

# Kansas Ornithological Society

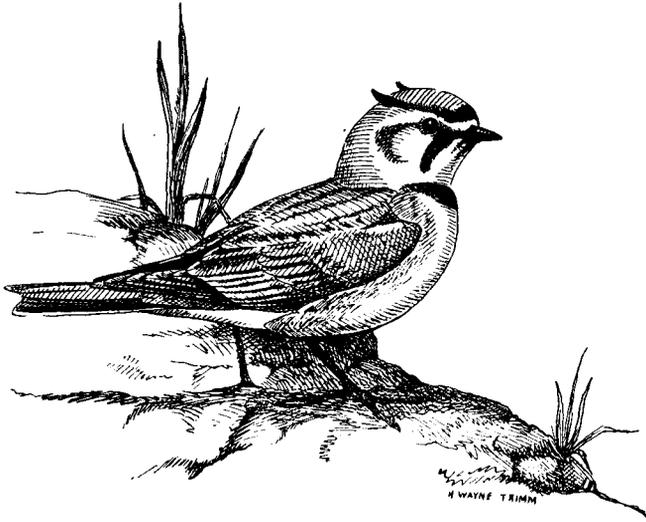
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## COURTSHIP FEEDING IN THE LARK SPARROW

BY JON C. BARLOW

On May 7, 1959, I observed certain elements in the courtship behavior of the Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) in the nursery on the grounds of The University of Kansas Laboratory of Aquatic Biology, ½ mile west of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. Each of two pairs was watched for approximately 30 minutes; the behavior of both pairs was similar and the observations below are representative of the actions of both.

The male carries his tail at an angle of about 35° from the horizontal, with the wings dragging on the ground and the head held erect. The bearing of the female is not distinctive. The birds, two feet apart, hop in a straight line, the male singing, the female foraging. After the male has progressed three feet in the above manner it stops, crouches slightly and fans the tail, displaying to the fullest the white tips of the rectrices. Roberts (1932:404) has likened this display to the strutting of a "perfect little turkeycock." This portion of the courtship continues for 5 minutes. Then the female crouches in a precopulatory or solicitation posture; the male, meanwhile having picked up a small twig, then mounts the back of the female. Copulation ensues, lasting for approximately two seconds. Within this short passage of time the male passes the twig to the female, which turns its head slightly to facilitate the transfer to its beak. Upon completion of copulation the pair, the female still carrying the twig, flew to a distant part of the nursery and the two birds were lost from sight.

Courtship feeding associated with copulation has been recorded "for such widely divergent species as the European Bittern, Laughing Gull, Rock Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Roadrunner, British Nuthatch, Red-backed Shrike and some Galapagos finches" (Van Tyne and Berger, 1959:339). According to Lack (1940:176), courtship feeding of any sort has been noted in only five other genera of North American fringillids, *Richmondena*, *Spinus*, *Pinicola*, *Leucosticte* and *Loxia*. To my knowledge there have been no additions to this list since 1940. In *Richmondena* the feeding was not associated with copulation (Ganier, 1937:37). The passing of the twig from male to female in *Chondestes* is clearly "symbolic" courtship feeding.

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## MIDWINTER BIRD COUNT FOR 1959

BY ABBOT S. GAUNT AND JON C. BARLOW

Nineteen participating stations reported 55,894 individuals of 111 bird species in the mid-winter bird count of the Kansas Ornithological Society. The total number of individuals counted is the fourth lowest in the history of the census (1949, 1950, and 1951 are lower). Interestingly enough, the total number of species observed is the third highest, surpassed only by the counts of 1953 (113) and 1955 (114). The number of species of waterfowl (13) is larger than that of last year (11), but the total number of individuals dropped to 11,006, less than half of last year's total. Perhaps this reflects the severity of the drought in northern breeding areas in 1959. It should also be mentioned that a number of the counts this past winter were made under unfavorable weather conditions; this may have also caused some of the low counts.

