

# Kansas Ornithological Society

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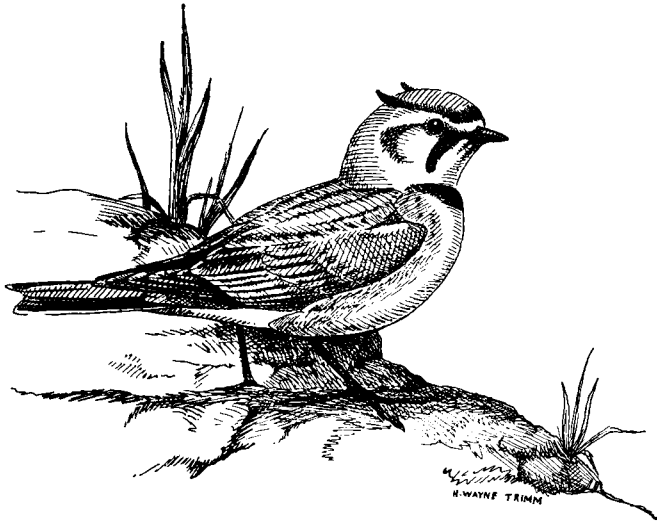
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**Distributional History of the Chuck-will's-widow in Kansas.**—The Chuck-will's widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) is a characteristic summer resident of deciduous woodlands in southeastern North America. Thus, the species today occupies the southeastern third of Kansas where suitable habitat occurs, broadly in the oak-hickory vegetation of eastern Kansas, and peripherally in watercourse bottomlands and deserted woodlots. The occurrence of a male (KU 38338) in breeding condition in a small woodlot 14 miles north and 5 miles east of Stafford, Stafford County, on April 30, 1960, emphasizes that there is little formally on record documenting the present northwestward limit to the distribution of the species. Reasons for this lie in the fact that in the past 50 years the Chuck-will's-widow gradually has been extending its range to the north and west.

The locality in Stafford County is actually only 80 miles northwest of the very first station of occurrence recorded for Kansas, near Wichita (Lantz, 1899:187). It is instructive to note that the broad watercourse of the Arkansas River runs but a mile distant from the locality in Stafford County; doubtless this feature has been significant as the avenue of access to central Kansas for Chuck-will's-widows, for Stafford County is well within the area of the Kansan prairie and those environmental qualities that seem suboptimal for this caprimulgid. Wichita, it should be noted, is adjacent to considerable quantities of broken, sub-humid woodland satisfactory for summer occupancy by Chuck-will's-widows.

Movement by Chuck-will's-widows along the Arkansas River has seemingly been slow, if steady. Sixty-two years separate the record of Lantz (*op. cit.*) and that of the present report. On the other hand, progress of the species northward has been marked by a comparatively enormous increase in area occupied. This makes sense ecologically, for the northerly advance has taken place in the westward extremity of nearly continuous oak-hickory vegetation in western Missouri and eastern Kansas. By 1902 the species had been found breeding in Osage County, Oklahoma, and Chautauqua County, Kansas (Colvin, 1905:81). Slightly later the bird was found nesting on the Cimarron River in Woods County, Oklahoma (Carter and Trentoon, *ex Nice and Nice*, 1924:54). To the north, the first Chuck-will's-widow for Kansas City, Missouri, was noted on May 3, 1918 (Harris, 1919:275); at that time the species was considered to be regular in occurrence only at the latitude of Bourbon County, Kansas. By 1940, the Chuck-will's-widow was considered only rare at Kansas City (Harold Hedges, personal communication), but by the mid-1950s the species was considered common there, particularly in Johnson and Wyandotte counties, Kansas. Meanwhile, specimens had been taken in the breeding season to fill in the gap between those localities mentioned above, most notably at Lawrence, Douglas County, and Hamilton, Greenwood County. There are also sight and auditory records from Topeka, Shawnee County, about 30 miles upstream from Lawrence, on the Kansas River, and one egg record at Kriepe Woods, Shawnee County (L. B. Carson, personal communication).

There is no reason to believe that the Chuck-will's-widow has appreciably stopped its northward advance, especially in view of the species's abundance in the vicinity of Kansas City, through which the ostensible northern distributional limit now runs. To the west in Kansas generally, however, there are severe environmental conditions (chiefly reflected in restriction of suitable woodland) that are likely to retard the Chuck-will's-widow in its dispersal into and eventual occupancy of the region. Further expansion of range will have to be even more linear than it is already along the Arkansas River, following heavy bottomland vegetation of the Kansas, Neosho, and Cimarron rivers.

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Richard F. Johnston, *Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, June 5, 1960.*

## REVIEW

**Introduction to Our Bird Friends.** L. B. Carson and Orville O. Rice. Topeka, Capper Publications, Inc., 1959 and 1960. 54 pp., 100 figs. in text, 4 col. pls. Price, \$0.50.—Many readers will already have read and used this book under other covers, for it is a combination of two smaller volumes issued in 1959. The colored plates, however, appear here for the first time. One hundred species of birds common to northeastern Kansas are treated, each in a text of about 300 words, a rhymed quatrain, and a line drawing. Each such treatment is a felicitous one, with the text and verse apt and the drawing graceful and economical. The information contained in text is on the whole accurate and manages to carry the flavor of each species concerned; Carson here shows evidence of long and varied experience as a student of birds in the field and library. The reviewer finds little room for objections, but has to challenge the statement, "Starlings have not learned to migrate . . .," for, not only is learning not involved etiologically, but starlings in fact migrate; some of them move into southern Texas, New Mexico, and México.

