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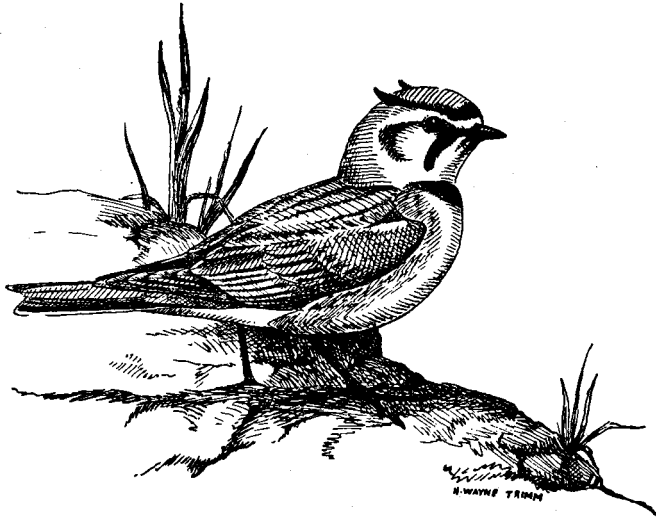
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The Prairie Warbler In Eastern Kansas

By Harold C. Hedges
Kansas City, Kansas

A. C. Bent in 'Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers', U. S. N. M. Bulletin 203, 1953, states that the Northern Prairie Warbler in the United States breeds north and west to Lake Quivira, Johnson County, Kansas. This statement is supported by numerous sight records, a specimen, and several breeding records, all of which have been substantiated since May, 1941.

Before Bent's publication, writers had either omitted the Prairie Warbler from Kansas or placed it on the hypothetical list, as the bird had not been seen nor collected since the time of Goss.

The Prairie Warbler breeds rather commonly in south and central Missouri. For instance in the Missouri Ozarks it can be found singing from May through July on open ridges, usually where the larger timber has been cut and second growth is prevalent.

In the Ozark-like hills bordering the lower Kaw (Kansas) River in extreme eastern Kansas (both Johnson and Wyandotte Counties) the Prairie Warbler can be found as a summer resident. Here in three local areas, and in as many or more lesser areas, this warbler has been noted by the writer and by others each spring and summer since 1941.

Along a wooded ridge one half mile east of Lake Quivira (Johnson Co.) this warbler has been found regularly for the past 13 years. By June each year the males have chosen their territories and seldom wander far from them. This past summer three singing males were seen on a number of field trips to this ridge. The cover here was originally oak-hickory, but has been cleared in a number of places leaving some grown-over fields and a good bit of second growth. It was in this area on May 1, 1941 that the first sight record was made of the Prairie Warbler which was a singing male.

One mile west of Lake Quivira is another wooded ridge (Johnson Co.) where as many as six males have been found at one time in June on a morning field trip. A male Prairie Warbler, the first specimen for the state of Kansas, was collected at this location on May 2, 1942. On July 13, 1941 a female Prairie Warbler was observed feeding three juvenile birds just out of the nest. Since that date observations have been made in other local areas of adult Prairie's feeding their young out of the nest. Actually no nests have been found in any of the areas where the Prairie Warblers are found, even though some very thorough searches have been made during June and July.

Another local area where the warblers are found regularly is along a thinly wooded ridge above the Lake of the Forest in Wyandotte County, four miles east of Bonner Springs, Kansas. As many as five singing males have been found here in early June.

Singing males have been found in six other locations in the hills of northern Johnson and southern Wyandotte counties—all during June. Most likely the migrants have moved on by this time and the males remaining have selected a territory. In most of these locations on successive field trips, the same birds were observed, indicating their intentions of staying.

On the Missouri side in the Kansas City region the Prairie Warbler does not occur as a summer resident, even in areas of habitat as typical as that around Lake Quivira. Occasional individuals are reported there only as migrants. The nearest to this region where the Prairie Warbler may be found commonly in summer is in the wooded region just south of Knobnoster, Missouri. This is about 50 miles southeast of Kansas City.

