

XX. SOME BIRD OBSERVATIONS IN CLEVELAND COUNTY IN 1924

Margaret M. Nice and L. B. Nice, University of Oklahoma

From January to June, 1924, we made a number of observations of special interest on birds in Cleveland County, Oklahoma. Several birds were noted in winter for the first time and a new species was added to the list of breeding birds of the county. We were fortunate in being able to make extended observations on shore-birds, about which information had formerly been meager; two species, new to the State list, were recorded.

Winter Visitants

Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*). one was seen near the Canadian River, Jan. 20, 1924.

White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*). Usually an uncommon spring and fall transient in Cleveland County, this season it wintered in considerable numbers. On the other hand, White-crowned Sparrows were almost entirely absent.

Chewink (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus*). Two males were noted on Jan. 13, one on Mar. 4 and 24, and three on Mar. 30, one was heard singing on Apr. 8. This is the first time we have seen them in this part of the State. They differ from our common Arctic Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus arcticus*) in their notes and also in the absence of white markings on the scapulars.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*). Two of these birds wintered in this region—the first winter record we have had for this species in Oklahoma. One was seen in a thicket along a creek west of Norman Jan. 23 and 28, Feb. 8 and Mar. 2; the other was found along another creek on Feb. 21.

Shore-birds

A new pond in a corn field a half mile south of Norman enabled us to make many observations on the spring migration of shore-birds. Sixteen species of Limicolae were seen, two of which were additions to the State list. We first visited the pond Apr. 4; rather frequent trips were made from this date until June 10, with the exception of the first 10 days in May. The specimens were collected by L. B. Nice and given to the museum of the University of Oklahoma.

Wilson Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*). One male was seen Apr. 5 and 6; fourteen of both sexes May 11, and two males May 14 and 15.

Wilson Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*). These were common about the pond Apr. 5 and 6; a few were seen from the 8th to 22nd.

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus*). Four of these birds were seen Apr. 5, 6 and 8.

Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*). Six of these birds were seen in a flock on May 14 and 15; one was collected.

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*). These were first seen on Apr. 11 and were noted at each subsequent visit until May 25, when one was collected. There were usually about 8 or 10 of them, but on Apr. 24, there were as many as twenty.

White-rumped Sandpiper (*Pisobia fuscicollis*). This bird was first identified on May 12 when one was collected; two were noted May 20, four on May 30 and two as late as June 8.

Least Sandpiper (*Piscobia minutilla*). Only one of these was identified (May 11); we distinguished it from the Semipalmated Sandpipers by its yellowish rather than black legs. It was tame and allowed a close approach.

Red-backed Sandpiper (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*). A new bird to the State list. Four were seen in full summer plumage May 15; one was collected.

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusilla*). This was the most abundant species and was seen for the longest period—from Apr. 4 till June 8. On June 10 the last transient shore-bird had left. Two were collected on May 12. Their numbers in April and May varied from about twenty to nearly a hundred.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). A new bird to the State list. Four were seen on May 11 when one in summer plumage was watched through field glasses for some time at distance of 15 feet. Three of these birds in winter plumage were observed May 15. Three specimens of this Godwit that had previously been overlooked were found in the University Museum; they were taken by E. D. Crabb in Canadian County in 1911.

Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanococcus*). First seen Apr. 8. A few were present at nearly every visit until May 30.

Lesser Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*). A few of these birds were seen from Apr. 5 to June 1.

Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* subsp?) Five of these striking birds were observed May 12.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). One was noted on May 11 and 23, and two on May 25 and 30.

Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*). A pair were present near the pond all the season and must have nested nearby.

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*). One Ring-necked Plover was seen May 15; it was collected and is the first specimen recorded for the State, the only other published instance of its occurrence being a sight record.

Nesting Birds

Bluebirds were uncommon during the season of 1924. For the first time since our Bluebird box was erected in 1920, none of the rightful owners appeared to claim it. It has sheltered several broods of these beautiful birds. Texas Wrens started to nest in it on Mar. 2, but soon left. On May 18 it was adopted by a pair of Crested Flycatchers.

The cottonwood in which a pair of Swainson Hawks had

nested for two years was cut down, and we saw no sign of the birds in their old haunts on May 24.

A new record as a nesting bird in central Oklahoma was established by the Western House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon parkmani*) which formerly had been recorded as breeding only in Garfield and Cimarron Counties. We had known it in Norman as a spring and fall transient, but on May 10, 1924 a pair started to build in a Wren box on our grounds. Eight eggs were laid but both parents disappeared and the eggs were never incubated.