

SUCCESSFUL NESTING OF THE HOUSE WREN
IN CLEVELAND COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

BY MARY AVOLYN JOHNS

IN CENTRAL Oklahoma the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) breeds southward irregularly as far as Cleveland County. In Cleveland and Oklahoma counties its nesting is often unsuccessful. The causes of this failure are obscure. Three "failures" mentioned by Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 406) may have resulted from predation on one or both parent birds, though suspicion lingers that midsummer heat may have led to desertion of eggs. In any event, a successful nesting at Norman, Cleveland County, merits reporting in detail.

In the spring of 1969 the House Wrens appeared in my yard in Norman (in a residential section near the southwest edge of the city) on 21 April. They investigated the four wren-houses there for a day or so, finally showing preference for a gourd hanging in a tree that a Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) continued



SINGING MALE HOUSE WREN (RIGHT) AND MATE

Photographed 17 May 1969 by Gordon H. Folzenlogen at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma. Photo supplied by Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

to sing from. The Catbirds and House Wrens scolded and chased each other for several days. The Catbirds won out, and the wrens settled for a tiny nest-box hanging from a branch in a fairly well shaded place not far from the west end of the porch at the rear of my house. During this several-day period I continued to hear and see Carolina Wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) and Bewick's Wrens (*Thryomanes bewickii*) in the yard, but neither of these species appeared to be involved in any way in territorial altercations.

The House Wrens were busy for several days nest-building. Both the male and the female carried material. The male continued to sing a great deal. By 15 May the female was spending much time in the nestbox. I do not know when the eggs were laid or how many there were. There were at least five, for at least five young hatched.

On 8 June I observed two wrens carrying food to the nestbox. The young must have been very small from 9 to 11 June, for during this period I could not hear a sound in the nestbox. On 11 June I had to leave the city. When I returned on 19 June I could hear the young birds distinctly. Indeed, on that date I saw their widely opened mouths crowding the entrance to the nestbox.

On the evening of 19 June I noticed loud scolding from one of the parent wrens. Investigating, I found a fair-sized bullsnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*) on a branch not far from the nestbox. I pulled the snake from the branch, carried it about 200 yards to the edge of our property, and threw it into some tall grass.

On the evening of 21 June loud scolding from at least one parent again attracted my attention. This time the bullsnake was a large one and its head was within a foot of the nestbox. Fearful that the young wrens had already been eaten, I grabbed the snake resolutely, pulled it away, and was bitten for my recklessness. I carried the struggling reptile to a pond not far from our house, and threw it in. It swam well. I hoped my throwing it into the water would frighten it off.

From 19 to 21 June I did not see or hear a male wren near the nestbox. All the food-carrying was done by one parent during this period—almost certainly the mother bird, since I heard no singing. On 21 June I heard a male bird singing several hundred yards away. On 22 June a male sang repeatedly near the nestbox but did not carry food to the brood.

On 27 June I witnessed the departure of most of the brood from the nest box. When I first went to the porch at 06:30 that morning the one parent bird that I saw was busy carrying food to the nestbox and also to a young wren well above the ground in a nandina bush not far away. Another young wren suddenly popped out of the nestbox, clung uncertainly to the perch just outside the entrance, was struck by a third chick that popped out, and both fluttered into the ivy covering the ground below. Struggling through the leafage, the

reached the nandina bush and climbed upward until they were two or three feet above the ground. The fourth chick did not appear until mid-day. It emerged as if shoved out, fell like a rock from the entrance, and was followed immediately by the fifth (and last) chick, which fluttered down. I did not try to help the fourth chick in any way. I did not see it climb into the nandina bush.

On the day of the "fledging" (hardly the right word, for not one of the chicks could fly well), I noticed that the two parent birds roundly scolded a Carolina Wren that happened by, but that they paid no attention to a Bewick's Wren that continued to sing not far away.

To my surprise I continued to see the young House Wrens for several days. I rarely saw the whole brood at one time, but on the morning of 1 July I watched the entire family for some time—all seven birds—on the back porch, some of them investigating potted plants, others hopping about the furniture or teetering on the edge of the rain-gutter near the roof.

