

# Kansas Ornithological Society

## BULLETIN

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No. 1

### MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT FOR 1967

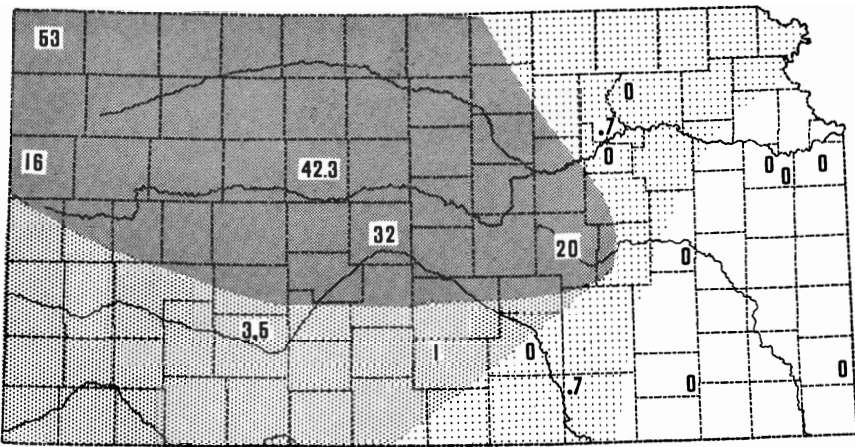
JEROME A. JACKSON AND JAMES D. RISING

Twenty-one bird counts were taken by members of the Kansas Ornithological Society between 20 December 1967 and 1 January 1968; 154,753 birds of 118 species were recorded on the counts (see Table 1). The total of 118 species is five more than was recorded in 1966, but represents a number of species that is characteristic of mid-winter counts.

Qualitatively, only a few species were reported that are unusual in Kansas in the winter: White Pelican (Great Bend), Double-crested Cormorant (Great Bend), Swainson Hawk (Olathe), Roadrunner (Longton), raven sp. (Dodge City), Curve-billed Thrasher (Ellis County), Evening Grosbeak (Lawrence), and McCown Longspur (Manhattan). The Swainson Hawk was well studied, both while it was sitting and in flight, by Ray Wackley, Mike Clark, and Dean Crane at a distance of about 100 yards. This record seems worthy of inclusion in this report, but such sight records must always be accepted with caution, not only because there is extreme individual variation among members of the genus *Buteo*, but also because the dietary preferences of the Swainson Hawk and its known winter range cast doubt on the species' ability to withstand the rigors of the temperate winter. Mrs. A. R. Challans identified the raven at Dodge City on the basis of the characteristic raven mode of flight; it is difficult to distinguish the White-necked Raven and Common Raven in the field, but the former would seem to be the more likely to occur on the Kansas high plains in the winter: It is a summer resident in that area, and January-taken specimens (KU 32985-90) from Finney County (from three localities near Garden City) suggest that it may be encountered in any season. Although there is but one specimen of the Common Raven from Kansas, individuals may wander from the adjacent Rocky Mountains more commonly than records indicate. The Curve-billed Thrasher observed at Hays, Ellis County, was collected the following day (FHKSC 1535; Ely and Davis, MS). The Evening Grosbeak, reported from Lawrence, was seen by Mrs. E. T. Turney who studied the bird at her feeder. The 20 McCown Longspurs recorded at Manhattan were seen by Herschel Gier who is familiar with the other species of longspurs. Additionally, the Osprey (Fostoria) and Burrowing Owl (Fostoria and Ellis County), which were also seen in the count periods, are interesting winter records.

Quantitatively, numbers of Common Snipe (32), Ring-billed Gull (1,558), Winter Wren (13), Bewick Wren (8), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (19), Brewer Blackbird (931), Rusty Blackbird (539), and Field Sparrow (104) are all unusually high, whereas numbers of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (10), Red-breasted Nuthatch (1), Robin (458), Purple Finch (9), and Pine Siskin (76) seem unusually low. Many of these species, especially those in the latter category, are known to be cyclic in their occurrence in Kansas; another such cyclic species, the Red Crossbill, was not even recorded.

