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MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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A NESTING STUDY OF PURPLE GRACKLES AT MIDDLE RIVER, MARYLAND

Edwin Willis

During the spring and summer of 1950 I passed quite frequently through a Purple Grackle (Quiscalus quiscula) nesting colony at Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland. My notes on their nesting extend from March 5 to early August, though I observed birdlife in the nesting area throughout the year. I made no attempt to make a careful study of Grackle nesting habits, mainly due to the inaccessibility of their nests. However, in the course of my observations of the nesting birds of the vicinity I amassed considerable information on the nesting of this species. Comparison of this study with a more intensive one of Bronzed Grackles (Quiscalus quiscula versicolor) at Madison, Wisconsin, by Petersen and Young ⁽¹⁾, shows much similarity between the two species. The following study is divided into two parts: the study of their nesting, and a summary of the factors influencing nest location.

A. NESTING

About 25 pairs of Grackles nested at Middle River in 1950. A few other pairs nested elsewhere in the vicinity. Middle River between the Eastern Avenue bridge and the Pennsylvania Railroad is a narrow tidal stream, mostly dry at low tide. Along its southwest side are a small marsh, a narrow weed-flat bordered by a line of trees and ending at a small stream, a small alder and elderberry bush-flat, and a softball lot. Behind this narrow edging are apartment houses, and across the railroad are large numbers of cottages. Along the northeast side of the river is a fair-sized marsh, which becomes shrub and seepage swamps at its edge and then lowland woods, in which most of the Grackles nested. Behind these woods are more houses.

The first migrant Grackles passed in late February, but I saw none at the nesting grounds until March 5. The breeding population here gradually built up to about fifty, even though Grackle migration continued all through March and some retired to roosts elsewhere at night.

During March they were busy with courtship. At first small groups sat up in the treetops, the males creaking and puffing out their feathers to impress the females in general. By mid-March courtship was down to a pair basis, and there was much chasing through the trees, sometimes in small groups but usually in pairs. Most were mated by early April. Nesting started about the same time as at Madison, Wisconsin ⁽¹⁾, despite the fact that the males arrived here three weeks earlier, because the mating process took nearly three weeks here but only one week at Madison (Table 1).

On April 8 I noticed several females carrying straws from the bush-flat into the woods, and found six nests nearly completed in the pines there. Several Grackles flew around nearby, creaking and chacking; one, which was flushed off a nest, may have been incubating. Petersen and Young (op. cit.) found that Bronzed Grackles took a week to eleven days to complete their nest; if this is true of Purple Grackles in Maryland, the nests must have been started the last week in March. On April 11, I found three more nests in a group of pines in the center of the woods. Probably, at the same time, building was proceeding rapidly throughout the woods, for on April 16 I found 21 nests in the half of the woods (near the railroad) which eventually contained 42 nests. Thus there must have been considerable building afterward, but I believe it was due to loss of eggs or death of young rather than to raising of second broods. Petersen and Young (op. cit.) mentioned that each year a number of nests were deserted in early stages of construction; possibly some of the nests in the final total were in this category.

On April 16 a few females were on the nests, and there were two eggs in each of the two nests I climbed to, which later contained three eggs. This is the lowest number reported by most observers ^(1,2); the average set seems to be five eggs. Though Petersen and Young reported their earliest record of eggs at Madison on April 15, probably some sets were complete by April 16 here. During the rest of April the adults were mainly busy incubating. A few were still on the nests in mid-May, and probably as late as early June in some cases.

The first sign that young had hatched was on May 1, when the female of one nest (the other nest was destroyed) was on three tiny young. Using the incubation period of eleven to twelve days determined at Madison ⁽¹⁾, the first of these probably hatched April 29. By May 9 these young filled the nest, and the parents were busy gathering food for their young everywhere - from the marsh-edge, the swamps, the leaves of the woods, and refuse behind apartment buildings - up to a mile away. By May 13 the young in this nest were gone, though I heard no young out of the nest. Since up to fourteen days had elapsed since they had hatched, and since Petersen and Young (op. cit.) reported that young stay in the nest an average of 12 days, these young could easily have left successfully. Probably most young left the nests in late May, but a few were still in nests during June.

The first bob-tailed little one I saw was in a large cottonwood by the bridge, at least 100 feet from the nearest trees, on May 26. By that

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF GRACKLE CHRONOLOGY,
MIDDLE RIVER, MARYLAND and MADISON, WISCONSIN

ACTIVITY	MIDDLE RIVER 1950	MADISON 1947 - 1949
Arrival of Males	1st week March	3rd week March
Arrival of Females	---	4th week March
Pairing	2nd-3rd week March	4th week March
First Nests Started	4th week March	1st week April
First Nests Completed	April 8	---
First Eggs Laid	about April 8	April 15, 1949
Last Incubation	---	June 1, 1947
First Hatching	about April 29	---
Earliest Fledging	about May 10	May 12, 1949
Latest Fledging	prob. early July	June 12, 1947
Last Feeding by Adults	July 23	---

time the "Cha cha" feeding or "location" calls of the young were coming from everywhere in the trees around the river. Three well-flying young observed in the woods on May 30 had been out of the nest at least a week. On May 31 I caught a bob-tailed little fellow on the grass bank below the trees along the southwest side of the river, while a parent circled and chacked. Otherwise the parents hid their young well down in the dense bushes around the marshes or in the boggy thicket-depressions which cut the woods into five sections.

By the middle of June many young were well grown, if not so large nor so long-tailed as the parents, and they began to disperse in family flocks of from three to six. The immatures frequently begged food with "Cha-a-ack, cha-a-ack" calls, but gleaned most of their own food once they left the nesting grounds. Half-grown young were still begging from parents as late as July 2, and the last time I saw one carry food to its young was on July 23. By early August their dispersal was general, and it was hard to tell young from old. Only enough birds for the available food supply (which too frequently includes eggs and young of other birds) were left in the nesting woods.

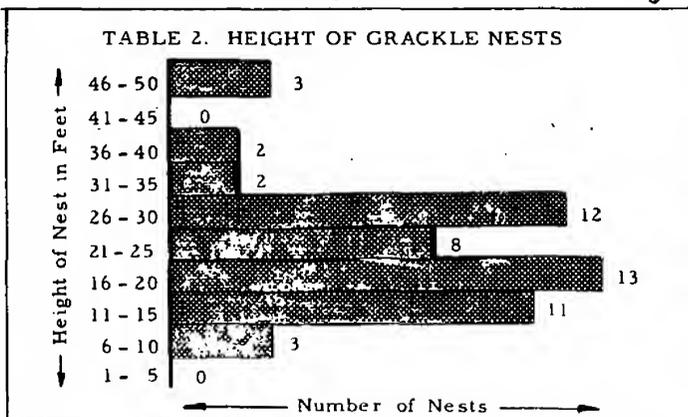
One nest produced a partial albino, with white tail-feathers tipped with black. It was still small, though well-flying, and cared for by a

parent on July 14. I caught it on July 17 when its feathers were wet from bathing. Probably it had been out of the nest only about two weeks, setting its hatching date about mid-June and its leaving date early July. However, its albinism may have been accompanied by slow growth, so it is somewhat uncertain whether it came from such a late nesting.

