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## WHOLE ISSUE *Nebraska Bird Review* (December 1983) 51(4)

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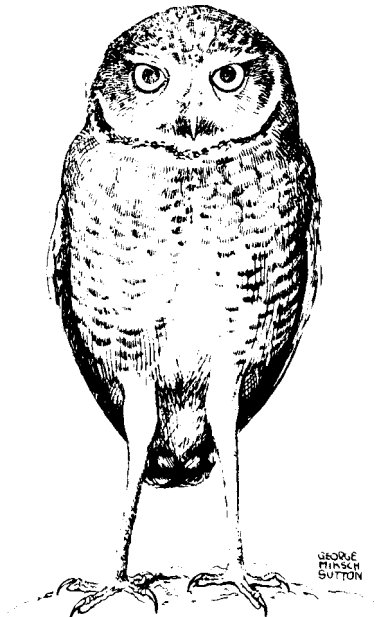
# The Nebraska Bird Review

*A Magazine of Ornithology of the Nebraska Region*

Volume 51

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Number 4



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All manuscripts for publication, and all changes in address, should be sent to the Editor, R.G. Cortelyou, 5109 Underwood Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68132.

Other officers are: President, Mrs. Ruth C. Green, 506 W. 31st Avenue, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005; Vice President, Gary Lingle, 2550 N. Diers Avenue, Suite H, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801; and Secretary, Mrs. C.E. Johnson, 604 S. 22nd St., Apt. 406, Omaha, Nebraska 68102.

## A NEW NESTING SPECIES FOR NEBRASKA

The Chuck-will's widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) is considered a highly local but regular migrant and presumed summer resident in Nebraska. Although it is known to breed in Kansas and Oklahoma, there were no nest records for Nebraska (Johnsgard, 1980). Egg dates for Kansas range from 21 April to 31 May (Johnsgard, 1979). On 4 June 1983 a Chuck-will's widow's nest with 2 eggs was discovered in a bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) — red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) woodland at Camp Merrill, Saunders Co. (Sec 29 T17N R5W), approximately 6 miles southeast of Linwood (Janett Waever, pers. comm.) The "nest" was located on the ground about 6 ft. from a footpath. A few fallen oak leaves and bedstraw (*Galium* sp.) made up the meager ground cover. On 11 June, 1 of the eggs hatched. The adult female, hatchling, and nest were photographed. The remaining egg hatched on 12 June. The chicks were observed again on 18 June, approximately 10 ft. from the footpath, and by 26 June were absent from the nest site.



The incubation period for this species is 20 days, beginning with the first egg (Johnsgard, 1979). This would mean that the approximate laying date for this clutch was 22 May. Both Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) and Chuck-will's widow have been heard regularly in this area

since at least 1978 (Janett Weaver, pers. comm.). This represents the first documented nest record in Nebraska.

I would like to thank Janett Weaver for providing me this information and the photographs of her remarkable find, and Tom Labeledz for critical review.

#### Literature Cited

Johnsgard, P.A. 1979 *Birds of the Great Plains*. Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska. 539 pp.

— 1980 A revised list of the birds of Nebraska and adjacent Plains States. Occasional papers of the N.O.U., No. 6, Lincoln, Nebraska. 114 pp.

— Gary Lingle, *The Platte River Whooping Crane Trust, 2550 N. Diers Ave., Suite H, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801*

(Camp Merrill is run by the American Baptists Churches of Nebraska. — Ed.)

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Bird Conservation: No. 1*, Stanley A. Temple, Editor, 148 pp. 6 × 9, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wis. No index, paper. \$12.95.

This is the first in a planned series of yearbooks to be issued by the U.S. Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation. It is intended that each yearbook will present a series of reports on a specific conservation issue or program submitted by biologists active in the field — in this case, on the conservation efforts for the Peregrine Falcon, the Bald Eagle, and the California Condor. Then a section presenting current, concise reports and updates on conservation news, and finally a review of bird conservation literature, in some cases annotated. It is intended for and should be of interest to anyone seriously concerned about bird conservation.

— Editor

*The Care and Breeding of Seed-eating Birds, Finches and Allied Species — Doves, Quail and Hemipodes*. Jeffery Trollope, 336 pp. 5¾ × 8¾, Blandford Press, England, Sterling Publishing Co. Inc., New York, bibliography, indexed, hardbound, \$17.95.

This book is intended for those who are, or hope to be, beyond the cage bird level and into the aviary level of bird raising. The first four chapters are on general principles: Accommodation, Nutrition and Food, Obtaining Stock and Management, and Breeding. The author then discusses, species by species, about 200 species, (50 of them shown in a 16-page color section). Material common to a genus or family is covered before an individual species is discussed. This discussion covers other names, and possibly volume of imports (into Britain), breeding success, related species, and then Description, Distribution and Habitat, Breeding, Voice, and Behaviour, and may run up to two pages, or less than a page, depending on how much information is available and how much has been given under genus, family, or similar species. People who have cage birds of species discussed (Canaries and Budgerigars are not) probably could learn from the species account; people who run a number of feeders might benefit from his comments on buying and storing quantities of feed, and maybe from his advice to feed each kind separately, so you will know who uses it, and how much is actually used. And anyone in the aviary stage could benefit from the review of general principles, and from the species accounts of prospective new species.

