



The Raven

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR
LEXINGTON, VA.

VOL. XXX

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1959

NOS. 1 & 2

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IN MEMORIAM - RALPH M. BROWN

By J.J. Murray

Another old-timer in the VSO has gone to his reward. Those who were early members of this fellowship will always remember Ralph Brown with respect and affection. We remember the quizzical look on his face; we remember the almost undecipherable character of his handwriting which made us open one of his frequent letters with hesitancy, but also the pleasant nature of that voluminous correspondence; we remember the enthusiasm with which he collected his ornithological data around Blacksburg and the eagerness with which he followed the meetings of the Society; and, most of all, we remember the simple, genuine quality of his friendship.

Ralph Brown died on November 30, 1958, at the age of 80, in a hospital at Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he had been living since his retirement from his work as Librarian at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. He had suffered a heart attack two days before. His only close survivor is a daughter, Mrs. Anna Maria Cariglia, of Crawfordsville, Indiana.

The following facts are quoted from The Techgram, Blacksburg, Virginia, Vol.XXXVI, No.7, January 1, 1959:

"Ralph Brown was born at Fort Shaw, Montana, in August, 1878, a son of an Army surgeon. He obtained the A.B. degree at Cornell University in 1901. After serving as assistant librarian at Buffalo, New York, he became chief of the library and archives division of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey from 1906 to 1917. He was an ambulance driver in World War I. From 1920 to 1922 he was geographical editor of Rand McNall, book publishers, and then was book editor for Popular Mechanics.

After serving for two years as librarian at North Dakota State College, he came to Virginia Tech as librarian in 1925. He retired in 1947. He went to live with his brother in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"He was a bird and fern expert and a collector of rare books. Shortly before his death, he had given 113 volumes of rare books to the library of the University of Tulsa in memory of his late brother, Dr. Paul R. Brown, Tulsa physician.

"While librarian at V.P.I., he had done considerable research in the history of the college. He was the author of several Bulletins of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Among them were a 'Bibliography of Matthew Fontaine Maury'; 'VPI Historical Index'; and 'Blacksburg Weather.'" He also published a few notes in early volumes of The Raven."

Ralph Brown was in the VSO from the beginning. He served as Treasurer in 1931, the second year of the Society's existence, and kept up his membership and his interest during the long years of his retirement. He was active in field work in Tulsa after his retirement, and also took time for some extended field trips. The last letter received from him by the writer was a long and enthusiastic account of a trip that he had made to distant Churchill in the far north.

VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

1958-1959

The editors appreciate the trouble that some of the Christmas count compilers went to in following the directions given in the VSO Newsletter of November 5, 1958. Unfortunately, some compilers did not make this effort and not only caused the editors more trouble but also diminished the usefulness of their counts. Two counts as submitted were in such poor condition that they had to be retyped before being sent to the publisher. A number of compilers left out information that is usually easy to obtain, such as percentages of habitats covered, weather, and number of party-hours. This last is particularly important since it is directly related to the number of birds seen, much more so than party-miles. Accuracy in supplying this information is also important. One compiler submitted figures that indicated the observers drove well over 20 hours at an average speed of 7 m.p.h.!

While checking the following counts, the reader should bear in mind the extreme cold spell and snow which preceded the counts. This apparently resulted in reduced numbers of herons and egrets, Eastern Phoebe, and other species. On the other hand some birds were more common than usual. Special note should be made of the many Red-headed Woodpeckers reported.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Va. (same area as past 4 years; open farmland 5%, pine and mixed woodlands 28%, low pine and myrtle 16%, fresh-water marshes and impoundments 15%, salt marshes 18%, sheltered bays 7%, dunes 3%, mud and sand flats 4%, ocean beach 4%). -- Dec. 30; 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 42° to 52°; wind NNW veering to WSW, 3-20 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Thirteen observers in 5-7 parties. Total party-hours, 57 (50 on foot, 4 by car, 3 by motorboat); total party-miles, 135 (39 on foot, 85 by car, 11 by boat). Common Loon, 47; Red-throated Loon, 24; Horned Grebe, 310; Pied-billed Grebe, 13; Gannet, 1; Great Blue Heron, 35; Black-crowned Night Heron, 2; Mute Swan, 2 (B.M.M., J.B.M.); Whistling Swan, 16; Canada Goose, 97; Brant, 7500; Snow Goose, 196; Mallard, 800; Black Duck, 4400; Gadwall, 196; Pintail, 171; Green-winged Teal, 4; Am. Widgeon, 2300; Shoveler, 44; Canvasback, 100; Scaup sp., 5150; Common Goldeneye, 48; Bufflehead, 136; Oldsquaw, 3; White-winged Scoter, 726; Surf Scoter, 18; Common Scoter, 931; scoter sp., 3100; Hooded Merganser, 52; Red-breasted Merganser, 8; Turkey Vulture, 53; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 4; Red-tailed Hawk, 7; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 3 (J.M.A., G.M.M., J.B.M., R.L.P.); Marsh Hawk, 25; Sparrow Hawk, 10; Bobwhite, 4; Clapper Rail, 18; Virginia Rail, 2; Am. Coot, 6; Killdeer, 10; Black-bellied Plover, 207; Ruddy Turnstone, 2 (seen by 3 parties); Am. Woodcock, 2; Greater Yellowlegs, 1; Lesser Yellowlegs, 1; Dunlin, 352; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 28; Sanderling, 780; Great Black-backed Gull, 68; Herring Gull, 1705; Ring-billed Gull, 526; Bonaparte's Gull, 1; Mourning Dove, 85; Belted Kingfisher, 10; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 52; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Horned Lark, 11; Tree Swallow, 32; Blue Jay, 2; Common Crow, 2800; Fish Crow, 1100; Carolina Chickadee, 27; Tufted Titmouse, 4; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 2; House Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 37; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 1; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 4; Mockingbird, 7; Catbird, 8; Brown Thrasher, 4; Robin, 12;

Hermit Thrush, 4; Eastern Bluebird, 4; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 21; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2; Water Pipit, 3; Starling, 906; Myrtle Warbler, 1977; House Sparrow, 123; Eastern Meadowlark, 121; Redwinged Blackbird, 610; Boat-tailed Grackle, 471; Common Grackle, 14; Brown-headed Cowbird, 74; Cardinal, 96; Pine Siskin, 2; Am. Goldfinch, 34; Rufous-sided Towhee, 21; Ipswich Sparrow, 3; Savannah Sparrow, 100; Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 121; Seaside Sparrow, 23; Vesper Sparrow, 4; Slate-colored Junco, 85; Chipping Sparrow, 4; Field Sparrow, 30; White-throated Sparrow, 424; Fox Sparrow, 23; Swamp Sparrow, 57; Song Sparrow, 328; Snow Bunting, 6. Total, 104 species; about 40,148 individuals. High storm tides tended to concentrate marsh birds near the edge of high ground where they were relatively easy to observe. -- J.M. Abbott, L.F. Conklin, P.A. DuMont, C.R. Hough, Sr., C.R. Hough, Jr., T.W. Martin, R.F. McCoy, G.M. Meade, J.B. Meade, M.C. Newlon, R.L. Pyle, F.R. Scott (compiler), J.K. Wright.

Chesapeake Bay, Va. (a strip census 15 miles long, taken from the Little Creek-Kiptopeke Beach Ferry just within the mouth of Chesapeake Bay; no closer than 2 miles to land; open water 100%). -- Dec. 31; 7 to 8:15 a.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 38°; wind W, about 12 m.p.h.; water surface moderate. One observer. Total party-hours, 1.25 (by boat); total party-miles, 15 (by boat). Common Loon, 12; Horned Grebe, 10; White-winged Scoter, 75; Surf Scoter, 210; Great Black-backed Gull, 1; Herring Gull, 128. Total, 6 species; about 436 individuals. -- F.R. Scott.

Little Creek, Va. (all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center 1½ miles NE of Kempsville, including Lynnhaven Inlet, Little Creek, eastern portion of Norfolk City, Stumpy Lake; open farmland 25%, pine woodland 10%, deciduous woodland 50%, salt marsh, sand beach, bay rivers 10%, city suburbs 5%). -- Jan. 1; 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cloudy, with rain showers; temp. 46° to 56°; wind ENE to SE; 8-15 m.p.h.; ground bare and water open. Eighteen observers in 7 parties. Total party-hours, 68 (34 on foot, 34 by car); total party-miles, 383 (21 on foot, 362 by car). Common Loon, 1; Red-throated Loon, 2; Horned Grebe, 129; Pied-billed Grebe, 50; Double-crested Cormorant, 7; Great Blue Heron, 27; Black-crowned Night Heron, 1; Am. Bittern, 2; Whistling Swan, 12; Canada Goose, 39; Mallard, 84; Black Duck, 77; Gadwall, 2; Pintail, 3; Blue-winged Teal, 8; Am. Widgeon, 756; Wood Duck, 8; Redhead, 4; Ring-necked Duck, 117; Canvasback, 65; Greater Scaup, 82; Common Goldeneye, 92; Bufflehead, 68; White-winged Scoter, 3; Surf Scoter, 5; Common Scoter, 8; Ruddy Duck, 123; Hooded Merganser, 71; Common Merganser, 3; Red-breasted Merganser, 21; Turkey Vulture, 13; Black Vulture, 16; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 3; Red-shouldered Hawk, 3; Bald Eagle, 5; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 35; Bobwhite, 120; King Rail, 3; Clapper Rail, 15; Am. Coot, 13; Killdeer, 63; Black-bellied Plover, 1; Common Snipe, 20; Purple Sandpiper, 1; Dunlin, 11; Sanderling, 40; Great Black-backed Gull, 26; Herring Gull, 3691; Ring-billed Gull, 7056; Laughing Gull, 1; Bonaparte's Gull, 19; Mourning Dove, 95; Screech Owl, 4; Barred Owl, 3; Belted Kingfisher, 23; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 78; Pileated Woodpecker 9; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 56; Red-headed Woodpecker, 26; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 8; Hairy Woodpecker, 13; Downy Woodpecker, 32; Blue Jay, 38; Common Crow, 601; Fish Crow, 114; Carolina Chickadee, 218; Tufted Titmouse, 113; White-breasted Nuthatch, 9; Brown-headed Nuthatch, 25; Brown Creeper, 16;

House Wren, 2; Winter Wren, 3; Carolina Wren, 174; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 5; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 3; Mockingbird, 139; Catbird, 9; Brown Thrasher, 37; Robin, 190; Hermit Thrush, 20; Eastern Bluebird, 91; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 20; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8; Water Pipit, 300; Cedar Waxwing, 2; Loggerhead Shrike, 1; Starling, 8828; Myrtle Warbler, 939; Pine Warbler, 5; Yellowthroat, 1; House Sparrow, 777; Eastern Meadowlark, 221; Redwinged Blackbird, 1757; Common Grackle, 8646; Brown-headed Cowbird, 514; Cardinal, 334; Purple Finch, 6; Pine Siskin, 3; Am. Goldfinch, 86; Rufous-sided Towhee, 154; Savannah Sparrow, 44; Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 49; Seaside Sparrow, 9; Vesper Sparrow, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 588; Tree Sparrow, 1; Chipping Sparrow, 117; Field Sparrow, 250; White-throated Sparrow, 1495; Fox Sparrow, 63; Swamp Sparrow, 139; Song Sparrow, 304. Total, 115 species; 40,726 individuals. -- Dr. W.G. Akers, Mrs. L.E. Burford, Miss Elizabeth Dabney, Mrs. D.S. Derby, Mrs. Leamon Forrest, S.D. Fretwell, D.S. Gordon, Miss Gisela Grimm, Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Hailman, H.A. Hespenheide, D.W. Lamm, Mrs. M.F. Morrisette, R.H. Peake, Jr., F.C. Richardson, W.F. Rountrey, P.W. Sykes, Jr. (compiler), E.G. Webster, Jr.

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Va. (same area as in previous years, refuge and much of the mainland of Princess Anne County; open farmland 20%, pine woodland 10%, deciduous woodland 20%, open beach 5%, marshes and bay 45%). -- Dec. 27; 5 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Clear; temp. 21° to 50°; wind W to NE, 3-6 m.p.h.; ground bare and fresh water areas frozen until noon. Seventeen observers in 5 parties. Total party-hours, 51½ (28 on foot, 22¼ by car, 1¼ by plane); total party-miles, 405 (23 on foot, 287 by car, 105 by plane). Common Loon, 2; Red-throated Loon, 5; Horned Grebe, 2000; Gannet, 2; Double-crested Cormorant, 20; Great Blue Heron, 9; Common Egret, 4; Little Blue Heron, 1 (RHP, DSG); Black-crowned Night Heron, 2; Yellow-crowned Night Heron, 1 (WFR, FCR, LF); Am. Bittern, 9; Whistling Swan, 2200; Canada Goose, 20,000; Snow Goose, 12,000; Blue Goose, 2; Mallard, 1118; Black Duck, 2500; Gadwall, 4; Pintail, 792; Green-winged Teal, 42; Am. Widgeon, 4700; Wood Duck, 1; Ring-necked Duck, 20; Canvasback, 5; Greater Scaup, 122; Lesser Scaup, 3; Bufflehead, 3; Oldsquaw, 3; White-winged Scoter, 37; Surf Scoter, 15; Common Scoter, 3; Hooded Merganser, 2; Common Merganser, 3; Red-breasted Merganser, 8; Turkey Vulture, 17; Black Vulture, 7; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Red-shouldered Hawk, 15; Bald Eagle, 6; Marsh Hawk, 21; Pigeon Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 71; Bobwhite, 43; King Rail, 13; Clapper Rail, 3; Virginia Rail, 1; Am. Coot, 553; Killdeer, 17; Common Snipe, 52; Greater Yellowlegs, 2; Sanderling, 32; Great Black-backed Gull, 13; Herring Gull, 517; Ring-billed Gull, 318; Mourning Dove, 146; Screech Owl, 2; Great Horned Owl, 3; Barred Owl, 10; Belted Kingfisher, 11; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 140; Pileated Woodpecker, 7; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 47; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 3; Hairy Woodpecker, 12; Downy Woodpecker, 56; Eastern Kingbird, 1 (LEB, GG); Eastern Phoebe, 5; Horned Lark, 2; Tree Swallow, 11; Blue Jay, 86; Common Crow, 566; Fish Crow, 130; Carolina Chickadee, 120; Tufted Titmouse, 53; White-breasted Nuthatch, 4; Brown-headed Nuthatch, 69; Brown Creeper, 8; House Wren, 1; Winter Wren, 10; Carolina Wren, 95; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 9; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 6; Mockingbird, 95; Catbird, 59; Brown Thrasher, 13; Robin, 306; Hermit Thrush, 30; Eastern Bluebird, 86; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 15; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4; Water Pipit, 90; Loggerhead Shrike, 1; Starling, 3384; Orange-crowned Warbler, 1; Myrtle Warbler, 2941; Pine Warbler, 5; Yellowthroat, 3; House Sparrow, 170; Eastern Meadowlark, 416;

Redwinged Blackbird, 9941; Boat-tailed Grackle, 1; Common Grackle, 3237; Brown-headed Cowbird, 4060; Cardinal, 168; Purple Finch, 27; Pine Siskin, 5; Am. Goldfinch, 87; Rufous-sided Towhee, 106; Savannah Sparrow, 608; Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 4; Slate-colored Junco, 294; Chipping Sparrow, 18; Field Sparrow, 175; White-throated Sparrow, 1049; Fox Sparrow, 65; Lincoln's Sparrow, 2 (RHP, DSG); Swamp Sparrow, 899; Song Sparrow, 765; Snow Bunting, 2 (RHP, DSG). Total, 122 species (1 additional race); 78,094 individuals. -- Mr. and Mrs. S.E. Breneiser, Mrs. L.E. Burford, Mrs. Leamon Forrest, Steve Fretwell, D.S. Gordon, Miss Gisela Grimm, H.A. Hespenheide, D.W. Lamm, Mrs. M.F. Morrisette, R.H. Peake, Jr., F.C. Richardson, E.E. Robb, W.F. Rountrey, P.W. Sykes, Jr. (compiler), E.G. Webster, Jr., C.S. Yelverton.

Norfolk County, Va. (all points within a 15-mile-diameter circle, center about $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles NE of Wallacetown, including the eastern edge of Dismal Swamp, western part of Northwest River, Great Bridge, Butts Station, Fentress, Deep Creek; open farmland 30%, wooded swampland 24%, mixed woodland 30%, deciduous woodland 5%, pine woodland 10%, marsh 1%). -- Dec. 30; 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 40° to 58°; wind N, 5-16 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Ten observers in 4 parties. Total party-hours, 43 (22 on foot, 21 by car); total party-miles, 287 (15 on foot, 272 by car). Pied-billed Grebe, 4; Common Egret, 1; Black Duck, 3; Hooded Merganser, 2; Turkey Vulture, 33; Black Vulture, 42; Cooper's Hawk, 4; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Red-shouldered Hawk, 8; Bald Eagle, 1; Marsh Hawk, 7; Peregrine Falcon, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 32; Bobwhite, 57; King Rail, 3; Clapper Rail, 1; Killdeer, 11; Common Snipe, 1; Herring Gull, 329; Ring-billed Gull, 207; Mourning Dove, 78; Screech Owl, 2; Barred Owl, 4; Belted Kingfisher, 5; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 76; Pileated Woodpecker, 10; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 42; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 4; Hairy Woodpecker, 13; Downy Woodpecker, 42; Eastern Phoebe, 1; Blue Jay, 60; Common Crow, 515; Fish Crow, 91; Carolina Chickadee, 120; Tufted Titmouse, 30; White-breasted Nuthatch, 5; Brown-headed Nuthatch, 12; Brown Creeper, 7; House Wren, 2; Winter Wren, 4; Carolina Wren, 116; Mockingbird, 102; Catbird, 23; Brown Thrasher, 15; Robin, 6750; Hermit Thrush, 4; Eastern Bluebird, 68; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 16; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 7; Water Pipit, 19; Cedar Waxwing, 4; Loggerhead Shrike, 5; Starling, 10,000; Orange-crowned Warbler, 1; Myrtle Warbler, 405; Pine Warbler, 10; Yellowthroat, 3; Yellow-breasted Chat, 1 (RHP, EGW); House Sparrow, 283; Eastern Meadowlark, 179; Redwinged Blackbird, 6,000,000; Rusty Blackbird, 37; Common Grackle, 6,000,000; Brown-headed Cowbird, 100,000; Cardinal, 243; Purple Finch, 88; Pine Siskin, 4; Am. Goldfinch, 156; Rufous-sided Towhee, 176; Savannah Sparrow, 7; Slate-colored Junco, 223; Chipping Sparrow, 7; Field Sparrow, 317; White-throated Sparrow, 1359; Fox Sparrow, 57; Lincoln's Sparrow, 1 (RHP, EGW); Swamp Sparrow, 132; Song Sparrow, 344. Total, 79 species; 12,123,037 individuals. -- Dr. and Mrs. W.G. Akers, S.D. Fretwell, Miss Gisela Grimm, H.A. Hespenheide, R.H. Peake, Jr., F.C. Richardson, W.R. Rountrey, P.W. Sykes, Jr. (compiler), E.G. Webster, Jr.

Nansemond River, Va. (all points within a 15-mile-diameter circle, center $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles NE of Driver, including Craney Island disposal area, Nansemond River, Chuckatuck Creek, Chuckatuck, Driver; open farmland 30%, pine woodland 10%, deciduous woodland 20%, marsh, beach, rivers, bay 40%). -- Dec. 26; 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 25° to 32°; wind N to E, 9-3 m.p.h.; ground bare, small bodies of water frozen. Nine observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 30 (10 on foot, 20 by car); total party-miles, 201 (11 on foot, 190 by car). Red-throated Loon, 1; Horned Grebe, 47; Pied-billed Grebe, 8; Double-crested Cormorant, 3; Great Blue Heron, 35; Little Blue Heron, 1 (MTG, FWS); Canada Goose, 476; Mallard, 69; Black Duck, 183; Gadwall, 45; Pintail, 115; Green-winged Teal, 8; Am. Widgeon, 795; Wood Duck, 5; Redhead, 2; Ring-necked Duck, 535; Canvasback, 1052; Greater Scaup, 7; Common Goldeneye, 352; Bufflehead, 621; Oldsquaw, 41; White-winged Scoter, 1; Ruddy Duck, 1744; Hooded Merganser, 39; Red-breasted Merganser, 115; Turkey Vulture, 25; Black Vulture, 10; Red-tailed Hawk, 3; Red-shouldered Hawk, 10; Bald Eagle, 4; Marsh Hawk, 3; Peregrine Falcon, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 23; Bobwhite, 9; Clapper Rail, 3; Am. Coot, 34; Semipalmated Plover, 3 (WFR, FCR, JEA, CJR); *Killdeer, 33; Black-bellied Plover, 9; Common Snipe, 3; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 9; Sanderling, 132; Great Black-backed Gull, 23; Herring Gull, 12,000; Ring-billed Gull, 3180; Laughing Gull, 3; Bonaparte's Gull, 315; Forster's Tern, 3; Mourning Dove, 324; Belted Kingfisher, 8; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 38; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 26; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 7; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 28; Horned Lark, 22; Blue Jay, 52; Common Crow, 437; Fish Crow, 383; Carolina Chickadee, 81; Tufted Titmouse, 44; Brown Creeper, 6; Carolina Wren, 61; Mockingbird, 63; Catbird, 4; Brown Thrasher, 4; Robin, 244; Eastern Bluebird, 12; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 6; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 3; Water Pipit, 152; Cedar Waxwing, 1; Loggerhead Shrike, 6; Starling, 785; Orange-crowned Warbler, 1; Myrtle Warbler, 242; Pine Warbler, 4; House Sparrow, 157; Eastern Meadowlark, 278; Redwinged Blackbird, 115,000; Rusty Blackbird, 16; Common Grackle, 18,200; Brown-headed Cowbird, 73; Cardinal, 131; Purple Finch, 2; Am. Goldfinch, 39; Rufous-sided Towhee, 44; Savannah Sparrow, 31; Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 140; Field Sparrow, 57; White-throated Sparrow, 371; Fox Sparrow, 13; Swamp Sparrow, 68; Song Sparrow, 159; Snow Bunting, 75 (WFR, FCR, JEA, CJR). Total, 97 species; 160,043 individuals. -- J.E. Ames, S.D. Fretwell, M.T. Griffin, H.A. Hespenheide, F.C. Richardson, C.J. Riddick, W.F. Rountrey, P.W. Sykes, Jr. (compiler), E.G. Webster, Jr. *Piping Plover, 1 (WFR, FCR, JEA, CJR);

Newport News, Va. (all points within a 15-mile-diameter circle, bounded by Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads, James River and Grafton; woodland 30%, open fields 30%, fresh-water ponds 10%, waterfront 30%). -- Dec. 27; 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Clear; temp. 20° to 45°; wind N, 5 m.p.h.; ground bare, ponds and marshes frozen. Fifteen observers in 7 parties. Total party-hours, 54 (27 on foot, 27 by car); total party-miles, 217 (35 on foot, 182 by car). Common Loon, 2; Horned Grebe, 291; Pied-billed Grebe, 29; Double-crested Cormorant, 1; Great Blue Heron, 16; Mallard, 47; Black Duck, 61; Gadwall, 6; Green-winged Teal, 3; Am. Widgeon, 477; Redhead, 1; Ring-necked Duck, 5; Canvasback, 45; Lesser Scaup, 73; Common Goldeneye, 97; Bufflehead, 112; Surf Scoter, 12; Common Scoter, 1; Ruddy Duck, 136; Hooded Merganser, 3; Red-breasted Merganser, 27; Turkey Vulture, 23; Black Vulture, 60; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 3; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 2; Bald Eagle, 1; Marsh Hawk, 1; Pigeon Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 12; Bobwhite, 33; Clapper Rail, 5; Am. Coot, 1; Semipalmated Plover, 3;

Killdeer, 158; Black-bellied Plover, 5; Ruddy Turnstone, 1; Common Snipe, 6; Dunlin, 105; Sanderling, 40; Great Black-backed Gull, 11; Herring Gull, 1625; Ring-billed Gull, 295; Laughing Gull, 12; Bonaparte's Gull, 15; Royal Tern, 1; Mourning Dove, 67; Short-eared Owl, 2; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 47; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 10; Red-headed Woodpecker, 5; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 7; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 15; Eastern Phoebe, 1; Tree Swallow, 10; Blue Jay, 25; Common Crow, 342; Fish Crow, 2; Carolina Chickadee, 27; Tufted Titmouse, 35; White-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Brown Creeper, 2; Carolina Wren, 35; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 2; Mockingbird, 107; Catbird, 1; Brown Thrasher, 13; Robin, 4; Eastern Bluebird, 26; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 3; Cedar Waxwing, 48; Starling, 2164; Myrtle Warbler, 207; Pine Warbler, 2; Yellowthroat, 1; House Sparrow, 376; Eastern Meadowlark, 181; Redwinged Blackbird, 370; Baltimore Oriole, 4; Common Grackle, 3164; Brown-headed Cowbird, 26; Cardinal, 93; Am. Goldfinch, 64; Rufous-sided Towhee, 27; Savannah Sparrow, 9; Slate-colored Junco, 144; Field Sparrow, 43; White-throated Sparrow, 350; Fox Sparrow, 82; Song Sparrow, 136; Snow Bunting, 35. Total, 94 species; about 12, 172 individuals. (Seen in area count period, but not on count day: Am. Woodcock; Dovekie.) -- Martha Armstrong, Georgianna Cumming, John Grey, C.W. Hacker, M. Hathaway, Norma Katz, Roger Miller, Emmy Lou Machen, S. Mitchell, N.D. O'bannon, Mike Serig, Doris Smith, W.P. Smith (compiler), Tim Sniffen, Mary Alice Talbott (Hampton Roads Bird Club).

