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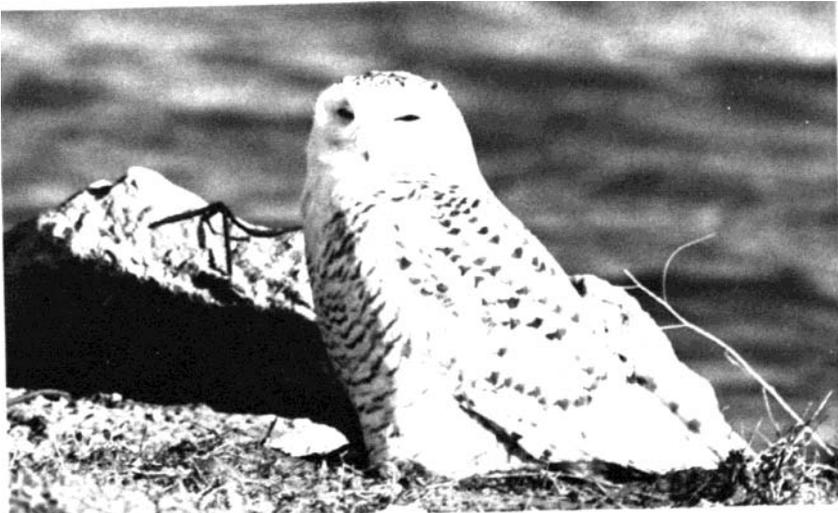
THE SNOWY OWL IN OKLAHOMA

BY JOHN S. SHACKFORD

Imagine my astonishment on 10 December 1974 when, having stopped my car on Interstate Highway 35 just northwest of Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma, to check what I supposed was a road-kill white-breasted hawk, I found at my feet a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*), the first I had ever seen. I assumed it would be my last; but no, during the following several weeks this visitor from the far north was to invade Oklahoma in unprecedented numbers; before the winter was over I was myself to see three more of the great birds, all of them alive and well.

EARLY RECORDS

So far as is known, the Snowy Owl first visited Oklahoma in 1880. On 10 December of that year D. W. Jones collected a specimen near McAlester, Pittsburg County, southeastern Oklahoma (Nice, 1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 105):

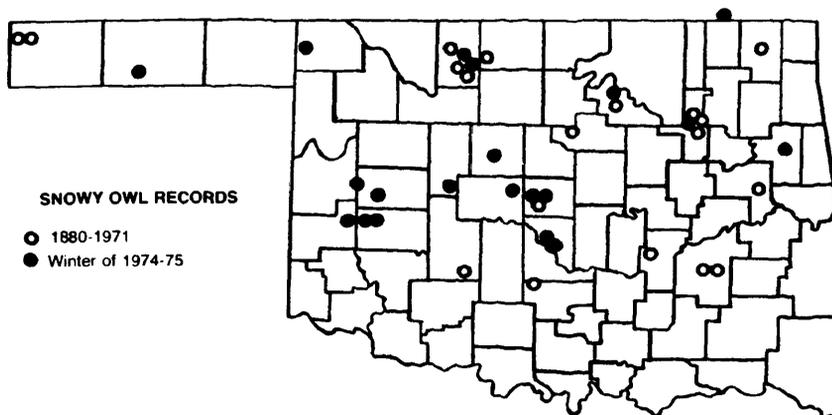


SNOWY OWL

One of two birds discovered by Brad Carlton at Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City on 16 December 1974. Photographed on 20 December 1974 by John S. Shackford.

according to the label for the mounted bird, which is now in the Kansas State Museum in Topeka, it was "shot while attempting to kill Doves or tame Pigeons [sic]." Thirty-seven years later (winter of 1917-18) a second Oklahoma specimen was obtained, this one in Craig County, northeastern Oklahoma, by G. W. Stevens (Nice, *loc. cit.*). In December 1918 a third specimen was taken, this one in Pawnee County, north-central Oklahoma, by R. O. Whitenton, and another bird was seen in Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, by R. C. Tate (Nice, *loc. cit.*). After a further lapse of 11 years, on 25 December 1929, R. C. Tate again saw a Snowy Owl in Cimarron County (Nice, *loc. cit.*).

