

dried off. All three chicks were now preening their plumage vigorously. When they lifted their crown feathers we could see that they had little crests.

On the 23rd, the chicks stood up while being fed. Food brought to them now included fair-sized grasshoppers, which they swallowed whole. The brood so filled the nest that one of them sometimes perched on the rim. That night the mother bird did not stay at the nest — it was simply too full for her. One of the brood slept on the rim.

On the 24th, all three chicks left the nest. Departure started about 0930. By noon two chicks had moved well off — first to the farther part of the holly bush, then to trees beyond the yard. They flew fairly well. So far as we could tell, the male parent was not with them. The last to leave — presumably the youngest — flew weakly from the holly bush when my sister stuck her head out the window. Unable to go far, it "landed" on the ground near a fence about 30 feet away. The mother seemed to want it to go to the trees in which its two siblings were, but when it finally did fly, it returned to the holly bush. It spent the night there.

During the following three weeks (until 18 October) we often saw two young birds with an adult female, but never with a male, so we assumed that "our" male was caring for the third chick well away from the house or that he and the third chick had been killed. On the evening of 23 October we saw three dark-billed young birds and an adult female heading for a blackjack oak about 30 feet from the holly nest-bush. We believed that the foursome roosted there, but we had no way of knowing for sure that they were "our" birds.

Throughout the observation period discussed above a second pair of Cardinals lived in the vicinity of our house. We occasionally saw or heard these two birds, but were not sure that they had a nest. On 8 October we saw a male Cardinal feeding an almost full-tailed chick that appeared to be considerably more mature than the brood we had been watching.

In any event, we were happy to realize that "our" birds had been successful in fledging a late brood. We could not help wondering whether the female that we had watched had reared one or two other broods earlier in the season.

ROUTE 1, BOX 971, BROKEN ARROW, OKLAHOMA 74012. 25 OCTOBER 1973

GENERAL NOTES

Late nesting of Pied-billed Grebe in Oklahoma.—On 10 August 1975, while banding nestling Great-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) at Rose Lake, Canadian County, central Oklahoma, I was startled by a loud splash nearby, followed by the loud alarm notes of a Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*). Upon close investigation, I discovered a grebe nest containing four warm eggs. The nest was a floating platform of cattail leaves about 10 feet in from the edge of an extensive dense stand of cattails in water 3 feet deep. Evidently I had surprised the incubating adult, for it had not taken the time to cover its eggs with vegetation before departing.

On 17 August I returned to the nest, finding it completely covered with warm, damp

vegetation. Upon uncovering it, I found that there were now five eggs. While at the nest, I repeatedly heard grebe alarm notes in the surrounding cattails.

On 23 August I again visited the nest. The five eggs, though uncovered, were warm: none was pipped. Among the several Pied-billed Grebes that I noted in the area that day were adults still in breeding plumage and fully grown immature birds.

John S. Shackford visited the nest on 31 August, finding only two eggs there, one warm, the other cold. Listening closely, he could hear peeping inside the cold egg.

Bent (1919, Life histories of North American diving birds, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 107: 41-42) describes the Pied-billed Grebe as one-brooded, as having an incubation period of 23-24 days, and as laying one egg per day contiguously until a full clutch of 3-10 eggs is complete. Thus, if the fifth egg of the clutch at Rose Lake was laid on 11 August, the hatching of that egg could be expected on or about 3 September.

According to data on *Podilymbus podiceps* filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range, the latest Oklahoma date heretofore reported for eggs in the nest is 16 July: on 16 July 1968, a nest containing seven eggs was found on a fishery pond 5 miles south of Sulphur, Murray County, south-central Oklahoma by George M. Sutton, George A. Newman, et al.—Warren D. Harden, 2409 Butler Drive, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 30 October 1976.

First Oklahoma breeding record for Hooded Merganser.—In late afternoon on 8 May 1977, while searching for rails among cattails along the shore of Robert S. Kerr Reservoir on the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge in Sequoyah County, east-central Oklahoma, Jerry Sisler, M.D., John S. Tomer, and I observed at close range a hen Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) and her brood of eight very small, dark young ones. The spot at which we saw them was about 2½ miles south of the town of Vian.

