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NOTES ON SUMMER BIRDS OF DECIDUOUS FOREST AND SALT MARSH HABITATS IN KANSAS

[The following information was received in the form of two letters from Mr. Rice as this issue was being prepared. The letters of which edited portions appear below relate observations of some of Kansas' more spectacular bird species (at least so considered in Kansas) in summer. Rice made his observations in two of the state's most popular and fertile "birding" areas—the lowland forests along Little Sugar Creek near Mound City, Linn County and the salt marshes in Stafford County.—Eds.]

May 13, 1957. I visited the wooded area west of Mound City and found the Pileated Woodpecker nesting cavity by following your [Tordoff's] sketch, but neither saw nor heard any activity in the vicinity. Two other fresh cavities in the immediate area (one on the south bank of the creek) led me to wonder which one of these had actually been chosen for the nest. I heard one of the pair calling from the north side of the woods and investigated a large dead tree in that area without results. However, I almost stepped on this individual before I saw it as it worked on an ant nest in a fallen log beside the trail.

As I returned to my car near the Fair Grounds I saw a White-breasted Nuthatch gathering caterpillars in a nearby tree. Instead of eating these, it pounded them against a branch and then flew to a dead tree on the north bank of the creek. I did not actually see the bird enter a nesting cavity, but the tree contained several such cavities, and I am sure that a nest was present.

May 22, 1957. I visited the Mound City area again but neither saw nor heard the Pileated Woodpeckers.

June 6, 1957. I revisited the Mound City area and found that one immature Pileated Woodpecker had fledged and was flying from one place to another in company with an adult on the south side of Little Sugar Creek. An almost constant chatter from the nesting area led me to investigate the site which you originally suspected to be the nest site. An immature female was the chatterer. She was being "teased" at intervals by both adults in the latter's efforts to coax her from the nest cavity. I took photographs of and watched the activity over a two-hour period, but did not witness the first flight.

June 1, 1957. I visited the salt marshes north of Stafford with my brother, Lloyd Rice, and saw literally hundreds of "peep" sandpipers. The majority of these were White-rumped Sandpipers, but Baird's, Semipalmated, Least and Western Sandpipers were also present. In addition, we saw 1 Knot, 2 Sanderlings (in the gray and white winter plumage), 1 Ruddy Turnstone, 2 Stilt Sandpipers, 6 pairs of Avocets, 6 Wilson Phalaropes, several Snowy Plovers, 1 Gadwall, 1 pair of Mallards, several pairs of Blue-winged Teal, 5 or 6 Shovelers, several Pintails, 1 Coot and 1 American Egret. There were also approximately 100 Black Terns and 2,000 Franklin's Gulls.

We found one Pintail nest containing eight eggs, one Avocet nest containing four eggs and three additional Avocet nests under construction, plus a pale greenish egg marked with brownish which we later identified as that of a Snowy Plover.

June 18, 1957. Returning to the salt marshes I saw 9 White Pelicans, 13 Wilson Phalaropes, 2 American Egrets, 2 American Bitterns, 1 White-rumped Sandpiper, 1,000 Franklin's Gulls, 6 Least Terns, 50 Black Terns, 6 Coots, 25 Avocets, 25 Snowy Plovers, 1 Piping Plover, 1 pair of Lesser Scaups, 1 pair of Mallards, and several Pintails, Shovelers, Gadwalls and Blue-winged Teal.

The Pintail nest seen on the last trip had been destroyed and high water had spoiled several Avocet nests. Several new nests of the latter species were found, however, and most of these were located on high ground where flooding will not endanger them. Three Snowy Plover nests were found, containing three eggs each, and one had three young in the immediate vicinity. One of these young was newly hatched and still wet. One adult gave an excellent display of injury-feigning, dragging one wing and uttering a nasal rattle as if gasping her last breath.—ORVILLE O. RICE, 1663 W. 28th Terrace, Topeka, Kansas, June 27, 1957.

Nesting record of the Roadrunner in Kansas.—On August 8, 1957, a nest of a Roadrunner, *Geococcyx californianus* (Lesson), was found by James Main, 3½ miles east and ½ mile north of Caldwell, Sumner County, Kansas. The nest contained four downy young which, along with the adult female, were collected on August 14, 1957.

The nest was built in a cedar tree near the edge of a wheat field. There are no large rivers or ponds in the immediate vicinity of the nesting site; most of the land is farmed in this area, and there are no wooded areas nearby. The nest was built 7½ feet above the ground and measured 19 cm. in depth and 43 cm. in diameter at its widest point. It seemed that the nest cavity had gradually been filled with weeds and grasses until only a slight depression remained. A variety of materials were used in construction of the nest, including rags, sticks, weeds, cardboard and grass.