Jamestown, Va. (Jamestown Island of 1500 acres, plus the causeway to trees on Glass House Point; perhaps 25 acres open grassed land, remainder almost equally divided between marsh and mixed woods). -- Dec. 20; 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Clear; temp. 40° to 37°, no wind till mid morning, light then. Six observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 12 (6 on foot); total party-miles, 16 (10 on foot). Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Great Blue Heron, 3; Mallard, 52; Black Duck, 14; Pintail, 4; Wood Duck, 2; Ring-necked Duck, 18; Ruddy Duck, 8; Hooded Merganser, 2; Turkey Vulture, 4; Red-shouldered Hawk, 2; Bald Eagle, 4; Marsh Hawk, 1; Killdeer, 5; Herring Gull, 2; Ring-billed Gull, 110; Mourning Dove, 4 (note appended); Belted Kingfisher, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 16; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 9; Red-headed Woodpecker, 2; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 6; Downy Woodpecker, 9; Blue Jay, 9; Common Crow, 29; Carolina Chickadee, 13; Tufted Titmouse, 4; Brown-headed Nuthatch, 7; Carolina Wren, 17 (one dead, apparently frozen); Mockingbird, 9; Brown Thrasher, 12; Robin, 55; Eastern Bluebird, 3; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 3; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2; Starling, 25; Myrtle Warbler, 53; House Sparrow, 29; Eastern Meadowlark, 7; Redwinged Blackbird, 1321; Common Grackle, 1; Cardinal, 41; Am. Goldfinch, 38; Rufous-sided Towhee, 9; Slate-colored Junco, 75; Field Sparrow, 25; White-throated Sparrow, 33; Swamp Sparrow, 15; Song Sparrow, 26. Total, 50 species; 2046 individuals. (Benny Gilliam found 15 dead Mourning Doves along a hedgerow the day of the count at Ambler on the James, about a mile from the count area; and at another place a little farther distant some 10 more that were dead - these latter near a stable where grain had been scattered; all birds seem to have been frozen). -- Martha Armstrong, Mary Lewis Brown, John Grey (compiler), Norma Katz, Roger Miller, Tommy Thomas.

Hopewell, Va. (Presquile National Wildlife Refuge and vicinity; same area as last 4 years; open farmland 35%, brushy fields 5%, marshes and river shore 12%, deciduous wooded swamp 12%, woodland 36%). -- Dec. 27; 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 16° to 50°; wind SE to E, 2-10 m.p.h.; ground bare, still water and marshes completely frozen. Two observers in 2 parties. Total party-hours, 14.5 (10.5 on foot, 1 by car, 3 by boat); total party-miles, 59 (8 on foot, 45 by car, 6 by boat). Horned Grebe, 3; Pied-billed Grebe, 7; Great Blue Heron, 14; Canada Goose, 6500; Snow Goose, 19; Blue Goose, 39; Mallard, 3000; Black Duck, 1500; Pintail, 250; Green-winged Teal, 23; Am. Widgeon, 17; Wood Duck, 23; Ring-necked Duck, 15; Ruddy Duck, 282; Common Merganser, 38; Turkey Vulture, 2; Black Vulture, 10; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 5; Bobwhite, 7; Killdeer, 1; Herring Gull, 5; Ring-billed Gull, 215; Mourning Dove, 354; Screech Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 5; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 24; Pileated Woodpecker, 5; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 19; Red-headed Woodpecker, 3; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 9; Blue Jay, 41; Common Crow, 128; Fish Crow, 2; Carolina Chickadee, 26; Tufted Titmouse, 25; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 5; Winter Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 14; Mockingbird, 13; Robin, 2; Hermit Thrush, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 11; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 19; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8; Loggerhead Shrike, 3; Starling, 2200; Myrtle Warbler, 32; House Sparrow, 183; Eastern Meadowlark, 20; Redwinged Blackbird, 9650; Common Grackle, 500; Brown-headed Cowbird, 560; Cardinal, 69; Purple Finch, 22; Am. Goldfinch, 27; Rufous-sided Towhee, 8; Slate-colored Junco, 60; Field Sparrow, 45; White-throated Sparrow, 195; Fox Sparrow, 1; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 54. Total, 67 species; about 26, 333 individuals. -- Bill Good, F.R. Scott (compiler).

Fort Belvoir, Va. (same area as previous year except no coverage on the Maryland side of the Potomac River). -- Dec. 20; 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 42° to 32°; wind NW, 10-20 m.p.h.; ground bare and frozen, marshes and tidal bays partly frozen. Twenty-eight observers in 8 parties. Total party-miles, 248 (189 by car; 59 on foot); total party-hours, 65 (16.5 by car, 48.5 on foot). Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Great Blue Heron, 10; Canada Goose, 248; Mallard, 37; Black Duck, 8; Wood Duck, 1 drake (J.M.A., C.D.); Canvasback, 1; Scaup, 121; Bufflehead, 20; White-winged Scoter, 1 (R.J.W., N.S.); Ruddy Duck, 903; Common Merganser, 16; Turkey Vulture, 13; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 17; Red-shouldered Hawk, 7; Bald Eagle, 11; Marsh Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 8; Bobwhite, 82; Killdeer, 14; Common Snipe, 3; Herring Gull, 268; Ring-billed Gull, 564; Laughing Gull, 1 (R.C. et al.); Mourning Dove, 123; Great Horned Owl, 3; Barred Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 9; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 47; Pileated Woodpecker, 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 44; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 10; Hairy Woodpecker, 7; Downy Woodpecker, 67; Eastern Phoebe, 1; Horned Lark (Prairie), 2; Blue Jay, 113; Common Crow, 325; Fish Crow, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; Carolina Chickadee, 202; Tufted Titmouse, 149; White-breasted Nuthatch, 26; Brown Creeper, 28; Winter Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 65; Mockingbird, 102; Robin, 46; Hermit Thrush, 7; Eastern Bluebird, 29; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 96; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4; Cedar Waxwing, 200; Loggerhead Shrike, 1; Starling, 1114; Myrtle Warbler, 76; House Sparrow, 257; Eastern Meadowlark, 133; Redwinged Blackbird, 351; Rusty Blackbird, 476; Common Grackle, 25; Brown-headed Cowbird, 108; Cardinal, 221; Purple Finch, 35; Am. Goldfinch, 84;

Rufous-sided Towhee, 38; Savannah Sparrow, 6; Vesper Sparrow, 3; Slate-colored Junco, 1186; Tree Sparrow, 26; Field Sparrow, 257; White-crowned Sparrow, 6; White-throated Sparrow, 741; Fox Sparrow, 12; Swamp Sparrow, 14; Song Sparrow, 360. Total, 79 species; 9,678 individuals. (One, and possibly two birds believed to have been Black-and-white Warblers were reported by Ron Chiabotta's group at Mount Vernon. Since the members of this group did not agree as to whether there were 1 or 2 birds, and all did not describe the bird's actions as being typical of a Black-and-white Warbler, and no Myrtle Warblers were reported by the group, the compiler regretfully cannot include the species in the above totals.) -- J.M. Abbott (compiler), Louise Berry, E.J. Bierley, Ron Chiabotta, E.G. Davis, Charles Dillon, P.A. DuMont, D.D. Feaser, George Golding, Ed Hayward, W.A. Houston, P.J. Houston, A. Hubbel, Dr. and Mrs. Dan Keeney, James Meade, Jim Middleton, Lois Morgan, William Mull, Mike Newlon, N. Shelton, Georg Sigel, Mike Smith, Mr. and Mrs. R.P. Teele, Fos Trowbridge, Joe Turner, R.J. Watson.

Brooke, Va. (all points within a 15-mile-diameter circle, triangular area with Brooke, Widewater, mouth of Potomac Creek at the 3 apices; tidal water 15%, marsh 7%, swamp 4%, fields 8%, hedgerows 6%, mixed forest edge 23%, deciduous woods 30%, pine woods 5%, slash 2%). -- Dec. 21; 6:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Partly cloudy a.m., clear p.m.; temp. 14° to 31°; wind N, up to 15 m.p.h.; ground bare, tidal bays and river margins frozen, Potomac River with floes of fresh ice, breaking up in p.m. Twelve observers in 7 parties. Total party-hours, 52; total party-miles, 27 (all on foot). Common Loon, 1; Horned Grebe, 2; Great Blue Heron, 40; Whistling Swan, 14; Canada Goose, 20; Mallard, 70; Black Duck, 300; Am. Widgeon, 1; Canvasback, 95; Lesser Scaup, 24; Common Goldeneye, 9; Bufflehead, 65; Ruddy Duck, 800; Hooded Merganser, 5; Common Merganser, 2000; Red-breasted Merganser, 140; Turkey Vulture, 10; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Red-shouldered Hawk, 3; Bald Eagle, 12; Sparrow Hawk, 3; Bobwhite, 27; Killdeer, 16; Common Snipe, 2; Great Black-backed Gull, 11; Herring Gull, 2000; Ring-billed Gull, 300; Mourning Dove, 40; Belted Kingfisher, 3; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 30; Pileated Woodpecker, 9; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 45; Red-headed Woodpecker, 7; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 22; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 45; Horned Lark, 5; Blue Jay, 100; Common Crow, 320; Fish Crow, 20; Black-capped Chickadee, 1 (A.A.B.); Carolina Chickadee, 130; Tufted Titmouse, 80; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 14; Winter Wren, 5; Carolina Wren, 20; Mockingbird, 42; Catbird, 2; Brown Thrasher, 1; Robin, 85; Hermit Thrush, 4; Eastern Bluebird, 6; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 30; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 14; Cedar Waxwing, 300; Starling, 300; Myrtle Warbler, 125; House Sparrow, 35; Eastern Meadowlark, 40; Redwinged Blackbird, 420; Rusty Blackbird, 13; Cardinal, 150; Purple Finch, 16; Am. Goldfinch, 130; Rufous-sided Towhee, 36; Savannah Sparrow, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 320; Tree Sparrow, 6; Field Sparrow, 100; White-throated Sparrow, 600; Fox Sparrow, 4; Swamp Sparrow, 20; Song Sparrow, 260. Total, 75 species; about 9937 individuals. -- C.A. Anderson, Roy A. Bailey, A.A. Baker, Henry Bell, III, John H. Eric, Andrew Griscom, Warren Hobbs, Luna B. Leopold, Edwin T. McKnight (compiler), Thomas B. Nolan, W.W. Rubey, Robert L. Smith.

Rockingham County, Va. (within $7\frac{1}{2}$ -mile radius of Ottobine; Silver Lake, lawn and shade trees in town, cottonwood-sycamore river bottoms, open farm land and farm woodlot, mixed Appalachian conifers and hardwoods in mountains; elevation 1160 to 3200 feet). -- Dec. 27; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 10° to 44° . Four observers together. Total party-miles, 106 (15 on foot, 91 by car). Pied-billed Grebe, 3; Great Blue Heron, 1; Canada Goose, 1; Mallard, 148; Black Duck, 14; Black-Mallard hybrid, 1; Gadwall, 14; Am. Widgeon, 87; Pintail, 6; Ring-necked Duck, 5; scaup. sp., 2; Ruddy Duck, 2; Hooded Merganser, 3; Turkey Vulture, 171; Black Vulture, 51; Cooper's Hawk, 2; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 4; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Bobwhite, 25; Am. Coot, 9; Killdeer, 3; Common Snipe, 1; Mourning Dove, 4; Screech Owl, 1; Barred Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 4; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 2; Pileated Woodpecker, 4; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 8; Blue Jay, 6; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 101; Black-capped Chickadee, 18; Tufted Titmouse, 4; White-breasted Nuthatch, 7; Brown Creeper, 2; Winter Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 3; Mockingbird, 12; Eastern Bluebird, 20; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 10; Cedar Waxwing, 9; Loggerhead Shrike, 5; Starling, 1296; Myrtle Warbler, 1; House Sparrow, 120; Eastern Meadowlark, 6; Cardinal, 50; Am. Goldfinch, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 51; Tree Sparrow, 3; Field Sparrow, 2; White-crowned Sparrow, 25; White-throated Sparrow, 3; Song Sparrow, 10. Total, 56 species; 2352 individuals. -- Max Carpenter (compiler), Harry Jopson, Hollen Helbert, Jack G. Miller.

Big Flat Mountain (about same area and habitat percentages as last year, mostly in southern Shenandoah National Park). -- Dec. 23; 6:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Cloudy; temp. 32° to 55° ; wind SW, 10-20 m.p.h.; 30 m.p.h. on ridge. One observer. Party-hours, $10\frac{1}{2}$ (on foot); party-miles, 17 (on foot). Turkey Vulture, 7; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Rough-legged Hawk, 2 (one light, one dark); Duck Hawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 7; Turkey, 12 (one flock of 11, a single); Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Pileated Woodpecker, 5; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 4; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 1; Raven, 2; Crow, 54; Carolina Chickadee, 40; Tufted Titmouse, 16; Brown Creeper, 4; Winter Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 6; Mockingbird, 3; Robin, 12; Eastern Bluebird, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 18; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2; Cedar Waxwing, 29; Cardinal, 21; Purple Finch, 3; Goldfinch, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 21; Field Sparrow, 2; White-throated Sparrow, 61; Fox Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow, 9. Total, 34 species; 355 individuals. -- Charles E. Stevens.

Charlottesville, Va. (about same area and habitat percentages as last year). -- Dec. 28; 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cloudy a.m., rain p.m.; temp. 32° to 38° ; wind NE, 0-5 m.p.h. Three observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 21 (18 on foot, 3 by car); total party-miles, 92 (26 on foot, 66 by car). Canada Goose, 38 (some, possibly all, feral); White-fronted Goose, 1 (First county record - K.L.); Mallard, 10; Black Duck, 2; Redhead, 2; Turkey Vulture, 4; Black Vulture, 1; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Bobwhite, 1; Killdeer, 2; Mourning Dove, 404; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 9; Pileated Woodpecker, 6; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 16; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 5; Downy Woodpecker, 28; Blue Jay, 70; Crow, 591; Fish Crow, 2; Carolina Chickadee, 147; Tufted Titmouse, 98; White-breasted Nuthatch, 14; Brown Creeper, 10;

House Wren, 1 (R.S.M.); Winter Wren, 8; Carolina Wren, 45; Mockingbird, 46; Hermit Thrush, 3; Eastern Bluebird, 12; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 73; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4; Cedar Waxwing, 1; Loggerhead Shrike, 4; Starling, 920; Myrtle Warbler, 8; House Sparrow, 33; Meadowlark, 168; Redwinged Blackbird, 104; Rusty Blackbird, 1; Cardinal, 175; Purple Finch, 20; Pine Siskin, 5; Goldfinch, 29; Rufous-sided Towhee, 10; Slate-colored Junco, 489; Tree Sparrow, 12; Field Sparrow, 191; White-crowned Sparrow, 3; White-throated Sparrow, 313; Swamp Sparrow, 38; Song Sparrow, 272. Total, 57 species; about 4458 individuals. The White-fronted Goose, an adult with white face-patch and yellowish feet, was found at Henley's Lake near Crozet, and has been seen there since. -- Kenneth Lawless, Robert S. Merkel, Charles E. Stevens.

Warren, Va. (same area and habitat percentages as last year). -- Dec. 31; 6:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Partly cloudy; wind NW, 0-5 m.p.h.; temp. 25° to 55°. Two observers in 2 parties. Total party-hours, 19 (16 on foot, 3 by car); total party-miles, 92 (22 on foot, 70 by car). Mallard, 201; Black Duck, 18; Gadwall, 2; American Widgeon, 48; Lesser Scaup, 2; Bufflehead, 1; American Merganser, 1; Turkey Vulture, 12; Black Vulture, 16; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 6; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 1 (light phase - C.E.S.); Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Bobwhite, 28; Killdeer, 8; Wilson's Snipe, 18; Mourning Dove, 460; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 14; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 16; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 2; Hairy Woodpecker, 5; Downy Woodpecker, 26; Eastern Phoebe, 2; Horned Lark, 11; Blue Jay, 26; Crow, 601; Carolina Chickadee, 77; Tufted Titmouse, 42; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Brown Creeper, 5; Bewick's Wren, 1 (K.L.); Winter Wren, 5; Carolina Wren, 34; Mockingbird, 57; Robin, 1; Hermit Thrush, 4; Eastern Bluebird, 36; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 38; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 6; Water Pipit, 1; Loggerhead Shrike, 7; Starling, 378; Myrtle Warbler, 35; House Sparrow, 50; Meadowlark, 192; Redwinged Blackbird, 48; Rusty Blackbird, 14,404; Purple Grackle, 13,000; Brown-headed Cowbird, 15; Cardinal, 138; Purple Finch, 15; Pine Siskin, 20; Goldfinch, 26; Savannah Sparrow, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 613; Tree Sparrow, 2; Field Sparrow, 145; White-crowned Sparrow, 31; White-throated Sparrow, 115; Fox Sparrow, 3; Swamp Sparrow, 5; Song Sparrow, 124. Total, 66; about 31,204 individuals. A freshly dead immature Herring Gull at Langhorne's Pond. -- Kenneth Lawless, Charles E. Stevens.

Northern Buckingham County (area located several miles south of Scottsville and mostly along the James River between Little George Creek and mouth of Slate River near Bremono Bluff; riverbottom 45%, open farmland 30%, deciduous woods 23%, pine woods 2%). -- Dec. 30; 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mostly cloudy; temp. 32° to 60°; wind NW, 0-10 m.p.h. One observer. Total hours, 9 (afoot); total miles, 18 (afoot). Mallard, 16; Black Duck, 3; Turkey Vulture, 8; Black Vulture, 24; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Mourning Dove, 78; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 22; Pileated Woodpecker, 8; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 13; Hairy Woodpecker, 10; Downy Woodpecker, 23; Eastern Phoebe, 5; Horned Lark, 2; Blue Jay, 18; Crow, 88; Carolina Chickadee, 33; Tufted Titmouse, 27; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 3; Winter Wren, 6; Carolina Wren, 56; Mockingbird, 7; Robin, 2; Eastern Bluebird, 39; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 11; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4; Water Pipit, 4; Loggerhead Shrike, 2; Starling, 41; Myrtle Warbler, 32; House Sparrow, 14; Eastern Meadowlark, 42;

Red-winged Blackbird, 2; Rusty Blackbird, 3; Cardinal, 44; Purple Finch, 11; Goldfinch, 12; Rufous-sided Towhee, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 212; Field Sparrow, 6; White-throated Sparrow, 89; Fox Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 24. Total, 43 species; 1046 individuals. -- Charles E. Stevens.

Lexington, Va. (From town center west to Sunnyside Farm and Brushy Hills, Big Spring Pond; Maury River from Cave Spring to Limekiln Bridge and at mouth of Warm Run; from town center east to the Womeldorf Farm, Warm Run, and the mouth of South River. Area within that covered in recent years. Pasture and open fields 25%; cedar-honeysuckle scrub 30%; hardwood forest 20%; cedar woods 20%; river bottom and Big Spring Pond 5%.) -- Dec. 26; 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 9 to 32 degrees; no wind in morning; wind W veering to SW in afternoon, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground frozen; river and ponds frozen, except for Big Spring Pond. Six observers in two parties. Total party-hours, 18 (16 on foot, 2 by car); total party-miles, 54 (14 on foot, 40 by car). Car used only for shuttling between points. Great Blue Heron, 2; Mallard, 59; Black Duck, 2; Turkey Vulture, 20; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Red-shouldered Hawk, 2; Marsh Hawk, 1; Peregrine Falcon, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Bobwhite, 41; Coot, 1; Killdeer, 5; Common Snipe, 3; Mourning Dove, 1; Screech Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 4; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 3; Pileated Woodpecker, 6; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 7; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 2; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 18; Phoebe, 1; Horned Lark, 27; Blue Jay, 16; Crow, 220; Carolina Chickadee, 64; Tufted Titmouse, 19; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown Creeper, 1; Winter Wren, 4; Carolina Wren, 15; Mockingbird, 41; Robin, 2; Hermit Thrush, 2; Eastern Bluebird, 23; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Water Pipit, 3; Loggerhead Shrike, 3; Starling, 939; Myrtle Warbler, 14; Palm Warbler, 1 (R.P.C.); House Sparrow, 136; Meadowlark, 23; Cardinal, 104; Purple Finch, 67; Goldfinch, 30; Slate-colored Junco, 143; Tree Sparrow, 12; Field Sparrow, 54; White-crowned Sparrow, 5; White-throated Sparrow, 108; Song Sparrow, 24. Total, 55 species; 2295 individuals. -- Col. Robert P. Carroll; Robert P. Carroll, Jr.; David Foster; Robert O. Paxton (compiler); Dr. Bromfield L. Ridley; Joshua C. Womeldorf.

Roanoke, Va. (same territory as in previous years; Murray's Pond, Woodrum Field Airport, Peter's Creek Road, Carvin's Cove Dam; farmland 20%, open field 40%, deciduous and pine woods 20%, creek bottom and pond 20%). -- Dec. 30; 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fair; temp. 34° to 55°. Total party-miles, 39 (8 miles by foot, 31 by car). Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Mallard, 1; Black Duck, 4; scaup sp., 14; Bufflehead, 29; Turkey Vulture, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Bobwhite, 4; Common Snipe, 2; Mourning Dove, 1; Rock Dove, 40; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Horned Lark, 5; Blue Jay, 3; Common Crow, 35; Carolina Chickadee, 15; Tufted Titmouse, 4; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Winter Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 6; Mockingbird, 20; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2; Starling, 200 (est.); Myrtle Warbler, 2; Cardinal, 17; Am. Goldfinch, 3; House Sparrow, 35; Slate-colored Junco, 13; Field Sparrow, 20; White-crowned Sparrow, 3; White-throated Sparrow, 13; Song Sparrow, 22. Total, 32 species; about 522 individuals. -- A.O. English (compiler), Mrs. A.O. English, C.H. Lewis, Mrs. W.J. Nelson.

Blacksburg, Va. (same area as last year; pasture and plowed land 20%, town and suburbs 10%, virgin white oak woodlots 20%, mixed pine and oak woods 20%, river and creek bottom 30%). -- Dec. 23; 7:00 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Cloudy ending in rain; temp. 25° to 45°. Wind NW, 0-20 m.p.h. Ground bare, ponds frozen, streams open. Nine observers in six parties. Total party-hours, 48 (45 on foot, 3 by car); total party-miles, 100 (44½ on foot, 55½ by car). Pied-billed Grebe, 2; Mallard, 59; Black Duck, 20; Gadwall, 4; Green-winged Teal, 1; American Widgeon, 5; Redhead, 13; Ring-necked Duck, 7; Lesser Scaup, 209; Common Goldeneye, 40; Bufflehead, 116; Hooded Merganser, 3; Turkey Vulture, 31; Black Vulture, 44; Cooper's Hawk, 2; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Marsh Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 11; Ruffed Grouse, 3; Bob-white, 25; Coot, 3; Killdeer, 13; Common Snipe, 7; Mourning Dove, 161; Screech Owl, 2; Great Horned Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 5; Pileated Woodpecker, 14; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 15; Red-headed Woodpecker, 2; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 2; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 41; Horned Lark, 143; Blue Jay, 84; Raven, 2; Crow, 826; Carolina Chickadee, 119; Tufted Titmouse, 119; White-breasted Nuthatch, 29; Brown Creeper, 11; Winter Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 26; Mockingbird, 18; Catbird, 1 (BSM); Robin, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 10; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 45; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1; Cedar Waxwing, 20; Loggerhead Shrike, 3; Starling, 1476; Myrtle Warbler, 3; House Sparrow, 69; Meadowlark, 208; Redwinged Blackbird, 92; Brown-headed Cowbird, 4; Cardinal, 154; Purple Finch, 1; Pine Siskin, 10; Goldfinch, 161; Rufous-sided Towhee, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 166; Field Sparrow, 45; White-crowned Sparrow, 38; White-throated Sparrow, 19; Song Sparrow, 38. Total, 69 species; about 4818 individuals. -- John D. Cooper, Michael N. Cassell, Maynard G. Hale, Burd S. McGinnes, G. Myron Shear, Charles O. Handley, Charles O. Handley, Jr., John M. Handley, John W. Murray (compiler).

Mt. Rogers, Va. (same area as last year; deciduous woodland 40%, grassy fields 40%, spruce-fir forest 20%). -- Dec. 23; 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cloudy, light rain in afternoon; temp. 25° to 40°; wind W, 15-30 m.p.h.; ground bare in open, snow 1-6 inches deep in woods. One observer. Total party-hours, 9 (all on foot); total party-miles, 11 (all on foot). Ruffed Grouse, 2; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Common Raven, 1; Common Crow, 19; Carolina Chickadee, 5; Tufted Titmouse, 7; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 12. Total, 10 species; 57 individuals. -- Paul S. Dulaney.

Glade Spring, Va. (same area as last year; farmland and pastures 35%, deciduous woods 30%, mixed pine and deciduous woods 13%, riverbottoms 20%, marsh and ponds 2%). -- Dec. 27; 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., temp. 20° to 40°; wind SW, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground bare, rivers ice-free, ponds frozen. Two observers in 1 party. Total party-hours, 10 (2 on foot, 8 by car); total party-miles, 85 (2 on foot, 83 by car). Mallard, 80; Black Duck, 19; Green-winged Teal, 3; Ruddy Duck, 1; Turkey Vulture, 67; Black Vulture, 3; Cooper's Hawk, 2; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 8; Am. Coot, 8; Killdeer, 8; Common Snipe, 6; Mourning Dove, 83; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 7; Blue Jay, 27; Common Crow, 44; Carolina Chickadee, 15; Tufted Titmouse, 9; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 2; Bewick's Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 14; Mockingbird, 8; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 2; Loggerhead Shrike, 2; Starling, 5000; House Sparrow, 60; Eastern Meadowlark, 35;

Redwinged Blackbird, 1; Common Grackle, 5000; Brown-headed Cowbird, 40; Cardinal, 109; Am. Goldfinch, 5; Rufous-sided Towhee, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 37; Field Sparrow, 26; White-crowned Sparrow, 28; White-throated Sparrow, 27; Swamp Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow, 15. Total, 44 species; about 10,812 individuals. (Seen in area count period, but not on count day: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Robin, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Fox Sparrow). -- Mrs. Carleton Abbott, P.S. Dulaney (compiler).

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BACK BAY TRIP OF 1958

By C.C. Steirly, Tripmaster

On the morning of December 6 as the sun raised itself majestically above the horizon of Mare Atlanticus, the shrill notes of the Tripmaster's tin whistle broke the cold, clear air to announce the beginning of another annual VSO trip to Back Bay. After the usual delays and confusion, the Tripmaster soon asserted his authority and had some forty members marshalled aboard a truck and trailer, and had a walking group properly lined out (the crowd was too large for the available facilities - a perennial headache faced by the Tripmaster). The group then moved southward along the broad unspoiled beaches, flanked on the right by picturesque dunes and on the left by the tossing waves of the sea. Everyone felt that the day was bound to be good, if not for birding at least for fellowship and the camaraderie of kindred spirits on a naturalist's holiday along the beaches, among the dunes and in the marshes of that most excellent of winter field trip sites - Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in lower Princess Anne County.

Flocks of Herring Gulls with the ever present individual Great Black-backed Gulls took to the air in the path of the advancing truck and trailer, only to settle down behind it and be ready for the foot party. Occasional Common and Red-throated Loons made the seaside most interesting while the region behind the dunes offered frequent glimpses of Canada Geese and Whistling Swans. Soon a flock of some 300 Gannets was sighted feeding on a school of fish close in shore. These were later viewed splendidly from the dunes which offered one of those fine vistas - the Gannets on the seaward side and a great flock of Snow Geese on the landward or marsh side.

The foot party, travelling at leisure in beachcomber fashion, added a Parasitic Jaeger to the list and had an ample opportunity to scrutinize the distant specks over the sea, which, through the telescopes, resolved themselves into Horned Grebes, Common Loons, Cormorants and Red-throated Loons.

Finally both the truck and foot parties met on the dunes from which the Gannet display could be best observed. Then the entire group took to the marshes and ponds. Fortunately most of the group had heeded the trip announcement and came properly shod (there are always some who attempt to negotiate these marshes in footwear more suited to the ballroom, much to the Tripmaster's chagrin). These splendid marshes were soon producing small flocks of Black Ducks, Mallards and Pintail. Several Sharptailed Sparrows made the marsh exceptionally interesting and even offered telescopic views of themselves. A pair of Bitterns added much to the charm of the scene which was continually offering flock after flock of Canada Geese, Whistling Swans and Black Ducks. A small open pond with a narrow mud flat yielded a flock of rather tame Dunlin and several Greater Yellowlegs which permitted exceptionally close study. Occasional Marsh Hawks cruised low over the marshes and a Bald Eagle made its appearance. The Wilson Snipe was seen by most of the party and Savannah and Song Sparrows as well as Myrtle Warblers enlivened the interest of the brush and thicket explorers.

The group slowly left the marshes and breaking up into small groups wended its way across some two miles of intensely interesting marsh and dune land to the Refuge Headquarters, a rendezvous point judiciously selected by the Tripmaster as the place for the field lunch at noon. One of the beauties of the VSO trip is that the individual, once transported to the site, is given complete freedom to roam at will. Those who wish to observe the sea birds are thus free to loiter along the beach; those who, like the Tripmaster, love the dunes, are at liberty to ramble away the hours in this fascinating habitat; while those who insist on scaring up a rarity or two in the marsh are not discouraged (their wet feet and usual disappointments are their own affairs - not the Tripmaster's).

All sorts of tempting lunch ingredients and several thermos bottles of steaming coffee and tea were spread out in the lee of one of the Headquarters buildings. Several active persons were privileged to see the Snow Bunting in this vicinity while others scanned the waters of the bay for waterfowl, grebes and Coot.

Once again the Tripmaster's whistle called the group from a mass of individuals to a single cohesive body so that it could be properly counted off and marched to the barge for the trip across the open waters of the bay to Long Island. During the afternoon a high wind made observation of the usual small landbirds most difficult. However, at the north end of the island a battery of telescopes was trained on small flocks of Baldpate, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Pied-billed and Horned Grebes and a Great Blue Heron. A hovering Kestrel added much to the charm of the spot. At the appointed time the group was again successfully transported across the Bay and the trip was about to enter on its somewhat sad closing phase - the truck ride northward to Sand Bridge after a most pleasant day.

All agreed that, although the waterfowl masses weren't what they used to be and no Coot was seen, the trip had been a most pleasant one. Some thought the Tripmaster had followed the ancient practice of the Roman auspices and had consulted the entrails of a fowl in order to select so fine a day.

Those remaining overnight in Virginia Beach enjoyed a social evening and were graciously entertained by Mary Tayloe Gwathmey in her charming home where the latest bird song recordings were enjoyed. On the following morning a sizeable group tried out a novel trip conceived by the Tripmaster in consultation with a group from the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Thus a motley group of bird cranks ensconced themselves in the bow of the Kiptopeke Ferry at 9:00 a.m. and spent the morning crossing and recrossing the expanse of open water between Little Creek and Kiptopeke. Here in rather bitter cold the more ardent spirits kept a continuous vigil for the sea birds. Those who were less hardened to the biting cold made frequent trips below to the warmth of the salons (and the juke boxes). This trip proved rather fruitful, and although there has been frequent reporting of such trips in these pages, the official observations must be recorded since this was a VSO trip. A flock of Herring Gulls followed the ferry all of the way, giving the observers an excellent display of thermal soaring. Gannets and Cormorants were to be seen at close range, and groups of Horned Grebes, Common Loons and Red-throated Loons were almost continuously in view. Several Old Squaws, Surf Scoters and White-winged Scoters added to the pleasure of the journey. A flock of ten Bonaparte's Gulls were viewed with considerable interest as were a flock of some 50 Goldfinches flying northward and overtaking the ferry.

At Kiptopeke Harbor several Horned Grebes permitted very close observations of themselves. Soon most of the party boarded the same ferry for the return journey which offered equally as good views of the water birds. Several Gannets passed rather closely to the bow to the great delight of all the observers.

A group, largely from Norfolk, remained on the Kiptopeke side for several hours of beach combing and bird study on the extensive sand beaches there.

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ECOLOGICAL NOTES ON THE POKEWEED AS AN AVIAN DIETARY ITEM

By C.C. Steirly, District Forester

Following the heavy snow of December 11, 1958, the writer had an interesting opportunity to make some casual observations of the dietary use of the fruits of the pokeweed Phytolacca americana by birds. Normally the droppings of birds which have fed on this fruit are not generally apparent unless a detailed search of small areas is made. However, on the snow the digested fruits appeared as reddish-purple blotches from two to three inches in diameter and were quite obvious for some distance on the pure white snow.

The writer, while doing some timber reconnaissance work in northern Sussex County, observed these droppings through an extensive pine woodland area adjacent to a small area of field that had been extended by bulldozing, the material removed having been pushed up into a wind-row along the edge of the woodland. Here in the accumulation of topsoil, stump logs and

other detritus of the operation, a profuse growth of pokeweed had been noted. The fruits had been entirely stripped from the plants and the droppings from them were found in all parts of the woodland as well as across the snow-covered field. Owing to limitations of time and the work at hand, no attempt could be made to ascertain the species of birds taking the berries nor could any attempt be made to establish the dropping density per unit of area.

The observation is reported here in order to point out the value of this plant, so often regarded as a weed, as food for wintering bird populations. There is a short article on this subject in the November-December 1958 Audubon Magazine.

In attempting to assess the alteration of forest habitats by bulldozing inferior hardwood growth in an effort to increase the acreage of commercial pine forest, the writer has observed heavy growths of pokeweed invading such raw areas. This growth is most frequently found in the areas where the useless material is wind-rowed and left to decay. Thus, for several years during the transition from unproductive scrub hardwood to commercial pine forest, a favorable wildlife situation is created. This situation, from the food standpoint, seems to be more productive than the untreated dry upland hardwood forest of oak and hickory pole-sized timber. These forest cultural practices are often condemned by sportsmen and nature lovers before they make any effort to understand the ecological aspects of such treatments.

— Virginia Division of Forestry
Waverly, Virginia

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BLUE JAY

No delicate approach has he,
No fear he may not welcome be;
A flash of blue, a greeting shrill -
And there he is at my window sill:
A ring of black to trim his blue,
Touches of white to accent the hue.

I do not admire his audacious manner,
But he brightens my day with his beauty banner.

— Ruth Smiley Venn
511 Walnut Street
Salem, Virginia

NEWS AND NOTES

Black and White Warbler in Winter. On Monday afternoon, December 15, 1958, Dr. William B. McIlwaine, Jr., saw a Black and White Warbler at his farm, 'Sysonby,' near Petersburg. He watched it creeping about on the trunk and the lower branches of a pine. We have only two previous Virginia winter records for this warbler; Richmond, February 6, 1949, and Cape Henry, December 5, 1950.

Appointment at Nantucket for John V. Dennis. John V. Dennis, VSO member and frequent contributor to The Raven, has been named director of the recently established Nantucket (Massachusetts) Ornithological Research Station. This station has been set up from 1958 until at least 1960 by the Northeastern Bird-banding Association. Mr. Dennis has worked on Nantucket Island during the 1956-1957 and 1957-1958 seasons. According to Audubon Magazine, "much of the work of the station will consist of participation in Operation Recovery, including a number of special studies such as the weight of migrants, or the unexplained presence of the yellow-breasted chat in fall north of its breeding range."

Research Grant to Merritt. Richard K. Merritt of the faculty of Longwood College and a VSO member, has been given a grant of \$360 by the research council of the University Center in Virginia, which is the co-ordinating unit for work in 17 Virginia colleges. The project for which the grant is to be used is a study of "The Interspecific Competition During the Nesting Season of the Bluebird and the Starling."

New Refuge Managers at Chincoteague and Presquile. VSO members who have visited these refuges will be sorry to learn of the transfers of Jacob Valentine to the South Florida Refuges, Box 1296, Boynton Beach, Florida, and John Walther to Gulf Coast Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Passagoone, Mississippi. They have been most cooperative with VSO groups. Valentine's paper on the Cattle Egret was one of the best pieces of research that we have published in The Raven. The new managers are Thomas W. Martin, at Chincoteague; and Bill Good at Presquile.

Cocoa, Florida, Christmas Count. Your Editor had the chance to participate in the almost fabulous Christmas Count at Cocoa, Florida. Organized by Allan Cruickshank, this area has led the whole list for three years past; and unless some other area has made a remarkable spurt has led again in 1958. This time the count broke its own record, reaching 194 species, which included a Jaeger and an Empidonax, each identified only as to genus. Sixty people, in some 15 parties, combed an area from Canaveral launching base to the freshwater marshes of the back country.

White-fronted Goose at Charlottesville. The most interesting report on any of the Christmas Counts in the western half of the State was a White-fronted Goose seen at Henley's Lake, Charlottesville by Kenneth Lawless. The bird was later seen by others. This seems to be our only inland record for this goose.

A Call for Help on the Cooperative Migration Study. The members of the staff at the Patuxent Research Refuge greatly appreciate the help given by members of the VSO in recent years in furnishing migration reports. They want reports for the Spring of 1959 for any of the following species: Whistling Swan; Canada Goose; Mallard; Pintail; Marsh Hawk; Killdeer; Common Snipe; Mourning Dove; Common Nighthawk; Chimney Swift; Ruby-throated Hummingbird; Yellow-shafted Flicker; Eastern Kingbird; Great Crested Flycatcher; Eastern Phoebe; Wood Pewee; Barn Swallow; Purple Martin; Common Crow; House Wren; Catbird; Brown Thrasher; Wood Thrush; Bluebird (dates on male and female separately); Red-eyed Vireo; Black and White Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Myrtle Warbler; Ovenbird; American Redstart; Redwinged Blackbird; Baltimore Oriole; Scarlet Tanager; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting; Goldfinch; Slate-colored Junco; Chipping Sparrow; White-crowned Sparrow; White-throated Sparrow. For each species give date of first migrant; date of peak of numbers; date of last bird noted. Report from as many localities as you like; but use a separate sheet for each locality. Give actual counts or careful estimates; and do not use such words as "common," as the reports are used on punch cards for machine listing. It is not to be expected that any observer will report on all these species. Even if you report on only four or five of them, your report will be welcomed. Send your report or reports direct to Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland; or through Fred Scott, 115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond 26, Virginia.

Blue Ridge Foray. The Blue Ridge Foray will be held on June 19, 20 and 21. For further information contact C.C. Steirly, Trip Chairman, Waverly, Virginia.

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

On hand in Bank of Waverly - January 1, 1958 ...	\$ 660.65
Receipts from dues, donations, etc.	<u>918.50</u>
	\$ 1,579.15

Expenditures:

Raven production	\$ 533.61
Letterheads, envelopes, etc. for Raven	113.65
Postage-treasury, publications, hawk leaflets	42.38
Cornell Univ., bird slides	28.00
Dues - Virginia Wildlife Federation	75.00
Dues - National Audubon Society	25.00
Annual Meeting expenses	26.71
Printing - treasury	13.50
Secretarial expenses, postage, printing, etc.	19.91
Purchase of VSO shoulder emblems	<u>126.51</u>
	\$ 1,004.27

\$1,579.15

1,004.27

Balance on hand in Bank of Waverly - January 1, 1959 \$ 574.88

Of the \$126.51 invested in shoulder emblems, \$41.00 has been recovered as of this date. Raven production costs have increased. In 1957 the Raven ran to 95 pages while in 1958 it contained 130 pages. The increased postal rates are reflected here too. Normally, the November-December production costs are paid in the following year. In 1958 this issue was paid for in 1958 and accounts for \$66.23 of the above total cost. The expenditure for letterheads, envelopes, etc. for the Raven is not generally an annually recurring expenditure.

Of the total balance indicated above, \$100.00 is in the Trip Fund. This leaves a net balance of \$474.88 in the general fund.

The Publication Fund is carried as a separate savings account.

On hand January 1, 1958	\$ 508.16
Income from sale of check lists	26.00
Interest	<u>6.05</u>
	\$ 540.21

Expenditures:

Publication of Avifauna No. 1	\$ 290.00
	\$ 540.21
	<u>290.00</u>
Balance on hand January 1, 1959	\$ 250.21

Submitted by:

C.C. Steirly, Treasurer



The Raven

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR
LEXINGTON, VA.

VOL. XXX

MARCH-APRIL, 1959

NOS. 3 & 4

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THE 1959 VSO ANNUAL MEETING

By Robert J. Watson

The Phi Beta Kappa Hall, on the campus of William and Mary College in Williamsburg, was the scene of the 1959 annual meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, which opened at 11:15 a.m. on Friday, February 6. President W.F. Rountrey called the meeting to order and asked the Treasurer, Mr. Steirly, for a report. Mr. Steirly reported that the Society has a net balance of \$474.88 in the General Fund, \$100.00 in the Trip Fund, and \$250.21 in the Publication Fund. He explained that the Society lost money in 1958 because of certain extraordinary expenses.

Mr. Rountrey announced that the Executive Committee had recently voted to impose an extra fee of \$2.00 upon non-members who attend the Society's trips, but had since rescinded this action after receiving protests from some of the chapters.

A proposed amendment to Article III of the Constitution (already printed in The Raven for November-December, 1958) was submitted for approval by the Secretary, Mr. Watson. The purpose of the amendment was to make official the existing one-year term for officers (a matter inadvertently omitted from the Constitution) and to provide that officers would begin their terms on July 1 each year. It was unanimously approved.

The afternoon session, with Mr. Steirly presiding, opened with an address by Mr. Robert S. Bailey, of the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory at Gloucester Point. Mr. Bailey described the purpose and activities of the Laboratory, which was established in 1940 to study and improve the state of the seafood industry in Virginia. It seeks its goal by trying to identify the environmental factors governing the population of aquatic organisms and to improve the environment in order to increase populations. The Laboratory's recommendations for remedial legislation sometimes run counter to the wishes of various special interests.

"Bird Life at Craney Island," a paper by Mr. J.E. Ames, dealt with a convenient and newly created bird study area near Norfolk. The Craney Island Disposal Area, established by the Army Engineers to receive material dredged from nearby rivers, consists of an area of four square miles of water enclosed by a hard-surfaced dike. On his first trip to this area (May 1957), Mr. Ames discovered three Northern Phalaropes. Since then, 89 species of land and water birds have been recorded, including the Purple Sandpiper and the Harlequin Duck.

Mrs. Luther J. Machen, of Hampton, described "A Program of Adult Education in Ornithology" which has been sponsored by the Hampton High School. The program began in 1950 when the school's Adult Education Department, as part of its hobby instruction program, instituted a course in "Fun Out of Doors." This was followed the next year by another course entitled "Fun with Birds," consisting of 30 hours of instruction, one-third of which were spent in field work. Since then, the "Fun with Birds" course has been given twice more (the last time in 1957) to a total of 70-80 people. The speaker expressed hope that those participating had had "a door opened for a new and interesting use of leisure time."

An interesting field study project carried out in Hampton was described by Messrs. Walter Post Smith and Charles Hacker in their paper, "A Year of Bird Counting on Hampton Boulevard." They conducted a "strip census" along a three-mile length of the Boulevard extending one-half mile back from the waterfront. Although the study area was in a heavily populated region, it included creeks, salt water marshes, mud flats, open fields, and woods. Starting in September 1957, they censused the area each week, always on the same day of the week and the same time each day. In this manner they obtained valuable data on population trends and nesting records. A project of this sort, they pointed out, could be carried out by anyone on his own doorstep.

"Observations on a Nesting Colony of Black Skimmers and Forster's Terns" were presented by Dr. James L. Chamberlain of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. His study was made in July and August 1958 on the Rockefeller Refuge in Louisiana. He studied two nesting sites containing 76 skimmer nests and 62 nests of the terns. Slides presented by Dr. Chamberlain illustrated the nesting sites as well as the nests, eggs, and downy young of each species.

Mr. Thomas C. Crebbs, of Suffolk, described the preliminary results of his investigation of crop damage by blackbirds in Tidewater Virginia, based on research conducted under contract with the Fish and Wildlife Service. In recent years, blackbirds have been accused of doing serious damage to peanuts and grain in this area. Mr. Crebbs found that damage to peanuts depends largely on how soon the crop is harvested, a matter which in turn is governed by weather conditions. Damage to milo and corn is considerable, and no means of prevention has yet been found. The speaker asked the VSO to aid the project by cooperating in a banding program which would throw light on the movements of blackbirds.

"Ornithological Field Work Needed in Virginia" was the subject of a paper by Dr. John H. Grey and Mr. Frederic R. Scott. Using a map of the state, they located the areas from which comprehensive lists have been published and those from which more study is particularly desired. They also listed certain species whose distribution and abundance need further elucidation. Much also needs to be done in compiling information on migration routes, breeding populations, and life histories.

Following the evening banquet (served in buffet style in Phi Beta Kappa Hall), Dr. Grey introduced Dr. John T. Baldwin, Chairman of the Department of Biology of William and Mary College, who extended a welcome. Mr. Rountrey then called on Miss Prior, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, for a report. Miss Prior submitted the following candidates for election to office:

President: Mr. W.F. Rountrey, Norfolk
Vice-President: Mr. Paul S. Dulaney, Charlottesville
Secretary: Mr. Robert J. Watson, Arlington
Treasurer: Mr. C.C. Steirly, Waverly

The Executive Committee:

To serve for three years (1959-1962): Mrs. J.W. Wiltshire,
Lynchburg; Mr. E.A. Marks, Richmond; Mr. Charles W. Hacker,
Hampton

To serve until 1961 in place of Mr. Max Carpenter, recently resigned: Mrs. Floy Burford, Norfolk
To serve until 1960 in place of Mr. Walter T. Bruce, recently resigned: Mr. James W. Eike, Falls Church.

All the nominees were elected.

The evening program consisted of two films presented, with comment, by members of the staff of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. Mr. Max Carpenter, who introduced the program, explained that the different nature of the two films resulted from the fact that each was aimed at a different type of audience. The first film, presented by Mr. Carpenter, was "A Way of Life," which dealt with predation in nature. Mr. George Harrison, of Blacksburg, then showed "A Wood Warbler's World," which, he explained, is intended to become part of a longer documentary film dealing with all the warblers of North America.

The field trip, held on Saturday, February 7, covered Jamestown and the York River along the Colonial Parkway. The group returned to Williamsburg for lunch and an illustrated talk by Mr. Harrison on the life history of the Barn Owl. Following the latter, the meeting was adjourned.

— 906 N. Wayne Street
Arlington 1, Virginia

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THE SILENT MOUSE TRAP

By George H. Harrison

"Chicken killer" is the name most commonly given to hawks and owls. "Mouse trap" would be more accurate. Tyto alba pratincola, better known as the monkey-faced barn owl, is the best mouse trap of all. Yet, most farmers, through ignorance, will shoot one every chance they get.

Although probably not worth its weight in gold, the money, measured in good American silver dollars, that a barn owl saves the farmer each year certainly would more than counterbalance the actual weight of this tireless bundle of flesh, bones, and feathers; especially since a barn owl weighs less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds soaking wet. Scientists have discovered that the barn owl is capable of killing as many as four thousand rats and mice during a single year.

One observer found that a pair of barn owls, while feeding their young in a nest, will capture at least 40 mice or other small rodents each night. A single wild barn owl under observation for a period of 90 days consumed 837 animals and captured 360 more which it did not eat. Another observer has seen a barn owl bring 16 mice, 3 gophers, a rat, and a squirrel to its ravenous nestlings during a single 25 minute period. As an experiment, a half grown barn owl was given all the mice it would eat. It swallowed 8,

one after another, and the ninth followed all but its tail. Within three hours, the tail had disappeared and the owl was ready for a second meal which consisted of four more mice.

Records show that one owl will catch as many rats and mice in a year's time as 8 to 12 average cats. A government report tells of an instance where cats were placed in a rat infested storage cellar of a brewery. When the doors were opened in the morning, the cats rushed out, showing every indication of fear, and fought against being taken back. An owl was placed into the same cellar and the next morning nine headless rats were found. Each morning for three weeks, dead rats, partially devoured, were located in the cellar until finally the rodents became so scarce that the owl had to be fed raw meat to prevent starvation.

The barn owl swallows its prey whole, fur and all. The owl's stomach separates the digestable parts from the fur and bones. This waste material is then rolled in a neat little ball and regurgitated. The dried fur and bones are called a "pellet." By examining the pellets found in and around the nesting sight, one can determine what the owl has been eating.

The examination of a set of 91 pellets at the University of Michigan disclosed 195 animals of which 160 were meadow mice, 8 deer and field mice, 10 short tailed shrews, 7 meadow jumping mice, 1 unidentified mouse, and 9 song birds. A collection of pellets from Pennsylvania contained 817 meadow mice, 210 house mice, 103 deer mice, 103 jumping mice, 9 other mice, 243 shrews, 31 barn rats, 31 moles, 12 young cottontail rabbits, 12 starlings, 1 chickadee, and 1 young opossum. Another collection of 2,094 pellets from several states yielded the bones and fur of 4,565 mice, rats, shrews, and moles. A few small song birds, mostly starlings and house sparrows, 15 immature cottontail rabbits, and a few miscellaneous items completed the list.

To my knowledge, there are no records of a barn owl killing a chicken. Most certainly if a barn owl ever did kill a chicken, it was the very rare exception.

What makes this monkey-faced creature a deadly mouse trap? What secret weapon enables it to out-catch any cat, trap, or poison? How can it swoop through the night and snatch a mouse in the protective cover of the woods? Two things make Tyto the greatest living mouse trap...hearing and silence! The barn owl possesses a hunting mechanism possessed by no other carnivorous bird. This mechanism enables it to locate prey by hearing alone and to make accurate, flying attacks even in absolute darkness. This fact has been proven. At last year's convention of the American Ornithologists' Union, Roger Payne and William H. Drury, Jr., reported that they had achieved unnatural darkness in a sealed room and that a barn owl, even under these exaggerated conditions, was successful in catching living prey.

Tyto has a skin-flap, much like our ear lobes, which enables it to pick up sounds that other birds would miss. It also is very sensitive to high pitched sounds beyond the range of the human ear.

The owl's second weapon is silence in flight, made possible by its very soft plumage and the furry edges on its flight feathers. These

specialized feathers almost eliminate sound completely.

As mentioned before, most farmers will shoot an owl on sight, but all farmers are not that ignorant. Bill and Dana Rowan of Butler County, Pennsylvania, know better than to shoot a barn owl because they have studied the big monkey-faced creature. Each year since 1944 the Rowans have had a family of barn owls nesting in the top of their 50-foot silo. Although their neighbors never said much, they still didn't like the idea of Bill Rowan keeping chicken killers in his silo year after year. But Bill knew better. The family of owls was safe on his farm. My father, Hal H. Harrison, received a call from Bill in the early spring of 1949. Mr. Rowan said that he thought that the barn owls were nesting in his silo again that year. Dad and I drove to the farm, climbed the silo and found five grey-white eggs on a litter of pellets. We checked the nest each day until the first egg began to hatch. Photographs were taken of the hatching process. Finally the little owl won the fight with the eggshell and tumbled out.

The female lays an egg every two or three days and starts incubating soon after she lays the first egg. As a result, the first egg hatches a week or ten days before the last. Four of the five eggs hatched, the fifth evidently was infertile.

Photographs were taken as the young grew. At first there was a marked difference in the size of the oldest compared to that of the youngest. However, as they grew the difference was not as noticeable. When the youngsters were four weeks old, we brought them down to the ground in order to let Mrs. Rowan photograph them. This developed into quite a project because a basket and ropes were needed to lower the family without risk of dropping them. This involved more work than anyone dreamed of.

One morning a short time later, Bill found one of the young in the bottom of the silo. It had an injured leg and Dana treated and bandaged it. The owl recovered. When the owls were about seven weeks old, we decided to try to get pictures of the adult owls bringing in food. This had to be done at night since they are nocturnal hunters. The camera was placed on the platform at the top of the silo. It was focused on the entrance where we had watched the adults fly in and out during the early stages of the study. An electric wire was dropped to the ground and connected to a battery where we controlled the camera. It was dark several hours before we caught the dim outline of the old owl sailing into the silo. Dad pushed the button just as the owl lit on the silo door. Flash! We had it!

Two nights were spent in this fashion. Three pictures were taken on the first night and each showed a meadow mouse (Microtus pennsylvanicus) in the owls' claws. The second night produced five pictures showing a meadow mouse, but in its beak this night.

Sounds from the feasting youngsters were evident, even from the ground, throughout both nights. In spite of their neighbor troubles, the owls have been very successful in raising four or five youngsters in the silo each year. And for three months each summer, the young owls actually scream for mice, moles, and shrews.

One year the Rowans got interested in the pellets and started collecting them. For two months they gathered all the pellets regurgitated up by the young and the adults in and around the silo. They collected 203 pellets and a bag of smashed ones. They sent the pellets to Dr. J. Kenneth Douth, Curator of Mammalogy at Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. Mr. Douth examined every pellet with a microscope and gave the Rowans this list of what their owls had eaten:

429 meadow mice	5 small song birds
4 lemming mice	1 insect
1 pine mouse	
12 white-footed deer mice	
18 jumping mice	
21 star-nose moles	
1 hair-tailed mole	
95 large short-tailed shrews	
1 least short-tailed shrew	
1 squirrel	
5 cottontail rabbits	
<u>23</u> unidentified mice	
611 mammals	

There wasn't a bone or feather of a chicken in all those pellets, even with four ravenous youngsters to feed.

No wonder the Rowans say they have the world's best mouse trap on their farm. A big pile of steel spring mouse traps have long since rusted at the Rowan farm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SOME CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CONSERVATION

By Robert J. Watson

Before the current session of Congress was more than a few weeks old, a flood of bills affecting conservation had been introduced. The following account of the more important ones has been taken largely from the very helpful material distributed by the National Wildlife Federation, which keeps close watch upon conservation developments in Congress and elsewhere in the nation.

The proposal of greatest interest to residents of Virginia involves a threat to Dyke Marsh, a valuable wildlife habitat located on the Potomac a few miles south of Washington, adjacent to the Virginia shore. The danger is contained in a bill which would authorize the National Park Service to effect an exchange of land with a local sand and gravel company - an innocent-sounding proposal likely to impress most citizens as totally lacking in interest.

Ownership of Dyke Marsh is divided between the company and the National Park Service. The company's portion lies next to the shore, at a point where the scenic George Washington Memorial Parkway (which parallels the Potomac from Alexandria to Mount Vernon) runs very close to the river. The company proposes to begin dredging this area in the near future. In order to prevent unsightly industrial operations close to the Parkway, the National Park Service has supported a plan to take control of the company-owned portion in exchange for the part now owned by the Park Service, which is farther from the shore.

The goal sought by the Park Service is, of course, wholly commendable. Unfortunately, however, the part of Dyke Marsh now owned by the government contains the most valuable wildlife habitat. It is, in fact, the last sizeable remnant of the once-great Potomac marshes in the vicinity of Washington. If it is surrendered to dredging, a unique and irreplaceable natural area will be destroyed.

The scenic integrity of the George Washington Parkway could readily be protected without sacrificing Dyke Marsh to destruction if the Park Service retained the area which it now owns and merely condemned a protective strip along the shore near the highway. But this solution would involve a little more trouble for the government. In the minds of Park Service officials, the extra difficulty evidently outweighs the value of a unique natural area.

The bill authorizing the exchange (H.R. 2228) has already been approved by the Committee on Public Works, after Park Service representatives testified in favor of it. It appears that an effort was made to slip it through early in the season in the hope that conservationists - those annoying and single-minded eccentrics - would be caught napping and thus could not indulge their pernicious habit of opposing business-like proposals by the Park Service to "improve" the properties entrusted to its care.

Leaders of the Potomac Valley Conservation and Recreation Council, however, were alert and discovered the threat. They have alerted all member organizations of the Council (of which the VSO is one) to support a move to have the bill returned to the committee. Such action would give conservationists a chance to testify in opposition, and to ask that the Park Service take the extra trouble to protect the Parkway without sacrificing the most valuable part of Dyke Marsh. In a bulletin distributed to its members, the Council has described the threatened area as "the only marsh of any consequence remaining in the immediate vicinity of Washington, the sole survivor of large marshes once found along the Potomac immediately below Washington . . . a place of beauty and a biological reserve of high importance." It is possible that by the time this article appears in print, H.R. 2228 will have been passed by the House of Representatives. If so, an effort will be made to hold it up in the Senate.

VSO members who attended the 1953 meeting in Arlington will recall how Dr. Irston Barnes, president of the District of Columbia Audubon Society, described his efforts to have Dyke Marsh turned into a permanent wildlife refuge. The company was quite willing to cede its part of the marsh for this purpose, in return for suitable government-owned properties elsewhere. The complexities of government red tape frustrated the proposal transfer. The Park Service now proposes to assume ownership of the company's property in a manner which would destroy what remains of Dyke Marsh, instead of preserving it.

The bulletin of the Potomac Valley Council also refers - all too accurately - to "the callous disregard of natural features which the National Park Service so often displays in dealing with the lands around Washington entrusted to its care." There is some reason for doubting that this disregard is confined to the Washington region. Those who doubt the last statement might well peruse some of the recent issue of National Parks Magazine, a well-illustrated and highly informative journal published by the National Parks Association. Here they will find photographs vividly documenting the scenic destruction wrought by "improved" highways blasted through our national parks - regardless of scenery or terrain - in order to carry the speeding tourist, as rapidly as possible, to the expensive lodges operated by concessionaires enjoying profitable monopolies. Increasingly, the Park Service seems to regard itself as engaged primarily in providing commercialized recreational facilities.

Several other bills pending in Congress are of interest to conservationists throughout the country. Perhaps the most important is the so-called "Wilderness Bill," which would set aside certain areas to be retained permanently as examples of the once-vast American wilderness. It was considered in Congress last year, but was deferred to allow further hearings. Several new bills, differing only slightly, have now been introduced by various members of Congress. Opposition comes from those who do not wish to see timber, mineral, or agricultural resources withdrawn from possible exploitation in the areas which would become wilderness preserves.

The bill to establish a new national park embracing the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, which was defeated last year by public-power interests, has also been reintroduced. Other bills would establish additional national parks on Cape Cod, in the Indiana dune country, and in part of the glaciated region of Wisconsin.

Certain favorable (or at least promising) developments in Northern Virginia may be of interest to VSO members in other parts of the state. The problems involved in trying to preserve open spaces in a rapidly growing urban area are particularly acute in this region, but they will sooner or later be encountered in other urbanized parts of Virginia. There is some evidence that planning and governing authorities in Arlington and Fairfax Counties are now awakening to the importance of preserving remnants of undeveloped lands for parks and outdoor recreation. Proposals have been made to enlarge the small local park now maintained by Fairfax County at the Great Falls of the Potomac, above Washington; to establish regional parks of some size in the two counties; and to set up and maintain a series of smaller parks, or "green fingers," in Arlington County, to separate the heavily settled regions. The Northern Virginia Chapter of the VSO is keeping in touch with these developments and will do its utmost to support them. Assistance from the Potomac Valley Conservation and Recreation Council will also doubtless be forthcoming when the proposals have been submitted in more detailed and precise form.

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DICKCISSEL AT NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

By Mrs. Floy (L.E.) Burford

On March 12, 1959, a male Dickcissel (Spiza americana) in beautiful plumage was feeding at my bedroom window feeder. I was within three feet of the bird when I first saw it. Hardly believing my eyes, I called to my husband. Together we watched the bird for fifteen minutes.

When I called to W.F. Rountrey, he came in a hurry, but arrived too late to see the bird then. When I telephoned him again at 1:00 P.M. he came and was able to watch the bird for several minutes. On the next day he and J.E. Ames saw it. Saturday, March 14, was open house day for the Dickcissel, when a number of the members of the Cape Henry Bird Club observed him at close range. After searching and listening for this bird in Virginia for many years, to have it turn up at such an unlikely spot has indeed been a thrill. It was feeding in company with House Sparrows and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

This is the second record for the species in the Norfolk region, one having been seen at Ocean View in 1907 by C.A. Reed. It has created wide interest in the city and has been written up for the local papers by Mrs. Mary Frances Morrisette. There are a number of recent records in the Richmond area, also in the Piedmont and central and lower Valley.

— 108 Lake Terrace Cl.
Norfolk 2, Virginia

THE U.S. NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ORNITHOLOGY

By Richard E. Price, Jr.

Some members of the VSO may not be aware of the outstanding bird displays and collections at the United States National Museum in Washington, D.C. While on vacation recently, I had an opportunity to see the amazing "habitat displays" in the Birds of the World exhibition. These are works of exceptional skill, and they will be of interest both to the amateur as well as the more advanced student of bird life. Of special interest to me was the display of birds that are either extinct or faced with extinction.

Serious students of ornithology will be interested to know that the excellent collection of bird skins at the Museum is available for their use. I was interested in seeing the collection of Bachman's Warbler skins. An amateur like myself should have been assigned to a junior clerk, but to my surprise none other than the distinguished Dr. Herbert Friedmann graciously showed the collection to me. As I left, I thanked him for his kindness in interrupting a busy schedule to help me. "They belong to the people," he said, "and if they don't have a right to see them, who does"?

Another service provided by the Museum is the free distribution of a limited number of bulletins pertaining to bird life. The most famous of these, perhaps, is the Life Histories of North American Birds by Dr. A.C. Bent. The latest of these (No. 211), Life Histories of North American Blackbirds, Orioles, Tanagers, and Allies, was available without cost for a time, but the Museum's copies are now exhausted. It is still available, however, from the Superintendent of Documents at the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C., at \$2.25.

Members of the VSO who are near Washington should investigate those and other opportunities for enriching their study of birds. After all, the Museum belongs to us!

--- 600 Second Avenue
Radford, Virginia

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NEWS OF THE LOCAL CHAPTERS

Cape Henry Bird Club

In December 1958 the Cape Henry Bird Club of Norfolk, Virginia, re-elected the following officers for another one-year term: President, Mrs. Mary Frances Morrisette; Vice President, Prof. Hansel Hughes; Recording Secretary, Miss Betty Dabney; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Gladys Forrest; Treasurer, Mrs. Marion Derby. Others elected to the Board of Directors were Mrs. Floy Burford, Dr. Gerald Akers, Miss Gisela Grimm, and Dr. William Blair.

The Cape Henry Bird Club and the Garden Club of Norfolk have sponsored the five-program Audubon Screen Tours for the season 1958-1959. The programs have been wonderfully received and a huge success financially. They will be presented for the second year next winter.

Regular monthly meetings of the Club are held the second Friday in every month in the Science Building of the Norfolk Division of the College of William and Mary. These meetings have proved very interesting and have included some excellent guest speakers and films. "Wood Duck Ways" from the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries was shown in September. In October, C.H. Lewis, of Salem, presented his excellent bird slides, while in November Club members showed a number of their own slides. Charles V. Covell, Jr., spoke on "Butterflies as a Hobby" at the December meeting and displayed a wonderful collection from this country and abroad. One of the Club members, Donald Lamm, who has collected for the Smithsonian Institution, presented the January program, "Birds and Animals of Africa," with slides and exciting commentary.

In February Max Carpenter, with the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, presented a program on the conservation plans of the Commission. He displayed many mounted birds and mammals and also showed two splendid films, "The Life Study of the Whooping Crane" and "Yours for a Song." W.F. Rountrey, a Club member and present President of the VSO, will talk on conservation needs at the March meeting and will show bird slides with corresponding recorded calls and songs. The April meeting will be presented by Mrs. J.A. Perkinson, of Virginia Beach, presenting color slides of the wild flowers of Seashore State Park.

The Cape Henry Bird Club holds field trips about every other week to numerous places in southern Virginia and eastern North Carolina. They also make projects of the Christmas Bird Count and the Spring Migration Bird Count. — Mary Frances Morrisette.

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NATURE STORIES FROM THE VIENNA WOODS

A Review

By J. J. Murray

Nature Stories from the Vienna Woods, by Lilli Koenig. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, March 13, 1959; 159 pp.; \$3.50; 24 full-page photographs and about 100 pen and ink sketches by the author.

This is a charming nature book by a real scientist. The author and her husband, Otto Koenig, have a simple home in the deep woods near Vienna and not far from the Danube. Here they keep all kinds of animals in various degrees of freedom and operate a very unusual research station.

Those who are familiar with the writings of Konrad Lorenz, author of King Solomon's Ring and originator of the kumpan concept in animal relationships, will recognize his influence in the studies here described. Dr. Lorenz has written a highly appreciative foreword for this book.

The Koenigs live in very close contact with their bird and animal friends, so close indeed that Schmurksi, a little dormouse, used Lilli as his 'sleeping tree,' spending most of his daytime juvenile life under her blouse, even going with her on shopping trips into Vienna. There are fascinating chapters about her relationship with the little animals and her discoveries about their habits. She tells of pheasants, goslings, kestrels, bee-eaters, dormice, badgers, South American nutrias and gray squirrels from the United States, and baby roe-deer.

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REPORT OF VSO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January 10, 1959

At a meeting held in Richmond on January 10, 1959, the Executive Committee of the Virginia Society of Ornithology took the following actions:

1. Heard a report from the Treasurer that, as of January 1, 1959, the Society had \$474.88 in the General Fund, \$100.00 in the Trip Fund, and \$250.21 in the Publication Fund. The balance in the General Fund is smaller than it was a year earlier, because of certain extraordinary expenses which arose during 1958.
2. Voted to authorize the Treasurer to maintain the balance of the Trip Fund at \$100.00 or less, and to transfer to the General Fund any excess over that limit.
3. Decided to abandon the attempt (decided on at the October 1958 meeting) to prepare materials aimed at reaching rural youths. The agencies working with rural young people already receive more material than they can use.
4. Heard an announcement from Mr. Steirly, chairman of the newly formed Budget Committee, that he had appointed the other committee members, as requested by the President. Those chosen were Miss Gertrude Prior, Mrs. Hawes Coleman, Mr. James W. Eike and Mr. Frederic R. Scott.
5. Voted to repeal the rule passed by the Committee in October 1958 requiring non-members who attend trips to pay an extra \$2.00 fee. Some of the chapters considered the fee to be a violation of the Society's by-laws. The President will ask a committee to undertake a study of the whole problem of VSO-chapter relations.

--- Robert J. Watson, Secretary

OFFICERS OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY, 1959-1960

(Terms to begin on July 1, 1959)

President: W.F. Rountrey, Norfolk
Vice-president: Paul S. Dulaney, Charlottesville
Secretary: Robert J. Watson, Arlington
Treasurer: Charles C. Steirly, Waverly
Editor: J.J. Murray, Lexington (temporary address,
Louisville, Kentucky)

Executive Committee:

Class of 1960:

Mr. J.E. Ames, Drivers
Mr. Raymond L. Stevens, Arlington
Mr. James W. Eike, Falls Church (1)

Class of 1961:

Dr. John H. Grey, Williamsburg
Mrs. C.W. Darden, Charlottesville
Mrs. Floy Burford, Norfolk (2)

Class of 1962:

Mrs. J.W. Wiltshire, Lynchburg
Mr. E.A. Marks, Richmond
Mr. Charles W. Hacker, Hampton

- (1) - Elected at 1959 meeting to fill out the term of Mr. Walter T. Bruce, who resigned.
- (2) - Elected at 1959 meeting to fill out the term of Mr. Max Carpenter, who resigned.

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NEWS AND NOTES

Evening Grosbeaks in Sussex County. The only Evening Grosbeaks reported in Virginia so far this season were seen by C.C. Steirly in north-eastern Sussex County in beech-oak-hickory forest along the edge of Black-water Swamp, a flock of 15 on March 8, 1959.

Second Annual Campus Bird Count. Kenneth Cooper, Chairman of the Committee at Sarah Lawrence College which initiated last year the Campus Bird Count, has announced that for this year a definite date (last year each group picked its own date) has been set -- Sunday, May 10. Except for the date, the rules are the same as for last year. These rules can be found in the September-October, 1958, issue of The Raven, page 110. Those who participate are asked to send their returns to Secretary, Campus Bird Count, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York. If you wish a copy of the official report of the returns, you should send \$1.00 with your return.

Sportsmen and the Birds of Prey. Some of the sportsmen's organizations are becoming whole-hearted friends of the hawks and owls. In News-Record for February, 1959, the organ of the Virginia Wildlife Federation, with which the VSO is connected, a note on page 6 tells how last year in some of the best duck breeding grounds of the Northwest there was an explosive population of field mice. When hawks and owls were drawn to the easy pickings to feed on the mice, hunters in turn began to slaughter the hawks and owls, with the result that the mice were permitted to eat all the natural food and the ducks went hungry.

Eastern Shore Trip.

Dates - August 1 and 2

Place - Wachapreague, Virginia

Further details to be announced. Write C.C. Steirly, Waverly, Va.



The Raven

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR
LEXINGTON, VA.

VOL. XXX

MAY-JUNE, 1959

NOS. 3 & 4

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ORNITHOLOGICAL FIELD WORK NEEDED IN VIRGINIA

By J.H. Grey and F.R. Scott

Adapted from a paper presented before the Annual Meeting of the
Virginia Society of Ornithology, Williamsburg
February 6, 1959

Introduction

Any discussion of this type is of necessity a highly subjective one. We feel most people who are acquainted with ornithology in Virginia will agree with our general outline, but the details are an entirely different matter. Every field observer has his own pet fields of interest, and it is natural for him to think these are more important than the next man's ideas. Hence we must emphasize that the ideas expressed here are ours, and we know there will be a great deal of disagreement about what we have included versus what we have left out. And of course it would be purely coincidental if our areas of emphasis agreed with yours. We hope, however, that if you disagree violently enough, you will make your views known.

Since this paper is restricted to one particular region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and to field ornithology, we can eliminate from present consideration such laboratory disciplines as anatomy and physiology, since these areas, while highly important, are not really applicable to this discussion. Similarly, strictly behavioral studies, while quite valuable and certainly Ravenworthy - to use a word coined by our Treasurer, C.C. Steirly - are not normally regional in nature and hence will be reviewed here only when they overlap other fields or when they take on a distinctive regional flavor.

We feel that work particularly needed in Virginia can be divided into four main categories: (1) distribution and abundance, (2) migration, (3) ecology, and (4) life-history studies. Over the years our work and interests have lain mainly with distribution and abundance, and thus we feel we can discuss this field with a bit more confidence than the others.

The categories we are using here should be thought of as a guide only and not as absolute divisions which Mother Nature has created for our convenience. Thus anyone who is doing a thorough study in distribution and abundance soon finds he can not ignore migration and ecology, and it is often fascinating how a bird's life history will affect its distribution and abundance. So it is important to remember that all of the areas of study which we discuss can and do overlap in an infinite number of ways.

Since one of the purposes of this paper is to encourage you to try to discover some of the unknown facts concerning our state's birdlife, we can not emphasize too strongly that no research project is complete until it has been communicated properly to others in the same field. This means that all of your old field notebooks are just so much waste paper until the material in them is put into a form in which it can be used by others. Our Society publishes The Raven for this purpose, and we hope you will use it.

I. Distribution and Abundance

Regional Studies

Dr. J.J. Murray has often stressed the importance of comprehensive regional studies in Virginia. These are studies in which the observer has tried to determine the seasonal status of every bird occurring in his study area, which is usually for convenience of some political subdivision or natural region in the state. It usually takes at least eight years of rather intensive field work by one or preferably a number of competent observers to produce such a study, for a shorter period will almost inevitably result in false generalizations being made from insufficient observations or in too much emphasis being placed on abnormal years. Many persons consider comprehensive regional studies to be the fundamental basis on which most other field work is based. These studies are particularly interesting to the novice, who usually wants first to know what birds he can expect to find in his area at various times of the year.

Comprehensive regional studies in Virginia have already been done for the following areas:

Albemarle County	Montgomery County
Amelia and Brunswick Counties	Richmond Area
Arlington-Alexandria-Fairfax	Rockbridge County
Cape Henry Region	Shenandoah National Park
Lynchburg Region	

Somewhat limited regional studies have been made elsewhere as well, such as in Pittsylvania County and along the Blue Ridge south of Roanoke.

With the exception of Rockbridge County and Shenandoah Park, it is probable that all of the above studies could stand a thorough revision. This is especially true of the Arlington-Alexandria-Fairfax area, which has not seen a regional study since 1929, and even at that time the study was combined with the District of Columbia and nearby areas in Maryland, and it is often not clear when Virginia is referred to. This is a particularly unhappy situation because the area is undoubtedly the most intensively covered in the state, and much useful information could be obtained merely by a compilation of scattered published notes and personal records. At the present time there is simply no convenient way of ascertaining the status of any bird in northern Virginia except by laborious correspondence and searching of old periodicals.

From what new areas of Virginia do we need comprehensive regional studies? We might truthfully, if somewhat facetiously, say any area not already covered. More realistically we might say any area where the necessary field work has been or is being done. However, there are a few areas that have especial interest for one reason or another, among which we might list the following:

- a. Anywhere in southwest Virginia west of Montgomery County. This is a sizable area, since there are some 180 miles and 15 counties from Montgomery to Cumberland Gap, an area about six times the size of Virginia's Eastern Shore. Those of you who heard Professor Maurice Brooks speak at our Blacksburg meeting in 1958 will recall his fascinating description of this area.
- b. The area around Buggs Island, centered in Mecklenburg County. Any county in Southside Virginia would be a good prospect, but this is probably of most interest because of the water birds introduced by the creation of this giant reservoir.
- c. Lower Peninsula - Hampton, Newport News, and York and James City Counties.
- d. Northern Neck, between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers.
- e. Eastern Shore.
- f. Northern Shenandoah Valley around Winchester, including Clark, Frederick, and Warren Counties.
- g. Open ocean, more than two miles out.

Of all the areas mentioned, only three are known to have workers who anticipate future publication of regional studies: Montgomery County, Lower Peninsula, and the Eastern Shore. Rather intensive field work is going on, however, in the Arlington and Richmond areas, Cape Henry region, Surry and Sussex Counties, and Albemarle County, and it may be that regional studies will eventually result.

A number of excellent surveys of breeding birds have been made of limited areas, and these are very useful in places on which there has been little previous work published. A typical study of this kind is made by an observer living in an area for a week or more at the height of the breeding season and working intensively to ascertain the status of all the nesting birds. In the past, studies of this sort have included islands off the Eastern Shore, high-altitude areas of Highland County, Burke's Garden in Tazewell County, Prince William Forest, etc.

The birdlife of a given area is never static, and the changes should be recorded. It is probable that it would be worthwhile publishing revised comprehensive regional studies of a given area as often as every 10 years if field work has been reasonably intensive. Most observers are probably aware of changes in bird distribution and abundance that have taken place in recent years in our state, particularly where birds have increased or moved into new areas. Examples of these are the recent increases of the Cattle Egret, Louisiana Heron, and Glossy Ibis along the coast, the spread eastward of nesting Horned Larks, Blue Jays, and Loggerhead Shrikes, and the recent invasions of the state by Evening Grosbeaks. Far less obvious but of no less interest are decreases in abundance or range, and it is often years following such a decrease before it is even noticed. Outstanding examples of this are the Dickcissel, which was once abundant over a large part of the state, and

the Baltimore Oriole, which used to nest all over the northern Piedmont south nearly to Richmond and on the Eastern Shore to Cape Charles. The oriole has now retracted its breeding range some 75 to 85 miles in eastern Virginia and is much less common elsewhere than formerly.

But there are other, more short-term changes in birdlife that are of equal interest. An example occurred at Skyland, in Shenandoah National Park, in June 1958 where the VSO Foray found only one singing House Wren, whereas in previous years it had nested abundantly around all the cabins at both Skyland and nearby Big Meadows.

Species Studies

If one's interest is confined to one or two species of birds or to one particular group, such as the hawks or ducks, a valuable study would be a survey of the statewide or regional distribution and abundance of these particular species, particularly if this information is either not available at all or is available only as scattered notes in the literature. An example of this type of study is the Bald Eagle nesting survey being coordinated by the VSO Research Committee. Since many birds have rather stringent habitat requirements, a study of this kind would be more meaningful if an ecological approach were used.

There are many species whose breeding distribution and abundance are imperfectly known in Virginia, including pairs of closely related species such as the following:

- a. Clapper and King Rails. The Clapper has been found nesting as far inland as Westmoreland County on the Potomac River, and the King Rail nests in fresh-water marshes within ear-shot of the ocean breakers. But somewhere inbetween there must be marshes where both nest, the Clapper perhaps on the salty edges and the King in the upper fresher reaches. But where this occurs in Virginia is unknown.
- b. Chuck-will's-widow and Whip-poor-will. The interrelationships of these two species should be checked. Not only is the **Chuck's** distribution in the state not known very well, but where both species occur, it is not known which is the more common. Perhaps one is restricted to a certain habitat, but there seems to be no published information.
- c. Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees. In the mountains the Black-capped Chickadee is known to breed only in Highland and Western Augusta Counties. It probably occurs elsewhere, but this information is not available. Furthermore, it is not known whether or not the ranges of the two species overlap.

Other birds whose breeding ranges and abundance in our state are imperfectly known include the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| d. Black Rail | j. Warbling Vireo |
| e. Barn Owl | k. Swainson's Warbler |
| f. Red-cockaded Woodpecker | l. Black-throated Green Warbler |
| g. Traill's Flycatcher | m. Bachman's Sparrow |
| h. Bank Swallow | n. Vesper Sparrow |
| i. Brown-headed Nuthatch | o. Sharp-tailed Sparrow |

The distribution and abundance in winter of Virginia's birds tends to be far more irregular than in the breeding season, being particularly sensitive to weather and food supply. The publication over the years of the Christmas bird counts has given us a good over-all picture of our winter birdlife, but there are still gaps in our knowledge. These gaps include the waterfowl of the Chesapeake Bay, especially north of the York River, marsh birds of all kinds, and the true status of the Vesper and Tree Sparrows in winter.

Taxonomic Studies

This is a very broad field, most of which need not concern us here now. Our special interest in this field lies with the distribution and abundance of the various subspecies of those birds that vary enough and in such a manner to have been divided into two or more races. Since only a few subspecies are identifiable in the field, and then only under optimum conditions, this is a job normally best left to experts in museums with trays of specimens, which make comparisons quite simple. The average field observer can best help by saving all the birds found dead and turning them over to museum experts at the first opportunity. Such specimens can be kept almost indefinitely if they are frozen, wrapped in air-tight material, and kept at zero degrees.

Unfortunately, in the past too much emphasis has been placed on this field of study, and the average field observer has been led to believe that he can participate more in taxonomic work than is actually possible for him to do. It can't be emphasized too strongly that the species is the basic biological entity, and that the subspecies is merely a convenient way of describing variation in the species.

II. Migration

The study of bird migration has as many facets as we have bird students with fertile imaginations. Many areas of this wide field we can disregard for the purposes of this paper, since they are not really regional in nature. This is particularly true when we begin thinking about the causes or mechanisms of migrations; these are really applicable anywhere, regardless of the location. In this paper we suggest three phases of migration that

might profitably be studied by local ornithologists, but these are by no means all, since it would not take a professional ornithologist to propose a study of the migration of any species that is known to make any seasonal movements at all.

Migration Routes

What are the principal migration routes in Virginia? It is apparent to even the casual student of birds with statewide experience that most land bird migration occurs either in the vicinity of the mountains or along the coast. Since the mountains are so much closer to the coast in the northern part of the state, it is natural to assume, and indeed it is true, that the coastal and mountain migration routes seem to overlap near Washington, D.C. Then this must mean there is a migration "hiatus" or vacuum in the south-central part of the state. Unfortunately, this has never been investigated thoroughly, nor for that matter have either the coast or the mountains been the subject of a migration study, except for a few specific species, and even this information is scattered.

Composition of Specific Flights

Every observer living in a good location knows that during migration large flocks of migrant birds may appear and disappear overnight. One interesting phase of study is to investigate the composition of these migratory flights and to attempt to relate them to various parameters such as weather, date, etc. A study of this sort would show, for example, whether males and females of a particular species utilize the same migration route or not, or whether they migrate at the same or different times of the year. It would also show whether immature birds in fall migrate south before, after, or with the adults of the species.

Diurnal Migration

In certain sections of the state it is possible to observe daylight migration fairly easily. Along the mountain ridges many observers have counted migrating hawks during daylight hours and have incidentally observed other migrating species, such as warblers or pipits. Similarly, coastal watchers are familiar with the great diurnal flights of loons, cormorants, Snow Geese, Whimbrels, and swallows of several species. Throughout the state observers have seen occasional daylight flights of migrating Canada Geese or Nighthawks. Yet there has been little work on this phase of migration except for casual mention in papers actually devoted to other subjects. And to our knowledge no one has ever concentrated on the study of major rivers or the Chesapeake Bay as migration routes.

A number of techniques have been used to study migration which might be of interest. Banding, of course, comes first to mind, particularly the use of mist nets, which catch insectivorous birds as well as the seed-eating types normally caught with traps. Some observers have had success with counting birds crossing the face of the moon, and then by fairly simple

mathematical calculations they have computed how heavy a migration passed overhead at a particular time. Other observers have found it extremely profitable to study birds killed in collisions with man-made objects, such as tall buildings, lighthouses, television towers, and airport ceilometers. Under certain weather conditions large numbers of birds will be killed by contact with these objects, and the resulting analysis is assumed to be an excellent random sample of the migrants passing overhead at that time.

III. Ecology

Population Studies

Population studies of a given area usually involve the observer determining the total number of birds using the area and then expressing this number as a density figure, i.e., the number of birds or pairs per unit area. This is about the only way to describe accurately the abundance of birds. The familiar breeding-bird censuses and winter bird-population studies are examples of this type of work.

Breeding birds are particularly amenable to this type of study because most noncolonial birds have a specific territory that they occupy during their breeding period. Thus an observer making a series of trips over a given area will usually succeed in mapping the territories of all the nesting birds without the necessity of finding the actual nests.

Relatively few of these studies have been made in Virginia, and they are probably among the best studies the amateur can engage in. They make excellent cooperative projects for local groups but are also perfectly satisfactory for an individual to handle. Both the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia and the Brooks Bird Club in West Virginia have sponsored censuses of this type for years. The development and encouragement of these studies has been done mostly by men at the Patuxent Research Refuge of the Fish and Wildlife Service, at Laurel, Maryland, principally through the magazine Audubon Field Notes. No one interested in this type of work should be without this journal.

Economic Studies

Although economic studies are highly important, they usually take the efforts of a full-time professional ornithologist to be useful. Of course any part-time amateur can study the food habits of a particular species, but large-scale studies, such as an investigation of the economic impact of the various blackbirds in southeastern Virginia, require equipment, time, and other resources that are generally not available to the amateur.

Ecological Studies of Individual Species

A study in detail of the preferred habitats of any species, including comparative abundance through various habitats, would be quite useful. Recently C.C. Steirly made an excellent study of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and its nesting ecology in southeastern Virginia which was a

major addition to our knowledge of this bird. Even such a study of as common a bird as the Robin would be useful, provided it was conducted in the right manner.

IV. Life-history Studies

"Life history" is an exceedingly general term that, applied to a bird, refers to everything concerning its habits and behavior, with particular emphasis on the life cycle. Specifically, life-history studies include such things as breeding habits and territorial behavior, habitat preferences, migration, flocking, roosting, species recognition, song, and so on. Because of limitations on one's time and interest, complete life-history studies are rare, and most current studies cover only a few phases of a bird's life history, with emphasis being placed usually on the breeding cycle. An excellent outline of a life-history study is given by J.J. Hickey in his book, A Guide to Bird Watching.

Thus far, we have had only a few published life-history studies on birds in Virginia. Among these are ones on the Cattle Egret by J.M. Valentine, the Osprey by W. Bryant Tyrrell, the Turkey by H.S. Mosby and C.O. Handley, the Clapper Rail by R.L. Stewart, the Black Skimmer by O.C. Pettingill, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker by C.C. Steirly, the Raven by J.J. Murray and W. Bryant Tyrrell, the Brown-headed Nuthatch by Mrs. Floy Burford, the Long-billed Marsh Wren by J.G. Griggs, the Brown Thrasher by Edna Becker, and the Carolina Junco by D.R. Hostetter. We hope that shortly Dr. Hostetter's thesis on the junco will be partially reprinted in The Raven.

When dealing with life-history studies, one of the most important things to remember is that a bird's life history near the center of its abundance is not necessarily the same as it is near the limits of its range. Virginia is on the edge of the range of a number of species or isolated populations, the study of any of which would be of value. In eastern or southeastern Virginia we have such interesting breeding birds needing study as:

Snowy Egret

Swainson's Warbler

Louisiana Heron

Black-throated Green Warbler

Marsh Hawk

Boat-tailed Grackle

Wilson's Plover

Seaside Sparrow

Note that both the Swainson's and Black-throated Green Warblers also occur in the western part of the state, but the ranges are apparently discontinuous. A fascinating study of either species would be a comparison of the life histories of both separated populations.

There are many mountain or Piedmont birds that would be worthwhile as the subject of a life-history investigation. Among these are:

Least Flycatcher

Golden-winged Warbler

Bewick's Wren

Magnolia Warbler

Black-capped Chickadee

Blackburnian Warbler

Warbling Vireo

Vesper Sparrow

These lists are not all inclusive, of course, as life-history studies could be made of even our more common birds provided they were not simply repetitious of what had been published elsewhere. If you are interested in this type of work, the important questions to ask are, what birds am I especially interested in, and which ones are available to me to study considering the time I have to spend.

Conclusion

We hope we have shown that anyone who believes there is no longer any original field work to engage in is either deluding himself or is lacking in imagination. The subjects we have mentioned are actually only an introduction to the unlimited field of bird study, principally because we have limited ourselves to problems involving some geographic connection with Virginia. One area we have scarcely mentioned is bird banding, and that is because this is a technique of study and not a field of study. However, as a technique it is highly valuable in every field we have mentioned, and every serious student of birds should investigate how banding might help him in his work.

To conclude we might point out that not all new papers worthy of publication are the results of field studies directly pointed at a particular problem. Many of us could produce excellent manuscripts by an indoor investigation of our own field notebooks, perhaps supplemented by conversation and correspondence with other bird students. For example, several observers in the Norfolk area could easily write highly valuable papers in this manner on the breeding of the Swainson's and Black-throated Green Warblers in this area. These papers could include discussions of geographic distribution, habitat preferences, times of arrival and departure, descriptions of nest sites, egg dates and numbers, and so forth. This information is not available elsewhere and will never be unless some action is forthcoming.

-- Williamsburg and Richmond, Va.

BREEDING CLAPPER RAIL IN JAMES RIVER CORD-GRASS MARSHES

By C. C. Steirly

For a number of years I had been interested in the breeding status of the Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) in the marshes along the James River, particularly the Surry County portion of the river. King Rails (*Rallus elegans*) had been found in several of the marshes of Surry County, and the finding of a nest of this species was reported in The Raven (Vol. XXIII, 1952).

During the winter I had handled dead Clapper Rails accidentally caught by the muskrat trappers trapping under permit at Hog Island State Waterfowl Refuge in north east Surry County. Occasionally throughout the year I had heard what I thought were Clapper Rails but have never been too sure of the voice distinctions between this species and the King Rail.

On May 29, 1959 I spent some time on a small wooded and marshy island along the James River on the Hog Island Refuge. This island, five feet above sea level, was one of loblolly pine, post oak and rather dense undergrowth including persimmon, green brier, poisonivy, groundsel, myrtle, swamp rose and stunted red cedars. Much of the island was marshy including *Scirpus*, *Juncus* and a great amount of giant cord-grass (*Spartina cynosuroides*). In back of this island, on both sides of the tidal creek that made it an island, and extending for a mile or so was a vast marsh in which giant cord-grass formed the dominant vegetation. At low tide mud flats of twenty to thirty feet in width flanked the tidal creek. These were occupied by thousands of fiddler crabs (*Uca pugnax*) and the mollusk (*Polymesoda carolinensis*) was very much in evidence.

Here on the edge of the upland portion of the island where the pine woods and understory species were abruptly bordered by a narrow zone of giant cord-grass some five feet wide, between the upland and the tidal creek, my Scotty flushed a female Clapper Rail and five black, downy young. The young rapidly dispersed themselves by swimming along the creek, disappearing into the cord-grass. One swam across the creek, a trip of some fifty feet across the open water and one concealed itself in an isolated clump of cord-grass that was about a foot in diameter at its base. Here the tiny black creature succeeded in hiding itself quite effectively and I had difficulty in showing it to my wife. It remained motionless even when I stroked it gently with a long cord-grass stem. Its tiny grayish beak was pointed toward the shore and even when it was menaced by the stem it did not move.

The female in the meantime kept swimming back and forth across the creek uttering loud cries. Now and then it would wade ashore and disappear into the cord-grass on the opposite side of the creek only to reappear and resume its swimming in the open water before me. This, of course, permitted excellent opportunities to note its coloration such that I had no doubt as to its identification. The Clapper Rail was thus recorded as a breeding species of the giant cord-grass marshes of the Hog Island area of Surry County.

Apparently there is a salinity gradient between the east side of the refuge and the west side of Cobham Bay. Hog point might be the dividing line. There seems to be a slight difference in the tidal vegetation between the two

sides of the refuge although the cord-grass marsh seems to be the dominant feature along the east or down river side. The King Rail is most often seen on the west side; however, there is as yet no proof that it does not breed on the east side. In one of the particular haunts of the King Rail, pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata* and bulrush (*Scirpus robustus*) occur in some abundance where there is less tidal fluctuation.

-- Waverly, Virginia

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SEMIPALMATED RING PLOVER AT PETERSBURG

By William B. McIlwaine, Jr.

We were driving along the Defense Highway just south of Petersburg. On our right was a low pasture, with a stream running through it; on the left was a woody swamp.

My wife can tell you what every woman in the crowd had on, cap-a-pie, and whether this or that was well made. In other words, she is a close and accurate observer. Also she is an enthusiastic bird watcher.

Suddenly she exclaimed, "Oh, oh! Right in the middle of the road! The smallest killdeer I ever saw!" As she continued to speak of the size of the bird, I asked, "How many rings did it have on its breast?" She answered, "One." So I betook me to the books. Immediately she said, "There is the bird I saw." Yes, it was a Semipalmated Ringed Plover. My wife said she had noticed particularly how the white ring extended definitely all around the neck.

Several days later we were on the Duncan Road, a few miles southwest of Petersburg, and there in a low grassy field, quite close to us, were three of those "little killdeers"; yes, three Semipalmated Ringed Plovers.

Our dates were April 20 and 22. This is well ahead of any records given in Murray's Check-list. Only one other record do I have of this bird for our area, May 13, 1954.

-- Petersburg, Virginia

WINTER BIRD POPULATION STUDY

Dry lowland deciduous forest. Location: three miles southeast of Herndon, Virginia, along the Loudoun-Fairfax County line. Size: 15 acres. Description of area: see Raven, May-June, 1958, pp. 53-54. Coverage: Jan. 17, 24, 31; Feb. 7, 12, 21. Total, six trips, averaging about 1½ hours each. Census: Turkey Vulture, ♀ (1); Red-tailed Hawk, ♀ (2); Bobwhite, 4 (28); Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1 (3); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, ♀ (1); Hairy Woodpecker, ♀ (1); Downy Woodpecker, 1 (3); Crow, 1 (4); Carolina Chickadee, 1 (6); Tufted Titmouse, 1 (3); White-breasted Nuthatch, 1 (6); Brown Creeper, ♀ (1); Robin, ♀ (1); Golden-crowned Kinglet, ♀ (1); Cardinal, ♀ (2); Purple Finch, 1 (6); Slate-colored Junco, 2 (10); White-throated Sparrow, ♀ (1). Average total: 13 birds (density, 80 birds per 100 acres). Remarks: Because two of the trips were made after the deadline of February 10 specified by the Audubon Society, the results of this census will not be published in Audubon Field Notes. The area was censused last year by Robert O. Paxton, who wrote up the results for The Raven (loc. cit.) His write-up drew attention to the abnormal nature of the area resulting from proximity to a feeding station. His total population figures (average density 13 birds, 84 per 100 acres) agree closely with this year's results. We did not find any of the species on all six trips; only the Downy Woodpecker was observed on as many as three. The extraordinary numbers of the Bobwhite resulted from the finding of a covey (presumably the same one each time) on two of the trips, estimated to number 10-15 birds. Evidently they used the woods as a roosting area or as a stopover between trips to and from nearby fields. -- Col. and Mrs. Louis B. Ely, Robert J. Watson (compiler).

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NEWS FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Last autumn the Committee and the membership at large were quite disturbed to learn that the Nelson County Board of Supervisors had placed a bounty on hawks. Considerable pressure was put on this governing body and we are now happy to report that its action has been rescinded. As yet we are not acquainted with all of the details but we suspect the hawk leaflets and the Reader's Digest reprints with which the governing body was bombarded had something to do with it.

I am particularly pleased to report the action, reaction and observation of a friend of mine, a gentleman farmer in Prince George County who raises sheep. During the winter when his sheep were lambing he noticed a bald eagle hanging around a bit too close for comfort. His first thought naturally was for his week old lambs so he went to the house for his gun. Before he was able to get in a shot he observed the eagle swoop down to the edge of a pond near the lambing pens. There he saw it fly off with a dead domestic duck. This is a good example of the manner in which these magnificent birds are so often maligned. My friend told me he was very glad that he hadn't shot in haste. If stories such as this could only get in the newspapers instead of

the usual pictures of so-called heroes posing with an outstretched bald eagle, complete with gun and asinine grin!

Recently while helping a prominent Sussex County farmer get started on a tree planting project, I noticed a Red-tailed Hawk flying over. Instead of merely saying "there goes a Red-tailed Hawk," I said, "look at that, it's a flying mousetrap." Even the four or five colored farmhands looked at me in amazement. This was all I wanted, a chance to get in a plug on the beneficial value of hawks. All of us have these opportunities from time to time, but how few of us take advantage of them.

During the winter I have had numerous opportunities to mention hawks and owls in rural school talks. In one of these, when I was making my annual forest fire prevention talk to a three room colored school in Greenville County, the teacher asked if I knew anything about birds. This was all I needed -- need I say more?

The excellent magazine, Virginia Wildlife, had in its January issue a splendid article on predation, written primarily for sportsmen. It reiterated most of the things we stand for. In order to make my issue as effective as possible I deliberately left it in a local barbershop frequented by farmers and sportsmen. Far better to get it in circulation than to have it gather dust among my huge stack of unread nature periodicals.

Mrs. Florence Robinson, one of our members in Charlotte County, writes that she has been giving bird talks in rural schools and to 4-H groups. In each she made a plea for hawks and owls. She also covered the subject in her newspaper nature column. My good friends, Floy Burford and Mrs. Mary Frances Morrisette, also advise that they have been carrying the hawk and owl party line in their talks and newspaper work down in the Norfolk area.

There is great need for more of us to participate in the program. We cannot rest on our oars now that the hawk law has been passed. That is not enough, for it is actually little more than one of scores of fish and game regulations that might prove difficult to enforce. We must keep up a steady educational program and we must mold public opinion. Until we have that on our side we are just kidding ourselves. The Committee earnestly requests all of the membership to keep up the fight. Audubon Society hawk leaflets are available from the writer, and Mrs. Hawes Coleman, Jr., at 108 Gaymont Road, Richmond 26, Virginia, has a quantity of the Reader's Digest reprint, "The Truth About Hawks," for distribution to those who will use them.

In closing, we wish to quote a passage from the February issue of the News-Record, the organ of the Virginia Wildlife Federation (Vol. 4, No.1):

"Last year the population of field mice exploded in some of the best of the Northwest duck breeding grounds. Hawks and owls drawn to the easy pickings were slaughtered by hunters and the mice never had it so good. They ate up all of the food strips and natural feed and the ducks went hungry. The same thing happens right here in Virginia every year to our food plantings and a lot of our barber shop biologists kill every predator bird on sight, and the quail starve."

-- C.C. Steirly
Waverly, Virginia

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

May 1959

At a meeting in Richmond on May 23, 1959, the Executive Committee of the VSO took the following actions:

1. Heard a report from Treasurer C.C. Steirly that there is \$1,009.03 in the General Fund, \$100.00 in the Trip Fund, and \$304.21 in the Publication Fund. Authorized the Treasurer to transfer \$200.00 from the General Fund to the Publication Fund.

2. Decided that a new edition of the Checklist of the Birds of Virginia should be started as soon as possible, and agreed to support Dr. Murray in the project.

3. Reappointed Dr. Murray Editor of the Raven.

4. Agreed to hold the 1960 meeting in Harrisonburg, Lexington, or Lynchburg (in that order of preference).

5. Received an announcement from the President, Mr. Rountrey, appointing or confirming the following committee memberships:

Local Chapters: Mr. Eike, Chairman.

Conservation: Dr. Akers, Chairman; Mr. C.H. Lewis; Mr. Watson.

Research: Mr. Scott, Chairman.

Records: Dr. Murray, Chairman; Dr. Grey; Mr. Scott.

Publicity: Mrs. Coleman, Chairman; Mrs. Morrisette.

Trip: Mr. Steirly, Chairman; Mr. Dulaney.

Education: Mrs. Wiltshire, Chairman.

Membership: Mrs. Morrisette, Chairman.

Budget: Mr. Steirly, Chairman.

Except where otherwise specified, the chairman of each committee will select the other members.

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AUTUMN FIELD TRIP

A Skyland Autumn Field Trip is being planned for October 10 and 11. Persons desiring to attend should make their own reservations with the Virginia Skyline Co., Luray, Va., for the nights of October 9 and 10. Although no trip fee is being charged, those planning to attend should notify the Tripmaster, C.C. Steirly, Waverly, Va.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE V S O

(S) - Sustaining Member

Abbott, Jackson M.	1100 Doter Dr.	New Alexandria, Va.
Abbott, Mrs. Judith A.	747 Alabama St.	Bristol, Tenn.-Va.
Addington, Mrs. J.C.	Cedar Grove Farm	London Bridge, Va.
Akers, Dr. W.G.	1138 Bolling Ave.	Norfolk 8, Va.
Allen, Miss Cleo	1207 W. 47th St. Apt. 2	Richmond, Va.
Allen, Mrs. Harry	c/o Mrs. W.N. Travenack, 21 Tavanna Rd., Richmond 21, Va.	Richmond, Va.
Alston, Miss Edith	43 Prospect Parkway	Portsmouth, Va.
Ambler, R.A.	118 Clyde St.	Hampton, Va.
Ames, J.E., Jr. (S)		Driver, Va.
Ames, J.E., III	404 Shenandoah Rd.	Hampton, Va.
Armstrong, Mrs. Martha B.	510 Newport Ave.	Williamsburg, Va.
Artz, Miss Lena		Waterlick, Va.
Bailey, J.W.	27 Willway Rd.	Richmond 26, Va.
Ball, Miss Ada	4508 Forest Hill Ave.	Richmond 28, Va.
Barksdale, Miss Winifred	1501 Palmyra Ave.	Richmond 27, Va.
Bartch, Dr. Paul W.	"Lebanon", Gunston Hall Rd., Lorton, Va.	Richmond 27, Va.
Bartholomew, R.J.	206 Cypress Rd.	Portsmouth, Va.
Bass, Mrs. Charles		Stephen's City, Va.
Baugh, Miss Birdie May	"Birdland"	RFD Powhatan, Va.
Beasley, R.J. (S)	Box 117	Newport News, Va.
Beaty, Miss Mary	Box 1577	Williamsburg, Va.
Bell, Dr. Leslie M.	137 W. Boscawen St.	Winchester, Va.
Bentley, Mrs. H.C.	7313 Jack Rabbit Lane	Scottsdale, Arizona
Blair, Capt. R.H. (USN Ret.)	East Hundred	Cobham, Va.
Blick, Mrs. J.E. (S)	12 Greenbrier Rd.	Portsmouth, Va.
Bliss, Miss Laura	225 South Princeton Cir.	Lynchburg, Va.
Boulton, Rudyerd (S)	3056 R St. NW	Washington 7, D.C.
Braxton, Mrs. H.H.	138 Walker St.	Chase City, Va.
Breneiser, Elliot (S)	1321 W. 50th St.	Norfolk 8, Va.
Breneiser, Mrs. Elliot (S)	1321 W. 50th St.	Norfolk 8, Va.
Brooks, Prof. Maurice	West Virginia Univ.	Morgantown, W. Va.
Brown, Mrs. J.S.	925 Clearfield Ave.	Norfolk 2, Va.
Brunk, S.F.	Box 84, University Hosp.	Charlottesville, Va.
Burford, Mrs. L.E. (S)	108 Lake Terrace	Norfolk 2, Va.
Burgess, Mrs. C.L. (S)	1900 Memorial Ave.	Lynchburg, Va.
Burgess, Mrs. E.H.	1542 Bolling Ave.	Norfolk, Va.
Burnett, Mrs. Bessie	227 Churchville Ave.	Staunton, Va.
Burns, Dr. R.K.	Carnegie Inst. of Wash.	Baltimore 5, Md.
Calvert, Dr. G.E.	Lynchburg Medical Centre	Lynchburg, Va.
Carpenter, Max	Route 1	Dayton, Va.
Carroll, R.P.	Box 613	Lexington, Va.
Carry Nature Sanctuary	Sweet Briar College	Sweet Briar, Va.
Cary, M.E.	Rt. 3, Glenaire	Charlottesville, Va.
Cary, Mrs. M.E.	Rt. 3, Glenaire	Charlottesville, Va.
Chamberlain, Dr. J.L.	Biology Dept., Randolph-	
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The Raven

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR
LEXINGTON, VA.

VOL. XXX

JULY-AUGUST, 1959

NOS. 7 & 8

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SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK FIELD TRIP

By Mary Frances Morrisette

The annual VSO Foray at Skyland in the Shenandoah National Park was held June 19, 20 and 21 with 30 members and guests in attendance. Trip Master, C.C. Steirly obtained a cottage with a spacious lounge as the meeting place for the group.

On Thursday evening the early arrivals were treated to a delightful program by C.H. Lewis of Salem, showing his own excellent color slides with interesting commentary. We saw ourselves as others see us when another member, Miss Helen Goldstick of Arlington, showed slides taken on several of our trips.

We took the White Oak Canyon Trail the first day with its descending path through the Limberlost. There is a constant murmur from the falls that grows increasingly louder as the trail winds toward the rocky gorge and cascading stream. The excitement of a pair of black-throated blue warblers led us to their small nest cradling three babies. The strikingly colored blackburnian warbler called from the tops of hemlocks. So high up are they that nothing on the ground attracts or disturbs them. One really has to work at catching a glimpse of these active birds. Also seen were the ovenbird, Carolina junco, veeries, black and white warblers, goldfinch, phoebe, and Acadian flycatcher. A pair of solitary vireos were building a nest on a lower limb of a hemlock directly over the trail.

We lunched on a promontory overlooking the first falls. Luncheon music was furnished by a brilliant parula warbler serenading in full view across the gorge.

It was a real treat to have Dr. and Mrs. J.J. Murray join us that evening. We all welcome them back to permanent residence in the State.

An outstanding fellow member and our speaker for Friday evening was Dr. Alexander Wetmore of Maryland. For many years Dr. Wetmore was secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and is a world authority on avian paleontology and classification. He is now research associate of the Smithsonian and spends every winter in Panama accompanied by his attractive wife, who was also with us that evening. He studies and collects the Panamanian birds for the Institution. He had quite a fine collection of these colorful bird skins with him.