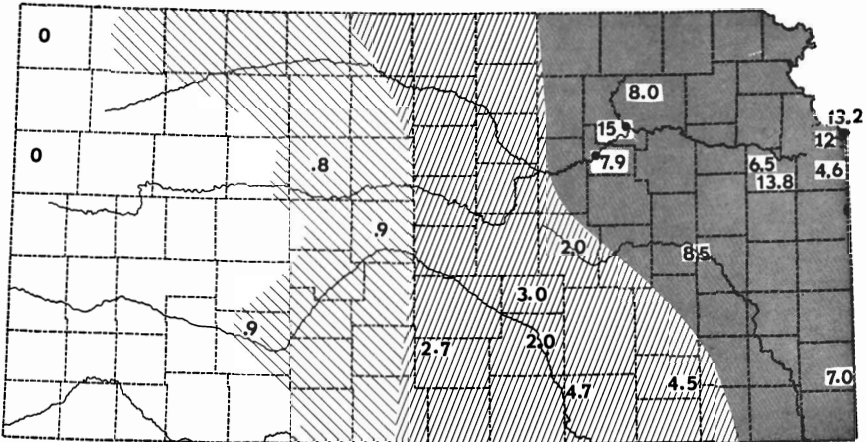
Figures 1-6 illustrate the density-distribution of seven resident species of birds commonly seen in Kansas. The numbers on the maps are the numbers of each species counted per eight party-hours on each census. The maps are open to several lines of criticism, the most obvious being that the data are at best only



