

# Kansas Ornithological Society

## BULLETIN

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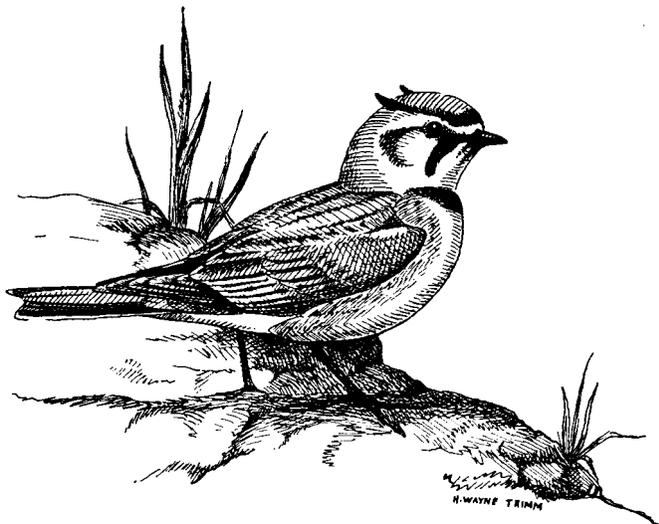
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## A REQUEST FOR SPECIMENS OF MALLOPHAGA

J. C. JOHNSON, JR.

Persons attending the spring meeting at Baldwin heard me relate general information concerning the little-known Mallophaga ("bird lice"), insects which live among the feathers of all species of birds. I have instituted a research program in which I am investigating certain ecological and phylogenetic aspects of bird study through the examination of Mallophaga taken from avian hosts, especially from the North American woodpeckers.

Members of the K.O.S. can aid materially in this long-term project by collecting these insects. Of the several effective methods of collecting Mallophaga, perhaps the simplest and most direct one is as follows. The freshly-killed bird is tightly wrapped in a layer of white, *unused* cotton; the layer of cotton (any grade) should be thick enough so that the bird cannot be seen through it. (Every precaution should be taken to prevent the exchange of lice between one bird and any others; each bird specimen *must* be kept isolated.) After one to three days, the cotton is gently stripped from the bird, folded, and, if to be mailed, is tightly sealed in an ordinary envelope; a separate envelope is used for mailing the wrapping from each bird.

If the required materials are on hand, the following preferable method can be used. Place the bird in a paper sack; add a fumigant (PDB is satisfactory); tie the sack securely shut; wait several hours; then shake the contents of the sack and fluff the bird thoroughly over a white surface. The Mallophaga will be easily seen and can be placed gently, with forceps, in a small vial of 70% alcohol or in formalin.

It must be emphasized that mallophagan specimens are scientifically valueless without the following minimal data:

- (1) species of bird from which collected;
- (2) locality in which bird was collected—county and state;
- (3) date on which bird was collected;
- (4) name of person who collected bird.

This data should be sent in the envelope or package with the mallophagan specimens.

I would very much appreciate cooperation in this project and would be happy to send alcohol vials or other collecting equipment to any K.O.S. member. Specimens should be mailed to: J. C. Johnson, Jr., *State College, Pittsburg, Kansas.*

**An Autumnal Roost of Robins.**—An apple orchard on the southeast edge of Baldwin, Douglas County, Kansas, was the roosting place for thousands of Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) during November and early December of 1957.

More Robins than usual had been noted in town that autumn, but it was not until November 11 that a definite flight was noticed. On that afternoon, between 3:45 and 5:00 P.M., more than a thousand were seen flying over the eastern part of town, coming from the north and northwest. Although this flight was seemingly without precedent, Baldwin observers decided it was just a migration ahead of a change in the weather.

It was two weeks later on November 24, before any observers saw a heavy flight of Robins going into the apple orchard, although many had been there for several weeks, according to the owner. Two nights later (November 26), Katharine Kelley counted 890 Robins flying south over town between 4:50 and 5:10 P.M.

On Sunday, December 1, a definite count of the Robins was attempted. With Mrs. Ivan Boyd, Roger Boyd, and Miss Kelley observing the flight coming from the north into the orchards, and Donald Betts and I watching the flight from the west, a total of 29,757 birds were counted between 4:10 and 5:30 P.M., with the main flight coming in the twenty-five minutes bracketing five o'clock. That total did not include several flights from the northwest and northeast that were too far away to be counted by either party of observers. Nor does it include the flight from the south, which was checked the next night and found to number over 1,000 in a period of ten minutes. Very few birds came in from the east.

A week later, an observer who had been watching the Robins at her farm home about two miles northwest of Baldwin reported the largest flight she had seen. She

estimated at least six thousand flew over her farm in one-half hour, many of them coming down to feed.

