



OKLAHOMA
GLAUCOUS GULL
RECORDS

Specimens (solid black spots) have been taken along (1) the Red River (1880) and (2) the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River below the Salt Plains Reservoir Dam (1971). Species has been sighted (circles) at Lakes Hefner and Overholser; at Lake Lawtonka; and along the Grand River just below Fort Gibson Reservoir dam.

one record of two birds (1942); Lakes Hefner and Overholser, several records (each winter from 1959 through 1963, from 1966 through 1968, in 1970, and in 1971); Foss Reservoir, one record (1960); Salt Plains Reservoir and Salt Fork of Arkansas River below reservoir dam, three records (one bird seen several times in 1961, one bird seen 2 January 1971, two birds seen 5 February 1971); Lake Lawtonka, one record, two birds (1963); Grand River below Fort Gibson Reservoir dam, one record (1970).

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, NORTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE, ALVA,
OKLAHOMA 73717, 28 AUGUST 1971.

GENERAL NOTES

Ross's Goose in Johnston County, Oklahoma.—On the afternoon of 28 December 1970, while driving through the 340-acre waterfowl feeding area of Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge, in Johnston County, south-central Oklahoma, Ernest S. Jemison (manager of the refuge) and I flushed a flock of about 1,000 small Canada Geese—probably of the race *Branta canadensis hutchinsii*—from a field of standing corn. Toward the trailing edge of the rising flock, about 40 yards from our vehicle, was a white goose about the size of a Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Through our binoculars we had no difficulty in seeing that this bird's primaries were black. The flock alighted in a winter wheat field about 100 yards away. We drove to within 60 yards of the birds and looked again. This time we felt sure that the white bird was an adult Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*), for we could see no black "grinning patch" on the mandibles. This same bird I saw again on 29 and 30 December, on each occasion with small Canada Geese.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the second record for Ross's Goose in Oklahoma. The first was of three adults observed feeding with a large

flock of small Canada Geese in mid-November 1961 on the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma (1962, Audubon Field Notes, 16: 51; MacInnes and Cooch, 1963, Auk, 80: 78). *Chen rossii* has never been taken in Oklahoma.—Gary R. Zahn, *Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge*, P.O. Box 248, Tishomingo, Oklahoma 73460, 4 October 1971.

Unusual flight of Mississippi Kites in Payne County, Oklahoma.—From 17:30 to 18:15 on 4 September 1971 T. R. Thedford, G. L. Simpson, D. E. Watts, and I observed a spectacular flight of Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) over the northeastern part of Stillwater, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma. A few of the birds were skimming along at about treetop level, but most of them were 75 to 250 feet above ground, moving ahead of a storm front that was advancing rapidly from the northwest. During the 45-minute observation period we counted at least 250 birds, most of them apparently adult. Some birds probably had passed over before we noticed the flight and a few were still passing over at 18:15. The kites were riding the wind currents ahead of the storm, moving directly southeastward for the most part, rather than circling. Bird students in Stillwater agree that this kite has never been observed in Payne County in such large numbers before.—Thomas R. Eubanks, *Game Biologist, Department of Wildlife Conservation, General Delivery, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074*, 16 September 1971.

Peregrine in Grant County, Oklahoma.—On 26 December 1970, while driving along a section-line road 6 miles northeast of Wakita, Grant County, north-central Oklahoma, I noticed a bird of prey ahead of me on a fence post about 30 yards from the road. With my 8-power binocular I clearly saw the slaty, bluish gray back and black moustache mark of an adult Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*). The bird appeared to be about twice the size of a Sparrow Hawk (*F. sparverius*).

With the car window rolled down, I watched the Peregrine for about five minutes. When I opened the car door, the bird flew to a power-line pole not far away. I walked toward it, but could not get very close. It continued to fly from pole to pole ahead of me. Eventually it ran out of poles and started soaring in tight circles, with tail fanned wide. Presently it alighted in the middle of a large wheat field. Again I tried to approach it, but could not get closer than about 75 yards.

So far as I know, this is the first Peregrine record for Grant County, Oklahoma. According to Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 124), the species has been reported from many parts of the state, from LeFlore and Sequoyah counties in the east to Greer, Beaver, and Cimarron counties in the west. Data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range indicate that it has been reported more frequently from the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County than from any other part of the state. This refuge is only 20 miles or so southwest of Wakita.—Brad Carlton, 5949 N.W. 27th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73127, 15 January 1971.

Second Black Skimmer record for Oklahoma.—On 1 October 1971, at the end of a low, treeless peninsula just north of the west end of the dam at Draper Lake, near Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma, Frances Peters, Ruth Updegraff, and I observed a Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*) for about half an hour. When we first realized that we were looking at some-

thing unusual, we thought we saw two skimmers, but only one of them lingered close by. We watched it as it flew gracefully low over the water (never over land), occasionally "skimming" with its long lower mandible. When standing at the water's edge, it was surprisingly approachable.

