

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
IN WINTER

BY JOHN S. SHACKFORD

ON 18 DECEMBER 1971, while participating in a Christmas Count at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, I saw a Green-tailed Towhee (*Chlorura chlorura*) just north of Northeast Lake in Lincoln Park. At about 10:00 that day I decided to "squeak up" some Harris's Sparrows (*Zonotrichia querula*) that had moved ahead of me into some thick vines covering a small dead tree—a thicket about 12 feet high and 5 feet wide near some animal pens of the Oklahoma City Zoo. When the sparrows hopped up into sight, the towhee also appeared. It was about 40 feet from me, 8 feet above ground, and in good light. I observed it for two or three minutes through my 10 x 50 binocular. The bright rufous of the crown caught my eye immediately, then the olive-green



GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE

Photographed by John S. Shackford just north of Northeast Lake in Lincoln Park, Oklahoma City, on 27 January 1972.

back, brighter, somewhat yellowish olive-green wing, clear white throat, ashy gray chest, and white belly. The bird uttered a metallic, nearly one-pitched "tree" that seemed less sharp than the "chink" of the sparrows.

The towhee stayed in the general vicinity of the animal pens all winter. Food that I scattered for it made observation by many other people and photography possible. It was last seen, so far as I know, on 1 March 1972. John G. Newell saw it that day.

Two comments on the bird's out-of-range habitat are in order. 1. The goats and sheep in the animal pens had turned a steep slope close by into a bare red rock-and-dirt hillside perhaps similar enough to a Rocky Mountain habitat to make the bird feel comfortable. 2. The thickets surrounding the animal pens and a pile of weed and tree clippings from the zoo afforded excellent protection. The weather, as a rule, was not severe; there was not much snow; but on one occasion the air temperature descended to a low of 1° F.

The Green-tailed Towhee has visited Oklahoma City twice before—first ten or twelve years ago when Henry Walter saw one in a rock garden in Will Rogers Park (date not recorded), again on 9, 10, and 11 May 1965, when John G. Newell saw a single bird in a brush pile in his backyard at 4129 N. Everest (1965, Audubon Field Notes, 19: 489). The three Oklahoma City records and a Cleveland County record (one seen repeatedly on 28 and 29 September 1964 by Sam C. Holland at a feeding counter in Norman) are the easternmost for the state. According to data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range the latest fall sighting heretofore reported was of a single bird "in rocks at edge of little bluestem stand just above Buffalo Springs" in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, on 8 November 1954 (Arthur F. Halloran).

812 N.W. 41ST ST., OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73111, 1 AUGUST 1972.

GENERAL NOTES

Green Heron at Fort Smith, Arkansas in winter.—Toward noon during a Christmas Count on 27 December 1971 Margaret Hedges, Audra Morris, Doris Springer and I observed a Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) along a little stream near a farm-pond at the corner of Park Avenue and North 66th Street in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, west-central Arkansas. Mrs. Hedges flushed the heron from the closer bank as she neared the stream. She watched it fly to a low limb across the stream and "freeze" there. Not being sure what it was, she called Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Springer, and me, and the four of us approached to within about 15 feet of the bird, where we observed it for about 45 minutes, both with and without binoculars.

The heron did not move for about half an hour. Then, as if attracted by something in the water, it walked slowly and carefully along the limb, stepped down onto the ground without spreading its wings, and waded two or three feet out from shore. There it stood motionless a while, then sud-

denly struck, obtaining a minnow which it swallowed immediately. Presently it struck again, catching another minnow. After standing still for about five minutes, it waded a yard farther out and struck again, this time obtaining a fish so large that it was obliged to walk quickly back to dry ground before dispatching and swallowing its prey.

Several bird students, including the above-named, returned to the spot on 28 and 29 December, hoping to see the heron again. No part of the stream or farm-pond had been frozen on 27 December, nor was it frozen on these later visits, but we did not see the bird again. The Green Heron has not heretofore been recorded anywhere in Arkansas or Oklahoma in winter. George M. Sutton informs me that the latest fall sighting on record for Oklahoma is of a single bird seen in Mohawk Park, Tulsa, northeastern Oklahoma, on 5 November 1935 by J. L. Borden and his wife, Marian.—Ruth B. Armstrong, 1104 N. 14th St., Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901, 31 December 1971.