Certain points should be made in conclusion: 1. When I opened the nestbox on 28 June I found no unhatched eggs or dead young. 2. I am not sure how many male House Wrens I saw or heard. I never saw or heard more than one bird singing at a time, and I believe there was only one male in our yard most of the time. 3. I feel sure that the larger of the bullsnakes did not capture the male wren, for there was no lump in the snake's body. 4. The fact that the birdbox used by the wrens was in a more or less shady place may have contributed to reproductive success. 5. Almost certainly the nesting would not have been successful had I not removed the bullsnakes.

1201 WALNUT ROAD, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069, 6 DECEMBER 1969.

THE BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER IN THE SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

BY GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON

THE BLACK-THROATED Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) is so un-
common in Oklahoma today that bird students of the state cannot help wondering whether S. W. Woodhouse, writing well over a century ago, might have erred badly in calling "*Sylvicola canadensis*" (the scientific name in use for the "Black-throated Blue Wood Warbler" at that time) "abundant in Texas and the Indian Territory" (Woodhouse, in Sitgreaves, 1853, Report of an expedition down the Zuni and Colorado rivers, p. 71). Might Woodhouse have misidentified the bird? Probably not. Might his records have been mixed? Possibly.

John S. Tomer, who has been making a careful study of Woodhouse's itinerary and work in Indian Territory, informs me (letter of 13 December 1970) that Woodhouse listed "*Sylvicola canadensis*" among the birds observed by his party in 1849 (see Sitgreaves and Woodruff, 1858, Reports of Captains Sitgreaves and Woodruff of the survey of the Creek Indian boundary line, Exec. Documents

House of Representatives, 35th Congress, 1857-58, 12: 9); that Woodhouse did not list "*Sylvicola canadensis*" among the twenty-eight bird species collected by his party in 1849 (*op. cit.*, p. 13); that Woodhouse did not mention the "Black-throated Blue Wood Warbler" in the report of his activities in 1850 (*op. cit.*, pp. 25-27); and that no specimen of Black-throated Blue Warbler is listed in the U. S. National Museum catalogue along with other Woodhouse specimens that were deposited there in 1859. In other words, there is very little evidence from specimens preserved or from what Woodhouse himself reported, that he had seen much of the Black-throated Blue Warbler in Indian Territory, this despite his rather sweeping statement. Margaret M. Nice, accepting the words of Woodhouse at face value, stated that "only one observer"—T. R. Beard, who saw the bird in Creek County—had noted *Dendroica caerulescens* in Oklahoma since Woodhouse's day (Nice, 1931, Birds of Oklahoma, p. 158).

In Kansas the Black-throated Blue Warbler is a "rare transient, in woodland. Present (chiefly west) in May, September, October" (Johnston, 1965, A directory to the birds of Kansas, p. 47). Four Kansas specimens (one from Lane County, western Kansas, a male, 16 October; three from Shawnee County, eastern Kansas, two males on 7 October, female on 23 October) are in the collection of the Museum of Natural History at the University of Kansas (card of 18 December 1970 from R. F. Johnston). Charles A. Ely informs me (letters of 13 November 1969 and of 19 November 1970) of two males mist-netted by him on 8 October 1966 and on 8 November 1970 among small box elders along Big Creek near the Fort Hays Kansas State College campus at Hays, Ellis County, central Kansas; he tells me also (letter of 16 November 1969) of two sightings for September, two for October, one for April, and one for May (all for eastern Kansas) reported in 1964, 1965, 1966, and 1970 issues of the Kansas Ornithological Society's "Newsletter."

Colorado records listed by Bailey and Niedrach (1965, Birds of Colorado, 2: 683) are chiefly for the eastern, non-mountainous part of the state; they indicate occurrence from 2 September to 27 November (five records for September, five for October, three for November) and from 9 to 27 May (exceptionally on 13 and 14 June). Two records not mentioned by Bailey and Niedrach are these: 17 October 1953, one seen at Loveland (1954, Audubon Field Notes, 8: 28); 30 September 1963, female seen at Golden (1964, Audubon Field Notes, 18: 51).

For Arkansas there are—according to Douglas A. James (letter of 1 November 1969)—seven valid records, one for September, one for October, one for April, and four for May. All of these excepting that for April (1904) are based on sightings since 1953. The Black-throated Blue Warbler has never been collected in Arkansas.

