

ground. The rudimentary nest was directly above the bed of a little creek and well shaded by the eastern part of the tree's crown.

Granger and I returned to the nest at 1815 on 5 May. Mud in the creek bed showed that there had been recent rain. As I climbed the elm both hawks watched from mesquite trees about 200 yards away. About 15 sticks had been added to the nest, which appeared to be about one-third completed.

When I next visited the nest (at 2035 on 11 May) it held one egg. One of the hawks was at the nest, though I am not sure that it was brooding the egg. One green twig was in the nest.

On 12 May, Dale Mills checked the nest at 2015. It held one egg. Neither hawk was at the nest, but one of the pair was perched in a tree not far away.

On 14 May, Mills flushed a hawk from the nest, which now held two eggs, one of them freshly flecked with blood. Several leafy twigs were also in the nest. Assuming that the second egg had been laid on 13 or 14 May and that incubation had started on that date, I calculated that hatching would take place on 10 or 11 June, 28 days being the "usual" incubation period according to Bent (1937, Life histories of North American birds of prey, Part I, Bull. U.S. Natl. Mus. No. 167, p. 226).

I last visited the nest on 15 June. It held two eggs. Neither transmitted light or made a "sloshing" sound when shaken. But no hawk was to be seen in the vicinity. The nest apparently had been deserted.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, CAMERON UNIVERSITY, LAWTON, OKLAHOMA 73505, 30 DECEMBER 1980.

## GENERAL NOTES

**Anhinga in Tulsa County, Oklahoma.** — On the morning of 18 May 1980, Bruce Reynolds and his wife Anne reported that they had briefly seen a bird that they thought to be an Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) in the North Woods unit of the Mary K. Oxley Nature Center in Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma. The Reynoldses and the staff of the Nature Center looked for the bird during the next several weeks, but without success.

On 11 June 1980, Jeff Webster, a summer employee at the Nature Center, observed an Anhinga in this same area. It was perched in a tree that bordered a long pond, part of an old oxbow of Bird Creek. Jeff notified Eileen Docekal, Nature Center Naturalist, and summer employees Neal Muirhead, Terri Bruner, and Bernadette Brown, who found the Anhinga within minutes and followed it to a tall dead tree at the edge of a sewer line right-of-way just south of the pond. Here, in full sun, it remained for about two minutes before flying off to the southwest.

On 14 June 1980, a group from the Tulsa Audubon Society had good looks at an Anhinga at the oxbow pond. In the group were Gary Lee and his wife Ellen, John Dickerson and his wife Lynn, Alice Hensy, *et al.*

On the morning of 28 June, Neal Muirhead and I were checking the area when we saw a male Anhinga fly from north to south across the oxbow at a

height of about 40 feet. Within ten seconds, another Anhinga (possibly, though not certainly, a female) followed the first, flying at about 90 feet. Both birds emerged from the tree-line as we watched, circling ever higher above the oxbow until reaching perhaps 250 feet. They then disappeared to the west. We looked for them repeatedly from 28 June on, but did not see them again.

*Anhinga anhinga* is listed by Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 21) as an irregular visitant to Oklahoma, recorded between 9 April and 29 October. Breeding pairs were observed in McCurtain County, southeastern Oklahoma, in 1937 (Nice, 1938, Auk, 55: 121-122) and in Sequoyah County, east-central Oklahoma, in 1971 and 1972 (Norton, 1973, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 6: 12-13). The only previous records for Tulsa County are for Mohawk Park, in North Tulsa, in 1948. On 24 September of that year one was seen at Lake Yahola (then called North Lake) by Tom Jessee, Orrin Letson, and Ethel Letson; on 17 October, Peggy Acord saw three at Recreation Lake (Letson and Kassing, 1949, Proc. Oklahoma Acad. Sci., 30: 25). — Robert G. Jennings, *Mary K. Oxley Nature Center, 200 Civic Center, Room 642, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74013, 1 December 1980.*

**Barnacle Goose in Custer County, Oklahoma.**—At about 1245 on 14 February 1980 (a somewhat cloudy but bright, unseasonably mild, winter day), while I was scanning a flock of about 12,500 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in hopes of seeing individuals wearing colored neck-collars, I realized that one of the birds along the edge of the flock was a Barnacle Goose (*B. leucopsis*). The flock was feeding in a big field of winter wheat about a mile west of the Washita National Wildlife Refuge's "McClure Recreation Area" near Butler, Custer County, west-central Oklahoma. Realizing that refuge personnel would want to know of the bird, I radioed word of my observation to them. Within a short time C. Craig Heflebower and Jack Warner of the refuge staff and Kelly Myers of the Young Adult Conservation Corps staff joined me, and the four of us observed the rare goose through a Questar 120x spotting scope. It appeared to be a fully adult bird.