There is no doubt in the writers mind that the Prairie Warbler has occurred in this general area of eastern Kansas for many years before it was found. In June of 1941, 13 singing males were noted at different locations in the general area. It is very possible that this warbler can and will be discovered farther up the Kaw Valley in the hills toward Lawrence, Topeka, or even as far as Manhattan. Northward it is likely to be found in the Missouri Valley hills as far as southeastern Nebraska. During May of each year the Prairie Warbler is more numerous in this area than it is later in June. Surely some of these pass on to the north and west to take up a summer residence. What has been discovered here, near Kansas City, about the Prairie Warbler could well be repeated elsewhere in eastern Kansas by other birders doing some intensive field work.

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* The date following the name indicates the year of affiliation. Charter member is designated by (C). Corrections in the list will be appreciated.

STATUS OF K. O. S. MEMBERSHIP

The Kansas Ornithological Society was organized in the spring of 1949. Of the original 135 Charter Members in the organization 79 have retained their membership. In other words 58% of the initial group are now in the society. To date the membership has grown to 232.

Twelve states and the District of Columbia are represented in the membership. Missouri has 18 members, 16 of which are in Kansas City. Oklahoma has 5; Nebraska, 3; California, 2 and District of Columbia, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas have one member each. There are 196 members living within the state of Kansas.

In the state Topeka leads with 37 members. Lawrence has 28; Manhattan, 16; Baldwin, 11; Halstead, 11; Kansas City, 11; Hays, 8; Emporia, 7; Wichita, 6; Hillsboro, 6; Pittsburg, 5; and Shawnee, 5. Thirty-one other towns are represented with less than 5 members each. No breakdown was made of those living in rural areas.

General Notes

The annual Christmas Bird Count.—You are urged to take part in a mid-winter bird count for this year. Enclosed in the September issue were instructions for taking a count and a quick check form which you may fill out and return to the editor. If you failed to receive a copy of this check sheet or have misplaced the one you received please feel free to write to the editor for another copy.

Last year 21 reports were sent in. A greater number of participants engaged in the census and a greater number of areas throughout the state were included than on any previous record.

Care should be taken to prevent duplication or overlapping in the count areas. Closer coordination of the participants in each of these localities should prevent these errors. Last year more than a reasonable number of errors occurred in several of the tabulated results. There were some reports in which the 15-mile diameter apparently was exceeded. In one or two instances the counts were taken on more than one day and in other cases the counts were not taken within the prescribed dates. This year the count date may be any day from December 25 to January 3, inclusive.

Additional Kansas records on the Bay-breasted Warbler.—Miss Edna Ruth has submitted additional sight records of the Bay-breasted Warbler for the spring and fall of 1953. They are as follows:

May 10. Hedges, Harold, with Ben King and Elizabeth Cole. One female seen at Lake Quivira.

May 10. Cole, Elizabeth. One male seen later that day at Lake Quivira.

May 11. Kelley, Frank. One male in Central Park, Topeka.

May 13. King, Ben. Sight record, one male at Shawnee.

Oct. 3. Bee, James W. One of this species was found dead on the campus of the University of Kansas. The skin is in the Museum of Natural History at K. U. Specimen No. 31234. Sex not reported.

Many birders refer to last May as being one of the best warbler migrations they have ever experienced. As many as ten Bay-breasted Warblers were observed in the Kansas City Region. Most of these observations were made on the Missouri side.

Reference to Miss Ruth's article on "The Bay-breasted Warbler in Kansas" (K. O. S. Bulletin, Vol. 3:18) indicates that this warbler is most frequently seen in the state during the second week of May. Out of 18 records only one bird was reported in the first week of May. Three observations of this species were made in the third week. The fall record sent in by James W. Bee is the first autumnal record obtained for the state of Kansas.

According to spring migration of the Bay-breasted shown in "Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers" by A. C. Bent the most frequent observations in North Central states have been made in the first week of May.

Annual Fall Meeting.—The fourth annual Fall meeting and Field Day of K. O. S. was held at Manhattan on October 31 and November 1, 1953, with an attendance of fifty-one. The Manhattan Bird Club, which was in the process of formation, sponsored and carried out the plans and arrangements for the meeting. The headquarters were at Fairchild Hall on the campus of Kansas State College.

