

# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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COVER: Killdeer. Photograph by Paul E. Taylor

HEADINGS: By Irving E. Hampe

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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### A SUMMARY OF HAWK FLIGHTS OVER WHITE MARSH, BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

C. Douglas Hackman

White Marsh is a small rural community located 14 miles northeast of Baltimore on U. S. Route 40 (Pulaski Highway), on the edge of the Piedmont Plateau, with an elevation of approximately 180 feet above sea level. The area is characterized by gently rolling land.

The study area is located about one mile from White Marsh. It is rectangular in shape; covering approximately one square mile, it is bounded on two sides by the Joppa and Old Philadelphia Roads.

A large majority of the counts were made from the shade of a tall gum tree beside my home. My house is surrounded on three sides by woods, and faces a large open field. The country surrounding my home offers a large variety of habitats that include: orchards, woodlots, briar patches, stump-piles, swampy areas, overgrown meadows, farmed land, and streams.

#### Flights

Hawk flights are observed regularly throughout the fall season. The first south-bound migrants are usually observed in the middle of August. Most of the birds that are seen in August appear in the middle of the day. As the season progresses the hawks become more numerous and appear earlier in the morning and later in the afternoon. Usually by the first week in September flights of 25 to 60 per day may be counted. The flights grow steadily throughout the first three weeks in September and finally reach their peak in the last week of that month.

Flights in October are usually very poor, but occasionally a good movement is noted. In November, after the Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks begin flying in earnest, large flights are observed. The biggest single November flight took place on November 4, 1952, when 494 hawks were counted.

The flights move in a general southwest direction, with the hawks rising in the northeast. Apparently the main flight line is directly over my home, because I have never encountered large flights more than a quarter mile from there. Small numbers of migrating hawks may be seen anywhere from Bird River to the Harford Road (Route 147).

My observation post is located on the crest of a small hill. For this reason many of the hawks are very low when first spotted. The hawks, because of the thermals formed by the wind blowing up the side of the hill, sometimes remain overhead for five minutes or more. Most of the large Broad-wing flights that have been observed circle nearby and gain altitude before proceeding south.

Twice I had the good fortune to see flocks of Broad-wings, that had spent the night nearby, take flight the following morning. On these two days, few hawks passed over prior to the build-up itself, which took place before ten o'clock. On both occasions, it seemed as if the hawks had a pre-arranged signal for the grouping. They suddenly began rising from nearby woodlots, singly and in pairs. The hawks came in small groups at first, then in larger groups of 20 or more, and silently joined the rapidly growing ranks of migrants. When the flight reached about 200 in number it began gaining altitude and finally drifted slowly toward the south. It is interesting to note that not one single call was heard until the flight had completely formed.

Morning flights are seldom large, although a few big migrations have been counted before noon. The largest flocks appear in the afternoon and sometimes into the evening. One flight was observed still in progress at five o'clock, but this is an exception. Most are concluded by four o'clock.

#### Origin of Flights

The following is mostly theory. It is based on observations made at White Marsh, as well as flight direction and the topography. Flights recorded over Philadelphia and Wilmington also have much to do with this theory.

Each year, for the past several years, large flights of hawks have been observed over the cities of Philadelphia and Wilmington. Although I have no records or totals from these two cities to compare with mine, I have gathered that they are smaller than those recorded at White Marsh. This means that these flights are probably joined by other flights somewhere between Wilmington and White Marsh.

If the Wilmington flights are the same ones that are seen over White Marsh an approximate route can be laid out. It is as follows: after passing Wilmington the hawks enter Maryland somewhere near Elkton, and continue in a generally southwest direction. It is almost certain that they fly along the height of land representing the edge of the Piedmont Plateau throughout most of their journey from Wilmington to White Marsh. Somewhere along the way they are joined by a large flight of hawks that originate from one of two places: either an inland flight or a coastal flight.

The combined flight will enter Baltimore County somewhere near Bradshaw, which is on the Harford-Baltimore County line. The study area is about four miles from this point.

Fourteen miles after it passes White Marsh the flight encounters another of the many man-made wonders that it must cross--Baltimore City. With Philadelphia and Wilmington already behind them and probably more cities to come they almost certainly proceed over Baltimore rather than deviate way inland or cross the two-mile-wide mouth of the Patapsco River. One is unlikely to see many migrants from the middle of the city because of the terrific updrafts that exist over large cities. These will force the hawks to such heights that they will be unseen by human eyes. A person stationed in a park or quiet residential district will most certainly have the best opportunity to observe migrants.

The flight apparently breaks up after passing Baltimore. No large flights have been intercepted, to date, between Laurel and Baltimore. On any favorable day one can see moderate flights at several places on a broad front from Bowie through the Patuxent Refuge and Laurel to Burtonsville.

#### Comparison of Sharp-shinned, Red-shouldered and Sparrow Hawks, August-November, 1952 (Fig.1)

In making this graph I chose the three most abundant hawks from the three major groups. I avoided the Broad-winged Hawk completely because of its large numbers.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk far exceeded the other two species in abundance. In the middle of September the number of Sharpies doubled overnight. This sharp rise continued until the last week in September when the daily numbers of Sharp-shins observed decreased as rapidly as they had increased. Throughout the rest of the season the number of Sharp-shinned Hawks rose and fell from day to day.

The Red-shouldered Hawk counts rose steadily throughout the last weeks of August and the first week of September. The slight drop in its abundance coincides with that of the Sharp-shinned Hawk. It is interesting to note that the increases and decreases in the abundance of these two hawks parallel each other. The Red-shouldered Hawk did not reach its true peak until November.

