

taking photographs, but these did not turn out well. Mrs. Cheesman watched the bird and its nest closely. One egg was in it on 16 May, two eggs on 17 May. For a day or so the bird was suspicious and excitable, but by 20 May it had settled down to steady incubation.

On 29 May, George M. Sutton and Troy L. Best inspected the nest and tried taking photographs of the bird. These were not good, though they showed the bird to be very long-billed—a character of *A. alexandri*.

On 30 May, at about 17:00, a light hailstorm, followed by heavy rain, then by more hail, struck Elk City from the west. The nest and devoted bird came through it all unscathed. Then another hailstorm struck, this time from the north, and, even as Mrs. Hughes watched from the window, a hailstone hit the nest. The bird clung to the tiny structure and resumed her position in it, but the eggs must have been knocked out, for they were not in the nest the following day. On 1 June the bird was observed to visit the nest several times, on 2 June once; after that she was not seen by anyone.

At no time during the period from 9 May to 2 June did anyone see a male Black-chin at or near the nest. On 6 June, however, Mrs. Cheesman saw a male bird at hollyhock flowers in her yard. She was out of town from 7 to 17 June. On her return she saw no hummingbird of any sort in her neighborhood. Convinced that the nest was not to be used further, we collected it on 1 August. It is now in the collection at the University of Oklahoma.

Taxonomists may well question whether the female bird discussed above was actually a Black-chinned Hummingbird. At least one known-to-be-breeding female specimen should, of course, be collected in west-central Oklahoma and carefully measured. If the Elk City female was a Ruby-throat, then interbreeding of the two species might have been taking place, a phenomenon that would explain such allegedly hybrid adult males as that reported from Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, by Vacin (1969, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 2: 15) and mentioned by Mayr and Short (1970, Publ. Nuttall Orn. Club, No. 9, pp. 53-54).

106 SUNSET, ELK CITY, OKLAHOMA 73644, 30 SEPTEMBER 1971.

CASSIN'S SPARROW IN NOBLE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

BY JOHN GRULA

The Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*), a "transient and summer resident in western Oklahoma," has not heretofore been seen in the state farther east than Grant, Oklahoma, Cleveland, McClain, and Love counties (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 616); it has not been known to occur regularly in any of these counties, however, and its breeding has been documented for only one of them, Cleveland (Johnson, 1956, Wilson Bull., 68: 75-76; Sutton, *op. cit.*). The species inhabits flat or gently rolling, semi-arid, comparatively treeless country.

During the spring and summer of 1971 I repeatedly observed a small population of Cassin's Sparrows in southeastern Noble County, about 5 miles north-

west of the city of Stillwater, in an area slightly east of the counties mentioned above. The birds were living in what had been a wheat field, a flat expanse left to fallow, not far from the recently impounded Lake McMurtry. The Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus saxanarum*) and Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) also inhabited the area, both species being quite common there. On a few occasions I observed a Dickcissel chasing a Cassin's Sparrow. The most important plants of the habitat were, according to Berry (1971, The nesting biology of the Dickcissel . . . in north-central Oklahoma, Master's Thesis, Oklahoma State University, p. 10), the following: Annual Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), Curlycup Gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosaa*), Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halapense*), White Sweet Clover (*Melilotus alba*), Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), Japanese Brome (*Bromus japonicus*), and Horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*).

I first noted the Cassin's Sparrows at about 10:00 on 24 May. My sister, Marge Gula, was with me that morning. One bird was flight-singing—"skylarking" in typical manner—two or three times a minute. We noticed a few calls of other sorts from the ground, but since we did not see the birds we could not be sure that Cassin's Sparrows were making the sounds. I called John S. Barclay, of the Department of Zoology at Oklahoma State University, telling him of my find. Dr. Barclay and I returned the following morning, collected one singing bird, noted two or three other "skylarking" individuals, and again heard from the ground calls that we could not be sure of.

Between 25 May and 5 June the lake deepened, parts of the Cassin's Sparrow habitat were inundated, the vegetation throughout unflooded parts grew taller, and the number of Cassin's Sparrows seemed to decrease. On 5 June I saw only three birds, one of which was flight-singing. On 12 June I saw one bird, but heard none. On 24 June I observed one bird, and that individual was flight-singing. I last saw the species on 11 July, when Deloris Isted, of Cushing, Oklahoma, and I, after much searching, found one bird that called infrequently from a weedstalk, but that did no flight-singing. The lake did not rise appreciably between 5 June and 11 July, so the Cassin's Sparrow habitat remained virtually unchanged—save for increase in the height of the vegetation—during that period.

ROUTE 2, STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074, 9 SEPTEMBER 1971.

GENERAL NOTES

Recent breeding of Anhinga in Oklahoma.—The Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) has been seen from time to time in Oklahoma since the fall of 1913. Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 21) called the species an "irregular summer and fall visitor . . . from April 9 to October 29." Its nesting in 1937 (ten pairs) in the southeasternmost corner of the state was reported by Nice (1938, Auk, 55: 121-122). Many bird students have believed that felling of the big cypresses in McCurtain County has been responsible for the species' apparent disappearance from Oklahoma as a nesting bird in recent years.

In September of 1971 (exact date not recorded) I observed a pair of An-