BULLETIN OF THE
OKLAHOMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VOL. 49 SEPTEMBER 2016 NO. 3

FIRST RECORD OF SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) FOR OKLAHOMA

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Abstract—Herewith, we report the first record of a Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) in Oklahoma. This observation occurred on 18 April 2013, at Beaver River Wildlife Management Area, Beaver County. The individual was found dead after an extreme weather event, in which snowfall occurred and mean ambient temperatures dropped to 0.49°C. The individual, an adult male, may have experienced mortality from exposure to cold temperatures during this weather event.

OBSERVATION

On 18 April 2013, while working on a Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*; hereafter bobwhite) research project (Tanner *et al.* 2015) at Beaver River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Beaver County, Oklahoma, Rabon found a dead adult male Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*). The specimen was located at approximately 1000 hrs, about 82 m from the nearest road while Rabon was tracking a covey of bobwhite on the WMA. The individual was located at 36° 49' 44" N, 100° 40' 5" W and was approximately 12.6 km from the nearest town (Beaver). The bird was lying in a 116 cm^2 opening amongst sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*) and intermittent clumps of little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). The bird was located at the bottom of a sand dune near the Beaver River corridor. There were no obvious signs of injury to the specimen. At the time of the observation, the weather was overcast and the ambient temperature was -1.67 °C. We collected the specimen, took pictures (Figure 1), and recorded the observation on eBird (Sullivan *et al.* 2009). The specimen was prepared and deposited in the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History (OMNH 23489). Mass was not obtained for the specimen due to its emaciated state, however, morphological measurements were taken: wing cord, 112 mm; tail, 89 mm; and culmen, 24 mm (Joe Grzybowski pers. comm.).

Fig. 1. Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) found at Beaver River Wildlife Management Area, Beaver County, Oklahoma, on 18 April 2013 (Photo by E. P. Tanner). Represents the first confirmed record for Oklahoma. Specimen deposited in Oklahoma Museum of Natural History (OMNH 23489).

DISCUSSION

The Scott's Oriole is a neotropical migrant that has a distribution throughout much of the arid southwestern regions of North America (Sibley 2003). They typically inhabit open arid hillsides with yucca (*Yucca* spp.) and oak (*Quercus* spp.) or pine (*Pinus* spp.) woodlands (Sibley 2003). This species has experienced regional declines throughout much of its distribution, with the greatest declines occurring within the Great Basin region (Sauer *et al.* 2014)

Rare occurrences of Scott's Orioles have been previously reported throughout much of the United States. In the central United States, records are common within Texas where breeding occurs. However, beyond Texas there are only isolated occurrences. These include reports in southwestern Kansas (Thompson *et al.* 2011) and south-central Kansas (Otte 2016), Louisiana (Lowery 1974), Minnesota (Maley 1974), and central Nebraska (Johnsgard 2013). Dates of spring extra-limital records typically have occurred in May such as those reported in south-central Kansas, Louisiana, and Colorado (Remsen and Cooper 1977, Otte 2016). Other extra-limital records typically have occurred in late fall and winter (Remsen and Cooper 1977, Johnson 2007). Although the earliest extra-limital record for this region was reported in southwest Kansas on 16 April 1967 (Thompson *et al.* 2011), our April 18th record

represents one of the earliest extra-limital spring records reported for Scott's Oriole.

The Scott's Oriole specimen was discovered after an extreme weather event. The mean nighttime temperature (based on times of sunset and sunrise for this region and time period, 2000 to 0659 hrs,) during the week before the extreme weather event (11-17 April) was 12.58 °C (standard error, SE = 0.25), whereas the mean nighttime temperature during the extreme weather event was 2.83 °C (SE = 0.14). Likewise, the mean daytime temperature (0700 to 1959 hrs) during the week before the event was 8.24 °C (SE = 0.21) compared to a mean temperature of 0.49 °C (SE = 0.18) following this weather event. A total of 0.31 cm of precipitation was also recorded. Most of the precipitation was in the form of snow and was likely greater than this amount. Maximum wind speeds reached 64.37 km/h. All weather data were obtained from on-site weather stations (WeatherHawk 232).

Differences in arrival times of second year individuals in warmer years have been reported in other migratory passerines, with second year males arriving earlier in warmer years when compared to average or colder years (Moller 2011). In Scott's Orioles, after second year males typically arrive up to a week before the majority of females and second year males (Bent 1958, Oberholser 1974, Flood 2002). Males are more susceptible to extreme weather events than females during spring migration because males typically arrive earlier than females (Moller 2011). The Oklahoma specimen was an adult male and may have been an early migrant as discussed previously. As the specimen was found by itself, it is likely that it was an isolated bird and may have suffered mortality from the extreme weather event. However, no data exists on how extreme weather events influence survivorship of individuals for this species (Flood 2002) and future research should investigate how these events may influence individual and/or population ecology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This observation occurred during a project that was funded by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation through the Wildlife Restoration Grant F11AF00069 (W-165-R-1) to Oklahoma State University and administered through the Oklahoma Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Oklahoma State University, U. S. Geological Survey, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Wildlife Management Institute cooperating). Additional support was provided by the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station at Oklahoma State University and the

Bollenbach Endowment. We thank the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, Joe Grzybowski for preparation of the specimen and providing morphometric data and Tamaki Yuri for providing the catalog number. We are grateful for useful comments provided by C. Otte, M. C. Thompson, and G. Young during the review process.

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Received 28 March 2016; accepted 15 July 2016.

