

By BILL BILLIEU
Eagle Outdoor Editor

Fifteen Kansans took a float trip down the Walnut River, near Winfield, Sunday, but there wasn't a rod and reel in the group.

The canoeists "cast" with binoculars and "caught a limit" of spotted sandpipers, black-capped chickadees and prothonotary warblers.

The canoe trip was an experiment by the Kansas Ornithological Society, in convention at Winfield last weekend, to discover if water-based field trips would be productive and popular.

Prof. Robert Wimmer of Southwestern College, Winfield, said numerous song birds inhabit foliage along the Walnut River, but banks are too steep to encourage a hike that follows the water route.

FLOATING DOWN the river in five boats were Marvin Schwilling, Great Bend; Mr. and Mrs. Larry Nossaman, Great Bend; Mr. and Mrs. Ed Dailey, Junction City; Mrs. Helen Whorton, Ogden; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Roth, Winfield; Professor Wimmer and Southwestern College students Steve Waite, Dal Hunt, Dave Book, Ron Jones, Steve Cauble; and this writer.

Waite, Hunt and Cauble were the sergeants-at-arms, paddling ahead to scout strong currents, shoals, sunken logs and minor rapids. The river is about two feet high, and while hazards are negligible compared to conditions after a 15-foot rise several weeks ago, the strong eddies and sharply rippled water was still noticeable in spots.

Canoe occupants with binoculars glued to a white-breasted nuthatch or tufted titmouse in a tree sometimes forgot they weren't on a sight-seeing bus. Their canoes on occasion were turned too late to avoid some out-reaching brush or to stop short of shifting to a backward position in an eddy.

I occupied a canoe with Schwilling, who is stationed at Cheyenne Bottoms refuge for the game commission. Schwilling is one of the top bird identification experts in the state. Mrs. Jo Dailey, also in our craft, was busy marking down the species seen and heard

on the trip. Such field expeditions are not all pleasure for society members. A record of bird sightings is maintained by state and national "birding" groups to keep abreast of movements and declines in bird numbers.

AT SPOTS along the route we heard a chorus of chickadees and watched hordes of the small birds spurting among lower branches. Spotted sandpipers skirted the top of the water, coming at times within a few feet of our canoe. A pair of rough-winged swallows busily built their nest within a hole of a mud bluff and bank swallows ailed overhead.

We saw several great horned owls including a woolly youngster probably no more than a day out of the nest where it was hatched. Green herons hurried on bird business along the bank ahead of us, and barred owls seemingly glared at us from upper branches.

Some of the more unusual songs we heard were those of the summer tanager, the blue grosbeak, dickcissel, eastern phoebe, blue-gray gnatcatcher, indigo bunting, parula warbler and red crossbill.

MORE COMMON were the grackle, redwing blackbirds Carolina wrens, blue jays, eastern meadowlark, eastern and western kingbirds and red-bellied and downy woodpeckers.

In mid-trip, we beached on a gravel point to stretch our legs. Some of the canoeists climbed the bank to stalk birds heard chattering well into the wooded bank above.

A total of 143 bird species were counted by the canoeists and other society members who went on field trips to the marshes near Winfield or into farm pastures and wooded sites.

Schwilling could tell a male from a female for many species not only on the wing but by their call. He even diagnosed one bird as sick because it was not voicing the proper call.

"Maybe it's asking for help," Mrs. Daily suggested.

THEN THERE were the calls even Schwilling was not certain about. He took a leaf from a

former instructor's notebook by calling these nomenclature-avoiding species by such monikers as damfinos I and damfinos II. Of course, they didn't appear in the total count.

The group had traveled by car several miles above Winfield and launched their five canoes. Getting to the water's edge was

a slippery, muddy job. The canoeists ended their trip below a small overflow dam at a city park. Getting up the bank there with cameras, binoculars and various purses and packs was a more slippery task. Poison ivy had to be avoided. The strong arms of the college youths came in handy here.

I was looking, during the trip, for some really rare species that would bring gasps of surprise from the birders. The convention ended at the park at noon Sunday before I found the chance.

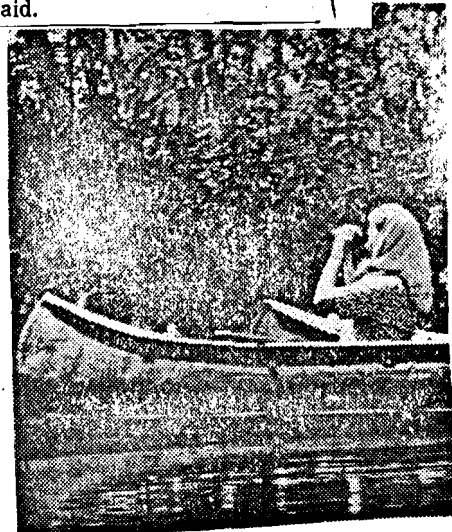
On utility wires above my head, seen as I was leaving Winfield, sat a seemingly all white bird, similar to but larger than a sparrow, with a tail three times as long as its body.