**Ring-necked  
Pheasant**

Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas  
1945

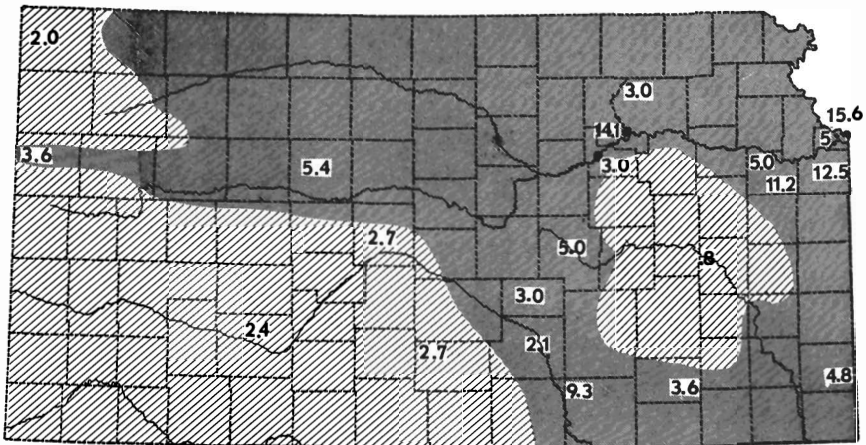
Scale  
0 20 40 Miles



**Red-bellied  
Woodpecker**

Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas  
1945

Scale  
0 20 40 Miles

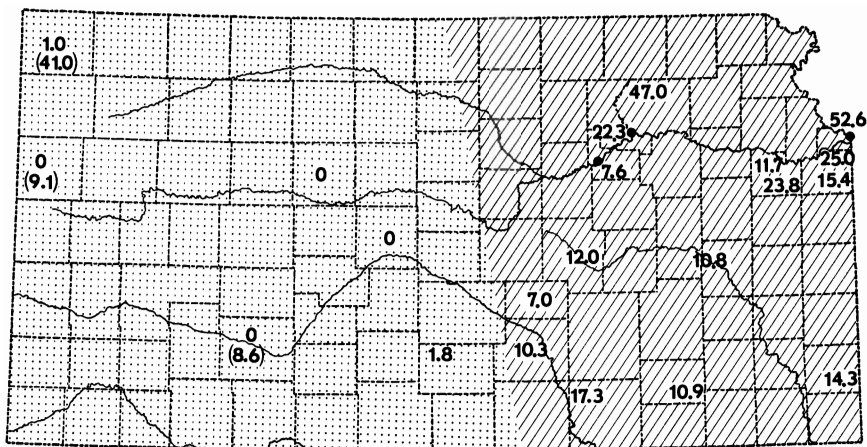


**Downy  
Woodpecker**

Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas  
1945

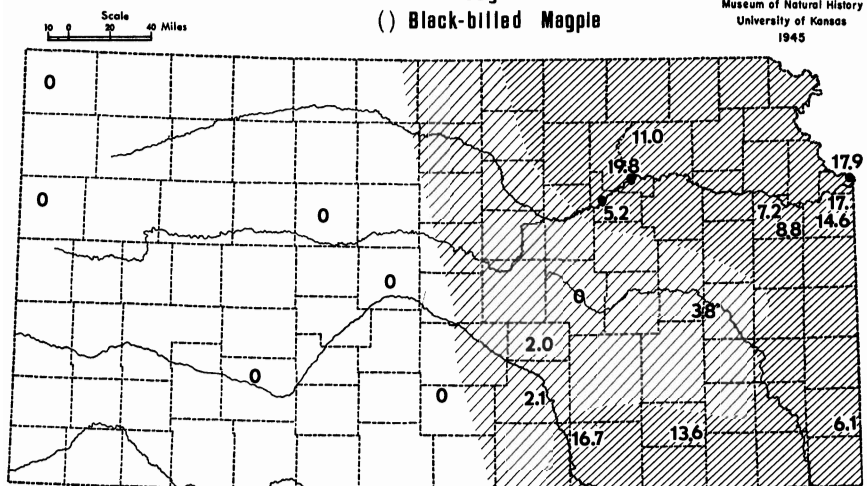
Scale  
0 20 40 Miles

Figures 1-3. Density distribution of the Ring-necked Pheasant (1, above), Red-bellied Woodpecker (2, middle), and Downy Woodpecker (3, below), based on winter counts by members of the K.O.S., 1967.



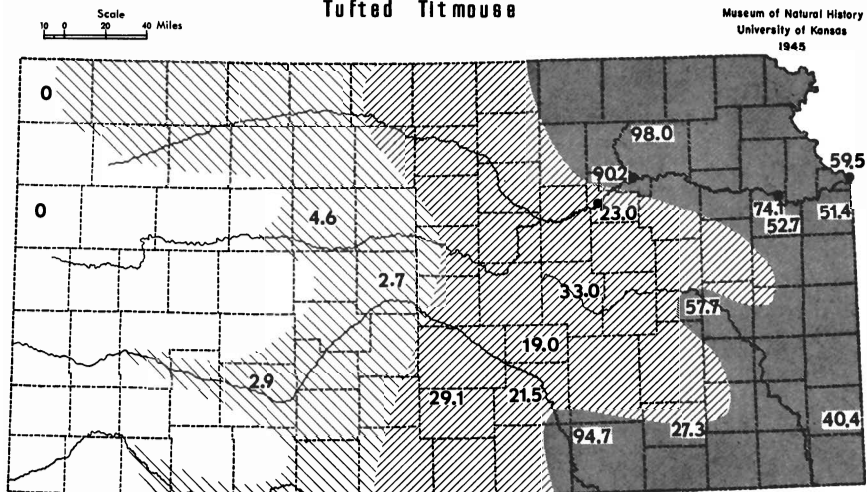
**Blue Jay**  
( ) **Black-billed Magpie**

Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas  
1945



**Tufted Titmouse**

Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas  
1945



**Cardinal**

Museum of Natural History  
University of Kansas  
1945

Figures 4-6. Density distribution of the Blue Jay and Black-billed Magpie (4, above), Tufted Titmouse (5, middle), and Cardinal (6, below), based on winter counts by members of the K.O.S., 1967.



as reliable as those collected on the individual counts. Additionally, although the data are corrected for the number of parties, there is no correction for the number of observers per party which would seem to have an effect on the numbers of birds counted, as would the experience of the observers, their relative "conservativeness" in counting birds, the local weather conditions on the census day, and so forth. Nevertheless, we feel that certain overall trends in distribution and abundance which emerge from the figures are meaningful. Our best estimates of the actual distributional limits of the species figured (excepting the Black-billed Magpie) are illustrated by the shading on the maps. The more darkly shaded areas correspond to areas of higher density. Of course, within the shaded areas each species is found only in suitable habitat; nevertheless, at the periphery of the range, we have extended the shading for species associated with woodland or brush along watercourses where habitat and the species are known to occur. This is justifiable on the grounds that in these marginal regions the suitable habitat becomes increasingly greatly restricted.