— Editor

*Birds of North America, Expanded, Revised Edition* Robbins, Bruun, and Zim, illustrated by Singer. 4½ × 7½, 360 pp. Golden Press, New York. \$7.95 softcover, \$10.95 hardcover.

The species names have been changed in accordance with the new AOU listing (but Green-backed Heron is still Green Heron), but the order (even of the genera) is not consistently the same as the new AOU order. There are new range maps, textual changed in places, new species have been added, and two pages on immature terns, one on parrots (presumably the most popular escapees), and other pages have been redone, resulting in an increase of 20 pages over the original edition.

— Editor

## A SECOND BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE IN NEBRASKA, WITH NOTES ON ITS FOOD HABITS



On 31 August 1983 at about 1200 h CDT, the junior author discovered a Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) on Mormon Island Crane Meadows, Hall County, Nebraska, perched in a plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*). The senior author visited the site at 1800 h CDT and observed the bird in the same tree, with a 25× spotting scope. It was perched on a dead limb and was carefully observed for 15 min. The next day, 1 September, we visited the area at 1200 h and observed the Kite. We carefully noted plumage and soft parts coloration as follows: eye - reddish brown; cere - greenish yellow; bill - bluish black; tarsus - yellow; cap - streaked with brown and white feathers gradually blending into a pearl gray neck and back; tail - mostly white with a faint, partial terminal band; breast - nearly all white except for remnants of a brownish streaked bib and sparse brownish fleckings on the breast; wings - grayish white except for black coverts; underside in flight - nearly all white except for black wrist markings. Based on these markings we believe it was an immature bird which had nearly completely molted into adult plumage. We flushed the bird and it circled curiously overhead, displaying its coloration. This bird was observed on 22 occasions from 31 August to 8 October. It perched regularly in the cottonwood or one of two nearby boxelders (*Acer negundo*).

The Black-shouldered Kite was observed feeding on a meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) on 2 occasions. Its hunting behavior consisted of hovering above open fields then dropping vertically to the ground while attempting to capture its prey. Eleven regurgitated pellets were collected underneath its perch between 2 September and 5 October. All contained hair and skull parts from meadow voles. The pellets varied between 21 × 26 mm and 27 × 39 mm in size.

This bird apparently established a feeding territory. On 19 September at 1630 h CDT, it left its cottonwood perch and pursued a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) soaring overhead. The Kite circled above the hawk and stooped to within 1 m, although no contact was made. It harassed the Red-tailed Hawk for about 300 m then returned to its perch. On 8 October at 1100 CDT, a second interaction with a Red-tailed Hawk was observed. The Hawk displaced the perched Kite. The Kite then circled and stooped at the Hawk for about 4 minutes until the Hawk departed and the Kite resumed its perch. The Kite stooped to within 15 cm of the Hawk at each pass but no contact was made.

Ruth Green reported the first Black-shouldered Kite in Nebraska on 19 August 1981 (1982. White-tailed Kite in Garden County. *NBR* 50:10-11). Johnsgard (1979. *Birds of the Great Plains*. Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 539 pp.) reported the breeding area as coastal Texas although there was 1 nest record in Oklahoma. This "non-migratory" species also occurs in California and was reported to feed on rodents and insects (Robbins, C., B. Bruun, and H. Zim. 1966. *Birds of North America*. Golden Press, New York. 340 pp.).

The occurrence of hurricanes Alicia and Barry on the Texas Gulf Coast less than 2 weeks preceding this sighting may have been responsible for sending this bird northward. Several people observed this kite and among them are: J. Athen, V. Coons, D. Grundman, D. Huxtable, T. Labedz, S. Stearns, T. Schupbach, J. Ziewitz, and others.

— Gary R. Lingle and Kari L. Lingle, *The Platte River Whooping Crane Trust*,  
2550 N. Diers Ave., Suite H, Grand Island, NE 68801

## PINE SISKIN NESTS AT WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

On 29 April 1976 I observed a number of Pine Siskins in the elm and blue spruce trees on the Wayne State College campus, Wayne, Nebraska. They were actively flying back and forth between the trees so I could not determine the exact number of them, but they would have numbered less than a dozen.

On 30 April I saw that a Pine Siskin appeared to be building a nest in a blue spruce tree, about five feet above the ground. I continued to watch from a safe distance for the next few days. By 5 May the nest appeared to be completed and occupied. It was occupied from 5 to 12 May. During this time there were varying numbers of other Pine Siskins in the area.

