

BREEDING OF THE CHIPPING SPARROW IN CLEVELAND COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

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THE CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) is said to breed widely, though somewhat locally, in eastern Oklahoma — westward regularly to Osage, Creek, Pittsburg, and Pushmataha counties and irregularly to Payne, Comanche, and Murray counties (Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma Birds*, p. 624). In 1922 it nested in or near Kenton, in the mesa country of northwestern Cimarron County (Tate, 1923, *Proc. Oklahoma Acad. Sci.*, 3: 48; Nice, 1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 188), but recent late spring and early summer records for that part of the state have all been of non-breeding birds (Sutton, *op. cit.*). In the spring of 1968, I found the species nesting in Cleveland County about 60 miles west of what has been considered the western edge of its "regular" breeding range.

On 14 April, Charles W. Comer and I happened to see a small sparrow carrying nest material to an eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) in my yard about five miles northeast of the city of Norman. Using a binocular, we ascertained that the bird was a Chipping Sparrow and that the nest material was a tuft of hair. Even as we recalled that hair was usually used in lining the nest of this species (see Bent *et al.*, 1968, *Bull. U. S. Natl. Mus.* 237, Part 2, pp. 1169-70), we heard the monotonous—and to me unfamiliar—song of the male bird.

The nest, which was almost finished, was 17 inches above ground and 45 inches below the top of the tree. It was close against the main stem, supported by two branches. The tree was growing in a Bermuda-grass lawn about six feet from a fence separating the lawn from open Bermuda-grass pastureland. Scattered large trees, a pumphouse, and a small building with attached carport were in the yard, all of them within 50 feet of the nest-tree.

I saw the two Chipping Sparrows not far from their nest on 16 April. On 17 April I did not see either bird, though on that date the nest appeared to be finished. I made no observations on 18 April. At 07:15 on 19 April, I found one egg in the nest. The bird was not there. The following morning at about 07:15 there was only one egg, and no bird was there. At 07:30 on 21 April, however, the bird was sitting on two eggs. On 22 April I saw a bird on the nest at 12:00 and again at 20:30, but I did not flush it on either visit. At 07:30 on 23 April there were three eggs—the complete clutch, and the bird was sitting on them.

I made no observations from 28 April to 3 May. On 4 May I found three very small young in the nest. Judging from their smallness and helplessness, I thought them to be little more than a day old. Their down was dark mouse-gray. Eight days later, on the afternoon of 12 May, one young bird flew directly from the nest to a position higher than the nest about 75 feet away. The following day the other two young were still in the nest at 07:30, but at 18:00 the nest was empty.

I collected the nest. It is now in the nest collection at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range. Its cup measures about two inches in diameter and one inch deep. Its innermost lining is composed almost entirely of fine, grayish white hair.

During the period of incubation I heard the male's song occasionally. I heard it at least once shortly after the brood had fledged, but I observed no indication otherwise that the pair might re-nest. I saw the three young about 100 feet from the nest on 29 May. Never did I see a Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) near the nest, though that social parasite is common in and about Norman during the nesting season.

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GENERAL NOTES

Harlan's Hawk in Roger Mills County, Oklahoma.—On 1 December 1968, near an impoundment called Skipout Lake, 11 mi. west and ½ mi. north of Cheyenne, Roger Mills County, Oklahoma, Malcolm M. Exendine, Biologist of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, shot a male Harlan's Hawk (*Buteo harlani*) that he has presented to the Bird Collection of the University of Oklahoma. The specimen presumably is in first winter feather, for its tail is brownish gray (without the slightest hint of red wash), heavily barred with black. The body plumage is brownish black, generally speaking, but much of it is white basally—so extensively so, in fact, as to give the chin, throat, breast, and upper belly a boldly spotted or mottled appearance that must have been clearly visible in the field. The bird was moderately fat. It weighed 980.7 grams, 123.5 grams of which were remains of a Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) that the hawk may or may not have killed. These remains included the head and neck, which had been swallowed whole, as well as the wings and feet. To my surprise I found very few feathers except those that were attached to the skin of the head and neck. The wing plumage in particular, even the upper lesser coverts, had been carefully plucked.

Harlan's Hawk is fairly common in wooded parts of eastern and central Oklahoma in winter, but it is rare in the western third of the main body of the state and in the Panhandle; "three or four black hawks observed going to roost in large cottonwoods" near Guymon, Texas County, on 8 and 9 February 1957 were only "provisionally identified as Harlan's" (Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma Birds*, p. 106). The species has not heretofore been reported in any way from Roger Mills County. The specimen (UOMZ No. 6494) is the westernmost of *B. harlani* to have been taken in Oklahoma.—George M. Sutton, *Stovall Museum of Science and History, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 1 February 1969.*

Recent nesting of American Coot in Cimarron County, Oklahoma.—At about 16:30 on 19 June 1966, along the south side of Lake Carl Etling, not far from the campsites in Black Mesa State Park, Cimarron County, Oklahoma, I saw several American Coots (*Fulica americana*) among the cattails and reeds