

notes only — a simple *phée-bee*, the former syllable higher in pitch than the latter.

4. Pygmy Nuthatch. *Sitta pygmaea*. The first specimen for the state, a breeding male, was collected on 22 May 1937 by George H. Lowery Jr. A specimen in *juvenal* feather was collected on 22 August 1972 by William A. Carter. The species no doubt nests in the Black Mesa country, but no nest has thus far been found. Young birds may have left the nest by May, for the species breeds early.

5. Gray Vireo. *Vireo vicinior*. The species has been taken once near Kenton — male of a breeding pair on 22 May 1937 (Sutton, 1938, *Auk*, 55: 505). To be looked for among the pinyon, juniper, and scrubby oak of the mesas. The species has a longish tail that it "wags" gnatcatcher-fashion.

6. Virginia's Warbler. *Vermivora virginiae*. Occurs regularly as a transient in western Oklahoma. Several specimens have been taken. Breeding pairs should be looked for among the mesas. The song is an unmusical but fairly noticeable series of chips.

STOVALL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY, UNIV. OKLAHOMA, NORMAN 73019, 18 JANUARY 1978.

GENERAL NOTES

Wood Duck nesting in Norman, Oklahoma.—On 25 March 1976, William H. Campbell observed three Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) flying up and down the small stream that flows just back of his house at 2601 S. Berry Road in Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma. Large trees grow along the stream, which has been dammed at one point. The impoundment is small, but the whole area is wooded despite its residentiality. Dr. Campbell did not see the ducks clearly enough to be sure of their sex, but he could not help wondering whether the species might nest in the vicinity.

On the following 20 May, within an hour after my return from Mexico, I received a telephone call from Bruce Granger, who lives at 944 Chautauqua Street about 2 miles from the Campbell residence. Dr. Granger told me of "a strange bird that looks like a duck" that was in his back yard at the moment and that had "nine little ones" with it. Hardly knowing what to make of such a report, I hurried to the Granger house in the gathering dusk, identified the "strange bird" as a hen Wood Duck, and watched mother and brood as they moved about close to the woven wire fence. Knowing that there were many cats and dogs in the neighborhood, and that the closest pond was the so-called "Duck Pond" on the university campus fully half a mile away, Dr. Granger, his wife Rosemary, and I decided to catch all 10 birds if we could and move them to the Duck Pond before dark. The chase began. I managed to get close to the mother bird several times, but she was remarkably agile. Had I rushed her while she was trying to push through the fence I might have caught her, but I missed this chance. Presently she flew lightly over the fence, alighted in the deep grass, and called her brood. Almost immediately the 10 birds disappeared.

We found them again in a remote corner of the plot, but again we failed to catch the mother. The ducklings now began scattering widely. Their peeping attracted two cats, which drew closer rapidly. Human shouts held off the cats while the mother's calls reassembled the brood. The 10 birds now moved back toward the Granger yard. Just at nightfall, while the mother was covering the brood, I almost caught her. The ducklings, now all in one place, were bewildered. As they started running this way and that, close to the fence, I caught six of them. By this time the mother was some distance off in a paved area among some parked cars. When I released the ducklings, they ran toward their mother, but I despaired of their surviving. By this time it was so dark that I could not clearly see either the mother bird or the ducklings.

The following day Norman Runge, a tree surgeon, volunteered to help us find the cavity in which the duck had laid her eggs. With his big ladder he investigated first the big old maple in the Granger yard, then tree after tree in the neighborhood. He found many cavities, some quite large, but none with down lining. His comment after two hours of work: "I can't imagine a pleasanter way to spend a Sunday than this."

On 24 March 1977, Dr. Campbell telephoned me again, this time to say that he had just seen two Wood Ducks flying up and down the stream near his house. One bird was a drake, the other a hen. Whether or not the 1976 nesting was successful — and I suspect that it wasn't — let us hope that the birds will try again.—George M. Sutton, 818 West Brooks St., Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 25 March 1977.

Red-tailed Hawks and snake.—On the morning of 14 June 1977 (air temperature about 85°F. at noon), near Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma, Hannah Bass, Louis Bentley and his wife Alma, Jayne Christo, Robert J. Farris, Elizabeth Hayes, Norman Weisenborn, and I watched an adult Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) take a large living snake from a smaller adult Red-tail while the two birds were flying almost directly above us. As the two hawks circled higher, we could see the snake writhing in the talons of the smaller bird. The larger hawk, with legs extended, lunged twice at the other, obviously intent on taking the snake, but the attempts failed. With the third lunge — while we who were watching held our breath — the larger bird took the snake and dropped to the ground perhaps a quarter of a mile away, followed closely by the other hawk. We could not tell what happened on the ground, for we could not see the birds there. Nor could we be sure that the birds were a pair. We know only that the two were adult and that one appeared to be larger than the other. — Eleanor Sieg, 5152 S. Urbana, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135, 30 September 1977.