In Texas the species is a "rare migrant" (Wolfe, 1956, Check-list of the

birds of Texas, p. 65). Most records (including several published recently in Audubon Field Notes) indicate occurrence from 2 September to 26 October and from 2 March to 20 May "in about the eastern half" of the state—i.e., westward to Tarrant, McLennan, Kerr, and Bexar counties (quoted phrase from E. B. Kincaid Jr. communication of 26 February 1970). The only record that I know of for the vast area west of the just-named counties is this: 3 to 9 November 1959, one seen repeatedly and photographed (motion pictures) at El Paso, El Paso County (1960, Audubon Field Notes, 14: 63).

In New Mexico *Dendroica caerulescens* is a "very local and irregular autumn migrant, recorded almost statewide" (Hubbard, 1970, Check-list of the birds of New Mexico, p. 75). Of the several records mentioned by Ligon (1961, New Mexico birds and where to find them, p. 249), only one is for spring (7 May), the rest being for fall and winter (20 September to 21 February). A male bird was banded at Los Alamos on 21 September 1959 (1960, Audubon Field Notes, 14: 63). Dale A. Zimmerman informs me (letter of 5 December 1969) of three recent records—one based on a specimen, one on a color photograph, and one on a sighting—all for October.

For Arizona four records are listed by Monson and Phillips (1964, A check-list of the birds of Arizona, p. 55): 30 April 1955, male found dead in Ajo Mountains; 5 May 1955, one photographed (color) in Chiricahua Mountains; 17 October 1956, one taken (others "believed seen") in same mountains; 31 October 1959, one seen "east of Tucson."

Recent volumes of Audubon Field Notes mention 15 records for Texas (see above), nine for California, five for Colorado (see above), five for New Mexico (see above), at least two for South Dakota, and one each for Saskatchewan, North Dakota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Nevada.

There are very few records for Mexico. Miller, Friedmann, Griscom, and Moore (1957, Distributional check-list of the birds of Mexico, Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 33, p. 248) state that the species winters "casually" on the Yucatan Peninsula (Cozumel Island and Quintana Roo) and in Guatemala and Colombia.

Until very recently, the only specimen of Black-throated Blue Warbler from Oklahoma was a female (mummy, old UOMZ No. 17704) that I collected along the Cimarron River near Kenton, Cimarron County, on 1 October 1932 (Sutton, 1934, Notes on the birds of the western panhandle of Oklahoma, Ann. Carnegie Mus., 24: 40; 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 501). Since 1932, *D. caerulescens* has been recorded in Oklahoma on 16 occasions. On 25 May 1947, O. W. Letson saw one in Mayes County 5 miles south of Locust Grove. In early May 1949, J. G. Newell saw one in Woodward Park, Tulsa. On 20 October 1953 the late A. Felkel saw one in Texas County in or near Guymon (1954, Audubon Field Notes, 8: 28). About 15 September 1954, Ivy Hilty also saw one in or near Guymon (1955, Audubon

Field Notes, 9: 38). On 3 May 1955, S. D. Schemnitz saw a male near Boise City, Cimarron County (1955, Audubon Field Notes, 9: 341). On 14 April 1956, the late Henrietta Pitchford saw a male in or near Okmulgee, Okmulgee County. On 5 October 1956, Arthur F. Halloran and his wife, Audrey, saw a male near the headquarters buildings of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County. On 17 April 1962, Marcia Boose and Katherine Miller saw a male in Osage County at a Girl Scout camp 12 miles southwest of Bartlesville (1962, Audubon Field Notes, 16: 427). On 2 December 1962, Ruth Barlow and Nelle South observed a male and a female for some time in Washington County, in the suburbs of Bartlesville. On 22 April 1963, L. L. Byfield and his wife, Ann, observed a male for several hours in Wakita, Grant County. On 4 November 1964, Ruby Cranor observed a female in a tangle near a farm pond 6 miles south of Bartlesville. On 16 October 1969, Emma Messerly observed a female in shrubbery in her back yard along the edge of Bartlesville; on the following day she and Sophia C. Mery saw a female in the Turkey Creek bottomlands nearby. On 21 October 1969 V. J. Vacin found a male specimen dead under a window of his residence at Silver Lake, in the western part of Oklahoma City. On 29 April 1970, and again on 2 May 1970, H. S. Cooksey and his wife, Hazel, saw a male bird in their yard in Norman, Cleveland County (1970, Audubon Field Notes, 24:621).