The first heavy snow of the winter came that same week-end (December 6-7) and the number of Robins dwindled rapidly after that, although more than usual spent the winter in town.

Mrs. Boyd banded 79 Robins that she had caught in town in the winter, using fallen pears as bait. It is hoped that they will afford a clue as to the summer range of at least some of the flock.—Amelia J. Betts, *Baldwin, Kansas*.

**Persistence in Egg-laying by Female Bluebird.**—In 1956, I kept records of a female Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) which repeatedly attempted to nest in a nest-box in my yard. Data obtained from observations of these attempts seem worthy of publication on the basis of the remarkable number of eggs laid in a given period of the reproductive season. On April 26, the bird completed her first clutch of eggs, numbering six. She incubated these, but on April 29 the entire clutch was gone. I removed the nest and the female promptly rebuilt in the same box. She completed her second clutch of six eggs on May 27, but a blacksnake (not specifically identified) took them the same day. The snake was killed soon after it had taken the clutch, and this time I left the nest in the box, fastening an aluminum shield around the post under the box to prevent further predation by snakes. The female returned to the box and by June 8 had laid five eggs. The aluminum shield proved ineffective, however, and this time a rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) took the eggs. Again I left the nest in the box and the Bluebird laid five more eggs, but then seemingly deserted the nest for a reason unknown to me. Examination showed the eggs to be covered with ants. The female Bluebird remained in the vicinity, however, and built a new nest in another nest-box. On June 29, she laid the fifth egg of her new clutch. Examination early on July 7, showed the eggs were still present, but at 4:30, the same day, a blacksnake (not specifically identified) was seen to approach the nest-box from a small tree nearby. This snake was promptly killed, but the female Bluebird refused to return to the nest. For two hours she and her mate hovered about the nest-box, perched in nearby trees, but never entered the box. Finally, at 6:30, the female entered the box and brooded the eggs while her mate perched in a nearby tree and sang. On July 15, the five eggs hatched, and on July 22, the young began to leave the nest. On July 29, the adults and the five young birds were in the yard.

The female thus raised one brood successfully, after laying 27 eggs in 63 days. Bent (1949. *Bull. U. S. National Mus.* 196:243) states that Briggs reported a female Bluebird which laid 25 eggs in 76 days, the successive five clutches of five eggs each being removed by the observer. The data reported herein are more remarkable than those of Briggs, since the eggs were removed, presumably in each case, by a natural predator, on two occasions not on the day of completion of the clutch but after several days of incubation. Additionally, the bird managed for the species what may be a record number of eggs for such a period.—Elizabeth Cole, 5535 *Renner Rd., Shawnee, Kansas*.

**Notes from the Marais des Cygnes Waterfowl Refuge.**—This is the third season we have searched for the nest of the Pileated Woodpeckers on this area and finally we have succeeded in finding one. We found it quite unexpectedly while searching for warblers on the morning of May 11. I had seen a Golden-winged Warbler very near the nest tree on May 9 and returned in hopes of finding others on May 11. None were seen but it was while following a Chestnut-sided Warbler that we found two Pileated Woodpeckers in a nearby tree. All attention was turned to the pair of woodpeckers the female of which soon returned to the nest cavity where she was apparently incubating. The nest was located some 50 to 60 feet above the ground in a dead portion of a large living pin oak on the south bank of Muddy Creek about a mile before it empties into the Marais des Cygnes River, T-21 R-25 S-17. This is only one of our Pileated nesting areas. We believe we have three, and possibly four nesting pairs of the birds on the refuge but locating the nests is rather difficult, in an area with much timber.

The warbler migration in this area was exceptionally good this spring (1958), and I had the good fortune of recording three species that I had never seen before; the Yellow-throated Warbler in Pleasanton, April 19, Golden-winged Warbler near the Pileated nest May 9, and the Bay-breasted Warbler, collected, near the Pileated nest May 9.

Mr. Orville Rice paid us a visit on May 9 to search for the Pileated Woodpecker nest but the warblers seemed to be too much of a distraction. I was able to record 21 species of warblers on this date and the following morning. They included Bay-breasted Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Parula Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Redstart, Orange-crowned Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow-throat, Kentucky Warbler, Canada Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Ovenbird, and both Water Thrushes.

The Wood Ducks are again using the nest boxes provided for them on the refuge, and the check made on April 29, 30 and May 1 turned up ten active nests with clutches numbering from 1 to 23 eggs. Prothonotary Warblers are again abundant in the area but have not as yet begun nesting in the boxes provided for them. They will begin nesting about the first of June.—Marvin D. Schwilling, *Pleasanton, Kansas*.