On Saturday evening the initial session of the Manhattan Bird Club, with Dr. H. T. Gier in charge, proved to be a very interesting meeting. The discussion centered around the distribution and occurrence of owls in Kansas. Movies taken of owls by Dr. Gier were shown.

On Sunday morning at 7:30 the group met again at Fairchild Hall. Hot coffee and doughnuts were served by the host club. Shortly after the refreshments the group took off in 14 cars for a tour of the birding spots near Manhattan. Vigorous efforts were put forth in trying to locate a flock of Prairie Chickens but only one chicken was sighted and that by one member of the party. The weather conditions seemed almost ideal for the bird-watchers but altho it proved to be only fair birding, everyone considered it a highly profitable day.

At noon the birders stopped in an abandoned farmyard and ate picnic lunches. Coffee and doughnuts were served by the Manhattan group. During lunch a short business meeting was held. The group ruled that hereafter at the Spring Annual Meeting the date and place be set for the Fall Field Meeting. Mrs. A. Dean Cole brought to the attention of the members the need for support of a bill for preservation of native

prairie grasses and establishment of national park areas which would include this grass type with its remaining native flora and fauna. By a favorable vote the Conservation Committee was instructed to draw up a resolution indicating that K. O. S. is in favor of said project and copies be sent to various appropriate organizations. At this time a list of 59 species was compiled for the day, the most unusual bird seen being the Harlan's Hawk.

Those persons participating in the outing were; Amelia J. Betts, Mr. and Mrs. I. L. Boyd, Roger Boyd, Katharine B. Kelley, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Miller, **Baldwin**; Ted F. Andrews, Bob Wimmer, **Emporia**; L. D. Wooster, **Hays**; James Lubkin, **Kansas City, Mo.**; Mr. and Mrs. Rollin H. Baker, Betsy and Bruce Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Chewning, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Fredrickson, Lenore French, Mr. and Mrs. Cloy S. Hobson, Carol L. Martin, Milton Moore, Mabel Willis, **Lawrence**; Mr. and Mrs. E. K. Beals, Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Gier, Lucy Keshan, Charles Langford, E. R. Lippincott, Phil Marvin, R. B. Moorman, Jim Roberts, Scott Searles, Carl Slater, Homer A Stephens, **Manhattan**; Ray Wackly, **Olathe**; Theodore M. Sperry, **Pittsburg**; Mr. and Mrs. A. Dean Cole, Ben King, **Shawnee**; L. B. Carson, Elizabeth Fisher, Mrs. W. A. Huxnan, Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Kingman, Philip B. Menninger. T. W. Nelson, Mrs. L. G. Thorpe, **Topeka**.

Red Crossbills in Kansas.—Red Crossbills were first seen this year in Lawrence on November 7, when they were found on the University of Kansas campus by Dr. H. B. Tordoff. We saw them on November 12 at the W. C. Boardman residence, 803 West 21st. Street and at the adjoining residence of T. G. Metcalf. Other persons who have seen them this year are Ben King of Shawnee, Miss Geneva McFarland, Kansas City, and Milton Moore, Lawrence. Dr. Tordoff reports the largest number seen at one time, 13.

The last definite invasion of crossbills into Kansas was in the fall and winter of 1950-51. Red Crossbills were first seen at that time on November 1. Crossbills rarely are found far from coniferous trees since their food consists mostly of pine seed.—Helen Chewning, Lawrence

A Return from a Banded Slate-colored Junco.—An adult Slate-colored Junco was banded by Harold Hedges at Lake Quivira, Kansas City, Kansas, on January 13, 1949, and was reported found dead about 80 miles northwest of Edmonton, Jasper-edson District, Alberta, Canada, in the late winter of 1952. Mr. Hedges has banded over 500 juncos since 1941 and this is the first return from an area outside the Kansas City region.

State Bird Notes

Notes from

Halstead

Warbler Sept. 13.

