

Dam on Lake Texoma in Marshall County on 5 April 1992 (OBRC records).

As a breeding species in North America, the Little Gull was first officially recorded in 1962 in the Great Lakes region. Since then, there has been a "general increase in sight records in eastern North America" (Grant 1986, *op. cit.*, p. 119). In the four-state region mentioned above, the Little Gull has been recorded 17 times since 1985; 11 of these sightings have occurred since 1990 (*Am. Birds* 1985-1992).

Whether or not this recent spate of sightings of both species is actually due to rising North American populations, to greater numbers of gulls wintering on reservoirs in the interior United States, or simply to more intensive scrutiny by bird students is not known. Further investigation is warranted.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FAYETTEVILLE 72701, 12 AUGUST 1992.

## GENERAL NOTES

**Another Inca Dove in Comanche County, Oklahoma.**—At approximately 1000 on 8 December 1991 (skies cloudy, temperature about 50°F), we noticed a small scaly dove that was perched quietly in an ash tree in our backyard in northeast Lawton, Comanche County, Oklahoma. It was watching several other birds feeding on the ground. When it flew down to join them after several minutes, its rufous distal underwings and longish tail with white outer feathers were obvious. We recognized it immediately as an Inca Dove (*Scardafella inca*) because we had encountered this species on several trips to south Texas. The dove remained on the ground only a moment before flying away to the west.

On 26 January it returned to the yard and we took several photographs, the best of which are on file in the Cameron University Museum of Zoology in Lawton. The last date on which we saw the little dove was 16 February.

This represents only the second record for Comanche County and the eleventh for the state. The first Comanche County sighting was reported by Eugene A. Bartnicki from the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge near Cache, where one bird was observed from mid-summer to 20 December 1977 (Bartnicki, E.A., 1979, *Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc.* 12:31-32).

Other Oklahoma counties in which *Scardafella inca* has been recorded are Cimarron, Harper, Kay, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Jackson (Sutton, G.M., 1974, *A check-list of Oklahoma birds*, Contrib. No. 1, Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist., Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 20), Caddo (Felis, C.A., 1976, *Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc.* 9:33-34), Stephens (1982, *Am. Birds* 36:654) and Woodward (Engleman, J., 1980, *Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc.* 13:12-13) counties.—Kurt A. Meisenzahl and Sharon Meisenzahl, 911 NE Bobwhite Rd., Lawton, Oklahoma 73507, 15 January 1991.

**Northern Oriole in Payne County, Oklahoma, during winter.**—On 7 January 1986, while visiting my aunt at her farm approximately 6 miles southeast of Stillwater in Payne County, Oklahoma, my son Brian and I saw a Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*). The house is surrounded by cropland, but in the well-landscaped yard various trees and shrubs are interspersed with numerous flower beds. My aunt maintains several bird feeders stocked with Black Russian sunflower seeds as well as two suet feeders.

The feeding stations are frequently supplemented with discarded fruit.

For the preceding several days, temperatures had been below freezing, a condition intensified by sharp northerly winds. At about 1545, several American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*), a few Pine Siskins (*C. pinus*), a Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*), two Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), and the usual contingent of English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) were at the feeders. Earlier in the day, a rotten apple had been placed in the main fork of a black locust tree where both suet feeders and one of the tray feeders were located. All at once, my son Brian and I noticed a brightly-colored bird foraging among the others. Through binoculars, we could tell that it was an adult male Northern Oriole, a species that regularly breeds in Oklahoma, but that normally migrates southward during latter September (Sutton, G.M., 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman, pp. 546-547). We were astonished therefore that this individual had lingered so late into winter. Clearly, its color patterns were nearer those of the "Baltimore" race of the Northern Oriole than of the "Bullock's." We watched it for approximately 30 minutes as it pecked at the apple. After feeding, it flew to the south side of the house, never higher than seven feet. It appeared that a wing injury impaired its flight, which perhaps had prevented migration.

The next morning (8 January), I photographed the oriole as it dined on a piece of banana in the locust tree, which it seemed to prefer over the apple. For the remainder of the day, the bird alternately fed on the banana and sought warmth and shelter beneath a spreading juniper near the corner of the yard or among dead flowers along the south side of the house.