On 13 May the nest was vacant and no Pine Siskins were in the area. On 14 May I noted carefully that no Pine Siskins were in the area and then examined the nest closely for the first time. I found no indication that any eggs had ever been laid in the nest. On 17 May I noted that the nest had not been occupied since 13 May, and that no Pine Siskins had been seen in the area during the time, and that fairly strong winds were rapidly causing the deterioration of the nest. I was not aware of any record of nesting attempts by Pine Siskins in this area prior to this time, so I salvaged the nest on 17 May (with authority granted via Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit #PRT-7-151-C-KC, Amendment #2). The nest was placed in the collection at Wayne State College as evidence of Pine Siskin activity in this area.

On 13 May 1982 the temperature was 68-70°F, intermittent rain, wind 5 mph or less from the east. At 12:15 PM I saw two fledgling Pine Siskins on the campus, south of Benthack Hall. They were in a low bush, which was just under the outstretched branches on the north side of a blue spruce tree. No adult birds were seen, and no nest was seen. At 3 PM on the same day I returned to the site. No baby birds were seen, but as I inspected the site an adult Pine Siskin flew in. After a brief survey of the area it flew almost directly to a nest which I had not located earlier. The nest was in the blue spruce about six feet above ground, above the low bush. It was situated about 18 inches from the tip of the branch. An adult bird was on the nest but no young birds were visible. I assumed they were in the nest, being protected from the rain by the adult. On 19 May 2.5 inches of rain and some wind occurred during the night and early morning. At 12 noon the adult bird was still on the nest and everything appeared to be in proper condition. Heavy rain (1+ inch) and some hail and wind occurred that night and early morning, and at 12 noon 20 May an inspection of the nest site revealed all Pine Siskins gone and the nest destroyed. The nest lining materials were not wet, but were separated from the outer nest structure. It appeared that the nest site might have been the victim of a predator rather than the weather. Photographic record of the nesting Pine Siskins was made by Mr. Harland Pankratz, Biology Professor at Wayne State College.

— A. Jewell Schock, Associate Professor of Biology,  
Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebraska 68787

## 1983 FALL FIELD DAY

There were 55 who registered for the 1983 Fall Field Day, 24/25 September 1983, at the 4-H Camp at Halsey National Forest. With the benefit of good weather they tallied 94 species on or near the Forest, and a party that went up US 83 as far as the North Loup added 10 more (marked [N]), and 2 or 3 unidentified species of shore birds. The Scott's Oriole, near Wauneta, was selected as the best of the birds submitted for consideration, with the Black-necked Stilt, near Gothenburg, and the Glossy Ibis, at Lincoln, tied for second. After the slide show Saturday night (which included an identification quiz) Wayne J. Mollhoff, of Albion, spoke about the Holartic Avian Speciation Atlas, for which he is the Nebraska coordinator, soliciting the support of NOU as an organization, and the members as individuals. He proposes about 400 blocks, each about 3 miles square, which will be surveyed for evidence of breeding of the species actually or expected to be found there. Collection of the data is expected to be done from 1984 to 1988.

The species tallied are: Pied-billed, and Horned Grebes; Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback [N], Ruddy Duck [N], Turkey Vulture, Osprey [N], Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Cooper's Hawk (too far off for definite identification); Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks; American Kestrel, Merlin, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot,

Killdeer; Greater [N] and Lesser [N] Yellowlegs; Common Snipe, Ring-billed Gull [N]; Rock [N] and Mourning Doves; Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos; Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Common Nighthawk, Common Poorwill, Belted Kingfisher; Red-headed, Downy, and Hairy Woodpeckers; Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee; Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches; House Wren; Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets; Eastern Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Pipit sp. [N], Cedar Waxwing, European Starling; Philadelphia and Red-eyed Vireos; Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, and Blackburnian Warblers; American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Northern Cardinal; Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks; Indigo Bunting, Rufous-sided Towhee; American Tree, Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, Vesper, Lark [N], Savannah, Song, Lincoln's, White-throated, White-crowned, and Harris' Sparrows; Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird; Eastern and Western Meadowlarks; Yellow-headed Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird [N]; Orchard and Northern Orioles; Pine Siskin, and American Goldfinch.

## A MISSISSIPPI KITE IN HALL COUNTY, NEBRASKA

The Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) is considered extremely rare in Nebraska, with only 8 spring records and 2 fall records (Johnsgard, P.A., 1980, A revised list of the birds of Nebraska and adjacent Plains States, Occasional papers of the N.O.U., No. 6, Lincoln, Nebraska, 114 pp.). On 10 July 1983, at 12:30 CDT, we sighted an adult Mississippi Kite circling above a flooded native hay meadow on Shoemaker Island, Hall Co. (Sec. 1, T9N R11W). The bird was identified by its frosted head and secondaries, pearly gray back and underside, and black retrices. It is believed this Kite was attracted to the area because of the recent flooding of the Platte River. This represents the first record in Hall Co., and the first summer record in Nebraska.

