

We drove to the spot at which the falcon had been tearing at its kill. There lay a hen prairie chicken. A three-inch patch of skin had been torn from the breast. We found no other external evidence of recent injury, but blood was flowing from the nostrils. On opening the body, which was still quite warm, we found blood clots in the heart and lungs. The heart appeared to have been bruised, but we found no puncture marks anywhere on the body and no recent wounds of any sort aside from the torn skin just mentioned.

There was, however, evidence of an old wound on the right side of the chest. Here a scab, which showed no sign of infection, covered a skin-area about half an inch wide and three-quarters of an inch long. Otherwise the chicken was in good flesh and fairly fat.

Although I have on many occasions observed a Marsh Hawk pursuing a prairie chicken, I have never seen one actually injure a chicken. On several occasions, too, I have watched a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) chasing a prairie chicken. A healthy Greater Prairie Chicken appears to be perfectly capable of outflying either a Marsh Hawk or a Golden Eagle. The chickens obviously fear a Prairie Falcon, however, for the appearance of a falcon near by completely panics them.

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105.

BIRDS TO BE LOOKED FOR IN THE BLACK MESA COUNTRY

BY JOHN S. WESKE

THE BLACK MESA country, in the far northwestern corner of Oklahoma, has received considerable attention from ornithologists. No bird student now lives in this part of the state, however. The nearest active observers, Adolph J. Krehbiel and his associates, live in Clayton, New Mexico, 40 miles south-southwest of Kenton, Oklahoma, and 11 miles from the nearest corner of the Oklahoma Panhandle. Mr. Krehbiel has kept records on the birds of Clayton for more than two decades. Several years ago he published a four-page check-list for the area. Although this list is not based on observations made in Oklahoma, it contains information of considerable interest and value to Oklahoma bird students.

To be noted is the fact that there are pronounced differences in habitat between Clayton and Kenton. The plains surrounding Clayton are largely treeless; rough country is confined to creek valleys, and there is no extensive pinyon-juniper woodland comparable to that found near Kenton. On the other hand, trees and gardens in Clayton provide a habitat not found in Oklahoma anywhere west of Boise City.

Mr. Krehbiel lists 15 species that have never, so far as I know, been seen in Oklahoma. Nine of these are on his "principal list." One of them, the Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), he considers an "occasional transient visitor." The following eight he considers "rare visitors": Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*), Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*), Coues's Flycatcher (*Contopus pertinax*), Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*), Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*), Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*), and Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*). The following six "additional species" have been seen only once or twice in the region: Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*), Olivaceous Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*), Buff-breasted Flycatcher (*Empidonax fulvifrons*), Crissal Thrasher (*Toxostoma dorsale*), Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*), and Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*). Two species—the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*) and Bendire's Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*)—have been reported since the check-list was published.

The above-mentioned species should be kept in mind by bird students visiting the Black Mesa country in Oklahoma. Many of the 17 are indigenous to regions several hundred miles to the southwest of Oklahoma, however, and their occurrence in Oklahoma would be truly exceptional. The Calliope Hummingbird and Western Flycatcher have both been taken in southwestern Kansas within only a few miles of the Oklahoma state line (Sutton, 1967: 289, 346).

Letters to Mr. Krehbiel may be addressed thus: *Box 518, Clayton, New Mexico 88415.*

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GENERAL NOTES

Whistling Swans wintering in central Oklahoma.—From January 25 to March 13, 1968, one pure white adult and 14 gray immature Whistling Swans (*Olor columbianus*) spent much of their time on Lake Elmer, a 63-acre impoundment in Kingfisher County, Oklahoma, 4½ mi. northwest of the city of Kingfisher. The swans flew about the impoundment each day; occasionally they visited a farm-pond known as Lankard's Lake, half a mile east of Lake Elmer. They did not, so far as I know, regularly feed in any winter wheat field in the vicinity.

When the swans ate crackers that I threw into the water for them, I decided to try feeding them regularly. Using yellow corn donated by Thomas Francis of Kingfisher and lettuce trimmings that I picked up at a market in Kingfisher, I fed the birds at five places—chiefly at a spot along the south shore west of the dam. I threw the corn into the water, where the birds "tipped" for it. They did not seem to care much for the lettuce. Occasionally I saw them pulling up and eating roots of cattail and smartweed. They must have obtained some food (mussels, snails, etc.), or perhaps gravel, from the bottom, for I often saw them "tipping" in areas where I had not scattered corn. During their stay they ate about 200 pounds of corn.