

Hank Coburn is to be thanked for his cooperation in allowing numerous birdwatchers to search the area around the grain elevator near Southeast Third Avenue and Walnut Street. John Shackford and Wes Isaacs both shared their fine photographs with me.

1701 LENOX, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069, 26 JULY 1983.

## GENERAL NOTES

**Barrow's Goldeneyes in Cimarron County, Oklahoma.**—Participants in the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count for Kenton, Oklahoma, have twice observed drake Barrow's Goldeneyes (*Bucephala islandica*) on Lake Carl Etling in Black Mesa State Park, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma. On 31 December 1979, nine other persons and I discovered a drake Barrow's among 25 Common Goldeneyes (*B. clangula*) (Williams F., 1980, Am. Birds 34:572) that were aggregated in a small ice-free part of the lake. Nannette Johnson and I again identified the species there on 1 January 1983, this time two drakes that were with another flock of Commons (Williams, F., 1983, Am. Birds 37:665).

In each case, the Barrow's Goldeneyes were resting quietly on the lake with heads tucked under their scapular feathers when first noticed. The extensive black on their backs initially drew our attention to them because it continued approximately two-thirds of the way down their sides; the black dorsum of the Common Goldeneye drake extends only about a third of the way down. Another distinguishing feature was the black vertical bar just in front of the folded wing, a character lacking in *B. clangula*. When the Barrow's became more active, we could see that the white patch in front of their eyes was vertically elongate (unlike the round spot of the Common Goldeneye) and that it extended upward past eye-level. Also prominent was a broken dorsolateral stripe formed by successive white blotches on the scapular feathers. On neither date could we tell whether or not any of the several female-type birds present in the flocks were Barrow's Goldeneyes.

During each sighting, the Barrow's Goldeneyes were studied carefully with the aid of several 20-60X telescopes under optimal conditions of light; however, because the birds were as far away as one-quarter mile, we were unable to photograph them. Other observers present on at least one of the sightings were: JoAnn S. Garrett, Julie Halford, Earl McHugh, Jananne McNitt, Malana Mock, Jean Schulenberg, Marvin Schwilling and Harold Smith.

*Bucephala islandica* has been reported in Oklahoma on four other occasions: on 22 November 1956, two adult drakes, accompanied by three female-type goldeneyes, were observed in Mohawk Park, Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma by E. J. and Lena Esst (Baumgartner, F. M., 1957, Aud. Field Notes 11:36); on 28 January 1961, A. M. and Sophia Mery and others reported "several" on Hulah Reservoir in Osage County, northeastern Oklahoma (Baumgartner, F. M., 1961, Aud. Field Notes 15:341); Richard A. Ellis saw a drake in a shallow roadside pothole near Lake Humphrey in Stephens

County, southwestern Oklahoma, in February, 1964, and J. M. Carrel saw a drake on the City Lake in Altus, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma on 2 February 1972 (G. M. Sutton Summary of Bird Records, Univ. Oklahoma). No specimen of Barrow's Goldeneye has yet been collected in Oklahoma. — Sebastian T. Patti, 6528 Wenonga Terrace, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66208, 12 January 1983.

**Black-shouldered Kite in Comanche County, Oklahoma.**—At approximately 1800 on 26 March 1983 (temperature 45°F, wind north at 10 mph, skies partly cloudy), while driving south on the east boundary road of the Fort Sill Military Reservation, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, Andrew spied a bird cruising low over the open prairie that he thought was a Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*). He watched it slowly descend into the grass, then fly to an iron post, where it consumed a small rodent. Approaching to within 300 feet, and aided by a 20X telescope, Andrew identified the bird as a Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) when it flew again, for he could then clearly see its white head, tail, and underparts contrasting vividly with the black of its shoulders and ventral wrist spots. After the kite landed, Andrew also noticed its ashy gray back, striking red eyes, and yellowish-orange tarsi.