I telephoned various persons about our find. On 2 October Warren D. Harden saw the skimmer resting with a small flock of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), about 20 Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), and perhaps a hundred American Coots (*Fulica americana*) at the very tip of the peninsula. On 3 October Warren Harden, his wife Mary Ann, Anna Sparrow, and George M. Sutton again found the skimmer at the end of the peninsula, this time with several Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*). As the north wind was strong and the terns wary, the skimmer, which flew up whenever the terns did, would not allow anyone to get very close. When the terns finally flew off, leaving the skimmer by itself, it lost its wariness. Dr. Sutton collected it, finding it to be a molting adult. The specimen, a female (COMZ 7211), was very fat (weight 270.1 grams, wingspread 40 3/8 inches, stomach empty). It is now at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range, where students and other interested persons may examine it.

This Atlantic coastal species has been reported from Oklahoma only once before—a single bird seen on 14 May 1967 at Lake Overholser, in Oklahoma City, by John G. Newell (1968, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 1: 25). The bird recently collected may well have been blown inland by Hurricane Ginger. —Grace E. Ray, 520 W. Symmes St., Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 6 October 1971.

Ground Dove in Wagoner County, Oklahoma.—On 20 December 1970, in the Jackson Bay Wildlife Refuge area west of Fort Gibson Reservoir and about 5 miles north of Okay, Wagoner County, northeastern Oklahoma, I had excellent looks at a Ground Dove (*Columbigallina passerina*). When I first saw the bird I was in my car, slowly following a stretch of deeply rutted road that served as the dam for a small farm-pond about 5 feet below road-level. The dove rose from the pond's edge and, moving along in my direction, gave me a clear though brief look at only 6-8 feet from the car window. The bird's smallness and the stubbiness of its tail were evident. It flew in a fairly straight line at car-level for about 50 yards, then downward and out of sight. I stopped the car, climbed a bank to one side of the road, and saw the dove below me. It was in a buttonbush about 1½ feet from the ground. Using my 8 x 30 binocular, I took note of several important details—the scaly appearance of the head, neck, and upper breast, the black-tipped red bill, and the black spots on the wings. I was able to approach to within about 15 feet. When I tried moving still closer, the dove flew. Now I could see the dark rounded tail and the reddish brown of the spread wings. The bird alighted in another buttonbush about 50 feet away. I decided not to disturb it further, for I hoped we might see it on our Christmas Count, scheduled for 27 December.

So far as I know, there are only two other wholly satisfactory Oklahoma records for the Ground Dove: on 1 December 1956 a specimen was collected near Greenfield, Blaine County, central Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 235); on 26 March 1967 one was seen by Arthur F. Halloran and his wife Audrey in Lawton, Comanche County, southwestern

Oklahoma (1969, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 1: 18-19).—James L. Norman, 502 N. 14th Street, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401, 7 August 1971.

Winter food of a central Oklahoma Roadrunner.—On 15 January 1970 Floyd E. Reid brought to the Bird Range at the University of Oklahoma the badly crushed remains of a Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) that he had found in a road near his house about 4 miles southeast of the city of Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma. Whether killed by a car or not, the bird had certainly been run over by one. It was examined by George M. Sutton, who decided that neither its skin nor its skeleton could be preserved. The remains weighed 324.6 grams, 14.4 grams of which were lump fat. The gonads were not discernible.

The weather had been exceedingly wintry for central Oklahoma since 28 December 1969. Up to three inches of snow had covered the ground during much of this period and the air temperature had dropped to within a few degrees of zero Fahrenheit on several nights. Roadrunners must have had real difficulty finding food during this cold spell, especially where the snow was deep. Many of them probably looked for food along roadways where there was little or no snow.

Dr. Sutton requested that I identify, if possible, the contents of the specimen's stomach. In addition to a rather large mass of woolly material—almost certainly the cocoon of a fair-sized to large lepidopteran—and several seeds of at least two kinds, I found the following: the thorax of a wasp (probably of the family Vespidae); three immature and three adult band-winged grasshoppers of the subfamily Oedipinae—orthopterans that live in open, dry areas; four weevils of the family Curculionidae; and two dipterous larvae, each about 6 mm. long. The seeds were, according to Dr. George J. Goodman of the Department of Botany and Microbiology at the University of Oklahoma, probably of *Chenopodium* (goosefoot or pigweed) and of *Cocculus carolinus* (red-berried moonseed or quailseed). In my opinion the Roadrunner must have swallowed these directly since the stomach contained no remains of a bird or mammal that might have eaten the seeds.

