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Brown Pelican in Southwestern Kansas. — On 21 April 1985 a mature Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) was seen by Joe Lilly and Mark Goldsberry on the northernmost pond of the Meade State Fish Hatchery, roughly 22.5 km SSW of Meade, Meade County, Kansas. On 22 April Goldsberry and Tom Flowers found the bird 2.4 km southeast of the initial area on Meade State Lake at 09:50 under conditions of clear skies and light winds. It was viewed for over an hour and numerous photographs were taken (Figure 1). The bird was very docile, and permitted us to approach within 15 to 20 m. It was standing near mudflats in about 6 cm of water. Most of the observation time the bird was asleep with its head placed over its back and tucked under the right wing. Similar behavior was described by Charlton (1979. Bull. Oklahoma Ornithol. Soc. 12:2) in his 23 April 1976 sighting in central Oklahoma. The bird had gray feathers, reminding us of the color of a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). The white head, rust color on the neck and typical pelican bill and pouch left no doubt as to its identification. We were surprised that an extra-limital sighting of this species would be an adult in summer plumage. Many accidental sightings of other species are immature birds, but the Oklahoma bird was also an adult (Charlton *op cit*).



Figure 1. Adult Brown Pelican, Meade State Lake, 22 April 1985.

Sutton (1967. *Oklahoma Birds*, Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman) lists all sight records for Oklahoma as “doubtful since White Pelicans look brown when oiled”, and cites a

photo of a misidentified bird. He also lists a specimen from Johnston County, Oklahoma collected 25 May 1955.

In Kansas there have been fewer than five acceptable records (Marvin Schwilling, pers. comm.) of this species which is considered to be "almost completely maritime in its habits" (Perrins and Harrison. 1979. *Birds, their Life, their Ways, their World*. Readers Digest Assoc., Pleasantville, NY).

Thomas L. Flowers, U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, P. O. Box 87, Meade, KS 67864.

Pacific Loon Captured at Milford Lake. — On 15 November 1986 a Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) was observed approximately 120 m off the swimming beach below the dam at Milford Lake, Geary County, Kansas. The loon was continually stretching its neck forward and rode low in the water. Because of this unusual posture and because the bird was not swimming or diving, it was concluded that the bird had become entangled in one of the nets placed by Kansas Fish and Game biologists to remove rough fish. Personnel at the nearby Milford Fish Hatchery were contacted, and they immediately put a boat in the water and rescued the loon. The bird was photographed and released.

Figure 1 illustrates field marks which were used to distinguish this bird: 1) shallow, sloping forehead, not steep, 2) smooth, round rather than flat head, 3) dark on the side of the head extending down to the eye rather than stopping over the eye, 4) a "chin strap", and 5) sharp contrast between white front of the neck and the dark sides and hind neck. In addition, the border between the dark and white feathers on the side of the neck lacked the indentation of white often seen on the neck of Common Loons (*G. immer*). Also a direct size comparison was made between the Pacific Loon and a nearby Common Loon. The Pacific Loon was obviously smaller and had a more slender bill. In the hand, broad grey feather edges were indicative of an immature bird.



Figure 1. Pacific Loon captured at Milford Lake, Geary County, Kansas on 15 November 1986 (photo by David Danskin).

Separation of Arctic (*G. arctica*) and Pacific Loons in the field is difficult. The Pacific Loon averages smaller, has a purplish rather than a greenish throat, and has a paler

(ashy-grey) nape and hind neck when compared to the Arctic Loon (DeBenedictis. 1980. *Birding* 12: 116-118). Birds not in breeding plumage are extremely difficult to identify, even in hand (DeBenedictis 1985. *Birding* 17: 266-267). The range of the Arctic Loon in North America is limited to western Alaska, but is vagrant southward along the Pacific coast (DeBenedictis 1985. *Birding* 17: 266-267). The breeding range of the Pacific Loon extends from southern Alaska, east across northern Canada to southern Hudson Bay. Pacific Loons are common winter residents from the Arctic coasts and southeast Alaska south to the Baja peninsula and northwest Mexico. They are rare to uncommon on the Atlantic coast and a very rare to accidental fall and winter visitor on freshwater lakes in the interior of the continent. (Terres. 1980. *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, A. A. Knopf, New York).

Prior to 1985 there had been only five records of Pacific Loons in Kansas. In the past two years, however, there have been eight additional records (M. Schwillig, pers. comm.): Rooks County (no date or details); Pottawatomie County, 13 November 1965 and 23 October 1966 (single birds sighted on the River Ponds and Tuttle Creek Lake); Russell County, late October 1970 (shot by a hunter on Wilson Lake); Cowley County, 23-26 November 1976 (single bird seen on Winfield City Lake, see Seibel. 1981. *Kan. Ornithol. Soc. Bul.* 32: 190); Trego County, 23-26 November 1985 and 8-14 November 1986 (single birds reported from Cedar Bluff Reservoir); Lyon County, 27 November 1986 (single bird on Lyon County State Fishing Lake), which on the basis of plumage differences was determined to be a different individual from the Milford bird. All the Kansas records for Pacific Loons occur in the five week period from late October through November.

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The First Record of a Prairie Falcon from the Pleistocene of Kansas. — I have identified the worn distal end of a left ulna, University of Kansas, Museum of Natural History, Vertebrate Paleontology, no. 16572, from the McPherson Formation (late Middle Pleistocene to early Upper Pleistocene), of McPherson County, Kansas, as that of a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*). The ulna is not from a Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*) because of the following characteristics: anconal margin of external condyle (lateral view) flatter, not so rounded; external condyle (anconal view) with straighter lateral margin, not curved; notch between internal condyle and carpal tuberosity not as deep; overall ulna not as robust. The size of the ulna is nearest to those of several large females.

The three remaining Pleistocene fossil falcons from North America are all distinctly different from the Prairie Falcon (Brodkorb 1964. *Bull. Florida State Mus.* 8(3):195-335).

The Prairie Falcon may now be added to the extant species from the McPherson Formation identified by Galbreath (1955. *Wilson Bull.* 67:62-63): The Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*), Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), and Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*).

Today Prairie Falcons occur throughout Kansas, being rare in the east to fairly common in the west, especially in winter.

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