

Kansas Ornithological Society

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Bulletin

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Front row, left to right: L. P. Dittmore, T. M. Sperry, R. T. Peterson, E. W. Dehner, H. T. Gier, I. L. Boyd, T. F. Andrews, H. C. Hedges, E. M. Nuss, L. B. Carson.
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Third row: Dwight Platt, John Breukelman, Roy Henry, C. J. Kauffman, Mrs. R. W. Frederickson, R. W. Frederickson, Richard Harder, R. J. Kingman, Mrs. Burt Chewning, Elizabeth Schnemayer, R. F. Miller
Fourth row: Howard Rowlee, R. H. Schmidt, L. D. Wooster, E. R. Hall, M. F. Baker, Grace Holcombe, A. L. Goodrich, Oliver Gaswint, Rolland Baker, Burt Chewning, John Bishop, Mary E. Pinney.

A REPORT ON THE TOPEKA CONVENTION

The second annual meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society was held on April 29 and 30, 1950. The morning and afternoon program of the first day was given in the Municipal Auditorium and consisted of reports, song-bird recordings and two business sessions. A banquet was held at the Jayhawk Hotel in the evening. The guest of honor was Roger T. Peterson. Following the symposium on migration trends was a kodachrome movie filmed and shown by William R. Eastman, Jr., of Hays, Kansas. A field trip conducted in the morning of the second day terminated at noon with a box lunch at Lake Shawnee. In the evening the Topeka Audubon Society sponsored the Audubon Screen Tour, "The Riddle of Migration" by Roger Tory Peterson.

Review of Convention Reports

Revision of East Kansas Bird Records.

R. F. Miller, Baldwin, Kansas, speaking on the publication "Migration Records of Birds in East-Central Kansas" gave its purpose, explained the method by which the records were made, and presented the need for a revision of the publication. He made the plea for members to keep migration records which could be used in future compilations. Dr. Miller stated that state-wide participation in this project would make a much more useful guide for the bird watcher.

Prairie Chickens In Kansas

Maurice F. Baker, Kansas Biological Survey, reported on the status of the greater prairie chicken, *Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus* and lesser prairie chicken, *T. pallidicinctus*, of Kansas. The lesser species is limited at the present time to the southwestern part of the state along the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers. The greater prairie chicken is found in the bluestem hills country, southeastern part of the state and in northwestern part of the state. Former survey would indicate that the range of these two species of chickens have shifted considerably in the last ninety years. Probably the factors influencing the decline in numbers of prairie chickens have been the reduction of the native prairie grasses and excessive takes of these birds through hunting and trapping. At the time of this report apparently insufficient data were available to indicate the influence that an open season might have upon the distribution and abundance of the prairie chicken in Kansas. It is hoped that the 1950 open season of October 25 will reveal suitable information for predicting future management of these upland game birds.

The Social Behavior of Birds

The social behavior of birds was presented by A. M. Guhl of Kansas State College. The field of behavior is relatively new and has fascinated both the amateur and the professional ornithologist. The author stated he was most familiar with the social behavior of chickens and so used them to illustrate an hierarchial system. The birds were marked with various colored legbands for individual identification. Dr. Guhl found that pecking occurred in one direction only, and that the birds could be ranked according to the number of individuals each member of the flock pecked. One bird might peck all in the group and not be pecked in return, another might peck none and be pecked by all. This dominance order was termed a peck-order. Peck-orders were shown to occur in small flocks up to as large as one hundred birds. As each bird learned which it might peck and which ones it must avoid, it was obvious that they recognized one another. It was observed that once the peck-order was established less disturbance occurred among the birds than did until each had met each of its penmates and settled the dominance relationship. It seems obvious, then, that an understanding of the behavior characteristics of fowls by the poultryman might be valuable. As was stated by the author the study of the social behavior of animals may be by no means limited just to chickens but can be applied to many other species of birds as well as to most other higher animals. Mention was made of nip-order in fish, bunt-order in cows and chase-order in squirrels. The peck-order has been described for birds such as Jackdaws, Valley Quail, White-throated Sparrows and Titmice.

Unusual Bird Records of Eastern Kansas

John Bishop of Kansas City, Kansas reported on birds considered rare in the Kansas City region. His list included Bachmann's Sparrow, Louisiana Heron, American Magpie, Hudsonian Curlew, Golden Eagle, Goshawk, Hooded Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Western Grebe, Hudsonian Godwit, Cinnamon Teal, Bald Eagle, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Avocet, Old Squaw, Prairie Warbler and Baird's Sandpiper. It was pointed out by Mr. Bishop that while some of these birds seemed to be rare at the time of this report they might be seen more frequently in the future.