Tomer and I, standing on a foot-bridge that crossed a narrow arm of the reservoir, were hoping to see any rail, bittern, or other secretive bird that Sisler might flush as he waded through the dense stand of cattails that lined the shore. As Sisler approached the foot-bridge, the hen merganser, with seven little ones in tow, emerged from the cattails not more than 30 feet from us. When mother and seven were about 10 feet from the cattails, an eighth chick appeared, paddled frantically catching up with the entourage, where it took its position as "caboose," and away went the "train" single file, the brood in a straight line behind the old bird exactly as if on a string. All three of us watched for possibly five minutes as the hen led her chicks — rather triumphantly, I thought — out of sight around a bend in the shoreline.

The area is wild. Robert H. Stratton Jr., Refuge Manager, tells me that Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) have nested thereabouts in some numbers. In the summer of 1972, Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*) nested in trees standing in water about half a mile south of the foot-bridge (Norton, 1973, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 6: 12-13). These same trees, now dead, have many cavities in which Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, and Barred Owls (*Strix varia*) may nest.

The Hooded Merganser has not heretofore been known to breed in Oklahoma, though according to records on file at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range a hen was seen in Mohawk Park in Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma on 15 May 1953 (Anne Reynolds); a single bird was seen 7 miles northeast of Guymon, Texas County, in the Panhandle, on 24 May 1941 (Howell, 1950, Proc. Oklahoma Acad. Sci., 29: 35); and a drake was seen on City Lake in Altus, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma on 30 May 1968 (W. M. Davis). The species is said to be an "uncommon breeder" in Louisiana (Lowery, 1955, Louisiana birds, Louisiana State Univ. Press, Baton Rouge, p. 182); its "nesting in Arkansas County," eastern Arkansas, has been reported (Baerg, 1951, Birds of Arkansas, Agric. Exper. Sta., Univ. Arkansas, Fayetteville, p. 44); and sighting of a

female bird near Ellis, central Kansas, on 27 June 1884 (Goss, 1885, Auk, 2: 112) and two specimens taken in eastern Kansas "in June" support the belief of Tordoff (1956, Check-list of the birds of Kansas, Univ. Kansas, Lawrence, p. 317) that the Hooded Merganser "probably nests occasionally" in Kansas. According to Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 84), *Lophodytes cucullatus* is "to be looked for in summer in wooded parts of eastern Oklahoma." — James L. Norman, 502 N. 14th St., Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401, 23 June 1977.

American Coot breeding in Jackson County, Oklahoma.—On 22 July 1973 William S. Bartush and I saw a chick American Coot (*Fulica americana*), with the distinctive red-orange head, swimming on a pond 7 miles east and 3 miles south of Eldorado, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma. To the north and west of the pond was a stand of mesquite trees (*Prosopis juliflora*) about 15 feet tall, to the south a large area of uprooted mesquite, and to the east a wheat field. The water surface of the pond covered slightly more than an acre. About 55 feet out from the south shore was a dense circular growth of cattails (*Typha* sp.) about 50 feet in diameter, but the shore itself was barren of vegetation.

The young coot, slightly larger than a Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), was swimming alone on open water. Presently an adult coot emerged from the cattails and joined the chick and together they swam back into the rank vegetation. We did not see the nest, which was probably hidden among the cattails.

Victor J. Heller informs me that during the summer of 1972 (exact date unrecorded) he saw two adult coots and two young birds among the cattails at this same pond.

Jackson County is listed by Sutton (1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 13) among the counties in which *Fulica americana* has been found nesting in Oklahoma, but pertinent details have not, so far as I know, been published. The date of the sighting reported above falls within the period stated by Carter (1969, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 2: 13-14) to be that in which nesting of the American Coot takes place in Oklahoma.—John W. Ault III, 4213 Bedford Dr., Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 22 May 1977.

Poor-will in Woods County, Oklahoma.—Soon after dark on the evening of 1 October 1976, about 6 miles northwest of Alva, Woods County, northwestern Oklahoma, I happened upon five or six Poor-wills (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) along a half-mile stretch of winding gravel road that follows a ridge between the Salt Fork (of the Arkansas) River and an arroyo known locally as Big Boggy Creek. At several places along this stretch the land slopes steeply northward toward the river bottom, but gradually southward toward the arroyo. Big Boggy flows only after rains, but the river almost always has some water.