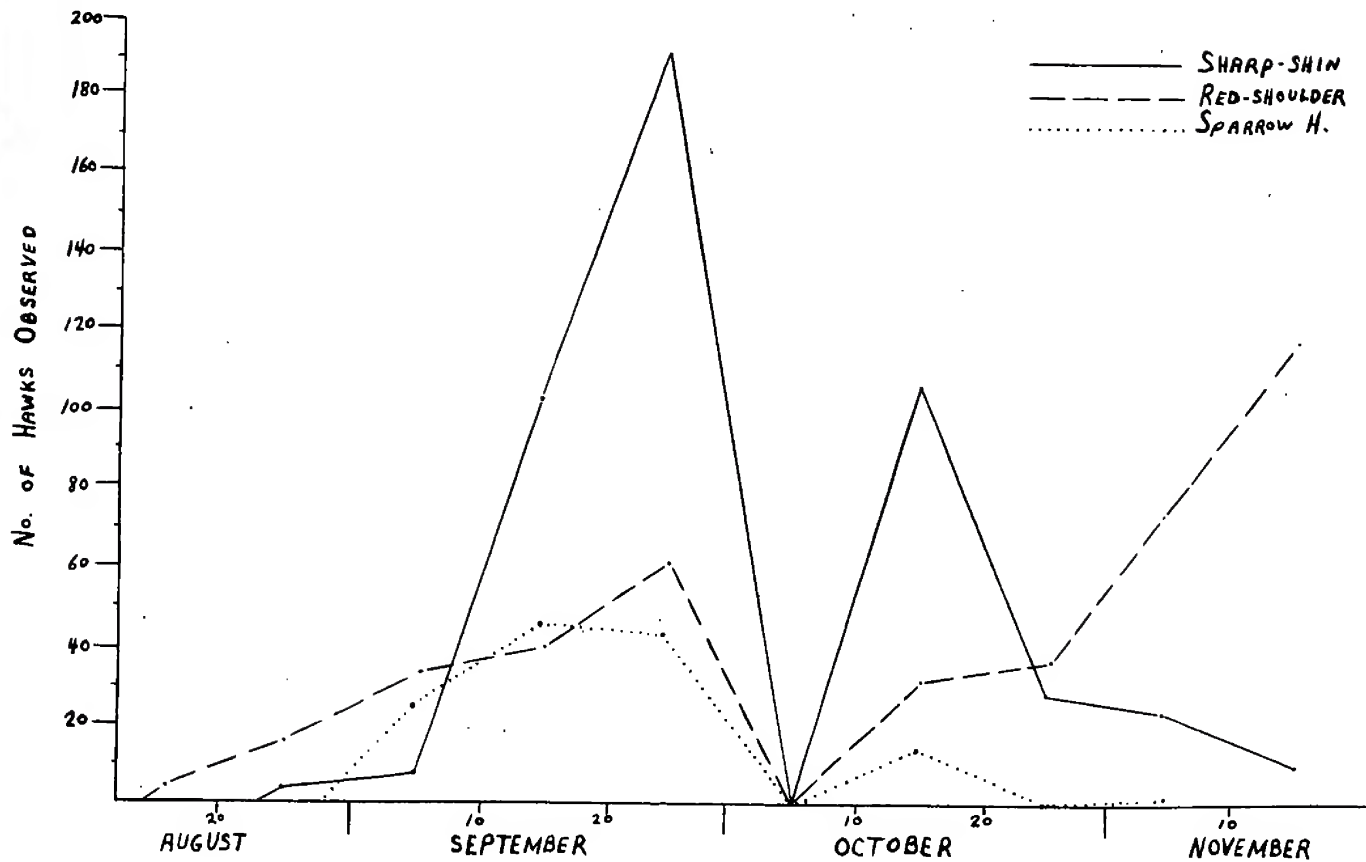
The little Sparrow Hawk had a shorter period of migration than the other hawks observed in 1952. It also showed less fluctuation in abundance than did any of the other hawks.

#### Relative Seasonal Abundance

The Broad-winged Hawk is by far the most abundant transient hawk at White Marsh. In the years 1951 and 1952, out of 4,648 hawks observed, 3,353 (72 percent) were Broad-wings. After September very few Broad-wings are observed; for example, in 1952 only two were seen after September 30th.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk is the next most abundant hawk. The flights of Sharp-shins in 1952 far exceeded those seen in previous years. Flights of this species are usually very sporadic.

FIGURE 1.

COMPARISON OF SHARP-SHIN, RED-SHOULDERED AND SPARROW HAWKS  
(AUGUST - NOVEMBER, 1952)



The Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks did not reach their peaks until the first two weeks of November. The Red-tail, though not uncommon, was comparatively scarce through the first three months of the migration. In the latter part of the migration period the Red-tail rose in relation to the Red-shoulder. For every two Red-shouldered Hawks recorded, one Red-tailed Hawk was observed.

Such species as the Bald Eagle, Marsh Hawk, Osprey and Cooper's Hawk changed little in abundance from year to year. The Golden Eagle, though uncommon, put in three appearances during the two-year period.

#### How Weather Conditions Affect Flights

The periods September through November in 1951 and in 1952 were much the same. In both years September was a warm, dry month with a large proportion of southerly winds. There was a noted lack of northwest winds. In October, 1951 there was more than normal cloudiness; while on the other hand, October, 1952 was very dry with clear skies prevailing throughout the month. November, in both years, was a very cloudy month. In 1951, November was the coldest on record in the past 40 years and also the fourth wettest.

In both years, with the exception of October, 1952, there was a noted lack of northwest winds. South to west winds seem to have prevailed throughout the migration in both years. Although a northwest wind is supposed to be the best wind for an autumn hawk flight, very few of the flights observed at White Marsh have been recorded on a northwest wind.

Not one of the fourteen counts made in September, 1952 was made on a northwest wind. The two best counts in the past two years (1,063 on Sept. 18, 1951 and 1,375 on Sept. 20, 1952) were made on south to west winds. A south to west wind with a speed of 2 to 12 miles per hour is apparently the most favorable for a large flight at White Marsh. This may be true all of the time, or perhaps only when there is a marked lack of northwest winds.

#### Flight Density in Relation to Wind Direction, September, 1952 (Fig. 2)

Figure 2 is plotted on a hawk per hour basis. The circled numbers by the eight points of the compass denote the number of days the wind blew from that particular direction.

One can see at a glance that over 60 percent of all flights recorded in September were made on south to west winds. None of the early September flights were on northwest to east winds. Winds blowing from these quarters may produce good flights, but seldom so early in the season. Most flights on these winds have been those that occur from October 15 to December 8.

When the wind blows from the northern and eastern quarters it has a decided effect on the direction of flight and the speed at which the

migrants travel. On a moderate south to west wind the hawks move in a general southwest direction and average twenty to thirty miles per hour. On the other hand, an easterly wind will tend to drive the hawks off course and make them lose time. Under such circumstances the hawks will 'tack' much as sailboats do when they are in an unfavorable position to the wind. They will rise in the east and fly toward the west and northwest until they reach a position from which they can effectively quarter the existing wind. When this position is attained the hawks swing toward the south and fly until the wind begins forcing them toward the west again, at which time they will repeat the whole process. By doing this a hawk will move steadily inland as well as toward the south. A hawk, by flying in this manner, may begin a day's flight near the coast and roost in the mountains by evening.

On windy days in August and September there is a noted lack of hawks. These conditions are reversed in October and November when winds up to 30 miles per hour have produced large flights.

At this location sky condition has very little to do with the progress of the flights. Most of the flights are observed in the afternoon and probably started several hundred miles from White Marsh. When these flights started, perhaps in southeastern Pennsylvania or in New Jersey, the sky was probably clear. Once a flight is in progress nothing short of darkness or a sudden storm will stop them. Rain does not always stop a flight of hawks. On several occasions moderate flights have been observed during a light intermittent rain.

