

A LIGHT FOR THE MARTINS

THE PEOPLE OF ARGONIA, KANSAS, SOME 40 MILES SOUTHWEST OF WICHITA, UNWITTINGLY SUPPLIED LIMITED HOUSING FACILITIES FOR PURPLE MARTINS. A BLINKER LIGHT HAD BEEN SUSPENDED OVER THE MAIN INTERSECTION IN TOWN, BUT ELECTRICITY WAS NEVER FURNISHED. SO THE BLINKER HUNG, UNUSED AND UNNOTICED FOR MANY YEARS.

WHILE THE CITIZENS OF ARGONIA IGNORED THE LIGHT, PURPLE MARTINS INVESTIGATED IT AND FOUND ONE LENS MISSING. ON JUNE 16, 1964, TWO PAIRS OF MARTINS HAD BUILT NESTS IN IT, AND WERE FEEDING YOUNG. EACH PAIR USED THE OPENING TO THE SOUTH WHERE THE LENS WAS MISSING. ONE NEST WAS PLACED AGAINST THE INNER FACE OF THE WEST-FACING LENS, AND THE OTHER NEST WAS LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE, EACH BETWEEN THE RESPECTIVE LENS AND ITS REFLECTOR. ON JUNE 29, ONLY ONE SET OF NESTLINGS REMAINED.—PHILIP H. MARVIN, MANHATTAN.

CEDAR WAXWING INVASION, 1964

MARCH 25 WAS A MISERABLE DAY. IT RAINED, SLEETED, FROZE, AND FINALLY SNOWED. IN FACT THE ROADS WERE SO BAD EARLY THAT MORNING THAT MY HUSBAND, JIM, DECIDED TO STAY HOME, AND WE BANDED BIRDS. IT WAS THE BIGGEST BANDING DAY WE HAVE EVER HAD. USING ONLY TWO TRAPS WE BANDED A TOTAL OF 64 BIRDS, AND 48 OF THEM WERE CEDAR WAXWINGS.

THIS STORY REALLY BEGAN ABOUT FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE STORM WHEN ABOUT EIGHT WAXWINGS DROPPED DOWN INTO A LITTLE DOGWOOD TREE JUST OUTSIDE OUR KITCHEN WINDOW. I HAD PUT SOME BUNCHES OF BITTERSWEET OUT FOR BLUEBIRDS EARLIER IN THE SEASON, AND EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS NOTHING BUT HULLS LEFT, THEY SEARCHED FOR JUST ONE BERRY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LEFT. I SPRINKLED A FEW CURRENTS ON THE GROUND UNDER THE TREE AND IT DIDN'T TAKE THEM LONG TO CLEAN THEM UP. THE NEXT DAY THERE WERE ABOUT 15 WAXWINGS, THE NEXT DAY AT LEAST 30, AND ON THE THIRD DAY, AN ESTIMATED 75. THEY ATE FOUR BOXES OF CURRENTS ON THE THIRD DAY ALONE AND WOULD HAVE EATEN MORE. THIS BEGAN A MOST FASCINATING AND EXPENSIVE BIRD-FEEDING EPISODE.

THE DAY OF THE STORM, WAXWINGS CAME IN BY THE HUNDREDS. JIM MADE A WOODEN TRAY TO PUT ON THE GROUND UNDER THE DOGWOOD TREE, AND I PUT OUT APPLES, BANANAS, CURRENTS, AND RAISINS. WAXWINGS WOULD PILE UP ON THE TRAY THREE DEEP. THEIR REPUTATION FOR POLITENESS AND FOR "PASSING A CHERRY BACK AND FORTH" HAD DISAPPEARED. IT WAS EVERY MAN, OR SHOULD I SAY EVERY BIRD, FOR HIMSELF.