**Check-list of Summer Birds of Cadillac Lake, Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas.**—In the summer of 1957, I made at least one visit to Cadillac Lake near Wichita each week of the months May through August and recorded birds seen there. My records are possibly of interest to observers of birds in Kansas, particularly those not familiar with the excellent habitat afforded by this lake.

Species	MAY Period				JUNE Period				JULY Period				AUGUST Period					
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Eared Grebe .....				x					x	x						x		
Pied-billed Grebe .....		x	x	x			x	x						x	x	x	x	
White Pelican .....							x											
Great Blue Heron .....	x	x		x			x	x			x			x	x	x	x	
Green Heron .....				x														
Black-crowned Night Heron .....							x		x	x						x	x	
American Bittern .....			x				x	x	x							x	x	
Baldpate .....		x	x	x														
Pintail .....			x	x			x	x									x	x
Green-winged Teal .....				x														
Blue-winged Teal .....		x	x	x			x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Shoveler .....		x	x	x														
Lesser Scaup Duck .....		x		x				x										
Ruddy Duck .....				x				x		x						x	x	
Swainson's Hawk .....				x														
Ring-necked Pheasant .....								x										
Coot .....		x	x	x			x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Killdeer .....	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Black-bellied Plover .....				x														
Ruddy Turnstone .....				x														
Whimbrel .....				x														
Spotted Sandpiper .....										x						x		
Solitary Sandpiper .....										x								
Greater Yellow-legs .....		x		x														
Lesser Yellow-legs .....			x	x						x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Pectoral Sandpiper .....			x								x			x	x	x	x	
Baird's Sandpiper .....				x							x							x
Semiplumbeed Sandpiper .....				x	x													
Avocet .....								x										
Wilson's Phalarope .....		x	x	x														
Franklin's Gull .....		x	x	x					x									

Species	MAY Period				JUNE Period				JULY Period				AUGUST Period			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Black Tern .....	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Mourning Dove .....					x				x	x			x	x	x	x
Yellow-billed Cuckoo .....						x										
Eastern Kingbird .....						x			x				x	x	x	x
Western Kingbird .....									x	x			x	x	x	x
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher .....					x				x				x	x		
Horned Lark .....										x				x		
Barn Swallow .....					x	x			x	x			x	x	x	x
Purple Martin .....					x											
Common Crow .....									x							
Mockingbird .....						x				x						
Loggerhead Shrike .....					x					x			x	x	x	
Yellow-headed Blackbird .....																x
Redwinged Blackbird .....					x	x			x	x			x	x	x	x
Orchard Oriole .....					x				x	x					x	
Baltimore Oriole .....					x											
Common Grackle .....					x				x	x						
Dickcissel .....					x				x	x						

*Comments.*—On June 8, 1957 I led a field trip out to Cadillac Lake, where we saw several Black Terns carrying food.

On June 29, immature Black Terns were flying with the adults at the lake.

On August 10, 5 young Coots with red heads were seen with 2 adult Coots.

On August 17, I saw three groups of Coots, one group of about half grown young, one group, small with red heads and another group of intermediate age and size. Also we saw 2 little Pied-billed Grebes with striped heads swimming with 2 adults.

On August 18, I saw 5 or more downy young Ruddy Ducks, swimming around in scattered water weeds with two adults.—Carl S. Holmes, 1728 North Sheridan, Wichita 12, Kansas, March 8, 1958.

## NOTES AND NEWS

The present number of the *Bulletin* is the June issue. Summer takes the members of the Museum staff to the field, into Mexico and other such places, and on vacations, which ventures partially account for the failure of the *Bulletin* to appear on schedule. The present number of the *Bulletin* is particularly satisfying to the editors, since all of the articles in it are the result of work by members *not* associated with the K.O.S. staff, or the Museum of Natural History at the University of Kansas. Your response to our encouragement to send us articles concerning your experiences with the avian league is gratifying.

The next issue of the *Bulletin* will be forthcoming in short order, but there is plenty of time to send us an article dealing with observations you made this summer or some other time. We await, thusly, your epistles.

Dr. Richard F. Johnston reports that the response to his request for specific data on the breeding of birds in the state is good. We now have many records of nests, eggs, young, habitat, etc. on species for which much information was previously lacking. Dr. Johnston still has plenty of breeding bird census cards which you may get simply by writing to him at the Museum of Natural History here at K.U. Give him some idea as to how many you need; if you have data on 200 nests don't hesitate to ask for 200 cards. That's what they are for.

Within a few weeks we will attempt to send all of you notices of the 1958 fall K.O.S. meeting. Be planning to attend. The area of the salt marshes of central Kansas should provide excellent shore-birding and a chance to get acquainted with some interesting and difficult-to-identify species.—J.W.H.

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