Yellow Rail sighted in Payne County, Oklahoma. — On 23 April 1975, at one of three small ponds on our place 2½ miles north of Stillwater, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma, I observed a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) at close range. My notes for the day read as follows: "About 2:00 P.M. Bright sunshine. I was fishing from an inner tube floater when I spotted a new bird. It was a rail— smaller than Sora [*Porzana carolina*] and different color. It worked through the pond's edge—small sedges and grass. I approached from the center of the pond to about 30 feet of the bird. It continued its slow, high stepping gait unbothered by my presence. Whenever I tried to move closer (20 ft.) it became nervous and I'd retreat back to about 30 ft. from shore line. I followed it for a good hour and it never took flight. Its head would dart quickly at whatever food it was taking and it would also flick its tail, the under side of which was a rich buffy color. The bird would hop up on a twig or blade that it couldn't go under. At other times it would swim around an obstacle."

The Yellow Rail has been reported heretofore from only two places in Oklahoma — Fort Wayne, Delaware County, near the Oklahoma-Arkansas state line, where H. L. Eustis took a specimen on 7 March 1842 (Tomer, 1959, Auk, 76: 94-95), and a TV tower 2 miles north of Coweta, Wagoner County, under which two specimens were found in the fall of 1976, one on 27 September, the other on 3 October (Norman, 1977, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 10: 7). The species is exceedingly secretive, hence is not often seen. The white patch on the wing (secondaries) is a good field mark if the bird can be flushed from the vegetation. Its bill is never strongly yellow as in the Sora. — Delores Scott, 4224 N. Washington, R.R. 2, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, 12 May 1977.

Marbled Godwit in Tulsa County, Oklahoma.—In early afternoon on 17 April 1977 (a cool, somewhat rainy day, with mild wind), my husband Bruce and I observed two Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*) feeding along the muddy east edge of Sperry Lake in the northern part of Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma. The birds were in shallow

water, not far from a stand of cattails. To our surprise we saw no other shorebirds along that stretch of shore, but we did see there six Great Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*), five Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*), and — farther out, in deeper water — a Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), several Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*), and a Northern Shoveler (*A. clypeata*). We watched the godwits for about 15 minutes, noting their over-all brownish color and long, dark, slightly upturned bills, which were reddish at the base. When the birds flew, we noted that the rump and tail were about the same color as the back, there being no white anywhere. The wings were reddish brown underneath. The godwits alighted in the southwestern corner of the impoundment, but we did not pursue them further.

To the best of my knowledge, *Limosa fedoa* has not heretofore been reported from Tulsa County: it has, however, been seen in Washington, Rogers, and Nowata counties. The species is considered commoner in central Oklahoma than in eastern: there is only one record for the Panhandle — of a single bird seen at Lake Etling in Black Mesa State Park on 2 May 1975 (Tyler, 1976, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 9: 13). — Anne Reynolds, Box 35371, Tulsa, 74135, 10 June 1977.

First hummingbird nest for Pawnee County, Oklahoma. — On 20 June 1976, while observing birds in a heavily forested rocky canyon near the Arkansas River between the towns of Cleveland and Blackburn in Pawnee County, northeastern Oklahoma, I chanced to see a female hummingbird, almost certainly a Ruby-throat (*Archilochus colubris*), as she alighted on a sunny perch. Her short flights to three other perches and her seemingly cautious behavior made me curious. To my surprise, her fourth flight took her straight to her nest, which was about 15 feet up in a small chinquapin oak growing in the canyon's bottom. As she perched on the nest's rim, two little heads stretched upward with open bills. After the brood had been fed, they huddled down out of sight in the bottom of the nest.

I returned to the nest on 26 and 27 June and on 3 July. The young birds became steadily more aggressive when begging for food. The nest was supported on one side by a vertical twig to which the female clung above her vigorous brood while feeding them. As the young birds became larger, they no longer sat side by side in the bottom of the nest: one had to sit high, the other low. They spent a lot of time, too, in what appeared to be play behavior and changed positions often. When I made my last trip to the nest on 10 July, I found it empty.