The largest flights as well as many of the lesser ones were recorded on overcast days. In most cases the sky was clear in the early morning and the clouds did not set in until early afternoon. These cloudy conditions aided my counts in one way and hindered them in several other ways. Clouds enable an observer to spot the high flying hawks easily but they make it almost impossible to identify the hawk.

#### Comparison of White Marsh and Hawk Mountain Totals (Table 1)

Through the courtesy of Dr. Maurice Broun, curator of the famous Hawk Mountain Sanctuary at Kempton, Pa., and author of "Hawks Aloft," the following comparisons have been made possible. The Hawk Mountain figures are representative of the 'ridge' flights of Pennsylvania and western Maryland, whereas the White Marsh observations are believed typical of the 'Fall Line' flights.

I immediately decided, upon receiving the Hawk Mountain totals, that no favorable comparison could be made from them unless I found a way to present them without showing the large difference in totals. If I had compared them with mine in that form they would have shown just one thing, that is: five times as many hawks were observed at Hawk Mountain.

I finally settled for a comparison on a percentage basis. In making such a comparison as this, one must keep in mind the great



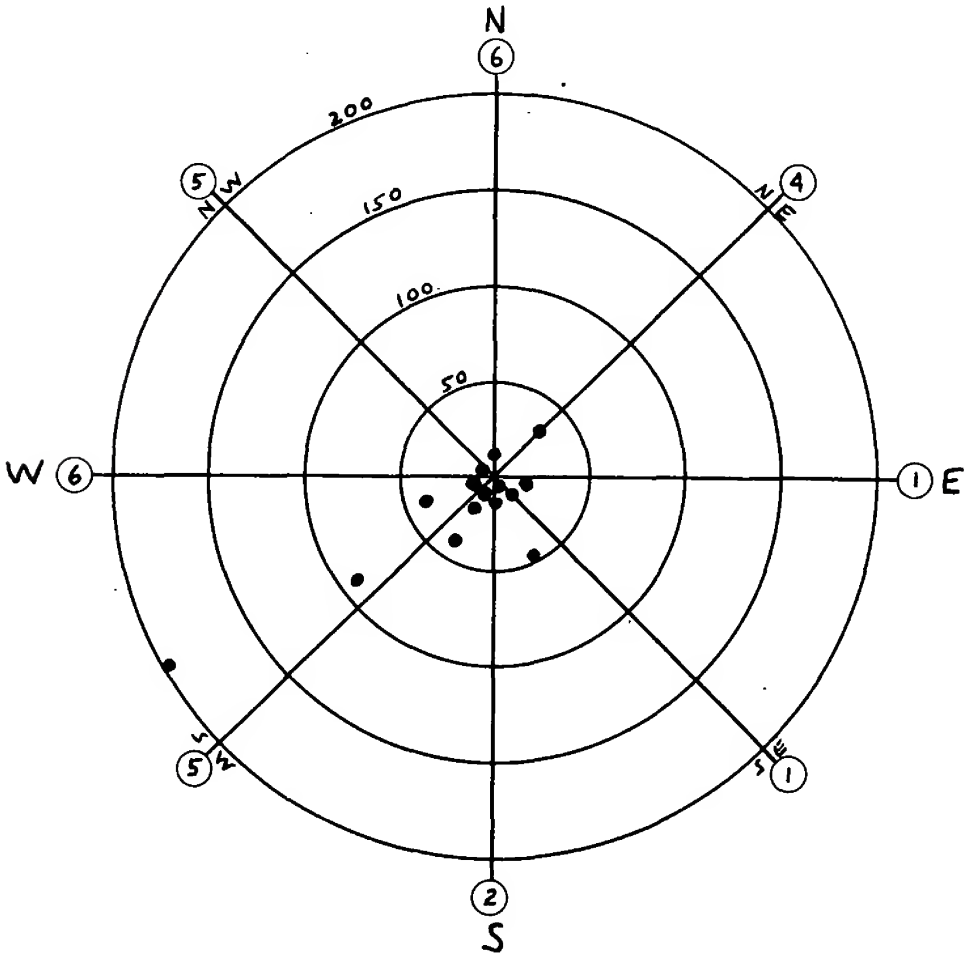


Fig. 2. Flight density in relation to wind direction, Sept. 1952  
(density in hawks per hour)

differences in topography and the different weather conditions that exist at the two places.

Broad-wings make up a larger percentage of the flights at Hawk Mountain than they do at White Marsh. Red-tailed Hawks are also commoner at Hawk Mountain. The Red-shoulder counts are much higher

	September		October		November		Total	
	Hawk Mt.	White Marsh	Hawk Mt.	White Marsh	Hawk Mt.	White Marsh	Hawk Mt.	White Marsh
Sharp-shinned	5.0	14.3	53.0	41.2	11.2	3.0	17.1	13.4
Cooper's Hawk	.4	1.0	7.6	4.7	1.2	--	1.7	1.0
Red-tailed	.4	1.4	27.1	4.4	75.0	17.0	12.0	5.5
Red-shoulder	--	4.6	5.1	28.2	6.2	20.0	1.4	9.8
Broad-wing	86.9	72.2	.2	--	--	--	62.9	50.0
Rough-legged	--	--	--	--	.6	--	--	--
Golden Eagle	--	--	.4	--	2.4	--	.2	--
Bald Eagle	1.1	.7	.1	--	--	--	.5	.5
Marsh Hawk	1.0	1.0	3.5	4.6	3.4	--	1.6	1.1
Osprey	3.0	1.0	1.8	--	--	--	1.7	.7
Duck Hawk	.2	.3	.2	--	--	--	.1	.2
Pigeon Hawk	--	--	--	--	--	--	.1	--
Sparrow Hawk	2.0	3.5	1.0	4.3	--	--	.5	2.8
Unidentified	--	--	--	12.5	--	60.0	--	15.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1. White Marsh and Hawk Mountain Totals (percent)

at White Marsh than at Hawk Mountain. In fact, the high ratio of Red-shoulders to Red-tails seems to be typical of the 'Fall Line' flight.

The large number of unidentified hawks in November at White Marsh is due to the heavily overcast skies that prevailed throughout the month. The clouds were generally heavy and dark and emitted very little light, making it very difficult to identify the high flying hawks. It is almost certain that a large percentage of these unidentified hawks were Red-tailed Hawks, because all of the unidentified birds were buteos.

In conclusion, it is an established fact that a hawk migration route passes along the edge of the Piedmont Plateau near White Marsh. It is not known where they originate or exactly what route they travel before and after they pass White Marsh. Within the next few years, through the combined efforts of many observers in the eastern part of Maryland, many of these questions may be answered. It may even be possible that the flights observed over White Marsh are part of a much larger flight that has gone undetected for many years.