Of the seven species illustrated, six are species that are associated with woodlands: Red-bellied Woodpecker (Fig. 2); Downy Woodpecker (Fig. 3); Blue Jay (Fig. 4); Black-billed Magpie (Fig. 4); Tufted Titmouse (Fig. 5); and Cardinal (Fig. 6). Five of these (excepting the magpie) show a marked decrease in density in the western portions of the state, and only two (Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay) are known to occur throughout the state. Although the data are more scattered than is desirable, the Downy Woodpecker and Tufted Titmouse show a similar decrease in density in the Flint Hills region, correlated in all probability with the scarcity of trees in this area, but this is possibly artifactual. The pheasant (Fig. 1) is primarily found west of the Flint Hills, and it occurs in highest densities north of the Arkansas River or perhaps the Smoky Hill River. It would be desirable to use long-term averages to draw such density-distribution maps, but unfortunately counts from the far west are only sporadically taken. These figures illustrate but one of the possible uses to which the mid-winter count data can be put, and stress the desirability of counting each bird observed, whether rare or common.

*Baldwin City* (15-mile circle, center junction of highways 56 and 59, Douglas County). December 28; 21 party-hours (7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 15%, cultivated fields 5%, brush 30%, woodland 15%, lakes 30%, town 5%; temperature 16–33°F; cloud cover 100%; wind S at 0–15 mph; ground 25% snow-covered; water areas 75% open; miles: 152 by car, 12 on foot; 13 observers in three parties: Mr. and Mrs. I. L. Boyd, Roger Boyd, Mark Doty, Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Faulh, Chuck Ford, Jan Hoch, Katharine Kelley, Mrs. Marmo McKaughan, R. F. Miller, Vernon Wilson, and Amelia J. Betts (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Snow Goose (white), Carolina Wren.

*Camp Naish* (500 acre reservation, 3 miles E Bonner Springs, Wyandotte County). December 30; 8 party-hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 10%, brush 30%, woodland 55%; temperature 30°F; cloud cover 100%; wind S at 8 mph; 3" snow; ground 100% snow-covered; water areas 30% open; miles: 4 by car, 10 on foot; seven observers in one party: Jan Bishop, Susan Bockhorst, Becky Hixson, Kathy Schott, Craig Duncan, Eric Rundquist, and Stan Roth (compiler).

*Cheyenne County* (39°46'N, 101°48'W; all points within a 15-mile circle, center St. Francis). December 28; 8 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CST); open grassland 45%, cultivated fields 50%, woodland 3%, river 2%; temperature 30°F; cloud cover 25–95–20%; wind NW at 20 mph; ground 95% snow-covered; water areas 20% open; miles: 85 by car, 4 on foot; two observers in one party: Charles W. Jackson, Thomas G. Shane (compiler).

*Coffey-Lyon counties* (15-mile circle, center midway between Hartford, Kansas, and Redmond Reservoir). December 21; 10 party-hours (7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.); open grassland 5%, cultivated fields 25%, brush 20%, woodland 30%, lake and river 20%; temperature 19°F; cloud cover 50%; wind N at 15 mph; 1" snow; ground 90% snow-covered; water areas 80% open; miles: 60 by car, 30 on foot; six observers in one party: Bert Blair, Marc Marcellus, David Parmelee, Robert Peterson, Lyle Stemmerman, and Edward Ryan (compiler).

*Dodge City* (37°46'N, 99°58'W; all points within a 15-mile circle, center 2 miles east of St. Mary of the Plains College, including Duck Creek, Ford County Park Lake, Arkansas River, and St. Anthony's Hospital grounds). December 20; 17 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); open grassland, fields and pastures 63%, woodland 30%, town and farmyard 7%; temperature 40–62°F; cloud cover 0%; wind S at 8–23 mph; no snow cover; water areas 100%; miles: 109 by car, 9 on foot; four observers in two parties: Maurice Bleumer, Duane Boyd, Gerald Rziha, and Joan Challans (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Blue Jay.

*Ellis County* (all points within a 15-mile circle, centered 6 miles S, 3 miles W Hays, including Rohr-Jacobs Lake, Harold Kraus farm, Big Creek near Hays, and parts of the Smoky Hill River). January 1; 10 party-hours (7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.); open grassland 30%, cultivated fields 35%, woodland 30%, urban parks 5%; temperature 20–30°F; cloud cover trace to 100%; wind S at 0–8 mph; no precipitation; ground 100% snow-covered (1–2"); water areas 5% open; miles:

58 by car, 5 on foot; five observers in one party: Larry W. Anthony, Marvin E. Rolfs, R. Kent Schrieber, Gerald W. Tomanek, and Charles A. Ely (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Cooper Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl (fresh road kill), Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet.