THE DAY WAS LIKE A THREE-RING CIRCUS. ON THE GROUND, FEEDING ON GRAIN, WERE FOX, HARRIS, AND TREE SPARROWS, TOWHEES, HUNDREDS OF JUNCOS, AND DOZENS OF CARDINALS. DASHING IN AND OUT FOR A PEANUT OR A PIECE OF SUET WERE THE CHICKADEES, TITMICE, BLUE JAYS, NUTHATCHES, AND WOODPECKERS. THE SUNFLOWER FEEDERS WERE FILLED TO OVERFLOWING WITH PURPLE FINCHES. THE WAXWINGS CAME IN TO THE TREE-TRAP SO FAST, AND PILED UP SO QUICK, THAT IT WAS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DROP THE DOOR SAFELY. THE BIRDS SEEMED TO BE STARVED. JIM AND I DROVE AROUND THE AREA, LOOKING FOR MULTIFLORA BERRIES ON ANY OF THE LARGE HEDGE-ROWS WE KNEW OF, BUT NOT ONE BERRY REMAINED. THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY WAXWINGS DURING THE WINTER MONTHS WHEN THEY USUALLY APPEAR, AND NONE WAS SEEN ON THE KANSAS CITY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. THE DRY SUMMER AND FALL MONTHS HAD PRODUCED FEW NATIVE BERRIES AND FRUITS, AND THE ONES THAT WERE PRODUCED WERE SHRIVELED AND DRIED.

IT WAS AMAZING HOW MUCH FOOD THEY CONSUMED. CURRENTS, RAISINS, BANANAS, AND APPLES WERE THEIR FIRST CHOICES, BUT THEY ALSO ATE COOKED PRUNES, CANNED FRUITS OF ANY KIND, COOKED CRANBERRIES, STALE DOUGHNUTS, CINNAMON ROLLS, PASTRIES, ETC. WE WERE ABLE TO BUY CURRENTS WHOLESALE IN 30# CARTONS, AND I BOUGHT OVER-RIPE FRUIT AT THE MARKET AND DAY-OLD BAKERY GOODS FROM THE REDUCED-PRICE SHELF. A SUET FEEDER WHICH I FILLED WITH A SQUARE OF A SPECIAL SUET-CAKE MIX WAS A FAVORITE. THE MIX HAS BEEN POPULAR WITH MANY OF THE BIRDS THIS WINTER — MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER I HAVE EVER MADE. I MELTED KIDNEY SUET, STIRRED ABOUT AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF PEANUT BUTTER INTO THE HOT SUET, ADDED BROKEN PEANUTS OR OTHER NUT MEATS, WHEAT GERM, AND THEN ADDED A FEW SPOONFULS OF BREWER'S YEAST. JUNCOS, FINCHES, CARDINALS, TITMICE, CHICKADEES, JAYS, WOODPECKERS, BROWN CREEPERS, NUTHATCHES, AND THE WAXWINGS ATE IT.

IN ALL, WE BANDED 255 WAXWINGS IN A LITTLE LESS THAN A MONTH, BANDING OUR LAST BIRD ON APRIL 23. WE COULD HAVE BANDED MORE, BUT WE HAD OTHER DUTIES THAT KEPT US BUSY. THEY FED FAIRLY HEAVILY UP THROUGH THE FIRST TEN DAYS OF MAY AND THEN BEGAN TAPERING OFF, ALTHOUGH SOME WOULD STILL VISIT THE FEEDER EACH DAY. BY THEN THE TREES WERE LEAVED OUT AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE THE NUMBERS OF THE FLOCKS. AS LATE AS MAY 25, WE STILL HEARD A FEW WAXWINGS IN THE TREES, ALTHOUGH I HAD STOPPED PUTTING OUT FOOD FOR THEM.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE BIRDS WERE QUITE AN ATTRACTION, AND ALWAYS PUT ON A GOOD SHOW. ON WEEKENDS OUR LITTLE HOUSE BECAME ALMOST LIKE GRAND CENTRAL STATION. I TOLD MY BROTHER ABOUT THE BIRDS. HE IS INTERESTED IN BIRDS, BUT IS DEFINITELY NOT A BIRDWATCHER. HE CAME OUT TO SEE THEM, THEN TOLD ME HE HAD MENTIONED IT TO A FRIEND OF HIS WHO IMMEDIATELY ASKED IF I HAD ANY "SCANDINAVIAN" WAXWINGS AMONG THE BIRDS. MY BROTHER SAID HE TOLD HIS FRIEND, "YOU MEAN BAVARIAN." I CHUCKLED AS I TOLD HIM, "AND YOU MEAN BOHEMIAN!" ANYWAY, THERE WERE NO SCANDINAVIAN, BAVARIAN, OR BOHEMIANS AMONG OUR FLOCK — ONLY THE CEDARS, AND MORE THAN ENOUGH OF THEM. — MARY LOUISE MYERS, CAMP TOWANYAK.