Schwilling passed me on the way out. The bird already was gone, but I hailed the expert. Schwilling brought his car to roadside and listened to my story.

"It could only be a scissor-tailed flycatcher," he nodded. "It looked all white because you were viewing it from the underside."

"I've never seen a bird like it before," I declared.

"Probably because you weren't looking before," he said.



Ornithological Society

Experiments With Canoe Trips on Walnut River

KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE, WINFIELD, KANSAS 67156

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

K. O. S. membership has reached a total of 305--one more than all of last year, despite the fact that fifty members have been dropped for failure to pay their dues or by resignation. Especially gratifying is the increase of sustaining members for 78 last year to 100 this year.

Thirty-nine new members have joined for 1970, but we have need for many more. Only a few members have sent me the names of prospects. The Society has information leaflets and sample Bulletins to send out if you'll just give me the names. If you prefer, I'll send application blanks for you to distribute.

We've been stuck near the 300 membership mark for five years. Let's up it!!!!

Don't be surprised when you find the reply-o envelopes for 1971 dues with the September Bulletin. We are taking a cue from national magazines and will try and get members to pay up by the time the new year begins, not several months afterwards. Amelia J. Betts, Membership Secretary

NOTES

Baldwin City--Pine Siskins have been unusually abundant around Baldwin this spring. A flock of about fifty frequented the area around Douglas Co. State Lake for about a month.

Baldwin Bird Club held its annual spring breakfast and bird count Saturday, May 9. An early morning rain moved the breakfast indoors. The count was below a hundred for the first time in several years, due to a scarcity of warblers and shorebirds--and of bird counters. Amelia J. Betts

SPRING MEETING

The annual spring meeting of the KOS was held at Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas, May 2-3. There were 129 persons registered, 124 came to the banquet to hear Dr. George M. Sutton speak on John Audubon. About 96 were registered at the field trip on Sunday. I thought for the interest of the membership, we would publish the registration list. You will note that some of the persons have no address. They are not members of the society and therefore no address. Those of you who know them, ought to persuade them to join the cause.

Lawrence--Byron Berger, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Fauhl, Craig Duncan, Jerry Jackson, Jerome Robbins, Mervyn Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. James Peoples, Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Koch.

Arkansas City--Catharine Penner, David and Kent Seibel, Hazel Chaplin, Dora Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. N. H. White

Winfield--Mr. and Mrs. Ross Williams, Donna Wilt, Janet Laws, Robert Wimmer, Gordon Barnhardt, Max Thompson, Richard Hamilton, Louise Kesler, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Miller, Naomi Miller, Paul Huber, Rick Hill, Floyd Dowell,

Topeka--Bob Glazier, Doug Zabel & Ellen, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Lewis, Orville Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Rod Runyan

Emporia--Mr. and Mrs. John Breukelman, Eric Rundquist, Walter Boles, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Comer, Anabel Bijjani, Frank Davis, Mr. and Mrs. David Parmelee,

Wichita--Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cookson, Jeff Cox, Ken Kaufman, Robert Vaughan, Georgia Vaughan, Glatha Riley, Walker Butin,

Baldwin--Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Boyd, John Burns, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Franq, Amelia Betts, Katherine Kelley

Wellington--Mrs. Roland Turner, Mrs. Hazel Land
Admire--Mr. and Mrs. Edward Schulenberg, Margaret Schulenberg
Pittsburgh--Ted Sperry
Independence, Mo.--Mr. and Mrs. Charles Franklin
Newton--Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Platt, Richard Platt, Kamala Platt, Peter Janzen,
 Joe Yoder
Manhattan--Margery Davidson, Doris Coppersmith, John Zimmerman, Helen Whorton,
 H. T. Gier.
Edgerton--Marno McKaughan
Kansas City--Bernice Tatum, Geneva McFarland
Shawnee--Mr. and Mrs. Dean Cole
Hays--Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Ely
Norman, Okla.-- Dr. George M. Sutton
Dodge City--Joan Challans
Parker--Mr. and Mrs. T. Concannon
Junction City--Bob LaShelle, Viv McLeran, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph White, Mr. and
 Mrs. E. R. Dailey
Great Bend--Mr. and Mrs. Larry Nossaman, Marvin Schwilling
Richmond--Mr. and Mrs. Charles Edwards and Carl
Halstead-- Ruth Rose
McPherson-- Bertha Beam, Gundhild Sollid, Juliet Gilmore
Burlington--Madge Hilbish
Oxford--Wallace Champeny
Eldorado--Mr. and Mrs. Galen Abbot, Mr. and Mrs. Kaleb Abbot.
Hutchinson--Joyce Schrock
Address Unknown--Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Boots, Cordella Evinger, Myrtle Cox,
 Audra Hazzard, Audrey Stratford

If I have omitted any names or misspelled any names, please forgive me.