The male specimen above referred to (UOMZ 6601) I prepared myself. It was one of the fattest parulids I ever handled, proof that it was, indeed, "in readiness to migrate" (total weight 15.3 grams; weight of lump fat 5.4 grams). The skull was not completely ossified. The twelve rectrices were (are) more pointed than those of fully matured West Virginia and Michigan specimens in my personal collection.

Summarizing the above: the 17 acceptable Oklahoma records (two without definite date; Creek County "record" or "records" not included since we have no idea how many birds T. R. Beard saw, or when he saw them) indicate occurrence here from mid-September to 21 October (exceptionally to 4 November and 2 December) and from 14 April to 25 May. Six records are for October, three for April, four for May, and one each for September, November, and December. The 17 records are for the following counties: Mayes 1, Washington 4, Tulsa 1, Okmulgee 1, Osage 1, Oklahoma 1, Cleveland 2, Grant 1, Comanche 1, Texas 2, Cimarron 2.

According to the AOU Check-list of North American birds (1957, p. 491). *D. caerulescens* winters "mainly" in the West Indies. No mention is made in this compendious work of the several New Mexico records, many of which antedate 1957. The westernmost localities listed under "breeding range" are Saskatchewan (Emma Lake) and Manitoba (Indian Bay). The only western

"accidental occurrence" localities mentioned are Alberta (Tofield) and California (Farallon Islands, Santa Barbara).

Since 17 records indicate presence of the Black-throated Blue Warbler in Oklahoma; since there are many records also for Kansas, Colorado, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona; and since some of the New Mexico records are winter records, is it not in order to suspect either that the species has had a continental winter range for some time or that it is now establishing one? Might Woodhouse, after all, have been justified in calling the Black-throated Blue Warbler "abundant in Texas and the Indian Territory" a century ago?

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GENERAL NOTES

White Ibis in central Oklahoma.—On the afternoon of 2 May 1970 James M. Carrel and I were surprised to see a goose-sized, largely white bird flying swiftly up from one of many scattered small sloughs in recently flooded Bermuda-grass bottomland along the Canadian River on the W. R. Griffith ranch 4½ mi. northwest of Newcastle, McClain County, central Oklahoma. The bird flew in the manner of an accipitrine hawk, alternately flapping its wings and gliding. Occasionally it uttered a guttural, gooselike grunt. It circled close to us several times, giving us a good look at its bright red face and long, rather thick, decurved bill, confirming our belief that it was indeed a White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*). It was not fully adult. As it flew overhead we noted that all of its remiges (secondaries as well as primaries) were dark brown. In a fully adult White Ibis the wing is white except for the black tips of the four outermost primaries—a pattern that shows admirably in a photograph taken by Allan D. Cruickshank (see Lowery, 1955, Louisiana birds, p. 135).

The White Ibis has not heretofore been reported from central Oklahoma. Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 45) cites records for Marshall, Johnston, and Choctaw counties in southern Oklahoma; for Tulsa County in eastern Oklahoma; and for Alfalfa County in north-central Oklahoma. The species evidently is to be looked for along large watercourses and near large impoundments throughout the main body of the state; its closest breeding grounds appear to be in "the southern half of Louisiana" where it occurs "in fresh-water swamps" (Lowery, *op. cit.*, p. 145), and along the coast of eastern Texas as far north as Chambers County (AOU Check-list, 1957, p. 55).—Larry P. Mays, *Department of Biology, East Central State College, Ada, Oklahoma 74820, 30 July 1970.*

Swallow-tailed Kite in central Oklahoma.—At about 09:30 on 6 September 1970, while Nelson Hall and I were studying birds along the southwest shore of Lake Hefner—a large impoundment in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County,

central Oklahoma—Hall called my attention to an odd-looking “hawk” flying low and hovering over the grassy shoreline about 300 yards west of us. At that distance the bird’s whitish head and underparts and very dark upperparts suggested an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), but the tail was obviously too long for that species, the wings seemed narrow and pointed, and the bird was hunting over the prairie rather than over water.

