray Catbird\*, Great Horned Owl\*, Northern Bobwhite\*, Red-tailed Hawk, Cattle Egret.

#### ANNOTATED LIST

The following list consists of species seen during the foray and additional species that have nested or that may be expected to nest at Reelfoot

Lake. The numbers following each species indicate the total individuals recorded on 12 May and 21-24 June, respectively.

1. Pied-billed Grebe 6/0; Whittemore (1937) found it to be a fairly common summer resident; no nesting season reports or evidence of nesting in recent years, although it may do so in small numbers.

2. Double-crested Cormorant 1/0; as many as 200 pairs formerly nested at Reelfoot (Ganier 1933); only one pair was present in 1963 (Gersbacher 1964); no evidence of nesting in recent years although the number of transients on Reelfoot is increasing.

3. Anhinga 0/0; Ganier (1933) estimated at least 50 pairs were present in 1932; the only confirmed nest in recent years was in 1977 (Pitts 1982b); Waldron (1984) reported on individual during the 1984 nesting season.

4. American Bittern 2/0; an unconfirmed report (Reelfoot NWR records) of calling and possible nesting near the Tennessee-Kentucky border in the summer of 1984.

5. Least Bittern\* 8/17; the breeding population is much larger than indicated by the foray results (pers. obs.); Mengel (1965) describes the breeding population at Reelfoot as the largest in the south; F.J. Alsop, III, found about 20 nests near boat trails while searching for nests of Red-winged Blackbirds in 1970 (pers. comm.).

6. Great Blue Heron\* 217/100 (estimated); the colony on Little Ronaldson Slough (Pitts 1982b) is increasing in size; an aerial photo survey in March 1984 showed 250 active nests (Pullin 1984). The nesting population is apparently larger now than in the 1930's (Ganier 1933, Whittemore 1937) but much smaller than it was in the late 1950's and early 1960's (Gersbacher 1964).

7. Great Egret\* 57/4; Whittemore (1937) described this as the most common and most conspicuous bird on the lake with at least 2,500 present during the nesting season. Gersbacher (1964) implies that the population was high in 1963, but she does not give a population estimate. About 15 pairs nested in the Little Ronaldson Slough Colony in 1984 (Pullin 1984).

8. Snowy Egret 1/0; not known to have nested at Reelfoot, although 1 was seen at the Little Ronaldson Slough Colony in 1981 (Pitts 1982b); formerly nested in a colony 13 km south of Reelfoot Lake (Ganier 1951).

9. Little Blue Heron 9/0; small numbers have nested on Reelfoot (Ganier 1951); usually present in small numbers during breeding season (pers. obs.) but no evidence of recent nesting; previously nested in a large colony south of Reelfoot Lake (Ganier 1951).

10. Cattle Egret 22/1; previously nested 32 km to the south of Reelfoot Lake at Dyersburg (Coffey 1964) but is not known to have nested at Reelfoot.

11. Green-backed Heron\* 5/4; both Ganier (1933) and Whittemore (1937) considered this species to be a common summer resident on the lake, although they both noted its preference for timbered shorelines. Whittemore (1937) reported seeing as many as 30 a day. It is still common in the watershed and surrounding area. The low numbers of this conspicuous species seen on the foray were, to me, unexpected and are unexplained.

12. Black-crowned Night-Heron 0/0; Vaughn (1933) and Woodring

(1934) reported 12 nests; Gersbacher (1964) reported only 1 nest and noted the decline. There are no recent nest records.

13. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron\* 6/0; the summer population (presumed to nest) is much larger than indicated by the foray; 10-20 are regularly seen north of Champey's Pocket (pers. obs.).

14. Black-bellied Whistling Duck 0/0; this species has apparently occurred and nested once at Reelfoot Lake (Pitts 1982a).

15. Canada Goose 2/0; the Giant Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis maxima*) formerly nested at Reelfoot (Hanson 1965), but by the time of Pindar (1886) the nesting population had apparently declined and eventually was extirpated.

16. Wood Duck\* 151/110; although many use nest boxes, natural cavities are still commonly used for nesting at Reelfoot.

17. Mallard\* 51/8; most of the nesting season records are of semi-domesticated individuals that are primarily found at the periphery of the lake, especially near boat docks and houses.

18. Blue-winged Teal 37/0; has nested in southern Illinois (Gore and Foss 1974) but there is no evidence of nesting at Reelfoot Lake.

19. Lesser Scaup 4.0; late migrant.

20. Hooded Merganser\* 0/0; although not recorded on the foray, this species nests regularly, but in small numbers (Reelfoot NWR records); the nesting population is apparently much smaller than that of Hatchie NWR (Waldron 1982a).

21. Black Vulture\* 9/2; a mid-summer visit to the Little Ronaldson Slough heron colony might have resulted in a significantly larger number, as this species is found in heron colonies (Spofford 1942).

22. Turkey Vulture\* 31/27.

23. Osprey\* 7/2; Ganier (1933) reported that 1 or 2 pairs were normally present during the summer; apparently nesting has occurred each year since then, although nest success has not been documented; in recent years 2-4 pairs have nested.

24. Mississippi Kite\* 11/11; Pindar (1925) described it as a rare summer resident; Whittemore (1937) did not report it.

25. Bald Eagle 0/0; Ganier (1931) reported 3-4 nesting pairs; continued nesting, but in diminishing numbers, until the early 1960's; nest building has been observed in late winter and early spring in several recent years; an active restoration project coordinated by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and effectively carried out by the Memphis Chapter of TOS may speed the recovery of the nesting population. Thirteen young eagles have been released (1981-1984) at a site near Little Ronaldson Slough.

26. Sharp-shinned Hawk 0/0; while it has not been recorded during the nesting season in recent years or by Whittemore (1937), it may have been a common nesting species earlier (Pindar 1925).

27. Cooper's Hawk 0/0; a record of 1 on 18 June 1982 (Waldron 1982b) indicates it may nest, although not in the numbers of 1880-1890 when it was considered a common resident (Pindar 1925).

28. Red-shouldered Hawk\* 17/10; based on the amount of courtship display (which takes place early in the year), I believe the nesting population is considerably larger than indicated by the foray results.

29. Broad-winged Hawk 0/0; it nests regularly, but in small numbers, in the Reelfoot Lake watershed; I can find no positive evidence of nesting in the foray area.

30. Red-tailed Hawk 1/0; commonly nests in the wooded farmland of the lake watershed, but rarely nests in the foray area.

31. American Kestrel 1/0; rarely nests in the foray area, but does so, in small numbers, in the watershed.

32. Peregrine Falcon 0/0; formerly nested in tall bald cypress trees (Spofford 1943) but, as elsewhere in eastern United States, was a victim of pesticides; last Reelfoot nest fledged young in 1947 (Hickey 1968).

33. Wild Turkey\* 18/13; flocks are present in the Walnut Log area and on the Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area near Champey's Pocket.

34. Northern Bobwhite\* 4/1; the low foray numbers reflect the lack of suitable habitat for this species on the foray area.

35. King Rail 1/0; Whittmore (1937) listed it as a fairly common summer resident; I suspect it to be more numerous than the foray results indicate; few, if any, foray participants deliberately searched for this species.

36. Virginia Rail 1/0; no evidence of nesting but habitat appears suitable and it has nested at several other sites in Tennessee (Alsop undated).

37. Sora 2/0; it is being overlooked as a nesting species?

38. Purple Gallinule\* 0/7; most of the records, including a nest with eggs, were from the south end of Brewer's Bar; this is the same area where Ganier (1933) found a colony nesting in 1923 and subsequently. Details of the nest and observations will be reported separately.

39. Common Moorhen\* 18/13; like the Purple Gallinule, most of the observations, including adults with young, were near the south end of Brewer's Bar.

40. American Coot\* 99/3; Ganier (1933) described it as a common summer resident, at least on certain parts of the lake; apparently the breeding population has dropped sharply in recent decades.

41. Semipalmated Plover 7/0; migrant.

42. Killdeer\* 15/5.

43. Greater Yellowlegs 14/0; migrant.

44. Lesser Yellowlegs 15/0; migrant.

45. Solitary Sandpiper 7/0; migrant.

46. Willet 1/0; migrant.

47. Spotted Sandpiper 5/0; may have previously nested but positive nest records are lacking (Pindar 1925); Ganier (1933) and Whittmore (1937) found it only as a migrant.

48. Semipalmated Sandpiper 11/0; migrant.

49. Least Sandpiper 13/0; migrant.



50. Baird's Sandpiper 35/0; migrant.
51. Pectoral Sandpiper 10/0; migrant.
52. Dowitcher sp. 2/0; migrant.
53. American Woodcock 0/0; probably is an uncommon nesting species in the foray area as it is elsewhere across Tennessee (Pitts 1978).
54. Ring-billed Gull 2/0; migrant.
55. Caspian Tern 9/0; migrant.
56. Forster's Tern 4/0; migrant.
57. Least Tern 0/0; while not recorded on the foray, it is frequently seen feeding in Reelfoot Lake, especially Lower Blue Basin, during and following the nesting season; the nearest known nest sites are the sandbars of the Mississippi River.
58. Rock Dove\* 3/0.
59. Mourning Dove\* 42/11.
60. Black-billed Cuckoo 2/0; has nested elsewhere in west Tennessee (Roever 1951) but does not nest regularly in the mid-south area. I am not aware of any Reelfoot Lake area nesting records.
61. Yellow-billed Cuckoo\* 26/43; one of the latest nesting species to arrive, as indicated by the foray results.
62. Common Barn-Owl 0/0; this species formerly nested in Wood Duck nest boxes around the lake, but as elsewhere in Tennessee, the population has declined drastically. My last record was in 1974.
63. Eastern Screech-Owl\* 0/2; also uncommon in much of the lake watershed.
64. Great Horned Owl\* 0/1; Whittemore (1937) described it as a rare permanent resident, which is apparently still correct; elsewhere in river bottom woodlands (seemingly similar to Reelfoot Lake habitat) of north-west Tennessee, it is a common resident.
65. Barred Owl\* 25/6.
66. Common Nighthawk\* 5/0; the low numbers may be due to the lack of suitable nest sites.
67. Chuck-will's-widow 0/0.
68. Chimney Swift\* 92/27; seen over all parts of the lake and suspected to use large hollow trees for nesting and roosting.
69. Ruby-throated Hummingbird \* 38/14.
70. Belted Kingfisher\* 6/2; the flood plain on which Reelfoot Lake is located provides few suitable nest sites; it is more numerous in the hills of the watershed.
71. Red-headed Woodpecker\* 71/34.
72. Red-bellied Woodpecker\* 96/43.
73. Downy Woodpecker\* 42/10.
74. Hairy Woodpecker\* 13/3.
75. Northern Flicker\* 11/11.

