

Present continuously on the plot were Hereford cattle, about one animal per 10 acres, that received supplemental food in winter — until mid-April. I noticed heavy cattle traffic and grazing on the Henslow's slopes between 10 May, when we last saw the little birds, and 20 May, when we failed to find one. Heavy rains fell, too, during that period, as much as two inches in a night. Possible predators were a Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), which lived about 200 yards from the Henslow's slopes, and a family of Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), whose young we heard not far from the census plot on 1 May.

What I have stated above does not, of course, completely validate the following sightings for Oklahoma, but it does prove that Henslow's Sparrow can be seen here: 28 April 1923, one observed by Margaret M. Nice "at close range as it fed in an old corn field near the side of a pond" in Cleveland County (Nice, 1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 182); 14 March 1924, one seen Tulsa by N. J. Gubser (Force, 1936, *Proc. Oklahoma Acad. Sci.*, 15: 62); 26 March 1932, one seen Tulsa by R. L. Luckhardt (Force, *loc. cit.*); 3 October 1932, one seen along Texakeet Creek near Kenton, Cimarron County, by G. M. Sutton (1934, *Ann. Carnegie Mus.*, 24: 47; 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, p. 609); 14 April 1934, one seen Tulsa by H. D. Chase (Force, *loc. cit.*); 24 January 1951, one seen Norman, Cleveland County, by Lovie M. Whitaker; 20 April 1967, one seen Bartlesville by Doris Williamson.

P. O. BOX 591, BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA 74003, 20 JULY 1974.

GENERAL NOTES

Did this Great Blue Heron die of starvation?—Parts of the winter of 1973-74 were unusually severe in central Oklahoma. According to U.S. Weather Bureau records for the area, the air temperature from 30 December to 12 January did not rise above 52° F. and the daily low was never above 20° F. A small farm pond on the Wilk farm 1 mile east and 1 mile south of Goldsby, McClain County, central Oklahoma froze over in late fall except at the extreme north end. At this open end, around which willows grew, a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) fed regularly. It did not, so far as anyone knows, spend all of its time there, but it was seen daily by John H. Wilk, who drove with his father, Kenneth E. Wilk, from Norman every day to feed the horses on the farm. From 1 to 4 January John saw the heron repeatedly at the open end of the pond. On the night of 4 January the whole pond froze shut. On 5 January John found the heron dead on the ice at the foot of a willow. He brought the bird to me the next day.

The specimen was in beautiful first winter feather. It proved to be an exceedingly thin male (weight 1630.1 grams; testes each about 2 x 8 mm., stomach empty). I searched in vain for the slightest evidence of injury and for parasites either external or internal. Believing that the bird had starved to death, I wrote Robert W. Storer of the Museum of Zoology at the University of Michigan, asking for information concerning the weight of specimens in the large collection there. Dr. Storer obliged by listing the weights of ten adult males (2070 to 2643 grams, average 2311.6), eight adult females (1436 to 2150 grams, average 1861.2), 15 immature males (1530 to 2660 grams, average 1941.8), and 12 immature females (1125 to 2270 grams, average 1687.0). Only three of the 15 immature males weighed less than the emaciated Oklahoma specimen discussed above.

It would be wrong to state categorically that the under-weight Oklahoma bird died of starvation, but I cannot resist the thought that having developed the habit of feeding at the pond's unfrozen end, it made the mortal mistake of returning day after day, despite the continuous bad weather, rather than moving southward. An interesting paper on "Mortality of the Great Blue Heron as shown by banding recoveries" concludes that 71% of the Great Blue Herons of North America die during their first year — a mortality "presumably caused by inexperience" (Owen, 1959, *Auk*, 76: 464-70). — George M. Sutton, *Stovall Museum of Science and History, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 23 August 1974.*

Cattle Egret in Payne County in winter.—At about 1000 on 1 February 1974, in a pasture 6 miles east of Perkins, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma, my brother Hubert Moorman and his wife Zora saw a Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) with their cattle. They drove to within about 40 yards of the all-white bird before it took flight. They considered it less slender and more "dumpy" than an immature Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*) they had seen at a pond on their farm the preceding summer.

There is one other winter record for the Cattle Egret in Oklahoma, a single bird seen at Lake Hefner in central Oklahoma on 20 January 1972 by Brad Carlton (1972, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 5: 27). The species evidently is hardy. Its ability to survive in cold weather may well be one of the reasons for its having spread so widely and rapidly in recent years.—Zella Moorman, *Route 2, Perkins, Oklahoma 74059, 31 March 1974.*

Greater Scaup collected in Washita County, Oklahoma.—On 4 November 1972 my friend William Yirka shot a Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*) at a 52-acre Soil Conservation Service reservoir in the Cavalry Creek Watershed 6 miles north and 1½ miles east of Rocky, Washita County, southwestern Oklahoma. The bird had been flying about with a mixed flocks of ducks, most of which were Lesser Scaups (*A. affinis*), Redheads (*A. americana*), and Canvasbacks (*A. valisineria*), in about that order of abundance. I did not weigh the specimen, but it appeared to be larger than the Lesser Scaups shot that day. I did not examine the gonads, but scattered black feathers (with greenish shine) on the head and neck suggested that it was probably an immature drake.