**Juncos of the
Kansas City Region**

Kansas City. Mr. Hedges described in detail a newly recognized race, the Cassiar Junco, *Junco hyemalis cismontanus*. (A detailed report of this paper will occur in a later issue. Ed.)

The purpose of the report presented by Harold Hedges of Kansas City, Kansas was to summarize the status of the genus *Junco* in eastern Kansas near

**Structure and Function of
Respiration in Aquatic Birds**

Common Loon. Eugene W. Dehner, Atchison, Kans., reviewed investigations made over a period of five years on various species of wild ducks.

This was a joint report in which H. T. Gier, Manhattan, Kans., discussed the anatomy of the airsacs in aquatic birds with special reference to the Com-

Dr. Gier stated that birds usually have five pairs of airsacs, sometimes as many as seven pairs. Each of these pairs of sacs have been given names which serves to locate them anatomically in the body of the bird. They are the *posterior abdominal* airsacs which are located posterior to the liver; the *anterior abdominal* airsacs which surround the stomach and the liver; the *intermediate* airsacs which surround the heart; the *interclavicular* airsacs which are located around the trachea, anteriorly on each side along the neck, laterally around the shoulders, and ventrally between the big breast muscles. The fifth pair, the cervical airsacs are found in ducks to extend dorsally along the cervical region penetrating the spaces between the vertebrae and around the spinal cord. Investigation showed that in some birds the airsacs have secondary diverticulae which penetrate the cavities of the long bones.

The function of airsacs is still hypothetical. They may aid in respiration, increase respiratory capacity, lighten the body by filling non-essential spaces, reduce friction between rapidly moving muscles or joints, or possibly other functions, or maybe no function at all. This must be determined by experimentation with living birds.

Rev. Dehner reviewed the methods used in studying the diving habit in diving ducks. The specific studies made and results of each were summarized as follows: Using the non-diving ducks (Blacks and Mallards) for comparison (controls), it was found in a study of specific gravity, that the diving ducks (Scaup and Redhead) are less buoyant than the aforesaid non-divers, and in that way approach the buoyancy characteristics of the true divers, like grebes and loons.

The buoyancy of the diving and non-diving ducks was found to be directly related to the total volume of air in the lungs and airsacs of the ducks, for the capacity of the diving ducks proved to be considerably less than that of the non-divers.

A further study showed that the volume of air exchanged with each breath (tidal air) is on the average greater in the diving duck than in the non-diving duck.

Finally, a study of the synchronization of breathing with diving in a representative diving duck (Lesser Scaup) showed that the buoyancy of these birds is further reduced in diving by the habit of expelling all, or nearly all, of the tidal air (normally expired volume) at the moment of submerging.

**Alterations in the List of Kansas
Birds Made Since Long (1940).**

Fredrickson, Lawrence, Kansas, brought the "Check-List of Kansas Birds" by W. S. Long up-to-date. Mr. Fredrickson stated that eight birds entirely new to Kansas should be added. They are Louisiana Heron, Flamingo, King Eider, Laughing Gull, Bay-breasted Warbler, Scott's Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Cackling Canada Goose and Backman's Pine-woods Sparrow. He reviewed a number of alterations that have been made through

Through the use of literature published in the last ten years and a study of bird skins at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History, Richard W.

taxonomic revision and subdivision of species already known to occur in the state. (A detailed report of this paper will occur in a later issue, Ed.)

Preliminary Report On The Ecology of The Cardinal

The preliminary report on the ecology of the cardinal was a project started by Richard Harder and carried on at the University of Kansas Natural History Reservation. Attempts at trapping and banding yielded only four males. These four cardinals were captured and released in December. Since they were not observed again in the study it was concluded that they migrated out of the area. Concentrated effort was given to observing a flock of 20 to 25 individuals through November, December and January. Typical habitat for these wintering birds seemed to be in thickets of osage orange and plum trees as well as in blackberry thickets. The birds were observed to forage in the weeds and grasses bordering the thickets. Wild grapes and bittersweet supplemented the diet of herbaceous seeds. Singing was first heard on February 4th. Singing did not occur when the light was as little as 2 foot candles. Mating of the birds was first observed on April 13. At the time when the report was given eight nesting pairs were under observation.