B. NESTS AND THEIR LOCATION

The Grackle nests were bulky and cup-shaped, of dried yellow grass stems bound together with an inner mud layer. Many of these nests were so well constructed that they endured until the next spring; it is possible that some of the fifty-four nests I found were nests from previous years. Four of these nests were on the southwest side of the river; the other fifty were in the woods. Forty-one nests were in scrub pines (*Pinus virginiana*), four were in willow oaks (*Quercus phellos*), five in dense honeysuckles (*Lonicera japonica*) up sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) saplings, and four in honeysuckle up cottonwoods (*Populus deltoides*). The Grackles at Madison (1) also nest in conifers (*arbor vitae*, *Thuja occidentalis*) and in honeysuckles in preference to the trees which are not in leaf when they started nesting. One pine tree at Middle River had four nests, twelve others had two nests each, and twenty-six were in separate trees.

Apparently safety, and consequently concealment from possible predators, was the main factor in placing the nest. In open places near houses they nest far up - to 50 feet - because the open growth there made a lower nest plainly visible to young boys, one of their chief enemies. Nests in the woods were only 15 to 30 feet up in pines, in order to be equally concealed by leaves from predators both above and below. It is interesting to note that no nests were in the lower third of the pine trees, 62½% of the nests were in the middle third (vertically), and 37½% were in the top third. Where the growth was dense enough nearer the ground, as in the honeysuckles here and at Madison, as well as in *arbor vitae* (1), the Grackles nested lower. My nests in honeysuckle-covered saplings ranged from 6 to 16 feet up, in contrast to 11 to 50 feet up



in pine trees. Comparative numbers of nests at different heights are illustrated in Table 2. Nests in the 46 to 50-foot group are those near houses.

When the nests were in large pines, they were from five to ten feet out, saddled on thin branches, twigs, and needles, but in small pines and other trees they were close to the trunk. This was evidently because the larger pines had longer and stronger branches and thus could support the heavy nests farther from the trunk. Thin willow oak branches would not support nests very far from the trunk. Since in the round-conical pines the largest branches are a little below the vertical center, the nests tended to be farther out from the trunks when placed half-way up the trees than when near the top. Apparently the direction from the trunk had nothing to do with the distance of the nest from the trunk.

The only thing noteworthy about the direction of these nests from the trunk was that comparatively few nests were placed on the north side of the trees. Perhaps they built their nests on the sunward sides of the trees to gain increased warmth, but it would seem that the leaves above would nullify any gain of this sort. Further study of their nesting habits will perhaps explain this and many other things still unknown about the Purple Grackle.

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1. Petersen, Arnold and Young, Howard. 1950. A Nesting Study of the Bronzed Grackle. Auk, 67 (4): 466-476.
2. Pearson, T. Gilbert (Editor-in-Chief). 1936. Birds of America, II: 267.

SOME BIRDS USE POISON IVY SEEDS WITHOUT SPREADING THEM

In reckoning the economic value of birds, it has to be counted against some species that they spread undesirable plants - by eating the entire fruits or seeds and later regurgitating or voiding the indigestible pits, which duly sprout and take root wherever they fall. One of the plants thus spread is poison ivy, the seeds of which are coated with a crumbly substance that many birds seem to like.

In Baltimore City and County I have at one time or another watched birds of eight species make use of this food. And it seems worth mentioning that not all of them were spreading the seeds. All of the Slate-colored Juncos (4 birds) and Carolina Chickadees (2) merely picked or chewed away bits of the seeds' coating, leaving the pits themselves on the vines.

Five other species, however, the Downy Woodpecker (1 bird), Catbird (1), Myrtle Warbler (7), Tree Sparrow (1) and Song Sparrow (1), have all swallowed the seeds whole, and so undoubtedly did spread the plant. I have seen two White-throated Sparrows pick at the seeds, but without being able to discern whether they took all or just part.

-- Hervey Brackbill.

SUMMARY OF MARYLAND NEST RECORDS, 1950

Helen L. Webster

Did you observe any birds nesting during this past season? What kind? When was the observation made? Where was the nest? In what type of habitat was it located? How was it constructed? How many eggs were in the clutch? How long did they take to hatch? How long did the young remain in the nest? These and many other interesting questions about the nesting habits of birds you can answer for yourself; and the compilation of your answers and the answers of fellow club members will not only be of interest to readers of Maryland Birdlife, but will provide scientific data valuable to others. The keen nature student loses much of the fascination associated with wildlife if he passes up the opportunity to peep into the family life of birds during the nesting season. Ask your friends to tell you of any nesting activities that they may see. Many will be glad to cooperate in this way and in time they themselves may succumb to the fascination of bird study.

In making these observations one should bear in mind that in approaching a nest he probably leaves a trail behind that may attract some predator to the nest. Nests on or near the ground are especially vulnerable to predation and your visits should be limited to the number necessary to obtain useful data.

Make your reports as nearly complete as possible, but clear and concise. Information presented in this manner has greater value and is more easily extracted. You may wish to consult the nest record file in connection with some research project or article for Maryland Birdlife, and you will appreciate the availability of well-presented data.

There is still much to be learned about the birds of Maryland, and through the combined efforts of observers all over the State we can compile valuable data on the distribution, ecology and nesting seasons of the various species. Those who have not read the summary of Maryland nest records for 1949 by C. S. Robbins (Maryland Birdlife 5: 41-48) should not fail to do so. This article gives some idea of the many things yet to be learned about the birds nesting in Maryland.

The summary of nest records reported by members of the Maryland Ornithological Society is to be an annual affair, so be sure to request nest record cards from local officers of the Society, and be ready to report any nests you may observe this spring and summer.

Special acknowledgment is due Edwin Willis, who submitted detailed records on 369 nests and also prepared an excellent summary of his data. Other members who reported 20 or more nests were Miss A. A. Brandenburg, Robert Dickerman, Douglas Hackman, Robert T. Mitchell, Chandler S. Robbins, Rosemary B. Thomas and W. B. Tyrrell.



Black Duck nest, Elliott Is., May 15, 1949. Clark G. Webster

The following summary contains selected notes on the 89 species reported in 1950.

GREAT BLUE HERON - About 30 nests on Mar. 24, and young about half grown on May 16 at Fairhaven, A.A. County (W. B. Tyrrell).

LEAST BITTERN - Three nests recorded, with 3, 4, and 2 eggs, on June 11, 22, and 28 at Middle River, Baltimore Co. (Edwin Willis).

MALLARD - Nest with 9 eggs on May 13 at Strawberry Point in Baltimore Co. was empty on May 27 (Willis).

