

high with an inner basin about five inches deep. It was made largely of coarse twigs. There were no feathers, down, or other soft materials in the lining. The three young, which were probably a little less than a week old, moved about clumsily. They showed no antagonism toward us. Each of them was covered with white down and each had a black bill and pinkish legs and feet. An adult Eastern Wood Rat (*Neotoma floridana*) was lying on the rim of the nest. One of the brood had obviously been nibbling at the carcass or had recently been fed, for its beak and facial down were blood-stained.

About four hours later we visited the nest again, finding a freshly caught Eastern Wood Rat, a freshly caught Hispid Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*), and a partly eaten Eastern Wood Rat on the nest's rim, a little above the level of the young hawks.

The nest was exceptionally low. According to Sutton (1967, *Oklahoma Birds*, p. 102), the lowest Oklahoma nest thus far on record was about 25 feet up. Data on file at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range clearly indicate that most nests in Oklahoma are from 40 to 60 feet above ground. The hatching date is early: a nest found by D. F. Parmelee on 17 April 1954 on a cliff in Cimarron County still contained eggs; a nest found by L. E. Dunn and P. F. Nighswonger on 2 May 1958 in Roman Nose State Park, Blaine County, held two young chicks (Sutton, op. cit., p. 103).

The Red-tailed Hawk is an important bird of prey in Oklahoma. The species inhabits wooded parts of the state all year, though some birds that nest or are reared here probably move farther south in winter, being replaced by birds that nest or are reared north of Oklahoma. In rough country Red-tails often nest on cliffs as well as in trees in Oklahoma. They are uncommon in treeless parts of Oklahoma in winter. The accompanying photograph lends further evidence as to the importance and efficiency of the Red-tailed Hawk in the natural regulation of rodent populations.

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THE RED PHALAROPE IN OKLAHOMA

By GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON

THE RED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) is believed to be rare in the Southern Great Plains. Its migrations take place largely at sea. It has been taken six times in Kansas, five times in the fall (October 6 to December 5), once in spring (May 10), twice in the northeastern part of the state, four times at the Cheyenne Bottoms, in Barton County, about one hundred miles north of Woods County, Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma Birds*, p. 209). The only record that I know of for Texas is of a bird seen on 26 September 1893 in Wise County, about fifty miles south of Jefferson and Love counties, Oklahoma (Bent,

1927, *U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 142, p. 15; Wolfe, 1956, *Check-list of the Birds of Texas*, p. 31; Sutton, *op. cit.*). For Oklahoma there has heretofore been only one record—that of a single bird in winter feather seen on 30 September 1962 along the southwest shore of Lake Hefner, in Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma by J. G. Newell, J. E. Martin, Irene Martin, *et al.* (1963, *Audubon Field Notes*, 17: 45; Sutton, *op. cit.*).

On 4 October 1968, Dr. Robert B. Payne, Louis Bussjaeger, Michael Aldinger, Clifford Blazer, Martha Ficklin, Keith Giezentanner, Charles Keys, Dorothy (Mrs. W. C.) McGrew, James A. Tuck, and I happened upon a Red Phalarope in a long, narrow roadside pond just east of Boise City, Cimarron County, at the western end of the panhandle. This bird I collected (1969, *Audubon Field Notes*, 23: 76).

As we had driven westward from central Oklahoma that day, the weather had steadily worsened. When, in late afternoon, we reached Boise City, the sky was dark, wind from the northeast strong, and the drizzle raw. The only other shorebird we saw at the pond was a crippled Lesser Yellowlegs (*Totanus flavipes*). Nowhere along the 350-mile drive had we seen the Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*), a species that is often locally abundant in Oklahoma during the season of migration.

When we first saw the Red Phalarope it was floating quietly a few feet out from the edge of the pond, sheltered from the wind by rank grass and other vegetation. The dark patch back of the eye, separate dark patch at the rear of the crown, and white wingbar indicated that it was not a Wilson's Phalarope. Since the Northern Phalarope (*Lobipes lobatus*) was known to be uncommon in Oklahoma, I sensed that the moot bird should be collected at once. When, on lifting the specimen from the water, we found that the bill was broad, we knew that we had a Red Phalarope—the first specimen of its species for the state.

Examination revealed that it was a young bird molting from juvenal into first winter feather. The entire bill was dark brownish gray, the base of the lower mandible being no more yellow than any other part. (Dr. David F. Parmelee informs me that in three fall specimens taken at the Cheyenne Bottoms in Kansas the base of the lower mandible was yellow.) The tarsi and tops of the toes in the Oklahoma specimen were pale bluish gray, the webbing and bottoms of the feet dull light yellow. The irides were very dark brown, almost black. On skinning the bird, I found it to be fairly fat. The stomach was virtually empty; the ovary small. All of the lesser and middle wing coverts and tertials, a few of the scapulars, and many feathers of the lower hind neck and upper back were juvenal—i.e., dark brownish gray, more or less edged with grayish white. The incoming winter plumage on the upper parts and on the sides of

the chest was clear light ashy gray. An ill-defined patch in the middle of the lower throat was light brownish buff.

There are only three species of phalarope. These do not differ much *inter se* when they are in winter plumage. Size difference is not great, though the Northern is the smallest and the Red the chunkiest of the three. The Northern and Wilson's are very slender-billed, the Red thick-billed by comparison, though the difference does not show up readily in the field. In both the Northern and the Red the broad white tipping of the greater secondary coverts forms a bold bar that is especially noticeable when the birds are flying. Wilson's has no such wing-bar. According to my experience, Wilson's is the most apt of the three to leave the water and to walk or run along the shore feeding with peeps and other shorebirds. When Wilson's does this, it can be downright confusing, for it does not look much like a phalarope with its trim body-shape, longish tarsi, etc.

I have just learned that on 18 October 1969 J. G. Newell and V. J. Vacin saw a Red Phalarope with a Northern Phalarope at the southwest corner of Lake Hefner. The following day Newell, Brad Carlton, *et al.* saw two Red Phalaropes and a Northern at the same place.

STOVALL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069, 25 OCTOBER 1969.

GENERAL NOTES

A second Groove-billed Ani record for Oklahoma County, Oklahoma.—From early October to 11 November 1968 several persons observed a Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) from time to time near an oilfield testing equipment shop at 1700 S. E. Twenty-fifth Street in Oklahoma City (Newell, 1969, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 2: 1-2). On 20 July 1969, not far from the coffer dam just north of Lake Overholser, in an area about 11½ miles northwest of the above-mentioned shop, and close to the Oklahoma County line, I saw another Groove-billed Ani.

I was working slowly along the dam, observing shorebirds on the mudflats to the southward. An infrequently repeated, two-syllabled whistle, coming from a brushy area about 200 yards west of the end of the dam, attracted my attention. The singing of a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) and calls from scattered groups of young Boat-tailed Grackles (*Cassidix mexicanus*) rather effectively submerged the strange call.

The ani finally flew from the brush following some grackles. Though it was about 100 yards away, moving out over the mudflat, I recognized it at once as an ani. It turned back shortly, alighting in a small "island" of bulrushes, where it continued to call infrequently from a conspicuous perch. I was able to approach to within about 75 yards and to observe it for about half an hour. Its manner of flight—a few wingbeats followed by a short glide—and the distinctive callnote convinced me beyond all doubt that it was a Groove-billed Ani. Since it was molting heavily, it had a dishevelled appearance. When I last saw it, it was moving downward into the shelter of the bulrushes.