The sun was shining through a light haze. A warm, very strong south wind was blowing. The “hawk” rose in the wind, climbing and turning toward us until high overhead, then swooped with partly closed wings until just over the grass, only to climb again into the air stream. This maneuvering was effected with little noticeable wing movement, but the long, forked tail was in almost constant motion, tilted first to one side then the other. Incredibly as it seemed at first, we were being treated to a magnificent view of an adult Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), a species that quite possibly has not been seen in Oklahoma since 1910 (Nice, 1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 69; Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, p. 97; Williams, 1971, *American birds*, 25: 75).

The kite soon gave up its search for food along the shore, turned northward over the lake, and with deep wing beats and the help of the strong wind disappeared over the dam a mile to the north. We drove around the lake, but did not see the kite again. I estimate the duration for good viewing at about five minutes. As I was using a ten-power binocular, the picture was excellent. There is no question in my mind as to the identification. —John G. Newell, 4129 N. Everest, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111, 6 November 1970.

Spring arrival date for Broad-winged Hawk in Oklahoma.—In continental North America the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) is strongly migratory. In some parts of Canada and the United States large flocks of migrating Broad-winged Hawks have been observed. The species winters “mainly from Guatemala to Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, northern Peru, and western Brazil; and in Florida; casually farther north” (1957, AOU Check-list of North American birds, p. 108). In Oklahoma it nests in the eastern half of the state—westward to “Washington, Oklahoma, Cleveland, and Love counties” (Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, p. 109). The earliest spring sighting on record at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range is of a single bird seen 25 March 1956 by G. M. Sutton and D. H. Baepler along the Deep Fork River 4 miles south of Stroud, Lincoln County.

On the morning of 22 March 1970—a bright day with mild breeze—we observed two Broad-winged Hawks for about twenty minutes in the northern part of the city of Tulsa in northern Tulsa County, Oklahoma. The birds behaved as if paired, flying together over rolling fields west of Yale Avenue (between 66th and 76th streets North), occasionally alighting not far from each other in woods bounding the fields to the south. We observed them with good binoculars and a spotting scope at distances varying from about 500 feet to a quarter of a mile. We noted that they were small and that their underwings were light with dark tipping; that they were not reddish brown enough below for Red-shouldered Hawks (*B. lineatus*); that they had no dark chest-band like that of Swainson’s Hawk (*B. swainsoni*).

or dark belly-band like that of many Red-tailed Hawks (*B. jamaicensis*); and that their tails were marked with broad dark bands and distinctly white bands.

Heretofore the Broad-winged Hawk has not been noted in the Tulsa area earlier than 10 April (on 10 April 1968 Ethel Getgood saw one in Mohawk Park). As a rule the species arrives here from the south in mid-April. All sightings for Tulsa and vicinity have been of one or two birds; no migratory flocks have been observed in the area.—Forrest S. Romero and Aline Romero, 3730 S. Yale Ave., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135, 15 April 1970.

Common Gallinule in Osage County, Oklahoma.—On the morning of 24 September 1970 John Hunter, a student at McCord School (in Osage County, northeastern Oklahoma, on State Highway 60, 4.4 miles east and 1 mile south of the Ponca City post office), found a dead bird lying against the east side of the gymnasium. When, at noon, Hunter noticed that the bird was still there, he and a fellow student, Lee Davis, took the specimen to a teacher, Mrs. Clarence M. Bowman, who called me. Three powerful electric lights that burn all night on the school grounds may have confused the bird, causing it to fly into the building.

Scott Buckner and C. F. Marshall, whom I asked to assist in identifying the bird, agreed with me that it must be of the family Rallidae, since its tail was short and its legs and toes long; but its coloration did not agree with that of any illustrations we could find. I called George M. Sutton, who requested that I send the specimen to him. He found it to be an immature female Common Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus*), a species listed as a "transient and summer resident" in Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 165). The specimen (UOMZ 6861) is, according to Dr. Sutton, the third of the Common Gallinule for the entire state, the other two being from Bryan and Murray counties. It is, furthermore, the only Common Gallinule in first winter feather available for study at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range. It represents the first *Gallinula chloropus* record of any sort for Osage County.—J. P. Barrett, 921 East Central Avenue, Ponca City, Oklahoma 74601, 25 January 1971.