One new record was added to the list of winter visitants and certain species were recorded for the first time in several years. Two Horned Grebes were observed at Topeka for the first time for the count, and constitute a relatively noteworthy record (Tordoff, Univ. Kans. Publs., Mus. Nat. Hist., 8, 1956:307-359). The Red Crossbills and the Chestnut-collared Longspurs were the first reported since 1955.

*Baldwin* (same as previous years).—December 29; 9 hours (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); miles: car 100, foot 13; observers: Amelia J. Betts (compiler), Mr. and Mrs. I. L. Boyd, Barbara Boyd, Roger Boyd, Katharine Kelly, Mrs. Francis McKaughan, R. F. Miller, Fred Purvis, Mark Biddle.

*Chase County* (same as previous years).—December 26; 8 hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.); miles: car 70, foot 4; observers: Marc Marcellus, Edward J. Ryan (compiler).

*Ellinwood* (same as previous years).—December 31; 4 hours (1:00 to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 31, foot 1; observer: Frank W. Robl.

*Emporia* (Lyon County; 30% grassland, 40% cultivated fields, 20% brushland, 5% woods, 5% lake or river).—December 19; 3½ hours (8:00 to 11:30 a.m.); miles: car 80, foot 1; observers: Robert F. Clarke (compiler). Gil Leisman, Bernadette Menhusen, Sue Griffith, Francis Gangel.

*Fostoria* (Fostoria to Pottawatomie State Lake, Blaine to Fostoria via Hwy. 16, to Marshall County line via Spring Creek Road; 50% grassland, 20% cultivated fields, 24% brushland, 5½% woods, ½% lake or river).—December 31; 7½ hours (9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.); observers: Eunice Webster, Mabel Willis (compilers), Mrs. A. J. Bertridge, Gladys Webster.

*Halstead-Newton* (7½ mi. radius centered 3½ mi. NE of Halstead along Little Arkansas, some Sand Creek; 15% grassland, 43% cultivated fields, 4% brushland, 38% lake or river).—December 30; 10½ hours (7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); miles: car 173, foot 22; observers: Joan Challans, M. Dettweiler, W. Dale Horst, Dwight Platt, Ruth Rose, Alma Ruth, Edna L. Ruth (compiler), Robert Siemans, Milly Stein, Art Toevs, Arlen Winsky.

*Hays* (College campus and farm, Experimental Station, Smoky River and Cedar Bluffs Lake; 10% grassland, 5% cultivated fields, 25% brushland, 25% woods, 35% lake or river).—December 28, 9½ hours (7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 65, foot 5; observers: L. D. Wooster (compiler) plus 9 adults and 8 juniors.

*Holton* (1 mi. S, 2 mi. N, 3 mi. E, 1 mi. W from center of Holton; 5% grassland, 20% brushland, 50% woods, 25% lake or river).—January 1; 8 hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 32, foot 10; observer: D. Eugene Enos.

*Iola* (50% grassland, 7% cultivated fields, 20% brushland, 20% woods, 3% lake or river).—December 30; 5 hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.); miles: car 14, foot 4; observers: C. Ora Smith (compiler), and one other person.

*Junction City* (cemetery, Seven Springs, Lyons Creek Road; 40% grassland, 10% cultivated fields, 10% brushland, 35% woods, 5% lake or river).—December 30; 7 hours (8:00 to 11:00 a.m., 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 37, foot 2; observers: Mary Lynn White, Mrs. Ralph White (compiler), Mrs. Robert LaShelle, Jock LaShelle, Judy Houdephele, Mary Alice Taylor, Robert Stevens, Aneile Oltjenbruns, the latter five persons being members of the Junior High School Science Club.