*Fostoria* (same as previous years, including Blue River area, and *Fostoria*, Pottawatomie County). December 28; 8 party-hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 50%, cultivated fields 13%, brush 30%, woodland 6%, land and river 1%; temperature 10-18°F; cloud cover 100%; wind NE at 8 mph; 4-6" snowfall; ground 100% snow-covered; water areas 3% open; miles: 51 by car, 1 on foot; five observers in one party: Bernard Plummer, Rowena Plummer, Howard Webster, Mabel Willis, and Eunice Webster (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Golden Eagle, Osprey, Burrowing Owl, Brown Creeper, Townsend Solitaire, and Loggerhead Shrike.

*Great Bend* (Walnut Creek, Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area, and vicinity, Barton County). 28 December; 9 party-hours (6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 10%, cultivated fields 30%, brush 15%, woodland 5%, lake and river 40%; temperature 28°F; cloud cover 100%; ground 90% snow-covered; water areas 5% open; miles: 28 by car, 2 on foot; two observers in one party: Gary Schwilling, Marvin D. Schwilling (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Ruddy Duck, American Coot, and Blue Jay.

*Halstead-Newton* (same as previous years, Harvey County). December 20; 8½ party-hours (7:40 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.); sand prairie and pasture 24%, cultivated fields 36%, woodland 30%, marshes and ponds 7%, farmyards and towns 3%; temperature 44-66°F; cloud cover 90% in a.m. to 5% in p.m.; wind S at 5-40 mph; no precipitation; no snow cover on ground; water areas 100% open; miles: 51 by car, 5 on foot; two observers in one party: Ralph Barrel, and Dwight Platt (compiler).

*Junction City* (39°00'N, 96°53'W; points within a 15-mile circle, center 3½ miles SW Junction City, Kansas). 26 December; 26 party-hours (7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); open grassland 45%, cultivated fields 20%, woodland 20%, lake and river 12%, juniper scrub and pines 3%; temperature 14-36°F; partly cloudy in a.m.; cloudy in p.m.; wind S at 0-25 mph; ground 5% snow-covered; water areas 90% open; miles: 269 by car, 9 on foot; nine observers in four parties: Chas. C. Ayres, John Irwin, Bob LaShelle, John R. LaShelle, E. R. Lewis, Ron Powell, Celia White, Judith Shane and Thomas G. Shane (compilers).

*Kansas City* (15-mile circle, center in Morris, including Wyandotte County Lake, Bonner Springs, Shawnee-Mission Park, Camp Towanyak, Lake Quivira, Suburban Air Park, and portions of the Kansas River, Johnson and Wyandotte counties). December 30; 34 party-hours (7:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.); open grassland 15%, cultivated fields 20%, brush 5%, woodland 15%, lake and river 30%, roadsides and feeders 15%; temperature 23-38°F; cloud cover 100%; wind S at 3-5 mph; snow in p.m.; 2" snow on ground; water areas 35% open; miles: 132 by car, 23 on foot; 13 observers in five parties: Dr. Chas. Clough, Elizabeth Cole, Barbara Edmonson, Josephine Isenberger, Dr. Robert Lee, Mary Louise Myers, James Myers, Katherine Olson, Leona Robling, Fred Robling, Bernice Tatum, Dr. Frank Thom, and A. Dean Cole (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Screech Owl.

*Kingman* (15-mile circle, center Calista Quail Farm, including Kingman County Game Management Area, Penalosca, Kingman County). December 31; 9 party-hours (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); open grassland 60%, cultivated fields 2%, brush 8%, woodland 10%, lake and river 20%; temperature 8-18°F; no cloud cover; wind N at 1-3 mph; no precipitation; ground 90% snow-covered; water areas 2% open; miles: 34 by car, 5 on foot; three observers in one party: John Boyer, Danny Walker, and Byron Walker (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: American Widgeon, Brewer Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird.