BLACK DUCK - Late nest with 5 eggs on June 14 at Swan Point, Kent Co. (Judge & Mrs. W. L. Henderson).

WOOD DUCK - Hen with 4 young on Apr. 28 at Marshall Diersen Refuge, Montgomery County. (Robert J. Beaton). Five nests at Patuxent Refuge with 10, 10, 13, 11 and 10 eggs, which hatched on June 2, 12, 26, July 6 and July 25; the latter is a very late date. (Clark G. Webster).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - Four downy young, 10 days old, in fork of sycamore tree near Halethorpe, May 7 (Ruth Lenderking).

OSPREY - Building, Mar. 3, Caroline County (Roberta Fletcher). Nest with 3 eggs, Assateague Is., May 4 (J. H. Buckalew). Five nests containing 3 eggs, 3 young & 1 egg, 1 egg, 2 young, and 3 young, June 6, Eastern Shore (W. Bryant Tyrrell).

BALD EAGLE - Indications on April 27 that young had been removed from nest; locality withheld (Tyrrell).

MARSH HAWK - One young and 3 eggs (2 pipped), June 23 at Bittering, Garrett Co. (Tyrrell); second nest record for western Maryland.

SPARROW HAWK - One young in nest, May 26, Dundalk (Kolb).

RUFFED GROUSE - Nest with 15 eggs, May 13, Catoctin Mt., Frederick Co. (Catoctin Conference, M. O. S.).

BOB-WHITE - Eggs reported as early as June 25 and as late as Aug. 13, both in Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas).

KING RAIL - Nest with 8 eggs, Caroline Co., June 23 (Roberta Fletcher).

CLAPPER RAIL - May 20, nest with 11 eggs, West Ocean City (Low, Buckalew and many others, M.O.S. trip).

VIRGINIA RAIL - June 3, 2 eggs in nest at Strawberry Point, Baltimore Co. (Willis). June 26, adult with downy young at Kent Narrows (R. Dickerman, R. Gibbs). July 8, adult with young, Unity, Montgomery Co. (Seth H. Low).

KILLDEER - Twelve nests or broods recorded. Nest with 4 eggs as early as Mar. 25, and another with 4 eggs as late as June 11 at Middle River (Willis). July 27, one extremely late downy young at Fort Meade, Anne Arundel Co. (Dickerman).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Juvenile, July 2, Kent Is. (Dickerman).

GULL-BILLED TERN - Twelve juveniles banded on island off South Point, Worcester Co., July 2 (Buckalew); increasing there.

COMMON TERN - Poor season; 163 young banded, July 2, off South Point (Buckalew). On Aug. 5 at Ocean City, one very late nest with eggs, 18 downy young, and 18 feathered young not yet able to fly (Robert Dickerman, Robert Gibbs, Martha Trever).

LEAST TERN - June 24, 32 young banded off South Point (Buckalew). June 17, 8 nests with 2 eggs each, Cove Pt., Calvert Co. (M.O.S. trip, reported by Pearl Heaps). July 9, 2 eggs in nest, also 4 juvenile birds well-feathered on wings, back and breast, Cove Point (Dickerman and Gibbs). July 13, 12 or more young in colony at Oxford, Talbot Co. (Judge and Mrs. Henderson).

BLACK SKIMMER - July 2, 92 young banded off South Point, Worcester Co. (Buckalew). Aug. 5, one late downy young, Ocean City (Dickerman, Gibbs, Trever).

MOURNING DOVE - Seven nests recorded. The earliest contained 2 eggs on Apr. 15 in Frederick Co., and was successful (Rodgers Smith and Mrs. M. J. Hoyer). The latest nest reported contained 2 eggs which hatched on Aug. 3 but were destroyed on Aug. 4, Middle River (Willis).

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - July 31, 3 eggs, unsuccessful; Aug. 6, nest with 1 young and 1 egg; both at Middle River (Willis).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - Two eggs found on July 16 hatched about July 19, Middle River (Willis); very late record.

BARN OWL - June 25, 1 young nearly grown and 2 addled eggs in observation tower, Blackwater Refuge (Kolb). June 18, young in nest in barn, Charles County (M.O.S. trip).

SCREECH OWL - Three young left nest, June 20, Leakin Park, Baltimore City (T. C. Buck); late record.

BARRED OWL - May 20, 1 egg, White Marsh, Baltimore Co. (Douglas Hackman). Apr. 7, a nest 25 ft. above ground, Forest Glen, Montgomery Co. (Frank C. Cross).

CHIMNEY SWIFT - Adults breaking twigs off trees at Middle River from May 27 to June 10 (Willis).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - Aug. 17, adult feeding young on wire, Gibson Island (Hendersons).

BELTED KINGFISHER - May 13, building in bank along river, Loch Raven, Baltimore Co. (C. Haven Kolb, Jr.).

FLICKER - Building as early as Apr. 7, Middle River (Willis). Seven eggs in nest box at Patuxent, June 4 (Mitchell).

PILEATED WOODPECKER - Adult feeding 2 young, June 19 at Bittinger, Garrett Co. (Tyrrell & Allegany unit's Junior Camp).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER - Young heard in nest, June 6, Chase; one caught and banded on June 20 (Orville W. Crowder and Wm. S. McHoul).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER - Nest in May, 60 ft. high in Baltimore City (Ruth Lenderking).

HAIRY WOODPECKER - Noisy young heard in Towson nest, May 30 to June 9 (Kolb). Young out of nest, July 2, Towson (Coles).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - Young out of nest, June 22 at Towson (Mr. & Mrs. R. D. Cole).

EASTERN KINGBIRD - Nine nests recorded. First eggs, June 16, White Marsh (Hackman). Last young in nest, July 28, at Patuxent Research Refuge, near Laurel (Robert Mitchell).

CRESTED FLYCATCHER - Young out of nest, June 3, Forest Glen (Cross). Adult feeding nearly-grown young, Sept. 4, Gwynns Falls Park, Baltimore City (Miss A. A. Brandenburg).



Ten newly-hatched Wood Ducks in abandoned Starling nest in Patuxent nest box, July 26, 1950. Clark G. Webster.

EASTERN PHOEBE - Nesting started late. No full clutch reported before May 6, when Kolb found 5 eggs at Loch Raven.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Two very late records. July 14, 3 eggs, Whiteford, Harford Co. (Duncan McIntosh). Four young left nest in mid-August, Camp Roosevelt, Calvert Co. (Rod. Smith).

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE - Three well-feathered young as early as June 13, Darlington, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas). Young in nest, July 22, Middle River (Willis).

HORNED LARK - Three eggs, McDonogh, Mar. 24 (Jack Weaver).

BANK AND ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS - Young in nests (at least 300 nests), May 30, Ches. & Del. Canal (Miss Brandenburg).

BARN SWALLOW - First eggs, May 20, Frederick Co. (Rod Smith). Latest hatching date, Aug. 4, Patuxent Refuge (Robbins).

PURPLE MARTIN - Four eggs, June 14, Baltimore Co. (Duvall Jones). Last young still in nest, Aug. 7, Laurel (Thomas B. Israel). Colony of 166 pairs in 5 boxes at Federalsburg, Caroline Co. (Virgil B. Turner). The largest box, with 96 rooms, is believed to be the largest Martin house in the State. Approximately 637 young left the houses successfully. The mortality rate because of heat was extremely low this year due to aluminum paint over the dark green roofs; in 1949, before the aluminum paint was applied, almost all birds near the 8th floor smothered, even though the house was well ventilated.

BLUE JAY - Building, Apr. 13, Middle River (Willis). Four young flew from nest at White Marsh, June 28 (Hackman); and 2 left nest at Middle River on July 28 (Willis).

CAROLINA CHICKADEE - Building at Takoma Park, Mar. 18 (Tyrrell). Six young hatched successfully, parents and young eating suet at Federalsburg, June 11 (Virgil Turner). Young out of nest at Towson, June 18 (Coles).

TUFTED TITMOUSE - Building, May 6; 2 or 3 eggs, May 17, and nearly-feathered young, June 3 at Rosedale, Baltimore Co. (Duvall Jones). Five eggs, May 19; 6 young hatched, June 2; left nest, June 20, Darlington, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Three young out of nest being fed by parent as late as July 15, Baltimore Co. (Miss Brandenburg).

HOUSE WREN - Nest with 7 eggs at Patuxent Refuge on May 24 (Mitchell and Robey). Five young in nest as early as May 25 at Fallston, Harford Co. (Betty Scarff). Last young left Middle River nest, Aug. 13 or 14 (Willis). Mean clutch size, 6.2 for 19 first-brood nests; 5.5 for 17 second-brood nests. One nest at Patuxent Research Refuge contained 8 young on June 7 (Harry Blagbrough).

CAROLINA WREN - Building, Apr. 6, Middle River (Willis). First young in nest, May 23, Towson (Kolb). Five young still in nest at Middle River, Aug. 20 (Willis).

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN - Forty-two nests of 23 pairs studied in Middle River area by Willis. First set complete, May 27; last completed, July 29. First young hatched on June 9, and last on Aug. 11. First young out on June 22, last still in nest on Aug. 19. Nesting success, 31%. Three nests contained 3 eggs, twenty contained 4 eggs, and



Kildeer nest, Ocean City, May 21, 1949. Clark G. Webster.

nine contained 5 eggs. The lowest nest was 1 ft. 8 in.; the highest, 3 ft. 10 in.; the median, 2 ft. 7 in.

MOCKINGBIRD - Building, Apr. 23, Middle River (Willis). Three eggs, May 5, Frederick Co. (Rod. Smith and Mrs. M. J. Hoyler). Young left nest, May 17, Havre de Grace (Rosamond Beech). Building, May 16; 3 eggs in nest, May 28; 3 young several days old, June 12; 3 young left nest, June 23; adult building new nest, June 25, Darlington, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas).

CATBIRD - First full sets, May 14 at Berwyn (C.S. and E. C. Robbins) and Middle River (Willis). Last eggs hatched, Aug. 17 (very late), and young left, Aug. 27, Middle River (Willis). Success of 31 nests, 60% (Willis). The lowest nest was 2 ft. 8 in., the highest was 20 ft., and the median was 6 ft. Seventeen first-brood clutches were distributed as follows: one set of 5 eggs, eleven sets of 4, three sets of 3, and two sets of 2 (mean, 3.6); in the second brood there were three sets of 4, fourteen of 3, and three of 2 (mean, 3.0).

BROWN THRASHER - Building, Apr. 26; 2 eggs, May 13; eggs gone, May 14, Harford Co. (Rosemary B. Thomas). Aug. 26, adult feeding young out of nest, Caroline Co. (Mrs. Roberta Fletcher). Fourteen Middle River nests were 35% successful (Willis). The lowest nest was 8 in. off the ground, the highest was 10 ft., and the median was 5 ft. Five clutches of 4 eggs and five of 3 were recorded in the first brood, and one of 4, six of 3, and one of 2 in the second brood.

ROBIN - First building, Apr. 12, and last, July 12. Four eggs, Apr. 30, Rosedale (Duvall Jones). Four eggs, May 22; 3 hatched; one

of second brood seen out of nest on June 25 at Middle River; last brood left nest on Aug. 10 (Willis). Forty-nine nests studied by Willis were between 50% and 60% successful. The lowest nest was 28 in. off the ground, the highest was 47 ft., and the median was 22 ft. Sets laid up to May 15 had the following clutch sizes: seven records of 4 eggs, three of 3, and one of 2; after May 15, four records of 3.

WOOD THRUSH - Building, May 13; one egg, May 17; nest destroyed by thunder storm, White Marsh, Baltimore Co. (Hackman). June 3, 4 eggs plus one Cowbird egg (removed); June 14, young left nest, Frederick County (Martha Kemp Slemmer). June 23, young ready to leave nest, Towson (Coles). Thirty-two nests ranged from 3 ft. to 42 ft. above the ground, with a median of 9 ft. 3 in. The incubation period was apparently 12 days, and young remained in the nest about 13 days after hatching. The latest egg date was July 20, Middle River (Willis). In first-brood nests there were three sets of 4 eggs and four sets of 3; in second brood, five sets of 3, and five sets of 2. Eighty-two percent of the young left 22 nests studied by Willis.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - First completed nest, Apr. 27; 4 young in nest, May 24; Patuxent Refuge (Mitchell & Robey). Adults feeding noisy young, May 21, Clear Spring (Robbins & Duvall).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - Building 8 ft. over water, Apr. 22, Seneca (Tyrrell). Adults feeding young in nest, May 6, Charles Co. (M. C. Crone, M. W. Goldman, A. R. Stickley). First breeding records for central Maryland were obtained by the Frederick Branch, who found a pair building on May 6 in Frederick Co., and by Robbins and Duvall, who watched a pair building in an apple orchard near Spickler, northeast of Clear Spring, Washington Co., on May 21.

CEDAR WAXWING - Building 30 ft. up in scrub pine, June 14, Middle River (Willis). Young in nest in beech tree, 20 ft. above ground, June 18, Chase (Hackman). Female on nest, June 17, Charlotte Hall, St. Marys Co. (Miss Brandenburg and M. O. S. trip).

STARLING - Five young about 4 days old, Patuxent Refuge, Apr. 27 (Mitchell & Robey). Latest young, June 30, 8 ft. up in apple tree near Clear Spring, Washington Co. (Robbins).

WHITE-EYED VIREO - Building, May 6, Caroline Co. (Marvin Hewitt). Young out, June 17, Middle River (Willis).