In addition to these four young and adult, another adult female was collected November 20, 1956, near Caldwell (the exact location is not known). These specimens and nest are now in the Kansas State Teachers College collection, Emporia, Kansas.—CARL W. PROPHEET, *Biology Department, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, August 29, 1957.*

First specimen from Kansas of Swainson's Warbler.—On May 11, 1957, Ben King and Elizabeth Cole secured a Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsoni*) on the east side of Lake Quivera, Johnson County, Kansas. This specimen (KU 33464) seems to be the first of the species ever taken in Kansas and also the first ever recorded as observed in the state. The bird, which was singing constantly in a willow thicket, was watched for most of an hour before King was able to obtain a gun to collect it. Unfortunately, the only gun quickly available was of large gauge and consequently only parts of the bird could be preserved: both legs with toes but minus some claws; both wings; a portion of the rufous crown together with the left supercilary stripe; and the tail with some tail coverts. Measurements in millimeters are as follows: gonyx, 9.7; wing (chord), 69.7; tail, 50.3; tarsus, 18.3. Although it seems probable that this individual merely overshot the species normal nesting range in migration, it is not impossible that Swainson's Warbler does breed rarely in river bottom forests of eastern Kansas.—JOHN WILLIAM HARDY, *Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, June 26, 1957.*

Sight record of a Golden-crowned Sparrow in Kansas.—On May 13, 1957, Edna L. Ruth observed a Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) at Halstead, Harvey County, Kansas. The bird was first noted at 5:45 p.m. and for ten minutes thereafter fed on the ground in company with a White-throated Sparrow (*Z. albicollis*) within 23 feet of a window of the Ruth residence. I quote from Miss Ruth's letter: "The two broad black stripes on either side of the head made it look as though he wore a heavy black turban which was almost ready to slip over his eyes. The central stripe

was a good strong yellow, almost half the distance back, and then clear white. . . . The Golden-crowned sparrow was a bit larger appearing [than the White-throated Sparrow]. I would say more like a White-crowned which it closely resembled." Sight records of species far outside their normal ranges are always open to criticism and doubt. Nevertheless, the circumstances of the above observation and the fact that there are other records of the species from as far east as Massachusetts (see A.O.U. Check-list, 1957, p. 621) lend credence to Miss Ruth's record.—[This note was compiled from information in a letter from Edna L. Ruth to H. B. Tordoff, August 2, 1957.]—J.W.H.

NOTES AND NEWS

A large number of "KOS members" who have not paid their 1957 dues received the March issue of the *Bulletin*. This courtesy was not extended to include the present number, however. Members (1957 variety, that is) are encouraged to consult their "delinquent" friends concerning this matter and ask them to re-join the society. An ample supply of the two 1957 *Bulletin* numbers published so far are available to furnish those re-joining.

As we began assembling this issue, consultation of the folder in which is kept publishable manuscripts received from members revealed nothing. Needless to say, such a predicament imposes a task on the editors of not only editing but also *writing*. Thus, if you think, as we do, that this bulletin represents the ideas and musings of too small a group of members, you can remedy the situation by sending us accounts of your own ornithological findings.

Those members within reasonable driving distance of the University of Kansas will find an absorbing exhibit of ornithological literature recently placed on display in the main hallway of Watson Library. The exhibit was organized and arranged by Robert M. Mengel, bibliographer of the Ralph Ellis ornithological library, and contains selected significant works, from that fine collection of bird books, depicting the history of ornithology from its earliest times. Many of these books are rare, some of great beauty, some of interest because of their curious, quaint, even fantastic approach to the study of birds. The display is attractively and informatively arranged with accompanying cards containing many explanatory notations thoughtfully compiled by Mengel.

There is a tendency among many ornithologists to cease their field work in spring with the passing of the last migrants northward. This is one of the reasons that our knowledge of nesting birds in Kansas is far behind our knowledge of migrants. Often a species which is almost unknown as a migrant, turns out to be a common nesting species in that same area. I found such a situation with Blue-winged Warblers in southern Illinois. Species which nest conceivably in Kansas are many, possibly including Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Sycamore Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Song Sparrow, Pine-woods Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Alder Flycatcher, Long-billed Curlew, Mountain Plover, and others. Some of these in the past have actually been found nesting in the state. So, if you have the time (and can stand the summer heat!) select some species for which we know little of its summer status, and search through your vicinity in habitats seemingly suitable for nesting of the bird. You may be surprised at what you find, and you will contribute data on Kansas birds more important than almost any migration records. The observations of Orville Rice in this issue are examples of time well spent—accomplishable by anyone who will "come up for air" in late May and then plunge back into the struggle in June.

Members of this society will, I am sure, regret the decision of Dr. Harrison B. Tordoff, associate curator of birds at K.U. and this bulletin's editor, to accept a curatorship in the Museum of Zoology at the University of Michigan. Tordoff will assume his new duties in Ann Arbor in early September, and in so doing will end an eventful seven year association with Dyche Museum and the ornithology of Kansas. In that period the study of birds in the state advanced several notches in terms of

scientific endeavor and in popularity. Marking these advances were worthy efforts by Tordoff, himself, including a new check-list of Kansas birds injected with an abundance of new information concerning distribution and nesting of birds in the state. The University of Kansas enhanced its standing as a center of ornithological study, judging from its increase in graduate students in ornithology, Tordoff's aforementioned researches, and the addition of many specimens to the Museum collection. That Tordoff has been a valuable influence in the Kansas Ornithological Society goes without saying. Dr. Richard F. Johnston, presently at New Mexico A. & M. College, and formerly a student at the University of California at Berkeley, has accepted the position as assistant curator of birds at the University of Kansas. He will assume his duties no later than the beginning of the spring semester, 1958.—J.W.H.

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