Maybe we shall even find a location in Maryland that is comparable with Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania. If such a place does exist, it will most certainly be found in the next few years. Each year many new observers join the ranks of amateur ornithologists in Maryland who spend many enjoyable hours in the autumn months counting hawks on their southward flight.

P. O. Box 493, White Marsh

## SUMMARY OF MARYLAND NEST RECORDS, 1953

Edwin Willis.

I still remember vividly the first time I ever sat down and took careful notes of the happenings at a bird's nest, as if I had slapped mosquitoes under those tall tulip trees by the creek only yesterday, with an alarm clock facing me and my notebook and pencil in hand. That pair of White-eyed Vireos was used to my family, for they were nesting practically in our back yard. A definite extrovert, singing to alert the young of his coming, he hardly noticed me. He sang a different song every time, until I had counted fourteen in all; no wonder vireo songs are so difficult to commit to memory! Even though the mother was more timid, and sometimes scolded me until the male arrived, she always followed his bold approach to the nest trustingly, feeding the young right after him. Nest-watching perhaps originated at nests near invalids' windows, though it has been developed to a high science by Mrs. Margaret M. Nice, Dr. S. Charles Kendeigh, and others making life-history studies. Every birder should try it once in his life at least, for a surprising revelation of the customs and habits of the bird world. The usual way to watch birds at the nest is from a blind or natural concealment. A car may do just as well, however, at the nests of Horned Larks, Killdeer, or other species that nest in the open.

Although nest studies do not always lend themselves to a summary of this type, frequently they may be worthy of an article or note elsewhere. There is a definite need for more thorough observations than the usual listing of nest height and nest contents. We do not even know how many broods some of the common Maryland birds raise in a year --the Orchard Oriole and the Cardinal, for instance. Only in the last year or so have articles in the Auk definitely stated the fact that Starlings and Wood Thrushes raise two broods in a year, which is evident to anyone watching bird-nesting from June to August. For many birds, incubation and nest-stay has not been determined. A. C. Bent could find no definite incubation period on the common Mockingbird when he wrote his "Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and their allies." The main new records being turned up now by Maryland nest-watchers are not extreme dates and new birds (though Clark Webster and Bob Stewart surprised us all with a Black Rail nest), but rather notes on nest materials, incubation periods, and stay of the young in the nest. Thus Mrs. Eleanor C. Robbins' observations at home near Laurel are better represented in this summary than are the notes of any other observer in proportion to the number of nests reported; she made repeated visits to her nests rather than single observations. Such records are always more valuable, and usually more interesting, than dozens of one-time reports.

Still, statistics are in order if there is nothing else to report. For instance: these five years of nest summaries have produced records

of some 148 Maryland nesting species, leaving only 30 whose records have been published before the series. Those of the 30 such as the Cooper's Hawk, Whip-poor-will, and Nighthawk, we can look for next year; others, such as the Goshawk, Bobolink, and Red-cockaded Woodpecker, we can dream about; and there are still Golden-crowned Kinglets and Mourning Warblers hiding in Garrett County. At any rate, the 105 species reported this year certainly represent a good percentage of the total.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** - Mrs. W. L. Henderson saw about 12 on their nests on the Eastern Shore across from Gibson Island, June 3.

**AMERICAN EGRET** - At what is probably the largest heron colony in Maryland, on Mills Island, Worcester County, 40 pairs or more of this species had large young in their nests, June 6 (E. O. Mellinger, Robert E. Stewart).

**SNOWY EGRET** - Over 100 pairs had nests with large young at the above colony, June 6 (Mellinger and Stewart).

**LOUISIANA HERON** - Eight or 10 pairs in the Mills Island colony had large young, June 6. This is the only Maryland nesting locality.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** - Over 100 pairs had large young in their nests at the Mills Island heronry, June 6.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** - Sixty or more pairs had large young in their nests at the same heronry.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** - John Terborgh found eggs in a Seneca nest, May 20; young were in the nest on June 6.

**LEAST BITTERN** - Three eggs and one egg were in two nests in a Middle River marsh, June 11 (Edwin Willis).

**MALLARD** - On June 11 a female had 6 well-grown young by the Middle River bridge (Willis).

**BLACK DUCK** - R. E. Stewart reported a female with 9 young at the Bay Bridge, May 28; nests with 6 and 8 eggs each at Elliott Island, Dorchester County, May 20; and a nest with 10 eggs at Robins Marsh Island, Chincoteague Bay, June 6 (with E. O. Mellinger).

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - Thirteen eggs were in a nest in a Spartina patens meadow at Elliott Island, May 20 (Stewart, Clark Webster).

**WOOD DUCK** - Lewis Oring saw young out of the nest near Greenbelt in mid-June.

**TURKEY VULTURE** - T. M. Uhler flushed an adult from a Kent Island nest, April 19; foxes got 2 of the 3 eggs.

BLACK VULTURE - One young was in a nest in an unused barn near Unity, Montgomery County, July 4 (Seth H. Low).

RED-TAILED HAWK - Two or more young were in a nest 50 feet up in a scrub pine at Patuxent Refuge, June 9-18 (Stewart).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - John Terborgh banded 4 young in a nest 75 feet up in a Pennyfield white oak, June 6.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK - Philip DuMont saw an occupied nest at Brookmont, May 10.

BALD EAGLE - At Cobb Island, Charles Co., one was on the nest, February 8 (Allen Stickley, C. A. McLean, Catherine Crone).

OSPREY - A Denton nest being built 20 feet up in a dead tree, March 22, had 2 young ready to fly, July 9; on July 14 one young was on a nearby limb (Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher). Three half-grown young were in a nest on Big Bay Marsh Island, Chincoteague Bay, June 6 (Mellinger and Stewart).

SPARROW HAWK - Raised one young under the eaves of the roof at 610 N. Washington St., Baltimore (Mary McNabb).

BOB-WHITE - Three broods of small young were reported: Caroline County, June 16 (Marvin Hewitt); and Broad Creek Scout Camp, Harford County, August 22 and 28 (Duncan McIntosh).

VIRGINIA RAIL - Stewart and Webster found 3 nests with eggs (1, 8, 8) on May 20 in Elliott Island Spartina patens and S. alterniflora meadows.

BLACK RAIL - Two eggs were in a nest in an Elliott Island Spartina patens meadow, May 20 (Stewart, Webster).

KILLDEER - An early Blackwater Refuge nest had 4 eggs a week before March 22. Three other nests were reported, one with 3 eggs which hatched on July 20 (Denton, Fletchers).

WOODCOCK - Llewellyn banded 3 young at Patuxent Refuge, April 23.