RED-EYED VIREO - Nest nearly completed, June 6; 1 egg, June 15; and full clutch of 4 on June 18; incubation was 13 days and the young remained in the nest 10 to 11 days, Middle River (Willis). Three eggs, June 20, Bittinger, Garrett Co. (Tyrrell). Two young just out of the nest were caught on Aug. 20 by Willis, who saw full-grown young being fed as late as Sept. 27 at Middle River. Nineteen nests ranged from 3 to 48 ft. in height, with a median of 9 ft. 8 in.

WORM-EATING WARBLER - Adult feeding young out of nest, July 23, Worthington Valley, Baltimore Co. (Coles).

YELLOW WARBLER - Nest found on June 24 in a sea-myrtle at Strawberry Point, Baltimore Co., was already empty (Willis).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - Young out of nest, July 23, Worthington Valley, Baltimore Co. (Coles).

PRAIRIE WARBLER - Three eggs, June 8, Patuxent Refuge (Robert T. Mitchell).

KENTUCKY WARBLER - Young, recently out of nest, June 21 at Patuxent Refuge (Mitchell & Blagbrough). Young out of nest, June 25, Harford County (Rosemary B. Thomas).

YELLOW-THROAT - Building, May 24, Patuxent (Blagbrough). Building, June 10; 4 eggs, June 17, Loch Raven (Haven Kolb).

HOODED WARBLER - Four young left nest in Leakin Park, Baltimore City, on June 22 (T. C. Buck).

AMERICAN REDSTART - June 25, young in nest 40 ft. up in white oak tree at Middle River (Willis).

ENGLISH SPARROW - In Frederick Co., Rod Smith found a tall pine with about 15 nests in it on May 30; the nests contained eggs and young in all stages of development. Young left nest under eaves of small shed at Middle River on Aug. 4 (Willis).

RED-WING - Building, May 6, at Middle River. An early clutch of 4 eggs at Strawberry Point on May 14, hatched on May 29. A very late nest with young, Aug. 4, Strawberry Point. Mean clutch of 41 nests was 3.25, and 57% of young left successfully (Willis).

ORCHARD ORIOLE - Five eggs on June 2, 4 young on June 5, Patuxent (Mitchell). Female on nest, June 17, Calvert Co. (Brandenburg).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Three young out of nest at Lutherville, Baltimore Co., June 21 (Brandenburg). Apparently only one of a brood of 4 that hatched about June 9 at Middle River survived (Willis).

PURPLE GRACKLE - See article by Willis in this issue.

COWBIRD - Willis reported eleven cases of parasitism in Red-eyed Vireo nests, ten cases in Song Sparrow nests, two in Carolina Wrens, and one each in nests of the following species: Yellow-throat, Redstart, Red-wing, Orchard Oriole, and Towhee; the earliest egg date was between Apr. 24 and 26 (Carolina Wren nest), and the last young begged from a Towhee on Aug. 28. Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Cole reported young being fed on July 1 by a Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Towhee, and Song Sparrow. One young was fed by a Yellow-breasted Chat, July 18, Patuxent (Mitchell). Young were fed by a Red-eyed Vireo as late as Aug. 20 at Riverdale (James B. Cope). Other hosts reported this year were Wood Thrush (2 records), Oven-bird, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow.

SCARLET TANAGER - Adults were seen feeding 3 young at Magothy River Park, Anne Arundel Co., June 23 (Brandenburg). Four young in nest, June 24, White Marsh, Baltimore Co. (Hackman). Three eggs hatched on June 16, Middle River (Willis).

CARDINAL - Female on 4 eggs, May 12, Patuxent (Robbins). Adult feeding very late young out of nest at Loch Raven, Sept. 16 (Kolb).

INDIGO BUNTING - First full clutch, 3 eggs, Patuxent, June 1 (Mitchell). July 23, 2 young and 2 eggs in blackberry bush at Darlington; 4 young on July 26 (Rosemary Thomas). Latest nesting reported was 3 young out of nest, Sept. 10, Baltimore Co. (Brandenburg).

EASTERN GOLDFINCH - Nest half completed, July 20; bird on nest, July 30 and Aug. 13, Darlington (Rosemary Thomas). Aug. 9, building; Sept. 4, all 4 eggs hatched; incubation period $12\frac{1}{2}$ to 15 days; young remained in nest 13 to $15\frac{1}{2}$ days, Strawberry Point (Willis). First young left nest, Aug. 29, and last young died in nest after Sept. 24, Middle River area (Willis).

RED-EYED TOWHEE - Four eggs, May 25, White Marsh (Hackman). Four eggs, May 31, Patuxent (Oscar Warbach) Nests with 4 eggs, 3 young & 1 egg, and 2 eggs were found on June 2, June 3, and July 27 at Middle River (Willis). Extreme dates of leaving Middle River nests were June 4 and Aug. 12 (Willis).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - Nest with 4 young, Strawberry Point, Baltimore Co. (Willis).

CHIPPING SPARROW - Two eggs plus one Cowbird egg in nest in rose bush, May 21. Building, May 30; 2 young hatched, June 15; left nest, June 23; both at Darlington (Rosemary Thomas). Three eggs at Middle River, July 12 (Willis). Full-grown young still begging for food, Sept. 2 at Middle River (Willis).

FIELD SPARROW - Four eggs, May 20, White Marsh; 3 hatched, May 24 (Hackman). Nest under construction at Loch Raven, June 10; 3 eggs, June 17 (Kolb). Extreme dates for leaving Middle River nests, June 18 and Aug. 23 (Willis). Eight May nests ranged from 0 to $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. off the ground (median, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.); nine later nests ranged from 0 to 2 ft. (median, 1 ft. 1 in.)

SONG SPARROW - Four eggs, May 14; 2 hatched on May 24, other 2 infertile, Baltimore City (G.M.Ortiz). Late young left a Middle River nest on Sept. 3 (Willis). Seven sets laid in May averaged 4.6 eggs, five sets laid in June averaged 3.8, and ten laid in July and August averaged 3.1. Median nest heights for these same three periods were $2\frac{3}{4}$ in.; 1 ft. 3 in.; and 2 ft. 10 in.



House Wren, Arbutus,
June 18, 1950. I. E. Hampe



Young Barred Owl, Relay,
May 8, 1947. I. E. Hampe

EUROPEAN CORMORANT OBSERVED AT OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

On December 13, 1950, while on patrol in the vicinity of Ocean City Inlet, I saw a large, dark bird at the mouth of the inlet. Binoculars revealed that it was a cormorant; however, it appeared larger than the double-crested species common in this area. After a short time the cormorant rose from the water and perched on a channel marker just across the inlet from where I was standing. As the bird preened, I could see that the entire belly area was white. On the basis of size, and the location and extent of the white underparts, it was identified as the European Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). A bird of this species, apparently the same individual, was subsequently seen in this inlet on December 27, 1950, by Ernest G. Baldwin, Fred M. Packard, and John W. Taylor, Jr. The European Cormorant was given a place on the Maryland list by Kirkwood (*Trans. Md. Acad. Sci.*, 2: 258, 1895) on the basis of Audubon's statement that this species "is rarely seen further south than the extreme limits of Maryland, but from Chesapeake Bay eastward it becomes more plentiful." No further data being available, this species has not been accepted as a Maryland bird by subsequent authors, and the present observations are the first for which definite localities and dates are available. The European Cormorant winters regularly as far south as Long Island, and has been recorded casually to South Carolina and Georgia.

