

GENERAL NOTES

Possible courtship feeding of Yellow-billed Cuckoo. — The Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) is common in summer in Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma, especially on and near the Oxley Nature Center in Mohawk Park in Tulsa. No one has, however, found a nest in that wooded area at all recently so far as I know.

On 7 May 1979 I observed two of the cuckoos in what has traditionally been called "courtship feeding" behavior (see Lack, D., 1940, *Auk* 57:169-178) in Mohawk Park. The two were in a large dead elm (*Ulmus* sp.) that stood on the east dike of Lake Yahola. I was attracted to them by the call of the male. As I watched him I saw what I came to realize was his mate about 15 feet from him in the same tree. As the male called, his mate responded by bowing her head, drooping and fluttering her wings, and raising and lowering her tail. I thought I heard her give a short, soft *kow* note, but I could not be sure about this. I watched this call-and-response cycle five times within about ten minutes.

Hoping to photograph the female in her response attitude, which I had never before observed, I focused my camera on her and waited. Presently the male flew to her, mounted her briefly, and alighted close by. I photographed the two of them. The male remained with the female for about five seconds, whereupon they both flew off. Whether or not the mounting that I had observed was successful copulation I could not say. Not until I examined the photograph carefully did I realize that the male had in his beak a green caterpillar that he may have given his mate during coition. S. W. Eaton (1979, *Wilson Bull.* 91:154-155) described a similar instance of precopulatory behavior in this species in New York, but did not observe feeding. J. C. Welty (1975, *The life of birds*, 2nd ed., W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, p. 263) states: ". . . courtship feeding is associated with coition and may function as a releaser for that behavior. . . it occurs during copulation in the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. . ." — Robert G. Jennings, *Oxley Nature Center, 200 Civic Center, Room 642, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103, 23 July 1982.*

Rufous Hummingbird records for Comanche County, Oklahoma. —

At about 0830 on the heavily overcast day of 6 October 1977, a brownish hummingbird attempting to drink at our feeder was driven off repeatedly by a female hummingbird, probably a Ruby-throat (*Archilochus colubris*), the only other species seen that summer in our yard in Lawton, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma. Its brown color and high, sharp, fussing sounds attracted attention. For 15 minutes Cindy Felis and I observed the moot bird closely as it continued to fight with the other bird around the feeder about 24 inches from our patio door. The tail of the puzzling bird was rust-colored at its base, darker distally, and the corners were white. Its rusty-brown back showed a touch of green at the shoulders, and its forehead was a darker green. As it perched briefly in a redbud tree (*Cercis canadensis*) nearby, we could see several dark streaks on its throat, and near the chest a small area of bright orange-rust. Its dark rufous flanks contrasted sharply with the white of the

stomach. We identified the bird as an immature male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*; see Williams, F., 1978, Amer. Birds 32:225).

At about 0700 on 6 August 1980 there appeared at this same feeder a Rufous Hummingbird closely resembling the one described above. Esther Beavers and I watched for about an hour as it caught insects and perched on a telephone wire between feeding flights. Through binoculars we discerned its white postocular spot, dark cheeks, green head and nape, and rusty back. It was still "hawking" insects at 1930 as my husband Louis and I watched from a distance of about 15 feet. Small irregular dark spots on the throat, the greenish cheeks, and a thin "eyebrow" of gold-brown feathers all were apparent. Early the next morning we watched the hummingbird try to drink from the feeder, but it was chased off each time by other hummingbirds. Only when it was catching insects did the other birds ignore it. Having read of the pugnacity of this species (Bent, A. C., 1940, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 176:404), I was surprised that the other hummingbirds could drive it away from our feeder.

Photos of a possible Rufous Hummingbird that came to our feeder on 4 September 1980 show a ventral view of the spread white-tipped tail feathers, each of which has a dark band distal to its rufous base. The flanks and axillars are pale buff. No rusty shading appeared on this bird's back as we watched it. Probably this same individual flew into a mist net in our backyard two days later (6 September). It quickly freed itself and flew off before we could obtain a photograph, but we examined it closely enough to ascertain that it was a female Rufous Hummingbird (Williams, F., 1981, Amer. Birds 35:200).

On 14 August 1981 an adult male Rufous Hummingbird, its bronze-gold head, nape and back brilliant in the sunlight, perched briefly in the top of a mimosa tree (*Albizzia julibrissin*) in our backyard (Williams, F., 1982, Amer. Birds 36:193). On 7 August 1982, an immature male appeared near a ground-level bird bath where it battled a male and female Ruby-throat before giving up and flying away.

Selasphorus rufus migrates northward mainly along the Pacific Coast and breeds in the Pacific Northwest States but has been reported in Oklahoma from Cimarron, Texas, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Tulsa and Washington counties (Sutton, G. M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 23). There are sight records also for Rogers (Williams, F., 1978, Amer. Birds 32:225), Delaware (Williams, F., 1980, Amer. Birds 34:909), and Muskogee (Williams, F., 1982, Amer. Birds 36:193) counties.

Virtually all Oklahoma records have been in fall, a few birds overwintering. It appears that at least a few south-bound individuals regularly spill over onto the western Great Plains from their traditional route through the Rocky Mountains. In Texas, it is a regular fall migrant through western sections and the Panhandle, and along the Coast frequently occurs in fall, occasionally in winter (Peterson, R. T., 1960, A field guide to the birds of Texas, Houghton-Mifflin Co., Boston, p. 139). — Janet M. McGee, 1703 NW 43rd, Lawton, Oklahoma 73505, 21 February 1983.

Great-tailed Grackle breeding in Cimarron County, Oklahoma.—The main thrust of the spectacular range-expansion of the Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) into and through Oklahoma since the summer of 1953 has been northward (see Davis, 1975, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 8: 9-18). Recently, however, perhaps because of the scarcity of acceptable spots for nesting, the spread has been eastward and westward (see Pruitt, J., and N. McGowan, 1975, Am. Birds 29:985-992). Be this as it may, in the summer of 1978 I found two Great-tailed Grackle nests, one on 6 June, the other the following day, not far apart along the edge of a thick stand of cattails (*Typha latifolia*) at one of several sewage ponds 1 mile northeast of Bose City, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma. The cattail stand was roughly rectangular, measuring about 50 x 100 feet.

Each nest was fastened to cattail stalks about 2½ feet above water a bit less than 3 feet deep. Each held four eggs whose pale blue ground-color was obscured by a profusion of purplish, gray, and brown markings. Both nests and eggs were similar to those with which I had become familiar at Rose Lake in Canadian County, central Oklahoma, in the summers of 1975 and 1976. I made a point of noting that there were only two pairs of the big grackles at the sewage ponds, so presumably I found the nest of each pair. *Quiscalus mexicanus* has not, so far as I know, been found nesting heretofore anywhere in the Oklahoma Panhandle. To be noted is the fact that it is not known to have nested among the cattails at Lake Etling, an impoundment about 25 miles west of Boise City in Black Mesa State Park. — John S. Shackford, Route 1, Box 125, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111, 21 March 1980.

FROM THE EDITOR: William G. Voelker, who twice travelled to Oklahoma from his home in Millstadt, Illinois, is to be thanked for his help with banding and photographing Oklahoma's first Black-shouldered Kites in 122 years. — Jack D. Tyler.

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: \$2 student, \$5 single, \$7 family, \$10 sustaining, per year. Life membership \$75. Treasurer, Hubert Harris, Box 344, Bethany, Oklahoma 73008. Editor, Jack D. Tyler, Department of Biology, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma 73505.