According to G. M. Sutton's summary of records, *Branta leucopsis* has not heretofore been reported from west-central Oklahoma. The species has, however, been shot as game in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma, and it has been seen repeatedly in winter during recent years at the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge in Johnston County, southeastern Oklahoma.—Robert K. Green, *Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Box 1747, Jamestown, North Dakota 58401, 29 February 1980.*

**Wood Duck and Vermilion Flycatcher in far western Oklahoma.**—In late afternoon on 30 May 1980, while Robert Andrews, James Loughlin, and I were driving along a gravel back-road about 4.6 miles east and 2.3 miles south of Kenton, Cimarron County, Oklahoma, my car broke down. Not far south of us was a farmhouse. East of us, about a quarter-mile across short-grass pastureland, was northward-flowing Willow Creek, along which were

scattered groves of cottonwood and willow. Near one of these groves I came upon a male and female Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), the former perched on a yucca stalk about 3 feet up, the latter on an exposed low willow twig. I never saw both at the same time, though they were not far apart. Neither carried food very far before consuming it, so I decided they were not feeding a brood. The male was less richly colored than males I have observed in Texas and Arizona, the red of his crown and underparts being of an orange shade.

Walking north along Willow Creek, I came upon a medium-sized, gray-looking duck afloat near some cattails. Its bill was two-toned. A white line encircling its eye extended backward toward its nape. It was a female Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*), a species that seemed distinctly out of place in this arid country. As I moved closer, it sprang from the water, letting me see its comparatively unmarked wings. It flew northward about 40 yards and alighted in the creek, again close to cattails. Next, I examined the creek to the south of where I had seen the flycatchers, and from there a second Wood Duck flew up, this one a drake whose white head-markings, though noticeable enough, contrasted less with the dark markings than those of a bird in full breeding plumage would have. This duck also moved downstream, alighting not far from the female.

Between 0730 and 1000 the following morning (31 May), my companions and I saw the two flycatchers and the two ducks again. We failed to find the flycatchers' nest and decided that the ducks were not a breeding pair. The more noteworthy of the 35 bird species that we saw in the area were a Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*), two Cassin's Kingbirds (*Tyrannus vociferans*), an Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), a Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*), and at least ten Cassin's Sparrows (*Aimophila cassinii*).

The Vermilion Flycatcher is known to have nested unsuccessfully in Major County, in the northwestern part of the main body of Oklahoma, in 1956; successfully in Lincoln County, central Oklahoma, in 1960; and successfully in or near Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma, in 1972; although reported several times from Cimarron County, it is not known to have nested there or elsewhere in the Panhandle (Sutton, 1974, Check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 27). The Wood Duck, which breeds regularly in eastern Oklahoma, has been reported previously only once from the Panhandle — a female seen at Lake Etling, Black Mesa State Park, on 10 May 1973 (Tyler, 1975, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 8: 18). — Mark Holmgren, *Section of Birds, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213, 17 October 1980.*

**Lesser Scaup captured by Snapping Turtle.**—At about 1300 on 18 May 1980 (weather mild; temperature 76° at noon; north-northwest wind 10-15 m.p.h.), while counting waterfowl at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma, my two young sons and I noticed a drake Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) flapping its wings in the water

75-100 yards out from the dike of a large pond known as Casey Marsh. The duck continued to splash about, beating its wings violently as if doing its best to fly off. Obviously it was in a state of panic.

Several times, as we watched, the struggling scaup went completely under, each time going straight down rather than diving head first. When it surfaced, sometimes only its head was in sight. When, after a complete submergence, its whole body reappeared, it seemed to be tiring.

Curiosity got the best of me, and I started to wade out. The water was about 2½ feet deep. When I was within 50 yards of the duck, it went under again. As 15-20 seconds passed while I was approaching, I suspected that it was down for good. Then up it came, still trying desperately to fly off. The closer I got, the more it struggled, but it could not break free from what was holding it. Finally I reached it, seized it, and began lifting it from the water. Holding to its right leg was a huge Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) with head about twice the size of my fist.