— Gary R. Lingle and Kari L. Haugh, *The Platte River Whooping Crane Trust, 2550 N. Diers Avenue, Suite H, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801*

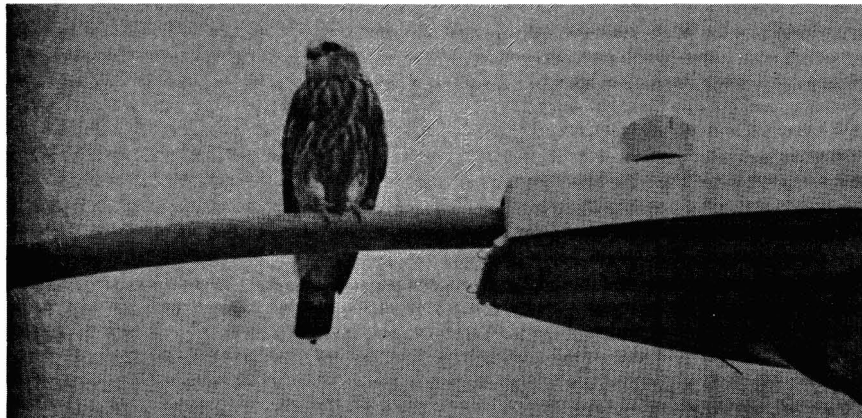
MISSISSIPPI KITES. On 3 September 1983 Norris Alfred and I observed four Mississippi Kites. Three were in the east end of Aurora, near the golf course. There were all immatures, and they had been seen and identified by the William Whitneys of Aurora, Gary Lingle of Grand Island, and others, and reported to Norris. The wind was strong out of the south the day we were there and the birds would circle to the north of us and then glide back over us very low into the wind, sometimes hardly moving. This afforded us a very good opportunity to observe them at close range for identification markings. One bird had something in one talon and fed on it occasionally, but we couldn't tell what it was. After watching the birds for quite some time we drove back to Polk, and as we were getting out of the car I noticed a bird soaring over the east end of town that resembled the Kites we had just seen. After watching it for a while we could see that it also was an immature Mississippi Kite. Since we had never seen one in this area before we were very surprised to find four in one day, at two separate locations. The Kites in Aurora had been there for over a week; I don't know how long the one had been at Polk.

— Lee Morris, *Rte. 1, Box 14, Benedict, Nebraska 68316*

About 10:45 AM on 4 September 1983 we saw an immature Mississippi Kite sitting on a power line on the north side of Gifford Road, at the intersection with Child's Road. For approximately 15 minutes we observed it from a distance of 50-100 feet, while it was sitting or hunting insects.

It was about the size of a Cooper's Hawk. It had pearl-gray feathers on the face and neck, except for a wide white eyebrow and white in the middle of the throat and around the beak. It had a yellow cere, and a dark, hooked beak. There was heavy brown streaking on the breast and belly. Undertail coverts were buffy. It had white feathering on the legs. Feet were flesh colored. The top of the wing was slate-gray and the primaries were black. The tail had about 1½ inch dark terminal band. When the bird was sitting the wings extended slightly beyond the tip of the tail.

In flight the tail showed brown banding underneath, separated by narrow white bands. The wing showed light brown linings, contrasted with dark brown in secondaries and primaries. The shape of the wings in flight was long and pointed, falcon-like. The flight was very graceful.



The Kite seemed unconcerned by human activity. Several cars and trucks passed under the light pole on which it was sitting. It then flew across the road to catch a large insect in the air, and then landed on another light pole, about 200 feet north of the intersection. It ate the insect, which appeared to be a cicada, while sitting on the pole and holding it in its talons.

Fortunately we were only a few blocks away from Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, and were able to get Bob Fluchel to come and photograph the bird. He arrived at this time and began taking photographs. After a few minutes the bird circled overhead a couple of times and headed north until it was out of sight.

— Babs and Loren Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005

## NOTES

**CORRECTIONS TO NBR 51:18.** On line 8 of page 18 of the March 1983 Bird Review the number of parties for North Platte should be 3, rather than 30. At the bottom of the page, the Olivaceous Cormorant was taken at Sutherland, Lincoln County (Lincoln was left out).

**MORE ON THE A.O.U. CHECKLIST.** The 6th Edition of the *A.O.U. Checklist* has been released, and some of the loose ends in the previous report on it (*NBR 50:74*) can now be tied up. The Crested Tinamou (no Elegant) is listed in Appendix D — introduced species, either not established or not sufficient importance to be included on the hypothetical list (Appendix B). Mexican Duck is included with Mallard because of extensive hybridization. The Japanese Quail (*Coturnix japonica*) is listed because it is established in the Hawaiian Islands (which were not included in the 5th but are included in the 6th Edition). The Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), which was introduced in Nebraska, apparently has not been successfully introduced anywhere in North America. The Screech-Owl complex is discussed in Marshall (1967, *W. Found. Vertebr. Zool. Monogr.*, no. 1, pp. 1-72): The eastern edge of the Western Screech-Owl's distribution is northern Idaho, western Montana, southeastern Colorado, and extreme western Oklahoma. Gray-headed Junco has been included with Slate-colored, but the book provides distribution data for each of three groups (Slate-colored, White-winged, and Gray-headed). The Rosy Finches have been merged with an Asiatic form, but the North American forms have been treated like the Juncoes: distribution data is given for each of Gray-crowned, Black, and Brown-capped Rosy Finch groups.