UPLAND FLOVER - Leonard Llewellyn found 4 eggs in a mowed field at Accident, Garrett County, July 24, but the adults were not seen.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Tiny young were just out of a Middle River nest, June 11 (Willis).

LAUGHING GULL - Stewart and Mellinger found 25 pairs (8 nests with 3 eggs, 8 with 2, 1 with 1) on islands off South Point, Chincoteague Bay, June 6.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** - Six pairs on islands off South Point had nests with eggs, and one pair had 2 eggs in an Ocean City nest, June 6 (Stewart, Mellinger).

**FORSTER'S TERN** - About 700 pairs (est.) were nesting on Robins Marsh island, June 6, many with eggs or small young (Stewart).

**COMMON TERN** - Some 250 pairs were on islands off South Point, June 6 (one pair had young), and 150 pairs south of Ocean City the same day, most with eggs (Stewart, Mellinger).

**LEAST TERN** - Stewart and others found 5 nests with one egg each at Kent Narrows on May 20, and 15 pairs (1 and 2 eggs each) on an oyster-shell spit on Big Bay Marsh Island, June 6.

**BLACK SKIMMER** - On Chincoteague Bay islands south of Ocean City, June 6, Stewart and Webster found about 160 pairs (1 to 4 eggs each).

**MOURNING DOVE** - Four nests were reported. On May 16, 2 young left a nest at Greensboro (Elsie Bilbrough).

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** - Four nests, 2 young each leaving 2 of them on June 9. Two young fell from the last nest, August 27, and were killed (Broad Creek Scout Camp, McIntosh).

**BARN OWL** - The pair in the Blackwater Refuge tower had about 4 young on May 3 (DuMont).

**HORNED OWL** - On May 2, young were in a nest 25 feet up in a sycamore at Pennyfield near Seneca (Terborgh).

**CHIMNEY SWIFT** - Two nests in chimneys of "Lost Valley" (O. W. Crowder); 3 young were banded in one of these nests. Adults were breaking twigs for nests off Lombardy poplars at Westminster as early as May 9 (McIntosh).

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** - Orville Crowder reported a nest at "Lost Valley" in northwestern Harford County.

**BELTED KINGFISHER** - A new hole in the same Middle River gully as last year was occupied on June 10 (Willis).

**YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER** - Young left a Middle River nest 20 feet up on the west side of a sweetgum stub, June 10 (Willis).

**PILEATED WOODPECKER** - Excavating nest-hole at Seneca, April 5 and 12 (Dr. Lawrence Kilham). Two young were in the nest at the Pleasant Valley Camp, Bittinger, Garrett County, June 13-14.

**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** - At 2 Seneca nest-holes, April 25 (Kilham).



RED-HEADED WOODPECKER - Adults were feeding flying young at McDonogh School, Baltimore County, July 23 (McIntosh).

HAIRY WOODPECKER - Young were in a nest by the Pocomoke River on May 3 (David Cutler).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - Four nests, 3 with noisy young, in early June. The young left one nest about June 11, which is usual.

EASTERN KINGBIRD - Eight nests reported, from 7 to 80 feet up near fields or houses. At 5 nests young were being fed the second week in June. A Denton nest was begun on May 6 and had young out, June 23, which is a week or two earlier than usual (Fletchers); however, young were fed in a nest near Reisterstown, August 22 (McIntosh), which is unusually late.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER - Five eggs were in a Denton nest-box, June 3; young were gone on June 23 (Fletchers). Young were being fed 20 feet up in a beech tree hole at Greensboro in late June (Hewitt).

EASTERN PHOEBE - Eighteen nests, one at Seneca with 3 Cowbird young and another there with 3 Cowbird eggs in mid-May (Kilham). A nest at the Robbins' home, Prince Georges County, had 4 eggs by 1:49 p.m. on June 2; the last 3 of 5 young hatched on June 17 between 2:38 and 7:08 p.m.; one young left prematurely on July 2, and the other 4 followed between 3:30 and 5:45 p.m., July 5. Incubation was thus about 14 days, and the young stayed in 15 to 18 days (Eleanor C. Robbins).

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Stewart found 3 nests in the flood-plain deciduous forest of the Patuxent Refuge, all 6 to 10 feet up, 2 in beeches and one in a viburnum. Materials used on one included strips of inner bark (perhaps of grapevine), tiny twigs, and even 2 tree blossoms. Three young left a Greensboro nest on June 29, and another nest was so poorly constructed that the young one fell through a hole in the bottom, June 19 (Hewitt).

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE - Building nests at Port Tobacco on May 21 (Stickley) and at Middle River on June 8 (Willis).

HORNED LARK - Three eggs were in a ground nest by the Glenn L. Martin plant at Middle River, March 23 (Willis).

TREE SWALLOW - Feeding young in Denton nest-box, June 9 (Fletchers).

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - Building two nests in a clay pit by water at Denton, April 29; one pair was feeding young on May 22 (Fletchers).

BARN SWALLOW - Four Caroline County nests on man-made structures. A pair which repaired last year's nest had 5 young out of the nest by June 9 (Fletchers). Two Seneca nests had 5 eggs each on May 17 and 23, respectively (Kilham).

CLIFF SWALLOW - Building nests on May 6 on a barn 2 miles south of Grantsville in Garrett County (Billie Taylor).

PURPLE MARTIN - The Fletchers banded about 100 at a Denton nest-box before young left, July 5 to 28. Nest-building had started about April 29.

BLUE JAY - A Denton pair were building a nest, May 2 (Fletchers). Several broods of half-grown young were following their parents at Middle River, June 8-12 (Willis).

COMMON CROW - Five nests were reported. A Seneca nest had 3 eggs on March 29 and 3 young and 1 egg on April 19 and 25, showing an incubation period of perhaps 20 days (Kilham).

CAROLINA CHICKADEE - Three Denton nests, 4, 5, and 7 feet up, respectively (Fletchers). Young were fed at one nest on May 7.

TUFTED TITMOUSE - Adults were feeding young in nests, May 10, along the Monocacy River in Frederick County (McIntosh), and 15 feet up in a Greensboro beech tree as late as July 10 (Hewitt). Was the latter a second brood or a renesting?

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Building a nest in a Bethesda nest-box, April 19 (Kilham).

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH - A pair were at their hole on Point Lookout, May 10 (Terborgh).

HOUSE WREN - Eleven nests, with 3 sets of 6 eggs each reported. Young which hatched about August 10 in Baltimore County were perhaps a third brood (McIntosh). Young stayed in a Robbins' nest-box from May 28 after 10 a.m. to June 12, 8 a.m., a stay of 15 days. Another nest there was in the pocket of an old pair of trousers shading a shrub, only 29 inches off the ground.

