

L. L., 1979, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 12:34). On 20 February 1984 *Carpodacus mexicanus* was observed in Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, for the first time. At about 1630, on a feeding tray in his backyard on the near-northwest side of Oklahoma City, Mitchell Oliphant discovered a male House Finch. This bird Oliphant saw almost daily for a month after the initial sighting. It was banded and photographed on 12 March 1984, but continued to visit the feeder after being released. It was not seen again after 20 March.

The increasing number of House Finch sightings eastward in Oklahoma and elsewhere during recent years strongly implies that the species' range expansion is continuing.

3116 N. VIRGINIA, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73118 AND 106 SUNSET, ELK CITY, OKLAHOMA 73644.
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THE CURVE-BILLED THRASHER IN SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA

BY JOHN W. AULT III

The Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) is a resident of the thorn scrub, semidesert shrublands, brush and cactus country of the arid southwestern United States. It reaches the northeastern limits of its range along an irregular line through northeastern New Mexico, southeastern Colorado, extreme western Oklahoma (Black Mesa region), and southwestern Kansas (1983, American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American birds, 6th ed., p. 572). H. C. Oberholser (1974, The bird life of Texas, Vol. 2, Univ. Texas Press, Austin, p. 653, gives the Texas range as "resident . . . in Trans-Pecos, southern Panhandle, and south Texas brush country; uncommon in middle Panhandle . . . north locally and irregularly to northern Panhandle (non-breeders) . . .". However, occasional vagrants show up far outside this range and have been reported as far north as Manitoba, Nebraska and Wisconsin, west to the coast of southern California, and east to Florida, one even in New Hampshire (see map in Newlon, M. C., 1981, Iowa Bird Life 51:23).

Toxostoma curvirostre was first reported from Oklahoma in September 1933 by George M. Sutton (1934, Ann. Carnegie Mus. 24:35-36), who also discovered the first nest on 5 June 1936 near Kenton, in northwestern Cimarron County (1936, Auk 53:434). At that time the species was considered rare. It has been more frequently recorded since its discovery, but has not extended its range eastward (Sutton, G. M., 1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 425). Sutton wrote that walkingstick cholla cactus (*Opuntia imbricata*), which was used exclusively as a nesting site in Cimarron County, appeared to have been the factor limiting the species' range (1948, Condor 50:40-43).

Published Oklahoma records for the species east of the Black Mesa have been from the following counties: Ellis, 26 December 1968 (Sutton, G. M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 31); Beckham, 3-10 January 1971 (Sutton, 1974, *loc. cit.*); Jackson, late January to 24 February 1965 (Sutton, G. M., 1968, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 1:19), 12 and 31 October 1972, and 20 November 1973 (Sutton, 1974, *loc. cit.*); Kiowa, 27 March to 7 April 1968 (Carlton, B., 1968, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 1:19-20); Comanche, 1, 18, and 29 December, 1976 (Fears,



CURVE-BILLED THRASHER CHICKS

This nest, the second known for southwestern Oklahoma, was located 4 miles north and a half mile east of Eldorado, Jackson County. It contained four chicks, but only two are visible. The photograph was made on 5 May 1979 by Wesley S. Isaacs.

O. T., 1977, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 10:24); Oklahoma, 31 May to 30 August 1970 (Sutton, 1974, *loc. cit.*); and Cleveland, 1 October 1980 (Grzybowski, J. A., 1983, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 16:22).

Since 12 October 1972, and during every month of the year, there have been more than 40 unpublished sightings of Curve-billed Thrashers by me and others within 10 miles of Eldorado, in southwestern Jackson County, Oklahoma (Sutton Summary of Bird Records, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman). Except for one observed in extreme southeastern Harmon County, all of these birds were in Jackson County. In every instance, the thrashers were in or adjacent to mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) woodlands, which predominate in the area. Walkingstick cholla cactus, which Sutton thought restricted the thrasher's range in Cimarron County, is not native to southwestern Oklahoma.

Thus far, three Curve-billed Thrasher nests have been located in this part of the state, all near Eldorado. The first, built entirely with twigs of Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), I found on 17 June 1975, 1½ miles south of town (Tyler, J. D., 1979, Birds of southwestern Oklahoma, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 38). It was nine feet off the ground in a mesquite tree 13 feet tall, and contained four naked young thrashers that I estimated were about six days old. The second nest, discovered by several members of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society on 5 May 1979, was 4 miles north and a half mile east of Eldorado. Barely 3½ feet up, it was nestled in a lotebush (*Condalia obtusifolia*) 6 feet tall and it, too, held four nestlings (see photo). On 16 June 1979, approximately 40 yards south of the second nest, I located a third. This one contained two young birds and was 7½ feet high, again in a mesquite, this one about 12 feet in height. Because of their close proximity, I suspected the

latter two nests to have been built by the same pair of thrashers.

Other evidence of breeding has been found on three occasions. On 3 August 1976 (not 6 August, as reported incorrectly in Tyler, 1979, *loc. cit.*), two young thrashers were observed in mesquite land 6½ miles north and a half mile east of Eldorado. These had a yellowish tinge to their bills, a "scruffy" appearance, and were only two-thirds adult size. A family group of at least six birds was noted 3 miles north and 1½ miles east of town on 31 August 1976 in similar habitat (Tyler, 1979, *loc. cit.*). In a mesquite pasture 4¼ miles north and a half mile east of Eldorado, another family of five thrashers was seen on 1 September 1977.

The nearest known breeding localities to Eldorado are approximately 100 miles south-southwest in Kent County, Texas (Oberholser, 1974, *loc. cit.*), and 120 miles to the northwest in Randall County, Texas (Williams, F., 1975, *Am. Birds* 29:1002). A sight record from King County, Texas, is only about 65 miles south-southwest (Oberholser, 1974, *loc. cit.*). In a study of the summer birds of Wilbarger County, Texas, 25 miles southeast of Eldorado, R. L. More and J. K. Strecker (1929, *Contrib. Baylor Univ. Mus.* 20:3-16) did not report the Curve-billed Thrasher. Recently, however, it has been observed in several nearby Texas counties (Cottle, Foard, Childress, and Hardeman; pers. comm., Peggy Acord) and in a number of other counties in the central and northern Texas panhandle (pers. comm., K. D. Seyffert).

On the basis of the preceding observations, it appears that the Curve-billed Thrasher is a permanent resident in western Jackson County, and should be looked for in adjacent mesquitelands of western Oklahoma and north-western Texas.

240 NUTTING HALL, UNIVERSITY OF MAINE, ORONO 04473. 3 JULY 1979.

GENERAL NOTES

Wood Storks in Lake Texoma area.—G. M. Sutton (1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, *Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman*, p. 4) reported that non-breeding Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) had been recorded from 1 May to 27 September in Oklahoma, westward to Alfalfa, Cleveland and Oklahoma counties. At 1445 on 19 July 1982, several Wood Storks were observed at the Fobb Bottom Public Hunting Area adjacent to northwestern Lake Texoma, Marshall County, south-central Oklahoma. McCarley and members of his natural history of vertebrates class from the University of Oklahoma Biological Station nearby were seining a small pond when five immature storks started to settle in willow trees (*Salix nigra*) around the pond. These birds flared away when they saw the students. Several minutes later, two birds, then three, flew over but they, too, veered off. McCarley could clearly see their yellow bills and "fuzzy" (partially feathered) heads, convincing him that they were all immature. This sighting apparently constitutes the first record for Marshall County.

On 21 July, 1982, Haller watched five immature Wood Storks at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, Grayson County, Texas, on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma and about 10 miles (16 km) SSE of the Marshall County