76. Pileated Woodpecker\* 50/8.
77. Eastern Wood Pewee\* 81/49.
78. Acadian Flycatcher\* 66/31.
79. Willow Flycatcher\* 1/4; the status of this species in Tennessee has been recently reviewed (Pitts 1982c); while numerous breeding season records exist, no nests have been found at Reelfoot Lake or elsewhere in west Tennessee.
80. Least Flycatcher 3/0; migrant.
81. Eastern Phoebe\* 7/4; records were scattered from north half of lake; apparently no records were near buildings.
82. Great Crested Flycatcher\* 131/30.
83. Eastern Kingbird\* 195/2; of the large wave of migrants seen on the first foray date, few remained to nest; Whittemore (1937) likewise rarely found it on the lake.
84. Horned Lark\* 15/76; although the foray area was primarily restricted to Reelfoot Lake and the surrounding wooded areas, some cultivated fields were included, thus explaining the numbers of this species.
85. Purple Martin\* 37/19; all apparently nest in artificial cavities on the periphery of the lake.
86. Tree Swallow\* 44/7; the breeding population at Reelfoot is apparently continuing to increase; its breeding status in Tennessee has been recently reviewed (Nicholson and Pitts 1982); a nest with eggs was found by Don Manning on 12 May.
87. Northern Rough-winged Swallow\* 13/16; while assumed to be nesting, I am not aware of nest records from the foray area.
88. Bank Swallow 0/0; although not seen on the lake during the foray, the species frequently nests in the sandy banks of the nearby Mississippi River.
89. Barn Swallow\* 54/31.
90. Blue Jay\* 40/3; probably present in larger numbers than the June count indicates.
91. American Crow\* 96/47.
92. Fish Crow\* 2/2; while occurring regularly, but in small numbers, in the Reelfoot area, I am not aware of positive nest records.
93. Carolina Chickadee\* 134/35.
94. Tufted Titmouse\* 20/11.
95. White-breasted Nuthatch\* 20/11; the nesting population is apparently restricted to areas with mature timber stands.
96. Brown Creeper 0/0; foray participants were asked to search for this species; I am not aware of any nest records from Reelfoot Lake. It has nested in adjacent Dyer County (Criswell 1979) and in southern Illinois (George 1972).
97. Carolina Wren\* 115/50.
98. House Wren 1/0; the nearby towns of Union City and Martin have

small, but regular, nesting populations; I am not aware of northwest Tennessee nest records outside of towns.

99. Sedge Wren 1/0;
100. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher\* 191/55; abundant over the lake and in adjacent woodland.
101. Eastern Bluebird\* 7/49; not found out in lake; records from farmland at periphery of lake.
102. Veery 2/0; migrant.
103. Gray-cheeked Thrush 40/0; migrant.
104. Swainson's Thrush 78/0; migrant.
105. Wood Thrush\* 36/10.
106. American Robin\* 12/11; records from lawns and urban areas.
107. Gray Catbird\* 24/1.
108. Northern Mockingbird\* 5/3; the foray results reflect the small number of human dwellings visited in the foray area.
109. Brown Thrasher\* 4/0.
110. Cedar Waxwing 109/0; no evidence of nesting; Pindar (1925) recorded it throughout the summer but found no nests.
111. Loggerhead Shrike\* 2/0; still commonly found in the lake watershed.
112. European Starling\* 500+/11; generally restricted to the periphery of the lake.
113. White-eyed Vireo\* 92/42.
114. Yellow-throated Vireo\* 9/0; nests in the watershed and probably also in the foray area.
115. Warbling Vireo\* 7/11.
116. Philadelphia Vireo 2/0.
117. Red-eyed Vireo\* 58/20; Whittemore (1937) found this to be the most abundant of the vireos at Reelfoot; as elsewhere, its numbers have declined at Reelfoot; loss of habitat may be partially, but apparently not entirely, responsible for the decline.
118. Golden-winged Warbler 1/0; migrant.
119. Tennessee Warbler 83/0; migrant.
120. Nashville Warbler 4/0; migrant.
121. Northern Parula\* 47/35; unlike many of the warblers, the population remains high as in 1936 (Whittemore 1937).
122. Yellow Warbler\* 11/8; territorial activity was observed, as in recent years, but no nests have been found at Reelfoot Lake; Pindar (1925) described it as a common nesting species in the 1880's. Nicholson (1982) reviewed west Tennessee records; it has recently nested near Memphis.
123. Chestnut-sided Warbler 9/0; migrant.
124. Magnolia Warbler 20/0; migrant.
125. Cape May Warbler 1/0; migrant.

126. Yellow-rumped Warbler 92/0; winter resident and abundant migrant.
127. Black-throated Green Warbler 1/0; migrant.
128. Blackburnian Warbler 2/0; migrant.
129. Yellow-throated Warbler\* 18/18; although known to forage and nest in sycamore trees in the Mississippi Valley, at Reelfoot, where there are few sycamores, it is found in cypress trees even out over the lake as also noted by Whittemore (1937).
130. Palm Warbler 12/0; migrant.
131. Bay-breasted Warbler 20/0; migrant.
132. Blackpoll Warbler 232/0; the number for 12 May is conservative.
133. Cerulean Warbler\* 13/5; Whittemore (1937) found it to be fairly common in some areas and equal in abundance to the Northern Parula; like many of the nesting warblers its numbers have declined in recent decades. Unoccupied, but seemingly suitable, habitat at Reelfoot supports the idea of problems during migration or on the wintering grounds.
134. Black-and-white Warbler 2/0; no evidence of nesting either recently or in the past (Whittemore 1937) although both Pindar and Whittemore (1937) considered it a rare summer resident.
135. American Redstart\* 40/2; this species was considered by Whittemore (1937) to be a very common summer resident; the beginning of the population decline at Reelfoot is not well documented.
136. Prothonotary Warbler\* 190/112; as in the past, this is an abundant nesting warbler at Reelfoot.
137. Worm-eating Warbler 1/0; migrant.
138. Swainson's Warbler\* 8/2; while more numerous than the June count indicates, it is restricted to a few localities.
139. Ovenbird 3/0; Whittemore (1937) did not list it as a summer resident, but Pindar (1925) recorded it as a common summer resident.
140. Northern Waterthrush 4/0; migrant.
141. Louisiana Waterthrush\* 4/0; uncommon, but regular, nesting species in the watershed; possibly present in larger numbers than indicated by the foray results.
142. Kentucky Warbler\* 27/12.
143. Mourning Warbler 1/0; migrant.
144. Common Yellowthroat\* 195/87.
145. Hooded Warbler\* 6/0; Whittemore (1937) found it to be a common summer resident, a situation not now true.
146. Wilson's Warbler 4/0; migrant.
147. Canada Warbler 10/0; migrant.
148. Yellow-breasted Chat\* 11/12; Whittemore (1937) found it to be much more common and widely distributed than foray results indicate.
149. Summer Tanager\* 41/12.

150. Scarlet Tanager 2/0; not recorded by Whittemore (1937) as a nesting species.

151. Northern Cardinal\* 201/88.

152. Rose-breasted Grosbeak 34/0; migrant.

153. Blue Grosbeak\* 1/1; not recorded by Whittemore (1937).

154. Indigo Bunting\* 508/162.

155. Dickcissel\* 82/25; Whittemore (1937) had only 2 summer records about the lake.

156. Rufous-sided Towhee\* 5/1; although commonly found in the watershed, it is rarely found during the nesting season in the vicinity of the lake; Whittemore (1937) did not record it.

157. Chipping Sparrow\* 0/3; restricted to lawns on the periphery of the lake.

158. Field Sparrow\* 2/7.

159. Song Sparrow 0/0; has apparently nested recently in the Lake County (Waldron 1976), but the small and irregular number of nesting season records indicates it is not yet established as a nesting species.

160. Lincoln's Sparrow 2/0; migrant.

161. White-throated Sparrow 4/0; migrant.

162. Bobolink 32/0; migrant.

163. Red-winged Blackbird\* 956+/322; the most abundant nesting species on Reelfoot Lake.

164. Eastern Meadowlark\* 11/8.

165. Common Grackle\* 217+/51; Whittemore (1937) noted that this species was outnumbered only by Red-winged Blackbirds.

166. Brown-headed Cowbird\* 124/48; Pindar (1925) considered it to be rare until 1893.

167. Orchard Oriole\* 11/8; Whittemore (1937) had only 9 summer records and considered it to be rare; Pindar (1925) described it as a rare summer resident.

168. Northern Oriole\* 18/10; mostly associated with elms (many of which have now died) and cottonwoods, especially along the Mississippi River. Pindar (1925) recorded it as a common summer resident; Whittemore (1937) had no records of it.

169. House Finch 0/0; to my knowledge there are no records of this species, at any season, for the Reelfoot Lake area; this situation will likely change if the westward range expansion continues.

170. American Goldfinch\* 13/9; also an uncommon nesting species in the watershed.

171. House Sparrow\* 28+/85; limited to periphery of the lake where it occasionally uses natural cavities over water; not recorded by Pindar (1925) or Whittemore (1937).

## DESIDERATA

The status of several nesting, or potentially nesting, species remains unclear. Information is especially needed on the following species: Pied-billed Grebe, Green-backed Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Least Bittern, Red-shouldered Hawk, King Rail, Common Moorhen, Purple Gallinule, American Coot, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Kingbird, Willow Flycatcher, Fish Crow, and Yellow Warbler.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Wendell Crews and his staff from the Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge provided boats and guide service on 12 May; this assistance was a key factor in coverage of some relatively inaccessible areas and is gratefully acknowledged.