**MINDEN NOTES.** Some Pine Siskins were included with the usual winter birds at feeding stations. Mrs. Michael Bunder had some House Finches in her yard, and a Pygmy Nuthatch was seen from 20 January to 20 April, 1983. Two or three Brown Creepers were noted in the Minden area, also. On 23 February, southeast of town but still in Kearney Co., I saw thousands of the blue morph of Snow Geese with only one white morph among them. I saw my first geese on 15 February, maybe 300-400 of what I took to be White-fronted, flying north. My first Purple Martin



was heard about 20 April, and one seen 2 May. Northern Orioles and House Wrens appeared the first week of May. On 7 May I observed Harris', White-crowned, Clay-colored, and Savannah Sparrows and Northern Rough-winged and Barn Swallows. On 10 May I saw my first Red-headed Woodpecker, and on 11 May I heard Warbling Vireo and Orchard Oriole calls.

— Harold Turner, P.O. Box 333, Minden, Nebraska 68959

TOWER KILLS. The weather system in mid-September 1982 was a slow-moving cold front that stalled out along the Nebraska-Missouri border and produced 5 windy, rainy, cloudy nights that were hard on migrants. From 12 to 16 September I picked up 320 casualties at the KCNA-TV tower, east of Albion. There were 42 species, including Least Bittern\*; Virginia, Sora, and Yellow\* Rails; Solitary Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Trail's Flycatcher; House, Sedge, and Marsh Wrens; Gray Catbird; Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Yellow-throated\*, Solitary, Red-eyed, and Warbling Vireos; 16 Warblers Yellow, Black-and-white, Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, Black-throated, Green, Blackburnian, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning, MacGillivray's, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat\*, Wilson's, Canada, and American Restart; Bobolink; Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds; Orchard and Northern Orioles; and Savannah and Lincoln's Sparrows.

\*Specially notable.

— Wayne J. Mollhoff, 736 S. Third, Albion, Nebraska 68620

SUMMER 1983 IN KEARNEY COUNTY. A lone Great Blue Heron showed up early in August and stayed until about the end of September. A Shoveler was seen on a field pond 20 July and the others with it probably were the same. I saw only one covey of Bobwhites during the summer. On 30 September I saw my first Greater Yellowlegs in several years. Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers were here in late August and early September. I usually saw Upland Sandpipers as singles, but once saw about 6 together. Mourning Doves stayed through September. I heard a Yellow-billed Cuckoo call in Minden 18 June — the only record of this species this year. Red-headed Woodpeckers and Flickers were present. Purple Martins first became noticeable about mid-April, but then apparently were rather scarce, and were last noted about 10 August. Quite a congregation of Cliff Swallows showed up in mid-September. I saw Barn Swallows as late as 21 September. Blue Jays were present, White-breasted Nuthatches were seen occasionally, and House Wrens were fairly regular. A Sprague's Pipit showed up 30 September. Cardinals were regular. Blue Grosbeak calls were heard 20 July and on one or two later trips. By mid-August Savannah Sparrows were present. Grasshopper Sparrows were also present, and about 20 July I saw an immature at very close range. I saw Orchard Orioles the same day.

My brother Elwin, who lives in Adams Co., had a Cooper's Hawk in his area this season and, probably early August, found a Grasshopper Sparrow's nest with 3 eggs and 1 chick.

— Harold Turner, P.O. Box 333, Minden, Nebraska 68959

RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS. I saw 9 male and 2 female Red-breasted Mergansers on Crystal Cove (a borrow pit at the junction of US 77 and I-29, in South Sioux City) yesterday and today (1 April 1983). They were reported as early as 23 March.

— Bill Huser, 319 W. 17th St., South Sioux City, Nebraska 68776

OSPREY. An Osprey sat on a tree on my skyline for about an hour, eating a fish, on the evening of 26 April 1983. I ran out to look during the ads on the 5:00 PM news. It was there from about 4:45 to about 5:45.

— Doris Gates, Route 1, Box 25, Chadron, Nebraska 69337

AVIAN TUBERCULOSIS IN A RED-TAILED HAWK. On 16 Aug. 1978, I salvaged a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) that had been road killed on U.S. highway 34, 1 km east of Holbrook, Furnas Co., Nebr. While preparing the bird as a study skin, I noticed that the bird was diseased. The bird was thin but not starving, with the keel protruding 3-4 mm. The liver was nearly twice the normal size and both it and the heart were filled with pale-colored, granulomatous nodules 2-6 mm in diameter. Since I had encountered this condition in a raptor before (Mollhoff, *Wilson Bull.* 88:505, 1976), I preserved the liver in 70% ethanol for further study.