CAROLINA WREN - Five nests; 3 young left one at Denton on May 9 (M. Butenschoen).

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN - There was apparently a sharp decrease in the number of breeding pairs at Strawberry Point, where Willis found only 3 nests on June 11, 2 with young and 1 with 4 eggs.

MOCKINGBIRD - Eleven nests reported, 6 in cedar bushes, from 2 to 10 feet up (median, 6 ft.). Three or 4 eggs were laid (3 cases each). A Greensboro pair had 2 nests in the same cedar, young leaving on May 25 and July 17 (Elsie Bilbrough).

CATBIRD - Nineteen nests, 3 to 10 feet up in various bushes. At Middle River, June 8-12, all held young (6 had 4 young each, 5 had 3) except one with 3 eggs, probably a renesting. A nest at the Robbins'

home, Laurel, held 5 eggs by May 20; 3 hatched between 1:20 p.m., May 31 and 2:30 p.m., June 1, 1 egg disappeared by 8:10 p.m., and the other egg stayed in until June 12 or 13, when the young left.

**BROWN THRASHER** - Thirteen nests, from 33 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches to 10 feet above the ground (median, 4 ft.). There were 6 sets of 3 eggs each. At Middle River, June 8-12, most nests held eggs of the first brood, but bob-tailed young were out, June 9 (Willis).

**ROBIN** - Forty-six nests, 38 of first brood. They were from 4 to 60 feet up (median, 10 ft.). Nine out of 14 nests produced 1 or more young. There were 4 sets of 3 eggs, 10 of 4 eggs, and 1 of 5 eggs each (average, 3.8). It is interesting to note that all nests found at Catoctin, May 15 and 16, contained eggs, while most Denton nests by that time had young. Seven nests, or 16 percent, were on buildings, rather than in trees. The earliest young left on May 3 at Denton (Elsie Bilbrough); young left a second nest in the same tree, July 15. Two nests were built at Denton the last week in July (Fletchers) and eggs were being incubated at Westminster in mid-August (McIntosh). Two eggs and 2 young in a Laurel nest at 11 a.m., July 4, produced 3 young, which left the nest between 3 p.m. on July 17 and 8 a.m. on July 18, a stay of 13 days. A nest begun there on the morning of May 5 had one tiny young, May 21 (9:10 a.m.); by 1:06 p.m. the second of 4 eggs had hatched. One or 2 young left between 8:17 p.m., June 4, and 8:15 a.m., June 5, a stay of over 14 days and 7 hours (Robbinses).

**WOOD THRUSH** - Twenty-eight nests, from 3 to 15 feet up in various deciduous woodland bushes (median, 8 ft.). Most had young of the first brood in early June, the first leaving on June 5 at Denton (Hewitt). The average clutch was 3 eggs.

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** - Of seventeen reported nests, 5 with 2 broods each, only 4 used natural holes, while 11 used bird boxes and 2 used hollow posts. There were 8 sets of 4 eggs, 3 of 5, and 1 of 6 (mean, 4.4); the 5-egg sets were in second-brood nests, even in one case where the first-brood clutch had been 4 eggs. Seven out of 13 broods produced no young, a success of 46 percent. The broods of one Denton nest left about two months apart (May 12 and July 12--Fletchers).

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** - Building a nest 15 feet up in a sweetgum sapling at Bethlehem (Fletchers), and 40 feet in a Greensboro maple, May 9 (Hewitt).

**STARLING** - Eight nests reported, 6 to 60 feet up. At Middle River many pairs were building nests March 20 to 23, while many had broods out of the nest or late young of the first brood in the nest, June 8-12 (Willis).

**WHITE-EYED VIREO** - Lewis Oring found 2 nests at Greenbelt in June.

**RED-EYED VIREO** - Eight or more nests reported, but an unfortunate

lack of details about this, our most common woodland nesting bird.

**BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER** - A ground nest, partially lined with horse-hair, was being built at the Foxville schoolhouse, May 16 and 17 (Thompson, Lawrence, Fletcher).

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** - Pairs visited their nests in rotten stubs at Chapel Branch, Denton, April 26 (Fletchers), and on the Choptank River near Red Bridges, May 3 and 10 (Bilbrough).

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** - Edward Fleisher and Leonard Worley saw an adult feeding a young one out of the nest, June 20, on the edge of the Pocomoke Swamp near Pocomoke City. This is the second nesting record for Maryland.

**YELLOW WARBLER** - Feeding young in two nests east of Baltimore on June 10 (Willis, Duvall Jones).

**BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** - Adult fed young out of the nest, June 28 near the Potomac River in Montgomery County (John V. Dennis).

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** - A pair was feeding young out of the nest, June 28, near the Potomac River in Montgomery County (John V. Dennis).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER** - Four eggs were laid in a Seneca nest, the second by May 17 (Kilham).

**OVEN-BIRD** - On June 10 R. E. Stewart found a nest with 3 eggs at Patuxent Refuge, and saw a young one out of another nest. The nest was made of 2-year-old deciduous leaves, and pitch pine needles, with a lining of moss sporophytes and black hair (skunk?).

**KENTUCKY WARBLER** - Young out of the nest were fed at Patuxent Refuge, June 11 (Stewart). Three young were in a Baltimore County nest on July 4 (Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Lubbert).

**YELLOW-THROAT** - Four nests were reported, all in June. One at Middle River had 2 nearly-grown young in the nest, June 8 (Willis).

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** - Three nests, all with eggs in early June, though bob-tailed young were out of the nest at Middle River, June 11 (Willis). A Denton nest had 6 eggs on June 6 (Fletchers).

**HOODED WARBLER** - Five occupied nests and 7 old nests were reported, from 2 to 5 feet up in low shrubs of thick deciduous forests (median height, 2½ ft.). Stewart found them rather heavily parasitized by Cowbirds at Patuxent Refuge: 2 nests had Cowbird eggs, and he twice saw adults feeding a young Cowbird. From June 8 to 17 he found several broods out of the nest. The nests were made of strips of inner bark (grapevine and tulip tree bark identified) and deciduous leaves; linings of 6 nests were moss sporophytes, of 2 were dried grass and sedges, and of 1, a mixture of the two.

AMERICAN REDSTART - Five nests reported. T. M. Brannan and others noted females building nests at Camp Greentop, Catoctin Mt., May 16 and 17. Young were out of the nest at Patuxent Refuge, June 9 (Stewart).

ENGLISH SPARROW - A male was taking dried grass stems into a Middle River bird house on March 23 (Willis).

RED-WING - Thirty-three nests reported, all except the Fletchers' 7 nests at Denton of the first brood. Most contained eggs (14 sets of 3 eggs each, 9 of 4--average 3.4). Seventeen nests were from 1 to 3 feet up in narrow-leaved cat-tails, 6 were 3 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet in Baccharus, 6 were 18 inches to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet in pepper bushes, and the remainder were in similar marsh bushes and grasses.