Yellow-throated Warbler in Cimarron County, Oklahoma.—On 9 May 1970, along Texakeet Creek about 3 miles east of Kenton, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, I clearly saw a male Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*). The bird was feeding with a small company of Audubon's Warblers (*D. auduboni*) in the upper branches of streamside cottonwood, hackberry, and black walnut trees, all of which were leafing out. I was attracted by the song—which has been described as *sweeta, sweeta, sweeta, sweetie*, and as *ring, ring, ring, ring, ringie*—but I did not identify the singer to my complete satisfaction until I had examined it carefully with an 8X binocular at a distance of about 40 feet. The white superciliary line, which appeared to be wholly without yellow, and the postocular white patch were distinct and noticeable; these, together with the black of the cheek ruled out possible confusion with the Grace's Warbler (*D. graciae*).

Nice (1931, Birds of Oklahoma, p. 159), who listed *D. dominica* as the Say's Warbler, thus giving it a widely used common name for the west-

ern race, *D. d. albilora*, called it a "summer resident in eastern and central Oklahoma as far west as Cleveland County." The westernmost Oklahoma specimens in the University of Oklahoma bird collection are from Washington, Lincoln, Cleveland, Murray, and Marshall counties, and no Oklahoma sighting has heretofore been reported from the area west of these counties (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 508). There are, however, three published records for Colorado: one of a male found dead in June or July, 1956, at Loveland (north-central Colorado); one of a bird seen at Buena Vista (central Colorado) on 2 June 1957; and one of a bird noted repeatedly at Golden (north-central Colorado, near Denver) from 6 to 9 May 1961 (Bailey and Niedrach, Birds of Colorado, 2: 690).

Occurrence of stragglers of this sort west of their normal range may be explained in part by the tendency of many passerines, especially wood warblers, to feed in mixed flocks during migration. Association with western species thus initiated during passage may be expected to result in occasional displacement of eastern species to western areas. Sutton (*op. cit.*, p. 486) has this to say of the matter: "Many Oklahoma records of uncommon-to-rare eastern warblers are for far western parts of the state, notably for the Boise City area at the western end of the Panhandle. These birds presumably have made their way westward following trees lining the large streams."—Orville O. Rice, 1663 West 28th Street Terrace, Topeka, Kansas 66611, 14 October 1970.

MacGillivray's Warbler in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma.—On the morning of 15 September 1967 Mrs. Harry J. Ellis, who lives at 10 Greenway—on the crest of a hill sloping sharply to the southward—in Okmulgee, Okmulgee County, east-central Oklahoma, asked me to identify a small bird that had flown against her picture window. She brought the bird to my house and laid the limp, though living form in my hand. It was a male MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*) with olive-green back, gray hood, black-blotched throat, incomplete white eye-ring, and bright yellow underparts. Presently it revived. Mrs. Ellis released it in her yard.

The following day Mrs. Ellis called to tell me that she had just seen two more of these warblers drinking together at her bird-bath. She did not say, however, that each bird had had the "incomplete white eye-ring" of the one I had handled.

MacGillivray's Warbler has been seen repeatedly in Cimarron County, Oklahoma. The most easterly sighting thus far reported for the state was in Cleveland County, central Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 519)—a female in first winter feather (UOMZ 3693) collected on 18 September 1959 by W. Marvin Davis.—Mary P. Williams, 1205 E. 10th St., Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447, 24 January 1971.

Winter records for Yellow-headed Blackbird in Oklahoma.—The Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) is well known as a transient in Oklahoma. It is "commoner in spring than in fall and in central and western Oklahoma than in eastern" (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 541). Only two winter records for the state have thus far been published (1964, Audubon Field Notes, 18: 258, 368; Sutton, *op. cit.*). An additional

record may be mentioned here: on 29 December 1967 J. G. Newell and V. J. Vacin observed a male Yellow-headed Blackbird in first winter feather feeding in a field with a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) in Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, along the North Canadian River just north of Lake Overholser.

From 18 December 1969 through 4 February 1970 I noted the Yellow-headed Blackbird on many occasions among the mixed flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), and Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) that fed in my yard about 9 miles due east of downtown Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma. Our house is near the eastern edge of the residential district. Many small brushy and wooded lots, some pastureland, and a few fairly large grain fields are nearby.

Not many blackbirds of any sort have come to my feeders in late fall and winter in the fourteen years during which we have lived in this housing addition. During severe weather in the winters of 1967-68 and 1968-69 sizeable flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds lived in our area, but they did not come into our yard. In the winter of 1969-70, however, blackbirds established a roost about 1½ miles north of our house. Each morning in December and January, a little after 07:00, hundreds of the birds, in waves that stretched from east to west as far as I could see, flew southward from the roost. Some of the flocks stopped in our yard to feed. Flocks returned to the roost in the late afternoon, but never in the dense concentrations that I witnessed morning after morning.