I submitted the liver as a tissue sample to a histology lab for diagnosis. A diagnosis of infection of *Mycobacteria sp.* was made, based on demonstration of characteristic morphology and staining with acid-fast stain. Identification to species level was not attempted because the apparatus necessary to work safely with this group of organisms was not available at the lab where I work.

Other information concerning this specimen is as follows: The bird was an adult male weighing 820 gm. and in very worn plumage. The only evidence of molt was 2 new rectrices. The crop contained the remains of Prairie Vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*) and a Plains Garter Snake (*Thamnophis radix*) 38 cm in length. The stomach held the partially digested remains of another garter snake (*Thamnophis sp.*) that was 50-75% larger than the one in the crop. The habitat in the area was a mixture of open farmland and native mid-grass prairie with some riparian woodland nearby along the Republican River.

The bird has been placed in the vertebrate biology collection at Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebr. 68787; catalog accession no. 460.

Special thanks go to Dr. Wilber A. Haynes, DVM, DO, of Midwest Clinical Laboratories, Omaha, Nebr.

—Wayne J. Mollhoff, 736 S. Third, Albion, Nebr. 68620

**HARLAN'S RED-TAILED HAWK.** A dark-phase Harlan's Red-tail (*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*) was found in a severely weakened condition on 3 April 1983, 1.5 m. south, 3 m. west of Petersburg, Boone Co., Nebraska, by Belle Esau. She approached the bird and, upon finding it too weak to fly, she picked it up, took it home, and placed it in a covered outdoor pen. She called me to confer about it. I went and took pictures that day. She force-fed the bird with hamburger. It was too weak to offer resistance and seemed to lack proper coordination and balance. She kept it and fed it until 7 April, when she brought it to me. At that time it was regaining strength and becoming difficult for her to handle. I fed it some mice, shrews, and small birds from my freezer until 10 April, at which time I took it out to the edge of the sandhills to take more pictures.

I tethered it to a dead snag with some string, and while I was getting my camera ready, it broke the string and flew off before I got a single picture. It seemed to fly well, and landed (with apparently adequate coordination) in a cottonwood, about 400 meters away. I ran over to flush it again to see if it could repeat the flight. This time it flew away, going southwest, out of sight. After much searching I found it (or another with identical markings) 2.5 hours later and 4.5 miles southwest of the point of escape. It was observed for about 15 minutes with a spotting scope, and when I flushed it an obviously extended crop was easily visible, indicating that it had been hunting successfully.

It's lack of balance, strength, and coordination when it was first found made me think it must have been suffering from insecticide/pesticide poisoning, and I didn't expect it to recover. I thought it more likely that it was starving as a result of lack of coordination (from the effects of poison), rather than merely from poor hunting. It appeared to recover simply by being fed, making it appear to be a simple case of starvation. At any rate, it seemed to have recovered.

—Wayne J. Mollhoff, 736 S. Third, Albion, Nebraska 68620

**MERLIN.** On the weekend of 19 April 1983 we saw a male Merlin, about halfway between Grand Island and Kearney.

—Mark Brogie, 1120 Main Street, Wayne, Nebraska 68787

**PEREGRINE FALCON.** We saw 2 Peregrine Falcons 5 October 1982, near Fish Lake, 28 miles south and 2 east of Bassett, Rock Co. They flew ahead of the car, alighting on telephone poles, so we had good looks at them. We followed them for about a mile. John Jorosz, retired from the U. of Minnesota Museum, and Robert Jorosz were with me.

—Harvey L. Gunderson, 1200 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska 68521

**GRAY PARTRIDGE.** Our nephew, Dan Osborn, has a ranch 14 miles north of Mullen in Cherry Co. During the week of 28 January 1983 he saw a Gray Partridge in his shelter belt. He got a good look at the rusty spot on the belly and the face markings, and the rufous tail as it flew away. He said it acted tired and perhaps blew in from South Dakota on some of the strong north winds.

—Wilma Wyman, 1401 East Second Street, North Platte, Nebraska 69101

SOUTH SIOUX CITY. I am fortunate enough to live a few blocks from an old oxbow of the Missouri, which fills up with water in the spring. And this spring it has much more water than usual and hence covers much more area. So far, I've had the excitement of seeing Soras, Virginia Rails, Northern Waterthrushes and one of the Marsh Wrens, all of which have eluded me for too long. On 15 May 1983 I saw a Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

— *Bill Huser, 319 W. 17th St., South Sioux City, Nebraska 68776*

SANDHILL CRANES. On the weekend of 19 April 1983 we saw a partial albino Sandhill Crane. The bird had a white body and neck, and partially white and gray wings, giving the wings a mottled appearance. The bird was on the outskirts of the flock and was often chased by Cranes of normal appearance. It had normal head coloration.

— *Mark Brogie, 1120 Main Street, Wayne, Nebraska 68787*

On 2 April 1983 Bill Lemburg, Mrs. Cortelyou, and I saw a Sandhill Crane with a stiff white neck collar, and a shorter stiff white leg band on the upper right leg. This was from US 281, a mile or so south of I-80.