In addition to the staff from Reelfoot NWR, the following participated in the foray: Diane Bean, Ivon Beaver, Carolyn Bullock, Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Lula C. Coffey, Helen Dinkelspiel, Harold Elphinstone, Jim Ferguson, Paul Hamel, Susan Keeton, Don Manning, Mark Mayfield, Charles P. Nicholson, George Payne, David Pitts, Damien Simbeck, Arlo Smith, Noreen Smith, Mike Todd, Wallace Todd, Martha Waldron, and Jeff Wilson.

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## MINUTES OF THE 1985 ANNUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BUSINESS MEETING

The 70th Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Ornithological Society convened on 4 May 1985 at the Student Center of Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee. The meeting was called to order by President Tony Koella. Following the determination of a quorum, the minutes of the 1984 fall meeting were read and approved.

### REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Lil Dubke, VICE PRESIDENT for East Tennessee, outlined the conservation projects of the various East Tennessee chapters. She then yielded the floor to Marcia Davis of Knoxville, who reported on her chapter's projects. Dubke then reported on projects of the Chattanooga chapter.

CURATOR James Tanner reported that \$504 had been raised from the sale of the William Walker books, which were formerly at the Children's Museum in Nashville. The sale had been conducted as outlined at a previous board meeting, and proceeds would be turned over to the treasurer. Sales of back issues of *The Migrant* had been slow.

TREASURER George Payne reported income of \$5,840.37 and expenses of \$7,426.93 since the November, 1984 meeting. Current paid memberships were 640, with two chapters not yet having submitted rosters.

The EDITOR of *The Migrant*, Charles Nicholson, reported that three issues had been mailed so far this year, and that he hoped to have the June 1984 issue mailed by June 1985. He had a good supply of manuscripts on hand. There was no activity by the certification committee.

The EDITOR of *The Tennessee Warbler*, Sharon Bostick, submitted a report that was read in her absence. There were no other officers' of directors' reports.

### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

FINANCE - President Koella reported that an informal audit of the treasurer's books had been completed and no problems were found.

CONSERVATION - In the absence of Chairperson Angela Davis, Ken Dubke reported that \$1900 was presented to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to aid in Peregrine Falcon restoration. Dubke then outlined some projects of various chapters.

NOMINATING - Martha Waldron, Chairperson, offered the following slate of officers to be voted on at the annual meeting: President - James Ferguson; Vice-President, East Tennessee, Lillian Dubke; Middle Tennessee, Tom Guschke; West Tennessee, Dollyann Daily; Directors-at-Large, East Tennessee, Dee Eiklor; Middle Tennessee, Ruth McMillan; West Tennessee, Don Manning; Secretary, Carolyn Bullock; *Migrant* Editor, Charles Nicholson; Curator, James Tanner; Treasurer, George Payne.



## OLD BUSINESS

Charles Nicholson reported that the 1985 Foray would be held in Cumberland County on 24-27 May and would serve as a pilot for the Breeding Bird Atlas project. Ken Dubke moved that the TOS wholeheartedly initiate and support the bird atlas project. Robbie Hassler seconded the motion, which passed.

James Tanner moved that the money from the sale of the Walker books be put in the endowment fund. Ken Dubke seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Lil Dubke offered the old decals to chapters to use as a promotion for new members.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 1985 Fall Meeting and Symposium will be hosted by the Chattanooga Chapter at Fall Creek Falls State Park on 1-3 November. Fred Alsop requested papers for presentation at the meeting.

The 1986 Annual Meeting will be a joint meeting with the Wilson Ornithological Society on 17-20 April, at the Holiday Inn in Gatlinburg.

The President expressed appreciation to Kenneth Anderson and members of the Columbia Chapter for putting together an excellent annual meeting. The meeting was then adjourned.

## BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting was called to order by Kenneth Anderson, President of the Columbia Chapter, following a dinner in the Student Center of Columbia State Community College. The invocation was given by Ed Byassee. A drawing for door prizes was conducted by Ann Lochridge.

TOS President Tony Koella thanked the Columbia Chapter for hosting the meeting. The secretary then summarized the afternoon board meeting.

Nominating Committee Chairperson Martha Waldron recognized her committee for their efforts and offered the slate of officers proposed during the board meeting. John Ellis moved that nominations cease and that the slate be elected by acclamation. George Mayfield seconded the motion which carried. The retiring president turned the gavel over to James Ferguson, incoming president. A roll call was held to recognize those attending from the various chapters and the members-at-large.

Dan Gray introduced Charles Nicholson, who presented a talk on "Birds of Forested Habitats of the Central Basin of Tennessee." His talk included plans for the Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

The meeting was adjourned with the announcement that the Foray would be in Cumberland County on 24-27 May.

BARBARA W. FINNEY, Secretary.

## IN MEMORIAM: HENRY ELMER PARMER

Katherine A. Goodpasture

Henry Elmer Parmer, a devoted member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, died at his home in Nashville, Tennessee on 11 May 1985. Two daughters, three granddaughters, and a stepson survive.

Henry Parmer was a member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society for 30 of his 71 years of life. Mr. B. H. Abernathy introduced Henry to the Bird Club about 1955. Decades earlier "Mr. Ab" and Henry had been teacher and student at Duncan School. Henry was enrolled in the School of Engineering at Vanderbilt University in the mid-1930's; later he became an active partner with his father and brothers in the H. E. Parmer Roofing Company. As manager of the furnace division of the Parmer Company, H.E., as his family called him, learned what he could do with metals and machines. He used this experience when he voluntarily designed and made net-poles and gadgets useful to bird-banders. He told me once that he could make a pole stand securely on a flat rock given 3 guy lines and though probably apocryphal, I can well believe he could throw a pontoon bridge for military crossing faster than any other man in the United States Army. He was on active duty in the Army during World War II.

It appears Henry became a member of TOS in 1955—full fledged and ready to go. He was soon elected president of the Nashville Chapter and was twice reelected. Henry was treasurer of the state society during the early 1960's. He was a prodigious field worker but was not a trampler. Most often he had with him one or two young boys who needed transportation for a day of roadside fieldwork. He was devoted to Two Jays Sanctuary and spent many hours there studying wild plants and birds. Color photography was one of his special interests, and he took great pleasure in sharing his slides of natural things.

From the Nashville Records Committee Henry learned what "earliest", "latest" and "peak" meant. Through active participation with that group, Henry amassed an astonishing volume of records of the movements of birds of the Nashville area. That thick volume of notes was left to the State Archives of the TOS. His special interest in the birds of the Bush Lake area, which he could visit daily, resulted in publication of several papers in *The Migrant*. These papers were based upon more than 1400 trips to Bush Lake to record water and shore birds, river bank and a few bottomland species.

Henry saw the timeliness and importance of the collecting into one place records of the birds of the Nashville area that were "resting", so to speak, in private notebooks. Without much help at first he plunged ahead becoming the moving force in accumulating dates and information. These data came from personal files, from *The Migrant* as well as other published sources and the Records Committee file. Henry became compiler for a booklet titled "Birds of the Nashville Area", presently in its third edition. Students of the birds of the Nashville area refer constantly to "Henry's Book" which will stand as a fitting memorial to him. A Memorial Fund to honor the memory of Henry Parmer has also been established by the Nashville Chapter of the TOS.

We all miss Henry very much.

## ROUND TABLE NOTES

SNOW BUNTING IN DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE—In the early afternoon of 14 November 1984, Linda Bowman, Marty Rush, and I were birding the undeveloped Bakers Grove section of Long Hunter State Park along the rocky shore of Percy Priest Lake, Davidson County, Tennessee, when Bowman pointed out a small bird about 2.5 m in front of her. I identified it as a Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*), in winter plumage, similar to the one that my husband and I had found almost 4 years ago in Rutherford County at Fate Sanders Boat Dock on Percy Priest Lake (*Migrant* 52:47, 1981), except that it appeared to be more reddish brown than the Fate Sanders bird. We watched the bunting pecking around the rocks and among the tall lespedeza plants for about 15 minutes.

I notified Park Superintendent Reggie Reeves, Anne Hettish of Murfreesboro, and the rare bird alert in Nashville of our find. On the next morning, 15 November, Hettish and I watched the bunting at the same location for about 10 minutes in the rain. Reeves and others saw the bird later that morning. It was apparently last seen by Jim Snapper of Nashville between 1500 and 1600 on 15 November.

During its brief presence, the Snow Bunting was always found in about the same location. The only time I know of that it was seen to fly was when Hettish and I observed it fly up just above the lespedeza for about 1 m before it dropped down to the ground again. The Snow Bunting was usually seen eating weed seeds and allowed viewers to get within 2 m of it. The bunting was not found on 16 November or on later dates. By 24 November, heavy rains had raised the lake level, and the rocky beach was submerged.

Previous records of Snow Buntings in the area are the Fate Sanders bird, mentioned above, present from 6 December 1980 through 19 February 1981, 1 bird at Bush Lake, 19-20 November 1954, and 2 birds at Old Hickory Lake, 29 November 1969 through 18 February 1970 (*Birds of the Nashville Area*, 3rd Ed.).

RUTH V. MCMILLAN, Rt. 2, Box 141, Lascassas, TN 37805. Accepted 5 March 1985.

SANDHILL CRANES IN LAUDERDALE AND LAKE COUNTIES, TENNESSEE—Around 0730 on 18 April 1985, I was traveling east on Hwy. 87 from Fort Pillow State Historic Area in Lauderdale County, Tennessee, when 2 large birds in a field south of the highway caught my attention. I immediately pulled over and identified them as 2 adult Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*). They were 7.5 km E of the park entrance on state farm property. With good lighting, my 20x scope, and the birds at a distance on 60-70 m from me, the red crowns were easily seen. They were apparently quite contented or very tired, and fed, rested, and casually preened. The birds were still in the field when I left the area at approximately 0815.

On either 9 or 13 April, Bettie Sumara (pers. comm.) observed a single Sandhill Crane in Lake County, Tennessee. The bird was briefly observed as it flew towards the Lower Blue Basin area of Reelfoot Lake from the west. Although Sumara was uncertain of the date, she was positive of the identity of the crane.

Sightings of the Sandhill Crane in West Tennessee are irregular. Devore (*Migrant* 51:43-53, 1980) lists 2 sightings: a historic record of "large flocks" on the Shelby-Tipton County line in November of 1820 reported by Audubon, and a more recent record by Barbig of 2 birds in Shelby County during February, 1953 (*Migrant* 24:11, 1953). Waldron (*Migrant* 52:72, 1981) lists a sighting of one individual in Obion County during January and February of 1981. This bird was in eastern Obion County, and the Lake County observation reported above represents the first Reelfoot Lake area report (D. Pitts, pers. comm.). The Lauderdale County report is the latest seasonal occurrence in West Tennessee and the first report from Lauderdale County.

ROBERT P. FORD, 3931 Graceland, Memphis, TN 38116. Accepted 28 October 1985.

**ANHINGA ON NEST AT REELFOOT LAKE, TENNESSEE**—On 20 May 1985, I accompanied Jimmy Cox of Reelfoot State Park into the heron colony at Little Ronaldson Slough, Reelfoot Lake, Lake County, Tennessee. Although the vast majority of birds were Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), we spotted three Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*) soon after entering the colony. We were following the birds, searching for a nest, when the trio split up. Cox followed one bird while I watched the other two. During this time I observed the pair attempt to copulate. After approximately 45 seconds the female flew off with the male close behind. While waiting for a possible return to this perch, I heard Cox whistle softly for me. As I edged closer to him, he pointed out an Anhinga sitting on a nest with another individual (probably the mate) close by. Cox had taken several photographs before I arrived. The third individual was not seen again.

The nest itself was in the upper canopy of a Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) approximately 28-35 m tall. It was one of the highest nests of 14 in the tree. Eight were occupied by Great Blue Herons, 1 was occupied by a Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) and 5 were apparently inactive. Due to the inaccessibility of the Anhinga nest, no eggs or young were observed.

Reports of the Anhinga in Tennessee have been scarce for the past 20 years. Cox and Steve Pardue (also of Reelfoot State Park) photographed 1 on the nest in the Little Ronaldson Slough colony in 1977, although it was not reported until 1982 by David Pitts (*Migrant* 53:63-64, 1982). Since 1977, Anhingas have been seen around the colony but no nests found. Waldron (*Migrant* 51:86, 1980) describes a nesting at Big Hill Pond in McNairy County, Tennessee in 1980.

ROBERT P. FORD, 3931 Graceland, Memphis, TN 38116. Accepted 28 October 1985.

## THE SEASON



## WINTER: 1 NOVEMBER 1984 - 28 FEBRUARY 1985

This winter began with one of the mildest Decembers on record, and many species stayed well beyond their normal departure dates. These lingerers included Green-backed Herons, Ospreys, shorebirds, terns, House Wrens, and a few warblers. The balmy conditions ended abruptly with the arrival in mid-January of heavy snowfall and all-time record cold temperatures, including a low of  $-24^{\circ}\text{F}$  at Knoxville. Colder than average temperatures persisted through most of the rest of the winter. The cold froze many bodies of water, concentrating waterbirds, and also pushing large numbers of waterfowl into parts of the state. The second state record of one species of waterfowl, the Harlequin Duck, was recorded when a male was shot by a hunter in early January, prior to the record cold, on Cheatham Lake.

Several northern species invaded the state following the record cold. These included good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks and American Tree Sparrows in middle Tennessee. Curiously, there were few reports of these species from the rest of the state. Other invaders included a Common Redpoll near Dover and 2 White-winged Crossbills at Chattanooga. Some landbirds were present in reduced numbers following the record cold. These included Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Winter Wrens. Determining whether populations of Carolina Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds, and other cold-sensitive breeding species were affected can best be done after censuses are conducted this summer.

Despite the presence of the redpoll and crossbills, this was not a good winter for northern finches. Purple Finches were present in very low numbers throughout the state, there were only a handful of reports of Pine Siskins, and only one report of Evening Grosbeaks from early in the period. As a result of the poor mast crop, Blue Jays were present in the lowest numbers in recent memory in west Tennessee and parts of east Tennessee.

Table 1 gives the results of the 1985 mid-winter eagle survey, held 4-12 January, before the severe cold. The Bald Eagle total of 265 birds is over 50% higher than last year's count, which was conducted when many water bodies were frozen. It is, however, lower than the 1981 and 1983 counts of 301 and 304 Bald Eagles, respectively.—CHARLES P. NICHOLSON.

**WESTERN COASTAL PLAIN REGION**—The winter season was marked with several days of intense cold and 2 to 14 inches of snow cover,

while other days were seasonably normal. Despite some of the bad weather, the number of field observations was consistent with previous years. The number of winter visitors was lower than expected for this season. Feeding stations did not record the large number of finches as in previous years, and Pine Siskins were only seen in groups of 2 to 10. The Vermilion Flycatcher was a first for Shelby County, but the sixth for West Tennessee.

**Grebe—Falcon:** Horned Grebe: 7 Jan (23), 6 Feb (2), 17 Feb (11) PLS (DWB). **TUNDRA SWAN:** 26 Jan - 19 Feb (1) Shelby Forest State Park (CHN, JRW, MGW); Pickwick Landing State Park, Hardin Co. (1) approximately the same dates as SFP sighting (CHN). Common Goldeneye: 7 Jan (13) PLS (DWB); 13 Jan (16) Ensley Bottoms, Shelby Co. (JRW); 6 Feb (70), 17 Feb (60) PLS (DWB). Common Merganser: 14 Feb (2), 6 Feb (70) PLS (DWB). Bald Eagle: 24 Nov (1 imm), 13 Jan (1 imm) Lakeview Levee, MS/TN line (BBC, LCC); 25 Jan (2 imm) PLS (DWB). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 20 Feb (1) HWR (CHB, SCF, NMS). Harlan's Hawk: 11 Feb (1) MEM (John L. Stokes). Rough-legged Hawk: 9 Dec (1) PEF (MGW); 2-10 Feb (1) REL (Paul D. Kittle, Shoals Audubon Society). American Kestrel: more common than usual (*vide* MGW). Merlin: 9 Dec (1) PEF (CHB, JRW).

**Yellowlegs—Flycatcher:** Greater Yellowlegs: 15-16 Dec (4) ESL (RLM, LCC, JRW). Lesser Yellowlegs: 9 Dec (1) ESL (BBC). Sanderling: 2 Dec (1) (JRW, BBC, LCC), 8 Dec (1) (JRW), 9 Dec (2) ESL (BBC, LCC). Ring-billed Gull: 1 Jan (350), 14 Jan (500+), 25 Jan (3000+) PLS (DWB). Forster's Tern: 2 Dec (9) ESL (BBC, LCC); 9 Dec (2) MS River at MEM (JRW); 16 Dec (3) ESL, MEM CBC (RLM, LCC). Short-eared Owl: 17 Feb (2) BRF (DWB). **VERMILLION FLYCATCHER:** 1 Dec (1) ESL (Chris Creech).

**Jay—Siskin:** Blue Jay: Dec-Jan numbers very low in Tri-state area (BBC); MEM CBC numbers lowest in 40 years. House Wren: 16 Dec (7 total by 3 parties) MEM CBC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Dec-Jan numbers low in Tri-state area (BBC). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 16 Dec (1) ESL, (1) President's Island, both MEM CBC (Bobby Whittlemore, LCC, W. Robert Peoples). Gray Catbird: 16 Dec (1) ESL, MEM CBC (Tina Carpenter). Dickcissel: 6-8 Feb (1) MEM (JRW). Amer. Tree Sparrow: 10 Feb (1) REL (DJS, Shoals Audubon Society); 17 Feb (4) BRF (DWB). Dark-eyed Junco: Dec-Jan numbers low in Tri-state area (BBC). Lapland Longspur: 17 Feb (40+) BRF (DWB). Rusty Blackbird: 29 Dec (300) PEF (Dollyann Daily, MGW); 17 Feb (260) PEF (JRW); 20 Feb (5) HWR (CHB, SCF, NMS). Purple

Table 1. 1985 Mid-winter eagle survey.

	Bald Eagle			Golden Eagle
	Adult	Imm.	Total	Adult
<u>West Tennessee</u>				
Reelfoot Lake	83	55	138	-
Lake Isom NWR	2	1	3	-
Mississippi River	4	-	4	-
Open Lake & Cold Creek	3	-	3	-
Tennessee NWR	8	14	22	2
Totals	100	70	170	2
<u>Middle Tennessee</u>				
Land-Between-the-Lakes	12	10	22	-
Cross Creeks NWR	4	-	4	-
Cheatham Reservoir	1	-	1	-
Center Hill Resv.	4	-	4	-
DeKalb County	1	-	1	-
Cannon County	1	-	1	1
Dale Hollow Resv.	33	3	36	-
Tims Ford Resv.	1	-	1	-
Totals	57	13	70	1
<u>East Tennessee</u>				
Norris Reservoir	5	-	5	-
Douglas Reservoir	2	-	2	-
Cherokee Resv.	2	1	3	-
Watts Bar Resv.	4	2	6	-
Chickamauga Resv.	4	1	5	-
Nickajack Resv.	1	-	1	-
Raccoon Mtn. Resv.	1	2	3	1
Totals	19	6	25	1
GRAND TOTALS	176	89	265	4

Finch: numbers through period low both at feeders and in the field. House Finch: 21 Feb (1) MEM (Joe L. Levy). Pine Siskin: sporadic in low numbers during period at MEM (BBC).

*Locations:* BRF - Britton Ford, Henry Co.; ESL - Ensley Sewage Lagoons, Shelby Co.; HWR - Hatchie Nat. Wildl. Refuge, Haywood Co.; MEM - Memphis, Shelby Co.; PEF - Shelby Co. Penal Farm; PLS - Paris Landing State Park, Henry Co.; REL - Reelfoot Lake.