There is no Oklahoma record of any sort for the species between the years 1929 and 1951, but between 1951 and 1974 enough sightings occurred every third year (and then only) to suggest cyclic southward migration related to some such factor as heavy snow-cover or lemming shortage in the far north. Briefly stated, these sightings are: in 1951, specimen taken near Braggs, Muskogee County, east-central Oklahoma (mounted; now at Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma; L. H. Bally letter of 21 February 1956 to G. M. Sutton); fall of 1953, two specimens taken in north-central Oklahoma, one by W. A. York near Nash, Grant County (photo filed at OU Bird Range), the other by Dean Gray near Cherokee, Alfalfa County (mounted; now in Mr. Gray's possession); 12 December 1956, at McAlester, Conductor J. Pingleton, while in a locomotive doing a "routine spotting" of railroad cars, reached out and grabbed "as if it were a mail bag" an owl that was "using a switch stand for a perch" (bird well photographed and released; two photographs filed at OU Bird Range); early December 1959, two seen in central Oklahoma — one at the Oklahoma City airport in Oklahoma County, the other in Garvin County near Lindsay — and reported to John G. Newell (1960, Audubon Field Notes, 14: 321); in 1960, one "found" 7 December near Holdenville, Hughes County, central Oklahoma, by L. Stiles (1961, Audubon Field Notes, 15: 342), another seen 14 December in Mohawk Park, Tulsa, Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma, by Anne Reynolds, L. B. Reynolds, Ethel Getgood, *et al.*, seen again on 16 December "on the airfield adjoining Mohawk Park . . . by C. E. Brown and Lewis Davis," and found dead on 17 December, having been "killed by a passing car on a highway [a county road just southwest of Catoosa, Rogers County] northeast of Tulsa" (Chase and Reynolds, 1962, Proc. Oklahoma Acad. Sci., 42: 91); in 1963, one seen repeatedly from "early November" to 7 December near Lake Carl Blackwell, Payne County, north-central Oklahoma by various observers including (on 6 and 7 December) F. M. Baumgartner and his wife Marguerite (1964, Audubon Field Notes, 18: 367), one seen on 6 December in Mohawk Park northeast of Tulsa by P. A. Aldridge, H. S. Davis, and C. E. Brown, and two seen on 12 December in the Tulsa area by P. A. Aldridge and H. S. Davis); 14 December 1966, one seen on Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma, by F. L. Bolwahn and R.



H. Stratton (1967, *Audubon Field Notes*, 21: 431); 11 March 1967, one seen on the same refuge by R. H. Stratton; and 13 December 1971, one seen perched on fencepost near Cyril, Caddo County, southwest Oklahoma, by W. G. Voelker.

Fully acceptable records among those discussed above indicate fall occurrence ("early November" to 25 December) rather than overwintering, the one late-winter or spring record (11 March 1967) being of a bird that might well have overwintered at the Salt Plains refuge. During no single winter were more than three birds known to have been seen. Another point strikes me as being worth mentioning: only one winter of those mentioned above (that of 1917-18) is listed by Gross (1947, *Auk*, 64: 588) in his discussions of "cyclic invasions"; during this particular winter Snowy Owls must have moved southward into the Great Plains in considerable numbers: in Iowa alone 23 of them "were taken or seen" (DuMont, 1933, *Wilson Bull.*, 45: 82).

1974-75 INVASION IN OKLAHOMA

In the winter of 1974-75 the Snowy Owl moved into Oklahoma in record numbers. Three specimens were preserved, two as skins, one as a mount, and so varied in color pattern were living birds seen and photographed — some almost pure white, others more or less heavily marked with gray — that a grand total of 20 birds is surely no exaggeration. Furthermore, some of these actually overwintered, one exceptionally white bird in particular having been observed repeatedly by others and me between 6 January and 14 February.

