

KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY  
SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE, WINFIELD, KANSAS 67156

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Wintertime Observations from Camp Towanyek

This was a winter in direct contrast to last year, both weatherwise and birdwise. Last year was an invasion year for northern species and nearly every feeding station was over-run with Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, Purple Finch. There were many reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches.

This year, none of these unusuals showed up. Although we usually have Purple Finches every winter, this year there were only 3-4 that fed regularly until the middle of March when these increased to 8, and to 13 on 26th of March. There were no siskins reported at any feeders, or sighted on any field trips during these months. However, on March 14, 6 of them showed up at our feeders and joined the goldfinch. Goldfinch have been abundant all winter, with a flock of 100+ feeding now (31 March). No one reported Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Four Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered here this winter. Last year there were none. One of these was found dying of undetermined cause on March 2. Two Mockingbirds wintered, last year there were four. Cardinal numbers seemed down somewhat over last year.

Robins apparently did not winter in the area: one showed on February 4, but did not stay. On March 12, another appeared, and on March 15, about forty. Two of these were a banded pair that we banded last year and they came directly to the feeders.

Hawks seemed numerous at all times when we were out driving along the hiway or country roads. Many Buteos and Marsh Hawks were observed at all times when out in the car. A pair of Red-tailed Hawks can always be seen at Towanyak and on January 25, a Rough-legged Hawk was seen perched at the edge of our meadow.

Bald Eagles were seen on numerous occasions and it is the first year we have observed them in this vicinity. On March 2, we observed 3 immature Bald Eagles along the Kaw River and Kansas Avenue, and another along the river bluffs on Inland Drive about five miles from here. On this day there was a large movement of hawks and along the river bluffs many Buteos were observed in the air. On March 7, two immature and one mature Bald Eagle were observed on the Kaw River at Kansas Avenue area and on March 25 a single mature bird was seen. T

This was a colder winter and a longer one than usual, with many more ice storms and snowfalls than ordinary. Temperatures got as low as minus 12 degrees on February 8, and the ice cover stayed on for over a week.

Two first dates are Mourning Dove, February 15; Eastern Phoebe March 21. Last date, March 26, Brown Creeper.

[The above report is a condensation of Mary Louise's report to the Newsletter. If we could get several persons to do this, it would not only contribute to the Newsletter but also to our distributional knowledge of State bird life. Editor]  
Mary Louise and Jim Myers, Camp Towanyak, Johnson Co., Kansas.

Notes from Ellis County.--I have done very little birding this spring and many of the following records were by other observers: Harold Kraus (HK); Marvin Rolfs (MR); Elton Schroder (ES); Richard Weber (RW). It has been a very unusual spring with some species arriving later than usual and individuals of other species arriving unexpectedly early. In general, however, numbers have been low and birding has been poor.

The waterfowl migration was unusually good and a new pond at the H. Kraus farm had up to four pairs of Golden-eyes from at least 6 March to 3 April. A female Hooded Merganser was present there on 3 April. We had a very good crow flight during the first part of April and scattered Blue Jays are arriving. Franklin's Gulls have

not yet arrived. The first positive Purple Martins arrived on 30 March; Ruby-crowned Kinglets on 2 April and grackles on 22 March. A Bald Eagle remained until about 11 April (HK), House Finches to 6 April (MR) and Evening Grosbeaks are still present on 13 April.

Among the early arrival dates are the following: Black-crowned Night Heron on 12 April (MR); Black and White Warbler on 30 March (CE); Yellow Warbler on 11 April (MR); Yellowthroat on 13 April (at Ellis, RW); Blue Grosbeak on 13 April (MR). On time but rare in Hays were a Bleu-gray Gnatcatcher (10 April, ES, CE) and an Audubon's Warbler (found dead 13 April, ES). Pine Siskin's were rarely seen all winter; there has been very little singing; no nesting was recorded through 13 April.

The two best birds for the spring were: two Whooping Cranes seen by Harold Kraus, SW of Antonino on 12 April. The birds were flying together, calling softly and seen at a distance of about 100 feet. There can be no mistake in his identification. A Gray-headed Junco came to the Marvin Rolfs feeder in north Hays on 17 March and remained through 3 April. It was seen by many people, netted, banded and released. On 26 March, Richard Weber netted a second bird at Ellis. Charles A. Ely, Fort Hays State College, Hays, Kansas.