On 9 January, I erected mist nets in the yard and soon captured the oriole. Upon close examination, I discovered an injured area on the underside of the left wing that appeared to have healed. I banded (USFWS band No. 971-08412) and photographed the bird before releasing it.

My aunt continued to observe the oriole feeding at the black locust tree for approximately three more weeks. He was not seen thereafter.

The supplemental feeding of fruit probably contributed to the survival of this bird. In addition, dense woody cover near the farmhouse provided windbreaks and probably some protection from the numerous avian predators that have been noted thereabouts. These included the Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Merlin (*F. columbarius*) and Prairie Falcon (*F. mexicanus*).

Three other mid-winter records are known in the state for the "Baltimore" race. From 7 December 1962 to 17 January 1963, M.R. Darrah observed one in Bartlesville, Washington County (1963, *Aud. Field Notes* 17:340); on 1 February 1958, Sophia C. Mery saw a female in the same city (1958, *Aud. Field Notes* 12:290); and in Tulsa, Tulsa County, E.J. and Lena Esst watched a male on 18 and 20 February 1950 (*Aud. Field Notes* 4:210). Whether any of these birds was injured or not is unknown.—Patricia L. Muzny, 104 SW 68th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73139, 17 August 1992.

**Snow Bunting in McCurtain County, Oklahoma.**—At about 0900 on 20 December 1991, my daughter Judy and I, while enroute from Mena, Arkansas, to Texas for Christmas vacation, stopped briefly at a store in Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Upon leaving the store, Judy called my attention to a very conspicuous black and white bird that was with a flock of House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) in the parking lot. Skies were overcast, the temperature was unpleasantly cold and a light rain was falling. Presently, all the sparrows flew to a nearby power line. The strange bird, however, moved apart from the flock and perched by itself.

After retrieving our binoculars from the car, we noticed that the bird had white and tan on its head, white and black on its wings, dark legs and a yellow bill. We at first wondered aloud whether or not it might be an albino House Sparrow. Deciding to try to photograph the puzzling finch, we approached the flock. Each time we did so, however, the birds flushed and either flew back up to the power line or retreated beneath cars in the parking lot. Finally, Judy was able to get one shot of the black and white bird before all had departed.

We scanned our field guide for an illustration similar to the bird we had just seen. When we came to the female Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) in winter plumage, both of us agreed immediately on the identification.

Only when our snapshots had been developed after Christmas did we realize the significance of our sighting. Upon showing them to some friends in Mena (Walt and Shirley Brotherton, Bruce and Lana Ewing and Don Peach) who were familiar with birds, we were advised to make known our discovery to ornithologists in Oklahoma.

The Brothertons were planning to attend an upcoming meeting of the local bird club in Longview, Texas, so we sent the photo with them for verification. All 17 people from Longview and 25 from Fort Worth present concurred that our bird was indeed a Snow Bunting. At a regional forestry management conference a short while later, Judy mentioned this photograph to Earl Stewart, a forester with the United States Forest Service in the nearby Ouachita National Forest. Stewart in turn contacted Jack D. Tyler of Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. After discussing the details with us by telephone, Tyler sent an Oklahoma Bird Records Committee verification form for unusual sightings. After completing it, we forwarded this form, together with our photograph, to the committee, which subsequently accepted this record (see *The Scissortail* 42(2): 27, 1992).

There are only three previous records for the Snow Bunting in Oklahoma. On 22 December 1960, Lewis W. Oring watched three fly directly overhead near Kenton, in Cimarron County at the west end of the Panhandle (1961, *Aud. Field Notes* 15:243-244)., a female was collected on December 22, 1972 at Norman in Cleveland County by G.M. Sutton (Sutton, 1974 *A check-list of Oklahoma birds*, Contrib. Stovall Mus. Sci. & Hist. No. 1, Univ. Oklahoma, Norman, p. 48). At their home near Ketchum in Craig County, Lee and Sue Cruce observed from one to three Snow Buntings between 15 December 1972 and 11 May 1973 (C. Davis, 1973, *Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc.* 6:33-34). — Elsie Logan, P.O. Box 1534, Mena, Arkansas 71953, 19 April 1992.