

Fort Hays Kansas State College
Hays, Kansas 67601

Volume 3, No. 1
January 1976

American Woodcock in Lyon County

Jean Schulenberg

To supplement the nesting record of American Woodcock for Woodson County in July 1975, there is considerable evidence of woodcock activity on the Ross Natural History Reservation in Lyon County during the summer of 1975. Randy Clark and Bob Gress, biologists studying rabbit movements, succeeded in capturing two woodcock in rabbit traps.

The first bird, on June 27 from a trap set along a moist roadside, was injured and subsequently died. It was placed in the collection at Emporia State but has not yet been prepared or examined. The second was captured and released unharmed from a trap set below a pond on July 24. The traps were not baited.

American Woodcock were observed several times during the rabbit study but all seemed to be adult birds. It is not known whether woodcock have been present in mid-summer in previous years or whether the above normal rainfall in June contributed to their presence.

Morton County Bird Count

To count birds under the high lonesome blue sky of the Cimarron grasslands in southwestern Kansas after the hectic rush of Christmas may not be everyone's idea of fun, but to Sebastian Patti, Jananne McNitt, Jo Garrett, Nan Johnson and Jean and Margaret Schulenberg it sure was. Beside the call of coyotes against a sunset spectacular or dawn slipping up on the high plains, there is the lure of determining which species are wintering this year in Morton County and always the distinct possibility of another "new for Kansas."

The count day of Dec. 27 was favored with clear, brisk weather -- you might even say cold. Thirty-nine species were found, with Short-eared Owl and Merlin appearing during the count period. A Curve-billed Thrasher was seen in a farm yard, a Brown Towhee flushed from some shin oak at Point of Rocks and Redpolls along the Cimarron were among the best finds. An almost absence of longspurs and a scarcity of jackrabbits and raptors were noted.

The group headed down to Black Mesa in Oklahoma the following day and added a note to Oklahoma ornithology by finding and photographing a female Pyrrhuloxia. Jean Schulenberg.

Two Ross' Geese were reported from Coffey Co. by Game Management Agent, David Gentry. One was shot November 10 and one was seen on the 30th. JS.

KOS Winter Board Meeting

Sondra Williamson, Secretary

The annual winter meeting of the KOS Board was held Sunday, Dec. 7 at Camp Towanyak, Shawnee, Kansas. A luncheon was prepared and served to Board members, spouses and friends by Mary Louise and Jim Myers and Jananne and Ted McNitt. Others attending were Amelia Betts, Jan and Charles Ely, Ruth Fauhl, Steve Fretwell, Katharine Kelley, Gene and Eulalia Lewis, Dr. and Mrs. Dwight Platt, Sebastian Patti, Stan Roth, Jean Schulenberg, Max Thompson and Kay Wahl.

President Dwight Platt called the meeting to order. Minutes were approved as previously circulated. Amelia Betts, Membership Secretary, reported 189 total members. Nineteen of these are life members, 45 sustaining, 120 regular and 4 student. A check mark will be made on the mailing labels of the next Newsletter of those whose dues are in arrears. A note indicating this new policy will be included in the Newsletter. Membership Chairman Katharine Kelley reported that due to the efforts of the committee members, 90 new members joined KOS last year with an additional 12 joining this year.

Treasurer Gene Lewis reported that the KOS checking account amount is \$1655.81 as of Dec. 1, 1975; passbook savings was \$1223.23 on Nov. 11, 1975 and savings certificates were worth \$1084.63 on Sept. 9, 1975, totalling \$3973.57. Interest accrued since that time makes the total over \$4,000. Some bills have not yet been turned in. A motion was made and passed to pay Stan Roth \$25 to give to the Lawrence High School Data Processing Center for preparing labels for Bulletins and Newsletters.

Editor Charles Ely reported that the December Bulletin is ready for the printer. There is sufficient material on hand for the March Bulletin but none for June. The September Bulletin will be devoted entirely to the Dingus Natural Area. Max Thompson announced that KOS material can no longer be mailed under the Southwestern College bulk permit. KOS will have to pay \$35 for a bulk permit and \$40 per year to use it. A motion was made and carried to purchase the necessary permit. The material will still be mailed from Winfield.

Stan Roth made the Conservation Committee report. The Corps of Engineers sends him notices concerning their meetings and their content. The Soil Conservation Service sends material regarding environmental impact projects. Stan will request information from the Environmental Awareness Center at KSU. A note will be included in the Newsletter reminding members of the existence of the Conservation Committee and requesting input.

