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Adaptive behavior of a Downy Woodpecker missing one foot.—Doubtless many persons conducting extensive bird banding operations have captured birds with abnormalities (see Nickell, 1965; Parkes, 1969; Prescott, 1970). Many of the birds noted previously were adults and apparently healthy. In a few cases (Nickell, 1965; King and Rolls, 1968) observations on the behavior of the abnormal birds were recorded. Nickell (op. cit.) observed a female Downy Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos pubescens*), whose right leg had never developed, ascend a tree diagonally while using its right wing extended downward for support.

During the winter of 1970 I observed a female Downy Woodpecker with its right foot missing, on the University of Kansas Natural History Reservation near Lawrence. I captured the bird on 11 February and banded it (#106-136946). From the condition of the remaining stub and scar tissue present it appeared that the defect was not congenital. A female downy fitting the same description had been seen earlier, on 17 January 1970, by Dr. and Mrs. Henry Fitch at their home on the Natural History Reservation. On 11 February and subsequent recaptures the one-footed downy weighed 27.3 g, 26.0 g (6 March), 26.9 g (7 March) and 26.2 g (10 March). The weights of four other females and four males captured during this period were respectively 26.5–29.5 g (28.2) and 25.0–28.4 g (26.9).

Several observations on the movements of the afflicted downy were made while I was observing social interactions of Black-capped Chickadees at a half-walnut suspended with wire from a tree. The downy frequently came to the walnut feeder and usually perched lengthwise on branches with the right stub on the side of the branch and the breast and belly resting on the branch. When perched at a right angle to the branch, or while moving along a branch toward the suspended walnut, she invariably lost her balance and then hung by one foot. At this point her only recourse was to let go and fall through branches below until control of flight was regained. She was observed hitching vertically up the trunk of a tree on two occasions. Progress was slow, with height being gained primarily by a fluttering of the wings during each upward movement. Her foot appeared to be used only to hold a given position. That this progression was different from that observed by Nickell (1965) may be related to the time when the deformities of the two downies occurred.

The afflicted bird's plumage appeared to be undergoing more wear than normal. Her belly and breast feathers were noticeably darker than those of other downies captured during the same period. Also, her rectrices were soiled over the distal two-thirds whereas the rectrices of normal birds were soiled only near the tips.

Mayer (1951) attributed the survival of a crippled Brewer's Blackbird that he observed over several years to the favorable environment of a city. Woodpeckers, by virtue of their proclivity for climbing trees, would seem to be at a great disadvantage when one foot is missing. The afflicted downy was not seen during extensive observations in the same area in the following winter, 1970–1971.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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- JEROME D. ROBINS, *Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.*

Little Blue Herons nest near Cheyenne Bottoms.—On 21 June 1971 Mr. and Mrs. Roger Boyd and I discovered a nesting colony of Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*) two miles west of the Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area, Barton County, Kansas. The nest site was about 25 yards below the dam of Barton County Lake. The colony consisted of 10 partial and complete nests, five of which contained eggs (1, 3, 4, 4 and 5 respectively). When Roger Boyd returned the following day to photograph the nests and eggs, two previously empty nests contained single eggs. On 29 June no Little Blue Herons were present in the nesting area and all but three nests (4 eggs each) had been destroyed. Egg shells on the ground under the nests suggested destruction by wind or avian predators. A visit on 5 July confirmed abandonment of the colony with only two nests, each containing four eggs, present. The eggs from these nests were salvaged and preserved on 10 July.

The unfortunate abandonment of the colony may have been the result of our desire to observe, photograph and record maximum information concerning this rare Kansas nesting.

The nest site was an unused area of dense Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*) forming a two acre thicket below the north dam of the lake and surrounded on three sides by a golf course. Some of the trees were supporting a dense vine growth of Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) with a thick understory of Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).