The second morning, after a breakfast of buckwheat cakes with mountain blackberry syrup and coffee, we drove to the Big Meadows picnic grounds. From there the Dark Hollow Falls trail skirts the botanically interesting swamp, crosses the highway and enters a wooded ravine. We came upon Canada warblers feeding their young in a nest on the ground. A male black-throated blue, attracted by the anxious Canadas, came close to investigate. For some seconds we had the thrill of seeing these two colorful males in the binoculars at the same time. Stopping at Big Meadows we renewed acquaintance with the vesper sparrows. A deer and a house wren were also seen here.

On Saturday evening after much persuasion, our shy trip master was prevailed upon to give a talk. Those not present will never know what they missed. He held our rapt attention, but sides ached from laughter. Thanks, Charlie.

The morning of the third day we were driving toward the Hawksbill Gap parking area when a family of ruffed grouse attempted to walk across the speeding highway in single file. Being birdwatchers, we stopped, caused a minor traffic jam, but had unobstructed looks at these interesting and intelligent game birds.

Ascending Hawksbill Mountain we found the nest of the ovenbird with three tiny babies. Near the summit in an open clearing a field sparrow nest in a low bush contained two young. Descending via another trail we flushed a Carolina junco from her nest beneath a tuft of grass at the edge of the path. Four greenish-white eggs spotted with rufous-brown were the objects of the concern of the pair.

Birds seen during the three days included: turkey vulture, red-tailed, red-shouldered and broad-winged hawks, ruffed grouse, mourning dove, black-billed cuckoo, chimney swift, ruby-throated hummingbird, downy woodpecker, flicker, eastern phoebe, Acadian flycatcher, wood pewee, raven, common crow, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, house wren, catbird, brown thrasher, robin, wood thrush, veery, cedar waxwing, solitary vireo, red-eyed vireo, black-and-white warbler, parula, black-throated blue, black-throated green, blackburnian, chestnut-sided and prairie warblers, ovenbird, Louisiana water thrush, yellow-breasted chat, hooded and Canada warblers, redstart, cowbird, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting, goldfinch, rufous-sided towhee, Carolina junco, vesper, chipping and field sparrows.

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VSO WACHAPREAGUE RENDEZVOUS, AUGUST, 1959

By Helen L. Goldstick

On the evening of July 31, twenty-one VSO members congregated at the Wachapreague Hotel for a hearty dinner, served southern style. After dinner, the group, barely able to move away from the tables, climbed to the third floor balcony to participate in an informal gathering and to map plans for Saturday.

Early Saturday morning (after eating far too much breakfast!) we boarded three fishing boats. With Charles Steirly in command, the fleet departed for Cedar Island. As we cruised through the inlet the familiar droop of the Hudsonian Curlew's bill and the predominant pattern of flying willets could be seen everywhere in the marsh.

A short stop-over at Club Point produced two (perhaps three) barn owls, flushed from the remains of an old water tank. Nearby we discovered a still active heronry. Nests of green herons, snowy egrets, and Louisiana herons were abundant and many adult birds were perched within close proximity protecting their clutches. Fred Scott of Richmond and Mrs. L.E. Burford of Norfolk banded many young birds. We departed from Club Point with some relief, however, because of the harassing insect population.

Next stop for our fleet was Cedar Island. We dropped anchor and were ready to go ashore when we heard thunder and saw frequent streaks of lightning and cumulonimbus clouds. Heeding the advice of the boat Captains and Fleet Commander (Charles Steirly), we decided to sit out the storm. Through the rain we sighted royal terns, a flight of curlews, ruddy turnstones, black skimmers, semipalmated and spotted sandpipers, laughing gulls, and oystercatchers. The wind shifted, and soon the sky cleared, blessing us with a sunny afternoon.

After lunch we waded ashore and assembled for the long, rewarding trek over the grass-studded sand dunes and on to the bird populated flats. We paused to check on seaside and song sparrows, cowbirds, and boat-tailed grackles. And then to our astonishment, someone spotted the wild goat, known to live on Cedar Island, after having been stranded as the result of a severe storm. We circled the animal and all had a close look at his long beard, huge horns, and shaggy coat.

As we trudged on to the flats we came upon the remains of a black skimmer colony. A few nests (circular indentations in the sand) contained brown spotted eggs. We were treated to the sight of a newly hatched baby black skimmer. Young birds of all ages could be seen scurrying about. While we inspected the skimmer colony, two gull-billed terns flew overhead.

Our fleet left Cedar Island at 3:00 P.M. for home port, Wachapreague. After dinner at the hotel we again met on the third floor balcony to recall the day's events and watch the colorful reflections of the sunset over the marsh.

After breakfast early Sunday morning the group regretfully broke up, and members were homeward bound to Washington, D.C.; Orange, New Jersey; Waverly, Richmond, Norfolk, Sweet Briar and Arlington.

There was a noticeable shortage of laughing gulls as compared to the number seen during the August, 1958, trip. Hudsonian were abundant, and one cormorant was seen on a spit off Cedar Island.

No complete list was compiled for the entire trip. The following list, compiled by Robert J. Watson, is representative of the birds seen by most of the group:

Cormorant	Spotted Sandpiper	Royal Tern
American Egret	Willet	Black Tern
Snowy Egret	Greater Yellowlegs	Black Skimmer
Louisiana Heron	Lesser Yellowlegs	Mourning Dove
Glossy Ibis	Least Sandpiper	Barn Owl
Green Heron	Dowitcher	Belted Kingfisher
Black Duck	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Barn Swallow
Turkey Vulture	Western Sandpiper	Common Crow
Bald Eagle	Sanderling	Fish Crow
Osprey	Great Black-backed Gull	Starling
Clapper Rail	Herring Gull	House Sparrow
Oystercatcher	Ring billed Gull	Meadowlark
Killdeer	Laughing Gull	Redwing
Semipalmated Plover	Gull billed Tern	Boat-tailed Grackle
Black bellied Plover	Forster's Tern	Cowbird
Ruddy Turnstone	Common Tern	Seaside Sparrow
Hudsonian Curlew	Least Tern	Song Sparrow

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SKUA OFF-SHORE FROM WACHAPREAGUE, VIRGINIA

By Floy C. Burford

On July 1, 1959, about 25 miles off shore from Wachapreague, Virginia, I saw my first Skua (Catharacta skua). I was fishing for Tuna fish with my husband. The Skua appeared circling the boat. I reached for my binoculars (which is my "tackle" and always near me on our fishing trips), The hawk-like appearance, rounded wings and white spots on the wings were very noticeable. Several times the skua circled and would disappear beyond the horizon, then would suddenly be before us again.

We had excellent views of the bird as he would circle the boat showing the brown from head to tail on the back and the white wing tips, also the paler uniform brownish underparts.

Wilson's petrels (Oceanites oceanicus), were rather numerous on this trip, and at times their yellowish feet were visible to us without the aid of binoculars.

Also on this trip a lone Cory's Shearwater (Puffinus diomedea), was seen. He circled us several times, flying much higher above the water than the petrels that seemed to hug to the waves and skim the water. I have seen this shearwater on several occasions while fishing in the Gulf Stream.

— 6049 Lake Terrace Cl.
Norfolk, Virginia

(Editor's Note: This is the third Virginia record for the Skua.)

POMARINE JAEGER (Stercorarius pomarinus) BATTLES WITH GULLS

By Floy C. Burford

On July 17, 1959, while fishing with my husband just off shore from Wachapreague, Virginia (Paramore and Cedar Islands still visible), he was feeding bread to the Laughing Gulls as we moved from one fishing site to another. Suddenly I heard squeakings, wailings and screams from a bird which I knew did not come from the Laughing Gulls. I began searching for the bird that uttered such cries. There in mid-air was a Jaeger in battle with a Laughing Gull. They would fly upward pecking and flaying wings at each other.

The wails and screams that the Jaeger gave were entirely different from the din of all the gulls around us. After a few seconds another gull would take over the fight, upward they would fly in fierce battle, then would fall almost to the water. Another gull would take up the fight, and this continued for several minutes. They were so close to the boat at times that binoculars were not necessary. The Jaeger seemed much heavier and larger than the gulls.

The very heavy bill, the bold black and white barrings on the sides and much white on the underwings were very noticeable. It's tail was quite visible but the elongated tail feathers were not there, which was evident that it was an immature Pomarine Jaeger.

After being stormed by so many Laughing Gulls the Jaeger turned and with heavy, powerful and deliberate wingbeats, headed due east and did not appear again that day.

--- 6049 Lake Terrace Cl.
Norfolk 2, Virginia

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UNUSUAL BIRDS IN THE CRANEY ISLAND DISPOSAL AREA
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

By J.E. Ames, Jr.

On December 13, 1958, several days after a severe snowstorm, C.C. Garvin and I observed for some thirty minutes a male Harlequin Duck (Histrionicus histrionicus (Linnaeus)). It was a rather cold day, with the temperature in the low 20s, and cloudy. The duck was standing on a wooden beam which was part of an old blind, just a few inches above the water line. With binoculars and 30x Ballscope we were able to check with the descriptions in the Peterson and Audubon field guides and to note the slaty-blue plumage, the reddish-brown sides, and the odd white patches and spots. The long-legged appearance and the resemblance of the duck's tail to that of a Ruddy Duck was noted. Four months later, on April 5, 1959, my son and I saw a

Harlequin Duck, probably the same bird, near the same place. (This is an additional species for the hypothetical section of the Virginia list. Editor)

On December 26, 1958, while making the Christmas count with Rountrey, Richardson and Riddick, we saw a Peregrine Falcon in the part of the area that had recently been filled. When first seen it was eating a gull. When he flew we noted that jesses were attached to his legs, evidence that he was an escapee from someone interested in falconry. He did not leave the area, but circled over our heads for some time, coming fairly low. On January 24, 1959, we found the falcon in the same area.

Purple Sandpipers were observed for the first time on one of the levees, three on January 24 and February 15.

Great Black-backed Gulls were quite common all winter. From ten to fifteen could be seen at almost any time.

Some fifty or more Snow Buntings stayed in the area from December through March. We were able to approach at times within fifteen or twenty feet.

— Driver, Virginia

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RARE BIRDS IN THE NORFOLK, VIRGINIA REGION

(Compiled by J.J. Murray from information supplied by
Mrs. Floy Burford, Mrs. Mary Frances Morrisette,
Donald W. Lamm, J.E. Ames, Jr., and Max Carpenter)

Within the past year observers of the Norfolk region have made some remarkable records. Two birds, the Harlequin Duck, mentioned in the preceding article, and the Black-headed Gull of the Old World have been added to the hypothetical section of the Virginia list. (Parenthetically, it should be said again that putting a bird on the hypothetical list does not mean that the record is doubtful. It simply means that since the line has to be drawn somewhere on sight records, we have chosen to put no bird on the regular list unless there is a specimen or unless it has been seen by more than one careful observer and at more than one time and place.) Other very scarce birds have been seen. The details are as follows.

Black-headed Gull (Larus ridibundus Linnaeus). This foreign bird was seen at the Craney Island disposal area, where large numbers of gulls winter, on February 14, 1959. It was carefully observed with field glasses and telescope at close range, both on the water and in flight, by a party of eight people. Present were Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Akers, J.E. Ames, Jr., Max Carpenter, Mrs. Dean Derby, Mrs. Leamon Forrest, Donald W. Lamm, and Mrs. Mary Frances Morrisette. At first sight the bird

was thought to be a Bonaparte's Gull until the difference in size was noted. After full study of the points in the Peterson field guide, several of the group decided that it was a Black-headed Gull. The size, apparently somewhat larger than a Bonaparte's Gull, the dusky under primaries, dark red bill, dark patch behind the eye, and trailing white wing edges were noted. It was only after the others had come to this conclusion that Donald Lamm gave his opinion. He has served in the U.S. Consular Service in Europe, Africa, and Japan, and has collected for the Smithsonian Institution. Since he has been familiar with this gull abroad, there seems to be no question as to the correctness of the identification.

Swallow-tailed Kite (Elanoides forficatus forficatus (Linnaeus)). One of these birds was seen on April 19, 1959, from the causeway at Lake Smith, just back of the Wild Flower Sanctuary, by a large group of Cape Henry Bird Club members, including Mrs. Floy Burford and Mrs. Mary Frances Morrisette. This is our sixth State and first coastal record.

Dovekie (Plautus alle alle (Linnaeus)). A slightly oiled bird was caught in Hampton Roads in January by some members of the Peninsula Bird Club. It was photographed and then released.

Dickcissel (Spiza americana (Gmelin)). This bird, which has been appearing through the winter at the feeding tray of Mr. and Mrs. L.E. Burford, remained until April 6. It continued singing at times even when the observers stood within a few feet.

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SPRING MIGRATION BIRD COUNT

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Va. (Same area as Christmas count, refuge and much of mainland of Princess Anne County; open farmland 20%, pine woodland 10%, deciduous woodland 20%, open beach 5%, marshes and inland bay 45%). - May 2; 3:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Clear; temp. 50° to 82°; wind SW to S, 3-9 m.p.h. Eight observers in 4 parties. Total party-hours, 43-3/4 (28 on foot, 15-3/4 by car); total party-miles 170 (28 on foot, 142 by car). Common Loon, 9; Red-throated Loon, 6; Horned Grebe, 4; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Gannet, 53; Double-crested Cormorant, 29; Great Blue Heron, 50; Green Heron, 10; Little Blue Heron, 2; Common Egret, 20; Snowy Egret, 7; Louisiana Heron, 1; Yellow-crowned Night Heron, 1; Least Bittern, 1; Am. Bittern, 3; Canada Goose, 3; Mallard, 6; Black Duck, 70; Gadwall, 12; Green-winged Teal, 20; Blue-winged Teal, 23; Am. Widgeon, 19; Wood Duck, 7; Common Merganser, 3; Red-breasted Merganser, 21; Turkey Vulture, 25; Black Vulture, 20; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 4; Bald Eagle, 4; Marsh Hawk, 2; Osprey, 11; Pigeon Hawk, 2; Bobwhite, 52; King Rail, 8; Clapper Rail, 1; Virginia Rail, 4; Sora, 31; Common Gallinule, 4; Am. Coot, 8; Am. Oystercatcher, 2; Semipalmated Plover, 24; Piping Plover, 3; Killdeer, 6; Black-bellied Plover, 20;

Ruddy Turnstone, 1; Common Snipe, 11; Whimbrel, 1; Upland Plover, 3; Spotted Sandpiper, 3; Willet, 7; Greater Yellowlegs, 173; Lesser Yellowlegs, 400; Pectoral Sandpiper, 5; White-rumped Sandpiper, 3; Least Sandpiper, 655; Dunlin, 19; Short-billed Dowitcher, 91; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 116; Sanderling, 117; Great Black-backed Gull, 4; Herring Gull, 217; Ring-billed Gull, 91; Laughing Gull, 37; Bonaparte's Gull, 2; Gull-billed Tern, 2; Common Tern, 7; Roseate Tern, 1 (H.A.H., P.W.S.); Least Tern, 8; Royal Tern, 152; Caspian Tern, 9; Mourning Dove, 48; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 3; Screech Owl, 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Barred Owl, 4; Chimney Swift, 140; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 7; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 23; Pileated Woodpecker, 8; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 25; Red-headed Woodpecker, 3; Hairy Woodpecker, 5; Downy Woodpecker, 14; Red-cockaded Woodpecker, 2 (S.E.B., W.F.R.); Eastern Kingbird, 41; Great Crested Flycatcher, 56; Eastern Phoebe, 2; Acadian Flycatcher, 11; Eastern Wood Pewee, 17; Horned Lark, 7; Tree Swallow, 330; Bank Swallow, 4; Rough-winged Swallow, 1; Barn Swallow, 836; Cliff Swallow, 2 (P.W.S.); Purple Martin, 112; Blue Jay, 5; Common Crow, 175; Fish Crow, 38; Carolina Chickadee, 26; Tufted Titmouse, 34; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown-headed Nuthatch, 16; Winter Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 97; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 188; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 3; Mockingbird, 63; Catbird, 103; Brown Thrasher, 53; Robin, 14; Wood Thrush, 31; Hermit Thrush, 2; Gray-cheeked Thrush, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 13; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 62; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Cedar Waxwing, 10; Starling, 115; White-eyed Vireo, 41; Yellow-throated Vireo, 17; Red-eyed Vireo, 80; Black-and-white Warbler, 1; Prothonotary Warbler, 48; Parula Warbler, 23; Yellow Warbler, 58; Myrtle Warbler, 14; Black-throated Green Warbler, 3; Yellow-throated Warbler, 28; Blackpoll Warbler, 14; Pine Warbler, 25; Prairie Warbler, 99; Palm Warbler, 1; Ovenbird, 28; Louisiana Waterthrush, 5; Kentucky Warbler, 4; Yellowthroat, 200; Yellow-breasted Chat, 32; Hooded Warbler, 57; Am. Redstart, 10; House Sparrow, 180; Bobolink, 325; Eastern Meadowlark, 222; Redwinged Blackbird, 1660; Orchard Oriole, 25; Boat-tailed Grackle, 122; Common Grackle, 2272; Brown-headed Cowbird, 106; Scarlet Tanager, 4; Summer Tanager, 10; Cardinal, 214; Blue Grosbeak, 1; Indigo Bunting, 16; Am. Goldfinch, 25; Rufous-sided Towhee, 99; Savannah Sparrow, 32; Henslow's Sparrow, 6; Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 3; Seaside Sparrow, 1; Chipping sparrow, 75; Field Sparrow, 85; White-throated Sparrow, 15; Swamp Sparrow, 11; Song Sparrow, 124. Total, 167 species; about 11,648 individuals. - S.E. Breneiser, Mrs. L.E. Burford, Miss Gisela Grimm, H.A. Hespeneide, D.W. Lamm, W.F. Rountrey, P.W. Sykes, Jr. (compiler), C.S. Yelverton (Cape Henry Bird Club).

Newport News, Va. (all points within a 15-mile-diameter circle bounded by Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads, James River, Grafton; woodland 30%, open fields 30%, fresh-water ponds 10%, waterfront 30%). - May 9; 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Clear; temp. 60° to 70°; wind E, 10 m.p.h. Eight observers in 4 parties. Total party-hours, 28 (14 on foot, 14 by car); total party-miles, 166 (22 on foot, 144 by car). Horned Grebe, 5; Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Great Blue Heron, 1; Green Heron, 5; Common Egret, 2; Yellow-crowned Night Heron, 8; Mallard, 4; Black Duck, 5; Blue-winged Teal, 3; Lesser Scaup, 1; Common Merganser, 2; Red-breasted Merganser, 3; Turkey Vulture, 2; Red-shouldered Hawk, 3; Osprey, 2; Bobwhite, 31; King Rail, 1; Clapper Rail, 4; Semipalmated Plover, 16; Killdeer, 27; Ruddy Turnstone, 1; Spotted Sandpiper, 18;

Solitary Sandpiper, 11; Greater Yellowlegs, 24; Lesser Yellowlegs, 26; Least Sandpiper, 11; Short-billed Dowitcher, 2; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 22; Western Sandpiper, 18; Sanderling, 18; Great Black-backed Gull, 1; Herring Gull, 289; Ring-billed Gull, 113; Laughing Gull, 245; Bonaparte's Gull, 1; Common Tern, 10; Least Tern, 36; Mourning Dove, 39; Chimney Swift, 12; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 15; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 8; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Eastern Kingbird, 19; Great Crested Flycatcher, 13; Eastern Phoebe, 3; Acadian Flycatcher, 1; Eastern Wood Pewee, 9; Tree Swallow, 16; Rough-winged Swallow, 1; Barn Swallow, 185; Purple Martin, 10; Blue Jay, 7; Common Crow, 19; Fish Crow, 6; Carolina Chickadee, 12; Tufted Titmouse, 16; House Wren, 2; Carolina Wren, 25; Mockingbird, 86; Catbird, 29; Brown Thrasher, 44; Robin, 148; Wood Thrush, 18; Hermit Thrush, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 6; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 12; Starling, 363; White-eyed Vireo, 6; Red-eyed Vireo, 15; Black-and-white Warbler, 4; Parula Warbler, 4; Lawrence's Warbler, 1 (C.W.H. & M.E.H.); Yellow Warbler, 5; Black-throated Blue Warbler, 1; Yellow-throated Warbler, 6; Blackpoll Warbler, 18; Pine Warbler, 9; Prairie Warbler, 20; Ovenbird, 9; Louisiana Waterthrush, 1; Yellowthroat, 22; Yellow-breasted Chat, 3; Hooded Warbler, 11; House Sparrow, 181; Bobolink, 7; Eastern Meadowlark, 20; Redwinged Blackbird, 151; Orchard Oriole, 3; Rusty Blackbird, 5 (no details, possibly the latest spring record for state - Ed.); Boat-tailed Grackle, 2; Common Grackle, 82; Brown-headed Cowbird, 34; Summer Tanager, 7; Cardinal, 66; Indigo Bunting, 12; Am. Goldfinch, 4; Rufous-sided Towhee, 24; Savannah Sparrow, 5; Seaside Sparrow, 2; Chipping Sparrow, 30; Field Sparrow, 11; White-throated Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 46. Total, 107 species; about 2,935 individuals. (Seen in area during count period but not on count day: White-crowned Sparrow (G.C.)). - Georgianna Cumming, John Grey, C.W. Hacker, M.E. Hathaway, Norma Katz, Dorothy Mitchell, Mike Mitchell, W.P. Smith (compiler) (Hampton Roads Bird Club).

Warren, Va. (Albemarle Co., about same area as Christmas counts and 1958 spring count; deciduous woods 40%, open farmland 40%, riverbottom 10%, ponds 5%, pine woods 5%).- May 9; 4:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mostly clear; temp. 50° - 78°; wind SW, 0-15 m.p.h. Four observers in 2 parties. Total party-hours, 22 (17 on foot, 5 by car); total party-miles, 81 (21 on foot, 60 by car). Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Green Heron, 6; Am. Bittern, 1; Green-winged Teal, 1; Wood Duck, 2; Turkey Vulture, 25; Black Vulture, 17; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Bobwhite, 28; Killdeer, 8; Common Snipe, 3; Spotted Sandpiper, 18; Solitary Sandpiper, 27; Greater Yellowlegs, 1; Lesser Yellowlegs, 6; Least Sandpiper, 13; Mourning Dove, 59; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 13; Black-billed Cuckoo, 2; Whip-poor-will, 22; Chimney Swift, 40; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 4; Belted Kingfisher, 4; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 7; Pileated Woodpecker, 9; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 4; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 7; Eastern Kingbird, 27; Great Crested Flycatcher, 16; Eastern Phoebe, 21; Acadian Flycatcher, 19; Traill's Flycatcher, 1 (K.L.); Eastern Wood Pewee, 22; Horned Lark, 2; Bank Swallow, 22; Rough-winged Swallow, 12; Barn Swallow, 23; Cliff Swallow, 1; Blue Jay, 11; Common Crow, 44; Fish Crow, 2; Carolina Chickadee, 20; Tufted Titmouse, 32; White-breasted Nuthatch, 7; House Wren, 3; Bewick's Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 22; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 1; Mockingbird, 35; Catbird, 12; Brown Thrasher, 20; Robin, 40; Wood Thrush, 26; Hermit Thrush, 7;

Swainson's Thrush, 36; Eastern Bluebird, 28; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 30; Cedar Waxwing, 36; Loggerhead Shrike, 4; Starling, 38; White-eyed Vireo, 13; Yellow-throated Vireo, 21; Solitary Vireo, 2; Red-eyed Vireo, 70; Black-and-white Warbler, 6; Worm-eating Warbler, 7; Tennessee Warbler, 1; Parula Warbler, 5; Yellow Warbler, 17; Magnolia Warbler, 7; Cape May Warbler, 3; Black-throated Blue Warbler, 15; Myrtle Warbler, 16; Black-throated Green Warbler, 15; Cerulean Warbler, 2; Blackburnian Warbler, 2; Yellow-throated Warbler, 9; Chestnut-sided Warbler, 5; Bay-breasted Warbler, 13; Blackpoll Warbler, 3; Pine Warbler, 7; Prairie Warbler, 26; Ovenbird, 28; Northern Waterthrush, 3; Louisiana Waterthrush, 11; Kentucky Warbler, 2; Yellow-throat, 44; Yellow-breasted Chat, 32; Hooded Warbler, 29; Wilson's Warbler, 2; Canada Warbler, 16; Am. Redstart, 18; House Sparrow, 49; Bobolink, 47; Eastern Meadowlark, 82; Redwinged Blackbird, 55; Orchard Oriole, 8; Baltimore Oriole, 8; Common Grackle, 83; Brown-headed Cowbird, 14; Scarlet Tanager, 39; Summer Tanager, 9; Cardinal, 56; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 2; Blue Grosbeak, 7; Indigo Bunting, 54; Am. Goldfinch, 37; Rufous-sided Towhee, 46; Savannah Sparrow, 18; Grasshopper Sparrow, 9; Chipping Sparrow, 48; Field Sparrow, 31; White-crowned Sparrow, 7; White-throated Sparrow, 8; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 24. Total, 119 species; about 2,149 individuals.- Kenneth Lawless, Katherine Lewis, Robert S. Merkel, Charles E. Stevens (compiler).