The Reids had seen a Roadrunner from time to time (not regularly) near their house before and during the wintry period. Many small birds visited the yard daily, feeding on grain that had been scattered there for them, but the Reids did not observe a Roadrunner trying to catch one of the smaller birds.—David J. Shetlar, Department of Zoology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 1 March 1970.

Blue Jay near Kenton, Oklahoma.—Despite the fact that the village of Kenton, in Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, is the type locality of *Cyanocitta cristata cyanotephra*, a western race of the Blue Jay (Sutton, 1935, Auk, 52: 176), the species has rarely been seen there since the collection of the type specimen on 29 September 1933. Aware of this fact, and knowing that I had never seen a Blue Jay myself anywhere in Cimarron County, I was surprised in the early afternoon on 27 December 1969 when, as I approached the Laurance Regnier ranch-house, along Texakeet Creek 4 miles south of Kenton, I heard several loud, unmistakable Blue Jay calls. My Christmas Count companions (Kenneth D. Seyffert, Leo A. Galloway, and his wife, Ruth) and I presently detected two Blue Jays in the heavy

growth of trees and shrubbery just north of the Regnier house. The Regniers informed us that they had been seeing at least three Blue Jays in the immediate vicinity since about the middle of December.

A few minutes after the Blue Jays disappeared, three Scrub Jays (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), frequent visitors to the Regnier dooryard, moved down the rocky slope from the west. That this particular spot—with its brush, its never-failing water supply, and the waste grain about its cattle pens—was attractive to other “eastern” birds than Blue Jays may be deduced from the fact that I saw a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), a Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*), and a White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) near the ranch-house but nowhere else in the entire area that same day.—W. Marvin Davis, *Department of Pharmacology, University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, 2 February 1970.*

Another new bird for Oklahoma: Western Bluebird.—On 30 December 1970 (weather unseasonably warm; no snow; very little wind) Jon V. Cecil, David O. Dillon, David L. Jones, Dennis M. Mullins, Dale G. Myers, and I encountered a flock of ten Western Bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*) as they moved leisurely across an open, almost flat area of short grass, cholla, and juniper near the mouth of a little canyon on the Laurance Regnier ranch about 4 miles south of Kenton, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma. The birds obviously were finding food, much of it on the ground. Above ground they perched on dead weed stalks and juniper branches. We collected two males and a female, all in fresh winter plumage. These are the first specimens of *Sialia mexicana* for the state.

According to George M. Sutton, who prepared the specimens, none of them was very fat. The stomachs were well filled with remains of insects (principally ground beetles and small locustid grasshoppers) and spiders, but not, oddly enough, of juniper berries. Dr. Sutton has compared the specimens (UOMZ 6898, 6899, 6900) with material representing the several geographical races of *S. mexicana*, finding all of the Oklahoma birds to have the extensively brown back, chest, and sides of *S. m. bairdi*, a well marked form described from northwestern Arizona.

Sialia mexicana could not have been common near Kenton in late December 1970 for Dr. Sutton, Larry P. Mays, and James M. Carrel, in addition to the six persons mentioned above, worked the area thoroughly from the evening of 27 December through 31 December without seeing the species otherwise. Five more persons (Peggy Acord, W. M. Davis, Leo Galloway, Barbara Lund, K. D. Seyffert) participated in the Christmas Count on 28 December, on which date 14 Mountain Bluebirds (*S. currucoides*) and two Eastern Bluebirds (*S. sialis*), but no Western Bluebirds, were seen (1971. *American birds*, 25: 413-14).

Sialia mexicana was listed among the several bird species that have been seen at Clayton, New Mexico (11 miles west of the southwestern corner of the Oklahoma Panhandle) by Adolf J. Krehbiel *et al.*, and that were therefore “to be looked for in the Black Mesa country” of Oklahoma (Weske, 1968, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 1: 9-10). Mr. Krehbiel informs me (letter of 14 January 1971) that he has seen the Western Bluebird at Clayton only since 1955, and as follows: in 1955, five on 5 April, ten on 7 April, five on 23 April; in 1956, three on 20 March; in 1957, two on 11 May, one on 16

May; in 1958, six on 26 January, six on 2 March, eight on 5 April; in 1960, six on 12 March, two on 2 April; in 1969, one on 9 May.