The species first appeared on 30 November, on which date Darrel Duncan saw one "on the ground in a field" in Texas County, in the Panhandle, several miles southwest of Guymon (Rita Longbotham letter of 10 January 1975 to G. M. Sutton). On 3 December (weather clear, cold, and windy, but snow melting), Gary L. Collins happened upon a very white bird perched on a telephone pole in eastern Tulsa County (10 miles east of Tulsa); alerted persons gathered from

near and far to watch the bird as it flew from snowpatch to snowpatch that day and on 4 December, on which date it was photographed by Joel P. McConnell, Herbert L. Keating, and Elizabeth Hayes. On 10 December the dead Cleveland County specimen referred to at the first of this paper (very thin female, UOMZ 7906, right leg with gangrenous old wound, remains of at least one cotton rat in stomach) was found; later that morning a living bird, flying from fencepost to fencepost, was observed along the same stretch of highway by J. Teague Self and his wife Ida. On 16 December two large, heavily barred birds were discovered by Brad Carlton near Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City; these were observed repeatedly from 16 to 20 December by John G. Newell, Henry Walter, V. J. Vacin, W. D. Harden, *et al.*, and photographed by Wesley Isaacs, J. Brooks Parkhill, and myself, and a single much-barred bird, presumably one of the same two, was seen in the same general area on 21 December by J. G. Newell, Gary Lee, *et al.* On 17 December a not very heavily marked bird, perched on a power-line pole near Skedee, Pawnee County, north-central Oklahoma, was seen by R. N. McGuinn. On 29 December a fairly heavily marked bird that had been shot was found dead by Game Ranger Jack Witt near Kingfisher, Kingfisher County, central Oklahoma (mounted specimen in collection of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation).

On 4 January, Howard W. Goard and his wife Dotty saw and photographed a very white bird at the Coffeyville, Kansas airport about 10 miles north of Elliott, Nowata County, northeastern Oklahoma (two photos filed at OU Bird Range). From 6 January to 14 February a small-looking, exceptionally white bird was seen repeatedly in Canadian County northwest of Oklahoma City, first by Henry Walter and J. S. Roberts, subsequently by several other persons, including me. This bird I made a point of following about, photographing, and observing at length (see last section of this paper).

On 11 January, Alan Kocan saw two Snowy Owls while hunting near the southwest corner of the Salt Plains refuge. He and his two companions watched the birds flying low over grassland, perching on fenceposts, and alighting on the ground among goose decoys, where they remained about 20 minutes before flying off. A Snowy Owl "spotted in a wheat field" by Dr. Kocan later in the day was believed by him to have been one of the same two birds (A. Kocan letter of 4 November 1975 to G. M. Sutton).

A Snowy Owl that appeared in mid-January at the Tahlequah airport in Cherokee County, northeastern Oklahoma, was seen almost daily for about a month by airport personnel; on 17 and 19 February, Everett M. Grigsby and several of his Northeastern State College students observed the bird (Xerox copy of Connie L. Center's field notes).

All other January and February sightings were in the western half of the main body of the state (i.e., east of the 100th meridian). From 18 to 28 January, a "very white" bird was seen repeatedly in open country in Custer and Roger