Among the other bird species nesting in the thicket were the following: Green Heron (three nests, none deserted), Mourning Dove (many), Eastern Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Catbird, Robin, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Boat-tailed Grackle (more than 30 pairs), Common Grackle (many), Dickcissel.

The only previous recorded nesting of the Little Blue Heron in Kansas was near Garden City, Finney County in 1952 (Schwilling, *Kans. Ornith. Soc. Bull.*, 4:36, 1953. MARVIN D. SCHWILLING, *Route 1, Great Bend, Kansas 67530* and ROGER BOYD, *1219 Merchant AC, Emporia, Kansas 66801.*

Bobolinks nest again in Kansas.—On 7 June 1971 I found a colony of Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) one fourth mile south of the outlet canal leading out of the Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area, 2½ miles north and 1 mile east of Ellinwood, Barton County, Kansas. Seven territorial males could be seen from the township road. On 9 June a quick survey of the wet meadow tallied 13 males and six females. A more complete census on 16 June tallied 17 males and eight females and several males were photographed through a 400 mm lens.

On 24 June, E. F. Martinez observed a female feeding young and located the nest containing four small nestlings. On 30 June I observed four females feeding at least six recently fledged young which were capable of short flights of 12 to 15 feet. Adults of both sexes were photographed. Mr. and Mrs. Larry Nossaman and I visited the area on 1 July and observed more females feeding young.

The nesting area was an 80 acre unfenced and ungrazed hay meadow of dense grass and rush and sedge-choked slough that held shallow water until about 1 July. Much of the meadow was sub-irrigated and wet with a thin scattering of sedge and rush in the tall grass. Clumps of Prairie Mimosa (*Desmanthus illinoensis*) and Wild Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*) provided what appeared to be acceptable nesting habitat.

Other species nesting in the wet meadow were Red-winged Blackbirds, Dickcissels and Grasshopper Sparrows. A nest of the latter species found on 18 June fledged all four young the next day. Eastern Meadowlarks also nested in the wet meadow while Western Meadowlarks nested in the grazed, shortgrass pasture surrounding the meadow.

This represents the most successful nesting to date of a Bobolink colony in Kansas. The first recorded nesting was in June 1940 when a colony remained in Cloud County and at least two pair fledged young. The second was in 1956, in Stafford County, when at least 40 birds were present. Nesting was believed to be unsuccessful although one female and a nest with five eggs was collected (Tordoff, Kans. Ornith. Soc. Bull. 8:13-14, 1957). MARVIN D. SCHWILLING, *Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Route 1, Great Bend, Kansas 67530*.

Rapid increase and dispersal of Boat-tailed Grackles in Kansas.—Prior to the the spring of 1969 there were no specimens of the Boat-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*) from Kansas. Although one sight record from near Sedan had been published (Audubon Field Notes, 18:465, 1964) other scattered sightings were apparently never recorded. In the spring of 1969 at least two small breeding colonies were recorded in widely separated areas of Kansas—one near Great Bend, the other near Wichita—and a single male was seen near Wellington. The number of sightings has increased each year since then.

1969

Great Bend.—A single male was sighted on 1 May in a windbreak two and one-half miles northeast of town. On 8 May I observed a single male at the Walnut Hill Feedyard about one half mile south of the earlier sighting and at the site of subsequent nesting. On 13 May Gene Bahr and I observed a pair of boat-tails at the feedyard and on the next day I saw a male and two females there. On 15 May two pairs were present and one of the females was constructing a nest about 20 feet up in a heavily-foliaged Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*). On 17 May Charles Ely and I observed three females and a single male at the nest site. On 31 May a second nest was located (when the female began feeding young) about 15 feet from the first nest and in the same tree.

One nest was blown from the tree during a thunderstorm in early June. Ed Martinez observed a female with three fledged young about one-fourth mile north of the nest tree on 29 June. On 21 December I observed a single male in my yard three miles north of Great Bend. On the following day I collected a single male at the Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area headquarters. This specimen is now in the collection of Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia.