Andrew returned at dawn the following day with Charles P. Boydston and Allan R. Pfister; within minutes, they found the kite again. After hunting a few moments, it perched atop a lone tree trunk immediately beyond the Reservation's east boundary fence. Pfister and Boydston slowly advanced until only some 80 feet away, and took several photographs. Boydston, who had had three years of experience with the Black-shouldered Kite on its breeding grounds in southern Texas, agreed with Andrew's earlier identification.

Andrew recorded additional observations on 27, 28, and 31 March. On 27 March at 0930, Mike A. and Mark J. England saw the kite. At 1600, Mike took Jack D. Tyler and his young son Jeff to see it. Between 1620 and 1740, they photographed it (slides on file in Cameron University Museum of Zoology). Under a black locust tree (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) where the kite frequently perched, Tyler recovered three round pellets (averaging .6x1 in.), each containing the remains of one vole (*Microtus* sp.). The kite cruised slowly just above the grass — much like a Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). Frequently it rested on a low dirt ridge nearby (where we found remains of several rodents), or atop some other isolated prominence. Sometimes it hovered in the 10-20 mph north wind. A few times it plummeted straight down after prey with wings held vertically, gull-fashion. During this time, the temperature was 50°F and skies were mostly overcast.

Between 26 March and 9 April, the kite was observed by several other persons: by Jay K. Banta, by Kevin M. McCurdy, and, amid north winds exceeding 50 mph on 1 April, by Louis E. and Janet M. McGee. The last person to see it was Mike A. England on 7 and 9 April.

This is the third recent sighting of this species in Oklahoma, there being an early record in 1860 (Nice, M. M., 1931, *The birds of Oklahoma*, Rev. ed., Publ. Univ. Oklahoma Biol. Surv. 3(1):70). In July 1982, W.A. Carter and C.L.

Fowler found it nesting in Latimer County (1983, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 16:9-11); another kite was sighted in Tillman County by R.M. Carter in November, 1982 (1983, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 16:21); *not* in October as reported in Am. Birds 37:197, 1983 — Jonathan M. Andrew, Charles P. Boydston, and Allan R. Pfister, *Fish and Wildlife Branch, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503, 10 August 1983.*

**Goshawk in southern Oklahoma.** — At 1200 on 5 December 1982, eight other members of the Dallas Audubon Society and I watched a large accipiter as it soared over the camping area near the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge headquarters in Johnston County, southern Oklahoma. The bird stayed in view for about five minutes, never exceeding a range of one quarter mile, and circled nearby several times. In size, this bird appeared to be larger than a crow. The light gray barring on the breast I saw, but it was the blackish auricular patch and white superciliary line that finally convinced me that the bird was an adult Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*).

The Goshawk has been recorded southward in Oklahoma to Garvin, Caddo, and Grady counties (Sutton, G. M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, p. 9). The record at Tishomingo is the first for southern Oklahoma. — Kenneth Nanney, *1005 Roman Road, Grand Prairie, Texas 75050, 12 December 1982.*

**Saw-whet Owl in central Oklahoma.** — On the afternoon of 25 November 1979 (a pleasant day), as I was approaching a thick clump of junipers in a juniper-lined ravine about half a mile north of Lake Hefner, Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, I clapped my hands to see what might fly out. To my surprise, out came a small owl that I immediately suspected was something other than an Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*). It alighted in a juniper not far from me about three feet above the ground. It was so "tame", that I was able to observe it at close range for about 20 minutes. It was a Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*).

About an hour later — after going home for my camera and notifying others who might want to see the bird — I found it in the very same tree. It had moved about two feet to a perch close to the trunk. Before long, Hubert Harris, Carolyn Gritzmaker, Henry Walter, John G. Newell, Nancy Krosley, and Kathryn Belcher came for a look. Able to approach it to within four feet, I took several photographs in both color and black-and-white. All who observed it were able to see clearly the species' several diagnostic features.

The following day (26 November), I found the little owl in the same tree, again close to the trunk, but this time about six feet up. Brad Carlton, Ernest Wilson, and Douglas Weeks also saw it that day. Though several persons looked for it day after day from then on, no one was able to find it again.