Mills counties about 6 miles north of Hammon by Lowell Bodkin and John Flick and photographed in Custer County on 28 January by J. Brent Giezentanner (slide filed at OU Bird Range). On 30 January, Warren D. Harden *et al.* saw a "very white" bird in open country in Blaine County 2 miles north of Geary. On 31 January one was seen by Wade Pratt ½ mile north of Butler, Custer County (J. B. Giezentanner letter of 11 February 1975 to G. M. Sutton). On 1 February, near Rosston, Harper County, Laurence E. Dunn found dead a heavily marked specimen that had been shot (very thin female, UOMZ 8013, stomach empty). In the latter half of January and early February at least two (possibly as many as five) birds were seen in pastureland near Canute, Washita County, two "about the middle of January" 6 miles north of town by Cheryl Dean, one at the same place by the same observer about 1 February, and two 5 miles southwest of town on 8 February by Kary Schneberger and his brother Daren (Ina S. Brown letter of 4 March 1975 to G. M. Sutton). On 22 February, during a blizzard, Gladys West saw one among trees at her house along the north edge of Elk City, Beckham County (Ina S. Brown letter of 4 March 1975 to G. M. Sutton).

According to data reported in the five above paragraphs, the 1974-75 invasion lasted from 30 November to 22 February. None of the three specimens found dead had obviously died of starvation, nor had any of the living birds appeared to be in poor condition.

ACTIVITIES OF ONE OWL IN CANADIAN COUNTY

The "small-looking, exceptionally white bird" referred to above I followed about almost daily from 22 to 29 January. I had no trouble recognizing it as an individual, for a large feather was missing from its right wing.

This owl spent most of the daylight hours in an open, roughly oval area of short-grass and plowed fields about 3½ miles long (north-south axis) and 1 mile wide. Day after day I observed it hunting at about the center of this area during the half hour before sunup. After this period of intense activity it moved gradually northward to another area of pastureland where it rested quietly for several hours, perching on a gopher mound, fencepost, or telephone pole, before working its way back to the center of its area in the afternoon. Here, after sundown, it hunted actively for about half an hour, flying southward to another field just before dark. Where it was and what it did after dark I do not know.

When I flushed the bird it usually squared away promptly, holding to a remarkably straight flight-line 6 to 15 feet above ground for distances up to several hundred yards. At times it looked back at me over its shoulder as it flew. If I followed the straight flight-line I had no difficulty locating the bird again even after it had flown out of sight. It had two methods of hunting: circular flights 40-60 yards in diameter about 20-30 feet above ground, and hover flights, each lasting from 15 seconds to two minutes, in comparatively

stationary positions 35-40 feet above ground and about 20 yards apart. Hover flights I observed more often in the evening than in the morning and they were especially frequent in windy weather.

On two occasions in late afternoon I saw the owl pursue a small flock of meadowlarks (*Sturnella* sp.) unsuccessfully. Twice I saw it dive to the ground during crepuscular hunting; but during about 20 hours of observation I never saw it actually catch anything. Its favorite area was inhabited by many small mammals, notably mice, several of which I saw from time to time in certain places. A few other birds of prey frequented the area, among them at least one American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), one Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), and two or three Marsh Hawks (*Circus cyaneus*). I suspect that the Snowy Owl did much of its hunting at night and that it caught virtually all of its food then. Its activity while hunting just before sunup and just before dark contrasted sharply with its inactivity during the hours of full daylight.

10731 N. WESTERN, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73114, 8 NOVEMBER 1975.

HARRIS'S HAWK IN SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA

BY JOHN W. AULT III

On 9 October 1972, at a place known locally as Mulkey's Crossing, 5 miles east and 3 south of Eldorado, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma, I saw a dark hawk perched in a tree along the north edge of the flood-plain of the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River. At first the bird seemed to have no conspicuous field-marks, but when it took flight I could see the white of its upper tail coverts, tail base, and tail tip, then, as it banked, the bright red-brown of its wing coverts, convincing me that it was an adult Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*). The sighting was noteworthy since, according to Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, pp. 114-15), there was only one other record of the species for the state — that of a single bird seen by John G. Newell near Oklahoma City, central Oklahoma, on 29 January 1962 (1962, Audubon Field Notes, 16: 345). Paucity of Oklahoma records has been puzzling in view of the fact that Harris's Hawk actually nested in southwestern Kansas in 1963 (Parmelee and Stephens, 1964, Condor, 66: 443-45).