According to Jack D. Tyler and George M. Sutton, who compared the specimen directly with three specimens of *A. marila* at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range, the bill at its widest point measures 24 mm., the nail 8.5. The wing stripe, which is grayish white rather than pure white, extends well outward on the inner primaries. The specimen (mounted) is now in the bird collection at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma.—Carrol L. Henderson, *Rural Route, Milan, Minnesota 56265, 15 July 1973.*

Wintering Bald Eagles in north-central Oklahoma.—On 22 January 1972, on the Henry LeForce Jr. farm 7 miles west and 3 north of Pond Creek, Grant County, north-central Oklahoma, my father (Elmer Tyler) and I counted seven adult Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and five dark birds that were probably immature Bald Eagles perched in large cottonwood trees along the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River. The following day, in the same area, we saw six adult Bald Eagles and four dark birds that we identified as immature Bald Eagles. The weather was mild on both days, with fog in the mornings and partly cloudy sky in the afternoons.

Between 1030 and 1315 on 6 February, in the same area, we counted six Bald Eagles (five adults and one immature bird) plus three birds that looked like Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) in that their tails were dark with much white at the base, plus at least three dark flying eagles that were too far away for satisfactory identification. Although

the sun was out (air temperature about 40° F.), a gusty north wind was blowing at 25-30 mph, stirring up much dust.

Great numbers of waterfowl fed regularly in fields of wheat on the LeForce farm less than a mile from the river. On 18 January I estimated that 5000 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) and 3000 Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) were feeding there. The eagles probably lived to some extent on these waterfowl, some of which they found dead or crippled, as well as on dead fish that they found along the river.

On 6 February, between 1600 and 1700, at the Salt Plains Reservoir dam in Alfalfa County, about 12 miles west of the LeForce farm, we saw between 25 and 30 more eagles. At one time we counted eight adult Bald Eagles and six dark eagles (probably Bald, since there seemed to be light freckling on the underside of the wings) soaring above the dam. By this time the sky had become overcast, the air temperature had dropped to about 29° F., and blasts of north wind plunged the wind-chill to about 0° F.—David C. Tyler, 306 S. Main St., Thomas, Oklahoma 73669, 22 October 1972.

Marsh Hawks observed feeding peaceably with Bald Eagles.—On 7 January 1974, as James W. Lish and I were driving northward on a section-line road 8 miles east of the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge and 1 mile south of the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma, we saw three immature Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) standing together in a cut maize field about a hundred yards from the road. The birds took flight as we approached. We stopped the truck and watched them as they soared about. Within a few minutes they returned to the ground — to something on which they obviously had been feeding. We continued to watch them. After feeding for about 15 minutes, they flew off. When they were out of sight we walked to the spot from which they had flown, finding there the remains of a Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*).

The following day we returned to the field. At the goose carcass were eight Bald Eagles (two adults and six immature birds) and three brown-colored Marsh Hawks (*Circus cyaneus*). To our surprise the two species were feeding together without friction. A passing truck frightened most of the company off. The one eagle (immature) and two hawks that remained on the ground continued to feed — quite amicably as far as we could see. The eight birds in the air flew about peaceably. Presently the three birds on the ground took flight. All eight of the eagles now dispersed, flying northward, while the Marsh Hawks continued to fly about over the field.

Brown and Amadon (1968, *Eagles, hawks and falcons of the world*, 1: 393) state that the Marsh Hawk "is likely to be aggressive towards other birds of prey, especially at the breeding site, and will drive off or attack birds very much larger and more formidable than itself (eagles, etc.)." Jacobs (1968, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 1: 8) vividly describes the behavior of a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) that fought with Marsh Hawks over a Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*) that it had killed in Osage County, northeastern Oklahoma. Southern (1963, *Wilson Bull.*, 75: 47) reports observing Bald Eagles that often "fed simultaneously" — and apparently without interspecific hostility — with Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) on dead shad at "open holes" in the ice along the Mississippi River in Illinois in winter. So far as I know the feeding together of Bald Eagles and Marsh Hawks has not heretofore been reported.—Gary W. Sallee, 519 S. Jarlot, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, 25 January 1974.

