The Breeding Season in Mitchell County
Eugene and Eulalia Lewis

Our annual bird safari took us this year to Mitchell County where we scouted the area from June 3 to June 6. Glen Elder Reservoir and the Solomon River are the main attractions for birds since much of the county is under cultivation.

The most spectacular of the bird finds were Great-tailed Grackles and large numbers of nesting Great Blue Herons and Double-crested Cormorants. The grackles were found in a small woods on the north side of the lake and numbered about 12. Their habit of flying back and forth on the tops of the trees made counting difficult. Only once did we observe any of them fly to the ground as Common Grackles were doing. In a revisit to the woods on July 16 the Great-tails could not be found. There was no evidence of nesting seen during the earlier visit even though both the magnificent males and the smaller brown females were present and making a lot of noise. This is probably the northernmost sighting of the Great-tail in Kansas and shows that it continues to extend its range.

The Great Blue Herons and Double Crested Cormorants were in four different rookeries located around the lake in groves of trees killed by inundation when the lake was new. A reasonably accurate count showed at least 100 heron and 220 cormorant nests. The largest rookery had about 240 nests of both species. The constant moving to and from nests, along with the lateness of the nesting season made an accurate count of the total number of birds impossible but it is probably safe to say the herons totalled more than 200 while there were at least 500 cormorants.

Of interest because of its puzzling presence in June was a flock of 200 Brewer's Blackbirds seen feeding each day in a mowed alfalfa field a few miles from the reservoir. Obviously these were non-breeding birds that should have gone west for the summer.

A canoe trip up the beautiful Solomon River above Beloit revealed a number of species not found elsewhere in the county. These were the Blue Grosbeak, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, Black-billed Cuckoo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-crowned Night Heron and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

In the list to follow, evidence of nesting will be marked with "N" preceding the name. Two unusual nest sites deserve additional comment. A pair of Bell's Vireos was seen to go repeatedly to and from a dense stand of "wild carrot" at the edge of the same woods where the Great-tailed Grackles were found. The vireos always seemed to go into the wild carrot at the same place and once one of them broke off a bit of the foliage and carried it in toward the place where the nest appeared to be. We had no way of knowing whether the nesting was successful but there is considerable doubt since the wild carrot had completely dried up by our July 16 visit. Bell's Vireos usually pick a more substantial nesting site such as a sand plum or prairie dogwood thicket.
The second unusual nesting involved a pair of Eastern Kingbirds. The nest they were working on was in the crotch of a dead tree but less than two feet above the water at a point more than fifty feet from shore.

Following is a complete list of the birds (87 species) with their relative abundance given by the numbers listed.

**Colonizing Birds**

- Great Blue Heron 200+
- Double-crested Cormorant 500+
- Cliff Swallow 600
- Barn Swallow

**Very Numerous**

- Mourning Dove 362
- House Sparrow 325
- Common Grackle 173
- Brown Headed Cowbird 288
- Dickcissel 165

**Quite Numerous**

- Killdeer 42
- Rock Dove 65
- Chimney Swift 51
- Red-headed Woodpecker 47
- Eastern Kingbird 83
- Western Kingbird 79
- Blue Jay 31
- House Wren 61

* does not include large number of unidentified meadowlarks

**Less Numerous**

- Mallard 13
- Wood Duck 10
- Turkey Vulture 2
- Red-tailed Hawk 8
- Marsh Hawk 1
- American Kestrel 5
- Bob White Quail 17
- Ring-necked Pheasant 13
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo 3
- Black-billed Cuckoo 1
- Great Horned Owl 1
- Poor Will 2
- Common Nighthawk 10
- Belted Kingfisher 1
- Yellow shafted Flicker 21
- Red-bellied Woodpecker 5
- Downy Woodpecker 6
- Scissortailed Flycatcher 4
- Great-crested Flycatcher 14
- Eastern Phoebe 1
- Eastern Wood Pewee 1