WINTER'S HAWK: RED-TAILS ON THE SOUTHERN PLAINS (BOOK REVIEW)

Winter's Hawk: Red-tails on the Southern Plains by Jim Lish (2015, 166 pages, $24.95 paperback, ISBN 978-0-8061-4835-9, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman).

For those that don't know of Jim Lish, he's an Associate Professor of Physiological Sciences at the Center for Veterinary Health Sciences, Oklahoma State University; a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) fanatic and expert who's published numerous scientific articles on the species, including in the *Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society*. This book is a result of a life-time infatuation with the most common hawk in Oklahoma and all of North America.

The book contains a preface and acknowledgment section followed by 16 chapters, a selected references section, and an index. The book is dedicated to George Miksch Sutton, a well-known Oklahoma ornithologist and avian artist, and in that nature the author's artistic photographs no doubt leave "Doc Sutton" with a smile on his face. The photographs are certainly one of the strengths of this book. Their use helps enhance the details provided in the text, and though numerous, are not a distraction, but beneficial. The composite images on pages 56-57, and 60-61 are well done. The former shows Red-tailed Hawks of different colors (plumages) which demonstrate the extensive variation that exists for this species. The latter provides the underside views of adults (pg. 60) and juveniles (pg. 61), which again demonstrates the variation and difficulty in identifying subspecies.

The first six chapters cover life history characteristics for the species in the southern plains. Some of the chapters, however, are really short, ex. The Defiant Red-tail is only a page and a half long (pg. 51-52). The author does a nice job of describing the movement of northern hawks into Oklahoma during the winter, and how this augmentation of the population is impacted as a result of winter weather and the impacts the hawks have on rodent populations. For the young naturalist interested in raptors, especially red-tails, the author provides good insight into when and how to observe them since they are often perched in the open. Their hunting prowess is well known, basically feeding on anything it can catch. But have you ever wondered why these birds are so abundant along roadsides and railroad right-of-ways? The answer lies in the numerous perches located over unmowed tall grass. The birds are looking for a favorite prey, the hispid cotton rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*). Roadways also cause many animals to get killed, producing vast amounts of carrion the hawks are attracted to for an easy meal. However, the downside, is the use of utility poles often causes electrocution (pg. 43). An additional downside, are the number of red-tails killed along roadsides that get killed, the author only briefly mentioned that "many get hit" (pg. 26) or injured (pg. 39). More discussion to the extent that such mortality or injury occurs would've been beneficial. Overall, these first six chapters, while a nice read, don't necessarily provide ornithologists with any "new" information. However, the novice birdwatcher should find this information interesting, and would be especially useful to the younger audience to hopefully spike their interest in raptor biology.

The next seven chapters are the highlight of the book. They primarily deal with the diversity of the species when it comes to plumage (see comments above), the complexities of ageing, and identification of the subspecies most commonly found in the region. The author distinguishes between the Eastern Red-tailed Hawk (*B. j. borealis*), Western Red-tailed Hawk (*B. j. calurus*), Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk (*B. j. harlani*), and Krider's Red-tailed Hawk (B. j. kriderii). Each of these chapters describes the range of the subspecies and provides details with helpful photographs to distinguish each.

The main problem with the subspecies identification within these chapters is with the Krider's Red-tail. Many authorities follow the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (1957) and consider it a valid taxon, as done by the author (current book) and in Lish and Voelker (1986). However, Taverner (1936), and more recent work, Clark and Wheeler (1987), Palmer (1988), Dickerman (1989), Wheeler (2003), and Liguori (2005) do not consider Krider's as a valid taxon, and at the

best, possibly only a distinguishable color morph (Liguori and Sullivan 2010). Even Sutton (1967) expressed that Krider's was not a "very satisfactory race." Thus, it's important to note, that some individuals may not be identified in the field to race, which is supported by the fact that even specimens in hand have been difficult to place within a subspecific taxon (Sutton 1967, Dickerman 1989).

The remaining chapters consist mostly of photographs and captions. They provide a unique glimpse into Oklahoma's importance to the majestic Red-tailed Hawk.

The book is well written and the layout is efficient with the pictures usually placed in such a way so as to not distract from the reading. Lish does a nice job of summarizing years of observations and study into a narrative format. Additionally, many of the photographs tell a unique story of their own. However, the drawback is the lack of literature cited, and a minimal amount of literature review, making it more of a coffee table book rather than a research book. But, I believe the intent was to expose the average Oklahoman to this remarkable species, and provide an understanding of "natural" Oklahoma. Overall, I think the beginning birdwatcher will enjoy this book. I think the book would be most beneficial to middle and high school aged children, as it provides insight to a common species that is readily observable. Teachers at those levels could use the book as a tool to get students interested in animal behavior or descriptive morphology. For the professional ornithologist, there isn't much to gain if you are familiar with the primary literature, although the images have value with the use of field guides and the pertinent literature for identification of subspecies within Oklahoma during the winter.

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Submitted 24 August 2016; accepted 26 August 2016.

The *Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society* (ISSN 0474-0750) is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December at Tonkawa, OK. Editor, EUGENE A. YOUNG, Agriculture, Science, and Engineering Division, Northern Oklahoma College, 1220 E Grand, PO Box 310, Tonkawa, OK 74653-0310, (eugene.young@noc.edu). Subscription is by membership in the OOS: $15 student, $25 regular, $35 family, $40 or more sustaining, per year; life membership $500. Questions regarding subscription, replacement copies, back issues, or payment of dues should be directed to LINDA ADAMS, OOS Membership/Circulation Chair, P.O. Box 24, Duncan, OK 73533.