The terrain in which I saw the bird in Oklahoma was broken and rocky, supporting a growth of buffalo-grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) and scattered mesquite trees (*Prosopis juliflora*), though hilly fields just to the north were planted in sorghum grains. At the time of the sighting, Victor J. Heller and I were engaged (under the auspices of the Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit) in a project dealing with the ecology of the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*). Our duties took us afield daily, so I was hopeful of seeing Harris's Hawk again.

On 30 November 1972, Heller and I saw two adult Harris's Hawks perched in a large tree 35 yards from the road about 7 miles southwest of Eldorado,

again near the Red River. As we approached the birds, Heller saw a third Harris's Hawk, which he believed to be immature. When all three flew, one of the adults crossed the road low enough to make the rusty wing patches and black-and-white tail pattern clearly visible. At this spot the terrain was similar to that of Mulkey's Crossing, though less rocky.

On the evening of 25 February 1973 Heller and I saw two adult Harris's Hawks 3 miles west and 3½ south of Eldorado. One was perched in a shelter-belt, the other on the crossbar of a telephone pole. Winter wheat, plowed cotton fields, and mesquite pasture characterized that area.

The following spring and summer William S. Bartush assisted with the dove-trapping program. Although he, Heller, and I all kept a constant lookout for the hawks, hoping to find a nest, our efforts were fruitless.

As fall approached, I fully expected to see Harris's Hawk again. On 30 October 1973, I saw a single adult 4 miles south and 1 east of Eldorado. It was perched on a fencepost 30 yards from me, feeding on a small rodent held in its feet. When it flew, it glided downslope, giving me a clear view of its upperparts. On 12 November, while travelling with John A. Morrison, leader of the wildlife research unit, I saw an adult bird again at Mulkey's Crossing. Dr. Morrison and I both saw three adult birds perched on brushpiles and poles in that same area on 14 November, and on the following day I again saw three adult hawks there.

On the morning and early afternoon of 22 November, George M. Sutton and I tried in vain to find the hawks where I had seen them the preceding week. Late in the afternoon, however, not far from the north bank of the Red River, we happened upon two adult birds perched side by side on a telephone pole crossbar 7 miles southwest of Eldorado. Shortly after they took flight we saw the diagnostic fieldmarks. They circled over us for two or three minutes, 200 feet or so above ground, then soared west out of sight upriver.

The final sighting for 1973 was on 14 December when Jimmy W. Tinsley took me 7 miles northeast of Eldorado to see an "adult" bird perched on a telephone pole about 30 yards from the road. Such tameness did not strike me as being unusual, for on most of my sightings I had been able to approach to within 50 yards before putting the birds to flight. Tameness must have led to this particular bird's death, for later that day Tinsley found it dead along that same stretch of road.

Dr. Sutton, who prepared the specimen as a study skin (UOMZ 7495), found it to be a fairly fat *subadult* female weighing 967.9 grams. Molt was in progress over the entire body. The crop and stomach held the remains of at least two cotton rats (*Sigmodon hispidus*).

Since 14 December 1973, Harris's Hawk has been seen near Eldorado several times, as follows: on 16 October 1974, one adult 2½ miles north and ½ mile west of town (Tinsley); on 1 October 1975, one adult 7 miles southwest of

town (Ault); on 14 October 1975, two adults 5 miles east and 3 south of town (Heller and Bartush); on 16 October 1975, two adults at the same place (Tinsley and Ricky S. Hill), and later that day three adults at the same place (Ault). All of these sightings were, be it noted, in the fall.

