

## X. NEW NESTING RECORDS IN CLEVELAND COUNTY IN 1925 AND 1926

Margaret Morse Nice, Norman

During the past summer we found nests of three species which we had not previously known to breed in Cleveland County; we saw parents of two other species with insects in their bills; and found that one species had returned to this region after an absence of several years. Since we were away from Norman from June, 1924, till September, 1925, the only birds we found actually nesting in 1925 were Western Mourning Doves;<sup>1</sup> however, in the case of the three birds first mentioned old nests gave evidence of breeding during that year.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Myctanassa violacea*). On Nov. 11, 1925, Mr. A. J. Kirn of Somerset, Texas spent the day with us; on a trip to one of our favorite haunts, the "Sloo," (a woods with large trees, some of which stand in water much of the time), he found two flat nests of small twigs in adjoining trees and told us that they belonged to Black-crowned or Yellow-crowned Night Herons—neither of which birds had we observed in this region. The next spring we were delighted to see a Yellow-crowned Night Heron by the pool. At our next visit, April 6, two herons were standing like statues on the higher nest, while another was perched below. On the 19th there were at least eight herons in the woods, giving their queer "squawks," but three days later only four were seen. A bird was incubating on the upper nest April 19, but the lower seemed to have nearly disappeared, apparently having been used to replenish the other nest. On the 21st a heron was standing on the remains of the lower nest; by May 4 it had been rebuilt and a bird was incubating. May 18 several downy babies could be seen through the sticks of nest No. 1, but this brood must have come to a sad end, because by June 3 the nest was empty and deserted.

The eggs in the second nest had hatched May 25; on June 21 there were six enormous young fully feathered. Since the sloo had dried up, the poor parents had to fly to a pond a quarter of a mile away to get food for their hungry family.

Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia hypogea*). In 1920 there were two pair of these amusing birds in a small prairie dog town west of Norman. The next year a house was built in close proximity and owls and dogs disappeared. In the sum-

---

<sup>1</sup>M. M. Nice. September Nesting of Mourning Doves in Norman in 1925. Proc. Okla. Acad. Science, VI. 1927.

mer of 1926 Mr. J. B. Goldsmith called our attention to a colony of Burrowing Owls a mile north of this former site on a few acres of prairie which was used as a pasture; he told us he had first seen a few of the birds and a very few prairie dogs in the fall of 1925. On July 11 at 6:45 p. m., we saw 11 owls in this colony but at 8 p. m., all seemed to have gone hunting; no prairie dogs were to be seen. Unfortunately by November the owls had entirely disappeared.

Road-runner (*Geococcyx californianus*). The gradual spread eastward of these unique and useful birds is most gratifying to the nature lover. Until the fall of 1925, we had recorded but two chaparrals in the vicinity of Norman. On Nov. 11, 1925, Mr. A. J. Kirn showed us a nest of the season at Bird Brook, a mile west of Norman and later in the winter by the South Canadian I found another nest apparently built the summer before. On July 21, 1926, we were informed by Mr. H. Hughes, a farmer living west of Norman, that a pair of Road-runners had a nest in an old peach tree in his orchard. Upon visiting it that afternoon we found five young of assorted sizes; the oldest bird had some brown feathers on its back and lay quietly, but the youngest, who was only two days old, quivered its wings and buzzed like a bee as it frantically begged for food. On July 27 at 9 a. M. there were four large, well-feathered young birds, but at 5 p. m., the nest was empty.

All three nests have been about 8 feet from the ground in small trees; the nests themselves were flat and rather bulky. A few bits of chalky white egg shell can be found on the bottom after all the young have left.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogastra*). Until the last two years Barn Swallows have been recorded by us as uncommon transients only; the building of the paved road from Norman to Oklahoma City offered them attractive nesting sites which they were quick to adopt. On July 17 and 23, 1926, there were two nests under a culvert five miles north of Norman, one an old one and the other containing four young. Another culvert also sheltered a pair that were noticed flying nearby on July 23; this place was not examined until Aug. 12, when four half grown young were found in one nest, while another was so dilapidated that it must have been built there the previous year.

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus griseus*). On June 29, 1922, we heard our first White-eyed Vireo in this county; this was three miles south of Norman in the city dump, which, until the recent cutting of primeval trees and thickets, was the best place to find birds in this immediate region. The next year we

observed them there on April 24, 29 and 30 and June 17, but neither saw nor heard them on May 3, 10, 17 nor July 12. Our next record was on May 11, 1926, when we heard the characteristic song at Bird Brook; this bird was singing on each of our visits to this locality. May 25 and 26, June 17 and July 12. On the last date he was seen with a caterpillar in his bill—good evidence of a family of young. In two other localities birds were heard June 21 and July 27 but at no other time; it seems probable that these did not represent breeding pairs.

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*). Until 1926 our only records for this beautiful bird were based on single males April 13, 1920, and April 19, 1922. This year, greatly to our surprise, two pairs must have nested at the slough, for they were heard singing at each visit from May 4th to July 14, when an agitated pair were seen with green larvae in their bills.