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## A Note on Compensatory Nesting Behavior of Scissor-Tailed Flycatchers in a Disturbed Area

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On 31 May 1966, while driving along U. S. Highway 82 and 277, between Wichita Falls and Seymour, Texas, we were impressed by what seemed to be an unusually large number of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Muscivora forficata*) nesting on telephone poles. Closer observation revealed that most of the mesquite trees, which represented the tallest and almost the only trees in that area, had been poisoned and killed to the ground several years before. Net growth averaged 6 to 8 ft high. (Fig. 1)

Within a distance of four miles, from two miles southwest of Holliday to the city limits of Mankins in Archer County, we counted 130 telephone poles having an arrangement of crossbar braces, additional wire supports, insulators, and wires all of which came together below the cross-

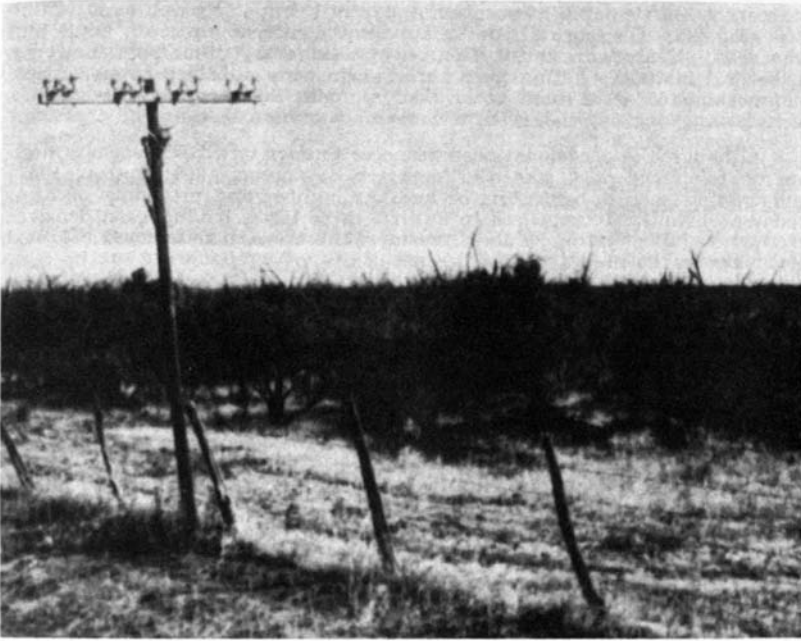


Figure 1. Recovery of mesquite trees in a previously poisoned area.

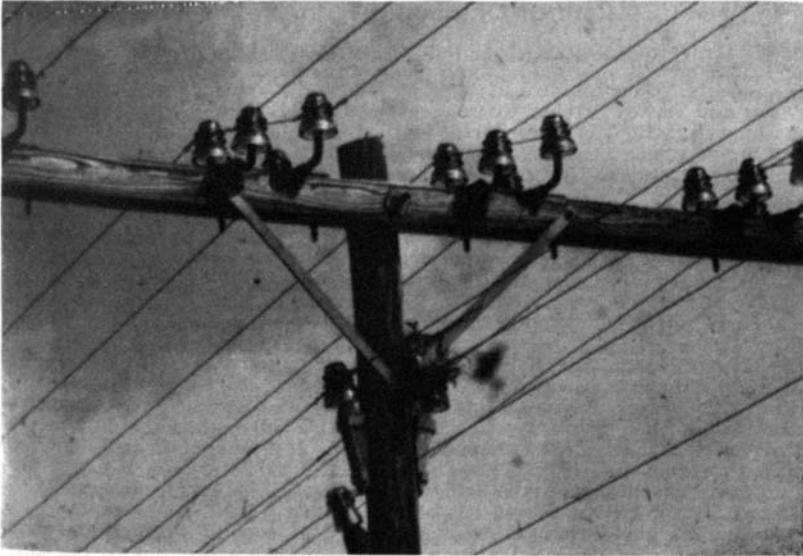


Figure 2. Compensatory nesting site of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

bars. This particular configuration apparently lent itself well as a nesting site (Fig. 2). On most of the 39 apparently current nests, an adult bird was seen. Nests were most often on at least every other pole; however, in several instances as many as three nests were observed in succession, and within 165 ft of each other. Many male Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were resting on wires between poles and some were seen on the crossbars.

Although the occasional occurrence of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nesting on telephone poles has been reported (Peterson, 1963; Sutton, 1967) and we had seen it before, never had the number and proximity of nests been so obvious. It appeared to us that these birds, having been deprived of their regular nesting sites in the mesquite trees, had selected the next best sites in the area.

Recently, 24 November 1967, we had occasion to be driving through this area again and counted 16 nests on the same poles. Although the mesquite trees are continuing to recover and some birds may be nesting in them again, there may be too few trees with sufficient height available to accommodate all of the nesting pairs. We wonder, however, if these birds may not have extended their nesting-site niche.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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- Sutton, G. M. 1967. *Oklahoma Birds: Their Ecology and Distribution, with Comments on the Avifauna of the Southern Great Plains*. Univ. Okla. Press, Norman.
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