John H. Buckalew

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS WINTERING ON THE
EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND

On January 1, 1951, while participating in the Susquehanna-Sassafras Christmas Count, we stopped approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Cecilton, Cecil County, to observe a number of Field Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows in a hedgerow bordering a plowed field along Route 283.

We soon became aware of a White-crowned Sparrow on a fence post on the other (south) side of the road. This bird flew across to the afore-mentioned hedgerow and soon flew down into the field, where it was joined by six others of the same species. The seven White-crowns, five adults and two immatures, were observed for over ten minutes, in the course of which time one adult was actually captured after it had alighted exhausted on the highway. After a few minutes in the hand it had apparently fully recovered and was released.

Approximately one-half mile further west along the highway another party of four White-crowns, two adults and two immatures, was encountered in a similar habitat. Another adult at the English Farm rounded out an even dozen White-crowned Sparrows, for what is believed to be the second winter record on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. One adult female was collected by Wetmore seven miles south of Ocean City on November 9, 1929.

E. G. Davis, W. T. Davis, J. E. Willoughby



THE SEASON - November and December 1950

Chandler S. Robbins

This period was ushered in by a record-breaking heat wave, and although a gradual lowering of temperatures continued for the rest of November, it was not until the 26th that hard freezing weather occurred in the eastern part of the State. The month ended with an average daily excess of 2 to 3 degrees. The warmth continued through the first ten days of December, but the remainder of that month was slightly colder than normal, and by the end of the period the State was enveloped in a severe freeze that sent a large proportion of our wintering waterfowl southward. The wide-spread wintering of the Phoebe, and records of such insect-eaters as the Gnatcatcher in November and the Redstart in December attest to the general mildness of the period.

Gannet, Herons. Two Gannets seen from the Matapeake ferry on Nov. 11 by John Aldrich, Thomas Burleigh, and Allen Duvall represent one of the northernmost records of this species in Chesapeake Bay. An American Egret seen at Patuxent Refuge on Dec. 15-16 by Francis Uhler and Robert Stewart is the latest ever recorded west of the Bay. Another late straggler was a Snowy Egret which remained at Blackwater Refuge through Nov. 3 (Robbins & Kraeski).

Swans and Geese. Swans were late in arriving, but the observations at hand indicate an apparent increase. The first flock passed over Seth Low's farm at Unity on Nov. 11, and on the same day a stray immature bird was seen at Ocean City (where rare) on the M.O.S. trip. In the next two days they were recorded at Savannah Lake, Choptank River bridge, Kent Narrows and Gibson Island. The peak was reached on the 18th, when 3,000 were seen by the Hendersons at the Romancoke ferry landing. The highest counts reported from the head of the Bay were 600 at Carroll Is. on Nov. 19 (M.O.S. trip) and 800 on the Gunpowder, Dec. 10 (Thomas Imhof). Impressive numbers of Canada Geese arrived on the Upper Eastern Shore and in the Choptank River area. Counts of 1,450 at Blackwater Refuge on Nov. 3 (Robbins) and 2,000 in the Elliott Island marshes on the 19th (Stewart) represent only a fraction of the total number using these areas. A rare sight at Blackwater Refuge was a group of 15 Brant flying overhead with a flock of Mallards on Nov. 12 (M.O.S.). One Snow Goose was seen at Miller's Island, Baltimore Co., and up to 7 at Blackwater Refuge. A flight of 700 to 800 passed south over Ocean City on Nov. 28 (J.H. Buckalew), and on the unprecedented

date of Dec. 27, some 1,986 individuals flew south over the same area (Christmas Count). From 1 to 5 Blue Geese were present at Blackwater Refuge throughout the period, and a high count of 10 was obtained at Chestertown, Nov. 24 (Buckalew).

Ducks. Black Ducks were less numerous than usual. Mallards, on the other hand, made a better showing with 250 at Blackwater on Nov. 19 (Stewart) and 203 in Eastern Bay on Dec. 23 (Hendersons). Gadwall on Savannah Lake increased from 40 on Nov. 3 and 200 on the 12th to 400 on the 19th (Robbins & Stewart); the favorite feeding ground of these birds is in the cove bordering the Elliott Island road, making this the best place in Maryland to observe Gadwall in large numbers. The second Anne Arundel County record of the European Widgeon was established on Nov. 30 when I. C. and C. Hoover identified one bird at Sandy Point. High Baldpate counts were obtained on some of its favorite feeding grounds as follows: 1,400, Elliott Island marshes, Nov. 3 (Robbins & Kraeski); 1,000, Nov. 11, Berlin (M.O.S. trip); 14,000, Nov. 19, Carroll Is. (M.O.S. trip); and 3,000, Dec. 10, Gunpowder River (Imhof). The combined effects of late arrivals and early freezing account in part for the low numbers of diving ducks reported. Except for the Greater Scaup and Old-squaw, which were especially common in parts of Chesapeake Bay, no comment on increases was received. The highest counts of diving ducks reported by single parties were as follows: Redhead, 1,500 on Dec. 10 at Gunpowder River (Imhof); Canvas-back, 2,000, same date and place; Buffle-head, 200 on Dec. 27 in Sinepuxent Bay; Old-squaw, 100 on Dec. 22 in Eastern Bay (Hendersons) and 200 on Nov. 11 at South Point (M.O.S. trip); Ruddy Duck, 1,500 on Nov. 19 at Carroll Is. (M.O.S.), and 2,000 at Gibson Island throughout the period (Hendersons & others).

Vultures and Hawks. The most comprehensive report on these species was furnished by Douglas Hackman, who observed frequent flights over his home in White Marsh through Dec. 9 (details to be incorporated into forthcoming hawk migration summary). His count of 11 Black Vultures on Nov. 11 is a high one for that area. Edwin Willis identified a late Osprey at Strawberry Point on Nov. 8, and two birds of this species were observed by Andrew Simon, Richard Simon and William McHoul on the Chase Christmas Count, Dec. 31.

Coot, Shorebirds. Only 3 localities reported 1,000 or more Coot, the highest estimate being 4,000 at Carroll Is., Nov. 19 (M.O.S.). A Piping Plover which was watched at leisure from the Ocean City bridge on Nov. 12 by the M.O.S. trip (Robbins, Miss Brandenburg and others) is by far the latest on record for Maryland. Three Ruddy Turnstones, seen at the same time, are also the latest except for one stray bird on Dec. 27, 1948. A count of 25 Wilson's Snipe on Dec. 23 at Frederick is unusual (Rod. Smith).