— *R.G. Cortelyou, 5109 Underwood Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68132*

PIPING PLOVERS AND LEAST TERNS. On 15 May 1983, near the headgate of the Loup irrigation canal, where it leaves the Loup River, 3 m. south and 4 m. west of Genoa, Nance Co., Nebraska, I found Piping Plovers and Least Terns. Both were using the temporary sandbars left where the dredging operation dumped the sand. I found a Piping Plover nest on 5 June and another on 4 July. The first had 4 eggs, the second had 5 eggs. On 4 July I also found a Least Tern nest with 2 eggs. I was unable to return to check for nesting success. It is a hazardous nesting area for both species, due to the constantly changing dredging operations, numerous raccoons in the area, and frequent use of the area for recreational use of motorcycles, three-wheelers, etc. I did not have a chance to check the adjacent Loup River for nesting by either species.

— *Wayne J. Mollhoff, 736 S. Third, Albion, Nebraska 68620*

PIPING PLOVER NESTS. Barbara Wilson and the Padelfords have an article in *Iowa Bird Life* (53:69) September 1983 on two Piping Plover nests they observed at the Iowa Power and Light Company settling ponds, south of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and just across the Missouri River east of Fontenelle Forest. One nest, found 6 June 1983, had 4 eggs but was abandoned by 16 June. The nest of another pair was found 11 June and hatched 3 young on 22 June. At least one of the chicks survived to 21 July.

MOUNTAIN PLOVER. I was searching for Mountain Plovers in western Kimball Co. on 13 July 1983. I found one adult with three young in a short-grass pasture 3 to 4 miles north of Highway 30, 1 mile east of the Nebraska-Wyoming border. The pasture contained grazing cattle, and the birds were foraging near the herd. The young were less than half grown; the black spots of the downy plumage were easily visible on their heads and backs.

— *Terry A. Cox, M.D., 5419 Western Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68132*

BURROWING OWL. As Don and I were driving through Valentine NWR near dusk on 4 July 1982 our attention was drawn to a bird near the road. It was hovering in the manner of an American Kestrel, but in size and shape more resembled a Burrowing Owl. It would hover for a few seconds, fly 20 feet or so, and hover again. Eventually it landed on a haybale and we were able to confirm that it was a Burrowing Owl. Although it is mentioned in Bent, I had not witnessed this behavior before.

— *Tanya Bray, 9708 Grover, Omaha, Nebraska 68124*

TREE SWALLOWS. On 15 May 1983 I found a colony of nesting Tree Swallows, near the headgate of the Loup irrigation canal, where it leaves the Loup River, 3 m. south, 4 m. west of Genoa, Nance Co., Nebraska. The Swallows were nesting in dead snags standing in the shallow water of the settling basin, where sand was being dredged from the canal. The nests were mostly from 15-30 feet above the water, and I estimated a minimum of 30-50 nesting pairs, although it could be a much higher number.

— *Wayne J. Mollhoff, 736 S. Third, Albion, Nebraska 68620*

**FEWER CROWS AT HOLDREGE.** Last year (early 1982) up to 100,000 Crows were estimated to be at Holdrege (*NBR* 50:47). An estimated 25,000 were present in December 1982, but the Christmas ice storm seemed to discourage them and it was not anticipated that the number would get much greater.

**BIRD BANDING RETURNS.** These birds were banded at the Chet Ager Nature Center, Lincoln. A Black-capped Chickadee banded by Dr. Esther Bennett 2 September 1974 was recovered by me 3 May 1978, 24 March 1979, 9 April 1980, 14 March 1981, and 18 April 1983. A Common Yellowthroat, banded 17 June 1977 by Hazel Diggs, was recovered by me 13 May 1980, 14 May 1981, and 19 May 1982. And an Orange-crowned Warbler, banded by me 22 September 1980, was recovered 1 February 1981 in El Gde, Gto, (Guanajuato?), Mexico.

— *Mabel Ott, 2718 So. 33rd St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68506*

**WAYNE COUNTY.** I saw a couple of unusual birds this fall in the shelter belt on the Keith Erikson farm, 8 m. north and 1 m. west of Wayne. On 17 September 1983 I got to within 10 feet of a Northern Mockingbird, which was in thick cover. On 8 October I saw a female Black-throated Blue Warbler, which stayed around long enough for Mark and Ed Brogie and Layne Johnson to come out and see it. I saw the white wing spot, the dark cheek, eye stripe, and the half moon under the eye.

— *Mark Erickson, RR 2, Wayne, Nebraska 68787*

**PIPITS AND LONGSPURS.** On our way home from the 1983 Halsey meeting Ray Korpi and I took the road from Purdham to Brewster, along the North Loup, and saw Water Pipits and Chestnut-collared Longspurs (25 September 1983)

— *Russ Benedict, 303 Orchard Drive, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005*

**NORTHERN SHRIKE.** Tanya Bray, Sandy Kovanda, and I saw a Northern Shrike on 24 February 1983 at DeSoto Bend NWR, on the Nebraska side.