Discovery of this nest was quite accidental, as was that of the nest found in Payne County by Rickstrew (1976, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 9: 12-13). According to Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 285), no hummingbird nest has heretofore been reported from Pawnee County, Oklahoma.—Neil Garrison, 917 N. Yale, Apt. 32, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74115, 1 August 1976.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher parasitized by cowbird in Oklahoma.—On 27 May 1975, while searching for birds' nests in mesquite-infested pastureland 11.2 kilometers (about 7 miles) west of Lawton, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, I found the nest of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) about 4 meters (12.8 feet) up in a mesquite tree. In the nest were three eggs, two of the scissortail and one of the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*).

I visited the nest three times thereafter: On 28 May it contained three scissortail eggs and one cowbird egg; on 3 June, five scissortail eggs only; on 14 June, two freshly hatched scissortail chicks. At each visit I saw one or both parent scissortails. In my opinion the scissortails removed the cowbird egg, but I had no way of knowing that they did so.

Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 334) stated that the scissortail "is not parasitized" by the cowbird in Oklahoma. *Muscivora forficata* was, however, listed among the victims of the cowbird by Simmons (1925, Birds of the Austin region, Univ. Texas Press, Austin, p. 172); two records of cowbird eggs in scissortail nests

in Wise County, north-central Texas were cited by Friedmann (1963, *Host relations of the parasitic cowbirds*, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 233: 50); and observation of a scissortail feeding a fledgling cowbird on 29 June 1959 in Tarrant County, north-central Texas, was reported by Pulich (1961, *Birds of Tarrant County*, Allen and Co., Printers, Fort Worth, p. 52). — Dennis C. Parmley, *Department of Biology, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas 76038, 3 November 1977.*

Yellow-throated Warbler in Comanche County, Oklahoma.—From about 1030 to 1505 on 24 May 1977 (a pleasant day), my wife Velma and I observed a male Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) in a 30-foot pine — a transplant from southeastern Oklahoma — in our front yard in Fletcher, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma. The bird picked about for food, part of the time at old cones, stopping now and then to sing. He never was more than 12 or 15 feet up in the tree.

We taped the songs first from the open garage about 50 feet from the pine, then from the front steps of the house about 25 feet from the pine. On the tapes with the warbler's songs are songs of the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). We were certain of our identification, but we compared the song as we had taped it with songs on a commercial record.

Dendroica dominica is an eastern warbler that has heretofore been sighted in Comanche County only once: on 22 May 1969, Janet M. McGee saw one in her yard at 1703 N. 43rd Street in Lawton. The species is known to have bred sparingly as far west as Tulsa, Creek, and Cleveland counties (Nice, 1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 160; Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 507), and there is one record of a singing male seen in Cimarron County at the western end of the Panhandle on 9 May 1970 (Rice, 1971, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 4: 18-18).—Carroll Ridgway, *Box 493, Fletcher, Oklahoma 73541, 14 June 1977.*

Bushtit in Woods County, Oklahoma.—At about 1800 on 14 May 1977 (sky overcast; very little wind) Thomas Flowers (a fellow student at Fort Hays State University) and I saw a single Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*) in open sand-sage country in northwestern Woods County, Oklahoma, on the plateau-like east bank of the Cimarron River west of State Highway 10, about 5 miles southwest of the village of Lookout and 8½ miles south of the Kansas state line. The bird flew from the sage, alighted on a fence about 3 meters (10 feet) from us, giving us an excellent look at its small size, drab coloration, and long tail, then flew back into the sage without making a sound. I have seen much of the Bushtit in southern Arizona, so know the bird well. The species has not heretofore been reported from Woods County, Oklahoma, though there are valid records for Woodward, Ellis, and Comanche counties (Sutton, 1974, *A check-list of Oklahoma birds*, *Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist.*, Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 29).—Renne Lohoefer, *Dept. of Biology, Fort Hays State University, Hayes, Kansas 67601, 18 May 1977.*

FROM THE EDITOR: An article in the Elk City Daily News of 15 December 1977 and kindly sent to me by Exa Kelly deserves comment. It reported the addition of an observation tower at the Washita National Wildlife Refuge near Clinton specifically for use by anyone interested in watching the numerous water birds of Foss Reservoir. The tower's steel frame was acquired from an electrical power company as surplus and converted by refuge personnel. A similar tower at the Salt Plains refuge enables birders to enjoy their hobby regardless of the weather. With encouragement and support from local O.O.S. members, towers might be erected at other lakes throughout the state.—J.D. Tyler.

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