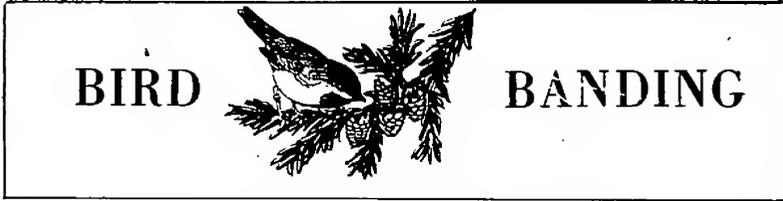
Gulls and Terns. The Black-backed Gull was reported from as far up the Bay as Gibson Is., where one was present from Nov. 16 to the opening of the shooting season (Hendersons and others). The highest count was 18 at Ocean City on Nov. 11 (M.O.S. trip). The Laughing

Gull remained a week or two later than usual, but then disappeared entirely, and no December strays were reported; departure dates were Nov. 2 at Middle River (Willis), Nov. 18 at Gibson Is. (Vera Henderson), and Nov. 19 at Sandy Pt. (Stewart) and Port Tobacco (Catherine Crone, Robert Farr, C. A. McLean). The late species of terns were last seen as follows: Forster's and Common (1 each) at Port Tobacco on Nov. 19 (Crone and others); Royal (10) at Ocean City on Nov. 12 (M.O.S.); and Caspian (2) at Blackwater Refuge on Nov. 3 (C.S. Robbins & Arthur Kraeski).

Woodpeckers, Phoebe. The following records are unusual for their respective localities: a Flicker at Dickeyville in northwest Baltimore City on Dec. 17 (Hervey Brackbill); fresh Pileated Woodpecker drillings in the Catoctin Mountains 4 miles southwest of Thurmont, Nov. 22 (Stewart); a Red-headed Woodpecker at Gibson Is., Nov. 26 and Dec. 4 (Vera Henderson); and a male Sapsucker in the Forest Park section of northwest Baltimore, Dec. 17 and Jan. 1 (Brackbill). Never before have so many Phoebes been recorded in Maryland in December. Frank Cross heard one singing at Forest Glen, Montgomery Co., on Dec. 3; John Fales recorded single birds at Cabin John on Dec. 10 and at Beltsville on the 11th; Robert Stewart saw one at Patuxent Refuge on Dec. 24; and 32 others were identified on Maryland Christmas Counts.

Mockers, Gnatcatchers, Pipit, Shrike. Two Catbirds lingered at Gibson Is. until Nov. 28 (Mr. & Mrs. George Englar), and 2 Brown Thrashers frequented Mrs. Galloway's feeding station at Plain Dealing Creek, Talbot Co., throughout the period. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher seen by Willis at Middle River on Nov. 7 and 11 is the latest on record for the State. A flock of Pipits at Corriganville in Allegany Co. on Nov. 18 is an interesting record for that locality (N. H. Miller). The Northern Shrike, which is rarely identified in Maryland even during "flight years", was seen at 2 localities on Dec. 23; one at Redland, Montgomery Co. (John H. Fales and John Thomen); the other at Sandy Point (Hendersons).

Warblers, Finches and Sparrows. The rare Orange-crowned Warbler was identified at Middle River on Nov. 12 by Willis. Thanks to a bumper crop of poison ivy berries, Myrtle Warblers were more common and widespread at the end of the period than for many years; several were observed in Baltimore City, and they were found west to the base of the Allegheny Plateau. A late Palm Warbler was seen at Middle River on Dec. 2-3 (Willis); and a female Redstart at White Marsh on Dec. 6 is the latest fall record for Maryland (Hackman). All the northern finches were scarce. The only Evening Grosbeaks were those seen on 3 Christmas Counts. Although Pine Siskins were reported from 4 counties, the combined total was only 5 birds. Mr. Cole and others found a late Chipping Sparrow at Gibson Is., Dec. 3. White-crowned Sparrows did not arrive at the Llewellyns' feeding station at McCool until Nov. 26, and only 11 birds entered his banding traps during the period.



BIRD-BANDING IN MARYLAND

Seth H. Low

The central office and files of the North American bird-banding program were located in Washington, D.C., from 1920 to 1942 and then moved to the present location at the Patuxent Research Refuge near Laurel, Maryland. Considering this proximity of the banding office, one might assume that there had been and would still be a concentration of banding cooperators in the Washington-Baltimore area comparable with those of the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco regions. Such has never been the case and only recently has there been any increase in the number of banders in Maryland.

Space does not permit at the present time a comprehensive review of the work of the twenty-five to thirty cooperators who have banded in Maryland in the past and who are no longer active in the State. Of these only four banded over 500 birds as follows:

Wm. M. Davidson, the dean of Maryland banders, while residing in Laurel from 1929 to 1949, banded 8,974 birds. In 1949, Mr. Davidson moved to Florida, where he is now one of the most active cooperators.

Edward McColgen banded 1,920 birds at Catonsville from 1933 to 1941 during his few years of retirement prior to his death.

Mr. & Mrs. Frederick C. Lincoln banded 842 birds at Takoma Park from 1928 to 1931.

Chas. E. Abromavich, Jr. banded from 1928 to 1931 while a student at The Johns Hopkins University, taking over the station of Percy L. Johnson and E. C. Meyers. He reported 635 bandings.

Banding in Maryland has been insufficient in the past and still is far from adequate. More cooperators are needed to avail themselves of the many fine opportunities throughout the State. A better coverage of upland stations is needed. The possibilities of banding studies of Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and DuckHawks are good but neglected. Nesting colonies of gulls, terns, and skimmers are few and small and are now being fairly well covered. The heron and egret colonies are inaccessible and present many difficulties. Although Maryland contains one of the largest and most important wintering grounds of a multitude of species of waterfowl, virtually no banding of these important species has been done here. The several reservoirs such as Triadelphia, Pretty Boy, Loch Raven, and Deep Creek; the federal wildlife refuges, Blackwater, Patuxent, and Susquehanna Flats; and state refuges such as Marshall

Dierssen, and Crisfield as well as innumerable other locations offer fine sites for the establishment of waterfowl banding stations.

The following table lists the number of birds which have been banded in Maryland by cooperators who are still active and who are residing in this State at the present time.

