

# Kansas Ornithological Society

## BULLETIN

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

VOL. 10

SEPTEMBER, 1959

No. 3

### OCCURRENCE AND STATUS OF THE GROUND DOVE IN KANSAS

RICHARD F. JOHNSTON

On November 28, 1958, Mr. Stephen Blubaugh of Welda, Kansas, found a Ground Dove (*Columbigallina passerina*) in a small snowbank 12 miles west and four miles south of Garnett, Anderson County, Kansas. The bird was alive but incapable of flight. Mr. Blubaugh attempted to keep the bird alive, but it died on December 7, 1958; the carcass was frozen intact and eventually the specimen was sent to the Museum of Natural History where it was saved as a skin (♂; KU 36900). This represents the first documented occurrence of the Ground Dove in Kansas, although there has been one sight record (see Tordoff, Univ. Kansas Publ., Mus. Nat. Hist., 8(5), 1956:329).

Characteristics of plumage and size indicate that the specimen can be satisfactorily referred to the subspecies *Columbigallina passerina passerina* (Linnaeus), populations of which inhabit the southern and southeastern United States. Individuals from these populations have been found in winter in Iowa, Arkansas and northern Mississippi in the central United States, and their occurrences there are termed casual or accidental by the Fifth Edition of the Check-list of North American Birds (1957). The specimen from Kansas thus fills in a slight gap in the knowledge of the distribution of the Ground Dove in winter along the eastern edge of the Great Plains.

As will be discussed below, it is probably not too much to say that this configuration of distribution in winter is not entirely owing to chance or accident. The plumage and skeleton of the present specimen are those of a first-year bird. In the left wing the 9th primary is ensheathed and the distal two (10 and 11) are those of the juvenal plumage; in the right wing all three distal primaries are of the juvenal plumage. Otherwise the individual had nearly completed the postjuvenal molt. The skull showed moderately large "windows" of single-layered bone, in these doves probably a reliable indicator of subadult age.

Birds-of-the-year are the individuals of a population that engage in dispersal (nonmigratory movement away from birthsites); it is reasonable to assume that the bird under discussion reached Kansas because of, or while engaged in, normal dispersal. Dispersal is a directed function of populations and thus any occurrence of a bird resulting from dispersal cannot be called "accidental." In Kansas, as elsewhere in the midwestern United States, the occurrence in winter of the Ground Dove is best considered as sporadic.—*Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, August 4, 1959.*

**Observations on Strength of the Pair-bond in Cardinals.**—On the morning of July 8, 1959, I found a dead female Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) on the road at the entrance to Camp Towanyak, Johnson County, Kansas. A male Cardinal nearby left as I approached. The female had evidently just been struck by a passing car, for she was limp and still warm. She was in good condition and I brought her to the house, thinking that some of the campers could admire her beauty. I temporarily put the dead bird on a wall near a bird feeding station.

Shortly thereafter I saw a male Cardinal standing over the female; I have no doubt

he was her mate—probably the bird I had seen to leave when I found the dead female. The following unusual scene developed. The male put his head next to the dead female's; he appeared to nuzzle her with his cheek, first on one side and then on the other. He next rubbed his beak up and down her beak. Then he preened and smoothed feathers of her wings. Between times, he stood and looked at the female, appearing not to understand she was dead. Finally, he picked up a sunflower seed and came to the female, seeming to offer it to her. At this point realization seemed to come; he flew into a tree above the female and sat motionless for a full ten minutes. Never have I seen a Cardinal sit so silently and still for so long a period of time in the early morning, when ordinarily these birds forage actively.—*Mary Louise Myers, Rt. 2, Camp Towanyak, Kansas City 6, Kansas, July 25, 1959.*

Note: Perhaps the most telling point in the above set of observations is that the male Cardinal presented the dead female a bit of food. Courtship feeding of the female by the male is a regular occurrence prior to and during incubation in Cardinals.—*Ed.*