On Sunday, the field trips were held. I was ask why there was no birding with
 the Pros. The answer is quite simple. No Pros volunteered to lead the trips
 (with one exception) so therefore we handled the trips as we have prior to
 1969. Many of the Pros are professional ornithologist and welcome a chance to
 get out on there own after tutoring students in bird identification in college
 all spring. The tours identified 144 species of birds as follows:
 Eared Grebe, White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, American Bittern,
 White-faced Ibis, Mallard, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal,
 Shoveler, American Widgeon, Wood Duck, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser
 Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's
 Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow
 Hawk, Greater Prairie Chicken, Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Coot, Semipal-
 mated Plover, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Upland Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary
 Sandpiper, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper,
 Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Avocet, Wilson's
 Phalarope, Ring-billed Gull, Franklin's Gull, Forster's Tern, Rock Dove, Mourning
 Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Chuck-will;s-widow, Poor-will, Common Night-
 hawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-
 shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Wood-
 pecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Western King-
 bird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe,
 Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Horned Lark, Bank Swallow, Rough-winged
 Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Common Crow,
 Black-capped Chickadee, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted
 Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Bewick's Wren, Carolina Wren,

Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Swainson's Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Bell's Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Yellowthroat, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Painted Bunting, Dickcissel, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Red Crossbill, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Harris Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow (Addenda: Whimbrel, seen at Timber Creek Reservoir in the afternoon).

NOTES

Wichita--When Mr. Carl Holmes left Wichita and moved to the State of Washington, Ken Slaughter took over the compilership of the local Christmas Count. As far as I know, he is not a member of the KOS (he is not Editor), so, hence, the results of our CBC were not printed in the KOS Bulletin, and I shall report on them here. Not counting Rock Doves, we had ten more species than our nearest competitor, Great Bend. Notable species or numbers are as follows (asterisks indicating State highs): *3 Pied-billed Grebes; *1 Black-crowned Night Heron (first State CBC record, seen by numerous reliable observers in NW section of Wichita); 981 waterfowl of *15 species, including 80 Gadwalls, 81 Green-winged Teal, 13 Shovelers, 30 Baldpates, *1 Wood Duck, *31 Redheads, 8 Ring-necked Ducks, and *205 Canvasbacks; 2 Golden Eagles, *1 Merlin, 132 coots; *11 Common Snipe, 72 Ring-billed Gulls, 7 Great Horned Owls, *1 Hybrid Flicker, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 14 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 6 Myrtle Warblers, 9 Purple Finches, 23 Pine Siskins, *20 Chipping Sparrows (Note-- This species has never been taken in the State in winter and 20 in one area is highly suspicious. Editor) and *58 Song Sparrows. The total number of species seen was 82 (with Rock Dove) and 7420 individuals.

A Common Nighthawk was seen March 23 in Wichita by Larry Gray. Though it is an early record for the State by more than a month, it is not too unbelievable when one considers the warm winter we had. A Boat-tailed Grackle was seen in town January 20-26 and again in late February by myself and Ken Kaufman. This is the second winter record of this bird for the State. Jeff Cox

Editor's Paragraph

This edition ends the Newsletters until next October. You will find the spring migration is missing. We must have this to press and mailed from here by June 1 due to closing down of the mailing room. Please forward your spring and summer notes to me for the October Newsletter. Those of you that have, I am holding your news until October. It was indeed gratifying to see that we have a correspondent from Wichita after all these years. With a metropolitan population of around 400,000, this is a great untapped source of members.

The editor would appreciate it if someone would supply him with some birding spots for the October Newsletter. Again, this Newsletter is no better than the membership makes it.

Will Mary Louise Myers, Mrs. N. H. White, Jr., Amelia Betts, Jeff Cox, Charles A. Ely etc. please get your area news in for October. Some of you are holding out. The best birds of the year and minutes of the meeting were left out as these reports were not available to the editor at press time. Max C. Thompson

NEW MEMBERS OF K.O.S.--1970

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