MARTHA G. WALDRON, 1626 Yorkshire Drive, Memphis, TN 38119.

CENTRAL PLATEAU AND BASIN REGION—It was a winter of extremes, as the fourth-warmest December on record in Nashville was followed by a January in which the coldest temperatures ever experienced in the region were recorded. Although December began with a brief cold period during which a record-tying low temperature of 10°F occurred on December 7 in Nashville, it turned warmer quickly, as the occurrence of three record-setting high temperatures in mid-month indicates. Overall, December averaged almost 50°F in Nashville, nearly nine degrees above the 30-year average. January, of course, brought extreme low temperatures, including Nashville's alltime record low: -17°F on January 21. Precipitation in January was also below normal, but much of it fell as snow, with several accumulations of an inch or more blanketing the region for periods of a few days to more than a week. For the second consecutive winter most small and medium-sized bodies of water froze over in late January and early February.

Meteorological conditions in the region to a large extent dictated avian conditions. December's balmy temperatures incited many summer species to linger, while the cold weather of January and early February triggered an invasion of varying numbers of northern species, as well as changes in the concentrations and abundance of water-related species. Although many laggard summer and migrant species were recorded in the region, perhaps the chief beneficiaries of the warm December were the regional Christmas Bird Counts, which reported many lingering species, including Ospreys at Ashland City, Green-backed Herons on the Clarksville, Highland Rim, and Hickory-Priest CBCs, House Wrens in Columbia and on the Hickory-Priest CBC, and the Nashville Area's first-ever winter Broad-winged Hawk. Generally, however, the counts resulted in about average numbers of both individuals and species, probably because the unusual number of lingerers was offset by reduced numbers of species associated with cold weather, which set in after the CBC season. The arrival of severe cold affected semi-hardy species inconsistently. Some appear to have been relatively little reduced by the cold weather (e.g., bluebirds and thrashers), while others suffered noticeably from reduced temperatures (e.g., wrens, kinglets, and orioles).

Equally inconsistent were the numbers of boreal invaders. American Tree Sparrows staged a remarkable region-wide invasion, certainly one of the finest on record. Beginning in early January and peaking in early to mid-February, the incursion of this species was one of the most memorable of the season. Rough-legged Hawks were nearly as conspicuous and as widely distributed, especially in February. Also indicative of a northern invasion were two other species: the region's first Harlequin Duck occurred in early January on Cheatham Lake, when a brilliant male was taken by a hunter, and a Common Redpoll appeared later in January, adding to the

handful of regional records of this species. Winter finches on the whole, however, did not invade in numbers. Purple Finches and Pine Siskins arrived late and remained in low numbers at most locations; Evening Grosbeaks were almost nonexistent; only American Goldfinches were reported in above average numbers.

The frozen conditions prevalent in January and February changed waterfowl numbers and locales. Some species which remain in the region in limited numbers (e.g., Ruddy Duck) simply moved south with the arrival of the cold. Nearly all the others were forced to concentrate in limited areas, as in late January at the Duck River Unit of the Tennessee NWR where thousands of ducks and geese crowded into the only open water available—the confluence of the Duck and Tennessee Rivers.

A few other comments are in order. Another Mute Swan occurred this winter, adding further to the discussion about whether or not to include this species on the official state bird list. This bird, seen 7-28 December near Gallatin by the Crawfords, appeared wild and stayed a relatively short time before moving on, no doubt to cause similar perplexing problems in other climes. Another perplexing issue involves the records submitted this season without sufficient details to justify inclusion in the following account. Although these are very few in number, even those few could have been avoided had the observers involved added a few details of their identification to their report. Of those records submitted with details only one does not appear below for reasons other than lack of significance or space. This report, of a Western Meadowlark at Cross Creeks NWR, was tantalizingly close to acceptance. Had the description of the song of this bird been a bit less anomalous, the record would have been accepted. Even so, the observer is urged to submit this sighting as a Round Table Note.

*Loon—Night-Heron:* Common Loon: 29 Dec (27) Hickory-Priest CBC (*vide* MPS); 29 Dec (13) Highland Rim CBC (*vide* Philip Medley); only reports, as most birds departed with the advent of cold weather in early January. Pied-billed Grebe: 22 Dec (43) Columbia CBC (*vide* ARL), highest total of season; this species also decreased dramatically with the arrival of cold weather. Horned Grebe: 27 Jan (20) OHL (CGD), only report after December. Double-crested Cormorant: 22 Jan (1) Jefferson Springs Boat Ramp, PPL (RVM, Mac R. McMillan), only report after December. AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: 16 & 29 Dec (1 ad.) WDR and Highland Rim CBC (RL, MH, CB), continues a record from fall. Great Blue Heron: 29 Dec (34) Clarksville CBC (*vide* EJW), all-time high for this CBC. Green-backed Heron: 29 Dec (1/1/1) Clarksville CBC/Highland Rim CBC/Hickory-Priest CBC (*vide* Joe D. Allen/CB, RL, MH/SJS, DFV); notable coincidence of CBC sightings with the last of the warm December weather. Black-crowned Night-Heron: 27 Jan (28) OHL dam (CGD), usual wintering numbers present despite record cold and frozen conditions.

*Swan—Duck:* Tundra Swan: 1 Dec-19 Jan (1 im.) Monsanto Ponds, MUC (ARL, m. ob.), continues a fall record; 20 Dec-16 Jan (1 im.) Foster-ville, RUC (*vide* ALH); 24 Dec-3 Jan (1 ad.) MUR (ALH, m. ob.); 14 Feb (1) DRU (Carl Dowdy). GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 5 Jan (3) WDR (Harry C. Yeatman, Jean A. Yeatman); 9 Jan (1 shot) PPL (DWN); 20 Feb (3) CCNWR (TJW, PCH), see fall 1984 report for related CCNWR records antedating this one. Snow Goose: small numbers reported from CHC (up to 7), LWC (1), and WLC (4), and larger concentrations noted at



the NWRs with up to 170 at DRU and up to 30 at CCNWR. Canada Goose: peak numbers of 50,000+ and 30,000 at DRU and CCNWR, respectively. American Black Duck: peak numbers of 19,000 and 11,000 at DRU and CCNWR, respectively. Mallard: peak numbers of 65,000 and 50,000 at DRU and CCNWR, respectively. Blue-winged Teal: 22 Dec (2) Columbia CBC (*vide* ARL); 28 Dec (2) DRU (SJS, PBH); 18 Jan (3) CCNWR (*vide* FFR); late lingerers in December probably a result of warm weather; January birds possibly wintering. EURASIAN WIGEON: 23 Dec (1 male) DRU (BHS), about 7th state record; follows fall sightings at CCNWR. Canvasback: 1 Dec-EOP (up to 41, except when Res. froze) FRR (SJS); 28 Dec (180, of which only 35 were females) DRU (SJS, PBH); 14 Jan (19) RDL (SJS), considered high for that locale. Redhead: 11 Jan (1), 16 Feb (20), 20 Feb (30), and 24 Feb (80+) CCNWR (DWB, AH, TJW, PCH); 16 Feb (49) PPL (CGD); 24 (4) and 26 Feb (1) FRR (SJS); February records probably indicate beginnings of spring migration, as few wintering birds were reported. Ring-necked Duck: 14 Jan (280) RDL (SJS); 22 Jan (14) LHL (GNP); 24 Feb (500) CCNWR (DWB). Lesser Scaup: by EOP (up to 300) RDL (ATT, m. ob.). **HARLEQUIN DUCK:** 5 Jan (1 shot) Cheatham L. (DWN, *vide* DFV, CGD), first NA record and 2nd state record. Oldsquaw: 25 Dec (1 male) RDL (ATT, C. Rowan Debold, m. ob.). Surf Scoter: 22 Dec (1 im.) Arrow L., MUC (ARL, O. Bedford Lochridge). Common Goldeneye: 8 Dec (13) BAL (DWB), highest total of season. Bufflehead: 16 Jan (34) RDL (ATT), a low total for this locale, but highest report of season. Hooded Merganser: 11 Dec (128) CCNWR (DWB), highest total of season. Common Merganser: 10-14 Dec (4) FFR (SJS); 22 Dec (4) Wilson County CBC (RVM, Donald C. Jenkins, Marty Rush, Linda Bowman); 29 Dec (2) Hickory-Priest CBC (*vide* MPS); 15 Jan (4) Long Hunter State Park, DVC (MLM); 22 Jan (1) LHL (GNP); 27 Jan (4) OHL (CGD); 9 Feb (3) PAP (SJS, ATT, LDR, Pamilla Hopkins); 19 Feb (1) Quarry Pond, RUC (TJW); a respectable number of sightings for one season in the region. Ruddy Duck: 1 Dec (1) CCNWR (CGD, m. ob.); 1 Dec-18 Jan (up to 20) FRR (SJS), freeze caused departure.

*Osprey—Falcon:* Osprey: 14 Dec (2) Ashland City CBC (Rocky J. Milburn, Jr.); 22 Dec (1) Nashville CBC (Miriam K. Weinstein); 16 Jan (1) MUR (Wilma J. Hunter, *vide* ALH). Bald Eagle: besides the regular wintering birds at DRU, CCNWR, WDR, and Center Hill Dam (see Table 1), reports also came from PAP, COL, DOV, and RUC. Northern Harrier: only 7 reports (4 at the NWRs and 3 away from them). Sharp-shinned Hawk: reported on 8 regional CBCs and in encouraging numbers at many widely separated locales, usually with a feeder nearby. Cooper's Hawk: reported on 6 CBCs and in good numbers elsewhere. Northern Goshawk: 27 Dec (1 im.) CCNWR (DWB), probably same bird as reported at this site during fall. **BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** 22 Dec (1 ad.) Nashville CBC (DFV, John Price), first NA winter record, again probably due to the warm December weather. Red-tailed Hawk: 1 Dec (1 dark phase) CCNWR (Mary Anne Guschke, m. ob.). Rough-legged Hawk: 11 reports 8 Dec-EOP from DVC, HPC, RUC, MUC, SWC, and WLC. Golden Eagle: 9 reports 27 Dec-27 Feb from HPC, SUC, SWC, WMC, and Cannon Co. Peregrine Falcon: 29 Dec (1 im.) Crossroads, LWC (GNP, DJS), only report with adequate details included.

