the nest. Although one or more of the young may have fledged, Shackford could find no flycatcher in the area two weeks later (15 July).

Almost exactly a year later, on 10 May 1983, Harden, Shackford and Monte Setzer caught the same banded female at a second nest cavity about one mile northwest of the 1982 nest. It was about nine feet high in a mesquite tree (*Prosopis juliflora*) and also contained five eggs. They did not see the male. It took three attempts to catch the now-skittish female, who was not captured until after dark. Quite possibly they inadvertently caused this nest to fail, for on 26 May it had been abandoned by the female and held three Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) eggs. The flycatchers were seen no more in 1983 or thereafter.

Sutton ([1982], Species summaries of Oklahoma bird records, Oklahoma Mus. Nat. Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman), listed Ash-throated Flycatcher sightings for the following counties: Cimarron, Beaver, Harmon, Greer, Jackson, Tillman, Pawnee, Kiowa and Comanche. For the following counties he recorded breeding records: Cimarron, Harmon, Jackson, Tillman, Comanche and Beckham. Thus these nesting records in Kingfisher County are well east of the species' previously-known nesting range in the main body of the state.

An interesting question is whether or not the Ash-throated pair, the *first* time they ever nested in central Oklahoma, arrived together already mated, or separately? The chances of two birds of opposite sex turning up independently so far from the normal breeding range seems remote. One suspects such nesting birds arrive as pairs, but this is difficult to prove. Perhaps future radiotelemetry experiments will provide the answer.

6008-A NORTHWEST EXPRESSWAY, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73132 AND 2409 BUTLER DRIVE, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069, 19 FEBRUARY 1987.

Common Moorhens nesting in the Texas Panhandle. — Prior to the impoundment of Lake Meredith in the 1960s by the construction of Sanford Dam on the Canadian River in southwestern Hutchinson County, local observers in the Texas Panhandle considered the Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) a rarity. The few widespread sightings in spring had not been followed by any evidence of nesting and the species was considered as a bird of passage only. However, with the formation of a permanent marsh downstream from Sanford Dam, sightings became more frequent beginning in the early 1970s.

The first verification of nesting came in August 1976, when an adult Common Moorhen with one chick was found on the stilling basin below the dam by Fern Cain (Williams, F., 1977, Amer. Birds 31:195). The following chronology outlines my own discoveries of its breeding at that location in subsequent years: 5 July 1981, five adults with seven chicks (Williams, F., 1981, Amer. Birds 35:955) — reported in error as 15 July; 6 July 1984, three adults with two juveniles (Williams, F., 1984, Amer. Birds 38:1035); 4 July 1985, two adults with six chicks plus three juveniles; 29 June 1986, one juvenile. Although I have found adult moorhens summering in the marsh every year since 1975, not always have I seen young birds or other indications of breeding.

In the summer of 1983, Winnie Wester reported that a pair of Common Moorhens nested at Southeast Park Lake in Canyon, Randall County, about 55 miles south of Lake Meridith. On 24 June 1979 I observed an adult moorhen on a playa lake northwest of Dimmitt, in Castro County (Williams, F., 1979, Amer. Birds 33:876), and on 4 August 1985 I discovered an adult with three juveniles at a playa 12 miles south and 4 west of Dimmitt (Williams, F., 1986,

Amer. Birds 40:135). This latter site is a permanent body of water with an extensive growth of cattails (*Typha* sp.) located near a cattle feedlot.

Prior to these discoveries, the closest nesting to the Texas Panhandle was in Alfalfa and Grady counties in westcentral Oklahoma (Sutton, G.M., 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 13), and in central Texas (American Ornithologists' Union, 1957, Check-list of North American birds, 5th ed., Baltimore, p. 160). Concurrent with breeding in the northern Texas plains, nesting was being reported in the southern plains in Crosby County (Williams, F., 1978, Amer. Birds 32:225) and in Lubbock County (Williams, F., 1984, Amer. Birds 38:1035).

Other localities in the Texas Panhandle at which the Common Moorhen has been recorded in summer and where it may nest are one reported by Oberholser in Hemphill County (1974, The bird life of Texas, Univ. Texas Press, Austin, p. 303) and two by E.B. Ellis in northwestern Gray County (Williams, F., 1979, Amer. Birds 33:876; 1980, Amer. Birds 34:177). — Kenneth D. Seyffert, *2206 S. Lipscomb St., Amarillo, Texas 79109, 6 September 1986.*

FROM THE EDITOR: Most duck populations in North America have declined to all-time record low numbers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reports that the 31 million ducks surveyed during the spring of 1989 is eight percent lower than in 1988 and 24 percent under the 1955–1988 average. Particularly hard-hit are Northern Pintails, which are now 55 percent below their long-term average; American Wigeons, down 19 percent from 1988; Northern Shovelers, down 24 percent; and Redheads, 26 percent below last year's numbers. Gadwalls and Mallards were both seven percent under 1988 numbers and Green-winged Teal 14 percent. Canvasbacks, which for several years have been illegal to kill, were up 12 percent from last year.

The primary reason for these declines, of course, is loss of habitat. When prairie potholes in the northern plains are drained for agriculture, vital breeding areas are lost. This, coupled with increased usurpation of inland and coastal marshes necessary on the wintering grounds, deals a double blow to most species. A series of droughts during the 1980s, accentuated by the severely dry breeding season of 1988, certainly exacerbated an already serious problem, resulting in even lower reproduction.

Although not the basic cause of the dilemma, hunting annually takes its toll on already decreasing populations. Even greatly restrictive limits imposed in recent years haven't helped the over-all picture very much. For example, the take in 1988 was only half that of the previous year, but populations are still dropping. Hunting embargos are not very politically popular, but if drastic measures are not taken soon, the grandsons of present-day waterfowl hunters will not be able to enjoy their grandfathers' sport — there won't be any ducks around to shoot (statistics from Outdoor News Bulletin, published by The Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C., 11 August 1989). — Jack D. Tyler.

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