Ruth Fauhl reported that KOS Bulletin reprints are now available. She is awaiting a price quote on KOS patches and decals. A motion was made and passed to sell Bulletins at \$2 a volume to members and \$3 to non-members. Two new exchanges are with the Bermuda Audubon Society and Rebecca Matthews, Springfield, Mo.

Gene Lewis gave the Dingus Natural Area Committee report. Paid to Nature Conservancy was a \$1 rental fee and \$14.50 for small perimeter

signs. The Hussey Insurance Agency was paid \$90 for a three-year liability coverage. Jay's Signs was paid \$99.36 for a 4' X 8' sign and \$37.26 for a 3' X 4' sign. A sub-committee consisting of Steve Fretwell, Lloyd Hulbert and Steve Fitch prepared a management plan and a list of rules and regulations for the Dingus Natural Area. Copies were given to Board members. A motion to accept the proposed plan and regulations was approved.

The Board appointed a Management Committee to carry out the management plan and the rules and regulations. The following were asked to be members: Bob Weese, Dr. McHugh, Dr. Lloyd Hulbert, Ruth Fauhl and Gene Lewis. If anyone is unable to accept the appointment, Pres. Platt will appoint a substitute. A motion was made and carried to make Bob Weese an honorary KOS member.

Jean Schulenberg, KOS delegate to the Kansas Advisory Council of Environmental Education, reported on the KACEE meeting in Topeka on November 12. The meeting opened with a discussion of House Concurrent Resolution No. 2020. This Resolution directs the State Board of Education to encourage, support and promote environmental education in Kansas schools. In September, KACEE supported a very successful Statewide Environmental Workshop at Rock Springs Ranch.

The Spring KOS meeting will be May 1 and 2 at Winfield. Max Thompson is making preparations for that meeting. An announcement of the meeting and call for papers will appear in the February Newsletter. Amelia Betts, Chairperson for the Guidelines Committee for the KOS Spring Meeting presented a guidelines proposal and copies were given to Board members. It will be discussed at the Spring Meeting.

A motion was made and carried to appoint those who have been awarded Merit Awards to a Merit Awards Committee. Their duty will be to decide whether or not to make a merit award and presentation and, if affirmative, who will be the recipient.

Copies of a report from the Field Trip Committee, chaired by Ed Martinez, were given to Board members. It will be discussed at the spring meeting. All business matters concluded, the meeting was adjourned by Dwight Platt.

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1975 Fall Report from Camp Towanyak

Mary Louise Myers

August

Following a drought pattern set by the month of July, August continued along the same lines. Hot and dry, the parched ground showed deep cracks, leaves were turning brown, drying up and even falling. The first rainfall in six weeks came on the 13th. On the 1st, four Purple Martins circled the martin house, came in for a landing, went in and out of all compartments, then sat resting on the porches for half an hour. It was as if they were bidding their summer home a fond adieu for another year. We saw them once more on the 16th.

During the hot days of August a male Cardinal brought two fully fledged young cowbirds to the feeder, as solicitous of their well-being as if they were truly his own. For the first time ever we had goldfinches coming to the thistle seed, even bringing along two fledglings. A small wave of migrants on the 26th brought a Louisiana Waterthrush and Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos. On the 27th, Mick Mc Hugh reported a Canada Warbler behind his home and Cleone McGuire had 3 Wilson's Warblers at Antioch Park. Two Cattle Egrets were spotted near Garnett, Kansas on the 31st by Bob Means.

September

On the 5th a chorus of coyotes wakened us in the wee hours. Large flocks of robins spread out over the meadows. Heavy rains came on the 10th and 11th, bringing an early Olive-sided Flycatcher, plus several Catbirds and 2 Yellow-throats on the 13th. Ted McNitt reported 2 Ospreys on this same day at Perry Lake Reservoir, and another was seen on I-70, east of Emporia, by Eliz. Cole. Red-headed Woodpeckers were most abundant at Towanyak -- at least 30 to 40 could be seen most any time carrying acorns from the south woods across the meadow to the north woods. Large flocks of robins and grackles on the 17th. A cold front moving in, accompanied by rain, brought the first noticeable movement of birds on the 19th and 20th -- several Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 2 Swainson's Thrushes, several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, 12 bluebirds feeding on white dogwood berries, a Broad-winged Hawk, 2 Cooper's Hawks, 1 Kestrel, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk. On the 21st 2 more migrating Cooper's Hawks. It was clear and cold on the 22nd and we had our first frost. Eight bluebirds circled above but did not come to the feeder. Dave Hedges brought a Swainson's Thrush that had collided fatally with his picture window. On the 24th, 2 Marsh Hawks, high in the sky were completely encircled by a large flock of blackbirds. As the hawks soared higher and higher, the blackbirds dropped back and the hawks moved on.