Cattle Egret in central Oklahoma in winter.—In mid-afternoon on 20 January 1972, while watching some Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) along the east side of Lake Hefner, a large impoundment in the northwestern part of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, central Oklahoma, I noticed a single white bird—obviously a heron of some sort—standing among some dead cattails along the shore.

It struck me that the season was not right for a white heron of any sort, so I made a point of noting that the bird was not very large, that its bill was entirely yellow, that its legs were black, and that the plumage of its crown, chest, and back was without a brownish cast. There could be no doubt that the bird was an immature Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*). I watched it closely as it stalked among the cattails. Occasionally it picked up and tossed aside decaying damp vegetation in its search for food.

Knowing that Walter Doane would want to see the bird, I drove to his house to get him. On our return the egret was still there, but when I opened the car door for a better look, the bird flew out over the lake. Circling northward, it alighted not far back from shore in a playground area, where it continued its search for food among the grass. We watched it for fully five minutes. Doane returned to the area the following day, but failed to find it.

A young Cattle Egret in the University of Oklahoma bird collection, a specimen (UOMZ 5525) taken in Cleveland County on 6 November 1964, is white all over, there being only the faintest trace of buff in the plumage of the crown.—Brad Carlton, 5949 N.W. 27th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73127, 15 February 1972.

Barnacle Goose winters in southeastern Oklahoma.—From 16 December 1971 to 1 March 1972 a Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) wintered on and near the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge in Johnston County, southeastern Oklahoma. The bird was first seen by Jenna Jo Hellack and Virgie Fly, who watched it for some time and tried to obtain photographs as it fed with a large flock of Canada Geese (*B. canadensis*) in a 12-acre wheatfield just east of the refuge. I made a point of observing the bird closely myself that same day, noting the white of the face and forehead, the black between the eye and the bill, and the black neck and chest. I noted, too, that the Canada Geese with which it was feeding all seemed to be middle-sized. On 17 December Harry B. Lyman and Robert Thomas, U. S. Enforcement Agents of

the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, observed it at fairly close range. Between 17 December 1971 and 25 February 1972, I noted it on sixteen occasions—invariably feeding with about 300 middle-sized Canada Geese. On 25 February I tried unsuccessfully to photograph it. I last saw it on 1 March, when the flock of Canada Geese was much smaller than it had been all winter.

The Barnacle Goose has been recorded in Oklahoma twice before—on 21 November 1958 on the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, when one was observed feeding with small Canada Geese (Marquardt, 1960, *Southwest. Nat.*, 5: 228), and on 14 December 1963, when one was shot as game near Amorita, Alfalfa County (Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, p. 56). A boldly patterned goose reported from time to time on the Tishomingo refuge between 1967 and 1972 might conceivably have been a Barnacle but the dates of the sightings were not recorded.

Branta leucopsis breeds in Greenland and Spitzbergen, wintering mainly in northwestern Europe—"exceptionally south to the Azores, Spain, Morocco, and Italy" (Bent, 1925, *U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 130, p. 262). According to Peterson (1947, *A field guide to the birds*, p. 32), it has been seen "almost a score of times on this [the American] side of the Atlantic."—Ernest J. Jemison, *Manager, Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge, P. O. Box 248, Tishomingo, Oklahoma 73460, 7 March 1972.*

Courtship behavior of Red-breasted Merganser in February.—On 6 February 1972 (day cold and overcast; rain in mid-morning), F. S. Romero and his wife Aline, Eleanor Sieg, Gary Lee and I saw a few Lesser Scaups (*Aythya affinis*), a few Buffleheads (*Bucephala albeola*), about 40 Common Goldeneyes (*B. clangula*), an estimated 100 Common Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*), and four Red-breasted Mergansers (*M. serrator*) on Yahola Lake in Mohawk Park, Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma. Of special interest were the Red-breasted Mergansers, which were close to each other about 100 yards out from shore. Through 20-power telescopes we watched the four birds—two drakes and two hens—for about 20 minutes. The drakes were displaying. Occasionally each drake raised itself in the water, flapping its wings and showing clearly the dark band across its chest; but the chief behavior was an elaborate bowing in which the head was thrown back, bill up, then vigorously brought forward and down, causing the bird to "bounce" on the water. Sometimes the drakes faced each other as they bowed, but more often they were side by side, headed in the same direction, each facing a hen, and moving with great precision in perfect unison.

