

that "the literature indicates rather clearly that stilts prefer fresh-water habitats and avocets prefer alkaline or saline habitats" and that "stilts tended to be found in areas where some emergent vegetation existed." The stilt nests of that study were all placed on man-made dikes. Particular attention should be paid such man-modified playa lakes while searching for nesting Black-necked Stilts in other areas of the Texas Panhandle and in Oklahoma.

2206 S. LIPSCOMB ST., AMARILLO, TEXAS 79109. 1 AUGUST 1985.

A recent Cooper's Hawk nest in Osage County, Oklahoma. — Since the discovery by John L. Schwabe of a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) nest that held four eggs on 13 May 1936 in the Osage Hills, there are no breeding records known for Osage County, Oklahoma (see Schwabe, 1940, Amer. Midl. Natr. 24:209–212 and Sutton, 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci & Hist., Norman, p. 9). This nest was 30 feet up in a large post oak (*Quercus stellata*) and all four eggs hatched in June. Interestingly, Osage-naturalist John J. Mathews, who wrote of the depression years in the Osage Hills, frequently (though disparagingly) mentioned the Cooper's Hawk and its young (1945, Talking to the moon, Univ. Chicago Press). But since the Bartlesville Audubon Society began keeping records in 1960, not a single instance of breeding has been reported for Osage County.

On a private ranch near the town of Bowring in northeast Osage County, trees were being bulldozed on 25 June 1985 to make way for an oil drilling rig when the lease operator saw a nest in a felled oak (*Quercus* sp.) approximately 30 feet tall. The nest contained five Cooper's Hawk nestlings and was about 20 feet up from the roots. No adult hawk was ever seen. This tree had stood 50 feet from a small stream along which grew typical bottomland species: cottonwoods (*Populus deltoides*), sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*), elms (*Ulmus* spp.) and several mature oaks.

The young birds were placed in a box and eventually taken to Bertta Snell, a licensed rehabilitator in Bartlesville. One nestling was already dead. She guessed that the other four were about four weeks old. On 28 June 1985, three of these died, but the largest and healthiest survived. Until its release on 21 July, it thrived on a diet of mealworms and mice. The young accipiter returned to the Snell residence for mice made available to it until 3 August, after which date it was seen no more.

The widespread use of the insecticide DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloro ethane) and several other chlorinated hydrocarbon poisons may explain in part the virtual absence of nesting Cooper's Hawks in Osage County for the past 50 years. Many of these persistent poisons were banned from use in the United States in the early 1970s. Already in 1985, more summer sightings of this hawk have been recorded than in the previous five years (Bartlesville Audubon Society records). — Melinda Droege, Rt. 1, Box 516AA, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74006, 13 February 1986.

A summer record for the Osprey in Sequoyah County, Oklahoma. — At 0930 on 31 July 1986, Steve Hardin and I saw an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) at Lake Tenkiller, Sequoyah County, eastcentral Oklahoma. We were fishing

from a boat in a quiet cove of the lake, when all at once we noticed a large raptor perched on a dead snag only about 50 feet away. After studying the bird carefully enough for positive identification, we rowed slowly toward it until the Osprey flushed. It was white below, dark above and the dark line through its eye was easily distinguishable against the whitish head.

G.M. Sutton (1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, *Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman*, p. 11) mentioned midsummer records (2 June to 31 July) for Cherokee, Payne, Alfalfa and Comanche counties and fall dates from 21 August to 16 December. Active Osprey nests at Salt Plains Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County and at Robert S. Kerr Reservoir in Sequoyah County were reported by Loyd D. Isley and James W. Lish (1986, *Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc.* 19:2-3). These are the only breeding records known for the state, but both are incompletely documented. The bird reported herein may have been an early migrant, but the species is to be watched for in summer near large reservoirs and river systems, for it could conceivably nest almost anywhere in Oklahoma. — Donald J. McMahon III, *Rt. 1, Box 50, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma 74434, 9 August 1986.*

Additional Eastern Screech-Owl records for southeastern Oklahoma. — Although it is true that few records for the Eastern Screech-Owl in southeastern Oklahoma have been published, a statement made by one of us in a recent note (Stewart, M.E., 1989, *Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc.* 22:7-8) is incorrect. It implied that only two records were known: a specimen at the University of New Mexico that was collected near Page in LeFlore County on 4 October 1919 and an owl Stewart photographed on the night of 19 March 1983 in northern McCurtain County. Several additional records have recently come to the authors' attention.

During the summers of 1961 and 1962, W.A. Carter regularly observed three red-phased screech-owls on the McCurtain Game Preserve in McCurtain County (1965, *Ecology of the summer nesting birds of the McCurtain Game Preserve*, Ph.D. Diss., Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater, p. 41). In the same area, J.L. and Marion Norman saw a single bird near Broken Bow Reservoir on 1 January 1967 (1967, *Aud. Field Notes* 21:297). Also in McCurtain County, G.T. Rogers heard screech-owls calling on the nights of 12-14 September 1944 at Cedar Creek Lake near Heavener (Sutton, G.M., [1982], *Species summaries of bird records, Oklahoma Mus. Nat. Hist., Norman*) and on 27 October 1975, D.S. Wood found a dead male bird (UOMZ 8689) 8 miles east and 13 south of Idabel (D.S. Wood letter of 27 April 1989 to M.E. Stewart).