The Poor-wills were widely scattered, but I sometimes saw two at a time. The glowing eyes and darting flight led me to suspect that they were caprimulgids, but they seemed too small for Chuck-will's-widows (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*), a species I had seen and heard many times in summer along this road.

After my car had put the puzzling birds to flight several times, I stopped to observe one of them. To my surprise, it did not fly until the car had approached to within a few yards. When I drove slowly toward another, it did not fly even when it was so close that I could not see it because of the car's hood. When I stopped the car, got out, and moved around to get a clearer look, it remained on the ground. Its smallness and gray-brown appearance convinced me that it was not a Chuck-will's-widow.

The following evening (2 October) I found three or four of the birds along the same stretch of road. Each allowed me to approach to within a few yards before it flew. I could not see the white throats of birds on the ground nor could I see the white (or buff) of the

tail as they flew. I did not have a binocular. Later that evening I collected one and knew at once that it was a Poor-will. From the white of the throat and tail-corners I judged it to be a male — a judgment confirmed by George M. Sutton, who weighed it (41.7 grams) and prepared the skin (UOMZ 11374; little fat; testes very small; stomach packed with remains of insects, chiefly moths; skull fully pneumatized).

From 3 to 14 October I had no occasion to drive along the road at night. On the night of the 15th I made a point of looking carefully for the birds, but found none. The weather turned cold on the 16th. On the night of the 18th I saw two Poor-wills. I could not help wondering whether the little population had settled down for the winter. Finding a hibernating Poor-will in some cranny along the Big Boggy would indeed be a discovery!

On the following 30 April (1977), along the same road but this time 7½ miles northwest of Alva, I found a Poor-will dead, a male bird that probably had been struck by a car the preceding night.

Phalaenoptilus nuttallii has heretofore been reported from Woods County by two early observers, neither of whom mentioned actually seeing the bird. During his residence at Alva from 1904 to 1914 Prof. George W. Stevens "frequently heard [the species] from the bluffs south of the Cimarron" and from 30 June to 9 July 1930 R. D. Bird heard it "several times near Waynoka" (Nice, 1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 108).—Paul F. Nighswonger, *Dept. of Biology, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma 73717, 10 May 1977.*

Curve-billed Thrasher in Comanche County, Oklahoma.—At about 1030 on 22 October 1976 I observed a Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) among the main corrals near the headquarters area of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma. I carefully noted the bird's brownish gray upperparts, long tail, and strikingly yellow eye. I was familiar with the species, since I had only recently moved to Oklahoma from the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in extreme southern Texas, where the Curve-billed Thrasher is common. Later that same day, Eugene A. Bartnicki photographed the bird, but at great distance (slide on file at Cameron University). During November it was observed repeatedly by me and others in the vicinity of the corrals. At 1600 on 1 December Jack D. Tyler, Brad Carlton, and I saw it. At 1500 on 17 December I had a good look at it. On 18 December, during a Christmas Count, several persons, including Louis E. McGee, his wife Janet, and myself, saw it. On 29 December I saw it clearly. On 31 December a storm blanketed the area with 6 inches of snow and the air temperature dropped to 10°F. Attempts to find the bird that day were unsuccessful. It has not been seen since then.

While we were watching the Curve-bill, it spent most of its time on the ground, picking about piles of horse manure. Florence M. Bailey, who observed the species extensively in southern Arizona, reported that on 3 February she watched one "walking in the mesquite pasture, flipping up cow-chips as he went, evidently looking for insects or other toothsome morsels below—a scorpion had been found under one of them" (*in Bent, 1948, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 195: 394*).

Toxostoma curvirostre is known to be resident in the Black Mesa country at the western tip of the Oklahoma Panhandle: it has been reported also from Ellis, Beckham, Jackson, Kiowa, and Oklahoma counties in the main body of the state (Sutton, 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, *Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 31*), but it has not heretofore been reported from Comanche County.—O. T. Fears III, *Box 448, Cache, Oklahoma 73527, 8 February 1977.*

THE BULLETIN, the official organ of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society, is published quarterly, in March, June, September, and December, at Norman, Oklahoma. Subscription is by membership in the OOS, \$4.00 single or \$6.00 family per year. Treasurer, John S. Tomer, 5911 E. 46th St., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135. Editor, Jack D. Tyler, Department of Biology, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501.