

GENERAL NOTES

Great Egret at Black Mesa State Park, Cimarron County, Oklahoma.—At about 1700 on 2 September 1972 in Black Mesa State Park, about ten miles southeast of Kenton, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, my husband, John, and I saw a Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) flying not more than 40 feet above us along the western edge of Lake Carl Etling. It was so close that we could easily see the yellow beak and the black feet and legs. The sky was cloudy and the air cool, a cold front having moved in the evening before.

According to Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, pp. 33-34) the Great Egret has not been reported heretofore from Cimarron County, Oklahoma.—Emma H. Messerly, 344 S.E. Elmhurst, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74003, 1 October 1973.

Early fall date for Common Merganser.—At about 0815 on 13 October 1973 several members of the Lawton-Fort Sill Bird Club watched a female Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) loaf and preen atop an old, partially submerged barge at the edge of Lake Ellsworth, 3 miles northwest of Elgin, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma. Several of us studied the bird closely through a 40X telescope. It appeared to be healthy. We did not attempt to make it fly. Skies at this time were solidly overcast and rain imminent; no wind stirred and the temperature was near 60°F. An inch and one-half of rain, precipitated by a slow, eastward-moving cold front, had pelted the lake—already swelled to record levels—during the preceding two days, but no unusually cold weather had yet occurred in the area.

Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 85) states that this species has been seen in the state from October 26 to June 3, and is "locally abundant during coldest part of winter."—Jack D. Tyler, Department of Biology, Cameron College, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 15 January 1974.

Mid-October hawk migration in Payne County, Oklahoma.—On 13 October 1972, a clear warm day, along the northeast edge of Stillwater, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma, in a period of just over an hour, I observed the migration of seven species of hawks totaling 30 birds. Observation was with binocular and spotting scope. The migration consisted of seven Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*), two Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*), eight Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), one Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), one Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus*), one Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), and ten American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*). Single birds and small groups passed overhead every few minutes and all were moving to the south. The Merlin, which I believe to have been a female, came in fast and in direct flight, overtaking and stooping several times at a female Cooper's Hawk, chasing it out of sight, southward. The vultures and hawks were soaring, entering a fast-rising southward flowing thermal and moving again south after gaining height. The American Kestrels soared south but did not enter the thermal.—Steve Platt, 221 South Burdick, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, 15 May 1974.

Monk Parakeet in Oklahoma.—The Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*), a not very brightly colored native of southern South America, has long been popular as a cage bird. In 1968 about 12,000 of them were imported into the United States; some that have escaped or been freed "are apparently surviving and breeding in the wild for they have been reported from western Long Island to the eastern shore of Virginia" (Bump, 1972, Amer. Birds, 26: 567). The species has recently appeared in Oklahoma—in Norman, Cleveland County, in the central part of the state, and in Tulsa County in the northeast-

ern part. In Norman it was first seen in mid-August, 1972 by Mr. and Mrs. Clomer Hames at their residence on Hughbert Street. The two birds were so noisy, especially early in the morning, that they disturbed the household. The pair built a nest in a clump of mistletoe about 30 feet up in a big elm in the front yard. From the ground the structure appeared to be made wholly of twigs; it was globular, with a low, 4-inch entrance on the side facing away from the house. On 3 September Mrs. Hames watched the birds carrying in twig after twig from the northeastward. That day she saw both birds at the nest, side by side, billing and preening each other. When she walked under the nest-tree, they became excited, chattering loudly.

In mid-September, after the nest was finished, the outcry and activity of the parakeets waned. No one ascertained what was in the nest. It might have been only a dormitory. Both birds were observed together in it on several occasions. No one learned where the birds obtained most of their food; they were seen occasionally at feeders in the neighborhood.

When, on 15 September, I walked under the nest-tree, the parakeets were quite vocal, though they paid little attention to Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and a squirrel that visited the tree. On 12 October I observed the parakeets at another clump of mistletoe in the opposite side of the tree. Here one bird chewed at twig after twig held in one foot just as the pair had when preparing material for the nest, but so far as I could see no new nest was being built nor was the "old" one being added to.

During a cold, very rainy spell in early November no one saw the parakeets. The possibility that they were in the nest during this period should not be discounted. On 9 November (weather bright and mild) the loud calls of one of the birds wakened Mrs. Hames at daybreak.

In Tulsa the Monk Parakeet was first seen in mid-September 1972. A single bird was observed repeatedly at a Roman Catholic convent on East 51st Street, just west of the Tulsa County line. On 20 September Polly Keating, Eleanor Sieg, and Sally Campbell watched the bird for some time. At 0830 that day it was busy adding twigs, each 8-10 inches long, to a big, dome-shaped nest (perhaps 2 feet in diameter) about 40 feet up under the eave of the convent's main building. The entrance to the nest was on the side and about 4 inches in diameter. One of the sisters thought she heard the bird call "Peggy," but it spurned food and a cage put out for it. Only the one bird was seen about the convent. It was there on 10 November.—Warren D. Harden, *1416 Huntington Way, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 13 November 1972.*

Vermilion Flycatcher in Washington County, Oklahoma.—On 8 August 1972, at the farm home of R. E. Ward about 5 miles north-northwest of Ramona, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma, I saw what I believe to have been a family group of Vermilion Flycatchers (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)—an adult male with bright red breast, an adult female with streaked underparts, and two young males with red blotches on the head and underparts. The four birds were perched on telephone wires along the road. All four were catching insects. The young birds were not receiving food from the adults. The party let me approach to within about 20 meters before taking flight, so I saw each of them clearly. If others of the same species were in the vicinity I was not aware of their presence. The area of the Ward farm home is located in one of the many small oak-hickory woods scattered throughout this part of Washington County; two farm ponds are within 200 meters of this area. I am certain that the Wards could not confirm the presence of this bird during the preceding summer. According to data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range, *Pyrocephalus rubinus* has been reported from Washington County only once heretofore—a single bird seen by Dotty M. Goard and Ella Delap near Young's Lake, 5 miles northwest of Dewey, on 30 September 1971.—G. W. Mathews, *Department of Biology, Kansas State College of Pittsburg, Pittsburg, Kansas 66762, 15 September 1972.*