Coots observed eating dead ducks.—During the five-day period before 9 December 1972 the average daily high and low air temperatures recorded at the Altus Irrigation Research Station, 8 miles north of Elmer, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma, were 34° F. and 19° F., respectively. This unseasonably cold weather caused a 15-20 acre man-made stock pond 4.3 miles west and 3.2 miles south of Elmer to freeze over

save for a small pool along the north bank. Ice conditions at the pond prevented a population of American Coots (*Fulica americana*) from feeding normally. On 9 December the several hundred coots that I saw there were all in one compact group on the ice.

About noon that day R. Taylor, D. Lindsey, and I killed two of the several ducks that we jumped from the open pool — a hen Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) and a drake Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*). The birds fell into the water and drifted out to the ice. Unable to retrieve them, we left the pond to get a boat. When we returned about three hours later we found the dead ducks well apart on the ice, each with 10-15 coots crowded around it, vigorously pecking at the carcass. We had no way of knowing whether the coots had pulled the ducks onto the ice before starting to eat them. Presumably they had pecked at the ducks until the skin was broken and the flesh exposed. Nearly all of the breast muscle tissue had been consumed by the time we had retrieved the ducks.

The following morning we killed six Pintails (*Anas acuta*) over decoys in the open water of the pond. As the dead ducks floated toward the ice many coots left the main flock, approaching the fallen ducks. We fired our shotguns over the hungry coots to scare them away, but this did not deter them. We had to retrieve the Pintails immediately to prevent their being eaten.—Carrol L. Henderson, *Rural Route, Milan, Minnesota 56265, 15 July 1973.*

Mourning Dove as possible prey of Short-eared Owl.—At about 1100 on 27 October 1973 (a cold day with clear sky), as I was running my dogs in a field at the east end of the Lake Hefner dam in Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, one of the dogs flushed a middle-sized owl from under a small juniper that stood among the dead tall grass and sunflowers. The owl, flying not very far above ground, circled the dogs and me three times, as if bewildered. I could clearly see that its head had no ear-tufts and that its color-in-general was a warm, almost yellowish tone of brown. It was a Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), not a Long-ear (*A. otus*). Presently it alighted in a rank stand of dead sunflowers 50 yards or so away.

When I looked under the juniper I was surprised to find a headless, half-plucked Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) that the owl almost certainly had been eating. The dove's left wing was gone, but the right wing and the feet were readily identifiable. I had no way of knowing whether the owl had killed the dove.

The dogs jumped into the sunflower patch and flushed the owl again. Again it circled us, as if wondering which direction to take, this time only a few feet up. Presently it alighted again, in thick grass, and I decided not to let the dogs disturb it further.—Mark Ports, *2924 Lakeside, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73120, 15 January 1974.*

Inca Dove in Jackson County, Oklahoma.—In early October of 1972 Viola B. Estes, who lives at 515 N. Navajoe Street in Altus, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma, noticed in her backyard garden a small, unfamiliar, long-tailed dove with "scaly" appearance. Later that fall, two, then three, finally four of the little doves visited the yard almost daily, feeding on the ground among the leafy vegetables or at a tree-feeder close by.

On 9 December 1972 (day calm and overcast; air temperature about 24° F.) Owen J. Felis and I saw the four doves. Unquestionably they were Inca Doves (*Scardafella inca*), a species with which I had become well acquainted in Colima, southwestern Mexico. We flushed them from the garden into an alley about 15 feet away. Here they allowed close approach, so we saw them clearly. They were about two-thirds the size of a Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*). The scaled appearance of their backs and underparts was noticeable. The ruddy primaries and white outer tail feathers showed clearly as they took flight the second time.

A card from Mrs. Estes reported that all four doves were still in Altus on 8 January 1973. On 16 February (overcast; slight north breeze; air temperature 40° F.), however, my

ornithology class and I found only three of them in the Estes neighborhood. All were huddled close together on a limb, with feathers fluffed out.

According to Mrs. Estes, the four doves continued to visit her yard until the last of March, when one disappeared. Another disappeared in mid-April, a third on or soon after 21 April, the last date on which she actually saw two. On 4, 12, 13, and 16 May, and again on 13 and 15 August she saw one bird. She had no way of knowing, of course, whether she was seeing the very same bird all this time. She did not see an Inca Dove in the fall of 1973.—Jack D. Tyler, *Department of Biology, Cameron College, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 15 January 1974.*

Poor-will in northeastern Texas.—On 25 October 1971, about 7 miles northwest of Sherman, Grayson County, northeastern Texas, and about 10 miles south of the Oklahoma state line, James Devore, a student at Austin College, and I found a dead Poor-will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) on the shoulder of State Highway FM 1717. The specimen, which probably had been struck by a car, I prepared as a study skin (KWH 2872). It was a very fat female (weight 48.5 grams); the ovary, which was 7.0 mm. long and 3.0 mm. wide at its widest point, appeared to be slightly enlarged; the skull was fully ossified. The specimen represents my only record of this species for Grayson County during my ten years residence in Sherman.