## NEW BOOKS

**Fundamentals of Ornithology.**—Josselyn Van Tyne and Andrew J. Berger. New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1959. xi + 624 pp., 254 text figs. Price, \$11.75.—This is the best American textbook on ornithology as biological science. It contains most of the kinds of information on scientific study of birds that can be included in around 600 pages of text. The 13 chapters are concerned with paleontology, anatomy, plumage and molt, senses and behavior, voice and sound, distribution, migration, flight, food and feeding habits, breeding behavior, social relationships, taxonomy and nomenclature, and a familial classification of birds of the world. Each chapter has a selected list of references pertinent to the subjects of the chapter. There is one appendix on a guide to ornithological sources (bibliographies) and one on a glossary of terms associated with avian biology. A good index of 38 pages is provided.

Authorship of the book was nearly evenly divided; prior to his death Van Tyne had completed about 60 per cent of the manuscript (some chapters in whole, some in part, some not at all). Berger completed the remainder of the text and was, of course, responsible for the task of seeing the book through the press. The book clearly has received meticulous editorial attention, and the entire production is successful.

Graphically, the book is at once excellent and disappointing. Nearly all the half-tones and line-cuts are appropriate and esthetically pleasing. Notable are the almost uniformly superb ink drawings by George M. Sutton depicting one species of bird for each of the 168 families treated systematically in the last chapter. Likewise, the chapters on anatomy, plumage, distribution and migration have pertinent illustrations. The disappointing element concerns the lack of certain kinds of illustrations, as, for instance, those depicting postural displays, "pictures" of bird sounds, configuration of breeding seasons in time, territories in relation to vegetation, hypotheses on bird navigation, *etc.* Additionally, there are but three formally-designated tables in the entire book (one presents the geological time scale, one a list of cranial nerves, and only one is comparative—osteological differences between *Ichthyornis* and *Hesperornis*). The near lack of tables is felt most acutely in sections where masses of data should be treated, as in variation in clutch-size or sizes of territories.

Minor points of note include the following. On page 96 one sentence reads, "Passerine . . . birds develop the juvenal plumage before they leave the nest." This is not strictly true. The following, however, is false: "(A few species, e.g., the Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata*, apparently pass through a *postjuvenal* plumage before acquiring the winter plumage.)" There is no mention (p. 125) of empathic learning. The classification and analysis (pp. 134 ff.) of vocal sounds seems too simple ("songs" and "call notes"); 13 pages are given to a discussion of song but only one page is given to examining call notes, in spite of the fact (p. 135) that "Call notes serve a multitude of purposes." The chapter on breeding behavior requests students to use a statistical approach in such studies, but that approach itself is avoided in the body of the chapter, and no tables or line-cuts are used; it is not enough to say that few

studies on breeding biology have been statistically-oriented, because enough have been so that good illustrative materials can be drawn up. It is suggested (p. 318) that the cowbirds are particularly interesting in that they suggest a way in which brood-parasitism could have evolved; the expected clarifying discussion never materializes. In the glossary, definition of *monogamous* as "Copulating with but one of the opposite sex during one nesting cycle." is not merely questionable English but unnecessarily restrictive, for the emphasis should be on the maintenance of one pair-bond *versus* more than one. Without citing the source of the definition used, *teleology* is defined as "Science of adaptation"; this is in one sense bold, admirable and accurate, but it does not help the naive reader to understand the full impact of the term or why it is a full-fledged dirty word in some quarters of biology today.

The chapters on behavior are not handled as deftly as they could be, in spite of a rousing start stemming from a stimulating discussion of the contributions to behavioral theory of the ethological and American schools of bird behavior; certain difficult constructs are handled well. A flavor of archaism is introduced with the inclusion, as the only illustration for the chapter on senses and behavior, of Tinbergen's diagram of the hypothetical hormonal and nervous elements involved in the expression of an instinctive behavior pattern, a conception some ten years old and now largely modified. An apparent attempt is made to revive the obsolescent terms *aposematic*, *antaposematic* and *gamosematic*, yet the term *agonistic*, a word implying psychological conflict over attacking and fleeing tendencies (one of the focal points in contemporary studies of ethologists), is absent even from the glossary. Imprinting is discussed entirely within the context of learning, without an adequate idea given to those features establishing imprinting as a phenomenon distinct from classical learning.