Although we saw both drakes and hens of the four other anatids present on the lake, we observed no evidence of courtship among them aside from occasional tail-spreading among the drake Common Mergansers.—Polly Keating, 5213 South Toledo, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135, 23 March 1972.

Sora Rail in southwestern Oklahoma in winter.—On 28 December 1970 William Fox saw a Sora Rail (*Porzana carolina*) feeding along the shore and swimming among broken dead cattail leaves that protruded 8-10 inches above the water at Lake Helen, a small impoundment in the northeastern part of Lawton, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma. What he believed to be the same bird he saw again on 1 January 1971, this time pecking at the ground "much like a chicken would." That same day Louis McGee and his wife Janet saw the bird. On 21 January I saw it myself. It was blackish about

the face and appeared to be molting into its first breeding plumage. A Sora was seen again at Lake Helen on 29 January by Elsie Smith and on 6 February by Joseph McGuire. The bird was not shy. Those who watched it occasionally approached to within 15 feet.

Presumably this one Sora wintered at Lake Helen. Admittedly there could have been more than one bird. The water surface was completely ice-covered for two brief periods between 1 January and 6 February. Other birds that were seen by various observers when the water was open were two Pied-billed Grebes (*Podilymbus podiceps*), several American Coots (*Fulica americana*), and about 30 domestic ducks.

The Sora evidently winters locally in Oklahoma. Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 162) mentions two records for the Tulsa area (26 December 1947, 28 December 1949). Carter (1969, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 2: 21) discusses these two records in detail, mentions a Cleveland County record for 25 December 1967, and reports a bird seen 23 January 1969 in McCurtain County.—Jack D. Tyler, *Department of Biology, Cameron College, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 24 May 1971.*

American Woodcock in Comanche County, Oklahoma, in winter.—In the early afternoon on 16 December 1971 (air temperature about 45° F.; sky mostly overcast; little wind), just inside the eastern boundary of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge and about 2 miles west of the town of Medicine Park, Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, John E. Kiley and I flushed an American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) from a thicket of mature black willow (*Salix niara*) about 25 feet high, rank buttonbushes (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) about 6 feet high, fallen branches, and smartweed (*Polygonum* sp.). The thicket covered a low-lying peninsula about an acre in extent along the shore of the southwest arm of Lake Elmer Thomas. A heavy rain two days before had saturated the ground and swelled the lake's tributaries to bank-level.

We flushed the woodcock twice on 16 December, each time noting the conspicuously rufous underparts, the down-turned bill, the "large-headedness," and the whistling wings. I flushed it again on 28 December and 31 December, but six persons who searched the thicket on 8 January 1972 failed to find it. A cold front on 3 January may well have forced the bird southward. At 06:00 on that date the air temperature was 15° F. During the night of 3-4 January light snow fell. The mud in which the woodcock had been probing for food probably froze during this cold spell.

This is the first *Philohela minor* record for Comanche County and one of the few winter records for Oklahoma. Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 181) mentions "winter records (December 24 to February 7) for Tulsa, Cleveland, Canadian, and Greer counties"; the species has been seen westward to Harper, Blaine, and Greer counties, but it is "decidedly rare along west edge of range."—Jack D. Tyler, *Department of Biology, Cameron College, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 15 January 1972.*

Hudsonian Godwit in central Oklahoma in early December.—On 4, 5, and 6 December 1971, at Lake Overholser, a large impoundment in Oklahoma City, central Oklahoma, Henry Walter, Brad Carlton, and I saw a Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) in gray winter feather. The bird was feeding on the flat open shore at the east end of the coffer dam. We put it to flight

several times, noting the white stripe in each wing and the white upper tail coverts. At times the bird approached us to within 50-75 yards, so we had good looks at it. Light conditions were good on all three dates. The species is very rare in fall in Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, pp. 203-4).—John G. Newell, 4129 N. Everest, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111, 24 April 1972.