The date is late for fall migration. The latest fall date on record for Oklahoma is 24 October (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 272). On 24 October 1957 (according to data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range) L. E. Dunn found a dead "exceedingly fat female" that had been killed by a car near Gate, Beaver County, northwestern Oklahoma. The easternmost Oklahoma locality at which the Poor-will has been taken—Shawnee, Pottawatomie County, central Oklahoma (Penney, 1970, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 3: 15)—is about 100 miles almost directly north of Sherman, Texas. The species has, however, been heard as far east as Bartlesville, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma, where A. M. Mery and his wife Sophia heard at least one Poor-will calling repeatedly just after dark on 5 May 1956 and again on 3 May 1958.—Karl W. Haller, *Box 1615, Austin College, Sherman, Texas 75090, 11 August 1972.*

Late fall date for Eastern Kingbird in Oklahoma.—On 17 October 1973, 2½ mi. south and ½ mi. west of Headrick, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma, near an old house in which we had been gathering pellets of Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*), Rodney M. Kemper and I saw an Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*). It was perched in the top of a small dead tree not far from an old corral. We were able to approach it to within about 15 feet. When it flew, the white tip of its tail was clearly visible. September 22 appears to be the latest fall date heretofore on record for Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 329); there is, however, one winter record: a single bird seen at close range near Crescent, Logan County, north-central Oklahoma by Edith F. Kassing *et al.* on 27 December 1962 (1963, Audubon Field Notes, 17: 234; Sutton, *op. cit.*).

Kemper and I returned to the area the following day, hoping to see the kingbird again, but we could not find it.—Dennis Parmley, *Department of Biology, Cameron College, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 15 November 1973.*

Sage Thrasher in Cotton County, Oklahoma.—About 1800 on 20 November 1973 (weather blustery, air temperature about 35° F., sky overcast, visibility poor), along the levee of a diversion canal a hundred yards from Beaver Creek and about 8 miles east and 1½ miles north of Walters, Cotton County, southwestern Oklahoma, I saw a medium-sized bird alight on the ground ahead of me. Its gray upperparts seemed to have a bluish tone. It was about the size of a shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), but no white wing-patches flashed as it flew into some giant ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*) bordering the levee. Several times I watched it fly to the ground from the weed patch and back again. Little cover was

available to it, for fields to east and west were all cultivated. I decided to collect the bird. From its boldly streaked underparts, dark yellow eye, not very large bill, and white tail-corners, I knew it to be a Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), a species I had collected in nearby Kiowa and Tillman counties. The specimen, an immature male (CCMZ 472), is in the Cameron College collection.

The Sage Thrasher migrates regularly through the Black Mesa country at the northwestern corner of the Oklahoma Panhandle (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 426). Records for the rest of the state — eastward as far as Oklahoma, Cleveland, Pontotoc, and Murray counties — have been summarized by Carter and Tyler (1970, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 3: 4-5). The species has not heretofore been reported from Cotton County.—Jack D. Tyler, *Department of Biology, Cameron College, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 15 January 1974.*

On fall arrival date for Harris's Sparrow in Oklahoma.—The Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*), an easily identified species which has been seen in Oklahoma "from October 6 to May 31," usually arrives from the north "about October 18" (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 630). According to data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range, the species has been sighted on two occasions earlier than 18 October: on 11 October 1952 a single bird was seen by G. M. Sutton at Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma, and on 7 October 1956 one was seen by F. M. Baumgartner at Stillwater, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma (1957, Audubon Field Notes, 11: 37). Details of the 6 October sighting seem to have been mislaid or lost.

At 0800 on 23 September 1972 (day cool; sky very dark until noon; heavy mist in early morning; no wind) my husband Bruce and I saw an adult Harris's Sparrow, a Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*), four Field Sparrows (*S. pusilla*), and four Dickcissels (*Spiza americana*) at a distance of about 25 feet in a roadside hedgerow along Memorial Drive just north of East 56th St. North in Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma. The area was about 100 yards north of Bird Creek and north of Mohawk Park. Southward migration was on, for we saw a total of 70 bird species that day, including two Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*), five Solitary Vireos (*Vireo solitarius*), eight Nashville Warblers (*Vermivora ruficapilla*), one Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*), one Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*), and one Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*).—Anne Reynolds, *Box 279, Oriental, North Carolina 28571, 15 September 1974.*

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