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Gray Hawk in Northeastern Kansas. — A Gray Hawk (*Buteo nitidus*) in definitive basic plumage was observed by five persons during April, 1990 at Milford Lake in Geary Co. On 15 April at the Rolling Hills Area (west section) I noted the following features in a *Buteo* that was about the size of a small Red-shouldered Hawk (*B. lineatus*): head and upperparts uniformly slate gray; unpatterned face; throat and upper breast light gray; other underparts (including flanks and thighs) light gray, barred rather heavily with dark gray; trailing edges and tips of the underwings dark slate gray; undertail coverts white and fluffy; upperside of tail with three black and two white bands; underside of tail banded in the same pattern as the upperside but with black replaced by dark slate gray except for the black terminal band; feet, legs, and cere yellow; and eyes dark.

At 17:25 I flushed the hawk from its perch in a Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) and noted its rapid, accipiter-like wing beat (rapid beats followed by glides). Within half an hour I again found the bird being mobbed by two crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). The intensity of their harassment increased and at 18:05 one of the crows "buzzed" the hawk twice, causing it to fly 100m north into a pine grove. From 18:20 to 18:25 I was able to approach within 50m before it again flushed. At 18:37 the hawk, noisily pursued by the crows, flew south along the edge of the grove and was not seen again. I returned to Rolling Hills on 16 April with Charles and Eric Otte and again found the Gray Hawk on the south side of the pine grove. Between 07:25 and 08:15 we were able to observe the bird in flight and perched and were afforded several views of the upperside of its tail, which it fanned widely while swooping upward to perch. We also noted its gray barred underparts, white undertail coverts, and dark trailing edge of the underwings as it flew as close as 15m. No photographs were obtained, and it made no vocalizations.

On the afternoon of 18 April, Robert LaShelle observed a small, gray *Buteo*, presumably the same bird, for one hour as it hunted over a burning grassland at the Curtis Creek Area, 3.2km northwest of Rolling Hills. Once during this period he saw the bird make a long, rapid dive to capture prey on the ground. Additionally, he reported that Michael Anderson had seen a small raptor with gray underparts and banded tail on the afternoon of 3 April at Rolling Hills (east section).

The breeding range of the Gray Hawk is from southern Arizona and southern Texas south to Middle America, and in South America, from Colombia, Venezuela, and the Guianas south to southern Brazil (Amer. Ornithol. Union. 1983. Check-list of North American Birds, 6th Ed.). The Arizona population inhabits the Santa Cruz and San Pedro watersheds and consists of about 45 pairs which migrate south in the nonbreeding season (Palmer. 1988. Handbook N. Amer. Birds, Vol. 4. Diurnal Raptors, part 1. Yale Univ. Press). A few pairs are resident in the lower Rio Grande valley (Clark and Wheeler. 1987. A Field Guide to Hawks. Houghton-Mifflin Co.), and Lasley and Sexton report evidence for breeding in 1988 and 1989 (1988. Am. Birds 42: 1312, 1989. Am. Birds 43: 505) at Big Bend National Park. The species is casual in southern New Mexico, but breeding records in Grant County for 1876 and 1953 are known (Lignon. 1961. New Mexico Birds and Where to Find Them. Univ. New Mexico Press). A single "adult probable" at Carlsbad Caverns National Park in September, 1988 (Williams and Hubbard. 1989. Am. Birds 43: 149) and near Socorro in September, 1989 (Williams and Hubbard. 1990. Am. Birds 44:138) are the only records from New Mexico during the previous decade. Records from Illinois in 1871 and Iowa in 1895 are unacceptable (Bent. 1937. Life Hist. N. Amer. Birds of Prey, part 1. U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 167).

A satisfactory explanation for the occurrence of the Gray Hawk in Kansas cannot be provided. The species has never been recorded outside of the states in which it is a known breeder. This Kansas bird, however, was seen about 550km north of its haunts in southern Texas and about 500km northeast of its Arizona breeding area. The ecological effects of a severe cold wave passing through Texas and Mexico during 21-24 December, 1989, of drought in southern and western Texas, and of habitat destruction in northeastern Mexico are cited as possible factors that resulted in the northward dispersal of several indigenous Mexican species during the early months of 1990 (Lasley and Sexton. 1990. *Am. Birds* 44: 289). While human-aided transport cannot be completely eliminated, the bird's wariness, the excellent condition of its plumage, and the absence of bands, jesses or other markings strengthen my opinion that this bird was a natural vagrant. In the absence of a specimen or a photograph, however, its presence can only at best, be considered "hypothetical."

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BOOK REVIEW

Birds in Kansas. Thompson, Max C. and Charles Ely. Univ. Kansas. Mus. Nat. Hist., Public Ed. Service No. 11, Lawrence, Kansas. 404 pages, illustrated (179 black-and-white photographs and maps). \$25.00 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper). 1989.