*Kansas City* (Wyandotte County Lake, Quivira Lake; 10% grassland, 20% cultivated fields, 10% brushland, 40% woods, 20% lake or river).—December 27; 10 hours (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 200, foot 25; observers: Felicia Bart, Elizabeth Cole, Jim Keck, Mr. and Mrs. James Myers, Ted Pacci, Dean Rising, Jim Rising (compiler), Bernice Tatum.

*Lawrence* (same as previous years).—December 27; 8 hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.); miles: car 142, foot 16; observers: Bert S. Chewning (compiler), Helen M. Chewning, Henry S. Fitch, John Fitch, Lenore French, Richard F. Johnston, John G. McPheeters, Ethel Martin, Robert M. Mengel, Daniel Michener, David Michener, Mrs. John H. Nelson, S. D. Roth, Jr., Jon Standing.

*Linn County* (same as previous years).—December 27; 9½ hours (6:30 a.m. to



4:00 p.m.); miles: car 145, foot 15; observers: Mrs. Wilson J. Dingus (compiler) and 8 other persons.

*Manhattan* (7½ mi. radius of Kansas State University campus; 30% grassland, 5% cultivated fields, 25% brushland, 15% woods, 25% lake or river).—January 1; 10½ hours (6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 25, foot 6; observers: P. Marvin, H. T. Gier, D. Gier, E. R. Lewis (compiler), J. Haldiman, E. K. Beals, A. Hendricks, M. W. Hull.

*Olathe* (7½ mi. radius centered at Gardner Lake; 11% grassland, 10% cultivated fields, 33% brushland, 32% woods, 13% lake or river).—January 1; 8½ hours (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 111, foot 8; observers: Amelia Betts, Ivan L. Boyd (compiler), Margaret F. Boyd, Katharine Kelly, Marno McKaughan, Ray F. Miller, Freddy Purvis, Ray Wackly, *also* (W and NW of Olathe; 5% grassland, 5% cultivated fields, 30% brushland, 50% woods, 10% lake or river).—January 1; 7½ hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 40, foot 10; observers: Stanley D. Roth, Jr. (compiler), John G. McPheeters.

*Pittsburg* (area 15 mi. in diameter on S edge of city; 15% grassland, 35% cultivated fields, 45% urban).—December 23; 10 hours (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); miles: car 35, foot 10; observers: Gladys C. Galligar, John Chris Johnson, Jr., Theodore M. Sperry (compiler); *also* (yard, garden, and barnlot, 5½ mi. SW Pittsburg).—December 27; 10 hours (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); observer: Bessie Boso.

*Topeka* (same as previous years).—January 2; 9 hours (7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.); miles: car 241, foot 10; observers: John Pat Atkinson, L. B. Carson (compiler), Elizabeth Roberta Foote, Dorothy Harvey, Dr. Robert H. Kingman, Mrs. R. H. Kingman, Marvin Kuehn, Richel Lundgren, Florence McKinney, T. W. Nelson, Mrs. Paul Newbolt, Orville O. Rice, Emma Thompson, Joyce Thompson, Mrs. L. G. Thorpe.

*Udall* (same as previous years).—January 2; 8 hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.); miles: foot 4; observers: Max Thompson (compiler) and one other person.

*Wichita* (7½ mi. radius centered at Central Wichita; 20% grassland, 10% cultivated fields, 10% brushland, 20% woods, 40% lake or river).—January 2; 10 hours (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); miles: car 85, foot 13½; observers: Daniel S. Kilby, Jennibelle Watson, Mrs. O. J. Selfridge, A. H. Hickman, Geneva Kinkade, Leona Duncan, Louise Watson, Margaret Hayes, Ralph Wiley, Eunice Goode, Carl S. Holmes, J. Walker Butin, Mrs. Charles Rombold, O. J. Selfridge (compiler).

*Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, February 29, 1960.*

## A PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED SPECIMEN OF THE BAIRD SPARROW FROM KANSAS

BY MAX C. THOMPSON

In the course of examining Grasshopper Sparrows, *Ammodramus savannarum*, in the collection of The University of Kansas Museum of Natural History, I noticed a heavily streaked, apparently immature specimen. Upon closer examination it proved to be a Baird Sparrow, *Ammodramus bairdii* (KU 16900), in juvenal plumage. The specimen was shot by Wallace Lane at a point between 6 and 12 miles due north of Dighton in Lane County, Kansas, on August 25, 1926, and bears his field number 45. The sex was not recorded. In time, this was the second specimen of this species taken in Kansas (the first having been taken by J. A. Loring in 1898). The species was not obtained in the State again until 1956, when three individuals were collected in Cowley County (Thompson, Bull. Kansas Ornith. Soc., 7, 1956:15).

This particular specimen is of interest because it is predominately in juvenal plumage. The plumage is fresh and shows little sign of wear. The tertials are still broadly-tipped with white. The bird was undergoing postjuvenal molt; this is inferred in part from partial replacement of the scapular feathers. There are other specimens of the Baird Sparrow in juvenal plumage taken in states south of the known breeding range, most notably in Arizona. It had been thought earlier that this sparrow bred in the higher mountains of Arizona since most passerines do not migrate when in juvenal

plumage (Dwight, Ann. New York Acad. Sci., 13, 1900:73-360). The arrival of these birds in immature plumage far south of their breeding grounds has been the confusing factor. Apparently the Baird Sparrow is one of those passerines that does not follow the usual placement of molt preceding migration and is capable of migrating in juvenal plumage. Since Kansas is south of the known breeding range, the bird obtained on August 25, 1956, probably was a migrant.—*Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, February 2, 1960.*

## REVIEWS

**Sounds of Nature.** Recordings by William W. H. Gunn and others. Toronto, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1955. 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm. Price, \$5.95 (12-inch disc).—There are five disc records in this set, each of which is available separately in its own jacket.

Volume I, *Songs of Spring*, presents songs of 25 species of common birds of Ontario on a ten-inch record. Plenty of time is allowed for each species (the shortest time is 19 seconds, for the Savannah Sparrow), establishing a leisurely air that is characteristic of each of the records in this set. A high point is the record of the Common Goldfinch singing throughout from a pole beside a railroad right-of-way as a steam locomotive whistles past.

Volume II, *A Day in Algonquin Park*, contains sounds of 30 species of birds characteristic of mixed coniferous-deciduous forest. There is no narration but all species are identified in a verbal postscript and on the jacket. The sounds of the Common Loon are superb.

Volume III, *Birds of the Forest*, presents sounds of 22 species of birds characteristic of boreal forest (except the Western Meadowlark); there is some duplication of species present in the first two volumes. There is a complete vocal narrative. The sounds of the Common Loon are, if anything, better than those in volume II.

Volume IV, *Songs of Warblers of Eastern North America*, presents songs of 38 species of parulids, and lacks only the Bachman Warbler of the typically eastern North American warblers. Many of the original tapes were recorded by Donald J. Borror. The sequence of presentation is that of song-type ("trilled songs," or "buzzy songs," etc.). The fidelity of sound reproduction is remarkably good.

Volume V, *A Day at Flores Morades*, presents the sounds of 32 species of birds recorded on a ranch in the llanos of Venezuela. This is one of the first available recordings of sounds of South American birds in the wild, or at least not modified for special purposes as was the Folkways Records' *Sounds of a Tropical Rain Forest in America*.

The five records in this heterogeneous "set" have good surfaces and excellent sound. The original tapes were made at 15 inches per second and volume levels were carefully regulated; there is little distortion and most of the original sound is still available. The high quality of the recorded sounds and the care in producing a first-class product are the most important virtues of these records, and outweigh any of the minor faults. The latter include a slightly overlong commentary on record III, and restricted coverage of species. Yet it must be noted that restriction in coverage allows detailed examination of sounds and voices, and this may at times be more important than is any other consideration. Certainly these records set a standard in general quality that other workers and manufacturers could well emulate.—Richard F. Johnston

**A Field Guide to Bird Songs.** Recordings by Peter Paul Kellogg, Arthur A. Allen, and others. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm. Price, \$10.00.—There are two disc records in this set, within one album cover. Here are presented sounds and voices of 306 species of birds of eastern North America, or about 70 per cent of the total that occurs in the east. The sequence of presentation is the check-list sequence found in the 1947 edition of R. T. Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds*, and each species is introduced by vernacular name and page reference to the Peterson guide.