ORCHARD ORIOLE - Six Caroline County nests were from 8 to 50 feet up in maple or apple trees. Young left 5 nests on June 17, 20, July 5, 24, and August 1, suggesting 2 broods (Fletchers, Elsie Bilbrough).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Nine nests were reported, some being built in early May and others feeding young in nests in early June. Young were out of the nest on June 12 at Middle River (Willis).

PURPLE GRACKLE - Building nests at Middle River, March 21; numerous immatures were out of the nest, June 9 (Willis).

COWBIRD - There were 3 Hooded Warbler nests parasitized, 2 Eastern Phoebe nests, and 1 nest each of the Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Chipping Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

SCARLET Tanager - Three nests. Young left one 35 feet up in a holly tree at Denton, June 6 or thereafter (Hewitt). On June 10 a young one was out of the nest at Patuxent Refuge (Stewart).

CARDINAL - The eleven nests were from 3 to 10 feet up in various bushes and briars. Two held 3 eggs each and 2 had 4 young when found. Eggs of first-brood nests were usually in by mid-May, as most young were out of the nest by June 10. One young still in the nest at Denton on July 28 was probably of the second or third brood.

INDIGO BUNTING - A nest 1 foot up in a Lespedeza bicolor field-edge at Patuxent Refuge, June 8, contained 2 well-incubated bunting eggs and 1 half-incubated egg of a Cowbird. The nest was made of weed stalks, some deciduous leaves, and several pieces of oil paper. The lining was of fine grasses (Stewart).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - A Harford County nest 8 feet up in an oak sapling held 3 half-grown young on September 4 (McIntosh). At Lake Roland a female was on its nest on September 17 (Mesdames Stollenwerck, Griffith and Kaestner).

RED-EYED TOWHEE - Five nests, all on the ground. A Denton nest had 4 eggs, laid May 10-13, and young were being fed, May 28 (Fletchers).

SEASIDE SPARROW - A nest in a Spartina meadow at Elliott Island had 2 eggs and 2 young on May 20 (Stewart, Webster).

CHIPPING SPARROW - The 12 nests reported were from 1 to 25 feet (median, 6 ft.) up in orchard trees and ornamental evergreens. All were nests of the first brood (young leaving June 7 to 27 or so), except for one young being fed by the Potomac River in Montgomery County, August 16 (Dennis). There were 2 sets of 4 eggs, 1 of 3, and 1 of 2.

FIELD SPARROW - Eight nests, all close to the ground, with 5 sets of 4 eggs each and 3 of 3. The last Denton young hatched August 9 (Fletchers), which indicates at least 2 broods, as eggs were in 2 other nests in late May.

SWAMP SPARROW - On June 12 Stewart and Neil Hotchkiss flushed 5 young from a low nest at Pleasant Valley Recreational Area, Garrett Co.

SONG SPARROW - Ten nests, 4 of first brood, 3 of second brood, and 2 of third brood. Five young of an early nest left on May 12 before 1:45 p.m., after hatching by 4:30 p.m. on May 1, showing a stay of about 11 days. Two young hatched from 3 eggs left the last Denton nest August 17 or earlier (Fletchers). There were otherwise 4 sets of 4 eggs and 1 of 5 (mean, 4.14).

Box 6293, Virginia Tech. Sta., Blacksburg, Virginia

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#### RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD SEEN AT EMMITSEURG

John W. Richards

On November 8, 1952 I saw what appeared to be a Rufous Hummingbird (Selasphorus rufus). At 1:30 I was idly watching for hawks and talking to a student when the hummingbird flew toward us, turned about, and flew away. I tried to follow it but could not find it again. When I returned, I asked the student what color it was. He said that it was about the color of a robin's breast. A neighbor later told me that he had seen a hummingbird with a red throat in his garden a few days earlier.

Since this record is unlikely, to say the least, the following is offered in support of the identification. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds normally leave Maryland the latter part of September. Allen's Hummingbird, the only one resembling the Rufous, is restricted almost exclusively to California, whereas the Rufous ranges farther north than any other hummingbird and, incidentally, can survive below freezing temperatures, according to A. C. Bent (Life Histories, Bulletin 176, U. S. National Museum). Dr. George Lowery (Audubon Field Notes, Vol. 7, Nos. 1 & 3) reports on the unprecedented invasion of western species, including Rufous Hummingbirds, in the Gulf states



in the fall of 1952. And finally, a Rufous Hummingbird was reported at Jamesville, Virginia on November 30, 1952 by Arthur B. Fuller.

Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg

#### LUNCH HOUR AT A DOGWOOD TREE

May M. Snow

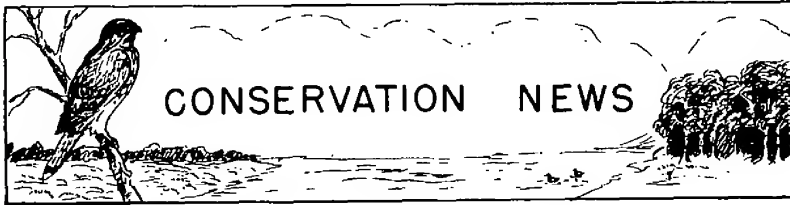
Birds come to a dogwood (Cornus Florida) tree in my yard the year round, partly because a feeder hangs from it; but what attracted my attention at noon on October 14, 1952 was the number of woodpeckers. During the hour from noon to 1 p.m. on this day the following observations were made. Flickers were coming and going constantly, and at one time seven of them and a Hairy Woodpecker were in the tree. Flickers were more easily alarmed than other birds by any slight sound or movement from the porch. They usually kept partly hidden behind leaves or branches, and generally seemed to get only one berry before dashing from the tree. At other times they swallowed more than one, many times 4 or 5 in succession, and once 7 berries. Several times a Flicker hung upside down, heavy and awkward on the swaying twigs, to get a berry.

A Hairy Woodpecker came twice during the hour, carefully examined the main trunk and larger branches, swallowed one berry and left. Later a Downy Woodpecker searched the smaller branches, but paid no attention to the berries nor to the dozen or so other birds in the tree.