4213 BEDFORD DR., LAWTON, OKLAHOMA 73501, 29 OCTOBER 1975.

GENERAL NOTES

First winter record for Green Heron in Oklahoma.—On four occasions between 4 January and 2 March 1975 competent observers saw what they believe to have been the same Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) along a swift, steep-banked, 12-foot wide stretch of Sandy (Lebos) Creek near a wooden bridge 2 3/4 miles south of Eldorado, Jackson County, southwestern Oklahoma. Woody cover there, primarily salt-cedar (*Tamarix gallica*) and hackberry (*Celtis* sp.), is dense close to the stream. On 4 January John W. Ault and Jimmy W. Tinsley first saw the bird, which flew upstream from the bridge. On 7 January (sunny day; temperature near 60° F. at noon; light south wind), Tinsley, Robert E. Morgan, and Jack D. Tyler flushed it from the very same spot, this time noting its orange legs and blue-gray upperparts. On 25 January Tinsley and William S. Bartush saw it again along the same stretch of the creek.

On 2 March it was collected. The specimen (immature female, Cameron University Museum of Zoology No. 545) weighed 238.9 grams. The ovary measured 6 × 12 mm. The stomach contained nothing but traces of vegetable matter, though food in the form of fishes and insects must have been readily obtainable since neither the creek nor farm-ponds of the vicinity froze much during the comparatively mild winter of 1974-75. During the first week of January the air temperature at Eldorado climbed to 50° F. on several days.

The Green Heron is said to inhabit Oklahoma from 1 April to 5 November (Sutton, 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, p. 3). The species has not heretofore been reported from anywhere in the state in winter. There is one winter record for Arkansas, that of a single bird seen at Fort Smith, just east of Sequoyah County, east-central Oklahoma, on 27 December 1971 (Armstrong, 1972, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 5: 26-27).—Jack D. Tyler, *Dept. of Biology, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501*, and John W. Ault III, *4213 Bedford Drive, Lawton, Oklahoma 73501, 5 March 1975*.

Rufous Hummingbird winters again in northeastern Oklahoma.—From mid-October 1974 to 26 January 1975 a Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) wintered in Bartlesville, Washington County, northeastern Oklahoma. On 25 October my neighbor Norma Drehman called to say that she "still" had a hummingbird coming to her feeder. Thinking the bird to be a Ruby-throat (*Archilochus colubris*), I did not look at it until mid-December, when Mrs. Drehman called to say that it was still there. On 16 December I was able to inspect it at a distance of about three feet through a sliding glass door. Noting its strongly rufous sides, axillars, and wing linings, gorget with red speckling, and 5 mm. wide red central spot, green back, rufous rump and tail base, white spot back of the eye, and white-tipped outer tail feathers, I decided that it was a Rufous, probably a male in first winter feather. My proximity to its "flower" caused it to dart toward me repeatedly, uttering a *ding,ding,ding* challenge. On 14 January Ella Delap, Odie McReynolds, Goldie Scheeler, and Madge Hildreth confirmed my identification.

The Drehman backyard is surrounded by thick privet hedge (*Ligustrum vulgare*). Inside its southeast corner is an evergreen vine of trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*). "Rufous" frequently flew to this corner, and we believe he roosted there. He

came to the feeder sometimes as early as 15 minutes before sunup. On the evening of 23 December (temperature that day 37-68° F. (3-24° C.) he fed at 1610, 1628, 1642, and 1656. Sunset was at 1714. The following day (temperature 38-48° F. (3-9° C.) he fed at 0819, 0835, 0847, 0935, 1000, 1115, 1135, and 1250. Electric heating tape around the syrup tube kept the solution from freezing.

The winter of 1974-75 was extremely mild in northeastern Oklahoma. Between 1 December and 26 January the average daily low air temperature was 28° F. (-2° C.), the average high 49° F. (9° C.), the lowest temperature 10° F. (-12° C.). Precipitation during the same period was 2.66 inches, all in the form of rain. Fifteen days were 55° F. (13° C.) or warmer, so small insects and spiders continued to be available as hummingbird food.

"Rufous" often visited the feeder during the week before he disappeared. He was last seen at 0830 on 26 January. He looked frisky and smooth-feathered at that time.

Selasphorus rufus is known to have wintered in Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma (late August 1971 to 12 January 1972), and the species was seen in Washington County repeatedly from 23 August to 30 August 1972 (Sutton, 1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, p. 23).—Dotty M. Goard, P.O. Box 591, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74003, 3 February 1975.

