

NEWSLETTER

KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Department of Biology
Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas 67156

Number 31
October 1969

Annual Fall Field Trip

A group of the more hardy members of the KOS appeared on 12 October for the annual field trip. The weather can only be described as lousy with about five inches of rain falling in the area. About 40-50 people were on hand. The trip went to the Neosho Waterfowl Refuge and to the Neosho County State Lake. The tally was held at the shelter at the State lake. The following is a list of the 82 species and subspecies seen:

Eared Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, American Bittern, Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Blue Goose, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Wood Duck, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Osprey, Sparrow Hawk, Bobwhite, Sandhill Crane.

American Coot, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Bewick's Wren, Carolina Wren, Short-billed Marsh Wren.

Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Eastern Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Nashville Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Palm Warbler, House Sparrow, E. Meadowlark, W. Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Savannah Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

After the bird tally, a meeting of the board was held. The report of the board will appear in the November Newsletter.

SHORT NOTES

Request for Information on Color-Tagged Mississippi Kites--As part of a study of the ecology and population dynamics of the Mississippi Kite, adult and juvenile birds are being color-tagged, banded with standard U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands, and released in areas of Southwestern Kansas, western Oklahoma, and north-central Texas. Marked birds carry a large plastic oval on the humeral area of each wing, and colors used have been white, red, orange, yellow, dark green, dark blue and light blue. Information desired includes: color of plastic oval on each wing, date, time and location of sighting, activity of the bird and observer. Please send information to: James W. Parker, Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

Summer Notes from Lowell--I wish to report a sighting of one immature Cattle Egret, 30 June, in a pasture following cattle, east of Galena, Kansas on Highway 66.

Above the dam at Lowell is a back-water area which we call Ropers Slough. It is sheltered and the water doesn't rise too high when we have heavy rains. It is

a natural habitat for Green Herons, wood pewees, Parula Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Eastern Bluebird, Pileated Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron and other birds. We found several Ruby-throated Hummingbird nests, mostly built on Sycamore limbs and over water. Nests were found into July. Parula Warblers sang from the Sycamore Tree tops and we saw adult Prothonotary Warblers feeding young June 10-11.

Farther up Shoal Creek we found Acadian Flycatchers nesting, all nests were over running water. One nest looked thicker than usual and later when we took the nest as a specimen, we found a Cowbird had laid an egg in the nest and the female had built up over it making the nest thicker. An unusual Cardinal nest was also discovered. It had a complete snake skin interwoven in the nest along with the grasses and bark.

Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are definitely on the increase in this area. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Qualls.

Cornell University --The frequently recommended practice of adding glycerine to water may keep your bird bath unfrozen this winter--but not the birds that use it. Cold water was thrown on the glycerine theory by Mrs. Walter R. Spofford, research associate at Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology, in reply to several queries received from bird lovers.

"Several bird lovers," she said, "have asked about adding glycerine to the water in bird baths in winter. My advice to them is don't. This practice results in the death of many small birds."

The glycerine in the water, she explained, is harmless if the birds drink it, but if they bathe, their natural insulation against the cold is destroyed.

"The feathers of birds are remarkably adapted for forming an insulating layer," Mrs. Spofford said. "The barbs of birds feathers interlock and in the winter the feathers are fluffed out, trapping warm air against the body. Anything added to the water--especially something oily like glycerine--makes it impossible for the feathers to function normally. As soon as the bird is exposed to extreme cold or heavy snow or rain, he will freeze."

It's far better, Mrs. Spofford said, to add warm water several times a day or to use little electric water heaters commonly used to open water for chickens.

Notes from Hays--Most of the late summer and early fall were spent trying to obtain departure dates for summering species and first arrival dates for fall transients. During most of September the nets were operated by Ron E. Howard and he and Marvin E. Rolfs provided most of the data here included. Summer populations of Mourning Doves were below normal; numbers of Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Dickcissels and Lark Buntings were above normal. A Pied-billed Grebe was seen on 26 and 28 June.

Among the "last dates observed" records were the following: Franklin's Gull, 12 June; Cedar Waxwing, 20 June; Upland Plover, 22 August; Purple Martin, 16 August (most left long before); Warbling Vireo, 19 September; Bell's Vireo, 22 September; Baltimore Oriole, 17 September. Both departure and arrival dates were obtained for: Traill's Flycatcher- 12 June and 29 July (to 12 September); Least Flycatcher--24 May and 23 July (adults) and 22 August (1st immature); Yellow Warbler- 17 June and 28 July (regular after 23 August).

Fall arrival dates are more easily obtained and included the following:

- June 28 - Long-billed Curlew
July 10 - Solitary Sandpiper
18 - Spotted Sandpiper
28 - Chipping Sparrow
Aug 8 - Red-eyed Vireo (earliest record)
23 - Parula Warbler (3rd Hays record; 1st in fall); Ovenbird
24 - Willett (1st fall)
25 - Red Crossbill - still seen almost daily (MER); largest flock 21.
26 - Solitary Vireo - 4 records this fall.
Sept 2 - Myrtle Warbler (earliest date)
5 - Worm-eating Warbler (MER)
8 - Canada Warbler (4th Hays record)
9 - Nashville Warbler (earliest date); Macgillivray's Warbler
13 - Red-breasted Nuthatch (earliest); Mourning Warbler
15, 16, 22 - Blackpoll Warbler (only fall records).
16 - Ruby-crowned Kinglet (earliest); Song Sparrow
17, 22 - Veery (few fall records)
19 - Ruby-throated Hummingbird
22 - Olive-sided Flycatcher (MER)
23 - Lincoln Sparrow
26 - Oregon Junco
27, 29 - Winter Wren
27 - White-crowned Sparrow; White-throated Sparrow
28 - White Pelican
29 - Tennessee Warbler (2nd and 3rd fall records)

Notes from Cowley County--The Winfield Natural History Society and the Arkansas City Bird Club both kicked off the start of the fall and winter meetings in September and look forward to many more meetings during the year.

The operation recovery station at Udall was started up on 26 August and has been run every weekend since that time. This is the last "official" year that it will be sponsored by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, the information that we are obtaining on the migration of birds through this area seems to warrant continued operation of the station for several more years. This year the station will operate well into November and maybe December. We are always happy to have birders come and see the operation. You would be surprised how easy fall warblers are to identify once you have seen them up close and are able to study them for a few minutes. The following are some of the more interesting birds and/or numbers banded: Nashville Warbler 316; Indigo Bunting 143; Goldfinch 118; Wilson's Warbler 72; Mourning Warbler 32; Blackpoll Warbler 27 September (first fall record); Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 11, 19, 20 September (first records for area); Canada Warbler, 13, 21 September (first records); Chestnut-sided Warbler, 19 September (2nd record); Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 11 October (late State record).

Additional data from the station will be put in the November Newsletter. Max C. Thompson

CONTRIBUTOR'S

Deadline for the monthly newsletter will be on the 10th of the month for the monthes that it appears. The next issue will be out around November 20. We would hope that you will have all of your fall migration data into the editor for this issue. The February issue will be for wintering birds. The Newsletter is only as good as the news you send the editor. Max C. Thompson