*Pheasant—Gull:* Ring-necked Pheasant: 2 Dec (1 female) near LOR (DJS); 29 Dec (1 female) Bennet L., LWC (Dawn G. Simbeck). Ruffed Grouse: 8 & 12 Dec (3) BAH (RWS), area within a few miles of western edge

of Cumberland Plateau. Sandhill Crane: 3 Dec (81), 6 Dec (60), and 7 Dec (30) Byrdstown, Pickett Co. (Robbie C. Hassler, J. David Hassler); 22 Dec (2) Nashville CBC (William Cowart); 4, 9, & 16 Jan (4) WDR (CWC, *vide* KHD), probably wintering birds; 21 Feb (27) and 28 Feb (24) BAH (RWS); 26 Feb (60) and 28 Feb (40) Dry Valley, Overton Co. (Francis C. Baker). American Coot: has all but deserted many former regional wintering areas, such as RDL, WDR, and DRU; maximum number reported was 30 on 7 Jan at CCNWR (DWB). Least Sandpiper: 28 Dec (13) DRU (SJS, PBH), departed with early January cold; 21 Feb (1) Edwin Warner Park, DVC (DFV), early returnee. Dunlin: 28 Dec (6) DRU (SJS, PBH), also departed with the January cold. Bonaparte's Gull: 4 Jan (10) RDL (ATT); 12 Feb (25) WDR (CGD); only reports. GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: 27 Jan (1 im.) Anchor Dr., OHL (CGD), 3rd NA record.

*Barn-Owl—Pipit*: Common Barn-Owl: 22 Dec (2) Lebanon, WLC (V. Ray Pope, Fred O. Detlefsen); 25 Jan (1) White House, SUC (Carl T. Hargis, *vide* Robert English). Common Nighthawk: 11 Dec (1) LEF (BHS); 12 Dec (1) Donelson, DVC (MLM); more warm-December lingerers. Red-headed Woodpecker: few reports, unlike the high number of reports from the preceding winter. Horned Lark: widely reported in moderate numbers; highest report was of 75 on 11 Jan at FRR (SJS). Red-breasted Nuthatch: only 7 reports for season (5 on CBCs during early warm weather); for third consecutive winter, this species was noticeably low in numbers. Carolina Wren: may have been negatively affected by the severe cold of January and February; Breeding Bird Surveys should clarify their status. Bewick's Wren: reports came in from DVC, MUC, RUC, and WLC, with all involving 1 or 2 birds except MUC where 8 were involved. House Wren: 22 Dec (1) Columbia CBC (Allen Pressnell); 29 Dec (4) Hickory-Priest CBC (SJS, DFV, m. ob.), high number, probably lingerers in warm December. Winter Wren: numbers decreased with the cold temperatures of late winter. Marsh Wren: 1 Dec (1) CCNWR (SJS, BHS, *et al.*); none on the CBCs. Golden-crowned Kinglet: generally much reduced in numbers after the arrival of cold weather in January; last report 14 Jan (1) MUR (ALH). Ruby-crowned Kinglet: also much reduced by cold; last report 9 Jan (2) BAL (DWB). Eastern Bluebird: no perceptible effect due to cold on this species. Gray Catbird: 29 Dec (1) Hickory-Priest CBC (*vide* MPS). Brown Thrasher: normal number of reports. Water Pipit: 8 Dec (75+) Bear Creek Waterfowl Management Unit, SWC (DWB), largest number reported; thereafter only a few reports of a few birds each.

*Warbler—Longspur*: Orange-crowned Warbler: 23 Dec (1) DRU (BHS), rarely reported in winter, this one due to warm December no doubt. Yellow-rumped Warbler: commonest in the bottomlands, but not easy to find in areas where normally present in past. Palm Warbler: 29 Dec (1) Hickory-Priest CBC (SJS, DFV); 30 Dec (2) Duck River Reservoir CBC (*vide* ARL); only reports. Common Yellowthroat: 30 Dec (1) Duck River Reservoir CBC (DRG, III); only report. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 12-13 Jan (1 male) MUC (Joe W. High, Jr., *vide* ARL). Indigo Bunting: 5 Jan (1 banded and photographed) west Nashville (John N. Riggins, Heather Riggins). Dickcissel: 1 Dec-19 Jan (1 male) CLA (AHH). American Tree Sparrow: region-wide invasion beginning 9 Jan (1) BAL (DWB); then none till 1-18 Feb (2) DOV (DWB); 1, 6, & 7 Feb (1) South Tunnel, SUC (Bessie Hagan); 1-12 Feb (1) LOR (Don K. Simbeck, *et al.*); 2-19 Feb (up to 6) CLA (AHH, *et al.*); 3-7 Feb (2) CLA (EJW); 8 & 18 Feb (1) Pennington Bend, DVC (MLM); 9-17 Feb (up

to 125) PAP (SJS, ATT, LDR, CGD); 12 Feb (1) MUR (Lou A. Erwin); 12-13 Feb (up to 20) GAL (DTC, JPC); 12 Feb (2) BAH (RWS); 13 Feb (1) Nashville (Marge and Oscar Patrick); 16 Feb (2) Metro Center, DVC (CGD); and 20 Feb (15) CCNWR (TJW, PCH). Chipping Sparrow: 4 Jan to EOP (1) CLA (AHH, m. ob.), rare winterer. Vesper Sparrow: 30 Dec (1) Duck River Reservoir CBC (DRG, III), probably a late-lingerer; 12-13 Feb (1) DOV (DWB), probably an early arrival; either record might be of a wintering bird, however. LE CONTE'S SPARROW: 16 Feb (1) CCNWR (DWB), only report. Lincoln's Sparrow: 9 Jan (1) BAL (DWB), only report. Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco: although reported nearly annually, this subspecies generally cannot be distinguished from some Slate-colored individuals, which merge clinally in features with Oregon individuals in the northwest, thus prompting the lumping of the two into one species. Lapland Longspur: 1 Dec (1) CCNWR (*fide* SJS); 28 Dec (1) DRU (SJS, PBH).

*Blackbird—Grosbeak*: Yellow-headed Blackbird: 27 Jan-( Feb (1 male) Donelson, DVC (Richard Craig, Richard Newton, m. ob.), possibly present since late August, 1984, this bird appeared injured, but recovering; 21 Jan (1) Bellevue, DVC (Camille Crenshaw); 27 Jan (1) GAL (DTC, JPC); about 7th, 8th, and 9th NA records. Rusty Blackbird: widespread with large numbers present; largest 9 Feb (500+) PAP (SJS, ATT, LDR). BREWER'S BLACKBIRD: 29 Dec (4) Murfreesboro CBC (TJW *et al.*), first NA record in 10 years; 29 Dec (1 female) northeast of Deerfield, LWC (GNP, DJS). Common Grackle: 29-30 Jan (300,000+) north-central WMC (BHS), largest number reported. Northern Oriole: 14 Dec (1 female) Love Circle, DVC (Jan C. Alexander); 3-21 Jan (1 male) LOR (DJS *et al.*), found frozen on last date; specimen to Univ. of N. Alabama. Purple Finch: late arriving and lower in numbers than in a "normal" year (ATT, DTC, JPC, RWS, ALH, EJW, AHH, DJS, DWB); about normal numbers only at two sites—LEF (SJS) and south of COL (*fide* ARL). House Finch: fewer than in previous winter, but in good numbers and widespread. COMMON REDPOLL: 21 Jan (1 male) 3.5 mi SW of DOV (DWB), very rare winter visitor; details will be published. Pine Siskin: late arriving with most sightings occurring in February; few concentrations of more than 10 birds. American Goldfinch: very high numbers present in Montgomery Co. (AHH), Putnam Co. (RWS), and WMC (SJS, BHS); usual numbers almost everywhere else. Evening Grosbeak: 6 Dec (2) south DVC along Hillsboro Pike (BHS); a pitiful echo from the preceding winter.

*Corrigenda*: *Migrant* 54: 44, 1983—amend the entry for Dark-eyed Junco as follows: change "(1 'Oregon')" to "(1 possible 'Oregon')." *Migrant* 54: 43, 1983—at the end of the entry for Western Grebe add the following: "first Nashville Area record." *Migrant* 55: 47, 1984—change the entry for Palm Warbler: 16 Dec (1) Hillsboro, CFC (ELR). Black-and-white Warbler: 8 Dec (1) Edgar Evins State Park, Dekalb Co. (MLM), Late. *Migrant* 55: 47, 1984—at the beginning of the locations list add: "BAL—Bard's Lake, Stewart Co." *Migrant* 55: 52, 1984—change "DRH—David R. Hassler" to "JDH—J. David Hassler."

*Key to Location Codes (and other Abbreviations)*: ad.—adult; BAH—Barnes Hollow, Putnam Co.; BAL—Bard's Lake, Stewart Co.; CBC—Christmas Bird Count; CCNWR—Cross Creeks Nat. Wildl. Refuge, Stewart Co.; CHC—Cheatham Co.; CLA—Clarksville, Montgomery Co.; COL—Columbia, Maury Co.; DOV—Dover, Stewart Co.; DRU—Duck River Unit, Tenn. Nat. Wildl. Refuge, Humphreys Co.; DVC—Davidson

Co.; EOP—End of Period; FRR—Franklin Reservoir, Williamson Co.; GAL—Gallatin, Sumner Co.; HPC—Humphreys Co.; im.—immature; LEF—Leiper's Fork, Williamson Co.; LHL—Laurel Hill Lake, Lawrence Co.; LOR—Loretto, Larence Co.; LWC—Lawrence Co.; MUC—Maury Co.; MUR—Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co.; NA—Nashville Area (includes all of Davidson Co. and parts of seven surrounding counties); NWR—Nat. Wildl. Refuge; OHL—Old Hickory Lake (in several counties); PAP—Pardue's Pond, Dickson Co.; PPL—Percy Priest Lake (in several counties); RDL—Radnor Lake State Natural Area, Davidson Co.; RUC—Rutherford Co.; SUC—Sumner Co.; SWC—Stewart Co.; WDR—Woods Reservoir, Franklin, Co.; WLC—Wilson Co.; WMC—Williamson Co.