Winter food of a central Oklahoma Roadrunner.—At about 12:30 on 20 December 1969, along an all-weather road about 6 miles northeast of Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma, W. Marvin Davis found the headless, tail-less carcass of a very recently killed Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*). Almost certainly the bird had been struck by a car. Dr. Davis brought the specimen to the Bird Range at the University of Oklahoma chiefly as proof that the species had been present within a stipulated area on the day of the Christmas Count.

Although interested primarily in ascertaining what the stomach contained, I made a point of examining the carcass carefully before opening it up. I found no evidence that the bird had been shot. Parting the soft plumage of the belly, I noted a strip of fat about half an inch wide just under the thin, transparent skin. I knew from this that the bird was exceedingly fat.

The headless specimen weighed 412.2 grams, about 54 grams of which were lump fat and 23.4 grams the stomach and its contents. In the stomach I found remains of several "true" grasshoppers (Locustidae), at least four of which had been fairly large (about 40 mm. from front of head to tip of abdomen), and several iridescent bits of beetle wing. There was not a trace of a vertebrate. Considering that the day was chilly—the southeast wind was strong and the sky overcast; in late afternoon heavy mist turned first into steady drizzle, then into forthright rain—I felt that the Roadrunner had fared well. I did not know, of course, when it had started feeding or when it had been killed; but it certainly had found many grasshoppers despite the inclemency of weather.

The more I investigate the food habits of the Roadrunner the more convinced I am that its capturing of lizards, snakes, mice, and other vertebrates is done principally during the nesting season, sound reasons for the procedure being (1) that vertebrates are more readily obtainable at that season, and (2) that it is good economy to feed the growing progeny items that require considerable time for ingestion and digestion.—George M. Sutton, *Stovall Museum of Science and History, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 23 December 1969.*

Groove-billed Ani in Payne County, Oklahoma, in November.—About noon on 17 November 1971, while I was sitting just inside the glass doors that open onto the patio of my house 5 miles east of Perkins, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma, I noticed a large black bird standing on the concrete of the patio floor about 8 feet from me. It was facing away from me, so I clearly saw its long "scalloped" tail. When it turned its head I saw that its bill was large and puffinlike. It was a Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*). It appeared to swallow something, then skittered off under some honeysuckle vines and euonymus bushes. I went into the yard, hoping to see it again. It had flown into a holly tree, which I passed twice before it flew out. Now I clearly saw its over-all shape, big bill, and long tail. It flew rather clumsily into an olive hedge along the yard's border.

The following day I saw the ani again, but at a distance and only briefly. My house is about a mile north of the Cimarron River. The yard is bounded on the south by a wooded area, on the other three sides by open fields and pastures. The lawn is bordered by a variety of shrubs—euonymus, olive, buffalo-berry, and holly. A large food tray at the corner of the patio is popular with the birds, especially in winter.

This ani sighting is the first for Payne County and the tenth for the State of Oklahoma; of the ten records eight are for fall, one for spring, and one for midsummer (McGee, 1971, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 4: 25-26).—Helen Carleton, *Ranch o' the Dells, Route 2, Perkins, Oklahoma 74059, 1 September 1972.*

Long-eared Owl in Johnston County, Oklahoma.—On 12 January 1971, while hiking in the Blue River Public Hunting and Fishing Area 7 miles northeast of Tishomingo, Johnston County, south-central Oklahoma, I happened upon a company of five owls roosting in a thick clump of junipers bordering a dry stream-bed. The owls were being harrassed by Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). My intrusion caused both crows and owls to fly. The owls sought cover not far away.

On 15 January William A. Carter, Jon V. Cecil, David L. Jones and I flushed five owls from the very same stand of junipers. After waiting half an hour, we witnessed the return of the birds to their roosting spot and identified them as Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus*). On 4 February Carter and I flushed five owls from the very same stand of trees. That day we collected one of them, a female, now catalogued as B-592 in the biological collections at East Central State College.

The behavior of the owls was the same on each of our visits. So hidden were they in the dense branches of the junipers that we could not see them until they flew out; but when one did fly, the others followed closely. They did not fly far—150 to 200 yards—and once flushed, they scattered. Each of our visits to the roost was in late afternoon—between 15:00 and 17:00.