The morning of Sept. 25th brought the first wave of warblers: a dozen or more little birds "twittering" and flitting about, but they moved on so quickly we were able to identify only 2 Black-throated Green, 1 Yellow-rumped, 1 Blackpoll plus an unidentified vireo and 1 Rose-breasted Grosbeak. On this same evening, it had grown nearly dark by 7 p.m. There was a soft glow in the western sky from the dying rays of a sun already slipped below the horizon. Not a leaf stirred. A quiet hush was over all, and the feel of autumn was definitely in the air. The next day (26th) a little group of birders (McNitt, Garrett, Halford, Yeskie, Beck) had a good wave at the SMESL. They saw several Black-throated Green Warblers, 20 Nashvilles, a Blackburnian, Tennessee; White-eyed, Red-eyed and Solitary Vireos, 4 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a Swainson's Thrush and an Olive-sided Flycatcher. We had half a dozen Yellow-rumped Warblers at Towanyak and Artie Kester reported 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches. Another small wave of unidentified warblers at Towanyak on the 28th. Heavy rains came on the last day of the month.

October

The 1st brought a wave of 4 Black-throated Green, several Yellow-

rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets around noon. There was another wave of kinglets about 5 p.m. and a Barred Owl at the front gate at 7 p.m. The morning of the 2nd we saw a flock of 29 Blue and 15 Snow Geese. Our first Brown Creeper was Oct. 3rd. On the 5th we heard several Cedar Waxwings and saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on the 6th. Jananne McNitt reported a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher on the 7th at I-35 and Switzer. Sebastian Patti had a ROCK WREN on the same day on the KU campus! On the 14th a Cooper's Hawk dipped over our house and down through the woods, scattering a large flock of grackles. Rain and a high-pressure system moving in from the north resulted in tower kills in Kansas City and Lawrence. On Oct. 15 we had the first bluebirds at the feeders, plus a male Rufous-sided Towhee (spotted), one White-crowned Sparrow, several White-throats, 6 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 3 Ruby-crowned Kinglets. A Red-tailed Hawk sat briefly in our walnut tree while all local chipmunks "hit the dirt." Jo Garrett and I took a turn around Quivira Lake and saw at least 25 Yellow-rumped Warblers, a dozen Ruby-crowned Kinglets, an OSPREY, 7 Ruddy Ducks, 5 Pied-billed Grebes, a few Blue-winged Teal and many Coots. The Osprey stayed about a week. There were lots of White-throats on the 18th and a little wave of warblers in late afternoon included a Prairie Warbler. We had another sapsucker on the 19th and another towhee (NOT spotted). An unidentified Empidonax flycatcher on the 20th, plus half a dozen more Yellow-rumped Warblers.

On the night of Oct. 22, we heard geese around 11:30 p.m. We stepped outside and watched them fly, silhouetted against a beautiful full moon. A real bonus! Hundreds of robins and grackles on the 23rd. Saw our first Golden-crowned Kinglets on the 26th, accompanied by some Ruby-crowns. A beautiful male Oregon Junco was netted, banded, photographed and released. On the 27th literally thousands of grackles filled the wooded areas around our house. A heavy frost on the 29th brought a flock of 20 Blue and 4 Snow Geese flying low over the camp. We heard one lone Solitary Vireo singing his "whisper" song as he said farewell to the month of October. Leaves were falling, ^{the} rain and winter was just around the corner. I knew it, the birds knew it, and certainly the chipmunks knew it -- and had known it for some time if their capacity for carrying seeds from the feeders was any indication. Personally, I do not dread November and the months that follow. In fact, I love the silhouettes of the trees in winter-time and enjoy looking through them to see the contours of the hills which are hidden from view under the green canopy of summer. Each season brings its own beauty -- we have only to be aware of it.