In 1883, N. S. Goss' *Catalogue of the Birds of Kansas* recorded, for the first time, the bird life of Kansas. This pioneer work (one of the first of such books for a state west of the Mississippi) was followed by a series of publications summarizing the knowledge of the birds of Kansas, the most recent being R. F. Johnston's 1964 *The Breeding Birds of Kansas* (Univ. Kansas Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist., 12:575-655), which brought together what was then known about the breeding biology of birds in Kansas, and Johnston's *A Directory to the Birds of Kansas* (Misc. Publ. No. 41, Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist., 1965), which gave a telegraphic summary of the distribution and status of each of the 383 species that had been recorded in the state by that time. The activity of ornithologists in Kansas has continued, perhaps even intensified since Johnston's books; today an additional 41 species have been added to the Kansas list, and substantial changes in the distributions and abundance of many species have been documented. Thus the appearance of a new comprehensive work on Kansas birds is timely, and the challenge of producing such a work has been taken, appropriately, by two active Kansas ornithologists, Max C. Thompson and Charles Ely. They have done their work well, and produced in *Birds in Kansas* a volume that all students of Kansas birds will want to obtain.

Thompson and Ely have chosen to deal with the 424 species of Kansas birds in two volumes. Volume One treats the 222 non-passerine species, and Volume Two will deal with the 202 passerine species. They write (1989:vii) that "These volumes are not intended to be a thorough technical work, but rather are written for the enjoyment and use of both the amateur birdwatcher and the professional ornithologists." Volume One will indeed be of use to all students of Kansas birds, although the occasional use of jargon or technical terms (e.g. ecotone, endemic and *ibid*) will decrease the comprehension of the amateur, and the virtual absence of citations to the literature in the species accounts reduces its value to serious students of Kansas birds.

Although the principal feature of *Birds in Kansas* are the accounts of individual species, these are preceded by useful and clearly written essays entitled "A brief history of ornithology in Kansas" and "Bird distribution and vegetation" which form a fitting introduction. Each of the 222 species accounts features a summary of the species' status in Kansas, a map showing the Kansas counties in which the species has been observed. When appropriate, there are also sections entitled "Periods of Occurrence", "Breeding", "Habits and Habitat", and "Foods". In some cases comments about field identification are included in a section called "Field Marks," but this book is not and was not intended to be a guide to bird identification.

A black-and-white photograph is included for 178 of the 222 species. The photographs are of varied quality, but the majority are quite good. They represent the efforts of 22 Kansas photographers and, we are told, many were taken in Kansas. The photographs

would have been more useful if more information were included in the captions, such as where and when the picture was taken. This would be particularly valuable for photos of species rare or extralimital in the state; the published photographs could provide permanent documentation of the records. For example, do the pictures of Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), and Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) document Kansas records? If Martin Pressgrove has excellent photographs of a Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) taken in Linn County, as we are told, why has not one been used here? As well, no photographs are given of some rare species for which good ones exist. For example, the text states (p. 63) that a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) was photographed at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, but that photograph is not shown, and excellent photographs that document Kansas records of Gargany (*Anas querquedula*) and Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) have been published in the K. O. S. Bulletin (34:29, 1983 and 36:21-22, 1985, respectively) that could have been reproduced here. Was the photograph of the Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) taken in Kansas? If not, why not use the one published in the K. O. S. Bulletin in 1987 (38:25)? This seems to be an opportunity missed. There are a few errors in the photograph captions: the White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) is not an adult, and the Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) is not in winter plumage; on balance, however, the photographs enhance the usefulness and especially the appearance of the book.

For each species there is a map with a dot placed in the middle of each county from which there is an acceptable specimen, sight, or literature record. These provide a quick useful summary of the distribution of each species in the state. There are a few errors. For example, the map for Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) has four dots whereas the text says there are three records. Is the record from Johnson County, indicated by a dot on the map, an error? Are the records of the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) from Coffey and Crawford counties valid, or is the map incorrect? The Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*) record from Morton County is not on the map. The maps would have been more useful if different symbols had been used to differentiate between, say, breeding records and other records, or perhaps old versus recent records, and thus another opportunity to put in more information in the accounts has been missed. In concert, the maps do help identify regions that need more ornithological attention (Ness County seems to have been particularly overlooked), and will provide a stimulus for additional field work.

Birds in Kansas is a fine, comprehensive book that will be of considerable value to both amateur and professional ornithologists. Every person interested in Kansas birds should obtain a copy. Although I have noted a few areas where improvements could be made, my reservations are minor. I join those who praise Thompson and Ely for a huge task, well done, and anxiously await Volume Two.

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