So far as I know, this is the first record of *Asio otus* for Johnston County. The species is not on the revised check-list of birds of the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge; it has, however (according to data filed at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range), been recorded on three occasions heretofore in south-central Oklahoma—on 16 April 1914, when E. D. Crabb collected two specimens (EDC 149 and 150) in Jefferson County; on 30 November 1956, when C. H. Mayhood Jr. saw one near Sulphur, Murray County (1957, Audubon Field Notes, 11: 36); and on 26 November 1967, when J. Craythorne and his wife Moryne saw one just east of Duncan, Stephens County. There are several records for central Oklahoma—Cleveland and Oklahoma counties principally—most of them for fall and winter.—David O. Dillon, *Department of Biology, East Central State College, Ada, Oklahoma 74820, 3 February 1972.*

Capture in hand of torpid Poor-will.—At about 15:30 on 14 January 1972, while back-packing with a group of Oklahoma Baptist University students on the Ore Terminal Trail down the eastern slope of a small rocky mountain northeast of Rio Grande Village in Big Bend National Park, southwestern Texas, I happened upon a torpid Poor-will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*). The bird was on a knee-high ledge of rock near the trail. When closely approached,

it made no attempt to fly but opened its mouth, emitting a coarse, growling sound. When I picked it up, it flapped its wings weakly. It seemed to be in a kind of stupor. I carefully examined it, but found no sign of injury. I replaced it on the ledge in the shelter of a small bush, a few inches from the spot it had occupied when I first saw it. There it stayed, making no attempt to run or fly.

A crack in the rock about 2 feet away was, so far as I could see, the only readily available hiding place in which the bird could have been hibernating. The air temperature was about 70° F., but water had frozen in our canteens the night before. Could the bird have left its "hiding place" to warm up in the sun (see Jaeger, 1949, *Condor*, 51: 105-109)? Oklahoma bird students should be on the lookout for Poor-wills in winter. Over-wintering individuals, if in hibernation, may be very hard to discover.—Dan F. Penney, *Department of Biology, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma 74801, 2 February 1972.*

Verdin collected in Jackson County, Oklahoma.—On 2 January 1972, along Lebos Creek about a mile west of Eldorado, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma, we collected the first specimen of Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*) for the state. Obtaining the bird, a male (UOMZ 7256), culminated efforts dating back to the fall of 1954 when Sutton, surprised by finding the Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Centurus aurifrons*) well established in southwestern Oklahoma, wondered what other "new" southwestern birds might also have made their way into the state.

In 1971 Kenneth D. Seyffert roused everyone's interest by reporting (1) the breeding of the Verdin in Randall County, in the Texas Panhandle, and (2) the hearing of Verdin callnotes by John S. Weske only 16 miles south of the Oklahoma state line in Wilbarger County, Texas (Seyffert, 1971, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 4: 1-3). When Seyffert, convinced that finding the Verdin north of the Red River might be largely a matter of locating a proper habitat, discovered a breeding pair in the Eldorado area in May 1971, he pointed the way for us. Sutton visited the area on 26-27 November 1971, finding two old Verdin nests, but neither saw nor heard a Verdin. The mesquite woodland there struck him as being more mature and more uniform than any he had seen in Oklahoma.

On 1 January 1972 we drove to Eldorado, arriving just before noon. Lawrence found that we could cross the Lebos using a beaver-dam as a bridge—a time-saving discovery. Late that afternoon we saw a Verdin, but it flew across the creek and we could not find it again. The following morning we again saw a Verdin, this time not far from us. Its yellow head was conspicuous; but when it flew it disappeared completely. Presently we found an obviously new nest well back from the tip of a long hackberry branch about 12 feet above open ground; it was much bulkier than either of the nests Sutton had found in November. What we could see of soft material at the entrance convinced us that it was warmly lined.

That afternoon we looked in vain for a Verdin. Finally, suspecting that the nest might be a "dormitory," we ensconced ourselves nearby and waited. At 17:00 a Verdin flew into a tree not far away, but behind us. Its not very loud callnotes attracted Lawrence's attention. At 17:05 Sutton collected it. It was, at the time, about 30 yards from the nest.—George M. Sutton, *Stovall*

Museum of Science and History, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069; Robert G. Lawrence, Mid-American Nazarene College, Olathe, Kansas 66061, 23 February 1972.