The organization of the chapter on social relations seems not well-conceived. The following major subheadings are used: Dominance, Relations Between Parents and Young, Relationships Between the Pair, Bird Display, and Aggregations. Thus, an inclusive category (Bird Display) is subordinated to a rank equal in importance to conceptual units ordinarily considered to fall within the category.

The longest and, as both authors suggest, the most important chapter is that treating of the families of birds of the world. Information about each family is arranged under the following headings: physical characteristics, range, habits, food, breeding, technical diagnosis, classification, references, and synonyms (if any). A remarkable amount of accurate and first-class information is put into these brief, one-page accounts. The classification used is perhaps best characterized as a moderate one; no ornithologist will be much troubled by the arrangement of the families, which is essentially that of Wetmore. The most "unusual" allocations of groups of species are ones that seem, presently, reasonably justified. The "Coerebidae" are placed partly with the wood warblers, partly with the tanagers, and one species is put into the Fringillidae; the cardueline finches are removed from the Fringillidae and placed with the weaver finches. These changes follow the suggestions of W. J. Beecher (on coerebids) and H. B. Tordoff (on carduelines), which were advanced some five to eight years ago.

The attitude of the book is one that stresses the scholarly and intellectual approach to the study of birds; the book is for the serious student. A paragraph in the preface (by A.J.B.) elaborates this point:

Van Tyne felt strongly that a student should become well-grounded in the several basic branches of biology before specializing in ornithology. Birds of the World, as he taught it, was a graduate course intended for those who had at least an undergraduate degree in zoology. Van wrote that this book "should provide the background" for his graduate course. He anticipated that the book would fill many other needs: as a quick reference for information of all the families of birds; as a dictionary of ornithological terms; as a general reference for those interested in life history, taxonomy, and anatomy; as a summary of anatomical characters used in the classification of birds; and as a guide to ornithological literature.

The book in fact does these many things, most of them quite well, and stands as the text of choice for graduate study in ornithology. It stands also as a tribute to the ability and memory of one of the best ornithologists of recent time.—Richard F. Johnston

## NOTES AND NEWS

The Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society was held on May 2 and 3 at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas. Papers were read at morning and afternoon sessions on May 2, and the field trip was held the morning of May 3.

Two business meetings and a Board meeting variously covered the following matters. The Nominating Committee (Gier, Huxman, Boyd) proposed, and the members elected, the following slate of officers for 1959-1960: President, J. Walker Butin; Vice-President, Orville O. Rice; Treasurer, L. B. Carson; Secretary, Amelia Betts; Editor, R. F. Johnston; Directors, J. C. Johnson and Edna Ruth.

The Fall Field Trip will be held at Emporia, Kansas, on October 11, 1959.

The Annual Meeting for 1960 will be held at Pittsburg, Kansas, on May 7 and 8.

*Erratum:* Pages 5 through 8 of Volume 10, Number 2 (the issue for June, 1959), of the Bulletin of the Kansas Ornithological Society were numbered, inadvertently, 1 through 4; the correct pagination is being resumed in the present number.

---

### OFFICERS

President . . . . .	Walker Butin
Vice-President . . . . .	Orville O. Rice
Secretary . . . . .	Amelia Betts Baldwin, Kansas
Treasurer . . . . .	L. B. Carson 1st Natl. Bank, Topeka, Kansas
Editor . . . . .	Richard F. Johnston University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas
Assistant Editor . . . . .	Jon C. Barlow
Regular Membership, \$1.00	Sustaining Membership, \$5.00

Dues payable January 1 to the Treasurer

*Subscription to the Bulletin is included in either class of membership*

---

Published September 4, 1959