

# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

*Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

2103 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland

---

VOL. I

JULY - AUGUST, 1945

NO. 3

---

## THE INCUBATION PERIODS OF SOME BIRDS AT BALTIMORE

In the determination of birds' incubation periods opportunity and luck so greatly outweigh patience and will that there are not too many closely calculated figures on record. A few observations that I have made in Baltimore are therefore given here; some of these are not as precise as could be wished, but they at least fix the periods within very narrow limits. All of the times given are Eastern Standard.

KILLDEER (Charadrius vociferus)--One observation: about 25 days.

Set of four eggs completed April 4, 1939; before 4:37 p.m., hatched between 5 p.m. on April 28 and 3:50 p.m. on April 29. The nesting was on a stony slope in Hanlon Park.

ROBIN (Turdus migratorius)--Two observations: from a few hours more, to a few hours less, than 12 days.

Third of four marked eggs, laid July 6, 1943, between 12:01 and 12:27 p.m., hatched July 18 between 6:39 and 7:18 a.m.; maximum possible period 11 days 19 hours 17 minutes. Hanlon Park vicinity.

Third of three marked eggs, laid May 12, 1945, at 11:30 a.m., hatched May 24 between 1:19 and 3:04 p.m.; minimum possible period 12 days 1 hour 49 minutes. Hillsdale Park.

WOOD THROSH (Hylocichla mustelina)--Six observations: 12 1/3 to perhaps 13 days.

Third of four marked eggs, laid May 17, 1943, between 9:29

and 11:14 a.m., hatched May 29 between 5:05 a.m. and 5:42 p.m.; maximum possible period 12 days 8 hours 13 minutes. Hanlon Park vicinity.

Third of three marked eggs, laid June 4, 1943, between 6:56 a.m. and 7:17 p.m., hatched between 7:38 p.m. on June 16 and 6:27 a.m. on June 17; maximum possible period 12 days 23 hours 31 minutes. Hanlon Park vicinity.

In my experience, the last egg of this species' clutches usually hatches at night. This makes precise determination of the incubation period very difficult, but at the same time indicates a normal period within the range that I have shown.

COWBIRD (Molothrus ater)--One observation: about 11 1/3 days.

Egg laid May 18, 1944, before 8:47 a.m., in Wood Thrush nest and incubated steadily. Hatched May 29 at 1:25 p.m. Hanlon Park vicinity.

SONG SPARROW (Melospiza melodia)--One observation: between 13 days and 13 days 10 1/2 hours.

Third of three marked eggs, laid May 15, 1945, between 4:53 and 5:27 a.m., hatched on May 28 between 5:20 a.m. and 3:46 p.m. Howard Park section.

Hervey Brackbill

\*\*\*\*\*

#### THE LESSER SCAUP IN MARYLAND IN LATE SUMMER

On August 26, 1945 I observed a male Lesser Scaup Duck on the Severn River at Annapolis, Maryland. The bird was in the eclipse plumage. When first observed it was sitting on a board at the edge of the water. It allowed me to approach within six feet before it took to the water and swam away. Late the same afternoon, the bird was discovered in the same spot.

Wildfowl occasionally are found during the summer in what is normally their wintering area. Due to gunshot wounds, or other reasons they are unable to join the migrating flocks.

Another observation of this type was made on July 12, 1939 when Haven Kolb and I found a male Ruddy Duck on the Patapsco River marsh near the Hanover Street bridge.

Irving E. Hampe

## A LATE SUMMER BIRD TRIP

Seldom does the amateur bird student realize the need for year round observations. The spring migration and breeding season over, the presence of the summer residents are only casually noted and very little is recorded of the subsequent behavior. Late summer is an interesting period in the life of birds. Family cares are over, most of the species have molted or are molting into winter plumage, many birds are forming into flocks and some have begun to migrate.

The notes made on a recent trip along the Chesapeake Bay may serve to illustrate some of the interesting data that can be obtained at this season. On the afternoon of August 12, 1944 Mr. Gilbert C. Klingel and the writer sailed from Annapolis in the twenty-foot sailboat, The Sea Gull. A hurried departure gave little opportunity to observe birds on shore. Purple Martins were flying about as we left. Several Laughing Gulls were perched on wharf pilings and six Common Terns were observed fishing near shore. Birds were scarce in the Harbor and nothing of interest was seen. During an earlier trip, late in May, I had observed Purple Grackles flying out over the harbor and fluttering down to pick up food of some sort from the water. This time I searched carefully hoping to discover what sort of food they procured, but no grackles were observed. Approximately twenty Herring Gulls were resting on the platform of the Greenbury Point Light. They paid little or no attention to our boat and we approached close enough to see the flesh-colored legs, one of the distinguishing features of this species. Very few immature birds were observed in the group. In spring the immature birds were very numerous.

A steady wind and a choppy sea made it almost impossible to hold binoculars steady on any bird. Sailing across the bay to Kent Island we observed a few gulls, mostly Herring Gulls and a few Laughing Gulls. The Laughing Gulls were in all stages of molt. The majority showed the black head but a few of them had molted the black and were in almost complete plumage. Immature Laughing Gulls were scarce, only a few were observed on the whole trip. As we approached Kent Island we observed and heard Common Terns flying just off shore. Rarely more than one or two individuals were seen at any one time.

Rounding Love Point a pound net immediately attracted our attention. On nearly every pole was a bird. Gulls were most numerous, one Osprey and four Great Blue Herons were seen. The herons were uneasy at our approach and flew off toward the shore. The gulls scarcely paid any attention to us. The Osprey was the first to fly away. Two Osprey had been observed just before reaching the point. One of them flew low over the water carrying a large eel. We anchored near Love Point ferry pier just before dusk.

After our evening meal we hoisted sail and set out for deeper water where we enjoyed a swim. The light on our boat cast a feeble glow on the dark water as we plunged overboard. Immediately the water around us sparkled with the glow of innumerable phosphorescent creatures. Every movement set up a flash as we swam through the darkness. Back at our anchorage we prepared our sleeping bags in the bottom of the boat and settled down to sleep with the gentle slap of the waves against the side of our boat.

The hoarse call of Fish Crows woke us just as the sun peeped over the horizon. We ate breakfast with our binoculars beside us, as every bird in sight was carefully observed and notes taken. Several Eastern Green Heron and one Great Blue Heron were observed along the shore. Red-winged Blackbirds were very numerous back of the beach. A flock of ten small sandpipers flew swiftly out across the bay. We nearly fell overboard in our rush to grab binoculars but the birds were out of sight before we could focus on them. A Spotted Sandpiper feeding along the shore was seen and a flock of eleven Black Ducks flew overhead.

Hoisting sail we set out for Sandy Point on the western shore. A choppy sea and heavy winds kept us busy but we noted the same species at the pound nets. The reactions of the birds to our presence were the same as noted the previous evening. The Ospreys took wing first, the herons followed, and the gulls merely moved on to other poles. A few Common Terns were perched on the poles at the net and they watched us, shifting uneasily about, but did not fly away.

Anchoring off Sandy Point, we waded ashore and set out for a short walk. Red-winged Blackbirds were numerous in the marsh back of the point. Several immature Red-winged Blackbirds were begging for food from the adults, but seemingly without success. Eight Black Ducks were flushed from a small pond in the marsh. Farther on a pair of Green Herons were furtively moving along the edge of the marsh, hesitating occasionally, and with quick jabs procuring their food. Small fish and frogs were seen to disappear down their capacious gullets. Reaching higher ground we walked along the edge of a cornfield. A small flock of Mourning Doves were perched in the trees and allowed us to approach very close. A month hence, when the gunning season opens, these birds will be very wary; and one needs to stalk carefully to get within gunshot of them.

The wind began to change and we hastened back to our boat, stopping only long enough to observe a Summer Tanager and several Indigo Buntings. As we hoisted the sails a Great Blue Heron flapped heavily across the swamp. The hot, fetid smell of the salt marsh, the heron overhead, and the salty spray against our faces as we sailed homeward, added the final touches to a picture of late summer in tidewater Maryland.

Irving E. Hampe

ADDITIONAL RECORDS FOR  
BIRDS OF BALTIMORE AND VICINITY

Winter Residents

	Arrives	Departs	
Kinglet, Golden-crowned	11/ /43	4/ /43	(common)

Summer Residents

Kingbird	5/4/43		
----------	--------	--	--

Transient Migrants

Duck, Ring-necked (17)	3/16/44		
Eagle, Golden (adult)	3/22/44		
Hawk, Pigeon	4/24/43		
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	4/13/43	(common)	
Siskin, Pine (24)	3/19/44		
Sparrow, Savannah	3/26/44		
Tern, Caspian	4/18/43	(Marley Creek)	
Warbler, Black-thr. Green	5/4/43		
Warbler, Western Palm	5/4/43		

Francis T. Elkins  
Glen Burnie, Md.

# MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 9, 1945

"The object of this Club shall be to record the observations of bird life in Maryland; to disseminate in a popular manner the results of such observations; to collate the scientific data furnished by bird students throughout the State, and to supply such available information to other groups as requested; and to promote the cultivation of public sentiment in the preservation of our native bird life."

## OFFICERS

Irving E. Hampe, President  
Orville W. Crowder, Vice-President  
Mrs. Millard C. Kent, Recording Secretary  
Miss Helen Klinke, Corresponding Secretary  
Millard C. Kent, Treasurer

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mrs. John L. Cotsworth                      Miss J. Pearl Heaps  
Miss Helen Coggins                      Ray J. Beasley  
Andrew Simon

## COMMITTEES

### PROGRAM

Miss J. Pearl Heaps                      Ray J. Beasley

### PUBLICATION

Ray J. Beasley                      Millard C. Kent  
Miss Helen Klinke                      Irving E. Hampe

### MEMBERSHIP

Miss Harriet L. Caspan                      Miss Helen Coggins

### HIKE

Miss Florence H. Burner                      Orville W. Crowder

### BIRD RECORDS

Miss Ruth Fishpaugh                      Miss Helen Klinke  
Irving E. Hampe

\*\*\*\*\*