Pine Ridge, Va. (area in and about Pine Ridge, Fairfax County, about 15 miles west of Washington, D.C., including wooded lowlands along Accotink Creek, with several acres of second-growth willow thickets, meadowland, and alfalfa fields; farmland 40%, woodland and residential area 60%).- May 9; 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Clear; temp. 42° to 72°; wind 0-10 m.p.h. Eighteen observers. Total party-miles, 23. Little Blue Heron, 1; Am. Bittern, 1 (in center of a large field at a table-sized spot of marshy ground); Wood Duck, 2; Turkey Vulture, 3; Red-shouldered Hawk, 2; Broad-winged Hawk, 1; Peregrine Falcon, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Bobwhite, 10; Killdeer, 1; Common Snipe, 1; Solitary Sandpiper, 2; Mourning Dove, 16; Whip-poor-will, 1; Chimney Swift, 7; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 3; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 6; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 8; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Eastern Kingbird, 7; Great Crested Flycatcher, 6; Eastern Phoebe, 5; Acadian Flycatcher, 9; Traill's Flycatcher, 3; Eastern Wood Pewee, 3; Rough-winged Swallow, 2; Barn Swallow, 19; Purple Martin, 1; Blue Jay, 20; Common Crow, 10; Carolina Chickadee, 16; Tufted Titmouse, 15; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; House Wren, 3; Carolina Wren, 5; Mockingbird, 6; Catbird, 16; Brown Thrasher, 6; Robin, 50; Wood Thrush, 12; Swainson's Thrush, 2; Veery, 4; Eastern Bluebird, 8; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 5; Cedar Waxwing, 1; Starling, 30; White-eyed Vireo, 2; Yellow-throated Vireo, 12; Red-eyed Vireo, 33; Black-and-white Warbler, 4; Golden-winged Warbler, 3; Blue-winged Warbler, 1; Tennessee Warbler, 2; Nashville Warbler, 1; Parula Warbler, 18; Magnolia Warbler, 5; Cape May Warbler, 10; Black-throated Blue Warbler, 1; Myrtle Warbler, 10; Blackburnian Warbler, 1; Chestnut-sided Warbler, 8; Blackpoll Warbler, 3; Pine Warbler, 2; Prairie Warbler, 9; Ovenbird, 10; Northern Waterthrush, 2; Louisiana Waterthrush, 8; Kentucky Warbler, 8; Yellowthroat, 20; Yellow-breasted Chat, 6; Hooded Warbler, 5; Wilson's Warbler, 1; Canada Warbler, 6; Am. Redstart, 30; House Sparrow, 25; Eastern Meadowlark, 7; Redwinged Blackbird, 6; Orchard Oriole, 2; Baltimore Oriole, 2; Common Grackle, 26; Brown-headed Cowbird, 11; Scarlet Tanager, 15;

Cardinal, 15; Indigo Bunting, 7; Am. Goldfinch, 58; Rufous-sided Towhee, 12; Savannah Sparrow, 2; Grasshopper Sparrow, 1; Chipping Sparrow, 2; Field Sparrow, 15; White-throated Sparrow, 65; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 16. Total, 94 species; about 847 individuals. - Mr. and Mrs. James W. Eike, Arthur Fast, Helen Goldstick, Mrs. Mary Kerr, Frederick Packard, Mr. and Mrs. Brantley Peacock, Richard and Daniel Peacock, Mrs. Mary Pulley, Charles Rheberg, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Rule (compilers), Allan T. Ryan, Michael Ryan, Dr. and Mrs. Robert J. Watson.

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NEWS OF THE LOCAL CHAPTERS

Northern Virginia Chapter

Under the leadership of James W. Eike, who continues as chairman, the Northern Virginia Chapter of the VSO carried out another program of mixed indoor and outdoor activities during the 1958-1959 season. A film of Florida birds, shown on November 3, 1958, by Mr. Ralph E. Lawrence, well-known bird photographer, was followed on November 22 by a tour through the National Zoological Park under the leadership of Mr. Malcolm Davis, Curator of Birds at the Park. On December 3, Mr. Rudyard Boulton, who led an expedition to the Galapagos Islands some years ago for the Chicago Museum, showed motion pictures of the islands, which, though almost 20 years old, were excellent.

Messrs. Arthur Fast and B.B. Warfield collaborated in a joint program on January 14, 1959. The former discussed the songs of the five spotted thrushes and made some remarks on their breeding sites in New England, while the latter described his recent tour to southern Florida. Another joint effort was presented on March 7 by Mr. John Trott and Miss Helen Goldstick, who showed colored slides of flowers and wildlife. The Chapter's annual visit to Mr. Fast's large and well-organized bird banding station (April 4) was combined with a talk by Mr. Philip DuMont, of the Fish and Wildlife Service, who showed slides of albatrosses on Midway Island in the Pacific.

On March 21, Mrs. M.B. Peacock led a field trip to Conway Robinson State Forest and to nearby Lake Brittle, in Prince William County. The program concluded with a field trip on May 2, 1959, to the wooded estate of Col. and Mrs. Louis B. Ely, near Hearndon. -- R.J. Watson.

Richmond Natural History Society

Another successful year was concluded by the Richmond Natural History Society with its annual meeting and election of officers on May 18. The officers elected for the coming year were as follows:

President	Frederick H. Peters
Vice President	Mrs. Hawes Coleman, Jr.
Recording Secretary	Mrs. Warren M. Smith
Corresponding Secretary	Mrs. Edward A. Marks, Jr.
Treasurer	Miss Henrietta Weidenfeld

Executive Committee Members-at-large:

Miss Cleo Allen	F. R. Scott
Abner Robertson	Miss Mary Tompkins
Mrs. Joseph E. Trahan	

As of July 31, the Society had 73 paid-up members.

The past year was marked by a rewarding program of Audubon Screen Tours, monthly meetings, and many interesting field trips. Aside from a number of local trips the Society went far afield on several occasions. Among these was a trip to Reddish Knob west of Harrisonburg on October 27, where the group was led by Max Carpenter; a week end at Cape Hatteras on December 6-7; and a joint trip with the Cape Henry Bird Club to Hog Island, Surry County, on February 21, which was conducted by C.C. Steirly. A fascinating trip closer to Richmond was a day spent at Tomahund Creek and the Chickahominy River in southeastern Charles City County on May 2, where the party had many opportunities to observe the recently introduced cross between the Iranian Black-necked Pheasant and the familiar Ring-necked Pheasant.

A full program of five Audubon Screen Tours is to be sponsored during the coming year at Mary Munford School in Richmond. The first two well-known speakers will be Olin S. Pettingill on October 15, whose topic will be "Penguin Summer," and Alexander Sprunt, Jr., on November 17, who will speak on "Coastal Carolina." Season tickets are available at Miller and Rhoads department store in Richmond or by mail from the Richmond Natural History Society, 108 Gaymont Road, Richmond 29, Virginia. Prices are \$4.00 for an individual season ticket and \$8.00 for a family season ticket. --
F.R. Scott.

OUR GROWING WATER PROBLEMS

By R.G. Lynch

Reviewed by Robert J. Watson

Recent years have brought Americans face to face with the fact that water is not, as it was once believed to be, an inexhaustible resource. Like soil, timber, and wildlife, it must be preserved for future use by proper management. An expanding population needs increasing amounts of water for direct consumption, for agriculture, for manufacturing processes, and for disposal of sewage and industrial waste. Since salt water is useless for most of these purposes, the supply of available water comes entirely from rainfall and is therefore fixed. The pressure of rising demand against limited supply manifests itself in many ways. Streams are turned into open sewers; communities encounter shortages caused by depletion of the water table; governments are forced to extend their regulatory powers to allocate the water supply among competing and often conflicting uses.

These and other effects of increasing demands for water, and the response by governmental agencies, have been summarized by R.G. Lynch, a Wisconsin newspaperman, in Our Growing Water Problems, published by the National Wildlife Federation. Not unnaturally, Mr. Lynch's summary emphasizes those developments which affect wildlife and outdoor recreation. Fishing, hunting, swimming, and boating all require an adequate supply of pure water in streams, lakes, or wetlands. Yet government agencies, in regulating the use of water, have generally ignored its recreational value (except to the extent that the latter benefits from pollution abatement, toward which some progress has been made). Valuable fishing streams have been diverted almost entirely for irrigation. Drainage of lakes and swamps for agriculture (often under Federal subsidy) has ruined fishing grounds (including some of considerable economic value) and waterfowl breeding areas. Power dams have been built without regard to the flooding of habitat or the effects of fluctuating water levels. Indifference to recreational and esthetic considerations involved in water usage has been strongest in the arid West, where the need for irrigation has given individual landowners virtual ownership of the contents of streams. It has been less marked in the populous states of New York, Pennsylvania, and the Middle West; here a dense population supports influential economic interests dependent upon recreation. In the South, the most destructive effects upon waterways have resulted from industrial pollution. As a relative newcomer to industrialization, the South had an opportunity to profit by the experience of other regions and to establish adequate anti-pollution controls when rapid industrial growth was just beginning. Most states ignored that opportunity in the race to attract industry.

Fortunately, according to Mr. Lynch, there is now a trend toward a more comprehensive view of the uses of water - one which will give more recognition to its importance for wildlife and for outdoor recreation. The Federal Government is now required by law to consult fish and wildlife authorities concerning the impact of proposed water development projects. A similar requirement has been included in a "model water law" drafted by conservationists for submission to all state legislatures. Most states now have anti-pollution laws, and some have begun to give legal recognition

to recreational uses of water. A brief summary of water legislation in each state points out that Virginia has had an anti-pollution law since 1946 and also requires maintenance of outflow from dams to protect fish.

Mr. Lynch's survey is a useful guide to a complex subject. Its usefulness would be increased if the material were better organized.

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NEWS AND NOTES

By J.J. Murray

Revision of the Virginia 'Check-List.' The executive committee of the VSO has asked the writer to prepare a new edition of A Check-List of the Birds of Virginia. It has not yet been decided as to what form this revision will take. If it is to be made, it will require, as did the first issue, the help of many members of the VSO. In the seven years since the book was published a mass of new information has been gathered in Virginia, much of which has not even appeared in The Raven. The point of this is that the author earnestly requests all members of the VSO to do two things. First, go carefully over the statements in the 'Check-List' about individual species with reference to the areas in the State with which you are most familiar. Especially keep in mind any extension of arrival and departure and nesting dates. Do this, if possible, within the next few weeks. Second, send this information as soon as you have compiled it to J.J. Murray, 6 Jordan Street, Lexington, Virginia. Otherwise, as Mr. Bent used to write in the foreword of each succeeding volume of his Life Histories, the absence of any fact that should be present in the finished work will be your own responsibility.

Corrections to the Membership List. The following errors in the Membership List in the May-June issue of The Raven have been pointed out. "Bartch, Dr. Paul W." should be "Bartsch, Dr. Paul." "Steven Messenger" should be "Russell, Stephen M., Division of Sciences, Louisiana State University in New Orleans, New Orleans 22, Louisiana."

The Birds of Rockbridge County, Virginia. As of April 17 some 91 copies of J.J. Murray's "Birds of Rockbridge, County, Virginia" had been sold in addition to those distributed free to all VSO members in early 1958. This booklet was not advertised at all, but it was reviewed in a number of bird publications as well as several newspapers. Twenty-three copies were sold out-of-state, and of the 68 sold in Virginia, 54 went to Rockbridge County. (Fred R. Scott)

Copies of this booklet are still available and may be obtained postpaid for 50¢ each from F.R. Scott, 115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond 26, Virginia.

New Threat to the Dismal Swamp. In the Richmond Times-Dispatch of August 25 there appeared the following item, which is disturbing to all Virginia nature lovers. "A quasi-public corporation set up to evaluate the Dismal Swamp area as a site for potential industrial development was chartered by the State Corporation Commission yesterday. Nine members of the group's 18-member board of directors will be jointly appointed by Virginia and North Carolina and the political subdivisions surrounding the swamp area, and nine elected by members of the corporation." The Dismal Swamp area has already been seriously damaged. It would be disastrous if this primitive wilderness area were lost. Now is the time for a concerted effort on the part of all conservation organizations to save enough of the Dismal Swamp around Lake Drummond to preserve for the public the unique character of this region which is so important both biologically and historically.

Oystercatcher Nest on Cedar Island. On May 16, 1959, a nest of the Oystercatcher was examined on the south end of Cedar Island (Accomac County). This nest contained one egg and two young, one of which had just hatched. The observation was made by B.B. Warfield, J.M. Nevin and C.C. Steirly. The nest was in the same general area where several were found at the time of the Wachapreague Annual Meeting, May 4, 1957, at which time all nests found contained eggs.

Yellow-headed Blackbird at Back Bay. Thomas C. Crebbs, of Suffolk, writes that he and two other observers, Joseph J. Coggin, biologist for the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Walter E. Price, enforcement agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, saw a male and two female Yellow-headed Blackbirds at the warden's headquarters at Back Bay Refuge on the morning of November 13, 1958. They were in a roadside shrub some twenty yards from the station, but flew before he could collect one. Mr. Coggin told him later that he had seen a single male in the marshes north of the station on November 7, but had not realized how rare the bird is in Virginia.

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James W. Eike - 3307 N. Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church, Virginia.

Representative to Virginia Wildlife Federation:

Dr. Gerald Akers - 1138 Bolling Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia.

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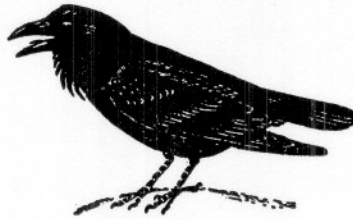
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C.H. Lewis, Box 229, Salem, Virginia



The Raven

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR
LEXINGTON, VA.

VOL. XXX

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1959

NOS. 9 & 10

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WILDLIFE SPECIALISTS

Virginia Style

By Burd S. McGinnes, Leader
Virginia Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit
Blacksburg, Virginia

The days of an abundant and seemingly endless supply of game are past. Wildlife served our country's early inhabitants as a source of food for generations, and during this period of exploitation relatively little thought was given to the day when game would become scarce enough to require management. Hunting, however, was only one of the factors which contributed to the decline of game; man's use and mis-use of the land was often the primary force. Limited game supplies finally relegated hunting to recreation. In order to sustain certain wildlife types and numbers, a new profession came into being recently - the wildlife biologist.

Virginia was one of the first states in the nation to establish a Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit in September, 1935. Located at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, the Unit has been training professional wildlife biologists for the past 23 years. The training of personnel for responsible positions in the field of wildlife management is the primary objective of each of 16 Units in the United States.

Four agencies cooperatively support the Virginia Unit at Blacksburg. A coordinating committee, composed of representatives from the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Wildlife Management Institute and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service decides on policies and generally supervises the Virginia Wildlife Unit. These agencies contribute financial support, office space, heat, lights, secretarial assistance, instructional staff, vehicles, salaries and miscellaneous facilities. An annual meeting of the Wildlife Unit's Coordinating Committee is held to review completed work, examine current projects and to discuss future studies, problems and policies.

The organization of the Virginia Unit is typical of most Units. In addition to training personnel, the Units are charged with conducting basic research on the state's wildlife resources and in carrying out certain wildlife extension activities. Extension activities are carried out by means of publications, lectures and demonstrations. Technical assistance on wildlife problems is provided to state conservation departments, other agencies and to private individuals.

In reality, the Virginia Wildlife Unit is primarily a research arm for the Virginia game commission. Both long-range problems are undertaken as well as emergency situation problems. With the organizational set-up as it exists, work can be rapidly inaugurated by the Unit when a problem suddenly arises, but perhaps long-range wildlife research projects are the ones with which the Wildlife Unit can make the greatest contribution to Virginia's wildlife.

Work at the Unit is conducted under the Biology Department on the graduate level. The normal route of entrance into wildlife work for most students is to secure an undergraduate degree in forestry, zoology or biology. Naturally, the undergraduate training for each student is slightly different, so each student's case is considered independently and a course of study outlined which will strengthen the weak points of his background and best prepare him for work as a wildlife biologist. Students coming into wildlife work from other fields generally have more course work to complete than those trained in the allied fields, but these men often result in fine wildlife biologists.

Unit graduate students work toward the Master of Science degree with their major in wildlife management or the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biology. From 1935 until last June, 50 men earned Masters' degrees in the Virginia Unit and 6 received Doctorate degrees.

Some of Virginia's Unit graduates have become distinguished leaders in the wildlife profession. The Executive Directors for Virginia and North Carolina and the Chief of the Game Divisions of Virginia and Maine received their wildlife training at Blacksburg.

Approximately 27 per cent of the Unit graduates are employed by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries; other states have hired about 22 per cent. Other sources of employment include the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, United States Forest Service, private industry and high school and college teaching. With such a high percentage of the Unit graduates being employed here in Virginia, the Unit has served a useful function in supplying The Old Dominion with technically trained wildlife biologists.

Students have conducted research on 16 species of game birds and animals native to Virginia. Wildlife survey studies have been made and work pursued on conservation education, animal ecology and water pollution. Fisheries work undertaken at the Unit has been very limited due to lack of facilities and personnel.

Each man spends the first year in the classroom which prepares him for conducting the field research problem. The second year (and third year in the case of Ph.D. students) is spent full time in the field on a research project which has been previously approved by the coordinating committee. A man may do his research near Blacksburg or may go to any part of the state as the problem dictates. The wildlife biologist's laboratory is generally the out-of-doors and it is here that most research is conducted. Only in isolated cases is the problem of such a nature that research may be done in-doors in the laboratory.

Upon completion of field work the student assembles his data and presents it as a thesis which must be approved by a committee of professors. The last test given the candidate is a committee-conducted oral exam based upon the field research thesis and general biological background. Bound copies of theses are maintained by the Unit and VPI library as reference sources for future students and are available on loan to other institutions. When the research findings warrant, the student is encouraged to present them for publication. In recent years students have presented their research data at the annual meeting of the Virginia Academy of Science. Numerous bulletins, technical journal articles and magazine pieces have resulted from theses written by students.

Wildlife students not only go into all corners of the nation after leaving Blacksburg, but come to Virginia from all parts of the United States. At present, four Unit men are native Virginians and one from each state of Kentucky, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. Unit projects at present include studies on cottontail rabbits, blackbirds, deer, herbicides, grouse, squirrels, fish, shrubs, grasses and conservation education. The staff also conducts some specific research problem, usually a long-term study.

Wildlife is one of our state and nation's most valuable resources. Fortunately it is a renewable resource. In order to properly manage a resource, the details of its supply and existence must be known. In the case of wildlife, the animal's life history, food and cover requirements, enemies, diseases, parasites and detailed habits must be known. Much work has already been done on these phases of wildlife investigation, yet much more remains to be learned. Agriculturists are adding daily to their knowledge of domestic animals and still are faced with perplexing problems. Imagine the situation confronting the wildlife biologist who must work with wild species!

An objective of research is to uncover facts which can be used in the wise and sustained management of our wildlife resources. Various management methods must then be devised, tested and the results evaluated. This procedure involves not only devising and applying means to count the number of animals present on the area under study but reaches into other fields such as botany, soils, forestry, agriculture, water, weather and ecology, to mention only a few.

Primarily, a wildlife biologist is an ecologist, one who studies a plant or animal in relation to its environment or surroundings. Because of the complexity of required knowledge, the game biologist needs a broad foundation in the natural sciences. Wildlife students are given an introduction to these subjects in the classroom but the real learning comes from work in the field - the biologist's laboratory.

Although the work schedule at the Unit is fairly demanding, the value of recreation is not overlooked. Just like the postman who takes a walk on his day off, most of the wildlife students prefer to relax by hunting and fishing. Several field trips each year provide an opportunity for some new hunting or fishing experiences and give the students an opportunity to observe wildlife and game management in other parts of Virginia. A favored form of relaxation and one of the best educational pastimes are the "bull sessions" which take place in the graduate lab room. It is here that a stranger will hear theories of game management, methods of aging deer, merits of pet rifle calibres or even the universal subject of girls discussed on occasion.

Virginia can well be proud of the contributions which its Unit has made to the wildlife profession. The quality of instruction has been maintained at a high level and results speak for themselves in the calibre of biologists and data produced.

(Reprinted by permission from Virginia Wildlife (Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries), May, 1959.)

BIRDBANDING

By Charles Cooper Barefield

(A Freshman English paper, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia)

The earliest form of birdbanding was done as a sport. Lords, who hunted with falcons, would place a band containing the lord's name and manor upon a captured bird and then release it. Other lords would capture the bird and they would know where the bird came from. The first recorded European record of birdbanding was in 1710, when a great grey heron was killed and found upon the heron's leg were many bands, one from Turkey. John James Audubon, the naturalist, banded the first bird in America in 1803. This bird was a phoebe, which happened to be nesting under the eaves of his house. Audubon banded this bird in order to tell if the same bird returned each year. His band was a small piece of wire twisted around the phoebe's leg.

Scientific banding was started in 1879, by a Danish schoolmaster, H.C.C. Mortensen. He banded storks, teal, starlings and birds of prey. At first birdbanding was individually carried on. Birdbanding lacked organization. The banding operations became too expensive and the written work became too great for mere hobbyists. The American Birdbanding Association was formed in 1909.

The number of records became so great that in 1920 the United States Biological Survey took over, now known as the Fish and Wildlife Service. This agency issues banding permits, bands, guidance and keeps the files for the banding records.

Between the years 1920 and 1940 over 3,712,327 birds were banded. Out of these, 234,929 birds were reported as returns or recoveries. By 1938 there were over 3,000 legal birdbanders. Out of these never has a single permit been recalled or revoked because of improper treatment to the birds or of improper handling technique. Banding was carried on before World War II in the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, England, Russia, Japan and many others.

All types of traps which will capture the birds without harming them have been tried and used. Some traps use food and water as bait, while others use begging young birds to lure the parents in. One of the best flock-catching traps is the boom nest or cannon net trap. This trap consists of three mortars made from axle casings of a model T Ford, and a net 75 feet by 25 feet. The mortars are placed so that they will project the weighted side of the net over a flock of feeding birds. The birds are baited into an area that the net will cover. The net is set off by remote control from a hidden place. These nets are used mostly for banding geese. Up to 185 geese have been caught in one projection of the net.

In England, the national pastime is bird-ringing or birdbanding. There many acres are devoted to bird traps. Some waterfowl traps cover almost an acre of marsh. These traps have great wings, which funnel the birds into the body of the traps. Many sizes, shapes and makes of wire traps are being used. Some are made by the bander, while others are bought. A few of the different kinds are: treadle trap, funnel trap, trip-door trap, and the maze traps.

In 1947 a new type of trap was introduced to American bird banders. It was the mist nets. These nets greatly increase the scope of the bander's activities. The mist nets are made in Japan, therefore they are sometimes called the Japanese mist nets. These nets are from 30 feet to 38 feet in length and from 3 feet to 6 feet in height. Two mesh sizes are available, the smaller, three-quarter inch mesh, and the larger, one and one-quarter inch mesh. The nets are placed along hedgerows. A wide variety of birds are caught in the mist nets. These nets have very few casualties.

In order to band birds you must have a federal banding permit. You may obtain a banding permit from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D.C.

The main requirement for birdbanders is that you have a banding permit. Qualifications for obtaining a banding permit are as follows: the person must be 18 years old or older, able to identify positively all local birds, and must be vouched for by three recognized ornithologists or by other banders.

Bands are furnished to the bander by the Fish and Wildlife Service. These bands are made of light aluminum. Many assorted sizes are available. The smallest in size is 0, for wren and kinglets, while the largest size 8, is for the larger birds. The official bands all carry a serial number and return address. The numbers appear on the outside of the band, but for lack of space the address is stamped on the inside of the smaller bands. The addresses that are still being used are:

- (a) Notify Bureau of Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.
- (b) Notify Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- (c) Advise Fish and Wildlife Service, write Washington, D.C.

The shorter forms are as follows:

- (a) Notify Biol. Surv., Wash., D.C.
- (b) Notify F. & W. Service, Wash., D.C.
- (c) Write F. & W. Serv., Wash., D.C. U.S.A.

Our first bands were made by England, for our Biological Survey. The British stampers, not understanding our government departments, abbreviated Washington Biological Survey to "Wash. Boil. Surv." This little phrase led to raised eyebrows by conscientious bird lovers. It sounded more like a recipe than a scientific interest in birds.

Through birdbanding scientists hope to find the life span of birds, and hope to uncover the mysteries of migration. Banding also aids in making detailed life histories of certain species. By the use of colored bands field identification is easy.

Primarily, the professional ornithologists views the marking of birds with numbered bands as a means to further his research into that greatest of all avian mysteries - the semi-annual travels of the birds of the Northern Hemisphere.

In addition, however, to throwing light upon their destination and migration, the numbered bands also are revealing much that has been obscured concerning the strength of the attachment borne by different species of birds over a period of years for their nesting sites and for their winter quarters; the speed and regularity of the migratory flight; the force of the mating devotion through the rearing of successful broods of fledglings; the longevity of birds; and many other related matters.

There were many theories regarding migration. Four of the oldest theories of migration were: transportation, hibernation, transmutation and a trip to the moon. Transportation was the theory that the larger birds carried the smaller ones across the Mediterranean Sea. Hibernation was the belief that birds hibernated as some mammals do. Transmutation was the theory that one bird changed into another for certain periods of the year. A trip to the moon was just that. Some people believed that birds migrated to the moon.

As early as Pliny, the Roman, migration has been thought about. Through Pliny, we know that swallows were used as messengers. The swallows were carried to chariot races. There the winning colors were painted on the swallows' wings. The swallows would fly to Rome and Athens with the color of the winning chariot. The swallows would arrive long before the runners.

Birdbanding has shown us that waterfowl have specific migratory routes. These are called flyways. They follow a definite geographic region. The main flyways in the United States are: The Atlantic, Mississippi, Central and Pacific flyways. The Atlantic flyway runs down the Atlantic seaboard, while the Mississippi flyway follows the Mississippi River Valley. The Central flyway is over the Great Plains and the Pacific flyway is the Pacific coast.

The Arctic Tern has the longest annual migration of any bird. It summers in the Arctic circle and winters in the Antarctic. It's round trip consists of 25,000 miles a year. This is the bird which met Admiral Byrd at the North Pole and greeted him again at the South Pole.

Through birdbanding the winter home of the Chimney Swift was established. In 1944 thirteen bands were recovered by Peruvian Indians. These bands were passed from hand to hand until they reached the American Embassy at Lima, Peru, then were sent to Washington, D.C.

The longevity of birds has been discovered through birdbanding. A purple martin was found dead 14 years after it was banded. An Arctic tern lived to be 22 years old while a Black duck only 17 years. The bird with the longest life span is a Caspian tern with a span of 26 years.