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**EASTERN RIDGE AND VALLEY REGION**—According to Glen Eller December was warm at Johnson City with low 70 degree temperatures being recorded at the end of the month. Then, January turned very cold and snowy with a total of 17½ inches of snow being recorded. On 21 January they registered a -21°F, the lowest ever recorded for the area. February remained cold and snowy thru the 20th with their biggest snowfall of the winter coming on the 12th when they had a total of 8 inches.

At Knoxville Chuck Nicholson commented December was very warm and high temperature records were set on several days at the end of the month. Early January was warmer than average, but the rest of the period was colder than average. Snowfall at Knoxville was heavier than in recent years and stayed on the ground a bit longer than normal. The massive cold front on 20 January brought heavy snow and record low temperatures. The low at Knoxville on 21 January was -24°F, an all time record low for their area.

The weather is always less harsh at Chattanooga since it is farther south than the other reporting areas. December was the ninth warmest on record with a high of 73°F being set on the 31st. The record cold day was 21 January at a -10°F and the greatest amount of snow was 2.1 inches on the 28th.

All of the above weather had a profound effect on the region's avifauna. Some of the effects were observed and reported while most of the results were apparently unnoticed or worse, observed and not reported to the compilers!

Eller stressed the warm weather in December had a definite effect on their Christmas Bird Counts as they recorded about the same overall species total, but the total number of individuals was about half of what would be expected. They had a few late dates, but, in summary, thought they had a rather dull period.

For the Knoxville area Nicholson commented they had a few reports of lingering species in December and early January while the Christmas Bird Counts were low mostly because of the absence of northern finches.

Nicholson did stress that late frosts the past two springs killed almost all the oak flowers and there was essentially no red or white oak mast available. The number of Blue Jays in the Knoxville area was very low with their numbers on CBCs the lowest in many years. Eller made a similar observation from his area while no comment was received on the subject from anyone in the Chattanooga area.

One subject that did receive universal comment from everyone this season was the lack of northern finches. They were practically nonexistent. There was only one report for the whole region of a Red-breasted Nuthatch, the lowest number of Purple Finches in memory and, apparently, even reduced numbers of House Finches. Then, what happened in an off year like this, two White-winged Crossbills showed up at feeders in Chattanooga! A few Pine Siskins showed up in January and there were no reports of the conspicuous Evening Grosbeak.

As usual there is a great deal of information to be gleaned by a close reading of the report.

*Loon—Night-Heron:* Red-throated Loon: 15 Dec (1) CHL (Brainerd Cooper, Jr.) - CBC. Common Loon: 2-4 regular BOL (RLK *et al.*); regular CHL, max 13 (KHD, LHD, RAR). Pied-billed Grebe: at KNX about normal numbers early in the winter, but greatly increased numbers present after the freeze - a count of 55 on 5 Feb in Concord area of FLL was very high for their region (MLD, JAK, CPN); regular CHL, max 181 on CHA CBC. Horned Grebe: 10 Feb (1) (RLK); 6 Jan & 16 Feb (2) BLC (JAK); regular CHL, max 62 on CHA CBC. Double-crested Cormorant: 1-10 Jan (1-2) BOL (RLK); 9 Dec (3) FLL (JAK); 18 Jan (3) WBL (Wesley K. James); 23 Feb (1) FLL (BRC, JMC); regular CHL, max 7 (KHD, LHD). American Bittern: 16 Feb (1) SAB (J. Thomas Patton, David C. Patton). Great Blue Heron: regular DOL, max 92 (JAK); higher than normal numbers present in KNX area after the freeze - 45 in Concord area of FLL on 5 Feb (MLD, CPN); regular HRA with a max of 497 on the CBC - this is a remarkable count for the area with the warm weather and the flourishing nesting colonies nearby probably combining to produce these numbers; of course, individuals from the other areas could certainly be mixed in. Black-crowned Night-Heron: present through winter on FLL (JAK).

*Waterfowl:* Tundra Swan: 6 Jan (1) CVL (BRC, JMC); 1 through period on CHL at Cottonport, Rhea Co. (T. Edward Beddow); 1 Dec - 16 Feb (1 regular) Soddy, CHL (James C. Brown, *et al.*). Snow Goose: 8 Dec (4) HRA (KHD, LHD); 8 Feb (1) Clinton (CPN); 18 Feb (7) HRA (KHD, LHD). Snow Goose (blue phase): 8 Dec (10) HRA (KHD, LHD); 17 Feb (1) Tellico L., Monroe Co. (ABS, Barbara Finney); 18 Feb (7) HRA (KHD, LHD). Canada Goose: regular, max 24 Jan (1035) HRA (TWRA). Wood Duck: 2-4 all period JNC (LHTOS) - they seldom winter in this area. Green-winged Teal: 7 Dec (5) BOL (RLK, EHS) - only sighting there; only noted sporadically HRA this winter, max of 225 on 8 Dec (KHD, LHD). American Black Duck: regular, max 7 Jan (2788) CHL (TWRA). Mallard: regular, max 7 Jan (8312) CHL (TWRA). Northern Pintail: 1 Feb (2) BOL (RLK) - only report there; 1-85 occasional HRA (KHD, LHD); 8 Feb (21) SAB (RAR). Blue-winged Teal: 6 Jan (5) CVL (BRC, JMC). Northern Shoveler: 22 Feb (2) BOL (Sally Goodin, Glenn Swofford) - only record there; 7 records CHL, SAB, HRA of 2-12 individuals (KHD, LHD, TWRA). Gadwall: regular, max 7 Jan (3017) CHL (TWRA). American Wigeon: regular, max 7 Jan (1889) CHL (TWRA). Canvasback: 25 Feb (1) BOL (RLK) - their only sighting; 15 Dec - 18 Feb (1-7) CHL (KHD, LHD, RAR). Redhead: 17 Feb (6) CHL (KHD, LHD); 24 Feb (70) CHL (KHD, LHD). Ring-necked Duck: regular, max 7 Jan (890) CHL (TWRA). Greater Scaup: regular, max 17 Feb (250) CHL (KHD, LHD). Lesser Scaup: they were more regular on CHL this year than in the past, max 22 Dec (170) CHL (KHD). Oldsquaw: 5-28 Feb (1-3) FLL (MLD, CPN *et al.*). Surf Scoter: 22 Dec (1) CHL (KHD). White-winged Sco-

ter: 6 Jan (2) CHL (KHD, LHD); 23 Feb (1) FLL (BRC, JMC). Common Goldeneye: increase in numbers FLL after the freeze - 60 at Concord, FLL, on 5 Feb (MLD, CPN); 50 there on 26 Jan (BRC, JMC); only 8 there on 26 Feb (BRC, JMC); regular, max 15 Dec (84) CHL (KHD, LHD) - CBC. Bufflehead: regular CHL, but noted only sporadically with max of 45 on 7 Jan (TWRA). Hooded Merganser: 6 Jan (62) BLC (JAK); observations limited this season from the lower section of the region, only recorded 10 times, max 8 Dec (60) HRA (RAR, KHD, LHD). Common Merganser: 25 Jan (2) BOL (RLK, Richard Clark) - only report for the region. Red-breasted Merganser: 7 Dec, 10 Feb (1) BOL (RLK); 7 reports CHL with max of 12 (KHD, LHD, RAR). Ruddy Duck: regular CHL with max of 62 (KHD, LHD, RAR).

*Vulture—Tern*: Black Vulture: 16 Feb (150) Nickajack Dam roost (DRJ *et al.*). Turkey Vulture: 16 Feb (50) Nickajack Dam roost (DRJ *et al.*). Osprey: 1 Jan (1) HRA (Mark E. Reeves) on CBC. Red-shouldered Hawk: 4-28 Feb (1-2) along the Nolichucky R., lower WGC (LHTOS) - reports from this section are limited. Rough-legged Hawk: 18 Feb (1 light phase) HRA (RAR). American Coot: appeared to be in reduced numbers in lower section of the region, max 1 Jan (1654) HRA on CBC. Sandhill Crane: 4-6 Dec (5 flocks of 117 individuals) Old Washington, HRA (CWC, Clarence D. Coffey); 9 Jan (4) HRA (CWC) - at the time of observation these birds were flying north, were they migrating or wintering?; then, a total of 1165 cranes were counted between 21 Feb and 23 Mar in Hamilton, Marion and Meigs Counties. Least Sandpiper: 3 records of 3-8 birds SAB (KHD, LHD). Dunlin: 19 Jan (14) DOL (JAK); only 4 records of 30-47 individuals SAB (KHD, LHD). Common Snipe: 16 Feb (4) BLC (JAK); regular, max 18 Feb (127) SAB (KHD, LHD). Bonaparte's Gull: at a roost site, max 19 Jan (100) CHL (DRJ *et al.*); 7 Dec (7) BOL (EHS, MD). Ring-billed Gull: after the hard freeze, up to 750 FLL (MLD, CPN); 100+ DOL all season (JAK); max 19 Jan (1500) CHL roost site (DRJ *et al.*). Herring Gull: max 19 Jan (50) CHL roost site (DRJ *et al.*). Forster's Tern: 1 Jan (1) HRA (Randy C. Stringer, RLK) on CBC.