Little time is allotted to any one species—some have less than four seconds—and the pace is hectic. For instance, about a third of one side is devoted to all 39 species of eastern warblers; the record by Gunn (noted above) treats of one less species in more than six times the space, or time. However, the intent of the records has been to cover

as much ground as possible without producing a set that is priced beyond what most people will want to pay. In a sense the records succeed in this intent. But this is to assess the records on a commercial basis (as would it be also to emphasize that never before have people been able to buy so many sounds on so few records for so little money), and this is to miss the point. Germane is that few of the recorded sounds are faithful to the originals; they sound, on a good phonograph, not much better than the voices on the 78 rpm records 15 years ago. On the other hand the album cover is nearly a work of art; it consists of six "pages" and has two indices for finding the voices on the records. A curiously uneven production.—Richard F. Johnston

**Mexican Bird Songs.** Recordings by L. Irby Davis. Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Records. 33 $\frac{1}{4}$  rpm. Price, \$7.75.—This disc record contains sounds of 74 species of birds found in Mexico. The pace set here is thus midway between the leisure of the recordings by Gunn and the rush of those of the field guide (noted above). The recorded sound is good and the check-list run of 74 species shows intelligent selection. The reviewer has seen three copies of this record; the first had bubbles in the plastic and the others, although straight from the publisher, were shopworn.—Richard F. Johnston

## NOTES AND NEWS

The spring meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 7–8, 1960, at Pittsburg, Kansas. Members are urged to participate fully in the paper sessions and banquet on Saturday, May 7, as well as in the field trip on Sunday, May 8. Opportunities will be had to see habitats and birds that occur in few other places in Kansas. Details concerning food, lodging, meeting and assembly places, etc., will be mailed to members soon.

Dr. Henry S. Fitch is continuing his study of food habits of raptorial birds in Kansas, and he would appreciate any information concerning locations of nests of the larger hawks and owls, particularly in the northeastern part of the state. Pellets will be collected at the nests, but the birds themselves will not be harmed or disturbed.

Blank forms suitable for enrolling new members into the Society will be distributed to members this month. New members are necessary for the continued existence of the Society; present members are urged to enroll at least one new member in 1960. A larger journal will be one of the results of increased membership.—Richard F. Johnston

## OBITUARY

Dr. Lyman Dwight Wooster, a charter member of the Kansas Ornithological Society, died on February 25, 1960, in Hays, Kansas, after prolonged, intermittent illness; he was 75 years of age. Dr. Wooster had served the Society in many ways: he was Vice-President in 1952, President in 1953, and a member of the Board of Directors in 1954, 1958, and 1959.

Dr. Wooster attended public schools in Eureka and Emporia, Kansas, and held a B.A. from Kansas State College of Emporia, a Ph.M. from the University of Wisconsin, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University. He was a member of the teaching staff at Fort Hays State College since 1909, with several years of absence owing to pursuit of academic degrees. He was named Dean of the college in 1939, and was President from 1941 to 1949, when he retired. He was President Emeritus of the college at the time of his death.

Dr. Wooster's interest in birds was reflected not only in his charter membership in the Society and in the formal offices he held in the Society, but also in his regular participation in the paper sessions at annual meetings, and in his enthusiasm for informal field work. His cooperation with the mid-winter bird counts extended over many decades; some readers will already have noted that again in 1960 Dr. Wooster handled the report from Hays.—Richard F. Johnston