*Aegolius acadicus* has not heretofore been reported from Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, though a specimen was found dead in Blaine County, central Oklahoma, on 11 November 1969 (Lamb, M., 1970, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 3:6-7). The species has been seen once in Texas County (Schwindt, K. E., 1982, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 15:30-31), and according to George M.

Sutton's summary of records at the University of Oklahoma's Stovall Museum, has been collected twice in that county and once in Osage County, northeastern Oklahoma (Osten, P., 1980, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 13:29). It has also been sighted in Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma (Baumgartner, F. M., 1965, Aud. Field Notes 19:499), and in Grant County, north-central Oklahoma (Sutton, G. M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, p. 21). — John S. Shackford, *Route 1, Box 125, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111, 29 January 1980.*

**Prothonotary Warbler in Cimarron County, Oklahoma, in October.**— On the morning of 2 October 1982, I collected a Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) on the Apple Ranch 15 km (9 mi) east of Kenton, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma. The specimen, prepared by C. W. Wood as a study skin, proved to be an immature (skull not fully pneumatized) female and is deposited in the collection at the University of Oklahoma Museum of Zoology (UOMZ 17760). The bird was in company with a loose flock of other small birds working their way through stands of shrubby hackberry trees (*Celtis* sp.) along the Cimarron River floodplain 1 km (.6 mi) east of the low water bridge known locally as Watson's Crossing. Other species composing the flock included approximately 75 Mountain Chickadees (*Parus gambeli*), at least 6 Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata*), 2 Wilson's Warblers (*Wilsonia pusilla*), 10 Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*), and about 20 Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*).

The Prothonotary Warbler is rarely observed west of riparian woodlands in eastern and central Oklahoma, where it breeds. Heretofore, there were but two records for the whole of the panhandle and extreme northwestern Oklahoma: C. W. Comer and several others watched a male for some time along the Cimarron River woodlands 3 miles northeast of Kenton, Cimarron County, on 7 May 1970; on 28 April 1978 Scott Collins reported one at Black Mesa State Park, also in Cimarron County (G. M. Sutton Summary of Bird Records, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma). J. P. Hubbard (1978, Revised check-list of birds of New Mexico, New Mexico Orn. Soc. Publ. No. 6, Albuquerque, p. 71) listed it as a "rare and very local" migrant in New Mexico, with nine known records, including one from Clayton, 35 miles southwest of Kenton. The nearest breeding locality on record is in Alfalfa County, Oklahoma, nearly 400 km (250 mi) to the east (Sutton, G. M., 1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 489).

There are few fall records after 15 September for the state; on 19 September 1936, Edith R. Force saw one bird in Sapulpa, Creek County; J. A. Grzybowski observed a female or young bird along the Canadian River in Cleveland County on 11 October 1980 (Sutton Summary, *op. cit.*). Even so, fall records of any sort are unusual for this species. — D. Scott Wood, *Section of Birds, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213, 9 November 1982.*

**Green-tailed Towhee in Johnston County, Oklahoma.**—At about 1300 on 12 February 1983, as I was returning to the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge headquarters from the goose field observation point, a bird with noticeable green plumage darted across the road in front of my car. Quickly, I investigated the brushy thicket into which it had disappeared. “Squeaking” the back of my hand, I soon attracted several Harris’ (*Zonotrichia querula*), White-crowned (*Z. leucophrys*), and White-throated (*Z. albicollis*) sparrows. While checking this flock with 7 x 50 binoculars, my attention became fixed on a bird about 20 yards back in the thicket that was not quite as large as a Harris’ Sparrow. It was definitely unlike the others as it sat quietly facing me. Especially conspicuous were its clear white throat and eyeline which combined to give its face an “X-like” pattern when viewed head-on. Dark whisker-marks too, were evident. When the bird changed position, its rusty crown and the striking green cast of its upperparts and tail became apparent. For approximately five minutes I studied the finch, concluding that it was a Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*). Fortunately, I had observed another Green-tailed Towhee in Dallas, Texas, just three days before.

Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge is located in Johnston County in south-central Oklahoma. Although there are numerous records for Cimarron County in far western Oklahoma, and scattered sightings for a few western and central counties (Texas, Kiowa, Comanche, Cleveland and Oklahoma), there is no previous record of Green-tailed Towhee for this part of the state (Sutton, G. M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, *Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist.*, Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 44). — Robin M. Carter, 8927 Liptonshire Drive, Dallas, Texas 75238, 11 August 1983.

**Brewer’s Sparrow in Cimarron County, Oklahoma, in winter.** — On 31 December 1979, several other bird observers and I happened onto a small flock of six Brewer’s Sparrows (*Spizella breweri*) along a blacktop road about 2½ miles east of the village of Kenton, Cimarron County, at the western end of the Oklahoma panhandle. After studying them closely in good light through a 30X telescope, several field marks convinced us that they were Brewer’s rather than Clay-colored Sparrows (*S. pallida*), both of which have similar winter and breeding plumages. First, the auricular pattern was not as well differentiated as it is in the Clay-colored Sparrow. Secondly, the plumages of the sparrows we observed were pale with a grayish cast; the Clay-colored tends to be more brownish, particularly during the winter months. Finally, *S. pallida* has a light median crown stripe, a feature not present on the birds we saw. Instead, the brownish crowns of our six sparrows were marked with fine black streaks. Furthermore, their brown (not gray) rumps precluded their being immature Chipping Sparrows (*S. passerina*). Photographs are on file in the Cameron University Museum of Zoology in Lawton, Oklahoma.

*S. breweri* is a transient in Cimarron County and there are single records for Woodward and Cleveland counties, both in late April. It has been recorded from 25 August to 11 October in fall, as early as 20 March in spring. There are no previous records for winter (Sutton, G. M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma

birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 47). The first state record as well as the latest fall date of occurrence heretofore was 11 October 1925, when R. Crompton Tate observed 14 of these birds near Kenton (Tate, R. C., 1926, *Condor* 28:181). — Sebastian T. Patti, 6528 *Wenonga Terrace, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66208, 10 January 1980.*

**White-winged Crossbill in Beckham County, Oklahoma.**—From 9 February to 3 March 1982 a White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) visited Elk City, Beckham County, western Oklahoma. I first saw the bird at 0745 on 9 February at the feeder in my yard. The weather that day was decidedly wintry. Air temperature rose from a low of 4°F in the early morning to a high of 16° in mid-afternoon. The sky was overcast; icy sleet and snow covered the ground. Also visiting the feeder that morning were six House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), several House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), and a female Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). I had no trouble identifying the crossbill, for its white wingbars were conspicuous and I could see its crossed mandibles easily when I looked at them through my binocular. Its fierceness toward the other birds surprised me. The House Finches and House Sparrows gave way to it. More than once while I watched it, before leaving the house for the day, it chased off the House Sparrows.

When I returned home in the evening, I saw the white wingbars flash as the crossbill flew from the feeder with the House Finches. A few minutes later I had a telephone call from Pope Almon and his wife Alma, who had just seen at their feeder a "white-winged finch-like bird" whose pugnacious attitude toward the other birds was noticeable. They continued to see the crossbill frequently at their feeder along with the House Finches from 10 to 16 February, during most of which period I was out of town. They last saw it on 3 March. It was with House Finches on that date.

*Loxia leucoptera* has now been recorded on six occasions in Oklahoma. A specimen was found dead in Beaver County; the other records are for the following counties: Tulsa 2, Cleveland 1, Washington 1, McCurtain 1 (G. M. Sutton Summary of Bird Records, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma). The species was well photographed by Robert J. Farris in Tulsa County on 26 February 1977 (1977, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.* 10:25). — Ina S. Brown, 106 *Sunset, Elk City, Oklahoma 73644, 3 March 1982.*

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