

What Song Is That?

What bird is that singing? This was the theme of the program entitled "Songs and Slides of Tryon Birds" presented by Martha and Ken Frederick at the November 20 meeting of the Tryon Bird and Nature Club. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick put the program together in response to requests for help in learning to identify birds seen around our yards and feeders, not only by sight but also by their songs.

In order to accomplish this the Fredericks used color slides and recordings of bird songs that are available through the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Thirteen birds commonly seen and heard in this area at this time

of year were selected, then, for ease in handling, the songs were transferred from the record disc to a cassette tape in the proper order for presentation. During the presentation the bird's song — or in some cases several different songs and calls — was played first and the audience was invited to identify the singer. The picture of the bird was then shown alone, and finally the picture and the song were given together, thus relating the image of the bird to the song. Questions and answers during the showing brought to light other interesting bits of information. For example, it is generally only the male bird who sings and then only in the spring and early summer when he is courting, whereas both males and females have calls which they use for communicating with one another. Woodpeckers, several of which were included in the presentation, communicate by drumming on a hollow limb or tree trunk. Thus, the drumming we hear is a message being sent and not an attempt to dig out a worm for lunch.

The program was innovative, well presented and received with great enthusiasm. So much so, in fact, that the Fredericks have sort of volunteered to do a similar program about spring birds. Shorter versions of the program have been given to a 6th grade class (in Ohio) and to a 3rd grade class in Tryon, and Mrs. Frederick is now working with the Tryon and Polk County school authorities for possibly more showings in the schools, and should provide an interesting learning experience. — Reporter

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