Lewis's Woodpecker in Stephens County, Oklahoma.—From 15 December 1973 to 31 March 1974 a Lewis's Woodpecker (*Asyndesmus lewis*) spent much of its time in a dead tree that stood by itself in a farm-pond 2 miles north and ½ mile east of Bray, Stephens County, south-central Oklahoma. During the 15-week period no fewer than 30 persons saw it. William Rice and I discovered it during a Christmas Count. When first seen it was working its way up its tree, investigating what appeared to be holes made by other woodpeckers over the years. We could not call it anything but a "puzzling dark woodpecker" until it moved into the brilliant afternoon sunshine (day clear, air temperature about 55° F.), at which instant I recognized it, for I had had good looks at the Lewis's Woodpecker in Cimarron County, far western Oklahoma, the preceding spring.

Since the pale gray collar was not very distinct and the underparts only faintly washed with pink, we decided that the bird was immature. In good light the back showed metallic green and we noted the crowlike flight as described by Bent (1929, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 174: 226-27) and others. At no time did we see it carrying or caching an acorn or attempting to catch an insect on the wing.

On 9 February I found the woodpecker in its farm-pond tree, preening its plumage and pecking casually at the limb to which it clung. The following day John Craythorne, his wife Moryne, and I went to the pond, this time with camera and telephoto lens, but the woodpecker and its tree were both so dark that we decided to drive the bird to a more lightly colored cottonwood across the sectionline road north of the pond. We drove the woodpecker from its special tree several times in getting pictures. Finally it flew southward from the pond and out of sight. The three best slides, each showing an identifiable bird figure, are on file at the Cameron University Museum of Zoology in Lawton, Oklahoma.

On 15 February Jack D. Tyler and his natural history class from Cameron University watched the woodpecker under overcast skies for about 15 minutes. That day the temperature was about 40° F. and the 10-15 mph north wind biting. John Craythorne observed the bird further on 23 and 28 February and on 9, 18, 23, and 31 March. When last seen it was in its favorite dead tree.—Frances Neeld, 1219 Elder, Duncan, Oklahoma 73533, 12 September 1975.

Bay-breasted Warbler in Oklahoma in winter.—On 14 December 1974 (weather

mild), while participating in a Christmas Count at Hospital Lake, Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma, George M. Sutton, Richard Gilliland, and I observed a Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) at close range (1975, Amer. Birds, 29: 172, 476). When first seen, the bird was fly-catching from the edge of a juniper tree in which a small flock of Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*) also were feeding. The warbler did not fly off when the finches did, thus allowing us an extended viewing as close as 15 feet.

We carefully noted the yellowish tone of the head, the streaked back, white tail-corners, white wing-bars, unstreaked breast, faint tawny-buff of the sides and flanks, and darkish legs and feet. About two hours after our observation I studied the Bay-breasted Warbler specimens at the OU Bird Range and found that the bird we had been watching was precisely like immature female *D. castanea* in Dr. Sutton's collection.

According to the AOU Check-list (1957, p. 500), the Bay-breasted Warbler winters from "central and eastern Panama" southward to northern South America. Although Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 509) mentions Oklahoma "records" for 4 October and 9 November, these are open to question; a warbler that Sutton himself saw on 8 September 1973 at Hospital Lake was, in his opinion, a Bay-breasted Warbler in first winter feather. In any event, the 14 December sighting reported above is important.—Warren D. Harden, 1416 Huntington Way, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 6 November 1975.

FROM THE EDITOR: The editor wishes to thank Lewis W. Oring of the Department of Biology at the University of North Dakota and John Farrand Jr. of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City for help with the Laughing Gull paper; Louis E. McGee and his wife Janet for preparing the index and the map illustrating the Snowy Owl paper; and Warren D. Harden and Mitchell Codding for help in reading proof.

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