November

On the 1st, Nan Johnson, Jo Garrett and Bob Fisher had a good list at Perry Lake: a Western Grebe, 160 White Pelicans, 45 cormorants, 15 Great Blue Herons, 1 immature Little Blue Heron, 1 Dunlin, 4 avocets, 1 kingfisher and 40 Bonaparte's Gulls. The 2nd was a good banding day at Towanyak. Lots of juncos had arrived along with some White-throats, kinglets, Brown Creepers and more Yellow-rumped Warblers. The one Fox Sparrow netted was the only one we saw or heard. Still lots of Red-headed Woodpeckers and many grackles. An Accipiter was bugging them as he had been for the past several days. Sebastian Patti saw 3 Pine Siskins at the top of the hill just SE of camp. Several days of rain followed and we did not open the nets again until

Nov. 7th. Netting was not good that day and we were surprised to net two Winter Wrens among the dozen or so other birds. While I was opening the nets at 7:30 a.m. that morning I heard and saw several Evening Grosbeaks. Rachel Haren had reported one at Quivira on Oct. 5th. Sebastian reported 25-30 on the KU campus on 11-5. Cleone McGuire saw one at Antioch Park on 11-14 and on the 26th Mrs. Griffith had 6 at her feeder in Prairie Village.

On the 7th, Jo Garrett spotted 4 pelicans in the air over Towanyak and Mick McHugh pointed out a flock of 200+ Mallards. On 11-9 Jananne McNitt and the Burroughs-Audubon group saw a mature Bald Eagle at Perry Lake. Nancy and Bob Highgate saw 3 Common Loons and a Bonaparte's Gull at Shawnee-Mission Lake on the same day and here at Towanyak Sebastian Patti had 3 Purple Finches (1st date) and several Evening Grosbeaks as he was opening the nets for banding operations that morning. On Nov. 10, Mick McHugh had a Red-breasted Nuthatch at his feeder (by the 24th he had THREE). On the 15th Jananne McNitt had 2, neither of them banded. You may recall that we banded 4 at her house last winter. Sandra Yeskie had 1 on Nov. 30. On the 10th we had 15 Cedar Waxwings in the sycamore, one White-crowned Sparrow feeding on the ground and 1 goldfinch at the thistle-seed. This was the first goldfinch since the summer-feeding ones had left in August. Wind and cold weather moved in on the 11th. It brought a late and lingering Brown Thrasher on the 12th. We have seen the deer several times recently. Dan Kroker saw the buck on the road just south of our entrance and Jim surprised four does several times on the trails.

Two Mockingbirds took up residence around the middle of November and thereby began the battle for "king-of-the-hill" position. On 11-15, Eliz. Cole and party saw a Western Grebe and 14 Horned Grebes at Wyandotte Lake. On 11-16, at Perry Lake, McHugh and Fisher had 1 Loon, 15 Common Mergansers, 20 Hooded Mergansers and 2 LeConte's Sparrows. In unfamiliar territory, for me, at Jacoma on 11-19, I saw what certainly appeared to be a White-winged Junco near a little pond that had been reported (by Nan Johnson) to be well supplied with a variety of sparrows a few days earlier. We got our first Pine Siskin at a feeder on 11-23 and also heard another sapsucker. The first Purple Finch at the feeder on 11-25 in a one-day appearance. 15-20 goldfinches were regulars by now -- a far cry from the 423 we banded last winter and spring. On the 26th came that fantastic, beautiful, record-breaking November snowstorm! A banded Harris Sparrow turned up. Sandra Yeskie had 3 cowbirds. As November gives way to December, reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches continue to come in. All the above nuthatches are still being accounted for. Dr. Steve Fretwell says Manhattan is full of them. Thirteen-year old Randy Wenger, in Mission, is feeding one by hand!

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Notes from Southeastern Kansas

Mrs. W. H. Qualls

November

7) on a field trip saw 5 Marsh and 5 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Red-bellied and 1 Red-headed Woodpeckers, small flock of Slate-colored Juncos, small flock of Harris Sparrows, several White-crowned Spar-

rows, 6 Blue Jays, 2 Mockingbirds;

8) 1 shrike and large flock of migrating Blue and Canada Geese;

9) 2 White-throated Sparrows at feeder, 1 Pileated Woodpecker in yard; 12) 1st Brown Creeper; 14) Harris Sparrow, shrike;

15) shrike near Galena; 21) 1 Eastern Bluebird, 1 White-thro.

Sparrow, 1 American Goldfinch, 1 Oregon Junco;

24) 1 Pileated Woodpecker in yard (never at feeder or suet);

25) during snow -- pair Oregon Juncos, 1 Carolina Wren, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 1 White-throated Sparrow, 4 Blue Jays, 2 Am. Goldfinches, flock Slate-colored Juncos, 1 Mockingbird, 1 Red-bellied and 1 Downy Woodpeckers, 1 flock House Sparrows;

29) 1 shrike, south of Lowell;

30) single Hairy, Downy and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

December

2) pair Oregon Juncos; 4) male Oregon Junco, 2 White-br. Nuthatch;

We always have 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 3 Tufted Titmice, 3 Cardinals and House Sparrows.