Stewart has recently been transferred from southwestern Oklahoma to the Ouachita Wildlife Management Area (also known as the Holson Valley Game Management Area) in southern LeFlore County. Since his arrival, he has had the good fortune to encounter Eastern Screech-Owls on three occasions in this county. On or about 11 June 1988, a red-phase bird struck his truck as he drove through the town of Poteau. It recovered a few moments later and was set free. Another owl he found dead 12 February 1989 on Post Mountain, 3 miles south and 5½ west of Hodgen, was decapitated and so badly damaged by traffic that it was unsalvageable. Then on 20 April 1989, a photograph of a live screech-owl

that had been brought by a house cat into the James A. Johnson house 12 miles south of Heavener on 14 April 1989 appeared in the Heavener Ledger (Vol. 85, No. 16, p. 9). After examining it for injuries, the Johnsons released it, apparently none the worse for its ordeal.

Two older LeFlore County records should be mentioned. At Wister Reservoir near Heavener, J.L. Norman saw a screech-owl on 7 August 1949 and heard another on 12 May 1950 (Sutton [1982], *op. cit.*). — M. Earl Stewart, *P.O. Box 101, Hodgen, Oklahoma 74939*, and Jack D. Tyler, *Department of Biology, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma 73505*, 2 May 1989.

Carolina Chickadee trapped in nestbox. — Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*) are abundant residents of the oak-hickory woods surrounding my home near Hogshooter Creek, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma. On 8 May 1988 the loud fussing and buzzing of a pair caught my attention. The birds' activities centered around a small plastic birdhouse that hung about six feet above the ground within 20 feet of my carport. This birdhouse had been ignored for years by all the birds in the area, so I was therefore surprised to hear scratching and thumping sounds inside. When I tried to peer into the entrance hole, however, I found the view completely blocked. Upon closer inspection, I could see that the hole was covered from the inside by a paper wasp's (*Vespula* sp.) nest. The nest appeared old and devoid of life. What then was causing the noise and activity around the birdhouse?

As I gingerly moved the wasp nest from the entrance, a young chickadee burst from the hole, brushed past my nose and fluttered to a tree limb approximately five feet away. Immediately, the adult chickadees flew to its side. The trio then disappeared together into the underbrush.

Inside the birdhouse, I found a chickadee nest composed primarily of moss and Angora rabbit fur (from our pet rabbit) densely packed to within 1 cm of the hole entrance. The wasp nest had originally hung from the highest point inside the birdhouse. Clearance between the wasp nest and the bird nest was 4.8 cm. Sometime during the nesting season, the wasp nest must have been knocked loose and eventually covered the entrance hole, trapping the young chickadee.

The next day I observed a family of chickadees (two adults and at least three young) within 100 feet of the nest area, suggesting that other nestlings had fledged without difficulty. This incident points out the importance of checking and cleaning birdhouses every year, even those that weren't previously occupied.

Human intervention to aid trapped nestlings has been reported for Cliff Swallows (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*) entrapped by buildup of their own excrement at a nest entrance hole (Stoddard, P.K., 1983, *Wils. Bull.* 95:674-5). — Bonnie Gall, *Rt. 1, Box 517F, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74006*, 15 May 1988.

Gray Catbird in Tulsa County, Oklahoma, in winter. — Early on the afternoon of 22 January, 1985, a pleasant, sunny day, Terry Mitchell and I were searching for birds along Green Dragon Trail at the Oxley Nature Center in northeast Tulsa, Oklahoma, when our attention was drawn to an unfamiliar

bird call. As we searched the undergrowth and low trees, only to discover that the unusual notes had come from a Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), we happened to notice a dark bird sitting quietly in a tree about 80 feet away. It was gray throughout, save for its reddish undertail coverts and black cap, which we could clearly see through our binoculars. We both agreed that it was a Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), a species that, after conferring with Bob Jennings at the nature center, we found to be transient statewide and that breeds chiefly across northern Oklahoma. According to Sutton ([1982], Species summaries of Oklahoma bird records, Oklahoma Mus. Nat. His., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman), there are three prior winter records for Tulsa County (21 and 22 December, 2 March) and one each in Washington and Alfalfa counties (30 December and 1 January, respectively). — Scott Dingman, *P.O. Box 4748, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74159, 12 December 1985.*

Early spring record for Dickcissel in Comanche County, Oklahoma. — At 1800 on the exceptionally early date of 17 March 1985, while driving east along South Boundary Road on the East Range of the Fort Sill Military Reservation in Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, Sam Orr and I noticed a small flock of sparrow-like birds moving along a line of Osage orange trees (*Maclura pomifera*) just ahead of our vehicle. We stopped and watched them from about 50 feet for 20 to 30 seconds through a Bushnell 25X spotting scope and 7-power binoculars. We counted six birds, but were having difficulty identifying them in the orange cast of twilight. Finally, one perched on an outer limb, facing west, where we could clearly see its yellow chest with black bib and bright chestnut-colored shoulders. We knew immediately that these birds were Dickcissels (*Spiza americana*), a species that regularly summers in Oklahoma.

For southwestern Oklahoma, J.D. Tyler (1979, Birds of southwestern Oklahoma, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 49) reported 22 April as the earliest spring date. Unseasonably warm late winter weather may have contributed to this untimely arrival.

Sutton ([1982], Species summaries of Oklahoma bird records, Oklahoma Mus. Nat. Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman) listed eight winter records. Four were in Washington County, two in Tulsa County and one in Muskogee County, all in northeastern Oklahoma. The other was in central Oklahoma, in McClain County. One of the Tulsa birds overwintered, having been noted from November 1969 to March 1970. — Allen Ratzlaff, *923 W. 4th St., Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74074, 22 July 1985.*

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