*Lawrence* (same as previous years, Douglas County). December 28; 37 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.); open grassland 15%, cultivated fields 5%, brush 20%, woodland 40%, lakes and rivers 20%; temperature 19-29°F; overcast; wind less than 5 mph; 2" snow-cover on ground; water areas frozen but for the Kansas River; miles: 148 by car, 22 on foot; 30 observers in six parties: Wendy Balfour, William Balfour, Jan Bishop, Susan Bockhorst, Bert Chewning, Mrs. Bert Chewning, David Conrad, Mrs. Donald Conrad, Craig Duncan, Mrs. Paul Erickson, Martha Faulh, Helen Carrett, E. Raymond Hall, Mrs. E. R. Hall, Becky Hixon, Fritz Koch, Mrs. Fritz Koch, Rebecca Leibengood, Ethel Martin, Marion Mengel, Robert Mengel, Diane Miller, Mrs. John Nelson, Jerome Robins, Stan Roth, Gary D. (Seagull) Schnell, Kathy Schott, Emily T. Turney, and Alfred Bjelland and Ruth Faulh (compilers). Additional species seen in count period: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

*Longton* (15-mile circle, center Longton, Elk County). January 1; 9 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 40%, cultivated fields 20%, brush 10%, woodland 20%, lakes and rivers 10%; temperature 20-25°F; cloud cover 100%; wind NW at 10-15 mph; mist falling; ground 5% snow-covered; two observers in one party: H. L. Albright, and Sylvia Albright (compiler).

*Manhattan* (15-mile circle, center Kansas State University Campus, Riley County). January 1; [est. 45 party-hours]; open grassland 35%, cultivated fields 5%, brush 35%, woodland 10%, lakes and rivers 10%, towns 5%; temperature 10-28°F; overcast; wind S at 0-11 mph; no precipitation; ground 100% snow-covered; water areas 10% open; miles: 319 by car, 53 on foot; 36 observers in seven parties: G. Blankespoor, M. Border, W. Carey, R. Case, W. Cole, D. Coppersmith, M. Davidson, Mr. & Mrs. R. Donham, L. K. Edmunds, K. Geyer, H. Gier, E. G. Heyne, D. Heyne, R. Horejsi, L. Latschar, M. Latschar, Mr. & Mrs. E. Lewis, R. Lewis, G. Killian, D. Marvin, P. Marvin, G. R. Marzolf, R. McWhorter, C. Moore, D. Moore, L. Schartz, Mr. & Mrs. T. G. Shane, N. Silvy, G. H. Smurthwaite, P. Watt, M. Walker, J. Weis, and J. L. Zimmerman (compiler).

*Marion* (15-mile circle, center Marion County Court House, Marion County). December 30; 8 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 20%, cultivated fields 5%, brush 5%, woodland 40%, lakes and rivers 30%; temperature 32°F; overcast; wind S at 3 mph; ½" snow; ground 100% snow-covered; water areas 50% open; miles: 38 by car, 4 on foot; two observers in one party: Earyl Enos, and D. Eugene Enos (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Brown Creeper, Brown Thrasher.

*Olathe* (15-mile circle, centered on intersection of highways 56 and 7, Johnson County). December 30; 22 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 15%, cultivated fields 15%, brush 20%, woodland 25%, lakes and rivers 20%, towns 5%; temperature 30°F, cloud cover 50-100%; wind SW to NE at 10-15 mph; 2" snowfall; ground 90% snow-covered; water areas 10% open; miles: 155 by car, 14 on foot; 10 observers in three parties: Dr. Ivan Boyd, Roger Boyd, James Bradley, Mike Clark, Gene Crane, Mark Crane, Ethel Hower, Joe Sanders, Dr. Ray Wackley, and Dean Crane (compiler).

*Pittsburg* (15-mile circle, center at Kansas State College at Pittsburg, Crawford County). 23 December; 18½ party-hours (6:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 30%, cultivated fields 25%, brush 10%, woodland 10%, lakes and rivers 20%, urban 5%; temperature 15-49°F; no cloud cover; wind SW at 12 mph; no precipitation; no snow-cover; water areas 50% open; miles: 55 by car, 13 on foot; two observers in two parties: Dr. T. M. Sperry, and Mrs. Bessie Bosco (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Rough-legged Hawk, Barred Owl, Mourning Dove, Myrtle Warbler, Common Grackle, Oregon Junco.

*Udall* (points within a 15-mile circle, center on watertower at Udall, including Walnut and Arkansas rivers, Cowley and Sumner counties). December 30; 12 party-hours (5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); deciduous woodlands 50%, fields and pastures 40%, freshwater 10%; temperature 32-32°F; wind SE at 3-5 mph; cloudy with light snowfall; light snow-cover; ponds and lakes frozen; miles: 120 by car, 5 on foot; two observers in one party: Robert B. Wimmer and Max C. Thompson (compiler). Additional species seen in count period: Myrtle Warbler, Cedar Waxwing.