6) immature Red-headed Woodpecker; 7) Robin; 11) White-thro.

Sparrow; 14) 1 immature White-cro. Sparrow, 1 Mockingbird;

15) 1 Brown Creeper; 16) 1 Yellow-shafted Flicker, 4 Cardinals.

Mr. Qualls cracks Black Walnuts in winter. We clean, screen and sack them. The hulls and all small nut meats that go through the screen are put out for the birds. We have not had the usual number of birds at the feeders. We usually have 40-50 Cardinals (especially if we have snow) but only 4 this year. Neighbors feeding sunflower seeds also have a shortage of birds -- 2 pairs of Cardinals and a Purple Finch. Most winters Purple Finches are numerous at sunflower feeders. Woodpeckers turn down suet for nut meats. Mild weather this winter may be a factor in low numbers of birds coming to feeders.

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Greetings from Down Under

Walter Boles

(The following letter to Gene Lewis just came to light -- although the letter is old the news may interest KOS members. Ed.)

This is a brief history of the last eight months as well as the Australian section of KOS International Report. After arriving here in June (1974) I was quickly put to work with very little explanation of procedures of Australian education. I quickly found out that the reason was because there were none. The education system here is chaotic and quite behind that of the states. Teaching was unenjoyable and a constant wear and tear on nerves, so I gave it up. After several months of unemployment and rejected job applications, I was lucky enough to be offered a job as Technical Officer (Scientific), Department of Ornithology, Australian Museum. This will involve working with the collection and in the field. It should be an enjoyable occupation.

The people are generally nice here and most aspects of Australian life are quite satisfactory although often relatively primitive when

compared to the States. I have met some K-State graduates and a couple I knew in college at E. State. I am currently living with two science teachers, one American and one Australian. I get many chances to get out into the field and with them and also with the NSW Field Ornithologists Club, of which I am a member. Birdlife is very interesting and plentiful besides. I have over 225 new species and about 12 repeats. Some of the highpoints and best birds are: a trip to the northernmost point of Cape York during a school holiday which allowed me to do some rainforest birding, a trip 20 miles out of Sydney harbor to see seabirds (penguins, albatross, gannets, etc.), emus, lots of species of parrots, Satin Bowerbirds, painted snipe, lyrebirds, Black Swans, two types of spoonbills, White-breasted Sea Eagles, Brolga Cranes, bustards, frogmouths, kookaburras and other kingfishers, rainbowbirds, rollers, honeyeaters and on and on. As I will be here for several years, if KOS decides to have another club trip like the African one, they have a guide available (i.e., me). Birdwatchers here (called bird-o's) act just like those in Kansas. It always amazes me what an universal experience birdwatching is. They've been very helpful to me.

The other wildlife is also very interesting. Yesterday I caught an echinida or spiny anteater, not without a little difficulty. I have also caught or seen several types of kangaroos, dingos, giant sea turtles, tiger snakes, pythons, monitor lizards, blue tongue lizards and more. It has been a very wonderful time for a biologist like myself.

I volunteered or was volunteered by someone else to give a talk to the junior section of the Royal Zoological Society and to the NSW F. Ornithologists on American Birds and Mammals. Therefore, if possible, I would like to get slide duplicates from members of KOS for this presentation. I suspect that the best plan would be to have slides sent to my mother who will send them to me and be able to pay the photographer with money I send there. I will send more information on types I would like. If you could insert in the Bulletin or Newsletter I would appreciate it.

Walter E.Boles, 28 Liverpool St., Cabramatta, NSW, Australia 2166.

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Hays notes

Charles Ely

Marvin Rolfs has four unusual species at his feeder. A Spotted Towhee arrived on 3 November followed by a Brown Thrasher on the 14th, a Bewick's Wren on the 15th and best of all a Curve-billed Thrasher on 8 December. The Bewick's Wren has been sporadic but the others (now 2 towhees) are regular. Warren Macy has had two Ruby-crowned Kinglets since mid-December and the Harold Wisners count House Finches among their regulars.

Among the other interesting fall and winter sightings are: Long-eared Owl, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, Myrtle Warbler, Redpoll, Red Crossbill and White-winged Junco.