

Wintering Robins in Kansas

Many people throughout Kansas have been aware of the unusually large number of Robins seen in the state this winter. A record high number of 5,371 Robins were counted on the 19 Kansas Mid-winter Bird Counts, and 1,654 were reported from one station alone (Baldwin City) on that count. Mrs. Ruth J. Green of Topeka writes that "unbelievably large flocks" of bluebirds and Robins were present in cedar-filled ravines along the Blue River, at least until the temperatures dropped to below zero in late January; many observers noted flocks of Robins in the Lawrence area until the middle of January.

Perhaps the most interesting observations about the Robins this winter were those of Phil Marvin of Manhattan. Mr. Marvin writes that Robins started to arrive in numbers on Sunday, January 23, and that most of them were gone by Thursday, January 27. At one time he counted 920 Robins within one city block, and estimated that at least 1,200 were present in that block at that time. The Manhattan newspaper received nine calls in one morning about the birds, and printed the following note on the front page on January 25:

Robins, Robins, everywhere and not a sign of Spring. Bird feeders in Manhattan have been swamped with thousands of unexpected guests the past three days as great flocks of robins have invaded the city.

It has been a field day for bird watchers who had to get out their adding machines to count the birds which, according to experts, normally nest in northern United States and Canada. The bitter cold weather in the northern regions has driven them south.

Nine hundred twenty birds were counted in one flock with an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 robins in the city this morning. Although the robin is usually identified with the "first sign of Spring", these visitors from the north have appeared with the first real sign of winter in the area.

Although bird watchers in Kansas have long known that the Robin is not a good indicator of spring, the presence of such large flocks of these birds indicates that there is extensive seasonal movement of individuals. Most of the birds seen in the winter in Kansas are probably representatives of populations that breed north of Kansas although some individuals may spend the entire year in the state.

Baltimore Oriole Wintering in Pittsburg

Dr. Theodore M. Sperry of Kansas State College of Pittsburg, writes that in the middle of January several people saw a male Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) near the southern edge of Pittsburg. Although Dr. Sperry never saw the bird himself, there seems to be no doubt as to the validity of the sight record. Baltimore Orioles do not regularly winter in the state [see the March K. O. S. Bulletin], and winter records are well worth mention.

Amelia Betts, the membership secretary of the K. O. S., writes that as of February 20 only 160 members have paid their 1966 dues. The operation of the society and the publication of both the Bulletin and the Newsletter depends upon the money received from dues, so all members are urged to check to see if they have paid their dues yet. Checks can be sent to: L. B. Carson, Treasurer, 1306 Lincoln, Topeka, Kansas, 66604.

Members are urged to send me their observations on birds for publication in either the K. O. S. Bulletin or the Newsletter.—U. D. Rising, Assoc. Ed.