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-- 6049 Lake Terrace Circle
Norfolk 2, Virginia

BIRDS Banded AT MOUNTAIN LAKE, VIRGINIA

By Mrs. G. Cole and Ralph K. Bell

	<u>Species</u>	<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Date</u>
1 ♀	Hairy Woodpecker	57-154691	A	F	6-11-59
1 ♀	Least Flycatcher	26-56671	A		6- 9-59
1 ♀	"	72	A		"
1 ♀	"	73	A		"
1 ♀	"	74	A		"
1 ♀	"	78	A		"
1 ♀	"	80	A		"
1 ♀	"	83	A		"
1 ♀	"	84	A		"
2 @	"	28-74250	A		6-10-59
2 @	"	51	A		"
1 ♀	Catbird	57-154677	A		6- 9-59
1 ♀	"	678	A		"
1 ♀	"	679	A		"
1 ♀	"	682	A		"
1 ♀	"	683	A		"
1 ♀	"	684	A		"
1 ♀	"	685	A		"
1 ♀	"	689	A		6-10-59
2 @	Robin	562-22597	A		"
2 @	"	598	A		"
10 ♀	"	599	A	F	"
10 ♀	"	601	A	F	"
2 @	"	606	A		"
2 @	"	608	A	F	"
3 @	"	609	A	M	6-12-59
1 ♀	"	532-96997	A		6- 9-59
1 ♀	"	998	A		"
1 ♀	"	999	A		"
1 ♀	"	563-44896	A		"
1 ♀	"	897	A		"
1 ♀	"	898	A		"
1 ♀	"	899	A		"
1 ♀	"	900	A		6-10-59
1 ♀	"	603-15255	A		"
1 ♀	"	256	A		"
1 ♀	Brown Thrasher	532-97000	A		"
10 ♀	"	562-22600	A		"
1 ♀	Wood Thrush	25-130083	A	M	6- 9-59
1 ♀	"	084	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	085	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	086	A	M	6-10-59
1 ♀	"	087	A		"
1 ♀	"	088	A	F	"
1 ♀	"	091	A	F	6-11-59
1 ♀	"	092	A	F	"
1 ♀	"	093	A	F	"
2 @	"	57-150079	A		6-10-59
3 @	"	081	A		6-11-59

	<u>Species</u>	<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Date</u>
4 @	Wood Thrush	082	A	M	6-12-59
4 @	"	083	A	F	"
3 @	Crested Flycatcher	25-125775	A	F	"
1 @	Cedar Waxwing	25-125777	A		"
1 ♀	"	25-130081	A		6- 9-59
1 ♀	"	082	A		"
1 ♀	Veery	25-130090	A		6-11-59
1 ♀	Red-eyed Vireo	57-87031	A		6-10-59
1 ♀	"	034	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	035	A	F	"
2 @	"	59-62641	A	M	6-10-59
2 @	"	643	A	F	"
2 @	"	644	A	M	"
3 @	Black-and-White Warbler	28-74254	A		6-11-59
3 @	"	255	A	F	6-12-59
4 @	"	265	A	M	6-13-59
1 ♀	Black-th. Blue Warbler	26-56689	A	M	6-10-59
4 @	"	28-74263	A	M	6-13-59
1 ♀	Blackburnian Warbler	26-56881	A	M	6- 9-59
1 ♀	Hooded Warbler	679	A	M	"
1 ♀	Chestnut-sided Warbler	675	A	F	"
1 ♀	"	682	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	685	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	692	A	F	6-10-59
1 ♀	"	693	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	694	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	695	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	696	A	F	"
1 ♀	"	697	A	F	"
1 ♀	"	698	A	F	"
2 @	"	28-74252	A	F	"
3 @	Canada Warbler	253	A	F	6-11-59
3 @	"	256	A	M	6-12-59
4 @	"	258	A	M	"
4 @	"	259	A	M	"
4 @	"	260	A	F	"
4 @	"	261	A		"
4 @	"	262	A	M	"
4 @	"	264	A	M	6-13-59
1 ♀	"	26-56676	A	F	6- 9-59
1 ♀	"	677	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	686	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	687	A	M	"
1 ♀	"	688	A	M	"
100 ♀	Scarlet Tanager	25-130089	A	M	6-11-59
4 ♀	"	25-125776	A	F	6-13-59
1 ♀	Ovenbird	57-87032	A		6-10-59
1 ♀	"	033	A		"
1 ♀	"	036	A	M	"
2 @	"	59-62642	A		"
2 @	"	648	A	M	6-11-59

	<u>Species</u>	<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Date</u>
2 @	Ovenbird	649	A	M	6-11-59
2 @	"	650	A		"
3 @	"	651	A	M	"
3 @	"	652	A		"
3 @	"	653	A		"
3 @	"	654	A		6-12-59
3 @	"	655	A		"
4 @	"	656	A	M	"
4 @	"	657	A	F	"
4 @	"	658	A	M	"
4 @	"	662	A	M	6-13-59
2 @	Rose-br. Grosbeak	57-150080	A	M	6-10-59
1 ¢	"	57-154681	A	F	6- 9-59
1 ¢	"	687	A	M	6-10-59
1 ¢	"	690	A	M	"
1 ¢	Rufous-sided Towhee	680	A	F	6- 9-59
1 ¢	"	686	A	M	"
1 ¢	"	688	A	F	6-10-59
2 @	"	562-22607	A	M	"
1 ¢	Chipping Sparrow	26-56690	A		"
1 ¢	"	691	A		6- 9-59
1 ¢	Carolina Junco	57-87030	A		"
2 @	"	59-62639	A	F	6-10-59
			Tail length		69mm
2 @	"	640	A	M	6-10-59
			Tail length		65mm
2 @	"	645	A		6-10-59
			Tail length		68.5mm
2 @	"	646			6-10-59
			Tail length		71mm
2 @	"	647			6-10-59
			Tail length		70mm
4 @	"	659			6-12-59
			Tail length		72mm

Key:

- 1 Birds trapped (netted) and banded on or near campus.
- 2 Birds netted and banded near the swimming pool.
- 3 Birds netted and banded on Moonshine Dell Trail.
- 4 Birds netted and banded on Pond Drain Ravine near first sharp curve.

¢ Birds banded by Mrs. Cole.

@ Birds banded by Mr. Bell.

The sex of some of the hard to tell species is given. This was determined by the brood patch and there is no guarantee of 100% accuracy.

The last four Juncos banded are probably adults, although the age was omitted on the data card.

The measurements for two of the Least Flycatchers are as follows:

28-74250 wing 66mm; tail 56mm; length 133mm.
28-74251 wing 66mm; tail 52mm; length 130mm.

Mrs. Cole banded 77 birds of 20 species in 194 net hours.

Ralph K. Bell banded 51 birds of 15 species in 212 net hours.

A total of 128 birds of 22 species were banded in 406 net hours.

This gives a good ratio of one bird per 3.17 net hours.

Mrs. Cole easily carried away the honors for banding the most birds. She also gave a very excellent demonstration on banding techniques to the persons attending the Brooks Bird Club Foray. Many people will long remember the beautiful colors of the birds brought into camp for everyone to view at close range.

Report submitted by
Ralph K. Bell
R.D. 1
Clarksville, Pennsylvania

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BREEDING-BIRD CENSUS OF A DECIDUOUS FLOODPLAIN FOREST

By F. R. Scott

Location and Description of Area

This roughly triangular track of 16.1 acres (paced) is located on the western end of Williams Island in the James River, within the city limits of Richmond, Virginia, 5 miles west of the Fall Line. The habitat is a nearly mature forest with an irregular but fairly well closed crown averaging about 70 to 80 feet in height. There are a few small openings no more than 50 feet square, apparently caused by windfalls. Based on a 12% sample, the overstory trees consist of Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis), 30% (average DBH about 21 inches); Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflor), 21% (18 inches); Bitternut (Carya cordiformis), 17% (18 inches); American Elm (Ulmus americana), 11% (15 inches); Red Oak (Quercus rubra), 5% (21 inches); American Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis), 4% (13 inches); River Birch (Betula nigra), 4% (15 inches); and Loblolly Pine (Pinus taeda) (18 inches), Black Walnut (Juglans nigra) (22 inches), Willow Oak (Quercus phellos) (20 inches), Tulip-tree (Liriodendron tulipifera) (16 inches), Silver Maple (Acer saccharinum) (23 inches), and Basswood (Tilia sp.) (8 inches) aggregating 8 %. There are a number of overstory trees 36 inches or more DBH. The understory consists principally of Ironwood (Carpinus caroliniana), Box Elder (Acer negundo), and the overstory trees. The undergrowth, which is generally very thick, is frequently heavily entwined with Japanese Honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica). Characteristic shrubs include Pawpaw (Asimina triloba) and Spicebush (Lindera bezoin).

Large vines are abundant, and both Poison Ivy (Rhus radicans) and grape (Vitis sp.) commonly reach the forest crown. Along the water edge the River Birch becomes one of the dominant trees, and there is a little willow (Salix sp.) and ash (Fraxinus sp.). Herbaceous ground cover is generally fairly heavy and averages 3 feet high. Technical names of plants above were taken from the eighth edition of Gray's Manual.

Topography and Edge

The ground is fairly level and is about 6 to 10 feet above mean river water levels, occasionally subject to flooding in part. A number of long, narrow depressions commonly hold rain water during periods of wet weather. The elevation of the area is approximately 100 feet above sea level. The roughly triangular tract is bounded on the north by a 250-foot channel of the James River, on the southwest by a few narrow channels and rocky islets in a 600-foot channel, and on the east by similar forest habitat. The water edge is marked by a 3- to 6-foot mud and rock bank with no marsh vegetation, the trees hanging well out over the water. Several adjacent small islands with similar habitat are included in census area.

Coverage

Field trips to the census area were made on April 4 and 18, May 3, 9, and 21, and June 6 and 19 (2 trips). Hours varied from 5:20 to 9:20 a.m. and totaled 18 man-hours.

Methods

The rules issued by Audubon Field Notes were followed throughout. Briefly, a 209-foot grid was laid out on the census area and a map prepared. On each census trip the grid was followed, and all summer resident birds were counted and marked on a copy of the map, with particular emphasis being given to singing males. At the end of each trip the observations were posted to species maps, from which it was fairly simple after eight trips to ascertain the number of territorial males and to outline their territories. The number of territorial males per 100 acres of this habitat was calculated for each species with three or more territories on the study area. A map showing the centers of all territories is on file with the editors of Audubon Field Notes, and copies are available from the author.

Census

<u>Species</u>	<u>No. of Territorial Males</u>	<u>No. of Territorial Males per 100 Acres</u>
Red-eyed Vireo	14.5	90
American Redstart	14	87
Cardinal	12	75
Carolina Wren	11.5	71
Acadian Flycatcher	8	50
Carolina Chickadee	4	25

<u>Species</u>	<u>No. of Territorial Males</u>	<u>No. of Territorial Males per 100 Acres</u>
Starling	4	25
Parula Warbler	4	25
Downy Woodpecker	3	19
Tufted Titmouse	3	19
Yellow-throated Warbler	3	19
Brown-headed Cowbird	3	19
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2.5	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	
Blue Jay	2	
White-eyed Vireo	2	
Kentucky Warbler	2	
Hooded Warbler	2	
Rufous-sided Towhee	2	
Prothonotary Warbler	1.5	
Wood Duck	1	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	
Yellow-shafted Flicker	1	
Crested Flycatcher	1	
Song Sparrow	Less than 0.5	

Total: 26 species; 106 territorial males (658 males per 100 acres).

Visitors (average number of individuals per 100 acres): Chimney Swift, 15 (overhead); Belted Kingfisher, 3; Rough-winged Swallow, 4 (overhead); Common Crow, 8; Fish Crow, 2; Robin, 4; Wood Thrush, 1; Yellow-throated Vireo, 1; Louisiana Waterthrush, 1; Common Grackle, 6; Summer Tanager, 2; American Goldfinch, 30.

Remarks

The high density of breeding birds was undoubtedly a result of a combination of abundant food, water, cover, and nesting sites. Significantly, hole-nesting birds totaled 32 territorial males (199 per 100 acres) or 30% of all territorial males. With the following exceptions, the edge, which probably should be considered an integral part of this habitat, appeared to have no observable influence on the density of breeding birds. The Prothonotary Warblers were recorded only immediately adjacent to the water, and the White-eyed Vireos showed a distinct preference for the edge. The Song Sparrow was recorded occasionally on one of the smaller nearby islets with a number willows on it, but the center of its territory was well off the study area.

The count of Starling territories was probably somewhat conservative. The presence of three Yellow-throated Warbler territories seemed surprising in view of the small number (1-2%) of coniferous trees in the overstory. An adult American Redstart was observed feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird on June 19. The two Rufous-sided Towhee territories in fairly heavy woodland and overlapping territories of Acadian Flycatchers, Kentucky Warblers, and Hooded Warblers seem inexplicable.

— Richmond, Virginia

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AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR SCHEDULES IN VIRGINIA
1959-1960

At least eight cities in VSO territory will share in Audubon Screen Tours this winter. Some places have five lectures; others have three. Subjects and lectures are as follows, the number of the lectures referring to the column in the schedule chart:

1. "Penguin Summer" - Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr.
2. "Coastal Carolina" - Alexander Sprunt, Jr.
3. "Outdoor Almanac" - Charles Mohr
4. "Pastures of the Sea" - Bartram Cadbury
5. "Ranch of the Purple Flowers" - Robert C. Hermes
6. "Forgotten Country" - Bert Harwell
7. "Between the Tides" - Robert C. Hermes
8. "Motmots and Mayas" - Ernest P. Edwards
9. "Tip O' the Mitten" - O.S. Pettingill
10. "Designs for Survival" - William Anderson

Schedules

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Norfolk (Northside Jr. High School)	Oct. 18 3:30		Jan. 13 8:00			Nov. 20 8:00	Dec. 13 3:30	Mar. 2 8:00		
Virginia Beach (High School - 8 P.M.)			Jan. 14			Nov. 19		Mar. 3		
Williamsburg (William and Mary - 8 P.M.)		Oct. 31			Dec. 11			Mar. 1	Oct. 14	Jan. 11
Richmond (Mary Mumford High School - 8:15 P.M.)	Oct. 15	Nov. 17	Jan. 15	Mar. 29	Apr. 21					
Charlottesville (Maury Hall Univ. of Va. - 8 P.M.)	Oct. 21						Dec. 10	Feb. 26		
Roanoke-Salem (Roanoke College - 8 P.M.)	Oct. 17					Nov. 18	Dec. 12			

Washington will have the following lectures at the National Museum Auditorium:

Nov. 17 - "The Birds of East and Central Africa," Bayard Read, 5:15 and 8:15 P.M.

Dec. 8 - "Wildlife Adventuring in Jackson Hole," Frank Craighead, 5:15 and 8:15 P.M.

Feb. 4 - "A Canyon Journey," Charles Eggert, 5:15 and 8:15 P.M. (two different parts)

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NEWS AND NOTES

Plans for the 1960 Annual Meeting. The 1960 Annual Meeting of the VSO will be held at Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia, on April 29 and 30. VSO members of the Harrisonburg-Bridgewater-Dayton area will be hosts. Details about the program and arrangements will appear in a later issue of The Raven. Dr. H.G.M. Jopson, Bridgewater College, will serve as chairman of the entertainment committee. Those who plan to read papers or show pictures should send titles for the program and statement of the approximate time needed to Dr. Jopson.

Bird Watchers Date Book. An attractive calendar for bird watchers for 1960 has been published by Colonial Publishing, Inc., 10 Thacher Street, Boston 13, Massachusetts, publishers of many types of calendar books. This one has a color cover of a Baltimore Oriole; a sheet for each week with places for notes on arrivals and departures; extra sheets with attractive pen and ink sketches of birds, with brief descriptions of range and habits. The author is Henry H. Collins, Jr., and the artist is Robert Verity Clem. The price is \$1.65.

Buy Duck Stamps. Because of the unusual need for funds to develop the breeding areas of many species of ducks, and because of the fact that this winter duck hunters may feel that ducks are so scarce that there is little use in their buying the duck stamps, the Executive Committee of the VSO at the recent meeting at Skyland went on record as urging bird students to buy a stamp this year and help the cause.

Information on Vultures Wanted. Robert H. Giles, Jr., District Game Biologist for the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fishers, is doing a study of the vultures of Virginia. He wants all the information he can get on both Turkey and Black Vultures, distribution and habits. He is especially interested in county by county reports as to the status of the birds, particularly of the northern and western counties of the State. Any facts as to the truth or falsity of the rumors that the birds are causing the spread of livestock diseases will be welcome. His address is RFD 1, Box 309-C, Covington, Virginia.

Glossy Ibis. On May 19, 1959, Mrs. W.P. Smith and Mrs. William Cumming saw a Glossy Ibis at the LaSalle pond or marshy area by the Tunnel Approach Way in Hampton Roads.

Barred Owl in Shenandoah National Park. On the way home from the Skyland meeting of the Executive Committee of the VSO on the night of October 9, 1959, J.J. Murray picked up a dead Barred Owl near Milepost 60 on the Skyline Drive.

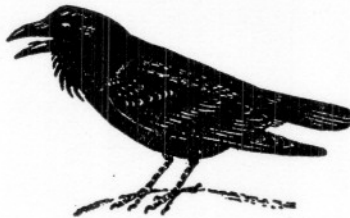
Pileated Woodpecker. Malcolm Davis writes: "Several evenings during the past three months the Pileated Woodpecker has appeared at our home, Lonesome Acre, Route 680, near Herndon, Virginia. We have seen several over the years. The bird that has made periodic visits to our place picks out an old rotted oak that rests upon the ground and with its chisel-like beak hammers it to bits. I have repeatedly examined the log and have been unable to find life of any form upon which the large woodpecker feeds. We have observed the bird with binoculars when it is playing carpenter and have not seen life of any form being devoured. Therefore, we assume that the Pileated Woodpecker has a station to which it comes to chisel and make the chips fly as a sort of playground, an area for its recreation. I offer the above as an observation."

Lawrence's Warbler. Mrs. Emmy Lou Machen reports that Charles Hacker and M.E. Hathaway saw a Lawrence's Warbler in the vicinity of the Bethel Reservoir near Hampton on May 9, 1959. We have only three previous sight records for the State for this hybrid between the Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers.

Large Flock of Bobolinks. Mr. and Mrs. Milam B. Cater (Box 15, Clifton Forge, Virginia) send in the following report; "On September 1, 1959, we were in the vicinity of the junction of Craig Creek and the James River, just west of Eagle Rock, Virginia, when we observed a large flock of birds coming into a nearby cornfield. This was during a thunder shower about 5 P.M. As the birds continued to come to this cornfield we drove over and with binoculars we were surprised to see that they were Bobolinks. We estimated that there were over 1500. They were in fall plumage, and the 'pink' call note readily identified them as Bobolinks. Also in the area were a few Barn Swallows 'hawking' about."

Blue Grosbeak. Sidney Mitchell has had Blue Grosbeaks all summer at his place on the Harpersville Road near Hampton.

White-crowned Sparrow at Hampton. Mrs. William Cumming saw a White-crowned Sparrow at close range three times on May 10, 1959, in her yard on Cherokee Road, Hampton.



The Raven

BULLETIN OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

J. J. MURRAY, EDITOR
LEXINGTON, VA.

VOL. XXX

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1959

NOS. 11 & 12

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Copy for The Raven (except Field Trip and Local Club News)
should be sent to J.J. Murray, 6 Jordan Street, Lexington,
Virginia.

Field Trip Reports and Local Club News should be sent to
F.R. Scott, 115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond 26, Virginia.

Requests for change of address or for back issues of The Raven
should go to Miss Gertrude Prior, Sweet Briar, Virginia.

All letters relating to dues and membership should be addressed
to C.C. Steirly, Treasurer, Waverly, Virginia.

NOTES ON NESTING BARN OWLS, Tyto alba, ON VIRGINIA'S
EASTERN SHORE

By F. R. Scott

On July 22, 1959, Thomas W. Martin, Manager of Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, found two Barn Owl nests in offshore duck blinds, one containing 7 eggs and the other 7 young birds. Both duck blinds were about 100 yards out in Chincoteague Bay from Assateague Island, Accomack County, near the Maryland line. Martin collected a number of pellets at each nest site and reported their contents to be 100% rodents.

Farther south near Wachapreague on August 1, 1959, a group of VSO members led by C.C. Steirly flushed two Barn Owls out of the remains of an old wooden water tower on Club Point, a marshy island about 1 mile west of the southern tip of Cedar Island. The party was informed by some of the local boatmen that several young owls had been removed from a nest in the tower earlier in the year.

The use of duck blinds and similar structures by nesting Barn Owls has been reported previously in Virginia only at Back Bay, where Paul W. Sykes was given an egg that had been removed from a blind there in early January 1957 (Raven, 28: 41, 1957). Both Sykes and W.F. Rountrey report (personal communications) that they have heard unsubstantiated stories of other nests being found in duck blinds at Back Bay, but they have no definite information. In the Maryland part of Chesapeake Bay Vernon D. Stotts has found more than 30 Barn Owl nests in offshore duck blinds between 1954 and 1959 and banded some 120 young owls (personal communication*). It is thus apparent that this type of nesting site is probably more common than the few Virginia reports would indicate.

*(For more detailed information on Stott's work, see his papers in Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Conference, Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, 1959, pp. 280-285, and Maryland Conservationist, 36 (1): 23-26, 1959.)

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NESTING OF THE KING RAIL IN ROANOKE COUNTY

By A. O. English

On June 1, 1959, while banding Redwings at Murray's Pond, I found a nest of the King Rail, Rallus elegans elegans. Two well-incubated eggs, already pipped, and fragments of eggshell nearby, indicated that the nest had not been long vacated.

This is the third definite record that I have for this species breeding at Murray's Pond. Other records indicate that this Rail is not a stranger at this pond and breeds when conditions are favorable.

COLORED BIRD SLIDES AVAILABLE TO VSO MEMBERS

Some time ago the VSO purchased from Cornell University a set of 52 kodachrome bird slides for the use of those of its members who are called on to make bird talks.

Since many members are not aware that this set is available on loan for such purposes it is hereby called to the attention of the membership. The set depicts the following species:

Common Loon	Blue Jay	Kentucky Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Titmouse	Yellowthroat*
Western Grebe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Hooded Warbler*
American Bittern*	House Wren	Canada Warbler
Whistling Swan	Long-billed Marsh Wren*	Western Meadowlark
Canada Goose	Short-billed Marsh Wren*	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Sandhill Crane	Hermit Thrush	Redwing
Limpkin	Bluebird	Boat-tailed Grackle
Virginia Rail	Starling*	Bronzed Grackle
Sora	White-eyed Vireo*	Cowbird
Coot	Prothonotary Warbler*	Dickcissel
Wilson's Snipe	Black-throated Blue Warbler*	Red-eyed Towhee
Willet	Black-throated Green Warbler*	White-eyed Towhee
Mourning Dove	Yellow-throated Warbler	Clay-colored Sparrow
Screech Owl*	Chestnut-sided Warbler*	Swamp Sparrow*
Kingfisher	Ovenbird*	Chestnut-collared
Phoebe*	Northern Water Thrush*	Longspur
Least Flycatcher*	Louisiana Water Thrush	

(Items marked * also show nests, eggs, or young)

This set can be had on temporary loan by writing C.C. Steirly, Box 97, Waverly, Virginia. The set should of course be promptly returned.

We also have available a series of hawk and owl slides, mostly of captive birds in the hand. These too are available to those who might wish to give a more specialized talk.

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NEWS AND NOTES

Apology to the Brooks Bird Club. The list of "Birds Banded at Mountain Lake, Virginia," which appeared in the last issue of The Raven, did not have the proper acknowledgment to the Brooks Bird Club. While it was stated in the paper that this banding was done in connection with the Foray of the Brooks Bird Club which was held at Mountain Lake, June 6-14, 1959,

it should have been made clear that permission was given to us by Dr. George A. Hall, Editor of The Redstart, to use this material, without waiting for it to appear in The Redstart. Similar permission has been given us to use other results of the Foray after they have appeared in The Redstart. Some work, both interesting and important to VSO members, was done during this Foray.

Washington Audubon Society Lectures. Along with the schedule of Audubon Screen Tour Lectures to be given in Virginia this winter, we listed three lectures (not Screen Tour lectures but lectures of their own selection) scheduled by the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia. In addition to those announced, three later lectures are planned: March 22, "An Ozark Anthology," by Leonard Hall; April 18, "Marsh Life - Delta," by Allan and Marjorie Powell; May 9, "Bird Study in Central Africa," by James and Ruth Chapin. These lectures are given at the auditorium of the Smithsonian at 10th and Constitution Avenues. Guest tickets may be obtained free by writing for them in advance to the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia, P.O. Box 202, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington 4, D.C. There are usually some tickets still available at the door.

Information on Blackbird Roosts Needed. Mr. Brooke Meanley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, would like VSO members to attempt to locate all sizeable blackbird roosts in Virginia between December 15, 1959, and January 30, 1960. Estimates should be made of the size of the roosting populations by species. Please send this information, including exact location of roosts, to Mr. Meanley at Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland, as soon as it is obtained.

Glossy Ibises at Chincoteague. Thomas W. Martin, new manager of the Chincoteague Refuge, recently told F.R. Scott and C.C. Steirly that he had watched a fantastic flight of Glossy Ibises at Chincoteague on May 4, 1959. Although most of them did not remain long, about 100 summered in the Chincoteague area. Martin, Scott and Steirly saw two birds still there on November 14.

Brant at Chincoteague. On the trip referred to above Scott and Steirly found Brant everywhere around Chincoteague; on the bays, in the marshes, and in the fresh-water impoundments. The comeback of this fine bird on our coast is heartening.

Blue Goose at Lexington. An immature Blue Goose came to the pond on the Womeldorf farm near Lexington on October 20. It is still there (on November 26) and apparently will winter, as a bird of this species did on Maury River near Lexington in 1956-1957. Like that bird, this one is very tame, coming up into the barnyard to feed with the domestic ducks. This is the second record for this pond and the third for Rockbridge County.

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