Pine Siskins have been found four times this fall. The Short-billed Marsh Wren was sighted Oct. 4 and the Winter Wren has appeared a number of times along Little River. The Red-breasted Nuthatch has been seen since Oct. 8, after a two-year lapse. Our Townsend's Solitaire put in a brief appearance at the Ruth home Nov. 30 and at Dettweiler's on Dec. 7. We saw an immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker frequently and previously an adult on three occasions.

On Oct. 14 Mrs. A. R. Challans, Marie Dettweiler and the three Ruths found Kanopolis Dam rather deserted, though plenty of Franklin's Gulls were about. At Cheyenne Bottoms that day our best yield was a flock of White Pelicans drifting past our car. Of the flock of Avocets seen by the Bishops on Sept. 5, we saw only the one with the crippled wing.

The only Mountain Bluebird we have seen in Kansas we sighted west of Halstead near Patterson on Nov. 16 while our group was on our way to the Salt Plains

Wildlife Refuge near Cherokee, Okla. There we were rewarded by the sight of flocks of 5,000 or more Canada and Snow Geese besides 50 White Pelicans, a Sandhill Crane, 3 Bald Eagles, an Osprey and Franklin's, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls.

—Edna Ruth, Halstead.

Notes from Homer Stephens and I went to the Cheyenne Bottoms on the weekend of November 7 and 8. Enroute we found all four **Cheyenne Bottoms** species of longspurs in Ellsworth County. The Lapland Longspurs were everywhere in small numbers. In a cornfield below Kanopolis Dam we found approximately 300 Chestnut-collared and about 30 Smith's Longspurs. The McCown's (only 3 of these) were in a winter wheat field farther along the road from the Dam. The next day at Cheyenne Bottoms we saw a Sprague's Pipit and a Western Grebe. Near the fish hatcheries at Pratt we found four Mountain Bluebirds and saw a Prairie Falcon a few miles west of Wichita.

A month later (Dec. 5 and 6) Homer Stephens, James Lubkin and I visited the area again. We found two Northern Shrikes in Ellsworth Co. and one in Stafford Co. At one location in Pratt Co. we found three Prairie Falcons, three Golden and two Bald Eagles. In Ellsworth Co. we counted 50 Chestnut-collared Longspurs and thousands (about 2500 in one flock) of Lapland Longspurs. A Ferruginous Rough-leg was seen in the same county.

To date my yearly list is 260.—Ben King, Shawnee.

A Heron Rookery Observed In Western Kansas

By **Marvin D. Schwilling**
Garden City, Kansas

A large interesting heronry located in Finney County, six miles north and four and one half miles west of Garden City, Kansas contained in 1952 herons never before reported to nest in the state of Kansas. The rookery is about one half mile southwest of Ackley Lake, a large natural alkaline pothole lake typical of this section of western Kansas, the nests are located in a thicket or grove of osage orange. This large rookery was first visited a short time after the destructive hailstorm of May 30, 1951. The storm had destroyed most of the nests and a great many adult birds had been killed or crippled. At that time there were Black-crowned Night Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Great Blue Herons, and a single American Egret in the area.

In 1952 several trips were made to the colony. The number of active nests was estimated to be near five hundred. The nesting population was largely Black-crowned Night Heron, but five adult Snowy Egrets stayed throughout the nesting season, two pair nested and the odd bird stayed near these two nests. Its mate possibly had been killed by the hail the year before. Several Yellow-crowned Night Herons were mixed into the group. Two pairs seemed to stay in one immediate section of the rookery and probably nested, however no nests could be singled out to definitely belong to this species. They seemed wilder and more wary than the other herons. Adult Little Blue Herons were seen on all visits and possibly two pair nested, however only one nest could definitely be established to belong to these birds. A single American Egret was seen several times but seemed to have no mate. Great Blue Herons visited the rookery quite often but did not nest. One pair of Great Horned Owls, two pairs of Crows and four or five pairs of Magpies nested in the grove and preyed on the herons nests and young. White-necked Ravens were seen over the area but not in the rookery proper. One pair of Lark Sparrows and several pairs of Mourning Doves were present. English Sparrows were numerous. To my knowledge this is the first record of the Snowy Egret, and the Little Blue Heron ever reported to nest in the state of Kansas.