While I was lifting the duck, the turtle did not jerk or pull but simply hung on like a dead weight. When I got the turtle's head above water, however, it released its hold, slid down into the muddy water, and disappeared. I never got a good look at its whole body. The scaup died while I held it. It will be preserved as a specimen.

In addition to the scaup that I took from the turtle, we counted that day on and near Casey Marsh the following waterfowl: nine Eared Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*), one Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), three Northern Shovelers (*A. clypeata*), five Lesser Scaups (two of them drakes), four Ruddy Ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), and 16 American Coots (*Fulica americana*). All of these seemed to be in perfect health. Nor could I detect anything at all below par about the scaup that the turtle had caught. Lesser Scaups had been seen regularly, in varying numbers, since 12 March — only one (a hen) on 5 May, as many as 13 (both drakes and hens) on 12 May. At no time had anyone seen a drake "moping around" as if in poor health.

I suspect that the turtle, partly covered with mud, captured some of its prey through merely waiting at the pond's bottom. When the scaup, idling on the surface, drifted into position directly above it, the turtle swam slowly upward and, when close enough, shot its head forward with jaws open and clamped them shut on the duck's leg.—John A. Kirk, *Acting Refuge Manager, Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Box 76, Jet, Oklahoma 73749, 13 June 1980.*

**Carolina Wren nest in hole in bank.** — On 9 May 1980, while exploring a steep-walled excavation pit in a dry tributary to East Cache Creek near Lawton, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, I found the nest of a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) in a hole in the pit's north-facing wall. The hole was about 3.3 meters (10 feet) above the pit's floor. Its entrance was 14 centimeters (5½ inches) wide and the nest was 37.8 centimeters (15 inches) back from the entrance. I would not have found the nest had not one of

the wrens flown from the hole. I did not ascertain what the nest contained, for I did not want the wrens to desert it.

Hoping to band the wrens, I returned to the nest on 11 May. Louis E. McGee was with me. We did not catch a wren, but found that the nest held six eggs. On 12 May, accompanied by my wife Darleen, I tried again. This time I caught and photographed one of the wrens and photographed the one noticeably over-sized egg — that of a Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). On 24 May the nest held four chicks — three wrens and a cowbird. The cowbird was about twice as large as the wrens. It was very active and its eyes were wide open, whereas the baby wrens' movements consisted chiefly in gaping for food and grasping with their toes and their eyes were not fully opened. We measured and photographed all four chicks and returned them to the nest.

I last visited the nest on 26 May, finding there three active and vocal young wrens but no cowbird. I am confident that the cowbird had fledged, though I failed to find it anywhere close by. It had appeared to be much older than its "siblings" on 24 May, and I cannot help believing that it had hatched before they did.

*Thryothorus ludovicianus* nests in a wide variety of places. Bent (1948, U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 195: 206) states that away from "human structures" it may nest "in a hole in a tree or stump, in the open crotch of a tree, in a densely branched cedar, in the upturned roots of a fallen tree, on the ground under the exposed roots of a tree or under dense undergrowth, in a hole in a bank or under its overhang among tangled roots, in a cavity in a stone wall, or even in a sheaf of grain in an open field." According to G. M. Sutton's summary of records, no nest heretofore found in Oklahoma has been in a "hole in a bank." Furthermore, though several nests found in the state have held eggs or young of the cowbird, no "Carolina Wren feeding fledged cowbird" has yet been observed in Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 411). — Michael F. Smith, 2323 A Ave., Lawton, Oklahoma 73505, 27 July 1980.

**FROM THE EDITOR:** For two good reasons the March issue of the *Bulletin* was badly delayed. George M. Sutton's extended stay at the hospital in November and December slowed editorial progress, particularly with the tables of the lead paper. Too, after the issue had been printed, a blemish was discovered on the front page — one so bad that the entire issue, colorplate and all, had to be reprinted. Previous issues have been printed on time but have sometimes been mailed late, a circumstance beyond the control of the editors. We believe that the need for accuracy and presentability far outweighs the desirability of timeliness. In this instance, editorial policy dictated that the issue be right.—Jack D. Tyler.

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