Symposium on Migration Trends of Birds in Kansas

The roundtable discussion was lead by L. B. Carson of Topeka. A summary of this discussion was submitted by him. Records made during the past sixty years show a definite extension in the nesting and migration range of many species of birds. Birds previously nesting in Southern and Central States have extended their breeding range until they are now found breeding in Canada. Cardinals, flycatchers and herons are notable examples. A secondary trend shows Western Birds extending their territories eastward. Brewer's Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and Western Kingbirds are being listed in greater numbers east of their former range.

The primary reason for changes appears to be due in part to a gradual increase in temperature as shown by records of the U. S. Weather Bureau. The mean annual temperature has increased about 5°F. during this period. Increased numbers of lakes, ponds and shelter may be contributing factors in the greater number of birds observed. An increasing interest in bird life no doubt furnishes more complete records than were formerly available.

Many of the species listed by Goss (1891) as rare in Kansas have been observed almost every year recently and in some cases have become common. Typical examples could be sited in the Chuck-will's-widow, Blue Goose, Eared and Horned Grebes.

Field Trip

In the morning of April 29, 1950, about sixty K. O. S. members met at 5:30 in Gage Park. Roger Tory Peterson, the famed naturalist, artist and writer was in charge of the bird count. A hypothetical list of 105 was made up of birds which might reasonably be expected to be sighted in the area.

At the conclusion of the outing that included Gage Park, Silver Lake and the Lake Shawnee area 103 of the 105 species on the hypothetical or "possible" list had been observed, plus one subspecies not on the list for a total of 104 species and subspecies. Out of the 104 species 91 were spotted by Mr. Peterson, and the same number by Harold Hedges. The list of birds seen is as follows: Common Loon; Eared Grebe; Pied-billed Grebe; Double-crested Cormorant; Great Blue Heron; Blue-winged Teal; Shoveller; Lesser Scaup; Ruddy Duck; Turkey Vulture; Sharp-shinned Hawk; Cooper's Hawk; Marsh Hawk; Osprey; Duck Hawk; Sparrow Hawk; Bobwhite; American Coot; Semipalmated Plover; Killdeer; Wilson's Snipe; Spotted Sandpiper; Greater Yellow-legs; Lesser Yellow-legs; Pectoral Sandpiper; Baird's Sandpiper; Semipalmated Sandpiper; Forster's Tern; Black Tern; Mourning Dove; Barred Owl; Chimney Swift; Belted Kingfisher; Northern

Flicker; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Red-headed Woodpecker; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Downy Woodpecker; Eastern Kingbird; Crested Flycatcher; Phoebe; Prairie Horned Lark; Tree Swallow; Bank Swallow; Rough-winged Swallow; Barn Swallow; Cliff Swallow; Purple Martin; Blue Jay; Crow; Black-capped Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; House Wren; Carolina Wren; Mockingbird; Brown Thrasher; Robin; Hermit Thrush; Olive-backed Thrush; Bluebird; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Migrant Shrike; Starling; Warbling Vireo; Orange-crowned Warbler; Nashville Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Myrtle Warbler; Louisiana Waterthrush; Yellowthroat; English Sparrow; Eastern Meadowlark; Western Meadowlark; Yellow-headed Blackbird; Red-winged Blackbird; Baltimore Oriole; Rusty Blackbird; Bronzed Grackle; Cowbird; Cardinal; Indigo Bunting; Dickcissel; Purple Finch; Pine Siskin; Goldfinch; Red-eyed Towhee; Arctic Towhee; Savannah Sparrow; Grasshopper Sparrow; Vesper Sparrow; Lark Sparrow; Slate-colored Junco; Chipping Sparrow; Clay-colored Sparrow; Field Sparrow; Harris's Sparrow; White-crowned Sparrow; Gambel's Sparrow; White-throated Sparrow; Lincoln Sparrow; Swamp Sparrow; Song Sparrow.

Rarest were the Eared Grebe; Duck Hawk; and Gambel's Sparrow and probably the biggest moment in many ways was the sighting of an unusually large flock of about 150 Yellow-headed Blackbirds in a cornfield just west of Silver Lake.

STATE BIRD NOTES

Notes from Kansas City, Kansas

Here is the list of birds which I consider rather rare for 1950. A Golden Eagle was seen at Wyandotte Lake on January 3. The European

Wigeon at Sugar Lake on April 26 was the first for this region. Spring field trips yielded the Marbled Godwit on May 7 and Hudsonian Godwits on May 6 and 14. A White-faced Glossy Ibis seen just north of Sugar Lake at Mud Lake on May 14 was verified by Hedges and myself as we poled up to it in a boat until the white on the face could be clearly seen. An ibis has not been reported in this region since 1915. An Avocet was also seen on this same day. A flock of about 250 Rough-legged Hawks, mostly in the dark-phase, was seen on October 8. An estimated flock of 10,000 Franklin Gulls at Squaw Creek on October 21 was quite a sight. Harold Hedges saw a female American Scoter, October 24 on Lake Quivira. It was in a flock of Horned Grebes. The influx of Horned Grebes puzzles us a little. Old Squaws numbering 10 were on County Lake November 15. On the following day Buffleheads were very numerous with as many as 20 in one group. The first Bald Eagle of the season was spotted November 25 at County Lake. This morning, November 25, I just missed seeing a flock of American Crossbills that were reported to be in a coniferous cemetery near here.

The first record of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron nesting in Swope Park was one for the books. They raised three young. Did you hear that a Carolina Wren nested in Hedges' basement?

Harold and I saw 144 species on May 14, our "Century run."—JOHN BISHOP, Kansas City.

Notes from Lawrence

Here are some records that seemed of interest to me. We saw a Dowitcher, April 11 at Lake View; Lark bunting, May 7, between Lawrence and Topeka; Bald Eagle, May 8 at Lake View; Florida Gallinule and Marbled Godwit, May 10, at Lake View; King Rail, July 19, east of Lawrence in the Haskell Swamps; Black-bellied Plover, Aug. 14 near Lake View and seen later by Dr. H. B. Tordoff.

Other records which might be well to note were a Snowy Owl taken by R. L. Montell last winter east of Lawrence and south of Eudora; a Sandhill Crane reported by R. W. Fredrickson near Lake View, April 2; Little Blue Heron (immature), Snowy

and American Egret seen Aug. 17 near the Kaw River by R. F. Miller, R. W. Fredrickson, Mr. Chewning and myself. Golden Plover on the Kaw River was seen October 14 by Fredrickson and Chewnings, (the bird was crippled); six Avocets on the Kaw River west of Lawrence, were seen October 7 by the Chewnings, Tordoff and Fredrickson; a Sitka Crossbill on University of Kansas Campus, November 1 was identified by Tordoff and Fredrickson. (The bird died of hunger having been found about 24 hours after a cold wave in Alaska); 400 to 500 White Pelicans were reported by football fans to have flown over the K. U. Stadium October 21.—HELEN CHEWNING, Lawrence, Kansas.

(Another bird listed in this region was the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, seen on Aug. 20 by R. F. Miller, K. Kelley and A. Betts on Aug. 27 by Mr. and Mrs. I. L. Boyd—Ed.)

**Notes from
Topeka**

To me these are some of my better finds. Buff-breasted Sandpipers on August 28-29, a total of 3 birds. Black-bellied Plover on September 25. This bird was heard at Lake View. I caught only a glimpse of a large gray bird which I thought was a Willet. The call was not that of a Willet. Dr. H. B. Tordoff said the call was that of the Black-bellied and he later verified the identification. I saw an American Bittern at Lake View on October 1. James W. Bee also flushed a Least Bittern which I did not see. There were numerous Sora Rails in the marsh across from the upper end of Lake View on this date. Two other fine records were the discovery on October 15 of five Golden Plover and on November 14 a single Horned Grebe sighted on Lake Shawnee and two on the Lake on November 19. We had a heavy flight of Blue and Snow Geese on October 18. We discovered an unusual duck November 9 on Lake Shawnee. This bird was feeding with a flock of Mallards and was either a hybrid or albino Mallard. It was a duck with light buff body, white wing and tail with a darker breast; bill lighter than a Mallard; feet only a shade lighter than the normal Mallard; eyes dark. The actions and markings indicated a young Mallard male. The dark eyes and rich buff coloring proved it was not a true albino.—L. B. CARSON, Topeka, Kansas.

**Notes from
Emporia**

Several birds not often seen in the Emporia area were observed during the 1950 spring migration. On the morning of May 9, three Black-throated Green Warblers were seen about one mile northeast of the Kansas State Teachers College campus at Emporia. At the Lyon County State Lake, fourteen miles northeast of Emporia, two White-winged Scoters were seen the evening of April 15 and a Wood Duck was seen there on May 1. On June 11, a Purple Gallinule was found at a small, marshy lake about two miles east of Emporia.

John Breukelman and Ted F. Andrews of the K. S. T. C. Biology Department saw a White Pelican on July 4, 1950. It was resting on a salt marsh in northwestern Reno County.

A Brown Thrasher apparently found conditions at the Frank U. G. Agrelius home at 1501 Rural, Emporia, to his liking. Most of the Brown Thrashers left this area during October but this one was still in Mr. Agrelius' backyard on November 22.—JAMES McLEOD and TED F. ANDREWS, Emporia, Kansas.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. Burt Chewning of Lawrence took a trip West June 16 to 27. One of their primary interests along the way was birding. They added to their Life Lists birds seen in New Mexico, Arizona, Grand Canyon, California desert, Los Angeles,

San Gabriel River Sanctuary, Zion Park and Bear River Bird Refuge. Forty-two species were new to their Life List.

On a 5,000-mile trip through the southwest from June 25 to July 16, Katharine Kelley and Amelia Betts of Baldwin listed over 185 species of birds. A separate listing of birds seen in each state put California, where almost half the vacation was spent, in the lead with 99 species.

In Los Angeles, they report good birding in Griffith Park's, Fern Dell and Bird Sanctuary and at the San Gabriel River Wildlife Refuge, although the latter is closed in July and August. The refuge offers such unusual birds as Ringed Turtle Doves, Chinese Spotted Doves and Cardinals.

Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks added six to their Life Lists, and the tortuous Kings Canyon and Tioga Pass roads rewarded them with the White-fronted Swift and the Gray-crowned Rosy Finch.

Misses Kelley and Betts have forgotten the width or depth of Grand Canyon, but they remember that Grace's Warbler, the Hepatic Tanager, a Duck Hawk and a family of Rock Wrens are there.

The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah lists over 70 summer residents. They found more than half that number in a three-hour visit, including an abundance of Black-necked Stilts, White-faced Glossy Ibises, Avocets and Western Grebes.

Highway 50 through western Colorado added several birds to their lists.

If the road and scenery gets monotonous, they stop and look around. That's the way they found the Desert Sparrow west of Albuquerque, the Dipper northeast of Yosemite, and the McCown's Longspur in eastern Colorado.

Mr. and Mrs. Ivan L. Boyd, the two children Barbara and Roger, and Mrs. Boyd's father, Mr. L. F. Kohlman spent the first two weeks of August in Colorado in the Denver, Palmer Lake and Colorado Springs regions. Birding was their chief interest. They compiled a list of 127 species, 35 of which were "life birds" for Mrs. Boyd and 54 were added to Mr. Boyd's "life list." The highlights in birding experiences were seeing the Lewis Woodpecker on the same tree as club members had predicted; spotting the Water Ouzel in Eleven-mile Canyon; watching a family of Evening Grosbeaks as the young ones were being fed; and observing the many Avocets in western Kansas.

MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT INSTRUCTIONS

Those members wishing to take part in the mid-winter bird count this year should follow the style suggested by the National Audubon Society in the issue of Audubon Field Notes for April, 1950. A free Christmas Bird Count Form can be obtained from the National Office, 1000 Fifth Ave., New York 28, N. Y.

Last year bird counts were reported to K. O. S. from fourteen areas of Kansas. Participants in these localities observed approximately 19,000 individuals representing 92 species and subspecies. In recent years four to six groups reported to National Christmas Bird Count from Kansas. Reports from more areas to both State and National would provide a more adequate account of the bird population of Kansas.

In brief the rules are as follows: Select an area not over 15 miles in diameter which includes the best or most varied bird population; the count should be made on one calendar day during the period from Saturday, December 23, 1950 through January 1, 1951. National requires 7 hours with dawn to dusk counts preferred.

The final report should include information about sky condition, minimum and maximum temperature, wind direction and velocity, precipitation and ground and water conditions. Give the location, kinds of habitat covered, date and number of hours spent in the field. List the species of birds in the order in which they appear in Peterson's Field Guide. Total the species and the individuals. (Where large flocks make it impractical to make an exact count estimates should be made and recorded as such when tabulated.) All persons taking part in the count should be listed by name and the reporter specified.

Send your report to the editor, Ivan L. Boyd, Baldwin, Kansas by January 18 and also to National Audubon Society, if you qualify with their required number of hours in the field.