- Horned lark 10
- Rough-winged Swallow 19
- Purple Martin 11
- Black-billed Magpie 9
- Common Crow 3
- Black-capped Chickadee 21
- White-breasted Nuthatch 1
- Northern Mockingbird 1
- Gray Catbird 7
- Eastern Bluebird 2
- Bell's Vireo 6
- Warbling Vireo 19
- Yellow Warbler 2
- Common Yellowthroat 7
- Eastern Meadowlark 3
- Cardinal 18
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak 4
- Blue Grosbeak 1
- Indigo Bunting 1
- American Goldfinch 16
- Grasshopper Sparrow 7
- Lark Sparrow 4
Miscellaneous Birds Probably Not Nesting

White Pelican 7
Black-crowned Night Heron 1
Gadwall 2
Blue-winged Teal 2
American Wigeon 2
Northern Shoveler 2
Ruddy Duck 3
Common Merganser 1 (female)
American Coot 10
Lesser Yellowlegs 2

White-rumped Sandpiper 1
Dunlin 1
Ring-billed Gull 2
Franklin's Gull 17
Forster's Tern 2
Black Tern 2
Cedar Waxwing 1
Brewer's Blackbird 200
Great-tailed Grackle 12

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Only a few of the 105 counties in Kansas have reasonably good records of breeding season birds. Indeed, most counties do not have good records of birds present throughout the year. These studies we have been doing are our small attempt at filling the void. We have heard from several birdwatchers around the state who have indicated an interest in keeping lists around their own home county and in some cases nearby counties also. But, don't make a list and keep it a secret. A new book on Kansas Birds, edited by Max Thompson (Southwestern College) and Charles Ely (Fort Hays Kansas State College), will be published in the near future. They will need all the help they can get on bird distribution so send them your lists.

Tower KANU Bird Kills

The following is a list of tower kills which took place on 25 and 28 September and 5 and 6 October of this year. The location was the tower KANU, Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. Most of the finds were deposited at the Museum of Natural History, the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Pied-billed Grebe (1)
Coot (1)
Sora (2)
Mourning Dove (5)
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (2)
Flicker (1)
Red-headed Woodpecker (1)
Trail's Flycatcher (1)
Short-billed Marsh Wren (1)
Solitary Vireo (1)
Black & White Warbler (2)
Orange-crowned Warbler (2)
Nashville Warbler (6)
Magnolia Warbler (1)

Bay-breasted Warbler (1)
Palm Warbler (1)
Ovenbird (1)
Northern Waterthrush (1)
Yellowthroat (3)
Wilson's Warbler (1)
Rusty Blackbird (1)
Scarlet Tanager (1)
Dickcissel (2)
Savannah Sparrow (2)
Clay-colored Sparrow (2)
Lincoln's Sparrow (3)

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Also, the following announcement may be of interest to the K.O.S. membership: The Morton County, Kansas Christmas Bird Count and the Kenton (Black Mesa) County, Oklahoma Christmas Bird Count will be the weekend of 31 December to 2 January 1977. All Kansas CBC'ers are encouraged to participate. For information contact: S.T. Patti, 6528 Wenonga Terrace, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66208. Phone 913-362-4887.

S.T. Patti
Pied-billed Grebe  
White Pelican  
Great Blue Heron  
Canada Goose  
White-fronted Goose  
Snow Goose  
Mallard  
Gadwall  
Pintail  
Green-winged Teal  
Blue-winged Teal  
American Wigeon  
Shoveler  
Wood Duck  
Lesser Scaup  
Turkey Vulture  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Marsh Hawk  
Osprey  
American Kestrel  
Bobwhite  
American Coot  
Killedeer  
Common Snipe  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Baird's Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Ring-billed Gull  
Franklin's Gull  
Caspiian Tern  
Black Tern  
Rock Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
Black-billed Cuckoo  
Screech Owl  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Common Nighthawk  
Chimney Swift  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Yellow-shafted Flicker  
Red-shafted Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
Eastern Phoebe  
Eastern Wood Pewee  
Empidonax sp.  
Horned Lark  
Tree Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Rough-winged Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Blue Jay  
Common Crow  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
House Wren  
Carolina Wren  
Long-billed Marsh Wren  
Mockingbird  
Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Robin  
Eastern Bluebird  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Water Pipit  
Loggerhead Shrike  
Starling  
Solitary Vireo  
Tennessee Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Parula Warbler  
Myrtle Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Yellowthroat  
House Sparrow  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Red-wing  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Summer Tanager  
Cardinal  
Blue Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Dickcissel  
American Goldfinch  
Rufous-sided Towhee  
Savannah Sparrow  
Le Conte's Sparrow  
Sharp-tailed Sparrow  
Slate-colored Junco  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Harris's Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Double-crested Cormorant  