— *Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005*

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH.** On 14 July 1983 a Louisiana Waterthrush found its way into Perry Center on the Doane campus. Here is how we got the bird out of the building: I held a stick about two feet long and invited the bird to hop on it. When it accepted my invitation I carried the stick and bird slowly to the door and out onto the steps. For several minutes I stood there, holding the stick with the bird on it, and talking to two staff members who were helping me (or was I helping them? — they saw the bird first) get the bird out of the building. The bird just sat there on the stick, occasionally closing and opening its eyes, until it finally flew off in the direction of the Doane Lake.

— *Mildred Gross, 945 Longwood Drive, Crete, Nebraska 68333*

**HOODED WARBLER.** On 17 June 1982 our cat carried into our backyard an adult male Hooded Warbler in full breeding plumage. Our house is at the south edge of town near Chadron State College. There are plenty of large trees and understory shrubbery in this part of town and it is very likely that the bird was caught somewhere within a three block radius of our house. The Hooded Warbler is listed in the *Field Checklist for Birds of the Nebraska Pine Ridge Area* as being only an occasional migrant. The plumage of this bird at the time of year suggests that it may have been attempting to breed in the Chadron area. This specimen has been turned over to Dr. Randy Lawson in the Department of Biological Sciences at Chadron State College.

— *George E. Probasco, 926 Bordequx St., Chadron, Nebraska 69337*

**SONG SPARROW.** On 19 May 1983 I flushed a Song Sparrow from a nest containing 5 eggs. The nest was near the banks of Beaver Creek, 1 m. south and 2 m. east of Albion, Boone Co., Nebraska. It was a cup of dead grass, lined with fine roots, with the rim of the nest 1 inch above ground level. It was placed in a clump of brome grass, about 2 inches tall, in an area of clumps of grass interspersed with bare sand, shorter grass, willow brush, cottonwood and ash trees.

When I visited the nest again on 3 June there were 4 or 5 young, almost completely feathered. I didn't try to get an accurate count because I didn't want to approach the nest any closer, because of the frequency of raccoon, mink, opossum, and skunks in the area.

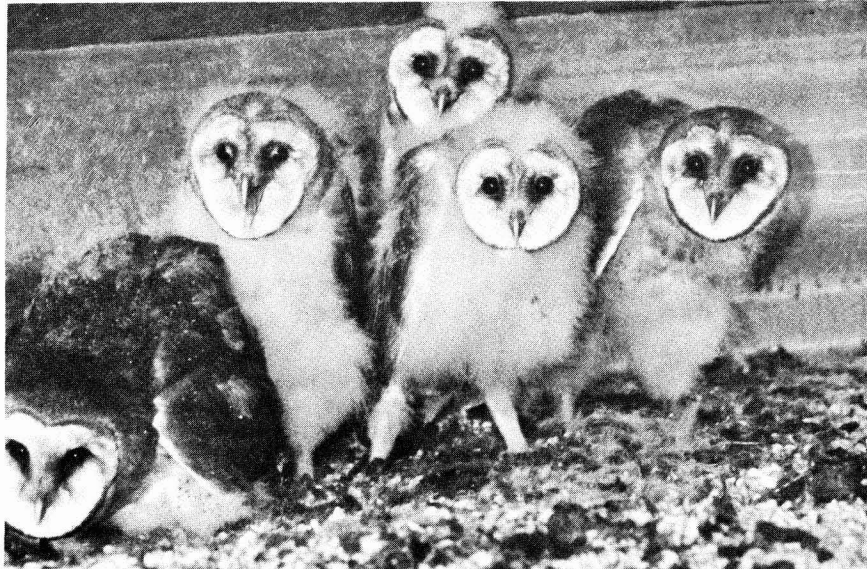
On 10 June I found the adults apparently tending young in some dense undergrowth about 30 feet away, but I couldn't find the young. I later collected the nest for Wayne State College.

— *Wayne J. Mollhoff, 736 S. Third, Albion, Nebraska 68620*



HOUSE FINCH NEST AT GRAND ISLAND. On 24 May 1983 we noticed House Finches, and on 30 April they started nesting in a white spruce. Gary Lingle checked the tree 5 May and flushed the bird from the nest. He didn't check any further for fear of spooking the birds. The nestlings could be heard 26 May, and on 31 May Gary determined that there were 3 nestlings. On 3 June Dennis Grundman took a picture of the young — he thought there were only 2 — in the nest. He had only an hour and the adults didn't show. The birds were the orange variant, shown in Peterson's new guide. The birds were very vocal before they started to nest, but very secretive afterwards.

— Vera Coons, 20 Chantilly, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801



Young Barn-Owls in a grain bin north of Archer, Merrick County, photographed by Dennis Grundman, Grand Island, in early July, 1983.

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