*Owls—Warblers*: Common Barn-Owl: 19 Feb (2) CHA (RAR, JTP). Red-headed Woodpecker: 1-2 apparently wintered JNB (RLK *et al.*); max 4 birds wintered CHA (RAR). Eastern Phoebe: 1-3 irregular JNC (RLK *et al.*). Horned Lark: 17 Dec - 5 Jan (2-3 flocks of 25-40 birds) lower WGC (RLK *et al.*); 10-20 WHP all period (JAK). Tree Swallow: 17 Jan (1) Chickamauga Dam (Albert M. Jenkins). Blue Jay: very low numbers in both the KNX and JNC areas (LHTOS, CPN *et al.*). Red-breasted Nuthatch: 15 Dec (1) CHA CBC (LHD). House Wren: 10, 15 Dec (1) CHA (RAR); 16 Feb (1) CHA (R. John Henderson). Golden-crowned Kinglet: numbers in NOR, KNX areas higher than normal in early winter with a marked decrease in numbers following the mid-January freeze (KTOS). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 10 Jan (1) KNX (BMM). American Robin: present KNX in much higher than normal numbers (KTOS). Gray Catbird: 10 Dec (1) CHA (RAR). Brown Thrasher: none reported from JNC where they usually have 2-3 present (LHTOS); several present at KNX and NOR with singing noted there at the end of the period (KTOS); one regular BLC after 24 Jan (JAK). Orange-crowned Warbler: 26 Dec (1) LaF (GWM). Yellow-rumped Warbler: at KNX higher than normal numbers present early in the winter with some decrease in numbers after the freeze (KTOS). Yellow-throated Warbler: 8 Dec (1) KNX (BMM). Pine Warbler: no reports KNX during the middle of the winter, but several singing birds present in late February

(JMC, CPN *et al.*). Palm Warbler: 27-28 Dec (1) JNB (RLK); 15 Dec (5) CHA CBC (Peter P. Robinson); 16 Dec (2) KNX CBC (*vide* JBO); 1 Jan (1) HRA (CPN, ABS) on CBC; 18 Feb (1) LaF (GWM).

*Sparrows—Siskin:* American Tree Sparrow: in the mid-section of the region several reports of single birds or small flocks at feeders in mid-February, at LaF (up to 3, first 13 Feb) (GWM), KNX (first 12 Feb, singles in at least 2 locations) (*vide* JBO), and Maryville (first 13 Feb, 1 bird) (*vide* JBO). These were their first local reports of Tree Sparrows since the heavy snow winters there in the late 1970's and this was a heavy snow winter. Chipping Sparrow: 13 Jan (1) CVL (CPN); 28 Jan (12) Collegedale (GLF); 20-30 regular at feeder, Ocoee, Polk Co. (J. Craig & Susan Watson); 2 Feb (4) LaF (GWM); first spring report JNC 12 Feb (MD). Vesper Sparrow: 30 Dec (1) CHA (RAR). Savannah Sparrow: lower numbers WHP this season; in past could usually flush 10-20, this year only 2-3 (JAK). Grasshopper Sparrow: 1 Jan (1) HRA (CPN, ABS) on CBC. White-crowned Sparrow: regular one location WHP and two sites Greene Co. (JAK). Lapland Longspur: 3 present through period at Doak's Pond, Campbell Co. (GWM). Purple Finch: probably the lowest number reported in many years with only 1-2 individuals at 2-3 feeders in the JNC area; in the KNX area only 20-40 on their CBCs with a modest increase in numbers after the freeze; at CHA the story was similar with the largest number being 30 at one feeder (JAP). House Finch: this species has seemingly replaced the Purple Finch as the dominate winter finch at the feeders in the JNC area with numerous flocks of 8-18 birds being reported (LHTOS); scattered numbers were reported at feeders in CHA, but apparently not as common as last year (Chattanooga Chapter, TOS. **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:** 3-6 Feb (1 male) Hixson area, CHA (DRJ, Kathy Davidson *et al.*); 3-28 Feb (1 female) East Brainerd, CHA (Michael A. & Barbara McMahan *et al.*); details to be published. Pine Siskin: no reports at all from JNC (LHTOS); no reports from KNX until mid-January, when at least 3 flocks of 3-8 appeared at feeders in the area (BRC, JMC, *vide* JBO); in the lower part of the region very few reports were received with only 5 records of 1-2 individuals noted after 6 Jan at Soddy, CHA, Cleveland, Hixson and Collegedale (DRJ, GLF, JAP, Paul H. Dietrich).

*Locations:* BLC - Blount County; BOL - Boone Lake; CHA - Chattanooga; CHL - Chickamauga Lake; CVL - Cove Lake; DOL - Douglas Lake; FLL - Fort Loudoun Lake; HRA - Hiwassee River Area; JNC - Johnson City; JNB - Jonesborough; KNX - Knoxville; LaF - LaFollege; NOR - Norris; SAB - Savannah Bay; WGC - Washington County; WBL - Watts Bar Lake; WHP - White Pine.

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**EASTERN MOUNTAIN REGION** - Despite this being a winter of extreme weather, there were few notable bird observations. December was much warmer than normal, with highs in the lower 70s°F as late as 1 January. This warm weather had a definite effect on Christmas Bird Count numbers and on overall population levels. While species numbers on the 3 counts in the region were near average, the total number of birds seen was reduced almost one half. This trend was noticed throughout the early part of the winter.

January turned very cold and snowy with a total of 17.5 inches of snow at Elizabethton. On 21 January, an all-time record low was set at Elizabethton at  $-21^{\circ}\text{F}$ . February remained cold and snowy with the biggest snowfall of the year, 8 inches, falling on 12 February. The cold, snowy weather did not noticeably change bird activity. There were practically no northern finches. Purple Finches were in very low numbers, only a couple of reports of Pine Siskins were received, and no Evening Grosbeaks were reported. Red Crossbills were present in the Smokies, but no crossbills were observed in the northern area of the region.

In spite of the bitter cold weather, Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren and Eastern Bluebird numbers did not noticeably decline. Sharp-shinned Hawks, several species of woodpeckers, and American Robins were more numerous than in past winters. Cooper's Hawks and Blue Jays were present in about half their usual numbers.

Once again, I would like to appeal to birders within this region to send in their observations so we can have a more complete picture of birdlife within the entire region, rather than just the northeastern corner.

*Loon - Hawk*: Common Loon: 1-3 regular thru period at WTL, SHL (*vide* GDE). RED-THROATED LOON: 29-30 Dec (1) SHL (REL, JWC). Horned Grebe: 11 Jan (1) WIL (MD, HHD); 3 Feb (1) WTR (GDE). Double-crested Cormorant: 13 Dec (1) WTL (RLK); 29 Dec (1) SHL (JWC). Mute Swan: 3 Feb (6) SHL (JWC). Canada Goose: 25-28 Feb (3-7) WTR (GDE). Wood Duck: 2-5 spent winter in ELI area (*vide* GDE). Oldsquaw: 15 Dec (1) WTL (RLK, EHS). Hooded Merganser: 4 Dec (5) Ripshin Lake (Frank Ward); 15 Dec (1) Walnut Mtn. Pond (RLK, EHS). Northern Harrier: 31 Jan (1) ELI (GDE). Sharp-shinned Hawk: more numerous than normal, 14 sightings in ELI area (*vide* GDE). Cooper's Hawk: low, only 4 sightings in ELI area (GDE). Red-shouldered Hawk: 22 Dec, 25 Feb (1) SHL (REL); 10 Feb (1) ERW (GWS).

*Killdeer - Pipit*: Killdeer: 1 flock of 120-150 birds in Siam Valley near ELI, thru EOP (GDE). Common Barn-Owl: 20 Jan (1) SHL (REL). Great Horned Owl: 20 Jan - EOP (3) SHL (REL); 22 Dec (1) PWB (RC); 21 Feb (1 on nest) WIL (RLK). Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 spent winter near ELI (GDE); 10 Jan (2) ERW (GWS). Blue Jay: very low numbers throughout period. Hermit Thrush: present but very localized in ELI area (*vide* GDE). American Robin: 3 Feb (flock of 750+) ELI (GDE); higher than usual numbers thru winter. Brown Thrasher: 1 Dec (1) Unicoi (REL), only report. Water Pipit: 7 Dec - 26 Feb (5-25) PWB (RC).

*Shrike - Grosbeak*: Loggerhead Shrike: 11 Dec (1) PWB (RC); 8 Jan (1) WTR (RLK). Chipping Sparrow: 15 Feb (1) ERW, (GWS), first spring sighting. Fox Sparrow: almost non-existent, then very numerous after 21 January (*vide* GDE). SNOW BUNTING: 27 Jan (1) North Carolina side of state line, 3.5 mi SW of Newfound Gap, Great Smoky Mtns. Nat. Park (CPN). Purple Finch: no large flocks reported, present in very low numbers. House Finch: numerous at feeders in ELI area (*vide* GDE). Red Crossbill: 30 Dec (64) Great Smoky Mtns. CBC (KTOS *et al.*), present at high elevations there thru EOP (CPN). Pine Siskin: 13 Feb (25) ERW (GWS); 17, 19 Feb (1) ELI (Harry Farthing), only reports. Evening Grosbeak: NO REPORTS.

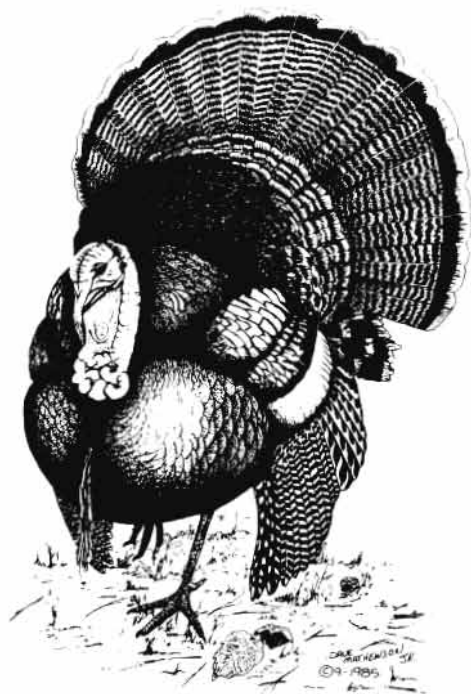
*Locations*: ELI - Elizabethton; ERW - Erwin; PWB - Powder Branch, near Elizabethton; SHL - South Holston Lake; WTL - Watauga Lake; WTR - Watauga River; WIL - Wilbur Lake.

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 TWRA—Tennessee Wildl. Res. Agency



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