

county. They have observed the species regularly and rather widely in the northeastern quarter of the county during the past five years. In the vicinity of Lake Fuqua, the county's most recent large impoundment, they failed to find it in 1968 and 1969, but on 31 October 1970 Frances Neeld, William Fox, John Craythorne and his wife Moryne sighted two birds there. Dorothy Paul has observed the species repeatedly among big trees along a creek that feeds a "conservation pond" on the Ringer Ranch near the village of Velma in the east-central part of the county. On a Breeding Bird Survey made on 16 June 1967, the Pauls and their son Stephen saw one along the "Loco Route" (Loco is one of the oldest settlements in the county) near Comanche Lake. On the 1968 Christmas Count (28 December) one was seen by Frances Neeld *et al.* at Clear Creek Lake (1969, Audubon Field Notes, 23: 346). The westernmost, as well as the most frequent, sightings in the county have been in tall trees just west of Lake Humphreys, an impoundment slightly west of Clear Creek Lake and 6 miles south of the Grady County line. About 1 November 1971 someone shot a male Pileated Woodpecker in the Clear Creek Lake area—6 miles east, 2½ miles south of Marlow. The specimen is now in the Tyler Collection at Cameron College in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Along Beaver Creek near the town of Corum, in the extreme southwestern corner of Stephens County, Frances Neeld and several other members of the Stephens County Audubon Society failed to find the Pileated Woodpecker on 17 January or 9 May 1970. In this area there are large trees of the sort in which one might expect to find the bird. Part of this watershed will be inundated when the Waurika Reservoir is completed in the mid-1980's. As the reservoir fills, the surrounding woodland should be observed carefully, for the combination of big trees and water should provide an attractive habitat for the big woodpecker.

1703 N. 43rd ST., LAWTON, OKLAHOMA 73501; 1304 ELM ST., DUNCAN, OKLAHOMA 73533, 17 MAY 1971.

## GENERAL NOTE

**Aggressive behavior of Starling at Yellow-shafted Flicker nest-site.**—On 25 April 1971, in a small patch of woods just north of the Harold S. Cooksey residence at 909 Morningside Drive, in Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma, Mr. Cooksey and I witnessed an encounter between a female Yellow-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) and a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). At a newly excavated hole about 2½ inches in diameter and 30 feet up in a cottonwood, a female flicker came and went so frequently that we felt sure she was nesting—or preparing to nest—there. Each time she went into the hole she stayed for 30 seconds or so, then left the tree. Since we heard no sound of excavating, we assumed that the nest cavity had been finished.

On returning to the cottonwood after a brief walk through the woods, we saw the flicker go into the hole. She had been inside only a short time when a Starling flew directly to the hole and also went in. Within about 15 seconds we heard the muffled clucking of the flicker. Almost immediately

she emerged, clucking loudly. Gripping her tail with its bill, and hanging on with the tenacity of a bulldog, was the Starling.

The two birds flew about 20 feet, the flicker clucking loudly all the while, before the Starling let go, returned to the cavity, and went in. Presently the flicker also returned, but when she started to enter the hole she immediately backed out. Clinging to the bark close to the hole, she looked in; but whenever she started to enter, she backed out. We could not see the Starling, of course, but from the behavior of the flicker we judged that the two birds were exchanging blows. We remained at the scene for about 15 minutes. The Starling did not come out—nor did the flicker leave during this period.

The tree would have been difficult to climb, so we made no attempt to ascertain what was in the cavity. The entrance hole was on the south side of the branch. Not far above it, on the north side of the branch, was another hole—which neither bird tried to enter, so far as we could see. At no time did we see a male flicker.

Much has been published about the theft of woodpecker nest-holes by Starlings. Howell (1943, *Auk*, 60: 90-91) discussed Starling-flicker competition as he observed it during a five-year period in Maryland. Sutton (1967, *Oklahoma birds*, p. 467) stated that in central Oklahoma Starlings steal many nest-holes of flickers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers (*Centurus carolinus*); in the spring of 1957 Sutton (*op. cit.*, p. 305) shot 17 Starlings, one by one, in an attempt to help Red-bellied Woodpeckers keep their nest, but the Starlings won out. On 23 April 1959 he rescued a flicker that a Starling had pinned to the ground and was pecking savagely; on 4 July 1964, after he had shot a total of 37 Starlings, one by one, within a radius of about 15 yards of a flicker nest, he witnessed the fledging of the flicker brood (*op. cit.*, p. 467). Prescott (1971, *Wilson Bull.*, 83: 195-96) recently reported a puzzling relationship between Starlings that had a nest in a nest-box and flickers that were nesting in a dead elm about 75 feet away. The Starlings continued to carry food not only to their own "noisy" young, but to the flicker nest-hole as well. On one occasion Prescott saw one of the Starlings enter the flicker nest just after chasing the female flicker "from her perch on the nest-hole edge"; on another occasion he saw the male flicker "fly out of the nest-hole to frighten away a Starling." When the flicker nest-hole became empty (presumably after the successful fledging of the flicker brood), Starlings nested there, but Prescott had no way of knowing that these were the very same Starlings that had fed their own young and also carried food to the flicker nest-hole.—Steve K. Sherrod, *P.O. Box 282, Springville, Utah 84663, 20 July 1971.*

**FROM THE EDITORS:** The editors wish to thank Craig Rudolph for the excellent photograph illustrating the "lead" paper in this issue, Jeffrey H. Black and his wife Judith for their assistance in obtaining this photograph, and Bryan Ellis for his help with the map illustrating the Pileated Woodpecker paper.

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