Second Western Bluebird record for Oklahoma.—Near mid-afternoon on 28 December 1971, while participating in the Christmas Count at Kenton, Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, Jon V. Cecil, John H. Schenck and I happened upon a flock of at least six Western Bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*) drifting leisurely from an open area only a few yards from us into the cover of junipers along a ridge some distance away. Presently we were joined by W. Marvin Davis, who also observed the birds as they perched on fenceposts, barbed wire, and the tops of small junipers. Of those that we saw clearly, four were bright, fresh-plumaged males, each with rich-brown back, chest, and sides.

The Western Bluebird was first seen in Oklahoma on 30 December 1970 (1971, *Amer. Birds*, 25: 414; Carter, 1971, *Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc.*, 4: 36-37). The flock of ten birds seen on that date were on the Laurance Regnier ranch 4 miles south of Kenton. The flock observed in 1971 was only a few hundred yards from the spot of the 1970 sighting.

On the 1971 Kenton Count the Mountain Bluebird (*S. currucoides*) was abundant in the area, a total of 547 individuals being seen (1972, *Amer. Birds*, 26: 431), this in sharp contrast with the 14 seen the year before (1971, *Amer. Birds*, 25: 413). In 1971 the Mountain Bluebird flocks—which numbered from 16 to 30 birds each—were in both the pinyon-juniper upland habitat and the cottonwood habitat along the Cimarron River and its tributaries. In 1971 we saw also hundreds of Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) and a number of Townsend's Solitaires (*Myadestes townsendi*) in the upland habitat. Nowhere in the vicinity of Kenton did we find the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), though two were seen there on the 1970 Kenton Count (*loc. cit.*), and on 30 December 1971 John Schenck observed a flock of 12 along the Cimarron River on the Albert Kohler ranch about 15 miles north-northwest of Boise City, Cimarron County. At this locality, which is about 20 miles due east of Kenton, we did not find any other member of the thrush family in 1971. —William A. Carter, *Department of Biology, East Central State College, Ada, Oklahoma 74820, 7 January 1972.*

Additional winter records for the Black-throated Sparrow in Oklahoma.—The Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*) has bred irregularly, as a rule in small numbers, in the Black Mesa country of Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, since the turn of the century; since it has been recorded in Oklahoma only once in winter (specimen taken near Kenton on 2 January 1962), and since the only published fall record for Oklahoma (specimen taken 27 October 1956 near Lexington, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma) was for an area far removed from the Black Mesa country, the species has been considered a "summer resident" (Sutton, 1967, *Oklahoma birds*, pp. 617-18). Two winter sightings, discussed below, suggest that it may be non-migratory, even as it is believed to be in Palo Duro Canyon, near Amarillo, in the Texas Panhandle (1966, *Field check-list of Potter-Randall counties, Texas*, 2nd ed.).

At sunset on 23 December 1966, about 2½ miles southwest of Kenton,

Oklahoma, I was attracted by a noisy fussing of birds among rocks at the foot of a mesa near the road leading to the Laurance Regnier ranch-house. Investigating, I found two Black-throated Sparrows, two Brown Towhees (*Pipilo fuscus*) and a Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*). The towhees and the wren were scolding. I failed to discover what was exciting the birds, but I enjoyed a clear, close look at the Black-throated Sparrows for about five minutes.

On the afternoon of 27 December 1969 Kenneth D. Seyffert of Amarillo saw two Black-throated Sparrows among cholla cactus and mesquite about 1½ miles east of Kenton, not far from the junction of the highway and the dirt road leading to the Easter Pageant area (1970, Audubon Field Notes, 24: 369). Next morning, following Seyffert's directions, I saw two Black-throated Sparrows in the very same area.

Not since the days of R. Crompton Tate, who lived in Kenton for many years, has anyone found the Black-throated Sparrow to be really common there. A party of nine bird students who scoured the Black Mesa country from 27 to 31 December 1970, as well as five additional persons who visited the area for a Christmas Count on 28 December, failed to find the species.—W. Marvin Davis, *Department of Pharmacology, University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, 4 March 1970.*

FROM THE EDITORS: The editors wish to thank Louis E. McGee and his wife Janet for preparing the index for Volume V and Miss Zella Moorman for assistance with the Groove-billed Ani paper in this issue.

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