According to Ligon (1961, *New Mexico birds and where to find them*, p. 233), the Western Bluebird breeds virtually throughout the forested mountains of New Mexico; "by late July, old and young begin to congregate in the high valleys, later moving into the lower foothills and onto the mesas, particularly where the one-seeded juniper [*Juniperus monosperma*] is the dominant tree, the berries of which constitute a good portion of their winter diet." Hubbard (1970, *Check-list of the birds of New Mexico*, p. 68) states that the species wanders "irregularly east to Clayton and the Pecos Valley" during migration and in winter. In Colorado the Western Bluebird is said to be a fairly common resident in the "Transition Zone"; published records indicate that it is "much more numerous" in the southern half of the state than in the northern; no records are mentioned for the southeastern corner (Bailey and Niedrach, 1965, *Birds of Colorado*, 2: 629-30).

Since the days of R. Crompton Tate, bird students have been paying special attention to the Black Mesa country of Oklahoma. The fact that the Western Bluebird has not heretofore been reported from that area cannot be attributed to paucity of observers or to lack of interest. The species is to be looked for especially where the one-seeded juniper is a characteristic part of the flora.—William A. Carter, *Department of Biology, East Central State College, Ada, Oklahoma 74820, 18 June 1971.*

Additional sightings of Black-throated Blue Warbler in southwestern United States.—To add to the reported observations of the Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) in the southwestern United States, as recently published by George M. Sutton (1971, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 4: 11-15), I offer the following sight records of mine made on the Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Umbarger, Randall County, northwestern Texas: one male on 9 September 1964, two males on 11 October 1964, one female on 4 October 1965, one male on 10 October 1966, one male on 13 October 1966, one male and one female on 6 October 1968.

All of these sightings were in the extreme southwestern part of the refuge where there is an extensive growth of cottonwoods, willows, and tamarisk. While being observed, the birds moved through the lower and middle levels of the cottonwoods and willows. The two that I saw on 6 October 1968 accompanied one another.

It appears to me that the Black-throated Blue Warbler is far commoner in northwestern Texas in fall than in spring. I have been afield repeatedly on the Buffalo Lake refuge in spring, but have yet to see a Black-throated Blue Warbler there, or anywhere else in northwestern Texas, at that season.—Kenneth D. Seyffert, 2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103, 1 August 1971.

Pine Grosbeak in Cleveland County, Oklahoma.—During the latter half of January 1971 an adult male Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*) was seen at three places in the southwestern part of Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma. It was first seen on or about 15 January at the home of George Nolan and his wife Mary, friends of ours who live at 609 Broad Lane, less than a block from our house. When first noticed it was among patchy snow atop a trimmed, not very high privet hedge, moving calmly toward a feeder

hanging just outside the sitting room window. It was searching for sunflower seeds scattered by the Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*) that regularly gorged themselves at the feeder. It was much larger and redder than the finches. When within about 15 feet of the window through which the Nolans were watching, it flew to an Austrian pine at the corner of the garden. The Nolans did not see it again.

We saw the grosbeak at noon on 21 January. This striking addition to our "first sight" list appeared in a bald cypress tree above our backyard sunflower feeder. It was attended by the dozen or so Purple Finches that regularly fed there. It was fully as big as a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and its redness and bold white wingbars were noticeable. It worked its way slowly down to the lowest branches of the cypress then, after looking about, flew to the ground, made passes at seeds and hull trash under the feeder, and returned to the tree. After a second trip to the ground, it left the yard. We did not see it again.

On 29 January Warren D. Harden and his father, W. T. Harden, saw the handsome bird again in a wooded tract just southwest of the corner of Timberdell and Pickard streets, several blocks from our house. This time the bird was in the very top of a pine. Its redness, wingbars, and heavy, blunt, black bill were conspicuous. It called several times. Each call consisted of three short, clear notes, all on the same pitch. Warren Harden looked for it in the same area the following day, but in vain.—Paul G. Ruggiers and Ernestine Ruggiers, 1035 Cruce St., Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 1 August 1971.

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INDEX of BIRD NAMES

BY LOUIS E. MCGEE AND JANET MCGEE

<i>acdon</i> , <i>Troglodytes</i> : 9-11	<i>americana</i> , <i>Fulica</i> : 5-6, 34
<i>affinis</i> , <i>Aythya</i> : 26	<i>Ammospiza caudacuta</i> : 20
<i>Agelaius</i> , <i>phoeniceus</i> : 19	<i>Anas discors</i> : 34
<i>alba</i> , <i>Tyto</i> : 6-7	<i>fulvigula</i> : 29-31
<i>albicollis</i> , <i>Zonotrichia</i> : 36	<i>platyrhynchos</i> : 29, 33
<i>albiflora</i> , <i>Dendroica dominica</i> : 17, 18	<i>rubripes</i> : 30
<i>albus</i> , <i>Casmerodius</i> : 26	<i>Ani</i> , <i>Groove-billed</i> : 25-26
<i>albus</i> , <i>Eudocimus</i> : 15	<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i> : 36