

may not have reached full self-sufficiency. A truly two-brooded species brings two broods to the point at which at least one young individual of each brood can care for itself.

I am publishing this paper not to justify my calling *Falco sparverius* "one brooded" in Oklahoma, but rather to stimulate thinking on what the phenomenon of two-broodedness actually is.

818 WEST BROOKS ST., NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069. 15 OCTOBER 1979.

GENERAL NOTES

Large aggregation of Great Blue Herons in Kiowa County, Oklahoma.—From 1305 to 1330 on 26 November 1978 (50° F., heavy overcast, north wind 10-15 m.p.h.), Jack D. Tyler, James Calaway, Charles Clemons, Robert Hollander, Edward Sands, Edith Scott, Terry Zupan, and I observed about 190 Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) on the extensive mudflats along the eastern shore at the shallow north end of Lake Altus in Kiowa County, southwestern Oklahoma. Groups of from five to 30 of the birds were wading among thin clumps of salt cedar (*Tamarix gallica*), while scattered individuals fed in somewhat deeper water well out from the lake's edge. Also feeding and loafing in the area were about 300 Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), a few Hooded Mergansers (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), some Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*), and about 150 diving ducks of the genus *Aythya*.

During the preceding summer and fall, this part of Oklahoma received very little rain. This dryness and the local demand for irrigation water were doubtless responsible for the unusually low lake-level. The herons were probably taking advantage of the concentrations of animal food in the shallow water. So far as I know, there is no breeding colony of Great Blue Herons at all close to Lake Altus. Colonies near Taloga, along the Canadian River in Dewey County, west-central Oklahoma, and near Fargo, Ellis County, in the northwestern part of the main body of the state, are, respectively, about 80 miles to the northeast and 100 miles to the north of Lake Altus.

What we observed might well have been the greatest number of fully fledged Great Blue Herons ever seen at one time in Oklahoma. In large heronries, the totals of young and old birds countable at the height of the breeding season might, of course, be equally large. On 31 December 1963, W. Marvin Davis counted 51 Great Blue Herons standing on the frozen surface of Canton Reservoir in Blaine County, west-central Oklahoma (1964, Audubon Field Notes, 18: 256).—Michael F. Smith, Box 3223, Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503, 29 November 1978.

Inca Dove in Comanche County, Oklahoma.—On 19 December 1977, while I was driving through a seldom used part of the "shop area" near the headquarters buildings of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, my pickup truck flushed a

small dove whose "tight" wingbeats and long tail, with its conspicuous white outer feathers, told me instantly that the bird was an Inca Dove (*Scardafella inca*). The species was well known to me, for it had been common in and near Phoenix, Arizona, where I had lived in 1964 and 1965.

When I told George Frazier, the refuge's mechanic, about the dove he said that he had been seeing it "all summer." He had often flushed it from a gravelly spot at which he had parked his personal vehicle when reporting for work in the morning. He had not thought his observations worth reporting for, having seen much of the Inca Dove in the Río Grande Valley and at Corpus Christi, Texas, he had assumed that it was common on the refuge also.

Other refuge personnel who observed the dove in December were Lindsey Bell and Elmer Parker, who saw it on 5 December, and Robert Karges, who saw it on 20 December.

Scardafella inca has not heretofore been reported from Comanche County, Oklahoma, but it was seen repeatedly in Jackson County in the winter of 1972-73 (Sutton, 1974, Check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 20), and a specimen has been collected in Caddo County (Felis, 1976, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 9: 33-34).—Eugene A. Bartnicki, *Wildlife Biologist, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Cache, Oklahoma 73527, 28 February 1979.*

Groove-billed Ani in Washington County, Oklahoma.—In mid-morning on 20 October 1979 (clear day: 77°F.; south wind gusting up to 30 m.p.h.), Randall A. Porter and I saw a Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) near Copan, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma. We were at the east end of the almost completed Copan Dam (scheduled to impound the Caney River in 1982) at the time. As we walked toward scattered small ponds above the dam, two Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) flew from oaks to our right toward a small pond on our left. Following them in flight was a slim, black, long-tailed bird that dropped into the shrubbery before we could train our binoculars on it.

Approaching cautiously through the dry vegetation, we saw the bird again, this time in a willow sapling across a pond. Using our 10x binoculars, we decided that it could be nothing but an ani. We watched it for more than half an hour, part of the time through a 40x spotting scope. We noted the grooves in its high, thin bill and the hint of greenish shine in its plumage. A liquid *sweee-oh* that it gave reminded us of one of the calls of a male Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). It moved from ground-level to about 5 feet up. Frequently it preened its feathers. Presently it flew to our side of the pond. As we moved closer, it called excitedly, flew back across the pond, and disappeared. We made no attempt to see it again for a while: but an hour later we looked for it in vain. Nor could Randall Porter find it in the area the following morning.

There is one other *Crotophaga sulcirostris* record for northeastern Oklahoma—that of a bird seen 12 miles north of Coweta, Wagoner County

on 27 October 1966 by Yula M. Thomas and Edna Flippo (1967, Audubon Field Notes, 21: 53). To be noted is the fact that in 1979 the weather had been very dry in late summer and early fall and that from 18 to 20 October the south wind had been strong.—Ella Delap, 409 N. Wyandotte, Dewey, Oklahoma 74029, 27 October 1979.

Tree Sparrows killed and eaten by meadowlarks.—Near the Corps of Engineers office building at Hulah Reservoir, in a remote wooded part of Osage County, northeastern Oklahoma, staff personnel operate a feeding station for birds in winter. Building and station are in a cleared area, the latter being fully 300 feet from the nearest trees. Common winter birds are the Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*), Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*), Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), Western Meadowlark (*S. neglecta*), and Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*). At times large numbers of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) descend to the station, scaring off the other birds.

On 13 January 1979, a blizzard covered the ground with 3 inches of snow. The following day we killed three Starlings with a pellet gun. We left the dead birds where they lay, believing that some nocturnal predator would find them; but to our surprise meadowlarks began pecking at and eating them, this despite the quantities of seeds that we had scattered on the snow.

In late afternoon on 15 January (air temperature about 13°F. at noon; snow still 3 inches deep), Park Ranger Wes Masonhall and I saw a meadowlark suddenly walk toward and grab *with both feet* a Tree Sparrow, a maneuver that obliged the meadowlark to fall to its side while striking its victim with its beak. The commotion did not seem to frighten the Tree Sparrows, but it did attract the other meadowlarks, several of which started to peck the captured sparrow. Rivalry developed: one meadowlark, more aggressive than the others, jabbed savagely at the sparrow's captor, forcing that bird to release its prey. The aggressor strode off with the dead sparrow in its beak. When it stopped to feed, however, the other meadowlarks put it to flight. Eventually, still carrying the sparrow in its beak, it disappeared in the distance.

Almost immediately, the vanquished meadowlark caught another sparrow; another free-for-all developed; and the sparrow was killed and eaten. The living sparrows, obviously ravenous, and possibly weakened by starvation, did not seem to realize that the meadowlarks would be predatory.

We do not know whether the meadowlarks were of the Eastern species or the Western. Both are present in this part of Oklahoma in winter, though the Eastern is the common breeding bird. Meadowlarks observed feeding on road-kills along a highway in southwestern New Mexico during a three-day spell of severe winter weather (snow 6-10 inches deep) were known to be of both Eastern and Western species (Hubbard and Hubbard, 1969, Wilson Bull., 81: 107-108). An Eastern Meadowlark observed near Bath, New York, on 5 July 1939 was feeding on a freshly killed meadowlark that had been

"partly smashed by automobile traffic" (Terres, 1956, Auk, 73: 289) — evidence that meat-eating is not strictly confined to periods of severe winter weather.—Michael P. Schrick, *Hulah Project Office, Corps of Engineers, Rt. 1, Box 620, Copan, Oklahoma 74022, 29 January 1979.*

Third winter record of Dickcissel in Washington County, Oklahoma.—Toward evening on 24 January 1978, I noticed a different "sparrow" feeding among the House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) in my yard in Dewey, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma. The larger bill, paler color, yellow breast, and eye-stripe convinced me that the bird was a Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*). When wind ruffled the feathers a trace of black necklace was visible across the upper breast. The bird remained only a few minutes, all the while spreading and closing its tail feathers as if suspicious or agitated. The following morning I saw the Dickcissel again. This time it was perching in a large oak not far from the house. Again it was spreading and closing its tail. I watched it for about ten minutes. It did no feeding during this period. On the morning of 26 January I watched it again for a short time. It was feeding with the sparrows, as usual. I saw the rusty wing patches clearly. During the three-day period above discussed, snow covered the ground and the air temperature did not rise above 35°F.

There are two previous records for the Dickcissel in winter in Washington County: from 1 to 8 February 1966 (snow and ice on ground) one was observed by Sophia C. Mery, Doris Williamson, Dotty M. Goard, *et al.* feeding with House Sparrows at the Williamson residence in Bartlesville (Norman, 1973, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 6: 33); on 8 January 1973 (3-4 inches of snow on ground) Gene Hendricks saw one, again with House Sparrows, at the Hendricks residence in Bartlesville.—Ella Delap, 409 N. Wyandotte, Dewey, Oklahoma 74029, 14 March 1978.

Brown-capped Rosy Finch and House Finch in Grant County, Oklahoma.—On 16 and 18 February 1979 (weather cold; 3 inches of snow on ground; prevailing wind in area in winter from north and west), my wife Ann and I saw a Brown-capped Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte australis*) in our yard in Wakita, Grant County, north-central Oklahoma. The bird was attracted especially by a heated bird-bath, to which we saw it go six times on the 16th and twice on the 18th. On the 16th we also saw it feeding on wheat at a feeder along with several House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and perching for about 15 minutes well above ground in a mulberry tree not far from the feeder.

The House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), a brightly colored male, we saw only on the 16th. It was rather shy. We did not see it go to the bird-bath.

Adverse weather conditions might well have been responsible for the presence of these two western birds in north-central Oklahoma. The winter of 1978-79 was the most severe that we have experienced within the past 51 years. No rosy finch of any species has heretofore been sighted anywhere in Oklahoma. The House Finch, on the other hand, has been seen eastward to Beckham, Harmon, Caddo, and Cleveland counties (Sutton, 1974, Check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p.

43) and also to Jackson County (Tyler, 1979, Stovall Mus. Contr. 2, p. 50) and Comanche County (1978, Amer. birds, 32:1182).—Lyle L. Byfield, P.O. Box 24, Wakita, Oklahoma 73771, 3 April 1979.

FROM THE EDITOR: Rod W. Smith and Jack S. Barclay have recently published in American Birds (1978, 32: 1123-27) an important paper on the westward range extension of the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*). A summary of their findings is in order since many students of ornithology in Oklahoma may not even be aware of the fact that woodcocks nest in the state. Data were collected from North Dakota to Texas, and all states except Nebraska reported breeding considerably west of the generally accepted western limits. Earliest dates for courtship ranged from late January in Oklahoma and Texas to 24 April in North Dakota. Nesting began as early as 14 February in Oklahoma and 3 April in South Dakota. Some birds hatched in Minnesota and Wisconsin migrated through or wintered in the southern survey states. The species may be commoner west of its accepted range than has previously been believed.—Jack D. Tyler.

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