*Wallace County* (38°53'N, 101°41'W; points within a 15-mile circle, center 3½ miles SE Sharon Springs). December 27; 9 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 35%, cultivated fields 60%, woodlands 4%, streams 1%; temperature 3-26°F; wind SW at 0-15 mph; cloud cover 5%; ground 100% snow-covered; water areas 10% open; miles: 65 by car, 3 on foot; two observers in one party: Charles W. Jackson and Thomas G. Shane (compiler).

*Wichita* (15-mile circle, center at the confluence of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas rivers, Sedgwick County). December 30; 31 party-hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); open grassland 10%, cultivated fields 20%, brush 10%, woodland 10%, lakes and rivers 50%; temperature 22-32°F; cloud cover 100%; wind S at 8 mph; 1" snowfall; ground 100% snow-covered; water areas 50% open; miles: 132 by car, 24 on foot; 20 observers in four parties: Glenn Barrett, J. Walker Butin, Phil Butin, Wallace Champeny, Jeff Cox, Alma Divinia, L. M. Divinia, Don Ferguson, Doug Ferguson, Larry Gray, Ken Kapvman, Dan Kilby, Marjorie E. Marshall, Nathan McDonald, Ruth Miller, Martha Schwartz, Keith Tillotson, Margaret Werner, Ralph Wiley, and Carl Holmes (compiler).

[Editor's Note: The Topeka, Shawnee County, count was received too late for inclusion in the above summary.]

*Topeka* (points within a 15-mile circle, center Gage Park, including Lake Shawnee, Sherwood Lake). 30 December; 36½ party-hours (6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); prairie and fields 30%, cultivated fields 20%, deciduous woodlots 20%, urban areas 25%, lakes and rivers 5%; temperature 20-30°F; cloud cover 100%; wind S to NE at 0-5 mph; 3" snow-cover; most water areas open; snow in p.m.; miles: 290 by car, 15 on foot; 11 observers in four parties: Mrs. Reid Green, Marvin Kuehn, Eugene Lewis, Eulalia Lewis, Tim Lewis, Kathy Rice, Jean Schulenberg, Mrs. Phil Sublett, Phil Sublett, and Orville O. Rice and Robert Sutherland (compilers). Species seen: Common Loon 1, Canada Goose 4, Mallard 125, Green-winged Teal 4, Ring-necked Duck 1, Canvasback 2, Common Goldeneye 4, Bufflehead 1, Hooded Merganser 5, Common Merganser 38, Goshawk 1 [well seen by two observers], Red-tailed Hawk 34 (plus 1 Harlan hawk and 1 Kridler hawk), Rough-legged Hawk 4, Marsh Hawk 7, Sparrow Hawk 19, Bobwhite 29, American Coot 57, Killdeer 2, Common Snipe 1, Mourning Dove 60, Screech Owl 1, Great Horned Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Yellow-shafted Flicker 16, Red-bellied Woodpecker 20, Red-headed Woodpecker 4, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2, Hairy Woodpecker 2, Downy Woodpecker 16, Horned Lark 242, Blue Jay 42, Common Crow 77, Black-capped Chickadee 63, Tufted Titmouse 24, White-breasted Nuthatch 4, Brown Creeper 2, Carolina Wren 5, Mockingbird 6, Eastern Bluebird 13, Townsend Solitaire 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 5, Water Pipit 1 [visiting pond regularly], Cedar Waxwing 10, Loggerhead Shrike 8, Starling 834, House Sparrow 570, Eastern Meadowlark 237, Western Meadowlark 4, Red-winged Blackbird 26, Common Grackle 21, Brown-headed Cowbird 194, Cardinal 189, Pine Siskin 5, American Goldfinch 51, Rufous-sided Towhee 2, Slate-colored Junco 241, Oregon Junco 5, Tree Sparrow 561, Harris Sparrow 236, White-crowned Sparrow 1, White-throated Sparrow 4, Lincoln Sparrow 1, Swamp Sparrow 6, Song Sparrow 76, Lapland Longspur 2. Total number of species, 65; total number of individuals, 4,234. Additional species seen in count period: Cooper Hawk, Long-eared Owl, Robin.

## Kansas Ornithological Society

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