Present Active Cooperators in Maryland

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present Address</u>	<u>Permit Issued</u>	<u>Birds Banded</u>
Berry, Comdr. Wm. H.	U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis	1948	252
Brackbill, Hervey	4608 Springdale Ave., Baltimore	1941	1,454
Buckalew, John H.	110 Clay St., Salisbury	1929	1,746
Crook, Compton	State Teachers College, Towson	1940	1,894
Crowder, Orville W.	Chase	1949	170
Cunningham, T. H.	6505 Maple Ave., Chevy Chase	1940	99
Dobbin, Miss Anne B.	Elkridge	1938	480
Grisez, Ted J.	N.E. Forest Exp. Sta., Laurel	1949	144
Hampe, Irving E.	5559 Ashbourne Rd., Halethorpe	1947	649
Henderson, Judge Wm. L.	Gibson Island	1940	181
Hodgdon, Kendrick Y.	16 Welsh St., Frostburg	1949	38
Jackson, William B.	615 N. Wolfe St., Baltimore	1949	2
Llewellyn, Leonard M.	Patuxent Refuge, Laurel	1937	399
Low, Seth H.	Route #2, Gaithersburg	1948	1,095
Merkel, E. A.	Queens Chapel Rd., Hyattsville	1949	58
Robbins, Chandler S.	407½ Gorman Ave., Laurel	1949	736
Sigwald, Sidney F.	5514 Morland Lane, Bethesda	1949	10
Smith, Frank R.	R.D. 2, Box 100, Laurel	1929	1,186
Sommer, Frank H., Jr.	Mountain Road, Joppa	1949	40
Tyrrell, W. Bryant	246 Park Ave., Takoma Park 12	1934	351
Wood, Capt. J. E. M.	Old Crossing Lane, W. Annapolis	1949	317
Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Cambridge		1942	1,962
Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel		1942	18,050

The banding at the Patuxent Research Refuge has been and still is the result of the combined effort of many of the staff. The major contributors (1,000 or more birds) have been John W. Brainerd, James B. Cope, Miss Brina Kessel, Leonard Llewellyn, Robert T. Mitchell, Chandler S. Robbins, and Robert E. Stewart.

During the current year several new cooperators have joined the program in Maryland and as yet have not had an opportunity to report on their banding. These new banders are:

Buck, Theodore C., Jr.	3514 Clifton Ave., Baltimore
Derby, James V. Jr.	2704 Emmett Rd., Silver Spring
Mitchell, Robert T.	5316 Taylor Rd., Riverdale
Orem, Reginald C., Jr.	33 High St., Cambridge
Webster, Clark G.	Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel
West, Norman E., Jr.	633 S. Potomac St., Hagerstown
Willoughby, John E.	8402 Barron St., Takoma Park



OCTOBER 15: LAKE ROLAND. The Baltimore Club trip to Lake Roland on Sunday, October 15, with Mrs. Kaestner as leader, proved more outstanding for the enjoyment of October's bright, blue weather than for bird observations. That most of the southern migrants had gone and few winter visitors had arrived was emphasized by tardy Phoebes, and the plaintive piping of one newly arrived White-throat. On the grounds of Dr. and Mrs. Gay, Robins, assembled in pre-flight conclave, chattered and ate the many dogwood berries. Two Sharp-shinned Hawks flew overhead. As we passed on our return, sudden fright sent the Robins fluttering like leaves, and the silence was broken only by the strident warning of Blue Jays. A number of nests were observed; those identified were Redstart, Catbird, and Red-eyed Vireo.

-- D. O. Stollenwerck.

NOVEMBER 10-12: OCEAN CITY AND BLACKWATER REFUGE. This annual fall trip was undertaken under the capable leadership of Chandler S. Robbins. Although only 5 people went, the trip proved to be very worthwhile, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Saturday was spent exploring the immediate Ocean City area, and despite the cold and rainy weather we managed to see 74 species. Some of the interesting counts of the day were: 6 Gannets, 210 Double-crested Cormorants, 500 Canada Geese, 10 Shovellers, 200 Old-squaws, 6 Royal Terns, and 50 Boat-tailed Grackles. Sunday provided several interesting observations. One of these was the surprise of finding a Piping Plover so late in the fall. It was seen standing with 3 Ruddy Turnstones on a sand bar beside the Sinepuxent Bay Bridge. At Blackwater Refuge we saw 8 species of ducks, including Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, and Hooded Mergansers. Among the Canada Geese that were flying over the refuge, one Blue Goose was spotted. Three Bonaparte's Gulls at the Choptank River Bridge brought the grand total of birds seen on the trip to 101 species. Everyone who possibly can should plan to attend this trip to Ocean City next fall.

-- John Mohlhenrich.

NOVEMBER 19: CORRIGANVILLE. Seventeen adults enjoyed the Allegany Club's visit to Mr. N. H. Miller's feeding stations overlooking Wills Creek near Corriganville. Mr. Miller really has a bird sanctuary, food, water and cover being provided. Last year when he built his home, he cleared just enough land for his house and lawn, leaving the rest of his three acres untouched. He put out several feeding stations and a large bird bath. Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, Cardinals, Juncos, Tree Sparrows, Bluebirds, White-crowned Sparrows, Chickadees, Winter Wrens, Myrtle Warblers and Downy Woodpeckers are all regular winter

visitors. The Club was interested in seeing the different types of bird houses that were occupied last summer. A large Flicker house is now being occupied by a Screech Owl. The group was also interested in locating bird nests as they went along. The following nests were identified: Robin, Cardinal, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Bluebird, Yellow Warbler and Chipping Sparrow.

-- Adele E. Malcolm.

ESCAPED AMERICAN MAGPIE AT FREDERICK

I would like to write this as a letter to the girls and boys of the Maryland Ornithological Society.

Three years ago Richard Brandenburg called every bird that has black feathers a blackbird, whether it was a Red-wing, a Crow or a Grackle. Then he joined the Frederick Branch of the Society, took daily walks afternoons at the close of school, studied the Peterson guide carefully and regularly, until today he has 119 species on his life list.

Early in November, 1950, Richard came by school to tell me that he had seen a Magpie in a meadow near his home. Of course we knew that if the bird were really a Magpie, it was surely out of its range. Each time I went to see the bird, it wouldn't appear, so I began to think Richard was dreaming. But then on December 10 Richard called me to hurry out to his home, for the Magpie was still there. I rushed out and, sure enough, it was there in all its iridescent beauty. I telephoned two other adult members of the club to come see it, and in a short time Miss Sarah Quinn and Rodgers Smith were thrilled at the sight of it.

Richard and I decided that it must have escaped from a zoo. If it had migrated here, then Richard had surely made a "find". We put an article about the Magpie in the Frederick paper. The very same day we had a telephone call from a man who said he had had the bird shipped here from Montana, and that it had escaped while being transferred to a new cage. The gentleman proved to be John R. Huff, of Frederick, and we learned that the Magpie had escaped in August, 1950. Richard saw it for the first time on November 5, 1950, and it was last seen on January 2, 1951, which means that it was not the same individual which was reported on the Allegany Club's Christmas Count for 1950.

The moral to this story, my dear junior members, is for all of us to study our bird books so we can identify those of our feathered friends with which we are not familiar. Don't you think that these lines from Arthur Guiterman's "Good Hunting" express our love of birds? --

For me, in time of dogwood, asters, roses
 Or barren woods, the season never closes;
 And if I miss the thrill that others know
 In seeing gouts of blood on moss or snow,
 The trophies of unerring ear and eye
 My memory shall hold until I die.

Mabel J. Hoyler