L. K. EDMUNDS SAW AN INTERESTING SHOREBIRD ON APRIL 23, 1964, NEAR MANHATTAN, RILEY CO., KANSAS. HE WRITES THAT "BY GENERAL APPEARANCE AND A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION THIS BIRD SEEMS TO BEST FIT THE DESCRIPTION OF PHILOMACHUS PUGNAX, THE RUFF, IN PRE-BREEDING PLUMAGE." THE "RUFF" WAS SEEN IN CONSTANT ASSOCIATION WITH BOTH LESSER AND GREATER YELLOWLEGS, AND SEEMED SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN A LESSER YELLOWLEG. NO VOCALIZATIONS WERE GIVEN. ITS BACK

WAS MOTTLED BROWN, AND ITS BREAST WAS DUSKY. WHITISH OUTER TAIL FEATHERS WERE EVIDENT IN FLIGHT, AND ITS LEGS SEEMED BLACK. THE BILL WAS SIMILAR TO THAT OF A LESSER YELLOWLEGS, AND APPEARED TO BE COMPLETELY BLACK. EDMUNDS OBSERVED THE BIRD FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES FROM A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 20-30 YARDS THROUGH 8 X 30 BINOCULARS. RECENTLY, THERE HAVE BEEN TWO SIGHT RECORDS OF RUFFS FROM MISSOURI, ONE FROM ST. LOUIS, AND ONE FROM SQUAW CREEK REFUGE NEAR MOUND CITY, AND SEVERAL RECORDS FROM OTHER PLACES IN THE NEW WORLD. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THIS OLD WORLD SANDPIPER OCCURS, AT LEAST OCCASIONALLY, IN KANSAS, AND K.O.S. MEMBERS SHOULD BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR IT.

**FALL MEETING:** SIXTY-THREE MEMBERS ATTENDED THE ANNUAL FALL FIELD TRIP, HELD THIS YEAR AT THE MARAIS DES CYGNES REFUGE, LINN COUNTY. A TOTAL OF 75 SPECIES OF BIRDS WAS LISTED: EARED GREBE, PIED-BILLED GREBE, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, GREAT BLUE HERON, MALLARD, GADWALL, PINTAIL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, AMERICAN WIDGEON, SHOVELER, WOOD DUCK, LESSER SCAUP, RUDDY DUCK, TURKEY VULTURE, COOPER HAWK, RED-TAILED HAWK, RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, MARSH HAWK, SPARROW HAWK, BOBWHITE, AMERICAN COOT, KILLDEER, COMMON SNIPE, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, LESSER YELLOWLEGS, PECTORAL SANDPIPER, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, ROCK DOVE, MOURNING DOVE, YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO, GREAT HORNED OWL, BARRED OWL, CHIMNEY SWIFT, BELTED KINGFISHER, YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER, RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, PILEATED WOODPECKER, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, HAIRY WOODPECKER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, EASTERN KINGBIRD, EASTERN PHOEBE, TREE SWALLOW, BANK SWALLOW, ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW, BARN SWALLOW, BLUE JAY, COMMON CROW, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, TUFTED TITMOUSE, WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH, CAROLINA WREN, MOCKINGBIRD, BROWN THRASHER, ROBIN, EASTERN BLUEBIRD, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, STARLING, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, NASHVILLE WARBLER, MYRTLE WARBLER, EASTERN MEADOWLARK, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, CARDINAL, INDIGO BUNTING, DICKCISSEL, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, SAVANNAH SPARROW, LINCOLN SPARROW.

DEAR R. LOVE OF WICHITA, KANSAS, SENT A LIST OF EARLY SPRING, 1964, MIGRATION DATES TO SUPPLEMENT THE DATA GIVEN IN THE SPRING NEWSLETTER:

PIED-BILLED GREBE	3-15	CHIMNEY SWIFT	4-17	NASHVILLE WARBLER	5-3
EARED GREBE	4-5	RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD	4-26	YELLOW WARBLER	4-19
GREEN HERON	4-19	EASTERN KINGBIRD	4-26	MYRTLE WARBLER	4-19
SWAINSON HAWK	4-19	SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER	4-19	OVENBIRD	4-23
KILLDEER	3-15	LEAST FLYCATCHER	4-23	YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD	4-19
WILSON SNIPE	4-19	TREE SWALLOW	4-19	BALTIMORE ORIOLE	4-23
UPLAND PLOVER	4-19	BARN SWALLOW	4-23	ORCHARD ORIOLE	4-24
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	5-3	CLIFF SWALLOW	5-9	WESTERN Tanager	4-10
GREATER YELLOWLEGS	3-22	PURPLE MARTIN	3-29	EVENING GROSBEAK	1-26
LESSER YELLOWLEGS	3-22	HOUSE WREN	4-19	DICKCISSEL	5-5
BAIRD SANDPIPER	3-22	CATBIRD	5-10	LARK BUNTING	4-10
LEAST SANDPIPER	5-9	BROWN THRASHER	4-18	SAVANNAH SPARROW	3-15
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER	5-3	HERMIT THRUSH	4-19	GRASSHOPPER SPARROW	4-19
MARBLED GODWIT	4-19	SWAINSON THRUSH	5-10	VESPER SPARROW	3-29
WILSON PHALAROPE	4-26	BLUEBIRD	3-8	LARK SPARROW	4-5
BLACK TERN	5-9	RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	4-12	CHIPPING SPARROW	4-19
FRANKLIN GULL	4-19	SPRAGUE PIPIT	5-10	CLAY-COLORED SPARROW	4-26
RING-BILLED GULL	4-19	BELL VIREO	5-3	WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	5-3
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	5-3	ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER	4-19	WHITE-THROATED SPARROW	1-18
				LINCOLN SPARROW	3-15

DAVID EASTERLA, OF KANSAS CITY, WRITES THAT ON THE NIGHT OF SEPT. 10-11, OVER 700 BIRDS WERE KILLED BY FLYING INTO THREE TV TOWERS. AMONG THEM HE FOUND: 2 PHILADELPHIA VIREOS, 4 SOLITARY VIREOS, 2 CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS, 1 BAY-BREADED WARBLER, 1 PALM WARBLER, 2 CONNECTICUT WARBLERS, 1 BOBOLINK, AND 1 SCARLET Tanager. ON THE SAME NIGHT, BIRDS STRUCK TOWERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. NEARLY 100 WERE FOUND AT GOODLAND, AND 50 AT LAWRENCE, WHILE IT IS REGRETABLE THAT SO MANY BIRDS ARE NOW KILLED IN THIS MANNER, TOWER-KILLS HAVE BECOME AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE FALL MIGRATION. ALL THE BIRDS KILLED AT TV TOWERS SHOULD BE CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED, COUNTED, WEIGHED, AND SEXED, AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO THIS WITHOUT THE PROPER FACILITIES. K.O.S. MEMBERS THAT FIND LARGE NUMBERS OF BIRDS KILLED AT TOWERS ARE URGED TO SEND THE BIRDS TO ONE OF THE MUSEUMS IN KANSAS IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO PROCESS THEM THEMSELVES. THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, FOR ONE, WILL GLADLY REIMBURSE ANYONE FOR POSTAGE AND DRY ICE IF THEY SEND TOWER-KILLS TO THEM. DAVE EASTERLA IS TO BE COMMENDED FOR HIS FINE WORK AROUND THE KANSAS CITY TOWERS THIS FALL. HE HAS PREPARED 100 OF THE BIRDS KILLED AS SCIENTIFIC SPECIMENS THAT WILL BE OF LASTING VALUE TO STUDENTS OF THE BIRD-LIFE OF KANSAS.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:** MEMBERS ARE URGED TO RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE K.O.S. AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ANNUAL DUES ARE \$2.00 (\$1.00 FOR STUDENTS). WE ALSO URGE ALL MEMBERS TO CONSIDER SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP (\$5.00 PER YEAR), AND TO SUGGEST MEMBERSHIP IN K.O.S. TO ALL PEOPLE INTERESTED IN BIRDS, ANIMALS IN GENERAL, GARDENING, OR CONSERVATION. MEMBERS MIGHT GIVE INTERESTED PEOPLE "GIFT MEMBERSHIPS" FOR CHRISTMAS. DUES SHOULD BE MAILED TO L. B. CARSON, TREASURER KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 1306 LINCOLN, TOPEKA, KANSAS 66604.

AT THE SPRING MEETING, K.O.S. MEMBERS CONSIDERED AND RATIFIED SEVERAL CHANGES IN THE K.O.S. CONSTITUTION. REVISED COPIES MAY BE OBTAINED BY WRITING: CARL HOLMES, 1728 N SHERIDAN, WICHITA 12, KANSAS.

WE SOLICIT ARTICLES AND FALL REPORTS FOR THE NEXT NUMBER OF THE NEWSLETTER. — J. D. RISING, ASS'T ED.