Wichita.—The Wichita birds (one male, two females) were first sighted by Kirk Downing about 11 May at Beech Lake where they were nesting about ten feet apart in a Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). On 11 May Max Thompson collected one egg from a clutch of two for the Southwestern College collection, Winfield. At least one nest was successful as Buddy Aiken collected an adult male and a fledged young on 26 May. These specimens are in the Kansas State Teachers College collection.

Wellington.—Orville Rice observed a single adult male one half mile north of the Wellington interchange along Interstate 35 on 2 June.

1970

Great Bend.—On both 20 and 21 April, Edmund Martinez observed a single male in a windbreak on the Sidney Rusco farm two miles north and five miles east of Great Bend. On 3 May four males and two females were seen at the Walnut Hill Feedyard where birds had successfully nested in 1969. On 12 July I observed three males and two females with fledged young one mile west and one half mile north of the headquarters of the Cheyenne Bottoms W. M. A. I observed two males just west of Barton County Lake on 16 July and nine birds with four fledged young, three miles north of Great Bend on 27 July. Two males were seen again in this area on 29 July.

Wichita.—Orville Rice observed an adult female near McConnell Air Force Base, Wichita on 2 May.

Haven.—On 25 April Max Thompson observed a flock of about 20 boat-tails of mixed sex, about two miles east of Haven near the Panhandle Eastern Plant. One male was collected and is in the collection of Southwestern College. This colony successfully fledged many young.

1971

Great Bend.—Among the spring observations were the following: 18 April, one male

east of Barton County Lake; 29 April, one male three miles north of Great Bend; 30 April, one male and two females at the Cheyenne Bottoms W. M. A. headquarters; 1 May, one male two miles east of the headquarters; 3 May, three at east edge of Barton County Lake; 11 May, single male three miles north of Great Bend. On 25 May, Marvin Kraft saw a single male in cattails in pool 3, Cheyenne Bottoms W. M. A. and numerous other sightings were made in the marsh during May and June. On 17 June, Ivan Sutton and I observed two females carrying food to young below the dam at Barton County Lake and on 19 June a large nesting colony was found in a grove of trees below the dam by Roger and Jan Boyd. Roger, Jan and I revisited the area on 21 June and found about 30 nests. Most nests had young but a few contained eggs and a few had already fledged young. On 29 June I found over 75 young and adult boat-tails.

The nest site was in an unused area of dense Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*) forming a two acre thicket below the north dam of the lake and surrounded on three sides by a golf course. Some of the trees were supporting dense vine growth of Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) with a thick understory of Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). The boat-tails were nesting in the vine-filled trees with some nests less than three feet apart and many nests in a single tree.

Wichita.—On 2 July I observed at least 14 adult boat-tails with several fledged young at the Wichita Municipal Airport in a field just north of the TWA Air Freight Office. Several females were carrying food to young in the tree plantings along the north edge of the Aircraft Services Building.

Haven.—On 18 April Edmund Martinez reported many boat-tails at the Panhandle Eastern Plant. On 2 July I checked the area finding nine birds including three females feeding young.

Dodge City.—On 7 May C. W. Comer and I observed two females one half mile west of Dodge City.

Russell.—On 25 May Edmund Martinez observed a single male in willow trees along Fossil Lake, just south of the junction of Interstate 70 and U. S. Highway 281. I saw a single male in the same area on 30 May. We saw the bird on several other occasions but did not record the dates.

Bunker Hill.—On 28 May Edmund Martinez saw a single male along Interstate 70 south of Bunker Hill.

Ellis.—On 16 May Harold Kraus saw a single male along an irrigation canal about nine miles south of Ellis.

These observations undoubtedly do not include all sightings in Kansas since 1968 but they do indicate that the Boat-tailed Grackle has dispersed widely and increased rapidly in Kansas. MARVIN D. SCHWILLING, *Route 1, Great Bend, Kansas 67530.*

Kansas Ornithological Society

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