The first blackbirds to visit our yard that fall were cowbirds and grackles, a few of which came regularly in September and continued to come all winter. The Redwings did not start coming until November. By 1 December a mixed flock of 75 to 100 blackbirds, principally Redwings, could be counted at any time of the day in our yard. At 08:00 on 18 December I saw a male Yellow-headed Blackbird with them. In late afternoon on 31 December, not many days after a snowstorm, I again saw a Yellowhead with them. From that date on to 23 January I saw the Yellowhead repeatedly in the yard—a single male as a rule, but two males on 8 January and two males on 18 January. On 25 January, from 30 January to 2 February, and on 4 February I saw one male Yellowhead repeatedly. On 19 March, early in the morning, I observed a female Yellowhead (or possibly a male in first winter feather) for a few minutes. Several times on 9 and 10 April I saw a male Yellowhead. According to data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range, northward migration of this species is fairly under way by early April.—Lois Rodgers, 528 S. 107 East Ave., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74128, 18 April 1970.

Indigo Bunting attending young cowbirds.—According to Friedmann (1929, The cowbirds, pp. 230-31) the Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) is "very commonly imposed upon" by the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) in many parts of the bunting's breeding range. Freeman Thomas has recently called attention to the fact that in Oklahoma, where several cowbird-parasitized Indigo Bunting nests have been found, no one has reported seeing "a recently fledged cowbird attended by an Indigo Bunting" (Thomas, 1970, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 3: 34).

On 5 July 1970, at about 17:00 in the afternoon, I observed two fledgling cowbirds that were attended by a male Indigo Bunting. I had just driven onto private property near Bar-Dew Lake, a small impoundment about 5 miles northwest of Dewey, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma, when I was attracted by the noisy food-calls of the young cowbirds. They were on a barbed wire fence about 25 feet from me. The bunting fed one and flew off, followed by both cowbirds.—Ella Delap, 409 N. Wyandotte, Dewey, Oklahoma 74029, 22 September 1970.

Fourth specimen of Sharp-tailed Sparrow from Oklahoma.—In mid-morning on 27 September 1969, not far from one of several fairly large fishery ponds 5 mi. south of Sulphur, Murray County, south-central Oklahoma, William A. Carter and I flushed from knee-high vegetation a middle-sized fringillid that flew directly to the lower part of a sapling willow about 50 ft. away, moved upward a few inches, and sat quietly enough for me to observe the buffy tone of the face and the chest. The fact that it had flown too strongly for a Le Conte's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus caudacutus*) made me wonder whether it might be a Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*)—a species that has not thus far been recorded in Oklahoma earlier in fall than 1 October (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 636)—but it was much too buffy on the face and chest for that species and, furthermore, its "staying put" about three feet from the ground (rather than moving down into the shelter of the rank grass and cattails), its refusal to lean forward or downward, and its failure to flick its tail, caused me to realize that its behavior was not that of a Swamp Sparrow.

I collected it, finding it to be a Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudacuta*). It was in fresh plumage. On skinning it that afternoon, I found it to be very fat. There was no evidence of molt. The skull was not fully ossified. One testis was fairly distinct, the other difficult to discern.

On comparing the prepared specimen with the three other Oklahoma specimens of *A. caudacuta* at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range (two from Cleveland County taken 14 October 1952 by Richard R. Graber; one from Murray County taken 8 October 1955 by Charles A. Ely), I find it to be slightly the darkest of the four on the crown. It is narrowly streaked with blackish brown on the chest. Its wing measures 51 mm., its tail 46. It represents the richly colored race *A. c. nelsoni*.

The Sharp-tailed Sparrow may migrate through Oklahoma regularly in both spring and fall, but few observers see it, or recognize it when they do see it. To find it requires flushing it from rank grass and other semiaquatic vegetation on the chance that it will alight above ground. In the manner of a Le Conte's Sparrow it may move upward in the vegetation and sit quietly, thus permitting the observer to get a good look at it.—George M. Sutton, *Stovall Museum of Science and History, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 12 October 1969.*

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