The color plates by Rice are a handsome addition to the text and should contribute to the general demand for the book. An error is present in plate III, where the Eastern Meadowlark is depicted with the tail of a Western Meadowlark. The color reproduction is clean and true in the review copy.

The four-page index is also an exceedingly useful guide to monthly occurrence and abundance in the vicinity of Topeka, Kansas. This alone would be worth the modest purchase price. No student of Kansan birdlife should neglect to obtain and use this handy guide.—Richard F. Johnston.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Windy Knob  
Mound City, Kansas  
July 8, 1960

Editor, K.O.S. Bulletin:

Recently a friend in Linn County asked if it were possible he had seen a "Loggerhead Shrike" feeding young birds near his home. After my startled "A what?" I recovered and assured him that the Loggerhead was our common shrike and that was probably what he saw. My friend had a Peterson's field guide so that his error was solely of inattention, but it climaxed a long-standing grudge of mine: why are not standard pronunciations included in field guide texts?

Take our own specialty, the Pileated Woodpecker; he is called pileated because his head is topped by a big red cap, or pileus. Therefore, isn't it reasonable to call him *pie-liated*? Yet, 95 per cent of birders pronounce the name as though it were *pilliated*. Webster prefers *pie*, but acknowledges *pill*; which is correct? For the Bewick Wren, do we say *beewick* or, as seems to be the case, *buick*? Are those beautiful white herons *eegrets*, or should we rhyme them with regrets? Is it *ploever* or *pluvver*?

These remarks could be extended easily; ani, pyrrhuloxia, pauraque, Vaux, goshawk, lazuli, parula, towhee among a dozen others lead double lives. There are many checklists and field guides, but none handle this matter; why doesn't someone in authority prepare and publish a standard pronunciation guide to be inserted in field guides for easy reference? It would save many red faces among others than those elusive Arizona warblers.

Earnestly,  
Eunice B. Dingus

There is no easy way out of the problem outlined above. Specialists in ornithology show no consistency in pronunciation, and specialists in English usage agree that consistency of any kind in language is possible only if the language is dead (but, Latin is "dead" and its pronunciation is not yet consistent). Recourse to an unabridged dictionary is good, particularly because of the brief etymological information given. If, for instance, one knows that parula is the diminutive treatment of the Latin *Parus*, titmouse, then the pronunciation *pár-oo-la* is easy and seems reasonable enough. Especially for

pronunciation of Latin or latinized names, a new booklet by Donald J. Borror (1960. Dictionary of word roots and combining forms. N-P Publications, Palo Alto, California. v + 134 pp. \$1.85) is of great value.—Ed.

#### NOTES AND NEWS

Species of birds seen by members of the K.O.S. in Barton and Stafford counties on the Fall Field Trip, October 1-2, 1960, are as follows: Pied-billed Grebe, White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Little Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Blue Goose, Mallard, Black Duck, Gadwall, Baldpate, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Pigeon Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Sparrow Hawk, Greater Prairie Chicken, Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot, Killdeer, American Golden Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Snowy Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Baird Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Stilt Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Avocet, Sanderling, Wilson Phalarope, Ring-billed Gull, Franklin Gull, Bonaparte Gull, Black Tern, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Burrowing Owl, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Red-shafted Flicker, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Robin, Water Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Redwinged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lincoln Sparrow.

The dates for the Midwinter Bird Count are Wednesday, December 21, 1960, to Monday, January 2, 1961; these correspond with the dates used by the National Audubon Society. Please submit copy for publication of the counts by January 20, 1961.

Members are urged to note that dues for 1961 will be \$2.00 for regular membership; sustaining membership remains at \$5.00 per year, and a new category of membership for students is \$1.00 per year. These matters were voted into policy unanimously at the Business Meeting of the K.O.S. at Great Bend, October 2, 1960. The roster of members as of April 1, 1961, will be published in the Bulletin for June, 1961. Prompt payment of dues results in more effective processing of each membership by the Treasurer and the Secretary; your cooperation is earnestly solicited in reducing the workload of these officers.

The Annual Meeting of the K.O.S. will be held in Topeka, Kansas, in association with the Topeka Audubon Society and Washburn University of Topeka. Paper sessions will be held in the new Science Hall on April 29, 1961, and the field trips will occur the following day.—Ed.

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With this number of the Bulletin the Society completes ten consecutive years of publication of ornithological information. Members of the Society are justified in taking some pride in their continuous support of this modest Bulletin; it is to be hoped that the measure of support will be no less in the coming decade. It is appropriate to note that Philip B. Menninger has volunteered to compile the first ten-year index to the Bulletin; this is welcome news to members who have planned to have the volumes to date bound for more permanent use.—R.F.J.