Robins ate continuously, and had the least trouble swallowing. Starlings came in a company of 10 or 12, stayed close together in the tree, ate steadily for 2 or 3 minutes, and were gone. Two Catbirds seemed to have difficulty in swallowing--did I only imagine that the smaller berries were selected by them? The Catbirds, a Brown Thrasher and two Olive-backed Thrushes all paused between berries--none of that hasty gobbling of Robins, Starlings and Flickers. White-throated Sparrows ate the most daintily--steadily, but small bites; eleven pecks at a berry left half of the scarlet still in place on the twig, with half of the stone exposed. A squirrel reached out a paw each time for a cluster, then ate the fruit of each berry from the stone, letting each stone in turn fall. Four Mockingbirds, which usually spend much time in this tree, did not even pause as they flew through or around it, playing follow-the-leader, giving their shrill call or a snatch of song. A Carolina Chickadee came to observe; it did not eat but just sat in the top of the tree and watched the others, seeming to enjoy the harmony.

Across the lawn a Rusty Blackbird in immature plumage walked back and forth, turning over every leaf.

6805 Brookville Road, Chevy Chase



### CONSERVATION AND NATURE STUDY ON PARADE

Frank Portillo

Wildlife conservation and nature study were represented in the Takoma Park Fourth of July parade by two different organizations. The Takoma Park Nature Society (affiliated with the Maryland Ornithological Society) and the Izaak Walton League carried the message of nature study and conservation to the hundreds of people who witnessed the parade. The Takoma Park Nature Society entry was a decorated car with attractive bird posters mounted on each side. C. N. Thomsen, vice-president of the society, deserves much credit for putting together this attractive display.

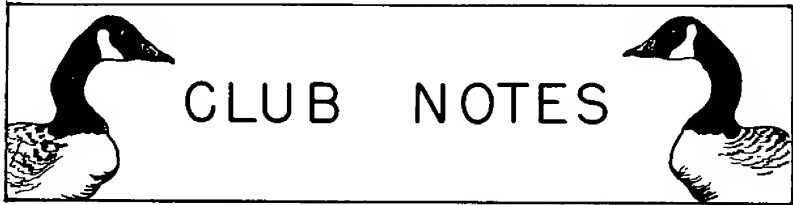
The Izaak Walton League entry was designed to represent a forest in which there were live animals: a young deer, grouse, and a skunk. There were also some mounted animals in the trees. The background of the float carried a message opposing the proposed use of the C. and O. Canal as a highway. This conversion would destroy a large area of wildlife refuge and deprive citizens of a heritage of natural beauty.

Preceding the float was a passenger car equipped with a loud speaker which was used by Izaak Walton League enthusiast, Garret Van Hoesen to tell parade watchers about the League and its work in conservation. He emphasized the opposition of League members to the C. and O. Canal highway proposal. Mr. Van Hoesen and League members constructed the float which received second prize in the non-commercial float awards.

Floats and exhibits of this kind are a valuable means of carrying the message of conservation to the public. It is thus possible to reach hundreds of people who are not familiar with the splendid work these organizations are doing to safeguard our natural resources.

14 Philadelphia Ave., Takoma Park 12

"Ecological Distribution of the Breeding Parulidae of Maryland," is the title of a 145 page thesis by Chandler Robbins on the 29 species of warblers which have been recorded in Maryland. This thesis, which was completed in May, 1950, is on file at the George Washington University Library, Washington, D.C.



## TALBOT COUNTY BIRD CLUB ORGANIZED

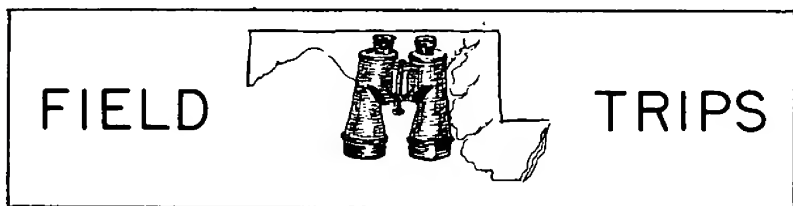
Richard L. Kleen

The finest birding area in Maryland is Talbot County. If you don't believe it, ask someone who lives there. We of Talbot have built up the reputation of talking more like Texans than Marylanders when the subject of our county arises. We speak of the great flocks of Swan that are found in every cove and inlet during the winter months. We mention the myriads of other wintering birds: geese, ducks, grebes. We talk about the Bald Eagles and the Ospreys which are always in evidence around our tidewater. We speak of the warbler hordes that flood Talbot during migrations.

With such birding possibilities, it was inevitable that some day a bird club would have to be formed. Through the years the old familiar cry had been heard on all sides. "Why don't we have a bird club in Talbot? Why doesn't somebody start one?" Finally five amateur birders got together and decided to do something about it, Mr. and Mrs. Howard McColloch, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Henderson, and Mr. Richard Kleen formed the original nucleus around which the Talbot County Bird Club was formed. These five sent out cards to all they thought might be interested and invited them to attend an organizational meeting. Late in February the meeting was held, a constitution was drawn up, officers were elected, and a program was scheduled.

Although only three months have passed since this initial meeting, the club appears to be on firm footing. Our three meetings have been well attended and our membership now numbers thirty-five interested birders. Our monthly bird walks are proving more and more popular. The two county high schools, St. Michaels and Easton, both have active bird clubs, and their members are an evident part of our monthly meetings. A vastly expanded program is planned for the coming year including trips to Hawk Mountain and Ocean City. We feel that, although the Talbot County Bird Club is the newest and youngest of the groups affiliated with the Maryland Ornithological Society, we have made a good beginning and have a future of value and interest to the people of our county.

St. Michaels



## BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB TRIPS, 1953 SUMMARY

Florence H. Burner

The 1953 trips started with a crow trip to Manchester on February 1st. Of the 24 trips, excluding Mrs. Kaestner's spring walks, taken in 1953, seven reports are missing. At this time may I ask all leaders to be sure to send me lists of people attending and species observed. The trips included the usual ones: Kent Island, Ocean City, Gibson Island, Lake Roland, Conowingo, Patapsco, Mr. Low's farm, Chalk Point, Sandy Point, Cape May, Hawk Mountain, Lost Valley, vicinity of the Gunpowder. The only variations were a city trip to the zoo and one to see Chimney Swifts.

Attendance reported totaled 345 plus 9 birders who accompanied Mrs. Kaestner on her spring walks each of the 7 weeks. Her group reported 73 species seen, the greatest number, 54, being observed on May 5th. The total of 833 species seen on the other trips, of course, includes many repeaters seen on several trips. The largest number of species seen on a single trip was 106 at Ocean City, May 23-24; the smallest number, 15 seen at Lake Roland, Feb. 14th. This report does not include the 1953 Christmas Counts.

5350 Reisterstown Rd., Baltimore 15

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BEHAVIOR NOTES

A Mockingbird was putting on a make believe act by sitting on a deserted nest while ten feet away from it the fledglings were almost ready to leave their nest. The parent bird showed unusual tameness on the nest and put on an occasional injured bird act on the ground. It kept it up for two days until the young had safely left the nest.

Margarete Butenschoen, Denton, Md.