Total - 111 species.

Of the 108 species seen on the fall K.O.S. count (centered around the Dingus Natural Area and the Marais des Cygnes Waterfowl Refuge) on October 2 and 3, three were new to the all-time record. They were the Black-billed Cuckoo, Parula Warbler, and the Summer Tanager. All three had been seen on spring counts, but not on any of the 27 fall outings.

This count covered a larger area than the two previous ones, so it exceeded the 75 species seen at Marais des Cygnes in 1964 and the 79 at Mound City, Kansas in 1956. Both of those October counts also had clear and warm weather.

Amelia J. Betts
Dues

Seven members caused the K.O.S. over three dollars in needless postage on the last mailing just because they failed to tell me they had moved. Mailings like ours are not forwarded, even in the same city, and the post office charges 25 cents to tell us where the person has moved to. So please notify me -- Amelia J. Betts, Baldwin City, Kansas 66006 as soon as you know you are going to move.

Several members have sent their dues to Baldwin instead of to E. R. Lewis, 1285 Macvicar Ave., Topeka, 66604. I don't spend 13 cents postage on each one to send them on. I wait until I have 13 cents worth. So if your checks are not cashed promptly that may be the reason why. Your dues envelope was enclosed with the September Bulletin. Please return it to the TREASURER as soon as possible.

Area Notes

Dodge City: Birds have been unusually scarce this fall. The most unusual is a pair of Scrub Jays that has been present since October 1. They come to the feeder daily. A Crissal Thrasher (?)Ed) was seen for several days in September. House Finches are here. Oregon Juncos were here on October 10. This summer we had a family of seven young Screech Owls. On May 9 we saw a White-faced Ibis in a roadside pool north of Bucklin. Warblers were scarce -- only a few Wilson's and Orange-crowns and 2 Yellows. We have had a number of Cedar Waxwings, mostly immatures. Joan Challans.

Cowley County: The spring of 1976 held several surprises for birders in the Arkansas City and Winfield areas, bringing both unusual species and unusual abundance of certain species, as well as some extreme arrival and departure dates. Following are some of the more interesting:

Red-breasted Nuthatch: At least 1 was present on the Southwestern College campus until 11 May, a full 17 days past the usual departure date.

Wood Thrush: Much more common than usual this year. Several were netted at Max Thompson's banding station on the Arkansas River (7 mi. N, 3 mi. W. Ark. City) and at least 2 were singing on territory there throughout May; 1 was also heard for several weeks at the Chaplin Nature Center (2 mi. N, 3 mi. W. of Ark. City).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: Numbers were considerably above average. A total of 13 was netted at the banding station between 2 and 16 May.

Bobolink: Several flocks were seen in alfalfa fields just north and west of Arkansas City during the week of 9-15 May. The species is an irregular transient in Cowley Co. and has not been seen in any numbers for several years.

Lazuli Bunting: One female was banded at the netting station on 27 May and was possibly sighted in the same area on the 28th.

Pine Siskin: Present in Cowley Co. to 22 May, 9 days after the previous latest departure date. David E. Seibel.

News Needed

Please send your news for the November Newsletter to Renne Lohoeufener, Fort Hays Kansas State College, Hays, 67601 before November 10.