Notes from Winfield.--This spring brought few surprises. We did have some early dates from the area: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, March 26; Greater Yellowlegs, March 9. Warblers have been conspicuous by their absence. In contrast to the experience of Camp Towanyek, we have had quite a few Pine Siskins on campus all winter plus a number of Red-breasted Grosbeaks. Evening Grosbeaks appeared in November and December but were not seen again.

The new City Lake of Winfield has given us a large body of water nearby for wintering waterfowl. About 400 Canada Geese wintered along with 2-3000 Mallards. This spring a raft of 150+ Double-crested Cormorants spent a few days at the lake. Max C. Thompson, Winfield.

Boat-tailed Grackle in Kansas--If you are looking for places to see the grackle in Kansas, you might try Marvin Schwilling at Cheyenne Bottoms or the gas compressor station west of Haven on K-96. The later has a colony of perhaps 30 birds. They were also seen at Wichita and at Winfield this spring. They are nesting at the Bottoms.

Edgerton News--On the 6th and 7th of February, I observed six Short-eared Owls flying over an open field one mile east of Gardner near highway 50-56. Other members of the Baldwin Bird Club drove over to see them.

On 22 February after the heavy snow many birds came to the feeding area east of the house. There were Harris Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Slate-colored Juncos, Cardinals, Robins and a Mockingbird. Since May 10 there have been many Killdeer around. The Purple Martins returned 18 March. Marno McKaughan, Edgerton.

#### CORNELL NEST RECORD SCHEME

The following is the copy of a letter from Dr. Robert M. Mengel to the KOS President  
"Dear Mrs. White:

For some time, when Dr. Richard Johnston was working on his now published "Breeding Birds of Kansas," we actively solicited data from K.O.S. members on breeding birds. You may recall that we provided cards such as the one enclosed for persons to record the data on. When we received these cards, we transferred the data to cards provided by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for their North American Nest-record card program.

Recently the entire program seems to have come to a stop, primarily, I guess, as a result of our not soliciting data. The people at Cornell, however, keep writing to us to see if we have any cards to send them.

It seems to me that the K.O.S. might review the situation and begin the program anew.

The bird division here would be willing to cooperate in the following ways:

- (1) Order Cornell data cards for all participants, and distribute both them and the Kansas cards upon request.
- (2) Collect both sets of cards here, sending the Cornell cards on, and storing the Kansas cards for use by any researcher.
- (3) Cornell sends their cards free of charge. The K.U. Museum could be glad to supply the Kansas cards at no cost to the K.O.S.

We do not have the personnel any more to enable us to copy the data from the K.O.S. cards to the Cornell ones. Even if we did, I think, from the standpoint on accuracy, it is best if the observer himself fills out both cards.

The K.O.S. would have to publicize the program. And we would hope that the participants would pay the postage on cards they send.

//Robert M. Mengel//

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS WINTER MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Kansas Ornithological Society met at the home of Celia White in Junction City, Kansas December 13, 1970. The Minutes of the Spring Meeting were read and after some minor changes in membership statistics approved. The minutes of the Board's September meeting were studied carefully in the light of re-studying the by-laws and the conclusion was that there was no way KOS could take any action on affiliation with CEAK until the members had been given an opportunity to decide on the proper course at a regular meeting.

Orville Rice suggested that if further study indicated a change in the by-laws would be necessary to permit an affirmative role with CEAK that we should have such changes publicized before the May Meeting. The board felt this was not needed and voted to wait for a full report at the regular meeting.

Max Thompson reported on the savings in the printing of the Bulletin and Newsletter.

Stanley Roth volunteered to have the KOS Constitution retyped with the new revisions inserted.

Bob LeShelle reported on the publicity he had obtained for the society.

The motion was made and passed that the Society have a set of the KOS Bulletins bound. The secretary is to get an estimate on the cost from at least two binders and if there is a saving in having a number of sets done at one time make a report at the Spring Meeting.

The Fall Field Trip will be at Cheyenne Bottoms. Date to be set later. Ruth D. Fauhl.

PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES